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THE GENESIS OF SUZUKI:
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ROOTS OF TALENT EDUCATION

by

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A THESIS
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ABSTRACT

In its short history, Talent Education, also known as the Suzuki Method, has had a profound impact on the teaching of music to the young. However, despite continued guidance from its founder, Shinichi Suzuki, misconceptions about the method persist among both its practitioners and critics. One route to understanding of pedagogical theory is to look at its origins. To that end, this thesis makes a study of history of the method and its founder, drawing on available sources. Further investigation is carried out on the philosophy and teaching techniques. An exploration is then undertaken of the possible antecedents of Suzuki's method taking into account the prevailing ideas and practices of his cultural environment as they relate to the history, philosophy and teaching techniques of Talent Education. Findings indicate that, while Suzuki's method is clearly appropriate to contemporary society, it represents, in many of its aspects, a continuation of several beliefs and practices of traditional Japanese arts.

RÉSUMÉ

Malgré son implantation récente, le mouvement de l'Education du talent, connu aussi sous le nom de "méthode Suzuki", a eu un impact profond sur l'enseignement de la musique aux jeunes. Toutefois, en dépit de la vigilance constante de son fondateur Shinichi Suzuki, certains praticiens et critiques ont mal interprété la méthode. L'une des façons de comprendre une théorie pédagogique est de remonter à ses origines. C'est dans ce but que cette thèse étudie d'abord la biographie de Suzuki et dresse l'historique de sa méthode en puisant aux sources disponibles. Elle poursuit ses investigations sur la philosophie et les techniques d'enseignement du maître. Enfin, elle entreprend l'exploration des antécédents possibles de la méthode de Suzuki en faisant ressortir comment les courants de pensée et les us et coutumes de son milieu culturel ont influencé l'histoire, la philosophie et les techniques de l'Education du talent. Les résultats indiquent que, tout en s'adaptant grandement à notre société contemporaine, la méthode Suzuki représente, à plusieurs points de vue, un prolongement de plusieurs croyances et pratiques des arts traditionnels japonais.

PREFACE

This investigation originates in a collection of interests: the genesis of ideas in education, history, Talent Education, comparative education and Japan.

I would like to thank Professor Roger Magnuson who guided me in the writing of this thesis. His generous encouragement and timely advice helped remove obstacles and point out the way. I would also like to acknowledge the Max Bell Fellowship and the McGill Summer Fellowship whose very generous support enabled me to study with Shinichi Suzuki in Japan. My stay in Japan was greatly enriched by Michiru Hotaka and staff of the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto who will always be remembered for their kindness and help.

I am indebted to all my teachers, especially Suzuki-sensei, who have taught me through the years. My colleagues as well as my pupils and their parents have also taught me much and cheered me on through the writing of this thesis. Special mention should be made here of Gary Anderson, Susan Bayley, Dragan Djerkic, Sunny Oey and Nicole Paquin-Donkin. Finally, I feel moved to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, Ketty and Jorgen, who nurtured me with their love and to whom this work is dedicated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Suzuki is a method and philosophy in music education. Suzuki is also a person, Shinichi Suzuki, who founded the method. This thesis is about a man and his method that has dramatically changed the teaching of violin and music to children.

Suzuki lives in Matsumoto, a town in the Japanese Alps where he teaches violin to small children. At ninety-two years of age, he has devoted most of his life to this work, saying that he does it for the happiness of all children and for world peace.

More than merely an old Japanese violin teacher, Suzuki is also a highly respected pedagogue. He holds numerous decorations and honorary degrees, has addressed the United States Congress as well as the General Assembly of the United Nations and is regarded by many as one of the most important voices in education today.

Matsumoto is the destination of teachers from many countries who come to see Suzuki at work and to study with him. When he is not teaching, he is writing and speaking about his theory and method, trying out new ideas and overseeing the application of his principles to fields of learning other than music.

Many have joined Suzuki in his work, uniting to form a

movement, an international network that puts his ideas to work. Suzuki calls this movement Talent Education. As the title suggests, he believes that outstanding abilities can be trained, that they are not inborn.

According to Suzuki, young children have an enormous thirst and potential for learning which is generally overlooked. He has shown that this potential can be realized with any healthy child, given the right conditions. Suzuki outlines five "conditions for developing great ability:

1. Begin as early as possible
2. Create the best possible environment
3. Use the finest teaching method
4. Provide a great deal of training
5. Use the finest teachers

When all these conditions are working together the flower of really wonderful ability will bloom."¹

Suzuki's method in teaching, be it music or math or reading, mimics the way we train children to speak their mother tongue. Teaching and learning the mother tongue is usually done in a natural, simple, unstudied way. Suzuki has analyzed this procedure and applies the same steps and components to other areas of teaching and learning. The effectiveness of his approach is demonstrated by the astoundingly accomplished performances of young violinists taught by his method.

Suzuki chose the violin as a medium for child education for several reasons: he happens to play the violin, it is considered to be the most difficult instrument to play and therefore demonstrates children's learning capacities with greater impact, and he believes that learning to play music greatly stimulates

intellectual, motor, affective and spiritual development in children. Despite the high standards of performance achieved by his students, his goal is not to produce professional musicians but rather to enrich the lives of children.

With the collaboration of colleagues and the support of foundations and private donors, Suzuki has extended his method to the teaching of other musical instruments, mathematics, drawing, languages and literacy. As with violin playing, the goal is to help children develop to their fullest potential, not merely to learn various subjects.

Suzuki's violin method has been taught in North America, where it is referred to as the Suzuki Method, since the early 1960's. Other instruments have been added and some Suzuki nurseries and kindergartens have also begun. The outcome has been uneven. Too often its practitioners have poorly understood its principles and the results were poor. There appears to be a need for greater understanding of Suzuki in the West.

Problem Statement

One avenue to understanding a pedagogical approach is to study its genesis, to investigate its roots. Thus when we learn about Pestalozzi's ideas, we may inquire into his experiences and the major influences upon his thinking that led him to his conclusions. A similar route has been taken with Montessori, Herbart, Dewey and other influential educators.

This will be our approach to Suzuki. It is especially apt for him because he claims that "man is son of the environment," that our abilities, beliefs, character are not inborn but a result

of our experiences or life activities. What, then, are the origins of Suzuki's pedagogy? Suzuki is clearly a pioneer but to what extent does he borrow and synthesize from antecedent thought and practice in education? Which ideas influence his? How and to what degree do they shape Suzuki's ideas? These questions are intended to throw light upon Suzuki but their resolution may also illuminate the genesis of ideas in education.

Hypothesis

Perhaps the most significant feature of Suzuki's background was his exposure to two different cultures, two different traditions. It may be that this is characteristic of the original and creative mind. The contemporary physicist, Werner Heisenberg wrote:

It is probably true quite generally that in the history of human thinking the most fruitful developments frequently take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet. These lines may have their roots in quite different parts of human culture, in different times or different cultural environments or different religious traditions; hence if they actually meet, that is if they are at least so much related to each other that a real interaction can take place, then one may hope new and interesting developments may follow.²

The two lines of thought Heisenberg refers to are the atomic physics of Western culture and the religious mysticism of the East.

Suzuki has experienced the cultural environments and religious traditions of both West and East. His family made violins, an European instrument and he plays one; as a young man, he studied music for eight years in Berlin where he married a German and became a Catholic. In his youth, he read extensively

the literature of the West. Now, in his nineties, he travels abroad frequently and while in Matsumoto, he meets and works with Westerners daily.

Despite all this, he is very Japanese. He has lived in Japan for eighty-six years of his life. His family was samurai, the warrior class which was the principal adherent of Zen Buddhism. Suzuki is a disciple of Zen and his upbringing conformed with the beliefs and practices of Zen.

The two lines of thought that meet in Suzuki are the ideas embodied by Zen and Japanese culture and the ideas found in Western art, especially music. New and interesting developments have followed resulting in a unique pedagogy. It is one that seems to transcend both cultures in many ways. Nevertheless, many elements are clearly Japanese, such as the emphasis on repetition and the concept that personal growth is the primary goal of music study. On the other hand, the music studied and its performance is entirely European.

It appears doubtful that someone who knows only one of the cultural environments, either Oriental or Occidental, could have developed a method such as Suzuki's. I propose to show that this method is the product of the cultural environments that Suzuki experienced.

Methodology

The impact of different influences on Suzuki will be evaluated by first tracing the significant points of his life history, then outlining his philosophy and pedagogy, and finally discussing the content of Suzuki's formative experiences,

correlating it with various elements of his method.

The content of Suzuki's formative experiences is, to a large extent, made up of the practices and values imparted by his cultural environments. These are the ideas which are informally assimilated, ideas which, as E.F.Schumacher observes, "have become a part of that great mass of ideas, including language, which seeps into a person's mind. . ."3

The major sources for this study are literary. The writings of Suzuki and transcriptions of his talks figure prominently. Books about Suzuki are consulted as are studies of his major influences (such as Zen Buddhism and European musical life in the early twentieth century). The author's recollections and notes from workshops and seminars with Suzuki will also be drawn upon. A two month period of study (in 1985) with Suzuki in Matsumoto constitutes a significant part of the research.

Literature Review

Suzuki's own writings are pivotal to the research. In books, articles and addresses, he not only delineates his major influences and experiences but also presents ideas in a style and of a substance that reveal his roots.

The available literature by Suzuki is extensive. Three of his books, Nurtured by Love, Ability Development From Age Zero, and Talent Education for Young Children, are in English translation. Talent Education Journal, an American quarterly, has translated and published two other books, Ability is Not Inborn and Ability Development in Music, in serial form as well as

numerous articles that Suzuki originally submitted in Japanese to the journal Saino Kyoiku. Several of these articles have been compiled into two books, Where Love is Deep and Lectures on Musical Instruction. Suzuki's articles appear in other journals as well, such as the American Suzuki Journal, and some books on Suzuki include extensive extracts and compilations of his articles and addresses.

Suzuki's message remains remarkably consistent throughout his pronouncements, which span a period of about twenty-five years. His specific methods of instruction may be continuously evolving as his enquiries proceed, but the underlying principles are unchanged. This consistency is welcome to those evaluating his theory; a definitive recapitulation of Suzuki's thought is possible. One obstacle, however, to understanding Suzuki is the expression of his ideas in a style that is elusive to many Westerners.

Like most Japanese writers, Suzuki resorts to a loose structure of argument rather than the careful logical reasoning that we are accustomed to, and suggestion or illustration rather than sharp, clear statements. He often expresses himself in pithy maxims, a common Japanese practice to which the use of characters is particularly well suited. It is hoped that this study may contribute to the clarification of his writing.

Suzuki's background can be explored through the study of the ideas and environments that affected him the most. Thus books on Zen, the traditional Japanese arts and about twentieth century European and Japanese culture constitute a part of the source

material for this paper. Examples of this genre are Zen in the Art of Archery by Eugen Herrigel, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, by Ruth Benedict, Great Masters of the Violin by Boris Schwartz and The Japanese by Edwin Reischauer.

Many books and articles about Suzuki have been published. Some are written by people outside the field of education. Such is the case of Kindergarten is Too Late by Masaru Ibuka, a Suzuki supporter and the founder-chairman of the Sony Corporation. Writing for parents of infants, Ibuka provides a clear explanation of Suzuki's principles and numerous examples of Talent Education at work.

Suzuki's German wife, Waltraud, wrote My Life With Suzuki, an autobiography recounting her involvement with her husband's work. Masaaki Honda, a practicing pediatrician and a very active supporter of Talent Education, also wrote about his own association with Suzuki in an autobiography entitled How Suzuki Changed My Life. It gives the perspective of the parent of a Suzuki pupil who was very active in the Talent Education movement. Also from Honda's pen are Talent Education, a short exposition of the principle features and history of Talent Education, and Suzuki: Man of Love, a first-hand biography of Suzuki.

Evelyn Hermann's biography, Suzuki: The Man and His Philosophy, has an account of Suzuki's life and work, based mainly on material from Nurtured by Love. The section on philosophy is a compilation of many of his writings and addresses, some which are out of print. Hermann is a North American Suzuki teacher.

As a rule, the writers are teachers whose aims are immediate

and practical: to show what the method is and how it works for parents, teachers and children. This approach is exemplified in The Talent Education School of Shinichi Suzuki, An Analysis: Application of Its Philosophy and Methods to All Areas of Instruction, a published doctoral thesis by Ray Landers. The treatment of Talent Education's history and philosophy is brief and superficial. On the other hand, description of the method's adaptation to the teaching of piano, comparison to some other learning theories and replies to criticisms of Talent Education are all covered in some detail. A similar preoccupation with the what and how is exhibited by other authors including Clifford Cook, John Kendall, Valerie Lloyd-Watts, Elizabeth Mills and William Starr.

The Suzuki method has increasingly become the focus of educational research in North America. An educational anthropologist, Lois Taniuchi, published a short (25-page) paper entitled Cultural Continuity in an Educational Institution: A Case Study of the Suzuki Method of Music Instruction, in which she very ably links some of the central themes of Talent Education to beliefs and practices of traditional and contemporary Japanese culture. She also briefly discusses the transplantation of Suzuki's method into the American cultural environment. Of the many works examined in the course of an extensive survey of literature on Suzuki, Taniuchi's paper is the only one to touch on the genesis of Suzuki's ideas.

There is an ample literary base for research into the roots of Talent Education. On the other hand, there seems to be a

dearth of literature on the genesis of Suzuki's pedagogy. It is hoped that this thesis will at least partially fill this void.

Notes

1. Shinichi Suzuki, Ability Development from Age Zero (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1981), p. 23.
2. Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism, Flamingo edition (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), p. 9.
3. Erich Schumacher, Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered (London: Blond and Briggs, 1973), p. 81.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE AND WORK

"Man is the son of his environment."¹ This is one of Suzuki's favorite and most oft stated mottos. He believes that it holds true for everyone, especially himself. When explaining his work he frequently resorts to autobiographical anecdotes, relating key experiences and encounters that he feels shaped his life and his activities. In describing his method, he writes: "With glances back at the past and full of hope for the future, I should like to tell the story".²

We may well begin by examining Suzuki's early environment. He was born into a samurai family in Nagoya, Japan in 1898, the thirtieth year of the Meiji year period.³

The Meiji year period (1868 - 1912), also known as the Meiji Restoration, saw a great and unprecedented transformation of Japan from a feudal pre-industrial society in self imposed isolation to a modern, highly developed, imperialistic nation. This remarkable metamorphosis was Japan's response to colonial subjugation which followed USN Commodore Perry's forced entry of Japan in 1853.

From 1600 to 1868, Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa family of shoguns (warlords) who, with their daimyo (regional feudal lords)

and samurai, oversaw the protection and administration of all Japan. The rule of the Tokugawa shogunate was, until 1853, an exceptionally peaceful period in Japan's history.

The samurai roughly correspond to the knights of feudal Europe. They made up about six percent of the population. During the Tokugawa shogunate they became increasingly involved with administrative duties and by 1850 very few were engaged in military activity. While they continued to wear the ceremonial sword as a badge of distinction, they were in the main bureaucrats and their education was first and foremost literary. They had become men of the pen, not the sword. Zen was their religion and the study of archery and swordsmanship was pursued in a spiritual context rather than as a martial contest. The same approach infused the practice of the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, calligraphy and judo.

The Tokugawa shogunate and its feudal hierarchy were toppled in 1868 to be replaced by reformers whose resentment of the domination of Japan by foreigners was expressed in the four character slogan "honor the Emperor and expel the barbarians."⁴ Another four character slogan, "rich country, strong military,"⁵ expressed the realization that to regain her sovereignty, Japan had to modernize. There followed a large scale adaptation of Western ideas and practices in economics, industry, politics and social hierarchy. The samurai were stripped of their privileged status, losing their stipend and position as a hereditary bureaucratic class. They were also prohibited from wearing their swords.

Suzuki's father Masakichi was born in 1859 in the midst of the upheavals that followed Japan's capitulation to foreign powers. He grew up in tune with his times, with the new Japan. Representative of the new Japanese, he was pioneering, inquisitive, enterprising and assimilative of the West.

At the age of ten, Masakichi was sent to an English school for two years. Then he went to work for his father, making samisens, "a side business for poor samurai."⁶ The samisen was a three stringed, banjo-like instrument which had flourished in the Tokugawa era.

In 1886 business had declined and Masakichi went to Tokyo to become an English instructor. While in Tokyo he saw a violin for the first time. Working from a drawing he made of a violin borrowed for a night he made his first violin in 1888, after many unsuccessful efforts. He subsequently established a thriving violin factory which became the largest in the world. This achievement was recognized with an award of The Second Order of the Rising Sun from the Emperor. Masakichi became wealthy and was able to afford the time and expense of touring Europe for five months in 1910. Unswayed by his newfound status and wealth, he continued working to improve techniques of production until his death in 1944, when he held twenty-one patents in violin manufacture.

Masakichi can be seen to embody the qualities that Orientals call yang: male, aggressive, creative action, rational, clear.⁷ These too were the qualities of the West and the new Japan.

Suzuki's mother, Ryo Fujie, was in many ways the complement

of her husband and fits into the standard description of vin: female, yielding, contemplative, intuitive and complex-- qualities that are traditionally attributed to the East and the pre-Meiji Japan. Her education was the traditional one for samurai daughters. She attended Shihan school (Japanese singing school) where she learned Japanese singing and samisen playing, Ikebana (flower arranging) and Ocha (tea) ceremony and other traditional arts.⁸ An old photo of Ryo Fujie shows a modest young woman in Japanese dress sitting on a floor mat in a kneeling position. In contrast, photos of her husband picture a Japanese in European attire, striking Western-style postures.

Suzuki was the third son in a family of seven brothers and five sisters. In an early childhood recollection, he recalls fights with his brothers and sisters in which they would bat each other with violins at hand in the factory!

Suzuki feels that his home environment was favorable and it is with great admiration that he reminisces about his father. He attributes his fortunate heritage to fate:

It is an unchangeable fact beyond our control, strictly in God's hands, that no one can choose his parents. We cannot say, 'I want to go over there; it is much more desirable, much better.' Here or there, we cannot do^a a thing about it. It is absolutely fate - nothing else.⁹

An early influence from outside the home was the teaching of Ninomiya Sontoku (1787 - 1856) which was popular in Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ninomiya was featured in magazines and taught in the public schools.¹⁰ He was a peasant sage who emphasized a high ideal of life, industry and careful, economical methods of utilizing resources. In a letter three

quarters of a century later, Suzuki cites Ninomiya as one of two major sources of early inspiration and points out that "Mr. Ninomiya wrote that it is important not only to read books but also learn from the spirit of nature!"¹¹

Tolstoy was the other major source of inspiration. At age seventeen, Suzuki discovered a Tolstoy diary. It was an almost mystical revelation:

I casually took it down from the shelf and opened it at random. My eyes fell on the following words: 'To deceive oneself is worse than to deceive others.' These harsh words pierced me to the core. I began to tremble with fear and could scarcely control myself. I bought the little book and rushed home. I read and reread that book so much that in the end it fell apart. What a marvelous man Tolstoy must have been! My admiration for him led me to immerse myself in all his writings. Tolstoy provided the staff of life on which I nurtured my soul. His Diary was always at my side. Wherever I went I took it with me. Several years later when, at twenty-three, I went to Germany to study, the book went with me in my pocket. Tolstoy said that one should not deceive oneself and that the voice of conscience is the voice of God. I determined to live according to these ideas.¹²

Suzuki extracted the phrase "The voice of conscience is the voice of God" and made it his personal motto, his sacred creed.¹³

The discovery of Tolstoy led to other readings. Suzuki became

fascinated with works that searched for the meaning of life, such as Bacon's essays and books on Western philosophy. And it was probably Tolstoy who started it all with me. I diligently studied the sayings of the priest Dogen entitled Shushogi, which began: 'It is the great Buddha Karma that illuminates life and death. . . .'¹⁴

Works in Western philosophy and the sayings of Dogen (1200 - 1253), one of the great exponents of Zen Buddhism are thus jointly classified as "works that searched for the meaning of life."

While attending public school and receiving a Western

education, Suzuki also studied Zen with the great master, Fuzan Asano, his mother's uncle. Suzuki was one of only two pupils; the other was to become mayor of Tokyo in the 1960's. They practiced control of their life force to the extent that hot coals could be held in their hands. This channeling of energy later developed into Suzuki's ability to heal. While he never talks about this ability, it is often mentioned by his associates and there are documented cases of him curing ailments and diseases.¹⁵

Seventeen year old Suzuki found his greatest joy in playing with his younger sisters and brothers and the children of the neighbourhood. Reading Tolstoy made him "realize how precious children of four and five were."¹⁶ He wanted to become one of them, to learn to always have the meekness of a child. Wondering why children lost their virtues of trust, love, fairness and joy as they grew up, he began to suspect that there must be something wrong with education. In his recollections fifty years later, Suzuki identified this as the moment when the seed of the Talent Education movement was sown.

Suzuki attended commercial school in Nagoya between the ages of fourteen to eighteen. One of his salient memories from this time was the school motto: "Character first, Technique Second". Teacher Jiro Yana had inscribed it with brush and ink on a large frame of calligraphy which hung on the front wall of the the school auditorium.

Popular with his classmates, Suzuki was pitcher on the baseball team and class president all four years. In the final graduating year he expressed solidarity with nine students who

were in conflict with the school authorities. He and the nine were punished with indefinite suspensions. The whole school population of seventeen hundred students went on a sympathy strike which lasted a week until the suspensions were revoked.

When he worked at the violin factory during summer holidays and after graduation, he and other members of his family were not expected on the job until nine, two hours after the workers. To Suzuki, it did not seem right from a purely human standpoint that he should have such privileges so he decided to rise at five and report for work at seven with the other workers.

From the foregoing we see that Suzuki in his youth was both tough and gentle, equally popular with his peers and with small children, obstinately principled and yet practicing meekness, studying in preparation for entering business and yet a dreamer. He felt

the seed of true friendship and love, as I had learned it from Tolstoy, taking root in my heart. I felt love for even the tiniest insect. On the path through the fields that I used on the way back from school to reach my house on the outskirts of Nagoya there were many ants, both large and small, busily going about their affairs. I remember being extremely careful not to step on any of them. When I thought that I could cause one of those tiny beings to lose its life forever, I could not walk carelessly. This is the sort of person I was as an early adolescent. It was not long after that I listened to records for the first time, and was amazed by Elman's 'Ave Maria' and quite carried away by the sound of the violin.¹⁷

The Suzuki household had acquired one of the early gramophones, hand wound with a loudspeaker horn shaped like a morninglory. Always vague about dates, Suzuki estimates that "it must have been before I graduated from commercial college."¹⁸ He

was deeply impressed by Micha Elman's "Ave Maria" by Schubert and realized for the first time the beauty of tone that could be produced by the violin, an instrument he had hitherto thought of as a toy. He brought one home from the factory and by listening to Elman and by stint of daily efforts at imitation, learned to play a Haydn minuet in D major.¹⁹ With no intentions of becoming a musician, he played with the violin hoping to discover more about the nature of art.

After graduation from commercial school in 1916, Suzuki entered his father's factory as a regular staff member in charge of the export section, packing and booking. He was happy and busy with his work.

At five in the evening, when working hours ended, I would start for home. One or another of the neighborhood children would be waiting for me. Swinging on my arms and hugging my legs, they could hardly wait to get to our house to play. I loved the violin, I loved my work, I loved talking and playing with the children.²⁰

In the Fall of 1918, after two years employment at the factory, he became ill and was sent to Okitsu to recuperate for three months. Here he made the acquaintance of a Mr. Yanagida who was a friend of Marquis Tokugawa. The following summer, in 1919, Mr. Yanagida wrote to Suzuki about a biological research expedition to the Chishima islands, to be led by the Marquis. Suzuki was invited as a guest aboard the expedition ship, to participate in some sightseeing around the islands.

An invitation from such an eminent person as Marquis Tokugawa was likely seen as a great honor by Suzuki's father who readily gave his consent to let him go. Suzuki went to Tokyo to meet

Tokugawa for the first time. ". . . this encounter decided my entire fate and led it in a new direction."²¹ He had great admiration for Tokugawa. ". . . for forty years Mr. Tokugawa's progressive ideas, his philosophy and great personality, his thoughts of truth, influenced me."²²

The expedition left Tokyo on August 1st. Among the guests on board was a renowned Japanese pianist, Miss Nobu Koda.

At that time I was inseparable from my violin. It had become a part of me. Since there was a piano in the cabin, I played the violin accompanied by Miss Koda. Young as I was, I didn't think that, after all, Miss Koda was a piano teacher. I now feel rather awkward at recalling this.²³

One day, as the party was walking along the beach, one of scientists spotted a rare piece of moss growing very high up on a sheer cliff, out of reach of the most skilled climber. Rashly, the young Suzuki boasted that he could get it down with the toss of a scoop. He had a sure aim, having throughout his childhood amused himself for hours on end by throwing stones at targets. In adolescence, he had pitched for his school baseball team. Urged on by the others, he took careful aim and threw the scoop. To everyone's surprise, including his own, it plunged into the moss but it failed to dislodge it. He then found himself in the horrible situation of being a failure and losing face. In desperation, and filled with anxiety Suzuki threw a big stone which, to his great relief, hit the scoop and brought it down. It was an amazing feat, one that Suzuki attributes to the sixth sense of kan (intuition).²⁴

The following autumn Tokugawa came to Nagoya to visit the Suzuki family. He asked Suzuki's father about letting his son

study music. Until then his father had been adamantly opposed and used to say " 'He may like music but he doesn't need to work where he will be obliged to kowtow to a lot of people in order to get on. If he wants to listen to music, he can become a successful businessman and hire those kind of people to come and play for him.' "25 However, since it was the Marquis Tokugawa who asked him, he could hardly refuse.

So it was that in the spring of 1920 Suzuki went to Tokyo to study violin with Ko Ando, younger sister of Miss Koda. He was given a room in the Tokugawa household and had his meals with the Marquis whom he looked to as mentor and guide.

. . . almost every day at the Tokugawa mansion there would be visits from scholars and friends, such as the physicist Torahiku Terada and the phoneticist Kotoju Satsuda. I was in the midst of fine men such as these. I'm sure it was Marquis Tokugawa's subtle way of seeing that my character was properly trained.²⁶

With Tokugawa as a powerful ally, and at his incentive, Suzuki had no trouble securing his father's permission and support when it was time to continue his music studies abroad. He left in October 1920 for Berlin where he was to stay for the next eight years.

It certainly was not I who opened the door of my destiny. I felt that something was always leading me. What led me then was Marquis Tokugawa's great love. I always tried to follow like a child, and because of this he never failed to push me and give me the encouragement I needed.²⁷

It may be reasonable to suppose that their relationship was in part that of lord and vassal. This had been the historical relationship between their families for over two and a half centuries, as recently as until the time of their parents. They were of the

same generation, Tokugawa being about ten years older, yet Suzuki rendered him the reverence and respect usually reserved for someone much older. Even Suzuki's father bowed to the wishes of the young Marquis. Tokugawa, for his part, assumed responsibility for Suzuki's welfare. He advised and helped him with the same paternal concern that the shoguns and daimyo were expected to extend to their retainers in earlier times.

Berlin in the 1920's was one of the most important cultural centers of Europe. It was also a very restive city. The deprivation and suffering of the war years were followed by the armed uprisings and strikes of postwar, defeated Germany. Unprecedented runaway inflation afflicted all but the black marketeers and wiped out savings overnight. Yet, despite the turmoil, Berliners continued to uphold their long tradition of cultural excellence. Waltraud Suzuki (1905-), Shinichi's wife and a native of Berlin, remembers her family's home concerts. "My bother played the violin, my sister the piano and I sang. At that time in Berlin, this was still the normal way to live for many people, ignoring all the upheavals and materialism outside."²⁸

Suzuki spent his first three months in Berlin looking for a teacher. He had refused an introduction to a teacher from Miss Ando, preferring instead to find his own. He went to concerts every evening, hearing famous as well as rising young artists, in the hope of finding someone whom he would sincerely want as a teacher. He was on the verge of giving up and moving to Vienna when he heard a concert by the Klingler Quartet, led by Karl

Klingler. Half a century later, Suzuki could "still vividly remember the sound of their performance that night. It was music of profound spirituality. It completely charmed my soul with its beauty, and it spoke to me gently. At the same time it had superb order and technique."²⁹ Suzuki had found his Teacher. He wrote to Klingler, in English because he did not yet write German: "Please take me as your pupil."³⁰ The other Japanese music students in Berlin warned that Klingler did not take private pupils so it was a surprise when he agreed to an audition. He subsequently accepted Suzuki as his only pupil.

Klingler was a student of Joseph Joachim, a giant among violinists in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Thus, in terms of artistic and violinistic lineage, Suzuki can be considered a direct descendant of Joachim. Such a consideration is significant because our musical heritage is transmitted from teacher to student. The bond between master and pupil is strong, permanent and important, perhaps more so than in any other branch of learning. It is therefore not uncommon to hear a musician pay respectful homage to his teacher with reverence and love. Nor is it uncommon to trace the lineage of a musician back to his teacher's teacher and sometimes further through to the earliest masters such as, in the case of the violin, Corelli, Viotti, and Tartini.

Joseph Joachim was recognized by many as "the greatest musician of his generation."³¹ He was certainly one of the leading musicians of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Joachim is remembered as teacher, composer, conductor, violin

virtuoso and chamber musician, colleague and collaborator of Schumann, Mendelsohn, Brahms, Liszt and Wagner, Sarasate and Wieniawski. One of his lasting contributions was the inauguration of the art of interpretation. Although a Hungarian and Jewish, Joachim was admired as the personification of German classicism in music. He is considered to be a central player in the rise of Berlin as a musical capital of Europe.³²

When Joachim died in 1907, there was not one musician who could replace him. Some had taken his place as a soloist, others filled his teaching post at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and it was Klingler who inherited the mantle of string quartet performer. He also received the master's Stradivarius of 1713, which was loaned to him for life. Most importantly, Klingler perpetuated Joachim's unswerving fidelity to the intentions of the composer and devotion to bringing out the essence in music. Klingler in turn transmitted these ideals to his student.

Suzuki recalls his teacher with affection and respect.

Klingler was about forty, handsome, and a man one could become extremely fond of. What he taught me was not so much technique as the real essence of music. For instance, if we were working on a Handel sonata, he would earnestly explain to me what great religious feeling Handel must have been filled with when he wrote it, and then he would play it for me. He would look for the roots underlying a man and his art and lead me to them. To be led by a man of such high character was indeed a blessing for me.

His friends were all wonderful people too. He often invited me to concerts at his home.³³ It is impossible to evaluate how much these taught me.

The weekly lesson usually lasted about two hours. Klingler would assign several pieces at once so that Suzuki gradually covered a great variety of repertoire. He found it a tremendous

ordeal to prepare his large assignments and despaired over his apparent lack of talent. He did not realize at the time "that it was just a matter of repeating a piece hundreds of times in order to play it better, more nobly and more beautifully."³⁴

Although he describes himself as a lazy student, he practiced five hours a day, hardly a lazy man's regime. Of these , he spent three hours on etudes, a study he was later to rue. "Why didn't I practice real music for all five hours? I deeply regret that I wasted countless hours in technical rather than musical efforts, when the music that I practiced every day contained technical factors equivalent to the etudes."³⁵

From the foregoing it becomes evident that Klingler did not instruct in the art of practicing. Nevertheless, Suzuki received what he was seeking from his teacher.

. . .I learned from Klingler the essence of what art truly is. My ultimate desire was not to become a performer but to understand art. And in that respect I learned a tremendous amount from Klingler. The first four years we studied concertos and sonatas, and the next four years chamber music. This was because I had gradually become extremely fond of chamber music as well as because Professor Klingler was a great master of this medium.

I was doing what I wanted to do.³⁶

He was learning the meaning of art. One evening enlightenment came in a flash and to hear Suzuki describe it, it sounds closely akin to a religious revelation.

It was Mozart who taught me to know perfect love, truth, goodness and beauty. And I now [forty years later] deeply feel as if I were under direct orders from Mozart, and he left me a legacy, and in his place I am to further the happiness of all children. What led to this revelation was the Klingler Quartet's playing of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet [in A Major, K.581].

That evening I seemed to be gradually drawn into Mozart's spirit, and finally I was not conscious of

anything else, not even of my own being, I became so immersed. Of course, I did not realize this until afterward. After the performance I tried to clap. But there was no feeling from the shoulders down, and I could not move either hand. I don't know when the clapping stopped. During the applause I just sat there in a trance. Finally I got my hands back, but even when the feeling came back, I still just stared into space. An indescribable sublime, ecstatic joy had taken hold of my soul. I had been given a glimpse of Mozart's high spiritual world. Through sound, for the first time in my life I had been able to feel the highest pulsating beauty of the human spirit, and my blood burned within me. It was a moment of sublime eternity when I, a human being, had gone beyond the limits of this physical body. That night I couldn't sleep at all. Mozart, the man, had shown me immortal light.³⁷

Suzuki was twenty-four at the time. From that day on he felt that he received power and strength from Mozart and that he was "eternally a child on Mozart's bosom" Mozart is clearly given a godly stature by an ecstatic Suzuki. He hears in Mozart's music a "superhuman love", a love that "takes cognizance of man's deep sorrow . . . birth and death . . . the evanescence and loneliness of life . . . the all-pervasive sadness."³⁸

When he later studied the haiku (seventeen syllable poems) of the Japanese poet Issa (1763-1827), Suzuki came to understand the mind of Mozart even more clearly. He feels that the following Issa haiku are pure Mozart:

Be it as it may,
All my life is in your hands,
Now at the end of year.

Though I am aware
Evening bells my curfew toll,
I enjoy the cool.

"In your hands" expresses the great soul of Buddhism, I believe.³⁹

Suzuki did not spend all of his time in Berlin floating on a spiritual cloud. He took lodgings in a house where both the

elderly landlady and her maid were hard of hearing. It was an ideal situation because he could practice as often and whenever he wanted without disturbing anyone. He learned German, encountering enormous difficulty with pronunciation. Three neighbourhood children tried to help him say 'R' but to no avail. He tried hard but 'RRR' always came out as 'AAA'. While he struggled with the recalcitrant consonant, the children had no difficulty even though they were not especially taught. Their only training came from hearing German spoken around them.⁴⁰

He attended concerts and there were many. Berlin in the 1920's was the mecca for the classical music world. Its vibrant musical life drew musicians whose names are now legendary. Suzuki recalls some in particular: violinists Fritz Kreisler, Jacques Thibaud, Cecilia Hansen and Adolf Busch, cellist Pablo Casals, pianist Schnabel, composer-pianist Busoni, conductor Furtwangler and composer-conductors Alexander Glazunov and Richard Strauss.

Suzuki was taken under the wing of Dr. Leonor Michaelis, a family friend who had been a frequent guest at the Suzuki home in Nagoya. Michaelis was a physical chemist and medical scientist. His research in biophysics and biochemistry led to important discoveries which gained him an international reputation. He was also a extremely talented amateur pianist, adept in improvisation in the style of various classical composers. When Michaelis left Germany for reasons of anti-Semitism, he entrusted the care of young Suzuki to a friend, Dr. Albert Einstein.⁴¹

Like Michaelis, Einstein was an avid and accomplished amateur musician. He played violin indefatigably and "was an experienced

sightreader, with a steady rhythm, excellent intonation and a clear and pure tone using a minimum of vibrato"⁴² Suzuki was impressed by Einstein's light, flowing finger movements and his beautiful, delicate tone.

When Suzuki met him, Einstein was already world famous. He could never understand why the public idolized him, especially since none but a handful of specialists could understand his theories. He nevertheless used his fame as a stage from which he fought for human rights and peace.

Einstein felt that his musical education played a large part in his success as a physicist. The theory of the optics of motion occurred to him by intuition. He further explained that "music is the driving force behind this intuition. My parents had me study the violin from the time I was six. My new discovery is the result of musical perception."⁴³

Einstein included Suzuki in his circle of friends. Most were prominent people in their fields and all loved art. Suzuki was deeply impressed by their extreme modesty and the kindness that they showed him.

Here I was, just a beginner of no particular talent, a mere struggling student, and never once did they make me feel foolish or treat me lightly, but they accepted me warmly and made sure I enjoyed myself. I was touched by the considerate way they took pains to include me in their conversation and to see that I was not bored.

Harmony--to achieve it, one must gracefully give in to the other, and it is nobler to be the one who gives in than the one who forces the other to give in. Harmony cannot be achieved any other way. It was things like that that I learned from Einstein and the people who gathered at his house.⁴⁴

Suzuki's friends often held home concerts at which they

played for each other or invited a guest artist. It was at one of these home concerts that he met his future wife, Waltraud Prange, a young singer. She was a devout Catholic. Suzuki began attending church and, without telling his fiancée, became a Catholic some time before the wedding.

When marriage plans were announced, Mr. Suzuki sent his eldest son to meet the Prange family, to appraise whether the marriage was suitable. "The report must have been favourable because there were no objections."⁴⁵ The wedding was February 8, 1928 and four months later the newlyweds were summoned home to Japan.

During his eight year sojourn in Berlin, Suzuki had experienced a very different way of life. He had heard and studied with the best musicians of Europe and had associated with highly educated and cultured individuals. Living at the very apex of Western culture, he had learned German, married, adopted Catholicism and become a musician in Western classical music. In short, he was a new man. Or was he?

He had gone to Berlin with the idealistic mission of discovering the true meaning of art. He

searched for the meaning of art in music, and it was through music that I found my work and my purpose in life. Once art to me was something far off, unfathomable and unattainable. But I discovered it was a tangible thing. Anybody who takes up an art is apt to think of the object of his ambition as something very far off, and I tried to search for the secret. But after my eight years in Germany I found that it was not at all what I had imagined it to be.

The real essence of art turned out to be not something high up and far off. It was right inside my ordinary daily self. The very way one greets people and expresses oneself is art. If a musician wants to become a fine artist, he must first become a finer person. If

he does this, his worth will appear. It will appear in everything he does, even in what he writes. Art is not in some far-off place. A work of art is the expression of a man's whole personality, sensibility and ability.

As I have said, on one hand I listened constantly to fine works in fine performances, immersing myself in Mozart, and on the other hand I was exposed to the modesty, high intellectual sensibility and humanity of Dr. Einstein and his group; and in this way I came to the end of my search and realized what art truly is.⁴⁶

Suzuki's mother was critically ill. Shinichi and Waltraud went to see her, planning a temporary stay before returning to Europe. They wanted to settle in Switzerland. Little did they know that they were to remain in Japan for the rest of their lives.

Soon after his return, Suzuki formed a string quartet with three of his younger brothers. They began to concertize widely and broadcast on radio, introducing Western music to Japanese audiences.

The elder Mrs. Suzuki died within the year. Shortly after, Mr. Suzuki informed the family that he had lost his fortune in New York's "Black Friday". For the first time in his life, Shinichi Suzuki had to start thinking of ways to support himself.

At the beginning of 1930, Shinichi and Waltraud moved to Tokyo where they soon became active in foreign and Japanese musical circles and society. The Suzuki String Quartet continued giving concerts and Suzuki also started teaching at the Imperial School of Music and the Kunitachi Music School. Despite a growing income and a continued, though reduced, living allowance from his father, the Suzukis were always poor, mainly because Shinichi had no concern or understanding for money. Meanwhile, the family fortune continued its decline. Shinichi sold his Vuillaume violin

to help his father pay his debts and asked his wife to sell her valuable Bechstein grand piano that had arrived from Berlin.

The first infant pupil was four year old Toshiya Eto. His father brought him to Suzuki for violin lessons in 1931. At the time Suzuki was teaching violin to a class of mostly young men and did not know how to best train such a young child. Without any experience, he had no idea of where to begin, what to teach. He became increasingly intent on finding the right way and began to think about it from morning to night.

From the agronomist sage Sontoku Ninomiya, Suzuki had learned to observe and be aware of nature, to see things as they are and not as they are commonly perceived. This is what he understood from Ninomiya's admonition: "'Read not ten thousand volumes; explore the logic of the heavens.' . . . 'penetrate the truth of great nature yourself, do not just read books.'" Suzuki resolved not to "sleep in commonsense" but to walk alone on the path of "reading the logic of the heavens, the karma."⁴⁷ It became his habit to shun popular wisdom in favour of trying to look into the essence of things. It was in this frame of mind that he approached the problem of teaching violin to the four-year-old boy.

The solution came in a stroke of insight.

At that time three of my brothers and I had just formed the Suzuki Quartet. One day when we were practicing at the house of my younger brother, it hit me like a flash: why, all Japanese children speak Japanese! This thought was for me like a light in a dark night. Since they all speak Japanese so easily and fluently, there must be a secret; and this must be training. Indeed, all children everywhere in the world are brought up by a perfect educational method: their mother tongue. Why not apply

this method to other faculties? I felt that I had made a tremendous discovery. If a child cannot do his arithmetic, it is said that his intelligence is below average. Yet he speaks the difficult Japanese language -- or his own native language -- very well. Isn't this something to ponder and think about? In my opinion the child is not below average in intelligence; it is the educational system that is wrong. His ability or talent simply was not developed properly. It is astonishing that no one has found this out before in all these years, although the situation clearly has existed throughout human history.⁴⁸

Suzuki was excited by his discovery. When he talked about it, half his listeners were startled, the rest found it absurd. He was nevertheless convinced that what he had found was of great significance, that any child could display highly superior abilities if the correct methods were used in education. He analyzed the processes of learning to speak the mother tongue and applied them to teaching violin to small children.

His methods were immediately successful, proving the validity of his theory. His reputation as a teacher spread quickly and Suzuki soon had a sizable class of children between the ages three and seven. His wife later remarked, when recalling this period, that their home came to resemble a kindergarten.

The little pupils gave a public performance in 1934, in Tokyo's Nihon Seinenkan. One of the performers was four year old Koji Toyoda who played Dvorak's "Humoresque", accompanied by his father on the guitar. Before the concert, Suzuki had told reporters: "Talent is not inherited or inborn, but trained and educated. Genius is an honorific name given to those who are brought up and trained to high ability".⁴⁹ Despite this briefing, the main papers carried big photos of Koji the next day and headlines proclaiming "A Genius Appears". Suzuki was disappointed

that most people could not understand the significance of his work. He decided thereafter to have several pupils perform pieces together in unison, hoping thus to show that talent is not exceptional but latent and trainable in any normal, healthy child. Thus he was able to claim, "The performance that had been termed genius a long time ago is now performed by hundreds of children in groups".⁵⁰

Many of these early pupils went on to distinguished concert careers. The very first, Toshiya Eto, became a recording artist and a teacher at the prestigious Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Koji Toyoda became concertmaster of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and teacher at the world famous conservatory of Berlin.

Some did not follow musical careers. One that did not was Teiichi, a blind boy brought to Suzuki at age five by his father, who was an artist. As he had done when confronted with Toshiya Eto, Suzuki tried to devise a new approach, this time for teaching a blind child. He came to realize that the child's kan (intuition) had to be trained.

First the boy was taught to "see" the bow. He held the bow in his right hand and tried to touch the tip with his left thumb. When, after many days of effort, he was able to do it, he continued to repeat this exercise many thousand times. Other exercises for developing kan followed, each repeated until Teiichi could perform them effortlessly. A year after starting, in 1942, he performed a Seitz concerto at a student's recital at Hibiya Public Hall in Tokyo. From that time on, Suzuki began to emphasize fostering intuition in his teaching. He explains that

When human ability of a high degree functions, such a thing as eyes would be unnecessary. A master of archery has the intuition to hit the target with precise aim in the dark, while there are cases in which a blind swordsman triumphs over several opponents.

The word "mindlessness" can be understood as an expression denoting the world of intuition. The world of outstanding intuition is precisely the realm of mindlessness, and that, I consider, is where the highest human ability is activated.⁵¹

It took Suzuki ten years to refine his violin method. It has changed very little since the early 1940's. It was compiled in ten volumes and made up of pieces of musical integrity and beauty that children find attractive. Some of the beginners pieces are Suzuki's compositions and others are German folk songs while the more advance pieces are from the classical repertoire. Some of these have long been used by violin teachers; others were popular and often performed in concerts of the 1920's and 1930's.

The Suzukis rented a summer cottage at Kutsukake, where they visited with the Marquis Tokugawa who had a villa there. Later they rented a little house year round on Lake Ashiya. Suzuki liked to fish and in the winter they went skiing.

In 1942 the air raids on Tokyo escalated. Suzuki and most of his students were evacuated. His wife, Waltraud, was confined to Hakone, a mountain resort, along with other German nationals. All foreigners in Japan at that time were viewed with suspicion, and life was made difficult and unpleasant for them.

The violin factory in Nagoya had been converted to making seaplane floats but there was a shortage of the cypress wood necessary for production. Suzuki offered to go up to the mountains, to Kiso-Fukushima where he took over a geta (wooden

clog) factory and converted it into a sawmill to supply the factory in Nagoya. It was a very successful venture and in the newspapers a big report was made of "The Plant of the Artist Manager".⁵²

Suzuki believes that the key to his success as a plant manager was treating the workers as family members. He recalls: "At that time, I gathered everyone at the plant every day before work and played the violin to cleanse their hearts and make them feel fresh. Then I gave them a daily lesson"⁵³ He counselled the workers on improving family life, on being helpful at home and treating their wives with love and respect. (The latter must have seemed audacious at a time when a Japanese man by custom publicly referred to his spouse as "my stupid wife".) A plant carpenter was assigned full time to the maintenance of the workers' houses. Home life thus improved with the outcome that the employees worked harder, efficiency levels soared and production was as a result very high. From the increased profits, Suzuki gave a five hundred yen bonus to each worker and promised another five hundred to whomever asked!

Although he spared no efforts in his work, Suzuki had no aspirations for a career in industry, nor was he driven by patriotic fervor. It was simply a part of his philosophy "to live as best I could, whatever happened, whatever work I had to do, so I was able to throw myself into the work at hand and gain from it. In my youth a Zen priest named Dogen had taught me this. The lumber-mill work was interesting and we carried on cheerfully".⁵⁴

As the war drew to an end, living conditions in Japan deteriorated rapidly. The food shortages became critical and rations diminished to the point where few had enough to eat. At the end of the war, most cities, among them Tokyo, were in large part destroyed by the air raids and about 668,000 civilians had been killed.⁵⁵

Afterwards, there was an intense, popular revulsion against the war and, perhaps more than any other people, the Japanese become preoccupied with peace and reconstruction. They had suffered immensely from war and were determined to prevent a reoccurrence. The people, who had fled from urban centers into the countryside, returned after the war to their cities to build their lives anew.

Instead of returning to Tokyo, Suzuki went to Matsumoto, a town in the Japan Alps, an area that is often called the Switzerland of Japan. He went at the invitation of a new music school on the condition that he would be allowed to devote himself entirely to infant education. The Talent Education movement dates from this time.

Suzuki's teaching took a new orientation. He no longer held training of musicians as his ultimate goal but rather the training of people of fine characters and highly developed abilities. He remembered Einstein, Dr. Michaelis and other admirable people that he had met in Germany who had extensive training in music. He concluded that musical training in children's lives would lead to heightened sensitivity to others and to beauty, as well as increased abilities in intellectual endeavors. If all children

were nurtured musically, he reasoned, humanity would no longer be subjected to the anguish and cruelty of war.

When the era begins which lets all children in the world be educated into people with beautiful hearts and desirable abilities, then surely armed forces and armaments would disappear from the world. Prisons and jails would change into schools where people would be re-educated into finer people. I am afraid that world peace will never come until we change the education of human beings.⁵⁶

The location of Matsumoto had several advantages. It is in the center of Japan, facilitating the spread of the Talent Education movement. More importantly, in 1945 "there was not one child who could play the violin in this small and cold local city in the mountains".⁵⁷ He hoped that turning out accomplished violinists in a provincial, culturally isolated town would verify that "Talent is not by nature" but rather by training. There were also health advantages in Matsumoto. It is known all over Japan as a health spa, as the best place for healthy living. Suzuki was in very poor health when he moved there.

Always given to generosity and more concerned for the welfare of others than for his own, he had given away his food rations and subsisted on almost no food. His stomach deteriorated until he was unable to eat. He was near death when he went under the care of a doctor in Chinese medicine who was able to cure him. During his convalescence, Suzuki invented a new system of calculation which is now part of the curriculum of many elementary schools in Japan.

Economic and financial circumstances forced a continued separation between Suzuki and his wife. Waltraud found a job in Tokyo and commuted home to Matsumoto on weekends, an arduous

journey of nine hours in a crowded train. She had to continue working in Tokyo until 1956, thirteen years after they had been first separated by the war.

Despite the separation, Suzuki had a family life of sorts. While in Kiso-Fukushima, he was joined by his younger sister Hina, who had lost her husband, and her two small children. As the bombings intensified, the little family grew with the addition of an aunt with her maid. Then came Koji Toyoda, an early pupil in Tokyo, who had lost both of his parents. When Suzuki went to Matsumoto, Hina with her two daughters followed, as did Koji. While in Matsumoto, Koji became a devout Catholic, as did Hina.

Koji eventually integrated as a family member. Before joining Suzuki he had spent three years under the care of an uncle who ran a small sake bar in Hamamatsu. Koji had helped out in the bar where he learned some coarse manners and habits which clashed with those of the Suzuki household. Instead of scolding, the Suzuki's decided that they would display better manners and conduct in their own daily lives. They did it for Koji's sake but found that they themselves benefitted greatly from the practice of circumspect behaviour. Koji gradually followed the example that was set and became a well brought up child. He resumed his violin studies with his old teacher until the age of nineteen, when Suzuki sent him abroad to continue his studies with Georges Enesco and Arthur Grumiaux. Although Suzuki never had children of his own, he did experience parenting when he was raising Koji and Hina's two daughters.

Suzuki recounts an incident from this period that he

considers significant. It was a cold day, -13 C in Matsumoto when Hina returned home telling of a wounded soldier standing by the bridge begging and shivering from the cold. She had thought of inviting him home to warm up and have some tea. On recounting this, she realized her mistake and ran out to bring him back. In the meantime, Suzuki made the room warmer and brought out some precious food. The wounded man was made to feel at home and stayed to warm up and chat for three hours. The valuable lesson of this anecdote is that to merely think is insufficient; action must follow thought. It was to be their first exercise in "If you want to do something, do it."⁵⁸

Many of the pupils from the early Matsumoto years went on to careers as concert violinists, some becoming members of European orchestras. Tomiko Shida was one of the first three Matsumoto pupils. In the beginning they had to share one violin which Suzuki would carry from house to house. Tomiko Shida-Lauwers now lives in Brussels where she performs with Le Quatuor de l'Opéra National and other ensembles. Another Suzuki student was Ekko Sato who went on to study with Leonid Kogan at the Moscow Conservatory and took third prize in the 1966 Tchaikovsky Competition.

The Talent Education movement grew quickly with chapters springing up all over Japan. By 1953, there were eighty instructors.⁵⁹

The first summer school was held in 1950 at an inn in Kirigama. Instructors and children with their parents came from many parts of the country to play and learn together for five

days. There has been a summer school every year since then. It is now held in Matsumoto for two weeks and is attended by hundreds of students and observers from Japan and abroad. The concept has been copied in North America, where there are over fifty different Suzuki summer schools, or "summer institutes".

A board of directors was formed for the movement. They took charge of matters such as arranging concerts, regulating the formation of classes, strengthening the organization, methods of disseminating ideas. The board initiated a graduation system and organized the first graduation concert. It was held on October 25, 1952 at the Kyoritsu Hall in Tokyo. One hundred and ninety-five students graduated from four levels: elementary, intermediate, high school and college. The concert was attended by Marquis Tokugawa, honorary president of the board of directors. Also in the audience was Mr. Kenji Mochizuki, a young man who was attending Oberlin College in the United States. An amateur violinist, he was impressed by the performance and brought it to the attention of the music faculty back at Oberlin. His report was received with incredulity and scepticism.

A second graduation recital was held the following year on October 28 in the hall of Aogama Gakuin University in Tokyo. The number of graduates this time was three hundred and sixty-three. At Mochizuki's request, a tape recording was made of one hundred children playing the Bach Double (first movement of the Concerto in d minor for two violins, by Bach). The music faculty at Oberlin could not believe what they heard. It seemed to them impossible, miraculous. It had to be seen to be believed so

Mochizuki wrote to request a film of the children performing.

The next big performance was the First Annual Concert on March 30, 1955. Other students joined the graduates to form a group of one thousand five hundred. A thirty minute film was made but there was no money for making a copy until 1958. That May it was shown at Oberlin to a conference of the Ohio String Teachers Association. The teachers were impressed, fascinated and the film was shown around North America. String teachers went to Japan to see with their own eyes. Talent education classes started in different locations across Canada and the United States. Suzuki's method had been recognized by string teachers abroad and given the highest compliment, that of imitation.

Pablo Casals, the legendary Spanish cellist, attended a concert by four hundred children on April 16, 1961 at Tokyo's Bunkyo Hall. Overwhelmed, the seventy-five year old maestro wept with emotion during the performance of the Swan (Saint-Saens) by eighteen cellists and the Bach Double Concerto, first movement, by two hundred violinists aged five to twelve. He went on stage and with a trembling voice, he spoke into the microphone.

Ladies and gentlemen, I assist to [have witnessed] one of the most moving scenes that one can see. What we are contemplating has much more importance than it seems. . . . And this is what has impressed me the most in this country: the superlative desire for the highest things in life. And how wonderful it is to see that the grown-up people think of the smallest like these [children] as to teach them to begin with noble feelings, with noble deeds. And one of these is music. To train them to music, to make them understand that music is not only sound to have to dance, or to have small pleasure, but such a high thing in life that perhaps it's music that will save the world.⁶⁰

Suzuki treasures these words. They mirror his sentiments and

come from such an eminent person, one for whom Suzuki has had a long standing admiration. He borrowed the phrase "Maybe music will save the world" adding, "That is, if we work for that purpose"⁶¹

Arthur Grumiaux, the Belgian violin virtuoso and teacher, visited Suzuki in Matsumoto later in 1961. This was their first meeting although Grumiaux had taught several of Suzuki's students, Toyoda and Shida, among others. The celebrated Soviet violinist, David Oistrakh, first heard the children in 1955 and conducted the Eleventh National (Annual) Concert ten years later. His colleague, Leonid Kogan, was also an admirer and taught several Suzuki students at the Moscow Conservatory in the 1960's. Another friend and fan was the conductor Leopold Stokowski.

Suzuki visited the United States for the first time in March 1964, with ten young pupils. It was a two week tour during which they visited universities in sixteen cities, giving twenty-six concerts and lectures. The children in the group were chosen for their ability to be away at that time and therefore did not include some of the best students. Suzuki recalls that "Every evening's performance was televised. We caused a tremendous sensation in America"⁶²

Among the concerts given were performances at the UN, for the convention of the Music Educators National Conference and at the Juilliard School of Music, "the ivory tower of the musical world".⁶³ After a word of introduction by Miss Dorothy Delay, the concert began. A column in Newsweek gives an idea of their reception:

Seven-year-old Asako Hata playfully dropped a chunk of ice down her neighbor's back, and the long table of children at lunch one day last week burst into delighted giggles. Forty minutes later, Asako was standing on the stage of New York's august Juilliard School of Music, bobbing her head shyly to acknowledge the thunderous clapping that greeted her performance of a complicated Veracini violin sonata.

The solo climaxed a concert that was at once impressive and absurd, in which ten tiny Japanese children, ranging in age from 5 to 14, played Bach and Vivaldi with a skillful authority that drew bravos from a highly critical audience of Juilliard students and faculty. If their applause was tinged with sentimentality (when the children's teacher, Prof. Shinichi Suzuki, stepped on stage to tune a 5-year-old's quarter-size violin, the audience sighed), it was nonetheless wholly deserved. "This is amazing," said Juilliard violin Prof. Ivan Galamian. "They showed remarkable training, a wonderful feeling for the rhythm and flow of the music."

Playing without a conductor and using no scores, the youngsters were a living testimonial to the validity of Suzuki's unorthodox teaching method. . . . The 150,000 children Suzuki's system has trained in 30 years are far from robots. They combine virtuosity with feeling so successfully that when Pablo Casals heard a Suzuki recital in Tokyo, he rushed to the stage, shouting "Bravo" and hugging the children. . . .

Suzuki has done more than revolutionize violin teaching in Japan. Oberlin music Prof. Clifford Cook says: "What Suzuki has done for young children earns him a place among the benefactors of mankind, along with Schweitzer, Casals, and Tom Dooley."⁶⁴

Japanese Suzuki students toured North America again in 1966 and from then on the tours became an annual October event. Cello, piano and flute students were included on later tours, displaying the work of Suzuki's collaborators in adapting his method to these instruments. In 1970 a tour group visited Europe for the first time.

Suzuki did not travel with the tour group after the second time but he returned to the United States for several weeks every summer from 1965 - 69 to give workshops. Americans noted his

energy, perseverance, lively sense of humour and attitude of service to others. Anecdotes abounded. One by Clifford Cook⁶⁵ recounts how Suzuki, seeing a warning road sign knocked over and obstructing traffic, ducked out into the street to right it. It seemed incongruous that a great man should pick up things for others.

After 1970 his visits became less regular and shorter but frequent nonetheless. In 1977 he visited the then US President Carter, taking the opportunity to tell Carter about his views on education from age zero.⁶⁶ Suzuki's most recent visit to North America was in the last two weeks of May this year (1990). After receiving an honorary degree at Cleveland, he went on to San Francisco where he spoke and taught at the Forth National Suzuki Teachers Convention. In August he spent two weeks with the European Suzuki teachers at their convention in St-Andrew's, Scotland.

The Suzuki method is now taught on a large scale in North America with about ten thousand teachers in violin, viola, cello, double bass, harp, piano, flute and guitar. It is also growing quickly in popularity and recognition in Europe.

Suzuki has received many honours and decorations. They include honorary citizenships, awards and five Honorary Doctorates of Music. After his first Honorary Doctorate, bestowed by the New England Conservatory in 1966, Suzuki joked: "An honorary doctorate is given to those who do not do anything for the degree."⁶⁷ Nevertheless, he has been addressed as Dr. Suzuki since then. It is a title which approaches the respect and reverence expressed in

Suzuki sensei, the Japanese form of address.

Now in his ninety-second year, Suzuki maintains a level of daily activity that seems miraculous. Rising at 3 AM, he listens each day to tapes of pupils from all over Japan. He records back his comments on each of the several thousand tapes that he receives annually. He possesses the uncanny ability of being able to describe a performing person's character, posture, handling of the bow, in short, all aspect of playing, simply by listening to the recorded sound of the player. "People wonder how I can 'see' all that. It is the result of [fifty-five] years of diligent training, the ability of kan."68

Suzuki also practices calligraphy in the early morning, inscribing innumerable shikishi which he presents to visitors, pupils and teacher trainees. He practices it with great enthusiasm, striving to improve with each shikishi. Of his enjoyment of calligraphy, he says, "I cannot tell how much satisfaction I get out of this work and how wonderful the repetition feels."69

Suzuki is a remarkable man of remarkable achievements. His admirers hail him as a genius. He is a dreamer of big dreams, but unlike most big dreamers, he is also an energetic man of action. "We must do something," he says. "It is not enough just to know."70

At his wife's insistence, Suzuki takes a day off once a year, on New Year's Day. The most important day of the Japanese calendar, it is the only day that he does not teach. Nevertheless, he does go to the kaikan, but only to attend the

noonday feast given for the staff and the few students who remain during the holidays.

Suzuki is fond of saying that he will retire when he is one hundred and ten.⁷¹ He has so many projects, so many things that he wants to accomplish "for the good of all children."

Notes

1. Inscribed on a shikishi (Japanese calligraphy) presented to the author by Suzuki in November, 1985.
2. Shinichi Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, trans. Waltraud Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), p. 11.
3. Year periods in Japan are named after the reign of the Emperor, in this case the reign of the Meiji emperor. We are now, in 1990, in the second year of Heisei.
4. Edwin O. Reischauer, The Japanese (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 80.
5. Ibid.
6. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 67.
7. Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism, Flamingo edition (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), p. 119.
8. Evelyn Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki: The Man and His Philosophy (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1981), p. 7.
9. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 67.
10. Robert C. Armstrong, Just Before the Dawn: The Life and Work of Ninomiya Sontoku (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1912), p. xix.
11. Letter to the author, dated October 13, 1986.
12. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 74.
13. Ibid., p. 95.
14. Ibid., p. 74.
15. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 15.
16. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 75.
17. Ibid., p. 78.
18. Ibid.
19. Elman was the first violinist to make a commercial recording (1915). "Minuet in D" and "Ave Maria" were both recorded on the Victor label. Alberto Bachmann, An Encyclopedia of the Violin, trans. Frederich H. Martens, ed. Albert E. Weir, with

an Introduction by Eugene Ysaye (New York, 1925; reprinted ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), p. 316.

20. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 80.
21. Ibid., p. 61.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 62.
24. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 63.
25. Ibid., p. 81.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 83.
28. Waltraud Suzuki, My Life With Suzuki (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1987), p. 3.
29. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 84.
30. Ibid.
31. Boris Schwarz, Great Masters of the Violin: From Corelli and Vivaldi to Stern, Zukerman and Perlman, with Foreword by Sir Yehudi Menuhin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 276.
32. Ibid., p. 321.
33. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 85.
34. Ibid., p. 86.
35. Shinichi Suzuki, How to Teach Suzuki Piano (Matsumoto: Talent Education Institute, n.d.), p. 6,7.
36. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 86.
37. Ibid., p. 91,92.
38. Ibid., p. 92.
39. Ibid., p. 93.
40. Shinichi Suzuki, Ability Development From Age Zero, trans. Mary Louise Nagata (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1981), p. 12.
41. In 1922, Dr. Michaelis accepted an invitation to the medical school in Nagoya where he was professor of biochemistry for three years. He was the first European to be offered such a

position in Japan. He then took the post of Resident Lecturer at John Hopkins University, Baltimore in 1926.

42. Boris Schwarz, "Musical and Personal Reminiscences of Alfred Einstein," Albert Einstein: Historical and Cultural Perspectives, Gerald Holton and Yehuda Elkana, eds. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 410.
43. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 90.
44. Ibid., p. 85.
45. Waltraud Suzuki, My Life, p. 9.
46. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 94.
47. Shinichi Suzuki, Where Love is Deep, trans. Kyoko Seldon (Saint Louis, MI: Talent Education Journal, 19820, p. 6,7.
48. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 10.
49. Ibid., p. 31.
50. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 28.
51. Shinichi Suzuki, Talent Education for Young Children, trans. Kyoko Seldon (New Albany, IN: World Wide Press, 1986), p. 34.
52. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 69.
53. Ibid., p. 67.
54. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 34.
55. Reischauer, The Japanese, p. 104.
56. Shinichi Suzuki, "A Petition for an International Policy for Nurturing Children From Age Zero: Written for the International Society for Music Education and the 1978 Congress of the United States" in Hermann, Suzuki, p. 228-9.
57. Shinichi Suzuki, "Suzuki Method and Matsumoto," Matsumoto: The Other Side of Japan (Matsumoto, Japan: Azumino Shunju-sha, n.d.), p. 100.
58. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 99.
59. Masaaki Honda, Suzuki Changed My Life (Evanston, IL: Summy Birchard Co., 1976), p. 100.
60. Transcribed from a tape recording of the concert on April 16, 1961 at Bunkyo Hall, Tokyo.
61. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 61.

62. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 116.
63. Honda, Suzuki Changed, p. 149.
64. "Fiddling Legions," Newsweek, March 25, 1964.
65. Clifford Cook, Suzuki Education in Action: A Story of Talent Training From Japan (New York: Exposition Press, 1970), p. 69, 70.
66. Hermann, Suzuki, p. 115. Carter's daughter Amy was a Suzuki violin student at the time.
67. Honda, Suzuki Changed, p. 185.
68. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 64.
69. Ibid., p. 53.
70. Cook, Suzuki Education, p. 70.
71. When this author greeted him in May 1988, Suzuki stood up from his table and returned the greeting, shaking hands. He then asked if the author was very busy in his work. Upon a reply to the affirmative, he said: "Very good. Me too, I have so many students. Also, I am younger than last time (which was two and a half years earlier)." He likes to joke that his true age is arrived at by adding the two digits of the number of years he has lived. Therefore, according to this whimsical calculation, he would now be 11 years old (9+2) and at 110 he would really only be 2 years old (1+1+0). This little farce is always accompanied by a happy chuckle and bright look so that one cannot help but laugh along every time.

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHY

"For the happiness of all children."¹ This motto is often heard when Suzuki speaks. It sums up his goals in education and governs his approach to teaching.

Through education, Suzuki wants to help bring in a new era of peace, one where all children will be safe and well looked after. He believes that he has discovered a new curriculum and method that will make this possible. He sees in music an ideal medium for educating children who together will make the world of tomorrow a better place.

Suzuki was about seventeen when he started to wonder why, as children become adults, they lose their virtues of trust, love, fairness and joy. He began to suspect that there was something wrong with children's upbringing and education. His suspicions became certainty as he grew older. The evidence lies not only in the loss of virtue in the individual but also in the global state of conflict and violence. To this day, Suzuki is deeply concerned about the the world and is sharply critical of modern society. His reproach is that

As we approach the twenty-first century, humans in the world are not yet civilized. Man has been fighting

continuously since the stone age when he used sticks and stones. Our wisdom has not grown. We have only progressed from sticks and stones to swords, guns, and bigger guns, to atomic and hydrogen bombs. The fundamental aim to kill each other has not changed. I cannot say that this is a very civilized age.

We must reflect upon the twentieth century and make the twenty-first century civilized. This is our mission. Convenience is fine, but we are not civilized when we make killing convenient. There is no direct connection between convenience and happiness.²

Even where modern technology is applied to non-destructive ends, it does not necessarily bring a significant improvement to the quality of life. Suzuki points to the example of air travel which employs splendid technology to enable us to travel to distant countries in a few hours.

But let us think well. Suppose the flying time between the U.S. and Japan were reduced to four hours to three hours and further to two hours, how much would that relate to the problem of human happiness? People today identify convenience with happiness. But it is₃ not so: there is no direct relationship between the two.³

Suzuki decries the present convention of equating technology with wisdom. Despite the gloss of modern technology, the world "remains in a miserable condition."⁴

These are strong condemnations but they should not be mistaken for the dirge of a pessimist. When he denounces contemporary society, it is to argue for change in the way we educate. He could, but does not plumb the depths of our misery by dwelling on our destruction of the environment, poverty and other ills. Instead he proffers hope. Though this era is not yet civilized, Suzuki says, it is the final stage of an uncultured age. In children's education we have the means to turn the twenty-first century into an age of true enlightenment and culture.

Children are the foundation of an era. We need all parents to be determined to raise their children as truly civilized human beings. A truly civilized human being is thoughtful of others, pours his love on others, knows the joy of living, and enjoys working for the happiness of all. Such a person loves other people and other people love him in return. Raising children to become such people is the best gift we can give them, and it will help in civilizing this world.⁵

Today the world "remains in a miserable condition" mainly because most adults were not properly educated in their childhood. "We can shape the destiny of the children to become people with beautiful hearts, or wild people like beasts."⁶ The world of tomorrow promises to be civilized and peaceful if we educate our children correctly, with care and in happiness.

According to Suzuki, music has the power to nurture children to become people with beautiful hearts, who together will form the peaceful and civilized society of the future. Recalling the saying that "every other form of art envies music," he marvels at the very existence of music, that

. . . human beings created a delicate culture composed of beautiful sounds.

In an age of advanced culture to come, musical culture will be observed close-up: it will be viewed as something that can be implanted in human beings starting at birth, stays in direct contact with the human mind, and has a strong cultural quality called beauty. This is education by the power of art which uplifts mankind's animal nature to humanity.

Suzuki is fond of quoting Pablo Casals who said: "Perhaps it is music that will save the world."⁸ To this Suzuki adds: "Who will do that? Isn't it on all those engaged in music education that this mission rests?"⁹

Suzuki cherishes the speech made by Casals after the 1961 concert by four hundred children at the Tokyo Bunkyo Hall. At a

class for teacher trainees twenty-four years later he played the tape of this concert and speech. Afterwards, remarking about the children who had performed for Casals, Suzuki said: "These children are now all happy salarymen. ('Salaryman' is the Japanese term for professional.) He gave a radiant, happy smile which left no doubt that he is pleased by the outcome, that they had grown up to become well adjusted and productive members of society.¹⁰

We are accustomed to the idea of pursuing an education for the sake of securing a good job. It seems quite normal and understandable therefore that the parents of a violin student should wonder about the professional prospects for their child. Suzuki does not share this concern which he finds ignoble, revealing a cold and calculating educational attitude. When asked by a parent whether a pupil would grow up to make a living as a violinist, to "amount to something," he once replied:

No. He will not become "something". . . . He will become a noble person through his violin playing. Isn't that good enough? You should stop wanting your child to become a professional, just a good money earner. This thought is concealed in your question and is offensive. A person with a fine and pure heart will find happiness. The only worry for parents should be to bring up their children as fine human beings. That is sufficient. If this is not their greatest hope, in the end the child may take a road contrary to their expectations. Your son plays the violin very well. You must make him splendid in mind and heart also.¹¹

On the other hand, some parents have too low expectations for their children. One mother stated that she wanted her child to learn violin as a hobby and as part of a cultural upbringing. Having no intention of making him a musician, she thought it would

be fine if Suzuki taught him to play just a little. He half-jokingly replied: "It's beyond me to adjust myself so that he'll be able to play a little, so I'm afraid I cannot take your child."¹² Young violinists ought to be guided to do their very best in order to beautifully foster their human abilities. While violin study can indeed be an excellent hobby and an important part of a cultural upbringing, it is also, in Suzuki's view, a training for life, not merely a pleasant diversion to be entered into halfheartedly.

Suzuki never tires of repeating that it is not his goal to train concert violinists. Although Talent Education students play remarkably well and many could make music their career, Suzuki has other priorities: "For the sake of our children, let us educate them from the cradle to have a noble mind, a high sense of values and splendid ability. At our institute we use violin playing to develop these qualities in children."¹³

"For the sake of our children", "for the happiness of all children"; these are phrases that Suzuki uses repeatedly.

Addressing an American audience, he wrote:

I believe sensitivity and love for music or art are very important to all people whether they be politicians, scientists, businessmen or housewives. These are the things that enrich our lives. I urge you therefore, to explore this new path [of Talent Education] for the education of youngsters so that all American children will be given the happiness they deserve.¹⁴

It can be seen that Suzuki attaches great importance to moral development, stressing qualities such as a beautiful and pure heart, a noble mind, a high sense of values.

Speculating about the ultimate direction in our lives he

wrote:

The life we try to live is always a search for happiness. Very few people seek wisdom. Children in their simplicity seek what is true, what is good, what is beautiful, based on love. That, I believe is 'the true nature of man' as described by Gautama Buddha. Mozart, whose music taught me the simple love and joy that overcome misery, must have believed that too.¹⁵

"Therefore, what we are advancing and researching under the name of talent education is the education of total man, or education in truth, good and beauty."¹⁶

Truth, goodness, beauty, love. To explain these concepts Suzuki illustrates with examples. A dog, for instance, even a dog has a understanding of beauty. It will never sleep in a muddy place but seeks instead the most desirable place to rest, such as a dry place in the grass. If let into the house, it will choose the neatest part of the sofa and appropriate the best cushion. The life workings, or life force, of a dog instinctively lead it to better and more desirable things. People are not different in this respect.

Similarly for the concept of goodness. It can be observed with children at play that they naturally approach friends who are playing pleasantly. Likewise we avoid the unpleasant, the grotesque, such as the scene of a murder. People who are attracted to such things have twisted themselves away from the natural flow of life.

Life desires to search for truer, better and more beautiful things. People try to live in abundant love while searching. What is life seeking? This is the question I always want to put at the foundation of my thinking.

When talking about the start and development of a talent, the most basic desire should be the search for truth, goodness, beauty and love.¹⁷

Suzuki is convinced that when truth, goodness and beauty are fostered in all people, then society will be beautiful and pleasant.

Utopian dreaming may well be Suzuki's inspiration. This inspiration leads him on to to concrete thinking, in this case about what constitutes moral development and how it is imparted to children.

In Suzuki's view, one of the most important virtues is sensitivity to other people. A well educated person should not only be knowledgeable but should also have a refined attitude of the heart toward everyday life and a sophisticated level of culture that "has been raised to overflowing." True sophistication is to be sensitive to another person's feelings and have respect for their point of view. A recent tendency in person-to-person relations is to think too much about personal profit instead of mutual deep consideration. A deeper kindness is needed in interpersonal situations. It may well be that present day education, with its emphasis on factual learning and intellectual training, is failing to inculcate sensitivity.¹⁸

A cornerstone to developing sensitivity is to practice becoming less self centered and more attuned to being of service to others. Suzuki sees in violin playing an excellent exercise in reducing the ego. Admonishing a pupil who was complaining of his difficulty to produce a beautiful tone, Suzuki pointed to a poster on the classroom wall on which he had calligraphed:

Do not play;
Let the bow play.

This was my conclusion from study of the principle ten years ago. It represented my great self-reflection. I said to the student:

'You always see this poster, but you only read it. Who else makes your bow dance but you? Discard your "I'm the one to play" type ego, recognize your bow's own life, and serve it so as to make it easy for it to play the violin. Your self-centered approach produces unpleasant, scratchy tone, and the force of that ego fetters your own free action.

'A master performer is one who values the bow's own life. Beauty of tone and freedom of action increase in proportion to freedom from the force of your ego. Violin study is nothing but the training of how to serve the bow and the study of how to shake off the "me-mentality" and the ego force.'¹⁹

If the practice of service is thus followed, it will eventually become an attitude of daily life and lead to happiness. The "me-mentality", on the other hand, creates noise. "The stronger the ego, the more noise surrounds one. The unpleasant noise others make around one in fact comes from the force of the ego that one created oneself."²⁰ Self-centeredness can only result in friction and obstruction from both people and things.

Suzuki observes that those who seek only their own happiness tend to entrap themselves in solitude and unhappiness. Because of their ego, they grieve about their daily lives amidst noise, dissatisfaction and disappointment. The reality of society is that so many people bump into one another, exhaust one another and raise their voices against one another. There is discord where there should be harmony.

Those who, for the sake of others' happiness, serve all who surround them today with love and respect, walk along the path which leads to happiness.

If you don't understand this, you don't understand 'Do not play; let the bow play.'²¹

Suzuki considers this to be of great importance, to the point of suggesting that if the spirit of service is not studied, it is

almost better to drop the practice of string playing.

There was a pupil whose performance Suzuki found to be somewhat egotistical. He advised him to stop playing the violin for a week during which time he was to learn the spirit of serving others. Suzuki suggested small tasks such as picking up a friend's books when they had fallen to the floor, or neatly arranging shoes left at the door by guests. (The Japanese always park their shoes at the entrance to a house.) When the pupil returned a week later to say that he could not understand the connection between serving others and violin practice, Suzuki sent him off to try again explaining: "If your heart is set to work for others, then your mind should be able to work more sensitively in an expanded world. If you do so, then more abundant, delicately beautiful expressions will enter your performance."⁶¹ Suzuki reports that the pupil eventually came to play beautifully.

Sensitivity is called into play in our speech as well. Often ugly words are used which wound the heart of another person in public and cause anger. If a person could feel the hurt and anger in another, the tongue would be more guarded. Suzuki tells children that their parents will be sad if they use ugly words.

I ask children to try to understand how such a sad heart feels and to help their mothers silently. If this is done the mother's thoughts will be happier. 'When you can delicately feel what is in the heart of another, then you will be able to understand Bach and Mozart. The ability to feel music means understanding the human heart.'²²

It is also possible to gain an appreciation of music through repeated listening. In talent education families, small children listen to records and play music every day. Eventually they, as

well as their families, unconsciously acquire a feeling for music and begin to sense the personality, character and emotion that the composer expresses through his work.

Suzuki, extolling the miracle of music, believes that the great composers communicate lofty ideas and values in their music.

It is a language that goes beyond speech and letters - a living art that is almost mystical. This is where its emotional impact comes in. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven - without exception they live clearly and palpably in their music, and speak forcefully to us, purifying us, refining²³ us, and awakening in us the highest joy and emotion.

Suzuki maintains that through music, contact with the souls of great musicians, interpreters as well as composers, is made and the cultivation of beautiful sensitivity is carried out unconsciously. Concordant with the pianist F.B. Busoni (1866-1924), Suzuki upholds that in their music Bach and Mozart are still alive, talking to us. It is with this thought in mind that Suzuki conceived the lines: "Sound breathes life / Without form it lives," and made it one of his personal mottos.²⁴ He inscribes it on shikishi for friends and students.

The people that a child encounters in life also play a big role in inculcating values and ideals. Suzuki would like to see young people come into greater contact with distinguished persons. If children are near a truly great person, they will internalize many of that person's outstanding qualities and virtues. When choosing teachers with whom his pupils were to continue their studies, Suzuki always evaluated his choices in terms of character as well as musical and pedagogical ability. When he sent Koji Toyoda, his student who was like an adopted son, abroad to further

his studies, Suzuki chose Georges Enesco²⁵(1881-1955) for his teacher. In a letter to Koji, Suzuki wrote:

You will one day realize that it is the greatest and best blessing on earth to come in contact with men of high humanism, who also through their art have a pure, noble soul. And whatever you can absorb of his [Enesco's] greatness and beauty of character will determine your worth as a person. However, to perceive and grasp these qualities requires the humility and judgment that come only through sincerity, love and knowledge. That you can be close to Professor Enesco makes me, above all, feel at ease, confident and happy.²⁶

The most influential people of all in a child's life are the members of the immediate family, especially the parents. Suzuki has much to say about how parents should behave for the sake of their children. He tables this subject in his many talks to parents and writes extensively on the matter in several of his publications. The major part of one of his books, Ability Development from Age Zero is given over to anecdotes and advice on how parents can improve the home environment, enhance the example that they set and better themselves in the process.

Suzuki often says that "the fate of a child is in the hands of his parents from the day of birth."²⁷ He recommends that parents be prayerful for their children, be respectful of them, reflect and be observant, not rely on general assumptions, avoid anger with their children, use a friendly voice, hold them and love them. An aptitude for action as well as for happiness can be transmitted from parent to child. He even advises on marriage! The unifying thread of his many pronouncements is that parents must nurture by example and not by precept, and that the home environment is the major influence in a child's life.

While advancing the benefits of a musical training in terms of developing virtue, Suzuki certainly does not overlook intellectual training and development. Indeed, it is in the domain of the intellect that the value of an education in music is perhaps the most evident. It is here too that Suzuki has received the greater attention and recognition.

When he enquires about his pupils' progress at school, their mothers invariably reply that the child is tops in the class. All the students who practice diligently progress easily, not only in violin but also scholastically. Why?

Contrary to the findings of modern psychology, Suzuki believes that there is a transference of skills. "To train your child to perfect something means to improve his brain activity to the utmost; eventually this outstanding ability will enable him to handle other things well."²⁸ Otherwise stated, an active, nimble mind will ensue from stimulation and it is an asset when tackling the challenge of languages other than music, such as arithmetic, reading and writing.

Music study can also develop learning skills which transfer to other subjects. "If, as a person works at playing the violin well, he develops the talent to overcome any difficult problem by working, then the talent will be born to accomplish even the hardest problems easily."²⁹ When a child is confronted with a difficult problem which he resolves, he will have the confidence, concentration and procedural know-how to overcome subsequent difficulties, be they academic or musical. Parents too, by fostering their child in music studies, become skilled in

fostering in other areas as well.

While Suzuki advocates music study as an ideal medium for nurturing children, he also recognizes the value of other subjects such as literature, dance, martial arts. The important thing is to foster an ability to a great height, to follow the chosen path as far as possible. Only one path should be selected as it is not feasible to do several things at once; doing too much would overburden the child and result in no real learning. "Please pick one thing for your child while he is small and educate him by the talent education approach."³⁰ Where the child manifests an interest in something and wishes to pursue it, the parents should be ready with their support and guidance. In some cases, however, children want to try a bit of everything. Such whims should be countered as they will lead nowhere.

Memory training is one of Suzuki's primary concerns. He sees memory as an extremely precious intellectual skill. It is through memory that we have experience and it is upon the content of memory that we are able to speculate and conceive ideas. The efficiency and effectiveness of thought is, in a large part, dependent on the speed and capacity of our memory.

Memory is the most easily trained at the youngest ages. Like plaster sculpture, "at first it is wet and gooey" and easily formed but its malleability quickly decreases with maturity. On the other hand, powers of reflection and judgement, of ratiocination, grow with age.³¹

The practice of memorizing extensive repertoire at an early age develops the memory to a degree which permits effortless

retention of materials such as times tables and words, facilitating manipulation of these materials. Contrary to prevailing views in modern psychology, Suzuki believes that the consistent scholastic successes of advanced young violinists is largely due to the memory training that they receive. It is not, in his view, due to innate brilliance since none of the pupils are pre-selected and good memories are observed to be contingent on extensive training.

"This education deals not merely with violin technique but with the advancement of human nature"³² Clearly Suzuki puts education of the whole person before training of the violinist. This priority is succinctly expressed in another favourite motto, the one with which he was imbued at Nagoya Commercial School: "Character First; Technique Second."³³

It is with conviction Suzuki discusses the importance of character, the goals of happiness for all children and of world peace. His frequent recourse to these points counterbalances the prevalent tendency amongst adults to make "performing monkeys" out of musical children. The public is always looking for the next child prodigy, adults routinely promote competition between children and many parents seek to propel their offspring onto the limelight in order to vicariously satisfy their own vainglorious needs. While there are great benefits accrued from attaining advanced ability at a young age, it is too often pursued with questionable motives which may cause the child more harm than good. Suzuki fights this tendency to exploit children by explaining and reminding that the objective is the happiness of children, that all efforts and

endeavors are for the sake of our children, that world peace is the mission.

Central to an educational method is the conception of the nature of the subject. Just as goals in education determine, to a major extent, the content, so does the perceived nature of the child dictate the method or process. When developing methods in education it is necessary to "first understand the human being and how human abilities start to grow."³⁴ As Suzuki points out:

Through science we can fly to the moon, yet man has hardly begun to evaluate mankind. This imbalance is a reversal of that which is important and that which is trivial.³⁵

Suzuki's understanding of the nature of talent and the process of learning grew out of his realization that children show great ability in learning to speak their mother tongue. He believes that "every human being is born with a wonderful brain,"³⁶ that in acquiring ability to speak his mother tongue, every normal and healthy child demonstrates virtually unlimited learning potential.

When we rely on general assumptions, it is normal for us not to use anything but that. However, a common assumption is what someone in the past decided was true and that we take for granted. We should examine these things at least once. There could be an error.

People often say, 'I was born to mediocrity,' or 'Surely I am no genius,' and other things about inborn talent. Now everyone understands that this assumption is in error. We must recognize that we were born as wonderful human beings with limitless possibilities.

A person is not born uninteresting. He is trained to be ordinary.³⁷

The child is born without talent or ability; this is developed through training.³⁸ A newborn is not pre-disposed to becoming a violinist or being musical or unmusical. The only

difference between one infant and another is physiological. "The only superior quality a child can have at birth is the ability to adapt itself with more speed and sensitivity to its environment."³⁹

The possibilities for each individual are therefore virtually limitless. Only the rate of learning may vary according to innate physiology. As he so often does, Suzuki condenses his thoughts into a pithy saying:

Every child grows;
everything depends on how they are raised.
Talent is not inborn.⁴⁰

He calls this the "Law of Ability". "Ability develops wherever there is training (stimulation and repetition)." It develops "in response to the environment and the conditions by which it is fostered, and under the influence of what grows within (hereditary and physiological conditions)."⁴¹

This, Suzuki feels, is a message of hope for all those who wrongly believe that it is fate that decides their level of ability. Armed with the knowledge that talent is not an accident of birth, there is no longer reason to be resigned to mediocrity. Each person can improve and a newborn child has the potential to accomplish anything. The only thing beyond our control, that can be called fate, is our being born into this world and having to die sooner or later.⁴²

It is a lifetime of experience and research that has convinced Suzuki that ability is fostered and generated by postnatal conditions. The fact that he worked in the area of musical talent, commonly considered to be the most avowedly

inborn, demonstrates clearly to him that talent is not innate.

"Now that it is clear that musical talent is not inborn, it cannot be proved that this is limited to music; human ability in every cultural area [eg. literacy, mathematics, dance], it follows, depends on the way children are raised after birth."⁴³

When outstanding ability is displayed, it is usually attributed to innate talent or giftedness when it is really the result of education. The children who are said to be gifted are often five or six years old. By then they have been exposed to conditions in which learning took place. When children are newborn it is impossible to predict which will be a talented musician, which will be a talented literary person. "Every child can be educated but children are not born with education."⁴⁴

To illustrate his argument, Suzuki asks what would have become of Einstein, Goethe and Beethoven, had they been born during the Stone Age. Would they then not have been limited to the cultural level and education of the Stone Age? Conversely, suppose a newborn infant from the Stone Age were transported to the present. Before long, if entrusted to Suzuki's care, that child would be able to play a violin sonata by Beethoven as well as any young person today. Or, if a child born today were to be raised in a society of five thousand years hence, he would adapt the customs and habits of that society.⁴⁵

Similarly, a newborn adopted into another culture will fully assimilate its language and traditions. A Japanese child raised by Britons in London would be perfectly English, a bush child from tribal Guinea, brought up in Tokyo would be perfectly Japanese.

"It all depends on how children are raised."⁴⁶

Many children are brought up in conditions which stunts and damages them. Then it is assumed that they were born that way.

"An undesirable, disagreeable adult was brought up wrong; one unable to do good work was brought up that way."⁴⁷

The roots of many personal shortcomings are found in training received in early childhood, before the age of three. According to a Japanese proverb, "What he is at three, he will be at one hundred."

Examples of personal shortcomings are greed and distrustfulness. Suzuki traces these back to the action of parents who will snatch out of their baby's hands objects that may be harmful to them or fragile. While at first the baby remains calm, after similar experiences are repeated, he develops the desire to hang on, tighter and tighter, eventually screaming in protest. Having his treasure forcibly confiscated is like being robbed. He eventually becomes grasping and distrustful, and by the time he is three or so, these are erroneously evaluated as inborn qualities. Suzuki considers it "particularly meaningful for parents to have sense enough to take something from an infant always after giving something else in his other hand, because this is the period when the foundation of his entire life is created."⁴⁸

Individuality is not present at birth but is developed in early life. This includes all personal traits, from greed to generosity and even facial expressions, which an infant learns from those who take care of him.

While giving her breast to her child, a happy mother turns her glad face, her smiling face, or her affectionate eyes to her child, stimulating his ability to adapt.

If the mother breast-feeding the infant leads an unhappy life, spending every day with a laughless sad face, the child will adapt her facial expression and develop a lonesome face lacking smiles. A child brought up in an unhappy family in an unpleasant daily environment is given the heart and expression of that environment. ⁴⁹

Suzuki, who is a bit of a pixie, goes on to poke fun at Japanese facial expressions, which tend to be inscrutable and misleading to foreigners. He considers the Japanese mask to be a legacy of the long feudal times, a legacy that is handed down through the generations.

Infants are acutely perceptive and highly adaptable. They become less observant as they grow older, and more set in their ways. Therefore, in education, the early period is the most important. "Especially infancy and early childhood constitute the most crucial period of life when the essence of a person is irrecoverably determined."⁵⁰

Adaptability is dependant on what Suzuki calls the life force. Life force is a concept of pivotal importance to Suzuki's Law of Ability, one that he refers to often; yet it is an elusive idea, unfamiliar to Westerners and hard to grasp perhaps because Suzuki, in explaining it, approaches it from slightly divergent angles each time. Here are some examples what he has to say about life force:

The human heart, feeling, intellect, behavior, even the activity of organs and nerves, all are but part of the life force. We must not forget that man is the embodiment of life force, and that it is the power of the life force that controls human seeking and finding.

That is why Talent Education has to be an education that is directed to this life force.⁵¹

In contrast to this almost mystical explanation is a very pragmatic pronouncement on the same life force: "Ability develops as a function of the effort of the life force to maintain itself - to survive by adjusting itself to its environment. I believe that in the field of education we must not forget that ability does not grow where there is no experience." ⁵²

Survival is an issue that is more readily understood. In one passage Suzuki seems to use "survival instinct" and "life force" interchangeably:

I think that the energy of man's survival instinct acquires ability [increases] as it adapts to the environment. . . . a baby will use his survival instinct to absorb everything in his environment while learning to be a human being. Each time something happens nearby, the development of the baby will be affected. . . . His voice will be low if his mother's voice is low. Often on the telephone the daughter cannot be distinguished from her mother. This happens because the daughter used her life force to catch her mother's voice while still a baby.⁵³

Another term used is "the great power of life":

This great power of life governs physical growth. It imparts ability during the growth process, which responds to outside stimulation so that life can be sustained. This stimulation enables the child to develop his ability as a part of his make-up. This great⁵⁴ power of life governs every function of the body.

Suzuki also refers to "the wonderful strength in the living soul." In a statement released at a teachers' conference in May 1988, he submitted that "every baby is born with an equal potential for ability which will be nurtured along with the living soul throughout his life. 'Man is a son of his environment' is the realization of this concept."⁵⁵

By now, the reader may well be lulled into the complacent conclusion that the "life force" concept is not so arcane after all. Might it just be a survival mechanism by a different name? To stir up the issue, one more passage is in order:

What is the principle on which ability grows?
What motivates each living being to acquire ability?

The answer is "the workings of life."

Life is something admirably strange and moreover actually existing though without a form. The power of this life controls the entirety of the living body, protects and fosters it. The baby grows each moment, whether before birth in the mother's womb or after birth. Should we not watch this with awe? It is by the great workings of life.

Please marvel at it. You need the ability to marvel at it. If you take this fact for granted and remain complacent, I am afraid you will not understand the "law of ability." Who feels awe toward life? Those who have come to know the great reality of life and its power are capable of cherishing awe toward life.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, Suzuki reassures that "the 'law of ability' can be stated simply -- Ability develops due to the working of the 'life force'."⁵⁷

By compiling and juxtaposing these several pronouncements on life force, Suzuki's point of view slowly emerges. While the function of life force is to ensure survival, its essence is ethereal and mystical. It works in everyday life yet it is awe inspiring, wonderfully marvelous. Man is part of the life force as well as the embodiment of it. It is commonplace and taken for granted -- how often do we get excited about everyday miracles such as our very existence or the sound of birds singing? -- but those who look at it with fresh insight will see something infinitely greater.

It is the environment that provides the stimulus, the life force that determines the interaction with that stimulus. The outcome is experience. As experience is repeated, it becomes an ability, more finely honed with each repetition. Memory, itself an ability, retains experience so that its effect is accumulative, so that ability builds on previous ability. And memory, with practice, grows in strength and refinement.

Repeating experience is to practice. "Ability develops through practice. An idle person will not develop ability." In the absence of interaction with the environment, there can be no experience, no practice. "Only through action can the power of the life force be displayed."⁵⁸

To develop our abilities, we must be active in life. Mere reflection and understanding will lead nowhere if there is no action. Imparting the habit of action to children should therefore be an essential component of education. "Act when you think" is one of Suzuki's mottos.⁵⁹ Whatever can be accomplished right away should not be put off until later.

"Every child acquires ability through experience and repetition."⁶⁰ But what kind of ability?

Superior abilities develop from the enhanced experiences that can result from contact with a superior set of stimuli. These stimuli are produced by the people, surroundings and events that make up a person's environment. The qualitative differences in ability between individuals are the result of differences in environmental conditions. If a child is exposed to beautiful things, is cared for by loving, sensitive and active people, and

lives in harmonious surroundings, he will turn out with superior abilities to a child who is raised in a devastated war zone by violent brutes. Each will develop ability, but not of the same kind. "Depending on these two things - practice and practice of the right things - superior ability can be produced in anyone."⁶¹

The ability to adapt to the environment grows. When there is training and repetition, there are good things and bad things. Bad things develop in a bad environment and ugly things develop in an ugly environment entirely unconsciously.⁶²

"It is superior environment that has the greatest effect in creating superior abilities."⁶³

A significant factor in learning is the speed and sensitivity with which a person reacts to the stimuli of the environment. While Suzuki recognizes that such intellectual quickness may be in part a physiological trait and therefore hereditary, he also observes that children and adults alike become brighter and more clever if given the proper stimulation and training.⁶⁴ Suzuki does not speculate on the relative importance of heredity versus environment in the area of intellectual quickness.

Intellectual quickness or cleverness is significant because it translates into rates of learning that vary from one individual to the next. In Suzuki's view, this means that to reach a given level of achievement, some will simply require more extensive training than will others.

While admitting that innate cleverness may play a role in rates of learning, Suzuki remains adamant that culture, as represented by arts such as mathematics, music, literature, being created by mankind, cannot be passed on physically, that is,

genetically.⁶⁵ Simply stated, a talent for music or a talent for math is not inherited. Furthermore, an environment favourable to learning can be created. Accomplished individuals invariably hail from backgrounds that engender learning.

"The first duty is raising your child," Suzuki tells parents. "Of all the work that people do, there is nothing more noble, nothing more important, than raising your own child to be a fine person."⁶⁶ He is puzzled that people should have children but not take the time to raise them. Priorities must be established. Which is more important: Bringing up one's children or pursuits such as shopping and social functions? Suzuki hopes that parents will reflect on their priorities and opt for placing their children first.

Schools and teachers do not hold primary responsibility for educating children; it is the parents. Yet often these main and auxiliary roles are reversed. Many parents "farm out" their responsibilities to the schools. It is with incredulity that Suzuki observes teachers and school principals asking parents for cooperation in the home education of their children, and the parents agreeing.

The person who plants a seed in his field and cultivates it is the cultivator. Parents are cultivators. They are the ones responsible for raising their children with love. . . . If the neighbor of a farmer, who was caring for his own field, asked the farmer to 'cooperate' in the care of that field, the farmer would be incensed. Nobody has the responsibility for bringing up a child to be a fine person except the parents of that child. It is the school teacher who should cooperate with the parents in educating the child. It is the parents who should be asking the teacher for cooperation and the school which should agree.⁶⁷

Analogies to agriculture abound in Suzuki's writings, especially when addressing parents. To explain his innovative ideas, he most frequently uses examples from gardening. When recommending that parents start educating their children from birth, he said:

Setting a child aside until elementary school age and then saying that now education begins is like taking a withered or withering sprout and suddenly giving it large amounts of fertilizer, putting it in the sunlight and soaking it with water. It is too late for the withered sprout.⁶⁸

Infants are often compared to seedlings. If a seedling is neglected it is not likely to mature into a healthy mature plant. Suzuki likes the anecdote about Darwin, who, when asked by a mother about the best time to start the education of her one and a half year old son, replied that she was a year and a half too late! Parents are advised to be active in the education of their children from the day of birth. Not doing anything and expecting good results is like not planting seeds and then waiting with bated breath for a bumper crop. Something will grow but it will not be what was hoped for. Instead, it will be a crop from whatever seeds happened to land in the field. Likewise, parents who leave the education of their child up to chance, should not expect the results that they hope for.

Parents are cautioned to be patient when teaching, not to scold, not to nag. Constant nagging will not nurture a child; it will only create a dislike for that which is being taught. While children may, under coercion, do what they dislike, they will never excel at it, ability will not develop. The opposite is true when children are motivated to learn.

When a child has the desire, the ability will become internalized. His life force will reach out and the ability becomes internalized.

The same can be said about plant cultivation. True cultivators know that a seed needs plenty of fertilizer, water and sunshine. If you hold a seed in your hand and yell, 'Sprout! Sprout! Sprout!' you are being merciless to the seed. The seed will not sprout unless the conditions are right.⁶⁹

Adults too often make the mistake of trying to force a child to learn. Parents typically say, "Do your homework! Study!" or, "Go do your practicing!" without any thought of motivation. It is like foolish gardeners who try to expedite growth by tugging at the seedlings as they appear. This clumsy approach is what Suzuki calls the "How Not to Develop Ability" method. He asks parents, "Why don't you make happiness part of their incentive?" As the parents change their attitude so will their child.⁷⁰

Children who turn out badly are not failures; in Suzuki's book, it is the parents who are no good. Children do not drop out of school; they are dropped out by incompetent parents and teachers.⁷¹ These adults should refrain from excusing themselves to Suzuki on the grounds that the child was born without talent. As likely as not they would get a stern lecture about gardening:

People today are like gardeners who look sadly at ruined saplings and shake their heads, saying the seeds must have been bad to start with, not realizing that the seed was all right, and that it was their method of cultivation that was wrong. They go on in their mistaken way, ruining plant after plant.⁷²

Incompetent gardeners will go on complaining about the seed while neighbours grow splendid produce from the same batch of seeds. Incompetent parents and teachers will do the same. Without shame or self reflection they will ignore their own shortcomings and

conclude that their children were "born that way".⁷³

Though Suzuki is harsh in his judgement of parents who fail to nurture their children, he recognizes that it is a difficult task. When asked by an interviewer about his own children, he replied:

Fortunately I have none. Fortunately, because what if someone says, 'then show me your children'? Since it would be a problem if I had examples of children whom I have already failed to foster, God wisely refrained from giving me one. (Laughter.) So I am provided with the opportunity to say what I like about another's child. However, it is important to start out with mutual awareness that it is the most difficult to foster one's own child.⁷⁴ It is easy to handle other people's children.

A recurrent tendency among parents, one that leads to conflict, is to see their offspring as extensions of themselves, someone whom they can order about and bully. Suzuki traces this back to the very beginning of the relationship. At first babies are like a part of the mother's body. Then, as infants, the parents turn them over, feed them, change diapers and so on, thereby forming the habit of controlling. But parent and child are separate beings, something that "everyone understands as one ages. For example, an eighty year old grandmother and her sixty year old daughter are separate persons. But they were, from the beginning."⁷⁵

In Suzuki's view, mothers have the greater influence in child rearing. It is upon women that nature has bestowed the assignment of childbearing. Their role is a noble one, and upon them rests the future of the human race. Suzuki quotes Goethe who said: "Eternity is seen in woman." If the mother is an excellent person, the child will also become an excellent person.⁷⁶ The

vital role of mother is here elevated to an exalted position.

When we refer to the first language learned as the "mother tongue", we implicitly acknowledge that the mother is the first teacher. The crucial role of parents, especially mothers, in education is but one aspect of mother tongue education that Suzuki has adapted to education in general and to music training in particular. Another is the concept of ability leap.

As is well known, children begin to talk a lot between the age of two and five. The vocabulary increases tenfold and exponentially in this period, but most impressive is the marked increase in fluency. It almost seems as if they learn to speak overnight.

Suzuki observed the vocabulary acquisition demonstrated by children learning to speak the mother tongue and noticed that in every case the same pattern was followed. First one word is acquired, after a period of several months following birth during which the child hears and sees speech used all around and babbles in an attempt to imitate. It is a simple word, usually something like "mama" or "yummy". This first successful attempt at imitation is repeated for many days, becoming easier and easier to say as ability develops with practice. At the same time, the word becomes meaningful as people around the child respond. Then another word is added. The first word is not dropped. Both are practiced and then another word is easily added. As ability develops in this way, all of a sudden it becomes easy and fun to add several words at once, and later, to string several together. A child never discards the first word in favour of the new one.

Vocabulary is added, not substituted.⁷⁷

Parents of children who learn to speak always provide a speaking environment, accept and expect repeated use of all words acquired, remain calm when words are mispronounced and greet with enthusiastic encouragement each new advance in language ability. They thus demonstrate great skill in effecting a fine teaching method, usually quite unconsciously, like the gardener who refrains from tugging the stem of a seedling to hurry its growth. Unfortunately this great skill and fine method are too often abandoned and parents become "stiff-collared" when a more formal education is embarked upon.

Suzuki employed this mother tongue approach in music study. "The method of instruction that I have been applying in my musical education thus far is nothing but this method of training in the native language."⁷⁸ He found that similar results could be obtained. The procedure in his violin method is essentially the same.

At first the young violin pupil starts with a small thing which is easily handled. This is trained extensively until it can be performed easily and with confidence. Then additional material at the same level of difficulty is added. Both are practiced. The first assignment becomes further refined while the newly added material is mastered. In this same manner, more new material is added, reinforcing ability as well as enhancing confidence and self-esteem. Eventually material of a higher level of difficulty is assigned. At this point ability has developed to the extent that it is easy to accomplish this more complex task. Again,

while working at the new level, there is continued extensive practice at the first level of difficulty. Each step is thoroughly learned so that the next one is easily handled. This step by step approach, which clearly parallels language learning, leads to a "leap in ability", a situation where the pupil accumulates the strength to suddenly advance more and more quickly. Suzuki expresses this phenomenon as "ability creates greater ability through fostering ability."⁷⁹

The progress of a pupil nurtured in this way is unremarkable in the first few months but after a longer period the results are astonishing. "Precisely because such leaps in ability are possible, among children I have taught, in the third year of violin training one played Bach's Chaconne, a world's masterpiece and a challenge."⁸⁰

It is Suzuki's ideal that his pupils should surpass in performance. Many of them do. While in Japan, this author heard two seven year olds play the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor. They played masterfully though it was incongruous to hear the piece played in unison and on one-eighth size violins.⁸¹

In contrast, the traditional approach is to move on to the next level as soon as an assignment is learned. When the new problem is tackled, the old assignment is dropped. Often, a pupil is challenged with material far beyond his capabilities. This was once the accepted, unquestioned, common sense approach. Suzuki has unhappy memories of submitting to this kind of training.

In reflecting on my own violin training, many times in those long months and years I recall facing something like a huge wall which seemed insurmountable: I often thought of quitting, ascribing my inability to overcome

the difficulty to lack of talent, or grieved over my lack of strength which I thought kept me from doing well despite my efforts. As I now think back, I suffered this pain each time my teachers assigned me something far beyond my capacity with the idea of helping me create ability by conquering a difficulty.⁸²

The idea was to train the student by assigning something beyond his power for the sake of making progress.

Suzuki finds that too often teachers only teach, neglecting to train students repeatedly until ability is fostered. He notes that the word "education" shares the same latin root as "educate", which in the Concise Oxford Dictionary is defined as to "bring out, develop from latent or potential existence." Kyūiku, the Japanese word for education, is even more instructive. Kyū means to teach and iku, to foster or bring up. Both aspects are important. Ideally, in Suzuki's view, the word for education should be kyū-iku-iku-iku (teach-foster-foster-foster) and not, as is the present trend, kyū-kyū-kyū (teach-teach-teach). An even better word would be jūn-kyū-iku-iku-iku, jūn meaning 'to prepare'.⁸³ Where children fail in school, he faults the teachers. They "might have been good at providing explanations, but they did not foster the students to absorb their knowledge until it became an ability, i.e., they did not give them repeated training."⁸⁴

"When ability is fostered to a high level, there arises a power called kan, or intuition."⁸⁵ In Suzuki's experience, intuition is a power which develops through extensive training.

Intuition is demonstrated in all spheres of human ability, intellectual as well as physical. It varies in manifestation from a simple to an extremely high level. Masters in a given field are

those who have reached a height that allows them to operate at a very advanced order of intuition. An example is the master of archery who has the intuition to hit a target with precise aim in the dark. There are cases where a blind swordsman triumphs over several opponents.

Suzuki points out that a demonstration of kan or intuition can be seen in the differences between our own two hands. If we are righthanded, the right hand will have been trained extensively since birth, having as a result much greater strength, adeptness and sensitivity. In comparison, the left hand is absurdly dull and powerless while the right seems brilliant, exhibiting kan in all its activities. Similarly, when people with average aptitudes observe a gifted person, they apply the label "brilliant" or "genius" when it is really just a case of extensive training.⁸⁶

Suzuki believes that only those who have attained great powers of intuition can accomplish great achievements. Mere knowledge is insufficient. If knowledge is not practiced and so assimilated that one can activate it as an ability, that is, spontaneously and creatively, "one will end simply as an erudite but incompetent person."⁸⁷ Education is therefore of little value if it is not driven to the point where intuition develops. Fostering children to a height of outstanding intuition is a priority of Talent Education.

The conditions for fostering fine ability in any field are summed up by the five mottos of Talent Education:

1. The earlier period
2. The better environment
3. The better teaching method

4. The more training
5. The superior instructor⁸⁸

"The earlier period" refers to the understanding that education starts at birth. "The better environment" is necessary to provide the child with good materials to assimilate and imitate. "The better teaching method" is the method of linguistic instruction, the mother tongue method. "The more training" leads to greater ability. "The superior instructor" is the parent or teacher who observes the child and responds to his needs with insight, respect and love.

Suzuki points out that "the five conditions for developing ability are all contained within speech education. In fact, I made up the five conditions from speech education."⁸⁹

Suzuki's philosophy of education is uniquely both humanist and achievement oriented. The two are not mutually exclusive when it is seen that intellectual and technical excellence, along with careful character development, are the means whereby the child will grow in happiness. The end in view is a sensitive, productive and well adjusted adult, a society of which will lead to world peace and prosperity. The dream of a better world is the driving force behind the inspired educator.

Notes

1. Evelyn Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki: The Man and His Philosophy (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1981), p. 151.
2. Shinichi Suzuki, Ability Development From Age Zero, trans. Mary Louise Nagata (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1981), p. 29.
3. Shinichi Suzuki, Where Love is Deep, trans. Kyoko Seldon (Saint Louis, MI: Talent Education Journal, 1982), p. 31.
4. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 223.
5. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 29.
6. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 223.
7. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 28 (Summer 1987): 38.
8. For extended transcription of this speech, see Chapter 2, page 29 (above).
9. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 13.
10. November 1985 at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan. This author was in attendance.
11. Shinichi Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, trans. Waltraud Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), p. 25.
12. Shinichi Suzuki, Talent Education for Young Children, trans. Kyoko Seldon (New Albany, IN: World-Wide Press, 1986), p. 23.
13. Ibid., p. 27.
14. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 151.
15. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 95.
16. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 24 (Spring 1986): 26.
17. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 29 (Autumn 1987): 35.
18. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 63.
19. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 27 (Winter 1987): 42.
20. Ibid.

21. Ibid, p. 43.
22. Ibid., p. 42.
23. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 96.
24. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 12.
25. Celebrated Roumanian violinist and composer, teacher of Menuhin, Grumiaux, Neveu and others.
26. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 43.
27. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 54.
28. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 22.
29. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 62.
30. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 22.
31. Ibid., p. 86.
32. Ibid., p. 42.
33. See Chapter 2, p. 22 (above).
34. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 137.
35. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 3.
36. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 9.
37. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 49.
38. Suzuki uses saino (talent) and noryoku (ability) interchangeably.
39. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 24.
40. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 6.
41. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 24 (Spring 1986): 25.
42. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 7.
43. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 6.
44. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 6.
45. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 24.

46. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 13.
47. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 7.
48. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 29 (Autumn 1987): 27.
49. Ibid., p. 31.
50. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 15.
51. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 96.
52. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 137.
53. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 9.
54. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 178.
55. Shinichi Suzuki, "The Wonderful Strength of the Living Soul," Statement given at the Third Suzuki Method Teachers' Conference held in Chicago May 26-30, 1988.
56. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 22.
57. Shinichi Suzuki, "Teaching Points for the National Teachers' Conference May 1984", Lake Biwa, Japan, p. 2.
58. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 29.
59. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 80.
60. Ibid., p. 27.
61. Ibid., p. 110.
62. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 17.
63. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 23.
64. Ibid., p. 51.
65. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 145.
66. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 78.
67. Ibid., p. 77.
68. Ibid., p. 12.
69. Ibid., p. 15.
70. Ibid.

71. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 25.
72. Suzuki, Nurtured, p. 120.
73. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 30 (Spring 1988): 30.
74. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 107.
75. Ibid., p. 109.
76. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 76.
77. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 30 (Spring 1988): 31.
78. Hermann, Shinichi Suzuki, p. 151.
79. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 30.
80. Ibid., p. 31.
81. Seven year olds usually play on one-quarter size violins but the children were small compared to their North American counterparts.
82. Ibid., p. 29.
83. Ibid., p. 43.
84. Ibid., p. 20.
85. Ibid., p. 31.
86. Ibid., p. 26.
87. Ibid., p. 35.
88. Ibid., p. 20.
89. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 25 (Summer 1986): 38.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

The earlier period
The better environment
The better teaching method
The more training
The superior instructor¹

These lines, the official motto of talent education, epigrammatically invoke Suzuki's theory of instruction. Putting this theory into practice led to the development of the method.

It is an innovative approach, departing from established methods of teaching classical music to a degree that is revolutionary. In a discipline that had become tradition bound, he took a fresh look at each component of instrumental music instruction and implemented new, often radical procedures. He reversed comfortably held beliefs concerning the age to start string study, the repertoire and the use of etudes, the role of reading, the training of memory, participation of the parent, the use of recordings and tape recorders, repetition, tone production and lesson format.

At every turn, Suzuki was guided by his perception of the nature of the child and the purpose of music instruction. Referring to his new approach, he proclaimed: "Music education has

entered a great revolutionary period. Those who sit relaxed with fifty or sixty year old approaches belong to the past." 2

Suzuki is a habitually modest man. Let us see why he would make such a boastful sounding claim. We will look only at the violin method. It was created solely by Suzuki and its development is under his direction to this day. As such, the violin method reflects his views more clearly than the adaptations for other instruments, such as piano and flute, which were done in collaboration with teachers of those instruments.

The first line of the motto is "The earlier period" which means to begin as early as possible. Eight years of age was once considered a good time to start string study. For Suzuki, as early as possible means starting at birth. By the age of eight, he considers it normal (though not commonplace) for children to play Mozart Concertos.

Starting violin at birth is an arresting thought. What is meant is that from the time of birth, infants hear and absorb the sounds of their ambient environment. For babies, learning violin simply means listening to recorded music.

From birth to age three is the best period for developing an ear for music through extensive exposure to recordings. Suzuki advocates letting the newborn hear one piece repeatedly.

If a particular piece of music is played every day for the baby, musical sense gradually grows. For example if a five minute masterpiece by Mozart is fed to the baby from birth, the baby learns it by five months or so. You can test this easily. Prepare a tape with a different piece attached before the usual piece. The baby quietly listens to the new music, but when it switches to the familiar piece, his eyes brighten up suddenly and he smiles at his mother. He shakes his

body to the rhythm. This is a five month old baby.³

The piece becomes the baby's own music, a companion and a comfort as well as an education for the ear. Suzuki reports on his nephew's experience:

My younger brother played a record of beautiful music for his baby every day. Eventually he became an easy child who stopped crying immediately and soon fell asleep peacefully if the record was played. He became fond of music, he sang earlier than children his age, and he sang in tune.⁴

Eventually more pieces are added, one at a time, as the baby's perception of music grows. By age three a heightened musical sensitivity has developed in the same effortless way that language is acquired.⁵

While focusing on listening to a single piece, gradually perception awakens. When you approach distant flowers attracted by their beauty, they gradually begin to look clearer. The flowers which looked like one color gradually reveal more complex coloring on closer look; flower petals are now in view; and beautiful fragrance also reaches you. Thus, by each step, your ability advances in terms of the senses, and with this, perception starts.

The piece does not change through repeated listening, but you grow and approach it step by step.⁶

The piece chosen should be beautiful (not all music is meant to be beautiful) and one that the parents enjoy. It should be from the European classical repertoire which Suzuki finds is appealing to young children while embodying an advanced level of sophistication in the organization of sound, in intricacy as well as in communication of ideas and sentiments. It is unnecessary to begin with simple pieces in the same way as it is not necessary, when gaining an appreciation of art, to start with looking at simple sketches before confronting a masterpiece.

This program of listening has been found to be an effective

introduction to music, not only with infants, but with everyone at the initial stage of musical training, whatever the age.⁷

Suzuki maintains that "music is learned through the ear."⁸ Though this may seem self evident, classical music teachers invariably used to start teaching from printed music, addressing the pupil's intellect instead of his auditory sense. To Suzuki, this appears to be an unreasoned approach which does not take into account that music is primarily sensed, not understood. He notes that "If, on hearing a piece of music, I am asked if I understand it, I too will answer, 'No, I don't.' However, if I am asked if I feel it, yes, I feel it well, I feel the composer's humanity, heart, sensitivity, emotion."⁹

Three or four is the age at which Suzuki recommends starting lessons on the instrument with a teacher. At three children have the strength and coordination required. Starting Talent Education lessons at a later age than four is also possible. The youngest pupil on record started at one year seven months and had learned the Twinkle Variations (the first piece) eight months later.

When violin lessons with a teacher begin, the first training is in hearing and seeing. At home the children hear a recording of the beginning piece (Variations on Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star) several times a day so that it becomes secure in their "inner ear" and memory when the time comes to play it. Parents and children go to the violin class to hear and see the teacher and pupils having lessons. Concerts given by the pupils are attended. Meanwhile, to prepare them for being effective teachers at home, the parents are given materials to read about talent

education and are instructed in the basics of playing, practicing on tiny violins suited to the children. The parents establish a routine of practicing at home every day at a time when their children are within earshot. This preparatory period of seeing and hearing continues for about two months. It is a period of exposure to an environment where music is played and enjoyed. "The better environment", to create the best possible environment, is the second condition outlined in the talent education motto.

After about two months, the children develop a strong desire to play as well. They want to join in the fun. They start grabbing the violin from their parents practicing at home, a clear sign that lessons on the violin can begin. Starting any earlier is futile. In the absence of a desire to play, learning does not occur at all with a young child and only very slowly for older, school age children. Progress on the instrument is proportional to the desire to play. The first step in teaching is inspiring the pupil.

We don't clumsily get set by saying 'now, work hard,' when we teach children how to speak. While people live happily talking to one another every day, a young child naturally adapts to that linguistic environment before one knows it, and 'a desire to speak' germinates. That leads to daily training, and to smooth mastering of high ability. I have come to understand that the knack of the most skillful education must consist in this natural style. Teachers and parents should ponder this question. One who tries to 'skillfully inspire the child's desire to learn' is one who is good at fostering.¹⁰

Great care is taken in briefing the parents. They often have great difficulty in understanding their children's perspective and just want to get going with lessons on the instrument right away.

Impatient parents would like the child to take lessons as soon as possible. However, progress in lessons is completely different between a child who is motivated from the start and another who is forced to learn. Your child may start a month or two late, but later on he will gain six months or a whole year.

Start the child with the joy of play, and guide him in the proper direction with the joy of play-early education, whatever the subject may be. The main thing is growth. The moment the parent or teacher becomes stiff-collared with the idea of 'education,' the child becomes warped. First foster a desire to learn, then help acquire ability. This is the knack of instruction.¹¹

If conditions do not collude to induce in the child a desire to play, then nothing will happen, regardless of how eager the parent is to start.

Where babies are born into families in which big brothers or big sisters already play, the conditions for fostering are already built into the home environment. The younger ones hear the music from birth, they see and hear the bigger children play, they attend lessons and concerts. As soon as they can ambulate, the little ones get underfoot at practice time, wanting to join in, often so insistently that practice is disrupted. When their lessons start, these younger siblings invariably develop well and quickly because the preparation is thorough and their desire strong. A further advantage is that the parents are experienced in fostering musical talent, having already been through the early stages of lessons with the older child. Suzuki often points to this experience of younger siblings when underlining the importance of proper preparation for beginning lessons.¹²

It is significant to note that new pupils are not tested for musical talent. The only precondition is willingness on the part of the parents to undertake the considerable responsibility and

time allocation required by talent education lessons.

"The better teaching method", to use the finest teaching method, constitutes the third line of the talent education motto. The materials used and how they are taught are of central significance in the making of a method or curriculum.

After the preparatory period of seeing and hearing others play, the next step is doing, imitating what has been observed. This usually happens quite spontaneously and playfully with a make believe violin.¹³ The beginning lessons are a continuation of this game of imitation with the teacher guiding the child's efforts to enable the production of good tone on the violin. Under the teacher's directions, the parents extend this guidance at home. This step in the progression of learning how to play is a crucial one where the spirit of fun must be maintained while practicing the very precise motor skills required for producing good tone.

The lessons with the teacher and home lessons with the parent are at first very short, limited in time by the child's attention span. At first, a three year old's attention lasts at most two or three minutes. His mind shifts restlessly from one object to another. The moment the child yawns or shows a lack of interest, the lesson should be terminated. Suzuki advises parents giving home lessons

to stop immediately when the child is bored. Never force. Cleverly grasp a moment again between his play times, and give him another lesson. Even if the child practices no more than three minutes at a time, if he does it three times a day, it adds up to nine minutes. Help him concentrate longer little by little.


'Don't hurry, don't rest' is my motto.¹⁴

Trying to prolong a lesson with a child who has lost interest achieves no effect except exasperation in the adult and resistance from the child. Bad feelings will remain causing the next lesson to start on a sour note. Stopping on time is better and best of all is to stop before attention fades, before the limit of concentration is reached. The child will want to do more but it is better to save the desire until the next lesson. In Suzuki's view, the first goal in teaching small children is to expand concentration.

Suzuki describes a typical first lesson with a three year old. It lasts thirty seconds. The violin is not even played before the child's attention shifts. At the second lesson the child is all set to produce a tone when he spots a bird in the garden and runs to the window crying, "mama, a bird's flying." The third lesson lasts longer. The child plays one note, then decides it is enough. This seems like slow progress but Suzuki finds it encouraging. The third lesson showed distinct progress from the first. Continuing along this path, without hurry and without rest, practicing in this way several times a day, "such a child comes to play the Twinkle Variations in three months. This piece takes seven minutes or so to perform, which means that he is now capable of studying with considerable concentration."¹⁵

"Start out with the easiest matter; let the children master this simplest thing before advancing further; then, gradually add a little at a time to this perfectly mastered matter."¹⁶ This was postulated by Pestalozzi about two hundred years ago. Suzuki is delighted that the great pedagogue concurs with one of his own

most strongly held principles. However, when examining violin methods produced since the time of Pestalozzi, it seems that this down-to-earth advice was largely ignored. The methods of Hohmann, Kayser and others start with producing tone using whole bows, an advanced technique, and playing on all of the four strings which is one of the major difficulties of the violin. Reading musical notation is introduced simultaneously. The beginner starts by facing daunting obstacles and by producing poor tone, itself discouraging.

In contrast, Suzuki starts with the easiest matter, which in bowing means using short strokes. "I found that they could play without difficulty and with good tone if I gave them something rhythmical for short bow strokes."¹⁷ The rhythm is , a universal rhythm amongst children (and also the opening of the Bach Double Concerto). In North America it is chanted as follows, usually as a taunt:



This rhythm, which Suzuki calls "takataka ta-ta-", is at the beginning played on the first string only, the E-string, which is the easiest one to play. This simplest thing is mastered before advancing further. Then something new is gradually added, a little at a time and of about the same difficulty. The something new is playing the same rhythm on the A-string, then the same rhythm several times without stop, then with string changes between A and E, next with left hand fingers stopping the strings and so on until the rhythm can be played to the notes of Twinkle,

Twinkle Little Star, producing a variation on that familiar theme. It is in the key of A major, on the A and E strings, thus requiring only one, the simplest, finger pattern in the left hand. Attention is focussed throughout on developing an effective bow hold, natural posture and good tone.

When the first "Twinkle" variation is mastered to the point where it can be handled with perfect ease, another rhythmic variation is added while continuing with the first. If learning continues in this careful one-step-at-a-time progression while practicing previously acquired material, the pupil soon progresses smoothly through several pieces. They are on the same two strings, A and E, and in the same key, A major, as Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.

The eleven beginning pieces all employ the same left hand finger pattern. Some of them introduce something new such as another note or a different bowing. Others maintain the same techniques, affording the pupil the encouragement of learning a new piece with relative ease.

A new key, D major, is introduced by transposing the already learned A major pieces down by one string. G major is next, which requires a new finger pattern in the left hand. This key is used in another eleven pieces before a new key, d minor, is used. Progression through the whole repertoire follows a similar pattern, adhering to the principle of advancing by steps that fit the pupil's stride, of achieving one step before taking the next and of continually practicing and improving earlier steps. If the basics of playing are thoroughly mastered, it becomes possible to

later advance very quickly in what Suzuki refers to as leaps of ability.¹⁸

Suzuki admonishes teachers not to skip any pieces in the repertoire.

I ask you, please don't do this. The materials in the ten volumes are edited so that necessary conditions for learning higher techniques are gradually accumulated one by one within the pieces. By training the student on the pieces in the correct order, it is possible to let him master the techniques. It is no good to skip pieces.¹⁹

The first twelve pieces of the Suzuki violin method are short compositions by Suzuki and folk songs, mostly German. They are followed by three minuets by J.S.Bach, transcribed from the Mary Magdalena collection. A children's piece by Robert Schumann, The Happy Farmer, is next. Volume One ends with the Gossec Gavotte, a composition popularized by the violinist Misha Elman in the 1920's. The remaining nine volumes of the violin repertoire continue in the same vein, presenting masterpieces from European classical music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Included are pieces such as Bourrée, transcribed from Bach's Suite No. 3 in C major for unaccompanied cello, the first movement of the Bach Double Concerto, two Vivaldi concertos, three Handel sonatas, two Mozart concertos.

Suzuki sought to compile instructive pieces that would appeal to children. Conspicuous in their absence are etudes, the "manufactured music" to which pupils have been subjected in the traditional schools of violin instruction.

I have abandoned, however, the idea of fostering technique by etudes from the beginner stage.

So that children would enjoy learning and that

musical sensibility and skills would constantly be developed, I thought it would be better to let them learn one great piece after another, collecting and organizing pieces in such a way that the equivalent of etudes were skillfully positioned within the collection.²⁰

The technical material is embedded in the music. It is only at advanced levels of playing that materials such as the Kreutzer etudes are used.

Why use tedious studies to learn how to play? Suzuki believes that it is much more rewarding and relevant to study technique within the context of music written by the great composers. It allows the pupil to enjoy music and appreciate masterpieces while learning the instrument. Where a composition presents a special challenge, preparatory exercises derived from the piece are practiced before starting it. Preparing for a new piece in this way helps develop good practice habits and is substantively different from practicing etudes which are not directly tied into the piece.

Though etudes, the bane of violin students, are banned, other study materials have a secure place in the Suzuki method. These include open string exercises as well as scales and exercises for special techniques such as shifting, trills, octaves. The object of practicing these is to develop the beautiful tone that results from accurate intonation, from rounded vibrato and from skillful manipulation of the bow. Borrowing from the word "vocalization", exercises which singers practice to develop their voice, Suzuki coined the word "tonalization" for these exercises which violinists use to develop their tone. Many tonalizations are of Suzuki's devising. They tend to be short, focusing directly on

the technical point being addressed. In contrast to exercises such as those by Sevcik which approaches a technique from many angles with voluminous materials, Suzuki's tonalizations are spare, using a minimum of material which is to be repeated many, many times. The priority is to apply the fullest attention possible to the actions taken and the tone resulting.

It is necessary to practise listening to each sound as when tuning. This training in the heart and the ear reflects the instructor's ability to teach.

Tonalization, I think, will play a big role in training.²¹

Tonalizing begins at the very first lesson where efforts are made to produce a clear, ringing tone. It continues thereafter with ever more refined tone as the goal. Of all instruction in playing violin, Suzuki considers the teaching of tone to be of first importance.

Suzuki believes that the success of his method is largely founded on the repertoire that he compiled. The "approach to editing the violin literature which allows even small children to develop, plays a major role."²² Because of this repertoire, it is no longer rare to hear small children play a Vivaldi concerto or a Bach gavotte. The once popular assumption that violin is a difficult instrument is being displaced by the view that it is something that everyone can learn.

Suzuki often said that his pupils had several other teachers. He was referring to the master musicians that the children listened to at home on recordings. He instructed his advanced pupils to listen to major performers such as Casals, Kreisler, Thibaud, Niveu, Enesco and Oistrakh. From the world's most

accomplished players the children could, through repeated listening, learn beautiful tone, vibrato, rhythmic feeling, musical movement, and a refined sense of intonation. He would tell the children, "These great masters are your teachers. Many teachers are raising and instructing you."²³

When they are advanced, records of these teachers are by their side at home. Listening to the recording of the assigned piece is part of the daily practice session so that sensibility will develop through the ear. I make this an important requisite of children's study.

To develop through daily contact with the world's most accomplished players - this means that I arrange children's musical development in the same way as in their linguistic development, which occurs in an environment of excellent language spoken by adults. Only those who have experienced it know how effective this approach is.²⁴

Playing along with the recordings is also encouraged. While this may seem like a dubious practice to many musicians, akin to a musical straitjacket, the children enjoy it and find it challenging. Suzuki believes that playing with the recording is an excellent way of internalizing the interpretation of a master artist.

With these outstanding models to inspire and instruct the pupils, the lesson teacher can then focus attention on guiding and instructing them on how to work towards achieving performance comparable to that of the masters, especially in the area of tone. Thus a teacher's limitations as a performer need not hinder pupils from attaining high levels of performance.

In Suzuki's method, music is learned by rote in the beginner stages. Only the parents are instructed in reading music. It is when musical ability has sufficiently developed to about the level

of Vivaldi or Bach concertos in Book Four that reading becomes part of the instruction. Starting earlier may stunt the pupil's ability to listen. Those who are "trained in music through the eye"²⁵ instead of through their ear have greater difficulty playing without the notes and tend to be less sensitive to the tone and expression of their playing.

'Monotony is the worst enemy of music.' These are Maestro Casals' words.'

Today let me talk about this advice, because 'monotony' is an easy pitfall which is commonly found in music education.

Now, one of the worst enemies of musical education which creates this monotony, I think, is written music. Musical notation was a wonderful, really convenient and praiseworthy invention; but, if ill-used, therein is a pitfall generating monotony. Hearing the performances of students who grew up reading the music, I comment: 'A skilled typist was nurtured.' Among them, there are some who have indeed developed the ability to sight-read fluently. However, they have no musical sense, no musical expression.²⁶

Even after reading is learned, the pupil continues to listen to recordings of the pieces studied and is encouraged to use the printed music only when memorizing pieces. Practice and lessons are conducted mostly without the notes. Following this procedure, pupils learn to perform from memory easily and with confidence.

There are instances when Suzuki's pupils were called upon to demonstrate their reading skills.²⁷ On one occasion in Japan, a visitor from Montreal challenged two boys with an obscure concerto for two violins, a piece he was sure they had never heard or seen. They sight read it fluently. The visitor then left for lunch with Suzuki. Upon his return after lunch, the boys performed the three movements by memory.²⁸

It appears that skill in reading develops better if it is postponed until musical ability is acquired. Pupils who learn to read after they have learned to play well tend to read music by phrase instead of note by note. Suzuki draws parallels with spoken language. To become fluent, one should learn to speak first, to read later.

Over a period of time, the Suzuki pupil accumulates a large repertoire, all of it practiced regularly and without notes. By the time a pupil has reached Book Eight, for example, sixty-three pieces have been memorized, some of them lengthy concertos and sonatas of three or four movements. In the process, the faculty of memory has been thoroughly trained.

Practice in playing without music is done from the start. Therefore . . . memory is fostered. While still training the child in the piece he first learned toward greater refinement, we teach him the next piece. We help him create ability by training him in these two pieces together, and then add a third piece. Thus children never forget what they have learned, and can play them at any moment.²⁹

To further develop memory, Suzuki advocates that children be given poetry to memorize. This could start even before lessons on the violin begin. At Suzuki's school in Matsumoto, five year old beginners memorize haiku by Issa³⁰ about one a day, 170 to 200 in a year. They practice recitation with clear pronunciation and phrasing.

While continuing this way, ability is accumulated, allowing the child gradually to memorize more and more quickly. If you continue this two or three years, the child will acquire an ability to retain in his memory what he heard once throughout his life.³¹

The children eventually begin to make up their own poems,

often very skillfully. When they start primary school, their school teachers are sometimes surprised to see well formed haiku added to pictures drawn in class.

Pupils in a talent education program receive two types of lessons: individual and group. Individual lessons are once or twice a week whereas the frequency of the group lesson varies from one to four times a month, depending on the program.

The individual lessons are also called classroom lessons. They are individual but not exclusive. Each pupil receives one-to-one instruction from the teacher while other children and parents listen. Three or four children come at the same time and stay for the full duration of the class. While this format prevails in Japan, it is less common in North America where many Suzuki teachers prefer exclusive individual lessons (private lessons).

Classroom lessons offer a valuable learning situation for both parent and child, especially if they are beginners.

While listening to the teacher's instruction and to other students' performances, students unconsciously learn a great deal, and at the same time feel inspired to try hard, with some good results. Parents, too, not only learn many things and receive stimuli from observing lessons, but become eager about home lessons. Such parents let their children listen well to records and practise properly. Moreover, parents and students make friends with each other so that the classroom lessons become pleasant.³²

Having children and parents await their turn outside the lesson room is, in Suzuki's opinion, a wasted opportunity.

The individual lesson begins with teacher and student bowing to each other. The bow serves as a sign of mutual respect and trust. It also marks, with mute body language, the beginning of

the lesson. From here on, attention is given over to teaching, learning and observing on the part of the teacher, pupil and parent. The parent is expected to attentively take note of the lesson without intervening and reserving, insofar as a possible, discussion with the teacher until the end.

When the lesson material has been covered or the pupil loses attention, whichever comes first, the lesson ends with another bow. Because bowing very clearly delimits the lesson, it helps both adult and child to focus their attention. In essence the first bow says: "Now it's time to play violin" and the second says: "Let's do something else, like chat about pets or chase around."

Bowing is common in Japan, where it takes the place of a handshake when people meet and take leave. The etiquette of the bow is hardly ever used in contemporary Western society except by performers, notably musicians, when acknowledging their audience. While it is a custom foreign to our main culture, it is at one with the subculture of musicians and other performers.

Suzuki has developed numerous innovative techniques for teaching various points of violin playing. Some are especially apt for young children; others are applicable for violinists of all ages.

Young pupils start lessons using a foot chart, a piece of cardboard which shows where to place the feet. If the feet are well placed, improved body balance ensues. The foot chart also helps with attention by keeping the feet still, allowing the mind to focus. In addition, the foot chart creates a space that

belongs to the child. Whether in comfortable and intimate home surroundings with family or in large unfamiliar places with strangers, the foot chart remains the same.

As well as these foot guides, there are also finger guides for the left hand. In the form of fret-like tapes on the fingerboard, these are primarily for the purpose of helping the parent, not, as is commonly believed, to be watched by the child. "For young children, I draw white lines for the places where the fingers should go, so that the mothers can watch [evaluate intonation] with their eyes."³³

The child's motions are carefully guided by the teacher's hands. This physical manipulation starts from the first lesson when the child is shown how to place the feet and make a bow, and it continues through learning to hold the violin and place the fingers.

At the beginning, when learning the first notes, and later when practicing difficult passages, Suzuki teaches a three step preparation for each note. "One, finger; two, bow; three, go" he tells the children. It means: first, place the finger on the string; second, balance the bow on the string; third, play. This procedure promotes good balance and coordination, permitting the production of good tone from the very start.³⁴

Suzuki is constantly looking for better ways of teaching good tone. Listening, the foundation of good tone, improves if the pupil's playing is recorded on tape and played back. Hearing oneself on tape is an effective exercise in developing a greater awareness of tone.

A sense of balance in the violin bow is necessary to translate a concept of sound into reality. A useful practice technique for promoting balance in the right hand is to play with a reversed bow, holding it at the tip instead of at the frog (the bottom), which gives it a heavy feeling. Other exercises for creating good bow balance include playing with one or more fingers removed from the bow and "panda", a vertical turning motion of the bow pivoting in the thumb.³⁵ These are but examples of the many techniques that Suzuki has devised for developing tone.

Suzuki's instructions to teachers largely concern tone production. The subject occupies a major part of his writings and of his classes for teachers and teacher trainees. His search for new teaching techniques is ongoing.

The group lessons compliment the individual lessons. Several pupils, usually between ten and forty in number, gather at group lessons to rehearse their pieces together, to play games and have fun with their violins. Since they share a common repertoire, it is easy for them to play together. Pieces are practiced in unison, sometimes with piano accompaniment, for ensemble and interpretation. Playing together in this way is good preparatory training for later participation in orchestra and chamber groups. Perhaps more significant is the peer support and motivation that results from grouping the children together. Children like to do what other children do and it is fun to do it together. "It's a great joy for them to play with friends. They start to play vigorously as though waking from a slumber."³⁶ Furthermore,

Since more advanced children will also be playing, their

advance style will be absorbed by the newer children, not just the sound but also the stance. Through their ability to adapt to the environment, they can pick up something better than themselves with sensitivity and joy.³⁷

There are many games to play together at group lessons. Some examples are: children pairing up to play on one violin, where one manipulates the violin and the other the bow, shaking hands with a partner whenever the piece has an open string, answering questions while playing, playing in teams, guessing what piece the teacher is miming. Such games are fun, challenging and instructional. Suzuki calls them test games because they show the pupil how well the piece has been learned. One noticeable feature of all the group games is the avoidance of direct competition between the children.

Pieces can be played while marching in parade or lying on the floor. Silly games are also fun, games such as having the teacher play all wrong, asking the children for advice on how to improve.

Suzuki relates how he helped some children improve their stance:

One day I gathered five and six year olds whose scroll drooped, and let them play a piece they could easily play: "How many of you can play the whole piece without tilting the violin down? Who can play with good posture all the way through?" They played with fine posture, violins held high. Suzuki praised them warmly and asked:

"But I wonder if any of you can play every day with the same posture. Raise your hand if you think you can," I said. All eight children immediately raised their hands. Children are always great just like this.

"Thank you. I am happy that you did so well today. When you go home today, try playing with this posture. See if you can play with the same posture again tomorrow. Lest you forget, ask you mother to watch you well. Whether you can keep this posture every day until the end of a piece till your next lesson - this is your only homework."

Then he asked them to purposely tilt the violins down after finishing a piece. "I made the children laugh, letting them lower their violins till they almost reached their knees. They giggled happily."³⁸

From his many years of experience, Suzuki has amassed an abundant pool of practical knowledge on how to teach music. In advising parents and other teachers, he emphasizes the importance of fostering the child. The tools of fostering include the techniques of praise, one-pointedness and repetition.

Praise is important in nurturing children of all ages. Suzuki notes that scolding and praise are complete opposites. If repeatedly scolded, children invariably lose self-esteem and motivation. When praised, they gain confidence and feel encouraged. Sincerity, however, is essential. Since children are sensitive, they tend to see through flattery and the effect can be the opposite of what was intended.

Praise precedes criticism. The teacher should acknowledge the pupil's successes before suggesting improvements. It is with a twinkle in his eye that Suzuki reminds teacher trainees: "Very nice but point. Always very nice but always point."³⁹ Regardless of how poor, always find something to praise; regardless of how accomplished, always find something to improve.

Suzuki never says "no good" no matter how poorly a student plays.

Depending on one word of praise, the child may get in a good enough mood to start to practice. When you ask him 'can you do this, can you do that?' the child tries to take the challenge, wanting no defeat. However, in that case you must challenge him to do what you know he

can do. You must not try a difficult thing. And when he does it, praise him, 'You're good, aren't you,' and pull him forward.⁴⁰

For the adult working with the child, the primary concern should be to develop the strong points, to reinforce the successes. Correcting weaknesses comes later. "Guide but not tug."⁴¹ Suzuki draws the analogy of the wise gardener who carefully nurtures seedlings instead of tugging at their stems.

While repeated scolding may give bad results, it is equally counterproductive to leave the child alone on matters of comportment. If the boundaries of acceptable behaviour are not established and adhered to, the child becomes willful and consequently unteachable. Suzuki recommends strictness as necessary but that it should be administered without anger. "The moment you are mad it is no longer education; you are frightening your child."⁴²

Suzuki advocates one-pointedness, encouraging teachers to focus on one point at a time. The best lesson is a one point lesson where the teacher lets the pupil play and pays close attention to his weaknesses. These may include technical errors, problems in musical expression, unnatural posture or poor practice methods. Shortcomings are evaluated in terms of which should be corrected first. The pupil is then instructed in correcting that one defect and none other. The focus on this one correction is continued at subsequent lessons if necessary. When that one problem is solved, attention is turned to one other in the same way. Suzuki reports that a pupil makes fast progress in this fashion and becomes a fine player. If too many points are tackled

all at once, none of them will change. The only outcome is that the child becomes overburdened and insecure.⁴³

The role of repetition in music study is addressed by the fourth line of the talent education motto which is "the more training" - to provide a great deal of training. Music, like speech, is learned through repetition, a reality that is reflected by the word répétition, a French term for practice.

The greater part of training occurs at the home practice. If children have fun playing, if they feel confident about themselves as violinists, if the results are satisfying, then they will readily spend a lot of time practicing.

A child who thinks that the violin is a toy and practice a game, will play the violin for up to three hours a day just as others will spend hours with dolls or television. Where parents and teachers can lead a child in the spirit of fun, violin practice becomes a natural and joyful event of the day. However, if adults become formal and strict with a "this is education" attitude, three hours of daily practice would be a horrible burden to impose on a youngster. Such an approach would "immediately warp the child."⁴⁴

It is pleasant and satisfying to play music well. Herein lies a major advantage of playing old pieces, pieces that have already been learned. Children are more eager to play at home if their practice includes a large measure of enjoying repertoire that they can play well.

Self-confidence grows out of being able to do something well. Repeating these pieces that are well known builds up the self-

esteem and confidence that reinforces the desire to play. An attitude of self-assurance is also invaluable when learning new material.

The emphasis is on having fun. For example, when deciding on which pieces to practice, a pleasant game is to choose them at random, by lottery. The names of the pieces can be entered on small cards which are then drawn from a box. Playing pieces that are well known with the recording is another enjoyable practice.

Let the child daily play with the record or the tape the pieces he has already learned. Let him play five or six previous pieces. If it's long, even one will do. . . . The child enjoys playing in this way the pieces he can play. Let him play them in the same way as he repeatedly speaks the dialect his parents speak. That helps him acquire ability, which in turn helps him progress rapidly. I teach children who have developed this way: they learn the Beethoven concerto, which can be expected to take over a year, at the rate of a movement a week. . . . Whenever a student finishes a movement in my lesson I have him play with Kreisler's record, paying attention to his tone and expression. The student doesn't pass [to a new piece] if Kreisler can be heard over the student. The student's music becomes one with the record, and his sensitivity grows before he knows it.⁴⁵

Suzuki will often advise repeating a certain technique or motion ichiman (10,000) times. Pupils who mistake this recommendation for a joke discover their error at the next lesson when Suzuki, perceiving that the repetition has not been performed, reiterates the assignment. He submits to the same kind of repetition in his own violin practice.

I tried an experiment to find out how my ability would grow at my age [then fifty-nine]. I placed the bow on a string, then produced beautiful tone with the well balanced bow. I carefully played a stroke at a time after checking the balance of the bow each time. I did this exercise 100,000 times (it took me about 25 days). People recognized the leaping progress in the beauty and clarity of my tone in those 25 days.⁴⁶

Listening is also done repetitively, especially in the early stages. Beginners listen to the recording of their assigned piece many times, over forty times daily for the earliest pieces. It is not enough to listen only until the music can be sung. Listening must be driven to the point where the sound is so firmly instilled in the "inner ear" that it becomes kan, or intuition, beyond thinking. This kind of aural preparation, along with thorough training in pieces previously learned, makes it possible to easily learn new pieces. Instead of laboriously learning notes, the essence of the music can be delved into almost immediately.

Suzuki is not afraid of stifling creativity with such repetitive training. He notes that all his pupils trained in this way, yet in their playing all manifest distinct, completely different personalities. In teaching children their mother tongue, no allowances are made for individuality. A flower is called a flower and rules of syntax are inviolable. Yet we all learn to use language creatively, each in our own distinctive way.

In Japanese language education, we teach children the kind of Japanese that we older people use, stereotyped and free from errors, and, while correcting their errors, foster in them the ability to use that Japanese with absolute freedom. Children freely use that speech, and gradually develop individual will and inventiveness, thus beginning to live each with his own personality.

What is important is first to teach proper Japanese. It is so with music. I think it the naturally expected way of music education to help children develop as human beings who fluently comprehend and use 'the language of music' in its most⁴⁷ proper form and with its most outstanding sensibility.

Handwriting too is taught in a stereotyped way, but each penman develops an individual style.

Another way to put incentive and joy into practice is to hold

weekly concerts for members of the family and friends. Even beginners can do this. A stage can be set up, perhaps an orange crate in the living room. The audience is quietly instructed to applaud, regardless of how the child plays and to request a return performance for the following week.

In this way, even a small performance will allow the child to enjoy his practice.

The following week, the piece is more polished when the child opens his concert. In this way, as the weeks go by, and if other pieces the child has played are added, he will become able to play all his pieces well.⁴⁸

In contrast, the traditional approach to learning to play has pupils drop earlier pieces as they go on to new ones. Many adults who took music lessons as children still squirm with discomfort at the childhood memory of being asked by family and friends to play something, to give an impromptu performance. Somehow the piece being worked on was not ready to perform. Earlier repertoire was forgotten and therefore not ready to perform. Yet, while this situation existed for pupils, performing artists have always maintained a substantial repertoire which was ready to play at any moment. It is puzzling that many teachers, who were themselves active performers, did overlook the importance of helping their pupils maintain a repertoire.

Solo performances can take place at the group lesson allowing pupils the opportunity to hear and play for each other. Small concerts can also be held in homes where several families might get together to have the children play. The concert might be followed by a communal dinner. Such home concerts provide both

parents and children an occasion to socialize and make friends with those who share their interests.

Public concerts are held regularly. One or several teachers may present some or all of their pupils, performing as a group or individually. Because the children play the same repertoire, it is possible for children who have never met before to play together with little or no prior rehearsal. The annual national concert held in Tokyo features up to 3,000 children from all of Japan playing together. Similar events occur in North America.

Performing pieces in a group is an excellent introduction to the stage. By the time children begin to give solo performances, they are accustomed to the public stage and are therefore much more at ease.

As well as motivating the children to play, Suzuki tells them that it is necessary to practice daily. He uses humour to get this message across. One of his phrases is "One, listen; two, peep; three, tempo."⁴⁹ This nonsense line is meant for pupils to laugh at and remember well. "Peep" is interpreted to mean that it is necessary to practice every day. "Tempo" represents the final and longest stage in learning a piece. It is when a piece can be played without mistake that its preparation is said to be complete. From then on it is studied for interpretation and refinement.

In another reminder to practice daily, Suzuki says that it is not necessary to play every day, only on the days that we eat. With children and adults alike, he frequently resorts to humour to catch his listeners' attention, or to put people at ease.

Receiving visitors and teacher trainees at his school in Matsumoto he sometimes says, "Welcome to my Music and Cookie Conservatory," and flashes a big grin. Such words may sound ridiculous but they seemed exactly right to this writer after having travelled from halfway around the world and being overwhelmed by the strangeness of a very different country. Cookie Conservatory turned out to be an apt title. At the school Suzuki was always plying the teacher trainees with cookies, puddings and sweets at every break in the day.

Suzuki now devotes most of his day to training teachers. The last condition of his talent education motto, "The superior instructor," underlines the importance of having fine teachers. Practitioners of the method must be competent and accomplished.

A competent teacher is one who is aware of how children learn and is therefore able to "give what the student can take in such a way that it is easy to take."⁵⁰

Suzuki finds that children are extremely sensitive in noticing and absorbing examples of performance given by the teacher.

As we often witness, when a teacher has funny habits, the students spontaneously pick them up in the course of their development. This is the best proof of the fact that every student has a delicately sensitive essence. He will reflect the teacher's mannerisms in posture and tone as well as in musical expression. Yet he may not absorb what the teacher tries to teach mentally [intellectually] as much as expected. He absorbs before he knows it what he catches with his senses.

If children were not sensitive, how could Osaka children learn to speak the Osaka dialect and develop Osaka sensibilities?⁵¹

Since teachers' most significant instruction is through what they

do, not through what they say, it follows that they must be accomplished in what they do. Suzuki urges teachers to ceaselessly work on improving themselves, to search for better tone, heightened musical expression in their playing and for greater love, virtue and goodness in their lives.

Teacher training at the kaikan (institute) in Matsumoto reflects this outlook. The main emphasis of his work with teacher trainees is to help them improve their playing. To this end a group class is held daily, seven days a week, in which trainees play together and individually. They perform in weekly concerts and take an individual lesson with Suzuki once a week. Pedagogy is only rarely discussed and then only within the framework of these activities. There are no classes on pedagogy. Instead, the teacher trainees are expected to attend and observe lessons and classes taught to children, to learn from watching experienced teachers at work. The trainees also learn a great deal about teaching from the personal experience of being taught by Suzuki.

Questions are not asked. While visiting observers and interviewers freely ask questions of Suzuki and receive thorough answers, teacher trainees are expected by unwritten rule to learn by observing and doing. Novice trainees who attempt to instigate discussion finds that their queries are either unheard or misunderstood. In every other way, however, Suzuki is extremely respectful and solicitous of his teacher trainees.

No grades are given. The trainees spend their days with the master until he decides that they should graduate. It appears that the decision is based partly on the quality of the trainees'

playing and partly on Suzuki's perception of their character. The period of study at the kaikan may be three or four years for students out of high school and as little as a year or less for graduates of music schools.

Graduation is marked by a recital given by the graduating trainee and attended by all fellow students, teachers at the school and Suzuki. At the end of the concert, the graduate recites a statement wherein acknowledgement is made of the unlimited potential of children and a pledge is given to continue to work on self-improvement and on research in furthering teaching methods. The graduate then receives shikishi made by Suzuki, as well as a gift from the school. The recital is followed by a tea party at which speeches are given by fellow students, teachers of the school and finally by Dr. Suzuki. Cookies and sweets are in abundant supply.⁵²

Teachers and teachers in training come from all of Japan and around the world to study with Suzuki in Matsumoto. In addition, Suzuki still travels extensively in Japan and abroad to give workshops and lead conferences for teachers. He regularly publishes reports on his work, his projects and the philosophy of talent education.

"The most joyous and worthy thing in the world is to have a task to pursue throughout life."⁵³ It is clear that Suzuki abides by this creed and it is one that he recommends to teachers in the talent education movement. His efforts at inspiring and training teachers appears to be bearing fruit. There are at present about ten thousand teachers worldwide,⁵⁴ trained by Suzuki or by

teachers who have studied with him. Many of them are highly accomplished players and teachers who contribute new and stimulating ideas to the method. Following the example of Suzuki, talent education teachers tend to openly share their expertise with colleagues, in marked contrast to the tradition of careful secrecy that has hitherto been characteristic of music teachers.

Suzuki's method differs in many ways, often dramatically, from traditional methods of teaching violin and other instruments. Various elements of the method at one time raised howls of protest from established music teachers. The ideas and practices seemed too radical. The cries of indignation have now all but died away. The method has proven itself. In the hands of the increasing number of competent teachers, it works.

Notes

1. See Chapter 3, p. 31 (above). A less literal but perhaps better translation is:
 1. Begin as early as possible.
 2. Create the best possible environment.
 3. Use the finest teaching method.
 4. Provide a great deal of training.
 5. Use the finest teachers.Shinichi Suzuki, Ability Development From Age Zero, trans. Mary Louise Nagata (Athens, Ohio: Ability Development Associates, 1981), p. 23.
2. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 32 (Autumn/Winter 1988): 35.
3. Shinichi Suzuki, Talent Education for Young Children, trans. Kyoko Selden (New Albany, IN: World-Wide Press, 1986), p. 13.
4. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 20.
5. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 32 (Autumn/Winter 1988): 32.
6. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 28 (Spring 1987): 36.
7. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 32 (Autumn/Winter 1988): 32.
8. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 31 (Summer 1988): 34.
9. Shinichi Suzuki, Where Love is Deep, trans. Kyoko Selden (Saint Louis, MI: Talent Education Journal, 1982), p. 11.
10. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 48.
11. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 44.
12. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 92.
13. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 28 (Spring 1987): 39.
14. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 45. The motto, "Don't hurry, don't rest comes from Goethe (Ohne Hast, ohne Rast).
15. Ibid., p. 28.
16. Quoted in Suzuki, Where Love, p. 29.
17. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent

- Education Journal 34 (Summer 1989): 37.
18. See Chapter 3, p. 83 (above).
 19. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 55.
 20. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 34 (Summer 1989): 39.
 21. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 18.
 22. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 34 (Summer 1989): 40.
 23. Ibid., p. 35.
 24. Ibid.
 25. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 26 (Autumn 1986): 31.
 26. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 15. Suzuki adopted the motto, "Monotony is the enemy of music," making it his own and inscribing it on shikishi.
 27. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Is Not Inborn," Talent Education Journal 26 (Autumn 1986): 31.
 28. anecdote told to the author by Jean Tremblay, August 17 1989.
 29. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 53.
 30. See Chapter 2, p. 30 (above).
 31. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 53.
 32. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 56.
 33. Ibid., p. 95.
 34. Ibid., p. 92.
 35. Ibid., p. 75. Ivan Galamian advocates a similar vertical turning motion. Ivan Galamian, Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 49.
 36. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 49.
 37. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 16.
 38. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 38.
 39. December 12 1985 at the Talent Education Institute in

Matsumoto, Japan. This author was in attendance.

40. Suzuki, Talent Education, p. 46.
41. Ibid., p. 47.
42. Ibid., p. 48.
43. Ibid., p. 50.
44. Shinichi Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, trans, Waltraud Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), p. 108. See also p. 98 (above).
45. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 70.
46. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 34 (Summer 1989): 41.
47. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 31 (Summer 1988): 37.
48. Suzuki, Ability Development, p. 16.
49. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 53.
50. Shinichi Suzuki, "Ability Development in Music," Talent Education Journal 32 (Autumn/Winter 1988): 37.
51. Ibid.
52. November 1985 at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan. This author was in attendance.
53. Attributed to Yukichi Fukuzawa, a late nineteenth century thinker and educator. Suzuki, Where Love, p. 19.
54. An estimate, qualified as conservative, made by Paul Landefeld, then president of the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA), in a speech on May 28 1988 in Chicago.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Hitherto, we have seen something of Suzuki's personal and cultural background as well as his philosophy and teaching methods. We will now attempt to evaluate the significance of Suzuki's experiences and influences. Starting from Suzuki's assumption that we are the sum of our experiences, let us see how Suzuki's background adds up to form his philosophy and method.

The tale of Nasu no Yoichi is well known to all Japanese. On February 18, 1185 the warring Genji and Heike clans were facing each other. The Heike were in boats on the sea, the Genji on the shore. A Heike lady hoisted a scarlet fan on her small boat, a gesture which the Genjis took as an invitation to shoot. Yoshitsune, the Genji leader, ordered Yoichi to hit the golden sun set in the middle of the fan. The young archer from Nasu province took a few steps into the water, prayed to the gods and Buddha for their protection, took aim and hit the target. The north wind at dusk happened to subside just then as the fan floated on the white waves. Both the Genji and Heike people cheered, for to hit a fan hoisted on a small rolling boat was an extraordinary feat.¹

In his discussion of kan (intuition), Suzuki refers to this

exploit and adds commentary which throws some interesting light on his way of thinking. The outcome of the story is of little interest to Suzuki. Instead his attention is drawn to the process of shooting the arrow and his admiration is aroused by Yoichi's disciplined heart. On the shoulders of one man fell the heavy responsibility for the honour of the entire Genji force. Should he fail, Yoichi was ready to kill himself. "Yet even if he killed himself, how, he must have wondered, would he be able to save the Genji clan from disgrace?" Suzuki finds it admirable that, given the situation, Yoichi "was able to become mindless like water."

However, Suzuki sees an internal inconsistency in the story. Yoichi could not possibly have prayed to the gods and Buddha for protection. Such dependency, in Suzuki's view, would surely have caused his arrow to miss. Likewise, "if he had thought in desperation that he had only one chance to hit the target, that thought would have sent the arrow astray. Simply because he was able to activate his usual intuition, he was able to demonstrate his ability of 'single arrow, no miss'."²

This tale along with his empathetic commentary recalls the moss collecting anecdote that Suzuki recounts from the biological expedition in his youth.³ There too the goal was to hit a virtually impossible target.

There are other parallels between the two stories. Suzuki, the youthful stone thrower, felt confronted with disgrace, a loss of face, should he have failed. Suzuki believes that the same thought must have weighed on the mind of Yoichi the archer. And, the successful outcome in both cases was the result of a mindless,

I intuitive performance. The ego was dead; the marksman was one with the target.

The story of shooting at a target for high stakes is archetypical to all cultures. An European example is the legend of William Tell. In India tales are told of swayamaras (contests for the hand of a princess) which involve miraculous feats of archery. While the same story appears everywhere in varied guises, the interpretation differs. In Europe the outcome is effected by courage and determination, in India it is by intervention of the supernatural, whereas the Japanese emphasize the value of intuitive, mindless action that is trained through years of diligent practice and unwavering self discipline.

Whether it be the gentle arts such as flower arranging (Ikebana), the tea ceremony (chado) and calligraphy (shodo) or the martial arts such as swordsmanship (kendo), karate-do and archery (kyudo), the ideal performance is carried out mindlessly. There appear to be two levels of mindlessness. One is the automatic, intuitive execution of an act which is only possible after extensive practice. Examples of it can be found in everyday activities such as walking and talking, in sports activities such as swimming and baseball and in performing arts such as dance and music. We walk without thinking about it, expert baseball players execute a double play without hesitation and the accomplished violinist plays notes with the same ease as we utter the syllables of our language. This is the level of technical mastery, where skills have been honed by repetition to become so automatic that action can be said to be intuitive.

Intuitive action leads to the second, higher level of mindlessness is where the performer is at one with the performance. The ego, the sense of self, merges with the object of the performance. The archer becomes one with the target, the violinist is immersed in the spirit of the music losing all awareness of self. Object and subject become one. It can only happen if the performer strives for something beyond technical mastery, something greater than merely hitting the target or merely playing notes perfectly.

Paradoxically, it is at this level of mindlessness, when the performer is detached and unconcerned about the outcome, that some of the most astonishing feats are carried out. The master of kyudo (archery) hits the bull's eye in the dark.⁴ With a razor sharp blade, the master of kendo (swordsmanship) cleaves a squash cleanly, leaving the underlying arm unscathed. When questioned after a brilliant performance, the master violinist reports an absence of concrete thought while playing.

Japanese culture and Zen Buddhism are intimately connected. The practice of Zen infuses the traditional Japanese arts. Thus the way of calligraphy or archery is, in the main, a spiritual exercise. The goal is mindlessness, enlightenment (satori), not aesthetics or hitting a target. In the enigmatic language of Zen, the master archer would describe his actions as a contest with himself, the contest consisting of "aiming at himself - and yet not at himself, in hitting himself - and yet not himself, and thus becoming simultaneously the aimer and the aim, the hitter and the hit." In the ultimate miracle of mindlessness, of enlightenment

"art becomes 'artless', shooting becomes non-shooting, a shooting without bow and arrow."⁵

These mysterious formulae can be quite bewildering if one lacks a background in Zen. Zen itself is hard to grasp and a clear guide is hard to find. The adept is unwilling or unable to explain the truth and experiences of Zen while books about Zen limit discussion to its history, influences and outward appearances. For a true understanding, the reader of these books is advised that Zen can only be practiced and experienced. The nature of Zen is such that its essence can never be expressed in words. It is ineffable.⁶ Even so, many books about Zen have been published.

An important and informative insight into Zen was written by the philosopher Eugen Herrigel. In the 1930's, he studied kyudo (archery) for six years with a master. Just as Suzuki had gone to Germany to study violin with the ultimate goal of understanding art, so did Herrigel, a German, study kyudo in Japan, with the aim of gaining insight into the Great Doctrine (of Zen). He later wrote of his experiences in a book entitled Zen in the Art of Archery. The veracity of his account is attested to by the Zen authority, D.T.Suzuki, who wrote the introduction. It is of interest because the course of studies he describes is representative of all the traditional Japanese arts and is, in many of its aspects, similar to that of Suzuki.

Kyudo is only accessible to those who are pure in heart, sincere in their pursuit of enlightenment and unconcerned with subsidiary aims. In the way of archery, all that technically

learnable must be practiced to the point of repletion. "Practice, repetition, and repetition of the repeated with ever increasing intensity are its distinctive features. . . . Demonstration, example; intuition, imitation - that is the fundamental relationship of instructor to pupil."⁷ Repetition is driven long past the point of mere competence until correct performance becomes automatic. This process is sometimes referred to as 'overlearning' in western educational psychology.

At first, the pupil's only task is to conscientiously copy the teacher. Verbal instruction is confined to a few brief hints. Conceptualization is shunned. Questions are either evaded or answered in a way that seems to either confuse or discourage further queries.

Artistic awakening can happen only after the pupil has achieved technical mastery. In the creative act of an artist

The hand that guides the brush has already caught and executed what floated before the mind at the same moment the mind began to form it, and in the end the pupil no longer knows which of the two -- mind or hand -- was responsible for the work.⁸

Though the art of violin playing is very different from the art of archery, many features of Suzuki's method are essentially identical to those described by Herrigel. Demonstration and examples for the young beginning violinist are provided in abundance by other children, by the teacher and by the parent who learns to play, as well as by the recordings that are listened to at home. At the lesson, the pupil imitates the teacher who gives very spare explanations. As we have seen, this incessant imitation continues for many years up to the level of playing

I where pupils listen to great artists and even play along when studying advanced repertoire such as the Tchaikovsky violin concerto.

The Suzuki pupil is discouraged from questioning and explanation is spare. After extensive practice the pupil is expected to intuitively grasp the significance of what they have been shown. "Practice, repetition, and repetition of the repeated" is what Suzuki advocates when he tells a pupil to repeat something 10,000 times. The earliest materials, such as the variations on Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, are incessantly reviewed, even by very advanced players. It is only after extensive practice of the right things that superior ability develops.⁹

The prerequisite attitude for studying violin is in harmony with the attitude recommended by the masters of kyudo. Suzuki encourages an attitude of service to others, humility and kindness for those who wish to advance as violinists. It is counterproductive to his stated goals to pursue violin study for the purpose of a career. The mastery of archery is on the same wavelength when he insists that only the pure of heart can follow the way of archery.¹⁰

Another resonance with the traditional Japanese archery can be found in Suzuki's ultimate goal of talent education. The purpose of violin study is not simply being able to play but rather to inculcate sensitivity to others and to beauty, to develop intuition (kan) and intellectual skills, to gain insight into the spiritual world communicated by music.

A similar aim is held in the study of traditional Japanese instruments such as the koto, a plucked string instrument, and the shakuhachi, a bamboo flute. Learning these instruments is centered around a few pieces of great antiquity which are studied and restudied at ever deeper levels. With personal and spiritual maturity as the goal, mere technical brilliance is distained as empty mechanical wizardry.

Evidence is here emerging that Suzuki's pedagogy was strongly influenced by Zen and the practice of Japanese traditional arts. How could it be otherwise? Zen was the religion of his family, it infused the culture in which he was reared. In his youth, he was a disciple of a Zen master, who was also his mother's uncle. His mother's education was in the traditional arts.

Suzuki further reveals his roots by coining the term ongakudo, or 'way of music', to describe the spiritual nature of musical training. The suffix do is written with a kanji character which means way or path and when used in this sense it connotes a spiritual discipline.¹¹ Thus kyudo, chado, shodo, kendo mean the way of archery, of the tea (ceremony), of calligraphy, of the sword.

Despite his affinity to the masters of Japanese arts, Suzuki remains less bewildering and arcane than they in his pronouncements. None of them approach the mystery of the "artless art" and of "aiming at himself - and yet not himself". Some statements, however, are quite baffling: "Sound breathes life / Without form it lives." This line has an aura of mystery akin to John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the word was God." It also recalls Hindu cosmology which traces the beginning of the universe to a sound, a vibration.¹² Suzuki's statement is most likely meant to be grasped intuitively, not through logical deduction or reference to cosmology.

In the study of the shakuhachi, the bamboo flute, "the quest to produce pure tone or 'the true sound of the bamboo' assumes a function similar to that of a Zen koan. The goal is ichi on io butsu, the attainment of enlightenment through perfecting a single note."¹³

Koans are riddles meant to help the seeker along the road to enlightenment by paralysing the mind's rational faculty, becoming mindless and thereby opening the way to intuitive understanding and dissolution of the ego. Solution of the riddle is accompanied by enlightenment. Examples of well known koans are "To feel the yearning for one's mother before conception" and "All things return into One; where does this last return?" The disciple may grapple with only one such problem for many years. "Finally the screen of his 'observing self' between his mind and his problem falls aside; with the swiftness of a flash of lightning the two - mind and problem - come to terms. He 'knows.'"¹⁴ The intent was to help the pupil break the shell of his limited mind and attain a second eternal birth, satori, enlightenment.¹⁵

When the swordsman's observing self, or ego, falls away he attains mindlessness and no longer fears death. The ultimate secret of swordsmanship, the final stage of enlightenment lies in being released from the thought of death. A person who is completely fearless in this way is considered a master of kendo,

though he may never have held a sword. The kendo practice hall is significantly referred to as the "Place of Enlightenment."¹⁶

A person who has not followed any training may occasionally experience a kind of enlightenment. When one watching a Noh or Kabuki play completely loses himself in the spectacle, he too is said to lose his observing self, his ego. Ruth Benedict, in The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, describes this state:

The palms of his hands become wet. He feels 'the sweat of muga.' A bombing pilot approaching his goal has 'the sweat of muga' before he releases his bombs. 'He is not doing it.' There is no observer-self left in his consciousness.¹⁷

This closely matches Suzuki's description of his reaction to hearing the Klingler Quartet performance of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet when he was in Berlin in the 1920's. In ecstatic rapture he later declared, "It was a moment of sublime eternity when I, a human being, had gone beyond the limits of this physical body."¹⁸

Herrigel, the German who practiced kyudo, encountered almost insurmountable difficulties in attaining a state of detachment. Contrary to the master's admonishment, he could not but aim at the target and hope to hit it. While this may seem perfectly normal, it also reveals an attachment to the attainment of an end. It was in his tenacious striving for success, which in the West is widely regarded as a virtue, that Herrigel earned the sternest rebukes.

"The right art," cried the Master, 'is purposeless, aimless. The more obstinately you try to learn how to shoot the arrow for the sake of hitting the goal, the less you will succeed in the one [the means] and the further the other will recede [the end]. What stands in your way is that you have a much too willful will. You think that what you do not do yourself does not

happen."¹⁹

Herrigel came to discover that, ironically, the only way to overcome the challenges of kyudo was by "withdrawing from all attachments whatsoever, by becoming utterly egoless."²⁰ "All right doing is accomplished only in a state of true selflessness."²¹

Suzuki is clearly in the same cast of mind as Herrigel's archery master. A passage quoted earlier bears repeating in part:

Do not play; let the bow play. . . . Beauty of tone and freedom of action increase in proportion to freedom from the force of your ego. Violin study is nothing but the training of how to serve the bow and the study of how to shake off the 'me-mentality' and the ego force.²²

Suzuki was pointing the way to a state of selflessness when he sent his pupil Koji Toyoda to play his violin for Christ in an empty church.²³ To Tomika Shida, who was to play Poeme by Chausson in a recital, he counseled playing for the spirit of Chausson, and not to think of showing off her ability to the audience.²⁴

The counsel of playing for the spirit of Chausson reflects the Japanese belief that everyone becomes a Buddha after death. In Japan, memorial tablets for family ancestors are called "the Buddhas."²⁵ While this may seem odd to Westerner, it must seem odder yet that one so steeped in Zen Buddhism should want his pupil to play for Christ. The Japanese, however, would find this entirely appropriate. They see diverse religions as being mutually inclusive. It is common for a Japanese family to worship at both Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. Thus it is no

contradiction that Suzuki, a professing Christian, follows the practices of Zen.²⁶

Herrigel's chronicle reveals several further parallels between the way of archery and Suzuki's way of music, some of which should be mentioned.

Herrigel's master could accurately judge how a shot had landed simply by keeping his eye trained on the archer. This recalls Suzuki's knack for describing everything about a player, including the stance, attitude and character, merely from listening to a cassette recording.

Lessons with Herrigel's teacher varied in time, as they do with Suzuki, depending on factors such as the pupil's attention span and the matter at hand.

One conspicuous feature of Talent Education is the prevalence of group activities. The children take their individual instruction within the framework of a small group. In addition, they regularly participate in group lessons where musical games are played and their repertoire is performed all together. Many of the concerts are given by large groups of children playing in unison.

It will be remembered that having the children perform together in unison was Suzuki's response to the public hailing his prodigal pupils as geniuses. He felt that several playing together would dispel that notion.

Group teaching and individual within a group are a continuation established practice in the teaching of traditional music in Japan.²⁷ In the practices of the more familiar

traditional arts such as judo and karate-do, exercise routines are practiced conjointly in step with grunts, breathing and shouts vented in unison. Individual instruction is given within a circle of observing disciples.²⁸

The custom of learning by ear harks back to Japanese classical music which was primarily an oral tradition. Pupils learned by imitating their teacher passage by passage. Musical scores did exist but the system of notation was rudimentary and incomplete. Only advanced pupils were instructed in their use. Incidentally, learning by rote is common to all musical cultures, the exception being that of Western classical music, where beginners typically start learning from the printed page.

An administrator and scholar from the early Tokugawa period, Banzan Kumazawa (1619-1691), advocated the following for the education of young samurai:

Music lessons should be given every day. The playing of the flute, the sho and the hichiriku [kinds of flutes] should be taught by an expert teacher to groups of ten or twenty boys from eight to twelve years of age. From thirteen upward they should be instructed individually in playing upon the three above-named pipes. The koto should be taught first among the stringed instruments. It would be well to have children of eight or nine years²⁹ listen to the playing of these instruments by others.

In another similarity between talent education and the traditional arts, the period of study with a master is determined by the pupil's progress. This period can vary between one minute to over twenty years. Training under a master ends when enlightenment is realized.

Further similarities include the mutual respect exhibited between master and pupil, and the ideal of the pupil surpassing

the master to "climb on the shoulders of his teacher."

Additional parallels could be drawn, but there appears to be sufficient and compelling evidence here to show that Suzuki's Talent Education was largely influenced by Zen and the practice of traditional Japanese arts. The correspondence on central tenets is significant, as is Suzuki's exposure to Zen and the Zen inspired arts.

Zen and the traditional arts exert a powerful influence on the general culture. The inverse is also true. Nevertheless, since Zen is practiced by only a small minority of the population, it stands to reason that influences from the larger Japanese culture might have had a formative influence on Talent Education. It may therefore be of interest to investigate how some other elements of Talent Education owe their origins to the Japanese culture as a whole.

As noted in the previous chapter, Suzuki recommends that violin lessons begin at an early age. Many Talent Education pupils start at three, some even earlier. This reflects a widespread belief amongst the Japanese that formal training should start at a young age, that many subjects such as second languages, music and complex physical skills are most easily and naturally learned in the pre-school years.

In present day Japan, almost all children take extracurricular lessons during pre-school. The most popular subjects, in order, are swimming, piano, calligraphy and gymnastics. In ancient Japan, boys destined for careers as Noh actors began their training at about the age of five.³⁰

The Talent Education policy of preceding actual lessons with a protracted period of observation for the child echoes standard Japanese practice when embarking on new activities. In such varied institutions as tennis clubs, salaried employment and flower arranging, the prospective applicant is expected to watch the older members' activities from the sidelines. This time honoured process is called minarai kikan, or 'period of learning through watching.'³¹

Banzan Kumazawa (1619-1691), a scholar and administrator of the early Tokugawa period stated that:

The pupils' eagerness to learn more must not be indulged too far. Children of eight or nine years who have not yet begun to read would do well to listen to what their older brothers recite, thus training their ear.³²

After watching other children and even their own mothers being allowed to play, the upcoming violin pupil naturally becomes extremely eager to play. Once lessons finally start, teachers are careful not to dampen this enthusiasm through excessively harsh correction. In a treatise on Noh written over eight hundred years ago, long before Rousseau and the era of child-oriented pedagogy, teachers were advised:

Don't excessively point out 'this is good' and 'that is bad.' If children are corrected too excessively, they lose their desire to learn and find Noh tedious and uninteresting. When this happens, their abilities cease to develop.³³

Talent Education teachers follow Suzuki's example of being gentle and playful with the young children and parents are urged to continue in the same spirit at home. The same behaviour is expected of instructors in the early grades of Japanese elementary

school. Whether a man or a woman, the teacher "pets the children and is one of them."³⁴ Contrary to a misconception widely held in the West, children in Japan are not subjected to harsh discipline. If anything, they are coddled and indulged. Training in exacting codes of behaviour begins gradually at about the age of eight.

The elementary school teacher minimizes competition between the children, avoiding situations where the child might be compared to others.³⁵ Similarly, though there is a high level of group activity, Japanese Talent Education teachers do their utmost to eliminate competition between children.

The Suzuki approach of guiding children physically with his own hands to teach them necessary skills is an established procedure in Japan. Teachers of calligraphy will take the child's hands to make the ideographs. The bow, the handling of chopsticks, shooting an arrow may all be taught by repeatedly manipulating the child's hands and physically placing his body in the correct position. Even the "correct" positions for sleep and sitting are taught in this way.³⁶

Parents play a central role in the teaching process of the Suzuki method. They are their children's home teachers and it could almost be said that the Suzuki method teaches the parents how to teach at home. This parental role is not alien to the Japanese. Most mothers in Japan are extensively implicated in their child's education. They are almost always present as observers during their children's extracurricular lessons and they assist with daily homework to a greater extent than do American mothers. Many Japanese mothers make their children's education

I their full time occupation, earning them the title "education mamas." This pattern of intense maternal involvement in children's educational achievement appears to have emerged only in the twentieth century as academic success began replacing family affiliation as the chief determinant of a child's occupational future.³⁷ While Suzuki exacts a higher level of maternal participation than do teachers of other extracurricular enrichment lessons, he is nevertheless adhering to a cultural pattern that is established and accepted in Japan. Home education has a long history in samurai families. "Samurai children [of which Suzuki was one] took their first steps in education in their own homes."³⁸

Most Japanese share Suzuki's view that abilities are primarily determined by environment and training rather than by heredity. Four out of five believe that intelligence is mostly due to experience and education after birth.³⁹ Japanese teachers in elementary tend to be "confident in the learning potential of all students. . . . They believe anyone can learn if he tries and is appropriately guided."⁴⁰

Suzuki exhorts his pupils and their parents to act when they think. Thought is of no value if it is not followed up with action. This same virtue was actively promoted by both Ninomiya Sontoku and Arinori Mori, two very influential educators of the Meiji period (end of nineteenth century). An educator from an earlier period, Ekken Kaibara, wrote in 1672:

Learning has two aspects, knowledge and action based on that knowledge. Learning may be compared with the eyes, and doing with the feet. Though our sight be clear, we cannot walk if our feet are paralyzed; and however

strong their feet, walking is difficult to the blind. To know and not to do is as if our eyes saw the way but our feet refused to follow in it. In order of precedence knowledge comes first, but in order of importance action, for while nothing can be done without knowledge, yet knowledge not acted upon is useless.⁴¹

Suzuki's desire for world peace is another outlook shared by the Japanese populace at large. The agonies and deceptions of the Pacific war left them with a vivid revulsion for war. Educators in Japan saw it as their mission to work for peace, not only in Japan but in the entire world. Tatsuo Morito, Minister of Education immediately after the war, spoke for all Japanese educators when he stated that Japan's defeat in the war was, in a sense, a heaven sent opportunity "to let education proceed in such a direction as will make the Japanese people apostles of truth and peace. . ."⁴²

Clearly, many features of Talent Education are rooted in Japanese culture and tradition. This is, of course, only to be expected. The clientele of Suzuki's method during its development was Japanese so it is tailored to fit Japanese cultural beliefs and practices. And, Suzuki himself is Japanese born and raised. Eighty-four of his ninety-two years have been spent in Japan.

Nevertheless, Suzuki has had a broad exposure to Western culture throughout his life. During his eight year sojourn in Berlin, he was immersed in that culture. To what extent might he have been influenced by the West?

Perhaps the most obvious input from the West is found in the music that Suzuki listens to, plays and teaches. It is exclusively European classical music. Not one piece of the Suzuki violin repertoire is Japanese.

The people of the Orient, especially the Japanese, share Suzuki's penchant for the music of Bach and Mozart. The numbers of people in Japan who acquire skills on the various instruments and forms of Western music are far greater than those who study traditional music.⁴³ Japan ranks first in per capita spending on classical music recordings. Many of the leading lights of the new generation of virtuoso string soloists are from the Asian Pacific Rim. They include the cellist Yo Yo Ma, the Korean violinist Kyung Wha Chung, the Japanese violinist Midori and the Taiwanese violinist Cho Liang Lin. It is safe to say that Suzuki's love and understanding of European classical is not an isolated phenomenon in his part of the world.

Much of Suzuki's violin technique was inherited from Joseph Joachim, who taught Suzuki's teacher Karl Klingler. Several of the Suzuki bow techniques, such as playing with a very low right elbow and gripping the bow near the fingertips, were hallmarks of Joachim's playing. The exercise of removing one or more fingers from the bow while playing was one favoured by Joachim as was playing while holding the bow upside down at the tip.

Joachim in his time was the first solo artist to interpret, to submerge his personality and creativity into the work of another composer. Although he had creative talent as a composer, he derived greater satisfaction by probing the depths of the great classical masters. "His interpretation was spiritualized."⁴⁴ It was this quality of sincerity and seeking that attracted Suzuki to Klingler, a Joachim pupil who followed very closely in the footsteps of his master.

The study of music did not Westernize Suzuki. Instead, he interpreted his experiences in Berlin through an outlook which was at one with his upbringing. When he went to Germany to study music, it was to discover the true meaning of art and thereby discover himself. It was not, as it would have been for his Western peers, to seek specialized training for a career. A performance of Mozart's music in Berlin threw him into a mystic trance while the rest of the audience was bent on showing their approval with enthusiastic applause.

At the end of his eight years in Germany, he found the real essence of art to be "right inside [his] ordinary daily self."⁴⁵ This echoes the discoveries of seekers who have realized enlightenment through Zen. One master compared it to becoming aware of the ox on which one has been riding all along. The way of Zen is self searching for one's true nature. Going to Berlin, coping with the challenges of living in a foreign culture and studying under the great masters of his art was the path Suzuki followed in search of his true self.

Thus, despite an extensive interaction with the West, Suzuki remained true to his Japanese roots. The same can be said for Japan as a whole. In the words of Edwin Reischauer, Japan scholar and former American ambassador to Japan: "Japan has more significantly become modernized, not Westernized, and the process of modernization has taken place on the basis of Japan's own traditional culture."⁴⁶

Though it has here been established that Talent Education has its genesis mainly in Japanese traditional culture and not in some

inexplicable stroke of genius, Suzuki has nevertheless shown great insight, ingenuity and skill in his life's work. And, even though it is made in Japan, his method is highly relevant in the West.

By blending the practice of traditional Japanese arts with the content of Western classical music, Suzuki, to borrow an old saying, effected 'a marriage made in heaven.' Like an expert matchmaker he came up with the idea, then put it to work.

It is difficult to evaluate the extent to which Suzuki consciously integrated elements from traditional Japanese arts training. It may well be that many of the ideas were ones that he had assimilated from his upbringing, the kind that "have become a part of that great mass of ideas, including language, which seeps into a person's mind. . . ." ⁴⁷ It should be remembered that while the basic tenets of Talent Education are all rooted in the traditional arts, Suzuki deduced them from his realization that the process of learning to play music was the same as learning to speak one's mother tongue.

Much of Suzuki's method is innovative and original. His use of the modern technology of recordings is ingenious and resourceful as is his recruitment of the educationally oriented parent as an auxiliary home teacher. He recognized that it is necessary and possible to create a home environment conducive to learning music. His skillful inclusion of games and motivational devices in learning music shows his special genius for appealing to children's sense of fun and desire to learn. The Suzuki method repertoire is innovative, embedding instructional material in attractive music by famous composers and ordering it in a well

graduated progression.

Successful implementation of the method in Europe and North America indicates that Talent Education has a high degree of relevance in the West. Children in Canada are not essentially different from children in Japan so it is no surprise that they should respond equally well to instruction.

However, while people all over the world are basically the same, cultures do vary significantly. When transplanting an educational approach from one culture to another it is to be expected that some of its elements will be adopted less readily than in the country of origin. North Americans, for example, have some resistant cultural beliefs and practices that may clash with basic tenets of Talent Education. Many assume that heredity play a more significant role than that of the environment in determining the ability and character of an individual. In learning, some North Americans favour shortcuts, convinced that, with the right method, subliminal learning or some other gimmick, the need for study and practice can be circumvented. If, when working in Talent Education as teacher or parent instructors, they do not understand the function of patient repetition, or neglect structuring a nurturing environment, then results will fall far short of what could otherwise be expected.

Talent Education is one of many importations from Japan in recent years. Japanese business management, aesthetics and sport, to name only a few, have been studied and emulated in the West. Courses and books on Japanese business procedures are readily available. The works of leading artists from the time of Vincent

Van Gogh are profoundly influenced by Japanese art. In sport we have adopted the Japanese martial arts, most notably judo and karate. The transplantation of these arts usually incorporates the age-old beliefs and practices with which they are associated. The readiness with which we absorb Japanese ideas and practices suggests that, despite some colourful differences, the cultures of the East and West share a lot of common ground.

The Japanese have a long tradition of excellence in the interpretive arts. Suzuki's special contribution was to apply that tradition to the practice of Western music. It is one of those "fruitful developments that take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet."⁴⁸

Talent education, or "Suzuki" in the jargon of the initiated, is rooted in the soil of its founder's personal and cultural background. It generated out of his Japanese upbringing and his immersion in the musical culture of the West. He is, to use his own maxim, "the son of his environment." This is the "genesis of Suzuki."

Notes

1. Heike monogatari, Tales of the Heike, trans. Hiroshi Kitagawa & Bruce Tsuchida (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975).
2. Shinichi Suzuki, Talent Education for Young Children, trans. Kyoko Seldon (New Albany, IN: World-Wide Press, 1986), p. 35.
3. See Chapter 2, p. 25 (above).
4. Eugen Herrigel, Zen in the Art of Archery, with an Introduction by D.T.Suzuki, trans. R.F.C.Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953; reprint ed., New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1971), p. 85.
5. Ibid., p. 20.
6. Paul Reys, comp., Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and pre-Zen Writings (New York: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, n.d.), p. xv.
7. Herrigel, Zen Archery, p. 62.
8. Ibid., p. 63.
9. See Chapter 3, p. 78 (above).
10. Alan Watts, The Spirit of Zen, (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), p. 93.
11. Lois Taniuchi, "Cultural Continuity in an Educational Institution: A Case Study of the Suzuki Method of Music Instruction," The Cultural Transition: Human Experience and Social Transformation in the Third World and Japan, ed. Mary White and Susan Pollak (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 132.
12. Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism, Flamingo edition (Great Britain: Wildwood House, 1975; reprint ed., London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), p. 270.
13. Taniuchi, Cultural, p.134.
14. Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1946), p. 246.
15. Reys, Zen Writings, p. 87.
16. Herrigel, Zen Archery, p. 108.
17. Benedict, Chrysanthemum, p. 248.

18. See Chapter 2, p. 31 (above).
19. Herrigel, Zen Archery, p. 51.
20. Ibid., p. 56.
21. Ibid., p. 67.
22. See Chapter 2, p. 34 (above).
23. Shinichi Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, trans. Waltraud Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), p. 39.
24. Ibid., p. 45.
25. Benedict, Chrysanthemum, p. 238.
26. The seventeenth century prosecutions of Christians in Japan were a political act, in step with the other measures taken to isolate Japan from foreign influences.
27. Taniuchi, Cultural, p. 125.
28. Budo, a motion picture directed by Masayoshi Nemoto, produced by Hisao Masuda (Crown International Pictures Inc., 1981).
29. Banzan Kumazawa, "Questions About the Greater Learning," in Herbert Passim, Society and Education in Japan (New York: Columbia University Teachers' College Press, 1965), p. 182.
30. Taniuchi, Cultural, p. 118.
31. Ibid., p. 119.
32. Kumazawa, "Questions", p. 181.
33. ZeAmi, "Fushikaden", quoted in Taniuchi, Cultural, p. 120.
34. Benedict, Chrysanthemum, p. 272.
35. In stark contrast, on the other hand, is the fierce contest in junior and senior high school to gain admittance into the best schools at the next level.
36. Benedict, Chrysanthemum, p. 268.
37. Taniuchi, Cultural, p. 123.
38. Passim, Society and Education, p. 22.
39. Taniuchi, Cultural, p. 123.
40. William Cummings, Education and Equality in Japan (Princeton,

NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 159.

41. Ekken Kaibara, "The Way of Contentment," in Passim, Society and Education, p. 177.
42. Yoshishige Abe, "Bases for Educational Reconstruction," in Passim, Society and Education, p. 275
43. Edwin Reischauer, The Japanese (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, The Belknap Press, 1981), p. 149.
44. Boris Schwarz, Great Masters of the Violin: From Corelli and Vivaldi to Stern, Zukerman and Perlman, with Foreword by Sir Yehudi Menuhin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 271.
45. See Chapter 2, p. 34 (above).
46. Reischauer, The Japanese, p. 228.
47. See Chapter 1, p. 11 (above).
48. See Chapter 1, p. 9 (above).

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VITA

Eric Madsen was born in Longueuil, Québec on April 5, 1954. He began violin lessons at the age of five and studied at the Conservatoire du Québec from 1963 to 1968. In 1978, he earned a Bachelor of Music in Performance at the McGill University Faculty of Music. His teachers were, among others, Taras Gabora, Otto Armin, Paul Rosenthal and Lorand Fenyves. In 1984 he received the Max Bell Fellowship as well as the McGill University Summer Fellowship. These grants permitted a period of study with Shinichi Suzuki in Matsumoto, Japan in 1985.

Since 1975, Mr.Madsen has taught violin by the Suzuki method in association with several institutions. He taught at Ecole Polyvalente Mgr. Parent and with the South Shore String Association. At the McGill Conservatory of Music and Preville Fine Arts Centre, he was teacher and coordinator. At the Suzuki School for Violin in Malone, he was teacher and director. He now teaches at his private studio, Cordes Suzuki, which started in 1986. He is founder and director of Institut Suzuki Montréal, an international summer school, and founder and past president of Suzuki Musique Montréal, a professional association of Suzuki music teachers.

Mr.Madsen has performed as violinist with numerous orchestras and chamber groups. He is a member of the International Suzuki Association, the Suzuki Association of the Americas, Suzuki Musique Montréal, Association des professeurs de musique du Québec and the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations.

APPENDIX

Shikishi by Shinichi Suzuki

單調さは

音楽の

敵

カサルス

第一



Monotony

is the enemy of music" - Casals

A string has no heart; it sings only with the soul of the player.

弦には
心なし
鳴らす者の
心を
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のみ

昭和五十六年春

後一



S. Juzueki

-1005



日 月 一 年

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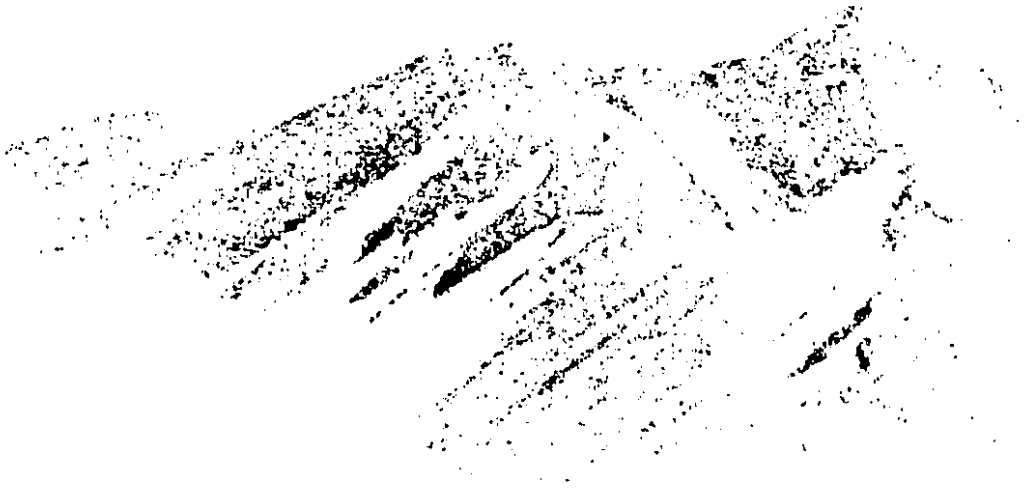
終



J. Juzueki
- 1984 -



Beautiful tone and beautiful heart, please!



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一

