

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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LET'S TEACH HARDSHIP

By Haruko Kataoka

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter
Vol. 9 No. 8, January 1, 2000
Translated by Chisa Aoki and
Teri Paradero
Edited by Karen Hagberg

The arrival of the year 2000 makes us aware that humankind has existed to be able to commemorate such an event. Arriving at any juncture in time is so historic that we must make sure to celebrate the momentousness of such an accomplishment.

Next, our focus must concentrate seriously on the future of our children, and on what we adults must do to help them conduct their lives in the 21st century.

Having brought up children of my own, I know well how it feels to be a parent. Inevitably, while our children are little, it is very difficult to resist giving them what they desire. Then when they start school, there is an excessive concern over their school grades.

I remember fondly how the late Suzuki Sensei often used to say that all people who can speak Japanese (our mother tongue) are intelligent. Being intelligent however does not imply that we are all the same, like robots. Our differences are revealed in the various ways our intelligence is directed toward whatever interests us. Parents, and those other adults who are present in children's lives, must acknowledge these interests and guide them in a direction that will allow them to succeed in these areas. Growing up in such a nurturing environment gives children the confidence to forge onward no matter what difficulties they encounter in their journey through life.

The generation of people who grew up in the Meiji Period (1868-1912) had a saying that one must grow up with hardships even if you have to buy them. Childhood is such a wonderful time in a person's life. As I previously mentioned,

with the loving acknowledgement of parents as support, children have the strength (energy) to endure any kind of adversity that may befall them.

Traveling to the United States from time to time, I have had the chance to make some observations. When a Japanese family emigrates together to the US and the children start attending school, the parents end up speaking English at home because they feel so bad for their children having to deal with two languages. Consequently, they allow their children to lose their ability to speak Japanese. Immigrant families from other nations, in contrast, strictly speak their mother tongue at home.

I know a Japanese person who was brought up by wonderful parents. She is Haruko Fujita, my piano teacher when I was eighteen years old. Not only was she a pianist, at age twenty-seven she attended the university after the war when such things became possible for women. She studied law at the University of Tokyo. Only three women had graduated from there when she began.

She lived in Germany from the time she was five until she was ten due to her

father's work. At school, she spoke German but at home her family spoke only Japanese amongst themselves. When they returned to Japan at the end of five years, the languages were reversed. At home, they spoke German and at school she spoke Japanese. Strict parents, those who realize that bestowing children with an environment that requires using twice the normal effort, are wonderful!

The other day, I was watching educational TV. The program was filmed last spring and featured the world-renowned violinist, Isaac Stern, giving a lesson in Miyazaki-city, in Kyushu. I am estimating that he is in his eighties, but he was giving a wonderfully intense and strict lesson. He was working with a trio of experienced young musicians who had excelled in numerous competitions. He was relentless, saying, "How can you possibly make any music when you don't even put your heart in just one single sound? You must breathe as you sing! Not even one out of the three of you is singing! Lift your violins. You must not bring them down." At times, he would pound furiously on a desk, and yell, "NO!" There was no end to his strictness, no compromising.

Every time I watch something like this, it causes me to reflect on what I am doing. It is as if God is asking me, "Are you sure you are not neglectful in your teaching? Please look into your heart and earnestly ask yourself..."

Alright! This year, 2000, I vow to become a strict teacher who teaches from the heart with love without cutting corners. Please, everyone, do not forget to attend to your children with strictness.

Please Take Care of Your Own Body!

(Parents, let's make sure children's bodies are not chilled by the cold)

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I was brought up by a generation of adults who were born in the Meiji Period (1868-1912). They were proponents of keeping children, especially girls, bodies (lower back and legs) from getting chilled.

Since then fifty to sixty years have passed, now we now live in a world where every household is equipped with heaters. Even in the cold climate of Matsumoto, we are able to be warm in the winter. However, when you think about it carefully, this sort of convenience results in a big difference in indoor and outdoor temperatures. The eventual possible reaction to this is to go outside dressed lightly and catch a chill.

If the body gets chilled before performing in a piano concert, the hands and feet get cold which makes the body become stiff, resulting in the inability to use the body well. So before a performance, please, both parents and children, be careful to keep the body- hands, feet, and lower back- warm.

I remember hearing about a now-deceased very famous singer from quite a long time ago, who gave advice to one of her attendants. She cautioned, "If you are thinking of continuing to dance, I suggest not wearing clothes like the mini-skirt you have on today." What this means is that if you continually chill your body from the time you are young, in ten to twenty years time your body will not move the way you want it to move. Ballerinas are very careful not to chill their ankles. Baseball pitchers are careful not to chill their shoulders by wearing warm clothing even in warm weather. I recall hearing

on TV program, an obstetrician say that with the tendency for young women to chill their lower backs and legs, they are having complications with labor during childbirth.

What concerns me quite a bit is the uniforms of Matsumoto's private high school. Summertime dress is fine. The style is not so bad. But why in such a cold climate (unlike warmer coastal cities, here we are in the midst of high mountains) is the mini-skirt appropriate in mid winter? Who is behind this conspiracy to harm the women of Matsumoto? Perhaps we have forgotten that the availability of central heating cannot be inversely proportionate to the kind of clothing worn for our winter climate.

Lately, I have come to understand that in terms of playing the piano and for our own general health, it is not good to chill our lower back and legs. By the time we are aware that some part of the body is cold, we are already at the point of danger. When you ignore being cold, it is so taxing for the body to be cold you become tense (stiff) and very fatigued. Being warm is much easier on your body because it is comfortable.

While I was contemplating such things, there was an incident in my family. My six-year-old granddaughter who is in first grade was crying about not wanting to go to school because her stomach hurt. After much discussion, she told us that it was warm at the nursery school but cold at grade school. Come to find out, the tights she was wearing had shrunken from multiple washings and further-more, it is the fashion these days for little girls' underwear to be skimpy, bikini style.

Parents please look out for your young children's welfare because they are not able to do it themselves. (My definition of young children is from infancy to high school.) Possibly, compared to the warmth at home, the temperature in schools may be colder. It also probably varies from school to school. Please take a good look again at what your children are wearing.

Welcome New Members!

Margaret E. Hebert; Lydia White; Anderson Family; Bacchetta Family; Calabrese Family; Colón Family; Enderle Family; Friedman/Rothstein Family; Harrington Family; Hobbs/Mitchell Family; Juan C. Limardo Family; Martin Family; Mogavero/Lewis Family; Nugent Family; Polino Family; Sun/Shi Family; Tucker/Butler Family; Wu/Huang Family

Changes:

Judy Wely; Diane Densmore; Christine Price; Christine Darling

Workshops with Teachers from Japan

Because of an International Convention in Japan this winter, Ogiwara Sensei and Kawamura Sensei are unable to come to the United States for workshops in February this year.

If you wish to host a workshop *next* year (in February 2014), please issue a request to Karen Hagberg (kh@hagbergsuzuki.com). Ideally, there would be one location in the west and the other in the east of the country. Invitations should be received by July 15, 2013, and decisions will be made by the end of the summer. Students planning to participate in the Sacramento 10-Piano Concert in August, 2014 are especially encouraged to attend a February workshop.

Five-day workshops will be held this August in Rochester, New York and Sacramento, California. See Upcoming Events on page 8 for dates and contact information. Please consider attending one or both of these events and to bring students. Give yourself the gift of improving your teaching in this New Year!

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Overheard

(a new column for which we welcome your contributions!)

Mom: My son doesn't like to practice.

Teacher: What kind of piano do you have?

Mom: It's my grandmother's upright. Most of the keys work.

Teacher: Did you consider that these two things may be related? Would you give him your grandfather's wooden racket for tennis lessons? Yes, it's contrary to traditional thinking, but Suzuki-Method teachers know that beginners need the best piano. Having poor equipment is one reason so many (around 90%) students in traditional programs quit before they learn to play well.

Mom: Hmmm. I've mostly heard that a beginner's piano doesn't have to be anything special.

Teacher: As with everything else in Suzuki Method, we adults have to change our thinking!

Attention Members

Dues for the calendar year 2013 are due and payable between now and March 1, 2013. The fee for teacher members is \$40, and family membership is \$25. As usual, we do not routinely send out separate bills to individuals, trusting our members to renew in time to appear in our annual directory. Please use the form enclosed, make checks payable to Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, and send to Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer, 242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento, CA 95831. Thank you for all your continued support!

Piano Basics Foundation – General Meeting

June 18, 2012

Suzuki Piano Institute, University of Louisville

Attending:

Malinda Rawls
Christine Albro
Hannah Hall
Barbara Brown
Jane Guerin
Linda Nakagawa
Carol Novak
Bruce Boiney
Rosalie Rawlings
Bruce Anderson
Shelley Sparks
Karen Hagberg

Karen Hagberg called the meeting to order and passed around the attendance sheet. Malinda Rawls moved to approve the June 2011 minutes and the 2011 Treasurer's Report, and Hannah Hall seconded the motion. The 2011 minutes were approved.

Nominations

Hannah Hall, running for Secretary, was added to the slate of nominations. The previous secretary, Lori Armstrong, resigned from this position. There were no other new nominations from the original slate submitted by Ann Taylor.

Carol Novak moved to approve the 2012 slate of officers. Malinda Rawls seconded the motion, and the 2012 slate of officers was approved.

Old Business

Karen Hagberg reported that Ken Wilburn, moderator of the Suzuki-Listserve, is willing to post videos of Dr. Kataoka's lessons and lectures on the internet. Anyone with Kataoka recordings may send them to Ken Wilburn, and he will convert and post them online. Ken will accept videos in any format, including VHS. Teachers and parents are encouraged to do this as soon as possible, as old tapes may be beginning to deteriorate.

Discussion followed as to the accessibility of the videos.

Options were as follows:

1. Available to the general public, freely on the internet
2. Available to members of Suzuki-Listserve
3. Available only to Piano Basics Foundation members (in hopes to encourage PBF membership)

Bruce Anderson suggested that there might be a way to post only a few of the Kataoka videos available freely to the public, as a sampling to create interest by those unacquainted with Piano Basics. Christine Albro said that all the videos should

be posted freely, so that anyone could view them, regardless of membership.

Karen Hagberg and Linda Nakagawa discussed the password restriction issues raised by making only a few Kataoka videos available. Bruce Anderson stated that Kataoka would have wanted to make this knowledge and research available to the world.

Linda Nakagawa suggested posting an announcement about the online Kataoka videos, with an attachment or advertisement suggesting that viewers become Piano Basics members.

Karen Hagberg said that she would discuss all these issues with Ken Wilburn.

Updates . Karen Hagberg:

1. The 10-Piano Schedule has been altered due to earthquake damage at the Concert Hall in Japan. The new date is set for April 28, 2013 in Matsumoto, Japan.
2. The next Sacramento 10-Piano Concert will be in 2014. Sacramento 10-Piano Concerts will move to the even years, and Matsumoto 10-Piano Concerts will move to the odd years. Bruce Anderson commented on the restriction of the number of American students allowed to perform in the Matsumoto 10-Piano Concert. Previously, only one student per teacher had been allowed. However, if there are very few teachers who plan to attend, the number of American students will not have to be restricted. American teachers may submit applications for more than one student, but students must understand that their acceptance may be tentative.
3. The International Suzuki Conference will be March 27-31, 2013, in Matsumoto.

New Business . Karen Hagberg

Senseis Ogiwara and Kawamura will be holding a workshop in America in August 2013, most likely at one location near the East Coast and one near the West Coast.

Malinda Rawls motioned to adjourn the meeting.

These minutes approved by:
Malinda Rawls
Shelley Sparks

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Hall

06/20/12

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation: The People

Here is a list of persons responsible for the various workings of our organization. Please feel free to contact any of us with your questions and concerns or to volunteer your help. We always welcome written input from any and all of our members to share in this newsletter. What is on your mind? Don't put off writing that article!

Board of Directors:
Karen Hagberg, Chair
Gloria Elliott, Recording Secretary
Bruce Boiney
Linda Nakagawa
Keiko Ogiwara, Honorary Life Member

Newsletter:
Karen Hagberg, Editor
Teri Paradero, Design & Layout
Teri Paradero & Chisa Aoki, Translators
Linda Nakagawa, Printing and Mailing

Officers:
Karen Hagberg, President
Renee Eckis, Vice President
Hannah Hall, Secretary
Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer

Membership Services:
Linda Nakagawa, Directory Editor
Linda Nakagawa, Educational Materials
Order Fulfillment Manager

Nominations Committee:
Ann Taylor, Chair

Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site:
Prof. Kenneth Wilburn, Web Master
Carol Wunderle, Content Editor

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation 2012 Treasurer's Report

January 1, 2012 thru December 31, 2012

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Starting Balance: | \$11,475.68 |
| Income: | +\$11,699.16 |
| <u>Expenses:</u> | <u>-\$8,409.05</u> |
| Ending Balance: | \$14,765.79 |

Expenses

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Legal/Accounting | \$670.00 |
| Materials | \$0.00 |
| Bank Fees | \$20.00 |
| Supplies | \$129.32 |
| Postage | \$1,736.67 |
| Printing | \$1,550.06 |
| Taxes | \$103.00 |
| Phone/Fax | \$0.00 |
| <u>Compensations</u> | <u>\$4,200.00</u> |
| Total | \$8,409.05 |

Income

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Dues | \$7,195.00 |
| Donations | \$930.00 |
| Memorial Fund | \$645.00 |
| Materials | \$2,929.16 |
| <u>Misc.</u> | <u>\$0.00</u> |
| Total | \$11,699.16 |

Piano Basics Foundation

Upcoming Workshops/Events

February 21-24, 2013

Atlanta, Georgia

Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop with Bruce Boiney
Contact Robin Blankenship 770-426-4967
rblan545@aol.com

July 26-29, 2013

Tacoma, Washington

Suzuki Piano Basics Festival with Rita Burns
University of Puget Sound
Contact: Jacki Block 253-759-7213
jblock@ups.edu

April 13-28, 2013

Matsumoto, Japan

International 10-Piano Concert
Contact Karen Hagberg 585-244-0490
kh@hagbergsuzuki.com
Registration deadline past

August 1-5, 2013

Rochester, New York

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

July 22-26, 2013

Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville Suzuki Piano Basics Institute
University of Louisville
Contact Bruce Boiney 502-241-5921
boiney@suzukipiano.com
www.suzukipiano.org

August 8-12, 2013

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

August 2014

Sacramento, California

International 10-Piano Concert



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, 585-244-0490).

Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site and discussion group:

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