Talking about Pollution from 1971 to 2000: Changes in the Contents of the Supplementary Reader for Environmental Education

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Launched in 1971, the supplementary reader *Kogai no hanashi* (Talking about Pollution) was the first educational publication on the subject of pollution to be issued by a Japanese public body (the Tokyo Metropolitan Government). Since the back issues are invaluable as historical source materials, I have taken this opportunity to record the changes that occurred over the years in the typical contents of the elementary school edition.

The reader is still published today in altered form under the title *Kankyō to kogai* (The Environment and Pollution), its focus having shifted from pollution to the environment. By studying the changes in its actual contents, I hoped to retrace the historical process that led from what was originally known as "pollution education" to the "environmental education" seen in present-day Japan.

There have been two major revisions of the reader's contents; thus, its twenty-nine years of existence can be divided into three periods. The purpose of these revisions remains to be determined in future by, for example, gathering records kept by those involved. In this paper, I attempt to shed light on the changes by exploring an underlying factor, namely, the transition that was made by educators and environmental policy-makers from "pollution education" to "environmental education."

Several points relevant to the debate on the future of environmental education emerge from study of the reader’s contents and presentation methods: (1) There is a need to focus on the continuing presence of industrial pollution. (2) There is a need to show that campaigns of social action are effective in improving this situation. (3) Presenting actual pollution incidents probably helps students understand the relationship between the ecosystem and human behavior. (4) The reader material offers a wealth of outstanding teaching resources that should prove useful in future environmental studies.