

이민의 삶과 세대 차이

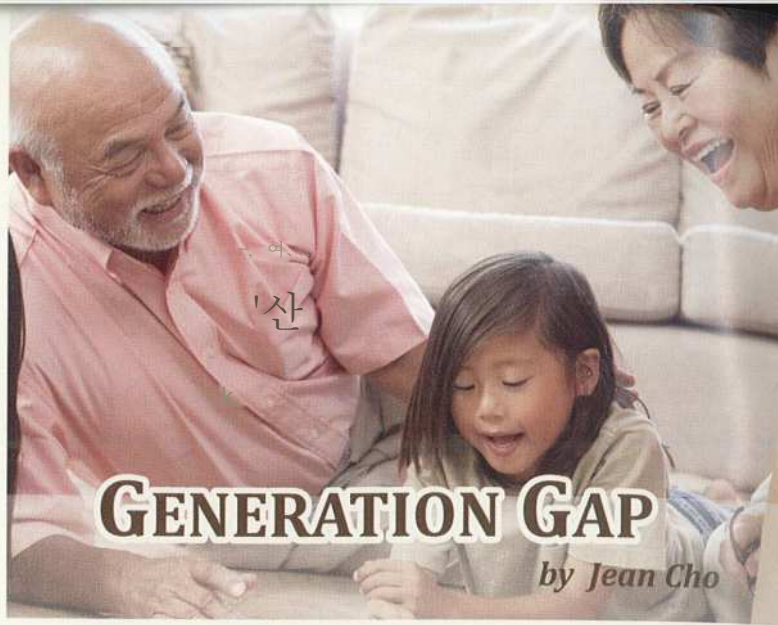
캐나다에서 이민의 삶을 사는 사람들은 새로운 나라의 기준에 따라서는 사회적 압력 속에 삶의 모든 영역에서 압박을 받는다. 그들은 엄청난 스트레스를 견디면서 생존을 위해 필사적으로 발버둥 치는 삶이 될 수밖에 없다. 복합문화의 사회 캐나다에서 한인들은 어쩌면 고독한 섬에 갇혀서 사는 모양인지도 모른다. 거대한 호수 위에 점점이 떠 있는 섬들이 종족별 이민 집단이라고 할 수 있다. 한인 이외의 외국 종족과 어울려 사는 한인들이 과연 얼마나 될지 생각해 보자. 언어장벽과 문화차이를 극복할 자신이 없고 두렵기 때문에 한인들끼리의 폐쇄된 문화에 길들여지고 있는 건 아닌지 성찰해 볼 필요가 있다.

반면에 자녀 세대는 이곳의 복합문화에 익숙해지고 서구식 자유분방한 가치관을 형성하고 있다. 그들은 비록 한인의 피를 이어받았지만 자라온 환경은 완전히 부모 세대와 다른 세상이다. 한 지붕 밑에 살지만 나가서 활동하는 환경은 전혀 이질적이기 때문에 세대 차이의 질과 양은 훨씬 심화될 수밖에 없는 구조를 지니고 있다.

세대 차이를 줄이려면

그 시대에 보편적인 청소년의 생각과 가치관의 흐름을 부정하는 부모 세대는 세대 차이를 느낄 수밖에 없다. 그렇다면 세대 차이를 줄이기 위한 대안은 없는 것일까? 세대 차이를 줄이는 가장 빠른 방법은 컴퓨터 사용문화 습득에 초점을 맞추는 것이다. 이제 문명의 이기인 컴퓨터를 사용해서 통신하는 SNS(Social Network Service) 알지 못하고는 의사소통의 기회마저 줄어들고 있기 때문이다. 이메일, 페이스북이나 카카오톡을 통한 통신이 보편화되어 있는데 언제까지 옛날 이야기만 하고 있을 수는 없는 노릇이다. 그렇다. 부모 세대와 자녀 세대가 적극적으로 대화를 시도해야 한다. 그런데 무슨 공통 주제와 관심사가 있어야 대화를 할 것 아닌가? 그렇다면 공통 주제와 관심사를 찾으면 된다. 자녀가 학생이라면 학교에서 배우는 것이 무엇인지 부모가 관심을 가져보면 될 것이다. 그리고 자녀가 무엇을 추구하고 노는지도 들여다볼 일이다. 게임을 좋아한다면 도대체 무슨 게임이길래 그렇게 재미있는지 한 번 동참해 보면 그들의 세계에 한발 다가가게 된다. 반대로 자녀 세대도 부모 세대의 가치관을 이해하는 노력을 기울이면 좋을 것이다. 그것은 역사적식을 갖는 것과 같다.

이차피 문화와 가치관은 돌고 도는 것이다. 한 시대를 풍미했던 가치관이 구시대적 유행으로 취급받다가 다시 복고풍으로 돌아오고 반복하는 것이 역사적 사실이다. 결국, 보편적인 진리를 가진 가치관은 인류에게 가장 유익한 방향으로 발전해 나가기 때문이다. 세대 차이를 극복하기 위한 노력은 개인적으로 쉽지 않다. 그렇기 때문에 생명의 전화 상담교육센터 같은 단체에서 마련하는 각종 패밀리 힐링 프로그램과 세대 간 대화 프로그램에 적극적으로 참여하는 것이 가장 좋은 방법이 될 것이다.



WHAT IS GENERATION GAP?

It is known that the phrase, "Children these days are impolite/ was written on a Pyramid in Egypt. Accordingly, one can infer that a Generation Gap has been prevalent throughout time. Generation Gap indicates dissimilarity in values and beliefs between different generations. It is influenced by many factors such as intellectual capacity, language use, technological capacity and cultural sensitivity. To put it frankly, it is the difference of attitude and views of society between the young and the old. Even within the same family, the members may have different worldly values based on age and upbringing. Formerly, it was thought that the greatest generation gap was between grandparents and their grandchildren, but in fact, the two generations may have more commonalities and the potential to overcome their differences. It is apparent that the biggest clash of generations exists between parents and their children. As a result of parents having direct influences on the nurture of their children and children having a tendency to rebel, the greatest generational divide is between children and their parents.

DIGITAL DIVIDE

The present Baby Boomer generation is most likely to experience Generation Gap with the strongest cultural impact. The world is rapidly changing with improvements in technology, medical care and quality of life as a whole. Following the Industrial Revolution, the Information Revolution contributes to the prevalent generational divide.

After World War II, the development of computers entirely changed the lifestyle of the human race. The Baby Boomers, who had no experiences with computers during their school years, were expected to make use of computers in their workplace. Despite having this rudimentary knowledge in computers, modern computer experts more commonly exist in younger generations. On the other hand, Generation X which followed the Baby Boomers is brought up in a technologically advanced society. It is difficult to imagine a world

without computers, smart phones and tablets. Everything can be done at the convenience of smart phones and tablets. Echo Boomers will be living as star players in an ubiquitous world. There is a Korean proverb that states, "Even rivers and mountains will be changed in 10 years/ In modern days, the technological advancement that can be achieved within 10 years is tremendous. This leads to the drastic impediment in communication between Baby Boomers and their children. The silly phrase of "Even twins feel generation gap" would also represent the speed of digital revolution.

COHORT

The cohort is a group of individuals of the same age, born in similar times and share analogous experiences. Since they share similar desires and ideals, they have common values and behavior patterns. Today's generation is known as Generation Z. They are more familiar with computers and the mass media than printed books and newspapers. They are also obsessed with popular celebrities and yearn to be like them. They are connected via cell phones and the Internet. Moreover, they imitate celebrities' speech, action and style and they are easily influenced to get plastic surgery to look like them.

By analyzing current generation gaps, one can conclude that it is a complicated social structure with the coexistence of two different generations; the older generation with 19th century ideals and the young generation with 21st century ideals.

CULTURE SHOCK

People living as an immigrant need to overcome culture shock to fit in to the new society. It is especially tough for first generation Koreans to deal with culture shock compared to their children who will grow up in Canada. Their children may also experience culture shock and as a result, their parents can empathize with the feeling of isolation.

Here is an example of culture shock. One day, a father scolds his daughter after seeing the dress she wore to go out. He asks, "Why are you wearing such a short skirt?" and that upset the daughter. She says, "Don't mind my skirt, you man!" After hearing "You man!" he misunderstands it as "you old man!" and got upset. It is easy to imagine what is going to happen next. The father becomes furious with his daughter for using such language. It is hard for the parent generation who were born and raised in Confucianism to accept the language based on the Western society culture. It is also hard for the children who were raised and received education in Canada to respect age rank and disciplines. The cultural difference between the parents and the children may cause conflict. One situation that may arise is when children report their parents to the police. Conversely, the parents may resent their children for not understanding their perspective.

LIFE OF IMMIGRANTS AND GENERATION GAP

Immigrants in Canada undergo certain social pressures living in a new country. They try to live their life under the stress of trying to fit in. Korean immigrants may feel as if they are on an isolated island living in Canada's multicultural society. Their life can be described as many small islands on an enormous lake. We need to consider the diversity of these islands and the cultures they represent. Moreover, it is important to consider whether Canadian-Korean immigrants are getting used to connecting with only Koreans society, since they are afraid of overcome language barriers and culture differences.

While children are different than parents, the children are accustomed to living in a multi-cultural life and western freewheeling life values. Even though their ethnicity is Korean, the environment for their growth is completely different than the parent generation. Although they live under the same roof, the generation gap is intensified since their lifestyle and habits are different.

IN ORDER TO REDUCE GENERATION GAP

Is there any solution to overcome the generation gap? The most effective solution is to focus on 'acquisition of computer use/ Now there are even less opportunities to communicate with people without using computers and the Internet, for example using SNS (Social Network Service). Parents and their children need to make an attempt to communicate with each other. While it is not easy to find common topics and interests to talk about, they both still need to try. If their children are students, parents can ask about their school life and about their interests and dreams. Additionally, parents can pay attention to what their children enjoy doing in their spare time. Instead of scolding them for playing games, they should talk about and play the game together. This would allow them to bond. Also the children need to try to understand the values of the parent generation. It is the same as having historical awareness.

In any case, cultures and values can trend as time passes. For instance, the values dominating an older period can resurface in subsequent generations. It is hard to overcome the effects of generation gap by oneself. Therefore, attending family healing and counseling programs and conversing with each other have positive effects. These services are provided by For You Telecare Family Service.

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