

Nurtured *by* Love

The Classic Approach to Talent Education
Second Edition

Shinichi
Suzuki

Translated by Waltraud Suzuki

Illustrated
All Photos © Arthur Montzka

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INTRODUCTION

All Japanese children speak Japanese

Oh—why, Japanese children can all speak Japanese! The thought suddenly struck me with amazement. In fact, all children throughout the world speak their native tongues with the utmost fluency. Any and every Japanese child—all speak Japanese without difficulty. Does that not show a startling talent? How, by what means, does this come about? I had to control an impulse to shout my joy over this discovery.

The children of Osaka speak the difficult Osaka dialect. We are unable to imitate the Tohoku dialect, but the Tohoku children speak it. Isn't that something of an accomplishment? But no one else I mentioned it to seemed the slightest bit impressed. It was just taken for granted; people in general think that the ability children display is inborn. At my excitement, half of my listeners were startled, and others just thought me absurd. Nevertheless, my discovery actually had great significance; it made me realize that any child is able to display highly superior abilities if only the correct methods are used in training. This happened about thirty years ago, when I was thirty-three or thirty-four years old. Following up the thought that struck me so forcibly on that day, and trying to find a solution, soon became the basic purpose of my life.

I think it was around 1931 or 1932, when I was teaching violin at the Imperial Conservatory to a class of mostly young men, that a father came to our home accompanied by his four-year old son. The boy is now a world-famous musician: Toshiya Eto.

How does this surprising fact come about?

The father asked me to teach his son violin. At that time I didn't know how to train such a small child, or what to teach him. I didn't