Original Article

Acceptance or Refusal of Disability in a Tolerant Society: Reexamination of the History of People with Disabilities in America

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The purpose of the present paper is to clarify why and how the West, especially the United States of America, historically accepted or rejected people with disabilities, and to bring to light the implications of this history. Schools for both the deaf and the blind, and schools for "idiots" were accepted in American communities in the middle of the 19th century, even if education of those various types of students did not achieve equivalent results. However, "the feeble-minded" came to be excluded from American communities at the end of the 19th century because their behavior was different from others, and because of their lack of intelligence. Early in the 20th century, they came to be considered as a social menace, because of their antisocial acts which scientific research appeared to show were a consequence of their mental disabilities. It was on modern principles such as the right to education that "the feeble-minded" came to be included in educational programs; another reason for their inclusion is that it was contrary to modern ideals that their behavior would be rejected. Modern society has arbitrarily accepted those with some types of disability and rejected those with others, according to the current cultural and social context. Can postmodern society, as the successor of modern society, provide people with mental retardation (the successors of "the feeble-minded") full enjoyment of a normal life style in principle?

Key Words: disability, acceptance, refusal, tolerance, United States

Introduction

The most important idea in social welfare at the present time is normalization. Probably almost everyone believes and does not object to an idea of normalization that shows clearly an appropriate relationship between society and persons with disabilities. We understand that Western nations have advanced the notion of normalization as a new idea unparalleled in history, and we accept background briefings on this as if the conversion to a normalization policy in Western countries had been brought to fruition on the basis of a concern about human rights and a

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general interest in innovative ideas.

It appears to be significant especially that normalization has a very close affinity with tolerance. Tolerance is one of the requisites for Western society, rather than being basic to the idea of normalization.

However, countries that have advocated normalization have, in the past, experienced intolerance, quite the opposite of normalization. People diagnosed as having emotional or intellectual disabilities in particular were forced to live the least normalized life, segregated from other civil society, and various kinds of specialists made a great contribution to this policy, including both planning and enforcement.

Then, we can submit some questions. In the first place, has normalization appeared only in Western countries? If we restrict our search to the relation between overall society and people with disabilities, probably just a few countries other than those in the West have become interested in the principle of normalization; this includes Japan, even without naming specially normalization or positioning as a new idea. In non-Western countries, including the developing countries, people with emotional disabilities and/or mental retardation have been supported by others so that they can enjoy the same life, or at least one that is similar to the lives of persons without disabilities, whereas Western society set up a hostile relation with those with disabilities, and attempted to eliminate them.[1]

Second, how can normalization take root in western society from now on, even if this idea is indispensable in this society? In the contemporary West, the problem of social evaluation relating to biological and social differences has not necessarily been solved fundamentally. Far from that, it can be said that problems connected to differences become invisible, and it is recognized anew that the solution of this is difficult in the extreme. Present-day western society, in spite of the wide approval of tolerance of differences, or coexistence and symbiosis as an idea, has actually experienced the inconsistency of generating one incident after another between states and ethnicities and/or races that is contrary to these ideals. This situation will never be separate from the situation with respect to normalization.

Therefore, if a remarkable change occurred in the West in the social evaluation of those with mental and physical disabilities, clarifying this change and the reasons for it would give us important ideas when we contrast that change with tolerance, one of the primary social principles in the West and also a source of normalization. The United States of America is the proper subject, because the country is a typical Western society which has experienced the most dramatic changes in the social status of persons with disabilities, including mental retardation.

The present article tries to reexamine the idea that American society had evaluated the differences in the mind and body resulting from disability, and inquires closely into the possibility of realization of this now from a viewpoint of tolerance.

Helping persons with disabilities in the pre-modern West became a meaningful religious and social act that was part of modernization, and the range and object of this aid was expanded. In connection with that, we should clarify the answers to some questions: what disability was selected, and what was the meaning of how education

and training were approved socially, how were mental and physical disabilities ranked, when and why were "the feeble-minded" excluded from society and an intolerant attitude taken against their existence in ordinary society? Moreover, is there a current trend for people with mental retardation, the ones formerly called "feeble-minded," to be tolerated?

It appears that there has been not a paper treating the social evaluation of diverse disabilities in American history from the viewpoint of tolerance.

In this article, "the feeble-minded," "idiots," and "idiocy" are used as historical terms when referring to the situation at the time those terms were used.

Discovery of Disability, Ranking, and Refusal in Modern Society

As part of the process of modernization, the discovery of disability connected the social meaning and the educational meaning of disability. That included, in charitable work, perception of a disability as a problem of poverty, application of education as a means of problem solving, and transformation of the poorhouse into a special school. However, the disabilities discovered did not include all kinds of disabilities. In the first half of the 19th century, deafness, blindness, and idiocy were each treated as a separate disability, and the time of discovery of each disability differed.

However, from the beginning, schools for the blind and the deaf, and the ones for idiots, differed in various ways in the concrete procedure of problem solving. The former schools were required to teach the students so that they could attain an approximation of normality from this education and training. Good results obtained in the special schools were ranked highly by the public. The various improvements in those who were blind and/or deaf also made acquisition of this approximation the main aim.

In the schools for idiots, in contrast, the core persons concerned with management of the schools recognized at least that there was a difference in educational goals compared to other special schools, took cognizance of the lower expected degree of educational achievement also, and did not adopt the approximation policy.

Thus, in mid-19th century America, schools for children with disabilities were classified by the main goal of their work, that is, the schools teaching the children so that they would become approximately like those without disabilities and the other schools not requested attain such approximation. However, it was an important point that education was considered as the main function of these schools, even in the schools for idiots.[2] Probably more significantly, American society at this time was very tolerant of idiots and their behavior (at least those who were not aggressive), and did not exclude them. As a result, "idiots" were part of the affinity relations of a community. Though there was certainly social recognition of the differences among disabilities, and "idiots" had lower status compared to those without disabilities, differential treatment was less strict, and was also gentle.[3]

An individual comparison of disabilities in general with blindness, deafness,

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and/or idiocy was not attempted because a comprehensive term including various disabilities did not exist. But distinct rankings did exist within both deafness and blindness. Since the schools for the deaf and the blind had to target student's economic independence through education, those who were "idiots" as well as either or both deaf and blind, or with epilepsy or "laziness" were discharged from these schools because of their dependence on others. Society was not tolerant of dependent deaf and/or blind people.

After the Civil War, a social meaning was given to each disability, and ranking among disabilities arose in the United States. It seems likely that the evaluation of each disability came to be set up directly, corresponding to the context of changing American society. In this period, American society came to be conscious of the whole disability, though vaguely, in connection with problems relating to social work administration. Social work specialists' prototypes lumped disabilities together with many other problems dealt with by social workers, such as poverty, crime, delinquency, and mental disease.

A typical example is "The Tribe of Ishmael" (1888), by O. C. McCulloch (1843–1891). The importance of this work consisted in its positioning the disability problem in a social and cultural context, in addition to its including the first scientific family-tree study, and also in its similarity with Social Darwinism. Because of McCulloch's view of the behavioral patterns and pauperism of immigrants, he limited the candidates for relief to "worthy" poor people, and demanded the social, political, and behavioral assimilation of such people, while he attributed immigrants' pauperism to moral defects (Derge, 1986). A consequence of this viewpoint was that individual disabilities that resulted in dependence were unified into the general idea of disability as a comprehensive concept, with the result that in this social and cultural context, a dependent person with a disability came to be blamed severely. In short, giving social importance to disabilities resulted in such a meaning arising.

The change of public charity work after the Civil War was still more important in connection with ranking disabilities. When social work specialists of the state boards of charities discovered that the main factor causing rapidly increasing needs for relief and increasing costs was feeble-mindedness, they united this main factor with the theory of heredity. A consequence of this was that maintenance of the educational character of schools for idiots became difficult. Originally, schools for idiots were called "schools," not "asylums" or "institutions," which were old names meaning poorhouse or referring to a mixture of education and protection. At about this time, some superintendents of schools for the deaf and the blind endeavored to expand from educational work that was mainly charity to special schools for the education and training of youngsters with deafness or blindness. The name "school" for the idiots reflected social cognition of the effort that had been made by preceding schools. However, when "the feeble-minded" became a major social problem after the Civil War, the social and cultural meaning of the schools was changed as a result of the social and historical situation outside the schools.

Also inside the schools for idiots, a situation had arisen which promoted change

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of the status of "the feeble-minded". Because the original intention of returning the students to their homes after their education was complete could not be attained, the number of older students continuing to stay in the school grew steadily. Then, the schools for idiots could not help but modify the educational function that was their sole purpose at the time of their foundation. So, as it was difficult to maintain only their educational function, these schools had to be reorganized, and had to present a new social meaning of long-term accommodation from a new viewpoint. It was not possible to make simply a small revision.

These social changes resulted in the issue being raised once more of heredity as a cause of disability, and called into question the results of education of those with disabilities. In schools for the deaf and the blind which had been created as charitable education work, the cause of each disability was investigated promptly after the identification of each student, and it was already known whether they had familial deafness or blindness. Therefore, the superintendents of these schools discouraged the students from marrying those with hearing or sight disabilities, in order to prevent new social burdens. However, even if such measures were not so effective in prevention, laws restricting the marriage of deaf and blind persons did not target them except for deaf or blind paupers.

However, the cause of disability, the educational result, and the behavioral pattern in the case of mental disabilities were interpreted in another social and cultural context, different from deafness and blindness, even if the cause of the disability was hereditary, just as were others' deafness and blindness. Those with mental disabilities were divided into two groups on the basis of social relations. The "antisocial group" included person with feeble-mindedness, mental illness, and epilepsy. This group was subdivided further, and those with mental illness or epilepsy were treated relatively more favorably than those with mental retardation, because the former subgroup might have been normal once and had the possibility of improving again if they were in the early stage of their illness. If the seizures of a person with epilepsy were strikingly reduced, even if not eliminated, by medication, the person was taken out of the category of mental disability. At the turn of the 20th century, when the feeble-minded were thought to be a core social problem, and the problem of feeble-minded persons promoted to a national problem, feeble-mindedness came to be considered a social menace, that is, there was the greatest possible intolerance by the American community.

However, ranking the disabilities strictly, making the feeble-minded a social threat, and furthermore drawing up plans for and carrying out localization of the places where they could live, including a system of exclusion from the general community, were not globally universal phenomena, but rather social and cultural phenomena that existed widely only in Western society and only during and after the end of the 19th century. In striking contrast to the way that those with mental disabilities were treated, education of the blind applied modern educational ideals, included blind children with temporary retardation or deafness, expanded their educational period, and achieved brilliant success. Moreover, education of the deaf

resulted in increasing approximation of the behavioral patterns of those without hearing disabilities, as exemplified in the spread of the oral method. Then, schools for both the deaf and the blind became considered more as school education rather than charitable education, which raised the social status of the blind and the deaf (Nakamura, 1991). The compulsory education system for the deaf and the blind at the turn of the century was one such case.

Consequently, the object of people's tolerance for disability was bisected by the social usefulness of the disabled people, and, in general, the group that could contribute to society was designated as an object of tolerance. However, as this criterion of treatment was not unconditional, the dependent deaf and blind were prepared for the minimum requirements for survival equivalent to paupers, that is, intolerant treatment.

As described above, owing to the spread of educational opportunities and medical progress, and the flexibility of modern standards, people with deafness, blindness, and epilepsy that could meet the standards and satisfy the necessary conditions increased. Modern social sciences such as psychology, sociology, and psychiatry played an inconsistent but important role in producing this new turn. On the one hand, many modern social sciences established methods for diagnosing the potential adaptability of people with disabilities using a modern standard, and, on the other hand, contributed to improvements that reduced those people's maladjustments through technical refinements. The sharp drop in the social status of the feeble-minded mentioned above came from scientific evidence on anti-social feeble-minded persons, accumulated by many of these new specialties in the rising social sciences (Nakamura, 2001). However, the contents of the scientific evidence had a strong tendency to be judged arbitrarily from a fixed value standard. The turbulent social situation after the end of the 19th century that included both domestic confusion and international imperialistic competition was reflected in the formation of this standard.

Maintenance of and Changes in Education for the Feeble-Minded

What meaning would be given to education of the feeble-minded in institutions and public schools? This section of the present article will analyze how the meaning of education for special class children in public schools was established and then changed, and it will be examined from the viewpoint of tolerance.

Special classes for feeble-minded students were originally established as institutional supplements for urgent cases due to lack of capacity at an institution or as a temporary placement for children of parents unwilling to institutionalize their child.

The reason we take up special classes for the feeble-minded here is that this topic is appropriate for examining the tolerance of special class teachers and the position of special classes in the public schools. In the first place, special classes for the feeble-minded were established for the purpose of isolating feeble-minded children, so that they would not endanger other children or the general community. Second, a

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female teacher of a special class was a leader who was a social reformer who recognized the idea that the feeble-minded presented a social threat.

It is of great interest to examine this woman's tolerance for feeble-mindedness in connection with the educational meaning harbored and changed by special class teachers in the education of feeble-minded children. By the way, a special class teacher could not evade the stigma given to feeble-mindedness, even if many of these teachers did not select teaching a special class on their own initiative. But, it was from these teachers that a leader of a special class or its supervisor came into existence.

Education of the feeble-minded was not originally advocated on the basis of similarity with ordinary education. Therefore, education of the feeble-minded by schools for idiots was accompanied from the first by a change in the concepts of both school and education. Education in schools for idiots was not related directly to the function, curriculum, or methods of ordinary schools. American schools for idiots adopted the educational theory of Seguin (1812-1880) as their model.

In this way, from education equipped with a different goal from ordinary education, the special curriculum and special methods brought children with mental retardation activities, development of their mind-and-body function, and happy lives with their parents after finishing school, resulting in social recognition of an opinion that education had an indispensable power. Thus, the number of schools for idiots increased after the second half of the 19th century. However, ironically, it did not take these schools long to disappoint the community on the results of education, and American society abandoned the idea of regarding the educational function of these schools as essential. In consequence, schools for idiots became custodial institutions whose main purpose was segregation of the feeble-minded, and their educational status declined.[4]

In relation to community life, an affirmative and positive meaning of education of the feeble-minded was not reappraised until special class teachers actually started instruction in the regular public schools at the beginning of the 20th century. Since the state normal schools (teacher training colleges) did not train teachers of special classes, summer courses held for several weeks at institutions for the feeble-minded were the only available teacher-training courses for special teachers. As a result of their experiences with the feeble-minded in these short courses, some teachers who had believed firmly in the menace of the feeble-minded until then corrected their negative educational and social meaning of the feeble-minded. In this way, they seceded from many social reformers' simple assumption of special classes as a complementary social defense mechanism, and tended toward reconstructing positive educational meaning and placement of children with mental disabilities in special classes.

The first summer course that an American institution for the feeble-minded sponsored was carried out over six weeks at the Training School for Feeble-minded Children in Vineland, New Jersey, in the summer of 1907. Fifteen young female teachers of special classes who worked in public schools in various states participated in this course, in order to study the feeble-minded child and methods of instruction.

However, when they came in close contact with feeble-minded children and youth during their studies, they felt these pupils' "beautiful character" which was just the opposite of their preconception of feeble-minded whom they had thought were antisocial. In a report written by a teacher attending this course, she wrote that she was most impressed by "the reflex influence—to develop the very best that is in a man or woman," a feeling that she got through work with and for feeble-minded children in the institution (A. S., 1907). The sponsor of this summer course, E. R. Johnstone (1870-1946), superintendent of Vineland Training School, stated that those whose character had such an influence were the feeble-minded, not the superintendent nor the attendants of his institution. In this way, the teachers by themselves radically changed their view of feeble-mindedness through contact with the feeble-minded.[5]

In the president's address at the 1904 meeting of the Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-minded Persons, Johnstone emphasized education in the institution. "Here the kindly teacher, without tears and sorrow or pain, shall draw the darkened mind from its deep place of hiding, to feel and understand stimulation of nature's beauties and treasures, and sympathy of human hearts" (Johnstone, 1904, p. 68). In the president's address the previous year, J. M. Murdock, superintendent of Western Pennsylvania State School, set up kindness as the ruling spirit of institution management, and said that he managed the institution by an educational method in a broad sense (Murdock, 1903). Moreover, he recognized from his daily observations in the institution and the social prognosis of those discharged in the mid-1920s that "the majority of mental defectives, if properly understood and treated, are good, affectionate, desire to help others, and are honest, reliable and well behaved" (Murdock, 1903). However, change in how those with mental retardation were perceived also made it necessary to revise the position of the intelligence and educational orientation simultaneously.

> We have in the past overstressed mere intelligence; other mental characteristics are of as great, if not greater importance. Success in life depends quite as much on personality and emotional reaction as upon intelligence. We have not sufficiently appreciated good behavior in those lacking in intelligence. After all, it is not so mach a question of how much a boy or girl knows as it is how he or she behaves (Western Pennsylvania School for the Feeble-minded, 1924).

To change the view of feeble-mindedness necessitated withdrawing evaluations of people that were based on their intelligence or behavioral pattern. Moreover, the educational goals and curricula of the institution schools changed from passive training of the ability to work all their life inside the institution, to training skills indispensable for adaptation to community life.

However, we may find a fundamental inconsistency of modern society in the depth of acceptance or refusal to accept those with feeble-mindedness and the behavior of the feeble-minded. It was due to the social evaluation of the feeble-

minded that they did not become appropriate subjects for education at the end of the 19th century, even though they had enjoyed equal opportunity of education on grounds of the right to education in the middle of 19th century. The reason this changed was that from education, they could neither attain "equal results" with the deaf or the blind children or those without disabilities, nor could they learn to assimilate into community life.

Such discord between principle and thought in modernism can be observed here and there in various matters and works for the feeble-minded. The education that E. R. Johnstone recommended was based on modern educational methods (Nakamura, 1991). In the City of New York, Dr. M. S. Macy opposed admission to the institution of doubtful cases of feeble-mindedness, on the basis of results of various tests. She especially emphasized practical use of special classes for borderline children, and getting rid of the stigma of feeblemindedness. The children were certain to be liberated to some extent from feeble-mindedness by effective education, but, on the other hand, both Johnstone and Macy believed in the threat of feeble-mindedness. Belief in education and in the threat theory were both elements of modernism. At the same time as A. M. Fitts, the special class supervisor of Boston, vigorously promoted segregated special classes, she also advocated a modern relation with parents and the feeble-minded in the educational and social scene.

Structure of the Change of Social Meaning in Feeble-Mindedness

Some special class teachers and institution superintendents changed the mainstream view of feeble-mindedness, probably when they woke up to a fresh idea as a result of their contact with the feeble-minded, or when they discovered the acme of a humane being among those with mental disabilities. They also recognized that the feeble-minded had a continuity with general values. On the other hand, many professions continued to emphasize the negative side of feeble-mindedness. When considering the problem of tolerance, of course, the latter is more important.

In spite of the disclosure of the falsehood of the old theories, the stigma of feeble-mindedness did not diminish very much. Consequently, the general attitude of society toward persons who were feeble-minded did not necessarily change in that they were thought to have difficulty adapting and were considered to be an encumbrance to the community, lascivious, and prolific. Moreover, change in the overall view of feeble-mindedness was never applied to all those who were feeble-minded, because only the feeble-minded who could live in the community without trouble were regarded as free from being a threat and a heavy burden. Probably the unconcealed enmity and candid antipathy toward feeble-mindedness disappeared only because recognition of the danger of feeble-mindedness became thinner than before and that resulted in a decline in the social concern about the feeble-minded.

After the 1920s, many investigations studied the adaptation of persons with mental retardation who were judged to be living a successful life in their community under supervision; the results suggested that this lifestyle might be adapted for many

others from among those who were feeble-minded. However, society did not convert into an affirmative evaluation of feeble-mindedness itself corresponding to such successes in community living. For example, although non-social actions such as illegitimacy were phenomena often observed in people other than the feeble-minded, it was considered as if it were a special problem of the feeble-minded, and the old legends, such as the promiscuous feeble-minded, were restored. Social difficulties that were a consequence of hard times tended to be associated with feeble-mindedness. Although it was rare for the feeble-minded living in the community on times of peace to have such labeling, the label never did disappear completely. In this way, society held on to its unfavorable view of people with mental disabilities, a view that could surface suddenly at any time, even if a belief in the legend of the feeble-minded was not always apparent on the surface.

Next, I would like to explain why, at the turn of the century, many sciences provided American society with the scientific basis that had the effect of turning society against people with mental disabilities. Only a sketch will be shown here (cf. Nakamura, 2001).

There is a deep-rooted sense of incongruity in that feeble-mindedness deviates from the modern ideal in the first place. The feeble-minded were never identical to other people and were excluded from the community at large because of the belief that the feeble-minded had an entirely different nature from the ideal human being that modern society had pursued. Harmonized development of the body, intellect and reason, and moral character were made into the ideal in modern society, whereas anyone could see that the feeble-minded were physically weak and often had visible stigmata, and that they not only lacked the intellect and reason necessary for daily life, but could not develop them, so that they inevitably fell into criminality, prostitution and vagrancy because of their "low moral character."

Moreover, while the maintenance of self-reliance, thriftiness, self-help, and industriousness were attributes of a law-abiding and orderly member contributing to democratic society, it was presupposed that the feeble-minded had traits of poverty and dependence, idleness, lack of self-help, a habit of drinking to excess, and filthiness, and therefore could not acquire good attributes. Their sexuality was regarded as one of their worst characteristics, and in a time when sexual abstinence, restrictive relations with the opposite sex before marriage, and getting married, staying married, and bearing and raising only a few children were the general ideals, the feeble-minded were thought to be characterized by excessive sexual drive, promiscuity, cohabitation, illegitimacy, and fecundity and so were exposed to blame.

The second reason was the domestic and international situation at the turn of the century in America. It was a time of keen competition for international survival, and America was domestically in a serious state of confusion. Social progress and reform were emergency measures because the American people harbored great expectations of being on the way to becoming a first-class power. However, the feeble-minded were at the opposite pole to progress and development, symbols of delay and weakness, regarded as having a scarce possibility for improvement and

recovery.

At the regular meeting of the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophy-laxis held at the New York Academy of Medicine in 1911, that is, several years before World War I, the first world war in history of mankind, J. N. Hurty, who had been Secretary of the Indiana State Board of Health and State Health Commissioner, asked the audience the following question: "Does not the future and the perpetuity of our nation, politically and economically, depend upon a generation that is clean-limbed, and clear-headed, possessed of brain, brawn and nerve that are free from taint and weakness?" (Hurty, 1912, p. 17). And he requested participants at the meeting to share the sense of impending crisis and to adopt concrete preventive measures against "degenerates." He was a typical proponent of the U. S. eugenics movement which tried to carry out compulsory sterilization of "degenerates" under the guidance of elite scientists, but he was not an isolated case, as it might be guessed from the responsible positions that he held.

If that is the case, was the social response to feeble-mindedness limited mostly to before World War II? Even when an innovative idea of social welfare for people with mental retardation flowed in from Northern Europe and spread in the 1960s, the old view of mental retardation, which disagrees with such an idea, continued to exist.

First, I will give a good example of a U. S. mental retardation policy that changed fundamentally. The mental retardation research commission that the California legislature created brought up in its last report in 1965 the improvement of the social position of those with mental retardation, and of the place where they would be educated and live. The report read as follows:

> Every retarded person and his family are entitled to the concern and assistance of the community, expressed through public and voluntary resources. This is their right as citizens of the United States and California residents. . . . Because the retarded person is a human being first, and a handicapped individual secondarily, he should have access to all the general community services that he can use in common with others. Only when integrated services fail to meet his needs would there be specialized services. . . . Services for retarded persons should be close to their homes and families. . . . Moreover, no retarded person should enter an institu-tion who can be cared for in the community, and no one should remain in an institution who can adjust outside (Halpin, as cited in Mercer & Richardson, 1976, p. 488).

It became clear that remarkable ethnic disproportions existed between the special class population and ordinary public school population in California at that time. Of the students who had been assigned to special classes, 26.6% had Spanish surnames, 50.1% were other whites, and 21.2% were African American. Comparable percentages in the remainder of the school population were 13.3% Spanish surname, 75.7% other white, and 8.1% African American (California State Department of Education, 1967, as cited in Mercer & Richardson, 1976).

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This phenomenon seems similar to that when non-feeble-minded persons had been institutionalized at the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, the cultural bias of intelligence tests, which was pointed out in relation to the placement of minority children in special classes in the 1960s, had been known as a theoretical criticism of intelligence tests since the 1920s, because tests at that time had specified the intellectual superiority or inferiority of various races and ethnicities. Summarizing the result of intelligence tests, E. E. Doll (1889-1968) of Vineland Training School declared in 1924, that "differences in nationality and color" do not necessarily agree with the results of intelligence tests (Scheerenberger, 1982, p. 181). Therefore, the bias of intelligence tests must have been to some extent common knowledge among school psychology specialists from the beginning.

However, in American society after World War I, research on a variety of intelligence tests and their interpretation strengthened a social and cultural semantic attachment for racial deviation, and brewed the soil in which group intelligence tests spread.

The Idea of Coexistence as a Possibility for Contemporary American Society

American society has increased its tolerance gradually by expanding or alleviating its standards, premised on the ideals, such as human rights, which American society stands for. Even so, is it possible nowadays to achieve toleration of disadvantaged groups such as those with mental disabilities, who have been neglected, even as others have become tolerated and gained rights? It will not be as easy to obtain tolerance of mental retardation as it was for other disadvantaged groups. Society's experience is that it is exceedingly difficult to eliminate the negative social and cultural meanings attached to a disability, and to overcome social intolerance once it has appeared to have been established scientifically. In recent years, the promotion of abortion on the "scientific" basis that the fetus may have Down's syndrome is one illustration of this.

The present paper will next examine normalization, by way of example, and consider tolerance from another viewpoint. Normalization has been applied and spread to people with disabilities as an expansion of political and religious tolerance, and as a concept of the progress that is the premise of modern society. However, normalization developed in a basic contradiction, as Ramon suggests (Ramon, 1991). He argues that normalization bloomed on Western bases, and premises a middle-class, Christian, Western life style, but he indicates that normalization is, on the other hand, based on a non-capitalistic sprit and an un-competitive life style. At this time, when the idea of normalization has been established, can this new, optimistic realization of a symbiosis of people with mental disabilities be accepted in many countries? If any social and cultural meaning is given to such thoughts as the old theory that people with mental disabilities are a menace, can equality be achieved by those with mental disabilities in the United States, the most capitalistic and competitive society?

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Moreover, Bogdan (as cited in Tøssebro et al., 1996) accepts frankly that at the present, there are many gaps[6] in the United States' adoption of normalization as the principle of welfare for people with disabilities. Furthermore, he expresses anxiety that there may be "ideological inconsistency and widespread labeling" as a result of a recession and cutbacks in welfare in the Nordic nations (Bogdan, as cited in Tøssebro et al., 1996, p. 15). Normalization was put forth on the basis of the principles of modern society on the one hand, but on the other hand, modern society may also impede its full realization. The specific space-time of the modern West that tended to eliminate the feeble-minded was not the exception to a modern principle, even if it was a unique phase of it, and it was not totally unrelated to it either.

If we adopt normalization as a basic social welfare policy, we cannot import directly normalization substantiated on a Western background, because it is thought that the non-West had given a different social and cultural meaning from the West to persons with disabilities. Japanese people with visual disabilities have enjoyed far more common life with normalcy and without dependence than their counterparts in the West after the pre-modern age. The Punan-Bah tribal society in central Borneo has no concept of "disability" and thus has realized the idea of normalization in by far the fullest way in the West (cf. Nicolaisen, 1995).

Additional Remark

This paper was originally written in September 1999, for the final report of a research project, and has been abridged.

Notes

1) Refer to Foster and Anderson (1978) on the coexistence and acceptance of those with mental disabilities in everyday life observed in non-European society. Of course, not all non-Western countries have accepted and carried out coexistence with those with mental disabilities. Attitudes toward disabilities in the South vary from negative to acceptance. But, it is worthy of note that there is a culture that does not have the word "disability" or a universal concept of disability in the South especially (Whyte & Ingstad, 1995).
Miichi's (1990) paper on the factors that controlled different responses to the plague and the patients who had the plague in Europe and the Islamic area is very suggestive when we are considering the difference in the mind-and-body state from a comparative culture point of view.

2) In the some schools for idiots, the education of even low-grade idiotic children was tried. The attempt by the superintendent of the New York State Idiot Asylum, Dr. H. W. Backus, to educate such very disabled people provides very fresh and rich suggestions for the present-day, although this kind of educational trial was not continued after the end of the 1860s.

3) This can be said also about the theory of heredity as a cause of idiocy. To be sure, those involved in schools for idiots in the second half of the 19th century supported

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the heredity theory, but they also believed that idiocy could be mitigated by environmental improvements. But at and after the end of the 19th century, the supporters of institutional care, hereditarians following Mendelism, stuck stubbornly to their opinion of unchangeable defective germ plasm. Almost all American studies have not paid attention to the difference between these opinions about heredity, for example, Rosenberg (1997).

4) But education in institutions after the last quarter of 19th century was regarded as important because it was an effective means for the institution to be independent. So, the newest educational theories were introduced, and in this context, the school function was the core of the institution as before.

5) A typical superintendent of an institution for the feeble-minded in early 20th century America, W. E. Fernald (1859–1924), also experienced a similar conversion of his view on feeble-mindedness. He abandoned his old view, and wrote as follows: "A lot of the feeble-minded are generous, faithful and pure-minded. Some of the sweetest and most beautiful characters I have ever known have been feeble-minded people" (Scheerenberger, 1982, p. 158). Some specialists in mental health recognized the very strong stigma that was brought about by the theory and heaped upon people with mental retardation and their families, and they endeavored to alleviate it (Levine & Levine, 1970). Nevertheless, their efforts were more or less buried by the scientific evidence supporting the view that feeble-mindedness was a threat.

6) Poverty disturbs innovations such as new systems or new ideas. In spite of the long-standing problem of income differential in the United States, there is no sign of any improvement. Refer to Kitano (1995) about the decline of innovation of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975) in a fatherless family.

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