

Research on Programs for Abusive Parents in Japan and Korea (2)

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Abstract This study follows Research into Programs for Abusive Parents in Japan and Korea (1), published in March 2011. The paper clarified the following two points: 1) the characteristics of child abuse in Japan and Korea and legal provisions for the parents, and 2) the content of programs for parents in Japan and Korea. This study examines the characteristics of child abuse programs in Japan and Korea, featuring five points, as a follow-up to the previous paper. These five points are as follows: 1) limitations of parent training based on behavioral therapy, 2) human relationship of healing, 3) resolving the internal conflict in the past and present, 4) the culture of the parent-child relationship and partner relationships in Japan and Korea, and 5) group work and empowerment.

Keywords : Human relationship of healing, Culture, Group work, Empowerment

1. Limitations of parent training based on behavioral therapy¹⁾

The characteristics of the common-sense parenting program practiced by Keiji Noguchi rely on the fact that it is a parent -training program based on behavioral therapy, and parents can change the way they interact with children, rather than bestowing knowledge of children and abuse. Therefore, Noguchi states, “Although this program is effective for parents who physically abuse children, because they do not know how to interact with their child despite wanting to raise a child, it is not that effective for cases of neglect where parents have stopped interacting with the children.” Furthermore, he admits the limitations of this program, with the statement of “People who receive parent training state they do not know how to discipline their child, but if you go deeper, you will find that there is something else. The parents are directing their dissatisfaction in their marital relationship to the child and taking it out on their child,” and “This program does not deal in-

depth with the relevant areas.” Concerning parent training based on behavioral therapy, Yuri Morita, who has many years of practical experience in the US, stated, “Although I have seen many behavioral therapy programs for parents who abuse their children in the US, I developed an independent program, because I felt that behavioral therapy itself was not enough.”

2. Human relationship of healing

Group work of Tomoko Hirooka’s Non-Program and Morita’s group work, which has set program content, may at first glance seem to be different. Furthermore, they have acknowledged that these constituted different approaches. However, interviews have revealed that their understanding of parents who abuse their children and their involvement with the parents based on such understanding are remarkably similar. Both Hirooka and Morita believe that “mothers who abuse their children need human relationship of healing.”²⁾ For example, Morita showed the pictures

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drawn by two mothers before they attended the program. In the first picture, only a small tree is drawn in the middle of a big piece of paper, with the picture depicting four trees being blown by a strong gust of wind. These pictures can be interpreted as the mothers' feelings toward their families, represented analogically as trees. The agreement between the understandings of Hirooka and Morita, as described above, can be inferred to be the conclusion they both reached as a result of having interacted with many mothers who had abused their children.

Group work held in Korea involved parents discussing past parent-child relationships, current relationships with partners, and problems in their lives. However, we were unable to obtain responses from Korean staffs who stated that such activities should occur in a space of healing to accept parents.

3. Resolving the internal conflict in the past and the present

Psychologist Satoru Nishizawa has indicated the importance of "focusing on the past of parents who abuse their children and re-educating the 'hurt children' existing within the parents."³⁾ In this context, although the interview results show that both programs in Japan and Korea concern past and present, "our cross-national comparison shows that the past are emphasized in Korea and the present are emphasized in Japan."⁴⁾ Such differences between programs in Japan and Korea are also reflected on the name of the program, with the term "treatment" frequently being used in Korea, while such a term is never used in Japan.

4. Perspectives on the culture of parent-child relationships and partner relationships in Japan and Korea

The results of the interviews reveal that Hirooka and Morita stage interventions with mothers who cannot maintain an appropriate psychological distance with their children. Theoretically speaking, it is important to work within the

cultural perspectives of Japan and Korea, which differ from those of the West, on the relationships between a parent and a child and between partners.

Regarding parent-child relationships, a culture of "cohesive mother-child relationships"⁵⁾, or mothers and children are codependent, exists in Japan and Korea. This is in contrast to Western countries, where children are extensively taught to be independent at an early age and relationships between couples are emphasized. Staff members of an association in France that conducts research and provides information on child abuse whom Rie Kondo interviewed indicated that it is crucial to inform parents who have abused their children that "children are autonomous people"⁶⁾ as well. This point may be a statement that applies well to Japanese and Korean mothers and their children who form a cohesive relationship, rather than those in France.

In addition, one factor causing the high percentage of child abuse by biological fathers in Korea is the presence of a strong paternal authority figure, based on Confucianism. Even in partner relationships, the status of women is low in Japan and Korea. Thus, a culture of male patriarchy still persists due to the patriarchal aspects of Confucianism.

5. Group work and empowerment

Group work was used in all Japanese and Korean programs. The following points were revealed through interviews: 1) although it is not easy to resolve the problems of parents who have abused their children in individual consultations, this is possible in group work, which tends to strongly impact participants, 2) empowerment in group work is important, and 3) since the problems that mothers and fathers have are different, group work separated by sex is crucial.

1) Concerning the impact of group work, Hirooka and Morita emphasize that group work can change participants. Building on this, Hirooka claims, "Mothers have many things that they

cannot discuss. However, mothers listen even if they cannot talk about it." Hirooka, thus, places value in times of silence where mothers change as a result of learning something while listening to other people's accounts, even while being silent during group work. Furthermore, Morita attempts to incorporate nature, such as the four seasons, into her group work. As evidenced by the title of her program that contains the word "tree," Morita uses a room containing Japanese tatami mats and a view of a natural scene, so the participants can relax. The program is also held so that the group work commences in autumn, concludes in winter, and participants reconvene in spring. Such aspects as the emphasis on silence and practices that value nature can be judged as fitting with Japanese culture that does not favor strong self-assertion and esteems the four seasons. Simultaneously, this practice can also accommodate Koreans who enjoy the four seasons.

2) Concerning empowerment, the empowerment of the participants was attempted in the practices of Hirooka and Morita, as well as those in Korea. Morita believes that all participants have the ability to solve their own problems. Therefore, instead of facilitators providing guidance, advice, and feedback to participants, Morita emphasizes the empowerment that stimulates the abilities that participants themselves possess. She states, "For the empowerment method, I consider what kind of strength is in the person." Therefore, she focuses on training facilitators to elicit appropriate responses from the participants, rather than simply talking unilaterally at one point and simply listening to another. For example, let assume a scenario involving a mother, who is a victim of domestic violence by her husband, who then also abuses her children. To escape her husband's violence, she has run away from home together with her child but then returned again. If she says, "I still went back to the house even after all. I did it to try and start again from scratch," the facilitator should first accept the mother's sentiment, saying, "I see." Then, the facilitator should say, "So

you may feel that way now. However, you were able to leave the house by your own will once. Please remember this." This statement makes the mother realize that, "I see. I was able to leave the house by myself. I can leave again if it is necessary." However, if the facilitator responds by saying, "You can leave again," the facilitator provides the mother with this realization instead allowing her to realize it by herself. Morita then explains, "Victims of domestic violence are in a powerless state, crouching down. This is why we lift them up. However, if facilitators lift them up, they cannot start walking by their own effort. If the facilitators take their hands away, they will go falling down again."

As described above, Morita considers it important for facilitators to provide appropriate responses. In the other hand, Hirooka is passive when it comes to responding, even though she provides several responses. Instead, she thinks, "good facilitators are not necessarily the ones with energetic demeanor and a wealth of experience." Hirooka believes that "giving comments creates a hierarchy. It is important to maintain equality and protect the dignity of the participants without dominating them." This thinking is in the same position as Morita, in the sense that it emphasizes an empowerment that values the parents' own realization. Although Hirooka herself is passive when it comes to facilitators themselves responding, the following description of Hirooka's practice reveals that Hirooka herself provides appropriate responses that elicit empowerment. Examples of responses given to mothers in group work include, "You feel like you can't do it, but there are things you can do if you tried," and "You're saying that you can't touch the body of your child nor hold them, but you can. There are things that you can do. You are moving forward. It's okay." When a mother who was separated from her child by the Child Consultation Center said, "Although I tell them that I want my child back, they told me that I look like I don't want my child back," facilitators were able to respond by saying, "That's true. There

are two feelings: wanting your child back and not wanting your child back. People are complicated, aren't they?"

3) Regarding group work separated by sex, although this was not acknowledged in Korea, Hirooka and Morita advocate the necessity of group work separated by sex.

In addition, although there is no room to discuss this in this study, Morita's program always has two staff members meeting parents who have abused their children. The French association that deals with abusive parents also has two staff members meeting parents at all times. This point will be elucidated in another paper.

6. Conclusion

The objective of programs for parents who have abused their children is for the abusive parents to stop abusing their children and for the parent-child relationship to become good. As a result of examining the content of programs for parents that are currently conducted in Japan and Korea, taking into account the characteristics of child abuse and the culture of parent-child and partner relationships in Japan and Korea, it was revealed that the following five points are significant for future programs.

First, programs based on behavioral therapy are not effective if 1) parents themselves are in pain and 2) in cases of neglect where parents have stopped interacting with their children.

Second, the importance of programs is "providing human relationship of healing."⁷⁾

Third, program practitioners must "resolve internal conflict of parents in the past and present"⁸⁾

Fourth, it is necessary to perform intervention for the following two factors while valuing the perspective of Japanese and Korean cultures that differ from those of the West: 1) the culture of parent-child relationships wherein mother and children are close, and 2) the culture of parent-child and partner relationships are marked by patriarchal habitus influenced by the Confucian culture.

The fifth aspect is that although group work is effective for parents who abuse their children, issues that the mothers and fathers face are different. Therefore, in addition to separating groups by sex, empowerment that emphasizes the parents' own realization is also important, rather than simple guidance.

Although it is not discussed in this paper, the French method of emphasizing assistance suited to each individual can be useful. This aspect is to be investigated as a future research topic.

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References

- 1) This article is written in more detail based on Rie Kondo's article published in 2012, "La famille et la violence", *Revue de la Société Japonno-Française de Sociologie*, no.22, pp.121-133. And the chapter of "Limitations of parent training based on behavioral therapy" of this article is written in more detail based on the content of pp.124-125 on Rie Kondo's article published in 2012.
- 2) Rie Kondo(2012) La famille et la violence, *Revue de la Société Japonno-Française de Sociologie.*, 22 : 124.
- 3) Satoru Nishizawa(1994)*Child Abuse: A Treatment Approach to Children and Families* : Seishin Shobo., 120.
- 4) Op.cit., 124
- 5) Ibid., 122.
- 6) Ibid, 122 and 126.
- 7) Ibid, 125.
- 8) Ibid, 125-126.

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日韓の虐待をした親に対するプログラムに関する研究 (2)

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