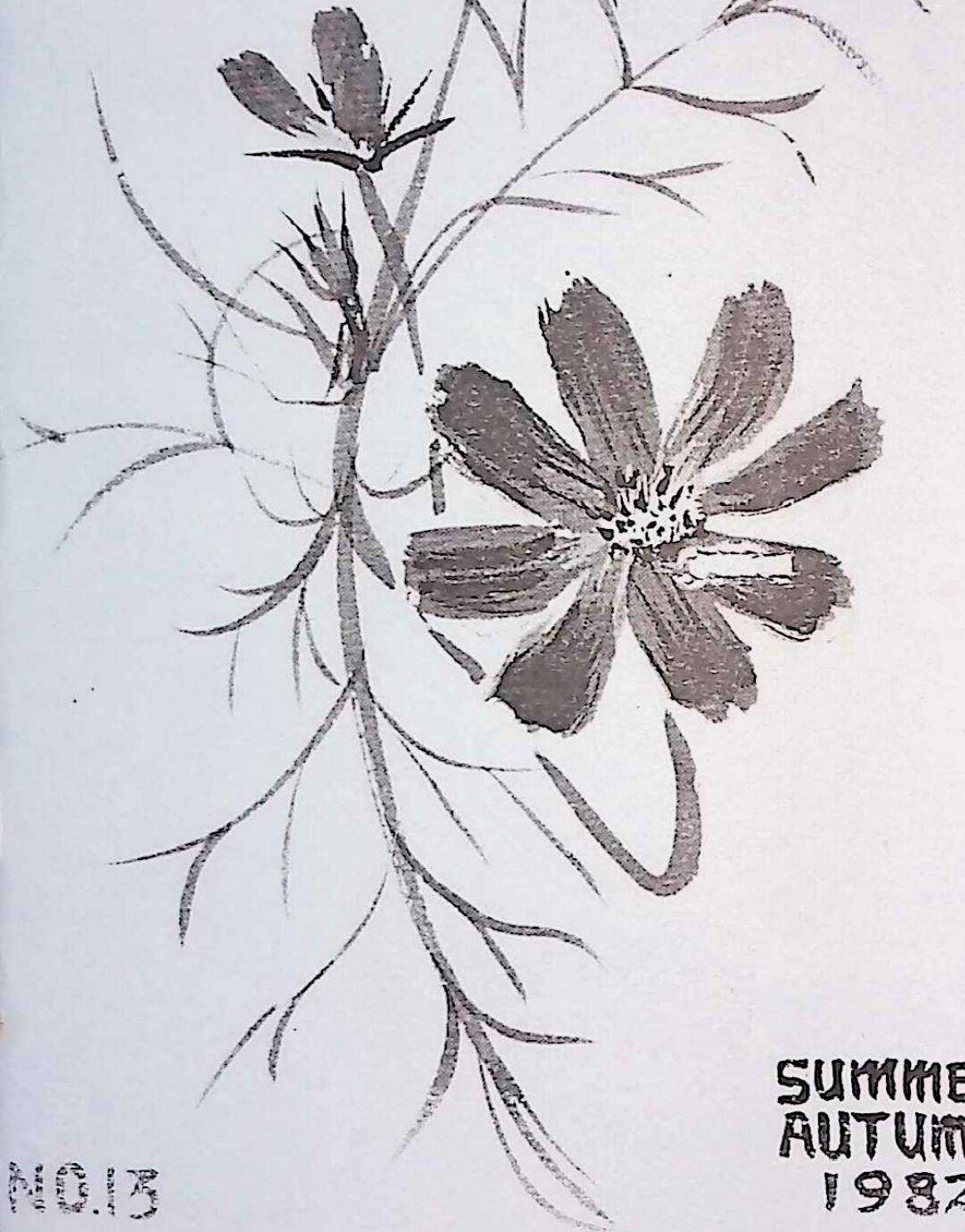


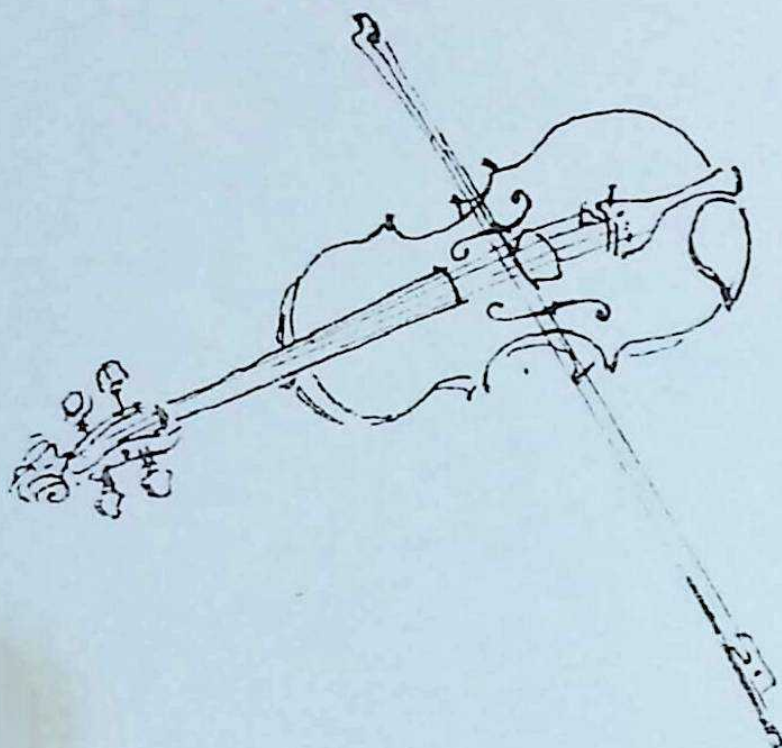
# TALENT EDUCATION JOURNAL



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Masayoshi Kataoka

The second installment of Mr. Suzuki's book, *Talent Education for Young Children*, translated in this issue, is titled "Conditions for the Growth of Ability." It explains the five mottoes of talent education: 1. the earlier period; 2. the better environment; 3. the better teaching method; 4. the more training; 5. the superior instructor. Rather than leaving children alone, he insists, we must help their ability sprout while they are small, for it can be fostered in whatever way precisely depending on the conditions.

In his lecture on "Fostering Ability," from the Japanese *Talent Education*, Mr. Suzuki lucidly explains the Suzuki philosophy, and relates the moving response which he received after addressing the United Nations in New York.

As this issue goes to press we anticipate the annual visit of the Suzuki Tour Children from Japan. Dr. Masaaki Honda's article, "On the Seventeenth Overseas Tour," describes the 1981 tour. We would like to dedicate this issue to the success of the 1982 tour and to Mr. and Mrs. Suzuki's visit to the U. S.

Masaru Ibuka, former chairman of the Sony Corporation and director of the Talent Education Institute, is now working enthusiastically for young children's education. In this issue, we are pleased to include the transcript of his radio interview on "Early Education and I."

Haruko Kataoka's "Elementary Instruction by the Suzuki Method" will be of interest not only to piano instructors but to every Suzuki instructor and parent. Madam Kataoka is one of the founders of the Suzuki piano school. This discussion will continue in subsequent issues.

The moving article, "Walking with the Suzuki Method," by Tomoko Numata, lecturer in the Piano Study Group, is a record of a mother who was inspired by the Suzuki method to foster her handicapped son beautifully.



## FOSTERING ABILITY

From Nagano Lectures to  
Businessmen and Parents

Shin'ichi Suzuki

### *A National Policy for Nurturing Children*

I do not like being formal; I always wish to be natural. Hence I make friends immediately no matter whom I meet, and lead a life rich in friendships. This way of living, I think, has been truly good.

When I met the late Prime Minister Ikeda, I spoke with him as though he were a friend. "You have gradually improved Japan's economy, for which we should be thankful. But that is merely a store manager's job; as a prime minister you should plan ahead for the next hundred years for the state," I told him, and discussed the importance of a national policy for nurturing children. Unfortunately he is gone now.

When I went to the States, Ambassador Matsui reserved some time for me to lecture at the United Nations. About 800 people from different countries

gathered. I think Hitomi Kasuya whom I have brought here today was among the children who performed the violin on that occasion preceding my talk on national child raising policies.

My national policy for child raising is this: just as policemen walk around their beat, we should create state-trained child raising consultants who visit new mothers when babies are born. They are to watch the growth of the children during their early childhood until they enter school. If the children seem to suffer because the families have no money, the state should protect them with subsidies. If the family environment is poor, the consultant has the authority to improve it.

In this way children would receive fine upbringing during early childhood, which is the most important period. If parents and the state leave them alone and then try to have the damaged seedlings nurtured at school, it is too late for them to bloom into fine flowers, isn't it?

At the United Nations I said that no matter what families they are born into, or what abject environment they are brought up in, babies born in your countries ultimately become citizens of your countries. "You have," I said, "a common responsibility to protect your children. Let me ask countries all over the world to initiate a child raising policy."

I talked about twenty minutes. Since I am of course no good at English, someone from the Consulate translated what I said.

When my talk was over, everyone stood up, and what a commotion there was. I returned to the stage and bowed many times answering their applause, but since they wouldn't sit down, in the end I joined my hands in the form of worship. Then I saw people in the front row in tears; receiving a strong shock, I was also overwhelmed.

"Please, let me ask you to protect your babies. It is for the sake of the happiness of children the world over." This was all I added.

After this many people came to see me in the waiting room. Among them was a person over six feet, tall enough for me to look up at. I don't know which

country he was from. He gave me a powerful handshake saying with a serious expression, "You will change the world."

When I said to him in my poor English, "You, too, will change the world. Every adult has the responsibility," he burst out crying, hugged me tight and remained in tears for a while.

I said the same words to Prime Minister Ikeda and to Minister of Education Aichi when I met them. The Children's Charter says "Every child is protected," but what does it mean by "protected"? Aren't children damaged? Aren't juvenile reformatories full? Once we decide to protect all children, should we not seriously ponder and try to prepare the foundation for doing so? This is what I said.

When I visited Mr. Aichi, Masaichi Nagata, director of the Daiei Movie Company who shared my views, accompanied me to blow the horn together. A fine person, Mr. Aichi agreed with us very much, and right away summoned Masutoku Hiratsuka, director of the National Education Center. Since then the Center has formed a research committee on talent education which studies the method by which every child grows.

### *Fostering Fine Seedlings*

In brief, if we damage the precious seedlings during early childhood, which is the basis of everything, and only try to educate them from elementary school to college using today's conventional teaching methods, the result can only be modest. I imagine your companies employ college graduates. How many of them prove useful right away? Few, I think.

College graduates should have personality, high ability, and practical knowledge worthy of their education. We must question the fact that they lack these qualities.

In any case, I have a dream that an era will come when all children will be fostered as fine human beings. I feel fortunate that I have support from such representative people as Masaru Ibuka of Sony, Seiji Kaya,

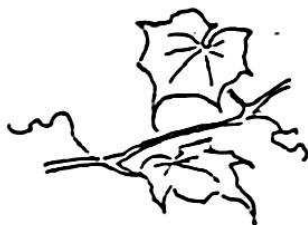
former president of Tokyo University, Masutoku Hiratsuka mentioned above, and Yoshichika Tokugawa.

### *Fostering Ability*

I have written on various occasions concerning talent education, so I won't detail what you can understand by reading my books. In a word, my theory is that human ability is not inborn. Every human being can demonstrate his ability in any way depending upon how he is brought up. Of course repeated proper training is required for that to happen.

Every year I write "Where love is deep, much can be accomplished" on 1,500 rice paper strips for children. It is a big job to write this 1,500 times, but I consider it calligraphy practice. While I enjoy trying to improve my hand with each paper, I reach the 1,500th before I know it. It takes me two or three months, however, since I give lessons and lectures, and attend meetings as usual. Further, there are the tapes sent to me from nearly a thousand graduating students every year. I listen to each tape, praise the student for his hard work, record my suggestions about how to improve some sections, then send back the tape. One tape takes about half an hour. When I do this, twenty-four hours a day are hardly sufficient. I was getting up at five in the morning last year and the year before as I always had, but during the tape-listening days this year I am getting up at three. Five hours of sleep is plenty. I have come to acquire the ability to sleep deeply.

This means that I have trained myself by a way of thinking. Another thing is that a paradoxical effect has resulted: I have become even healthier. Just as the body becomes fragile when lacking in exercise, confidence and strength are created by exercising the body.





## *The Brain, Not the Hands*

A long time ago, I was asked to give a lecture at a textile company in Aichi Prefecture. The president of the company asked me then: "We have about thirty workers in our company whose hands are slow. They are doing their best, but somehow they slow down our efficiency, and this is giving us trouble. In other words, we have a deficit in proportion to their inefficiency. Would there be a nice method to solve this through your talent education way of thinking?"

"You referred to slow hands, but isn't the problem slow brains rather than slow hands? I chanced to see four or five ping pong tables a while ago. How about letting those people play ping pong? Let them quit work one hour early every day, and have some of the better ones coach the rest.

"In ping pong, it is too late to get ready after the ball comes flying to you. If the brain works, the hand goes there spontaneously, but if you only try to move your hands, there will be a time lag.

"Isn't everything including work procedure a matter of the brain's work? Although you say their hands are slow, I think it's that they lack motor nerves. Try ping pong on them," I answered and parted.

Half a year later I received a letter from him saying, "Since improving in ping pong, their work efficiency rose." Isn't this just as expected? When something becomes interesting through training, the brain's activity also becomes sharper.

Take for example little Hitomi who has performed for you just now: what an ability she demonstrates! She makes no mistakes while playing such a difficult piece. However, she herself doesn't think it difficult at all. It is a result of accumulated training. By firmly securing the initial preparation, the procedures thereafter become smooth and speedy. Therefore, if you want people to do something fast, let them repeat correctly and slowly: when ability is created, they gradually become faster. Instead of reluctantly working because there is no other choice, try testing yourself to see if you can do a certain amount of work

neatly in one hour. While you are repeating that, you will gain unexpected speed. You will find yourself becoming inventive.

Those who have gathered here are in different kinds of business. In your work, if, instead of being satisfied with the day's sale, you find for your employees a way to work willingly, their ability will be raised, and if their ability is raised, the work will become easy, and they will make fewer errors and continue to grow.

When I become aware of something new in my study of the violin, I try it out while thinking of the condition for success: "I get a good sound if I do it this way." Then when I discover that something works, from that moment I do nothing but that. Well, I try it at least 10,000 times. What happens when I repeat it 10,000 times? I reach the point where I may goof if, instead of letting it happen spontaneously, I make a conscious effort. At that point I am secure enough. In other words, ability has been created.

So, when it has become easy for you to do your job, it means that ability has been fostered, that you have thoroughly mastered the skill.

Some acquire the habit of finishing today's job within the day and enjoy leisure afterwards, and of making sure to finish tomorrow's job tomorrow. Such people can walk relaxed on an unerring road with more than sufficient ability, but how about those who say to themselves, "I'll just stop here and rest today; I'll continue tomorrow," or keep making excuses: "I had a visitor today, so I couldn't finish it"? Such people have never tried to create the ability to finish a job.

In this sense, I am practising to complete my chores myself. And as long as I do it, I do it with joy. My daily work is a brother who helps me grow--isn't this how we should feel?

### *Don't Force Children*

When the parent has the child inherit his business, there should be no element of forcing. What is most important is to bring up the child as a human being

with a fine mind and ability who will be loved by many people and will find joy in serving people. It is not, I think, for the parent to decide what the child will do in the future. It is enough for you to build the foundation for your children's growth as fine human beings. I have already said this, but as a practical problem, I realize that many parents think differently.

Suppose a greengrocer tries to let his child succeed to his business. Of course it is a fine business; however, the child will be happy only if he is provided with the heart and dream to engage in the business with joy. Suppose the child is simply forced to succeed the father, that would mean constricting him. No matter what it is, I think that business lies in the world of service. Ability means how much service one can do.

### *The Greatest Joy*

Lecturing to mothers, I always say that the greatest joy for a human being is to do something that pleases others. Joy for just oneself is limited, and it quickly bumps against a wall. However, enjoyment of others' joy is boundless.

With this attitude, I don't think that being a greengrocer is a reluctantly attended chore. Since it would be hard for the mother of each household to get up early and go to buy vegetables at farmhouses, you want to go for them early and buy the best possible things and sell them cheaply. If you think this is what a greengrocer does, things will proceed pleasantly both on the seller's and buyers' sides.

Human life establishes itself on mutual service. Who can serve the greatest number of people is a determining factor for the development of a given business.

After all, it depends on the person's spirit of service, largeness of his love, and his effort. Making the joy of living for others his own is the basis of it all.

As I asked Education Minister Aichi, I would like school education to include more human education.

For example, if children are taught and trained to be kind to people for the nine years of compulsory education, I suggested, Japan will become a much happier land.

I think that we should seriously ponder this important question of education once more.

Today's education, it seems to me, neglects important human education as it overemphasizes specialized areas. If parents and teachers tackle this problem seriously, children will have a happier future, and their happiness, I am sure, will be shared by parents.

*Talent Education, no. 4*



## ON THE SEVENTEENTH OVERSEAS TOUR

Masaaki Honda  
Standing Director



At Professor Jempelis', Rochester

### *Prologue*

The first overseas tour occurred in March, 1964 when Mr. and Mrs. Suzuki and Mr. Hirose took ten children to the States. In the fall of the same year the Olympics were held in Tokyo, transforming the appearance of some Tokyo streets. Although the content is not the same as the Olympics, our talent education movement also began to develop in strides from the first overseas performances. I have already written about the difficulties involved in that tour; looking back now, I don't know how we ever managed to do it. By the seventeenth tour this year, both the tour group and the hosts have become rather used to it; we no longer face so many difficulties.

### *Alaska*

Our tour started in the north: first we visited Juneau, then went to Sitka. Since our Tokyo departure time was ten o'clock September 27, we had

stayed at an airport hotel overnight. It was good that children coming from afar could thus recover from their fatigue before the big trip, for we had a hard itinerary ahead: we landed in Anchorage at 10:30 p.m. that night arriving at the hotel at midnight. We rose at six o'clock the following morning to go to Juneau.

Although we had previously given several performances in Fairbanks and Anchorage in Alaska, Juneau and Sitka were new to us. We had some anticipation about visiting unfamiliar places. We had expected the weather to be fairly cold, but thanks to the warm currents, we were relieved to find it not at all cold.

The landscape was beautiful in both places with mountains pressing the sea: it was so lovely that we just stood and watched.

On the afternoon of our arrival in Juneau, we had our first rehearsal in a lakeside church. The glacier we saw through the window was shining blue with the mystery of primeval times.

The first performance was given the following afternoon, a matinee for children. The old piano in the gym took us by surprise, but the performances went well, and young children listened with shining eyes. That night at eight o'clock the curtains were drawn for the first overseas tour concert at the high school auditorium.

The program for this tour group was fairly high level. The first half started with Paradis' Sicilienne, followed by Mozart/Kreisler's Rondo. The transition from the calm melody to a piece of a quick tempo was rather effective, and these two numbers already seemed to captivate the audience. After that came Michiko Kondō's Samartini sonata, Maki Yashiro's Siciliano and Rigaudon, then Hiroki Sugano's Rondo Capriccioso, etc. The last number was a unison performance of the Mendelssohn concerto, third movement. Since they beautifully performed what is difficult enough for a solo performance, as they finished the program the audience gave a standing ovation here and elsewhere.

In Sitka there is the Japanese company, Alaska Pulp. Executive director Nagumo and families in the company's

housing took very good care of us.

The back of the stage of the hall had glass windows through which we could see the ocean, and it gave the illusion of a concert on a boat. However, during the real performance, the curtains hid the sea.

Hiroko Itō burnt her hand with hot tea at the Sitka reception, and she kept weeping quietly from the pain and lonesomeness. However, due to the instant first aid, the burn healed completely by the following day, not at all interfering with her performance. This was my first and last duty as tour doctor: during this pleasant tour everyone stayed healthy without a hint of illness.

### *Portland, Oregon*

The host here was Douglas public school with Mrs. Dorothy Kroo as the central person. A graduate of the Eastman Music School, she is teaching by talent education in the public schools. Her method is close to ideal as she requires parents to attend lessons at school.

The children performed two nights in a big hall at Madison High School, collecting the audience even from places as far away as Idaho, but there was difficulty filling the hall two nights and Mrs. Kroo had no cool time, or had kurō (difficulty)-filled time.

However, on the free day after the performances, we rode the bus with our hosts along the Columbia, enjoying the view of the Fall, said to be bigger than our Kegan Fall of Nikkō, the grotesque shapes of the huge sturgeons, and the chance to become friends with people during this pleasant outing.

On our departure to Denver, our friends shed tears and we, too, felt choked in the breast.

### *Kansas*

Transferring to a bus in Denver, we sped straight to Kansas splitting the plain which stretched as far



Japanese Consulate, Kansas City

as the eye could reach. When I first saw the itinerary of this tour which depended rather heavily on buses, I was worried that it might prove considerably fatiguing. In fact, the Greyhound charter turned out to be absolutely pleasant, and we enjoyed the changing scenery

all the way.

It is hard to gain a real sense of the spaciousness of the States when travelling by air, but on a bus, the plain lasted even after we rode and rode from morning till night. We were dumbfounded by its utter spaciousness. Moreover, it was not only pleasant but economical in terms of time and money to stop at a supermarket on the way to buy bread, ham, sausages, juice, and fruit and make sandwiches in the bus.

We gave a concert at a small town called Atwood, population 5,000. We were impressed afresh by the high standard of culture in such a rural area: so this was the States.

In Kansas City our host families were mostly Japanese. We were moved by their warm reception.

As I happened to find some free time here, I made fifteen clean copies of Yukichi Fukuzawa's motto: "The most joyous and worthy thing in the world is to have a task to pursue throughout life." I gave a copy to each member of the tour group and asked them to memorize it. I was pleased to see that everyone did.

The performance in Kansas City was given at a hall of the University of Missouri across the river. Having recovered from the fatigue of the trip, the children gave powerful and beautiful performances.



## *Detroit*

We had given a concert in Detroit two years earlier. Dr. Z. Konikow, the leader, is a gracious and confidence-inspiring person who takes initiative in handling things. Many from Ann Arbor participated in the workshop making it a crowded occasion. At Dr. Konikow's place near the lake, the red leaves were particularly striking.

Rising before dawn the following day, I enjoyed fishing with Dr. Konikow. Flocks of ducks and geese swam on the still water while the sun rose behind the morning mist that hung over the lake. I watched this beautiful scene till I lost myself. However, the catch was nil this Sunday morning, the fish apparently also taking a vacation.

As Hiroki was polishing his instrument after the concert in Detroit, the finger board suddenly broke in two. This rare accident, the first of its kind in the many tours, left us worried: it was already late at night, and we were expected to leave for Pennsylvania the following day.

However, finding that there was someone who could fix it, we gave a sigh of relief when we called Edinboro College in the morning.

## *Pennsylvania*

We continued by bus from Detroit. The red leaves that comforted our eyes were even more beautiful after entering Pennsylvania.

On arriving at Edinboro College, we were met by Professor Cox who was waiting for us with a student who was to fix Hiroki's violin. He was quite skilled, and changed the fingerboard by the following day. To his great joy Hiroki was thus able to perform on his own instrument at the concert that night.

The college was our host here and again at the State University of Pennsylvania which was our next stop. They had talent education classes, and American children performed together with us in the workshop.

One of the host families was that of a Penn State

professor who had once lived in Rochester. After moving to this area, he had complained about having no acquaintances in this college town. On finding out about the Suzuki program, he joined right away. He immediately made many friends, and his life there, he said, had become very pleasant. I was pleased to see it as a side benefit of talent education.

### *Rochester*

We again enjoyed a pleasant bus trip from Penn State to Rochester. I found it quite interesting as the landscape immediately changed on leaving Pennsylvania to New York. At Eastman we were met by Professor Jempelis and many others. Among them were such familiar faces as Ken Hayashi and Terri Goulard who started out in talent education a long time ago when four or five. A dozen Suzuki-trained students are at the Eastman School of Music at present, Professor Jempelis said, and she would like to have them perform the Bach Double in the near future as a gift for Dr. Suzuki.

The Eastman Theater with 3,000 seats was built by Eastman in his prime and donated to the University of Rochester; it is beautiful and luxurious almost beyond words. The house was eight-tenths full for the concert with a crowd of over two thousand people whose applause sounded louder than anticipated, and we were pleasantly moved by this result.

This concert was given on October 17, Mr. Suzuki's birthday. After the performances, a great birthday cake was brought onto the stage, and we all sang "Happy Birthday," commemorating the birth of the person who introduced this wonderful movement.

How great a single person's power can be; a single person can achieve such wonder. You, too, please do your best, I asked the audience from the stage.

## *Toronto*

Jan Nagai met us at Toronto, Canada. We boarded a Seneca College bus and started out to see Niagara Falls. Although I had thought it might be too tight, I had asked to squeeze the sight-seeing into our schedule in response to the tour members' desire. We had only forty minutes, but everyone seemed to have fully enjoyed the brave sight of the falls.

That night we were invited by the college to a banquet at Eaton Estate. We had a full course dinner with the Chancellor and other people. This delightful mealtime filled with waves of laughter was also a good opportunity for the children to learn table manners.

In this cosmopolitan city, many people from Asian countries including China and India attended the full house concert.

In the States the children performed "America the Beautiful" for an encore, but here we obtained the printed music of the national anthem, "Oh, Canada," and gave a fine performance of it under the leadership of Miss Nakajima. The audience sang along in tears of emotion.

## *Newburgh, New York*

Many think of New York City when they hear the name of the state, but the upstate towns, I think, are among the most beautiful places in the States. On arriving at Laguardia Airport, we got on the school bus sent for us and saw the sights of the city. Many members of the tour group visited New York for the first time, and were carried away by the distant views of the Empire State Building, skyscrapers, and the Statue of Liberty; however, the schoolbus driven by the middle aged woman, Ruth, was rickety and the crowd and the noise of the city exhausted us. Eventually we felt like quickly escaping from it all. It was a relief when we arrived at the quiet town of Newburgh in the late afternoon where the red leaves were beautiful.

The host here was a Catholic College, Mount St. Mary, a very quiet and beautiful school located on the upper Hudson.

At ten o'clock the following morning I talked about the relationship between talent education and the Doman method to the chancellor and members of the faculty.

During the intermission of the concert that night, a middle aged man greeted me and asked if I knew Toshiya Etō. As I answered that I knew him very well, he introduced himself as his classmate at Curtis and a professional violinist. After the concert he sought me out again backstage and said: "Dr. Honda, I have been against Suzuki before tonight's concert. However, listening to the children's music, I have come to agree with him completely."

When I told this to Mrs. Price who had organized the event, she was very pleased: "Yes, he is a famous anti-Suzuki man. Although I had sent him a complimentary ticket, I didn't expect him to come at all. It's wonderful, I'm really pleased."

On the way back to the New York airport, we stopped by at West Point, the Military Academy. It was so large that it looked like a castle. Here we parted with Mr. Mochizuki of the Japanese Consulate, who had spent a night with us, and left for Chicago.

### *Chicago*

The church in Oakbrook outside Chicago is a big and beautiful one where we had given a concert on a previous tour. We told the children about the happiness of being able to perform at a place for worshipping God, and instructed them to play humbly as though offering music to Him.

### *Rapid City*

In South Dakota, we had given performances in Brookings and Huron. This state has a spacious and scantily populated land. The host here was a music association,

and the concert was for its members, not open to the public.

In the afternoon before the concert, we went to Mt. Rushmore outside the city. On the high rocks were sculpted the faces of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Roosevelt. We heard that each measured about twenty meters between the chin and the top of the head.

### *Salt Lake City*

Transferring at Denver, we arrived at Salt Lake City at noon. We had the chance to hear a chorus at the Mormon Tabernacle: its choir was welcoming the Queen of Thailand. Their truly beautiful harmony moved us.

We went to Provo city the day after the concert, and were treated to sukiyaki prepared by Mrs. Primrose and others. Everybody enjoyed the delicious food: some ate so much that they couldn't breathe.

On the way back we went to visit the late Mr. Primrose who was then seriously ill. As he came out to the living room, he looked sturdy, to our great relief, with a fairly good color on his face.

He listened intently to the music the children played for him--I can never forget this in my life.

### *Los Angeles*

Since Mrs. Mills had moved from Pasadena to Clairmont, a workshop and a concert were held for the first time there. When a concert was given in Los Angeles for the first time sixteen years ago, there were no American Suzuki players. Today I was moved to see several hundred children get on stage.

On the morning of the concert day, Mrs. Mills took us to Disneyland. Everybody was very happy.

## Epilogue

After the long journey of thirty-five days, everybody was healthy. I was relieved when we returned the children to their parents at Narita Airport.

People often comfort me: this kind of trip must be exhausting just to make; it must be so hard because you give as many as thirty concerts and workshops, and in addition you personally have to supervise the members' health. However, in comparison with the rigor of my life in Japan tackling the treatment of brain-injured children, the tour is indeed pleasant for me. Listening to music every day from morning till night, cherishing the mission to convey Mr. Suzuki's words to many people and shaking hands with people who heartily enjoyed the concerts, I renewed the joy of having known talent education.

At this writing, the melodies of Sicilienne and Mendelssohn which the children performed on this tour are still echoing in my ears. Enhancement of humanity by music --how wonderful this is. On this tour I emphasized, besides the Suzuki philosophy, the Five H's.

The first H is for memory (Head). The second is the Heart. The heart represents the richness of understanding the beauty of music and art as well as the beauty of nature, and at the same time it expresses the love of mankind. The third is Hand. By the use of the hands, the brain is stimulated. Then comes Health. The last is Happiness. Thus we have a fivefold H, so add "s" as in Suzuki for the plural, and we get Five H's. This means that children of the world gain mutual understanding and friendship through talent education, that they are linked by the S.



## EARLY EDUCATION AND I



Conversation  
with  
Masaru Ibuka

Interlocutor:  
Ryūichirō Hosokawa

--You are an inventor, are you not, Mr. Ibuka?

IBUKA: I think I am not an inventor. I did invent; I guess there are seventy or eighty patents. But it's just that I had a certain aim, and a new idea occurred to me while trying to pursue it. I don't think I belong in the category of so-called inventor.

Let me give you an example. When the transistor was invented in the States, nobody tried to make it into a radio, because the yield rate was very poor. I worked as a project manager with a very strong will to create a transistor radio. In order to make a radio, there were many shortcomings to overcome in the old transistor, and it was also necessary to improve the yield rate. There was a very strong purpose in thinking what should be done, and I thought of many things in order to achieve those things. That seems to describe me more accurately than the word inventor.

*A Three-Year Old Child's Soul Till Age One  
Hundred*

--I see, so that means you carry through your purpose. Now I would like to ask you about your early education, a topic you have already written a lot about.

IBUKA: Yes. What is most important is, as the saying goes: "A three year old child's soul till age one hundred." This Japanese saying is absolutely correct. Then is the three year old child's soul which persists forever inborn? I ran into this question. It seems to me that the character of a human being is a blank piece of paper. To

quote a quick example, while looking at the mother's face every day, the baby becomes fondest of her face in three or four months. It's the same with music. No matter what kind of music it is, if the baby listens to the same music every day, what happens in three or four months is that he stops crying the moment the music is on. Human beings don't have likes and dislikes at birth; what is repeated from right after birth becomes the person's taste.

Therefore, depending upon the mother's idea since the baby's birth, his personality can develop in any way. If an atmosphere is prepared that induces the child to become fond of studying, he becomes fond of studying. Whether the child is bright or not isn't so much a matter of inborn qualities. What follows birth is what matters. If one is always taught the habit of bowing to elders, one becomes fond of doing that. From among children who can bow to the next door neighbor saying "good day," no Red Army and no Radicals will be created. It would be a job to carve such people out of them. What are mothers like nowadays? It is all a matter of their egoism. Their vanity is creating overprotected children and that from birth. They are only creating children who think of nothing but themselves.

--Mr. Ibuka, is it true that babies who crawl well learn language well?

IBUKA: Yes, although it's hard to tell which is first, children who are mentally deficient often cannot crawl. For example, a certain Mr. Fukuda, a horseback rider in Fuchū, fell from the horse and became a vegetable like man. He is in training now at Dr. Doman's place in the States. He is given strong stimulation and is made to crawl. Crawling involves turning the neck, and the movement around the neck is very important. Whether the baby's neck is steady or not is often used as a gauge of development, for the steady neck means that all the activities of the nervous system are being coordinated properly. The foundation is built by crawling. It is quite dangerous to encourage the baby to walk before he can crawl.

--That's very interesting. How was your own babyhood and childhood? What kind of baby were you?



IBUKA: How do I know such a thing? (Laughter.) My mother often told me what my father had wanted to do. He died when I was three. He was an electrical engineer. That I was going to be an electrical engineer was a spontaneous feeling which was already there, though my father had gone.

--So your mother told you many things. . . .

IBUKA: Yes, although that was after I grew a little bigger. More important, it is crucial that the mother tried hard to create a really good human being from age zero, to create a proper human being. It is crucial in making the country better. I wrote a book called *Kindergarten Is Too Late*. It is already way too late by kindergarten. If you create a proper human being by age three, there will be no element for becoming bad at school. Make as much fuss as you want about how school teachers are wrong or how schools are badly run; violence which so far only begins in middle school will surely reach down to elementary school. With today's children educated by the mass media the age for adolescence has been going down. What is neat for a first year middle school student is certainly neat for a sixth grader. Such a thing naturally goes down to lower grades.

--That sounds quite hard to the mother's ear. How about the father?

IBUKA: Fathers--well, they don't contribute much to personality formation. In Saudi Arabia which I recently visited, I found that the mother does not teach a boy at all. When the boy is five or six, the father trains him according to the Koran's teachings. This creates stability among the people of Saudi Arabia. So I can't say that there is no contribution from the father, but not so much in personality formation. It's of course a different story if the father stays with the child from morning till night, educating him.

--In Japan the mother often stays home and has daily contact with the child.

IBUKA: So that forms the child's personality, and after that of course there is the father's influence. However, something decisive has to be done before then--this is what I strain my voice to repeat. It

means that it is too late at three.

--You are not saying anything harsh to mothers but telling them that they have that important mission.

Isn't this what you want to say?

IBUKA: It is. If a child says "I'm watching TV" at age three, and if you try to stop him, you have to get into a big fight. People have all experienced this. Where do his likes and dislikes stem from? They were already formed when the child was one or two. So, if we just leave a baby alone without the sort of education we are talking about--pardon my saying this on the radio--, commercials and monsters will become the sweet home in his heart, for these are now the most stimulating and the most often repeated. What to put in the *finished* computer is the great concern of today's education. However, the baby is an *unfinished* computer which is being finished. If you breastfeed the computer which is being finished every day, a computer will be created which loves mother's milk best. People don't think about this.

--Through your talk, I have freshly realized how important it is that the mother fosters the child well especially in view of early education.

IBUKA: Then let me add one other thing. The Soviet Union took pride in their fine daycare facilities in factories which enabled women workers to go back to work two or three months after childbirth. A few years ago, though I don't know the exact date, they suddenly changed the constitution, and stipulated that mothers on principle should engage in child raising for one year. They are to devote themselves to child raising for at least six months with pay. This amendment of the constitution is not too well known. Japan's educational world is not aware of it.

--It shows how important child raising is, West or East.

IBUKA: That's right. Yet it is not recognized. Child raising simply means hygiene problems: how the baby is growing in length or weight--nothing else but those.

--Your talk this morning, Mr. Ibuka, has clarified the importance of education from age zero. Mothers listening to the radio, we hope you will reconsider early education and bring up your children beautifully.

Thank you very much.

(This conversation was originally broadcast in Bunka Broadcasting Company's program, "Ryūichirō Hosokawa's Good Morning News Parade.")

*Talent Education*, no. 56



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

## CONDITIONS FOR THE GROWTH OF ABILITY

Shin'ichi Suzuki  
From *Talent Education  
for Young Children*

### Conditions for the Growth of Ability

When the nature of expression of human ability, or the nature of talent, was clarified, it came to be understood that the ideal way of fostering it was through "the teaching method of language."

This contains so many lessons. How do children learn language from infancy? The quest for understanding this process in turn became a key to the development of human ability. The heavenly principle has gradually dawned on me: "if one does it in a certain way, talent can be fostered to unusual heights."

Changing my teaching method in violin, I experimented in teaching violin to four or five year olds.

The only test I gave before taking students was: "Can you speak?" I was convinced that children who could speak had no problems in the brain.

Many tiny children started to gather to study the violin with me, among whom were Toshiya Etō, Nejiko Suwa, Takeshi Kobayashi, Kenji Kobayashi, Shūtarō Suzuki, and Kōji Toyoda.

These children easily started to play the violin which had been regarded as a difficult instrument to play. It gradually became commonplace for them to play within six to ten months such pieces as Beethoven's Minuet, Handel's Bourrée, and Dvůřak's Humoresque.

As a result, I was able to know the following:

1. Language is a talent developed by skillfully fostering human ability.

2. Hence, human beings who have this potential can display outstanding ability in any area, provided that the training method is proper.

3. Man is capable of developing talent to the degree expressed in his language in other areas as well.

Children who cannot handle math, I concluded, don't have poor brains. Rather, their teachers' method of instruction was faulty. Of course math teachers might have been good at providing explanations, but they did not foster the students to absorb their knowledge until it became ability, i. e., they did not give them repeated training.

Whatever ability is to be fostered, the conditions for fostering fine ability are:

1. The earlier period
2. The better environment
3. The better teaching method
4. The more training
5. The superior instructor.

I have come to the conclusion that human ability can be fostered in whatever way depending on differences in these conditions.

### *Sprouting of Ability*

The question of the sprouting of ability is exhausted by one word: environment. However, it is necessary to add a few more concerning the condition and speed of sprouting.

For example, we see a mother talking every day to her baby who does not understand language at all yet: "yum yum," "mama," "papa," etc. This is indeed the necessary preparation for encouraging the ability to sprout later on. It corresponds to planting a seed, keeping it in the sun, and watering it before it sprouts.

Such stimulation is a necessary means for letting the sprout of ability come out.

If you bring up your baby without linguistic stimulation, caring for him in silence every day, allowing no one to talk to him, and keeping him from hearing people's conversation, the baby will grow as a child who can do nothing but cry and utter sounds which are not words.

My younger brother played a record of beautiful music for his baby every day. Eventually he became

an easy child who stopped crying immediately and soon fell asleep peacefully if the record was played. He became fond of music, he sang earlier than children his age, and he sang correctly.

The conditions for letting ability sprout are the same as in plants. It is no good if you try a little and quit before anything happens.

As in language, other abilities smoothly sprout by daily repetition.

Different children start to talk at different times, but careful observation clarifies that the differences are not created by different brain qualities. With the exception of those with specific diseases, the differences relate mainly to the linguistic environment in which children find themselves: in other words by how often they are talked to.

"Your child is already talking; how come ours is slow when they are the same age?"

I hear such comments often. There is always a cause behind this. In the family of a child who started to speak early, are grandparents, a big brother, or a big sister; it is always a family where the child has many opportunities to be spoken to. Again, the family with a child who starts to speak late, I think, is one in which he is spoken to less often.

This happens within a family, too. The second or third born child tends to speak earlier than the first born, as the family expands creating greater opportunity for a younger child to be talked to. Perhaps those who have many children have realized this.

Considering this, the difference in the periods of sprouting results from the difference in frequency of stimulation. It is the same with plants: even if you plant seeds at the same time, they don't sprout at the same time depending upon whether they are in the sun all day or just during the morning.

Next let me write about the conditions in which ability sprouts. Consider language. Suppose the baby said "yum yum" for the first time. This is a sprout in language. However, the baby did not say "yum yum" thinking of food; it is something like a reflex movement

to the word he had repeatedly heard every day; it is mere mimicry.

In other words, that ability starts to grow from mimicry can be considered one principle.

When the baby says "yum yum" for the first time, the parents, becoming aware, repeat "yum yum" all the more frequently and train the baby.

This provides an important stage in developing ability. When the baby is trained to say "yum yum" in association with food instead of as a reflex movement, "knowledge" is created.

Ability sprouts through these processes. Soon the state of "knowledge" leads to such steps as speech, action, and finally writing, while the child acquires increasingly higher abilities.

### *Children's Ability Should Not Be Left Alone*

Many people seem to think that children's talents eventually develop even if left alone. This is too relaxed: despite the parents' vague anticipation, the child will become only another ordinary person in society.

It is no different from waiting in anticipation for years for something to sprout when no seed was planted.

Unless you plant a seed in the dirt called environment and make efforts in fostering, nothing grows--this is the heavenly principle.

If there is a person who says that such and such talent grew although he left his child alone, there is always a cause for growth in the child's living environment which the parent has overlooked.

For it is impossible that there is a result without a cause.

If children become interested in something and wish to pursue it on their own accord, of course you must let them do it if it is a good thing, and at the same



time offer guidance so that it will develop as ability.

In many cases, children try a little bit of everything, wanting to do this and that, constantly moving on to new things. Since this is how children are naturally, if you allow their spoiled whims to get the better of them, the child will turn out to be a person of no ability with nothing special about him for life.

"It doesn't matter what you choose; please pick one thing for your child while he is small, and educate him by the talent education approach," I would like to recommend.

To train your child to perfect something means to improve his brain activity to the utmost; eventually this outstanding ability will enable him to handle other things well.

A good example is found in my experience of violin teaching. Elementary school children who have developed enough to play Mozart's concertos nos 4 and 5 are, I have found, all top students ranking first or second in class.

I find it natural that children trained from age four or five achieve best among other children, and I am confident that they would be outstanding even if they were transferred to higher classes. It is no wonder, for these grade school children are demonstrating in music the same ability as that of music school students.

As ability grows by talent education, children's expression changes. Their facial muscles become focused, and their eyes brighten. When I notice the change in a child's face, I always ask his mother, "How is he doing academically at school?" The answers I have heard are unanimous: "He is tops, thank you."

### *Grow a Fine Seedling during Early Childhood*

I continue to teach violin to many children, not to foster outstanding musicians but to help them develop fine ability through the violin. I always tell the parents:

"I am not instructing these many children with the intention of turning them all into musicians. I am only making efforts wishing that your children will become



people with fine and active brains, beautiful hearts and good personalities. Whatever field your children may go into in the future, I am confident that fostering strong seedlings now will help them succeed in their chosen paths; so whether or not they become musicians, please strive to the utmost. Even if they don't become musicians, those who have developed so beautifully that it is regretted that they choose other careers will be people who can demonstrate fine abilities in their areas."

Einstein of the theory of relativity also learned the violin from early childhood. His ability was comparable to that of many violinists. While studying in Berlin, I often heard him play: his performances were so wonderful that I could not easily rival him.

He is known to have said in a broadcast talk: "I am most thankful that I owe my ability today to the violin training I received in my early childhood."

Once a woman brought me a child and said, "I would like my child to learn the violin as a hobby and as part of cultural upbringing. I have no intention of making him a musician; it will be fine if you train him just so that he can play a little."

"It's beyond me to adjust myself so that he'll be able to play a little, so I'm afraid I cannot take your child," I joked, and told her about the importance of training the mind: as long as she wants him to do it, she ought to guide him so he will do his very best.

No matter what you have your child study, there is no distinction between a specialist and an amateur. What is necessary is precisely to beautifully foster human ability. Moreover it simply depends upon how you think about it.

### *Ability and Habit*

Ability and habit are closely related; in other words, only within habit does ability grow.

The habit of repeatedly doing something does not imply staying in the same level: in the course of repetition ability is accumulated.

*Ninja-Training*

I once read about the training method of *ninja* ("men of stealth"), or emissaries in Japan during civil war times trained in the arts of jumping, hiding, etc. There I found a method for mastering high jumping: "Plant a hemp seed; jump over it every day."

I thought this indeed told the truth about training human ability to an outstanding level.

Hemp, I hear, grows rapidly; yet its day to day growth must only be at such a rate that the person watching it every day would not recognize it.

The person who jumps over it morning and night every day from the time the hemp plant sprouts grows with the plant: the proper posture of jumping and the way of moving the legs are fostered before he knows it. By daily training the strength of the legs increases; when it becomes warmer and the young plant gains speed in its growth, the person can still easily jump over it.

It is simple enough for anyone to jump over the tiny shoot. However, if thinking it ridiculous to start training then, one waits until it has grown to the height just right for him to jump, he is resting his ability to jump instead of developing it during that interval; since it does not parallel the unceasing growth of the plant, he will eventually fail to catch up with it.

This story, which may look commonplace at first sight, is not so at all; in many cases such common-looking things create what is quite uncommon.

Ability is something that blindly advances to any place induced by an electric wave called habit. In other words, various talents are mere functions of ability, which grows where there is repeated stimulation.

Therefore, no matter what one studies, the start is important. If, erring in the first step, one repeats faulty training instead of proper training, eventually ability ends up stretching toward such inferiority that nobody can even imitate. In that sense the person has reached the realm of the outstanding, but unfortunately, his skill has hit the lower depth instead of soaring to a height.

It is the same with poor handwriting. When one continues merely to write without care, a habit of poor handwriting is created. What is trained through and through over months and years becomes settled so strongly that it cannot be corrected even if one spends the rest of one's life adjusting it.

This is similar to how an Osaka born child fails to get rid of his accent completely after spending half of his life in Tokyo. What is fostered in early childhood is so strongly rooted that it cannot be easily removed.

It is often said that "a bad habit is easy to acquire but a good habit is hard to acquire." This is not so: by the time one recognizes a bad habit one has in fact repeated something hundreds or thousands of times. What one recognizes as a good habit, too, is nothing but what is similarly created through repetition.

Ability grows smoothly regardless of whether it is good or bad; what is hard is to correct it. If one has accumulated a thousand repetitions which crystalized into a bad habit, it can only be corrected after several thousand times of proper training. Moreover, if one relaxes a bit, the bad habit pops back before one knows it.

It is that hard to correct. If one starts out with a thousand times of proper training, it settles as a good habit, creating no problem; hence the importance of the beginning.

Thus considered, abilities created differently by different people are indeed varied, differing from person to person down to the minutest detail. This makes us realize the rationale of all people growing in different environments receiving different types of stimulation in a most complicated way. Human potential is a blank piece of paper at birth; how interesting nature is that through the complexity of what is painted on it there are no two identical persons in mankind.

From this fact, it is clear that ability can be fostered to whatever height, if a good instructor carries

out a method for developing human ability properly and beautifully according to heaven's principle.

### *Leſthandedness and Righthandedness*

A woman I know is equally skilled in using either the left hand or the right. She can sew with her right or left hand; when she tires of chopping white radish finely with her right, she switches to lefthanded chopping. I think this must be very convenient.

This is actually something natural, but it is generally considered a rarity.

We also know that someone who has lost his right hand in an accident may develop the ability of the left hand in a year or two to the point that he can write and work as freely as with the right hand.

Our commonsense which considers lefthandedness abnormal is in fact lack of commonsense. If lefthandedness is abnormal, isn't righthandedness also abnormal? I think that those who are brought up to be ambidextrous are in fact normal in their ability, and that education which enabled us to develop just one hand, leaving the other hand useless is, we have to reflect, one-sided. What do you think? Are monkeys lefthanded or righthanded? Laymen's commonsense does not provide a clear answer. As I look at their skill as an ability developed through needs, it seems as though they are both-handed and both-footed, since even their feet are useful like their hands.

The ability of one who received talent education and that of another who did not can be compared to our two hands.

The righthanded person has received a talent education on the right hand from early childhood. Whatever he does, his right hand is put to use, and everything up to delicate sensitivity is developed in it. Again, its strength is incomparably greater than that of the left hand. Moreover, the right hand has even acquired "*kan*," or intuition, as a result of training.

Both hands are equally part of the body, yet how dull and powerless the left hand is. Let it throw a ball:

it cannot aim well, and cannot even throw one third as far as with the right hand. Let it write: it is absurdly lacking in ability in terms of sensitivity.

This is an example of what has not been trained by talent education, a sample of undeveloped ability.

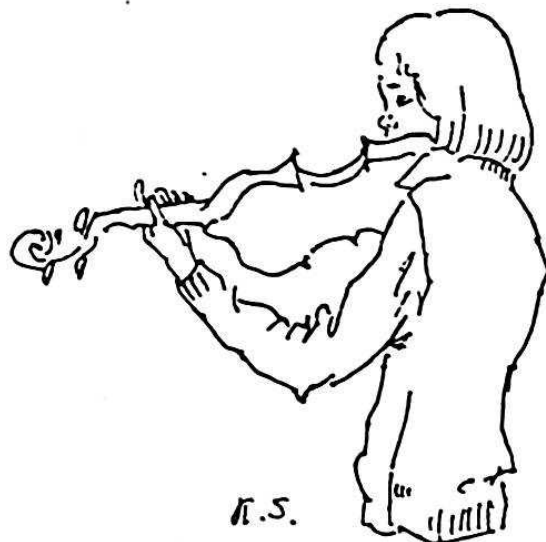
Looked at from the viewpoint of the left hand, the right hand is certainly genius-like, isn't it? Suppose people in society in general are all those who haven't received talent education. In other words, suppose most people have ability like that of the left hand. No wonder they make a fuss calling him a genius at the sight of the ability of a person who has acquired *kan* as in the right hand through talent education.

The present world, I think, resembles this.

Regarding the importance of talent education, the answer will become clear if each of you look at your right and left hands.

Human ability develops without fail like the right hand if only if is fostered. We should remind ourselves each time we look at our hands that we must not leave children alone to become like the left hand.

(To be continued.)



ON ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION  
BY THE SUZUKI METHOD

Haruko Kataoka

Part I

1. Discipline Is Important at the Beginning
2. How to Teach the Twinkle Variations
3. No Printed Music at the Beginning

KATAOKA: I have been asked to talk about elementary instruction, but I would first like to know what level of elementary instruction you wish me to discuss. For example, Pre-Elementary and Elementary Levels are all matters of the elementary stage. If you have any questions, please go ahead.

Q: I have just joined talent education. I used to teach children by Beyer and other methods. When I begin teaching children, for a long time they can't finish the Twinkle Variations; they can't memorize them.

*Discipline Is Important at the Beginning*

KATAOKA: Yes, I see your point. First the mother and child come to the lesson; then I tell them about the way of thinking of the Suzuki method. It is important before everything else to explain thoroughly about buying the record along with the text and playing it every day. It is quite a job when one starts a talent education class for the first time, as in the case of the teacher who just spoke. When you are not starting the class, there are already children who are more advanced, so all you have to do is ask new students to observe their lessons. In my class I ask a newcomer to observe for at least one month. I ask him to come during the lesson hours of children working on the middle portions of Book 1. While observing them, the child learns unconsciously, and the parent learns consciously. Only after that I start them. If the child

is five or six, he listens to me, although three or four year olds may present many problems.

In the first lesson I only teach how to bow. I start with "Stand straight with a proper posture," and then "Let's take a bow with your teacher"--this constitutes the entire lesson. Unless the child bows properly, he never goes to the next step. As Mr. Suzuki always says, the teacher kindly instructs the student in many things in traditional music lessons. As a result, the student fails to accomplish anything, and loses interest. It is really so. That leaves the child miserable. Anyway, one homework will do. Some children can't bow well. If they can't bow well, will it be the same next week? No, that's not the case. Let me quote a recent example of a nursery school boy who gave us a hard time because he could not bow for three months: he said, "I'm going

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to the lesson," when his parents said, "Let's go to the festival." His father was moved by this, and the three of them came to the lesson together. Now he is studying happily and diligently despite the initial few months' difficulties. Whether the child is fast or slow--such a thing is not the main thing; whether he can or cannot do what I have asked him will be at the core of his lessons in the future. It is good to WAIT—if he doesn't bow, instead of saying, "Well, it's just a bow." When he can bow, let him sit on the piano bench. You teachers know it well, so watch the height of the bench and its distance from the piano. A beginner finds it hard to sit still while counting one, two, three. But until he learns to be ready, he has to stay at that stage whether it is two weeks or three weeks.

Y.S.





### *How to Teach the Twinkle Variations*

When that's done, the next is "taka taka tatta"—just this, and nothing more. Wait till he can do these steps one by one. To exaggerate, please wait even if it takes two months, or even three. Unless you do that, the next steps will become more difficult for the child to absorb.

At first, handle the first three measures or so. Then work on the entire variation. I have never taught my students the order of the phrases for the children listen to the record every day. I can't think that children can't memorize the piece. I always do only this at lessons for at least three months. Every child knows how the song goes from the record. Some three or four year olds may forget how many times they have played the middle section, but that's when their parents haven't played the record often enough. If they listen to the record often, they never become confused. My daughter who is in junior high school knows TV commercials by heart from the beginning to the end. Seeing that I am impressed about how well children are born to memorize things. So let your student accumulate only what is firmly absorbed from the very beginning. Then, since, as Mr. Suzuki says, children who can talk have no disturbances in the brain, they never fail to memorize. I'd like to meet one if there are indeed children who don't memorize. As I am sure those who have taught long of course understand, children never fail to learn, so don't worry. Little by little, at least at the beginning little by little and securely--this is what is important. As I always say, I too have brought up a child. At first the baby drinks only a tiny bit from the bottle of milk. When will she drink a lot, I wondered with anticipation. But before I realized it, she was already drinking a whole bottle. It's the same with music. If you give the child a lot at the start, it causes indigestion, and nothing goes into the body system. The child in fact has the ability to digest properly, but giving too much invites indigestion, and he can't absorb it. To put it a little cruelly, if the teacher makes it

hard for the child to learn, he won't learn. However, if you teach step by step gradually and securely so as to let him learn, he will learn.

Now your student has studied just one variation. When this variation is finished, he goes on to the next. Please make sure to have him study the legato carefully. A child who tends to be stiff, I think, will at first be troubled by the first legato notes. Let him listen to his sounds and see if they are neatly of equal length. Also, it is hard to connect the first finger to the fourth finger. Assign this as homework. Most children seem to be able to connect the sounds if you ask them to work on it for a week. If they become connected, the rest is easy, except that the fifth and fourth fingers are a little hard to play.

When the child is able to play with the right hand, let him gradually start practicing with the left. If you let him play with both hands, the result becomes unrefined, so it should be one hand at a time. I don't usually let my students play the Twinkle Variations with both hands. Although there is no particular harm in letting them do so, this is something they can do as much as they want later on.

Once the student can play Twinkle well, I think there won't be much difficulty after that. When the student finishes Twinkle perfunctorily, it is going to be difficult for a long time afterward.

I was invited to Memphis for the first time two years ago. The class which had started only a year earlier was working very hard. They invited me back last year, so I visited them again. The number of students had doubled, their progress was much faster than in other piano classes, so the Suzuki method class was overflowing. Their happy problem, they said, was that they had students on the waiting list. I listened to the students, and found them somewhat weak after Twinkle, since they had not studied it carefully enough. So I asked them to study Twinkle harder. Of the pieces in Book 1, what is most difficult should be the Twinkle Variations.

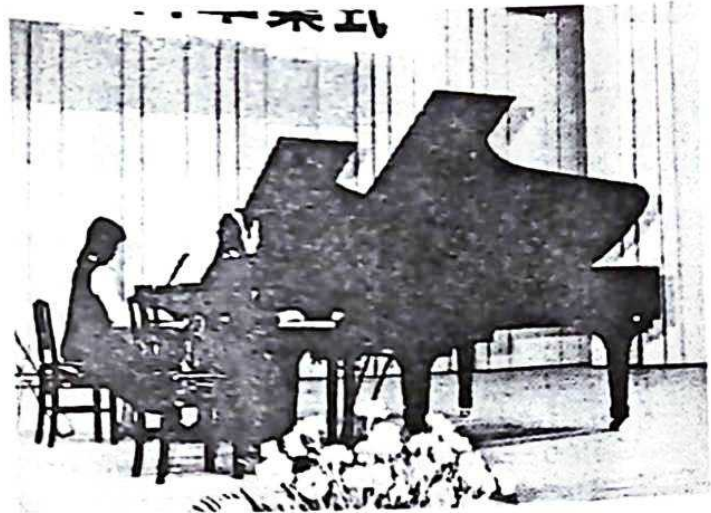
Q: I am also a new member. I would like to ask about what comes after the lesson on bowing. When a student

sits at the piano for the first time, according to the traditional method, most teachers teach him where *do* is, or where C is in G-clef, connecting the piano keys and the written music, and show him that the C in the bass clef is the second space from the bottom. However, in the Suzuki method, the written music is left alone completely. I must first teach my student the sound of the *do*; the student does not understand merely by listening to the record that Twinkle goes *do do so so la la so*. Some students enter the class with no knowledge of *do re mi*. They may be three, or they may be four. In such cases, how do you teach that this is the sound of *do* and relate it to the sound in the record? I would like to know what to do when I first let the child sit before the piano.

### *No Printed Music at the Beginning*

KATAOKA:

Yes, I see your point. The traditional method started with the written music as you say. I was taught that way, too, when I was small. The talent education teaching method is the same as



in language teaching. To reduce it to the barest simplicity, when a newborn turns one year old and starts to talk, we don't teach him words from letters, or from books. Only after he can more or less talk, he learns to read. It is the same in our method. Therefore, no written music is necessary at all at the beginning. When you try it this way, you will only find wonders. We grownups were all children long ago, but

there are things we don't remember about our childhood. We remember more about things we experienced after we grew up; those things occupy our minds, and we forget what it was like to be a child. That's the error of the traditional teaching method.

Just as the baby first learns to say "uma uma" (yum yum) and "manma" (meal), we try to accumulate in music one by one. And when the child has come to a certain stage, we start teaching the written music. How fast and how interesting it is if taught that way. And interestingly children never fail to remember the sound of *do*. They are never at a loss unable to find the key. When they know one thing securely, they come to know the rest as things follow suit. If everything is all mixed up, they don't understand anything. There is a small hall in the Matsumoto Talent Education Center. Since there are no other convenient halls, we rent it for other piano class recitals. Once, a piano teacher wrote the names of the notes on the keyboard with oil based magic marker. Since two or three teachers borrowed the hall at about the same time, we didn't learn who had done it, but we had a hard time wiping away the writing.

Why they write such things at all is curious to us. How can children lose the place for the first note of their music? When our students learn the Twinkle Variations, they learn the *do*-sound without fail within the first month or so when they are taught to prepare the piece. Even three year olds do. They learn better without the written music. The same is said about English classes now. We study English as a written language, with the result that the Japanese have no parallel in the world in being unable to speak despite the many hours we spend learning the language at school. In other countries, I hear that they learn to speak within far fewer hours. That's because we start with our eyes. If we listen first, and learn the written form after we gain a certain amount of competence in spoken, we should be able to do better.

No printed music whatsoever is placed on the piano at lessons. So they all learn well, almost frighteningly well. My students, too, learn so well that I feel

dumbfounded--even advanced students do. It's not that they play well. When I give a student new music, he memorizes it in three days. It is not a matter of whether he is bright or not; it is a matter of habit. Children, unlike grownups, have no greed, and, before their wisdom develops, they just soak up everything as though they were blotting paper. So, if you give them this kind of education while they are that way, they can enjoy wonderful ability when they grow. On the other hand, when people constantly look at the written music, as I used to, what will it be like when they begin to play the piece fairly well and the teacher says, "okay, memorize the piece by next week." This was a chore for me. I had to work very hard at memorizing. When I had to play without the music at student recitals, I was terribly worried, and always had a bad time. Long ago, I observed a talent education violin class in Tokyo. Then what? Aside from whether they played well or not, they all played without the music any number of times. What is this all about? Is the violin so easy to play? Why is it that they are all playing as if it were nothing? This question was the beginning of my relationship with talent education.

My first teacher was one of the first three women to enter Tokyo University when its doors were opened to women after the war, a brilliant person, rare among women in those days. A professional pianist, she entered the law school of Tokyo University. She always said, "I hate to have to memorize, don't you?" Why did such a brilliant person fail to enjoy memorizing? So, it's a matter of habit. I have realized it so clearly. It's frightful. Everybody has the ability to memorize during childhood, yet since all my teachers diligently and kindly taught me with the music before me, I still can't memorize--it's unpleasant for me to play in front of people without music. So, you needn't worry about the written music at all.

*Piano Instruction by the  
Suzuki Method, Talent Education  
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To be continued.*

## WALKING WITH THE SUZUKI METHOD: MY CHILD WAS HANDICAPPED

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### *Prologue*

Had I not learned of the Suzuki method, I would have had to depend on an institution for my child's mental growth and he might not even have learned to talk.

I will never forget the day of the examination which diag-

nosed our second born son as hypothyroidism. He was examined by Dr. Takeuchi of Gunma Red Cross Hospital who is a pediatric authority on endocrinal diseases.

"I would like both parents to come in three weeks when we get the test results; we have to plan for the future," he said. —Finally what was to come has come, I thought. I never dreamed that the disease about which I had learned in a textbook in my student days under the name "phlegmatic dementia" would ever fall on my child.

I was taking care when four or five months pregnant since there were signs of premature birth, but he was born one minute after it had turned May 5, the due day. Already on the day he was born, he cried so much he did not let me sleep at night; in fact he continued to cry in a pitiful voice from the moment he was born. He vomited milk often, and his voice was dry and hoarse. He looked so pitiful as he whimpered wheezingly as though he could not cry properly even if he wanted to. Whether it was because he had much mucus or because he had a flat nose with narrow nostrils, he had a hard time breathing, with mucus coming in and out of his nose each time he breathed.



Minoru at seven months

One month after birth he had a high fever and contracted asthma. I took him for respiratory treatment many days in a row. I thought his mental development normal since he had smiled at three months, but his neck did not become sturdy past five months. After seven months, I thought maybe he would turn over today, maybe tomorrow, but it was the same story no matter how long I waited: his development was very slow. The result of infant check-up was "nothing abnormal." The doctor who examined him was reputed to be a top pediatrician, but he only ascribed my son's inactivity to lack of exercise. His weight increased satisfactorily. He sat at one year, but he grew little in height, and he had thin, brown hair, only scantily growing.

These, I later realized, were symptoms of his disease. This disease prevents sufficient secretion of hormone from the thyroid gland needed for metabolism of calcium. Hence the development of the bones is retarded. Due to the slow metabolism, the body temperature is low, the skin tends to look swollen, and almost always the child characteristically looks languid and quiet. My child, too, slept after drinking milk, and either slept or had heavy eyes after a diaper change, a life as though in hibernation. If hormone is given daily he may catch up in height with normal children by the time he goes to middle school, but intellectually he may not be able to cope, as this is a fatal disease to mental development—this was how Dr. Takeuchi viewed his future.

I prayed every day, "What will You do for my fatally handicapped child?" I began to hear His voice: "Hope is not lost even though remedies have been exhausted," "I gave you the child; I will take the responsibility." Gaining conviction that God would not fail to take care of my child's mental growth, I resolved to leave Him with the worrying and to sacrifice as much as I could as a parent and make efforts even though he was hopeless medically. For was he not named Minoru (to bear fruit) by Him?

He received hormone treatment at one year and three months. Since he was sleeping almost continually

during the stage when the intellect sprouts and develops by absorbing environmental stimulation, of course he received no stimulation. If talent were inborn, then he was hopeless; yet Mr. Suzuki's words flashed to me as if by "*kan*" or intuition: "Talent is not inborn."

Those words had existed in me since Mr. Suzuki's book was on my desk when I was a fourth grader. "My child will not grow unless it is by a training method based on this approach," I thought, as though I had found something I had been looking for, and purchasing a copy of his book, I read it. I realized that this was the fostering method that I had been seeking while groping in the dark; excited by the joy of discovery, I stayed awake two nights.

When Minoru was one year and four months, I started to play "Talent Development through Music," taped music published by Shufu-no-Tomo. Including each time he was given the bottle and each time he ate, I played the tape the moment I saw him awake even if for just a moment, but totalling five or six hours a day. In six months of playing the first level, A, he came to calm down when I put it on even if he was crying, and as long as the tape lasted, he remained happy.

At two Minoru just barely toddled. The result of the IQ test he received at Gunma University when two years and four months showed that he was in the lowest bracket, scoring seventeen. As he seemed to have become familiar with the music of the first level, A, I started him on B after six months. I proceeded to the second level after a year. Although he did not utter a single word, he seemed to gradually develop hearing comprehension. He started to advance to a higher stage in the taped music gradually faster, spending five months, then four months on each stage, and now he advanced every three months. When the music ended while he was awake, he pushed the button tirelessly any number of times, having taught himself to operate the tape recorder. He was constantly seen listening absorbed. I don't know how many cassette tape recorders were broken. If I was slow in putting on the switch creating an interval after the tape was over, he did not like it. The machine was in use all day. Indeed this child was brought up on



those tapes. It was easy to play them since fortunately the convenient cassettes of today had just appeared on the market. From about that time the hours of unfocused daze became shorter, and the tired and lazy expression started to disappear little by little. He slowly started to move, like a bear just waking from hibernation.

I went to the hospital once in two weeks to get the hormone. Once in six months he had his carpal development examined by X-rays. Again I took the result of the yearly IQ test to an authority who prescribed the amount of the hormone and gave instructions concerning the cure.

As my son spoke no word at three and a half, I was encouraged by the head pediatrician of Sakuma Hospital to try language therapy: "Your son doesn't speak due to mental retardation: why don't you get some help from the psychiatrist who comes to our hospital regularly from Gunma University?" However, what good would such once-a-week guidance do, guidance which consisted of playing with toys, unless repeated at home every day? Besides, as long as he could hear and understand words, he would begin to talk if only he spent several times more time listening plenty, though so much later than others since he had missed receiving stimulation while sleeping for two years. Thinking this way, I decided against receiving continual guidance and counselling. It was okay not to compare him with children his age. Recalling the famous movie "La Strada," I was confident that we saw a long road stretching ahead and that we were walking toward that road. I simply staked myself on the music of the Suzuki method. Although he once contracted pneumonia, Minoru became fairly healthy so that he no longer kept my hands full: running a high fever at night once a month or so was just about all he did.

In the motor aspect, I tried tumbling him on a mat copying the first step of mat exercise at Yōji Gakuen, the talent education kindergarten in Matsumoto. He also rolled by himself. It was like a step forward from turning over in bed. I helped massage his body with a dry cloth in the winter and with a cold, wet cloth in the summer. Whenever we went out, I always made

him walk except when he had a fever. When I went to Matsumoto for a Piano Study Group meeting, I took him with me, having him carry a backpack containing a tape recorder, illustrated books, and rice balls. When we returned, it was always nearly ten at night.

I used the Suzuki Piano School tapes when he was two side by side with the other set of tapes. From about that time I felt I could do it if I used the Suzuki method; and with a sense of mission, I started to teach my first born son and children of some neighbors who asked me to teach them.

### *Mr. Suzuki's Words*

When Minoru was nearly four and a half, Mr. Suzuki's lecture and children's concert were held at Komoro City. Five of my piano students performed. I took Minoru with me. When we met Mr. Suzuki at the station, he gave Minoru a chocolate and played with him. Minoru looked lively and childlike. Who would have thought him any other than a normal child of about two who couldn't speak yet? Since I drove in the same car with Mr. Suzuki to the City Hall after lunch, I told him, unable to restrain myself, about my mentally retarded child. Then he said in a totally unsympathetic tone, "If you, the mother, think that way, he will turn out that way." The words were a bolt of thunder. How stern and cold they sounded.

When my child's intellectual sprouting surfaced little by little, I realized that those words were "a whip of love." Mr. Suzuki was able to clearly speak the words of truth regardless of the temporary hurt they might cause, because he had a perspective: "If the mother wants to, she can foster her child." It reflected his love which chastised dependence, for "it will be as you believe."

When Minoru proceeded to the fourth level tape, he was able to advance to a new piece in two months, and whistled the theme of the first piece, Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik." Although he was not quite in tune, he was charming; the sprouting of his intellect

was palpable.

*"Bubō," the First Word*

One day suddenly Minoru said "*bubō*," incorrectly pronouncing the word *budō*. (grapes). As he realized his pronunciation was wrong, he found it humorous himself but repeated it many times with a shy expression on his face. This was the first word he uttered. How long we had waited for this one word. The entire family applauded saying, "he said it, he said it." It was as though a parrot suddenly spoke. I still remember the surprise which almost made me jump. Where did the word come from, where was that word hiding? —I still find it strange. Since then, I find an encounter with a child who has just started to talk an experience like discovering a treasure: I watch such a child endlessly, enchanted by his speech.

Was it because I was so used to thinking it all too natural that every child speaks? I did not realize till then that children who can't talk, too, rested on the great law, which is like the presence of air.

Once the first word came out, word after word was added to his vocabulary, though slowly at the rate of a word at the interval of two or three days. On his fifth birthday Minoru could say fourteen words. The talent development by the tapes was completed. I continued to play the piano tapes in a thoroughgoing way.

I started him on the piano, but in this, too, how slowly he learned the first thing. Before he learned the first variation of Twinkle, I think he practised just the C notes over 10,000 times. Some children could learn it in one lesson if they have heard it over a month, and others have learned it already before their first lesson. However, my child develops characteristically slowly, according to Mr. Suzuki's law of ability. But once it sprouted, it rapidly developed, driven by its own power of life.

I did think about enrolling him in a nursery school

or kindergarten, but decided against it since I thought a child who could only speak single words would not be able to catch up in mental development with those who spontaneously grew. I thought of simply giving him piano lessons in order to provide him with repeated single stimulation to help him eventually catch up through concentrating on growth in one area. I thought of letting him go to nursery school for one year only, before entering school; however, while waiting for a year because of his physical disorder, he became too old to enter a nearby nursery school. So after all I prepared materials on the principle of the talent education method, and taught him one thing at a time again and again until he mastered whatever he was learning. The materials I made out of scrap paper filled the orange crate. Daily thought and daily effort were accumulated in them so that I felt them too precious to throw out. His IQ test at age five and a half still clearly indicated linguistic deficiency as well as difficulty in comprehension of numbers.

### *Hard Work in Learning Numbers and Words*

For learning numbers, I started out with numbers up to five, while giving him food that represented numbers he was trying to learn, thus helping him comprehend numbers in association with objects. For four months, day after day, I had him tackle numbers at snack time, at meal time, when at play, in his life, using anything that could be counted such as toy blocks. I trained him through and through on analyzing numbers up to five; then I graduated him to numbers up to ten.

I learned a great deal from the late Hajime Tōyama, former emeritus professor of Tokyo University of Technology. His *Toddlers' Math* is his attempt to broaden his vista of math as an educator to the burgeoning consciousness of math. This develops into *I Love Math*, a teaching method which guides children to really understand and love math through games. Becoming familiar with this teaching method, which has much in common with the Suzuki method, I understood why present school education created dropouts.

It became clear to me that children with normal intellectual development and children who awaken later (including brain-injured children) were on the same line of intellectual growth process, and this gave me confidence. A true educator handles the budding stage with care; I admired the love with which the late Professor Tōyama noted the importance of the foundation and broadened it from the viewpoint of education.

Minoru's vocabulary increased quite a lot, but he could not use auxiliaries. I realized that there was a jump between the use of single words and the use of two words connected by auxiliaries. Trying to search for a way to help him learn to talk in sentences, I burrowed through books on the education of handicapped children, and visited child counselling centers. However, they taught me nothing concrete. It was just that my child had to hear ordinary sentences more often, that a longer time was required before sentences could come out of him. Minoru had to be kept in the same listening condition longer.

### *Entering Elementary School*

Although I wished to keep him home one more year, the education law changed and we were no longer allowed to wait: we had no choice but to put him in school at age six. His IQ then was 80. A doctor called Minoru's improvement a miracle. His manual ability was especially good: his "living" age was measured as nine, which surprised doctors. He had graduated from the Pre-Elementary Level in piano, and was practising half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon. He was now on Clementi's Sonatina in Book 3.

In the first and second grade, he avoided having to talk before people as he was slow in speech, but at home we could detect his gradual growth. I had no further worries. He switched schools when in the third grade, and became the bullied child in



Minoru at age nine, performing Bach's Gavotte at the piano school graduation.

class. Granted that there was a cause in himself, I realized with pity how much the lag in language could influence spiritual development. He continues to be lovable to the extent of childishness. He can do mechanical things such as calculation, but is poor and lazy at learning anything that requires thinking. In order to somehow catch up with the rest

in a normal class, there is no other way but to tackle it through the piano, I think, and we are aiming at two hours of practice a day.

Now Minoru is a fifth grader. Although he is small, he is gradually developing motor functions, and in some ways he is strong like a weed, having developed concentration, persistence, and strength for living; so, in the long run, I have come to think that he will be able to do something when he is grown. He has grown enough to resist like any other child. He is capable of being moved by changes in the seasons, of entering into the world of fantasy or of stories, and he is a most childlike child. He has the drive to live, he does physical work well, and often is good enough willingly to do a chore which others hesitate to do.

I am impressed by his caring for others and his attentiveness. It is proof of how his mind is working.

He is fond of classical music. Apparently moved by performances of foreign musicians visiting Japan, he often listens to their TV broadcasts as long as two hours even when he is alone.

I am trying my best to let him continue the piano at least until the Advanced Level so that he will seek what is beautiful and develop high sensitivity.

*In the World Useless My Child Might Be*

In the world useless  
my child might be;  
yet may he grow  
in spiritual wealth  
as a human being!

I have jotted down random notes as things revive in my memory. What I have done almost makes me faint at the endurance required. Although the single road was in view, I became tired because the journey was so long and I wished to give up being the mother, being the parent. What gave me power on such occasions was the sense that "God gave me this child to keep." What a heavy and irreplaceable responsibility it is to be a parent. I have walked pressed by that thought. The feeling has now changed: I wish to fulfill my duty quickly, finish it, and be liberated. Each time I was tired, I read *Nurtured by Love*, encouraged by the idea of "no ultimate predicament even if hope is lost."

In order for me to share Mr. Suzuki's wonder that "every child speaks the mother tongue," God gave me my second son, and through experience I was able to provide proof of the fact that "every child grows."

Therefore, I would like to raise my voice to encourage mothers who are burdened by having slowly budding children. It has become a mission. I talk if I am consulted; I share my experience if I am asked to give guidance. If the child comes to understand daily language, he is receiving information even if he can't yet talk. If the parent believes that he will surely grow and stakes herself in the law of ability with loving patience, the child will surely grow. Indeed, everything depends upon the parent.

## Epilogue

Finally, let me summarize once again for myself.

In order to help the child bud, first of all believe in the child's potential (power of life). If we don't believe in it, how can we come up with loving patience? Once we believe in it, all that is necessary is to stake ourselves in the practice of patience issuing out of love. Education should not be lost in the details before our eyes. We should look far ahead, understanding that many things achieve effects later on if the child is on the proper track of growth. We must keep walking toward the teaching method of truth, untiringly and unhesitatingly. When the child begins to like something, it is proof that he is now in a condition in which he begins to bud. Even though it is invisible to the eye, he will surely grow in time. Parents and teachers should have the first aim in making the child love what they are trying to teach, making all kinds of devices depending upon the child's past growth and his family environment. As for the practice hour for the child, there is a chance which, if you miss it by one minute, does not allow the lesson to exist, especially with a small child before will power develops. It is necessary to create a habit so as not to miss this chance. If we force the child to practice when he falls asleep or has a bad temper during the session, it may be harmful or useless. I think we should start with an understanding that "everything depends upon the parents" means that sometimes we just have to sacrifice other things for the child.



I am sure there are people among friends of talent education who have fostered their children with much greater pain than in my case, yet I recorded a part of my experiences. Though this may sound lacking in



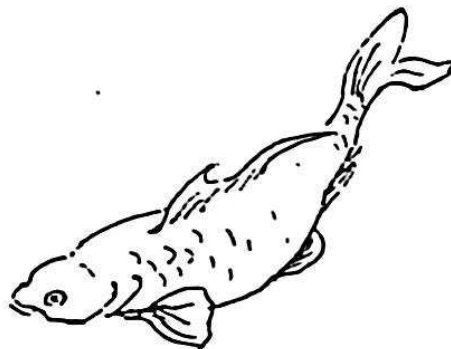
modesty, my child has grown, this child who could not recognize me, who was evaluated as below the level of feeble-mindedness.

Then, if many normal children who receive the warmth of the sun and an appropriate amount of water are to grow by the law of ability, how can it be possible that they don't grow smoothly?

*Talent Education, no. 58*

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

(Five Mottoes of Talent Education)

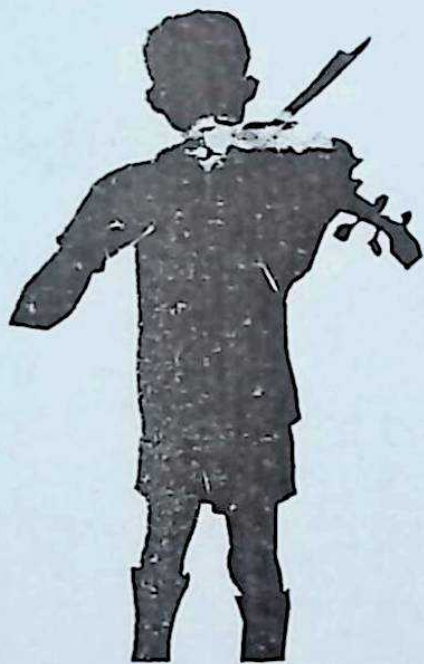


*"Man is a child of the environment."*

*"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



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