

Relationship between home education and storytelling in the late Meiji era, especially the “fairy tale” theory of Iwaya Sazanami

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The subject of this paper is the “fairy tale” theory of Iwaya Sazanami, a Japanese children’s literature writer, and a clarification of the role played by storytelling in home education in the second half of Meiji era. First, the paper outlines Iwaya Sazanami’s work and activities relating to fairytales. Then, his theory of the home is compared with contemporary views of home education and the role of women. Finally, his view of childhood and the role of storytelling in home education are clarified by a look at his writings on fairy tale

The fundamental principle of both the home education theories and fairy tales of Iwaya Sazanami from the second half of the Meiji era to the Taisho era were the bolstering of Japan’s national power, so that it could build up a position in international diplomacy equal to that of the established great powers, such as the European powers and the United States. Therefore, for Iwaya, home training meant national education. It was important for fairy tales told to children at home to be “national” fairy tales. Moreover, Iwaya said, by using this type of education it became possible to teach not only at school or at home (carrying out an auxiliary school role), but to connect school, home and society, each playing its own role in the child’s education.

Furthermore, an important aspect of the fairy tales in Iwaya’s theory is that they should be told to children at home. This is because fairy tales are high-quality amusement for a child, and their imaginative world gives the child educational effects above and beyond sheer enjoyment.