

An Inspection of “Loss”: Principles of Social Welfare

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It is impossible for a person not to experience “loss” through life-long separation or death, but it is also a solemn matter. A narrative of a person’s life sometimes has loss as its central theme. At times it can determine a person’s life. To experience “loss” is not to “cast something aside” willfully. Rather it is to have another person taken from oneself, or to lose someone by provision of nature, without regard to one’s intention or against one’s will. It is something which happens in the “whirlpool of society,” the “whirlpool of time” and the “whirlpool of nature,” without relation to one’s own personal circumstances. To the person who experienced it, a loss may seem an unreasonable matter beyond one’s control, while from the perspective of the laws of nature, it should appear to be something obvious. The reason why life is often life called “beyond one’s control” is because it does not accord with one’s wishes. From the stand-point of the invariable law of “dependent origination,” it is only natural that it should be so. However, loss is an unfathomable “mystery,” and an “inconceivable” aspect of life.

The present paper consists of two parts. The first part focuses on my own fieldwork conducted in social welfare and clinical psychology institutions. I have taken up as my theme “the structure of social welfare,” “the structure of the family” and “the structure of the market,” However, I regret that there are points at which my study is not developed thoroughly enough or where it is lacking in analysis. In the second part, in order to investigate loss, I have taken up the “history” of people who have experi-

enced loss, such as Uryu Iwa, Kujo Takeko, Masaoka Shiki and a half-way handicapped person, who remains anonymous, whom I met in a clinical psychology insitution. In my analysis of historical people, I have inferred my conclusions from their activities and remaining writings. However, with such people, it is difficult to portray “the workings of the mind” vividly; there was also the problem that their historical backgrounds are different. On the other hand, with the case taken from clinical psychology, it was possible to portray the “workings of the mind” vividly, but I am afraid I was unable to demonstrate the changes that occurred in the mind.