

Good Discipline in the Home **The life method of happiness**

There are two forms of discipline. There is an outer discipline that focuses on the behavior that appears and tries to correct it by rules and punishment and there is an inner discipline that focuses on the thinking and nature within and realizes that right action flows from right thinking.

Dr. Taniguchi definitely takes the high road, you might say the road less traveled of developing the discipline within. This is certainly not the easy way. It is, instead, the path of genius. Dr. Taniguchi believes the path to true discipline is to recognize and encourage the divine nature within all children. He teaches for example,

Then, how do we guide children properly when they show strong opposition? Do not underestimate children's understanding of the truth. Do not think that using force or reprimands are the only way to reform a child. There is a divine nature within children. Divine nature is a Heavenly thing. It is "truth" itself. It is natural that "truth" complies with truth. Use reason with children as if speaking to an adult. If what you say is reasonable, children will surely be pleased to go along with reason. Nowadays very few parents reason with their children. They simply force their children to do what they tell them. If this should fail, they then resort to violence and punishment .

It is often the case that parents underestimate the ability of their children. If we felt as Dr. Taniguchi does that teaching our children "is a great and holy enterprise that can almost be called divine work" we would have the earnest desire to do our very best. Dr. Taniguchi recognizes that there is genius within each of us and it is critically important to develop this quality in our children. As Dr. Taniguchi says,

In order to develop clear creative thinking power in the minds of children, they must be trained from childhood to think for themselves and do things based on their own opinion. Although it may be easier, less troublesome, less aggravating and quicker for grownups to teach children how to do it and let children do it that way, instead of using their own thinking power. However, all these things should be put up with to develop children's thinking power. Do not put down children's ideas. Treat their ideas respectfully as if they were ideas from a great genius.

You are probably beginning to see a difference in emphasis here. As parents we are often faced with a disagreeable situation in the present moment. In that moment faced with a broken object or loud and unruly behavior we tend to react in our anger to the child who has caused these circumstances. If we shout and scream or even strike the child, what have we taught the child? We may have succeeded in suppressing the activity but at the cost of teaching fear and the use of violence in getting our way. If a child is ill with their life in danger, we drop everything to do what we can regardless of time or money. However, if they break a lamp or interrupt our TV program, we overlook the damage we do with our anger. Have you ever

noticed that the children that strike others are always the ones who were struck by their parents? Children learn best to do what we do rather than what we say. As Dr. Taniguchi puts it, "Children's lives are an exact replica of their parents'. It is impossible for children to live a lofty life, even if they are told to do so, when the parents themselves do not." The secret lies not in the use of force but in using reason and respect. Children reflect back to us the way we have treated them in the past. The reason so many parents have difficulty with rebellious teenagers is because they are rebelling against the force that was applied by the parents in their upbringing. If we have been striving to nurture their independence and creativity, there is no need to rebel. Rigid outer rules "may appear to be working smoothly and favorably but it is merely a mechanical operation without any moral good. Moral good comes only from the free flow of an enlightened life. People will naturally do good spontaneously when their life energy is flowing freely and they feel exhilarated." As parents our job is not to control our children as if they were little robots but rather to nurture the inner good and help them develop the most important tools of life's journey which are courage, prompt decision and intuitional judgement.