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Comments on Pamela Cox 'The impact of 'child removal' in nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain: a life course approach'

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Pamela Cox's article is a very inspiring one in many ways. For one thing, it stimulates comparative studies of 'child removal' between Britain and Japan and makes us think how the ideas of institutions for reform education and child-saving in the modern world had been transmitted. Transmission or contagion, as is sometimes named, of ideas, institutions and others has been an important agenda of global history(1). Just as Hirobumi Itoh and other Japanese politicians and academics visited Prussia and other European countries with the United States in the 1870s and 1880s to prepare the Japanese Imperial Constitution, many philanthropists and civil servants visited Europe and the United States to learn reformatory education. They were impressed by what they saw and regarded them as ideals. Some of these institutions were imitated and ideas were transmitted. Some were not accepted in Japan. My comments are about seeking a comparative perspective on how two societies, i.e. Britain and Japan, had dealt with 'children in trouble' or 'children at risk' differently. They also focus on transmission and non-transmission of ideas of 'child protection'.

Cox's paper focused on 'removal' of 'children at risk' and 'children in trouble' from their families. She does not distinguish the 'children at risk' and the 'children in trouble'. Her crux is 'removal' of children and its long-time outcomes. She emphasized in her paper that historians would 'have much to gain from beginning to reframe familiar but segmented histories of child-saving, child rescue, child emigration, child protection and youth justice as a wider history of child removal'. I could see the point of Cox's paper, and recognise the importance of reframing various histories as one history. However, I argue here that the idea of removal of children from the natural parents is unique in Britain and other countries under strong influence of Britain, and that Japan has never accepted the idea. Here, I would like to discuss 'children in trouble' and 'children at risk' separately to show the differences of dealing of children, underlying ideas, and image of mother-child relationship.

In this paper, 'children in trouble' means the delinquent children who might commit petty crimes and other social nuisances. 'Children at risk' means the children who were out of parental protection or living in unsuitable conditions. As Cox has pointed out, those two were not distinguishable for a child could be charged in court with wandering and sleeping out.

(1) For contagion of written constitutions from 1776 onward, see Colley (2017).

In Japan, many social reformers had realised that undesirable surroundings and neglect from parents often caused youth delinquency, and 'children at risk' and 'children in trouble' were not separable. Having said that I would like to draw a simplistic picture of reform education for 'children in trouble' and child-saving institutions for 'children at risk'. My conclusions are: the 'children in trouble' have been admitted into institutions for reform education and therefore they have been temporarily removed from their families in modern Japan. The ideas and ideals of reformatory education were transmitted from the Western world. On the other hand, peculiar ideas of mother's love and mother and child relationship were developed in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century, which prevented the removal of children from their natural mothers even if staying with mothers was obviously against the welfare of children.

Let us see how the 'children in trouble' and the 'children at risk' were dealt with in Japan before the Meiji Restoration. As Eriko Motomori, a sociologist specialised in child protection, pointed out, young offenders were imposed lighter penalty than adults, 'because lack of intelligence owing to young age' in the Edo period (2) . The dividing age was 15. Nevertheless, there were no formal systems nor ideas of correction of the youth. As for the 'children at risk', Mikako Sawayama, a historian of family and children, pointed out that it was quite normal that abandoned babies were fostered by common workers and farmers. There were agents who matched abandoned babies and foster parents(3). Sawayama also mentioned that a feudal lord of the Tsuyama Fief had an idea of orphanage in the mid-19th century based on Russian orphanages. The idea was introduced through books written by those who accidentally visited Russia because of ship wreckages(4). But this was never realised. How did those practices change after the Meiji Restoration?

First, I will draw a rough sketch of reform education and other aspects of treatment of the 'children in trouble' in modern Japan. The first legislation for delinquent children and young persons in modern Japan was enacted in 1872 which ordered the prisons to establish penitentiaries within to detain offenders under the age of 20 and delinquent youngsters whose parents wished so. In 1880 the old Criminal Act fixed the minimum age of legal competency at 16, and thus the penitentiaries were to accept those who were under this age. In the penitentiaries, both academic education and occupational training were provided. Some educationalists set up reformatories in the 1880s on voluntary basis. As the 19th century drew to an end, the Government started to realise the importance of reform education. The Reformatory Act was passed in 1900, though the number of state-funded reformatory schools established was smaller than expected in early years of the 20th century.

At the beginning of the 20th century some enlightened bureaucrats set up special branches for young offenders in prisons, which later became youth prisons, and tried to reform the

(2) Motomori (2014), p.39.

(3) Sawayama (2014).

(4) Sawayama (2008), pp.143-149.

youth through education. The administrators also took special care to make those branches as homely as possible while stressing the importance of both academic and vocational education. In short they offered progressive programmes, but the trial lasted only 5 or 6 years. It was after the 1907 amendment of the Reformatory Act that the reformatory schools were established in every prefecture except Okinawa, the southernmost prefecture. The national centre of reform education was set up in 1919.

Social reformers, some of them were Christians, were hoping to establish reformatory schools like those in the US or European countries. Many of the advocates of reformatory education were influenced by western ideas; some actually visited reformatories in the US and Britain and highly praised them. For Example, Shigejiro Ogawa(1864-1925), a bureaucrat for prison administration, admired reform education in Britain. He emphasised its preventive effects by using statistics from Britain which showed reform education had effectively decreased the rate of young criminals after 1861(5). Kosuke Tomeoka(1864-1934), a social reformer and graduate of Doshisha University wrote an article on comparative studies on elementary school education and pointed out that education in elementary schools in Britain included not only academic subjects but also moral education and spiritual or religious education. Then he continued that "In Britain, they (were) teaching what the virtues meant and to respect the God to elementary school pupils" (6) and argued that this was why Britain saw the decrease of criminal offences.

Fumitoki Kuramoti, who published a book entitled *Children in Prison* in 2016, pointed out that many reformers obviously praised the reformatory system in the US and Britain; it was generally considered that the educational and reformatory systems in those countries were too decentralized for Japan. It might be mistaken to assume that modern Japanese society simply imitated reformatory systems or treatments of young criminals of a particular country or region. We need a more detailed study here to know what characteristics of the British model of reformatory attracted Japanese reformers and enlightened bureaucrats.

Provisions for the 'child at risk', on the other hand, followed an entirely different course. As we have seen earlier, the normal practice to save abandoned babies in the Edo period was fostering. This practice continued after the Meiji Restoration. An order by the Meiji Government prescribed to make an allowance of certain amount of rice for foster parents if they were caring children under 15 years of age. (7)

A number of orphanages were established by Christian, Buddhist and other voluntary associations from the mid-1880s to the beginning of the 20th century. Some of them were set up under influence of George Fredrick Müller (1805-1898), a famous preacher and founder of orphanages in Bristol and other places. The religious impacts from Europe played an important role in formative years of institutional child-care.

(5) Kuramochi (2016), p.139.
(6) Kuramochi (2016), p.69.
(7) Tsuchiya (2014), p.10.

However, neither institutional care nor fostering became an answer to the 'children at risk' in modern Japan. The social norm of child care changed drastically at the beginning of the 20th century. The 1920s was the time when Japanese found the modern or westernized idea of childhood. As Sawayama pointed out that the number of abandoned children decreased from around 8000 a year in the late 1880s to less than 1000 in the 1920s[8]. The norm that a child should be brought up in family by his/her natural mother became strongly rooted in the public. Slogans such as 'the worst family is better than the best orphanage' or 'the worst mother for a baby rather than the best baby home' show how a natural mother was singled out as the best carer of a child. The number of fostered children decreased. The child care systems in the Edo period had almost evaporated. In this circumstance, there was no possibility of removal of the 'children at risk' from the natal family, however inferior and risky were the surroundings of the children concerned. Although some voluntarists realised that inferior conditions were certainly a cause of youth delinquency in later life, they were not listened to.

I would like to show an example of the outcomes of this mind-set, although its origin went back to the 1870s. It was about babies and young children of women prisoners[9]. In 1872, the first prison regulations approved that women prisoners would bring their babies into prison if they wished to do so. The regulation was amended in 1881 to limit the age of those babies staying with their mothers up to three. In the 1880s and 1890s they allowed women to carry their babies into prison more or less generously. By the end of the century, however, they lowered the age limit of babies to one. Around that time, Ogawa mentioned that 'maternal love' was not enough reason to bring a baby into prison[10]. However, the regulation has been effective throughout the 20th century. There were about 160 babies in prison in 1999[11]. This issue strongly shows the particularity of concept of maternal love and so-called indivisible tie between mother and child.

Famous Japanese folklorist Kunio Yanagida and family sociologist Kizaemon Aruga both criticized the norm of modern family that children should be protected by and only by their natural mother. That norm put maternal love into the supreme position. Mothers were obliged to take full and sole responsibility for their children and their upbringing. It seems that this norm had been established firmly by early years of the twentieth century. The Mother and Child Protection Act 1937 was to regulate that mothers with children under 13 years of age were entitled to receive public assistance from the local authorities if they could not support their children. The Act was enacted because in the 1930s considerably increased the cases of Boshi Sinju: a despaired mother kills her child/children and almost instantaneously commits suicide. We have to note that there must have been father and children in extreme poverty, but they were not entitled. If we think babies in prison with their mothers in this light, it is obvious

(8) Sawayama (2008), p.176.

(9) Kuramochi (2016), chapter 7, *passim*.

(10) Kuramochi (2016), p.204.

(11) Kuramochi (2016), p.224.

that those babies were thought to be inseparable from their natal mothers whether or not they were breastfed, although prisons were certainly inappropriate place for children to grow up. Imagined values of maternal love prevailed over rational judgement on desirable environments for children.

Atsushi Tuchiya, a sociologist of medicine, argued that anti-institutionalism in the inter-war period in Japan was turned into institutionalisation of care of the 'children at risk' after the Second World War. There were about 123,000 children who lost both parents during the war or were abandoned and lost home and slept rough in 1948[12]. The number of orphanages and other child care institutions jumped up from around 100 in the 1930s to about 450 in 1950, so did the number of children in those institution[13]. Since the Second World War, children without family were normally taken into institutions. The statistics from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare shows that there were 16,200 families registered for fostering children in 1950. The number dropped to 8,700 in 1985 and picked up slightly to 11,400 in 2016[14]. On the other hand, problems relating to so-called hospitalisation of children were 'scientifically' proved and the taboo of removal of children from mothers has lingered strongly in Japanese society. The removal of children has been a last resort. Although some philanthropists in the Meiji period came into contact with the idea of institutional care for children in European countries, the idea of removal of the 'children at risk' had never been fully accepted in Japan.

Even today, the child welfare authorities are often criticised for being too slow to remove children from their abusing parents. They often put priory on making rapport with parents rather than securing children's physical and psychological safety. The fact that parents have strong legal rights over their children is an obvious reason, and there are also administrative imperfections. But at the heart of this hesitation lies a strong belief that the best place for a child is home with his/her natural parent(s). From Japanese perspective, it is very interesting to know how child removal was seen in Britain, especially with growing interests on children and their psychology especially under strong influence of John Bowlby(1907-1990). It would be thought-provoking to know attitudes, reactions of parents in Britain whose children were removed.

Child removal as reformatory education was well established in modern Japan. Reformers who inspected reformatories in European countries and the US was deeply affected by the ideas of reformatory education while they clearly understood that the object of reformatory was to prevent future crimes. However, it is characteristic of modern Japan to think maternal love was best for children regardless of other circumstances.

The idea of child welfare was both contagious and un-contagious. Japanese society has been selective about how they should deal with children with problem. This selectiveness indicates how childhood and motherhood were differentiated by culture even in the modern world.

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(12) Tuchiya (2014), p.52.

(13) Tuchiya (2014), p.7.

(14) https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kodomo/kodomo_kosodate/syakaiteki_yougo/02.html

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