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Chapter 1

Man is the Son of His Environment (1859-1919)

Background

To understand the man Suzuki and his philosophy, one must understand his environment. Five hundred years prior to 1867, Japan was a feudal country governed by the strongest warlord, or *Shogun*. The *Shogun's* warriors, or *samurai*, were an elite group highly trained in the skills of protecting their *Shogun*. The breakdown of the *Shogunate* began in the 1850s, when a series of treaties made trade possible with other countries. By 1860, there was a Japanese Embassy in the United States and two years later, they had opened embassies in several European countries.

In 1866, the *Shogunate* of Tokugawa, Toshinobu, came into power; but almost immediately there was a move to restore the power of the emperor. One year later, the 15-year old Emperor Meiji became ruler. Most of his ministers were of the *samurai* class, because these people had been trained in the tradition of responsibility and leadership.

Many members of the *samurai* class fell into a period of great depression because they had learned only one skill — war. However, those who had the foresight to seek an education in other fields of endeavor found new lives. In 1872, Emperor Meiji, the “Enlightened Emperor,” published an Imperial decree for the encouragement of education; in part, the decree stated:

There shall, hereafter, be no illiterate family among the people of any community, nor shall there be an illiterate member of any family... learning is the basis for all human endeavor from the commonplace — speaking, reading, writing, and calculating for everyday needs — to the professional need of the military man, government official, farmer, merchant, craftsman, and artist, in the multitude of technical skills and arts, and in the law, politics, and astronomy.¹

By 1912, when the Emperor died, the goal of the decree had become a reality.

The first educational institution, Tokyo University, was opened in 1877, and within

¹ Bradley Smith, *Japan: A History in Art* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964), 286-7.

Chapter 15

Suzuki's "New Ideas" for Playing the Violin

1. 10 Points for Talent Education
2. Four Classes of Tone
3. Vital Points for Violin Performance
4. Teaching Points for 1976 (New Ideas for Teachers to Use in Their Teaching)
5. Tonalization for Nurturing a Beautiful Sound (1982)
6. Four New Teaching Points of Suzuki Method
7. Ability Can Be Developed by the Living Soul
8. Developing Children's Ability Using the Suzuki Teaching Method
9. Suzuki's Summary

10 Points for Talent Education

Teachers of the "Suzuki Method" must strive to acquire these 10 points.

(During lesson or hearing children perform, the teachers must be able to recognize at once which of the following points needs most attention.)

1. Listening to records is important to develop musical sensitivity. The teacher should urge parents and children to hear records at home. He must possess the potentiality to make them do it.
2. TONALIZATION — The teacher must have the ability to show his students how to produce a beautiful tone with nice resonance of the strings (and to find the "sound point").
3. Teach a nice vibrato.
4. Arouse a feeling for good *musical* tempo.
5. Teach correct intonation. (1st Position)
6. Develop brilliant trilling ability.