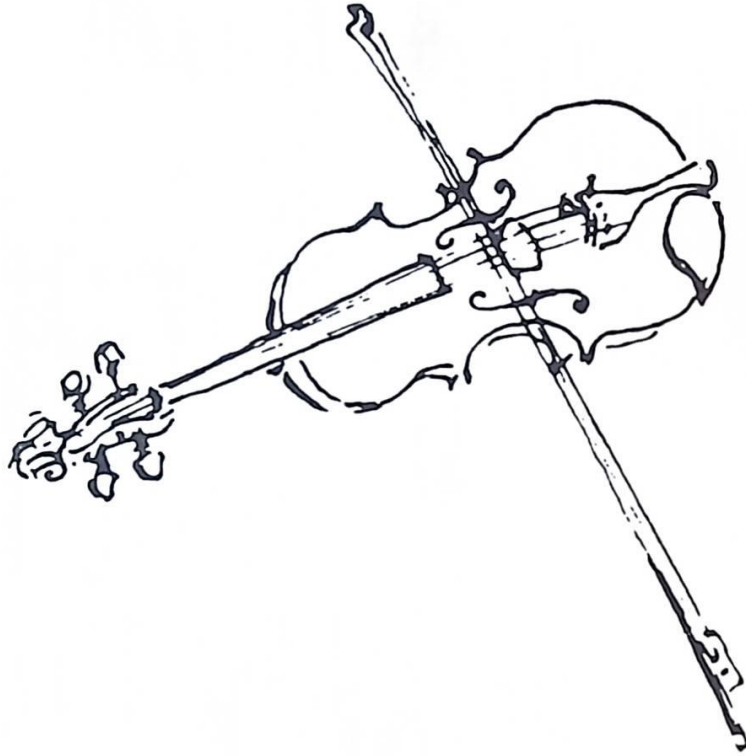


TALENT EDUCATION JOURNAL

No. 28
SUMMER
1987



Cover by Kiyokazu Andoh



Editors Eiko and Masayoshi Kataoka
236 Spring Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119

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1987

Translation by Kyoko Selden

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Masayoshi Kataoka

The secret to progress is in the quality of practice. How well the teacher's lesson points are organized into daily practice routines depends on the parent's skill. *A Record of Home Lessons*, published by Talent Education of St. Louis, is a chronicle of how practice sessions were carried out in the Takezawa home, starting with daughter Kyoko's pre-Twinkle days and concluding with her completion of Book I. This detailed account is an excellent reference guide for all Suzuki parents. Kyoko Takezawa, who later was a several-time member of the Ten Children's Tour, is now studying at the Juilliard School of Music. She received first place at the Indianapolis International Violin Competition last year, and is a fine example of good Suzuki upbringing.

In "Let Your Students Perform in Pleasant Mini Recitals" Dr. Suzuki discusses American piano teacher Eddy Kane's ideas. Dr. Masaaki Honda and 'cello teacher Akira Kubota report in their respective articles on the fall 1986 tour of the Ten Children. "Everything in Life: Practice in Service" is about the "Dr. Suzuki and his Twinklers" concert that marked Dr. Suzuki's 88th birthday at the newly opened Suntory Hall in Tokyo. These observations on the Suzuki method by a non member of the movement are fascinating.

In this issue's Lecture, Dr. Suzuki explains his recent campaign to encourage students to involve the shoulder in bowing.

In the fourth installment of Dr. Suzuki's *Ability Is Not Inborn*, many episodes are cited to illustrate his ideas about the influence of environment on ability. "Friends Watching Over Him" is an account by the mother, and "My Experiences with Sho-chan," by the teacher of a blind boy whom they raised to overcome his handicap.



LET YOUR STUDENTS PERFORM IN PLEASANT MINI RECITALS

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Recently I received a letter from Instructor Eddy Kane of the U.S. telling me about a nice, new idea of having students give informal mini recitals.

I decided to report on this, hoping that Japanese teachers will also try this whether in violin, piano, 'cello, or flute.

This piano teacher's letter concerns a seven year old's recital. In the program, titled "Book 2 Recital," the student performed all the pieces in the book.

Only those parents and students in the class who wished to come gathered to listen to the student's performance of Book 2 pieces. The names of the pieces were printed in a simple recital program.

Along with the letter came a tape recording and a copy of the program from the recital, which apparently took place in a large classroom. On listening to the tape, I noticed the applause of the small number of people after each piece, indicating that this was not a concert in a hall with a big audience.

A recital of the pieces of just one book takes only a small amount of time. I would like you to have your students try in your classroom or in a mini hall a "Book 4 recital," a "Book 3 recital," or a "Book 5 recital." Of course it is fine to plan a recital with piano accompaniment, but you can also give a pleasant recital with the accompaniment tape.

Try this experiment in your class, giving students who have studied hard a chance to give a recital by turns.

It would be a good approach to encourage a student who does not practice much by telling him that you would like him to practice hard because "his recital is coming up," and have him perform the book before his present piece. If you set the recital date in two months or so ahead of time, he will practice hard with the tape; this can be a lovely method for gradually changing students who do not practice into students who practice well.

I ask you to try this Book by Book recital in classrooms throughout Japan. Those who have promptly tried it are encouraged to inform me, even by a postcard.

This is a report on a new idea of an American teacher who carries out his thought.



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INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

—The Twenty-Second American Tour—



In Greenville, North Carolina

Masaaki Honda

The first overseas tour occurred in 1964, and this tour was the twenty-second. We have visited nineteen countries during this interval, over 300,000 people having attended our concerts. Talent education has begun in the majority of the cities we have visited.

In 1986 the European tour also took place in June prior to the American tour in October; both were successful.

A Fine Start (Los Angeles)

The first fall concert took place on October 1 at the Japanese-American Cultural and Community Center in the heart of Los Angeles. Things went well from the start on this tour, and the entire audience rose the moment the performance was over. The director of the center, moved to tears by "Ave Maria," said that he would like us to come back next year.

This year's program was as follows:

- (1) Concerto in e minor, third movement (Mendelssohn), unison
- (2) Piano solo: Minuet (Paderewski), Rika Iino
- (3) Rondo (Mozart/Kreisler), Kanako and Mayuko Sagoh
- (4) Variations on Corelli's Theme (Kreisler), Emiko Yashiro and Kanako Sagoh
- (5) Sicilienne and Rigaudon (Kreisler), Ryoji Nishina and Ryo Aoki
- (6) Polonaise Brillante (Wieniawski), Kinuko Komori

—————Intermission—————

- (7) Prelude and Allegro (Kreisler), Saeko Oguma
- (8) Prelude (Bach), Chizu Kataoka
- (9) Cello solo: Concerto in d minor, third movement (Lalo), Chizu Kataoka
- (10) Concerto in d minor, first movement (Sibelius), Makiko Yashiro
- (11) Ave Maria (Schubert), unison
- (12) Allegro (Fiocco), unison

For encores, they played two Japanese songs, "Sakura" and "Kono michi wa" (This path I have tread once), and, finally, "America the Beautiful." This last was

repeated twice, and the second time around the audience stood to sing. Both the verse and the melody express the land and heart, and the piece is more loved than the national anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner." It is a famous piece almost every American knows. Hearing Japanese children play this as an encore after a fine program is a moving experience.

I talk about ten minutes at the beginning of the second part of the program about the philosophy of talent education. I do not prepare the speech but talk casually with reference to the locality for better understanding and reception.

Boyhood Memory (San Francisco)

Because I lived in San Francisco as a boy for six years, the city has a particularly dear memory for me. Since I had some leisure, I visited my old house and found it lived in, kept in the same condition as more than half a century ago. All the nearby houses on Pine Street, too, were preserved strikingly well. I also went to the park in the neighborhood I had frequented. This is where as a boy I used to lie on the grass and watch the blue sky. I was full of thoughts thinking of the flow of time. This park is located on the highest part of San Francisco. I was able to see a large, white boat which happened to pass the Golden Gate. I recalled with nostalgia the sight of the Japanese boat, "the Pacific," which I had watched long ago at the same place.

The children's performance took place in the Herbst Theater in the center of the city on October 3. In this small hall of about one thousand seats, the reception was great, and the audience stood in ovation when the concert was over.

After the concert we were invited to a reception at Dr. Newmeyer's place. Many talent education teachers from nearby places were present at this delightful party.

Two Full Concerts (Denver, Colorado)

In Denver, a city we had already visited a few times before, talent education thrives under the directorship of Professor and Mrs. James Mauer of the University of Colorado at Denver. Chizu Kataoka, Saeko Oguma, and I stayed at the Mauers'. Unfortunately Mrs. Mauer took ill that day, and Professor Mauer prepared the food. No matter where I stay, I am always impressed by the way American husbands help with the housework.

On arriving in Denver, we had a rehearsal in the afternoon at the place of Dr. Odon who hosted the Hirose group, and in the evening there was folk dancing at his other house. This being more vigorous exercise than imagined, the following day some teachers had aching backs and muscles.

The concert was held in the afternoon and again in the evening the following day (October 5) at Corkin Theatre. Some of us thought it was a little hard to give two full concerts in a day, but the concerts took place as planned in sympathy with the sponsor's reasons. The audience's good reception blew away our fatigue.

Sponsored by Cultural Associations (Austin, Minnesota)

On reviewing our past history on the airplane that took us from Denver to Minneapolis, I was surprised to realize we had visited Minnesota, a northern state, more frequently than any other.

This year again the children performed in Austin, a city of 20,000 or 30,000. We had nearly forgotten having been there once several years ago. The reason that we give concerts more frequently in Minnesota than other places is that music and cultural associations of this state actively sponsor the Suzuki Children's concerts. In spreading the movement, sponsorship by local community

groups is very good both in terms of economy and good attendance.



In front of Austin's coat of arms.
(Extreme left is the author.)

The Locale of an Annual Summer Institute (Stevens Point)

The first American summer institute was held here at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. When the children performed fourteen years ago, Margery Aber told me of her wish to hold a summer institute. "There will be a fair amount of risk," I responded, but she said she was prepared for that. Impressed by her courage, I remember giving her an introductory film on talent education. Since then a successful summer institute has been held every year, gathering students from throughout the States.

A Hall with Fine Acoustics and Equipment (Midland, Michigan)

Midland has Dow, the number one or two chemical company in the States, and many people work there. The beautiful and dignified appearance of the place reminded

me that naturally a city's prosperity is affected by its economy.

The hall was perfect both in terms of acoustics and equipment, and although only half of the 1500 seats were occupied, the audience responded enthusiastically.

The Home of the Reds (Cincinnati, Ohio)

This was our first visit to this city of the professional baseball team, the Reds, where talent education is also popular. Staying three nights at the classiest hotel in Cincinnati, everyone was pleased by the luxurious rooms.

That evening we were treated to dinner at the Spaghetti Factory. The restaurant, a remodelled old railroad station, seemed popular: it was quite crowded and we had to wait a long time, but the food was fair. We received Cincinnati Reds hats, and had a group picture taken to commemorate the event.



At Cincinnati

At Schiel Elementary School, a Cincinnati public school, foreign languages are taught. Seven or eight students studying Japanese welcomed us by singing "Toryanse" (a Japanese equivalent of "London Bridge")

and "Toys Dance Cha Cha Cha." I was moved to hear them sing with good voice and pronunciation.

Since we had a leisurely day, here, we took the children to the zoo, where a white tiger was the center of attraction. I had heard of white tigers, but saw one for the first time — it was a rare beast.

In Cincinatti, a workshop was timed with our visit, gathering many teachers from throughout the States to teach. Both workshop and concert ended successfully with a capacity audience.

Here I squeezed a visit to a basic class of Cincinatti University's School of Medicine. I learned much from seeing Dr. Schertzer's experiment in vitamin C neutralization of cancer-inducing material.

de Pasquale's Academy (West Chester)

We were met at Philadelphia Airport by Linda Fiore and host families, and an hour's drive took us to West Chester. After a little rehearsal, we were taken to our host families' places for supper, and started the concert at 7:30. This was a rather tough schedule, but the performance was great — enough to impress Robert de Pasquale of the Philadelphia Symphony.

Ralph and Jane Armstrong, our host family, have a spacious lot with two ponds. The following morning I rose early, borrowed a fishing pole, and tried fishing with an end piece of bacon as a bait. The moment I let it down, a trout of about a foot bit. When I pitied and let it go back to the water, this fish seems to have sent out a warning signal, for there was no other bite after that, and I regretted it a little.

On October 16, the tour children gave a joint mini concert with American children for the Mayor at Franklin Center located in the central square of Philadelphia. The concert was followed by the presentation of a letter of thanks from Mayor Wilson Goode.

I left the tour after this to visit the Children's Academy of Music run by the de Pasquales in Fort Washington in the suburbs of Philadelphia.

Ten years ago, when we were rehearsing in the hall before the concert at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, I was watching in a seat, when a genteel looking elderly gentleman came over and started to talk.

"I think age three is a little too early for starting violin," he said quietly.

"Education starts on the day of birth. Talent education is based on the idea that the earlier the better for starting violin," I responded. Since he began to state professional views, I asked: "Pardon my asking your name."

"Eugene Ormandy" was the answer. Of course I knew the name of the world famous conductor of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. "I see, no wonder you understand music so well," I said, bursting into laughter.

Then we went on stage and were photographed with the children. A young man was watching this from stage side.

"Why don't you get in the picture, Robert?" When Mr. Ormandy invited him, he waved his hand in a declining gesture. On asking later, I learned that he was Robert de Pasquale, a first violinist of the Philadelphia Symphony.

The following year we had a chance to give a concert in Philadelphia again. When we were waiting for the curtain to go up that evening, Mr. de Pasquale visited us backstage accompanied by his wife, their daughter and even his mother. Surprised, I asked him what had happened.

"Our daughter is three now. I would like to teach her violin by talent education."

"Although as a member of the Symphony you are an outstanding violinist, instruction should be trusted to a professional teacher," I said and introduced Linda Fiore to him.

When I saw the de Pasquales several years later, I learned that their daughter was not only making great

progress in violin but excelled in academic subjects, and furthermore had grown beautifully as a human being. Understanding the true value of talent education, they made efforts to found a school. As a result, three years ago they rented a big building attached to a church in Fort Washington, and now besides the music school a preschool has also been established. I visited them there because they had invited me to take the opportunity to see the place during this tour.

The Children's Academy of Music was a large building of about 600 square meters of floor space in a large lot. The children gave me a welcome concert, making this a truly moving day.

In the long history of the talent education tour, not a few have been moved by the Suzuki Children's performance. However, not so many founded a school to put the method into practice. I left the school heartily praying for the de Pasquales' success now and in future.

Performing with the Orchestra (Virginia Beach)

There were two concerts here over two days. The first was just by the tour children; the second was with the local Symphony Orchestra. The members were amateur music lovers of a variety of occupations including lawyer, doctor, and businessman, the conductor and the concert master being the only professional musicians.

Chizu Kataoka's 'cello broke here, but despite the lateness of the evening many people tried to help us in various ways. We were truly thankful for their kindness.

Opening Concert (Greenville, North Carolina)

This is our second visit, having come here once a few years ago. Joanne Bath is developing a large movement around East Carolina University. The University hall had

just been remodelled, and our concert, we were told, opened the new hall.

Surprised by the Development (Greenville, South Carolina)

It was a 500 kilometer bus drive from Greenville, North Carolina to the city by the same name in South Carolina. On arriving there in the late afternoon, we found Greenville of the southern state to be beautifully landscaped surrounded by mountains. Furman University where the concert was to be held had a large campus and an elegant atmosphere. The mountains and the woods were at the peak of red leaves, and we fully enjoyed the fall under the distant sky of a foreign land. This was our first visit to South Carolina, but talent education was already going on with full force, gathering many people to the concert from nearby cities. Here again I was surprised by the development of talent education.

The City of Father Flanagan (Omaha and Lincoln)

We had visited Omaha twice before. We gave a workshop in the hall of Father Flanagan's Boys Town.

Already many years since Father Flanagan passed away, his achievements tend to be forgotten; however, on visiting the place again on this tour, I renewed my admiration for his great love and strength of action with which he led delinquent boys back to normal paths through sports and physical labor.

After the workshop in Omaha, a concert was given in Lincoln, the two cities cooperating to host the Suzuki children. We were fairly busy that day, attending a lunch party after the workshop and then heading for Lincoln. That evening the concert took place in Kimball Hall of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Many people also came from Omaha to the concert, which was enthusiastically received in a heated atmosphere.

Indian History (Tahlequah, Oklahoma)

This is a small city which I could not find when I saw the name Tahlequah in our itinerary for 1986 and tried to locate it in my map. There is a sad story about the Cherokees and other tribes who were banished from Carolina where they had lived for a long time and were forced to move several hundred miles away to this place in the harsh weather. During their migration, women and children died one after another from the cold and starvation, and only three fourths are said to have reached Oklahoma after what is known as the "trail of tears."

The famous sculptor Willard Stone writes:

Transplanting of seeds, recovery of hope — our hearts have been burning with the flames of new hope. Our seeds were deeply planted in this new land. We survived the trail of tears by the strength of faith. We will build a better life in this land.

On reading this I was deeply moved, glimpsing the history of a race's changes and transitions, rise and fall.

At the reception on the evening of our arrival we saw Indian dancing which expressed gratitude for the blessings of nature and the gods. I thought they somewhat resembled Ainu dances.

The American government later carried out various preferential measures for the Indians. One of them is the founding of hospitals. There is a large general hospital with good equipment, where people can be examined free if they are even one tenth Indian.

Noting my deep interest in the Indians, Professor Wrono of the University of Wisconsin gave me a book by Gibbon titled *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present*. It details the history of the Indians. I will lend it to anyone interested.

We gave a matinee for junior high school students, and an evening concert at the hall of the State University of Oklahoma at North Western. The audience gave a standing ovation.

Proclamation of Suzuki Day (Dallas, Texas)

The last performance in Dallas took place twenty long years ago in 1966. Evelyn Hermann who taught many years here had just left for Seattle.

We stayed two nights at the Anatole Hotel. We were surprised by the size and luxury of the hotel, but hearing that its owner took care of the cost of our tour of sixteen, we were even more surprised.

On the evening of our arrival, Suzuki teachers of Dallas and Fort Worth gave us an outdoor welcome party with Texas style barbeque. There were still many mosquitoes although it was already late October.

On October 29, we gave a performance for children at ten o'clock at the Convention Hall. The hall filled with small children was very quiet, relieving and impressing the sponsors.

We were requested to attend the Dallas City Council at the City Hall that afternoon. We had to wait a long while and were becoming a little impatient when my name was called, and I received from the Mayor a proclamation which said that this was to be Suzuki Day. I gave a thank-you speech, and the children played *Fiocco Allegro* by way of gratitude. The Mayor greeted: "I have sat in this council several years, but this is the first time I have experienced such a pleasant atmosphere."

In the evening, there was the last concert again at the Convention Hall. When it was over, the audience saw us off with long applause.

Everyone rose at 5:30 on October 30, and after breakfast headed for the airport in two mini buses. We felt anxious because one of them did not arrive and it was

almost time to depart, but to our relief it arrived at the last minute. We learned that the bus had been disabled, the engine catching fire.

Conclusion

This tour again came to an end without an accident, and I am filled with relief, feeling I was able to carry out the heavy responsibility.

When something is repeated as often as twenty-two times, one tends to become used to it and lose sensitivity, but the tour does not allow a moment of relaxation or an easy-going attitude from familiarity. Moreover, since giving the best performance in any circumstance is the essence of the Suzuki Method, we constantly make our best effort. When we arrive at Narita and hand the children back to their parents, for the first time we feel relaxed.

In any case, I feel joy and pride thinking that this tour left great emotion in many people's hearts and that we contributed to international friendship through music.

Last, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Instructors Hachiro Hirose, Chise Yajima, Toshiko Hasegawa, and Akira Kubota, as well as to pianist Yuko Hirose who accompanied the children by herself from the beginning to the end.

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BEAUTIFULLY FOSTERED HEART

Accompanying the American Tour

Akira Kubota

——The unison performance of "Ave Maria" and Fiocco has just ended. There is a prolonged applause in the hall. Some quietly wipe their tears with a handkerchief; others shout "bravo." The children return to us looking contented. How beautiful they look! ——

The children's performance which grew better each time was delightful, but it was also a joy for me to see them returning from the stage. The above scene, in the final stop on the long tour, comes back vividly to me over a month after our return to Japan, as if it happened yesterday.

Departure: Komaki Airport

I was feeling anxious about the month ahead as the departing airplane accelerated, when my eyes caught the children folding origami paper or starting their homework (their mothers prepare a journal-style homemade workbook for the children who skip school for one month). They looked so at ease.

To think of it, of the eight members of the tour who left from Nagoya (five students and three instructors), I was the only one who joined the tour for the first time this year.

Looking at Mayu and the other two children, a stewardess must have thought, "The little kids must be anxious about the flight they are not used to," for she repeatedly showed her kind concern.

"I went to Europe in May, too." "I went to the States last year, too." "This is my sixth trip to the States."

To the stewardess taken aback, I almost said, "I am the one who's nervous."

Home Stay

My first host family in the States was the Tanakas, whose two children study violin by the Suzuki Method. Ryoji, who had stayed with them last year, was delighted to have this opportunity again. I, too, felt secure since it was like being home once we stepped inside the door.



At a church in Los Angeles

The tour receives the favor of many Suzuki Method parents. My group stayed at thirteen different homes including the Tanakas' and most of them were either Suzuki teachers or parents. Some fathers stayed home from work for the day, chauffeured us, or, finding a free moment, took us out for sight-seeing and shopping.

My group consisted of two boys besides myself, Ryoji and Ryo. Hearing that they are big league baseball fans, our host families gave them the hats of their local teams wherever we went. The number of those hats increasing in the last half of the tour, the two boys, who do not usually care much about clothing, seriously agonized: "Which hat shall it be today?"

Every host family cared for them very much. And they seemed impressed by the beautifully fostered hearts of the children.

At supper, family members eagerly asked about the ten children and talent education in Japan. Inspired by their enthusiasm, I was carried away by an effort to answer those questions, when, as it often happened, I noticed that mine was the only plate that was yet hardly touched.

A mother who had started the method two years ago commented: "The goal that was vague has now become clear. I feel I can continue with confidence." These words heard on parting at the airport left a deep impression.

Tahlequah

We are met at the airport, load the luggage in cars, and divide ourselves into six groups going to the host families'. Things to do after our arrival at the host's home are to put the luggage in order, practice, do homework, etc. The whole day goes instantly. The following day we have a rehearsal in the morning, lunch, joint playing with local children, supper, then the concert and a party. After that we go home and prepare our luggage for the following day's trip to the next destination.

This is a typical schedule for the month. The children seem to really enjoy seeing one another at airports and rehearsals.

At Tahlequah, Instructor Yajima's group happened to stay across the street from our family's house. At seven each day, Rika came for a pre-breakfast piano practice (because their host family had no piano). We were having

breakfast then. Needless to say, the two boys also started to practice, hardly finishing their breakfast.

How quick their pace was in every aspect of their lives! "Mr. Kubota, Emi's group got up at five to practice. May we also?" The better day they had, the finer the performance. As expected, their performance was quite superior at the Tahlequah concert.

On the following day Instructor Yajima prepared the six servings' worth of ramen noodles which the Kataokas of St. Louis had given us, and more than a dozen of us enjoyed them including the hosts and neighbors who curiously (?) watched us. (We learned that we were the first Japanese to visit Tahlequah.) This and the taste of the noodles are both unforgettable.

American Teachers

It was also a joy to see a larger than expected number of familiar American teachers everywhere: Jacquelyn Corina, Kathryn Lee, and Barbara Wampner in San Francisco (where so many students participated in the play-in that they barely fit in the stage; they performed very well); in Cincinnati, Michelle (who drove nine hours from Cleveland); and in Philadelphia, Linda Fiore (who runs a wonderful chapter while raising two small children).

Since Barbara Wampner had kindly informed her colleagues at our destinations of my participation in this tour, I was able to meet 'cello teachers in various places, and had the opportunity to conduct a group lesson several times.

The Kataokas of St. Louis (who were also the parents of a tour child this time) treated us to curry and rice at Cincinnati (they brought a rice cooker!) and everybody was delighted. I hear that they go to hear a tour concert as a family every year. I nodded sheepishly as Eiko Kataoka wistfully said, "I feel that if I don't come to hear the tour children every year, I lose closeness to Dr. Suzuki and his teachings."

——Leaving the long applause in the hall, the children returned backstage after finishing the final encore. Everyone seemed in tears——

Through the journey with the ten children beautifully fostered by the Suzuki Method, I have gained more than I can fully describe here (in exchange for a tooth which came out in Austin and several kilograms of lost weight?). Mr. Suzuki, thank you for this wonderful experience. Last, I must thank Dr. Honda and the five instructors who warmly watched the novice tour instructor who tended to make errors. I will put my pen down thinking of the responsibility to let this experience be reflected in my teaching.

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EVERYTHING IN LIFE: PRACTICE IN SERVICE

From the December 7, 1986 Concert Program
in Celebration of Mr. Suzuki's Eighty-Eighth Birthday

Reiko Ohara

Whenever I see Suzuki children playing small violins with their little hands, I feel that I have witnessed a special privilege granted only to children. The small four-stringed instruments breathe and sing with the children as if they were part of their body. When the children seem to be distracted sometimes, looking somewhere else, their violins continue to ring innocently, as if they now had separate lives. It is not like this with adults. I can affirm this through my experience as one who started a string instrument as a forty year old beginner. This supple sensibility and learning ability are also fully demonstrated in recent family scenes around a computer. No matter what we think, children are far beyond adults' reach. Faster than they think, their hands move; their eyes race. The simple fact is that there are many areas in which adults cannot compete with children, as Shin'ichi Suzuki first taught me clearly.

It was Kirigamine, the Misty Peak, in August. Through the morning mist which still densely covered the grassy plain, one small child after another came playing Twinkle. Wild summer flowers waved at their feet. Even if a child tottered on a little rock, the violin in his arm continued to ring without halting. Titled "Twinkles on the Plain," this TV program was the first of "The Orchestra Has Come" serialized by TBS for over a dozen years. Following the walk, Mr. Suzuki and talent education students from Matsumoto and nearby areas appeared on the Suwa stage. The children now played

paired up, one playing the right hand and the other playing the left, now freely relayed the music from group to group at Mr. Suzuki's signal, and now held the bow upside down — in a demonstration which might appear acrobatic at a glance, I recognized the solid foundation of the Suzuki method and found it deeply impressive. Grasping children's ability, or ability which exists only in children, the method gave it life in the area of music; the children were free and radiant, each of them. "The Orchestra Has Come" lasted thirteen years after that, with many famous musicians also taking part. However, the sight of Mr. Suzuki and the children at the first recording has been a kind of "initial inspiration" for those involved in the production.

When it was decided that I help with Mr. Suzuki's Eighty-Eighth Birthday Concert at the Suntory Hall, I went to Matsumoto to see him after a long while. Naturally Mr. Suzuki had grown older, but his spirit was even livelier than before. Partly for shootings, I repeated my visit a few times, and as I came in contact with his activities, I gradually became aware of one thing: that privileged ability which I had thought was limited to children was even now amply present in Mr. Suzuki himself. It may be called a childlike mind: Mr. Suzuki's unadulterated enthusiasm and unceasing desire for the higher were precisely the soil for "child's ability." Each time I went to explain the proposed content of the birthday concert, he listened with smiles, but at the end he always asked me to give plenty of chances for children to perform at the concert. Accordingly the concert title was fixed as "Mr. Suzuki and his Twinklers." The many "ex-Twinklers" who studied with him before and big Twinklers who are still supporting and making effort to run talent education were kind enough to contribute their efforts underneath the stage to the children's performances. As for selection of the pieces, I bothered the Kobayashi brothers, Takeshi and Kenji. Koji Toyota of the Berlin conservatory found the time to come and give a congratulatory speech. Aiko Mizushima, one of the

first graduates, flew from Munich at her own expense leaving her two children with her husband. For the past several years I have been enjoying her friendship whenever my job takes me to Germany. On each visit, I had a pleasant moment as Yoko, her older daughter who has been studying violin with her mother, raised her arm and expressed the joy of music with her entire little body.

Whatever the assistance of these adults, the main characters in the concert were to be children. I thought I would like to bring into Suntory Hall the model of the communication between Mr. Suzuki and children from throughout the country which I observed this year at the Matsumoto Summer School, and, amidst children's music, to trace his steps over half a century. I read his works and other related articles, but what he told me in Matsumoto is imprinted more sharply. Seeing me startled to hear that he rose every morning at three to listen to children's graduation tapes from all over Japan and to add comments on how to play, and this before a busily scheduled day which lasted until his nine o'clock bedtime, he smiled and said: "Sleep is not the purpose of human life, you see. After all the purpose is to live. So, well, I'm happily engaged every day, every day." I also like another word Mr. Suzuki uses: service. "You give service to the bow which plays the violin. Only when this is taught, can fine tone be produced. Everything in life means practice in service." Mr. Suzuki is truly a magician in drawing ability from children. I have always secretly called talent education class "talent-drawing class."

On the *shikishi* (large square card for calligraphy and painting) Mr. Suzuki gave me is written with beautiful brush execution: "Where love is deep, much can be accomplished." More than a dozen years since first meeting him, as I work toward the birthday concert for a person whose existence resembles a big mountain to look up at, I sometimes mumble, "Everything in life means practice in service."

Thank you, Mr. Suzuki, you've taught much to us powerless adults who hold no violin.

VIOLIN APPROACH ENCOURAGED FOR PIANO INSTRUCTION

Lectures on Music Instruction (52)

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Violin students whose tone is too small are playing with the forearm only.

It is probably the same in piano.

In the past, in violin instruction, we taught students to "play with the arm, play with the elbow." This helps the tone to become better and more powerful.

However, as long as students play only with the arm, their shoulders immobile, the tone is still not big and fine enough.

So now we have been asking students to practice making large circles, skillfully moving the arm and shoulder together. Their tone has improved greatly. In brief, the coordinated movement of the shoulder and arm is the correct, natural action, and the movement of the shoulder should also be coordinated with the body movement.

Our recent message to students has, therefore, been: "Play with the shoulder." This has helped them produce bigger and more beautiful tone.

I think piano students' tone may also change greatly with a similar approach.

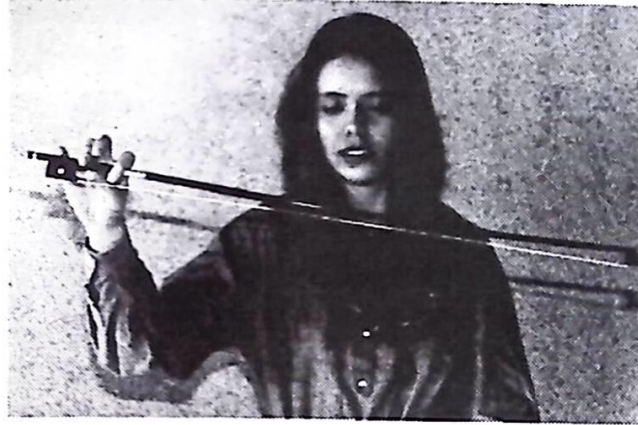
With both hands in front of the body, have the student raise them in the piano playing posture to their head, then lower them down to the stomach, and repeat this up and

down movement of the hands, arms, and shoulders. What changes have occurred when the student plays a piece right after repeating this exercise many times? Please try it.

In violin, this concept greatly improved tone, and continued daily practice has made an even greater change. I think eventually it may be possible to tell students to "play with the shoulders" in piano, too. In that it has created a big change, this can be called a totally new approach in violin.

Making the Thumb Nail Power Stronger

—A New Violin Method—



Have the student hold the bow as in the photos with the forefinger, the little finger and the thumb nail. With power in the thumb nail, lower the tip of the bow, stop, and keep the bow still.

Next, try pushing the tip of the bow up from underneath; add power to the thumb nail so that the tip, fixed this way, does not move at all. Create this ability through practice.

Have your students carefully repeat this exercise.

Right after that, let them play Chorus keeping the same strong thumb nail as when the tip of the bow was lowered and fixed there (it is fine to play with the ring and third fingers lightly on the bow). This changes the tone greatly.

The purpose of this is to strengthen the thumb nail power and to create the ability to produce powerful tone "panda" style.

If you have your students try this at every lesson and help them strengthen their thumb nail power, they will gradually develop big and refined tone. Please experiment with this yourselves, then apply it to your students, guiding them to wonderful tone.

Creating the ability of the thumb nail this way to produce rich tone can be viewed as the discovery of a new approach. Let me ask you to look carefully at the photos and put it into practice.

Talent Education, no. 79.



LET'S HAVE A LISTENING EAR

From *The Evolution of the Suzuki Method*

Shin'ichi Suzuki

ABILITY IS NOT INBORN (1951), PART IV

LET'S HAVE A LISTENING EAR

The traditional Japanese method of training a master warbler gave me a big hint in my study.

In Shinshu (now Nagano Prefecture), a bird trainer goes to the mountains in spring, captures a young bird in a wild warbler's nest, and, after taming it with food, tries something called *tsukego*.

Tsukego, or attached child, means to borrow a master warbler with a beautiful voice, and let it sing by the young bird every day for a month or so.

I understand that much careful study has been done on this method, but the most important is the selection of the parent bird which plays the role of the voice teacher. Since the young will imitate the teacher, it won't do good to let it hear a wild bird's singing.

In any case, after a month of singing by the side of the young bird, the parent warbler is returned to the owner. Although various careful training steps are added later, this first education is said to be crucial.

What interests me most here is that the single approach, exposure to masterful singing, prepares the beauty of the young bird's tone and his singing, i.e., melody and phrasing; and that, as a full fledged warbler,

already when he first starts to sing the following spring, he has the master's fine singing tone.

It is of course wonderful that his singing is masterful; what seems to me of greater significance is how he acquires the vocal tone. While the young bird silently listens to the beautiful tone color of the parent warbler's daily singing, physiological or functional changes occur in him as he tries to adapt to it.

The ability to adapt to the environment is extremely powerful in early childhood. I call this natural phenomenon physiological, or functional, interaction.

This is clearly shown in the warbler, and, through much research from long ago, it has been viewed as nothing rare in the world of warbler raising and appreciation.

The clear fact that physiological or functional changes occur in animals and that the education in the first month created the foundation for the bird's tone color and quality of singing for life — this intrigued me.



Tone-Deaf Due to a Good Ear

We grew up thinking that "one becomes tone deaf because one's ears are poor. A tone-deaf person himself thinks his ears are poor: "I have poor ears; that's why I am out of tune and tone-deaf."

However, today when adaptability has been identified as the brain's function, it is clear to me that *one turns tone-deaf precisely because one has good ears.*

No child is born with the musical scale. Consider this fact, and consider the ability to adapt: if music of faulty intonation is repeated by a child from birth, he will adapt to the faulty scale of that music. Once he becomes an adult with no chance of correction, he is a perfectly out of tune person who admits it himself: "I am out of tune and

tone-deaf." At this point it is a little difficult to correct him.

He has beautifully adapted to the flawed musical environment because he has good ears. In those who own to "poor ears" look carefully for proof that they have in fact good ears. Suppose, for example, such a person is from Osaka. Isn't his good ear demonstrated in the delicate intonation and accent of his Osaka dialect? He has beautifully acquired the fine ups and downs of the Osaka dialect which is far more difficult than average music.

That he is out of tune only in music testifies that in music he simply had a model with flawed intonation.

Music is a form of culture made up of codes created by human beings; it is not an inherent thing built in every human being already at birth.

According to the survey of the French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918), there are 300 kinds of scale in the world; later the Russian composer Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) maintained that there were 700 kinds.

Different areas of the world have music of different scales, and people of each area are raised with their own scale.

If the melody that the mother or the grandmother sings is out of tune, the child in her arm adapts to that intonation; if she cares for the baby by holding him near neighborhood children singing with faulty intonation, that is one method of creating tone-deafness. Parents who are not aware of this are careless. Children who listen to vulgar popular songs as they grow are imprinted with unrefined sensibility as human beings, while in those who hear musical masterpieces a dignified, beautiful world of musical height is created in their hearts. This becomes a trait for the rest of their lives. As the delicacy of the Osaka dialect becomes a child's accent and intonation for his entire life, Osaka's mental climate, too, works as an influence from society which contributes to forming the child's character as a human being.

"Man is a child of the environment" is a fact we often clearly realize.

Every music instructor has many experiences of correcting people raised with an impaired musical scale. I, too, have years of this experience. And what I can say here is that the younger the student, the easier the correction. When the student passes a certain age, say, above twenty, correction has extremely small effect in terms of musical values; above thirty, the musical sensitivity is gradually fixed at a stage where correction is quite difficult.

A five year old's tone-deafness can be cleanly erased in four or five months through daily corrective training.

With a seven or eight year old, it will take at least half a year. The time required for correction cumulatively increases as the age advances. However, children can all be beautifully corrected. When trying to correct an eighteen year old, I feel something is already fixed. That decreases the percentage of the possibility of correction. While his weakness is still possible to correct, parts that are impossible to correct linger on.

At age twenty, this phenomenon is more striking; over thirty, correction is difficult.

If I am asked to correct a tone-deaf person over thirty, I would hesitate to start. If forcefully asked to instruct such a person, I would be a little at a loss and feel like saying, "Help."

A person's heart is something that will gradually be fixed with age. Those with undesirable hearts that are fixed make themselves and society unhappy.



Adaptability of the Brain

Once I taught a musician in N City. He was already married with children.

After that I had no chance to see him over ten years. During that interval, there was the war, followed by defeat and postwar social disorder. Amidst that confusion, one day I had the opportunity to see him again. He told me that his older child was already eighteen, that he taught this boy violin, and that the boy could now play up to Mozart's concerto No. 5. Then he asked if I would hear him some time.

I had never seen his boy before. However, I answered that I would hear him if he could come to Matsumoto.

A month or so later, an eighteen year old youth came to my house.

I met him for the first time then.

He looked exactly like his father. His voice also resembled his father's (naturally through inheritance). When greeting me, he clasped his hands in front of him just like his father; the way he talked sitting down was an image of his father long ago; he laughed with the same melody as his father's.

Of course the accent, intonation, and dialectal features of his speech resembled his father's. I felt as if I were talking with his father.

"Well then, let's hear your violin playing," I urged, and watching him start to play, I shouted in my heart: "What great adaptation!"

His violin hold posture, the hand motion when moving the bow, virtues and defects of musical expression, the degree of cultivated sensitivity, occasional intonation problems, his sense of tone — in all these he was exactly like his father.

I almost suspected that the boy was his father's reincarnation. The more attention I paid, the clearer my discovery that the boy had adapted to his parent in every

delicate point. "This was a day of a wonderful experiment," I thought, pleased.

To me it was evident: in the single action of playing the violin, the boy had received everything that his father had including intonation, sense of tone, musical sensibility, motion, and posture.

This was an experiment in a child's adaptation as a result of living eighteen years in the same house with his father.

Seeing so clearly the human brain's adaptability gave me strong confidence.

I recall chatting on different topics one summer evening with Professor A. Moguilewsky, a musician, while taking a walk along Lake Ashi, Hakone. Mr. Moguilewsky, whose study of violin playing I greatly admire, is already over sixty, but is as passionate as ever today. He is an outstanding violin master who never forgets reflection and progress.

He and I have understood each other from long ago, and we are intimately united by art. Our walks are pleasant.

In the outskirts of the town of Hakone, we walked quietly talking between rows of tall, ancient cedars.

The water of the large lake shone white in the moonlight through the big cedars.

I had heard his students say that they were often at a loss because he changed from week to week: when they went back to his lesson after practicing as instructed, he would say, "Don't do it that way; it should be this way." I talked about it and asked him frankly as a friend: why did he teach in this manner, which, I was afraid, was confusing to his students?

Mr. Moguilewsky responded with an excellent answer as would be expected of him:

"I am an artist. What I was yesterday is not what I am today. What I thought was correct a week ago is not correct to me today. When I believe something is better, I see life in what I believe today, even if I have to retract

what I said before. I feel sorry for my students, but when I stop changing, my life as an artist has ended; what they see would be the dead Moguilewsky."

These words pleased me greatly.

I liked his belief which made him say that what he was yesterday was not what he is today.

Precisely because of this his violin technique is world class.

His music is the image he achieved as a human being; his outstanding technique is the barometer of the efforts of a man who has never ceased his quest for the truth.

Those words uttered by him could not be expected from just anybody. "Good," I thought, moved. And I told him what I felt.

Then the topic shifted to the question of artists and human beings of the world. Mr. Moguilewsky told me about the extraordinary greatness of Andre Capet (1878-1925) in particular among the historical personages he had met. Before a performance started, he said, the audience was already enclosed in a lofty atmosphere of art because of the noble artistic height which emanated from the man Capet. I, too, told Mr. Moguilewsky about the greatness I felt about Capet. It was pleasant.

Perhaps we walked about one hour along the lake.

Across the moonlit lake water ranges of black and dark gray mountains stood; and by the waterside further away beneath distant mountains we saw little red village lamps, one here and one there.

It was a beautiful evening walk.



An Exquisite Way to Perceive Music

In order to understand Beethoven, one needs to develop the ability to perceive music.

In order to understand music, one has to listen to music. In order to be able to perceive music by listening, one has to start by listening to the same piece twenty or thirty times. Otherwise, real perception does not start.

Musical perception is the ability to feel the special language called music, and those who try to do such an unreasonable thing as to translate that into the world of words and letters cannot develop the ability to perceive music.

It is possible to know Beethoven in a certain sense by reading his critical biographies.

If you listen to Beethoven and talk in front of people about Beethoven the man as described in critical biographies, they will probably consider you a person with a fair understanding of Beethoven. Since the outstanding authors of critical biographies must understand Beethoven well, one can make no big errors as long as one simply quotes them.

However, unless one has musical perception, one neither knows Beethoven through music, nor is one able to come into contact with his musical life. After all one remains unable to perceive his art.

Therefore, if you play Haydn for this kind of person and tell him that it is by Beethoven, he is so knowledgeable that he will proudly tell you about the Beethoven qualities apparent in that piece.

In order to know Beethoven, one must first listen to one piece by him repeatedly twenty or thirty times and develop perception in one's heart.

While focusing on listening to a single piece, gradually perception awakens. When you approach distant flowers attracted by their beauty, they gradually begin to look clearer. The flowers which looked like one color gradually reveal more complex coloring on closer look; flower petals are now in view; and beautiful fragrance also reaches you. Thus, by each step, your ability advances in terms of the senses, and with this, perception starts.

The piece does not change through repeated listening, but you grow and approach it step by step.

Thus, one should start with a single piece and first develop one's own ability. In other words, it is necessary to develop the ability to perceive music.

When introducing oneself to music, this should be the method of nurturing perception. I do not think it a good approach to listen to many pieces once or twice per piece, if you want to develop perception.

As the ability to perceive gradually develops, now it is possible to feel the value of Beethoven as a human being or the height of his music as art. Here one's growth begins toward this form of culture which is expressed by neither in spoken words or written letters.

The degree of perception for this corresponds to the height of humanity fostered within oneself.

When one listens to Bach, Beethoven and so forth, and one's ability to perceive is gradually heightened, I think one will gradually be able to perceive and judge instantly other composers' music as well.

For the first time then, can one find listening to Bach and Beethoven enhancing, i.e., one now knows the power of great art.

Therefore, in many cases those who, in their youth, criticized Bach and Beethoven, develop enough to admire them in later years.

This is the method of introduction to music I recommend. It is fine to enter through whatever great piece — the greater the better.

There is no need to choose a beginner-like easy piece just because one is a beginner. An adult should confront Beethoven with all his might and try to develop his ability in that lofty environment.

In appreciating paintings, a person makes no sense who says that it is necessary to start with beginner works, leaving the highest works for later.

As in painting, in music, too, I think we should familiarize ourselves with high works for nurturing the ability of appreciation.

"Every other form of art envies music," someone said.

Besides written language culture and art forms such as painting, sculpture, and dancing, human beings created a delicate culture composed of beautiful sounds.

In an age of advanced culture to come, musical culture will be observed close-up: it will be viewed as something that can be implanted in human beings starting at birth, stays in direct contact with the human mind, and has a strong cultural quality called beauty. This is education by the power of art which uplifts mankind's animal nature to humanity.

"Art is for all humanity; not just for artists."

Such a matter of fact has to be advertised because today's commonsense is so uninterested in man and art.

It is strange that no one thinks it strange that a carpenter does not talk about art, a green grocer does not think about man, and a peasant does not mention beauty.

Because artists overemphasized the fact that they know art or that they are artists, professionalizing that artistic quality, people's response has been: "If you are an artist, I'm a green grocer," etc. Before people knew it, things became divided occupation by occupation. The essence of art is humanity which every human being should possess, but this seems completely forgotten. People who call themselves artists have robbed people at large, before they realized it, of the commonsense that truth, goodness and beauty should all be present in every human being. I feel like emphasizing this more strongly, but I will stop here for now, and just walk around advertising that "Art is for all humanity; not just for artists."

Here is a question: "Starting children on violin lessons, some will find that theirs dislike violin by birth, won't they?"

My answer is: "Some children seem to learn to dislike violin, yes. However, no children dislike it by birth. Those who do have been made to dislike it."

Everything is wrongly ascribed to birth in today's world. If you want your child to learn violin, do not buy him a violin; instead let him have fun in a class where

other children are taking lessons. When you expose him to that environment three or four times, your three or four year old child catches the melody, picks up the violin hold posture, and eventually brings out a chopstick to start imitating violin playing.

In other words, a will to try playing violin is created in the child's brain.

If you then give him a violin, he will be overjoyed. This is the right order; those who do not start education by first planting a seed in the child's brain have a clumsy approach to instruction.

We must not forget that even a little movement of a hand is initiated by the brain's activity.

Suppose an adult who wants his child to learn violin buys him an instrument and encourages him: "Now, rub with this bow, all right? Now, play *takataka tatta*." No matter how enthusiastic the parent, there is nothing in the child's brain: Why do I to rub this funny looking thing, what is *takataka tatta*, what posture am I to be in? There is neither command from his brain, nor joy in his heart. He cannot stand it.

"No-o-o," he says, with good reason.

Parents who started out clumsily this way always bring out their favorite "birth" theory, shelving away their approach that failed: "After all, some children dislike violin by birth. In fact my child is a good example."

Even in a child, psychological reactions are the same as in an adult. When having a child hear other children's violin as a preparation for education, it seems to be less effective to use performances of too advanced and accomplished children. It is extremely effective if it is children his own age, and the pieces are also beginner pieces, so that he feels in his little heart that he will probably be able to do the same. The least effective is for an adult to play for him: the child remains nearly uninterested. Naturally he would seem to take an interest in the music played in front of him, but adults are nearly useless in creating in him a desire to try.

Supreme education fosters children in the circumstance where "there is no like or dislike."

When you try to let your child learn something by making him love it, it already means that the environment is not yet fully prepared.

It is the lowest of the low to make children hate it.

In this sense, the education in the mother tongue is the world's best for the time being. For example, suppose someone asks, "Did you like or dislike learning Japanese?" We would find the question odd. Why is it then that we can instantly answer the question, "Did you like English?"

[To be continued.]

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FRIENDS WATCHING OVER HIM

A Mother's Note

Junko Andoh
Yajima Class

My encounter with talent education originates in meeting Instructor Yajima at a training center of the Seitai Society. No matter which hospital I visited with Shotaro, a child with eye handicap, the answer was always the same. When I had half given up, I was introduced to the Seitai Society. I started going there wanting to try whatever was said to be good. My boy was two and seven months.

When he turned three, I was told that he would not gain sight through Seitai, but that he would be able to maintain health, accumulate great internal strength, and develop *kan*, or intuition. If that's the case, I thought I should first try to make him a cheerful child and develop sensitive finger tips so he would be able to read braille. When I talked about it to the Seitai instructor, he mentioned that a violin teacher came regularly and that he was happy to speak to her about us. I learned for the first time then that Miss Yajima was a violin teacher. I had seen and greeted her many times before, but never talked with her. She, in the meantime, seemed to have been quietly observing Shotaro.

The Seitai instructor got back to me with her answer: "She is not sure she can do it because this is her first experience, but she would like to try anyway; she wants

you to visit her class." I felt greater anxiety than joy: how was I, having never even touched a violin, to teach my child who had no sight? If Miss Yajima had not consented then, there would have been no Shotaro today. I realize how decisive an encounter can be.

We started to attend her class regularly. Miss Yajima introduced me to Mr. Suzuki's book, *Nurtured by Love*, through which I came to know the expression "talent education." In the book Mr. Suzuki describes his experience of giving lessons to a blind child. With us, too, every day was continual struggle. I had never dreamed that violin was that difficult. It was an endurance contest between mother and child, and we cried together many times.



Shotaro Andoh performs.
(September 15, 1986)

Even now Miss Yajima says, "When I see strawberries, I recall Sho-chan's lessons when he was small." In class his naughtiness used to trouble her: "I won't practice unless you give me a strawberry." "How his practice is handled at home is transparent," she said again and again. It took over one year before he could play the Twinkle Variations, and we were so happy when the next piece, "Lightly Row," was assigned. As if it was

yesterday, I recall thinking, "Now we can finally go forward."

When I put on the record, he would go away to a room where he could not hear. I became angry so often that he would no longer practice unless by the side of my mother-in-law. Because I was a little gentler out of respect for her, he would be even more willful, and this made me angry again. So my mother-in-law said many times, "It's just practice, isn't it? When he hates it so much every day, why do you have to do it till he has to cry?" When I consulted Miss Yajima, she said, "Whose child is Sho-chan?" This woke me, and I felt as if a vista opened up in front of me.

Practice at home was a continual struggle, but I always looked forward eagerly to the lesson. Shotaro seemed to feel the same way, and he never said "I want to skip it." Even when he stayed home from kindergarten with a fever, he went to the lesson in the afternoon. It was because he enjoyed riding the train and appreciated contact with the warm hearts of the members of the class. At home, I simply could not find anything good but interpreted everything in the wrong way.

When I walked with my boy, we were looked at with a cold or curious eye, a sad experience which pierced my heart. But friends in class were different. It was a genuinely pleasant relief because they faced us with "the heart of love and the eye of love" described in Mr. Suzuki's book. So we enjoyed going to the class, and our week revolved with Tuesday, the lesson day, as its axis.

At first, however, I worried that we might burden others. But a mother kindly said, "You need not worry about such a thing at all. We are encouraged through knowing Sho-chan, and also learn a lot from him." I felt as if a lump in the chest went down. "What warm people," I thought, thanking our good luck of encountering talent education. Rie-chan, who joined the class around the same time looked after him particularly well, partly because they were the same age. She always took his hand and walked with him.

In the summer, through the class camp and the Summer School, we were able to make friends with members of other classes. Thanks to many friends, teachers and families, we have walked to this point. Only going to the blind children's school is limiting in terms of the scope of activities and friends; the violin has helped his world to become wider and brighter, and he has gained confidence to live facing forward.

Last year when Miss Yajima said, "Mr. Yamamura is encouraging us to have Sho-chan's recital, so let's do it," it was so unexpected that surprise and joy filled my heart, and I could not withhold my tears. Shotaro's friends and their mothers who heard those words with us were heartily pleased, and delightedly agreed to cooperate.

On September 15, "Concert by Shotaro Andoh and Friends" took place at Chuden Hall, Nagoya. It was drizzling that day, but so many people were there to listen that the door to the hall could not be closed. The struggle and happy memories of the twelve years crossing and recrossing my mind, I could not see my child well by the tears. Teachers and parents kindly commented that it was "a moving concert which encouraged them and urged them to reflect upon themselves." I owe this to Mr. Suzuki as well as Miss Yajima, other teachers, friends, mothers, families, and many others who have warmly watched him.

Making good use of this precious experience, my child and I intend to make efforts so that we will be able to repay those to whom we are indebted. Please continue to guide us as before.



MY EXPERIENCE WITH SHO-CHAN

Chise Yajima
Instructor, Tokai District

My "encounter" with Shotaro was a great, happy, and valuable one which can hardly be expressed in this note I will now write.

From time to time at the training center of the Seitai Society I caught sight of Sho-chan, blind and just three, and his mother. I could not remain indifferent to him. I was familiar with the episode of the blind boy Teiichi in Mr. Suzuki's *Nurtured by Love*, which records the boy's and Mr. Suzuki's "gruelling effort." In addition, my mother being a teacher at a special school, handicapped people were near me in my life.

At three and a half, Sho-chan started to come to class regularly with his mother. As it must have also been to them, to me lessons with a little child in a lightless world was like grabbing at darkness. One day something suddenly flashed: we see things with two eyes; although Sho-chan could not see with his two eyes, undoubtedly he saw with the eye called life. I decided to stop thinking that Sho-chan could not see.

When Sho-chan and his mother entered the room, I often thought, "Here comes the noisy mother again." It was in fact so. His mother tried to instruct and communicate everything to the sightless boy through "words." I often said to her, "I think Sho-chan understands even if you don't say it in words. Let's stop remote controlling through words."

Another problem was that lessons were difficult not so much because he did not see as because everybody felt so sorry that he was raised as a totally willful child. "Now you may pity Sho-chan, but eventually, he will have to live by himself with the handicap of not being able to see.

Even if it is hard now, try to raise him with your eyes focused on what it will be like *eventually*, so that he will be loved by everybody and be able to live by himself," I sometimes told her.

I never treated Sho-chan differently in class just because he did not see. Even now, his mother says with a laugh that I was "stricter with him than with others." Sho-chan is trying, he can do it — a sense of wonder at this gave great encouragement and reflection to other parents and children. Before we knew it, children spontaneously began to help him and give him a hand whenever he moved. Everybody was taught how fortunate it was to live with a perfect body.



After the concert.
Extreme left is Chise Yajima.

Among the words my mother often repeated at home were these: "There is a special school expression, kindness by being unkind;" "Handicapped children's parents are often mentally handicapped." These two remarks never left my mind.

When I was asked to contribute this article, I said to Sho-chan's mother: "We probably tried desperately hard at each moment, but, on looking back, it doesn't feel as though we have done anything special, does it?" This is

really true. I have no memory of taking a special stance for him because he cannot see or of saying to myself, "I will teach him this way today." However, when facing him, I think some ideas spontaneously occurred to me now and then so that I could convey to him what I had done with the other children.

This does not, however, mean that lessons always proceeded smoothly. When he performed the Bach Double of Book 4, with me playing the first violin part, for the first time I felt, "It has now become enjoyable; he has started to grow." Until then, I had felt that we were wandering in the mud.

I recall Sho-chan happily participating in Mr. Suzuki's group lesson at the Matsumoto Summer School with a stageful of children, or playing in unison with 3,000 children at the National Concert in Tokyo. These have now become annual routine events for him, but at first it required much courage to have him participate, given his handicap. On such occasions, his friends from the violin class always supported him.

Let me write a little about my experience related to seeing with the eye of life. When I am feeling unhappy about the lessons because I cannot communicate the way I like, sometimes I hear other teachers comment: "Sho-chan is just like you, Miss Yajima." This is a piercing comment for me, but at the same time I am really impressed. This can concern posture or tone. It is what Mr. Suzuki means when he says, "I see everything when I listen to a graduation tape." I am taught by looking at Sho-chan. I feel that he catches me best. His mother often says, "Shotaro sees better than I do." I think this is a feeling that grew out of her daily life with him.

Last year Mr. Yamamura suggested: "It would be nice if you did Shotaro's concert. His development reflects his mother's tremendous love." I had dreamed of doing something like that from before, but I was able to make up my mind when he said this, and consulted the students and mothers of the class. To my pleasure their instant response was: "Let's, let's."

Now, during practice toward a recital everyone confronts a problem which the teacher wishes him to overcome. In Shotaro's case, perhaps because he cannot see, the scope of his music and his motion tended to become small, a weakness we had been concerned about earlier. "Sho-chan, tone is something you hear both by the ear and by the eye. It's something you hear with your whole body. Please don't listen just by the ear." I think many words, painful and harsh to Sho-chan, were thrown at him. Some days he seems to have gone home crying after the lesson, heedless of what others thought. I had faith, however, that he would make another big stride there.

On September 15, amidst the emotional tears and warmly encouraging eyes of the guests who filled the hall, I was far from being moved, thinking that this section was still no good, maybe here he improved a little, etc. At a party with his friends after the concert, a burning thought rushed all over my body for the first time. As an instructor I have had joyous experiences.

At the Matsumoto Summer School last year, I started as I walked toward the third floor auditorium of the Talent Education Hall giving my hand to Sho-chan. I thought, "Isn't this the first time that I am taking his hand?" On a later day when I told his mother about it, she said, "Shotaro also said that he thought that was the first time that you took his hand." This is how little I have done for Sho-chan. In the warm family called talent education he was fostered by other teachers, members, mothers and friends of the class. The title of the event, "Concert by Shotaro Andoh and Friends," contained the idea that he and his friends were fostered and grew together.

This spring he will become a high school student. Growing as a cheerful and strong boy, with the violin which is his friend for life and the friends he grew up with, he is studying Bach's Unaccompanied Sonata no. 1.

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