

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  
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## Invisible to the Eyes But More Important!

*By Haruko Kataoka*

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter

Vol. 12 No. 10, March 3, 2003

Translated by Chisa Aoki and

Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was an era when tangibles, things that we can see with our eyes, were perceived as important. The tangible, visible things consisted of worldly possessions and therefore of money. Countless wars were waged for the acquisition of worldly possessions and money.

Certainly, the importance of material goods and money cannot be denied. Life is not possible without them. However, after spending a hundred years accumulating tangibles, it is now time, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to value that which cannot be seen with our eyes.

I had the opportunity to read *The Hidden Messages in water*. This book reports the results of experiments with water, such as exposing water to classical music or to a person's voice. I was surprised to learn that water crystals produced from the exposed water were either structurally normal or abnormal depending on the music or the words spoken, as if the water had awareness. (*Editor's note: This book was a sensation in Japan. The author took microscopic photographs of water crystals, which reacted to their environment. If the water was exposed to negative thoughts or noisy music, they became misshapen and deformed. Conversely, exposure to positive thought and to classical music produced perfect crystalline structures.*) Music and the spoken word are not tangible and therefore not visible to the eyes. Recently I spoke to a girl, a sixth grader, who had been conducting an experiment that studied the effect of classical music on the growth of white

radish sprouts. She showed me the data that she had collected from this study. I realized the truth about water! If water that was exposed daily to good classical music has the ability to form normal crystalline structures, and this water in turn is absorbed by the white radish sprouts, then of course healthy growth of the sprouts would result. The sprouts that were not exposed to music failed to grow and rotted in the water.

Perhaps, water might be the heart. No, water is the heart. That is the reason why it understands music and the spoken word.

Remember that the human body consists of approximately eighty percent water. Our bodies are full of water. The heart is not only that small heart-shaped organ. Rather, can it be that our whole body is the heart? It is the heart that is walking. What is so wonderful is that we, each and every one of us, all possess a big heart. What can we do to not only preserve or maintain but also to improve every part of our bodies? The white radish sprouts knew. One way is to listen every day to a lot of good classical music. Another is to talk to our own body, in other words, to tell the water in our body, that you worked very hard today or to express a simple thank you. Why not express a variety of positive messages? It is entirely possible that your body will function better and that your heart, as a result of a positive outlook, will become healthier. I feel that you will be able to spend the whole day in a wonderful state of being after doing these things. Because I was unaware of the properties of water until now, I used to get preoccupied thinking to myself how tired I was, or feel bad over a negative outcome, or ask myself if I should give up. I couldn't have thought about thanking myself while being in such a negative state.

I would like to relate to you what happened in my family. Ten months ago my granddaughter fell ill from a very worrisome disease. It became necessary for her to take many medications that

caused serious side effects. She continued with the medications even though there was no indication that they were working. We were deeply troubled by the ever-worsening adverse reactions.

We finally had to make a decision to ask her doctor to stop administering any more medications, even if it resulted in her condition deteriorating. We told the doctor that we were more concerned about the long term damage she would sustain from the drugs.

Instead of medications, we turned to Mozart! All day and night, Mozart would be playing on the CD player with the volume turned down low. It has been over two months now since we started, and we have not skipped a single day of listening.

To our amazement, since we decided to switch from medications to Mozart, my granddaughter, who had been an invalid, became healthier than ever before! Mozart was better for her body than medications! I truly believe this. However at this time there is no scientific proof that something like music, something that cannot be seen with the eyes, is good for the body. It is not possible to collect data to prove such a thing. Because there is no conclusive data or proof, I am sure there are many who might think this idea ridiculous.

Classical music offers a positive influence even to healthy children. There are no adverse side effects. Please everyone, let children hear classical music.

I believe that, for us humans, being good to each and every person's heart, that which cannot be seen with the eyes, is the path to world peace and universal happiness.

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# Let's Listen More to Our CDs

***By Haruko Kataoka***

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter

Vol. 11 No. 9, February 5, 2002

Translated by Chisa Aoki and

Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

Let's listen to recordings of great concert artists every day.

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki was a person who was always fond of making jokes, and he delighted us with conversations peppered with his humorous outlook on life. One day he had this to say about recordings:

*In my day, when I wanted to listen to a great artist's performance, I would have to board a ship to Vladivostok. From there, I would have to take a train, the very boring Siberian Railway, for two weeks all the way to Europe. When I finally arrived there, I could attend a great concert. What can we do these days? The great performers come and stay in your home [referring to recorded media], and without having to offer dinner or tea you can listen to them whenever you please. What a wonderful opportunity! It's crazy not to take advantage of it.*

It is really true! So let's listen a lot every day to recordings of the pieces you are presently studying or to great pieces that you are not yet studying. They will all become your assets, depending on how many times you listen. What you hear now will become part of you that will never go away. Please make the effort to listen to many different recordings. Please listen at whatever volume you prefer, loud or quiet. No matter what the volume, the human psyche can take it all in.

It is the same when learning a foreign language. It is also the same when we learned our own language (our "mother tongue"). Because we were constantly listening all day, every day since the day we were born, we are all able to speak our mother tongue very fluently. When you study music, it is of utmost importance that we listen to the best music, which means the best performances, by the best performers.

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# ***Wisdom from the Dalai Lama***

***By Karen Hagberg***

*“Modern education pays attention to the development of the brain and the intellect, but this is not enough. We need also to be able to develop warm-heartedness in our educational systems. This we need from kindergarten all the way through university.”*

9/9/11 Dalai Lama posting on Facebook

This quote embodies a main point of Dr. Kataoka’s book *Sensibility and Education*. As our schools continue to face funding cuts for the arts, our work as piano teachers becomes increasingly important in the lives of our students. Let’s not forget that we are teaching, in addition to music, warm-heartedness.

What exactly does this mean? we may ask. Don’t we have enough to teach with attention to posture, balance, tone, relaxation, etc.? Dr. Kataoka described it as developing the *sensibility* of a human being. While developing the intellect helps to solve practical problems, education that ignores



Karen Hagberg in her studio, 2011.. Photo by Dorothy

the sensibility of the child can produce a callous attitude toward the child’s environment and toward other people. It can produce neurotic, maladjusted adults. Dr. Suzuki always pointed out that his goal was to teach students so that they would develop into worthy human beings. Dr. Kataoka pursued this goal by teaching parents to have their children listen to live, acoustic music; to practice on the best possible piano; to eat well-prepared, fresh food; to wear fabrics made of natural fibers; to experience the beauty of nature; to be given the opportunity to view great painting and sculpture. She often counseled parents on extra-musical topics.

Since she wrote her book, the world of children has become an increasingly virtual world, with so much of their experience merely an imitation of the real thing. How much of their time are our children staring into a video or computer screen? How much processed food are they eating? Are they wearing and sleeping on synthetic fabrics? Are they listening only to recorded or amplified music? Are they seeing only reproduced images of things in the real world? In 2011 too many American children are experiencing these things almost exclusively.

Aesthetic experience requires the *real* thing, not something that sounds, looks, tastes, or feels sort of like the real thing. Aesthetic experience makes us feel one with our universe and empathy with other human beings. It gives us warm-heartedness. What kind of adults will develop from children who are deprived contact with their physical reality?

Educators agree that children are principally influenced by their parents to around age 9. After that, the major influence comes from peers. What we experience early in life affects us most profoundly. This means that parents have a huge affect on how children will turn out. Children do not choose their own environment. Adults who are responsible for young children need always to be aware of the environment they are creating. Is it an environment that provides the child contact with reality? Is it an environment that holds the potential for aesthetic experience? Is it an environment that nurtures a child’s natural tendencies toward warm-heartedness? Parents are in charge of their child’s environment. They, and those of us who teach their children, have an awesome responsibility, don’t you think?

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## *February Workshops*

Keiko Ogiwara Sensei and Keiko Kawamura Sensei will come from Japan to conduct 5-day workshops in, Salt Lake City, Utah and in Phoenix, Arizona in February 2012. Please see Upcoming Events on page 8 for dates and contact information. We hope you will all consider attending one or both of these events and possibly to bring a student. We all need a week for ourselves to concentrate on the art of teaching once or twice a year. Hope to see you there.



Keiko Kawamura Sensei during a teacher panel discussion at the 10-Piano rehearsals in Matsumoto, April 2008. Photo by Malinda Rawls.



Keiko Ogiwara Sensei teaching in Dr. Kataoka's former studio in Matsumoto, April 2010. Photo by Malinda Rawls.

**Teachers :** Now is the time of year to encourage families to join Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation for the 2012 calendar year. Family membership is only \$25/year to receive their own copy of the newsletter and to get discounts for materials and free shipping. Please tell your families about this good deal, and see what happens when your parents read Dr. Kataoka's articles at home. You will notice an increase in motivation and dedication.  
Guaranteed!

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## ***Wisdom from Dr. Shinichi Suzuki***

Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens. If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart.+

Music exists for the purpose of growing an admirable heart.+

It is necessary to be concerned about the importance of educating a really beautiful human spirit.+

Wrong education and upbringing produces ugly personalities, whereas a fine upbringing and good education will bring forth superior sense and feeling, as well as nobility and purity of mind.+

### DEEPLY DISCOUNTED

#### ***Suzuki Piano Basics Starter Packs***

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation is pleased to continue to offer its members Starter Packs for your students at a price even lower than our usual discounted price for materials. As usual, all materials are sent to Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Members free of postage. We hope you can take advantage of this opportunity. This offer is limited to current members of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation.

**Starter Pack #1 \$50.00**      **CDs**    **Kataoka recordings of Books 1-3**  
**Books**    **Nurtured by Love, by Shinichi Suzuki**  
**Sensibility and Education, by Haruko Kataoka**  
**How to Teach Beginners (Books 1-2), by Haruko Kataoka**

**Starter Pack #2 \$25.00**      **Books**    **Nurtured by Love, by Shinichi Suzuki**  
**Sensibility and Education, by Haruko Kataoka**  
**How to Teach Beginners (Books 1-2), by Haruko Kataoka**

Please use order form enclosed with this newsletter or contact Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer, 242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento, California 95831 [g.nakagawa@comcast.net](mailto:g.nakagawa@comcast.net)

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# ***Piano Basics Foundation***

## ***Upcoming Workshops/Events***

**February 3-7, 2012**  
**Salt Lake City, Utah**  
Teacher Research Workshop  
with Keiko Ogiwara & Keiko Kawamura  
Contact Nila Ledesma 801-942-5472  
[nilaledesma@msn.com](mailto:nilaledesma@msn.com)

**February 10-14, 2012**  
**Phoenix, Arizona**  
Teacher Research Workshop  
with Keiko Ogiwara & Keiko Kawamura  
Contact Gloria Elliott 623-466-7447  
[gelliott50@aol.com](mailto:gelliott50@aol.com)

**April 12-29, 2012**  
**Matsumoto, Nagano, Japan**  
Harmony Hall  
POSTPONED INDEFINITELY DUE TO  
EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE  
International Suzuki Piano Basics 10-Piano Concert  
Contact: Karen Hagberg 585-244-0490  
[kh@hagbergsuzuki.com](mailto:kh@hagbergsuzuki.com)

**June 18-22, 2012**  
**Louisville, Kentucky**  
Louisville Suzuki Piano Basics Institute  
University of Louisville  
Contact Bruce Boiney 502-241-5921  
[boiney@suzukipiano.com](mailto:boiney@suzukipiano.com)  
<http://louisville.edu/music/suzukipiano>

**August, 2-6, 2012**  
**Rochester, NY**  
Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop  
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura  
Friendship Concert featuring students from Japan  
Contact Karen Hagberg 585-244-0490  
[kh@hagbergsuzuki.com](mailto:kh@hagbergsuzuki.com)

**August, 9-13, 2012**  
**Sacramento, California**  
Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop  
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura  
Friendship Concert featuring students from Japan  
Contact Linda Nakagawa 916-422-2952  
[g.nakagawa@comcast.net](mailto:g.nakagawa@comcast.net)

**The events listed above are for the information of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation members and others. Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation does not endorse, sanction, or sponsor events.**

To add or change items on this list and 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>**