A Historical Study of the Evening Class held at Municipal Junior High School in Postwar Japan:
The Problem of Secure the Right to Education for Over School Age People

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This study clarified the historical process, in which evening classes held at municipal junior high schools were formed, and the mechanism of existence of evening classes. Through these analyses, this study examined the problem of secure the educational right for over school-age people without receiving compulsory education in Japan.

Evening classes were opened for school-age pupil in 1950s, but in 1970s, the requirement for admission of evening classes shifted from school-age pupils to over school-age people without receiving compulsory education, and it is thought that there was the qualitative transformation of evening classes. There is essential difference between that school-age pupils go to the evening classes and that over school-age people. A wide variety of over school-age people enter evening classes from 1970s, and it continued until nowadays.

This study has two points of analysis. First, the legal positioning of evening classes, second, the social movement that support the existence of evening classes. This study consisting of two parts. In Part 1, this paper examined movement over the positioning of the legal system for evening classes from 1950s to 1980s. In Part 2, it tried to describe the social movement around evening classes from case studies. One is focusing on the establishment process of evening classes in City of Kawasaki and the other is that of Japanese language classes in evening classes in Tokyo junior high schools.

The academic contribution of this study has two points below. One is to have explicated how evening classes were persisted as a public education system from the historical point of view. Although it was mentioned the education functions from a viewpoint of the social inclusion of evening classes in previous studies. It can be said that evening classes were placed as part of history of education in postwar Japan by this research. The second to have analyzed of evening classes through tension related to evening classes on the governmental side as well as movement on the social and school side.

This study shows new three issues about evening classes as follows:
First, legal grounds for evening classes are indefinite. Evening classes looks to be
continued with well legal grounds but those are still insufficient. In such circumstances, continuation of evening classes has been expediently controlled by governments, and opening and continuation thereof have been affected by intention of a local government and social movements. Second, it pointed out that evening classes hides a problem, which is that right to education is limited to “school age pupils” in public education system. This is caused from that evening classes has been changed for over school-age people. It should be discussed how and which education system should secure the education opportunity to over school-age people. Third, there is legal contradiction in public education system. Over school-age people that has reflected who are not included from the education system and also constitution of Japan. It is often discussed on children of foreign residents. However, Japanese people are also affected by the problem as described above.