
Vol. 21.1 January/February 2016

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***

Editor

Karen Hagberg

Layout

Teri Paradero

Translators

Chisa Aoki
Teri Paradero

Production and Distribution

Linda Nakagawa

Send Articles to:

Piano Basics Foundation

67 Shepard St. Rochester NY 14620
kh@hagbergsuzuki.com
585-244-0490

Memberships / Subscriptions

Linda Nakagawa
242 River Acres Drive
Sacramento, CA 95831
916-422-2952
g.nakagawa@comcast.net

Next Deadline: February 15, 2016

*Diligence
and
Practice*

By Haruko Kataoka

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter
Vol. 8 No1, June 7, 1998
Translated by Chisa Aoki and
Teri Paradero
Edited by Karen Hagberg

In our society today, everyone thinks that diligence is a very good thing. In modern Japan, whenever mothers see their children's faces, from late elementary school on, they invariably tell them to go study.

It is certainly important to acquire the ability to study every day. When children start piano lessons from the age of three or four and practice every day a little at a time, by the time they are able to play the piano well, they will simultaneously have developed the fundamental ability to exert effort and to persevere. If children continue their piano lessons, it is not that difficult for them to develop the habit of doing daily schoolwork by the time they are in the later primary school years and into middle school. Fundamental or basic abilities that are cultivated can be useful in any endeavor.

What would this kind of study consist of? Since energy and precious time is dedicated to this, let us choose practice that is beneficial. As people go about in their daily lives, they choose to be sensible about their expenditures. To go to a town ten kilometers east of where they live, there isn't anyone foolish enough to walk directly opposite toward the west to end up going full circle around the globe to get to their neighboring town. Similarly, if the store next door is selling quality goods at a reasonable price, you would not go

out of your way to spend three or five times more for inferior goods elsewhere.

However, when it comes to practicing piano, many people do unimaginably strange things at the piano. If people should walk around the entire earth or pay high prices for inferior merchandise, they would be wasting time and money. Similarly, they also waste money and time (not to mention cause damage to the piano) when practicing piano in a bad way. Furthermore, on top of harming their bodies, they end up with a muscle memory full of bad habits. When they go to perform in a concert, their performance is unnatural and terrible. As a consequence, the audience will not be able to enjoy listening and will have to suffer through the performance.

It takes more than diligence. We must objectively observe ourselves as if by a third party and think carefully about what we are doing.

When people who study piano wish to play a piece but cannot play it well, they conclude that they have not practiced it enough yet, that they have not been diligent enough. They do not suspect that it could be the way that they are

practicing. They think practicing is nothing but playing with both hands all the time. Why is it they do not wonder, with all the hard work they do, that they do not sound at all like the masters, or that what they are doing might be ineffective, causing their inability to play with ease?

Have you observed how using parts of the body in a certain way affects the state or condition of the whole body? Have you listened to the kind of tone you are producing? Have you chosen the type of sound that is good tone? Have you researched methods of practicing legato scales, arpeggios, and chords? Have you thought about what must be done to make the harmony in chords beautiful? Are you aware that in order to do one thing well you have to practice hands separately until you can do that one thing with ease, and that this is the fastest way to improve? What do you do to practice the beats (time signature) of a piece properly or to ride the rhythm? You have to think of the method that in the most efficient way to become skillful in the shortest amount of time.

A while back when I was travelling in the United States, I was reading a book by Kita Morio. He wrote that merely being diligent is no compensation for being a fool, and furthermore, there isn't anything more annoying than a diligent fool. When I read that I had to laugh out loud to myself. I couldn't agree more! So please everyone, let's be careful not to become diligent fools.

Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site and discussion group:

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

Fetching Water at Four Years Old!

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter
Vol. 8 No1, June 7, 1998
Translated by Chisa Aoki and
Teri Paradero
Edited by Karen Hagberg

I turned on the television and happened upon a program that had already started. At first I was not sure which country I was watching.

The documentary was about a family living in the great prairie of Mongolia Pao. I was astonished to watch what a four-year-old girl was expected to do. Her chore was to walk quite a distance from her home to a brook (I was so shocked I now cannot remember how many kilometers she walked round trip. All I remember is that it was quite far.) Her daily responsibility was to bring enough water for the needs of her family for the whole day. Wearing gloves for her little hands, she carried a lidded plastic bucket and metal container to the brook, filled them with water, and hauled them back home.

Understandably, she would have to rest from time to time *en route* with two containers full of water. I am aware of her need to rest because I have a grandchild who is the same age. I believe such a chore causes great hardship for a four-year-old child. Furthermore, it was

cold with the outdoor temperature in the 2 to 3 degree Celsius range.

However, survival in Mongolia Pao necessitates that all family members pitch in. There is a saying that man is the child of his environment. Consequently, learning to live in such a harsh environment requires practicing hard labor from the time children are four years old.

For children who are born in an environment where water is available by merely turning on a faucet, parents must find work that children can do to be able to withstand hardship and difficulty. Ready at hand is piano practice. It fits the bill perfectly for practicing hardship. Let us provide the opportunity to study and experience hardship guided by a strict, sometimes scolding mother. At times parents worry that if they are too strict, it would damage their children's disposition. Being very strict is fine as long as there is love and you show your love. It will provide children with the necessary strength that is so splendidly useful throughout their lives. Please do not worry. Please be strict with conviction.

Watching this TV program, I was truly moved by a precious four-year-old girl who had to endure life where nature dictates that life's harsh lessons must be learned in such a grueling, physical way.

Everyone, piano practice is a lot easier! Please endure this task of practicing every day!

Happy New Year!

An invitation from Linda Nakagawa

On August 14, 2016 we will hold our 9th 10-Piano Concert for the Piano Basics membership in Sacramento, California. We hope teachers, new and old, international and domestic, will make it a priority to attend and have their students participate. It's an experience that students will treasure for the rest of their lives. It is also a big expense and a long two weeks away from families.

This event is always fun for students. They can make new friends and reunite with old ones. It's a little different for teachers. We participate to give our students the opportunity of a lifetime. We see each other every year anyway at Piano Basics Workshops. Sometimes we find it difficult to justify so much time away from our families and our own teaching. But in the end the reality is that the more we accumulate good experiences in observing excellent teaching, the better we will become. That is the truth.

We will begin rehearsing with all ten pianos on July 30 and then will move into the Sacramento Community Center Theater on August 8th and resume rehearsals on the 9th to the 12th. The full dress rehearsal will be held on Saturday, August 13, and the concert will be on Sunday, August 14th at 2:00.

The 10-Piano Concert is one of the most difficult projects to organize. The logistics alone are enough to age a person beyond their years! Scheduling ten students for every piece is mind-boggling. Many students might have

their hearts set on performing a particular piece but there may be thirteen other students who want to do it too. Or in another situation there may be only six students on a piece. This situation happens more often than not.

Teaching the Piano Basics Method is the most humbling experiences in my life! We learn from our students. No matter how much knowledge and experience we accumulate, it's never enough. And that's a good thing, because we must always strive to become better. This is a lifelong journey we are on together. I have an example. During the summer months we try to rehearse as many weekends as we can with the local students. It's a pretty good system because the local teachers can work with our students during the week and hopefully improve every weekend together as a group. By the middle of July, the pieces really start to sound together. But something happens when all ten students are finally here. It is totally amazing to me how "bad" the students sound. They cannot play together at all. It sounds as if the local students did not practice at all. That is a humbling experience!

So if you are a visiting teacher, it is so important to come at the beginning of the rehearsals when all ten students are together. It is fascinating how the Japanese teachers conduct the pieces bringing them to a higher and higher level, always asking for more! As a teacher observing, it looks easy. But believe me, it is not! If only one student rushes, the entire group will tend to rush. If only one student moves their finger a little differently than the rest, it is impossible to play in unison. That is the challenge for us teachers. Our ability must improve so we can demonstrate to our students. Teaching with ones mouth at the lesson does not work. That is the truth.

The students must know their pieces forwards and backwards and inside out. They have to play using their instincts and senses because with ten pianos, the sound travels slowly! Someone asked me if organizing the 10-Piano Concert was harder than organizing a Piano Basics workshop. My answer was, "100 times more difficult." Having worked

on 5-piano concerts, my answer would be the same. A 10-Piano Concert is 100 times more difficult than a 5-piano concert. But 100 times more exciting and exhilarating too.

So teachers, please try to attend the next 10-Piano rehearsals and concert this coming August. We will put you to work so you can really learn something. By the way, I believe the teachers who learn the most are the ones who adjust the chair

and footstools. Even if you are not designated to do the adjustments it is fine to get up and observe the students up close. It is very important to be near the students to help them if they need it but most of all you will get a first-hand understanding of how to better prepare your students and bring them to a higher level.

We teachers need to improve our own skills and get back and using the sensibilities that we were born with. Then we will learn how to keep the sensibilities of our students alive! Then we begin to hear music. That is the truth.

.....

Moving, Cleaning, Downsizing??

This is often the time of year when we organize and clean out our offices, attics, and basements. In those areas of your house are invariably old videos, probably on VHS reels or other small tape format, of Dr. Kataoka teaching students. Hopefully you have not decided to discard these when you discarded your VHS player. Hopefully, you know these are valuable and have saved them, but don't really know what to do with them.

If you send them to Prof. Ken Wilburn (address below), your video will be digitalized and saved on the internet for future study, and they will stop deteriorating in your house/attic/basement/garage!

There have been various problems viewing these from time to time, but the media department at South Carolina University is busy making access easier and easier. It has been a monumental project, and we are grateful for their ongoing help.

Members, when you view this invaluable resource we hope that you will be moved to send your videos, regardless of format, that may be collecting dust in your homes and that are surely on their way to decomposition. It is also a good idea to contact the families of former students who may have had lessons with Dr. Kataoka to contribute their videos as well. Please identify, as much as possible, the date and place of the lessons. Teacher lessons will not be included, and students are not identified by name.

Send videos to:

Professor Kenneth Wilburn
History Department, Brewster A318
East Carolina University
East Fifth Street
Greenville, North Carolina 27858-4353

To Our Members

All membership in Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation is for a calendar year. Therefore, now is the time for *all* of us to renew our membership.

Dues for the calendar year 2016 are due and payable between now and February 15, 2016. Members whose dues are not received by March 15 will not appear in our 2016 Directory. The fee for teacher members is \$40, and family membership is \$25. **We encourage all teachers to require family membership in your studio so that we may continue to relieve workshop directors from airfare fluctuations when we invite teachers from Japan.**

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 (we do not accept credit-card payments) 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 July 20, 2015

Suzuki Piano Institute, University of Louisville

Attending:

Hannah Hall
Jacqueline Graham
Karen Griffin
Christine Albro
Eloise Sanders
Brooke Chumachenko
Rae Kate Shen
Marche Altom
Malinda Rawls
Bruce Boiney
Karmalita Bawar
Linda Nakagawa

Linda Nakagawa called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM. The attendance sheet was passed, and Karmalita Bawar read the **minutes from the 2014 meeting**, which had taken place at the 10-Piano Concert in Sacramento, CA. Malinda Rawls moved to approve the 2014 minutes, and Hannah Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Bruce Boiney commented that the minutes from the 2014 general meeting were very similar to those of the 2013 general meeting, particularly regarding the Piano Basics Foundation assisting with airfare for the Japanese teachers during workshops, and regarding the Kataoka Video Project. Linda Nakagawa continued this discussion by asking if anyone present at the meeting had experienced trouble accessing the Kataoka videos. No one reported having any current problems with this. Malinda Rawls volunteered to begin searching for videos of Dr. Kataoka teaching in Louisville, KY, which would eventually be added to the online collection.

Linda Nakagawa brought up the need to increase student/family membership in the Piano Basics Foundation, indicating that some teachers include the price of a membership in their yearly tuition. Discussion continued in relation to how the newsletter should be sent out to families. Some teachers prefer the newsletter to be mailed directly to each student's home, whereas other teachers receive all the

newsletters for their studio, and distribute each newsletter individually. Karmalita Bawar made a general recommendation that all families' newsletters be shipped directly to teachers, who can then disperse them, in order to save on postage and supply costs.

Christine Albro suggested that the newsletter could be distributed by e-mail as a pdf file, thus lowering costs even further, but in this case, paper and printing expense would fall upon each teacher, who would then have to print a copy for each student. This discussion closed by general agreement that the newsletter's best form is the high-quality paper currently used, not a digital version.

The **2014 treasurer's report** was unavailable for review during this meeting.

Nominations

Rae Kate Shen, nominated for Secretary at a previous Board meeting, was added to the slate of 2015/2016 officers. All other officers remain the same. The slate of officers now includes:

Karen Hagberg . President
Renee Eckis . Vice President
Linda Nakagawa . Treasurer
Rae Kate Shen . Secretary

Hannah Hall, the current Secretary, is moving to serve as Secretary of the Board. Christine Albro moved to accept the proposed slate of 2015/2016 officers. Malinda Rawls seconded, and the motion was approved.

Old Business

There was no Old Business to discuss.

New Business

The February 2016 workshop with the Japanese teachers is currently planned to take place in either Phoenix, AZ, or Orange County, CA. Brooke Chumachenko stated that Atlanta, GA, is also expressing interest in hosting the Japanese teachers in February. Linda Nakagawa instructed that any group wishing to host the Japanese teachers should submit a request to Dr. Karen Hagberg.

Malinda Rawls motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Christine Albro.

These minutes approved by:

Malinda Rawls
Christine Albro

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Hall
07/22/15

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? Don't put off writing that article!

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

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

Officers:
 Karen Hagberg, President
 Renee Eckis, Vice President
 Rae Kate Shen, 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

If you would like to assume responsibility for any part of the workings of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, or if you know someone who would, please contact our Nominations Committee Chairperson, Ann Taylor, before June 15.

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation 2014 Annual Report

January 1, 2015 thru December 31, 2015

Submitted by Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer

Starting Balance:	\$10,992.05
Income:	+\$19,429.00
<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>-\$24,976.39</u>
Ending Balance:	\$5,555.66

Expenses

Legal/Accounting	\$665.00
Materials	\$892.35
Bank Fee	\$98.00
Supplies	\$94.05
Postage	\$2,467.29
Printing	\$2,984.09
Workshop airfare subsidies	\$9,436.90
*Matsumoto 10-Piano	\$8,500.00
Taxes	\$44.00
<u>Compensations</u>	<u>\$4,200.00</u>
Total	\$24,976.39

Income

Dues	\$10,393.00
Donations	\$1,005.00
Memorial Fund	\$770.00
Materials	\$896.00
*Matsumoto 10-Piano	\$2,550.00
<u>Scholarship Fund</u>	<u>\$215.00</u>
Total	\$15,361.60

***NOTE: The Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation does not financially support the Matsumoto 10-Piano Concert. The discrepancy between income and expense for the Matsumoto Concert results because most monies were collected in 2**

Piano Basics Foundation Upcoming Workshops/Events

February 3-7, 2016

Phoenix, Arizona

Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Gloria Elliott 623-466-7447
<gelliott50@aol.com>

**Please note: this workshop was inadvertently
omitted from listing in previous newsletter.**

June 20-24, 2016

Maumelle, Arkansas

Suzuki Piano Basics Festival
Five Piano and Chamber Music
with Rita Burns, Rae Kate Shen and Michael Jacobsen
Contact Pam Werner 501-425-2862
musicpam@gmail.com

February 11-15, 2016

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 15-18, 2016

Tacoma, Washington

Suzuki Piano Basics Festival
with Cathy Hargrave
Contact: Jacki Block 253-759-7213
jblock@ups.edu



July 30-August 14, 2016

Sacramento, California

Suzuki Piano Basics International 10-Piano Concert
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).