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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

*As Much as Possible,
Let Us Not Be
Wasteful*

By Haruko Kataoka

Newsletter, Special Issue No. 9

April 6, 2009

Translated by Chisa Aoki and

Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

***Piano Basics
Foundation News***

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Every time I read the newspaper or watch a televised report about the destruction of nature, my heart aches when I reflect on my daily routine. I am reminded, as I split disposable chopsticks, that they were made from a tropical rainforest tree in Malaysia. I also wonder which trees I am wasting every time I throw away tissue paper or the ad section of the newspaper.

Factories all over the world manufacture plastic bags and disposable plastic containers every day. What will become of this? No doubt, there will come a time when the entire earth will be buried under mountains of plastic trash.

Our world may be fine for us now, but what will happen to future generations? It is obvious that products like automobiles and electric appliances become old and will create problems unless they magically disappear. Manufacturers could have thought about their method of disposal at the end of their usefulness. I, too, pursuing a convenient life, have thoughtlessly bought and enjoyed my refrigerators, washing machines, and cars. There is also much waste in the clothes we wear and the food we eat.

So what are we to do? It is not practical to say that we should just stop. Economic stability will decline. Jobs will decline. Every country will be plagued with unemployment.

Once too much of a good thing is spread too thin, quality declines and it is hard to stop it from declining. Although, it is obvious to everyone, human beings repeat the same mistakes over and over. Since I am part of this time in history, I can't very well choose to defy everything and revert back to life in the Stone Age. So this came to mind after much thought. Isn't it our task and responsibility to exert our utmost effort gradually to teach children around us to economize, to save?

When I was a little girl, wasting even a single grain of rice would have resulted in a scolding. The adults would explain that the sweat and soul of the farmers who toiled in the fields resulted in each and every single grain of rice and it is never to be wasted. If I did not shut the water faucet tight enough, I was immediately reminded to do so. Even one drop of water is

precious. If I forgot to turn the lamp off when I left my room, I would be scolded.

We must clearly explain to our children the importance of being prudent with our resources and teach them the value of taking care of things, no matter how minute. We must teach them to prevent our earth from being less habitable since resources do not belong to one individual but to all of humanity. We must endeavor to teach them not to be wasteful and to be grateful for what they use.

This can be applied to playing the piano. Playing well means there is no wasted movement. Because there are not many notes in the beginning pieces, it is easy to develop extraneous movement of the body. When this wasted movement becomes a bad habit, students are unable to change it when they become advanced. Effortlessness and wastefulness are absolute opposites. A favorable outcome cannot be born out of waste. From Book 1, we must be diligent so children's bodies do not develop the habit of wasted movement. Those of you who are educators, in other words, teachers and parents, please be very careful. If you pay attention to this issue of wasted movement, children may develop a natural (effortless) technique with no unnecessary movement after about ten years if they begin at age two or three.

It is also important to teach children at this young age to not to be wasteful in their daily lives.

About Haruko Kataoka Sensei:

Suzuki Method was the philosophy of the late Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. His based on his belief that “Every child develops according to how he/she is raised.”

The Suzuki Method is taught throughout Japan and abroad to develop persistence and concentration while creating art-loving human



beings through the study of musical instruments such as violin, piano, cello, and flute.

Impressed by the work of Shinichi Suzuki, Haruko Kataoka Sensei moved from Tokyo to Matsumoto. For nearly fifty years, from 1955 until her death at the age of seventy-six, she lead the Piano Department of the Matsumoto branch in the research of education of children. Armed with her wealth of experience and passion, she started publishing the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter. She conscientiously composed an article for her column every month from 1991 continuously for 13 years. The newsletter received enthusiastic reviews and became extremely popular.

The article *As Much as Possible, Let Us Not Be Wasteful!* is from one of the earlier issues of the newsletter. The illustrator Juri Kataoka has provided illustrations for the newsletter from its inception. The reprint of Kataoka Sensei’s articles are brought to you with Juri Kataoka’s completely new illustrations.



Do not Dumb Down for Children

By Karen Hagberg

Dr. Suzuki and Dr. Kataoka made numerous discoveries relating to the education of young children. Many of these bring us to the conclusion that children have a miraculous way of absorbing the various abilities they must acquire before becoming adults. Not the least of these is the ability to speak their native language, which they do without any information or formal education whatever. In other words, young children are able to do many things that we adults can no longer do.

Dr. Suzuki...always reminded us that very small children, even infants, are fully capable of having the same kinds of profound aesthetic and spiritual experiences we adults have.

This fact is central to the Suzuki Method. It causes us to change our thinking. We do not have to simplify material to present it to children. If adults speak to children in baby talk, they will speak baby talk. If adults speak to them using adult sentence structure and vocabulary, they will speak with adult sentence structure and vocabulary. If adults speak to them in Chinese, they will speak Chinese. If adults speak to them using sign language, they will use sign language.

Let's give them real things, not childish things, so we can see them all flourish to their full potential.

Dr. Suzuki noticed something else: children arrive here on earth with a fully-formed soul. The body ages from the time of birth, but the soul is ageless. We are born with the same soul that is with us when we die. Furthermore, he viewed the soul as that which experiences and appreciates matters aesthetic and spiritual. In other words, he always reminded us that very small children,

even infants, are fully capable of having the same kinds of profound aesthetic and spiritual experiences we adults have. The reason that adults do not notice when children have these experiences is that the children do not yet have a way adequately to report their experience to us. Given children's power of observation, however, it could very well be that their aesthetic and spiritual experiences are even more frequent than our own.

Many educators, those teaching Suzuki Method as well, fail to grasp these basic concepts and continue to develop curriculum for children using what they see as "child-centered" material. They rely on simplified versions of things. They try to keep children's attention with game-playing or with juvenile entertainment. When Dr. Suzuki's ideas came to the United States, a catalog of "Suzuki Method" materials became available, consisting of all sorts of games, toys, and gimmicks. Books were written about how to make music lessons fun for small children. People put words to the pieces in Book 1, including the Twinkle rhythms, as if children were incapable of learning a tune or a rhythm in and of itself, as if children need a crutch that older students do not need. A teacher or parent could purchase labels for the piano keys as if children were otherwise unable to find their place on the keyboard.

Children, no matter what their age, know when adults are talking down to them, when we are over-simplifying things, or when we are giving them toys instead of the real thing.

The opposite is probably true. It is the adult beginner who might need all this kind of help, just as we need visual and intellectual ways to study any new language. Children need no such help, they are able simply to hear and then to speak (in the case of music, to hear and then to play). All this game-playing is just a distraction for them, and it often involves listening to mediocre or abridged music, music that cannot provide a profound experience, music that is uninteresting.

Since my first experience with Suzuki Method was in this country, my first strong impression of Dr. Kataoka's studio in Japan was that there was nothing in there that might indicate that she was teaching young children. It looked nothing like a kindergarten classroom full of toys, but rather like the teaching studio of a serious piano teacher. Dr. Suzuki's studio was the same. The only indication that 3-year-olds were studying there were the 3-year-olds themselves as they came and went with their parents.

To teach Suzuki Method as it was taught in Japan in those two studios requires a *complete* change from the conventional thinking that tells us that young children are handicapped by virtue of their youth and that we need to make up for their deficiencies with games and gimmicks that will speak down to their level of comprehension. We adults are the ones whose comprehension has become deficient. We need to teach *up* to the level of children.

Children, no matter what their age, know when adults are talking down to them, when we are over-simplifying things, or when we are giving them toys instead of the real thing. What they want from us, however, is the real thing.

Practicing is not fun. Ask professional concert pianists and you will receive the same answer: they do not like to practice. The result of practice, being able to perform wonderful pieces of music, is the reward of hard work. This is the reality of learning to play an instrument. It is also the reality of life itself. What, on the other hand, results from having fun during a so-called practice session? Is the student able to do something better than when practice began? If not, the real reward will not materialize and the child will become reluctant to go on, and who can blame him or her?

We teachers and parents need to be serious about lessons and practice. These are not fun, but we do it for the rewards (same as brushing teeth, studying for a math exam, doing sports drills). Let's bring children into the real world of practice and the real world of results, teaching them that effort and persistence reap myriad benefits.

Let's bring children into the real world of wonderful music by taking them to live concerts and providing them with wonderful recordings. Let's give them real things, not childish things, so we can see them all flourish to their full potential.



Note: I recently heard a recording that I wish all students could hear: The Beethoven 5th Piano Concerto (the Emperor Concerto), performed by Rudolf Serkin with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa conducting. Teachers and parents, please download this

recording or purchase the CD and enjoy it yourselves. A performance like this is priceless in terms of inspiration for both you and your child. Do it for yourself. Do it for your child. Your lives, and your practice, will be better for it.



Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site and discussion group:

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

Piano Basics Foundation – General Meeting August 6, 2014

Ten Piano Concert, California State University Sacramento

Suzuki Piano Institute, University of Louisville

Linda Nakagawa – Treasurer

Hannah Hall – Secretary

Attending:

President, Karen Hagberg

Janet Miller

Rae Kate Shen

Shirlee Rickman

Ann Taylor

Jill Austin

Teri Paradero

Connie Snyder

Chiung-Hwa Bryce

Rita Burns

Huub De Leeuw

Naomi Wysong

Karen Hagberg asked the floor for any new nominations. None were given. Ann Taylor moved to accept the 2014 slate of officers, and Rae Kate Shen seconded the motion. The 2014 slate of officers was approved.

Old Business

1) The Online Kataoka Video Project headed by Ken Wilburn of Suzuki-Listserve, better known as Suzuki-L, was discussed. In the 2013 minutes it was reported that many people were unable to view any of the Kataoka videos that have been posted. A task force of volunteer teachers was established to determine video accessibility on various computers and in different parts of the U.S. Karen Hagberg will contact Malinda Rawls to report any findings from the task force.

Dr. Karen Hagberg called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. There were no additional items added to the agenda. Rita Burns read the **minutes from the 2013** meeting. Teri Paradero moved to approve the minutes and Janet Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The 2013 Treasurer's Report was passed for review. Ann Taylor moved to approve the report and Connie Snyder seconded the motion. The treasurer's report was approved.

Nominations

The slate of officers for 2014 remains the same as that of 2013, as no new nominations have been received. The 2014 slate of officers includes:

Karen Hagberg -- President

Renee Eckis – Vice President

Karen commented on what a wonderful resource these videos are. Many new teachers to Suzuki Piano Basics have not had the privilege of watching Kataoka Sensei teach. These preserved videos can give them access to her teaching. Also, VHS videos and DVD's deteriorate with the passage of time, therefore this is a great way to preserve them.

Karen Hagberg is again asking teachers who have videos to send them to Ken Wilburn. Suzuki Piano Basics is very fortunate that Ken Wilburn's university media department uses their resources to adapt the videos for the website. This is normally an expensive process, but Ken's university is doing the work free.

2) In 2013 The Piano Basics Foundation board voted to **assist workshops with the cost of airfare for the Japanese teachers.** These airfare costs will continue to increase. The August airfares are generally \$3,000 per teacher. In the winter months, the average cost is \$2,600 per teacher. Each group hosting workshops will only be required to pay up to \$1,800 for airfare costs. The Piano Basics Foundation will cover the rest of the airfare out of the general account for as long as the funds are available.

This monetary assistance can only be continued if each teacher member of Piano Basics encourages each of his/her families to join our organization. It is a mere \$25 per family to join. This money will enable us to continue to study here in the States with the Japanese teachers. The teachers from Japan were both students of and trained as teachers

by Kataoka Sensei. They are our supreme resource to becoming better teachers for our students.

It was suggested that this fee be included in each teacher's annual piano tuition. Please send this money to Linda Nakagawa, our treasurer. Included in this fee is a newsletter and directory of members with their donation. **Most important, their children will benefit from the training you will receive in workshops with the Japanese teachers.**

Rita Burns moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:45. Jill Austin seconded the motion. These minutes were reviewed by Jill Austin and Connie Snyder.

Respectfully submitted by Rita Burns for
Secretary Hannah Hall 8/8/2014

The People of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation

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? Please don't put off writing that article!

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Linda Nakagawa g.nakagawa@comcast.net
Keiko Ogiwara, Honorary Life Member

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ō and **YOU**, our members. Thank you for your continued support!

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation ***2014 Annual Report***

January 1, 2014 thru December 31, 2014

Starting Balance:	\$8,745.36
Income:	+\$15,351.60
Expenses:	<u>-\$19,054.91</u>
Ending Balance:	\$5,042.05

Expenses

Legal/Accounting	\$677.00
Materials	\$592.25
Bank Fee	\$20.00
Supplies	\$39.73
Postage	\$1,869.28
Printing	\$1,912.75
Travel	\$9,436.90
Taxes	\$7.00
Phone/Fax	\$0.00
Donations	\$0.00
<u>Compensations</u>	<u>\$4,500.00</u>
Total	\$19,054.91

Income

Dues	\$10,135.00
Donations	\$1,300.00
Memorial Fund	\$285.00
Materials	\$1,831.60
<u>Misc.</u>	<u>1,800.00</u>
Total	\$15,361.60

Submitted by Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer

Piano Basics Foundation

Upcoming Workshops/Events

February 5-9, 2015

Orange County, California

Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Mei Ihara 714-997-8692
mihara14@att.net

July 17-20, 2015

Tacoma, Washington

Suzuki Piano Basics Summer Festival
with Rita Burns
Contact Jacki Block 253-759-7213
Jblock@ups.edu

April 26, 2015

(leave U.S. on 4/9 and return on 4/27)

Matsumoto, Japan

International 10-Piano Concert
Contact Karen Hagberg 585-978-0600
kh@hagbergsuzuki.com

July 20-24, 2015

Louisville, Kentucky

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

June 22-26, 2015

Conway, Arkansas

Suzuki Piano Basics Five Piano
and Chamber Workshop
with Bruce Anderson, Rita Burns and Bruce Boiney
Contact Pam Werner 501-425-2862
info@suzukiprg.org, www.suzukiprg.org

Friday, July 31-Tuesday, August 4, 2015

Rochester, NY

Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Karen Hagberg 585-978-0600
kh@hagbergsuzuki.com

Saturday, August 8-Wednesday, August 12, 2015

Sacramento, California

Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Linda Nakagawa 916-422-2952
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, 585-978-0600).