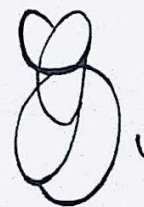


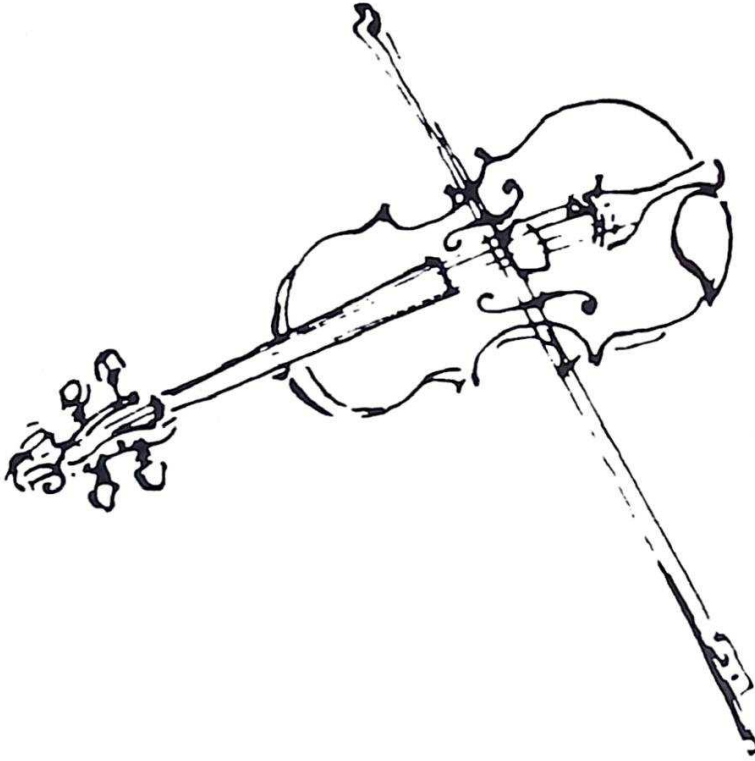
# TALENT EDUCATION JOURNAL



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Masayoshi Kataoka

The word "education" (*kyoiku*) in Japanese consists of the kanji *kyo* (to teach) and *iku* (to foster). It means to teach and to foster until the material is absorbed so that it becomes inner ability. When there is inner ability as the foundation, the ability to think and originalize develops. This enables children to spontaneously stretch toward higher levels. The skill of fostering that inner ability, I think, is the starting point of instruction. Dr. Suzuki explains in detail how to foster ability as well as how to train in "A Perfect Score for Everyone."

An International Junior College of Music, a talent education music school, is in the planning stages in Matsumoto. With the goal of opening the school in April 1992, fund raising is proceeding.

In Japan, in addition to the national concert held in Tokyo, prefectural and branch chapter concerts are held yearly. We introduce the backstage account by Hirotsugu Matsui, head of the Suwa chapter, describing his efforts in preparing the Nagano Prefectural concert.

Dr. Suzuki's "Ability Development in Music," Part III, concerns how to raise technical ability. He explains how to achieve correct intonation, how to approach the left hand shape, etc.

"A Mother's Note" is by Hiroko Doi, who has raised four daughters through piano. Patiently, through many psychological struggles, she has beautifully fostered them, including the youngest two who are twins.

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## **A PERFECT SCORE FOR EVERYONE**

### **Worldwide Innovation in Elementary Education**

**A Discovery of an Educational Method  
by Which Everyone Develops**

**Shin'ichi Suzuki**

I would like this simple method by which every child develops, the method of a perfect score for everyone, to be tried in the first three years of elementary school. This year I have resolved to appeal to school teachers for the sake of children's happiness.

For an initial experiment, math and language will do. I would like you to apply in these two subjects the method by which every student can easily achieve a full score.

The same experiment was conducted forty years ago with the approval of Shigeru Kamijoh, principal of Hongoh Elementary School, Asama, in the suburbs of Matsumoto. Shigeki Tanaka taught his class of forty students by the full-score-for-everyone method. The forty students developed beautifully in three years, everyone achieving full scores. Unfortunately, Principal Kamijoh passed away at the end of the third year. Due to the new principal's lack of understanding, the forty children were divided into four other classes, and the experiment in the full score training method concluded. It is a fact, however, that all forty children in the Tanaka class developed, through the three year training, as students with the ability to achieve full scores.

This full score training method is based on the principle of ability development which I discovered over fifty years ago through my study of the mother tongue method by which children throughout the world develop with outstanding ability. This is an important educational issue. Wishing to let you know the principle of every child's development, I have decided to take this opportunity to explain my full score training method.



Twenty-five years ago when I first visited the States, in visits to twenty colleges I repeated to psychology professors: "No baby is born with inborn talent; babies are born as white paper, and ability develops in them in diverse ways depending upon all the stimulation from the daily environment." I visited the States five years in a row, presenting this view for their examination. Whether or not I contributed to it, American psychology has been changing for the past twenty years, inclining to accept the theory that "babies are born as white paper, and develop while acquiring ability through external stimulation." My recent visits to the States have been graced by the attendance in seminars of forty to fifty American psychologists from various areas.

## My Psychology — the Law of Ability Life and How It Works

All babies, born with wonderful life, have equal potential throughout the world. A baby begins his activity on the day he receives life inside the mother's body, and grows while gradually absorbing everything that is there in the interaction with her feeling, heart, and her life itself. Therefore, at the time of birth babies have already developed different abilities under maternal influence.

Since long ago I have repeated that "man is a child of the environment."

Traditional psychological theories have held that each newborn has different propensities through heredity: some are born with musical traits, others with literary inclinations. Personality and talent have also been considered innate. Looking at the result of the development of abilities in a child, people judged that this child has a gift, or has none, ascribing it to the issue of inborn heredity. This was the commonsense from long ago.

I discovered over fifty years ago that this theory was flawed. Heredity, I found, determines all the physical conditions of the baby inherited from the parents. However, there is no heredity as far as ability is concerned. As the baby develops physically through the wonderful workings of life, he also acquires every ability through the very workings of life.

Therefore, there is no such thing as a born genius. We can easily raise a Beethoven or a Mozart as a terrible tone-deaf person depending on how we raise him from birth. For example, if we record terribly tone-deaf music and play the tape every day for them, both will eventually become terribly tone-deaf. It is the same as when an Osaka resident raises American babies in Osaka; everyone of them will easily learn to speak fine Osaka dialect.

Every child grows; everything depends upon how he is raised.

When I came to know this principle, I began early education in violin for the first time in Tokyo over fifty years ago. One of my earliest students, Koji Toyoda, constantly listened to the world class recordings of Kreisler at home and practiced with records of international maestros as his teachers, continuing to develop superior sensibility and skills until nineteen. Now he is one of the three violin professors in the world famous conservatory of Berlin.

Please realize that every child is a wonderful being endowed with wonderful workings of life and capable of developing. Small children who studied with Koji, including Toshiya Eto, Takeshi Kobayashi, Kenji Kobayashi, Hidetaro Suzuki, Takaya Urakawa and others, later actively taught in music schools in the States or in Europe.

Japanese performers are also playing in orchestras throughout the world, not because of heredity but because of the outstanding skills and superior musical sensibility they developed.

Next let me explain the educational method for successfully fostering children's ability. This is the principle by which every child grows.

The full score approach is the expression I use for the method of ability development. Take elementary math or language for example. Starting with the easiest material introduced at the beginning, teach first graders in such a way that every student can handle it well. Teach the same material repeatedly every day till it is mastered. By this process, the material becomes easier and easier, and the students begin to advance faster. Thorough training is what creates ability.

Then advance the students to the next level, and daily train them thoroughly in both the former and the new levels. This is full score training, an approach which produces no dropouts. Gradually add newer materials, letting students master them. This is the same as the initial stages of ability development in language by which every



child learns to speak the mother tongue fluently. A baby's progress is slow at the beginning. Starting with "yum yum" which the baby repeats every day, he goes through repeated training. As ability develops, more words are added, and he acquires more ability. Every child progresses gradually, gaining in learning speed. In the same way, whether in math or written language, it is important to take time to develop students' ability, training them by the full score method to develop ability. If this is done, every child develops without fail.

I would like to ask teachers to observe the wonderful development of speech in children, understand the principle of how life itself acquires ability, and practice the full-score-for-everyone training method. Have faith in the greatness of life, in the fact that there is no child who is no good and that every child can develop without fail.

In music education, out of my faith in the greatness of life I have, for over fifty years, accepted children without screening. I have fostered every one of them as a violin student with superior sensibility and skills. They developed by the same full score approach as in the mother tongue training. Hiroyuki Takahashi, a brain injured boy who started at age three, has developed through violin study and graduated this year at eighteen from the high school division of a special school. He has acquired the superior ability to play the Tchaikovsky violin concerto with a fine musical sense.

Ability is determined by the way the child is raised. It is an issue of the workings of life.

Of traditional approaches in elementary education, the worst is the way of advancing in teaching materials: teach, advance, teach, advance. Starting out with first graders, teachers teach to a certain level in the first term, to another level in the second term, then a test is given to determine students' degrees of achievement. This is an educational method for creating dropouts. Look at the word education, *kyoiku*, which consists of *kyo*, to teach, and *iku*, to foster. I think it means to teach and foster ability.

When you have taught, the student has not yet acquired ability. You have to train the student fully, using the same material, and help him develop ability.

In language, a child masters words through repeatedly using them, then adds more words which he masters likewise. This way his ability is gradually heightened. Whether in spoken or written language, or in math, if you teach the first material, finish it, then teach new material, thus advancing the student from material to material, the student will be a perfect dropout. In speech, gradual increase of vocabulary occurs hand in hand with mastery of what has been learned. This is how to foster ability.

Let me ask you to practice from the beginning of the first grade the ability development approach, or the full score method, which promises proper progress. Every student can learn without fail. In language, play a testing game to see if by the time the first book is finished every student can recite it from cover to cover, with the book closed. I would also like you to create the ability in every child to write out without an error any lesson requested by the teacher, also with the book closed. Try this sort of thing at the end of the first semester, and perhaps at the end of the second semester, and you will find it an effective and enjoyable method.

If you experiment with the full score training method in math and language for all students of the first three grades, children will benefit.

Every child has that potential. The full score method already stood the test when implemented at Hongoh Elementary School in a class of forty students. I am convinced that it will prove successful again. At the outset of the Hongoh experiment, one of the children, at age six, did not even understand the concept of three. Instruction took place with this child as the focus of attention, and he, too, achieved fine development through the full score training approach.

Let me ask elementary school teachers to carry out this full-score-for-everyone method, an innovative movement

in elementary education, not only for your schools but for schools throughout the world. It is an education of love for the sake of children.

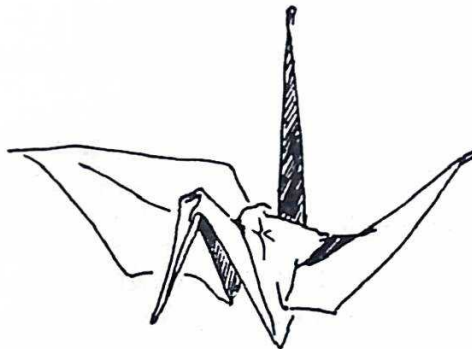
At present over 300,000 children in 39 countries are studying violin, piano, and so forth by the Suzuki method. If experiments for the first three grades are conducted, I would like to invite elementary school teachers from these 39 countries and spread an educational movement of the full score training method.

I wish to express my deepfelt respect and gratitude toward elementary school teachers for their love of children and their worthy task. I am also making efforts for the happiness of children throughout the world.

Let me again ask you to try this for the sake of children throughout the world, for the sake of a new world.

(November 1988, the fall of my ninetieth year)

*Talent Education*, no. 86



**MY DREAM**  
**FOUNDING**  
**AN INTERNATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE**  
**OF MUSIC**

Shin'ichi Suzuki

The conservatory in Matsumoto, where talent education instructors are trained, produces only seventeen or eighteen to twenty graduates each year. In light of the development of our association in the last decade, enrollment has shown no signs of expansion. So what I wish to do is to found a two-year junior college, and start with 120 first year students with the goal of educating 240 students altogether. We will not only create instructors from graduates but train students internationally toward a big development of talent education.

The junior college project has the backing of Mayor Wagoh of Matsumoto and members of the city council. The February 1988 meeting of the city council resolved to supply free the land for construction. The Mayor has also agreed to represent the project promoters.

Since then Daisuke Kamijoh, construction committee chairman, and I have gone to Tokyo many times to lobby related people in the Ministry of Education and the House of Representatives. As a result we now anticipate the opening of the school by 1992.

When the project materializes with your support, some students fostered by the Suzuki method will be among those who enter this world class junior college.

My dream is to complete this project first in Japan, then make an international junior college of music in the States, followed by another in Europe.

*Talent Education*, no. 86



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 let them ring.

—Shin'ichi Suzuki

## NAGANO PREFECTURAL CONCERT

Hirotsugu Matsui  
Chairman, Suwa Branch

### Suwa Becomes the Host

In mid November of 1987 I visited Instructor Ken'ichi Yamashita in hospital who had collapsed from overwork after the Suwa-Okaya recital which coincided with various other tasks. "Mr. Matsui," he said, "the prefectural concert took place in Nagano City last year, and in Matsumoto this year. If we follow the order, it'll be our turn next year. Let us Suwa and Okaya chapters do it." Seeing his cheerful smile, I was relieved to find him healthier than I had thought. Yet on the other hand I thought, "Oh no, it'll be a big job." Suwa and Okaya had done it only three years ago. My mind was not at all prepared to do it again. I told Mr. Yamashita how I felt. But there was still time, and he was recovering quickly. So after all we decided to accept the job at the branch chairmen's meeting for the prefectural concert. We promptly secured a hall, and set the date for Sunday, October 16, 1988. This was approved in committee.

I thought we had much time, but this was naive. Time elapsed quickly. 1988 started with the branch chapter's New Year party, followed by Seizo Azuma's recital, the visit of Masayoshi and Eiko Kataoka from St. Louis, the summer school, etc., etc. Before I realized it, it was late August. Now I had to turn on the engine, I thought. At least we had started to prepare the program in June.



Unison playing with orchestral accompaniment

### Preparing the Program

At the June 13th committee meeting, it was decided that 2,000 copies of the program should be printed. Mr. Koike, president of the printing company, is not only a former Suwa chapter chairman but a violinist in the Suwa Symphony who understands everything about the Talent Education Institute. We were able to ask him to print the program inexpensively. In order to pay for the expenses of the concert, I asked committee members and parents to collect more than 75 advertisements. Although I was not sure if we could get that many advertisers in the small Suwa area, anyway I set the deadline as the end of July. Happy news after news came in to blow away our anxiety. Companies responding with advertisements rapidly increased. I almost feared that we might need to increase the number of pages due to too many ads. I was freshly impressed by the parents' efforts and the organizational strength of talent education. More than 130 advertisements supporting the concert were gathered by the deadline date. We determined the number of pages by

the layout of the ads and the program. For the cover we emphasized local color by using a photograph of a little boat on Lake Suwa set against the mountains.

I worked on layout with Mr. Yamashita from early in the morning, and did not even know when it grew dark outside. We had to finish it that day to hand to the printer. I delivered the manuscript to Mr. Koike the following morning, the layout completed. In order to make sure, six of us proofread the galleys. 2,000 copies were ready in mid September, and promptly sent out to each chapter. Members ran around, delivering the program and collecting money for the ads. On the day of the concert, Mr. Suzuki commented that it was a good program. This made all of us forget our past efforts and realize it was a great success.

### **Reception**

On October 16, the prefectural concert concluded with great success, and we hurried to the hotel where a reception was to be held. The hall was packed with over 150 people. Mayor Kasahara of Suwa City, the former Suwa Rotary Club President Mr. Mikoshiba, and President Fujiwara of the International Friendship Association were among those who came to congratulate us. While listening to the warm words of our guests, committee members and parents were full of smiles everywhere. The plentiful food disappeared quickly. It was natural, because neither teachers nor parents on the committee had time to eat lunch. We took Mr. Suzuki to Kami-Suwa Station a little before seven, and this ended the short day which felt long.

*Talent Education*, no. 86



## LET'S WORK TOWARD "TWO-TONE VIBRATO"

Lectures in Music Instruction (58)

Shin'ichi Suzuki

I have been realizing how crucial instruction in beautiful vibrato is.

The center of our responsibility as outstanding instructors, I strongly think, should be in instructing to produce beautiful, great tone and play beautiful vibrato (in two tones).

Let me ask all Suzuki instructors. Study how to teach beautiful vibrato (in two tones) and try your best so that in one year every student will be playing with beautiful tone and beautiful vibrato.

Consider the world of vocal music. In superior soprano and alto singing, the voice always beautifully vibrates.

If, for trial's sake, a soprano or alto singer with a beautiful, fine voice sang without vibrato, the audience would burst into laughter.

Although your instruction in tone, in both violin and cello, has been helping students to produce more beautiful tone, in many cases vibrato is miserable. Many students busily move their left fingers, vibrating on the selfsame tone so that if you close your eyes no vibrato is heard.

Record your tone and listen. If it is a one-tone vibrato, not two-tone vibrato as in soprano or alto singing, or vibrato of just the fingers, not of the tone, then burst into laughter.

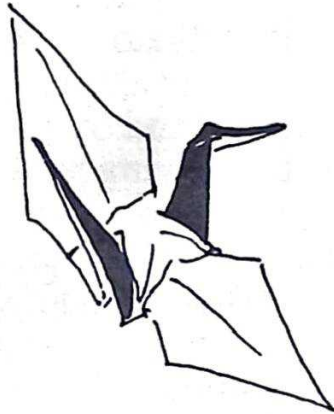
Vibrato of just the fingers is no good; vibrato of tone is the vibrato in music.

One-tone finger-only vibrato is taken for granted and widely practiced. Let your students stop it, and instruct them

in tonal vibrato. Have them play with eyes closed, for example, and listen to their own vibrato.

Instruction in beautiful tone and beautiful vibrato comprises proper, superior instruction in string playing technique. Let's make this our big assignment of the year.

*Talent Education*, no. 85



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## A NEW, SIMPLE APPROACH TOWARD RICHER TONE

### Lectures on Music Instruction (59)

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Instruct every student at the beginning of the lesson in playing whole bows with plenty of tone, always in quest for the richer and more beautiful. Here is a new approach to developing that ability.

Let the student play the following with whole bows, *ff.*



Then let him play the same with the bow held upside down, compare the tone with the tone produced before, and try to produce the same amount of tone when holding the bow in the normal way.

Next have the student play with the same amount of tone the first eight measures of the Chorus from Judas Maccabaeus starting with the third finger on A. Give this

instruction at every lesson, listen for the volume, and guide the student gradually to richer tone.

After trying this method on kenkyusei every morning for about two months, I have found improvement in everyone.

The amount of tone changes by the "panda" that creates power at the bow tip, the proper use of the thumb nail, and the bowing with a downward movement of the right elbow. Please instruct well in these areas.

*Talent Education, no. 86*



## LET'S MASTER CORRECT INTONATION

Ability Development in Music (1954-57)

Part III

From the *Evolution of the Suzuki Method*

Shin'ichi Suzuki

FOR HEIGHTENING TECHNICAL ABILITY

### Let's Master Correct Intonation

Concerning technical ability, we can think of a wide-ranging field. In a word, it can be explained as "ability of expression or of performance" in the technical areas. It does not simply mean that the hands move well. The skill to produce beautiful tonal shapes and the ability to express such shapes in proper rhythm and with correct intonation — these can also be considered aspects of technique.

Therefore, technique should be judged from the viewpoint of the quality of the ability to express.

For example, many misjudge those whose fingers blindly run around out of tune, and comment that they "have technique." It is only that their fingers move well; they do not have technique in the musical sense. A well developed motor nerve is one thing; well fostered musical technique is quite another.

The ability to use the bow with perfect freedom and accomplished bow execution, while producing fine tone, is certainly an important technique. The skill of forming required tonal shapes is also an important ability, an important technique.

Thus, the content of technical training for fostering the ability to perform and express is quite wide ranging. When we reconsider who has technique with this understanding, we will see that it is all wrong to regard those who merely move their hands fast as masters of technique; at the same time, we will clearly recognize who have "real technique."

Now, from the viewpoint of education, I would like to classify and examine issues required for achieving the level of those who have "real technique."

	Accuracy of intonation
	Natural, movable shape of the left hand
Technique	Well developed, active motor nerves
(Training)	Correct left finger movements with the beat
	Proper posture enabling proper movement
	Skillful bowing (skills of the right hand)
	Skills of the left hand

These elements occur to me as required conditions. Aside from other such issues as the skill of shaping sounds, the above points, roughly classified, comprise the skills that must be fostered.

What heightens ability? The answer is one word: "training." What is outstanding ability? The answer is again one word: "proper training in what is proper." Either way, training is the key.

If this thing that is obvious to everyone is practiced by everyone, everyone will be accomplished. If all instructors properly teach only what is proper, everyone will be accomplished.

Let us imprint this deeply in our minds.

Now, let me discuss "intonation" which is our main theme here. The instructor must accurately correct the

student's intonation so that, through training, he will learn to play even fast pieces with proper intonation. In order to foster this ability, it is necessary to start at the beginner stage and pursue it all the way through, gradually and skillfully guiding toward correct intonation.

However, if you are too strict from the start and music education is reduced to intonation drills, the child will lose interest in learning, and training will be impossible. I think the most skillful instructor is one who handles intonation as an aspect of happy music education and gradually fosters children toward finer intonation.

With this in mind, the *Suzuki Violin Method* asks that in Book 1 the instructor teach students to play at least the first and third fingers on the fourth string with extremely precise intonation. It places the focus of instruction on the intonation of the third and first fingers on all four strings. Since this is also the core of the first position, I am asking that the intonation of these two fingers be emphasized.

Naturally, this does not mean that you can neglect the rest as long as the first and third fingers are correct. As the order of achieving correct intonation, in instructing students you should first require extremely pure intonation of these two fingers.

Those who give no thought to this and instruct unsystematically will end up being frustrated, because, when they eventually try to improve students' intonation, it does not suddenly improve.

All skillful instructors help students get clear intonation of the first and third fingers while on Book 1. Next, always with a clear plan, they add the fourth finger, then the second finger, striving for precise intonation.

In order to teach proper intonation, you need to follow an order in this manner, correcting students in steps, and gradually adding the number of notes they can play accurately.

## How to Correct Intonation

A superior teacher succeeds in correcting the student's intonation in correspondence with the growth of his ability.

Start out with what is crucial, and guide him to correct note by note. In doing this you should sometimes be extremely strict. In other words, you must demand extremely clean pitch so that you can foster precise intonation in the student. That is skillful instruction. The student's intonation should improve in proportion to the increase of his ability. If you teach every note too strictly, he may lose interest or, without understanding anything, become unhappy.

As a good way to let the student first understand notes he can perceive, recently I came to think it good to try this at lesson as one of the challenges outside of the assigned piece: exercise to find the note that rings.

For example, play certain notes using the first and third fingers, and challenge the student to find them on his violin. Let him find the locations of the two notes where the entire violin will ring fully. It is crucial that the teacher demonstrate by playing correct, fully ringing sounds.

Do not vibrate. Do not let the finger touch the adjacent string even slightly.

When the correct spot is found, the string rings much, resonating with other strings, and produces a wonderfully rich tone. The resounding echo lingers long.

Assign the student to find this location. Give instructions at each lesson and keep assigning the same. The student will gradually learn to find easily the right point of sympathetic vibrations. Eventually, he will put his finger there directly. Starting at the stage where he has to finger around and determine the location, continue lessons until the stage where he can bring his finger straight to that point at first try. It is hard to say how



many days it requires, since it greatly depends on the frequency of practice. Even if the student makes much effort, it takes a fair number of days. Shift strings, and help him acquire the intuition to put his finger on the correct spot on whichever string. It will be good to start trying this at every lesson around the middle of Book 1. To teach how well the note played on the correct spot rings and to emphasize this until the student develops intuition — I have been thinking lately that this is one method of intonation training in violin.

Foster the ability to put the finger intuitively with no error on a spot that is right for a ringing tone. Increase such spots one by one. (The short cut is to foster this perceptive ability. Through trying to find the point of ringing tone, such a location spontaneously becomes desirable to the student. This also induces correct intonation.) Try to get the intonation for the first, second, third and fourth fingers by the end of Book 3, thinking this the first stage. If you don't forget to let the student conquer the finger locations one by one, you can expect considerably high results. If you continue to assign one simple thing at a time, a delicate sense toward tone never fails to develop. Naturally, if the student does not work on this very easy, short assignment at home but only tries it before the teacher at lesson, in one year he will not get even the third finger (which is taught first) to the intuitive level. No ability develops in one who does not work.

Fine ability develops only in those who practice properly and hard. I have come to know clearly through years of experience that paths are prepared impartially for human beings. Those who make no efforts never develop high ability — this is a truth, it is heaven's logic.

Those who have made efforts and learned to position the first and third fingers quickly and correctly will begin to play their pieces in an accomplished way with proper tone. These are the points of instruction for mastering the correct intonation for fingers 1 and 3 by the end of Book 1.

Practice this way of giving assignments as a new instructional method. This does not only apply to Book 1 students. I use this approach with students of all levels whenever there is a need for improving intonation or for comprehending how to let the instrument ring.

Students gradually learn that there is a better ringing spot within the well ringing area. Eventually they acquire the ability to play so that the entire instrument truly reverberates.

I start with correcting the intonation of fingers 1 and 3, then proceed to low 2 with the finger close to 1, then high 2 with the finger close to 3.

At least practice the second finger until it becomes a habit to let the second finger touch the first or third. Those who put the second finger down in the middle between fingers 1 and 3 — they are without exception students who play their pieces calmly out of tune.

I help improve intonation in this way step by step, and from advanced students I demand musical sensibility in their tone.

It is important to pay constant attention to precise intonation until the student masters the places on the string where he can feel the ringing quality. It is not enough that he has just learnt to do it, because the ability will fade away soon. The skill learned quickly is not yet part of the body.

It is also basic to teach to play the octave properly and beautifully. That is why I included scales on different keys as exercises at the end of Book 3. I would like you to assign one at a time from the beginning of Book 1 as the need occurs, in order to form a proper sense of the scale.

As ability is heightened, students will gradually play scales with greater beauty, finer musicality, and better intonation. You cannot say that they studied all the scales once through, so they need not study them any longer. I am practicing scales so they will be more accomplished and more musical.

Gradually demand greater precision at lesson. Even if it is *coarse* at the beginning, we should not forget to aim at *density*.

I have described the crucial points concerning the effort to prepare accuracy of intonation. Every learner knows how important this is.

With full knowledge of this, still people lack the effort to make intonation accurate and neglect the study of how to do it. Can this be called a common nature? Everyone can choose this truly worthless path, a path along which people who do not develop ability walk.

If they know the importance, why not make efforts through and through?

They have no ability to carry it out. In other words, the ability to practice the principle —— i.e., the heart to pursue and the desire to make efforts —— is lacking.

Yet, they think they are making efforts by playing violin a lot.

It is unavoidable that people who have this kind of grave defect will never be accomplished, will never make it, unless they make efforts to correct the defect. Therefore, in such a case, the most important goal of instruction is to foster the ability to make single-minded efforts toward the thing they found important.

Whether or not he can do this one thing determines the person's life, and his value as a human being. That ability is that crucial to the child.

I painfully realized the lack of this ability in myself. Since then I have always been making efforts to correct this defect in me. The ability to make efforts where I have found them needed —— I am always trying to make this a learning attitude throughout my life not only in music but in my personal life and in my work.

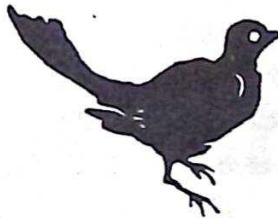
The ability to put the fourth finger in the first position correctly so that the sound will be the same as the adjacent open string —— how many years will this one thing

take? When I realized the difficulty, I continually made efforts to create proper intonation for the fourth finger.

No matter how much effort is made, it does not necessarily come out to be precise. Why? This question leads to the fact that the shape of the left hand has to be correct when putting down the finger. When we make efforts in this manner, another profound problem always emerges beyond the immediate question, and thus our study moves to deeper reaches.

Through my experiences, I have realized that the effort to correct one defect always brings me a gift: a direction to further study.

Everything including the octave and the sense of intonation comes from the ear. In trying to foster your ear, listen to the beautiful sense of the scale and intonation of Maestros Casals and Kreisler.



### Accuracy of Positions

In traditional violin instruction, we moved from the first position to the third position, skipping the second position. And for the third position, we had to learn very many etudes, spending many months on one volume. When that was finished, we had to study yet another volume only on the second position.

Having gone through this type training, we have a good sense of the third position, while we are poor at the

second and fourth positions. In fact, it is difficult to develop intuitive ability for those positions.

At present, advanced children in various branches of the Talent Education Institute have no fear of any position. Those of them who developed proper intuition and worked hard play equally well on any position without the insecurity and unevenness with which we were brought up.

I find this a matter of great pleasure. This reflects the achievement of my *Position Etudes*.

It is one of my discoveries, a new textbook whose parallel you probably will not find in foreign countries. I believe that an approach similar to this will eventually be adopted throughout the world, but that is just a matter of course when you come to think of it.

The traditional way of thinking the third position easy, skipping from the first to the third, and thoroughly training on the third position using a whole volume ——— this is of course effective for the study of the third position. However, staying fixed on the third position for a long time at the crucial beginner stage unexpectedly becomes a cause of large disaster. One remains insecure about not easily mastering the second and fourth positions through the senses.

Having noticed this, I prepared a thin volume which will foster intuitive ability: in it the student plays the same melodies using the first to the seventh positions so as to train the sense of intonation in different positions. I first trained myself using the book, and published it only after I discovered that the unevenness of my intuitive ability, insecurity about the second, fourth, and sixth positions, etc. were effectively wiped away.

The small amount of teaching materials in the book is so designed that the amount of training can be large. It focuses on what is important, which will be repeated by those who make efforts until they reach a sense of security, i.e., the real ability, or certainty, concerning positions.

I use that thin position etude book on a student from Book 4, using it over two years to create the real ability to use positions. In two years, the ability to shift positions accurately and intuitively is created. I give lessons on the book twice, and on the third time around, I find out the student's insecure positions, concentrate on those positions, and eliminate his insecurity.

The approach is this: from when the student enters Book 4, start giving a lesson on a position on a string at each lesson and continue this for two years. Always assign one exercise per lesson. Limit it to a position on a string; there is no need to assign a lot.

It is absolutely prohibited to use the etudes in such an unprincipled way as to ask each student to practice them at home without having gone over them at lesson. You should instruct at lesson on a position etude, watching the student's growth in correct intonation and intuitive ability. This is because it is basic for future development.

I use the position etudes also as training for producing fine tone. In other words I make use of it for both correct position and beautiful tone. I train myself as I try to foster in my students finer tone and more correct intonation. I find them very effective.

Teaching materials are to be utilized wisely in order to foster fine ability. The same materials can foster a variety of levels of ability depending upon how they are taught and how they are learned.

By the traditional method, as I have already said, students practiced a volume of third position etudes long and thoroughly. So they became comfortable with the third position, developing a fine sense of that position. However, in many cases they were uncomfortable with the second position, and felt insecure about the fourth position. Why was this so? I think that they spent too much of their crucial time on the third position, and the teacher's insecurity about the second position was reflected in his students.

When one speaks Japanese until age twenty and studies English from age twenty-one, no matter how hard

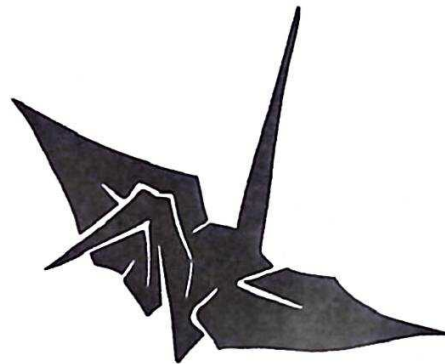
you try, your Japanese will be dominant. Berlitz, a great linguist and founder of the international Berlitz Language Schools grew up multi-lingually, his grandparents and parents speaking different languages to him from birth. I thought that the sense of positions, like languages, must be considered as a question of when to introduce them.

I thought the second position I felt insecure about was a defect in my upbringing. In my *Position Etudes*, I make students think of all positions as equal from the first to the seventh. I created the way to eliminate fear by giving position exercises from the start.

However, if no instruction is given that utilizes the materials effectively, we will produce students in whom all positions are insecure and who will play fumblingly at random.

If you use these etudes in instruction with the idea of creating fine ability which will work with intuition, your students will without fail develop secure skills.

The *Position Etudes*, I think, was an innovation. I would like you to study how to use it effectively in your instruction. For ability development up to Book 10, these basic exercises will be sufficient for helping strong ability to grow.



### Left Hand Shape

Whatever activity we are talking about, in order to move we must think of the most natural, relaxed condition as a basic assignment.

Look at someone you think is unskilled. You will find that he is engaged in a difficult activity full of unnatural force and stiffness.

Think of the shape of a pianist's hands. Unskilled pianists also have forced hands, but you will not find the same extreme unnaturalness found with violin players. In piano, even clumsy players somehow move their fingers on the keyboard, using them as their own fingers.

At least no one plays the piano with a pencil in hand. The right hand at least is free. Even the most unskilled pianist has a hand shaped several steps better than a violinist's left hand. Look at a violinist. A clumsy player holds the neck of the violin with his left hand, and at the same time is trying to play the violin with the fingers of that same hand that is already occupied.

This is the extreme of unreasonableness. He is carrying out a method that will never allow him to improve. If, when learning piano, you must hold a pencil in each hand while playing, the fingers of both hands will be deprived of their freedom. And if you do that, people will laugh at you.

Yet in violin, many people are trying to move the left fingers while holding the neck of the violin in the left hand. With nobody to laugh, they calmly continue what they are doing. Isn't this unreasonable?

Many people do this unreasonable thing and complain: "Somehow I am clumsy and my fingers don't move well." This is a situation even before thinking about the "left hand shape." We need to learn to remove the unreasonableness of wanting to firmly hold, or fix between fingers, the neck of the violin.

Emphasizing this problem, from about the time children have learned to play Twinkle in Book 1, I let them face each other two by two while playing the first variation, and shake hands with their partners with their left hands each time they play an open string. They are not allowed to disrupt the tempo. They enjoy this, thinking they are playing a game. I let them form a habit in this way, and gradually help remove the concept of



holding the violin with the left hand, with emphasis on fostering a hand and its fingers with at least the same amount of freedom as a beginner pianist has. This is a necessary approach.

Then it will be possible to improve the left hand shape. No matter how hard you try to shape your left hand correctly while still holding the neck of the violin, there is no way of doing it since the fingers are immobile.

Concerning the left hand, for a long time I was only vaguely thinking about forming a free hand. Of course it is truly difficult to acquire freedom of the left hand. All I could do was hear maestros' performances, observe the absolutely free activities of their left hand, and think that one can say one has a free left hand only when it moves as theirs. I did not observe enough how much I was restricting the freedom of my left hand, and, although occasionally I made efforts, before I knew it I was feeling the lack of freedom.

Unless I constantly study, make efforts, and train myself to free my left hand, I cannot improve in this area. I realize with pain that I can inadvertently shape my left hand unnaturally, its ability robbed by the neck of the violin.

The habit formed over many years cannot easily be corrected.

This makes me think how important it is with child instruction to pay careful attention from the beginning and let children master a good shape. Moreover it is desirable to continue to watch it, and make it their common sense to have a well shaped free left hand.

An ability formed properly from the start is completely different. How difficult it is to correct the ability already mistakenly formed — I know this through my own experience.

## WITH THE FOUR CHILDREN

### A mother's Note

Hiroko Doi  
Hiroko Suzuki Class

#### Encounter with the Suzuki Method

The relationship between talent education and our home goes back to 1970. Since a decade is called "an age," that was "two ages" ago. What long months and years I have come, crying and laughing with my children around the piano.

In 1969 when we moved to Osaka, we happened to live next door to Shimei Kawasaki, piano instructor. Wanting my oldest daughter to take piano lessons, I went to see him. "An epoch-making piano teaching method has been developed, which does not begin with Beyer as in the traditional approach," he said, referring to the Suzuki method.

Actually the Suzuki method was not a new expression to my ear. Long ago when I was practicing violin, a member of the same class switched to the Suzuki method, and in a brief period of time learned to play difficult pieces with beautiful tone. Eyes wide open with surprise, I watched her change. It left a strong impression on me. "So, it's the piano version of that talent education; then it must be really wonderful," I thought and willingly joined. It didn't even occur to me that I as the mother was going to have to share grave responsibilities under the principle, "Everything depends upon the parent."

My four year old daughter, who had until then lived quietly at home with her one year old sister and me, was so nervous before other people that she walked awkwardly, putting forth the right hand and right leg together, then the left arm and left leg together. She being this stiff, the first priority was to ease her tension. She learned the joy of music through games with several children her age: guessing notes, stepping to the rhythm, playing with castanets. After about a year of patient instruction, when she finally started to move on in piano, she was given a chance to play a Bach minuet at the Kansai teachers' seminar. Performers were seated separately from their parents. Both my daughter and I felt quite insecure, as I recall with a smile looking at the now completely discolored program.

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Since no cassette tapes were around yet, her early elementary level graduation tape was recorded reel to reel. The deadline being later than now, I remember that the taping took place in early February. The submission of a tape experienced once, her practice pace was established, when my husband was transferred again. We moved to Chiba in July 1973.

I often hear that you have to start over from scratch when you switch teachers, but my daughter was able to resume where she had left off. This deepened my faith in the method which has securely organized textbooks.



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

*(Five Mottoes of Talent Education)*

## Resistance and Collision

We started going to Haruko Mori's class in September, this time also joined by my second daughter who was then four. My oldest daughter's resistance began around then. She would not start practice on coming home from school. When she finally sat before the piano, she would not last ten minutes. If I urged her, she would play a little, then her attention would shift to something else. This being the case, I thought maybe I should first let her have fun as much as she wanted, and changed her practice time. But then she was so tired from playing that she only yawned in front of the piano. What about bath, what about supper? Busily trying to fit everything in, I only felt irritated.



The Dois

Finally there were days when she did not touch the piano all day. I said to her, "Didn't Mr. Suzuki say that the day you don't have to practice is the day you are too ill to eat?" "Then I won't eat," she said. I too got carried away and said, "Then don't." She watched TV, and went to sleep supperless. Looking at her still childlike face, I shed tears wondering why on earth parent and child were going through this.

This was a collision between a child who came to hate the daily practice and a parent who wished to let her continue to a certain degree what she had once started. It could not be easily solved. Even so, she wanted to go to her weekly lessons, and continued to do so though hardly preparing for them. Haruko Mori would stop her where she stumbled, and say, "Please play this section ten times." Once, twice, . . . she counted, then after the tenth time she would say with a smile, "You've improved." Although I would never have been able to copy her, I learned what it was to treat a child with patience.

Even after that my daughter continued to hate to practice and finally said she was quitting piano, when my husband who had been silently watching the situation extended a helping hand: "Since you've come so far, why don't you continue just a little longer, then quit if you still hate it?" She seemed to find herself salvaged by these words. He also criticized me: "Isn't it better not to expect too much progress from a child? Music by its nature is something that should be happy."

I resolved to watch her growth with a more placid mind. On coolly reflecting on our lives, I realized that my daughter at that time had just changed schools and was doing her best to get used to the new environment. Moreover, when the company employees' housing was newly completed, we had to move there after a three months' stay in a temporary place. Busy with newborn twins, I was feeling fretful not knowing how to find the time to listen to two daughters' piano practice. At the moment I felt that 24 hours a day were hardly enough. Thinking that it was fine to quit if we didn't enjoy it, however, seemed to give us unexpected relaxation.

In December, when my oldest daughter had more or less calmed down, this time my second daughter refused, on the day of the recital, to play in her first Mori class event, ending in nominal participation only in the printed program. The following year Instructor Mori thoughtfully prepared her to play a duet with her big sister. Becoming sick from much nervousness that day, her body was

shaky as she performed. The teacher praised her much afterwards. This helped her to relax, apparently wiping away her fear of playing in front of an audience. Having later performed on the big Sun Plaza stage twice, she still seems unable to forget those encouraging words and the duet she played then, "The Word 'Big' ."

### **Ability That Develops Through Listening**

A sudden transfer brought us to Tokyo, where Hiroko Suzuki was our new teacher. The many students in her class frequently gathered for such happy events as mini concerts, family concerts, and Christmas. Since a student is to play a different piece on each occasion, it is necessary to practice piece by piece and expand the repertory. Hiroko Suzuki being the type who guides students powerfully in big strides, at first it was a job for my daughters just to follow her.

As my older daughters became higher graders, they gradually lost the time to listen to the study tapes. If a tape was on while they were doing school work, they would find it disturbing and stop it. So usually we had the tape recorder on before school in the morning and during supper, letting the music reach the unconscious ear rather than listening with concentration. However, when new pieces were assigned, they listened out of necessity. If the student herself was motivated, I realized, she progressed greatly; in other words, "everything depends upon myself [the student]."

My third and fourth daughters also started piano when four years old. Having listened to my second daughter's Twinkle already while in my tummy, they began to touch the piano with no particular thought. Nor did I have the parental determination as with my oldest daughter to raise them as good piano students. Their start was natural. Although at first they only practiced ten minutes or so a day, they could play pieces with no trouble. I was impressed to see the proof of the ability fostered through listening. Even so, until Book 4 or so when they were

able to read the music on their own, my responsibility was double for twins. It was time consuming, but I enjoyed accompanying them to their lessons and taking notes. This was perhaps because my older daughters were already practicing alone at that time, which made me realize that children needed parents only for a brief period of time.



Chizu, fourth daughter, performs the first movement of the Coronation at Kanto District Piano Graduation (Sun Plaza Hall, March 1985).

## Graduation and Summer School

In 1970 my first daughter recorded her middle level graduation after spending three years on that level, and was quite unexpectedly asked to perform in the Sun Plaza concert. The first graduation concert was held that year in the Tokyo District, with a simple program printed on one sheet of paper. From then on, it became an annual spring vacation event for my daughters to attend the graduation ceremony and perform in the graduation concert. It has lasted until this year, the last for the family to finish the Third Stage of the graduate level. When all four were submitting a tape, the piano at my parents' house was also



used for practice. Otherwise there was no problem. "Scheduling practice hours must be hard," people have asked; but contrary to what they think, the children compromised with one another so beautifully that sometimes there was no sound of piano all day.

The youngest two were conscious of each other and felt competitive about pieces. Thanks to Hiroko Suzuki's thoughtful instruction, however, they were able to advance at equal levels without a fight. Even when my third daughter quit practicing for four months due to open heart surgery, the balance between the two girls was not disrupted. Not only that, she played in a Sun Plaza concert half a year after the operation, which was profoundly moving. The girl who had lain as if lifeless in the intensive care room was now actually performing. No words could have possibly expressed my joy. All I knew was that I was grateful to the teacher. My fourth daughter played the first movement of the Coronation concerto three years ago, and treasures the program autographed by the orchestra members.

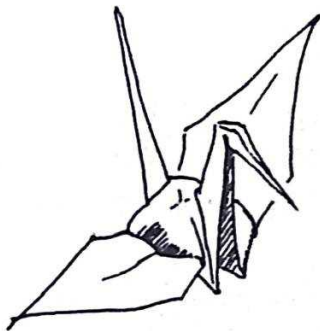
We attended Piano Summer School three times, receiving a different impression on each occasion. When I went with the older two in 1980, it was piano all day from morning till evening. When they finished their lessons, they visited class after class, listening to lessons of friends from different areas. At night they were simply exhausted. We did not even visit Matsumoto Castle during our stay. The only recreation the girls had was bike hoop trundling in the Agata woods. The following year my second daughter, having just turned a middle school student, had been at a training camp as a member of the extracurricular tennis club. After arriving at Matsumoto, she practiced hard on a rented piano all day long to barely get ready for lessons. We had a few days filled with thrills.

When I attended the summer school with the younger two, it was like a pleasant outing from the beginning because they were with four friends from the same class. They only went to their own lessons, and when they were

free, they even went to the Kami-Kochi Highlands. At night there was great turmoil with pillow-throwing and head-standing parties. Recalling the serious expression of the same children at the piano during the day and the beautiful tone they produced, I could not but realize the greatness of children's ability and the teaching method that heightens it.

This spring when my youngest daughters graduated from the Third Stage of the graduate level, Mr. Suzuki gave us words we did not deserve. I have described how our family lived, and especially how I went right and left with my children not knowing where we were. My oldest daughter, a fourth year student in the piano department of a music school, is working hard in search of better tone before her graduation exams. My second daughter, is a sophomore in college majoring in English literature. When her younger sisters bring home their newly assigned pieces, she still often plays them on the piano to show how they sound. The youngest ones, ninth graders, are so relaxed that they don't even go to *juku*, preparatory school for high school and college entrance exams. When the time comes and they are put to the test, however, I expect that they will display their persistence and concentration fostered through piano training. I am grateful to all the many people who have helped us.

*Talent Education*, no. 86



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 let them ring.

——Shin'ichi Suzuki

