

研究活動報告

Forest Kindergarten in Japan and its Variable Educational Influences: Lecture in Western Applied-Technology University (The Kingdom of Norway), 2018.9.25

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日本の森のようちえんとその多様な教育効果
——ノルウェー西部応用技術大学における講演——

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要 約

森のようちえんは北欧から始まり今や世界各国に広がっている。その教育効果は多様で総合的である。3歳から5歳児の20人前後の規模の集団での異年齢保育をしており、子ども6人にリーダー（保育者）が1人の割合で見守りを中心に子どもたちが自由に遊んでいる。子どもたちはお互いに助け合ったり危険を予測回避したりしている。また保育者の環境教育の意識によって生態系の循環を学ぶこともある。この度私たちは広島から北欧を訪れ、ストックホルムでは野外就学前教育とレッジョエミリアの保育を展開する就学前教育を視察した。世界では今、ESD（持続可能な発展のための教育）が緊急の課題となっているが日本は立ち遅れている。レッジョエミリアの保育を実践する園も非常に少ない。しかし、北欧ではこれらの教育が進んでおり、子どもの人権が保障される国で、これは民主主義の教育の深まりと関係が深いと考えている。さらに日本では森のようちえんは無認可で財政的補助を受けられないでいる。世界的にも稀な現象である。園舎ではなく、保育内容で認可するのが世界の常識である。そこで長野県と鳥取県は条例で財政補助を始めたのである。今回は長野県の森のようちえんピッピの活動を詳しく紹介した。実は日本ではもっと深刻な問題があり、待機児童や保育士不足が続いている。森のようちえんは自然の中での保育がいかに重要かを印象付けて注目されているが、日本では未だその価値が十分には認識されていないようである。

About 7 years ago, I started studying on Forest Kindergarten in order to make a report to found and manage Forest Kindergarten with a plenty of financial aids from one former director of my university. After that, I have hoped to be a director of Forest Kindergarten or outdoor-centered preschool.

I have been researching on forest kindergartens all over the world, Denmark, Germany, Korea and Japan. And I have known a variety of its educational effectiveness and influences

beyond my estimate. The educational effectiveness of outdoor education ranges in health, linguistics, human relationships, developing curiosity and senses in the nature, and artistic expressions. All natural phenomenon develop a variable intellectual and sensitive competencies. Teachers watch children and nature. Children help to play with each other and manage risks and know the nature structure of ecology.

Now we are coming from Hiroshima in Japan and last week in Sweden we visited some outdoor-centered preschools and Reggio-Emilia preschools in Stockholm. Our aim of visiting

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Scandinavian countries is to research outdoor learning methods and environments of outdoor-centered preschools and also Reggio approach with an educational documentation.

Nowadays all over the world Education of Sustainable Development (ESD) is necessary but in Japan it is very poor in practice even in primary and pre-primary schools and Reggio approach is rarely practiced. I hear Scandinavian countries are leading ESD in the world. Your countries are famous for the Education guaranteed with children's rights, too. It is so-called Education of Democracy that is poor in Japan, I suppose.

By the way in Japan there are many types of kindergartens with governmental financial aids. But Forest Kindergartens have no financial aids because Forest Kindergartens have not the so-called adequate building or house according to the national law for the kindergarten.

But two prefectures are exceptions that have founded the original law to aid these kindergartens as most the same finance just three years before. This two prefectures have more than 20 Forest Kindergartens but there are only about 100 Forest Kindergartens in Japan. We have 47 prefectures in Japan and these two prefectures are famous for the pioneers of Forest Kindergarten. Almost Forest Kindergartens started from 1990s to 2010s in Japan.

Generally in a Japanese forest kindergarten there are 10 to 30 children, 3 to 6 years old, and 4 to 5 days a week. 1 adult staff to 5 or 7 children. And some has a less than 3 years children class with parents for a few days a week. It is opened from 9:30 to 14:30. Some are until 17:00.

Monthly fee is 30,000 to 40,000 yen (24,000–32,000 krona). Playing fields are private and governmental forests, mountain areas, parks, rivers, etc.

Now I will introduce a forest kindergarten named Pippi in Nagano prefecture, famous for the winter Olympic 1998. I visited on Pippi in last July and interviewed to the director, Miss Nakazawa. She started Pippi in 2007, gathering just 10 children. in 2010 22 children, in 2018 35. Surprisingly 31 children of 35 are domestic migrants and parents of 14 children came from a different prefecture in order to enter Pippi. It has a 3-days course for 2 years children and a 5-days course for 3 to 5 years children. 5 Main staff (1 director) has a national license and more than ten years career. There are also 3 supporting staff also a license. Salary ranges from 170,000 to 240,000 yen per month. This is a general one because of a prefectural financial aid. If no aid, Salary decreases to half of it. Activities are free playing in the forest, rice and vegetable cultivation in the fields for cooking, nature programs for gradation of leaves, caring my tree, painting, etc. There are the camping 5 times a year, encountering of parent needs, frequent parents meetings and a yearly home-coming meeting. These activities are general in Japanese Forest Kindergartens. I suppose that the outdoor cooking of infant child is characteristic in Japan.

Meetings of children are often held at morning and afternoon every day. They talk about aims, objects and a schedule of playing and reflect themselves every day. Such a meeting is democratic education. It is rarely in Japanese general kindergartens. Pippi staff has a problems about playing fields in the forest. Trees in the forest

are increasingly becoming sick and decreasing a sustainability. In Hiroshima Prefecture we have 7 forest kindergartens.

Finally I would like to conclude my lecture. In Japan, 1990s, after the collapse of the economic bubble Japanese people called for the humanistic life and noticed that they had lost nature in their life. They called for nature and started moving to country side from urban area. They wish they could develop children in the nature. Therefore forest kindergartens have been increasing year and year in 2010s. Forest kindergartens have influenced to general kindergartens education. For instance, some kindergartens in the big city, Tokyo or Osaka, have built the forest in their gardens. They have known nature education is necessary for children and also parents hope it. Many prefectural governments have interested in this movement and Some started the condition maintenance. But National government is never interested in forest kindergartens and has no Conditioning examination. National government has more serious tasks that include the waiting children, lack of nursery teachers and charge-free kindergarten. And I wonder why Japan Ministry cannot approve forest kindergartens like many European countries and Korea. Everyone knows which is more important between the development of children and the house of kindergarten, I suppose. Let us believe in the possibilities of children and their capacity of safety. Also I wonder why Japan has been late for the trend of the times in the infant education. It may be influenced by old-fashioned concepts of education that is baby-sitter level. Finally I hope forest kindergartens in Japan will become a major

institution and nature education for instance ESD will be practiced in the most kindergartens.

Thank you very much for your attention. And it was very honorable to have a lecture at this university. I hope you will enjoy your happy time in the beautiful and wonderful nature. Thank you.

付記 なお、本研究報告は、2018年9月にノルウェー王国およびスウェーデン王国の野外就学前学校の視察研修旅行に際し、ノルウェー西部応用技術大学の専任教員である上坂裕子先生の御依頼により学生及び教員に対して行った講演内容である。上坂先生には貴重な場を与えて頂いたことに、この場をお借りして厚く御礼申し上げる次第である。



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