

Sociology Perspective on Emotional Maltreatment: Retrospective Case Study in a Japanese Elementary School

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Abstract—This sociological case study analyzes a sequence of student maltreatment in an elementary school in Japan, based on narratives from former students. Among various forms of student maltreatment, emotional maltreatment has received less attention. One reason for this is that emotional maltreatment is often considered part of education and is difficult to capture in surveys. To discuss the challenge of recognizing emotional maltreatment, it is necessary to consider the social background in which student maltreatment occurs. Therefore, from the perspective of the sociology of education, this study aims to clarify the process through which emotional maltreatment was embraced by students within a Japanese classroom. The research employs retrospective narrative data collected through interviews and autoethnography. The research results imply a pattern of emotional maltreatment that is challenging to differentiate from education. The finding is analyzed and discussed in conjunction with the cycle of violence theory and the deschooling theory. The cycle of violence theory explains how violence in a specific relationship can be tolerated. The deschooling theory provides a sociological explanation for how emotional maltreatment can be overlooked in society. Analyzing the case in association with these two theories highlights the characteristics of teachers' behaviors that rationalize maltreatment as education and hinder students from escaping emotional maltreatment. This study deepens our understanding of the causes of student maltreatment and provides a perspective for future qualitative and quantitative research.

Keywords—Emotional maltreatment, education, student maltreatment, Japan.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN studies of abuse, emotional maltreatment tends to be mentioned as significant, but difficult to survey. Emotional maltreatment is a “systematic pattern of negative interactions that occur between a child and an adult over time” [1], and includes humiliating, cursing, calling names, or humiliating a child's family [2]. This leads to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, interpersonal sensitivity, dissociation, and borderline personality traits [3].

Student maltreatment by school teachers has been researched as the causality of devastating academic, social, and psychological effects over time [2]-[4]. According to a scoping review, maltreatment was one of the most major terms to describe repeated aggressive behavior by teachers at elementary and secondary schools against the background of asymmetrical relationships [5]. Reported cases included

physical (e.g., not allowing a child to go to the bathroom, hitting, pinching ears, pushing, and shaking) and non-physical maltreatment (e.g., mocking, ignoring, isolating, threatening, and coercing) [5]. In 18 countries with different school cultures, each surveyed in different ways based on pupil reports, the prevalence rates ranged from 0.6-90% [5].

However, many believe that the actual number may be higher than previously reported. Some student maltreatment, such as emotional maltreatment, is not captured in surveys because it can be accepted as a standard behavior in schools [1], [3], [4]. Previous research may not have captured all patterns, and there is a need to link this research to the school culture of the target country/region [5].

To discuss the difficulty in recognizing emotional maltreatment, it is necessary to consider the social background of the occurrence of student maltreatment. Therefore, from the perspective of the sociology of education, this study aimed to clarify the process through which community members embrace emotional maltreatment.

II. JAPANESE CONTEXT

A. Emotional Maltreatment in Schools

In Japan, student maltreatment has attracted attention, especially since 2022, when a book on student maltreatment was published. In the book, *kyōshitsu marutoritomento* (maltreatment in the classroom) was explained as “inappropriate relations and ones that should be avoided under normal circumstances by mentors (in addition to teachers, instructors, support personnel, assistant staff, and all other related members) in the fields of education” [6].

The term highlights the problem of school staff interactions similar to psychological abuse and neglect, in addition to physical and sexual abuse. The Child Abuse Prevention Law prohibits physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and neglect, but works only against acts by guardians. Of these kinds of behaviors, physical and sexual abuse are illegal in schools as well. The School Education Act prohibits corporal punishment, and the Act on the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children by Educational Personnel prohibits sexual violence. However, these laws do not prohibit psychological abuse and neglect. Kawakami, an active teacher of special needs schools, lists guidance that is not subject to legal action but is similar to neglect and psychological abuse (see Table I).

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TABLE I
 GUIDANCE NOT SUBJECT TO LEGAL ACTIONS [6]

Similar to neglect	-No encouragement or praise -Avoidance of picking a particular student -No reasonable accommodation for students who need support -Negligent of necessary preparation for classes -Hundred-percent dependent on support personnel or assistant staff for the care of student who needs support -The word of abandonment such as “Have it your way” and “Bye”
Similar to psychological abuse	-Coercive, intimidating and forceful guidance -Strong reprimands leading students to lose confidence -Words and deeds without respect to student’s personality -Guidance interfering students’ indecent actions

B. Student Suicide Due to Shidō

Teachers’ acts that are not illegal appear to cause severe damage to students, and some children have committed suicide triggered by *shidō* (guidance), which is referred to as ‘*shidōshi*’ (death due to guidance).

Shidō is often used to mention everyday practices in Japanese schools [7]. The Japanese dictionary *Modern Schooling Chronicle* provides the following meanings of the word: (1) to guide by teaching, and (2) guidance [8]. Although some Japanese dictionaries indicate that *shidō* has the same meaning as guidance, the term in the former meaning is usually translated as instruction, which has the effects of a strong approach and encourages internalization [9]. *Shidō* developed from Dewey’s idea to collaborate and enhance the abilities of the person receiving education [9].

The idea of *shidō* enabled people to acquaint themselves with Dewey’s suggestion and the importance of supporting students’ voluntary learning. This idea gained popularity after guidance was emphasized as the keynote of democratic education in the Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan in 1946. It is suggested that *shidō* refers to educational practice and has been used to emphasize its democratic and voluntary aspects [8]. In other words, the frequent usage of the term *shidō* in schools implies that a teacher’s behavior in school premises consents with students even if the situation is difficult for students to escape.

Shigeo Kawahara, an educational researcher, clarified the areas and functions of *shidō* based on the guidelines of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [10]. *Shidō* is carried out through curricula and subjects such as education, moral education, student-led activities, and integrated studies. Areas outside the curriculum include recess, after-school hours, club activities, and suburban life, which fulfill the educational function of student guidance. The functions of school education comprise academic guidance (*gakushū shidō*) and daily life guidance (*seikatsu shidō*). Daily life guidance is provided within and outside the curriculum to assist students to live in accordance with their lived reality. It aims to supplement the lack of standardized education and motivate students to learn and personalize their own education. *Shidō* is such a broad concept that it has both the function of discipline and guidance; it also involves the voluntary participation of students [10]. While the idea of *shidō* enables schools to provide personalized education, it possibly leads to interaction with students beyond standard class activities.

Considering the breadth of what *shidō* implies, a parent whose child committed suicide due to unreasonable *shidō* suggests that *shidōshi* is “child suicide when teachers’ treatment generally accepted as *shidō* drives them into a corner mentally or physically” or “suicide seemingly caused by or triggered by *shidō* (e.g., suicide that is committed soon after *shidō* and whose causality is hardly found any other than *shidō*)” [11]. *Shidō* “refers to any activity for education commonly and widely seen in school even if the activity is inappropriate in an instructional way (e.g., suspension due to trifle behaviors, collective responsibility, interviews, and fact-checking over time, etc.)” [11].

Additionally, *shidōshi* occasionally refers to suicide due to a teacher’s physical violence because “violence is widely accepted as a means of *shidō* although it should be regarded as assault or injury being prohibited legally” [11]. The definition entails some inconsistency and confusion stemming from the attempt to emphasize the damage caused by actions regarded as *shidō*. It also highlights how various forms of physical and psychological violence are embraced as forms of *shidō* even when the practice is illegal. In other words, *shidōshi* highlights the problem of student suicide triggered by an act carried out as a form of *shidō* in school, regardless of whether it should be called *shidō* or not.

While various actions are regarded as a causality of *shidōshi*, most cases seem to be caused by psychological abuse or neglect. Takeda, an educational critic, surveyed *shidōshi* cases in elementary, junior high, high school, and university through related literature and newspaper accounts. From 1989 to 2022, 95 of 108 cases of *shidōshi* (including 15 attempts) were triggered by *shidō* without physical and sexual abuse [12].

Physical and non-physical form of student maltreatment has caused devastating damage in Japan, same as what the previous research reported in other countries/regions. However, the term maltreatment has mostly led attention to psychological maltreatment and neglect in Japan. Following the Japanese context, this paper deals with emotional maltreatment; it consists of psychological maltreatment and neglect [13].

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aimed to clarify the process by which students in a Japanese elementary school accept emotional maltreatment. Focusing on a series of educational interactions between a homeroom teacher and 11- and 12-year-old students, this study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of emotional maltreatment and its relationship with education. The primary question addressed in this research was: How does emotional maltreatment become accepted by students in Japanese classrooms?

A case study was conducted to answer the research question using the narratives of former students who had experienced maltreatment. To suggest practical ideas for preventing future emotional maltreatment, it is necessary to study the views of those who have experienced maltreatment. To address social problems, it is necessary to explore the connection between subjective personal experiences and structural and historical problems [14]. This case study enabled the researcher to deeply

consider the social background and context, and discuss the connection.

The case for this research is the sequence of shidō that was carried out by a homeroom teacher in the 6th grade of an elementary school in Japan from April 2011 to March 2012. It was a small public elementary school attended by over 100 students at the time. The homeroom teacher was a veteran female teacher and in this study is referred to as X-sensei (X-teacher). There are two reasons for picking up this case. First, to fulfill the research aim, the focus is to be put on shidō that should have been recognized as maltreatment but were not recognized or intervened with. Second, we needed to be familiar with the background and context of the shidō because emotional maltreatment is difficult to describe and understand.

Data collection utilized two main methodologies: autoethnography and semi-structured interviews. Autoethnography is a critical research methodology that contributes to the development of existing theories and studies by providing a critical representation of a researcher's experiences in association with society and culture [15]. Autoethnography enables researchers to collect detailed data that is difficult to verbalize in interviews. These research methods are well suited for this research, which aims to break

the taboo of focusing on the student's perspective instead of teachers' educational intentions and to gain a deeper understanding of student maltreatment [15]. The autoethnographic texts were written in Japanese between May 2020 and December 2021. It was translated into English between November and December 2021, with additional changes to make the description clearer.

Transcripts were created based on semi-structured interviews conducted between March 2020 and May 2020. Using LINE, one of the most common social media platforms in Japan, we recruited 11 former students from the same class in which X-sensei was in charge. It took place online or face-to-face within one to three hours, depending on the participant's preference (see Table II).

All collected data were disguised to prevent personal identification in a way that did not compromise the context. In the data, round brackets are inserted to add supplementary information for the parts difficult to understand from the data alone. The researcher's name is Fujisaka while the interviewee names are pseudonyms. Permission to carry out this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Kyosei Studies, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University.

TABLE II
 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Name	Yamada	Matsumoto	Inoue	Hayashi	Yamasaki	Ikeda	Hashimoto	Abe	Ishikawa	Nakajima	Yoshida
Style	In-person	In-person	In-person	Online	In-person	In-person	In-person	Online (Audio only)	Online	In-person	Online
Time	3	1.5	3	1.5	3	1	3	1.5	2	1.5	3

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF SHIDŌ IN THIS CASE STUDY

A. Control without Physical and Sexual Abuse

Inoue stated that if a student disobeyed X-sensei, the student felt excluded from the classroom.

It was like we were part of the teacher's empire, like the empire's subjects. And when we didn't obey what the teacher, it was like we were being banished. (omission) The ones who did not obey were evil, so they should have been banished and forced. That is why students couldn't say "Iya (the feeling of dislike and reluctance)," or "No" and do what they wanted to do. This situation is the reason why the students said "We had to sense the atmosphere" or "We could suggest nothing."

Students were the subjects of "the teacher's empire" where they had to follow the teacher. Students tried to understand and participate in what was happening in the classroom, instead of expressing their will.

Once students were in trouble, they had to apologize as Yamasaki explained:

We apologized by saying, "It was my fault to have done this, I'm sorry," but it was superficial. I sense that we mostly apologized just because we were afraid of the teacher or had to deal with the awkward atmosphere.

Although students went to the teacher and apologized after being scolded, the apology did not come from their reflections. Students apologized for fear of the teacher or the need to deal with the situation. Other students had similar experiences.

Ikeda felt it necessary to manage the situation ("For now, I have to manage this situation"), and Hayashi stated that the students apologized while not understanding the reason ("Everyone apologized tentatively although they didn't understand what they had done wrong").

Yamazaki's narrative is an example of a typical case that forced students to apologize. In Japan, two students commonly take turns in charge of classroom chores and help with class on the day. They must clear the blackboard during the break time as they prepare for the next class. However, they sometimes fail to perform these duties because, for example, they become so engrossed in chatting with their friends that they forget.

When we did not erase the letters written on the board by the time of the next class, the teacher began writing letters on top of those already written. Then (if the students did not clean as soon as the teacher did,) she said, "It's okay if you won't clean," and went back to the staff room. But when the student didn't go to the staff room (following the teacher), the teacher (returning to the classroom) would say, like "Hey, you should have come," and "Why didn't you come to apologize?" I think something like that happened.

When students forgot to clean the blackboard, the teacher wrote without caring about the letters already written. If students did nothing then likely due to surprise, confusion, and fear, she perceived those students reluctant to take the class. The teacher went back to the staff room to show that she would no longer provide a class to the students. With this behavior, the

teacher seemingly expected students to understand the need to apologize and ask her to restart the class in addition to cleaning the blackboard. The teacher waited for the students' apology in the staff room. If they did not come to apologize, she would go back to the classroom and display disappointment.

Yamazaki explains more in detail about how students were made to apologize.

Ikeda: More than what I got blamed for, the moment I went to apologize was, how can I say, a huge experience for me. (omission) I hate the atmosphere where we have no idea what to do.

Fujisaka: Yeah.

Ikeda: After we got scolded.

Fujisaka: Like, everyone was sitting down.

Ikeda: Yes, yes, yes, silent. There was a silence. Who was the first to apologize in silence?

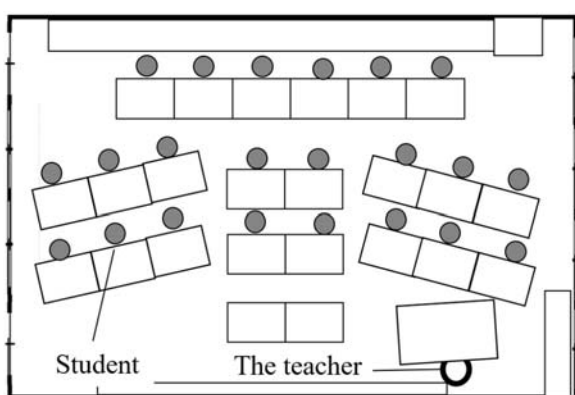


Fig. 1 The classroom after X-sensei got angry

When students were scolded, they usually sat down on their chairs and remained solemnly silent (see Fig. 1). Once the teacher ceased yelling and waited for the students to apologize, the classroom was filled with silence. Students knew that they had to apologize, but they did not want to go first, so they remained sitting without moving. This seemed to be because they wanted to hear other students apologize before themselves as they would give hints on what to say and not to say. The teacher was able to control the students without using any words during this phase. Shidō by X-sensei did not involve corporal punishment or sexual abuse but was continuous and worked on the student's body and mind.

B. The Impact

Former students were impacted by their experience of shidō by X-sensei. These feelings are often referred to as fear and anger. For example, Ikeda said, "It was really really really scary." Hayashi also stated the following:

I was furious. Why was I blamed for such trifles each day? It happens every day, does it not? I had to stand in line every day (to apologize). To be honest, I really did not want to go to school, but I did not want to lose to the teacher. I didn't want (X-sensei to think) like, "She's not coming (to school) because I scolded her."

Hayashi indicated that students' emotional burden was so

substantial that it discouraged her from attending school. Students felt intense fear and anger in response to the shidō.

Moreover, low self-esteem has a significant psychological effect. Yamasaki clearly states that X-sensei's shidō made her believe that she was incompetent.

We were told, "Those who can't do this are sick." At the time, I thought "Oh, I am truly sick" for a while, and felt depressed. Since then, I was made to believe that I was seriously incompetent and couldn't do such things. Now I think I was being led in a bad direction.

X-sensei regarded Yamasaki as sick for not meeting her demands, and therefore Yamasaki was depressed about her abilities and future. Shidō by X-sensei could have caused a sense of helplessness in the students rather than motivation or development. Yamasaki was deprived of confidence, which may have affected her academic achievements and social relationships.

Additionally, the experience of Yamada implies a lack of focus on studying due to shidō.

When going to school, I always thought about how I would avoid getting scolded. Even during class, I was thinking about what I should do to avoid getting scolded and how I could avoid getting blamed. That's all I did.

When she was at school, Yamada could not help thinking about her defense. The most important thing for her was neither to study nor have fun with her friends, but to avoid being scolded. In another part of the interview, Yamada said, "I couldn't do what I wanted" even when she was the student council president whose role was to suggest activities for students to enjoy the school. Students had to focus on understanding X-sensei's intentions and work accordingly.

Such emotional weight seemed to stress the students constantly, and Yamada even experienced physical reactions.

I always had a stomachache before going to school. (omission) I could not go to school because of stomachaches, so I had to go to school later alone.

In elementary school, students walked to school with other students living in the same residential area. However, due to stomachaches, Yamada went to school alone after her friend had left. Stress caused by shidō imposed a physical and mental toll on her, making it impossible for her to go to school as usual.

While the sequence of the teacher's behavior did not involve physical maltreatment, it caused fear, anger, and depression. It deprived students of their ability to focus on academic tasks or their opportunities to interact with their friends in school. The style and impact of this shidō are consistent with the characteristics of emotional maltreatment: interactions with psychological abuse or neglect impacted students psychologically, socially, and academically. The following section describes the process by which emotional maltreatment occurs in detail.

V. PROCESS OF EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT

A. Constant Fear

Throughout the school year, shidō by X-sensei instilled fear in the students. Hashimoto said, "She's always intimidating,

and whenever we ask or say something, she always starts with ‘Huh?’” Hashimoto explained that the teacher often intimidated students talking to her by saying “Huh?” instead of, for example, asking “What’s wrong?” This represents how former students were stressed through trifles and how they carefully interacted with teachers every day.

Yamasaki implied that such shidō was regularly provided through the whole school year: “I was always thinking, ‘Ugh, she’s probably going to be mad at me today again,’ or ‘She’s probably irritated.’” The teacher’s way of shidō resulted in her being tense every day.

B. Explosion of Anger

While students tried to avoid being scolded, the teacher occasionally and unexpectedly exploded in anger. Many cases were identified through interviews, and one of the most challenging for students to avoid occurred when Yamada worked as a student council member. She discussed the event with students in the school, looking at the list of tasks written in a file for the Student Council. After discussing everything on the list for discussion, Yamada stated, “We’ve discussed everything.” However, X-sensei asked what the exact tasks were, like “Who will make the stationary article of Koinobori (carp-shaped streamer)?,” “How long will the article be?,” and “Where are you going to put them?” Students were not able to answer properly, so X-sensei expressed anger, saying, “You haven’t yet decided anything at all.” Yamada was scolded even though she had already done what she was expected to do.

Such an unexpected explosion of anger was not unusual. Ishikawa found such explosion unexpected: “When I was talking (with X-sensei) during a break, a few words came out (from Ishikawa), and X-sensei caught on. Like, ‘Wait, what did you mean by that?’” Ishikawa told something from her point of view, and the teacher got mad at her without explaining or asking.

Hayashi described the angry teacher as hysterical: “She was getting hysterical. Towards the end (of reprimands), her way was to get angry. (I thought) like, ‘Oh, she’s probably angry and got panicking.’” At least from the perspective of the former student, it suggests, the teacher focused on getting mad at the students while the purpose of the shidō was unclear. Other former students also provided similar comments, such as “I wondered what she wanted to do” by Ishikawa and “incomprehensible” by Yamasaki. It was almost impossible for the students to understand why she was angry and to avoid getting scolded.

C. Consolation after Explosions of Anger

In addition to creating feelings of fear or anger, the teacher seemed to keep the students attracted to her by being kind to them after her explosions of anger. Hashimoto stated that the teacher took a conciliatory attitude after cornering the students.

She tried to draw the students to her side. I mean, X-sensei did. She makes people suffer as if they were starving, and then she pretends to lend a hand. (omission) She made us say words of remorse endlessly for approximately two hours. In the end, everyone came back

to the classroom crying, and the teacher started talking, like, “Is that okay? (In a deep, encompassing voice).”

From Hashimoto’s point of view, the teacher made herself likeable by doing different shidō for different times. The teacher was kind to the students after two hours of apologies by the students.

An example of this appears in an autoethnographic text. This happened after the student became a leader in planning and organizing events. She tried hard but did not do well with everything. She felt isolated from the three members of the group, and they were all scolded by X-sensei almost every day. She felt depressed but was relieved in the following scene.

Once X-sensei talked to me in the corridor near the staff room, although I did not remember why the conversation started. She said, “It must be hard for you to be the leader of the three students.” Listening to those words, I felt that the teacher understood me, and tears came in drops. Seeing this, X-sensei gave me a troubled smile and consoled me, but my tears gathered momentum. I felt relieved that it was not just my fault for not doing anything. (omission) The next day, I was scolded by her for the slow progress. I was full of despair that I had been scolded again, and depressed that I was useless for being scolded by someone who understood me so well.

Consolation made the students feel better understood and relieved. However, when the teacher expressed anger at her the next day, she felt incompetent and depressed. She came to accept the words by the teacher as fact because it was told by the teacher “who understood me well.” Gentle admonishment after making students fearful was a powerful way to persuade students that the teacher did that shidō for the students.

D. The Cycle of Violence

While the shidō constantly instilled fear, the consolation expressed after an explosion of anger kept students believing in the teacher. This process may be explained by the cycle of violence theory, which was developed to explain the process of women being victimized by domestic violence. This cycle explains why battered people are deprived of the will to escape [16]. Violence is carried out in a cycle which repeats three phases, as shown in Fig. 1: the tension-building phase, the explosion or acute battering incident, and the calm, loving phase [16]. Minor battering accumulates and escalates in Phase 1, uncontrollable violence explodes in a short time during Phase 2, and Phase 3 involves attractive behaviors for the victim, such as remorse and comfort for the violence (see Fig. 2) [16]. Applying this theory to the case of shidō, it seems that constant fear is instilled in Phase 1, unpredictable explosion of anger takes place in Phase 2, and consolation appears in Phase 3.

This theory provides a reason why students neither accuse the teacher nor escape class. Battered people learn helplessness by continuously being exposed to uncontrollable crises, while believing that they can control the situation [16]. Under continuous fear, students continued to believe that their inappropriate behavior caused their teacher’s anger as they internalized their expectations towards the students. However,

it was difficult for students to control their anger. While they expected themselves to behave in such a way to control their teacher's anger, they simply found their predictions to be inaccurate. Eventually, students learned that their expectations did not work, leading them to assume the impossibility of escaping difficult situations.



Fig. 2 The cycle of violence theory

VI. EMBRACING EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT

A. Teachers and Parents Misunderstanding Student's Views

The cycle of violence may be one reason why maltreatment is not readily recognized, but it does not explain it entirely. Maltreatment was not regarded as a problem, although some students thought the teacher's interactions were inappropriate. Hayashi explained how the school principal had a chance to acknowledge the emotional maltreatment but tried to discipline Hayashi instead.

Hayashi: We had a science class in the first period. (omission) I was probably a member of the sixth group and sat in the last seat of the classroom. The teacher was the furthest away. Several experiments were conducted. Everyone wanted to revel, so they started to play. They were scolded for not focusing on the class. Everyone was scolded, and I am sure she kept getting mad at us until maybe 6th period. We apologized in the 6th period. It was during the 6th period when I apologized. I probably stood last or second in line. And then, I was called in after school, and I guess X-sensei got mad at me. It was probably something like that. I thought, "Wow, that's unreasonable."

Fujisaka: After school?

Hayashi: I was called by the principal.

Fujisaka: What did he say?

Hayashi: Well, he told me I needed to apologize. That's what he said.

Fujisaka: You had apologized already, hadn't you?

Hayashi: I had apologized for the time being, though. It was as if I was crying out of frustration.

Hayashi and other students had fun playing during science class in the first period, and X-sensei scolded them. Surprisingly, the reprimands lasted from the first to the sixth periods, the last class of the day. The students, including Hayashi, apologized individually. However, Hayashi's apology

was followed by a new reprimand for her taking longer to apologize. After school, the principal called on Hayashi to apologize, although she had already apologized to X-sensei. Hayashi cried for an unreasonable and frustrating experience.

It seems to be hard to judge whether all shidō was appropriate or not. It also remains unclear why X-sensei kept scolding for hours and why the school principal called Hayashi. This may have been to discipline Hayashi because the principal had heard that Hayashi had been dangerously fooling with an experiment but was reluctant to reflect on her own actions. Otherwise, it may have been to take care of Hayashi's mental health by listening to her. Whichever, Hayashi's perspective is that she was encouraged to apologize by a teacher after she endured more than five hours of being reprimanded. It appears that the school principal failed to recognize the problem that Hayashi recognized in X-sensei's shidō even though he had time to talk with Hayashi after the shidō was carried out. Hayashi was further humiliated by the school principal, and she learned that other teachers might be on X-sensei's side.

It is common for educational administrators to not admit the occurrence of maltreatment by teachers [1], [3], [4], [17]. However, in this Japan case, both school educators and parents prevent students from claiming injustice at school. Hayashi mentioned a case in which she attempted to explain to her parents. She felt that it was impossible to explain because her parents trusted the teacher.

Even if I talked to my parents, they would not have understood this. Parents did not know what the teacher was like. Even if I told my parents, because they know what the teacher looks on the surface, they would be like, "Huh? Would the teacher say that?"

It implies that the image of X-sensei looking good on a surface made it difficult for students to criticize her shidō.

Citing her experience when she was eight or nine years old, Hashimoto explained the difficulty of getting her parents to accept their child's view, rather than the teacher's perspective.

Hashimoto: I could not explain those things (the reason she behaved problematically) very well because I was a child. I couldn't explain like, "I couldn't be patient anymore because of what my classmate said to me and what had happened before that," or I should have said, "I don't like it, so don't do that," but I experienced a burst of rage and used this kind of language. I was just a child. Well, school was hard for me. If such things, including fights, continued several times, my parent would be called in, right?

Fujisaka: Yeah, yeah.

Hashimoto: I was afraid that the school would call and my mother would have to go to school.

Fujisaka: Uh-huh.

Hashimoto: My mother also told me off. I sometimes thought I had a bad personality and was useless, though. Now I can say that I just did it because I was dared to, but I suffered at the time. I wondered why I easily caused trouble even though other children lived peacefully. I was the kind of kid well thinking, not who just got into trouble and was done with it.

Hashimoto said that a teacher scolded her for her unacceptable behavior without knowing why she behaved poorly. Because she “was a child,” Hashimoto had difficulty explaining the situation surrounding her, and her mother tended to accept what the teacher explained as fact. Hashimoto was told to avoid trouble and suffered from not being able to.

This suggests that students’ parents may unintentionally stand by the teacher. It seems natural that parents hope that their children will better transform themselves and live well in their communities.

B. Former Students Evaluating Shidō

While the discussion so far has mostly focused on the problems of shidō former students experienced, it should be acknowledged that some students mentioned the effectiveness of the shidō. They referred to shidō by X-sensei as an educational practice which looked desirable, whilst simultaneously complaining of the painfulness. Nakajima was an example and emphasized that she agreed only with the goal of her shidō.

I didn’t like the atmosphere which was unique to the teacher or her way of shidō, which made us all feel like we were bonding. But I did not hate my friends in class, so I wanted to be united. Probably, she was quite good (at doing shidō in her style for what students desire). I didn’t dislike my classmates, so I was not uncomfortable with being brought together in class. I disliked only the way we were made to get together. It is difficult to describe the feeling.

Nakajima carefully avoided proposing that the shidō was inappropriate and bad. She emphasized that the aim of the shidō, to make students band together, was also what she wanted. Only the way of shidō was not what she liked, but it is hard to describe why she did not like it.

Abe also had a high opinion of shidō by X-sensei when she was an elementary student, however, her opinion later changed. She got confidence in her ability through the shidō.

I thought like, “Wow, X-sensei makes students get along so well, X-sensei will do us good definitely.” But that wasn’t the fact, was it? (omission) X-sensei got mad at us a lot, and many times, we had to stand up one by one. I had to express my opinion. The more we did that, the more I thought we were getting closer and closer together and that I became better as a person. But it was a false feeling, well, kind of, only for the moment, it was like the satisfaction at the moment both for me and the class. In that way, for the moment, I thought we solved the problem, we developed our ability as humans, and I grew as a person. But looking back now, I don’t think so at all. (We needed) something like fighting, not actual fighting though, instead of getting scolded. You know, due to the presence of a teacher, I mean, due to the atmosphere (students must obey the teacher), no one said their honest thoughts there even when everyone had to speak their minds one by one.

She thought X-sensei was a good teacher for the students because she developed students’ abilities by repeatedly forcing

them to stand and speak self-searching words one by one. Abe concluded that shidō satisfied the students with false feelings, and she suggested that conflicts resulting from real intention would have been preferable.

Yamasaki expressed such shidō as being associated with the term “inspiration porn”.

It is something close to inspirational porn. (omission)

Well, in this case, it is not about people with disabilities. I have the impression that she was keen on creating an emotional atmosphere. I mean, when getting angry or quarreling, she looked to do so intentionally. When we had quarrels or got angry, we clashed with each other, and we all felt good at the end. It was like that. I think that atmosphere was remarkable. She was likely trying to create this unnatural atmosphere.

From Yamasaki’s perspective, X-sensei created “inspiration porn” to make people impressed with her shidō.

Inspiration porn is defined as “the representation of disability as a desirable but undesired characteristic, usually by showing impairment as a visually or symbolically distinct biophysical deficit in one person, a deficit that can and must be overcome through the display of physical prowess” [18]. It is a fantasy that underestimates the ability of the disabled and overly praises them, or that optimistically exaggerates no limitations for the disabled with examples of those who have special skills, such as Olympic athletes [18]. The emphasis on individual efforts diverts attention from the structural and systematic aspects [18], [19].

Given the features of inspiration porn, Yamasaki’s claim seems to mean that the shidō worked, encouraging students optimistically and criticizing what they failed to do. The shared fantasy constructed an ideal image for the students and encouraged them to make effort to make it real. By emphasizing the necessity of students’ efforts and praise, they stopped perceiving the structural and systematic aspects.

Based on the findings of previous studies [1]-[4], [13], the case discussed in this paper was nothing more than maltreatment. Regardless, former students often mentioned and appreciated the effectiveness of those shidō, even though they felt strongly about the negative aspects. Learning helplessness alone is insufficient for this reason. It is possible to view them as having not escaped the implications of their shidō, even though 10 years have passed, or that they are retrospectively glorifying their past suffering. However, from the standpoint of discussing the issue from the participants’ viewpoint, it is not the credibility of their perspective that should be considered; the social background that led them to hold such a view.

C. School Institution Justifying Emotional Maltreatment

According to Illich, myths make values measurable and producible through institutionalization [20]. Institutionalized values are increasingly produced by leading people to believe in the myths of self-perpetuating progress and to learn more. Schools provide institutionalized values for production and consumption and make people believe in a package of values: schools encourage consumption while creating need.

The production of knowledge consumption and values leads

to the affirmation of alienation. Knowledge production and consumption are external and driven by others. Therefore, the producers and consumers experience mental and physical exhaustion. They ruin their mind and are subjected to others through these acts; however, it does not matter if knowledge production and consumption are demanded [20]. In contrast, schools distinguish “pedagogy” from others. The boundary is for packaging values based on the market demand. The demand supporting alienation is created in school institutions and does not disappear until deschooling is achieved [20].

As knowledge production and consumption in schools means belonging to others, we suggest, it may be difficult to differentiate them from emotional maltreatment. Emotional maltreatment can be defined as physical and mental exhaustion and loss of oneself due to belonging to another person under the dominant background. Approval of emotional maltreatment has led to criticism of knowledge production and consumption in schools. Therefore, emotional maltreatment is not recognized by school institutions.

As learning belongs to others, it is difficult to construct personal discipline. All true master–pupil relationships are literally priceless but have no ulterior purpose [20]. It may appear meaningless from the viewpoint of others and is not established through systems. By contrast, the relationships constructed through institutions proceed to the schooling of desire.

Schools teach pupils to make their desires conform to institutionalized marketable values. Pupils learn that they are not “social men” until they are matured through the school system, and they tend to go under the supervision of teachers, the leaders giving special value, to get knowledge [20]. The company of teachers forces pupils to stay and requires them to decide on their learning processes [20]. They feel guilty when they do not behave according to the predictions of consumer research, such as a student not getting a grade [20].

Those who desire school believe that others should have the same desires. With the idea that valuable knowledge is a commodity that, under certain circumstances, may be forced into the consumer, they long for packaging value [20]. We are also convinced that good learning can and should be produced in us, and furthermore that we can produce it in others [20]. This leads to the assumption that one’s effort may change another’s desire, and that the action is not an object of disapproval.

The myth of self-perpetuating progress has accelerated this desire. While Illich stated that pedagogical therapists will drug their pupils more to teach them better, and students will drug themselves more to gain relief from the pressure and race for certification [20], now it gets to the point where teachers drug themselves to relieve pressure. People who believe in the myths of schooling do not doubt and criticize them. They are conceived that any acts in schools are “pedagogical,” therefore, negating “pedagogy” means negating school institutions and, by extension, themselves within it. As long as the school system is there, people inside the system hardly recognize maltreatment by believing in the goodness of “pedagogy.”

VII. CONCLUSION

This research revealed a pattern of emotional maltreatment and a structure that made emotional maltreatment unrecognizable. This discussion, in association with the cycle of violence, highlights the possibility of students learning helplessness. It also shows that the school system seldom highlights emotional maltreatment. People brought through the school system internalize the value of schools and expect others to have the same values. This is the mechanism of how teachers, parents, and even students prioritize “pedagogical” value or goodness and underestimate the other aspects of shidō.

The difficulty in recognizing emotional maltreatment in schools results from the emphasis on goodness in this context. In previous research, student maltreatment has been sometimes understood to be associated with personal traits or backgrounds [5]. However, this research highlights that emotional maltreatment emerges from a social background, including the education system and culture. This may also be the reason why emotional maltreatment is hard to survey and highlights the necessity of focusing on the school system itself, veiling the damage to students, not schoolteachers as perpetrators.

There is room to reconsider whether the perception that maltreatment can be distinguished from education is useful in an actual educational setting. Our recognition of emotional maltreatment was based on the judgment of what should be valued in the context and what it is acceptable to pay for the value. The school system allows people to accept maltreatment by providing educational value. It seems to be time to rethink not only the way of education but also our wider values.

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