

Mental Health Care in Rural Areas in Japan

— Naikan Meditation Method —

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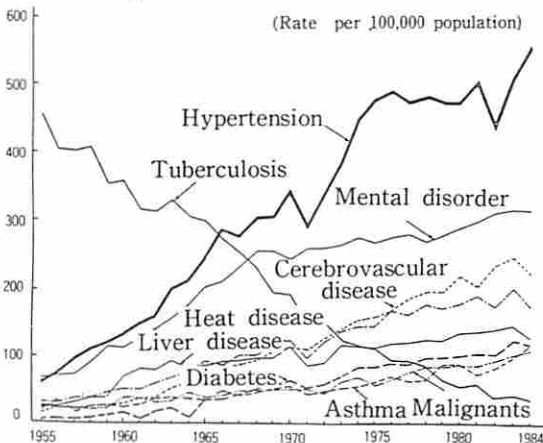
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Preface

Aspects of diseases in the rural areas in Japan have been changed through progress of medical techniques and change of life style.

Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases which were prevalent in our rural areas in past, have decreased owing to preventing hygiene, antibiotics and other medical techniques. While, mental disorders or psychosomatic diseases have increased remarkably. (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1 MEDICAL TREATMENT



“Naikan meditation method” which we are going to introduce has been reported effective on mental disorders and psychosomatic diseases as preventing or therapeutic techniques.

Naikan Meditation Method

“Naikan” means “Watching of Self” in Japanese. The Naikan meditation method is derived from a religious training of a sect of Buddhism in Japan.

Mr. Ishin Yoshimoto who was a founder of the Naikan method, abolished strict conditions fasting and no sleeping in the training. He improved it without religious character so that anybody can do.

In practice, a Naikan client sits in a small square surrounded on two sides with a Japanese paper screen and on the other two sides with walls. (Fig. 2 and 3)

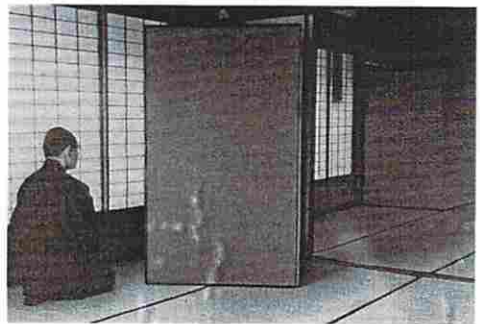


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

He is kept away from outer stimuli such as noises, radio and television, reading books and seeing people.

Except the time for sleep, meals and elimination, he sits there from five in the morning till nine in the evening. He examines himself severely from past till now. In the course of week-long concentrated self-observation, he will come to recollect the past life with his parents and surrounded people. The past misbehaviors and shameful deeds which have been buried in his memory will appear clearly.

An instructor (or a therapist) visits the room every hour or two to listen to the client's confession. The client will be relieved in the process of the Naikan method, from sorrow, irritation and resentment. He now sees the world in another way, where he is supported by the love of all people around him. He is filled with the feeling of happiness. He recognizes how much he is supported by them, and feeling of gratitude takes the place of hatred, resentment and grievance.

Cases Presentation

We should like to introduce two cases.

Case 1: A 49 years old printing worker. He was nervous and used to drink in order to avoid trouble in his daily life. He suffered from alcoholism. He came to our hospital for the purpose of admission. He was irritable and aggressive at the admission. This picture was drawn by him at the admission time. (Fig. 4)

We psychiatrists often use drawing tests as projective tests. The picture is "combined H.T.P.test" in which a house (H), a tree (T) and a person (P) are drawn in a



Fig. 4

paper. We can appreciate some of the client's inner world in it.

An angry man, his self-portrait, is shouting against a big tree with a small hoe in his hand. The huge and leaves thick tree seems to be symbolized his difficulty in real world.

A next picture was drawn after the Naikan therapy. (Fig. 5)



Fig. 5

A wide river flows calmly. A young man, perhaps self-portrait, is fishing by the river. The sun is just rising now. He seems in a calm and satisfactory mind owing to accepting plenty of gifts from the nature. He had good prognosis after the Naikan therapy.

Case2: A 42 years old self-supporting illustrator

He married at 25 years old as an adopted

husband in his wife's family. He was timid and could not speak his opinion enough in her family. He suffered from gastric ulcer and depression. He admitted in our hospital.

The picture was drawn by him at admission. (Fig. 6)



Fig. 6

A man, perhaps self - portrait, is sitting on the ground under the dark trees, whose face looks sad and depressive. His picture after the Naikan therapy changes remarkably. (Fig. 7)



Fig. 7

A courageous and happy farmer is working on a tractor. A big beautiful rainbow appears in the sky and birds are singing. It is a fine scenery after rain. We can appreciate his hopeful and refreshing mind in the picture.

His depression went over and spent good life.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Naikan method turns the self itself, which had been governed by the egocentric desires, to moral or true self. This true self lets him recognize many people's love surrounding him. Once he discovers his moral or true self, his eyes will be opened to truth and love. He acknowledges his guilt of past misbehaviors and great love given to him by surrounded people. He who has liquidated his sins and awakened to the love of many people, will come to feel be pressed with the drive to engage himself in service for his parents and for all other people in the world. This drive is thought to be power of recovery from diseases, promoting of health and constructive life.

The Naikan method aims at reconstructing the client's view of his past in order to reshape his attitudes and behaviors in the present.

To acquire the sensibility to the love through the reflections that seems to be the secret of the Naikan method.

The Naikan method has been used as Naikan therapy in psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine in our country. The Naikan therapy has effects on neurosis, depression, alcoholism, psychosomatic disorders and delinquency problems.

It is reported to be effective not only on treatment of mental disorders but also promotion of health.

Recently, the Naikan method has been interested in U.S.A. and in Europe. Several psychologists who had training of the Naikan method in Japan are practising over the sea now.

日本の農村地域におけるメンタルヘルス

——内観法について——

福井県立精神病院 草野 亮

わが国の農村における疾病の様態は、医学の進歩と住民のライフスタイルの変化によって、大きく変貌している。かつての感染症や寄生虫症は、抗生物質の発見や予防医学の発達によって減少し、それに代わってストレスによる病気、すなわち心身症やうつ病などの精神的不健康が増加している。心身症や精神障害に対する、内観療法の効果については、多くの報告がみられる。

内観法は、浄土真宗の一派の修行法「身調べ」にその起源を求めることができる。吉本伊信師が、断食・断水・断眠などの苛酷な条件をなくし、宗教から脱却して、一般人の誰もが行なえるように改良した。

その方法は、部屋の隅に屏風を立て、畳半帖の狭い空間に坐る。午前5時の起床時から午後9時の就寝時まで、一心に瞑想に耽るのであるが、それを1週間続ける。テーマが与えられ、自分が「してもらったこと」「して

返したこと」「迷惑をかけたこと」を、周囲の一人ひとりについて、幼少時から現在まで数年刻みで、順次調べていく。指導者が1～2時間ごとに面接に訪れるが、その際 瞑想者は自分の調べたことを指導者に告白する。時間経過とともに、瞑想者はありのままの自分に気付く。自分の小ささ、罪の深さを発見するが、そのような自分に対して周囲から注いでくれる愛の深さを感得する。その気付きが、不健康状態（病気）からの回復のエネルギーとなり、さらにより良い人生を送ろうという原動力となる。

わが国の精神医学会や心身医学会に、内観療法として1965年頃より導入され、現在に至っている。最近では、アメリカやヨーロッパ（ドイツ、フランス、オーストリアなど）でも関心を持たれ、一部に導入されている。筆者自身も、日常臨床に応用しているが、その経験について報告した。