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わが国の自殺に関する研究(3):親子心中の実態

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15. 佐藤裕 わが国の自殺に関する研究（II）紀要
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A Study of Suicide in Japan (III)

— About the Realities of Family Suicide —

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For three years, from December, 1976 to November, 1978, 450 cases of family and double suicide were collected from Tokyo newspapers. The suicides (participants) in these cases were grouped by sex, age, occupation and cause. Based on these listings, a study of preventive measures were undertaken.

In Western countries, it may be difficult to find many cases of parent-child suicide. Nevertheless, such kinds of suicide often do occur in Japan.

When parents find themselves in a crisis, they may kill their children and commit suicide. Such tragedy should not happen in a democratic country where fundamental human rights are held in high esteem.

What causes these suicides? The following are some reasons:

1) The relationships between the mother and the child are not those between individuals. In other words, the mother and her child are regarded as a single identical existence.

The mother sometimes regards her child as a possession because she holds life and death power over it. Due to this attitude, so-called mother-child suicides may occur.

2) Before World War II, many young couples lived with their parents in one household. Young mothers were able, in this way, to get helpful advice and aid from their mothers-in-law as well as well as from the other members of the family knowledgeable in child-rearing.

Today, it is rather difficult, however, to get such help, because the 'nuclear family' has spread rapidly in our society. As a result, 'neurosis' caused from child-rearing has increased among Japanese mothers.

3) On the other hand, official and voluntary organizations that deal with child-rearing and children's problems have not yet been sufficiently developed.

Tragic suicides should be prevented. In addition, the causes should be eliminated as well. All people in society should respect human rights and try to help mothers who may be potential suicide victims.