An Empowerment Approach to the Abused Children
— Based on the Viewpoint of the Child and Its Resiliency —

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Abstract

Although it is often “warned” that since a child is powerless and easily hurt, and that, if abused, he/she is likely to grow up to be a criminal or an abusive parent, recent studies in North America have resulted in rejecting this kind of causality. In Japan, however, the thinking is still strongly maintained that assistance to the children should be like one for vulnerable. While a change in the paradigm of aid philosophy from one based on paternalism to that of empowerment is taking place, it seems to this writer that empowerment of the children is ignored.

This paper reexamines the traditional view of the child in the child welfare field, and a pathological model in the field of child abuse intervention from the viewpoint of “resilience”, while it introduces an assistance program to abused children, quoting the Child Abuse Prevention program that has come to be known as a model program to empower the children.

Key Words

Child Abuse, View of the Child, Resilience, Empowerment, Child Abuse Prevention Program,

I. Preface

The number of consultations received at the consultation offices for children nationally in 2004 totaled 32,779 cases. Taking measures against child abuse is a highly urgent issue. Countermeasures for child abuse often centers around how to intervene the parents. Indeed, this is rational choice since child abuse are often caused by the parents. However, at the time of intervention, it often happens that the child, the very victim of the abuse, is left behind and forgotten in a loophole among adults such as the medical welfare workers and parents. The Agreement on the Rights of Children ratified by Japan in 1994 places the child not as the “object” but the “subject” of protection who exercises its rights. Moreover, in the field of social welfare, the idea of assistance has been shifting lately from “protective relief aid” to “welfare as a right”, and “empowerment” has become the latest keyword. However, although a child is the victim of abuses and domestic violence, it seems rare that he/she is treated equal as the subject with rights. This seems to stem from the fact that the modern view of the child as “a being to be protected by an adult” has been accepted as self-evident by caregivers and internalized in their minds.

Of course, a child does not necessarily have equal abilities in all areas as the adult, but the child is not a powerless being who cannot do anything without the adult. Given information that the child needs, there are many instances where the child took care of him/herself in a difficult situation. How we see the child and how we evaluate its ability to cope with the situation will define the content and the direction of the assistance for the child.

In this paper while critically reviewing the pathological model of the abuse, I would like to present the example of empowerment in cases of sexual abuse, using the Child Assault Prevention Program as an as-
sistance model to bring out the problem solving ability of the child.

II. Theory of Transmission of Abuse between Generations

Dr. Judith L. Herman, psychiatrist known for her study of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, said “Repeated traumatic experiences in the life of an adult corrode the structure of the personality already formed, but if the child in its childhood experiences traumas repeatedly, these traumas form the personality and deforms the personality.” (Herman 1992-1996:147) and observed that among the people diagnosed as the borderline personality disorder according to DSM III, 71% suffered from physical abuse, 68% sexual abuse, and 62% witnessed father's abuse against mother. Dr. Satoshi Saito, psychiatrist who led the study of child abuse as a pioneer in Japan, also indicates the effect of abuse on the life of the child as follows:

A child whose affection to principal caregivers is disrupted by abuses becomes extremely sensitive to inner and outer stimuli, overreacts to small matters, and cannot endure anxiety. The child sometimes exhibits overactivity by incessantly moving about, but when at rest becomes depressed and shuts him/herself up. They sometimes go after the adult, but they can also be extremely passive. It cannot participate in group plays, and is scared of and avoids association with others.

To the abusive parent it either shows a frozen and strained look or display abnormal sensitivity to parents’ demands. They find it difficult to control aggressiveness to others and become self-destructive, sometimes engaging in physically harmful activities. They tend to be depressive even after becoming an adult and have difficulty keeping stable relationships or professions.(Saito 2001:23)

Dr. Saito says further from his clinical experiences, “Most of the parents who assault their children physically were themselves exposed to parental violence in their childhood,” and concludes, “Children who were abused by their parents tend to be abusive to their children when they become parents”(Saito 1996:38). Amid a “rapid increase” of “serious crimes” committed by juveniles becoming a social problem, a discourse that an abused child grows to be a juvenile delinquent, commits crimes, and becomes an abusive parent has spread through various media as “true” and currently leaving no room for doubt. However, there is no agreement on generational transmission of abuse among those who study child abuse. On the assailability of an abused child, for example, Herman points out as follows:

A person who experienced abuse in childhood turns to be abused rather than to abuse others and the probability of harming oneself or being abused is much higher. It is really a mystery that victims do not turn out to be perpetrators. This is probably because their self-hatred is so deeply engrained in their mind that they grow a tendency to turn their assailability to themselves. Suicide attempts and physical damage of the self is highly correlated with the history of abuse in childhood, but the relationship of abuse in childhood and antisocial activities in adulthood is weak compared to that.(Herman 1992-1996:177)

Herman says the number of victims of child abuse turning to be an abuser is rather small and the probability of great majority of victims “replaying” a victim is higher than becoming abusers. Furthermore, there is a gender difference in the process from a victim to an abuser. Male victims find it easier to express aggressiveness to others, while female victims either become victimized by others again or the tendency to damage herself becomes stronger. Also, on the theory of “transmission of abuse between generations,” which was also advocated by Saito, Herman says, “It is an extremely rare case for a survivor of childhood abuse to attack or to neglect his/her own child “ and refutes as follows:

Contrary to a general belief of “transmission of abuse between generations”, an overwhelming
majority of the survivors of abuse in childhood neither abuses nor neglects their own children. Many survivors are truly scared if their children might encounter sad fate as they did and rack their brains to prevent it. Those who experienced abuse have learned to mobilize the ability to care for and protect their children which they couldn’t use for themselves. (Herman 1992=1996:178)

In other words, she says that although a child abuse experience has serious influence on the child, the victim of the abuse is not destined to be an abuser. Yuri Morita (1999), who has been active in the Child Assault Prevention program in North America, says that it has been documented in the survey reports from clinical fields, the statistics of intervening organizations such as child protection bureaus and police, and the survey report on convicts that there is a high ratio of adults who experienced abuse in childhood among the adults who abused children but “the reverse is not always true.” She said “the theory of transmission of abuse between generations” has been “denied as a common understanding among the people who practiced Child Assault Prevention program since the mid 80s (in North America: addition by this author)”. She introduced the research by psychologists Kaufman and Zigler in which they said, “33% of the abused children became abusive parents, while 67% didn’t.” and another research in North America that said, “65%~75% of the abused children didn’t become abusive parents.”

Also in Japan, in the survey that the Ministry of Justice carried out among the juveniles in the reformatory, it has become clear that about 60% of the juveniles had experienced abuse, but Junko Fujioka points out that cases of an abused child committing delinquent or criminal acts later in life are 1.5 to 2.3 among 10 people (Fujioka 2003:167-171). What these reports show is that the probability of the abused child turning its aggressiveness to others including its own children is much lower than is generally believed. However, if we take it into consideration that these figures do not include many victims of abuse, particularly women, who, as Herman pointed out, would point their aggressiveness toward themselves, we should not take the influence of abuse lightly. But why is it that the theory of transmission between generations is still talked about persuasively while negative data with regard to the theory are presented?

III. Power to Overcome “Injury of Heart”

What gives a ground to the “theory of transmission of abuse between generations” of Saito and others probably comes from an understanding that “the child is a particularly fragile being to trauma”. Herman does not completely deny this point, but in the survey that followed many children from their birth to adulthood she found that one out of ten children showed an outstanding ability by withstanding adversity in childhood, and concluded that what becomes of the “injury of heart” caused by traumatic incidents depends on the “restorability” of the one that was injured. What was common in these children was “they had an excellent ability in having communication with others and they had a strong sense that they can decide on their own destiny”. From this research, Herman concludes that “post traumatic stress disorders can be prevented to some extent by maintaining social contact even in an extreme situation and by not giving up active coping strategies” (Herman 1992=1996:86-87).

Skolnick introduces that a similar indication is found in the study about a half century ago by Anna Freud and Dan. Anna Freud and Dan observed and recorded three boys and three girls of three years of age from 1945 for a year, whose parents were killed by Nazi in the gas chamber and who were released from the concentration camp and moved to a nursery in Great Britain. These six children were, as expected, wild and restless and broke all the toys they were given and damaged a lot of furniture. They showed cold indifference and intense hostility to adults. However, among themselves, they would share what they had, care about other children’s safety where there was dangerous traffic, help reaching toys, admire what they made for fun, offer their food to the others before they ate, and one of the children who received a gift demanded that the rest of the children should receive a gift. Each
child was sensitive to the feeling of the other children and exhibited remarkable acts of love of others. Later these children also began to show affection to the staff of the nursery, and showed willingness to help work. Eventually the children were able to form personal relationships with adults, although the attachment was not as strong as the emotional union of ordinary children with their parents and the tie with the children themselves was much stronger. Putting the impressions on the children's conducts together, A. Freud and Dan point out as follows. The children, having extremely damaging experiences under the circumstance, did not suffer from any severe mental disorder. The fact that being in such confusion they were able to gain a new language eloquently tells us that their basic contact with their circumstance was not lost (Skolnick 1986). Dan continued the observation and after 35 years reported that the six children grew up to lead a peaceful life (Skolnick 1986:202-3).

These six children were not only cruelly deprived of experiencing attachment to parents which is regarded indispensable in the existing theory on development but also were exposed to traumatic experiences in an unimaginable circumstance like the concentration camp. They overcame these traumatic events by forming emotional relationship with each other as children "by not giving up active coping strategies" (Herman 1992=1996:87). What this story suggests us is that the child is not just a vulnerable and helpless being to the circumstance, but rather has strength to overcome all the hardships and to recover themselves.

IV. Issues of A "Damage Model"

It was the latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century when the abuse of children became an issue and taking measures was started for the first time in history. The fact that theories concerning children in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, and genetics were presented one after another had a lot to do in the background with arousing social concern over the child abuse. In the age when the boundary between the child and the adult was not yet differentiated, the theory that, differing from the adult, the child has its own developmental stages, is pure and innocent, and is a powerless being, thus the family circumstances where the child grows up influences the life of the child greatly changed the understanding of the child and the child rearing$^5$. Also, the theory that the abused child becomes a criminal was effective in raising a social concern on the child abuse$^6$. Since then, this kind of view on the child and causal straight line thinking has been internalized in ourselves as self-evident.

Wolin & Wolin say that in the field of psychiatry and psychology so far, the child was regarded as a "vulnerable, powerless being tied down by the family" and more concern was given to a "life-long damage" caused by harmful effects rather than its resiliency. According to Wolin & Wolin resiliency means "an ability to recover oneself through enduring hardship". They say that, "we hear about news on damages all around" but we don’t find, "good enough information on resilience" and, "are bombarded by a fearful prophecy that neglected and abused children are destined to grow up to be abusive and neglecting adults to reproduce the past" (Wolin & Wolin 1993). How much frightened and anxious the people who experienced abuse in their past are of the "prophecy" found in the theory of transmission of abuse between generations can be observed in the following confessions found on the internet.

If I should have known before getting married of an opinion that "an abused child must not have children", I might have thought about it more. I can’t help it now by saying "if I ...".
I don’t have any confidence in me if somebody asks me if I could love a child when I haven’t experienced being loved by my parents$^8$.

Wolin & Wolin call the theory of traumas in childhood which damage the child’s whole life as a "damage model," and points out the problems of the theory as follows:

1) As the theory focuses on the trauma in the past rather than how to live the present more
meaningfully, it offers little information on what to do now.

2) Since the resilience of the abused victims is made light of, they keep on feeling powerless and are drawn to a trap for victims. The image as a victimized child interferes with the victim's hard work for change.

3) This model makes the victims anxious because it does not imagine a child's resilience on the assumption that the family issues are unavoidable and repeated across generations (Wolin & Wolin 1993:24-5).

Wolin & Wolin state that, "a child of the parents with problems learns to be careful by itself and in its process grows strong", and say, "a young survivor knows how to form alliance outside the family and learns how to raise self-assessment in its imagination. By acquiring those skills, they develop the ability to grow despite adversity."

V. Resilience and Empowerment

However, resilience does not always function in any circumstances. Unfortunately, studies including Herman's have shown many instances and examples where abuses are transmitted across generations and aggressiveness goes toward both the abused and the others. Then, under what conditions does resilience function? Grasping resilience in relation to society, Cyrulnik, psychiatrist and psychologist, points out as follows:

A person, even if injured, can cultivate "resiliency" which would develop his/her personality further due to the injury. However, whether this work is possible or not depends greatly on the support that the society provides with him/her. If the society is indifferent to the pain of a person, the personality would shrink harder. Resiliency could best be illustrated like a knitted goods. For example, a glass box is quite breakable but if it is wrapped by soft and elastic knitted material, the box will not be easily broken when a ball come flying at it. If parts of the knits wrapping gets torn, they become traumas.

A person does not possess this knits wrapping from birth. Rather, it is knitted to match to the kind of glass box each one has. If it receives a hard shock, it might need repair, and if a ball keeps coming from the same direction, the part that gets hit would become more fluffy and shock-absorbing stitches. It requires a periodical check-up to see if there is any loose stitches. Also, the knits gets deteriorated without balls hitting it. In order for the knits to keep resiliency, it would be necessary for balls to be thrown at it at appropriate intervals and received (Cyrulnik 2001=2002 :181).

Cyrulnik says that resiliency does not only exist within an individual, but it is something that the individual produces with collaboration with the people around her/him, and whether the resiliency functions or not depends on social support. Also, Flannery & Harvey say that individual responses after a traumatic experience differs due to complicated interactions among factors such as "persons", "events", and "environment", and points out each contents as follows.

"human" factors — age of the victim, developmental stage, repertoire of the victim of how to deal with problems before the traumatic experience, value system, relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (close or not).

"event" factors — nature of the event, severity, frequency, period of abuse, number of victims (Was the victim alone or with somebody else?)

"environmental" factors — availability and amount of support for the victim after a traumatic experience, available social measures and quality, attitude and evaluation from the community to which the victim belongs (Flannery & Harvey 1991:374-378)

Harvey says, "It is possible that a response to sexual assault of a girl in a society where appropriate
information on rape is given and supportive service is available for a victim, and that of a girl who shares the value system that blames victims and cannot receive any support from the society may be different." (Harvey 1989) and points out that it is especially important to consider the "environmental" factors to deliberate the response of the victims of traumatic experiences. That is to say, the response to and the recovery from a traumatic experience differs and depends not only on the victim and the kind of violence experienced by the victim but also on the value system and support system of the society and, in a larger sense, on the resources available in the society.

Today, it looks as though the theory that traumatic experiences in the childhood affect the child throughout its life is a major premise when they discuss the issue of abuse. However, taking Harvey's study and the viewpoint of resilience into consideration, the symptom of the transmission of abuse among generations can be understood not as the issue of a pathology inherent within parents and children, but as the matter where conditions concerning "human," "event" and "environment" prevented the child's resiliency from functioning. These observations light up the importance of assistance when we encounter an abused child. The role of assistants can be described as empowering the child to face up to the problems in a difficult situation and make the damage of abuse as small as possible. In order to do so, it is necessary to have trust in the power of the child and give support to develop resiliency of the child.

CAP (Child Assault Prevention) Program has been developed out of women's movement to deal with violence against women in order for the children to deal with abuse and violence against them by themselves. Women Against Rape that run a rape rescue center and developed CAP Program after a girl was raped at an elementary school in Columbus, Ohio, in 1978 claimed that violence was targeted against "the second-class citizens who had suffered from numerous damages as well as from discrimination by being labeled as 'inferior', and that in order to stand up to violence, it was necessary to empower the people who are placed as "the weak" socially. One of the characteristics of CAP is that the child is defined as social minority just like "native Americans, the disabled with sight, hearing and understanding, gay and lesbian, and the aged" (Cooper 1991=1995:30). Cooper says power means "ability to produce change" and defines "empowerment" as rejecting oppression by getting in touch with inner resources called power such as "vitality, individuality and sensibility which any person is born with" (Cooper 1991=1995:30). In the following, I would like to think about the idea and the method of empowering the child while introducing the outline of CAP.

VI. An Outline of CAP Program

CAP stands for Child Assault Prevention and the program started as sexual assault prevention program and then developed as a comprehensive assault prevention program to include such violence as battering and kid-napping that a child is often faced with. In this program, children aged from pre-school up to high school learn how to deal with situations in a workshop basically by role playing and through discussions about how they would feel and what they could do when they are faced with violence. In Japan, an official training began in 1995 to practice CAP, and today there are more than 130 active groups in the nation. At the time of the revision of the Child Abuse Prevention Law in 2000, the law stated clearly that it is compulsory to make an effort "to spread the abuse prevention education", and since then the number of local governments to introduce CAP in schools and local communities is increasing and in the last ten years about 200,000 children and 250,000 adults have participated in the workshops of CAP. CAP defines empowerment as follows:

Violence against the child has been neglected in a social situation where such prejudice and oppression is approved as "the child is powerless" based on the overwhelming disparity between the adult and the child. Similarly, measures to prevent violence against the child so far has been based on the idea that as "the child is powerless" they need
to be protected by the adult and the method was to control the behavior of the child such as “you must not do such and such”. In this method, however, when a child actually faces violence and is about to suffer from damages, he/she does not know what to do, and ends up blaming him/herself, thus promoting a sense of powerlessness and anxiety of the child. CAP program is based on the idea that if the child has the choice of action and the ability to use the power to protect oneself it can protect oneself against assault rather than considering the child as “a powerless being to be protected by the adult who cannot do anything”. Empowerment means to believe in the problem solving ability of the child, and work on its inner strength to bring out its strength. (CAP Center, Japan 2000:4)

The founders of CAP like Cooper analyzed that the reason why the children are easily victimized was that they were deprived of power socially due to three points - “information”, “isolation” and “subordination”, and by causing change in these points they could empower children. What is important in providing “information” about what situations may be dangerous is to provide an alternative information confirmed by witnesses of victims instead of usual domineering information. A usual story of a situation believed ordinarily where a child may face sexual assault is that “a lovely girl is suddenly assaulted by a stranger in a deserted road.” But it has become apparent by the testimonies of victims and research that such story does not really reflect the reality. First, 80 to 85% of sexual assaults of the children is caused by acquaintances. Most of perpetrators are somebody that the child knows and the perpetrator makes ill use of the trust and affection of the child. Many children are assaulted in busy public places and in the house of either the victim or the perpetrator. Not only girls but also boys are assaulted. According to a survey conducted by Prof. Finkelhor who is one of the authorities in the world in the field of the research of child abuse, one in four girls and one in six to seven boys became victims of sexual assaults before they were eighteen. The report also said that the investigation of the perpetrators disclosed that they targeted a child who (they judged) would not protest regardless of sex (Finkelhor 1984).

But the “myth” surrounding sexual violence has worked to make people believe that sexual abuse against children were rare, thus the education to prevent sexual violence against children has been neglected. Ms. Stanislaski, director of the International CAP, says “Women who created the program had to fight the same myths still deep-rooted in the society. The worst of them was telling the children about these things would scare them” (Stanislaski 2001:10). Cooper analyzed that what made the children feel anxious and an easy prey to assault was that they were disciplined to listen to adults without being given correct information on violence and how to deal with it, and that they were made to believe they were to blame if adults got violent against them. So she thought of empowering the children by providing enough information to prevent abuse while telling the children of their rights “to live safe, have confidence in oneself, and choose freely what he/she wishes without being coerced” through workshops (Shimonishi & Asano 2002:109).

One of the characteristics of CAP program is having a period of time called talk time after a workshop when the children can ask questions or consult individually. The purpose of “talk time” is as follows:

1) Reinforcing the content of the workshop
2) Empowering the children so that the child may deal with abuse by themselves
3) In case an abuse is suspected, contact proper authority.

If a workshop in school classes tries to empower groups, the talk time tries to empower individuals. Most children come to tell the staff what they thought of the workshop or what happened in school, and a few children come to consult about their damages of abuse12. In that case following procedures are taken as an act of “emergency intervention”:

1) Listen to the child carefully to make the problem clear.
2) Ask the child about what he/she has done so
far, and think together with the child what other possible choices for action there are.

3) Discuss the effect of the choices and have the child select an achievable action.

4) Make a plan of how to take action.

"Emergency intervention" can be understood as a preventive crisis intervention where you make sure that the child is in an emergency situation and you discuss what can be done to stop the abuse. There have been many reports of success stories to assume that this talk time is very effective even though the discussion takes place once\(^1\). The following case is the one with the author was a staff of the workshop. (The example given here is a mixture of multiple cases to protect privacy.)

VII. Emergency Intervention and Empowerment of the Abused Child

Case A: Sexually abused by her grandfather

A is a girl in the third grade, and after the CAP workshop in her class, she came to the staff and broached, "Grandpa sometimes does unpleasant things." Her grandfather who lives with her family would come to A and repeated sexual contacts with her since the summer last year, when her parents were not home or about midnight and each time he would put his forefinger on his lips hinting "don’t tell anybody", and give her some allowance. This was the first time she ever talked about it and she told the staff never to tell anybody else. The staff listened to her with empathy and discussed A’s sense of fear of “not wanting to be told to anybody else” and summed up the result and shared it with her as follows.

Her first fear was “My (classroom) teacher might scold me if I told her about this, thinking that I am telling a lie because I have been admonished already for forgetting doing homework and dozing off in class”. Her second fear was, “My mother might scold me if she finds out that I did shopping secretly with the allowance Grandpa gave.” Her third fear was “if somebody learns about it, they might say ‘you are indecent’ or leer me,” and her fourth fear was “Grandpa might get mad if he learns that I broke the promise of keeping it secret and might not speak to me again. This might cause fights in the family.”

The staff praised A’s courage for telling her story to her and assured her by saying that she was not wrong at all for receiving allowance because it was grandfather’s way of touching her improperly and giving her allowance that was wrong and if he would get mad, she has done nothing wrong. It’s not just her, but there are many other children who are in trouble by being touched improperly, and if she leaves it as it is, eventually she would lose spirits. The staff encouraged her to think together what can be done so as for her to be able to live at home safely. Reminding her of one of the skits in the workshop, the staff asked her if she would be able to say ‘No!’ next time when the same situation was about to occur. The girl said, “Maybe, or maybe not, I don’t know.” Asked if ‘she would leave the place right away’, she said, “I could do that.” So they agreed on the plan that if a disagreeable thing was about to happen, A would leave the room as soon as possible. Then quoting to the words in the workshop “don’t keep the secret you don’t feel safe”, the staff told her what happened to her could not be solved without other’s help by keeping it secret, and gave her a choice of adults that she could continue consulting such as parents, relatives, teachers, persons in the community and Child Line. She thought she would be able to talk to the nurse-teacher of her school, but she looked afraid ‘that the teacher might tell other teachers’ and with A’s request the staff would accompany her to talk to the nurse-teacher after the talk-time.

The role of the staff here is to help A to explain the situation with her own words by supplementing words. The nurse-teacher had received training on the purpose and method of CAP before this workshop for children, and listened to A’s story with empathy. She then requested that she wanted to talk about this to A’s class teacher and her parents, so the staff gave a supplementary explanation about the fear that A had and had the nurse-teacher show A how she would tell her parents. After a few revisions by A, they arrived at an understanding that her class teacher and her parents would be told of the situation, and if this is to be told

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to somebody else, the nurse-teacher should get A’s prior consent. This is done because it has been pointed out that many children retract what they have said as they become anxious to be asked about heartbreaking experiences from adults\(^{14}\). Finally considering the possibility of intervention by the consultation office for children, the staff gave her information on a facility where she could consult with outside the school by saying, “There is a place called the Consultation Office for Children where children with problems like yours can go and talk about the problems so that they may have a good life. You can phone them by yourself or ask your teacher to get in touch with them.” The information that there is a consultation office for children that gives assistance publicly should make her feel safe. A looked relieved after she had talked to the nurse-teacher.

The nurse-teacher visited A’s home on that day, and explained her mother what had happened. The mother looked incredulous and showed rejection at first, but as the teacher further said “Are you allowing this to continue?”, she eventually accepted the story. Later, the staff found out that they decided to live separately with the grandfather, and A who used to show little expression began to show gradual change.

Observation

Sexual assaults by strangers and/or ruffians are easily recognized as ‘crimes’. But when perpetrators are victims’ acquaintances or relatives, not only “such a wrong view as the degree of violence, severity, and criminality to the victims is low and does hardly cause trauma” is taken, but the victim is blamed and distrusted. (Parad & Parad 1999=2003:109) In case the victim is a child and the perpetrator is her own grandfather, the possibility of such a view would be much greater. The reason A appealed not to tell anybody else at first was not because her first demand was secrecy but because she vaguely expected such a response from the people around her, and further she didn’t expect to get an empathic response\(^{16}\) judging from the negative evaluation she’d had at the school\(^{15}\).

Not only that, what silenced A was a sense of shame and humility as observed by the use of the word ‘indecent’, anxiety that a balance may be lost in the family, and, above all, a confusion caused by the difficulty of understanding why her grandfather that she felt close and trusted would take such a conduct. The girl could not verbalize her experience as “a story to tell”\(^{16}\).

A observed a skit where a schoolgirl suffers from sexual abuse by a male relative in the workshop that preceded the talk-time and learned that the act was defined as “violence” just like “battering” and “kidnapping” and she was able to name her “nameless anxiety” as “violence”, and during the talk-time A was told that her fear was a legitimate emotion shared by anyone who’d had a similar damage. All these information probably alleviated her anxiety and fear. The fact that A stopped sexual abuse that could have lasted for years for herself would probably keep her post traumatic stress disorder to the least.

In closing

Child abuse takes place against the background of the overwhelming power relations between the adult and the child, and abusive acts have been allowed socially and culturally in the name of “discipline”, “an expression of love” and “education”. Therefore, the children have been taken away the right to protest against such an unjust treatment as “unjust” or to talk about violence as violence. Thus, it would be essential to assist the children to gain an alternative viewpoint on abuse and to be able to talk about their experiences as ‘a story that should be told’ without putting blame on themselves\(^{17}\) in order to empower the child.

Violence is composed as an entirely different story from the standpoint of exercising the violence and from that of the exercised. Just as sexual abuse used to be referred as ‘mischief’, in most cases violence is a trivial affair on the part of the user.

However, to the victimized children abuse is an experience of terror, causing tormenting helplessness, and the child is fundamentally deprived of a sense of self-affirmation that it’s OK to be who you are and a sense of basic trust in the world\(^{18}\). Children in this
kind of situation can think about survival strategy only with a limited source of information. But a number of studies on the effect of abuse have shown that in most cases those strategies send the children deeper into the structure of dependency on the abuser.

Victims of violence tend to “feel there’s nothing I can do”, the feeling that comes from the sense of powerlessness and self-denial, and this is not limited to the child. Therefore, it is necessary to think together all the possible methods for solution in order to take measures to meet the reality of abuse, and to choose a solution that the child can practice by him/herself among different possibilities, and to plan the strategy together how to carry out the strategy in order for the child to recover the sense of power and control as well as to stop the next abuse. The choices of the abused child are not actually very many, but even if you cannot come up with a choice right away, being able to find an acceptable story for the affair that the child suffered as a private, family matter, in the social context, must have an important meaning in the recovery process from post traumatic stress disorder.

In order to make this kind of assistance possible, we must free ourselves from the modern idea of the child as “helpless and powerless being to be protected by the adults” for the time being and instead should accept the child as a subject with problem-solving ability. As we have seen so far, the child is a resilient being who can overcome a difficult situation with appropriate supports.

It was at the end of Meiji Era when with the introduction of the idea on the rights of the child, an understanding of the child not as parents’ private property but as an independent being with rights such as the right to life, child abuse was recognized as a public issue for the first time in Japanese history. After a century of “oblivion”, as the rise of concern with the rights of the child grows high, the child abuse has once again become recognized as “a serious social problem” (White Paper on Public Welfare), and various measures are being considered. A most remarkable difference between the “rights of the child” as stated in the international agreements on the rights of the child and those of the Meiji Era is that the child is recognized not as “the object to be protected” but as “the subject to exercise rights”. It seems, however, that the idea of protection and relief of the child, based on the modern idea of the child formed during the Meiji Era as the child is a helpless and weak being needing adults’ protection is still on the base of the present child welfare.

As McNamee & Gergen pointed out that “Many experts in psychiatric medicine of this century depended on one understanding. That started from the philosophy of the Enlightenment in Europe in the 18th century and is typical in the philosophy of science in the 20th century,” and that “In fact, most of what we think is ‘true’ or ‘good’ is the product of <text called history>, "(Sheila McNamee & Kenneth J. Gergen 1992=1997:13-20) the view of the child and the understanding of the effect of abuse that we think self-evident has theories that gained power during this period of time embedded here and there for better or for worse.

Barbara Solomon who contributed in spreading the term and the concept of “empowerment” in the field of social work defines the word as “the process of assisting to decrease the powerlessness caused by negative evaluation of the stigmatized people.(Solomon, B.1976:29) Empowerment does not mean to help the weak as they are, but to work on bringing out the power of “the weak” that has been taken away in the social relationship. The reason why the child rarely gets treated as the subject of the recipient of the aide although the Agreements on the Rights of the Child has been ratified and the right of the child to express their opinion has officially been recognized is probably caused by the fact that the concern of the assistants is aimed more at the vulnerability of the child rather than the resilience the child has.

Following the example of Ellen Kay who called out, “Let’s make the twentieth century the age when the children are protected.” We should probably say, “Let’s make the twenty-first century the age when the children are empowered.”
Notes

1. Many cases appear when a child protected him/herself from abuse in “Success Stories-Stories Told by Many Children Who were able to protect their precious selves” edited and published by CAP Center, Japan (2004:18) and in “the Tenth Anniversary Journal” edited and published by Hiroshima Association of CAP when a girl who suffered abuses from parents was able to confide her story to the staff after the workshop for the children, and after consulting with her teacher and with the understanding of the school, the girl was protected by the child consultation agency the next day.

2. Although a “rapid increase” of juvenile crimes and “crimes becoming more atrocious” are pointed out in mass media, the fact shows that it was from 1958 to 1966 when there were most juvenile crimes after the war, and the number of “atrocious crimes” such as burglary and murder shows a sharp decrease. See “White Paper on Crimes” 1997, “the Number of Arrests of Atrocious Crimes according to Crimes” (Police White Paper 2000) for details.

3. Diana Russel made a similar indication in 1986. According to the survey she conducted of women who experienced incest in their childhood, two-thirds of the women later experienced rape.


5. See Shimonishi(2005) on programs for child abuse developed in the 19th and 20th centuries.

6. The remarks that “the head of a child is hollow, thus if the experience of abuse is imprinted there, not only the development of the child is hindered but also it can’t be helped that the child is driven to bad inclination after all. It is rather natural for such a child to grow a criminal” made by Hara who established “Child Abuse Prevention Association” plainly expresses the idea of abuse prevention in those days and a new understanding of the child.

7. Yasunaga Komori who introduced the idea of resilience translates the word resilience into “recovery”(Komori:2002). According to Longman Dictionary, it has “elasticity” besides “power to recover”. Morita(1990:225) says that in North America the word resilience is a term used to mean inner mainspring to bring recovery or natural power to recover, and compares it to elasticity like a rubber ball.


9. Herman(1992:86) says, “Even if someone encounters an entirely same incident, no two people show an entirely same response.”

10. Morita gives the following examples as situations where resiliency of a child may not function.
    1) when an outer stresser is too intense like a case of rape
    2) when outside pressure is repeated

3) when the child was not able to experience attachment to parents or a substitute care-giver(Morita 1999:225-226)


12. So far 2-4% of the children have confided that they were not safe to the staff using this period.(CAP Center Japan 2000:26)

13. See Reference 1. Also, in the survey conducted at the elementary schools in Osaka Prefecture in 1998, 69% of the third grade children and 85% of the sixth grade children answered “yes” to the question, “Can you make use of any ideas you learned in the CAP workshop?” See “CAP in Japan”(2000) for details.

14. Summit(1983), psychiatrist, pointed out that a sexually abused child often takes back the fact of abuse because of a sense of guilt that she was also wrong and of anxiety that the perpetrator and the family would be in trouble after she admitted her damage, and named those acts “the child sexual accommodation syndrome”.

15. The fact that A dozed off, was not able to concentrate during class and often didn’t get her homework done probably had a lot to do with the fact that sexual abuses from her grandfather often took place in the dead of night. Cooper(1991) points out that an abused child is often regarded a “problem child” because she/he often shows her/his unstable state of mind with her/his attitude.

16. Finkelhor(1984:34) said that 63% of sexually abused children never told about it until they became adults.

17. White & Denborough(1998:13) say, “In our culture, we are often induced to believe a dominant story that when we have a painful experience, we ourselves are ‘failure’ or ‘to be blamed’ by regarding ourselves as a problem or as having some defects. They encourage us to reject a view that the problem is inside the individual”, and to practice “externalization of conversation that it is not the person that is a problem but the problem itself”.

18. Herman(1992=1996:46) points out “that people without power suffer from trauma. At the time of experiencing trauma, the victim is made powerless and isolated by an overwhelming external power.”


20. Harvey(1989) lists “the victim recovers self control” as the first step of recovery after trauma in a reciprocal action model.


22. Herman(1992=1996:3) points out at the beginning of her book “Trauma and Recovery” that the history of the study of psychological trauma has had periods of active investigation alternating with periods of oblivion up to now.
Bibliography

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