

Suzuki  
Piano  
Basics  
Foundation News

To facilitate, promote, and educate the public on the way of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka

**Piano Basics  
Foundation News**

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*How to Capture  
the Hearts of Children*  
(Part 36 of 3)

**By Haruko Kataoka**

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter  
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from a Lecture delivered at the  
39<sup>th</sup> Chubu Japan Medical Congress of Pediatrics, Matsumoto,  
August 24, 2003 (4 months before Sensei's death in January, 2004)  
Translated by Chisa Aoki and  
Teri Paradero  
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I am always contemplating, what exactly we should be teaching children. We should be teaching them the basics. Everything is about the basics. The one thing that I most lament is that present-day Japanese do not sit on a chair with good posture; nor are they able to sit on the *tatami* (straw mats on floor). We have lost good posture. This is another aspect of the sign of our times. Since the end of the war, life on the *tatami* has disappeared. Now our life is conducted at a desk, sitting on a chair. We have lost the opportunity to develop the ability to have proper posture.

I saw a television program where a teacher neglects to ask the students to sit with good posture. As a result the students bring their eye level down to the desktop resulting in rounded backs as they write. I wonder why this teacher does not teach good posture.

During the Edo period, when children were educated in temple elementary schools, the brush was the writing instrument. If your back was not straight, you could not utilize the soft end of the brush to write. With advances in civilization arrived the advent of modern day writing instruments like the ballpoint pen and the pencil. Because these writing tools are firm and solid, there is no need for the human body to be strong. People like my mother who were born in the Meiji period wore kimonos and lived the traditional Japanese way of sitting on the *tatami*. Upon returning home from school, my mother would sit properly and bow with her hands positioned in front of her knees

and announce that she had come home, or else she would be scolded.

Nowadays, I feel that all basics have been lost---to sit properly with a strong back and to listen to a lot of classical music...

However, related to this topic of listening to classical music, much scientific and medical research has been conducted especially in the field of rehabilitation. In America, they have made great strides and advances in this area.

About twenty years ago, I had the opportunity to go to a children's hospital in Calgary, Canada. Immediately upon entering the hospital, I noticed that classical music was being quietly aired from speakers mounted on the ceiling. Classical music continued to be played for the entire duration of my visit, so I asked a doctor if they played classical music all the time. He responded, "Twenty-four hours." I

inquired what the reason was for playing classical music. He said that it helped patients tremendously particularly those who were seriously ill. With my limited ability to speak English, that was all I could manage to ask. However this experience has had a profound impact on me.

Various research about listening to classical music, more specifically, the music of Mozart, has shed light on the positive effects on the human body. So from the time children are born, or even sooner, when they are still in the womb, they should be listening to a lot of good classical music. Then, when they are born, all the adults who are involved in the children's upbringing must treat them as individual human beings and take the job of nurturing them very seriously.

Long ago, Dr. Suzuki said that mothers seem to think that because they have given birth to their children they are free to do whatever they want with them. Of course, in the beginning because babies are helpless, mothers change their children's diapers. However, they maintain this view of their children's helplessness through-out their upbringing. So parents forget to bring them up to be independent and self-reliant. This, Dr. Suzuki stated, becomes the problem. I am in total agreement.

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## ***A Word to Parents & Teachers***

***By Keiko Ogiwara***

*A speech delivered after the Friendship Concert in Phoenix on Sunday, February 7, 2010*

Thank you very much for today's concert. We are very fortunate to come to the spring-like warmth of Phoenix from the midwinter cold in Japan.

We are also happy to attend today's concert and meet the teachers who have gathered together to research how to teach students.

They say that the economy is bad everywhere. However, the practice you do with your children at home will become their assets, assets that will never be influenced by the world economy and will never run out

Through studying the arts, children can acquire the abilities of patience, effort, concentration and beautiful sensibility.

Fathers and mothers, please keep raising your children with faith and conviction.

We are looking forward to seeing you all and hearing your performance again someday in the future.

Thank you.

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## Our Friend Cheryl Kraft

At the recent meeting of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Board, we reluctantly accepted the resignation of founding Board member Cheryl Kraft.

Cheryl worked tirelessly and single-handedly during the initial incorporation of SPBF in the state of Washington with an attorney and an accountant to form our corporation; and for several years she prepared our tax returns. She also served as travel agent for Dr. Kataoka's two or three annual trips to North America for many years, and in so doing coordinated her itinerary among various workshops, one of which Cheryl hosted on numerous occasions in Bellingham, Washington.

Cheryl was always a levelheaded voice on our Board, and helped guide the Foundation through its formative years in the early and mid-90's when Dr. Kataoka's status as a Suzuki Method teacher was being challenged by the International Suzuki Association and when our Foundation was threatened with legal action for using the Suzuki name. During these times of stress and growth, we came to rely on Cheryl's long history with Dr.

Kataoka, with Suzuki Piano Basics, and with the larger Suzuki Method worldwide.



During her husband's illness Cheryl became unable to attend Suzuki Piano Basics events, and after Jerry's death the focus of her work changed. She nevertheless remained a solid member of the Board, always with good advice and suggestions. We are very sorry to lose her, but fully understand her need to carry on with other aspects of her life, including her new blended family.

Cheryl, we pay tribute to you and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for everything you've done for the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation. Without your selfless efforts our organization would not be what it is today. We wish you all the best in the future.

*The Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Board: Cleo Ann Brimhall, Gloria Elliott, Karen Hagberg, Linda Nakagawa*

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To add or change items on the Suzuki Piano Basics website, contact Karen Hagberg ([kh@hagbergsuzuki.com](mailto:kh@hagbergsuzuki.com), 585-244-0490)

**Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site and discussion group:**

**<http://core.ecu.edu/hist/wilburnk/SuzukiPianoBasics>**