

**With Proper Instruction, All Children Can Change
The DNA for Politeness Remains In Them**

**Manner Kids Project, Certified NPO Organization
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Thank you very much for honoring me with the opportunity to deliver a speech at XX Rotary Club.

1. The Contents of the Manner Kids Program

1) Lessons by the Master, Makiko Suzuki – How to make a Proper Bow and Greeting

Let me start with the contents of the Manner Kids Program. At the beginning of the class, every child introduces himself or herself. Like all children in Japan, they stand with bad postures and speak in feeble voices. After their self-introductions, Ms. Makiko Suzuki, the Master of Ogasawara School of Etiquette, teaches them how to make a proper bow and greeting. First, children have to make their backs straight, focus their attention on the center of the stomach, and take a deep breath. Then they say “Yoroshiku-Onegai-Shimasu (Please give me a good advice)” and bow to her. In bowing, it is necessary for them to bend their bodies from the waist, lowering their mind instead of their heads. After bowing, they have to look her in the face and smile. We call this way of bowing “zanshin,” which means “leaving your mind behind.”

Then the children take the tennis lesson, which is part of the project. In playing tennis, they have to say “Arigatou-Gozaimashita (Thank you very much) to their instructors as well. During 90 minutes of short tennis lesson, they repeat “Yoroshiku-Onegai-Shimasu“ and “Arigatou-Gozaimasita” every time they get advice. We can see their voices are getting bigger, while postures are getting better in every 10 minutes.

At the end of the lesson, they improve so much in manner that their parents doubt if these kids are their own. If we teach properly, children will change. I am sure that the DNA for politeness remains in children.

2) Lecture For Parents

a) Lecture by Master Suzuki, “Discipline Training at Home”

In the Manner Kids Program, Master Suzuki provides a lecture to parents while their kids are attending the tennis lesson.

At the beginning of the lecture for parents, Master Suzuki asks a question, “In your family, who is the first person to speak to kids in the morning?” In most cases, mothers say the first word, such as “Good morning. Hurry up and get ready for school.” Master Suzuki says this is not good. Greeting is to be made from inferiors to superiors. So you should make your kids say first, “Good morning, Mom,” in a polite manner. In case of younger children, mothers should stop cooking, look into their faces, and reply “Good morning.” People in the past said, “Look at your kids in the morning, call their names at noon, and touch them at night to see if they are fine, or they might vanish.” Similarly, Master Suzuki emphasizes the importance of looking into children’s faces and checking their condition every morning.

Then Master Suzuki tells them not to touch or arrange children’s hair at the table. Nowadays, we often see people eating snacks or even putting on their make up in the train as if it were nothing. Seeing these scenes on a daily basis, people are no longer able to distinguish public places from private ones.

Master Suzuki also recommends that parents take the top seats of the table when they scold their children. In this way, scolding would be more effective.

For children, mothers are someone to love, while fathers are someone to respect. So mothers shouldn’t talk ill of their husbands. Even If they didn’t come home until late, you should say, “Your father is working hard into the night. He is very tough. I could never do as he does,” instead of “I wonder what on earth he is doing.” You have to be determined to deliver only beautiful words so that children respect their fathers.

Master Suzuki also tells parents to see their children off to school at the door every morning. As children are leaving, give them a word such as “Have a good day. Take care” from behind, so children can go to school with something warm and gentle in them, and keep the warmth all day long. Children grown up with much affection could survive severe bullying.

b) No superior or inferior, everyone is friends – Problem of Japanese education system

As I told you before, Master Suzuki says that the inferior-superior relationship is essential for discipline trainings. I will show you an example.

One day, we gave the Manner Kids Program in Tsukishima Kindergarten in Tyu-o ward, Tokyo. After the program, the principal said that he was very surprised to see children, because they looked so different from usual. After World War II, all the kindergartens in Japan have adopted American education theory and operated under the policy in which everyone, including the principal, teachers and children, stands on even ground. On the contrary, the Manner Kids Program put children lower than teachers. Under this policy, we teach children to straighten their posture and speak politely with teachers. In this way, children learn manners. As the saying goes, “What is learned in the cradle is carried to the grave.” I deeply feel the importance of early childhood education.

c) Lecture by Mr. Hajime Omori, a professor of Tsukuba University Graduate School, “Mother’s love nurtures the brain of a child” and “Effects of imitative activity on verbal development in infants”

As I said before, Master Suzuki says children grown up with much love will gain a high tolerance for stress or bullying. Mr. Hajime Omori, professor of Tsukuba University Graduate School and an executive director of Manner Kids Project, also argues that mother’s love nurtures the brain of a child. His theory has been proved by experiments on rats. Here are the findings of his experiment.

- 1) Rats loved by their mothers in early childhood behave calmly. They are not too aggressive or easily frightened.
- 2) They are more tolerant to stress.
- 3) They are resistant to the decline of cognitive function later in life.

He also studied the effects of imitative activities on verbal function in infants. We often hear that children of today play indoors with video games, instead of playing outdoors, because they lack time, space and friends. It causes the decline of not only exercise ability and physical capacity but also verbal or mental ability. Professor Omori’s research says that 3-year-old children who had the imitative activity class 3 days a week showed a higher development of verbal ability than those who didn’t. For healthy mental development of children, we have to stop the decline of exercise ability and

physical capacity.

d) Children's poor manners is a common problem in industrialized countries

Nowadays, the lack of manners is not a problem special to Japan.

In the last 3 years, we have held a national tennis team competition for primary school children called the Manner Kids Tennis Cup of Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Players are judged comprehensively by not only tennis achievement but also by compliance with rules, good manners, essays, and physical/exercise excellence. Every year, about 4 winners are designated as "the Manner Kids Tennis Ambassador," and sent to the summer camps for international exchange, which were held in Wimbledon, England in 2009 and 2010, and Frost Valley, New York in 2011.

The Manner Kids Tennis Ambassadors have to be winners in games as well as in manner, writing and physical test. Through this selection, we try to convey the message for children to be excellent in both cultural and physical ability.

Escorting winners to summer camps, we found that the decline of manners in children is also a big problem in some industrialized countries including England, France and the U.S.A. I think it is due to the disruption of local communities and decline of religious influence.

Leaders from these countries were surprised by the fact that we have more than 600 years tradition of Ogasawararyu-Reiho, or Ogasawara School of Etiquette in Japan. For these countries, collaboration with the Japanese traditional art of manners might be an answer of the problem.

3. Background

1) Beginning – Establishment of kids class by Waseda University Tennis Club in 1996

Now, I would like to tell you why I started this project. Around 1996, I was working in the human resource department of a company and anxious about the lack of greetings among employees. So, I started a kind of greeting campaign, setting up "Greeting Road" and putting up the slogan "Say Hallo Cheerfully, Livelily, and Refreshingly." I knew it was something like a kindergarten, but I couldn't help do it. In doing this, I wondered

how these grown-ups could not exchange greetings.

One morning, I walked by an elementary school in my neighborhood and saw an incredible sight. There, children passed by teachers standing at the gate without saying a word while teachers only watched them, also in silence. There was no “Good morning” or “Hallo” between them. After this experience, I talked to some members of the alumni association of Waseda University Tennis Club, and established a tennis school for elementary school children.

2) Launch of “Manner Kids Tennis Project” as a project of the Japan Tennis Association in April 2004

The Manner Kids Tennis Project started in April 2004 as a project of the Japan Tennis Association.

3) Establishment of Manner Kids Project as a Non-Profit-Organization in June 2007

In June 2007, the Manner Kids Project received certification as a Nonprofit Organization. Until now, we have provided the Manner Kids Program 650 times, meaning 65,000 children from kindergarten to elementary school have learned in our class. 51,000 of them learned manners through tennis, and the remaining fourteen thousand 14,000 through baseball, soccer, rugby, mini-basketball, valley ball, judo, or snag-golf.

4) Adoption by Shinagawa-ward

The Manner Kids Program has been adopted as a part of the curriculum in 170 elementary schools and kindergartens in 29 prefectures in Japan so far. In 2010, Shinagawa-ward, Tokyo, became the first municipality to prepare a budget for this program. Mr. Wakatsuki, the head of the board of education explained the reason why they included this program in citizenship education in elementary schools. He said, “The fundamental reason of the recent decline in manners is due to the educational policy which Japan had been eager to implement after the World War II.”

“In considering the history of the Japanese education system, we have to remember the influence of German idealism introduced in modern Japanese culture. It made Japanese education system too metaphysical, ideological, abstract, and mental-oriented. But education has to include some fundamentals, one of which is “Education is encouragement of autonomy by heteronomy. Everyone lives in an effort to be

autonomous.

However, teachers today are allergic against “heteronomy.” They try to expand children’s potential, give attention to their self-motivation or original idea, and look at things from a child’s perspective. These approaches are not bad, but too ideological. Teachers have no practical strategies, measures, or methods, so these approaches end up in just words. It is the reason of today’s decline of moral and social values in children.

Without regard to these problems, they continue to give children totally unrealistic mottos such as “Respect every life” or “Be kind to others.” We cannot deny these ideas, but the most important thing is teaching them how to make these words come true.

The Manner Kids Program, which teaches manners through tennis, is heteronomous education. Children learn manners and courtesy as practical actions in a natural way. Without putting these activities on the base, any beautiful, precious, noble or tearful story gives no sense of reality to children.”

4) Report from Hamakawa Elementary School in Shinagawa ward

Here is a report from Hamakawa Elementary School in Shinagawa ward, titled “Disciplined Children Improve in Academic Achievement – Adoption of the Manner Kids Program into Citizenship Education.” I would like to share with you the outline of this report.

Hamakawa Elementary School has taken multi-dimensional approaches for the academic development of children, including strict rules in the classroom and daily life, 15 minutes self-directed learning in the morning and lunch time, supplementary course called “Power-up Time,” and various courses according to proficiency levels. Children practice what they have learned in the Manner Kids Program, such as bowing after greeting, not only in school-wide morning assemblies or pupils’ councils but also at the beginning and end of each class. As a result, scores of Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) greatly improved as a whole in 2010 compared with the previous year.

In addition to that, analysis of a questionnaire survey on pupils at third grade and above shows that children who maintain or try to maintain disciplines in studying and living gain higher academic scores than others who are not interested in these disciplines.

I expect that through the Manner Kids Program, all the children acquire disciplined study habits and improve their academic achievement.

5) Manner Kids Program in Junior High School

Junior high schools in Japan share the same problem in teaching manners to students. For example, students didn't stand up to pay respect to the principal on the stage, or even listen to the principal's speech. Some girls sit sloppily with their legs open. We wondered how to teach them manners, as they are grown ups in a sense.

We have provided the Manner Kids Program in two junior high schools in Shinagawa ward. The first one was hopeless. Students didn't listen to us and it took about 5 minutes to make lines. So we thought the Manner Kids Program doesn't work on junior high school students. But the second one was different. Our program was accepted with no problem. It was just because students in the second school had learned the Manner Kids Program in their primary schools. After this experience, I came to expect that the Manner Kids Program in kindergartens and primary schools would have a positive effect when children go on to junior high schools.

6) Manner Kids Program in the areas affected by Tohoku Region Pacific Coast Earthquake

Please look at the screen. We held the Manner Kids Tennis School in an evacuation center in Sendai on June 26th, 2011.

By donating short tennis gear, we offer an exercise opportunity to people living in temporary housing. We hope they would participate in Manner Kids Tennis School as instructors, enjoying short tennis with children and refreshing their spirit as well.

2. Request to XX Rotary Club

1) Request to introduce the Manner Kids Program in all of the elementary schools in XX District

Thanks to the cooperation of the First Group, District 2590 (Yokohama and Kawasaki) International Rotary Club, we provided integrated exercise/moral classes in five elementary schools of Hiyoshi, Miyamae, Asahi, Yumemigaoka, and Kawasaki. In order to expand this movement into XX District, we wish to have your cooperation again.

Schools are conservative in nature and slow to adopt something new. In private sector, every company is eager to borrow newly developed solutions. On the contrary, schools hesitate to follow someone's "good practice," so even good practices don't easily spread.

Rotary Club members here are highly influential in the community. With your advice, schools would be more open. We strongly hope to have your kind cooperation so that we could introduce the Manner Kids Program in all of the elementary schools in Utsunomiya District. We also hope many Rotarian would participate in this program as instructors or operators in kindergartens and elementary schools nearby.

2) Development into community-wide "Friendly-Greeting Campaign"

The Manner Kids Tennis School program has been adopted into exercise/moral classes in 170 elementary schools and kindergartens in 29 prefectures, of which 38 are elementary schools in Kita-Kyushu region. In this region, our program is spreading by word of mouth among principals. For example, in Okagaki-cho of Onga-County, Fukuoka, with a population of 50,000 and 5 elementary schools, all the children had participated in the Manner Kids Tennis School.

Hoping to improve town services as well, Okagaki-cho invited Master Suzuki to deliver a lecture titled "Manners in Administrative Services," for the town hall workers on November 11th, 2009. I expect this movement could develop into a "Friendly-Greeting Campaign" across the town.

Due to a concern with prowlers entering schools and doing harm to children, Japanese elementary schools advise children not to speak to strangers. As a result, many children walk with their heads down to avoid looking at strangers. We should rather think about a society in which everyone exchanges greetings so that children can walk with their heads high.

I hope Rotarians lead this Manner Community Movement in XX junior high school district.

3) Request for donations

All of our projects have been operated with donations from companies and individuals, as well as full and supporting membership fees. Our annual budget reaches 26 million

yen in total. Because of the recent recession, donations from companies are decreasing. We greatly appreciate Rotary Club support and personal registration in full or supporting memberships.

Please look at the enclosed flyer. I believe that you will agree with our purpose and contents, and join us as companies and individuals.

In March 2010, we were recognized as an authorized nonprofit organization by the National Tax Agency. We were able to be one of 190 groups approved from about 42,000 applicants. With the tax reform in 2011, private donors are able to deduct 40% of donations minus 2,000 yen.

The other day, a fundraising lecture was held. UNICEF and other organizations supporting refugees have got big donations. These donations are very important. However, we should pay more attention to the problem of children around us, because they will be the leaders in Japan in the future. If you agree with us, you can donate your estate and funeral offering by a written will, contributing to the healthy development of the next generation. In this case, your successors don't need to pay inheritance tax.

We already have started the Manner Kids Will Project. Ms. Reiko Miyagi, who was the former all Japan Champion and died at 86, donated a significant amount of money in her will. Respecting her wishes, we have produced miniature balls with her signature and message and are offering them for more than 400 yen each as a donation. (Here I have some today. I would appreciate if you have one for your grandchildren.) We hope she will be followed by many more through the Manner Kids Will Project. Please see details on the flyer enclosed.

Also we issued the Manner Kids Point Card. With this card, expired points are automatically donated to our project. Until now, 3 shops in Ningyo-tyo joined us. We would appreciate if you would refer us to shops you know.

4) Conclusion

Some call us "a scavenger of the Pacific Ocean." To be "a scavenger of Biwako-lake," it is essential to gain more national attention for the problem of manners. For this purpose, we have to promote the Manner Kids Program to every sport and cultural activity.

I heard that foreigners who visited old Japan were so impressed to see ordinary people so polite and graceful in manner. I wonder why Japanese have changed so much.

Some say that in just over a hundred years, there were three important points at which Japanese lost a significant part of their traditional virtues: the Meiji Restoration, the defeat in World War II, and the economic bubble in the 1980s and 1990s. I think no other nations have lost their traditional virtues in such a short span of time.

Now, the generation educated in postwar democracy occupies the leadership role on every front in Japan. In the postwar education, discipline and manners have received lower priorities in every aspect of life, including home, kindergartens, schools, and communities. I think this is one of the reasons for moral corruption in Japan.

In over a hundred years, we denied our traditional virtues three times. Now we have to pay for our mistakes and restore these virtues. Despite many difficulties, we will awaken an interest in good manners in various places including sports and cultural events. Every child can change through the Manner Kids Program. And on seeing children change, senior or student leaders, parents, and teachers, as well as communities will change. I hold a firm belief that the Manner Kids Program will change people. I very much appreciate all your kind cooperation.

Thank you.

(Translated by Mayuko Kamata)