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# Contradictions of Recent Policies and Challenges of Movements for Social Education and/or Lifelong Education in Japan

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## Introduction

Japan Broadcasting Corporation made a particular program 'Working Poor' in 2006.

That summer I talked about the program with some prominent social education staff, Shinya Matsuoka who had worked long time in Kaizuka city.

This city is situated in the Kansai, the west part of Japan and had about 89,000 populations in 2013.

In the program, there came the old tailor who had spent happy life before, but then he suffered terrible poverty though he had continued to work hard in Senboku city. Senboku city is situated in the north east region of Japan and had about 32,000 populations in 2006.

When I expressed my sadness on his story, Matsuoka told me that he wondered social education staff there had done nothing for such situation. He also introduced a little about his own voluntary activities in some poor district in Kaizuka city. I had wanted to hear about his activities more from then.

This spring I had a chance to ask him to write his opinion about the role of learning at Kominkan for such poverty problems with his own activities for our journal, *the Monthly Journal Social Education*, in the August issue of 2013.

He pointed out the challenges for our social education movements rather than lessens, with introducing the severe episodes he met, in his article<sup>[1]</sup>. Moreover these episodes he introduced seem to uncover the contradictions of recent policies of social education in Japan.

So I will talk about these contradictions and also the challenges of social education movements with these episodes he introduced us.

## 1. Concentrating the Purpose of Social Education to Cultivate Manpower including Human Relations for Community Development

### (1) The previous analysis of mine about the tendencies of social education policies in Japan

From 1990s there have come two tendencies of social education policies in Japan. One is outsourcing. The other is to keeping some kinds of social education, especially for the parent educations, supporting schools and community developments.

In the former tendency, the governments should give up social education. In the latter one, the governments should be positive for social education.

Although some researcher analyzed them for the dilemma of the governments, I analyzed differently. I wrote that it was natural for them in my article in 1999<sup>[2]</sup>. In short the governments wanted to bring learning activities of people for their prefer purpose through the selection: which kinds of learning had to be supported publicly. I pointed out the problems for the commodification of learning activities that brought the reduction of the quality of learning and social education in the former tendency. I also pointed out the crisis of freedom of learning in the both of two tendencies.

### (2) Another stream of Lifelong Learning Policies

Lifelong learning policies in Japan have become to explore the market place for adult learning in 1990s. We used to point out the similarity of Lifelong Learning Promotion Maintenance Act to the so called resort law; the Law for Arranging Integrated Recreational Areas. So we can understand the motivation of the outsourcing policies is not only for reducing financial expenditure for local governments, but also for promoting private sectors to be provider of social education; the latter means exploring marketplace for adult learning, and the national Government promoted it much.

### (3) Changing of these tendency of social education policies under the Decentralization Policies

#### ① Recent 20 years Decentralization Policies in Japan

Recent strong decentralization policies have come from the mid of 90s in Japan. Social Education Law was changed under such situation and lost some of democratic characters for deregulation. These decentralization policies were introduced by public finance problem as well known, though the Government often explains as if their purpose would be to promote the autonomy of local governments.

The Government promoted to abandon public services and public regulations as much as possible. Local governments were guided to take the same policies invited by the Government.

#### ② Changes on the outsourcing policies of social education

Under such situation, the outsourcing policies in social education were accelerated and there have come two patterns of them. One is to outsource to profit corporations, not to semipublic sectors that they usually outsourced before. The other is to outsource to new stakeholders, those means nonprofit organizations or resident voluntary groups.

The former pattern looks more to be involved in market system and become less public. We can find it same to the previous direction of giving up of public support of adult learning.

But in the latter pattern, the local governments put a new meaning to outsourcing policies. In this pattern, the local government actually stat that the purpose of these outsourcing is mainly to make partnership with residents or civil society groups, not only for reducing finance.

### ③Changes on the selection policies of some kinds of learning

Recent about 10 years, we have met the issue of administration system of education in local governments. Education Board system are put on political discussion. Related to this situation, some municipal governments moved some social education subjects from the education part to the other general part of administration by using loophole of law.

In the early stage of these policies, the National Group of Mayors declared their wish of taking part of the administration of lifelong education including social education under their control in 2001<sup>[3]</sup>. Even the Central Educational Council seemed to accept their wish.

They usually explained about such changing that there was no problem because every part of administration of municipality already delivered educational programs for residents. Moreover the Central Educational Council has suggested the importance of strong partnership between the social education part and the other administration parts, including chief of local governments, recently<sup>[4]</sup>.

Along with these opinions about administration system, a lot of local governments and the Government also tell the necessity to recover local communities by making intimate connections among people. They also tell the necessity to get the support from residents to each part of administrations of local government, because of financial problem. They usually explained it because of the results of changed social structure.

Then the purpose of social education is strongly concentrated to motivate and involve people to local community activities with empowering them. Some researchers seem to want to suggest that social educations are same to local community activities.

The Government introduced a new community organizing system that municipality could set within them in order to repair the big merging of local governments. The Government strongly suggested these merging in the 90s decentralization policies in Japan. Related to this new system, some of municipalities, even well known of their excellent social education practices,

involved Kominkans, which were typical social education institutions in Japan, in to community organizing centers or similar named boards<sup>[5]</sup>.

## 2.What is the most important value of social education?

—from the episodes introduced by Shinya Matsuoka

### (1)After 10 years community development activities

Their community activities of Matsuoka were born from one class that was put on by the administration part of social education with some Kominkan in Kaizuka city. The purpose of the class was to motivate and empower people to engage in community activities. One member of the class lived in some poor district and he invited other members of the class to start the community development activities in his district. Then they made a group and developed a lot of activities including support the old people of this district. They settled their office and made a lot of events. First 10 years, residents of district gathered and enjoyed these events. The atmosphere was getting changing to active.

But recent few years, the power has been declining.

Main reason is the planners and supporters got older and sometimes go down by disease or injury. They themselves got down to need some support from others.

Adding this change of situation for community development activities, Matsuoka also introduced the severe situation of people, especial mind situation that he found during their activities. There are existed the exclusive prejudice to old people even in such district that have a lot of old people for residents. There is also rested the isolated feeling of sick old person. It cannot be easily removed. He also introduced the shocking case of a young volunteer. He was working hard for their voluntary activities. But some day he was arrested because he neglected his own mother in his house and she died without any care.

If we look at these cases, we can understand that the local governments too easy relied on resident activities in order to resolve their financial problems and also in order to recover the local community, can't we?

The role of social education, is it to promote residents to engage in such community activities? Is it for solving social problems directly as the governments often expected? Social education has to support residents by making a lot of chances for them to learn more profoundly, together with residents, doesn't it?

### (2) Suicide of an old woman after long year active learning experiences in Kominkan

Matsuoka also introduces another hard experience. Some old learner whom he met at his Kominkan killed herself a few years ago after getting over 80 years old. She started to go to Kominkan after retiring her job and was getting attracted by the learning activities in the Kominkan. She looked to continue

to enjoy learning with her friends she met there. But when she got around 80 years old, she started to mumble her loneliness and some day she abused Matsuoka that the leaning had played nothing for her at last. He was taking care for her with his wife. But he could not stop her suicide. Matsuoka seems to continue thinking about her death and the meaning of learning that she asked, for his heavy challenge.

The Central Educational Council have mentioned in their reports, how to support people to catch up this knowledge society, how to empower them to survive in this competitive society, in order to guide the education policies together with the community development as I already mentioned.

Through the question on the value of learning from the woman, and also the experiences of Matsuoka during his community activities, I remembered that we used to be more sensitive at the position of learning to the society. Learning, does it for changing the existed society or for adapting us to it?

This question may seem somewhat naïve, but it is essential question, isn't it?

### 3. Residents New Movements and Challenges of Social Education Movements

In 1970s and 80s we had a lot of residents movements to promote public social education services. They also cultivated a lot of resident participating system to create and decide social education policies of local governments.

Recent 20 years, these results have been pulled down in social education field.

But new generations who have enjoyed these results in social education find again the importance of these results when they face to the crisis of them.

We, Japan Association for Promotion of Social Education (JAPSE)<sup>[6]</sup> have had every year the National Study Conference of Social Education from 1961. This year we had the 53rd one in Chiba.

I have engaged in the workshop for Kominkan for over 20 years and have taken part to manage it for recent 20 years. This year I managed it for one of 18 workshops.

In this workshop, some reporter introduced their active political activities with negotiating with the education board because their local government suggested outsourcing their Kominkans. He met Kominkan and the learning activities after retirement. He said he was so surprised and much moved when he found out there were so good places and systems where he could enjoy his learning. Then he worked hard together with other residents and their groups for protecting Kominkans and their qualified systems.

Other two reporters are now coordinating their group named 'I love Kominkan'. Their Kominkan have served children care with no fee when parents attend some Kominkan classes. It was

result of previous movements for social education in their city. They had enjoyed this service. But someday the Kominkan started to ask the learners to pay fee for children care. They got confused then. But at the same time, a staff of the Kominkan opened the class for learning about Kominkan. So they attended the class and met there the older generation who have worked hard to make Kominkans better for residents. They also learnt about social education, Kominkan and the right to learn. The group 'I love Kominkan' was born from this class including both of old and new generation of resident learners. The two reporters have developed vivid activities for producing the opportunities to learn about Kominkan profoundly. They are also the members of the Council of Kominkan of their city, and moreover one of them is the president of it.

We are now planning to make a network of such residents' movements for Kominkan to exchange the way and ideas in respective cities with using the connection of these recent years' workshops on Kominkan at this National Study Conference of Social Education. It is these resident learners' movements that make social education and lifelong learning policies to go advance properly.

\*This is a presentation paper for 2013 EAFAE Seminar at Gwangmyeong City Lifelong Learning Center, Korea on 13th September, 2013. The theme of the Seminar is 'Citizen Empowerment for Creative Learning City'. EAFAE is East Asia Forum for Adult Education. It is an international network for research, practice and policy of adult education. I amended this paper a little after my presentation for this Year book.

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- [3] The National Group of Mayors, The Opinion about Strengthening the Relation between School and Local Community—promoting decentralized education and reviewing the role of education board—, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001, in Japanese.
- [4] The subcommittee for Lifelong Learning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Central Education Council, The results of discussion in the subcommittee of the 6<sup>th</sup> for Lifelong Learning of the 6th Central Education Council, January in 2013, in Japanese.
- [5] They are Iida city, Matsumoto city in Nagano prefecture, Tokorozawa

city in Saitama prefecture, and so on, for example.

[6] About JAPSE and the National Study Conference of Social Education, see to <http://japse.main.jp/> in Japanese.

Also see to, *Social Education/Adult Education in Japan: Policies, Practices and Movements during the Last 12 Years Analysis and Recommendations a Report from Civil Society Organization to the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education(CONFINTEA)*, ed. & pub.by Japanese Domestic Grass-roots Meeting for CONFINTEA, full page 190 in Japanese & in English.

<http://prof.mt.tama.hosei.ac.jp/~yarai/JDGMCON6/JDGMCON6jp.html>

Japanese version

<http://prof.mt.tama.hosei.ac.jp/~yarai/JDGMCON6/CSOsREPfinaljpcore100321.pdf>

English version

<http://prof.mt.tama.hosei.ac.jp/~yarai/JDGMCON6/CSOsREPfinalencore110712.pdf>



荒井容子 報告風景



Gwangmyeong City Lifelong Learning Center(building) (光明平生学習館)

※本稿は韓国、光明平生学習センターで行われ東アジア成人教育フォーラムの2013年セミナー「創造的な学習都市のための市民の力量形成」で9月13日に報告した原稿に若干の修正を加えたものである。以下、日本語での要約を示す。

## 日本の社会教育・生涯学習における

### 近年の諸政策の矛盾と市民運動の課題

筆者は2006年放映のNHKドキュメンタリー「ワーキングプア」に衝撃を受け、これについて貝塚市で長く社会教育の仕事に従事してきた社会教育主事、松岡伸也と話した際、貧困と向き合う社会教育の課題について示唆を受けたことがあった。その後、機会があり、松岡にそのような自身の実践を『月刊社会教育』誌で書いてもらったが、そこにはさらに衝撃的な事態が描かれていた。それらは、日本の社会教育・生涯学習政策のこの間の複雑な展開に潜む、矛盾についているように思われた。ここでは日本の社会教育・生涯学習政策の展開を分析したうえで、松岡が紹介したその衝撃的な事例をもとに、その政策に潜む矛盾を指摘

し、さらに、社会教育の諸制度の発展を推進し、またその蓄積の価値を受けつごうとする住民の運動にこそ、本来あるべき社会教育施策推進の方向が示されていると述べた。

## 1 地域開発のための、人間関係も含めた人的能力養成への、社会教育の目的の特化

日本の地方自治体による90年代の社会教育施策は、一方で財政削減を目的とする施策の外部委託が進められ、他方で家庭教育、学校支援、地域振興のための社会教育は自治体施策として重視するという二面性をもって展開されてきた。これを施策推進側の「ジレンマ」と捉える見解に対し、筆者は、それはむしろ人々の学びを選別する社会教育施策として一貫していると論じてきた。同じ90年代には「生涯学習」政策も積極的に展開されたが、その政策意図には「社会教育」事業を提供する民間企業育成という産業政策が関わっていた。従って、90年代の社会教育施策の外部委託施策は、「生涯学習」施策と関わって、財政削減を目的とするのみならず、「人々の学び」を市場経済の対象として産業



育成する施策意図にも関わっていく可能性をもっていた。

その後 1990 年代後半から強化された国による地方分権政策の中で、地方自治体の自主性に任せるとする説明の下、社会教育法に規定されていた住民参加規定が外されていく。また社会教育施策、とりわけ社会教育施設運営の外部委託は、委託先を公益団体とする規定が外され、民間営利企業に委託する流れと、地域住民の組織や非営利組織（NPO）に委託する流れの二つで進んでいく。

その後、生涯学習施策を自らの下に置こうとする地方公共団体の首長の主張と呼応するように、中央教育審議会はこの間、社会教育行政と一般行政との連携を推奨してきている。この中で社会教育の目的は、社会構造の変化により行政施策に住民の協力が必要になってきたとする首長部局の意向を受け、人々が地域活動に従事するよう動機づけることに限定されていく傾向にある。

いくつかの地方公共団体は、地方分権政策下に推進された市町村合併を補うように、日本の代表的社会教育施設の一つ、公民館のその目的を、小規模地域社会の組織化、活性化に特化したり、その教育機関としての位置づけをはずし、あるいは、教育施設ではない、地域振興のための施設の中にこれを包摂したりしている。

## 2 社会教育のもっとも重要な価値とは何か？

### ー松岡伸也が紹介した事例から考えるー

貝塚市の社会教育職員だった松岡伸也は、地域活動の担い手を養成する講座に自身も参加し、そこから仲間とともに貧困地域活性化の活動に取り組む。その活動は 10 年ほど、生き生きと展開し、成果も上がる。しかしその後、担い手の高齢化で活動が停滞する。さ

らに高齢者の孤独感と他方で高齢者を嫌う雰囲気の残存、支え合う関係の未成熟、活動に参加した青年の、家庭での実母への虐待等、松岡は衝撃的な事態に直面したという。

松岡が紹介したこの事態は、財政問題や地域社会活性化の課題を住民の活動に任せる行政の安易さを、また、社会教育の役割を直接そのような課題解決の活動に結びつける安易さを、問題として浮かび上がらせる。社会教育の目的は本来、住民が共に深く考える機会を提供することであるべきではなかったか。

松岡はまた貝塚市の社会教育事業の中で生き生きと学んできたある高齢の女性が、80 代になって、「学びは自分にとって何の役にも立たなかった」という厳しい言葉を投げかけて自死する事件に遭遇し、改めて社会教育の意味を深く問い直させられているという。

中央教育審議会はその報告の中で、人々に地域振興への従事を促すことの外、知識基盤社会に追いつき、競争社会を生き抜く力をつける必要を教育施策の課題として述べているが、松岡が紹介するこの高齢女性の問いは、逆に、かつてはよく語られた素直な、しかし本質的な問い、社会への適応のための学びか、変革のための学びかという問いを思い出させてくれる。

## 3 住民の新しい運動と社会教育運動の課題

日本の社会教育は実践・制度とも、1970 年代 80 年代の住民運動によってその質を高めてきた。その蓄積がここ 20 年の間に後退しつつあるが、その蓄積の恩恵を受けて学んできた人々が今その後退に直面し、改めて質の高い実践と制度を守る運動を展開し始めている。

このような住民自身の運動にこそ、社会教育及び生涯学習施策を全うに前進させるものたりうるのではないか。