The tangible stuff of education is classes, recess periods, extracurricular activities, school regulations, homework, teachers meeting, students socializing, and all the other minutiae of daily events that occur in thousands of schools throughout the school year. Each of us has been through long years of school. If we do not regularly go back to keep in touch, however, we quickly forget details and soon succumb to the abstractions of the public dialogue about education. The daily flow of classroom life seems remote from debates about budgets and pedagogical theories. The will and consciousness of citizens, bureaucrats, and politicians dwell on larger questions and choices, whereas the reality of what goes on in schools seems almost immaterial in its regularity.

Events in schools, that is, have a momentum of their own beyond the reach of administrative intent. What occurs in the flow of education does not always fit the abstract categories and distinctions used to shape general dialogues about the subject. We will start on the inside, with the concrete, by considering the differences in five carefully selected Japanese high schools.

These schools are distinguished by their place in a hierarchy that is constructed by a high school entrance system that allocates each student to a secondary school on the basis of ability. Our concern
here is simply to familiarize ourselves with the variety of schools such an approach produces. The five schools chosen for study represent the very top and bottom and three intermediate points in the hierarchy of high schools in Kobe. Each has a distinct orientation and subculture. Three of the five are primarily concerned with preparing their students for Japan's highly competitive university entrance exams, yet each occupies a separate niche in the competition. The two vocational schools have the official task of teaching practical skills, a job made difficult by the fact that they enroll the less able and less well-adjusted portion of each generation. The five schools thus represent five cross-sections of the educational order. In combination, they reveal much about the inner dynamics of Japanese society.

Otani

A bell rings in the hall, the chatting dies down, and students begin to move to their seats. Shortly the sliding door opens with an irritating rattle, and the teacher steps into a nearly quiet room. The students rise, some with a studied nonchalance. Once at the lectern, the teacher nods briefly, and in haphazard fashion the students bow in return. A few boys make no pretense of following this courtesy and simply stand a bit hunched over, but here and there other students bow formally. With few exceptions, these are well-scrubbed, clean-cut teenagers who come to school with carefully prepared lunch boxes. They carry their materials neatly in almost identical book bags, Snoopy insignia are popular with the girls and "Madison Square Garden—Boxing" bags with the boys.

The subject is social studies, and for the next fifty minutes the lecturer drones on about the relations of geography to economic development in Japanese history. Those with their textbooks open can see that he seldom diverges from the day's reading assignment. He has prepared thoroughly, and his delivery is persistently serious. He is a pro, but not an entertainer. He uses no visual aids, not even a map. His delivery marches on, punctuated with a few rhetorical questions that he answers without even looking up. Anecdotal materials creep in briefly, but he assiduously avoids diversions. During the lecture the "important points" and "things to remember" are regularly pointed out as the teacher moves over the day's material. Several times an approaching test is mentioned.

The students are trying to be attentive, but it is difficult for a seventeen-year-old to sit through a full day of such lectures. Some students, mostly boys, take notes seriously. Some unobtrusively pass nearly folded messages. Several have magazines tucked inside their book's out of the teacher's view. Those lucky enough to be sitting by the window bask in the warm autumn sunshine and periodically crane their necks to see what is going on outside. This is a quiet class, and almost no disciplinary action has been required all day. Just how much is being learned is another question. Only the results of the regular tests reveal the answer, as other forms of feedback from the students rarely occur.

Sitting at the back of this classroom all day causes me considerable discomfort. The lectures have generally been boring, and even the rare spitball prank offers little relief. After lunch, time seems to move especially slowly. Even I—a thirty-five-year-old possessed of a less youthful physiology than that of a student, and with all manner of lively research questions to investigate here—find the monotony almost insufferable at times. This is what my high school was like twenty years ago, I remind myself. Maybe it was not quite so dull. At least my American teachers expected answers to their questions, and they seemed to take pride in setting the textbook aside. Clearly, I am no longer used to this form of disguised imprisonment, and, knowing now that I have a choice, I am no longer ready to acquiesce.

I spent two months in Otani High School. Despite my best intentions, I was rarely able to force myself to sit through entire days with the students. Most often I satd forth from the teachers' room to attend a few classes, breaking the routine with interviews, readings of the files, and walking observations through the halls. I visited for classes to end just as much as the students did.

During the class breaks, at lunchtime, and after school Otani abounds with high-spirited activity. Take this particular day. When the bell announces the end of the hour and the teacher leaves, pandemonium breaks loose. Some girls scurry for the door to meet their boyfriends in the hall. Some head for the washroom. A boy in a stairwell begins practicing his trumpet. A Japanese chess game is brought out from under a desk and two students pick up their match where they left off after the last period. Several others look on. A small group gathers at another desk to study a car magazine. Two boys are at the blackboard working out a physics assignment. The hallways are full of smiling, noisy kids. Then suddenly it's all over. Ten min-
utes have passed. The bell rings, and a great scurry begins to get back into the classrooms, to straighten desks, and to stow away gear before the next lecture begins. As the next teacher enters, all becomes quiet once more.

In the late 1960s Otani experienced a brief moment of political drama. Several students, under the leadership of a handful of college radicals, occupied the school for several weeks. Students stayed home, parents fumed, and the faculty debated what to do. The occupying students were finally expelled (and later readmitted), and a set of minor reforms was instituted, including one that made school uniforms optional. In 1975, the majority of Otani students still wore their school uniforms or elements of them. Black pants and white shirts, tennis shoes, and black jackets in winter (patterned on nineteenth-century German student uniforms) is the traditional outfit for boys, and it is still much in evidence, but one does see an occasional pair of blue jeans, and many boys skip their coats. The girls’ uniform of white blouse, navy blue pleated skirt, white bobby socks, and navy blazer is often varied slightly with the substitution of a checkered blouse or the addition of a colorful sweater. However, clothes-conscious the Otani girls may secretly be, they have not made much of the opportunity created by the dress code to form to move toward fashion or diversity. Modesty and conformity still prevail.

Otani teachers regularly noted that their students were “average” or “typical.” Even on such observations, they commented: “Our students are neither very smart nor particularly slow.” Most come from “stable middle-class families.” Many teachers said, in effect, “They are good kids.” There may be no such thing as an average high school in Japan: when we take into consideration how many ways a school can be judged, but its teachers were making a generalization about Otani High School that is useful as a rough guideline: “in our effort to compare high schools in Kobe. Otani is an “academic” high school (jitsukō kōkō, literally, regular high school) belonging to the city-administered school system. Its students, about half boys and half girls, are studying a general curriculum geared to entering college. Sixty-five percent of Kobe’s high school students are attending academic high schools, and in terms of ability the Otani students rank about in the middle of this group. Thus, considering the full range of high schools in the city [including vocational and night schools], Otani is above average, but not markedly so.

Academic high schools like Otani are the single most numerous kind of school in Japan today. Sixty-eight percent of all secondary students are in schools with this kind of curriculum, both public and private. The public variety is somewhat more numerous and generally more highly regarded. Most of Japan’s university students are produced by public academic high schools. Nationwide, about 40 percent of all graduates are now advancing to higher education, but from the public academic high schools the rate is about 70 percent. Otani is typical of this kind of school.

Otani’s reputation as representative of Kobe’s high schools is reinforced by the teachers’ general observations about family background. Shopkeepers’ children mix with those from families of white-collar workers. There are some students from blue-collar families, but not many. Only one-quarter of the mothers work. An image of respectable, stable middle-class families also results from a reading of the hundreds of family information cards in the school office. There are exceptions, but such students blend in with the others.
Otani has few discipline problems. What worries teachers, parents, and students most is the gap between students’ ability and educational aspirations. As children of the urban middle class, the expectation is that they will go to college. Virtually all the boys are or should be striving to enter a four-year institution. Parental pressure on most girls is notably less. Should their daughters enter a junior college or go straight into a good job, many parents will be pleased. School statistics indicate clearly just such differences of aspiration. Of the 199 students who graduated in 1974, 63 percent went directly to some form of higher education—a figure well above the national average but just about average for academic high schools across the country. The number of Otani girls matriculating to higher education upon graduation was actually slightly higher than that of boys, but only 31 percent of the girls entered junior colleges, for which the competition is not intense. Less than 5 percent of the boys entered a junior college.

The figures concerning those who did not immediately enter higher education are also revealing. Twenty-five percent of all the girls graduating from Otani took jobs, but only 2 percent of the boys did. On the other hand, 39 percent of the boys and 8 percent of the girls chose to do a year of postgraduate study in hopes of passing some entrance exam on a second try. Typically, they were aiming at good graduate schools. If it is assumed that everyone in this group eventually succeeded in entering a four-year university, the final disposition of the Otani class of 1974 would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Junior College</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above estimate fits closely with the results of a questionnaire I gave to over one hundred juniors at Otani in 1975. Ninety-nine percent of the boys and 98 percent of the girls planned to go on to higher education. The same questionnaire revealed that 18 percent of the boys, but only 4 percent of the girls, were attending a private cram school (yobikō) in the late afternoons to supplement their entrance exam preparations.

This general pattern is typical of urban academic high schools in the public school system. It reveals among other things the special burdens for university preparation that fall on boys’ shoulders. If boys are of average ability, as in the Otani case, this burden can be heavy. Entrance exams are the major focus of school and parental concern. Teachers know that much of their school’s reputation hinges on the record their graduates achieve on entrance exams.

Most tailor their teaching to exam preparation and regularly judge one another by this standard. Inevitably, the students, the parents, and the world at large will judge academic high schools primarily on the basis of these results. As in American private secondary schooling, the most revealing information is where the graduates go to college.

Otani, however, seeks to be more than a machine for university preparation. About half the students are enrolled in some sort of after-school club activity. About one-third of the teachers are actively involved in supporting such activities. I have many warm memories of the noisy enthusiasm of Otani students on sports fields.

During lectures they are rarely excited or even very interested. When three o’clock arrives, their faces light up and they find new energy. Within a few minutes the class has become a rock band.

The Otani students actually enjoy school. The Otani students actually enjoy school.
The social and historical context

utility tolerance. Compared with other schools that fall in the middle range, I found the students at Otani more playful and naive, less burdened by the weight of their studies, yet the essential point is that in average Japanese high schools the level of order is high without undue exercise of authority. Students comply with the basic rules, written and unwritten, that protect classroom instruction.

The fun can go too far, however, as happened with one of the senior skits during Otani's bunkasai, or Culture Festival. The scene was a cowtown bar, complete with gunslingers at a poker table and dancing girls wearing red garters. The bad guys had started to push the girls around when in walked a version of Bruce Lee in black kung fu pants, swinging a pair of iron chaku sticks (Chinese traditional weapons), two blocks of hardwood connected by a chain. Using exaggerated Kabuki gestures, the skit was played out in hilarious fashion to its classic conclusion. The jokes were slightly risqué in several cases, and the cavorting of the bad guys and the dancing girls was a bit more authentic perhaps than is proper for young Japanese to effect, but to my American sensibilities the skit was a high point of creative exuberance. Rarely during my year in Japanese high schools did I witness events witty and imaginative, or as much fun as this. But most of the teachers were shaking their heads in disapproval as they talked about it later, and the principal scolded the third-year homeroom advisors for failing to closely supervise the students’ production. The jokes and latent sexuality had crossed the boundaries of Japanese good taste (boundaries I had not perceived), and the teachers were responsible.

This was a line that small-town Americans might have drawn before World War II. Otani, perhaps because it is a solid middle-class institution, must adhere to moral standards high. What struck me as quite old-fashioned behavior on the principal’s part seemed perfectly proper to the teachers and I am sure to any parents who heard of the matter. The atmosphere of relaxed student playfulness outside of class occurs within a framework of firm expectations about proper conduct that would seem highly puritanical by present American standards. This is the case in the majority of Japanese high schools.

Nada

Nada is the most famous high school in Japan. A private boys' school, it is located in the eastern part of Kobe, several miles from

Otna's. Since the mid-sixties, Nada has succeeded almost every year in placing more students in Tokyo University than any other school in the nation despite the small size of its graduating classes. Of its 230 to 245 annual graduates, the number gaining admittance to Tokyo, the nation’s top university, has averaged over a hundred from 1966 to 1976. Nada’s other graduates almost all take highly prized places in medical departments at lesser universities, or gain entrance to one of the other first-rank schools in Japan. The average high school student’s statistical chances of eventually entering Tokyo University are about 1 in 440, but for a Nada student they are almost 1 in 2.

A history class has been in progress for a few minutes. The subject is the Meiji Restoration, the coup d’état that opened the floodgates of change in 1868 and set Japan careening toward a modern existence. The teacher, a frail older man whose head is just visible from the back of the room, finishes his succinct review of the chronology and dramatics personae and begins firing questions at the class. What stages can we discern in the relationship between Satsuma and Choshu? What was the key internal problem within the Tokugawa house in the year 1866?

The majority of students are sitting up pretty straight now. A few continue to lounge with legs stretched out in front, somehow appearing comfortable on their hard wooden school seats—which are reminiscent of the kind now sold in antique shops in the United States. At the front is a group of boys whose hands shoot up in response to virtually every question, their faces ever alert and serious— caricatures of classroom virtue. The classroom itself is old, but hardly genteel. A nineteenth-century one-room schoolhouse with raised lectern, large blackboard, and a bank of windows on one side.

Class size is large in Japanese public high schools by American standards. Forty-four students is average, yet in private schools the average is larger still, at fifty-four. This Nada class has fifty-five boys. Some have long hair and casual dress, and others wear school uniforms and crew cuts. They fill every bit of space, leaving hardly enough room for the taller students to angle their legs out in the aisle.

The answers to the teacher's questions are notable. Sometimes someone gets one wrong, and there is jovial snickering from friends nearby, but most of the time the students' replies are crisp, detailed, and on the mark. Even those who assume a disinterested pose are alert to the proceedings and quick to note others' mistakes. No apo-
Tiring pauses follow questions as happened when, on rare occasions, questions were asked of the students at Otani and other high schools. Nada students obviously know their material backward and forward and feel little hesitancy in displaying their accomplishments. This is a senior class, and at Nada the national curriculum has been completed by senior year. At Nada (and almost nowhere else) the last year is devoted to intense review and exam preparation. Most academic high schools find the national high school curriculum too intensive to complete adequately by graduation, yet these Nada students are studying the Meiji Restoration for the second time. Now the teacher is going over the key details with them, the kind of details that just might make the difference on the entrance examination to Tokyo University. His questions are meticulously prepared with this in mind. In fact, he regularly reviews his substantial collection of past questions on the subject given by the top universities, and he knows those that have been particularly difficult for his students.

Toward the end of the hour something else occurred that was unique in my experience of Japanese education. The students actually debated in class the merits of several different interpretations of the history of the restoration. A few teachers in other schools I visited solicited student opinions on matters of interpretation, but never did I witness students ready and able to engage in a discussion of the relative merits of one argument over another. Only at Nada and other top schools are students far enough along in the way to self-confidence and independence of thought to venture publicly into the murky realms of interpretation. To accomplish this skill, by the way, is one of real help in passing examinations to Tokyo and other top universities. The point is that Nada students are not only exceptionally well versed in the facts; they are notably articulate and poised for their age. Having heard the school criticized by the media as precocious with cramming for exams, I expected the students to be somewhat anemic and compulsive bookworms, but that is not what I found. The boys are about as diverse, as healthy, and as athletic as those at Otani.

What makes Nada distinctive above all else is that it is an exceptionally well-oiled machine for producing successful candidates for the most cherished university places in Japan. It is like the Etos, the Harrows, and the Grotons in the significant role it plays in producing a nation’s future elite. Nada epitomizes Japan’s version of the elite school.3 Unfettered by public educational policies, it is one in a species of educational institution that in the last two decades has been progressively replacing the older elite public high schools at the top of the ladder of secondary education. There are not many such schools, but they have enjoyed spectacular success, and none more than Nada. Nada is famous in Japan today, and hardly a week goes by during the six months prior to the entrance exams in February and March when it is not mentioned in some national magazine. A novel about the school was recently serialized in one weekly news magazine, and a book by the school’s principal, full of study hints for aspiring university applicants, quickly became a commercial success.4

Unlike Etos or Groton, however, Nada is neither ancient nor rich, neither aristocratic nor magnificently endowed. Founded in 1948 with the patronage of three leading sake brewers, Nada initially enrolled students of upper-middle-class families who had failed to gain access to the few public academic high schools, which at that time were the focus of aspiration for all bright boys. Nada’s graduates typically went on to Japan’s second-ranking universities. The school was famous in prewar days for its judo teams, not its scholar.

3. On this subject see also Takakura (1979).
4. The species, elite school, includes several varieties that should be distinguished. One is the "lab" schools belonging to the education departments of a number of national universities. Though publicly funded, they are administered independently and can therefore gear up for exam preparation as Nada does. Among top private schools, the crucial distinction is between those like Nada that run from grades seven to twelve and those that run from grades one to twelve. Naturally, they differ because of the degree of pressure to study that their students have experienced in the elementary years: those entering a seventh-to-twelfth private school have had to prepare intensively to enter, whereas those in a one-to-twelve arrangement pass the entrance barrier when they are still in kindergarten. The notorious scramble to get into good kindergartens is largely a phenomenon of Tokyo because most top one-to-twelve private schools are located there.

5. The percentage of entering Tokyo University students from private and national "lab" schools has risen steadily from less than 10 percent in 1960 to over 30 percent in 1971—and to 48 percent in 1972. Equally dramatic has been a shift in the ranking of top secondary schools by the number of how many students are placed in Tokyo University. In 1951 the top ten were mostly public high schools, by 1972 the private and "lab" schools had taken over nearly all of the top ten; by 1980, nearly the top fifteen places. Forty-eight percent of the 1964 freshman class at Tokyo University came from private schools.

ship, and even in 1960, when its star began to rise, it was largely un-
known outside of the Kobe-Osaka region.

What caused the change? Not private wealth, but public policy. During
the 1950s, public school redistricting had cut off some very
able students in nearby suburbs from access to Kobe's best public
high schools. They went to Nada, and as they did well in college en-
trance exams, the school's reputation slowly climbed. The caliber of
students Nada could attract improved progressively, and by the
mid-sixties the school was climbing the charts of the nation's top
ten secondary schools as measured by success in entering Tokyo
University. It dominated that list as the country's top high school
during most of the seventies.

Unlike public high schools, which have just three grades, many
private schools in Japan embrace a larger segment of education.
Some of the most established offer classes at all levels, from primary
through university. Nada has a middle school, where three-quarters
of its students spend three years, entering directly from elementary
school. Only fifty-five students are accepted at the beginning of
ninth grade, and this entrance exam is highly competitive. Because
of its reputation, they get no choice of the best young stu-
dents in the heavily populated area that includes both Kobe and
Osaka. Elementary school teachers advise parents that only those
boys in the top 1 percent of the prefectural aptitude exams should
bother to apply to Nada, and even then only one in three is accepted.
Applicants for the first year, grade entrance count from as far away as
Hokkaido and Okinawa. Much of Nada's suc-

...
The front gate to Nada High School

The building in back is the gym, which was built before the war when the school was famous for its judo teams. The trees and plants inside the gate are all identified by tags in Japanese and English so that students will learn their names.

have a good chance of producing someone who can stand for the school's entrance examination with reasonable confidence.

Family conditions must be nearly ideal to produce boys able to enter Nada, and the school continues this pattern by maintaining optimal conditions for preparing strong candidates for university entrance examinations. Unlike public schools, where numerous goals and educational priorities are at cross-purposes, Nada and other elite private schools enjoy the luxury of pursuing a single major goal: entrance to the top universities. In fact, a construct of the ideal educational machine for this particular purpose looks very much like Nada:

1. students, faculty, and administration all committed to the same goals and priorities;
2. homogeneity of ability among students;
3. latitude to move forward in the curriculum as rapidly as possible;
4. no extraneous interference from educational requirements or philosophies or pedagogical practices that do not contribute to the central goal of preparation for entrance exams;
5. a conception of teachers as experts in their subjects as defined by university entrance examinations;
6. no limits on the school's ability to attract the most capable, well-prepared students;
7. a track record and reputation that draw the best applicants.

Nada comes close to fitting all these criteria, certainly much closer than even the public high schools, and only its lack of scholarship monies and its large class size are notable limitations.

Consider the fact that the senior year is spent in review. This acceleration is not achieved by some gargantuan labor but follows rather naturally the facts of the situation. Entering Nada students are exceptionally well prepared. Most are already a year ahead of others their age. The school has them for six years, and over that time it can accumulate its gain over the national curriculum in small annual increments. Fast tracking in other countries would have such students advancing into university-level work and engaging in independent research projects. In Japan, however, the magnitude of entrance exams has made independent research of virtually no consequence at the secondary level.

The faculty is made up of outstanding teachers largely selected from the public high schools. Nada recruits by offering no obligatory extracurricular work, better students, higher status, and no requirement to retire at age sixty. The school has no union problems, and this appeals to the teacher who wants to concentrate solely on an academic subject.

Obviously, Nada attracts excellent students, but it is worth noting that despite having entered the inside track in Japanese education, most of them continue to study hard. Many attend summer cram schools during vacations. They know that Nada alone does not guarantee admission to Tokyo University, that ultimately they will face the exams on their own. In each class there are students who lose interest or motivation and fall behind during the six years. Typically, they enter top-ranked private universities.
Nada's basic approach certainly challenges the ideals of liberal education and the well-rounded individual. Yet the school does in fact encourage participation in extracurricular activities, so long as this does not seriously interfere with exam preparation. Notwithstanding the single-mindedness of the faculty and the school's inherent efficiency as an exam preparation machine, Nada is a notably relaxed and lively place. Even without faculty supervision, after-school sports and other activities are popular, with more than half of the boys participating. And if student independence and self-government is the issue, Nada meets the test better than the four public schools I studied in Japan because the teachers give students so much discretion. As in all organizations, the delegation of authority must fit the capacity of those given the responsibility. Nada students are capable of carrying on club activities without teacher guidance.

The question of the faculty's role in personal guidance, in school discipline and morale, and in extracurricular activities—all crucial matters in public high schools—is of little consequence at Nada. Bright and self-confident students make a big difference. Whatever about the school's extracurricular life, from an active use of the library to broad participation in the preparation of the student literary magazine, reflects Nada's rich environment for education. The other high schools in Kobe that I studied placed greater emphasis on creating a full educational environment, but without almost constant faculty encouragement and support, all extracurricular activities would quickly flounder.

But there are clear limits to this educational atmosphere. Take the case of a Nada junior who had been selected to spend a year in the United States as an American Field Service exchange student. His spoken English was already far superior to that of his English teacher, and a year living with a family in rural California would make him virtually bilingual. The Nada teachers saw the matter differently. Spoken English, to begin with, is not on the university entrance examinations, and nothing the boy would learn during a year in an American high school would be of any help, either. During that year the student would begin to forget the exam-relevant material he had learned at Nada. In their estimation he would slip from being a strong candidate for Tokyo University to one whose chances were slim. A compromise was finally reached, since the boy was adamant. He would do an extra year at Nada after his return, making up the time "wasted" abroad. For Nada and for Japanese society in general, gaining special skills and experience means little if a student does not get into Tokyo University first.

Often in Japan one hears the lament that the examination system has caused sports to become the specialty of high schools and of students lacking academic aspirations. Indeed, the best national teams are generally produced by schools of low academic standing, schools that concentrate on sports just as Nada does on exams. College-bound students often avoid sports or quit them a year early, to focus exclusively on taking the entrance examinations. Nada no longer turns out strong sports teams, but it keeps quite a number in the field considering the constraints of exam preparation. The explanation I was given for this is that the school's accelerated approach leaves more leeway for extracurricular activities than is available to top students in public schools.

Teachers long associated with the school note a change in student character since Nada has become academically exceptional. Until the 1960s, they say, the school produced its share of writers, entertainers, and artists, but recently students with such inclinations are rare. A number of well-known comedians and actors and the novelists Endo Shusaku are graduates of the old Nada, but famous alumni from the next generation are likely to emerge in areas such as medical research, law, and government. Between one-quarter and one-third of each class chooses to study medicine today. One teacher observed that as university humanities departments attract more and more female applicants they appear less competitive and challenging to the ablest boys. In fact, it is easier to get into the literature and education departments at Tokyo, so naturally their prestige is lower.

For Nada students, this can be important. The elite-consciousness of the students is remarkable. In interviews with prowling journalists (not an uncommon phenomenon) there is always someone who, in answer to the inevitable question of what he wants to become, answers "prime minister." The sense of self-importance and stature shown by these students is not based on family, but on their own accomplishments. Their fathers are usually upper middle class but not prominent or powerful. During elementary school these boys were at the top, and they have already succeeded in entering Japan's best secondary school. Japanese parents do not fret about having a "brat" in the family, and no peer pressure descends on them for excelling at their studies. Most high school boys are simply worried...
about getting into some university, or whether to go to college at all, many Nada students have begun to worry about how they will use their elite education to serve the nation. In their precarious responsi-
bility as future leaders, they have decayed their own elite status
and protest, in a reverse form of self-congratulation, the exam-
oriented popular obsession that underwrites their self-importance.
The world over, elite education seems closely associated with a pe-
cular moral critique of social structure that in the abstract is egal-
itarian. Does making it to the top through education create a form of
guilt and righteousmess that the self-made do not experience? What-
ever the answer, social criticism is clearly a habit that Nada students
develop earlier than most.

Sakura

When Nada's students are heading home or already sitting around the
family dinner table, a group of their peers are just beginning their
classes at Sakura, a technical high school located just a few
blocks away. If the boys at Nada have exceptionally bright futures,
the prospects of Sakura's students are exceptionally bleak.

On a January evening, at 5:30 p.m., the sun has set an hour ago,
and it is very cold. The building lacks central heating, as almost all
older Japanese buildings do, and the only warm place when school
begins is the teachers' room with its two gas stoves. Students begin
collecting there. The older ones standing around are allowed to
smoke, something strictly forbidden in most schools. As class
rooms start being used, stoves are lit, but only by sitting near them
one can feel really warm. Most of the classrooms and hallways re-
main vacant because the night school has few students in compari-
son with the technical high school that occupies the same building
in the daytime. The clatter are like tiny ships in
a dark, cold sea. Most students remain bundled in their coats.
The school does not require uniforms, and school attire is varied. The
majority of students work at manual jobs, many in factories, many
ride motorcycles to school. They may even go to school wearing
socks, where between Bob Dylan, the Hell's Angels, and Ringo Starr. Oth-
ers, who come from offices or shops, tend toward Ivy League styles.
The humble of appearances seems almost impossible to an American
used to the symbolic hostilities and segregating aspects associated
with this range of dress styles in the United States.
very seriously either. As a vocational teacher remarked, "Just how well they master these skills will not affect their immediate job prospects greatly because high school graduates with technical training are in short supply." The very diligent student receives strong recommendations from teachers and special help in securing a particularly attractive job, but few find such favor worth the extra effort.

Even in the night school, going to college is the status goal. Despite accumulated disadvantages, nearly one-third of the second-year students at Sakurai say they hope to go to college. They are not expecting to enter by passing exams, however, but by being accepted into one of the private colleges with such low standards that being able to read, write, and pay tuition are all that is required for admission. The percentage who aspire to higher education drops considerably over the time before graduation, but the remarkable fact remains that some actually do go on to junior colleges and low-ranking private universities.

This makes sense only if we realize the popularity of education in Japan and the effects of mass education on schools at the bottom of the system. The declining level of educational attainment in night schools is a direct product of the growth in new public high schools. Only the weakest students are left for schools like Sakurai. Even among this group, however, the desire to go to college and thus escape the onerous social identity of being just a high school graduate is powerful. Mass education carries such consequences.

Nowhere in Japanese education are there more problems than in night high schools. In an era of nearly universal high school attendance, they have become something like the catch below the kitchen sink. Students failing to enter any daytime high school now gather in the night schools. This means that night schools generally enroll students from the lowest two percentiles (in terms of academic ability) of any ninth-grade graduating class. In the highly ranked world of urban high schools, Sakurai represents the bottom rung.

When first instituted in pre-World War II years, night schools were very different. They were established to serve the needs of poor but ambitious and able students who had to work to support themselves.

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9. About 5 percent of the nation's high school students were enrolled in night schools in 1940. Total enrollment in night schools declined by nearly 90 percent between 1945 and 1972, as more schools were built and more families decided to pay for private high schooling.
THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

while achieving a high school education. Until the late fifties, it must be remembered, a minority of Japanese obtained a high school diploma. Many night school students then were country boys who had taken urban jobs following graduation from junior high school. They hoped to move up in the world despite the disadvantages they faced, and night school was their opportunity. Working all day and going to school until ten or eleven at night taxed their endurance, to be sure, but they were ambitious and fairly able, inspiring hope. To their teachers and employers they often epitomized the especially popular image of the country boy making good in the big city. Their high spirits were joined by a sturdy optimism.

At Sakura, such students can still be found, but they are now few. The majority today come from city backgrounds, and about one-quarter do not even work during the day to support themselves. This is not to say that night school students are largely middle-class, for that is not true. Rather, most would have preferred to go to a daytime high school [public or private] but, failing acceptance, they turned to the night school as a last resort. The majority of Sakura students in 1971 applied for admission only after being rejected by several daytime high schools. Rarely are there more applications than openings to Sakura, and to fill its official quota of eighty freshmen the school has a late application period and has been willing to accept students clearly incapable of high school work. Dropout rates from high school in Japan as a whole average only 3 percent, but at Sakura less than half of those who enter stay to graduate. No one flunks out. The faculty is willing to ignore poor attendance and examination results. Diplomas are awarded to those who simply stick it out for four years. [Night schools require an extra year because there are fewer daily class hours.] Study itself may not be difficult, but simply finding the willpower to go night after night, including Saturdays, proves too much for half the students.

The teachers at Sakura were among the most devoted and skilled I met in Japan. Their students' problems were large enough and intrusive enough to push aside the more usual preoccupations of Japa-

FIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

new high school teachers with narrow subject matter and academic achievement. Most wish to teach better students, but once they accept the Sakura reality, many learn to cope and find fulfillment by relating to the individual needs of students—just the reverse emphasis from those at Nada. Yet to the competent and experienced core of Sakura teachers are added many young newcomers to the profession who must begin at the bottom of the professional pecking order. Anc in the night schools, there are some painfully inadequate older teachers nearing retirement. What keeps the able teachers in this kind of teaching? Many stay at Sakura because it allows them to pursue a second occupation or avocation during the day. Among the best Sakura teachers are an artist, a small businessman, a Christian minister, and a teacher who is studying English literature full-time in a university. Most newcomers, however, take their jobs at Sakura with the understanding that it is a first step up the ladder. They are impatient to move up to a daytime high school where what they learned in college has some relevance to their classroom performance. Turnover among young teachers is thus high. Sakura is a hardship post, and as such its leadership must cope with morale problems among teachers who wish for greener pastures.

There are also many things to praise about Sakura and reasons to take heart. Under such difficult conditions, the good teaching that does take place, the learning that is accomplished, and the warm human relationships that do develop seem especially notable. During class breaks, many students gather in the teachers' room to talk and joke in a pleasant, informal manner with the teachers. When it is time to leave for the next class, both students and teachers linger too long and are often late. In no other school I visited is there as close and friendly an atmosphere. There is more humanity and more candor all around. The proverbial Japanese propriety and restraint are not much in evidence here.

Okada

Perhaps because it is winter, everything in this school seems a bit muted and under wraps. At Okada student uniforms are required, and the dress code is followed with greater scrupulousness than in the other schools I have visited. The halls are relatively quiet, and...
more students nod politely to teachers as they pass. The formal bow before each class hour seems more comfortable to these students. In fact, several younger teachers with breezy manners appear to resent the ritual more than do their wards.

Classes are very much like those at Otani: hour-long, well-prepared lectures, interrupted by neither student disturbances nor discussions. More students are paying close attention here than at Otani, it seems, but the difference is slight, and it is quite possible that it was the sunny autumn weather rather than some intrinsic difference that made the Otani students seem brighter, more cheerful, and less soberly diligent.

Like Otani, Okada is a good high school in the minds of teachers and parents. Disciplinary problems are minimal, and nearly all of its 650 girls and 345 boys are headed for higher education. The school's atmosphere is decidedly serious. Unlike Otani, Okada belongs to the prefectural high school system. It possesses greater resources, a longer history, and a higher average level of student exam performance. The great majority of good academic high schools within Kobe actually belong to the prefectural administration. I selected Okada for my study to represent this general stratum within urban Japanese education. There are prefectural schools in Kobe superior to Okada, schools that until the mid-1960s occupied the local pinnacle of education where Nada now stands. There are also prefectural academic high schools below Okada on the ladder of status and performance. They look very much like Otani in their college entrance record.

Nearly all of Okada's graduates go to college, and about 10 percent attend some national or public university. [By contrast, more of Otani's graduates take jobs, and less than 5 percent attain places in national or public universities.] Very rarely does an Okada student succeed in entering Tokyo, Kyoto, or one of the other top-ranked schools. Only the three elite private schools and the three best prefectural high schools in the city can claim the distinction of turning out such students; Nada, of course, is far ahead of the rest. Still, Okada does better than most of Kobe's academic high schools in several respects. Few girls take jobs upon graduation, and more than 60 percent of them go on to four-year colleges. Recall that only 25 percent of Otani's female graduates advance to a four-year school. A

A biology class at Okada
Uniforms are required. Note the undecorated classroom and the loudspeaker above the blackboard.

solid group of Okada students also attends the better private four-year colleges each year, and fewer of them than of Otani students require a year of post-graduate study to gain acceptance. Clearly, the difference between the records of Okada's and Otani's students is not great in light of the much more striking contrasts that exist within the total Kobe school system. But to ambitious and concerned parents the nuance is universally noted and appreciated. Given the choice, very few indeed would fail to select Okada over Otani for their children, and even the teachers at Otani recognize the difference. When I told them that I was going next to do research at Okada, several said jokingly, "Find out what their methods are and tell us the secrets of their success."

Academic high schools all focus on the goal of college entrance, yet prefectural schools have the reputation of concentrating on this

11. For example, Doshisha, Ritsumeikan, and Kansai Universities.
goal more intensely than city-run schools. 12 Okada, in many ways nearly imperceptible to the untrained eye, confirms this stereotype.

During the third and final years, for example, class schedules are arranged so that those planning to take the entrance exams to science-oriented departments get a heavier dose of science and math, and those aiming at the liberal arts take more history. The school forbids its students from taking part-time work for several reasons, including the need to concentrate on studies. 13 Teachers are candid about the "facts of life" regarding entrance exams, and elective activities during school time have a much heavier load than elsewhere. Unlike Otani, Okada's library is crowded at lunch with browsers, and when teachers were ordered by the Ministry of Education to organize a weekly leisure-oriented elective hour (the rather pathetic result of official concern that Japanese schools were too single-mindedly oriented toward work), some Okada teachers persisted in offering foreign languages, science, and other subjects in the guise of hobbies. At both Okada and Otani one can find many teachers who view themselves as experts in their subjects, especially in the kinds of minutiae that can be objectively tested as on university entrance examinations. It is noteworthy in this regard that Nada recruits the most experienced and professional teachers out of the prefectural high schools.

One teacher moved there from Okada during my study.

Physically, the main school building is old, poorly lighted, and in general need of repairs. No other school I visited was as run-down. I was told that the broken windows were the work of neighborhood youth, not Okada students, and the explanation seemed plausible because the school is surrounded on two sides by clusters of slum-condition shack homes. But the essence of the problem is the school's age.

Okada celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in the early seventies. Before the war it had been a prefectural girls' high school, a publicically funded institution created on the lines of an upper-class finishing school. It had a special Western-style room where the fine points of foreign etiquette were practiced, and during the war its students dug air raid trenches in their bloomers and middy blouses. Coeducation arrived with the occupation, but teachers still claim that the students retain a "well-mannered passivity" from the school's previous incarnation.

In doing field research, a wealth of local history inevitably emerges that, to those working daily amid these memories and legacies, can be thoroughly absorbing, causing them to see the historical uniqueness of their school as the primary reality. I felt the magnetic charm of just such a perspective as the weeks went by in each of the five high schools I visited, and each move from one to the next came as a shock. Gradually I learned to balance the nature of the very different schools with the emerging picture of a system that ties them together into a single institution of secondary education. The perspective and actions of students and teachers cannot be understood unless their preoccupation with their own school is acknowledged, yet an interest in sociological analysis and generalization demand that one grasp the larger structural whole.

Yama

One spur of the Kobe Electric Railroad runs up Rokko mountain above the older and most heavily industrialized part of the city into a small plateau recently opened as a suburban area of modest family residences. Each morning it is filled with student commuters, many headed for Yama Commercial High School. As the train winds slowly up the mountain, it passes trains headed down, packed with office workers and their commuting children. To look down past the lush green of the mountaintop to the ugly grime-covered neighborhoods tucked in among the factories below leaves an indelible impression. The physical contrasts involved reflect basic dimensions of the sociology of Kobe society. This railway line, as it bisects the city's working-class neighborhoods near the harbor and the middle-class neighborhoods located on the higher ground, serves as a conduit between residential and educational elements that have been jumbled by history. The oldest and most prestigious public high schools are located below in the older neighborhoods, now lower-class, and the newer schools like Yama Commercial, low in prestige, have been built among the recently developed and more desirable residential areas.

Only a very naive visitor would mistake the quiet, clean surroundings and Yama's relatively new buildings as indicative of its charac-

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12. In Kobe there are nineteen prefectural high schools and thirteen city high schools.
13. For these reasons, see Chapter Nine.
ter. Japanese would notice that Yama students on the train rarely carry books, and they could not ignore the number of girls with "mature" hairdos and the number of boys sporting Elvis haircuts and foppish, strangely cut uniforms. Upon entering the school they would also notice a large sign publicizing the school's problem with tardiness. Because Yama is a vocational high school, such blatant indications that it has problems would confirm what Japanese already expect: vocational schools are known to collect the less able and the more troubled.

Yama draws its students from the lower third of Kobe's graduating ninth graders, and over 80 percent of Yama's students say that given a choice they would choose an academic high school. Few are proud or happy about being at Yama. Because they fell below the entrance requirements to public academic high schools and because typically they cannot afford private schools, they enter Yama by default. Under these conditions, faculty and students find it difficult to be enthusiastic about their common tasks. This is a poor foundation on which to run a school, but other problems of a critical nature also plague Yama.

The character of the vocational curriculum holds no particular interest or future advantage for many students. They see it as block- ing the way of preparing for higher education, a dream that more than one-third of the students still harbor, regardless of their previously poor performance. Yama, furthermore, has more than four girls for every boy, and this, too, is the source of problems. The reason is that commercial high schools are preferred by girls and technical ones by boys in what is in effect a voluntary sex role bifurcation, despite the official policy of coeducation. In the United States the same bifurcation occurs at the course level in such subjects as technical drawing, auto mechanics, and art, but in Kobe this means separate schooling.

If Yama itself is a disadvantage, compared with academic schools like Otani and Okada, many of its students also have problems at home. Teachers say poverty and broken homes hang like a dark shadow over student life. In some of the worst cases, school seems like an opportunity and a blessing in comparison with conditions at home.

15. See ibid., p. 39.

There has been considerable talk in Kobe of closing the vocational schools, due to their unpopularity and the particular difficulties of educating students uninterested in the vocational curriculum. Twenty years ago, when nearly half of all young people were not even going to high school, vocational schools were hard to enter, and the diploma meant better pay and employment. But as academic high schools became more available, vocational schools began to decline. The general quality of vocational school graduates has dropped notably, and as a result companies view vocational training with little respect. Vocational schools now carry a stigma, and parents worry about bad peer influences.

The presence of large numbers of tenured teachers of vocational subjects, firmly supported by the teachers' union, and unresolved policy questions about educational opportunity, deadlocks the issue of closing the vocational schools. Viewed objectively, the needs of the Japanese society are for more, not less, vocational training and for less, not more, university graduates. The bachelor's degree is devalued as more and more receive it, yet demand grows for many technical skills. But Japan, like the United States, has entered an age of mass higher education, and the trend is difficult to reverse. Vocational high schools are caught in the middle of this historical disjunction.

We might begin by asking what actually happens to the graduates of Yama Commercial High School. The class of 1974, which lost ten members along the way, had 102 girls and 43 boys at graduation. Seventy-eight percent of the girls and 61 percent of the boys took jobs, mostly in large firms, where they began working in clerical positions. Another 40 students (10 percent) are listed as working at home or attending special schools, such as those for beauticians or auto mechanics. Fifty-seven seniors (14 percent) went on to higher education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Junior College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As at Otani, more Yama boys than girls go to universities. The opposite is true of junior colleges. But the caliber of the schools involved is very different from those to which Otani or Okada stu-
dent's are heading. Yama students enter universities and junior colleges that have very low admissions standards. Often a teacher's recommendation suffices, and there is merely a perfunctory entrance examination. Four or five Yama students, invariably boys, do a year of exam study hoping to gain acceptance to a university of some higher status. Yama clearly stands above Sakura, the night school, as far as future prospects are concerned, but a great gap exists between Yama and academic Otani in the scholastic achievements of graduates.

Although many talk of wishing to go to universities, most Yama students still view high school as the last stage of their education. They have no strong reason to study. They are pressured neither by the prospect of entrance examinations nor by employment worries. Companies rarely look closely at grades, and the demand for high school graduates has remained high in Japan even during recent recessions. Yama students who do no homework and pay no attention in class are about as likely to get a reasonable job as their more studious peers.

During my first day at Yama, one of the teachers took me on a tour of the school. Walking around outside, we found several girls sitting behind a building drinking coffee. My escort asked them firmly where they belonged, and they explained that their class was doing "self-study" (jishū)—meaning that the teacher for that hour had not shown up. They got up quickly and hurried back to their room. As we passed their classroom later, two boys suddenly climbed out a window and walked out the school gate.

Other scenes come to mind. A young male teacher is trying to explain English grammar to a class of largely inattentive students. One girl is brushing a friend's hair. Several students are staring out the window, others are passing around movie magazines, and a handful of boys in the back talk incessantly. The teacher tries to make jokes, but they are too witty for the students, and he laughs alone. In fact, it seems he is lecturing to himself. Clearly, he has not yet learned to control his class. More experienced Yama teachers use thoroughly planned exercises that force all students to pay attention. They do not hesitate to play the role of drill sergeant when disturbances arise. This teacher complains that the students have no interest in his subject and that the text is over their heads. He wishes he could be transferred. Perhaps the students with the same.

At noon, many students leave the grounds to eat in one of the small restaurants in the neighborhood. Not only does this add to the eternal tardiness problem, other temptations are involved, and a few students skip afternoon classes. Once several came back acting rather silly and could not settle down in class. Going to speak to them, the teacher noticed the smell of alcohol. "We are some whiskey bonbons" was the explanation. Unsatisfied with the answer, the teacher pursued the matter after class and discovered that a group of students had in fact wandered into a candy store at lunchtime and bought small (decorative) bottles of whiskey that they naively quaffed on the way back to school. They were almost as surprised as the teacher at the result.

Such innocent developments occur along with less easily dismissed problems. During my time at Yama the wall between the boys' and girls' lavatories was attacked with what must have been a sledgehammer. The floor was strewn with cigarette butts, a symbolic expression of defiance as well as a sign that the vandals were nervously trying to act tough. But such destruction is rare at Yama. The school is in a good neighborhood, and it shows no signs of external vandalism. The culprits in this case were never caught, but everyone speculated that Yama boys were involved.

About twice a year Yama boys get into a fight with a group from some other school. Schools known for being tough tend to maintain rivalries, though Yama has too many girls to be high on the list. Such fights are not part of the academic high school student's world. According to the teacher in charge of Yama discipline, only about 10 percent of the students are involved in trouble during their high school careers, so it is unfair to portray the entire school in terms of delinquency. But in comparison with the academic high schools I have described, the proclivity for delinquency and the discipline problems this creates for teachers is a hallmark of Yama and other schools in the lower third of Japanese urban education. 16

As with most schools, Yama prohibits smoking off as well as on campus, but a school survey shows that about 30 percent of the older students smoke. Another school rule prohibits motorcycle riding. Accidents and arrests reveal that many boys break this rule. It is worth noting that the teachers have remained firm in their insis-

16. The issue of delinquency as it correlates with school types is taken up in Chapter Nine.
tence on these prohibitions despite the knowledge that they are con-
trary to student custom and difficult to enforce. "Teachers should
know what is best" and "There is a right and wrong way in these
matters" are their explanations for taking responsibility over what
in the United States would be considered private matters.

To Americans accustomed to much more serious conditions in
urban high schools, Yama may seem tame, but to Japanese, the
school's problems are deeply disturbing. With 96 percent of Kobe's
young people now in high school, teachers in schools like Yama and
in low-status prides themselves facing problems that high schools
even ten years ago did not have to face. They are not well
equipped to handle delinquency or lack of motivation. Ten
years ago most vocational school students were going directly to
work after ninth grade. A work environment created very different
pressures, under which no peer subculture supported delinquency.

To my surprise, Yama students participate in extracurricular ac-
tivities at about the same rate as students in academic high schools.
Several of the girls' teams, in fact, are among the strongest in the
city. The boys' sports teams suffer, however, and sometimes do
not even have enough members to practice properly. Only on the sports
fields does Yama have much life in the afternoons; many clubs are
dormant. A few girls meet eagerly once a week with the art teacher
to draw. "He's been to Paris," they remark in awe, and "he doesn't
think like a Japanese." And a music club is busy, too, thanks to
a music teacher, but not enough dedicated teachers. But then enough teachers stay around to help. Those that do tell of enthusiasm but little leadership or organi-
zational ability among the students. They say teacher guidance is
crucial to the maintenance of extracurricular activities.

Yama's annual Culture Festival is an illustration. A teacher who
had been staying past six o'clock most nights for several weeks,
helping her homeroom prepare its musical presentation, noted, "In
most things they learn slowly, they don't concentrate well. There
are disturbances, and many not show up regularly. All the same,
they want to do a good job and feel great pride in their performance."

Some of the girls want to see their boyfriends downtown after school,
and some students work at part-time jobs. Teachers have to work
hard to shape a satisfactory presentation for an event like the festival.

Participation in a general problem. Many Yama students do not
want to participate in school events. Large or small extracurricular
efforts are thus more problematic than in academic high schools.
At vocational schools such as Yama, organizational skills, free time, and
self-confidence among students are in as short supply as academic
interest, preparation, and ability.

Summary

Obviously, the spectrum of differences among high schools in urban
Japan is large, though perhaps not as large as in nations with greater
ethnic and social diversity. Key questions arise: To what extent does
the school ranking reflect differences of family background? Does
sorcery by entrance examination calibrate socioeconomic factors
with the structure of educational outcomes? The answers help mea-
sure mobility and social hierarchy in Japan.

A spectrum of school subcultures apparently exists that correlates
academic achievement, orderly behavior, high morale, and a preoc-
pation with university entrance exams, on the one hand, and, on
the other, academic difficulties, delinquent tendencies, and low mo-
rale. Each of the five schools has its own balance of these two sets of
qualities (see Table A for a simple comparison). Here is evidence that
Japan, like the United States, has great problems extending second-
ary education to an entire population. The growing power and pres-
tige of private education at the elite end and the many frustrations of
vocational and night schools at the other give witness to fundamen-
tal problems with the public policy of universal education. That
quality and equality are countertop ambitions is no surprise, but
the role of high school and university entrance exams in shaping
both seems unusual, at least to Americans.

The differences among high schools in Kobe should warn us
against making facile generalizations. Clearly, neither Japanese so-
ciety nor its high schools are monolithic, a point too regularly
ignored in foreign treatments of Japan. The basic observational
grounding of this book is these five schools. The challenge is to re-
tain a focus on diversity while considering Japanese high school edu-
cation as a whole. Both levels of generalization are crucial.

Indeed, many common threads run through all five schools. They
share the same cultural heritage and general history. They are dif-
ferentiated, positioned, and defined largely by the same system of
high school and university entrance examinations. Their admin-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Approximate Enrollment</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Advancing to University</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Advancing to Junior College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nada</td>
<td>Private, academic</td>
<td>675 boys</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okada</td>
<td>Prefectural, academic</td>
<td>650 girls</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otani</td>
<td>City, academic</td>
<td>610 girls</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>City, commercial</td>
<td>900 girls</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakura</td>
<td>City, night technical</td>
<td>210 boys</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative structures, schedules, textbooks, and curricular designs are largely generated by the same Ministry of Education formulas. Their subcultural differences constitute a single evaluative set for parents, students, and the teacher corps. Finally, teachers circulate among a city's public schools, and their union's perspective and political activities embrace nearly the entire spectrum.