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**Ritual and Social Change: A Japanese Example  
University School Festivals**

A Dissertation Presented

by

**Alfredo Ruiz Varela**

to

The Graduate School

in Partial fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

(Socio-Cultural Anthropology)

Stony Brook University

May 2007

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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As social change occurs new constructions of power emerge, economic relationships may change or the composition of domestic arrangements may come under extreme pressure to adjust to new demands for labor (Robertson 1991). In addition to these socio-economic changes, rituals are often affected as they suggest new systems of beliefs and understandings about these changes. Rituals once deemed essential-if not at least popular-often change, adjust to new social priorities or risk becoming less practiced (Schnell 1999, Bestor 1989, and Reischauer 1988). Contemporary rituals may be invented or old ones rediscovered with new meanings ascribed that better fit the present (Holy 1996). In the most basic terms the practice of rituals reflects the current - sometimes immediate state of a society (Geertz 1957) by providing a forum within which participants recreate their identities and, by extension, social norms.

This dissertation examines the practice of three university level ritual activities in order to demonstrate this general principle. Furthermore, the data presented adds support to the proposition that Japanese society is in the midst of a shift away from many of the characteristics that have long been identified as essential to "Japaneseness." As Miyanaga (1990) suggested, sections of Japanese society have always operated at the fringes generating new modes of thought or, as she characterizes them, "a creative edge." While presenting a set of interesting data, I disagree with Miyanaga's assertion that such innovation is a recent

phenomenon occurring only at the fringes of society and instead believe social creativeness is embedded in all societies. In this dissertation, I demonstrate one area where it is evident.

I begin with Geertz's (1957) reconstruction of ritual as both a mirror of societies' ideals and an expression of its tension to examine Japanese university school festivals as they fit within the yearly cycle of other university level rituals. I suggest that the university school festival is a ritual event that has shifted in its focus and practice, reflecting changes in Japanese society. When compared to other university level rituals these changes are mirrored in the support and level of participation the various rituals receive. Such changes demonstrate the shifts occurring in the manner Japanese society is organized and highlights the flexibility inherent in the rituals as a result of their mode of practice.

The examples presented here demonstrate that rituals both guide and are guided by the participants. However, it is clear that those rituals with greatest degree of interpretations foster greater participation in a society with an individual centered ideology. Following Schnell's (1995) example, I also conclude that ritual actions are often political in nature. As such, as Japanese society moves from social and hierarchical ideals to egalitarian and individualistic ones, associated rituals will emerge and gain support.

Examination of the evolution of school festivals allows for the presentation of a model of the "life-cycle" of ritual. The model presented indicates how rituals span generational lines as well as offering insight into process of change and the eventual end of specific ritual activities.

**For Hiroko, Angie, Erina, Sarina and Kariña, my angels, and all the students whose hard work and effort created spaces of great joy and learning.**

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank everyone who assisted me in the writing and preparation of this dissertation. All the students, faculty and staff at Hokkaido University, Hokkaido University of Education, Tokai University, Tokyo Denki University and Waseda University, thank you for sharing in good times and difficult times. To my committee who demonstrated great patience and support all the way to the end, “hontoni arigatou gozaimasu”. To Takeshi Akiba, I hope you will continue to share your opinions and viewpoints with everyone – remember change comes slowly. Most of all I want to thank my family who suffered a thousand times more than I and who gave me the determination to finish.

## Introduction

### North-sea University

It is April 1998 on a cold wintry morning. Snow still lingers on much of this university campus in northern Japan as students in their new business suits and formal kimono exit the university gymnasium where the official *nyugakushiki* (entrance ceremony) has just ended. While many of the larger and more prestigious colleges and universities hold their ceremonies in public auditoriums near the center of the city, the administration of this small branch campus of North-sea University has elected to hold the entrance ceremony on school grounds. While “wishing to generate a sense of community early in the students’ academic career” is the official reason for this choice, a recent period of declining enrollment has forced the school to take into account the cost of renting a hall and transporting students, parents and other guests across town.

Most students do not comment on this difference, though they are well aware it signifies a disparity in status between “their university” and those of their high school cohort. Others note that had they graduated from high school five years earlier they probably would not have had the opportunity to attend college or might have been forced to choose between one of the “country schools” or two-year private business and technical schools. Their entrance now was made possible by a sharp decline in the birthrate and consequently the number of university applicants. North-sea University sits on the fringes of the capital city of a prefecture at the edge of Japan. However, it does have some status as a branch campus of a prestigious Tokyo-based university, and because every year a few ambitious students are able to transfer to the main campus, few students complain about the extra effort required to get to North-sea University, which sits on the rise of a small mountainside more famous for a ski slope.

For those students who are less than enthusiastic about their education, the entrance ceremony was at least a good opportunity to catch up on some sleep as various university dignitaries and alumni made speeches welcoming the students. In fact those who dozed off were thankful for the somnolent respite, the product of a ceremony that requires no more from the students than their physical attendance. But as they leave the formality of the gymnasium all thoughts of ceremonies and coursework to come, as well as daydreams, are erased from their minds and replaced with the shouts and catcalls of their *senpai* (upperclassmen).

As the ceremony was taking place inside, second- and third-year students were quickly preparing signs, leaflets and other attention-grabbing incentives in order to recruit students into their student club or the less formal student circles. Thus begins the career of most university students in Japan, and though not immediate in their thoughts, this is their entrance into the cycle of *gakuensai* (university school festivals).

### **Club, circle or something else?**

Marie Sato, one of these students, recalled the confusion she felt as she was assaulted on all sides: “I thought I had made up my mind to focus on my department student circle but everyone was so friendly and excited I started to consider what other clubs I could join. After we exchanged names and telephone numbers (during the entrance ceremony) one of the other students sitting next to me in the entrance ceremony said I should join a club as a good way to meet boys outside of my department.”

For many, student clubs and circles create the social nexus around which their longest-lasting friendships will be formed. As noted by McVeigh (1998), Japanese university is not always as academically challenging as it might be, and thus students have considerable time and energy to devote to the student group of their choice. It is also through these groups that they will make their main contribution to the university school festival. While most of the clubs and circles focus on a particular sport or creative activity (photography, anime drawing, etc.) they all recognize the responsibility to actively participate in the school festival. Members of these groups also recognize the implicit advantages of doing so.

Student groups come together around activities that are very demanding in terms of time and financial resources. Often students take on part-time jobs in order to pay for the cost of belonging to a sports team or to engage in an activity. Apart from the main focus of the group, many of these groups engage in trips and enter tournaments. While the university administration contributes substantial money to the student government council, which then distributes it to various student organizations, relatively little of the money is used directly for these expenses. Consequently, the students themselves often must cover any extra fees for club activities. Most of the funds student groups receive from the student council are designated as seed money to engage in fund-raising activities during the school festival, and as a result many students are committed to participating. However, on this entrance day most students simply want to find a group of like-minded individuals who share a common interest.

Clubs are generally the more formal of the two types of student groups and are frequently organized around a competitive activity. Most university sports

teams are recognized as clubs or *bukatsu* (teams), though intramural teams are most commonly recognized as circles. Clubs can also at times have semi-academic status if they engage in an activity related to their coursework. Some departments have clubs; there could be a literary club or English speakers club, for example. Circles by contrast are less formal and more centered on *asobi* or “having fun”. A photography circle organizing a mountain hike intended to offer the opportunity to do nature photography might find that only one or two members will bring a camera, the remainder of the group more intent on engaging in conversation or the shared meal that occurs at the end. A tennis circle will meet to play informally every week but hold a big event in winter over a weekend ski trip.

One other student group, which has a slightly different status, is the “*iinkai*” or committee. Student committees operate generally in the frame of the student government and serve specific roles related to its functioning. The most prestigious of these is the university festival committee (*gakkousaijikkouiinkai*), which receives the largest share of student government funding. The school festival committee is also the most demanding on students’ time, as planning and preparation take place throughout the year.

Ai and Marie, two students who decided to join the university festival committee, explain “we had fun in high school working on the school festival and thought it was be a good thing to do here. We knew it would give us the chance to meet many people, even off campus, and have a number of responsibilities.”

While still months away, for the school festival committee a healthy recruitment is vital to the success of the school festival itself. As one member states, “We all work together but the first-year students are the most energetic and active.”

At North-sea University on this day, the festival planning committee is the most organized of the groups soliciting membership. Twenty or so students dressed in blue and red “*happi*” coats stand in front of a large hand-painted sign welcoming students and listing the time and place of the first formal meeting of the year. Except for the two students holding the sign, everyone has leaflets with a miniature replica of the larger sign. As they hand these out to students they engage them in conversation about the benefits of the committee. “It is a great way to meet people.” “Do you like drinking?” “It is some work, but we feel great and it is a lot of fun.” Others explain that for those interested in going into entertainment or event planning this is a perfect opportunity to get experience. This last comment is a strong draw for some students.

In Japan, advertisers rely heavily on traditional media to get their message out, yet at least an equal share is spent on holding events designed to make a personal connection between people and their products. From handing out samples on street corners to sponsoring elaborate stage events, companies make

large investments to add this personal touch. Ari Yamazaki, an event planner and announcer based in Hokkaido, explained that when interviewing for her staff she almost exclusively favored recent graduates who had served on the university festival planning committee. She recognized that their experience translated very well into the type of public relations work she specialized in and had seen some of her employees move successfully into more professional marketing positions.

On this particular day the team from the committee feels satisfied that they made a good impression and had enough firm commitments from students to organize a good working group for the coming year. One member comments that there are always people who join later so “[we should] definitely be fine”. With that, students roll up their sign, make plans to post any remaining leaflets around campus, and break off into smaller groups, with conversations returning to the coming year, their academic schedule and the next drinking party.

### **Planning and organization**

Weekly planning meetings for the new recruits begin during the first week of classes and students immediately get the impression that a commitment to the school festival is going to be costly in terms of their personal time. Club members emphasize the amount of time the recruits will spend “working hard” (*isshoukenmei hatarakanakya*), especially in the few weeks immediately before the festival. Students are also told that they should expect to miss classes around this time because even with the few days off that North-sea University gives them to prepare for the festival, it is impossible to organize everything. “But most teachers already know about this”, they add.

Everything about the first meeting sets the tone and reinforces the hierarchy that exists at North-sea University. First-year students, the first to arrive, sit in a tight group on the floor at the center of the club-room, designated as the festival planning committee meeting space, in a non-descript building at the far edge of campus. Second and third-year students, most of whom arrived just before the start of the meeting, stand either at the front of the room or on the edge along the walls, with a few sitting in the three or four chairs available. As discussion begins, a rundown of last year’s event is presented with some brief highlights, and then this year’s “chairperson”, Yumi, quickly runs through a list of items that have already been “decided” over the winter break. Most of the items are related to what the individual student groups will offer at the various booths they intend to set up. Yet there are other items, such as the theme of the school festival, into which some of the first-year students had hoped to have some input.

While Japanese decision-making is often characterized by consensus, this is not the case in much of what occurs at North-sea University throughout the

process of planning and preparation. This is an affront to many of the first-year students, especially the ones who were involved in planning their high-school festivals. The rate of attrition would be high if not for a great deal of effort on the part of the older students and in particular the chairperson to keep the level of excitement high. Because first-year students make up most of the membership, holding their interest is essential.

Unlike other campuses of its size, North-sea University has a more traditional, hierarchal organizational structure among its student body. This appears to be because of its connection with a much older main campus in Tokyo. Also, as a school with a strong sports tradition, it tends to follow the pseudo-militaristic format around which much of sport in Japan is organized. At other universities, first-year students can be more involved in the decision-making process, with some first-year students even taking on leadership roles. Yet Mari states that

“I was able to head the sub-committee charged with organizing the talent for the main stage in my first year. Many of the second- and third-year students just didn’t seem to have the time to take the responsibility. I stayed on until my third year because of this experience, switching to other sub-committees”.

At smaller universities few decisions are made over the winter break and little physical preparation occurs until the final weeks of the first semester in June. The explanation for this variation seems to be in the focus of the event. Smaller institutions with a relatively short history tend to see the *gakuensai* as an event meant to celebrate their institution for themselves. This is most evident at two-year colleges and technical schools. For more prestigious, well-established universities, tradition and maintaining status is paramount. In these cases, the focus is outward, focusing on the public face of the institution, and success is measured by the level of attendance by the public, including perspective students, their parents, alumni, and students from other universities. Both styles of decision-making and processing are present in Japanese formal organizations. Students often comment that being a member of the school festival planning committee is like being employed at a company, and they may even refer to the head of the committee respectfully (or sarcastically) as “*sachou*” (president).

At North-sea University during the time of this study, the lines of communication were clear. There was the chair of the planning committee and her assistants. Each assistant led a sub-group focused on a particular set of tasks. There was also a “secretary” who worked very closely with the chair, and while not the head of one of the sub-groups, held some status within the group and acted as a deputy in the absence of the chair. Most major decisions were made by this



group of about 10 students, who were responsible for getting their assigned tasks finished. They were also responsible for recruiting members into their sub-group.

This operated effectively at two levels. First, each sub-group was loyal to its leader; in many instances members were recruited and operated around the personality of this person. Consequently, like-minded individuals with similar skills, interests or personalities tended to group together. This organization of decision-making also “shielded” communication as decisions were being made, which were then communicated to the larger group by the leaders. This allowed a formal communication process to develop. A second-year student, Shinji, explained that

“I really didn't like many of the decisions (or how they were communicated) but I had a responsibility [to the school festival and my group] so I would do my best to explain to them [my group] the decisions... I often joked with them and focused on the decisions we could make in our group.”

In 1998, the top-down structure of the decision-making process was particularly strong and the ability of the sub-group leaders to make the opinions of their group heard required some tough negotiating skills. For instance, it was reported that there had been a decision by the chair of the festival planning committee to restrict the use of colors for festival posters to the school's official colors (blue and white). At the same time, the sub-group designated with the responsibility for publicizing the event had designed a much more colorful poster based on the theme for that year, 極, or *goku* (zenith or climax). Everyone in this sub-group felt very strongly about the design and supported the artist, a first-year computer science student with some aptitude for design. The leader of this sub-group, realizing that he could lose the loyalty of his group, employed a form of the Japanese bargaining tactic of *nemawashi*. Translated directly *nemawashi* means “going around the roots” and originally describes the process of preparation for transplanting trees or other large plants. In social terms, this process involves prior consultation with major parties to be involved in some decision or proposed change in order that their input and feedback are included so as to avoid public disagreement.

In this instance, the leader of the sub-group called in all of the other leaders in small groups and showed them the design as one of several that had been suggested. He also left it prominently displayed in the hall of the student club building where everyone would notice it. The chair of the planning committee began to receive compliments on the poster design, so that by the time the festival planning committee meeting was scheduled to meet, it was difficult to adhere strictly to her original proposal. To all but a small number of those in the sub-

group, there was no knowledge that anything had occurred, as it appeared outwardly that the design had always had the support of the chair. In this manner, without direct public confrontation or any embarrassment to the parties involved, this issue was settled.

One other aspect that is common to many student groups and their leadership is an inherent distrust of the university administration and to some degree the faculty. While not as militantly liberal as some student government organizations, some members among the North-sea University student body expressed a strong aversion to any interest on the part of the faculty or administration. This creates a clear divide between the realm of the students (their clubroom building) and the official realm of the university (everything else). Faculty and administrators very rarely visit the clubroom building and usually only when invited. Even in these rare cases students will display great care with what they say and some who might appear warm and friendly in other situations will suddenly take on a more formal tone and manner. This type of behavior is an odd juxtaposition to the physical space itself, which is often disorganized and crowded with remnants of past school festivals and various parties.

While the structure of leadership and organization varies from campus to campus, there are two common means of keeping students interested in the events as they unfold. The first is to break down the large group of 30 to 40 committee members (it can be well over 100 at larger institutions) into small fluid working groups, what I have so far called sub-groups, focused on particular tasks, but whose labor can be called upon at a moment's notice. This becomes critical during the final days when the construction of stages, clearing of classrooms and other physical tasks take place. Preparation of signs, selling advertising, and requesting donations from the community are among some of the tasks groups are organized around and during the majority of the year these working groups will remain relatively separate and focused. While the committee will meet weekly, most meetings of the entire group last a relatively brief period and then break out into the working groups. This not only keeps the groups focused on specific tasks but keeps everyone feeling involved.

The second approach employed to maintain involvement is the *enkai* or *nomikai* (drinking party). While in recent years these have been less formally sanctioned due to widely reported student illness and some deaths as the result of over-consumption of alcohol, they continue to be ubiquitous. As identified (Moeran 2005, Allison 1994), drinking both reinforces hierarchy and creates a space for the transmission of opinions and ideas outside the normal lines of communication, all in a space that is safe and free of most adverse consequences. It is significant that *nomikai* occur generally at the end of periods of intense work when levels of stress are at their highest and tensions between individuals at

different levels in the hierarchy need to be aired. At one such event this year, a male student became aggressive, speaking in violent tone towards one of the upperclassmen with whom he had been working closely. Initially everyone thought that the drunken student was upset because both men had become romantically involved with the same female student. It turned out that this student was in fact jealous, and was airing his feelings in this abrupt public forum. Noteworthy is the fact that even when questioned later, few students commented on the incident, and the working relationship between the two students seemed to improve.

In addition to airing grievances, these drinking parties allow close bonds of friendship and romance to develop. Mari said that “I don’t drink but at drinking parties I can act more freely and joke with my fellow students in a way that I can’t normally do. We also talk more openly and share personal information.” Both as a way to relieve tensions and as an opportunity to grow closer, the *nomikai* work to ensure that everyone feels included in the process as a full member of the group.

### **Community relations**

In the following months preparation continues at a steady pace with flurries of activity centered on specific projects and problems. In the case of North-sea University one issue is raised again and again, the lack of participation and attendance by people in the immediate surrounding community. While relatively small, North-sea University’s connection to the more prestigious main campus in Tokyo burdens it with the need to meet expectations that would be placed on larger institutions. Thus the question of attendance by guests from outside the campus community has been a reoccurring dilemma.

Because of its location North-sea has little true presence in the community. It rests on the plateau of a steep incline with a high wall at the entrance and while there are homes within a 2-minute walk the relationship between the campus and the community has been cool at best. A number of faculty who live in the surrounding neighborhood state that this is due to North-sea’s connection to a near-by private high school that acts as a feeder school for the main campus in Tokyo and was established about 15 years before the university campus was founded. Most of the students attending North-sea high school are not from the surrounding community, with less than 50% reported to come from the prefecture. Most live in dorms located close to campus and attend North-sea high school in hopes of gaining preferential admission to the North-sea university campus in Tokyo. While noted for its high academic standing North-sea high school is also known for its sports teams, and a large number of its students are aspiring

sportsmen. These factors and others (including an under-supervised, largely male student body) have generated some tension. In the past this was less of an issue, but as urban sprawl has engulfed the high school and university campus, residents of this “new town” agree that they would prefer their neighbors move. Most have accepted that this is not going to occur and instead have decided the best strategy is to ignore both institutions and their students as much as possible. Local restaurants and other retailers that cater to student needs are the only groups that prize the presence of the schools, as they benefit from a higher volume of traffic.

However, this has not dissuaded North-sea university students from making some attempt to attract people from the surrounding community to attend the school festival. In the past the school festival planning committee has enlisted a number of approaches. Local restaurants and other small businesses frequented by the students always comply with requests to display posters advertising the event. Postings at the surrounding local public high schools have been moderately successful though these are reported to attract mostly female students and the motives of those who support the continuation of this form of advertising are often called into question. Less successful have been discussions with the local community council.

Students reported that most of these meetings have been brief and in the end focus on questions of increased traffic, noise and litter that seem to be associated with the event each year. A faculty member living in the community attended a meeting unofficially to get a sense of how the students presented themselves. She commented that the community council could not have been less interested in generating ties to the university and was more concerned with what time they were going to close the festival and with receiving an assurance that any drinking parties afterward would be confined to the campus or held well away from the neighborhood.

Without support from the surrounding residents, attendance by those not associated with North-sea University is low. But this is not only due to the demands that the local community places on the students; it is also because, like many rural smaller schools, North-sea is unable to produce an event impressive enough to attract an off-campus audience. Most large universities produce elaborate venues for not only student talent to be displayed but also for professional popular artists to perform. Depending on the location, and major interest of the school, concerts by major Japanese pop idols will be held throughout the festival or on the final day. At one university with a focus on science and engineering a pop idol famous for singing a number of theme songs from *anime* and associated video games was featured, while another university with a strong liberal arts program was able to book an all-male band with a recent string of hit songs on the music charts. Both of these campuses are located close to Tokyo, which enables artists to make these appearances profitable for them.

These acts were also booked for their performances nearly a year in advance, which requires assuming a high level of risk that smaller more rural universities cannot take on.

North-sea University has neither the funds nor is it in a location that allows it to draw such talent, and as a result has relied on local bands and student-organized talent exclusively. Each year performances are dominated by karaoke competitions between students and faculty and “battle of the bands”-style contests. The advent of rap music has reportedly allowed for the inclusion of DJ-led dance parties, though it was difficult to determine whether those performing were recognized nationally or were local talent. In the end, while attempts are made to broaden the appeal of the event, it continues to remain a celebration of the campus, for the students. This does place extra responsibility on faculty and staff to participate or at least make an appearance.

Some take this quite seriously, even when they are conflicted. R. Kibler, Assistant Professor and faculty representative of the English Circle, says that “every year I get up on stage with my guitar and lead a sing-a-long. Of course I do this in English so the students get a sense that I am still teaching – it is not as exciting (for me) as the first few times but the students appreciate it and then they always invite me to the after-party, which is fun.”

### **The final days**

“About a month before North-sea festival we get terribly busy. Everyone on the school festival committee will begin to miss classes. Most of us who live away from campus stay with friends . . . [two or three days before] we will sleep on campus . . . first in the clubroom then in the classrooms on the floors. Most of us don't really sleep much until maybe the end of the first day [of the festival]. We stay up talking and a lot of people drink and there really is so much work to do. I don't know how we get it all done. I thought about quitting but didn't because in the end I really enjoyed the friends I worked with and I learned so much.” - Marie, third-year North-sea University student.

It is the third week of October and there is a buzz in the air on campus. The fall semester began about six weeks ago and while students are preparing for midterms many are also missing classes, especially those not directly associated with their major course of study. Yet while attendance in class is lower, student presence on campus seems heightened as they fill the halls in eruptions of activity, disappearing just as quickly into spaces normally designated as study

labs and empty classrooms. Often students are carrying large objects resembling oversized jigsaw puzzle pieces of every imaginable shape and size. Brightly colored papier-mâché sculptures bound out of doorways and into narrow hallways, barely clearing the walls and tight corners and in at least one case not quite making it into the stairwell intact, a clear sign that the proper forethought was not used in its creation.

A couple of students smile sheepishly as they make eye contact with their instructor and bow in acknowledgement that they will be expected to make up missed work. The instructor waves them off and tells them to work hard and that he expects a discount at their booth without asking what it is they will be selling. It is about 5:30 pm on this fall day and while he is heading home, the instructor knows the students will be spending most of that evening and quite a few evenings from that point on working and “playing” well into the night as they prepare for the festival less than 10 days away. *Tsurai* is often a word associated with this final period of preparation for the university festival and while literally translated as physically or emotionally “hard, painful or bitter” (Kenkyusha 1983, p.832) there is clearly an element of pride in students’ voices as they utter it.

At North-sea University everyone seems involved at some level. Students are the most visibly active, but in the administrative offices the staff is unmistakably in preparation as well. Up to this point most of the university staff’s involvement has been in the form of verbal agreement and negotiation. While in most cases students follow the set norms of past years, there are requests that require further discussion. A room may not be large enough for its desired purpose and students may ask to use a room that they know to be of the “correct” size. A section of a building generally designated as “closed” during the festival may serve as a convenient walkway between two sections of campus and may as a result be “opened” for limited use. However, for the most part the administrative office staff is there for the support of the students and to a large degree they turn a blind eye to circumstances that would normally seem irregular as long as no permanent damage is done. Even when a window is broken or some equipment is damaged, as long as students exercise good judgment and inform the university immediately, more often than not this is forgiven.

The administrative staff also supports the students through specific training. Students are shown through the buildings to learn the locations of fire extinguishers, fire alarms and emergency exits. They also review basic crisis management procedures and are told who to call in the event something should occur. Most injuries are not reported and there are no official reports of injuries at North-sea University. Instead, there are recollections of a cut hand or bruised head; an older student seems to recall his *senpai* showing up in a cast on the final day of the festival a number of years back, but cannot recall if this was an injury related directly to work on festival preparation. The director of the *jimuka*

(administrative staff), Mr. Suzuki, about festival-related injuries, declines in an interview to discuss any specific incident but states that most people accept a certain amount of risk and know there is bound to be some injury. He acknowledges that it can be serious and the university has had to make reparations in the form of formal apologies, gifts and the payment of medical bills. Sighing, he states, “There are so many meetings when something serious occurs. Everything has to be done correctly, it takes up so much time.” When questioned why there are not set procedures that might eliminate the need for meetings, Suzuki pauses and says, “*so desu ne-*” (a rhetorical statement, the equivalent of “hmmm . . .”, “well”, or in this case, “yes why isn’t that so?”). Then he launches into a description of Japanese propriety, the concept of loss of face and the principle that the meetings held actually demonstrate that sufficient thought has gone into the conciliatory act rather than it being an automatic response.

Generally all school festivals take place the week of *bunka no hi* (Culture Day) on November third. This day is meant to commemorate those who have made significant contributions to Japanese society, and prior to the end of World War II was celebrated as the birthday of the Meiji Emperor. The connection between *bunka no hi* and school festivals is unclear even to Japanese, and no one was able to provide a definitive answer or source. Most believe that because it was the emperor’s birthday all national institutions were expected to have some form of celebration. In addition, with the Meiji reconstruction all educational systems were organized under a single calendar and significant effort was made to instill a sense of national culture based around norms accepted as “Japanese”. It appears the emperor’s birthday was seen as the appropriate time to celebrate being Japanese, which also explains the shift to “culture day” after the war.

Today, for most Japanese it is an excuse for a long weekend, and many travel to their favorite tourist spot to enjoy the crisp fall air before winter sets in. In the northern prefectures, the weather can be unpredictable and has hampered the celebration of *gakkousai*. But because of the holiday it serves as an excuse for universities to give their students several days and in some instances up to a week off in order to set up and celebrate the school festival. Depending on when the holiday falls students will be excused from class as early as the Tuesday before the weekend of the festival and will not have to return to school until the following Tuesday. The intent is to provide time for setup and cleanup and those students most intensely involved will spend the entire week on campus. However, in recent years, with more and more students going to school some distance from their homes and even in other prefectures, many students not directly involved with the school festival will return home for the week.

“Yes, I had some friends ask me why I wasn’t going to stay.  
Obviously as a first-year student that is generally the case. But I

really wanted to rest, see my high school friends and eat some home-cooked food. Maybe I was homesick.” Shinij M.

For those who do stay or live near their university this is the most hectic few days of the year, especially for the school festival committee. While key administrative staff are on-hand most faculty are nowhere to be seen. From the end of classes on the final day before the break to late in the afternoon on the day before classes begin again, the campus belongs to the students. Slowly at first, as students depart from their mid-terms, and then with greater energy students rush around the campus, through the halls and around the grounds. Students work in teams to build stages, at times guided by those who delivered the pipes and planks used to construct them. Booths that up to this point had been hidden away in clubrooms are brought out and assembled. Boxes of materials with everything from portable stoves, fryers, pots and pans, paper plates, large ice coolers, and tools are carried to every public spot on campus. Each student club and circle has a square of the main parking lot marked out for them in white masking tape and representatives bring out chairs, benches or tarps so that a few members will have a place to sit as they watch over their goods and begin to make final preparations. What could be miles of extension cords crisscross the campus and generators are placed behind the main stage in order to power stage lights and the sound system that will fill the entire campus with announcements and music for the next three days. The extension cords are often taped down to the pavement using duct-tape, which serves its many purposes over the next few days.

Often students find unique solutions to unpredictable problems as they work to set everything up in time for the opening ceremony. When rain leaves an area of grass too wet to place a metal stand in the center of the grounds students use three-inch thick *manga* (comic books) under the feet of the stand to provide a stable footing and to soak up some of the water. Thinking little of the damage this will do to the grass, the students' only response is a thoughtful “*so desu ne*” (“yes, that’s right”) when asked. In another instance large clear plastic sheeting is used to protect the university’s radio system from the elements, allowing the student-operated radio station to broadcast from the center of the festival grounds and provide the appearance of an enclosed (if not sound-proof) space. Signs, banners and all manner of flyers are posted throughout the campus announcing the food sales, presentations, films, concerts, and the range of contests and other entertainment scheduled. Literally, over a period of two days the university takes on a fairground-like atmosphere.

Throughout the process there are numerous discussions between student groups, members of the festival committee and North-sea administration, various off-campus vendors delivering supplies and rented equipment, and the occasional local resident curious (or suspicious) enough to stroll through campus. The



discussions themselves range from the wrong number of chairs being delivered, to the order of speakers at the opening ceremony, to the placement of booths on campus, to the sexual politics of the location of portable toilets. But all these discussions follow a predictable pattern:

“Are you going to place the toilets here?” Student one – female  
“Yes, this is the space we marked out for them.” Student two – male  
“hmmm, yes I see you are right this is where they were last year.”  
Student one – female  
“Yes.” Student two – male  
“Is this where you want the toilets?” Delivery driver  
“That’s what I thought . . .” Student two - male  
“Could you please wait? Last year there was a problem at night because it was a little dark in this spot,” Student one – female  
“Really?” Student two – male  
“Yes I can see there is no light around here.” Driver  
“Yes with no light it is difficult to see.” Student one – female.  
“Yes, I see.” Student two – male  
“Some of the female students didn’t want to come here at night.”  
Student two – female  
“A little dangerous, right.” Driver  
“Maybe we could move them to the front of the building? There is some light there.” Student one – female  
“Yes but you can see them clearly. It might look bad (unsightly).”  
Student two – male  
“Yes but it would be safer,” Driver.  
“Could we move them to the front? Would it be a problem?”  
Student one – female  
“No I think it would be fine; the parking lot is flat there.” Driver  
“Well we should ask someone on the planning committee.”  
Student two – male  
“Ok. Could you please wait here?” Student one – female  
“For a few minutes.” Driver.

A similar type of discussion followed when one of the leaders for the appropriate sub-group was located. In the end the portable toilets were placed in a well-lit location. This typifies the high-context form of communication (Gudykunst 1993 and Lebra 1993) that is common in Japan as individuals negotiate for resources. Over and over again students engage in these discussions,

carefully avoiding conflict but more importantly keeping high the level of enjoyment and good feelings.

After days of intense work the first day of the festival arrives.

Representatives from all the student groups gather early in the morning to review the schedule for the various activities of the day, any restrictions, and other points of information. Numerous details have been worked out throughout the last few months, everything from the location of trash, the availability of first-aid, on-call schedules for representatives from the festival committee, and the proper posting of events, to cleanup schedules for each of the days.

North-sea University school festival committee members are easily identifiable throughout the two days by their *happi* coats. On other campuses, festival committee members might wear t-shirts with the word "STAFF" or brightly colored trainers with the festival logo and theme. In each case, the aim is to provide points of contact for patrons and students.

After a brief opening ceremony the festival finally begins. Given the level of work and effort up to this point, the festival might seem anti-climactic but this is not the case. Occasionally weather does dampen the festivities and students are forced to spend two or three long days in the rain vying for the attention of the few visitors. But fortunately this year the weather cooperates and a reasonable number of students and visitors are expected to attend. In addition to a few faculty, there are always administrative staff on hand.

In the case of North-sea University there is significant number of the administrative staff on-site throughout the festival, with many actively participating. Mr. Suzuki spends a considerable amount of time on the main stage handling announcements and even participating in the karaoke contest. A generally demure female office assistant generates a stir and considerable interest when she appears on stage in very short pants and high-heeled shoes, playing the role of escort for individuals as they climb onto or leave the stage. Other staff seemed to be positioned in strategic locations, some dressed in their work attire, others in more casual clothes as they assist students in various tasks, most related to the activities occurring on stage. Some stand in the back of the crowd drinking beer or the occasional cup of *sake*. This visible presence of North-sea staff is unusual for most school festivals but seems to be explained by the large number of "old boys" or alumni who are now working as administrative staff. Several of the administrative directors graduated from the Tokyo campus and appreciate being around at this time, much in the way alumni return to college campuses in the U.S. for homecoming.

Across the campus, in the main parking lot, on the first two floors of the main building, and in the auditorium students have set up stalls and presentations of many types. Students run booths selling all manner of food; there are art, film and photographic displays, band performances, traditional and modern comic

routines, “nightclubs” set-up in classrooms with the windows blacked-out to give the feeling of evening even in the early afternoon and a gaming room where students can try their hand at video-games designed by the students themselves.

### **SOBA! – so what?**

One stall run by the bicycle circle sells hot *soba* (buckwheat noodles). Masa, the head of this group, had been looking forward to the festival for some time. The group had been floundering with a low membership and little real interest in entering cycling competitions. They had held one successful camping trip but since that time there had been little cohesion within the group. Masa attributes it to a lack of commitment on the part of the members but he often missed meetings himself and on one of the two occasions when he had encouraged several members to participate in a competition he failed to show up. It was later revealed that he had sold his bicycle over the summer when he purchased a car and he admitted that he did not have a high opinion of his other circle members because he considered them *dasai* (uncool, nerds). He had been a member of the circle since he was a freshman with what was apparently a much different set of cohorts. He stayed with the group realizing that he would fall into the position of circle leader by default as a third-year student. At the time Masa joined, the cycling circle was apparently a very athletic group of students who entered and regularly won cycling competitions. For both reasons they had attracted a following of female students who served as “managers” for the group. In addition to their cycling, this group had also thrown a number of fun *nomikai* throughout the year. But the year Masa joined he was one of only a handful of first-year students who elected to participate. The others who joined were like Masa, not exceptionally serious about cycling but who enjoyed participating in the events and were willing to serve as respectful *kohai* (underclassmen). Masa’s *senpai*, who had now all but graduated, were also not very good at mentoring the younger students and instead ran the circle in a very hierarchical fashion. This seems to have facilitated the departure of Masa’s cohort. Masa seemed to have believed that he would inherit not only the position of leader and the ability to organize the group as his predecessors had, but also the privileges. But because the younger members were never encouraged to compete, the few members that joined and stayed on in the years following Masa did not have any particular talent for bicycling. In fact, it seems they had been selected to join the group because of their willingness to respect their upperclassmen. Masa had been struggling all year, but had stayed on because he fondly remembered his participation in the school festival in past years and hoped he would be able to create something of this event.

Unlike most of the other student groups, the bicycle circle spent little time planning in the weeks leading up to the school festival. They had requested a space and funds, decided that they would sell hot *soba* as in the past, and located the cooking utensils stored in the clubroom. But other than designate one of the members to purchase the noodles and other items necessary, very little else was done. Initially the group had hoped to enlist the aid of two female students who had been unofficial members of the circle (though they were not quite willing to call themselves managers), but on opening day neither student showed up and only half of the male members presented themselves as planned, and the group present did not include the student designated to purchase the noodles and other supplies. Eventually those who came managed to organize themselves enough to set up their space with a couple of small tables and a few chairs. About the time the opening ceremony was beginning, they received a call from the student who was to do the shopping. He apologized, explaining that he had been out drinking with one of the other student groups and this is why he was running late. In anticipation of his eventual arrival the students set up the cooking space, which consisted of a portable gas burner attached to a propane tank and a large metal cooking pot that they filled with water and proceeded to set to boil.

While the preparation of *soba* is by most accounts relatively easy, as with many activities in Japanese society much lies in the presentation. For *soba* most important is the grade of noodles purchased. Dried noodles sold in supermarkets or convenience stores are of the lowest grade and often are purchased only for one's own consumption. Department stores also sell the dried variety, but generally of higher quality and suitable for guests. On special occasions one will purchase only fresh noodles made on the same day. These are moist and purchased from small shops where if one arrives early enough one can view the "master" rolling out the *soba* dough and cutting the noodles, and even sample freshly boiled noodles if desired. The best noodles are found in establishments where the flour is ground and they are made in limited quantities; these often sell out for the day before the lunch hour is over. Of course one can make their own noodles at home; this can be done as a family, or by the designated chef in the house, which is just as often the father as the mother.

In addition to the noodles there are the condiments. These generally include chopped green onions, *wasabi* (horseradish paste), grated *daikon* (white radish) and shredded *nori* (seaweed). After being boiled, the noodles are served in a fish-based broth flavored with various combinations of *sake*, sugar, and *soyu* (soy sauce), among other ingredients. Often *soba* is served in small bowls that can be slurped in a single inhaling motion, bringing the bowl to your lips and quickly tilting your head back. While the price for these individual bowls can seem small, the profit margin is reasonable because it can take several to make a meal.

The members of the bicycle circle, deciding to maximize their profits, chose to purchase the least expensive noodles. While all the members had observed their mothers prepare *soba*, no one had ever done it themselves. Preparation of the broth became the point of some discussion since everyone remembered very different processes, and no one had thought to discuss this at the time the shopping list had been created so their choices were limited. In the end, the broth was a very basic fish-based broth with *soyu*. Condiments were limited to chopped green onions and *wasabi*. The paper bowls purchased were much too large to serve as “single-slurp” servings and so the group decided to raise the price in relation to the servings they felt fit into the bowls. Throughout most of this discussion Masa vacillated between excitedly encouraging everyone along and a moribund melancholy, taking comfort in the bottle of *sake* that had been purchased for everyone to share throughout the day as they sold *soba*.

By the end of the first day most had lost interest in staying on. Some who had come early left when their scheduled shift was over. Others found an excuse to leave early and by mid-afternoon, at the first sign of the sun’s departure behind the tallest of the university’s buildings, those that remained decided to stop boiling water in preparation of selling any more *soba*. The following day Masa arrived just before the schedule opening time for the festival along with three other members. Some retelling of the activities of the day before occurred, followed by some discussion, and in the end they decided that the weather had turned too cold and there was no sense setting up since few customers would come anyway. While a somewhat chilly wind picked up and later in the afternoon rain was forecast, most of the other booths stayed open and the activities continued as scheduled. By the evening rain eventually came which hampered the clean-up process, but for those that stayed on it did not hamper the post-*gakkousai* celebration.

### **A storm before the calm**

It is about 10:00 PM on the evening before the third and final day of the *gakuensai* and after a long day of working at their various booths, students are beginning to gather around a central building normally used as storage for the student clubs. Tonight, however, the building is decorated and furnished with tables and chairs in the style of a club or cabaret. As students finish arranging their booths in preparation for the next day, more and more students enter the building. A few have already started drinking beer and distilled grain alcohol (*shouchuu* 酎), and others are looking around expectantly for friends. While many present have been on-site for most of the past few days, others are just now arriving, particularly interested in the events about to take place. In the course of the next hour the mood changes swiftly. Without any of the ceremonial toasting

that generally precedes drinking parties in Japan, it is obvious that students are now intent on consuming as much alcohol as possible in the shortest amount of time. In the confined space of the building, the movement of the students suggests the building itself is swaying back and forth. Unable to breathe comfortably, some students leave the building, only to find that those outside have been engaging in what they call “serious drinking.” Students scream, yell and jump at one another, males with fists in the air, females huddling together red-faced, several shedding the generally timid demeanour that usually accompanies other co-ed events. Some couples pair off into the darkness but most of the students stay within the building area. Anyone caught without a drink is given one with the expectation that they will quickly “drink up.” In the next few moments the mood changes again as one student and then other and then several more begin to vomit. Students circle together in three or four locations expelling alcohol and any food they may have recently eaten as rapidly as it was ingested. The students unable to make it to one of the seemingly designated points are handed large garbage bags; others begin heaving furiously and one or two students can be seen lying in the grass passed-out, remnants of the festivities still on their clothes. Students fortunate enough not to have succumbed are now bringing water to those still hunched over, others are placing wet towels on the backs of necks, looking for tissues or leading students away to places where they can sit down. Rain begins to fall sending participants scattering in every direction. Beer and *shouchuu* bottles are everywhere. A few students wander in the rain, appearing confused. Others seem defiant and continue to shout, calling to their friends not to abandon them and the good times. For the most part the evening’s festivities are over and tomorrow students will celebrate the final day of their school festival.

What is most significant about these events is not that they took place on the grounds of a national public university, or that there was no supervision on hand, but that while seemingly unplanned, they reportedly take place in much the same fashion year after year. In fact, my presence at this event was the result of these activities being described to me several days before they took place. Surprising my western sensibilities at the time was the fact that these events continue to take place with the full knowledge of faculty and staff of the university.

### **School festival as ritual**

The process of physical change which occurs on Japanese university campuses every fall as students and staff prepare for the annual rite of the school festival (*gakkousai* 学校祭) allows for the examination of questions regarding the meaning of ritual, the creation and use of ritual space, and how the practice of ritual reflects processes in a society at large.

In Japan, the transformation of a university campus from a place of learning and formality to a place of structured revelry or open chaos offers insights into the construction of ritual because university school festivals are a series of simultaneous competing events within an overarching framework that is created by a single organization, place and period of time. Traditional views of Japanese society and ritual have been defined on the basis of their repetitive, unchanging nature or have focused on their role in reproducing the social system and supporting the current political, economic and religious structures. However, I believe society in general and more specifically ritual should be viewed as “an ongoing performative discourse whose contents are continually amended, reinterpreted, or clearly change over time in response to changing sociopolitical and economic conditions” (Schnell 1999: 4). When the dominant power-holders exert excessive arbitrary control over the thoughts and actions of target groups, these groups will in effect abandon state-sponsored rituals.

As a cultural performance, ritual represents a model of the society within which it exists. More importantly, by examining levels of participation, forms of support, and participants’ perceptions of the event in comparison to other university-level ritual events, we can see how this event not only mirrors society in its structure but how ritual acts as a lens focusing on changes occurring in the society (Grimes 1999).

My premise is that ritual both reflects and supports changes in the structure of a society by offering its members a means of acting out, if not experimenting with new modes of social relationships, and at the same time of legitimizing these in the process of successfully acting them out. To paraphrase Geertz, some rituals (or texts) are ensembles people *write* about themselves through the process of acting it out (Geertz 1973: 452).

Here I provide a detailed description of the Japanese university school festival as an example of an annual event that demonstrates general shifts in Japanese society. Geertz’s conception of ritual serves as a base, while Handelman’s (1998) perception of public performance and Douglas’ (1996) grid/group matrix are employed to frame the changes. The argument also draws on perceptions of social acts as performances whose presentations in the form of actions are often different from the reality of the act - i.e. meaning.

## **Background**

Currently, Japanese higher education is undergoing an upheaval as the government institutes funding reforms as a means of restructuring the system (MEXT et al). One root of these reforms lies in the long-developing demographic shifts that have resulted from an aging population and a birthrate that continues to decline. According to the Japan Bureau of Statistics (2004) the birthrate had dropped to 1.32 in 2002 and the Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications records a further decline to 1.29 in 2003. The most recent figures by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications indicate that this decline is continuing with a birthrate of 1.25 in 2005 (2006). With an average birthrate of 2.1 needed to maintain a stable population at zero growth, shifts in the demographics of Japan will continue to shape the structure of the society for the foreseeable future (see appendix one Japan Yearbook statistics).

During the economic boom of the 1970's, parents were able to invest more money in the education of their children. Consequently, the percentage of children attending primary-, secondary- and university-level education increased dramatically. This increase in matriculation was especially true for university-level education as both opportunities and the need for college-educated employees expanded. In response to insufficient space in established universities, many new private universities and business colleges (*senmon gakkou* 背紋学校) were established. Most of these smaller private universities catered to those who could not pass the more rigorous university entrance exams (*nyugaku juken* 入学受験), yet hoped to find gainful professional employment upon graduation. A number of the business and technical two-year colleges had semi-contractual relationships with large corporations, funneling their students into the lower ranks of these companies. In a number of instances high-ranking executives of companies would retire and either found their own "college" or join the board of an existing one. Students applying to these colleges paid exorbitant tuition fees, tied more to the business connections than the level of instruction (McVeigh 2003).

The burst of the economic bubble in the 1990's brought significant changes and sped up trends begun in the 1960's. The process of urbanization gave the population, particularly women, greater access to medical care and education, and overall offered more opportunities and life choices (Imamura 1996, and Rosenberger 2001). As a result, many individuals delayed marriage. Those who



did marry, rather than deny their children the idyllic and costly life that had been popularized by government institutions and the media, had fewer children. The resulting lower birthrate and strict immigration policies exacerbated the declining population trend.

One major area affected by these shifts was the education system. The declining birthrate corresponded with a decline in the need for schools at all levels, after a period of previous expansion. As it became obvious that this trend was not temporary and was only going to accelerate, the national government began to devise measures to deal with the changing composition of society. In the end, rather than make difficult decisions the national government decided to place the difficult choices in the hands of the universities. During the economic boom the national government supported a system of national universities and heavily subsidized many of the private universities through grants. While private universities had to “compete” for these grants, public universities were guaranteed support. In order to level the playing field, foster competition and innovative research and teaching, the national government has been progressively reducing the support and subsidies given to public universities in exchange for more independent administrative oversight. The ultimate goal of this process is to eliminate the public university system and privatize all universities, with each competing equally for loans and grants, which will continue to be provided (MEXT 1995, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005).

The effect this restructuring has had on higher education is extensive. A tenured professorship (*shuushinsei seikyoin*), which in the past was automatic for faculty who stayed on past five years, is now being formalized into a process or is being denied altogether as more and more faculty are hired on yearly contracts. International students are being courted as universities search for additional revenue streams. For the first time in the history of Japanese higher education some “top-level” universities are considering aggressive recruitment strategies in order to maintain their enrollments. Smaller institutions have been forced to close or file for bankruptcy (Brender 2005). This phenomenon of increasing focus on students as consumers of education contextualizes this dissertation. The effect of these changes as a whole is foregrounded by student perceptions of their own educational experiences through ritual.

## Methodology

This research occurred over two periods. The first began in the spring of 1991 when I first arrived in Sapporo. Though initially this was meant to be a short sojourn, I quickly became captivated with Japanese culture and language. It is partially due to my interest in socialization and partially to the fact that through my work I was able to observe several levels of the formal educational system (K through 8) that I became keenly interested in how the Japanese educational system intertwined both the learning of facts and the learning of social rules and modes of behavior. Later, as I taught within the Japanese university system, I came to see how this socialization was carried on through the higher levels of education. The *kohai/senpai* (junior/senior) relationship so vital at the junior high and high school level was replaced by a *gakusei/sensei* (university student/professor) relationship where students become beholden to their professor, on whose recommendation everything including academic advancement, employment, sometimes even marriage, depend.

I spent eight years in Sapporo working at various universities and other educational institutions such as language and business schools. I also participated in the formation of an NGO designed to provide inter-cultural training, which published a bilingual periodical. The second period of research began in the spring of 2003; I spent an additional eighteen months in Saitama prefecture just outside Tokyo at an engineering university in order to gather comparative data on university education and the cycle of yearly rituals.

Over these two periods there was the opportunity to make a wide range of observations of the events, and to conduct interviews (both formal and informal) with faculty, staff, parents and students, and members of the community. Working within the university system afforded me the opportunity to observe the “behind the scenes” decision-making process and thus make inferences about the value the university as an institution placed on the school festival, graduation and entrance ceremonies. In addition to observations and interviews at the university level, I made numerous visits to local kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high and high schools. Attending school festivals, entrance ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, sports day activities at all levels provided for comparisons and interviews with participants and attendees. On several occasions I served as faculty advisor for various student groups, which provided further insight into the

work students put into preparation for the various events. Over both periods I also conducted a number of surveys in an attempt to gauge student perceptions on issues regarding their university life, how they viewed various aspects of their society and culture, and how participation in various university-level ritual events reinforced their own identity. Appendices include questionnaires that guided interviews, as well as a sample of student tracking cards that were helpful mnemonic devices when doing follow-up interviews. These cards provided basic personal information about each student (appendix 12).

Beginning in 1991, I recorded observations, but more formal research for this dissertation began in 1996 as I was working on my second Master's degree in education (Varela 1999). While at that time I was more interested in how the Japanese high school education system mirrored the top-down administrative style of failed economic programs in developing countries, many similar issues are discussed in this dissertation. Most relevant is the process by which actual practitioners and participants in institutions or rituals either negotiate some level of control over processes they are asked to partake in or simply abandon them.

As the result of my work in the field of education, I found the guidelines for social research as outlined in McMillan and Schumacher (1997) extremely informative. The chapter on qualitative and ethnographic research in an educational setting (pp. 390-462) was especially helpful in deciding on guidelines for my role as "insider-observer" (p.437). I also considered the "standards of adequacy for ethnographic methodology" (p. 458) as I processed my research. While their discussion of ethics appeared to assume research among school-age children I found it helpful affirmation that I have taken the appropriate steps to preserve the confidentiality of my informants in a culturally appropriate manner.

A more general framework was provided by Babbie (1995), whose discussion of "Field Research" in social research (pp.279-304) informed my training as an anthropologist. Because I held various professional positions throughout my stay in Japan, I was concerned with the ethical considerations related to my multiple roles during the research period, and these were addressed very clearly in Babbie's discussion of ethics (p. 298 and pp. 245-258). Though I did not rely heavily on formal surveys I did follow the guidelines as outlined in this text, and my own research (Varela 1999) helped to avoid the problems associated with conducting formal surveys in an intercultural, multi-lingual setting when used. All of the surveys conducted were brief, consisting of no more than three questions and some demographic data (sex, class standing and major course of study). Questions were written in English, reviewed briefly in Japanese, and students were given the option of answering in English or Japanese. Though much of this period was unsupervised research, I also processed my notes in keeping with standard ethnographic practices.

As discussed in sections two and three, in Japanese there are a number of terms that represent school festivals at various levels, including *bunkasai*, *gakuensai*, and *gakkousai*. While in everyday conversation these terms can be interchangeable I use *bunkasai* when referring to kindergarten or elementary school events, *daigakusai* (大学祭) when speaking of university-level events, and *gakkousai* (学校際) when speaking of similar school festival events at any level of education.

As my intention is to demonstrate that the school festival is a ritual event, I need to establish several characteristics including a universal aspect to its performance. A commonality across all regions within the society in which a ritual is practiced demonstrates not only a sense of common understanding of the meaning embedded in the acts themselves but how these can be altered and reinterpreted. This is one reason why I have chosen to provide accounts from a number of different university festivals from various regions in Japan. While not keeping with one common practice of the ethnographic approach, I introduce this as a method for the study of contemporary rituals.

Often the study of contemporary or “modern” ritual presents difficulties since the practice observed can be very specific to a region or a community. This can make findings about the state of the society difficult to generalize. In some cases an incident is portrayed as “an example” of how the society reacts to a specific set of circumstances that seems to confront the status quo or the accepted wisdom concerning this society (Schnell 1999). In these cases, what is generalized is not the practice but the reaction of the society at large. While this does not make these findings any less valid, it does limit the discussion of the actual practice of the ritual and forces the ethnographer to rely on examples of similar rituals as they expand out from the community of study.

One aim of this dissertation is to be able to make some comprehensive statements about schools festivals in general and university school festivals in particular. Therefore, I sought to demonstrate that indeed the school festival shares a common set of practices that would allow for discussion of these as a national rite. It is with this intention that I have chosen a somewhat bifurcated approach to the observations presented in the dissertation. While the initial set of observations comes from a single university, the vignettes offered throughout the remainder of the text are meant to establish that the university school festival is indeed a national cultural phenomenon easily recognized and possessed of a common set of meanings separate from its location or regional variations.

While the main focus is on the university festival, I include data here from various levels of the educational cycle, including grade school and high school. While not all aspects of school festival are the same at all levels, many of the major components are shared, such as the three I highlight in the sections titled preparation, presentation and celebration. However, other than demonstrating a

direct correlation in the practice of the school festival in a national setting I am attempting to show that there is a direct continuum in the development of the school festival throughout a student's educational life-cycle. As students progress through their educational life they are indoctrinated in the ways of their society and become "Japanese". The university school festival is the culmination of this process and as such represents a test of how well lessons have been learned. It is at the university level that fully indoctrinated individuals have the ability to manipulate the rules for social behavior, or as Durkheim described, "to be autonomous means, for the human being, to understand the necessities he has to bow to and accept them with full knowledge of the facts. Nothing that we do can make the laws of things other than they are, but we free ourselves of them in thinking them, that is, in making them ours by thought" (Durkheim 1950: 91).

Except for sections one and eight, the specific occasions to be discussed here are an assembly of observations made over a twelve-year period beginning in 1992 at various institutions. In the text I do not note the individual universities for the sake of confidentiality and for ease of description; however, in the acknowledgements I list those universities from which I drew ethnographic data.

While in other cases I chose selections from my observations there are two instances where I write extensively about particular institutions and so they deserve special notice. First, my time at North-sea University was much more intense and productive in terms of collecting data than was the time I spent at Tokyo Central. I worked at North-sea for three and one-half years as a full-time faculty member and the faculty representative of the bicycle club mentioned extensively in the text, and I participated in an official capacity at many of the events described. At the time I had hoped to expand a paper I had written on the administrative structure of Japan's centralized education system, and collected much of the information used here during this period.

Conversely, I never worked at Tokyo Central and while I witnessed the school festival there at about the time of the events described in the text, I was not fully aware of the context of what I was witnessing until several years later. I was able to put what I observed into context as the result of two main informants. One of these is a former student (and a member of the student government at the time of the controversy) and has an extensive webpage with commentary and numerous supporting documents. He is currently studying law on the west coast of the United States. My second contact is a member of the faculty and advisor to one of the deans at Tokyo Central. He spoke very frankly on three occasions, yet also cautious given that his job and career would be at risk if his identity were disclosed.

This leads into the larger issue of confidentiality. The centralized structure of the Japanese educational system allows the national government to exert a great deal of influence at the local level and in the last ten years there has been

increasing pressure to force local faculty and staff to conform to state policies. Public reprimands, suspensions and even firings for infractions such as failing to stand for the raising of the nation's flag and the singing of the national anthem (Aspinall 2001, Befu 2001) are becoming more common.

In addition, as has been noted in scholarly and popular literature, Japanese tend to develop a group-based identity (see Nakane, Lebra, Douglas, Befu 2001). As a part of this, a person's individual sense of self is immersed in their associations. This includes schools they graduate from, places they work and the family name they carry. When the reputation of one of these is damaged, they feel damaged and often are willing to take an active role in affecting "justice" against those they perceive offended "their" reputation. Associated is the issue of memory in Japan, a fascinating topic, and one that has not been researched extensively. The clearest examples of how this operates are related to the textbook controversies surrounding the description of Japan and its role in WWII, particularly the invasion and occupation of Korea and China. Like the national memory that recalls little of tragic events, institutions often exercise extreme measures to erase institutional memory of difficult times in their history. In the case of the events I describe at Tokyo Central, a substantial number of first-, second- and third-year students have no knowledge of the events, though they occurred in the recent past and were widely reported in the media at the time they occurred. While it is true that students are apt to focus on their tenure at university, many faculty and administrators who were present during the events will also deny the events or simply excuse themselves from the discussion of these events, often abruptly. In one instance, not related to Tokyo Central, a faculty member struck a student over the head with an empty sake bottle at a new year's event. The student was taken to the hospital and for a few days it made the daily newspapers and local television. Another faculty member present was quoted in the newspaper. Several years later I asked this faculty member about the incident and he claimed never to have been there. When I told him I remembered he had been quoted, he denied this. When I showed him a copy of the news report he became angry and never spoke to me again and it was communicated to me by the university administration that I was never to speak of this incident again. While the internet is changing some of this it is still the case that no "polite" person would go searching for information that would contradict the institutional version of history.

In writing this dissertation I often felt internal conflict in discussing incidents that may reflect poorly on Japan and the institutions where I was employed. I imagine it is this internalized "check" that keeps Japanese from not discussing difficult topics in polite conversation. Other anthropologists working in Japan have made similar comments and a review of the current body of work will reveal that very little actually deals with social issues or takes a critical look at Japan.

Most critical perspectives of the failure of the Japanese government to address social and environmental issues have come from non-academic writers, the popular press and in fiction. Not that I believe academics should necessarily take up the banner of these causes, but there is a tremendous amount of material there that has yet to be addressed.

One other main comment is associated to the larger issue of ethnographic realism and my own personal style of writing. I made a conscious effort to remove myself from the text as much as possible. While this may detract from a more traditional style of ethnographic writing it provided psychological space between myself and the events I experienced. This also allowed for a writing style that is fluid and concise. With this in mind, it should be noted that unless otherwise noted clearly, all ethnographic data was collected by the author through direct observation, interviews or structure surveys.

Finally, I have also omitted detailed description of the Japanese university calendar year as they have been discussed extensively in the literature (see for example: White 1988, Benjamin 1997, McVeigh 1997, and MEXT et alii).

## Limitations

It has been argued that anthropological fieldwork was the result of circumstance, with Malinkowski's forced isolation on the Trobriand Islands. However, most would agree that research based on such an accident of fate is not the ideal. "Living in the field" and "doing fieldwork" are two distinct processes, out of necessity they overlap, yet they are different. Originally when I went to Japan it was not with idea of doing either. I left for Japan with the idea of recuperating from the experience of spending a year's fieldwork in Ghana.

At the same time, I fully intended to return to my academic program and topic of study, the networks women create and maintain in order to bring goods to market. This field of interest required that I spend considerable time by their side in the marketplace, and at church and association meetings. As a result I was drawn towards those locations in Japan that represented the nexus between the social being and the economic being. Marketplaces, festival grounds, and entertainment districts in Japan were to me the "modern" representation of the same socio-economic networks I had experienced in West Africa. Consequently, though at the outset it was completely unintentional, I began "doing fieldwork."

Originally, I was drawn towards the position of women and their combined role as both marketer and the marketed (Allison 1994) in the adult entertainment districts. I was taken by the fact that "working women" saw no disjuncture between their night time roles as "entertainers" and their daytime time ones as office workers, students or even housewives. I was even more perplexed when it became obvious that the society at large saw no disjuncture either. In search of the roots of an explanation, I was redirected to the process of education, social integration and initiation into Japanese society. My curiosity led me to investigate the process of Japanese formal education. As part of this process, I completed a second master's degree in education and several essays examining the structure of the Japanese education system (Varela 1996, 1997, 1999). In addition, I organized a course on the Japanese education system that I team-taught with a Japanese colleague. In this course we examined a wide variety of topics and were able to bridge the gap between the international students who were viewing the university educational process from the outside and the Japanese students who were experiencing it from within.



I continued to pursue the topic of initiation and incorporation through formal education and recognized that the manner students were indoctrinated into Japanese culture revolved largely around a set of ritual behaviors. These behaviors included everyday actions such as greetings and appropriate modes of dress and techniques for conflict resolution and peer group management. While reinforced at home, instruction was clearly in the domain of formal education complete with a rationale and a mandate to create good citizens.

This process begins at the pre-k level and continues through to university. One of the most intriguing aspects of the Japanese education system is the manner that cohorts are created. In the same way as Turner describes rites of initiation, periods of stress are imposed on a cohort generating *liminality* resulting in a sharing of *communitas* which students use to organize social relations in their more structured everyday lives (Turner 1969: 94-130). One such period is the organization and execution of the *gakkousai*, which takes place beginning in kindergarten and continues through to students' post-high school education. The observations of student rituals and specifically ritual events, which occur at the university level, stimulated my interest in the school festival as a lens for viewing the changing structure of Japanese society.

In summary, the majority of the limitations of my fieldwork have been in the "hit and miss" process. While I used many of the tools of the ethnographer, the range of interests and modes of operation (often observer, as much as possible participant but only occasionally participant-observer) were not always, in the strictest sense, in-line with the process of "fieldwork" as it is generally conceived. However, I believe the depth of my experience, knowledge, and command of the language and culture more than make up for any deficiencies in methodology. Unlike the anthropologist who "studies" events once or twice and fills the gaps with the knowledge and experience of others, I had far fewer gaps because I experienced all the events discussed here on numerous occasions.

## Literature Review

While a body of material discussing ritual (Suzuki 2001, Van Bremen 1995, and Anderson 2002) and education in Japan (White 1987, Lincicome 1995, Benjamin 1997, and Cummings 1980) exists, there is little discussing both (McVeigh et alii). There are even fewer texts that deal with the university school festival its origins or its place as an instructive tool (Okihara 1973). As a result, the items below inform in one manner or another the larger topics of social change, representations of national identity, how these are reinforced through the Japanese system of education and practiced in ritual activities. While a complete list of all the relevant materials would be cumbersome, here I present those that are most relevant in helping to organize and reaffirm my ideas and observations. These texts provide the best support for the arguments presented. From these I move onto new ground.

From the classic work of Turner (1969) to recent examinations of ritual in Japan (Bestor 1989, and Schnell 1999) a large body of material represents ritual in general and in Japan. This work is informed by a number of sources. Contemporary perspectives question the validity of the term ritual, citing contradictions in how it has been used to describe a broad range of activities that often do not resemble one another (Bell 1997, and Handelman 1998). While these authors offer interesting options for the study of “public events”, as they prefer to refer to ritual, these perspectives are more applicable to comparative studies of so-called public events. The study of expressive social performance set within boundaries of a specified time and space within a specific society should remain the study of ritual.

Capturing a general overview (Bell 1997) provides a historical backdrop for the way the term ritual is used here to describe a set of annual occurrences that provide a space for the acting out of new social perceptions of identity and understanding of social norms. While concepts such as *liminality* and *communitas* (Turner 1969) may be helpful as descriptive tools when discussing ritual events as a stage for the recreation of society the use of Turner’s ideas does present some issues.

Turner’s own struggle with these concepts is evident in the manner they seemed to change over time as he tried to identify exactly what happens during festivals. More problematic to my views is that Turner among others (Manning 1983), seem to place rituals and festivals in different constellations of events, with

little relation to each other. One a highly structured display of the status quo and the other a swirl of activities supposedly intended to demonstrate the desires of those challenging it.

Geertz to some degree filled the gap between ritual and festival and transformed how anthropologists examine the work they do by making the anthropologist a focus. While for some this influence has been a negative one, Geertz's body of work still offers much to the study of ritual. Here I employed some specific aspects that speak directly to the concepts in this dissertation. The first (Geertz 1973) offers both structured and unstructured understandings of ritual. Geertz saw that rituals are often formally organized overt displays of power, economic position, and social standing. At the same time, the unplanned events that "just happen" and how participants – including the anthropologist – react to these were just as important, and reveal as much about the social organization of the community. This perspective views ritual as a stage set by tradition that permits the actors to interpret their roles depending on the social circumstance and needs of the moment.

The second is Geertz's analysis of structural perspectives and their inability to describe social change. Many of my observations in Japan were vindicated and clearly defined as I reread his analysis of the Javanese funeral rite (1957). The problem of employing ritual as a forum for social change in my description of university school festivals was elucidated by the political and social complexities as they were expressed through the expressions of grief and the desires on the part of the community to "do the right thing."

Ritual, while an expression of beliefs through the practice of tradition is clearly also an expression of the current state of the society to which it belongs, and while its practice may remain the same (or not) the meaning ascribed to it changes to reflect a new social structure. In effect, Geertz saw ritual as a mirror society holds up to itself so that everyone understood the (new) rules. My renewed understanding of Geertz and his work explicates this dissertation.

In *Wrapping Culture* (1993), Joy Hendry presents a comprehensive view of ritual and the power it exercises in Japanese society. Her thorough examination of how her wrapping metaphor is "simultaneously a model of, and a model for social reality" (Hendry 1993: 172) helps to demystify many of the exotic "oriental" aspects of Japanese society without deconstructing them into non-existence.

McVeigh (1997) serves as a bridge between the study of ritual and the study of Japanese formal education. While broad in some of its conclusions the value in his work is the detail he provides which supports his principle that many educational activities as practiced in Japan can be examined as rituals. His recent work (2002) focuses only on the negative aspects of the educational process and leaves little room for student driven reforms. He does make the case that there is

a growing disinterest in the top down decision making process that exists in university level education and successfully argues that tension generated between the individual and society is not simply about economic and political power but encompasses ideas about the construction of self, independence and identity.

The success of the Japanese economy in later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century focused much attention on the Japanese system of education as one possible origin. In addition to the work written supporting (White 1995) and discounting (McVeigh 2002) this view there have been some excellent ethnographies (Benjamin 1997, and White 1987), which provide grounded impartial perspectives. There is also a large body of work in Japanese on the subject of education and its role in the process of socialization. An overview of Japanese education during the early Meiji period (Lincicome 1995) provides proof of this. In this dissertation, I reference Ministry of Education materials, much of which can be accessed via the Internet (MEXT Official Website 2005), which are useful for understanding the current official opinions, historical perspectives and educational plans. Statistical and demographic data accessible through various government agencies such as Japan's Statistic Bureau, Ministry of Public Management, and Ministry of Labor is referred to throughout. In addition, universities themselves publish historical reviews, official budget and enrollment figures, as well as speeches and other accounts of campus events and incidents. These documents support my own investigations. In some instances where an informant's confidentiality was of concern these "official reports" were used as a primary source.

One criticism of the educational system that has also been cited as a cause for its success, is the heavy-handed role the national government has played in its construction and management. Lincicome (1999) presents a comprehensive summary of varying perspectives on the history of the construction of the modern Japanese educational system. While I disagree with his premise that the Japanese educational system was not created as an agent for the promulgation of a Japanese national identity, his is the best overview of the competing perspectives. It is apparent that movements designed to promote international cooperation and a more inclusive worldview existed. However as these movements had to struggle, only to fail, demonstrates that the closed, nationalistic views of those in power clearly held sway.

Studies in low ranked high schools in lower income working class neighborhoods discuss the tracking of students, the effect on students and the relation of this ranking to the replication of the class structure have also been extensively discussed (Yoder 2003 and Slater 2003). Such studies demonstrate the power of formal education systems to reproduce a cognitive system of beliefs that is translated into the construction of society. Research on the Japanese educational system in a historical context (Beauchamp 1988, Cummings 1980, and Hunter 1989) portrays the formation of a national education system as an

institutionalized program for creating a national identity and supports the notion that even seemingly innocuous aspects of the Japanese educational system are meant to be socially instructive. Others have approached similar themes from the perspective of the effect such systemized indoctrination has on how individuals conceive and understand their national identity (Callens 2001). While concerned with visual representation of what is Japan, Japanese, and what being Japanese means, this work also examines the organizations that create and communicate these images. Data from students and schools emphasizes the process by which “Japaneseness” is communicated and passed down to the next generation. “Children are taught about ‘Japan’ especially ‘Kyoto’ and what to value: an idealized past never directly experienced” (Callens 2001: 7). That much of what Japanese are taught about their own identity is tied to the romanticized image of a particular city presented in school as curriculum, supports the argument that the realm of Japanese education is formally constructed to enforce and replicate the structure of Japanese society. In light of this, attempts on the part of students to self-direct their education, reformulate the practice of rituals or reinterpret their meaning should be seen as an attempt to claim ownership of these practices and in a larger sense, an attempt to claim ownership over their future.

The literature focusing on Japanese society offers a number of important perspectives. Nakane (1970) still remains one of the most important examinations of the structure of Japanese society. Though Nakane has been criticized for presenting a homogenous view of Japanese society, ignoring history and its complexity, many still use it as a guide for how Japanese understood themselves at a particular period. Her work is particularly helpful for the ethnographer who will undoubtedly come across many of the observations outlined in Nakane’s work presented as “truths.” That many Japanese refer specifically to Nakane underscores both the accuracy of her descriptions and the influence she has had on Japanese society and Japanese perceptions of themselves. Other authors (Lebra 1976 and White 1987) follow a similar line of reasoning yet provide a more human face to the Japanese by dealing with areas such as empathy, dependence, and the need for belonging in order to articulate the process in which Japanese social organization operates. They also recognize the interplay between the traditional and modern, which continues to shape the direction of changes in Japanese society. This understanding also focuses on the strength of “Japaneseness” as a force that, rather than blindly accepting outside influences, changes these institutions to fit appropriately. As a result no reconciliation between so-called traditional formulations of the family and the post-modern realities being experienced today is necessary. “Japaneseness” can and does include punk rock, rap music, single parent households and even McDonald’s albeit in altered local formulations. These altered formulations of social phenomena, which reveal much about the complexity of Japanese social

organization, have presented a wealth of opportunities for examining various social aspects.

Issues of class, hierarchy and power as they are constructed through the use and practice of knowledge both modern and traditional have been examined through the lens of humor (Hibbett 2002), sex education (Yamamoto 2004) and most relevant, the physical organization of community festivals (Bestor 1992). All underscore the weakness in assertions that Japanese traditions as they are understood today have survived unchanged and uncorrupted. Instead it is clear that tradition is often defined by position and is manipulated in order to reestablish, reinvigorate or reorder the organization of power. Often this is accomplished as groups claim ownership over knowledge and practice in the face of attempts to deny access to the tools necessary to play an active role in determining their own futures. Yamamoto (2004), in particular, shows a process driven by a youth culture more concerned with individual rights rather than group responsibilities.

Identity, the image of self and how these are constructed within society have been discussed in two ways. In relation to class and the construction of identities, identity has been represented as a way of maintaining a division among roles of unequal status, for example part-time worker versus mother or wife (Kondo 1990). It also represents how individuals cope with “new” notions of independence, control over one’s body, and an open desire for sexual intimacy that are in direct conflict with expectations (Rosenberg 2001). Data from these examples supports the notion that it is through a reformulation of traditional roles rather than a rejection of tradition that a segment of the populace is able to express the current status of society. This ability to manipulate ideas of tradition to meet contemporary needs is important since I argue here that through the practice of school festivals, university students are not only learning to practice rituals basic to social communication, but are also learning to manipulate these same practices to communicate different messages and achieve different ends.

There are several articles that specifically address the issue of school festivals and their role in social education (Oki 2002, Kono1976, Yamamoto and Takamoto 1976, Horii 1970, and Okihara 1973). The articles cited here and throughout this text represent nearly all of the published materials on school festivals in Japanese. Why so little work has been published on this social phenomenon is indicated in the tone of many of the articles which all mention the changing role of the school festival from a formal display of student accomplishments to a festival-like event run by students. While some seem to indicate that there is still educational value in holding such an event (Okihara 1973, and Horii 1970), there is consensus that school festivals – from the indigenous Japanese perspective - belong on the fringes of academic study. Similar opinions have been expressed regarding the study of prostitution, attitudes

toward sex, and the role a tiered education system plays in maintaining social classes in Japan. In each case the accepted opinion is these topics are inappropriate for scholarly research resulting in a lack of academic interest (Allison 1994: 11 and Yoder conversation with author, Tokyo, Japan, 10 November 2002). This attitude is unfortunate since serious study by indigenous ethnographers would likely reveal greater insight into the place of school festivals in a society where *matsuri* play such an important function, allowing individuals to reassert or question the status quo through the public performance of their roles (Ashkenazai 1993). As it stands, this small body of work does little to enlighten the reader beyond accepted notions that much has changed in terms of school festival structure and content, and all seem to maintain the opinion that much of this change has been for the worse.

These articles do present support for the history of school festivals, indicating that they were initially community-based, semi-religious events tied to the fall harvest (Horii 1970 and Okihara 1973) which later became more standardized and then shifted again at the end of World War II (Yamamoto, et alii) into the student organized affairs of the present. There also appears to be agreement that the cause for this shift was the U.S. occupation's emphasis on developing students' social skills, and independence, one of the few lasting influences the U.S. had on the Japanese educational system (Okihara 1973).

In general, however, these discussions are less interested in the exact origins of the event and more interested in describing how school festivals have become opportunities for students to engage in activities outside the regular curriculum. They also agree that the tone of the festival often reflects the current tone of the student body whether this be optimistic or combative and represents an expression of the school's and the local community's current status.

## Ritual and Social Change: A Japanese example

### Continuity and change

“It is the way it is because we are Japanese.”

Or so I was told on many occasions as a means of explaining an aspect of Japanese society or decision-making practices that an informant did not want to or felt unable to explain fully. While this response was just as often the result of frustration with an inquisitive ethnographer, in many cases it is what the informant truly believed. As such, it represents a standard conviction which forms many of the opinions Japanese have about themselves, the way things should be and the inability of non-Japanese to understand Japanese society. In this particular instance I was challenging my participation in the annual company trip (*shain ryokou* – 社員旅行). The *shain ryokou*, or company trip, on some levels could be characterized as a version of the *gakkousai* experienced as a professional. The structured daily schedule is replaced by an opportunity to breakdown barriers and air conflicts often by involving drinking and play in an organized but unregulated manner. Attendance is often mandatory as it is seen as an opportunity to enhance camaraderie among co-workers. Objections to this policy result in explanations focusing on a need to maintain traditions and group feeling which are difficult for non-Japanese to comprehend but speak to the image of what it means to be Japanese and its outward focus.

Japanese society has long been characterized by its seemingly hierarchical nature and highly ritualized modes of acting out daily life (Benedict 1946, Douglas 1973, Lebra 1976, Nakane 1970, and McVeigh 1997). In the many descriptions of Japanese society the focus characterizes Japanese culture as more static than others and highlight the manner individual members of the society are guided towards conformity and the needs of the group. Yet, recently both the popular and academic press have begun to focus on what might be termed an eruption of individualism or “*kawaritsutsu ari Nihon*” (Lewallen, Ann Elise e-mail to author June 2005). Some have placed this shift in Japanese society in historical terms citing that the push towards conformity is only a relatively recent phenomenon beginning with the Meiji Restoration citing that diversity has always existed between geographic regions and classes (Hibbet 2002). Others see recent demographic shifts, coupled with the influx of migrants and the prolonged economic depression as a cause for major changes (a breakdown?) in the society

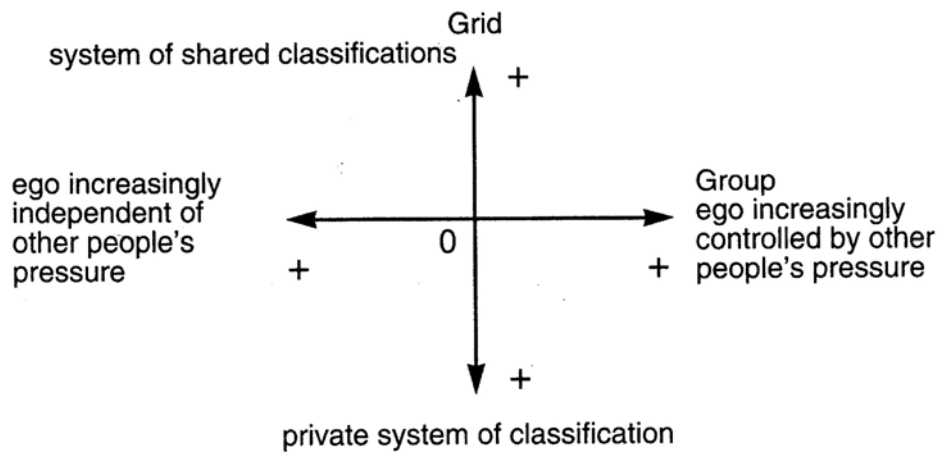


(White 2002, Befu 2000). Regardless of the driving forces, it is apparent that an obvious shift away from some of the basic characteristics that have been identified with “being Japanese” (Callens 2001) is occurring and that this shift is affecting many parts of Japanese society particularly those spheres dominated by Japanese youth including attitudes towards sexuality, employment and social relationships. Yamamoto (2004) makes the case that while the reasons behind an apparent increase in sexuality among youth is largely misunderstood, young people in Japan are engaging in a sexual revolution of sorts. Associated with this is the delaying of marriage and the appeal of not seeking the security of fulltime employment in exchange for greater freedom and mobility (White 2002, and Kozuki 2005).

The idea that these changes in attitudes might be reflected in ritual activities is certainly not new (Geertz 1957). However the manner in which Japanese university school festivals are able to reflect both those aspects of Japanese society that are stable and those aspects that are changing is unique and interesting.

### **Grid and Group**

In order to better conceptualize the shifts occurring, I employ the matrix devised by Mary Douglas for the study of ritual, which must begin with a study of the practicing society (1996:56). Ritual in her conception operates differently in different societies and thus must be contextualized. However, Douglas also felt that there had to be some objective criteria for understanding the manner ritual operated in particular societies and so developed a matrix to be used in mapping two basic criteria she identified as “grid” and “group.”



Douglas (1996: 60)

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Douglas refers to grid as the degree to which a society shares a set of common understandings, something akin to a shared code that both restricts and facilitates communication and understanding (1996:54-60). Social linguistic theory makes similar comparisons when discussing the degree to which a society relies on verbal communication as opposed to non-verbal communication (Knapp 1980). A society that could communicate effectively through the use of non-verbal cues under Douglas' model can do so because they share a set of strong common understandings. Societies that rely heavily on verbal forms of communication have a weak grid (set of common understandings) and so need to explain everything using words. Again, linguistics offers other terms such as high context/low context (Hall 1990) for the same basic ideas but the focus of Douglas' study was ritual. As a result, she saw a direct correlation between the importance of ritual in a society and the degree to which its members held closely to a shared group of common symbols.

Group refers to the degree of pressure a society places on individuals to conform to the needs of the society. Pressure can come in the form of social sanctions and is most effective when a society is composed of a web of small groups. Often this "pressure" is exhibited in the form of personal contact by members of an associated group on an individual but can also come in other forms (Lebra 1976). I would argue contemporary U.S. society though extolling the values of individualism ranks near the middle of the group scale having replaced traditional forms of social control with legal or political ones. What is important is that members of the society understand that there are social consequences for failing to conform and, as a result, the tendency is to a consolidation of social

practices. Societies with weak social controls tend to value ideals such as freedom, individuality and mobility.

Japanese society as traditionally characterized would exhibit both a high degree of common understanding and strong pressure on the individual to conform to the group and thus would fall deeply within the strong grid/strong group quadrant of Douglas' matrix.

However, due to some of the trends discussed above, Japanese society is undergoing a shift in the degree to which the group can exhibit pressure on the individual to conform to its needs. A depressed economy, shifting demographics and increasing competition from international sectors have all influenced the degree to which social sanctions can be used effectively. Not only do individuals have greater mobility between groups but the groups themselves are less tied into each other in the web of social connections when compared with the past.

As a result, this shift is also affecting the degree that members of Japanese society are able to express and feel able to act on individual preferences. What makes Douglas' matrix so useful is that it allows for modeling a shift in one attribute without necessitating a shift in the other. Obviously while changes in one quadrant will affect how processes in the other manifest themselves, the changes are in modes of operation, not the level to which a society uses forms of social control or a set of common symbols. In the context of Japanese society, members are using the same symbols of communication (grid) but in an altogether different ways to express new ideas about themselves. Now they are manipulating these symbols (or ignoring some all together) to break free of the constraints of social controls (group) which in the past obliged them to conform to social norms. This ability to reinterpret the daily symbols of communication is very evident among university age adults.

### **The cycle of university ritual**

For students, life in the Japanese university setting represents the culmination of many of their life-long aspirations, while others have described it as a finishing school, free period of play between high school and life, or an opportunity to develop one's own personality (McVeigh 1997). In many ways, for Japanese their college years are the final stage of the formal socialization process that began on the first day of kindergarten. At university, students put into practice the many social rules and observances to which they have been indoctrinated, in a setting that is safe and relatively free from penalty. Most significantly the university is becoming more and more a place to practice ways of circumventing social constraints that have suppressed the individual to the needs of the group while still retaining uniquely Japanese modes of communication.

These changes reflect stronger tendencies towards individual expression while maintaining a strong set of common understandings. Moreover, this shift is not only reflected in the manner in which university school festivals are practiced but also the manner in which other university level rituals have lessened in participation and importance. This is not to say that the acts around which these rituals are composed have lost their significance but that the practice of these rituals has lost their related importance. As one example, the act of graduating from high school or university is still significant in that it is a step in the process of becoming an adult but the ritual of the graduation ceremony has lessened in importance as a symbol of the process. Students may still graduate but the degree to which the ceremony is seen as a signifier is not equal to the rewards and opportunities it provides. I propose several reasons for this situation.

First, rituals like the entrance, graduation and coming-of-age ceremonies, all significant events on the road to adulthood, are organized in a top-down fashion with little room for input on the part of the social group they are supposed to celebrate. Instead they are a labeling process, as students appear like items on an assembly line to be proclaimed, “graduated.” Such ceremonies do not in any way resemble Turner’s principle of *communitas* or the tunnel described in his consideration of rituals as transformative exercises. In fact, in all three of these events participants need only be present physically in order to participate as only a few have an active role. In addition, with all three of these the actual process has become increasingly detached from the ritual thus removing much of the meaning from the event. For example, students in the fourth year of university in many cases have already begun a frantic job search. As demonstrated by recent figures for the ratio of job openings to applicants provided by the Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare in 2003 even in the most difficult economic times, a majority of graduating university students were able to find a position by September, before the beginning of their final term and long before the end of the academic year and the graduation ceremony in March (appendix two). Once a student has been offered and accepted a position it is unlikely a university will fail to graduate a student and may actually put pressure on faculty to make sure the student is passed in all courses, especially those not vital to the major. As a result, there is little tension or anticipation associated with the ritual of graduation since the actual step in the process of “becoming an adult” occurred when the student signed on with a company. Many students interviewed expressed an anti-climatic feeling regarding their graduation ceremony and most said they attended “for their parents” or because they wanted to say farewell to their friends. Generally this type of response has manifested itself in two ways; a decreased level of attendance or attention to certain ceremonies, or attempts to infuse some level of individual expression into the event, often to the consternation of the organizers.

The university school festival is quite different. While historically it, too, was organized in a top-down and scripted fashion the focus has always been on the display of students' talents and thus required their active participation. To be discussed later in this paper, today students not only actively participate but also tend to direct most aspects of the school festival. As such, there would be no school festival without their involvement. Again in contrast to the events mentioned above where the process and ritual have become detached from each other, in the university school festival the process and ritual are closely intertwined with each other and unlike other university level ceremonies the significance of university school festivals is *in the doing*.

Providing a history of university school festivals presents the background necessary to understand the intended role of this annual rite and demonstrate how it was intended to provide an opportunity for the university to present to the community at large how it was achieving its stated goals. Included is a brief outline of the history of the modern educational system in Japan in order to suggest that from its inception, the system of education and everything associated with it was intended to create "good Japanese." Finally, I will discuss an instance of a student rebellion, which forced the cancellation of the school festival. This instance supports my thesis in demonstrating how students perceived of the school festival as a time for personal expression and the limits a strong grid/group orientation place on the members of a society.

To fully understand the significance of the university school festival in the creation of Japanese society, it is best to view the life-long cycle of school festivals as a reoccurring process of events. I present this process in order to demonstrate that school festivals play an important role in the maturation of Japanese students. From early childhood to young adulthood a major event in the cycle of the academic calendar is the school festival. However, even after graduating from university or a trade school, and a brief respite to begin a career, marry and have children, the cycle begins anew, as students become parents and later grandparents.

Unlike other academic rituals (entrance ceremonies, graduation, etc.) a high level of participation is necessary and so the school festival represents a true rite of passage with all generations represented in continually changing roles.

This description demonstrates how university school festivals act as an opportunity for individual self-expression and work to maintain the set of shared common understandings and mirror the structure of Japanese society itself. Following the actual events of a university school festival from preparation, through its presentation and the celebration of a successful event one can see how the cycle of school festivals has steadily prepared participants for the roles they will take on in this climatic event. More importantly, the skills required to take on these roles will prove useful throughout the lives of the participants.

Comparing the structure and participation level of university school festival with other university level rites of passage I make the case that the university school festival has maintained its vitality because it embodies the shifting values of Japanese society. Reports from individuals as well as the media show a declining level of participation in events such as the entrance and coming-of-age ceremonies. While these occasions will continue, unless they adapt to the changing values of the society, they risk becoming redundant.

Rituals in Japanese society that are administered from the top-down have become less significant. At the same time, those which allow for individual expression and are “more democratic” have held and/or gained importance. Similar changes are occurring in Japanese society. Evidence presented in the succeeding chapters support Geertz’s perception that rituals reflect societal norms and also mirror the tensions caused by constant adjustments. Japanese society, while remaining essentially Japanese, appears to be at a crossroads brought on by global factors. With the older generations becoming increasingly conservative and the youth of Japan experimenting with new modes of expressing identity, Japanese society will remain ripe with opportunities for the study of social change and conflict not unlike that which occurred in the West in the 1970’s.

## Gakkousai-A short history

### **Ritual and moral education**

Local *matsuri* are a staple in Japanese society. Each town, city and prefecture organizes one or more annual events designed to reinvigorate the feeling of community amongst its members (Bestor 1989 and Schnell 1999). Many find their roots in local agricultural rites that have existed for hundreds of years and as such, were part of the set of beliefs that make up the Buddhist and Shinto religions (Okihara 1973). Today few of the local customs remain intact so that these festivals, or *matsuri*, on the surface resemble each other to such an extent that some one unfamiliar with the Japanese language might not differentiate among them. Traveling from one to the next, the same colorful stalls, red banners, games and food - except for the local specialties - give the impression of a traveling circus that has stopped in one spot for a few days only to pack up and then move on. In actuality however, most of the merchants present are local people who make their living in the community and it is not the stalls that travel but the ideas, or more accurately the ideology of *matsuri* that has become ubiquitous. This description of local festivals is important as many of the same forces that drove conformity among local *matsuri* are also behind the creation and transformation of school festivals.

With the inception of the Meiji period there was a calculated drive to bring all of Japan and all Japanese under one banner, and a single ideology (Thomas 1996, Hunter 1989, and Gordon 2003). This process encompassed all aspects of society firmly establishing not only the hierarchy of Japanese society but also what it meant to be Japanese.

At the apex of both the hierarchy and the ideology is the emperor and the acceptance of his place as god on earth. While transformed into a figurehead as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the dogmatic doctrine surrounding the emperor's position was useful in establishing and holding power. According to this doctrine it was from the divine nature of the emperor that all claims to power were entrenched and as a result it was necessary to entrench these ideas firmly into the minds of the populace. Given that prior to the reorganization of the Japanese feudal states, Japan was a collection of diverse customs, beliefs and dialects those

in power felt that a concerted drive was needed to instill a single set of nationalistic ideas.

As a result, in addition to discouraging many local practices and customs, the Meiji government also instituted a national system of education which would not only serve to supply capable workforce but would also insure that all its citizens were trained in the ideology of being Japanese (Schoppa 1991). These two goals were paramount as has been documented in many places and in fact these principles still predominate much of the present day system of education as evidenced in the goals and edicts of the Ministry of Education (MEXT School Education: Incorporation of National Universities 2005).

Amongst the many ways that the Meiji government felt it could effectively instill a sense of patriotism and respect into its citizenry through education, was the use of ritual, around which a common set of experiences could be experienced. Much like the skeleton of the human body, a well-organized formulaic calendar would serve as the base upon which the beliefs the Meiji government hoped to instill would rest. As a result, from the inception of the organized system of education several important yearly events were established. These included; *nyugakushiki* or the entrance ceremony, which signaled across the nation that the academic year had begun, sports day, which was meant to insure that healthy bodies as well as minds were being nurtured, and *happyokai* or school “open house” or “presentation day”, which was not only designed to allow students to display their academic achievements but also meant to include displays of patriotism through performances and acts of community service.

Prior to World War II these school activities were highly organized and regulated to instill a specific set of values and ideals. Values such as patience, endurance and loyalty to the emperor were represented through the precise practice of activities, recitation of creeds and the presentation of student works. *Gakkousai*, *gakkensai* or school festivals were very different from today with few events organized independently by the students. In most cases, student participation was regulated to the presentation of skills and knowledge appropriate to their grade level and there was little purpose other than strengthening the values mentioned above (Kono 1976).

As today, it was the one time of the year when the surrounding community was invited onto campus in order to witness students’ accomplishments and develop a sense of community. Coming to campus was especially important in the early years of the Meiji era since many of the parents had not attended university themselves. This string of events helped to foster communication between the school and the local community and indirectly between the central government and its citizenry. Prior to 1872, school attendance was still voluntary and though there were legal edicts, many parents still had to be convinced that formal education was a reasonable way to use a child’s time when they could be



working the fields of the family farm (Adams 1970). In creating this opportunity for students to display their work and performances the Meiji government hoped to create a stage, arena, or a *basho* (場所) where the community and school could come together. Thus the school festival would not only serve as a stage for individual and group achievements but also for the set of beliefs and the ideology it was trying to instill.

### **Ritual and independence**

In a kindergarten school festival, parents, grandparents and siblings are seated on mats around the edge of the school's courtyard while three and four year-old girls and boys march out into the center of the field. Wearing matching caps indicating their *gumi*, or class, or group, shorts and white t-shirts they resemble a miniature army platoon taking the field for calisthenics. As the announcer calls out the name of each *gumi* students respond with a loud *hai* or "yes". Once the roll-call is complete music begins to play and these young children proceed as best as possible through a series of synchronized moves intended to display dedication, dexterity and identity as members of their class and school. While most successfully participate, some stand still and silent, others sit on the ground and at least one child will break down in tears running off the field in search of comfort.

Early accounts of school festivals describe highly regimented events in which students performed songs, read passages they had learned or participated in some community activity as a show of gratitude. After WWII, a significant shift took place as the purpose and range of activities associated with the school festival was transformed by a new ideology introduced by western occupation forces. While there are few direct references on the part of the Ministry of Education connecting the edicts of the U.S. Occupation Forces and pedagogical changes in Japan's education policies, it is clear that the principles of independence, social interaction, communication and self expression fall in line with what was envisioned for Japan's future (U.S. Government Printing Office 1946). At this time, the school festival also took on a more festive atmosphere and students took great control over its planning and execution.

While those placed in power by the U.S. Occupation Forces were often the same individuals who were in power during the war, few wanted to see a return to the militaristic attitudes. As a result, administrators attempted to reorganize the education system and its practices to foster a strong sense of independence and freethinking. One of the first attempts of this reorganization included giving more

local control to the towns and cities. Each school was intended to have a school board composed of faculty, local officials and local citizens. In addition, faculty were given a great deal of power in deciding the administration of their school and the newly formed teachers unions gave teachers additional power in negotiating the curriculum as well as their salary. All these reforms were meant to break up the centralized system of education responsible for the dissemination of the imperialistic rhetoric. While some of these reforms, such as the formation of local school boards, were short lived and the centralized system of education remained largely intact, the decision-making power granted faculty remained influential for sometime (Adams 1970). These young idealistic teachers who had lived through the war were committed to educating the next generation in a manner that would insure there would not be a return to militarism. When US Occupation Forces departed the strong teacher unions successfully resisted numerous attempts on the part of the national government to re-instill pre-war modes of teaching, versions of history, and even the recognition of a national flag or anthem. These ideals permeated every level of education and are often blamed for the rioting on many Japanese university campuses in the 1960's (Yasko 2002, and Gordon 2002).

Other reforms were not as grand but were meant to be as far reaching, including the reorganization of school activities such as the school festival. As discussed above, prior to the war the school festival was an event organized by the school designed to communicate through the students work the ideology of the state. Because many of the post-war faculty felt that the system of education was largely responsible for generating an unquestioning populace they hoped to transform the next generation into independent minded individuals.

One of the tactics was to create a forum for students to organize, express their ideas, and exercise their opinions. One result of this idealism was the creation of student government councils, which in addition to serving as the center of organization for student groups, were given responsibility for organizing the school festival. It was believed that if students were given responsibility for school festival they would be able to develop social skills, learn to cooperate and expend their energy in constructive manner.

While some schools, such as Tokyo University, record school festival type of events as far back as 1922, other schools and universities indicate that their earliest school festival was held around 1950 (Horii 1970). Examination of school records, support Kono's assertion that the flavor and organization of school festivals changed drastically around this date. No longer was the festival an opportunity for the school to present the academic prowess or skills of the student body but it had become an opportunity for students to develop their social and creative skills. Academics, while still a part of the festival, were no longer as

important as the ability of students to generate an attractive atmosphere for the local community to enjoy (Horii 1970, and Nishi 1970).

While the roots of the school festival exist in the desire to generate common understandings and practices around principles of what it means to be Japanese it evolved over a short span of time into an opportunity for the expression of individual talents and new ideas. This evolution, though the result of historic events, lies in the structure of the event itself. Unlike other occasions that comprise the ritual calendar of the school year, the school festivals exist because the participants - the students - create it. Soon after students were given control of the organization and planning of the event it became obvious that it was only through their direct participation that the event could occur at all. While obviously in the younger grades students' participation is in a sense coerced, as they grow older the success of the event is directly proportional to the enthusiasm they put into it. In sum, although the *gakkousai* was originally a ritualized event meant to support the installation of a common national ideology and identity it was transformed by a shift in power to students.

### **Gakkoensai and radicalism**

Associated with this shift in power was the rise in radicalism that occurred across university campuses in the 1960's. Supported immediately after the war by the U.S. occupation, activist groups with leftist leanings permeated some important areas of Japanese society. These included a newly established labor movement as evidenced by academics who effectively took over the governance of most universities through the establishment of strong faculty labor unions, which continues as the present system of faculty governance. This faculty roused a spirit of radicalism among its students that led to a series of infamous riots at many of the top universities. One result of these riots was the establishment of a clear delineation between the realm of the university administration, and the realm of faculty and students. Along with student dorms and club areas, the school festival became a secular rite of passage that the university administration could no longer interfere in without fear of student protests. In this manner the modern school festival was created. One recent event described here, in many ways represents the latest stages in the evolution of university school festivals. I record some of the major events here in order to emphasize the populist individual nature *gakkousai* have assumed.

In the 1960's a leftist movement swept over the student body of many of the major universities in Japan. To a large extent this movement was the creation of faculty who had been nurturing a socialist leaning sentiment since the end of World War II, a movement that was hastened during the intervention that was the

U.S. occupation. As noted the U.S. occupation allowed innovative ideas and methods to flourish at many levels of the education system. While the majority of the most progressive programs ended with the exit of the occupation forces, some had taken root and continued under the protection of laws and organizations, such as labor unions. As a result, the first few generations of students immediately following the war were indoctrinated into a set of ideas based heavily in this leftist idealism. As this group entered into university during the late 60's and early 70's, the stage was set for many explosive confrontations between traditional university administrations and students who were tactically supported by their faculty. In several instances protests resulted in universities being forced to close down for days at a time as they negotiated with student protestors who took over campus buildings.

In order to restore order, university administrations were often forced to make concessions that students felt served to protect the intellectual freedom of their professors and their education. Often, these reforms were followed by structural changes that greatly diminished the effect of these changes and recently this process has gained momentum. One example has occurred under the guise of a restructuring of higher education and has a direct effect on the status of faculty. In the past tenure was automatic for faculty after a period of five years but this has now been all but abolished. Most faculty today are hired on revolving contracts which leave them with little security. While this was meant to generate incentive for overall academic production it instead has made those in the remaining tenure track positions beholden to oversight by the non-faculty university administration who play a significant role in the tenure process.

It is noteworthy that none of the benefits associated with tenured faculty status have been altered but instead universities have created several categories of contract positions and are hiring few faculty into tenure track positions.

These changes are the result of a wide set of social, economic and political changes occurring over the last three decades, the most prominent of which is the slowing economy and stagnant nature of growth. By the end of the 1970's, the economic boom was clearly ending and businesses began to realize they would no longer be able to support the large white-collar work forces, guaranteed lifetime employment and huge pensions. As businesses began the painful process of restructuring and public enterprises were turned into private companies labor unions were forced to make concessions or in some instances dissolve altogether.

As the labor market was affected so, too, were the expectations of university graduates. With hiring rates near only 50%, what at one time had been competition for employment in the best and most prestigious companies became competition for any job. Students seeing the weakening of labor movements started to become less concerned with issues of academic freedom and more concerned with finding employment upon graduation. The university as an

institution became less a place for education and moral and philosophical development, and instead an opportunity to gain marketable skills.

Student radicalism decreased and the majority of students declined to participate in efforts to protect their rights or those of their professors. Most students were content with passing their courses. However, there continued to be a strong dedicated presence of students who, remaining loyal to the ideals of the previous generation, occasionally staged protests and raised concern among the university administration.

### **The case of Tokyocentral university**

At one central Tokyo campus, referred to here as Tokyocentral university, this core minority of students took advantage of declining interest among the general student body in student government (*jichikai*) to elect their members in key positions of power. Fixed in these positions this coalition of left leaning student groups were able to control the large amount of funds funneled through the *jichikai* to groups and projects of their choosing. Because these funds were earmarked to support student clubs and the presentation of the school festival, the progressive minded student government could only make decisions about the division of the funds among the many student groups and clubs. Many of the left leaning student clubs benefited although they represented a minority of the student body. The school festival, a major source of funding for student groups, became a stage for the presentation of their ideas and often included speeches and marches.

Beginning in 1991 there were a number of issues brewing on the campus that had become particular points of contention between the student government and the university administration. One included the demolition of the student club building. As one of the top three universities in Japan this campus was not experiencing a decline in student body but was going through a period of renewal that included a number of major construction projects. A number of the original buildings were slated for demolition and would be replaced by modern buildings in an effort to beautify the campus. This plan included a row of buildings that had housed student club and activity rooms. According to student reports the plan was designed without their consultation and of most concern were plans to equip the new buildings with cameras and card-key locks that could record who entered the building and at what time. Student clubrooms had long been recognized as a student-only area and both of these new security measures were perceived as infringement of their rights.

It should be noted that with little oversight by faculty, administration or even maintenance staff on many campuses these rooms are often overflowing with an

unorganized collection of equipment, tools and remnants of past school festivals and other events. While attempts are made to maintain Japanese sensibilities around cleanliness, the existence of leftover food and empty bottles of alcohol are common. Guests often ignore the prohibition on shoes inside and remove their shoes at the entrance, only to place them on again once passing over the threshold. Some clubrooms house mascots, which generally include fish or small animals but in one instance included a goat. All this results in general disarray often cited as a fire hazard and one that grows over time.

In the case of this university the building was close to one hundred years old and the clubs had occupied the basement for over fifty of those years though there were no records of the exact date. The student government and associated groups argued the demolition and construction of a new building was simply an attempt to weaken its position and disrupt its operations. The university administration argued that the building was crumbling, was an inefficient space, with no central heating and poor plumbing. They also said the cameras and card lock were security measures meant to insure student safety.

The rooms were not only important as a place to prepare the school festival, but the largest space belonged to one of the most influential clubs on campus - the *gakusaijikuinkai* (school festival committee) – which at this time was largely composed of members very sympathetic to the political ideals of the student government. The clubrooms were used for much preparation, and were staging areas for many of parties that followed. Students often spent days and nights in these rooms just prior to the event, and so the *gakuensai* was one focus for the student protests. The student government council first complained to the university administration, then through the school festival committee and other student groups, began to organize education campaigns and protests.

Fearing a return to the days of protests and turmoil, the university administration first attempted to set up guidelines for the presentation of the school festival meant to limit the level of protests. However these proved unsuccessful and several court cases resulted from these attempts. In one case, students who had attended a speech by a speaker whose views were perceived to be particularly radical had their attendance recorded by the university administration. These students successfully argued that this was an invasion of their privacy and this action was meant to discourage attendance without overtly setting limits on freedom of speech. In this instance, the courts ruled that the university would have to pay reparations for their actions.

Finally in 1997, it was decided that while the university could not upset precedent by dissolving the student government, they could cancel the university school festival altogether citing student safety, and by doing so drastically reduced the \$100,000 the student government had control over. It also removed the purpose of the *gakusaijikuinkai* greatly reducing the support base and the

opportunity to voice their message. While the student government continues to be dominated by politically left-leaning students, the level of support they received from the general student body largely decreased.

Because the student government and its supporters only represented a small portion of the total population of students the majority of students knew or cared little about the conflicts that were occurring. Most viewed the occasional protests as bothersome (*mendokusai*) and largely ignored accounts in the newspapers until the school festival was cancelled. However, once it became clear that the cancellation was to be permanent, a backlash occurred as the majority of the student body who had not been involved in the protests recognized a great loss with the cancellation of the festival.

This disruption in what had been an expected event in the yearly calendar was so great that in the spring of 2002 students in small groups without the knowledge or financial backing of the student government began organizing informally around a drive to bring back the student festival. Most of these students represented student clubs with no political agenda and had in the past felt under-represented on campus. These clubs also greatly depended on the revenue they could generate during the school festival for other events throughout the school year. A number of them were sports related though they also included film clubs, cheer groups and clubs associated with various academic departments.

These informal student groups or “*circles*” created networks and began to organize on a larger scale via leaflets and meetings. Eventually they organized a central group of about 200 students who were to serve as the primary planning committee and was composed of students from a variety of formal clubs and informal student groups (*circles*). This planning committee proposed a newly designed school festival free from political rhetoric and submitted it to the university administration. In order to separate themselves further from the student government and the “official” school festival planning committee they named themselves the *Tokyocentralsai junbijinkyoku* or Tokyo central festival preparation group.

Unique to their proposal were three concessions, the *junbijinkyoku* was willing to; relinquish the monetary support of the university, forego a weeklong holiday that had always accompanied the school festival in the past, and agreed to limit the scope of activities and their location on campus to approved areas. In exchange this group was given the freedom to run the event without the direct involvement of the university administration. The university accepted the proposal as a trial and thus in December 2002 the students held the first school festival in five years.

The organization and structure of the newly formed school festival was different from the past. Although financial support from the university, one-third of total annual funds no longer was provided the event proved successful with

attendance in the first year matching previous years and attendance in the second year exceeding the average of 100,000 for the two-day event by 50,000 people. In subsequent years the student circle organizing the newly named *Tokyocentralsai* became more formalized and took on responsibility on a year round basis. Both the university administration and students continue to accept this annual plan on year-to-year basis. While the university exercises no other oversight, this approval process is considerable, since it is clear that a plan including objectionable events would be rejected and as an unaffiliated student group could easily be disbanded. In the short term the annual approval process seems to have resolved the students' desire to hold a school festival and the university's desire to limit the influence of the more radical students.

It is significant that this renewal of the *gakuensai* all occurred without the involvement of the *jichikai* that had been at the center of the controversy that originally resulted in the cancellation of the school festival. The student government's reaction was to denounce the school festival as "not authentic" and the student planning committee, which had become in essence a parallel student government, as puppets of the university administration. Rather than accept this notion, the students who formed the *Tokyocentral junbijinkyoku* should be viewed as taking the initiative in order to reclaim one of the most visible symbols of their identity and membership to their prestigious university.

As an interesting aside, for a time after the cancellation of the school festival there was one particularly entrepreneurial student who throughout the school year organized large parties that attracted hundreds (some reports of thousands) of students. While these parties were held off campus and were financed completely by the student and his "circle" they were in some fashion sanctioned by the university as they were recognized as a semi-official university organization. As such, the student was able to use the university's name in the advertisements for the parties. This attracted many students - particularly females - from other universities hoping to develop relationships with soon to be male graduates of this prestigious campus. That the head of this group was only attending part-time in an extension program and had no immediate intention of graduating did not trouble university officials. That is, until several female students who had attended one of the parties alleged that they had been invited to join a private party after the main one where they were coerced into drinking more alcohol and then gang-raped (Mainichi Daily News 2003). Later it came out that this was not the first incident of this type and that in addition to making substantial amount of profit from these parties the head of this group used these parties as opportunities to lure young co-eds into sexual relationships.

This activity indicated that one of the reasons the university administration did not investigate these parties earlier was because they saw them as substitutes for *gakuensai*. As one administrator put it, "these parties represented students



organizing themselves for the purpose of generating a common set of experience or *skinship* through an event designed for their own enjoyment.” This attitude of complacency was shared by top ranking government officials one Cabinet minister reportedly stating, "At least gang rapists are still vigorous. Isn't that at least a little closer to normal (CBS News 2003)?" This series of events also demonstrates the tolerance for a certain set of activities, regardless of the dangers they may represent if they seem to support the ideological goals of an institution. In this case by providing an alternative to the school festival these parties circumvented the student government and its radical leanings.

In their attempt to imprint a national identity on the reorganized nation the Meiji government itself used a variety of political, military and social tools. The extent to which they were successful is debatable but what is true is that it is in this period that the seeds for many of the present day systems and rituals were planted. Of these, the system of education was one of the more strongly set in place due to the fact that no extensive national system of education existed prior to this period. As an important part of generating a national identity, setting in place a calendar of events designed to incorporate the bodies, minds and spirits of Japanese youth and their parents was seen as a vital necessity. It is within this context that the school festival was created. In addition to the manner school festivals incorporated recognizable community based concepts such as *matsuri*, the way school festivals incorporated children and their parents, served the goals of generating an ideology of loyalty among a diverse populace.

Unlike some of the other events in the school calendar however, the school festival relies heavily on student participation at the basic levels of planning and execution. As a result, it has been susceptible to change in a way unlike the entrance, graduation or coming-of-age ceremonies. This flexibility has resulted in an evolution of the school festival. Whereas in the past it was focused on establishing the goals of national identity, today *gakkousai* are focused on celebrating individual talents and achievements within the context of individual members of a system organizing themselves for a common purpose.

I began this section by describing local neighborhood festivals because they represented one basis for the creation of school festivals and also because they, too, rely on individual participation. They have also undergone many of the same evolutionary revisions. In the last two decades a recognizable shift has occurred from events designed to incorporate members of the community to visible attempts to draw in tourists as a means of revenue. As such, they replicate the same pattern of individuals using a group context to meet their own goals. As further evidence of this more and more local events are branding themselves as a means of attracting tourists. Some of these ritual events represent the nexus of the strong grid/weak group that Japanese society is becoming.

## The Social Cycle of School Festivals

### **Entering a community**

The *gakuensai* I describe here take place at the university level, though *gakkousai*, *happyokai* and *bunkasai* are an activity at all levels of education. Beginning in kindergarten, students (or their parents) are organized into groups made responsible for various activities carried out at the yearly school festival. As students progress through the system of education they become more and more responsible for the activities until at university they are given almost complete control over the planning and execution of events. Through their continuous participation, students are keenly familiar with the process of *gakkousai*, its institutional nature and their advancing level of responsibility.

In every society, formal education is to one degree or another, a form of socialization but many Japan specialists deem it the main instrument in which enculturation occurs (Nagai 1971, Adams 1970, White 1987, and Yoder 2003). Those who have examined the role of education in Japanese society agree formal education serves the important role of codifying rules for behavior. These commentators cite how from the onset, formal education in Japan emphasizes pulling the society together under a single ideology of beliefs (Varela 1996, White 1988, and Ministry of Education 1980). Others have pointed out that the university is a form of finishing school where young men and women are sent to become young adults ready to fully participate in society, assuming roles dictated by their status and profession (McVeigh 1997). Rules governing dress, hairstyle and language have been examined and have either been credited with the educational successes or cited as part of the problems with the Japanese education system (Yoder 2003). Regardless, all seem to agree that the education system as it is organized in Japan has a profound effect on *becoming Japanese* (Callens 2001). With this in mind, the process of education itself as a rite of passage that spans most of a young person's life can be examined. The university campus in particular, as a type of ritual space where individuals go to become a special class of members of their society, is of particular interest.

Within the structured system of formal education there are a number of events or "rituals" which serve as markers indicating the passage of students from one phase of personhood to the next. The more prominent of these include entrance and graduation ceremonies, school performances, sports festivals and of

course, entrance exams, which are clearly a defining moment in the young life of many Japanese. The *gakkousai* also fit into this category of rituals and are notable in that while many events and rules - regarding dress and appearance - are laid aside when students enter university, *gakkousai* continue on as an expected and anticipated part of a student's life. Why is this? And what role does the school festival play in the structure of education? In order to attempt to answer this fully we must look at the full cycle of school festivals as it spans a student's educational career and in some instances a person's entire life.

Entrance into kindergarten is an auspicious event in the life of a child. Not only does the corresponding ceremony mark the transition of the child from infancy onto the long road to personhood but it also marks a point of transition for the parents as well. Parents will be dressed in their finest and often newly purchased apparel. On the first day of school, they will accompany the child who will often be wearing the school's uniform for the first time. There will be a formal welcoming ceremony complete with speeches from the principal of the school, the head teacher and usually the president of the PTA. Parents will be reminded that they are just as responsible for their child's education as the school and that kindergarten is not a place for learning the alphabet or math. As such, they should not push their child too hard in these areas. The purpose of kindergarten is to lay the foundation for their child to become a healthy social member of the community. Parents are also reminded of their responsibilities to the community, that they will be called upon to help guide and nurture their children through example, and that their participation in school and community events is an important, required part of this process. It is in this manner that parents become full members of the community or face criticism for not being responsible parents.

For many children, this ceremony will not be the actual first day on the kindergarten grounds as many encourage parents to enroll and accompany their children into special programs which allow their children to spend one or two mornings a week at the kindergarten prior to their official enrollment, acclimating to the environment, learning teachers' names and perhaps most importantly meeting their future upper-classmates. While the full concept of *senpai* does not take hold until high-school children begin learning from the very beginning that it is the responsibility of older students to watch over and guide the younger students and that this guidance should be met with respect and some degree of obedience. One of the unique aspects of Japanese education is the manner in which much of the social education is cross-generational with older students leading younger students and with instructors guiding the older students from a safe distance. As students progress through their educational careers this "safe distance" will increase when students are engaged in extra-curricular activities,

with instructors being less and less present for most student centered activities until they are not present at all except for emergencies.

Regardless of whether it is the child's true first day or not, it is by all appearances, a traumatic event for many. Even for children who have spent time in daycare, the daily schedule and new rules often result in several weeks of weaning from parental security. This process mirrors what is happening to the child socially as they over time become less a child of her parents and more a child of the community and, while manifesting itself in a variety of ways, is most visible in the manner a child learns to recognize school as the nexus for the students relationship with the community. Students are first recognized as a member of a school community and when there is cause for some form of social sanction it is through the school that information will be communicated to the parents or authorities if necessary.

This practice of children's behavior becoming the responsibility of the school is one of the often-noted aspects of the Japanese educational system (Benjamin 1997, and White 1987). The Japanese themselves recognize the importance this places on teachers as enforcers of social rules, a role that can extend over the parents as well. In one instance, a parent reported that when her child came in from playing in the park one day, an older child had been seen with cigarette lighter and acting in a threatening manner. While the child was easily identified from the school's name tag children are required to wear even after school hours, this did not lead the parent to call the child's parents directly, instead the mother first called the child's grade school and reported it to the teacher and principal. Once the incident was reported to the school the principal did not notify the police or other authorities instead, he apologized for the boy's actions and then contacted the boy's parents directly and "encouraged" the parents to apologize to the parents of the young girl who had reported the young boy's actions. That the boy himself did not apologize reflects the degree to which the boy's school and parents assume responsibility for the boy's actions and is an example of the active role education plays in the socialization process.

### **School festival - the early years**

I have gone into some detail about a child's official entrance into the educational system and the responsibility a school assumes over its pupils because many of the same ideals are present in the cycle of school festivals. Particularly notable is how over the course of a lifetime the school festival draws one into a community and how their roles and responsibilities progress as they mature, mirroring their roles in the community at large. Such parallel incorporation is something that is not true of other educational rituals.

In kindergarten and grade school, school festivals may be called *happyokai* or *bunkasai*. Literally this means “presentation meeting” or “culture festival” but is better translated as “school open house.” At this level, the event still retains much of the original purpose of the school festival as described in section 2, to display students’ work, abilities and achievements. At the kindergarten level student involvement in the actual event is quite minimal. Throughout the course of the school year students’ various projects have been collected and will be put on display at this time for parents to view, compared against other children’s work and eventually taken home. Other than this “preparation” students rarely do much more than simply attend the event. However, for parents and teachers it is a major undertaking.

Aside from the display of children’s work there is generally a festival-like atmosphere, which is central to the event. Preparation and planning for the event is accomplished by the teachers, staff and members of the parents’ association. Describing the event as a student affair mistakenly places excessive focus on the students and generates an image of a top-down administrative structure. However, for the most part, at this stage children are only vaguely interested in the event and see it as a “fun” time to enjoy with their family, friends and teachers. For the parents, however, it is an opportunity to show their commitment to their child’s education in a public display of effort. While not as extensive as the university or even middle school festivals, at the kindergarten level there are still usually a variety of different food offerings, a small bazaar of second hand or hand made goods and possibly some activities for everyone in which to participate. From this perspective the event is very much in the hands of the main participants, the parents. With some careful suggestions from the school staff, parents generally are in charge of planning and producing the school festival. It is they who decide what kind of foods to sell, ordering of the events and what types of other activities there will be.

Upon entering grade school, parents begin taking a secondary role to their children in the planning and execution of the school festival. Through the classroom parents’ association, some may play an active role in the events of the day, but beginning in first grade and progressing through to sixth, parents play less of a role and teachers take on more responsibility for directing the effort (labor) of their students in order to produce a successful event. Instead of parents deciding what events will be conducted it is the students with clear and direct suggestions from the homeroom teacher who now are responsible. At this stage there is a clear top-down structure to the process with teachers telling the students what they will do for the event and how it will be carried out. What is important is that students have begun to take on some responsibility for the activities if not actual decision-making. This trend will continue.

Often the level of unsupervised activities is surprising by western standards. For example at South High School in Hokkaido students build elaborate floats (*mikoshi*), constructing frames of wood then using paper to shape the painted figures that are hand carried through the streets and lit from the inside by car batteries (see photos in appendix) completely unsupervised by adults. In terms of effort, what is of interest is that students will often spend long hours on campus in preparation for the festival and with very little supervision use tools such as hammers and handsaws.

As they progress through middle school and later high school the trend towards shifting responsibility to students for the planning and execution of the school festival continues. In tandem with becoming more responsible, a greater degree of autonomy occurs between the students and their instructors responsible for supervising their activities. Unlike the U.S. where fear of litigation would prevent instructors from leaving students unsupervised for any length of time, by the time Japanese students are in high school supervision occurs in a hands-off fashion. Often required to be on campus while their students or the student club they supervise is meeting, instructors will usually work at their desk in the teacher's room being on call in the event an emergency arises.

Many of the high school teachers interviewed complained of this added responsibility (in addition to their teaching duties) since it required them to spend evenings and weekends on campus. In addition to the additional time, some expressed the sentiment that the students were old enough to care for themselves and did not need to be "babied" (author's translation).

In addition to the level of decision making power and increasing responsibility for their classroom project, the scale of the projects the students undertake also increases. In the early years of grade school students will produce small handmade items for "sale" to visitors (usually parents or close relatives). In addition they may present a play or sing a song at an organized recital during the event. However, once they reach junior high school level students are taking on the design and execution of projects that would rival most university level student groups in the U.S. as exemplified by the 20-foot colorful paper *mikoshi*.

The scale of the school festival increases in other ways as well. Where at the kindergarten level the festival would take place in the span of an afternoon, beginning at the junior high school level the school festival is often expanded to fill an entire weekend. As in the case of the university level school festival, high school students may spend the entire weekend on campus including staying overnight.

As the level of effort increases, so does the level of tension, which, in turn requires a greater degree of effort to release stress created by this tension. Students as early as junior high school mentioned secret drinking parties that occurred after significant events in the festivities, such as the completion of their

float, after the parade and at the end of festivities. It should be noted that while these parties are under-supervised students practice a great degree of caution since their entrance into college could be affected if events were to get out of hand. I use the term “under-supervised”, because some of these parties will occur in public drinking establishments while students may still be dressed in their school uniforms. In one instance a group of students was “caught” drinking in an *izakaya* (the local equivalent of a sports bar) because a passing teacher noticed the large number of student bicycles parked outside. Upon entering he said, “you guys should be more clever next time.” Drinking and getting drunk plays an important role in the process of the school festival especially once students make the leap into university.

As students enter university, the school festival becomes almost entirely a student-organized affair. Except for peripheral supervision and support, students plan and execute almost every phase of the event. For the purpose of demonstrating the life cycle of school festivals one need only understand that post high school education represents the end of the first cycle in a Japanese person’s life.

### **School festivals – the next cycle**

Upon graduation most individuals do not participate in school festivals with matriculation marking the end of any association with the event. However, for many a second cycle of involvement occurs. As a person matures, marries and then has children of their own they are drawn back into the cycle of school festivals for a second round, this time as parents. This “parental cycle” mirrors the first “student cycle” in the sense that as their children grow the parents become less involved and less responsible. Interestingly parents’ increasing lack of involvement in the school festival parallels their involvement in their child’s life until the child graduates from high school and the parent is expected to provide support but little guidance or restrictions. Moral education becomes the role of the university, trade school, or company, depending on the route a student takes after high school.

Many parents will attend their child’s first university school festival since it is one of the few times they feel it is appropriate to enter onto campus. Entrance ceremonies and graduation are the other two times. This type of attendance generally occurs in a limited fashion and rarely repeats itself for all four years for a student’s university career. It is here where the second round in the life cycle of the school festival ends.

Again there is a period of no participation and, as in the first round, for some there may be no further connection to school festivals. However, for others once

their child matures, marries and has children of their own, individuals are once again drawn back into a third and final round. This round is often very short but in many ways very meaningful for an individual as it signals a culmination and end to their responsibilities as a family member. One grandmother commented to me how happy she was to have seen both of her grandchildren through their first kindergarten school festival feeling she had done all the work she could do in this life.

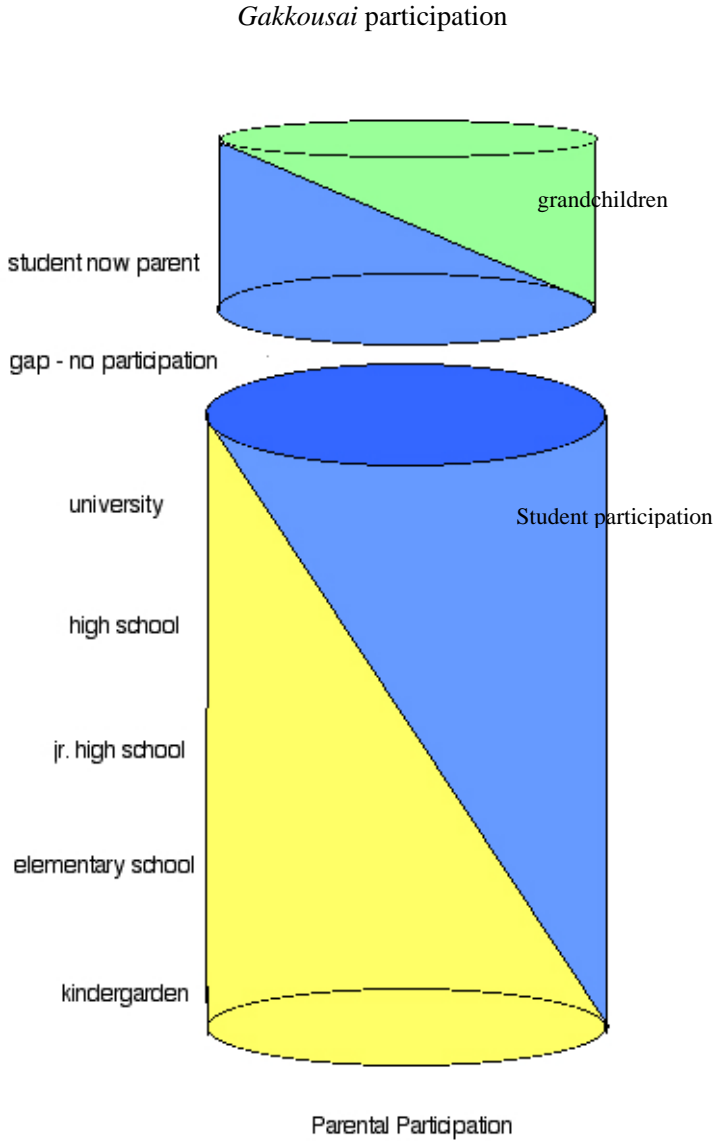
For many grandparents the kindergarten level rituals are the most important events in their grandchildren's life as later opportunities to attend events in primary school and beyond represented physical challenges. However, it may be due to other reasons such as the increased mobility of families and likelihood that grandparents will live outside the immediate proximity of their children and grandchildren. It could be that as the "space" between parent and child becomes more distant, the space between grandchild and grandparents feels impassable. One of the problems often cited as the result of the nuclearization of the family is the neglect of grandparents who no longer live with children (Sugioka 1999). Even when grandparents do live with their adult child they will often occupy a separate part of the home with their own entrance and kitchen. In one such household the grandparent confided that she felt like a stranger at times and would often find herself alone in the house, the rest of the family having gone off.

Whatever the case, it is at this point that the cycle ends. Generally even if healthy, great-grandparents will not attend kindergarten events. The main reason given for this is that many of these events, regardless of the weather are held outside in a picnic like atmosphere, everyone sitting on the ground or on low-level stools. Physical limitations that come with age may also effect participation of grandparents at primary and secondary school events since these often entail climbing stairs in order to visit classrooms or long periods of sitting or standing.

As stated, I have attempted to create a visual representation of the lifecycle or school festivals as presented here. This three-dimensional model takes the shape of a two-tone cone. Blue represents participation while yellow represents attendance as a spectator or patron. In the first level the student takes on an increasing amount of responsibility, as parents become spectators of the event. In the second level, the student-now-parent begins with the highest degree of participation and quickly relinquishes responsibility to their children and school. In the third level, the student-now-grandparent is fully a spectator to the event. That this cycle symbolizes other areas of a person's life is significant in many ways. However here I only wish to call attention to the fact that the events as I have described them above and will describe more thoroughly in the next chapter are events that are repeated, not only as a student progresses through their own academic career but as their children and grandchildren repeat the cycle with a declining level of participation on the part of the individual. As such, I believe



the events of the school festival represent a link across the generations, signifying a person's status and role within the society.



## Preparation, Presentation and Celebration

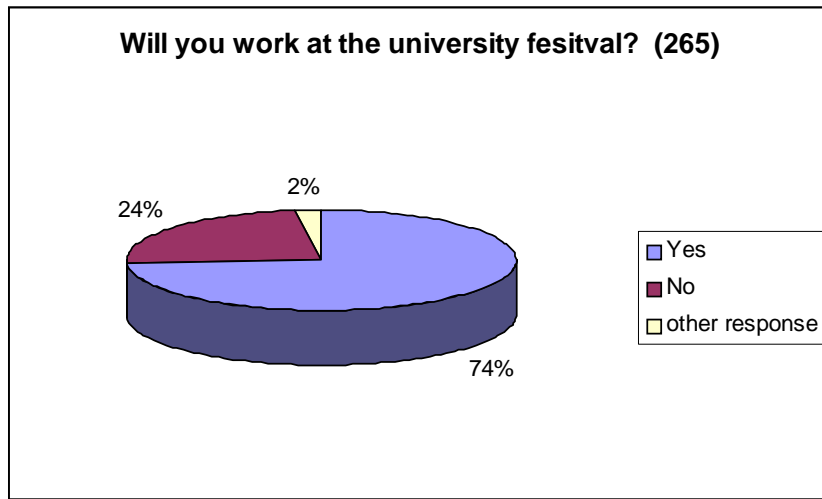
### **Preparation**

The first hint that a university school festival is imminent generally comes from the primary participants, the students, not in the form of an announcement but often in the form of their absence. The *gakkousai* requires a great deal of planning and preparation so in the weeks leading up to the event a larger and larger circle of students will become over-occupied and will begin to miss class or appear less attentive for the classes they do attend. This is only the most obvious manifestation of their involvement.

Formal preparation for the school festival may begin as early as the end of the previous year when students informally evaluate that year's school festival. Generally at this time, in addition to this review, the baton is passed from the current head of the student school festival council to the head of next year's student school festival council.

Almost immediately, preliminary planning and preparation begins. Some important key steps often include making first contact with potential entertainers, establishing working groups with the festival committee and setting a calendar.

While preparation continues throughout the remainder of the year and up until the actual event, most of the physical work does not begin until early April shortly after the beginning of the academic year. At this time first-year students are recruited into or seek out membership in prominent student groups, clubs, and associations. Recruitment for club membership often occurs immediately after the entrance ceremonies marking the beginning of the school calendar and is an important part of the preparation for the school festival because it is these students who make up the major source of labor. The new membership insures the success of the school festival.



Though a certain degree of planning does occur over the summer break, true preparation begins soon after the beginning of classes when the student government is allocated its annual budget for the year. From this budget allocation the various student organizations are provided funds in order to operate and participate in the school festival. At some of the more prestigious universities relatively little money is allocated to the student body since they are able to raise considerable revenue from the sale of advertising in various publications associated with the school festival. At one Tokyo university, students were able to raise over \$90,000 U.S. in advertising revenue. This school also estimated attendance at over 100,000 people over four days. Most are not so fortunate and, in fact, of the 1,290 colleges and universities in Japan in 2003 (MEXT 2004) only the top 25 would be able to approximate that amount.

At less prominent public and private universities, the university administration provides substantial support to the student government and associated student groups. These school groups are allocated a number of different allowances depending on the type of group and their needs. In most cases these allowances do not cover all the perceived needs of the groups and this encourages them to include in their budget a request for an allowance to participate in the school festival. In many cases one quarter or more of the total budget provided to the student body by the university is spent directly on the *gakkousai* and a considerable amount more is spent indirectly through funding provided to each group to participate (see appendix for budget). While the percentage this funding makes up of a group's total budget varies it is clear that

access to this extra funding insures active student participation. At the same time it would be wrong to assume that students are coerced into participating, since as will be discussed later the economic gains are not as high as one might assume. In order to appreciate how labor and other resources are organized one must understand something about the role of student clubs at the university.

Recruitment into student clubs and their organization deserves some mention here since they play such a pivotal role in the presentation of the school festival. As on western campuses there are many types of clubs and associations on campus that students join generally out of some common interest with peers. In the Japanese context, however, these clubs represent a much larger role in the social life of students than in the west. As in the case of the school festival planning committee, participation in a club can often serve as a valid excuse for missing class to attend a club function, such as a sports event.

Clubs are seen as one of the few opportunities to develop ties across departmental disciplines. Interacting with students from different departments is not always easy, as most students enter and graduate university as a cohort often taking the same classes. The relationships that develop in clubs are some of the strongest. The type of experiences members share in clubs generate feelings of a shared hardship much like initiation rites generate feelings among a cohort of inductees. Clubs members are more likely to remain friends beyond graduation, organizing reunions, attending each other's weddings or even finding marriage partners from within the club membership.

As a result, choosing a club to join is something not done casually. Students often have some idea which clubs they would like to join based on advice from upperclassmen, older siblings or school catalogues that may describe some of the opportunities. The more popular clubs are sports teams with successful records, those that offer regular access to interact with the opposite gender and those that allow students to develop some technical skill that might be of use after graduation. The school festival planning committee fits into this last category. The administrative and organizational skills necessary to execute a successful school festival are seen as valuable with the heads of various sections within the school festival committee often using this experience to get positions in a managerial track.

Less popular or relatively new clubs must work harder to recruit students though depending on the club they may in fact depend on a small, dedicated core. *Cosplay* clubs or "costume play" clubs see as part of their mystique the fact that there are only a few truly dedicated individuals who are willing to invest the time and finances required to pull together the elaborate wardrobes necessary to be considered a true *cosplay*.

In the U.S., school clubs represent something students engage in for pleasure. However, on Japanese campuses student clubs represent much more. Not only is

the club a student joins the center of focus for many of the lasting relationships they will develop while at university, it is often one of the main indicators by which students identify themselves. Claiming membership in the photography club is just as significant as being a third year biology major. As in the society at large an individual is identified by his associations. Identifying one's position in relation to others is what makes the exchange of business cards so important in Japanese culture. In the university setting employment is generally part-time and not significant in terms of status. However, one's association with others through a club or a major course of study determines who they are and who they associate with. Both the club affiliation and course major fulfill different roles.

By identifying a student's major and current year of study one can instantly determine if that student has taken certain required courses, participated in fieldtrips or read certain materials. However, the major and year are horizontal identifiers since all qualifiers are specific to a certain major. Membership in a club is more vertical since it cuts across majors. Yet it can be equally informative as an identifier since it signals with whom one spends their free time. In addition, a significant number of students find permanent employment either through associations created in these groups or as the result of skills acquired. For example, a number of students expressed interest in looking for positions in event planning companies and stated that being head of the *gakuensai* planning committee would allow them to make the connections and acquire the skills desired. Other students joined photography clubs, film making clubs or illustration clubs for similar reasons.

There are at least two types of student groups, the club and the circle. While both often participate in the same type of activities there is a clear difference. This distinction is in terms of formal and informal association with the university. A club or 部 (*bu*) has a formal association with the university, is represented in the student government, can request funds through the student government and, if a sports team, represents the university in organized competitions. A "circle" though recognized by the university generally does not have a representative on the student council, cannot petition for funds and may or may not participate in informal competitions. For example, a baseball club enjoys the status of school team competing against other schools, whereas a baseball circle resembles more of an intramural team. One student trying to explain the distinction noted, "The main part of being a member of club is the activity like basketball or photography, but for a circle the main activity is often drinking."

In relation to the organization of the school festival, clubs are positioned parallel to each other under the school festival committee which is situated under the student government that receives its mandate to operate from the university administration. This organization not only represents the flow of information and rulings on regulations but also the flow of resources. Each year the festival

committee makes a funding request to the student government, which receives its funds from the university administration. Once allocated to the festival committee, the various clubs request funding for various projects including their participation in the school festival.

Apart from applying for funding, each student group must decide what kind of product or service they will attempt to market, sell or provide over the two to three day school festival. For some such as the photography club or the university radio group running an art show, radio programming or public announcement services are obvious choices. However, for other groups such as sports circles, the activity depends on tradition, as in the case of one baseball team leader who said, "we've always sold *yakitori*," or on equipment available as in another case, "we have the gas burners and large flat griddles so of course we make *yakisoba*." Occasionally some student groups will try something original as in the case of one group of students who made tacos because they wanted to do something that would represent their department's focus on international development. In most cases the offerings at school festivals are limited. As a result, depending on the size of the student body there could be considerable competition with groups offering limited variations of noodle dishes, bar-b-qued chicken or desserts.

In addition to various food and forms of entertainment offered by student groups, the university, through the student government, will often sponsor one or more "stages" that serve as centers of activity throughout the festivities. Performances, contests, and announcements organized by a central school festival committee are conducted on these stages. In some respects these stages act as a safety net for the other student groups' activities because the activities on these stages are well planned, professional and act as a main draw for bringing people from the community onto the campus.

Preparation for the school festival begins at a rapid pace about one month prior as students begin constructing the booths, signs, and other decorations. Beginning with the core students and slowly expanding to include almost all members of the club or circle, students will begin spending nights on campus in order to work on preparations for the festival. In many instances, students will miss classes or sleep through class with no other excuse other than that they were up all night "doing something for the school festival." As the date of the school festival approaches it becomes more evident in the demeanor of the students and in their absence from classes.

While faculty unfamiliar with Japanese university life complain about the manner the university administration seems to support this "lack of respect for education", students conversely complain about the lack of understanding on the part of faculty who religiously take attendance or inappropriately schedule midterms to coincide with school festival preparations. This problem has been a rising issue as more and more Japanese faculty are being educated overseas and

have themselves never participated in the university school festival. Japanese faculty educated overseas are likely to put more emphasis on the university as a place for advancing formal education rather than Japanese faculty who recognize that students are creating important relationships during their university years and are therefore more willing to excuse students for activities related to this process. A continuum might be generated with international faculty and faculty educated overseas least receptive to the interruption in the school calendar and faculty educated at the same university, often referred to as “old boys”, being the most understanding.

The final big push of preparation comes in the two or three days before the school festival when many universities will cancel classes in order for students to dedicate themselves completely to a successful school festival. At this time, a remarkable transformation occurs. Most faculty members not directly involved with the school festival - and few are - will avoid campus as students take over almost every major area of campus. Classrooms, labs, auditoriums, playing fields and other outdoor spaces are “opened up” to students for use either as presentation or market areas or as storage areas for desks and chairs cleared away from classrooms. One set of rooms conspicuously off-limits is the administration offices. This restriction is an indication of the relationship between the administration and student body and faculty. While advancing education is the stated goal of the university and is said to rank at the top of the list of priorities, the administration of education, its office and personnel are protected and kept separate. The administration, including some service personnel, are the only ones required to remain on campus and often they will stay in their offices.

In these final days leading up to the school festival, throughout the festival and in the day or two after the festival, almost all of the students actively participating will spend their nights on campus even those who live close to or in campus. Students feel this gesture of commitment is necessary for a successful festival and that part of the experience of the school festival was this time spent together with their friends. The term *skinship* was often used to describe the importance of developing or strengthening relationships. This term was first used to describe the relationship that develops between parent and child through physical closeness. However, the term has come to be used in a wide variety of manners including sexual closeness between lovers and the closeness which occurs as the result of commonly experienced adversity or hardship (wordspy.com and Adis 2005). In this particular case, in addition to the long hours and the pressure of preparing for a public event there are the numerous opportunities for the group consumption of alcohol. While much has been said about the special role alcohol has in allowing more direct conversation (Allison 1994: 45-46) in the university setting there are distinct situational differences that should be discussed.

Alcohol is available to many first-year university students throughout their adolescence, but always with the possibility of harsh consequences if they were “caught” drinking. Such consequences could be particularly detrimental for students hoping to enter into the more prestigious universities. As a result, while many students may have consumed alcohol, they have not experienced the same level of freedom as university students. The availability and permissive atmosphere results in many learning their limit by going over it and drinking to excess. Again the principle of *skinship* comes into play as students learn whom they can trust and depend on in difficult times. It is interesting to note that while Orientalist perspectives make much of the differences between western and Asian countries, this is one set of experiences that university students seem to share in common with similar motivation and results (both social and physical).

In the final days before the school festival, booths, tents and stages are erected overnight. Signs are posted directing guests to the various events and every opportunity to add some color to the campus is conspicuously taken. Classrooms become concert halls, art display areas, establishments offering services of a wide variety or storage areas. Labs are opened for patrons to wander through as eager students attempt to provide explanations of their research in layman terms or provide visitors the opportunity conduct model experiments. School cafeterias are closed in favor of stalls offering a limited range of easily prepared fried or “*yakied*” food and snacks including, *yakisoba*, *okonomiyaki*, franks, *yakitori* or desserts such “*choco-banana*” and crepes. On some campuses, though now less common, alcohol is offered for sale to those of legal drinking age.

The students are given the run of the campus and the lack of involvement by faculty and staff is compelling. Other than unlocking doors or being on hand to answer questions, their presence is minimal. Just prior to, during and just after the school festival students are largely unsupervised. Given the age of the students -18 to 22- the lack of supervision may not seem unusual. However, to those familiar with some of the incidents which can occur, the issues of legal liability alone would render such events unthinkable at most U.S. campuses. As mentioned above the university turns a blind eye to the consumption of alcohol throughout the events, even though most of it is done by first year students who are technically underage. In addition, accidents resulting in property damage are common though readily forgiven, as long as they are quickly brought to the attention of the administration, no one is seriously injured and the apologies are appropriately conducted. Often such incidents include broken windows, holes in plasterboard walls, and stained floors but also regularly include costly damage. In one instance, a concert held in the gymnasium resulted in damages to the floor totaling 2,000,000 yen (approximately \$20,000). One should note that the university paid for this repair - as in most cases - without penalizing or charging



the student body budget. While universities carry insurance, often they carry high deductibles and in some cases, such as this one, insurance companies have refused to pay for damages caused during the school festival.

### **Presentation**

Although the university school festival itself is a combination of structured and chaotic events. There are three basic parts to most school festivals: the opening ceremony, the school festival itself and the closing ceremony. The opening ceremony is organized largely by the administration and designed as an opportunity for students to be congratulated on their efforts up to this point and in anticipation of a successful event. This ceremony is highlighted by speeches by members of the faculty, the administration and often includes the university president. This event adds legitimacy to the event and cements the understanding between the students and the university that this is an opportunity not just to enjoy themselves but also to put the university on display and to put their social and organizational skills to the test.

The actual festival itself can be compared to a play or a public performance. The planning and preparation up to this point is put into practice and except for unexpected emergencies things are left run their course. Throughout the festival there is constant negotiation - a continuation of the negotiation which occurs in preparation for the festival - as supplies run low, students fail to show up as scheduled or too many show up at one time. If the school festival committee, the group largely responsible for publicizing the event, has done their job there will be a sufficient number of patrons wandering the halls, eating food and participating in the various events offered, which raises other important issues.

Unlike high school, junior high school, or grade school *happyokai*, students cannot rely on their parents and relatives to make up the majority of the patrons. As a result, one of the biggest efforts is spent developing relationships with the community and surrounding universities and high schools. Depending on where a university campus is located the surrounding community may be more or less supportive of the event. "Turnout" largely depends on the ability of the students and university administration to develop and maintain ties to the community.

The least successful school festival attended was a rural university where the surrounding area, though recently developed, was still largely open space or agricultural land. In the past, the students had worked hard to attract patrons from the neighboring communities several train stops away. However, several large housing tracts had sprung up around the campus in two years. The students now felt they could expect a healthy turnout from the surrounding bedroom community, literally across the street. In the end, partially due to bad weather,

there was a much lower attendance than expected. While the event was well publicized through the use of posters, there was little direct personal contact between the students and community leaders. One difficulty the students faced in this respect was that the community was so new there was no clear set of leaders with whom to communicate. In Japanese towns there are a number of documented groups organized around neighborhoods, schools and the local business community. These groups are key to successfully advancing most programs (Bestor 1989).

In contrast, one of the most successful school festivals, also in a rural “new town” community. They had good relations with the surrounding community and had even managed to schedule the school festival to coincide with yearly ten kilometer walking marathon with a checkpoint passing through the university which brought an influx of approximately 200 participants at lunchtime on the last day of the festival. The key difference between these two communities is in the universities’ ability to establish links within the community required to advance community projects. While one was less than two years old the other having been established at the same time as the construction of many of the new housing tracts shared a common history with the community. Like many similar events it is difficult to capture the mood of university school festivals. The school festival is less an event and more of a setting in which many events are occurring at once.

By space and structure *gakkousai* may be divided into three areas, outdoors stalls, indoor stalls and events run directly by the student school festival committee. This last group of events may be either outdoors or indoors or both. From the perspective of some one visiting the campus for the purpose of attending the school festival the first thing they might see is a large sign or group of signs announcing the school festival and the year (see photo). Because parking is limited, patrons will most likely arrive on foot or by bus. As a result, most will enter the campus through a common entrance providing a location of first contact between students and patrons. This area is often occupied by a *gakkousai* committee sponsored booth, kiosk or large events roster listing a schedule of events and possibly a map. There might also be any number of students in this area, calling out to patrons “advertising” their group’s particular food item, service or entertainment. The number of students and their activities are restricted in this area partially for safety concerns but also because “we don’t want to overwhelm people as they come in by being too noisy.”

Once on campus, patrons will first see rows of booths arranged to fit the layout of the grounds and to provide plenty of space for people to wander around from place to place. The basic layout resembles a community festival. Pedestrian thoroughfares are lined with stalls mostly offering food of one type or another, some offer crafts or occasionally items that might be purchased in discount shops. The predominance of food items demonstrates the need for active student

participation and an inherent lack of focus on profit. Weather is often the deciding factor concerning profit, a cold raining day often means the students themselves must consume their own goods and any after-party is either very small or held based on the generosity of a faculty member. One faculty member, the advisor for the student dance club noted, "Last year, I paid 50,000 yen (for the after-party) because we were selling ice cream and it was cold all weekend."

While unstated, it is clear that students are expected to apply their own effort to every aspect of carrying out the school festival and in this manner exercise practical skills involved with cleaning, cooking, basic construction and graphic design. How well these are carried out goes largely untested or un-judged, except for culinary skills, which will effect how popular a stall is with patrons.

As mentioned, the large focus on food items not only results in competition between neighboring food stalls but between stalls offering the same food item. Even the most determined visitor could not patronize every stall, which, in the end, means many stalls make money though few generate profits. Bad weather - including snow or freezing rain - generally is a not cause for canceling events. In fact, there is not one incidence where a school festival was cancelled which highlights the lack of concern with economic goals and a focus on the social event itself.

During the festival the food stalls will remain open for a scheduled period of time beginning sometime mid-morning and closing sometime in the evening. Students are responsible for set-up each morning and any clean up required each evening. The negotiation of these activities is handled within each student group with oversight from the school festival committee.

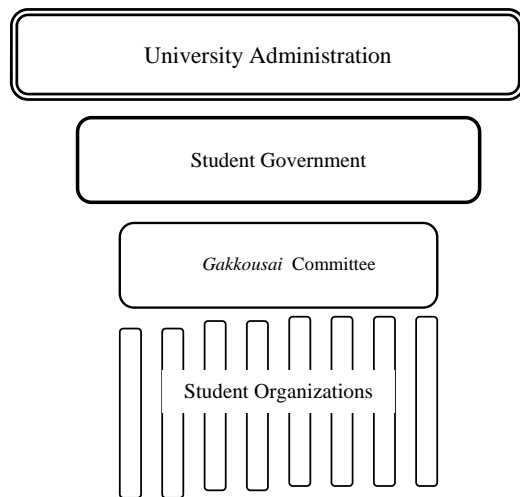
Apart from the food stalls there are various other services offered. Many student groups that engage in some kind of artistic or creative endeavor offer displays of their work or performances. Generally these are offered free of charge with the main effort placed on attracting an audience. Students often put up posters and flyers announcing their event or will wander the campus requesting that patrons follow them to the "next showing." Logistically, these efforts are counteracted by the fact that most of these activities occur within classroom or laboratory space inside university buildings that are often difficult to navigate. Although helped by students' efforts, patrons more or less stumble on performances and displays as they wander through the halls. In many cases, these performances are sparsely attended unless a group has a large following among students.

The school festival committee organizes the final set of activities. These activities often include performances by professional musicians, guest speakers or films. Stages are also constructed through the efforts of the school festival committee. The stages, which can be very elaborate and professional, serve as the

center for scheduled events, contests, and announcements, which are organized either by the school festival committee or student groups.

These activities are occurring simultaneously and at times appear to be a random set activities sharing a common space. However, because of negotiations during the preparations and knowledge gained through past experience, many disagreements and mishaps are avoided. These negotiations are important to understanding the role of the *gakkousai* in the socialization of Japanese university students. Primarily the school festival committee is viewed as a mediator between the university administration and student groups. However they also play an important role in mediating the social interaction that occurs between student groups and individual students. The role of mediator (仲介人 *chuukainin*) is common to communication in Japanese society as it is seen as a virtue to avoid direct conflict when possible.

While the university generally leaves the students “in-charge” of school festival activities, students are expected to follow a very clearly defined set of rules. These rules are both general (care should be taken with tools) and specific (no selling of alcohol). In addition, the university provides, through the school festival committee, a number of services deemed essential to a successful event. In some cases, the university may provide first aid or fire safety courses or may hire technical advisors to assist in the construction of booths or stages.



The university relies on the student government and the school festival committee in particular to disseminate these rules and other information. Requests to adjust the regulations or to conduct a new or special activity generally

are made to the school festival committee, which may make a preliminary determination and then take the request to the university administration for consideration. If a request is denied, then the school festival committee must report on the decision and explain the university's rationale. In most cases, once a decision has been reported acceptable alternatives are discussed agreed upon, sometimes without further direct involvement from the university. This style of top-down pyramid management is prevalent throughout Japan with the middle-levels acting as both negotiator and enforcer (Nakane 1970). The figure below (Fig. A) shows how information is disseminated and requests are negotiated, and demonstrates that the construction of horizontal (*oyabun-kobun* or *senpai/kohai*) relationships are still very much part of the cognitive patterns of social organization (Lebra 1976).

Prevalent to all the communication occurring is the generalized sense of politeness that encompasses much of Japanese personal interaction. Without mystifying the type of social interaction that occurs in the daily life of Japanese people it is obvious that a great deal of communication is ritualized, bowing and formalized greetings being the two most obvious examples. In addition, there is a general sense of "care" that must be taken when dealing with another human being. Joy Hendry (1993) described such implicit communication style as a type of "wrapping" which can be used to smooth out relationships and communication between individuals or groups of individuals. Her examples include the use of polite forms of language and talking around the subject of conversation if speaking directly would cause discomfort. At the same time, Hendry carefully points out that this "wrapping" is not important as a part of the presentation of social interaction but that in many instances it *is* the social interaction. In peeling away the layers of wrapping "we may be throwing out some of the important cultural (social) information we need...only to find nothing at all" (Hendry 1993: 173).

One of the exceptional traits of school festivals is the apparent lack of conflict. Considering the amount of time students spend in close interaction and the stressful nature of the execution of the school festival, it is impressive how little open conflict there is and how disagreements are resolved. As noted (Nakane 1970, and Lebra 1976), Japanese tend to practice leadership through consensus building. While making a decision may involve accurately gauging the sentiments of all members of the group and finding an acceptable middle ground, it just as often the result of one person being able to convince others to understand her point of view. Because everything is open to negotiation, from the price of the food to the booth arrangement, there is extensive discussion that takes place as these items are negotiated. There are also structural considerations that assist in settling many of these discussions.

Though weakening in some respects, the hierarchical structure of Japanese society still pervades many areas, particularly those with some sense of officialdom. In the case of student government organizations, the hierarchical nature can clear the way for decision making to flow more smoothly. Age and position do generate a ranking and authority that translates into an ability to direct the actions of the group. However, care should be taken not to assume a command style of authority is occurring. Instead, it is better interpreted as the spending of social capital accumulated through the diligent effort of earning the respect of fellow students.

Apart from the opening ceremony, which varies widely in length and content, there are few formally organized activities. The only other significant event is the closing ceremony. The opening ceremony is an open event for invited guests, participants, patrons and parents. The closing ceremony is often attended only by those directly involved in the planning and execution of the festival. Therefore, those attending the closing ceremony will most likely include some faculty representatives, members from each of the student groups involved, key members of the administration and possibly an appearance by the president, though it is less likely. This event is a much more relaxed affair and generally much shorter than the opening ceremony with less speeches and other formalities. However, what it lacks in formality, will generally be made up for in revelry. Students who have been hard at work for weeks now feel they can relax and celebrate. As long as there were no major disasters, the closing ceremony will often consist of a certain amount of university sponsored celebrating, in the form of the formal consumption of alcohol including student sponsored drinking parties.

In many cases, a large portion or even all of the funds accumulated over the course of the school festival will be spent on these student parties. Given that some of the student groups number as many as forty or more students, it is not uncommon for the money spent to exceed the amount raised through their efforts. Even in cases where the group had a stated goal such as the purchase of a piece of equipment or to cover the entrance fee to a competition, the price of the party could easily exceed the amount of money raised. In many cases, the money allocated to a student group just to participate in the school festival exceeds the amount of money raised through their efforts. This varies from school to school again with the more prestigious universities able to raise considerably more.

Taking a strictly economic perspective, in many cases it would be more practical for students to each donate a certain amount and forego participation in the school festival or for the university to simply give the students the funds needed to spend directly on the expense desired. Such a disregard for profit raises questions regarding students' participation, the university's support and the latent purpose of *gakkousai*.

Most administrators will confirm that while the school festival disrupts the academic calendar it is a necessary part of a school's mission. They see it as an opportunity to give back to the community by inviting them on to campus for a few days each year. It is also an opportunity to advertise school spirit through the enthusiasm of their students and of course - recently becoming more important - to give prospective students and their parents an opportunity to visit the university and examine its facilities in a low pressure atmosphere.

Students have a varied range of opinions. Many first year students see the *gakkousai* as a well-deserved break from the normal routine and an opportunity to publicly display skills that for the remainder of the year are regulated to rehearsal halls or more private functions. While most first year students see some benefit to participating, whether because they see it as an opportunity to raise their social standing or simply because "it's fun" there are those who see the *gakuensai* as bothersome (*mendokusai*). This latter group of students argues that if there are no classes there is little reason to make the (long) trip to school when they could take the opportunity to stay (or return) home and "play" with their friends there. At the same time, it should be noted that on several occasions, students who had made such remarks and had indicated that they would not be attending the school festival were later seen attending and actively participating.

As university students proceed through their academic career it becomes more and more likely that they will not participate and will use the time to return home or to work on papers or for job hunting. In few instances graduate students participate actively in the preparation or the actual festivities. They may help to supervise a student group or participate in drinking parties at the end of the festivities. This process of attrition as students progress through their academic careers is most visible among senior students. Many circle leaders are too busy finishing up research or interviewing for jobs to actively participate though they will look in on their group to make sure things are being handled appropriately. In one instance the president of the university's English circle claimed that he did not even know what his group planned to do at the school festival. The students who continue to participate throughout their four years at university are generally those who are active in student government and have ambitions to take on leading roles in their fourth year.

There are both institutional and social reasons for *gakkousai* and active participation in its activities. Students see it as a break from the daily routine of classes and as an opportunity to socialize with their new friends. The administration sees it as opportunity to publicize the campus and its goals, and as part of university tradition. However there are also compelling societal reasons for participation in *gakkousai*.

## Signs of Change

### **Participation and attendance**

By comparing university school festivals in terms of structure and participation with other university level rites of passage I demonstrate that they have maintained their vitality because *gakkousai* reflect the shifting values of Japanese society. This chapter includes reports from individuals as well as the media showing a declining level of participation in events like the entrance and coming-of-age ceremonies. While these events will continue for some time, unless they adapt to the changing values of the students they risk becoming obsolete.

Some define “participation” in the ceremonies as merely having a physical presence and base levels of participation on the numbers of those present. However, true participation requires more than attendance. The precise definition of participation is “the act of taking part in an activity” which includes making a contribution, sharing or having membership requiring a higher degree of involvement than simply, showing up. In each of the cases described most of the students felt a need or even an obligation to attend. Yet it was clear that very few had any sense of “participating” in the events. In fact participation in the strictest sense is not an option and, in at least one case, students opted out of attending an event in order to participate in another when they felt the opportunity for true participation was greater. As a result, I did not measure participation based on numbers of students but on the degree to which they expressed the ability or desire to be actively involved in the event *as it was organized*.

Aside from the school festival already described, there are several other ritual events throughout the university academic career of students. The particular events discussed here meet three basic criteria. First, they are organized taking place in a particular span of time, usually within several hours or in a day. Second, they have a well-defined structure, a beginning, middle and end. Finally, as with the school festival, these events serve as public markers of status change, though in a different manner from participation in the school festival. The process of recruitment, acceptance and membership into one of the many school circles or clubs also represents a rite of passage but does not have a well-defined structure and thus makes comparison difficult. It is for these reasons I have chosen the entrance ceremony (*nyugakushiki* - 入学式), coming-of-age



ceremony (*seijinshiki* - 成人式) and the graduation ceremony (*shotsugyoshiki* - 卒業式).

These ceremonies are significant events and mark a change of social status. However, none requires student participation in order for the change of status to occur. In the case of both the entrance ceremony and graduation, the events are redundant in the sense that other events precede them both in time and in importance. These events are official but leave the ceremonies themselves, as little more than anti-climatic markers. As these events are more process than substance they leave little room for true participation and self-expression. As such, their value as rituals has declined. Ritual through its execution communicates meaning and generates a sense of community. As the result of changes in the manner communities are organized and the increased mobility of individuals, none of the events described in this chapter fulfill either of these criteria. As evidence I cite not only recent trends in the practice of these events but also attempts by the subjects of these rituals to infuse them with some degree of ownership.

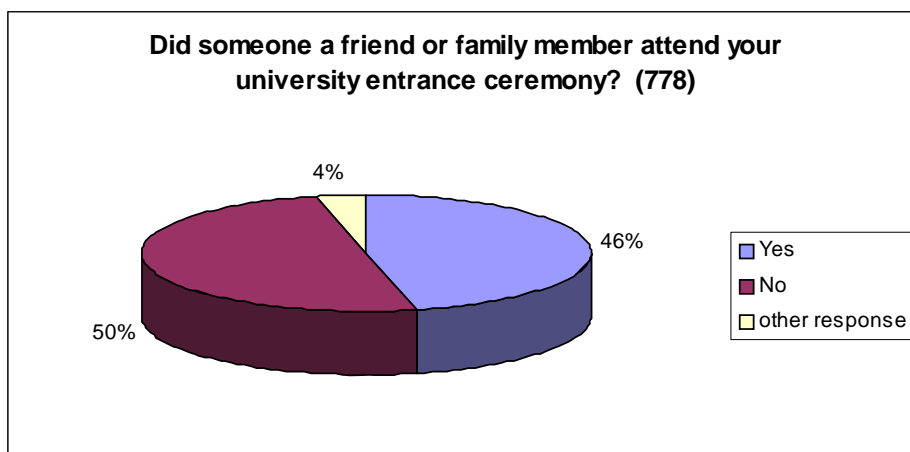
### **The Entrance Ceremony – 入学式**

University “entrance ceremonies” or *nyugakushiki* take place on or close to the official beginning of the academic year, April 1. Much like the kindergarten entrance ceremonies, the event is marked by pageantry with all students and parents dressed in their best clothes. The event, wholly organized by the university, is composed of three basic parts. An opening comprised of the presentation of the flag, possibly the singing of *Kimigaiyo* (the recently installed Japanese national anthem) and an opening statement on the part of the president welcoming the students. Then, there is a series of introductions and speeches and possibly the acceptance of a certificate by a representative from the first year class. Finally, the ceremony is closed with the singing of the school song as the students file out of the auditorium. While many of the speeches offer messages of welcome and congratulations they also indicate what is expected of the students over the next four years (see appendix 3, 4, and 5 for example of entrance ceremony speeches). There also may be an official handing over of some item signifying a student’s official entrance into university such as a student identification card or letter. Often the ceremony takes little more than an hour though this depends on the speeches and the venue. Many universities in and near Tokyo will use the Tokyo Budokan resulting in scheduling limits.

Much like the school festival, the entrance ceremony is an event that is repeated throughout the life of an individual as they progress and enter the various levels of education. Unlike the school festival it is neither an annual event in the

life of a single student nor one in which an increasing level of participation is required as one progresses through their educational career. When compared with the kindergarten entrance ceremony it is similar in that it is neither for nor about the students.

Just who benefits from this ritual display of incorporation is open to debate. Students express little interest in the actual ceremony and many admit to sleeping through it or remembering little of the proceedings. Students also indicate in surveys that in less than half the instances do their parents attend (appendix 8). Faculty and administrators at first indicate that it is for the students but when presented with these facts they agree and tend to explain the event in terms of Japanese culture. One history faculty member indicated, "It is a manner of greeting, in Japanese society when we meet or start a relationship we begin with a greeting" is one common idea expressed. This argument takes one element of Japanese culture to explain another. One professor replied to my question, "Why do we have an entrance ceremony?" with "because graduation is the end and so you need a beginning." Better stated, one might say that the entrance ceremony is an opportunity for the university to formally incorporate the students into their institution.



Since over 90% of the students are expected to graduate, the entrance ceremony is seen as the beginning of the cycle. Thus, the sense that "it is important to begin together" because students are going to finish together represents a compelling argument as put forth by a number of faculty. Many students and parents noted a sense of "being allowed in." However, the fact that most students graduate in four years may be due more to the structure of the

educational system rather than the students' efforts, which adds evidence to the notion that formal education in Japan is more about socialization than technical education.

As with the graduation ceremony, the entrance ceremony is organized and conducted by the administration. In this sense, the faculty and administration are the true participants with students merely attending. Students receive little instruction concerning the event except for notices regarding the time and place, expected conduct and seating arrangements. In the past, these instructional notices might have been more specific in terms of appropriate clothing. Today, these notices simply remind students that the entrance ceremony is a formal event and the notices are designed to insure a respectable and uneventful occasion. As instructed, most students show up promptly, young men in dark suits, ties and dress shoes, young women in skirt suits, light plain blouses and low heel dress shoes. (see appendix 6 for photos.)

In high school, instructions concerning hairstyles and jewelry are still widely issued and by western standards intrusively enforced. However, because entrance into university is supposed to signify a period of greater independence and adult responsibility some students portray this through changes in their physical appearance. As a result, about one third of the students use the entrance ceremony as an opportunity to show up with a newly dyed coiffure of the latest fashion and flashy jewelry signifying association to a particular style of dress. For men, one fashion trend is represented by oversized clothing and long gold chains, oversized rings and earrings. One young woman presented a somewhat discordant picture by wearing a dark business suit with a silver chain draped from her left earring to her nose-ring and spiked hair. These examples are still the exception and many of the students made a presentable appearance and spoke of waiting until after the entrance ceremony to exercise their new established freedoms.

Occasionally, students will show up in a more traditional style of dress such as the female or male version of kimono though such dress is more likely at graduation ceremonies. Some students may wear a kimono at all three events described here especially if the student (usually female) owns a kimono or has taken special classes in kimono dressing. Students who chose to wear kimono expressed a higher degree of participation in the event which can generally be ascribed to the lengthy preparation required to wear kimono and the sense that they are on stage engaging in a performance. The importance of dress is one of the few ways students are able to express participation in the event.

After the official event, there is an informal gathering, which often occurs in association with the entrance ceremony and plays an important role in the new student's life. While upper-class students play little role, if any, in the actual entrance ceremony, there will be a large group waiting just outside the auditorium

attempting to enlist students to join their club or circle. As described earlier, recruitment into student organizations is one of the first steps in the organization of the university school festival since in-coming students represent the main source of labor and the school club or circle is the nexus of organization for this effort.

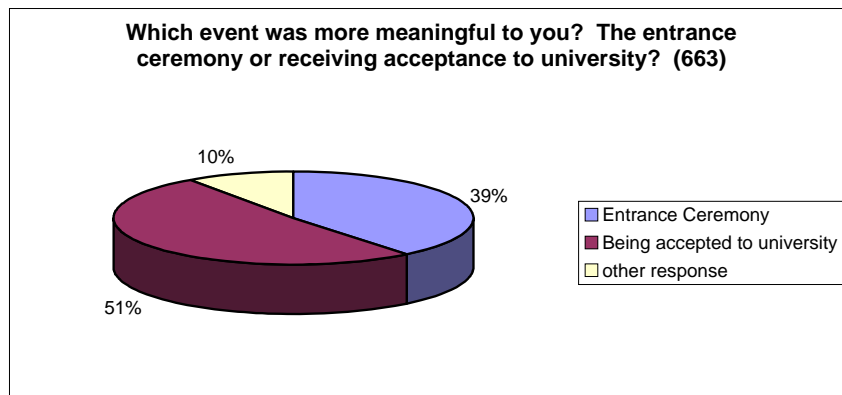
Apart from signifying their official entrance into school, the entrance ceremony is the “official” recognition that the student has entered a new phase of life. However, this event is foreshadowed, and in many ways upstaged, by another event that has taken place months before which was the receipt of an acceptance letter from a university.

The receipt of the letter is a significant and emotional affair that determines the individual’s future. This less formal event is so momentous that newspapers, television and radio news programs have covered it intensely. They list the names and numbers of those students accepted into the most prestigious schools, interview successful students and report on precautions taken by railroads and caretakers of popular “jumping” spots in the event that unsuccessful students decide to commit suicide.

As indicated, in the past, each university took great care in preparing signs, news releases and other announcements in order to insure that students’ identification numbers are properly posted. Also, in the past, the level of secrecy until the list of student identification numbers were officially unveiled was a top priority least some one who had not been accepted attempt to influence the university to change their decision at the last minute. Yet still today, some students, their parents, friends and the press will often arrive hours early or in some cases even the night before in order to be among the first to view the lists.

More recently, universities have taken to notifying the students by e-mail or personal letter though many still publicly post their lists or publish them in newspapers. In particular, *juku* or private cram schools will take out full-page advertisements with photos of their students who have gained entrance to the most prestigious universities.

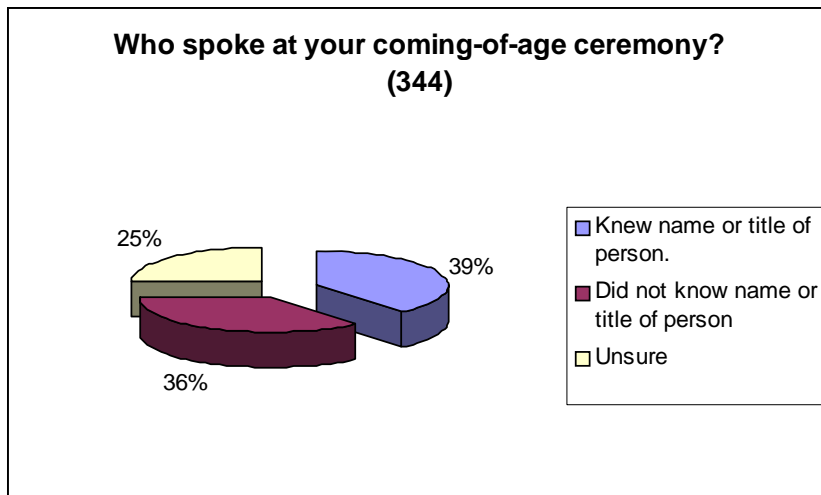
In the U.S., one may compare the event to getting a letter of acceptance from a university as a high school senior. For many in Japan getting accepted to a university has a similar effect, with a wave of *senioritis* accepted as an almost institutionalized rite of mid-winter. In Japan, because of the manner in which students are tracked, most students know by the end of January if they have been accepted by a university and in some cases simply stop attending classes. Students who are not accepted also stop attending classes in preparation for the following year’s exams. Alternatively, they may seek employment. Several students reported taking overseas trips missing the remaining weeks of school and returning in time for graduation or the beginning of university classes.



Some argue that the extent to which all Japanese students are subjected to the rigors of “examination hell” and shifting demographics is affecting attendance at entrance ceremonies (Martinez 1999: 109). However, surveys and interviews with students clearly indicate that being accepted into university is more significant than attending the entrance ceremony. Approximately 48% of the students who were asked to identify which of the two events was more significant said that being notified of their acceptance was more important. About 18% were unsure or indicated that the two events were about the same but for different reasons. The remaining students indicated that the entrance ceremony was more meaningful though some of these students were notified by e-mail or had received an early acceptance based on a recommendation from their high school. What was more interesting was that on a number of occasions students who felt that the entrance ceremony was meaningful indicated that it was also boring or that they “felt sleepy” or actually fell asleep during the ceremony. Most students, regardless of how they felt about the entrance ceremony, indicated that only one or neither parent attended the ceremony either because they lived far away or had work commitments. When there were positive comments on the entrance ceremony they generally related to the location of the ceremony (“the budokan is big”) or the fact that the surroundings were beautiful. A number of students felt the entrance ceremony was “not necessary” and when speaking to them asked me, “Why do we have the entrance ceremony?”

### Coming-of-age - 成人の日

The coming-of-age ceremony occurs outside the context of the university proper but as all the participants are of university age (19 or 20) this ceremony fits within the concept of a university level event. Organized by the local ward (town/city) office as a representative of the national government, *seijinshiki* officially recognizes the new legal status of the participants. Originally held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, this event occurs on a set day determined by the Japanese government shortly after the beginning of the New Year. Presently, it is held on the second Monday of January, except for in a few locations where there is extreme weather. This event is marked by a display of high fashion on the part of the participants who have no responsibility for the planning and execution of the event. The sequence of events is generally as follows: there is a welcoming of the “new adults”, followed by the presentation of the national flag, the introduction of the main speaker, a speech and then a procession of the new adults as they receive a small gift from the town office meant to serve as a remembrance of event. In addition to acquiring the ability to vote these young adults can now legally drink alcohol and smoke tobacco.



The ceremony possibly originates before the ninth century during the Seiwa era when boys approaching puberty were celebrated. As in today’s ceremonies, gifts were offered but in that era the gifts served as more than a simple token of remembrance. Boys were given headdresses and collars that required them to change their hairstyles and the boys often changed their names. The purpose of the rite was meant to indicate a change in status and its name *genbuku* or *genpuku*

(literally “basic clothing”) was intended to highlight the fact that the child was now worthy of wearing the clothing of a man. While biology was a physical indicator, social class also played role in deciding when one became an adult. Sons of aristocrats and warriors participated in the ceremony between the ages of ten and fifteen while sons of merchants waited until the ages of eighteen and nineteen. The lower classes seemed to also go through the ceremony at this later age but were only offered loincloths. In the sixteenth century, young girls were formally recognized as becoming young women. This was associated with their first menses. For the young women, a change of costume or a “putting on of the skirt” was also an important part of the ritual (Shintani 2003; Kodansha Encyclopedia 1983). This brief history demonstrates that as the ritual has become distinct from any physiological, social or cognitive indicator it has lost most of its meaning. In a student’s own words,

The officials prepared 7,000 seats in a gymnasium where the ceremony was held for the (a possible) 17,000 twenty-year-olds residing in the city. But most of the seats were empty during the speech. Many of the 20 year olds who did show up ignored the professor and spoke among themselves or talked on their mobile phones. Some of them even made a ruckus outside the gymnasium.

Youngsters came to the ceremony not to listen to speeches but to see their classmates. The mayor criticized the young generation at a news conference (the next day). It is true the generation gap is getting bigger and bigger. . . Older people (still) want to educate to younger ones, while younger people feel they (have) finally obtain(ed) the right to behave freely because they are now adults. Though ironically, young people have to ask their parents to buy them new clothes for the ceremony.

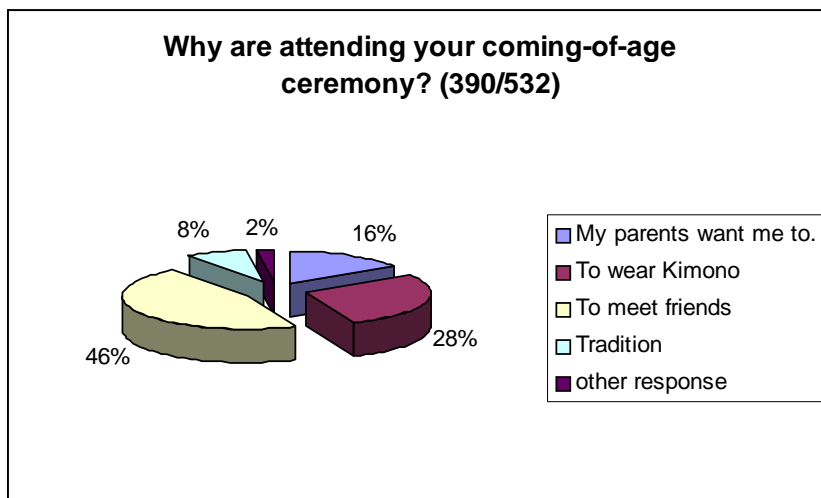
It is about time to change the way we celebrate this festival, I think. The idea of blessing new 20 year olds is not so bad. But there seems to be some other ways to celebrate more properly. The present seems to me a little superficial and materialistic. Instead of eternally complaining about the young’s behavior at the ceremonies, people should consider how they can make their ceremony worthier.

- Yukiko -

The incident the student refers to above was only one in a string of near riots reported in recent years. We can also get an estimate for participation rates with fewer than 7,000 out of a possible 17,000 eligible twenty-year olds in attendance. Another student Hide described a scene where as the ceremony was taking place

inside, a large group of young motorcycle toughs known as *bousouzoku* began to mill around outside drinking and catching up with old friends. In the end when the level of noise and revelry began to interfere with the ceremony the police were called in to clear out the parking lot, which had turned into an impromptu motorcycle show.

Since 1990, there have been public discussions in the popular media about the disrespect the attendees display towards the event. The main speakers who include local mayors or even governors have admonished or walked out on audiences for talking, on cell-phones or to each other, sleeping through the ceremony, or bursting out into drunken revelry causing police to be called in and make arrests. In one instance, the attendees did not even notice when the speaker walked out in anger over their behavior. In another case, the local government officials made the pretense of reaching out to the local “adults-to-be” asking for input on ways the ceremony could be made more relevant but in the end ignored every one of their suggestions. As a consequence when it came time for the youth group representative to give his speech of appreciation to the local government representatives he instead admonished the organizing committee and the ceremony as “meaningless”. This act caused the mayor of the community who had just completed his speech to roll up the parchment on which his speech was written, throw it at the young man speaking and walk out (Ito 2004 and Sankei Shinbun 2001).





The lack of attention to the ceremony by the young adults in attendance raises the question, “Why do these young people attend?” As the student above indicated, many admit they do not understand the meaning or significance of the event. They attend because it is a good time to get together with friends they may not have seen since graduation from junior or senior high school and because it is an opportunity to dress up in some of the most elegant kimono (female and male styles). Of these two reasons, the desire to meet old friends was the most often mentioned.

The main reason I went is to see old friends from elementary and junior high. I think this is why most people choose to go. We all went our separate ways to different high schools so I had not seen a lot of my friends for four or five years – Yumiko –

Even among individuals now over the age of 30, reuniting with old friends was seen as an important reason for attending the ceremony. So while disruptive behavior appears to be more prominent of late, even as early as 1970’s this ritual held significance for the participants other than as a rite of passage.

The coming-of-age ceremony has lost much of its meaning because it is disconnected from any physical parallel indicators. Some might argue that becoming an adult still holds some meaning, in that drinking alcohol, smoking and voting are all rights acquired at age twenty. However for many these “rights” have been practiced for sometime.

After coming to school extremely hung-over, one 19-year-old university student freely admitted to me that he had been out drinking till 3AM with his father and such father and son camaraderie had been a regular occurrence since he was 15. Many of ceremony attendees have been both drinking alcohol and smoking openly for several years and are not interested in politics. This has a distinct effect on the meaning of the ceremony.

The opportunity to wear an elegant kimono, have one’s hair and make-up done professionally and have professional photographs taken is significant both socially and economically. Parents pay for renting kimono, and the photographs since many of the participants are still attending university. They are still living at home or depend largely on their parents’ financial support, signifying the reality that many of these young people, though officially considered independent adults, are still and will continue to be dependant on their parents for some time. It is obvious that they exercise their new status selectively. Some comment that now they can spend their money as they see fit without consulting their parents first. Others feel that they are now free to come and go from their home without having to ask permission or without feeling obligated to notify their parents. When asked about responsibilities associated with the new status, many were unsure or did not

feel they had any new responsibilities. Of those not attending university some did express a desire to try and help out with household expenses but most reported that they had already been doing so for some time. In essence, the participants expressed their change of status emphasizing new freedoms, and putting off new responsibilities until they graduated from university and began working fulltime. For women, responsibilities such as paying rent and other living expenses might be put off for several years longer until they decide to get married. It is still common for women to live for several years after graduation with their parents while working fulltime. During this period, some report helping with family expenses but many students report that they spend all or a majority of their salary on themselves or save what they earn hoping to do some traveling or help with a down payment on a future home.

Others say they feel pressure from their parents to attend the coming-of-age ceremony and some express a vague notion that they would feel left out if they did not attend. No one I spoke to expressed an obligation to attend or the idea that they would not become an adult if they did not attend.

In summary, one student commented, "A long time ago the speech was very strict and traditional, but recently they have modernized the speech and made it shorter because everyone realizes that the most important part of the ceremony is seeing friends and taking pictures, not listening to a lecture."

### **Graduation 卒業式**

The graduation ceremony closely resembles the entrance ceremony in organization. There is some additional room for a student speech thanking the faculty and administration and possibly for a procession of students walking across the stage to accept their diploma. The graduation ceremony allows for the highest degree of involvement by the students of any of the three events. This event seems to hold a greater significance for the students though like the entrance ceremony the graduation ceremony has a more significant preamble of events that overshadows the importance of the ritual.

The graduation ceremony itself resembles a U.S. graduation ceremony. There is a procession of students into a hall, several speeches, including one by a student and the conferring of diplomas often symbolically to an individual or possibly to all students as they walk across the stage. Most students take advantage of the event to dress formally with many wearing the same suit they wore at their entrance ceremony. Others will wear kimono similar in style to those worn at the coming-of-age ceremony. Occasionally, students who feel particularly emboldened by the fact that they are graduating will dress in their own particular style or make a point of coming in very casual clothes such as

jeans and sport shoes. Recently there has also been a trend towards one or more students arriving in a costume of one sort or another. In one graduation ceremony, a student attended in a full-body panda costume. In addition to taking up two seats this young man almost brought the ceremony to a stop as he navigated the steps to the stage in order to receive a diploma in the name of the graduating class and give the students' speech. In order to safely step down from the stage he had to jump several steps at a time and almost tripped.

While this act was not prohibited, it was not widely appreciated by the administration that felt the student displayed a lack of respect for the institution, his fellow students and their guests. Yet the student's actions highlighted both the lack of involvement students have in executing the ceremony and the degree to which students are willing to interject some of their own personality into such events when given the opportunity.

What is distinct about the ceremony is the degree to which it is couched in the tradition of the college or university that dictates the format. The venue, the line up of events and speakers and even in some instances the speeches themselves are the same as in years before. The faculty may be the only ones aware of this since many only attend the ceremony once. However, a lack of originality or opportunity for student input is no explanation for the low degree of meaning students attach to graduation.

As shown, graduation remains significant only because it signals an official end to their university career but in fact for many their lives at the university had a de facto ending several months earlier. Again, while this may be true for many U.S. students, it is clearly not as wide spread or institutionalized as it is at Japanese universities. A description of a typical student's fourth year will help to illustrate how graduation is an extended process.

The first of these is the distinction made between general education courses and major courses. Early in the history of Japanese higher education students entering university only took classes within their major course of study. It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the idea of a general education began to be practiced. Unlike the U.S. where universities expanded their scope by adding several departments in the social sciences and humanities, in Japan "general education" departments brought together faculty from a wide breadth of disciplines into one department. In addition to larger teaching loads, additional administrative duties and higher student to teacher ratios per class, the faculty of these departments are often expected to fill some of the roles student services offices provide on U.S. campuses.

Burdens such as these, along with a general perception from other faculty that general education requirements are not significant to a student's academic career, result in a less than equal standing given to these courses or their faculty. The cumulative effect of all these factors is that students show little interest in a

majority of these courses and the faculty has limited resources to provide adequate instruction. In the end, most courses provide students with little more than a superficial overview of topics. There is also a low risk of failing as long as students put a minimum of effort into the course. Classes in a student's major course of study often have the same low risk for failure but for opposite reasons. High interest among the students, a lower student to teacher ratio, ample resources (including notes, teaching assistants, tutoring and scheduled study sessions) allow all but the very poorly motivated to achieve a passing grade. In addition, testing procedures are not always the most rigorous and all but insure that most students will perform at a minimally acceptable level.

Most students have passed all but their senior seminar courses by their fourth year. In many cases, these courses are designed around a research topic of the student's choice and should conclude with a senior thesis of some length. Some faculty incorporate students into their own research, while others allow a wide degree of freedom and delegate supervision of undergraduates to their graduate students. Regardless of the situation, acceptance of this essay or thesis represents a student's final effort and determines the completion of their academic career. However, at the same time students are completing their papers, the students search for employment. With a small number of students continuing on to graduate school (MEXT 2004: 10) and the economy stagnant for over ten years, the job search is a significant process. It is not only significant for the students, but also for the university since the universities are judged and ranked primarily based on the number of graduates who successfully find employment upon graduation.

Universities provide a large degree of support for students in their fourth year in order to guarantee that a healthy percentage finds employment. In addition to running seminar type courses that include training on proper dress, attitude and behavior, there are a series of mock interviews, as well as personal introductions by the university to companies which have hired students in the past. Significantly atypical about this assistance is the dual personality it takes on. At one level the university is enormously concerned with helping students find a fulltime position. At another level a university that appears excessively concerned with student employment may signal to its constituents a lack of focus on academics and possibly a lack of confidence in the institution's good name.

As a result, career guidance offices are almost non-existent and much of the support is provided semi-clandestinely either after school hours or on weekends, yet in a manner that is institutionalized so that nearly all fourth-year students are involved and everyone is aware. Often students will notify their instructors that for the several weeks they will be absent from classes because they will be interviewing with several companies or taking required civil service or licensing exams. Instructors are not expected to count these absences against a student and

provide ample opportunity for the student to make up the work in some other manner.

Though the level of employment will range from department store sales people to entry level manufacturing and office positions, over 50% of graduating students find some type of employment, even with the economy in a prolonged period of stagnation (MEXT 2004: 10). How students are managed once they do find employment further reveals the degree to which universities are concerned with this issue and is key to understanding why graduation carries little significance for students.

Once a student signs a contract with a company, especially for a worthwhile position, graduation is all but guaranteed. Though there are significant differences between public and private institutions, at each there are mechanisms that work to provide students assurance that they will not have to turn down an offer of employment because they have not completed their course of study. In some cases, faculty may be strongly persuaded to pass a student especially in cases where the course is not required for the student's major course of study.

While students often attend the graduation ceremony, it holds little significance to them. The result is disinterested attendance.

In 1998, the students at a high school in a bedroom community just north of Tokyo decided that they no longer wanted to participate in the formally sanctioned ceremonies. Apart from the fact that the students felt that they held no meaning for them in their formulaic presentation, controversy over the presentation of the *hinomaru* (rising sun flag) and *Kimigayo* (de facto national anthem) led to a revolt and rejection of the events. The opening or welcome ceremony and graduation were specifically targeted. What was significant is that it was not an issue over the ceremonies themselves but over how they were conducted. Students and the faculty readily recognized that both of these events could hold important significance for the students as a means of identifying their passage through important phases in their lives. In fact, for many years both of these events had been directed by the students and were very well attended and did not include the presentation of either the *hinomaru* or *Kimigayo*.

In April of 1997, when a new principal was introduced to the school, he decided the school would no longer ignore the edict to present both the flag and anthem at all official ceremonies. However, the students and most of the faculty did not feel that the events, as they were to be practiced, conformed with the school's ethos of freedom, autonomy and independence. As a result, the students, with the support of the faculty chose to organize alternate events. However, the principal refused to accept these events as legitimate and continued to hold official ceremonies. His reasoning reflected his mandate from the centralized Ministry of Education.

In the period between WWII and the 1970's, promotion among faculty was based on seniority and support of fellow faculty. This system guaranteed that the control of many of the top posts within the administration of the ministry stayed within the hands of liberal leaning union educators who often chose to ignore centralized government mandates. One noticeable example was the lack of respect paid to efforts to institute the *hinomaru* (rising sun flag) as the national emblem and *Kimigayo* (a highly nationalistic anthem that in not so veiled speech recognized the emperor as divine ruler of Japan). For many years, even at schools where the anthem was played, many of the faculty refused to stand and encouraged their students to do the same.

However, almost as soon as the unions had reach their height of organizational strength, active interest began to wane and the government began making inroads into their power base. For the teachers' unions, increasing encroachment on their membership and their ability to control promotions was one result. Eventually, the decline in the political strength of unions led to the current system whereby promotion to positions such as principal no longer required approval of or support of fellow faculty. The Ministry began actively replacing retiring principals with non-union faculty who supported the government initiatives.

The principal of this high school was one such appointee and so it is not surprising that his response to the students and faculty requests to allow changes in the ceremonies was met with great resistance. He stated that "these ceremonies are not for the students but are meant to be instructive, to teach students how to behave properly in the presence of the government, to teach proper respect."

The students, unable to make changes in the ceremonies, produced alternative ceremonies on their own apart from the school. The result was the creation of parallel entrance and graduation ceremonies. In the beginning, these were very popular and for the first year almost completely replaced the official ceremonies with attendance at the school held events reduced to one-tenth normal. The principal declared that attendance at the "official events" was mandatory and even threatened to deny admission to any student who did not attend the official entrance ceremony. In the end, he could do little to prevent their parallel ceremonies and, in fact, his position was threatened at one point as the faculty and parents attempted to force his resignation.

However, with apparent support from the Ministry of Education, this principal began to retaliate and exert pressure on faculty, threatening in some cases to fire those who were seen as supporting the students' initiatives. In fact, several of the faculty who were perceived to have been supporting the students were transferred and replaced with management track faculty who had a vested interest in supporting national policies. The principal himself was also replaced with a less confrontational individual who assisted students in organizing alternate

student-run ceremonies in addition to the official ceremony. While he continued to insist on the presentation of the flag and anthem he did not designate these events as “required.” As a result, student attendance at both events was about equal and relations between the student body, the school, parents and the faculty were normalized.

While in the end the students’ attempts to create a more meaningful and expressive event failed, this account demonstrates the recognition on the part of all involved, that the events as they existed carried little significance for students. It also demonstrates that the Japanese government understands how the use of ritual can instill common feelings of patriotism and fidelity and their fear that too much independent expression may result in the lack of these sentiments. Aspinall and Cave (2001) note that a number of right-wing groups and newspapers took an active role in mounting a negative PR campaign against the school, the students and the faculty. The use of the media to bring negative attention to the students’ protest again underscores the conflict that is occurring in many areas where local and national interests are clashing. It also highlights the current struggle between different generations whose clashing ideologies will form the future of Japan.

## Two roads diverging

The events described here are part of a yearlong cycle of preparation, presentation and celebration that both integrates Japanese young people into their society and allows them to define their role in that society. As a consequence of the historic, social, and political movements, the school festival is today a marker of affiliation and independence. These young women and men through elite membership as university students and then membership in a variety of clubs and other student organizations are categorized and at the same time able to exert newfound identities. They are bound by traditional rules of Japanese social organization and manipulate these rules to express a post-modern view of independence and freedom.

While seemingly contradictory, this picture of the ritual of the university school festival and the students who participate, mirrors the current state of Japanese society itself. Before I conclude, I will review some of the ideas and theories that have focused my perspective of the university school festival in Japan and the current state of Japanese society.

Some excellent work has been done on Japanese *matsuri* as expression of resistance and dissatisfaction. Schnell (1999, 1995) and Bestor (1992) outline many of the prevailing views on how these localized events are often saturated with meaning and opportunities for the actors to overtly express (and act upon) emotions best left out of everyday polite conversation.

While having lost much of the religious overtones, school festivals still maintain some socio-religious aspects, such as the presentation of food and drink and the overt references to a higher power and ideals. School festivals through some of the more ceremonial acts, such as the raising of the national flag or perhaps even blessing by a Buddhist priest, also express a combining of religion and government. There is also the strong association of purification through the use of alcohol, which both brings participants closer to the deities and allows for exorcism of one's personal evil nature. This occurs through the abandonment of constraining social norms and the engagement in behavior that normally would be considered vulgar. In addition, there is the obvious sense of *liminality* as discussed by Turner (1969), which pervades the school festival. Students successfully participating in their first university school festival often comment on



the sense of relief that all went well, if not exactly as planned. Finally, there is the reorientation of space during *matsuri*. Streets, storefronts and shrines are transformed into stages, dance floors and marketplaces. School festivals transform classrooms, meeting halls and sports grounds into all manner of presentation and performance stages, food stalls or even makeshift living quarters. Understanding this obvious connection between *matsuri* and school festivals is important because it provides historical context. As mentioned above, at the time that the Meiji government was establishing a national system of education there were overt attempts to co-opt local festivals and customs for the sake of establishing a national identity (Finkelstein 1991: 77 and Adams 1970: 35).

Like Schnell (1999), I have come to view ritual as an expressive social performance set within the boundaries of a specified time and space. Both Ortner (1984) and Giddens (1979) make the point that “human agency” is in constant dialogue with the constraints of social norms in continually reestablishing the rules and boundaries within which members of the society must operate. By looking at ritual and the manipulation of ritual activities as part of this dialogue, as a vehicle of change per se, we can examine more closely the process of how sectors of a society express dissatisfaction with the ideals of the governing forces within that society. While in most cases student expressions of independence, identity and discontent do not reach the level of “rituals of rebellion” that Gluckman (1954) describes, in two of the cases above there was an explicit attempt to subvert the control of the national government’s role in defining the meaning of student based rituals.

From an alternate perspective, Schieffelin (1985) suggests that ritual does not convey meaning by strict adherence to a way of doing things but “rather it does so by socially constructing a situation in which the participants experience symbolic meanings as part of the process of what they are already doing (1989: 709).” While his ideas are more traditional than Bell’s (1997) in that he still perceives ritual as “a reality apart from its participants” he clearly argues that there is “no single correct or right meaning for a ritual” but that “to a large degree the meanings of the symbols and of the rite itself are created during the performance, evoked in the participant’s imagination in the negotiation between the principle performers and the participants” (Schieffelin 1985: 722). Arno (2003) built on these principles by developing a model demonstrating the process by which ritual and non-ritual space/time interact. The line between ritual and non-ritual is a one fine indeed and in the Japanese context I would argue (as Douglas seems to do) it disappears almost entirely with “ritual” constantly crashing on the shores of “non-ritual” in a much more fluid fashion. As demonstrated by the example of the “negotiation” over the design of the poster presented in the first section there is considerable overlap within the space of the *gakkousai* between the negotiation of social politics and ritual interaction. For those who participate fully *gakkousai* is

life compressed into a short period and then spun into the weave of the rest of their lives. “I always worked (in the family business) and used the same (interpersonal) skills as a university student to organize activities. But now that I manage the store myself, I realize how much I learned during this period,” Sakaya. Thus, I disagree with Arno’s dichotomy created between ritual and non-ritual, though his conception that ritual practice acts as an important part of a social structure demonstrates how ritual reflects current norms and values.

Bell (1997), in her presentation of a “practice theory” of ritual, argues that the study of ritual has been closed in the sense that definitions of ritual tend to distort this set of actions by separating them off from the rest of daily life. She proposes instead some basic identifiers of ritual; these are 1) “ritual is not same thing everywhere; it can vary in every feature”, 2) ritual is a way of acting “that distinguishes itself from other ways of acting in the very way it does what it does”, 3) ritual is a circular act that both is created by the actor (ritual agent) and creates the actor’s role, 4) ritual is inherently flexible in that the actor can employ ritual schemes in multiple situations and “restructure those situations in practical ways” and 5) ritual is ultimately about the “expression of authority” in that it is about an actor or actors employing a set of activities that construct particular meanings and values in specific ways. In essence, Bell’s view opens up the study of ritual to include a wide range of activities and actions and Bell herself concedes that “practice theories suggest the value of jettisoning the category of ritual as a necessary first step in opening up the particular logic and strategy of cultural practices” (1997:83).

These ideas help to describe the manner *gakkousai* fits into the structure of Japanese society. On Douglas’ matrix, Japanese society would be one in which there is both a strong system of shared classifications (grid) and a high degree of pressure on the individual to conform to other people’s pressure (group). Within this social context, Douglas believes there are strong tendencies to ritualize activities. These rituals are active in daily life because they are embedded with meaning about the relations of the participants and also generate relations between the participants. Participants are not subservient to these rituals, instead, they use the space constructed by the ritual to convey acceptance or dissatisfaction through participation in the ritual activities or the lack thereof. Invoking the image of the playground sandbox to represent a socially constructed space participants engage in the action of play within a specific space for the purpose of “having fun”. While in this space, they evoke meaning and reconstruct their reality and themselves to varying degrees based on their proficiency in negotiating the structure of social relationships through formalized actions (ritual). While open to many possibilities children (the participants) engage in a specific type of play in a sandbox. Those with greater proficiency in manipulating their space and in engaging in social relationships enjoy the play

more than those who are not as proficient. Significant to note is the premise that the more everyone enjoys the play the greater the reward for anyone player.

As with the sandbox and social situations in general, rituals vary in scope, size and range of activities and because of their fluid nature are most easily identifiable by the manner in which the participants construct the space within which they occur. In addition, unlike purely economic activities, success of a ritual and the proficiency of any one actor are measured by the overall participation and enjoyment of all the participants.

In essence, it is not any specific activity that allows the *gakkousai* to act as a codifier of social norms but the space/situation it creates that allows the participants to experience (test) their aptitude for coping in the real world. This attribute is what makes the *gakuensai* unique among the ritual activities presented here. Unlike the entrance, coming-of-age or graduation ceremonies, the school festival invokes the students as responsible participants for the actions of the ritual. Clearly the *gakuensai*, though comprised of a recognized set of activities, allows for the representation of an institution's unique character as driven by the students' participation at all levels of planning and execution (Oki 2002). In doing so, the students must assume proactive roles as members of the society, interacting with each other and the other communities to which they claim membership. In the past (real or imagined) the other university level rituals may have operated as signifiers of new status or the inheritance of new rights and responsibilities, but it is obvious that such is no longer the case and as a result only the thinnest of shells remains. While in some cases the target population of these empty rituals have attempted to infuse them with new meaning, these attempts have been met with intolerance of the dominate powers for anything less than subservience to the ideals and principle that best serve their agenda.

I consolidate some of the stated purposes for *gakuensai* as put forth by participants in order to better understand how it operates as a location of incorporation and tension. Students and the university recognize a number of social and institutional reasons for the expenditure of time and money on *gakkousai*. The university understands that in addition to being a part of tradition, the *gakuensai* is an opportunity for the community to come on to campus and see what students are doing. Part of what necessitates the temporary fusion of campus and community is the tension that can build up between the two as the result of the seasonal influx of students who share the public transportation, patronize local businesses or occupy apartment buildings in the neighborhood. In addition, there is the perception that the campus is not a full member of the community and so *gakuensai* help to integrate the campus with the community. In addition, due to demographic shifts and over-arching changes in the structure of education in Japan, it has become increasingly more important for universities to actively recruit students. More and more, the *gakuensai* has been seen as an

opportunity for prospective students and their parents to come and “check things out.” As discussed, the campus is “opened up” in a manner that is not duplicated at any other time of the year. So those interested can view the campus in this unique time and gauge the level of school spirit. Again, as more attention is placed on recruitment, aspects of student life like the ratio of male to female students, the size of classrooms, and the general condition of the campus will become more and more important.

Students see *gakkousai* from different perspectives. Before discussing these, it is important to note that while the administration can be seen as a single entity with a single perspective, students have a range of perspectives. For those students who participate actively, the most immediate response when asked why they participate involves some element of “fun” or the opportunity to “play” with their friends. However, those involved in student government or as officers in student clubs mention their responsibility to others as a motivating factor. When pressed, they go on to explain that if they were to ignore their responsibilities it would be remembered and their standing in their group would be affected. Such anxiety for their social standing signals social-political concerns on the part of participants who might need to rely on the cooperation from the group to advance their interests at some later point in time. Apart from the perceptions of those who actively participate, there are real structural consequences. Keeping in mind that university *gakkousai* represent only one link in a life long chain of events that fit under the term *gakkousai*, I propose that *gakkousai* represent a model of Japanese society in which students are given the opportunity to safely test their proficiency in the social skills necessary to operate in their society.

To highlight this principle, I recap some examples of how students experience this creation of *basho* or ritual space for experimentation. First, that students understand and anticipate a school festival will take place at some point in the academic year indicates the level of social acceptance. Though the timing varies from school to school not having a *gakkousai* would be similar to canceling Christmas or Hanukkah. As indicated above, students have been participating in *gakkousai* for their entire academic career at increasing levels of responsibility and so understand the event and their expected roles. The organization of the school festival itself seems to mirror the social organization of society. Rules and regulations are passed down through a hierarchy with the university administration at the top and individual students at the bottom. The student government and the *gakkousai* committee act as negotiators, by passing information and requests, and both disseminating and enforcing the rules. Because this is a structure duplicated not only in business but also in daily life through community and civic organizations, being able to operate effectively in such an atmosphere is essential. *Gakkousai* are just one opportunity students are given to develop and practice the social skills needed to function effectively in

their society. However, *gakkousai* are not only about the practice of social skills but about their development. Students, through the process of preparation, presentation and celebration, spend a considerable amount of time in close contact. The resulting *skinship* is very important since it represents emotional ties of common understanding developed through the process of shared experience. Students belong to many types and levels of groups throughout their academic life but the emotional ties they develop through this type of close contact remain some of the strongest.

The result is an event that is abundant with built-in opportunities for a display of necessary social skills in practice. It is interesting, however, that when questioned, most participants do not describe the *gakkousai* as an opportunity to display social skills but, rather, describe it in more material terms, as an opportunity to show students' work or the school itself. It is not that participants do not recognize the social aspects of this ritual display. Instead, they do not distinguish between the product and the production or as might otherwise be described as, the difference between *what is done and the doing*.

## Conclusions:

*Gakkousai* in Japan are components of a broader set of educational rituals that encompass the whole of education in Japan. While differences exist between locations, some generalizations can be made about *gakkousai*. In this final section I will outline these generalizations. The literature on *gakkousai* is scarce and because *gakkousai* represent a type of festival or *matsuri* I therefore refer to literature on Japanese *matsuri* and the factors that contribute to their continuation.

There appears to be agreement that there is no single factor working to maintain the practice of *matsuri* (Yanagawa 1974, Sonoda 1975, and Bernier 1975). While all agree that social, economic and political changes have had great effect on how they are practiced (Akaike 1976, and Davis 1977) there is no firm consensus as to why they continue to be an important part of social life in Japanese communities. *Gakkousai*, though unique in many aspects as are the institutions that sponsor them, are similar to each other in the way they operate in their specific sub-set of Japanese society – formal education.

Like *matsuri*, *gakkousai* can become foci of community unity. The community of mainly first-year students unite around a common, broadly expressed goal of “having a successful school festival.” That a wide range of groups can interpret this goal differently is key, as it allows for feeling of unity often where competing interests exist. As described in previous sections, groups that normally do not communicate find common ground during the preparation and presentation of *gakkousai* as they are forced by circumstance to share access to resources. Just as Meiji authorities recognized the power of *matsuri* to establish broader national loyalties in the under-governed countryside (Fridell 1973: 18, 93), national and institutional interests supported the establishment and continuation of *gakkousai*. While these interests continue to be a motivating factor behind the support universities provide to school festivals, participation remains high because they reinforce the feeling of community solidarity.

*Gakkousai* also serve as opportunities for the creation and display of school spirit and solidarity that can extend beyond the university. In some cases, surrounding communities identify with the campus during the period of *gakkousai* either through attendance or in the case of local businesses that offer financial support. Alumni also can play an important role especially when they live in close proximity or have become members of the faculty or administration.

Often a center for this feeling of solidarity is the closing ceremony, which concludes with drinking and a meal, paid for from funds earned during the

festival. Such feasts have been noted as important parts of all festival rituals in Japan (Embre 1939). For many *gakkousai* participants, the closing ceremony and final congratulatory party is seen as the highlight of the entire event. As in the case of the English club president who played a minimal role in the planning and execution of the school festival, but attended the closing party, many students expressed the feeling that, if nothing else, this feast was not to be missed.

Continuing this reasoning, *gakkousai* also act to socialize newcomers into established communities. Yamamoto (1978) points out that this is another reason why such rituals, as community festivals, survive. This is seen in the case of the Namahage a demon figure that appears at the end of the calendar year and harasses those who are suspect or seen as not conforming to the local mores. Their appearance much like Hopi mudheads or Zuni zebra clowns in the American Southwest is meant as reminder of the social consequences of not conforming to appropriate modes of behavior.

For these reasons, I propose that, in part, *gakkousai* persist beyond the mere ceremonial acts because they help universities and colleges maintain the institutional culture. Obviously this viewpoint alone would represent a simplistic functionalist interpretation. However, there are other factors supporting the continuation of *gakkousai* that are just as important. Participants cite the manner in which *gakkousai* help the university function by generating a group feeling, which facilitates communication. This emic interpretation has validity since Japanese highly value maintaining a “group feeling” as important to almost any social function.

Sonoda (1975: 32) describes how *matsuri* serve as vehicles for common cultural idioms and Bestor (1989) discusses how even in urban settings where communities are indistinguishable from the larger cityscape *matsuri* operate as a means of distinguishing neighborhoods as unique entities.

In the university context, the *gakkousai* is one of the few opportunities to rouse campus wide school spirit. That the institutions founding and history are presented in speeches is significant as a means of marking the university as unique through the retelling of its own myths. In a number of cases, students expressed that the popularity of the school festival played an equal role as the school’s academic standing in their decision to attend. This was the case in the example presented in section three, where one of the major motivations for reinitiating the school festival came from the sense of loss of identity with its cancellation, having in the past been recognized as one of the largest *gakkousai* in Tokyo.

*Gakkousai* are clearly used as opportunities to put on display the hierarchical nature of university society and this way society at large. Often with the university administration at the top, and each class of student, club, circle and major course of study placed plainly on display in its proper place. That those

with higher status are required to commit greater resources is one manner those at the top display their power and prestige. This ties in well with the discussion on socialization as in-coming first-year students are socialized into the hierarchy and allowed to find their proper place.

While egalitarianism is supposed to be prized and real competition muted, *gakkousai* offer opportunities for a continuous one-upmanship within the setting of striving for a common set of goals. Under the guise of friendly competition, rivalries ignite and are settled. Generally, minor shifting occurs between competing groups. In most cases shifts in the hierarchy occurs between equals. However, as was seen in the case presented in section three, occasionally shifts on the level of a minor revolution can occur. This supports my argument since, within the context of a public event, the entire campus community and, in fact, the entire city, was able to take note of the major shift that had occurred.

Given the degree of revelry in the form of drinking and feasting that occurs, it must be acknowledged that students commit great amounts of time and energy to the preparation at least partly because they enjoy doing so. *Gakkousai* will continue to exist at least in some part because they serve as a form of entertainment. Viewing them in this light raises two issues. First, as entertainment one can examine how *gakkousai* are performed by the students, for the patrons, and for each other. Secondly, as entertainment they must compete with other forms of entertainment in order to capture the resources necessary to organize them. So *gakkousai* must remain current and offer what is likely to attract participants and patrons. This requires that *gakkousai* must constantly change with the times in order to be relevant. As was noted, neither the entrance ceremony nor coming-of-age ceremony required change and in fact were based in an ascribed tradition.

As with other forms of entertainment where participation is key, *gakkousai* are constantly undergoing change. While Japanese who have written about *gakkousai*, lament such change as a loss of tradition or meaning (Nishi 1970, Oki 2002, and Okihara 1973) this adaptability should be seen as one main reasons for the vitality of *gakkousai*. Whether in the choice of events or the structures and organizations that support the *gakkousai*, change can be interpreted as reflecting the cumulative effect of social or economic shifts, or serve as a focus to hasten them.

In this dissertation several examples of how change was reflected in the practice of educational rituals were presented. In the case of Tokorozawa high school, shifts in the political views of the educational hierarchy were hastened in reaction to teacher supported student protests. In the case of the Tokyo university that had cancelled its *gakkousai* because it had become too politically oriented, the political ambivalence of most college age youth was clearly displayed as



students freely gave up almost all association with the student government in exchange for the opportunity to hold a school festival.

As presented here it is clear that regardless of locality, size and even the level of education at which they are practiced, school festivals share some common characteristics that make them a subset of ritual. On the whole, it is apparent that *gakkousai* are dramatic performances, *gakkousai* can serve as a stage for the presentation of social myth and ideology, *gakkousai* are a form of entertainment and leisure, *gakkousai* must act as public events because in isolation they have no meaning, and *gakkousai* are participatory and unforced.

Like community festivals, it would be difficult to imagine forcing people into the type of preparation and spontaneity required for a successful *gakkousai*. This spontaneity signals one of the areas where *gakkousai* ritual bleed into other social phenomenon like festivals or what Manning (1983) calls celebration. Handelman (1977) creates a dichotomy between ritual and festivals or celebration, using seriousness and play as identifying factors. However, I prefer to view *gakkousai* as a subset of ritual where the ceremonial aspects of *gakkousai* frame the play and serve to maintain order around the disorder. In all play there are rules that govern and limit the freedom so as to prevent anarchy from spilling over into “real-life.”

Within *gakkousai* this is both implicit and explicit throughout the entire event. In the preparation, while students are clearly given free reign over the events, they are also given the responsibility for the safety of their fellow students as can be seen in the fire readiness and first-aid training many receive prior to the event. Also, while at specific points in the festivities rules governing social boundaries and etiquette might be ignored, basic precepts of “Japaneseness”, particularly ideals surrounding group solidarity, are rarely abandoned. In a more basic manner, rules dictate temporal limits or boundaries by framing events with opening and closing ceremonies clearly dictating the beginning and end and a return to normalcy.

Even a passing knowledge of Durkheim requires mention of his ideas as they reflect on the development of social conscience, conformity and individualism. In this particular study, Durkheim’s ideas regarding, moral education, mechanical and organic solidarity and his discourse on anomie are most relevant.

In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim (1960) identifies two forms of solidarity, mechanical and organic. A description of the first type seems to imply a complete submission of the individual to the collective conscience and the second allows for more personal freedom and choice. As such, it is tempting to describe Japanese society as existing in a state of transition between the two. Douglas, who I discuss extensively, while building on Durkheim clearly makes the point that such a description would at the least be inappropriate if not overly simplistic. Yet, much of Durkheim’s assertions are clearly germane to the discussion of the transition that is occurring in Japanese society.

Perhaps it would be best to state that Durkheim identifies some of the characteristics of the transition separate from the moral judgments associated with a lineal progression from a simple to complex society. As I make the case in this dissertation, there is clearly a shift occurring, however while individualism is on the rise and “anomie” appears to be a more common frame for this conduct it does not seem to be resulting from the decline of common values, morality, beliefs, and normative rules or dissimilar, social experiences and materials interests. Instead, I would make the case that through a dominate top-down administrative system there is clear set of common experiences that have been created which effectively instill a set of common understanding about what it means to be Japanese, which includes a common set of values and modes of communicating and acting. In a number of respects, Durkheim’s understanding of the role of education in establishing a common moral code has been fully implemented within the structure of the Japanese education system with the school festival as one instrument for its transmission.

The expectation of the Japanese government would be that the individual would become beholdng to the society through the establishment of the set of contemporary rituals discussed here. However, what is occurring is that the individual in Japanese society has become more conscience of these common understandings, and the ability to manipulate them. As I quoted earlier, Durkheim did not necessarily see a common consciousness or system of beliefs as inhibiting individual action. Instead he felt that by embracing the rules of society in a conscience manner an individual in a sense could express ownership and in a sense engage in a dialogue with society.

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### A Final Perspective

For organizational purposes the practice of *gakkousai* was divided into three sections; preparation, performance and celebration. While clearly related, to understand how *gakkousai* are different from entrance, graduation and coming-of-age ceremonies, one must recognize the differences in each.

The most visible difference is in terms of the type of participation that occurs in each section. For the *gakkousai*, participation is not simply open but required for a successful event. *Gakkousai*, as with *matsuri*, are built around the ethos generated by community. While I have already discussed the complexity of using Turner’s *communitas*, it is difficult not to reference this principle in respect when in fact without community participation there can be no feeling of community. In the other rituals examined here, participation in planning is limited, often even

closed off to the subjects of the event. Students or those of the appropriate age must simply show up in order to participate with no current cognitive recognition of their membership into the group other than their attendance. In other words, there is no ownership of the event by those for whom the event is intended. In some cases, no one claims ownership of these events. The university administration claims it is for the students, the students claim it is for their parents and everyone cites “tradition” as the main impetus for their continuation.

While structurally, all of the events discussed here serve to put the societal hierarchy on public display, in the case of *gakkousai* there are opportunities for negotiating one’s status built into the process. The other university level rituals presented here are more or less theater with the students given little choice about their role. Just as student attempts to interject other roles or images of themselves into these events signals a desire to negotiate the proscribed roles, the often forceful means of rejecting these attempts signals the reluctance of those in power to relinquish or even recognize that students could be anything other than students. What those in power – government and university officials - fail to recognize, is that as the larger structures of society are changing, chipping away at the base of their power. In many cases the disruptions that occur are the true portrayal of Japanese society, a theater within theater exposing the rifts within the formal image of Japanese society presented to the world via popular media.

Even a cursory investigation of Japan today reveals that as a nation, it is at a crossroads. More than a decade of a stagnant economy, regional political unrest and the rising prominence of China, have all combined to alter its position in the world social, political, and economic system. As the result of its economic and social dominance in the 1970’s, globalization (or as others have referred to it the westernization – Befu, 1991:33) of Japanese society has affected the transmission of culture and information between Japan and the rest of the world. Globalization in turn has influenced the direction of art and culture at many different levels. These processes brought about many internal changes, in many cases forcing a self-critique of a once dominant monolithic national identity. One conspicuous change is a focus on youth and youth culture - this in the face of a demographic that disproportionately favors the elderly. This focus on youth and ideals perceived as “youthful” such as freedom of choice and expression, and mobility have affected countless sectors of society.

Yet in the face of such mechanisms of change, Japan essentially remains Japanese and in many respects this fact is just as intriguing as changes that have been forced on a society often portrayed as stagnant. As White (2002) indicates part of the disparity that seemingly exists between “tradition” and the “post-modern” is a myth whose roots lie in creation of a Japanese identity during the Meiji restoration. Rather than an invasion of western ideals, Japan’s exposure to the world has made acting out modes of living not typically viewed as Japanese

less stigmatizing. Thus, rather than becoming “more western” it is better to characterize the shifts occurring as an expansion of already existing ways of being Japanese. However, one should not understand that this expansion of possibilities is sanctioned or accepted by all, especially not by entities who rely on the view of Japan as a nation with a homogenous identity to support their power base.

As many of these activities have long existed the emergence of class in a so-called classless society could be viewed as one possible explanation. As disparity increases so do markers of this disparity in the form of perceived rebellious or uncivil acts. These serve as warning signals to those with power whose reaction is to suppress these subversions with both moral and physical force. But as it is still too early to tell if in fact this is the case it can only be said with certainty that Japan and what it means to be Japanese is changing, one foot firmly in the center of tradition and the other as far to the edge of a very broad circle as possible.

In the introduction, I stated Japanese society was shifting to a more open society, away from the dominance of the principles of group identity. In reality, Japan is moving along two parallel tracks. One is driven by the younger sectors of society who, while remaining Japanese, are tied into the global society through their values, their perceived opportunities, their emphasis on consumerism as well as their views of who are Japanese and what it means to be Japanese. At the same time there is a second group comprised of the generation following this who is looking for ways to further advance the influence of Japan including loosening restrictions in its current constitution.

The result is a picture of Japanese society composed of layers, each competing for an audience and limited resources, an image far from one of a homogenous group all operating on a standardized subservience to the whole. Instead, each is vying for a constituency, negotiating for attention against the wide variety of perspectives now available. In its complexity, Japanese society resembles a school festival with many levels.

From a broader perspective there is a shift occurring within Japanese society as the next generation of Japanese begins to assume more political and economic power. Enabled by greater access to education, information and exposure to the world, they are at many levels rejecting the roles they were once expected to fulfill. Today, unable to rely on an expanding economy or lifetime employment, young Japanese people are rejecting accepted standards and modes of behavior.

This aspect is mirrored in the behavior and attitudes students express towards the ritual activities presented here. The entrance, graduation and coming-of-age ceremonies all are representative of the promise of rewards offered to those who conform to the ideals of what it “traditionally” meant to be Japanese. Diligence, perseverance and denial of oneself in favor of the nation once promised security and the right of being Japanese. Today they can offer none of these as so are being rejected.

In Okihara's (1973) short history of *gakuensai* he begins by noting parallels between school festivals and religious festivals. Okihara cites the offerings made at religious events and the revelry and the consumption of food that occurs at school festivals. Then, as he focuses on school festivals, he suggests one possible source of the apparent shift in the flavor and tone of *gakuensai*, the introduction of modern educational principles during the U.S. occupation. Okihara indicates that it was these ideas that encouraged the development of *gakuensai* into an opportunity for students to socialize themselves into Japanese society by practicing consensus building and generating relations with the community. While it would be easy to accept this explanation at face value, there are a number of other factors that have played a role in this process of change.

Trends such as a depressed economy, shifting demographics and increasing competition from international sectors have all decreased the strength of social sanctions that once exhibited great influence on individuals. Today, not only do individuals have a sense of greater mobility between groups, but the groups themselves are less tied to each other in the web of social connections resulting in new opportunities and new choices. For the cycle of ritual events that university students partake in, it means that they are beginning to make choices about how and when they will participate. Although students continue to attend those events where "participation" is only a matter of showing up, it is clear both overtly and in more subtle ways they have been expressing their dissatisfaction for some time. By sleeping, text messaging or showing up in costume, students have been attempting to indicate that events such as entrance and graduation ceremonies could be important markers of their passage into adulthood but are not because of the manner they are currently practiced. The more overt examples such as performing alternate events or causing near riots I interpret as examples where the ritual has lost all significance and those attending see it only in terms of how it serves their interests. The school festival, while originally aligned with the other events as an opportunity for instruction in appropriate modes of behavior and responsibility, evolved as the result of the structure of the event itself. Unlike these other events, the school festival exists because students create it. In other words, the active participation and commitment that is required also allows for the contribution of one's ideas and generates a sense of ownership. At the same time, because of its yearly cycle, the school festival draws students into a spiral process, with students' increasing responsibility for the success *gakkousai* mirroring their increasing responsibilities and power in the society.

When questioned about the appropriateness of first-year students drinking throughout the festival, one parent commented, "Oh it's okay because they are now adults." While this parent may have been indicating that the students' age gave them status as adults it is clear that this statement indicates other markers of adulthood including completion of their first semester of university. As I

discussed above, Turner's concept of *liminality* comes into play as many students expressed feeling changed by the events surrounding a school festival. The effort and long hours spent in preparation often bring out characteristics unseen at other times of the year. More than one student commented that it was the only time of the year they were "serious" (*majime*). Such opinions are clearly related to the fact that this was the one time of year student opinions could be aired and acted upon. Driven by the responsibilities of the *diagakusai*, students do seem to transform themselves (if but for a short period) into productive adults accountable for a wide range of activities and events.

Most often described as "fun" or an opportunity to cement relationships through *skinship* the reality is that students feel a great sense of reward and accomplishment having taken responsibility for and successfully created an event of such a large scale. That this event occurs within the boundaries of an institution that represents the culmination of both academic and moral education, should be seen as an attempt on the part of the students to self-direct at least one aspect of their education. Rejection of other rituals could be seen as attempts to bring about the reformulation of the practice of these, to reinterpret their meaning and to claim ownership of these and, in a larger sense, claim ownership of their future. As Schnell (1999) made clear, rituals can carry great political and social meaning in their practice allowing for the expression of views and ideals that may not be in line with those of the power holders. In the case of the cancellation of one university's school festival and the high school that refused to submit to the presentation of the flag and anthem, it can be seen that these events are not only local but take on national and often political concerns.

While there are many critics of the Japanese university system and some argue that it is little more than a place to further the moral education of young Japanese and mold them into productive citizens, it is without any doubt that a shift is occurring. At university, students put into practice the social rules they have spent a lifetime learning, engaging independently from their families with their society, testing their ability to negotiate the rules of Japanese politeness and daily ritual and also testing the limits of these rules by finding ways of expressing their own identity while remaining Japanese.

There are students who feel that the entrance ceremony, graduation and even *seijinshiki* (coming-of-age) are very meaningful and signify important markers of their passage into the different phases of their life. Yet for the most part these students come from the upper class of Japanese society and align themselves with the ideals these ceremonies represent. Though the economic boom is long over, the upper classes still benefit from a hierarchical structured society and for them, change signals a challenge to their status and position. While a minority, those students who did express views opposite those presented here, often expressed revulsion towards the majority of their classmates who "hadn't learned properly."

Further study in this area would most likely present evidence for a rapidly changing social structure, one that will see other changes as the result of a widened gap between the classes and generations.

In closing I paraphrase Durkheim (1950) who observed, “Where (deviant behavior) exists, collective sentiments are sufficiently flexible to take on a new form, and (deviant behavior) sometimes helps to determine the form they will take” (p. 71).

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Appendix 1  
Japan yearbook statistics 2002

主要指標

主要指標

KEY STATISTICS

Key Statistics 3

(Data on base unless are provided year to long a year period as possible. Where the time series are not continuous for certain series such as changes in money balances) method and survey coverage, etc., see introduction in part between the two pages concerned.

年次	Year	人口総数 Total population	出生率 Fertility rate	平均寿命 Expectation of life at birth	労働力 Labor force		就業者 Employed persons		失業率 Unemployment rate		生産額 Production		輸出額 Exports		輸入額 Imports		貿易収支 Trade balance		対外債務 External debt		対外純債 Net external debt		
					男 Male	女 Female	男 Male	女 Female	男 Male	女 Female	1次産業 Primary industry	2次産業 Secondary industry	3次産業 Tertiary industry	1次産業 Primary industry	2次産業 Secondary industry	3次産業 Tertiary industry	1次産業 Primary industry	2次産業 Secondary industry	3次産業 Tertiary industry	1次産業 Primary industry	2次産業 Secondary industry	3次産業 Tertiary industry	1次産業 Primary industry
1950	1950	81,287	9.1	1.96	68.03	70.79	4,826	4,498	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1951	1951	81,181	9.1	1.98	68.23	71.16	4,814	4,556	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1952	1952	81,105	9.1	2.00	68.27	72.16	4,802	4,598	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1953	1953	81,032	9.2	2.03	68.27	73.16	4,790	4,644	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1954	1954	80,959	9.2	2.06	68.27	74.16	4,778	4,698	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1955	1955	80,886	9.4	1.98	68.26	75.16	4,766	4,752	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1956	1956	80,813	9.6	2.03	68.81	76.15	4,754	4,806	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1957	1957	80,740	9.8	2.03	69.66	77.16	4,742	4,858	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1958	1958	80,667	10.0	2.13	69.18	78.17	4,730	4,910	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1959	1959	80,594	10.2	2.14	69.21	79.18	4,718	4,962	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1960	1960	80,521	10.3	2.14	70.56	80.19	4,706	5,014	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1961	1961	80,448	10.4	2.14	70.70	81.20	4,694	5,066	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1962	1962	80,375	10.5	2.14	71.46	82.21	4,682	5,118	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1963	1963	80,302	10.7	2.14	72.56	83.22	4,670	5,170	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1964	1964	80,229	11.0	2.14	73.70	84.23	4,658	5,222	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1965	1965	80,156	11.3	2.02	74.48	85.24	4,646	5,274	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1966	1966	80,083	11.7	1.91	74.73	86.25	4,634	5,326	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1967	1967	80,010	11.9	1.81	75.08	87.26	4,622	5,378	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1968	1968	79,937	12.1	1.71	75.43	88.27	4,610	5,430	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1969	1969	79,864	12.3	1.61	75.78	89.28	4,598	5,482	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1970	1970	79,791	12.5	1.51	76.13	90.29	4,586	5,534	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1971	1971	79,718	12.7	1.41	76.48	91.30	4,574	5,586	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1972	1972	79,645	12.9	1.31	76.83	92.31	4,562	5,638	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1973	1973	79,572	13.1	1.21	77.18	93.32	4,550	5,690	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1974	1974	79,499	13.3	1.11	77.53	94.33	4,538	5,742	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1975	1975	79,426	13.5	1.01	77.88	95.34	4,526	5,794	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1976	1976	79,353	13.7	0.91	78.23	96.35	4,514	5,846	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1977	1977	79,280	13.9	0.81	78.58	97.36	4,502	5,898	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1978	1978	79,207	14.1	0.71	78.93	98.37	4,490	5,950	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1979	1979	79,134	14.3	0.61	79.28	99.38	4,478	6,002	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1980	1980	79,061	14.5	0.51	79.63	100.39	4,466	6,054	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1981	1981	78,988	14.7	0.41	79.98	101.40	4,454	6,106	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1982	1982	78,915	14.9	0.31	80.33	102.41	4,442	6,158	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1983	1983	78,842	15.1	0.21	80.68	103.42	4,430	6,210	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1984	1984	78,769	15.3	0.11	81.03	104.43	4,418	6,262	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1985	1985	78,696	15.5	0.01	81.38	105.44	4,406	6,314	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1986	1986	78,623	15.7	0.01	81.73	106.45	4,394	6,366	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1987	1987	78,550	15.9	0.01	82.08	107.46	4,382	6,418	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1988	1988	78,477	16.1	0.01	82.43	108.47	4,370	6,470	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1989	1989	78,404	16.3	0.01	82.78	109.48	4,358	6,522	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1990	1990	78,331	16.5	0.01	83.13	110.49	4,346	6,574	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1991	1991	78,258	16.7	0.01	83.48	111.50	4,334	6,626	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1992	1992	78,185	16.9	0.01	83.83	112.51	4,322	6,678	4,278	4,024	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,060
1993	1993	78,112	17.1	0.01																			

| Appendix 2  
Trends in Ratio of Job Openings

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

式辞・告辞集平成17年度東京大学入学式総長式辞

式辞

国立大学法人東京大学総長小宮山宏 平成17年(2005年)4月12日

本日入学された皆さんに、東京大学を代表して心からお祝いを申し上げます。本当におめでとうございます。東京大学は、創立127年、世界に認められたリーディングユニバーシティの一つです。人生は一生が学びの過程、成長の過程ではありますが、皆さんが東京大学で過ごすこの4年間は、自己を確立していく上で、特に大切な時期だと思います。そうした皆さんに今日お話するのは、21世紀という時代が要求する、大学と人についてです。21世紀の幕開けを迎えて間もない今、私たちがどのような状況にいるのかを考えるために、20世紀が人類にとって何だったのかを、振り返って見ましょう。20世紀は戦争の世紀、イデオロギーの世紀、あるいは、科学の黄金時代であったなど、いろいろな見方が可能でしょう。私は、膨張の世紀、つまり人類の活動が未曾有の発展を遂げた世紀という観点からお話をします。20世紀、百年の間に、世界の人口も、産業の生産も著しく増大しました。このことは、人類の活動が活発になったということであって、人類の繁栄を意味するでしょうが、その一方で、環境の劣化という深刻な問題を引き起こしました。しかし、人類の活動の増大や環境劣化が20世紀固有の現象かということ、そのようなわけでもありません。数百万年前、アフリカで最初の人が生じたといわれています。その人類の誕生以来、ほぼ一貫して人口は増え続けているわけです。環境問題にしても、産業革命当時のロンドンにおける環境の劣化はひどいものでした。20世紀以前にも多くの環境問題が世界各地で発生していたのです。 そうだとすれば、いったい、20世紀の膨張は、どのような意味で未曾有であったといえるのでしょうか。その答えは、人間の活動が、ひとつの都市やひとつの湖といったような地球の部分、部分にとどまらず、地球を全体規模で変え始めたということです。象徴的には、大気中の二酸化炭素濃度が増加し、地球温暖化が始まりました。つまり、大気の世界という、水惑星地球を成立させている最も重要な因子が一大変化を蒙り始めています。私たちの活動が、私たちの活動の基盤そのものを揺るがすほどに膨張した、これが、20世紀だったのです。20世紀があらわにした、この「有限の地球」という命題を、深く心にとどめて、21世紀の行動を選択する必要があります。このことは、いくら強調しても、しすぎることはないでしょう。今お話したのは、環境や資源に関する問題で、皆さんもすでにご存じのことです。しかし、よく考えて見ますと、20世紀に最も膨張したものは、実は知識あるいは情報なのではないか。私はそのように考えます。勿論、知識・情報が増えたことそれ自体は、歓迎すべきことです。しかし一方で、あまりに増えすぎたために、知識の全体像を把握できなくなってしまった、そうした問題が生じています。人間の物質的な活動の増加が環境問題を引き起こしたように、知的活動の進展が、知識の全体像や、社会的な問題の全体像の把握を困難にさせるという、負の側面をもたらしたのです。皆さんはこれから、いわば、知識の洪水に曝されることになるのです。しかしそれは、皆さんだけの問題ではありません。人類すべて

にとって、さまざまな意味で、全体像を把握することが困難になっているのです。全体像を把握することが難しくなったということを表す事例として、2000年に起きたコンピューターの二千年問題があります。コンピューターの中で、年号は下二桁で表現されていました。1935年なら35, 1988年なら88, といった具合です。メモリーの値段が高かったから節約をして、二桁ですませたのです。2000年になって、そのつけが回ってきました。2000年の下二桁は00です。しかし、1900年も00ですから、コンピューターは1900年か2000年か分からなくなってしまいます。その結果、コンピューターで制御されているさまざまな機器が混乱を起こし、社会が大混乱に陥るという心配が生じました。これがコンピューターの二千年問題です。車の運転が不能になる、飛行機もエレベーターもおかしくなる、電気やガスが誤作動を起こす、病院の医療機器も、銀行のATMも、商店のレジも、工場も、さらには、ミサイルが誤って発射される可能性まで心配されました。結果は、銀行の自動貸し出し機が少し混乱した程度で、幸い深刻な事態には至りませんでした。結果はたいしたことはなかったのですが、この問題は人類にとって極めて大きな歴史的意味を持っています。それは、世界中にたった一人として、情報社会の全体像を把握できる人がいなくなったということ、それが事実をもって明らかにされたということです。現在、人類は多くの問題に直面しています。民族問題、貧困の問題、テロリズムの問題、地球環境問題、エネルギー資源の問題、高齢化社会の問題、過疎の問題、大都市に付随する数々の問題など、文字通り枚挙に暇がありません。いまこそ英知を結集して、こうした問題の解決にあたらなければなりません。ところが、20世紀に知識が爆発的に増えた結果、かえって、私たちの最大の武器である知を有効に使えないというジレンマに陥っているように思われます。社会的な問題の全体像を把握し、知識の全体像を把握し、知によって問題を解決する、そのことが困難になってきているのです。つまり、私たちが抱えるさまざまな困難の背景には、全体像を把握できなくなったという、知に関する基本的な問題が潜んでいるのです。東京大学は、世界の先進大学として、時代の困難に立ち向かう使命感を感じております。皆さんも東京大学の一員として、そうした使命感を共有して頂きたい。そして、やがては、人類の困難に立ち向かう先頭に立つ人になっていただきたい、そのように期待してやみません。そうした期待に答えてゆくためには、さまざまな課題が皆さんに求められます。基礎的な学力を身につける、専門をしっかりマスターせよ、幅広く物事を理解する人になれ、英語に堪能になれ、包容力のある人になれといった、皆さんにしてみれば矛盾とも思われるような、さまざまな要請がふりかかることとなります。しかし、先頭に立つということは、自分で道を決めるということですから、それだけ重大な責任を背負うことになり、なによりも問題の全体像を把握する能力が要求されます。全体像を把握しないと、ビジョンを描けないし、正しい道か、誤った道か判断することができないからです。こんな風にいわれると不安に駆られるでしょうか。知識が爆発的に増えた。その全体像を把握しなければならない。いったい、自分にそのようなことが可能なのだろうか、そういった不安に駆られるでしょうか。こうした不安は、深くものを考える人であれば、共有する不安です。しかし、本気で、そうした要請に応える挑戦をして欲しいのです。専門性か一般性か、基礎か応用か、英会話か英文学かといった、二者択一ではなく、二つを両立することを追い求めて欲しいのです。皆さんがこれから直面し、おそらく皆さんをもっとも悩ませるであろう本質的な矛盾は、広く学べと深く学べ、この二つの間の矛盾でありましょう。私は、「広く」と「深く」の両立は可能だと思います。それには、ひとつで良いから深く学ぶこと、同時に、頭の中に全体像を作るという明確な意識をもつこと、この二点が肝心なのです。まず、ひとつでよいですから深く学んでください。ひとつの分野を深く学ぶと、その分野が分かるというだけで

なく、同時に他の分野を理解する力も増します。ところが、浅くても良いから広く学ぼうとすると、もごとの本質をつかむ力を得ないままに終わってしまいがちなのです。さて、私は、深く学ぶと同時に、全体像をつくるという意識を、明確にもつことをお勧めします。深く学ぶというだけで、専門分野のことしか分からない人になってしまう心配があるからです。深い専門分野を有し、しかも他の学問分野や、社会のさまざまな事象を幅広く理解できる人になる道は、頭に全体像を描くことを、無意識ではなく、意識的に行うことではないかと、私はそう考えています。例えば、ひとつの教科なら、その教科はいったい何を対象としていて、それをどのような方法で取り扱い、社会や自然とどのような関係にあるのか、細部は臆気でもよいですから、全体像を、意識的に構築しようとするのです。社会問題に対しても全体像を意識するのがよいと思います。たとえば、先ほど例として示したコンピューターの2千年問題にしても、その全体像が把握できればあのようなことにはならなかったのです。最初のうち、全体像は茫洋としています。それは仕方ありません。これから履修する教科の全体像を描くのは容易ではありません。しかし、大丈夫です。全体像を意識して学びを進めるうちに、しだいにそれはできていきます。そして、教科の全体像、教科群の全体像、社会問題の全体像など、さまざまな全体像が、相互に関係を持ち出します。それがそれぞれの人の頭の中に生じる、知の構造でありましょう。

私の頭の中にも、さまざまな全体像があり、総体としての知の構造があります。この構造は、昔より今の方が大きさと鮮明さが、多少はましになっていると思いますが、しかし今でも、あちらが壊れたり、こちらを改修したり、変化し続けています。それは私にとって、大いなる喜びであり、生きがいのひとつです。申し上げたいのは、知識が爆発的に増えた現在における学び方についてです。皆さんは、学ぶということを、高い山を、重い荷物を背にしょって一步一步、一合目、二合目と、脇目もふらずに頂上ま登る、そのようなイメージで考えているのではないのでしょうか。私のイメージは、ひとつの山の頂に向けて一步一步登りつつも、時にはヘリコプターでいきなり山頂に立ってみたり、隣の山の麓を散策してみたり、外国の都市に遊んでみたり、人工衛星から俯瞰してみたり、潜水艦で深海に潜ってみたり、全体の構造を縦横無尽に動き回りながら、ひとつの山の頂を目指す、そうしたイメージなのです。それが、「深く」と「広く」を両立させる道である、自己と全体をともに把握する道であると、そのように考えています。東京大学としても、学術俯瞰講義、学術統合化プロジェクトなど、教育と研究の両面において、21世紀における、時代の問題である、知の全体像を把握するための挑戦を行っていきます。しかしここでひとつ、忘れてはならない、大切なことがあります。皆さんは、今日から東京大学の一員として、知の世界への冒険と挑戦の旅を始めることとなりますが、それは決して、ひとりぼっちの旅ではありません。多くの人との出会いの場なのです。ところが、皆さん方の世代がゲームや携帯音楽やコンピューターなど、ひとりの世界に閉じこもって、人と人の関わり合いが薄くなってきていることを、私は憂慮しています。人生とは、と大上段に振りかぶって語ることは、私の得意とするところではありませんが、しかし、人との関係が人生でしょう。人との関係を持たないということは、人生を生きないということに近いのではないのでしょうか。人との関わり合いを通じて、私たちには、「他者を感じる力」が備わってくるのではないのでしょうか。初めての人と関わりをもつことは、怖いことでもあります。いつでもよい関係をつくれるとは限らないからです。相手も同じなのです。怖いからといって、表面だけのつきあいですませてしまえば、人間関係の醍醐味は味わえません。真の友情や愛といったものは生まれません。はじめは、ぎこちない関係から始まるのが普通でしょう。そのぎこちなさを恐れるために、そして、ゲームや携帯音楽や、ひとりの世界に閉じこもる手段が安易に手に入る状況であるために、逃避する人が多く



なるのでしょうか。けんかしたって良いではないですか。それも人間同士の関わり合いです。クラスの友人と、踏み込んだつきあいをしてください。そのために大学は、授業や演習や実験や、夏休みや、サークル活動や、さまざまな機会を提供しています。それらは、それら自身が学びの手段であると同時に、皆さんに熱いつきあいの機会を提供する媒体でもあるのです。これから始まる学生生活というのは、自由という点で、高校生までの生活とは相当に異なったものになります。皆さんにとって無限の可能性を秘めているといって過言でないでしょう。大切なことは、どんな4年間になるのか、それを決めるのは皆さん自身の意志によるところが極めて大きいということです。決して、閉塞的にならないでください。関係を持つ人の範囲も思い切って広げてください。人との関わりは、それが多様な人との関わりであるほど成長の糧となります。学んだ分野や育った環境が異なると、同じ問題でも異なる視点から捉え場合がしばしばあります。例えば、人といってもさまざまなとらえ方があります。人生を生きる人、肉体を持つ人、考える人、病気になる人、歴史の登場人物、人種など、さまざまな視点があります。ここで私は、人生を生きる人を考えるのが文学部の人の視点で、病気になる人を考えるのが医学部の人の視点である、などと申し上げているではありません。また、教員が成熟していて、皆さんが未成熟などというつもりすらまったくくないのです。人というのは、そのような定型的な分類や予断を許さない、意外性に満ち、相互に影響を及ぼし合い、変化していく、誠に魅力的な存在なのです。ゲームや漫画の主人公などはまったく異なるのです。だからこそ人との関わりは何ものにも代え難い、人生を豊かにするものなのですし、人と関わらないというのは人生を生きないということにほとんど等しいのではないかと、私がそのように考える理由なのです。人との関わりを通じて、「他者を感じる力」を備えた人になってください。さて、そろそろまとめに入りましょう。私は今日の話の前半で、知識の洪水に溺れるな、専門を深く学べ、同時に、頭に知の構造を作れ、そうお話ししました。それは、21世紀という時代において、問題の本質をつかむ知を養えということでもあります。人類は様々な困難に直面しています。それらは知によってのみ解決可能なものであり、知によってのみ人類の未来は開けるのです。そして、知を行動につなげる勇気は、自分は本質をつかんでいるという確信があってこそ生まれるのです。そうした人を、時代が求めております。東京大学、そこに集う私自身を含めた教職員は、世界の先進大学として、時代の困難に立ち向かう使命感を感じております。私たちの使命感を、現実に社会を動かす力とするためには、先頭に立って一歩前に踏み出す勇気を持つことが必要でしょう。人類にとって必要なもの、東京大学の役割、そして、皆さんに期待するところ、これらは実は全く同じなのです。東京大学で学ぶ中で、「本質を捉える知」、「他者を感じる力」、そして、「先頭に立つ勇気」を、是非育んで下さい。最後になりましたが、本日ご列席のご家族の皆さん、お子さん達は今、社会へ向けての旅立ちの第一歩を踏み出しました。是非、暖かく見守って頂きますようお願いしまして、本日の式辞の結びといたします。

## Appendix 4

### Hokkaido University Entrance Ceremony – Welcome Speech

北海道教育大学の学部、大学院、専攻科、別科に入学の皆さん、学部編入の皆さん、入学おめでとうございます。北海道教育大学全学の教職員を代表して皆さんを心から歓迎します。

今日の入学式は、昨年に引き続き、通信衛星を使って札幌のあいの里から各キャンパスにお話ししております。

さて、皆さんが入学された北海道教育大学はどういう大学でしょうか。

第一に、北海道教育大学は、小学校・中学校の教師の養成を中心に、北海道の地域に根ざして発展してきた、道内で最も古い歴史と伝統を持つ大学です。

前身は戦前の師範学校ですが、その創立は、札幌農学校と同じ年の明治9年、函館に置かれた「小学教科伝習所」にまでさかのぼります。日本の近代化をまずは学校教育の整備によって進めようとする明治政府の方針のもと、いち早く北海道における教育振興と教員養成の種がまかれたのです。

その後、農業や炭鉱などの産業が内陸部で発展するとともに、札幌、旭川、岩見沢に師範学校が広がり、戦後さらに釧路に分校が開かれるなど、本学は、北海道の開拓や地域の教育の振興と歩みをひとつにしこれに貢献する形で発展してまいりました。

実際に、戦前から入学者の多くは道内出身者であり、かつ卒業後の就職先も道内がほとんどです。最近のデータでは、入学者の約7割が道内出身者で、就職先は約8割が道内です。皆さんの先輩方は、長年にわたり、道内各地で営々と北海道の教育と地域振興に力を奮ってきたのです。皆さんは、こうした大学の一員になるのであり、その歴史と伝統に大いに誇りを持つとともに、北海道の発展と一緒に歩んできた本学の社会的責任の重さにも十分に思いをいたしていただきたいと思います。

第二に、北海道教育大学は、広大な北海道という環境のもとで、全国に48ある国立の教員養成大学・学部の中で最大規模、道内の国公立大学の中でも最上位の規模の大学であります。その基盤にありますのは、50万人に及ぶ小中学校の児童・生徒数、3万数千人にのぼる教員数という全国でも有数の教育規模の大きさです。

そして、北海道の広大さのもと、本学は道内主要都市に5つのキャンパスを置く、全国にも類のないマルチキャンパス大学として成り立っています。皆さんは、そのひとつのキャンパスでこれから学ぶわけです。

5つのキャンパスは、歴史や地域の違いからそれぞれ特色と独自性を持っていますが、同時に北海道教育大学はひとつです。教員養成大学・学部で全国最大規模を誇る大学としてのメリットをぜひ活用するように心がけていただきたいと思います。大学では、学校支援ボランティアやアイヌ語・アイヌ文化など全学的な共通カリキュラムの充実、ITを活用した双方向遠隔授業の拡充、転キャンパス・転課程の制度化など、キャンパス間の壁を超えるさまざまな改革の試みを積極的に進めていますが、所属するキャンパスだけに閉じこもることなく、いろいろな機会を積極的にとらえてこれらに加わり、北海道教育大学の一員としての自覚を確かなものにしてください。

第三に、北海道教育大学は、教員養成を主な目的としておりますが、それだけではありません。教員養成を核としながら、文学部や理学部といった縦割りの伝統的な専門学問の限界を乗り越え、これからの社会が求める幅広い教養をそなえ、地域のさまざまな分野で活躍できる人材の養成を大きな課題としております。そしてそこには、長い歴史と伝統の中で培われた教育理念、特色というものが一貫したベースとしてあります。

本学では、教師になることを目的としない課程の学生諸君にも教育や人間に関する科目が豊富に用意されています。また、皆さんの周りでは、教育や人間のあり方についてのさまざまな議論が日常不断になされることでしょうか。そういう点で、わが大学は、単に企業経営や個々の産業技術を学ぶ既存の経済学部や工学部などとは違います。さらに、本学で学ぶ方法も、教育自身が実践の学である通り、実践と体験を通して真に行動において生きる知識を身につけることを重視しています。これらの特徴を、北海道教育大学ならではのものとして、期待と抱負をもって学習に励んでいただきたいと思います。

第四に、北海道教育大学は、学部4年の教育だけでなく、とくに道内各地の小中学校で教師をしている現職教員の方々に対する大学院教育を重要な仕事としている大学です。今日の入学式にも全学で二百人以上の新大学院生が出席しています。その中には、今年から始めた北見サテライトで学ぶ10人の大学院生も含まれています。修士課程にとどまるとはいえ、大学院の規模も道内でも教員養成大学・学部の中でトップクラスです。大学院では、道南、道央、道北、道東の道内4つの地域にわたり、学校現場と結びついた高度の実践的な教育と研究が行われています。

さて、皆さんご存知のように、本学は、来年から、5つのキャンパスがそれぞれ明確に特色と重点をもちながらひとつの大学としての統合性とメリットを発揮しうるように、各校のこれまでの在り方を大きく変え、新生北海道教育大学として再出発します。この点では、皆さんは、現在の体制のもとでの最後の入学者になります。

今回の本学の再編は、戦後50数年にわたって続いてきた本学の体制を根本から変える大きな転換です。私は、これだけ大きな転換に伴うと想定される種々の不安をおして本学を選んだ皆さんに、心から敬意を表しますと同時に、すでに公けにしておりますように、皆さんが、入学したキャンパスで現在のカリキュラムによって確実に勉学ができ、卒業を迎えることができるよう保証することを、ここで改めてお約束いたします。

そもそも今回の再編は、各校にとっては教員免許取得を必修としない新課程を廃止したりそれに特化したりなど大きな変化ですが、大学全体としては、本学がこの10数年進めてきた教員養成と新しい地域人材養成の課題を、より効果的に発展させることができるようにするためのものであります。

実際に、現在学内では、来年4月からのスタートに向けて新カリキュラムを精力的に検討しているところですが、その中心的な内容は、日常的な学校体験や北海道に関する授業の強化などこの数年学校現場と連携して取り組んできたより実践的な教員養成教育であり、これまでの地域環境教育課程、情報社会教育課程、国際理解教育課程、生涯教育課程や芸術文化課程などで蓄積してきた教育内容のいっそうの深化にほかなりません。この点では、私は、これから数年間続く皆さんに対する教育を責任をもって確実に実りあるように行うことが、同時に新生北海道教育大学の教育の成否を決めることにもなると考えております。

それにしても、皆さんは、これから、大学の大きな変動の中で学ぶことになります。私

はこれを、皆さんに対する日々の教育の在り方と本学の将来の発展の両方に関わる、21世紀の北海道教育大学の自立的で個性的な発展をめざした改革の試みとして受け止めていただきたいと思います。21世紀は、ひとことで「知識基盤型社会」と言われ、そこでは社会における知の役割ひいては高等教育に対する期待が強く大きくなります。大学は、長い間、「象牙の塔」と言われ、社会の動きとは独立に学問と知識の継承を主とする場とされ、大学教育の中で学生は、もっぱらこの知識を伝授されるものとされてきました。しかしいまは違います。大学の学問が社会の中で実際に生かされることが求められ、学生は、社会の中で生きる専門的な力を身に付けることのできる大学教育を確実に受ける義務と権利を持っているのです。いま世界中の大学で、このような転換と改革が行われ始めています。

皆さんは、これから、大学と教育の転換の最前線で学びます。しかも、本学の改革は、知識基盤型社会の根底的な支えである国民の気礎教育と学校教育に深く関わっております。それだけ課題と責任は大きいと言えましょう。

教師をめざす諸君は、国民的な議論になってきている学力かゆとり教育かの問題をきちんと解決でき、実践的な指導力を持つ教師としての資質をこの4年間で着実に磨かなければなりません。新課程で学ぶ学生諸君は、変化激しい地域社会の中でリーダーとなりうる優れた資質を獲得しなければなりません。大学院に学ぶ諸君は、学校現場などで高度の専門的力量を発揮するための実践的な研究に励まなければなりません。そして、こうした皆さんの学びが本当に可能となるように本学の大学教育はもっともっと改善され、さらには大学のシステムも大いに改革されていかなければならないのです。

本学に入学された皆さん、いま大学は変化の途上にあります。変化は時に流動と混乱を含みますが、創造の喜びをもたらすものでもあり、また本物の知性を磨いてくれるものであります。私は、このような大きな変動の中で皆さんが学ぶことは、皆さんの人生の中で必ずや貴重な経験になると確信しております。今日入学したすべての皆さんが、新生北海道教育大学誕生を同時代者として見守りつつ、充実した学生生活を送られますよう心から期待しまして、歓迎の挨拶とします。

平成17年4月6日

北海道教育大学長村山紀昭

## Appendix 5

Address Delivered on the Occasion of the Entrance of Graduate and Undergraduate Students into Waseda University, September 2005

### The Pride Learned at Waseda

On this occasion of the entrance ceremony for 2005 September graduate school admissions; I would like to say on behalf of Waseda University, congratulations to all of you here today. Congratulations to you who are entering graduate school, and congratulations to all the families and friends attending this ceremony in celebration of this wonderful occasion.

Today we welcome 451 students to the graduate schools of Waseda University, 99 to our School of International Liberal Studies, 51 to our School of Commerce, and 301 to our various other graduate school programs. I am extremely delighted to be able to welcome so many talented individuals. I have great expectations for you, and I know that through your student life here each of you will realize your great potential and undertake many bold challenges on the path towards a bright future.

Allow me to tell you a little about Waseda University and its principles. Unlike national universities established by the national government, private universities always have a founder. As you all know, the founding father of Waseda University is, of course, Shigenobu Okuma. However there is another person who was also instrumental to the establishment of the University, Azusa Ono, a great philosopher and politician of the Meiji Period in whom Shigenobu Okuma put his utmost trust. Here at Waseda, we call Mr Okuma, “the Father of Foundation” and Azusa Ono, “the Mother of Foundation.” It can be said that for Okuma, Ono was like his right arm.

Okuma described Ono with the following words: “Whenever I undertake a venture and discuss my thoughts with him, he instantly pulls my thoughts together, and gives them form. On top of that, it is not infrequent that what he produces is actually far better than my own original idea.” This one episode by itself shows how important Ono was to Okuma. At the age of 17, Ono left his home-town of Sukumo in Tosa Han (modern day Kochi Prefecture) and came to Tokyo to further his studies. After a visit to China, Ono went on to study in the United States and Great Britain. In 1874 he joined Okuma in the democratic rights movement and they worked together from this point onward. In 1882, the two men established the Constitutional Renovation Party and also founded Tokyo Senmon Gakko, the predecessor of Waseda University on October 21st of the same year. At the opening ceremony of the school, Ono made the following statement about the spirit of the ‘Independence of Learning’: “The independence of a country is based on the independence of its people, and the independence of the people is based on the independence of their spirits. Thus, as the independence of people’s spirits can only be achieved through the independence of learning, it is essential to maintain the independence of learning if the country desires to be independent.” In 2007, two years from now, Waseda University will be celebrating the 125th Anniversary of its founding. The pillars of its philosophy still stand strong today and phrases such as “the Independence of Learning”, “Northwest of City” and “Progressive Spirit” have come to

symbolize the University. The ideals conveyed in these words are crucial – even today – for Japan if it is to enhance its contribution to the world as an advanced nation.

In Waseda University's mission statement, it is written, "Waseda University aims to uphold the independence of learning, to promote the practical utilization of knowledge, and to create good citizenship." One can take the phrase "good citizenship" and replace it with "global citizens." In this age of progressive globalization, it is imperative that you all acquire not only the basic skills and knowledge necessary to survive as global citizens but also the ability to understand various cultures and the diversity of societies.

In particular, my hope for you undergraduates is that you will have as your goal the thorough acquisition of basic skills over the 4 years here. No matter what it is a person does, it is important that they gain these basic skills while they are still young. I am sure you will be challenged by many difficulties after you graduate from Waseda University and become active members of society and, more importantly, global citizens. You are also going to experience a great number of changes in direction over the course of your long lives. It is extremely important that during your time here (in order to be able to continue learning throughout your lifetime), you acquire intellectual curiosity, the ability to comprehend deeply, analytical prowess, and the ability to combine them all with the communicative skills needed to build relationships.

Okuma's spirit and beliefs are also incorporated into the Alma Mater, the song of Waseda University which was introduced in 1907. I hope that you will all learn it. The second verse of the song starts with the lines, "From east and west, from age to age, All tides of civilization" and expresses Okuma's ideal to harmonize the cultures of the East and West. Okuma thought that it was urgent for Japan and China to import western cultures and mix them with the traditional cultures of Japan and China in order to oppose the unlawful intrusion of the Europeans into Asia at the time. He also believed that Europe should recognize and accept the superior points of Asian cultures. He asserted that peace can be maintained if the peoples of the East and West possess a mutual understanding of one another and have harmony between them. Okuma established Waseda University in the belief that the fundamental requirements for realizing this peaceful harmony of cultures can be acquired through university education. It should also be mentioned that Waseda University opened its doors from the very beginning to not only Japanese students but to a variety of nationalities. These days, Waseda University is engaging in even closer cooperation with the main universities of Asia both in education and research, working under the slogan "Co-Creation of Academic Excellence in the Asia-Pacific Region." There are currently over 1,900 exchange students at Waseda University and it has become, as Okuma said, a place dedicated to study. From the perspective of Okuma's belief that peace will be founded on the harmonization of the cultures of East and West, we see that the Japanese people have actively sought mutual understanding of the people, languages and cultures of other Asian nations since the postwar era. It goes without saying that establishing relationships between nations requires the efforts of both sides, and I feel that we still have more work to do. We must consider the past and the positive steps we can take to overcome that past and work together with our Asian counterparts in creating "New Asia." We must carry on the ideals of Okuma and Ono to build a strong system where this can happen.

One thing that I would like to stress to all our new students here today is that in order to achieve a goal or realize a dream, you must establish a process and a system that will enable you to do so. A global and intellectual society is an advanced society, one which has a process and a system that enables it to globally share its knowledge and recognize the differences between cultures and their ways of thinking.

My hope is that you will recognize graduate school as the place where you as students – the future leaders of society – are trained and educated to undertake this process to create such a society, and that, with this recognition, you will study insatiably to gain the necessary skills. With all this integrated into the Waseda University Campus, it is a perfect microcosm of the collected history of Asia. You have tremendous opportunities to study with people from all over the world. Make the most of this. Build strong networks, regardless of country or race, and you will find these to be an asset throughout your life.

Lastly, there is something that we, the faculty and staff, must promise to all our new students, and that is to provide you with a university experience which leaves you thinking, “I’m glad I studied at Waseda.” We make this promise to you, and we will make every effort so that these next years for you at Waseda are prosperous and successful. At the same time, the university experience is created by both students and teachers, so I hope you will spend your time here always eager and enthusiastic. By doing this I know you will be proud that you studied at Waseda University. Waseda University will continue to maintain its founding ideals and make the most of its traditions, and it will continue to work towards even greater development in education and research. I believe that your lives as students here will be fruitful, and I hope that you will all absorb the heart and essence of Waseda University’s spirit, which is “to promote the welfare of state and society.”

Thank you for listening, and once again, congratulations on your admission to Waseda University

Wednesday 21st September, 2005/10/12 West Waseda Campus, Building 14, Classroom 201

Address Delivered on the Occasion of the Entrance of Graduate and Undergraduate Students into Waseda University, September 2005 (Japanese)

本日、ここに二〇〇五年度九月入学式を挙げるに当たり、新入生の皆様ならびにご列席賜りましたご家族や関係者の皆様方に対し、早稲田大学を代表いたしまして、心よりご入学のお祝いを申し上げます。

晴れて早稲田大学に、国際教養学部九十九名、商学部五十一名、大学院各研究科三百一名、合計四百五十一名の皆様方をお迎えすることになりました。このように大勢の才気あふれる方をお迎えすることができたことに、大きな喜びを実感しています。これからの学生生活において、みなさん一人ひとりが自己の可能性を最大限に引き出し、輝かしい将来に向けて果敢なチャレンジをしてくださることを心から期待しています。

今日はまず、晴れて早稲田大学の一員となられたみなさんに、早稲田大学とはどのような大学であるのかについてお話ししたいと思います。

国が設置者である国立大学法人とは異なり、私立大学には必ず創立者がいます。いうまでもなく、早稲田大学の創立者であり建学の祖は大隈重信ですが、もう一人、本学の創立を語る時に欠かせない人物がいます。明治期の優れた思想家・政治家であり、大隈重信がプレーンとして絶大な信頼を置いた、小野梓先生です。早稲田では大隈重信を建学の父と呼び、小野梓は建学の母と呼んでいます。大隈さんにとって小野先生は、まさに片腕ともいべき人でした。大隈さんは小野先生の人物を評して次のような意味の言葉を残しています。「何かをしようとするとき、私がある考えを彼に話すと、ただちに骨を継ぎ足し、肉を付けちゃんとした形にしてくれる。しかもそれは、往々にして私の考えよりもはるかによくなっていたのである」。このエピソードからだけでも、大隈さんにとって、小野さんはいかに重要な存在であったかが分かります。

小野さんは学問を究めるため、十七歳の年に故郷の土佐・宿毛を離れて上京しました。その後、中国視察に続いて、アメリカ、イギリスに留学し、一八七四（明治七）年から自由民権運動に加わって、大隈さんと行動をともしていきます。そして、一八八二

（明治十五）年に立憲改進黨という政党を結成し、その半年後の十月二十一日、現在の早稲田大学の前身である東京専門学校設立に至るのです。開校式の際、小野さんは次のような言葉で「学問の独立」の精神を唱えています。

「一国の独立は国民の独立に基いし、国民の独立は其の精神の独立に根ざす。而して、国民精神の独立は、実に学問の独立に由るものなれば、其の国を独立せしめんと欲せば、必ず先ず其の学問を独立せしめざるを得ず」。

早稲田大学は二年後の二〇〇七年に創立百二十五周年を迎えますが、この建学の理念は今も脈々と受け継がれ、「学の独立」は「都の西北」「進取の精神」とともに、早稲田を象徴する言葉となっています。日本が先進国としての役割を果たして世界にいつそう貢献していくため、現代においても非常に新しい重要な言葉であります。

早稲田の教旨には、「学問の活用を効し模範国民を造就するを以て建学の本旨と為す」と記されています。「模範国民」は「地球市民」という言葉に置き換えることができます。グローバル化が著しく進展するなか、みなさんが地球市民としてこれからの時代を生きるためには、基本的なスキルを習得し、まとまった知識体系を身に着けるとともに、地域の文化や社会の多様性を理解する能力を持つことが最も大切であり必要不可欠なことです。



特に、学部生のみなさんには学部の四年間で基礎力の徹底を目指していただきたいと思います。何事につけても、基礎というのは若いときに訓練して叩き込んでおくことが重要です。みなさんが早稲田を巣立ち、社会人として、また、地球市民として歩いていくなかでは、さまざまな困難に見舞われることがあるでしょう。また、長い人生の間には方向転換することもあるはずで、そうした時のためにも、生涯学び続けることができるだけの知的好奇心、深い理解力、分析する力と統合する力、他者との関係を作るに足るコミュニケーション能力を、学部時代にしっかりと身に付けておくことはたいへん大切なことなのです。

大隈さんの精神は、一九〇七（明治四十）年に制定された校歌にも表されています。みなさんもぜひ校歌を覚えてください。二番の歌詞に「東西古今の文化のうしほ」という一節があり、そこには「東西文明の調和」という大隈さんの理想が表現されています。大隈さんは当時のヨーロッパ諸国の不法な進出を防ぐには、日本も中国も西洋文明に大いに学ぶ必要があるが、それはそれぞれの国独自の伝統と調和させた形にすべきであるし、また、西欧も東洋文明の長所を理解する必要があると考えていました。つまり「東西文明の調和」こそが平和を導くものと考えていたのです。それを実現するための基礎が大学教育にあるとして、早稲田を創設したのです。そして、当初から日本人だけでなく早稲田の門は開かれていて、広くアジアの人材を育成してきました。

この建学以来の使命を受け継ぎ、新たな根幹として、今、早稲田大学は「アジア太平洋地域における知の共創」のもと、アジアの中核大学と教育・研究の両面にわたる提携を深めています。現在、早稲田には千九百名以上の留学生が在籍しており、大隈さんのいわれたように、世界中の国々からの留学生が学び切磋琢磨する場になっています。

大隈さんの「東西文明の調和」という基盤の上に平和が築かれるという考え方から見ると、戦後、日本国民は、アジアの人々と、言語、文化を互いに理解し合うということを目的とした取り組みや交流を積んできたのでしょうか。もちろん、国家間の互いの関係は鏡であるとは思いますが、私たちがそれぞれに歴史を乗り越えて、新しいアジアの世界を生み出すための協力を積極的に積み重ねてきたとは言いがたいところがあります。私たちはやはり、大隈さんや小野さんのようにしっかりシステムを組み立てるという考え方を受け継いで、それを実行しなくてはなりません。

ここで、大学院生のみなさんに申し上げたいことがあります。それは、ある目的、理想を達成するには、プロセスとそれを可能にするシステムを確立しなくてはならないということです。

グローバルな知的社会とは、グローバルに知識を共有し、その基礎の上で互いの文化や考え方の相違を認め合った上で高度な社会を構築する、そのプロセスを実行できるシステムを持つということです。大学院は、真にリーダーたるべきみなさんが、そのプロセスを実行する、あるいは実行できる力を養う場所だということを考えて、貪欲に勉強し問題意識や実力を培ってほしいと思います。

今申し上げたように、早稲田のキャンパスはアジアの歴史が集約された世界の縮図です。つまり、早稲田には世界中の多様な人々とともに学ぶ場やチャンスがたくさんあるわけですから、ぜひ、この環境を有意義に利用していただきたいと思います。

ぜひ、国や民族といったような枠にとらわれず、固い絆で結ばれた人的ネットワークを築いてください。それは、将来、みなさんにとって生涯の素晴らしい財産になります。

さて、最後に、新入生のみなさん全員に私たち教職員スタッフが約束すべきことがあります。それは「早稲田で学んでよかった」と、みなさんに感じてもらえる大学生活を提

供することです。私たちはみなさんが早稲田で学ぶこれからの何年間かをしっかりと納得して過ごしてもらえるようにするという事です。私たちは十分な努力をするということをお約束したいと思います。もちろん、大学は教職員と学生がともに作るものです。みなさんには一生懸命に、前向きな緊張感を常に持って、これからの学生生活を送っていただきたい。そうすれば、早稲田で学ぶ誇りを持ってもらえることと思います。これからも、早稲田大学は建学の理念、創立以来の伝統を生かしつつ、教育・研究の発展のために一層の挑戦を続けます。みなさんのこれからの学生生活が実りあるものとなることを信じておりますが、早稲田スピリットの神髄、それは「人と世の中のために役立とうとする気概」です。これをぜひ在学中に身に着けていただきたいと思ひます。みなさん、早稲田大学入学、本当におめでとう。2005年9月21日（水）西早稲田キャンパス 14号館 201教室において

## Gakkousai

### Preparation, Presentation and Celebration



welcome to “hatoyama sai” (TDU 2003)



first-year students provide most of the labor throughout the *gakkousai* (TDU 2003)



setting the stage (TDU 2003)



with direction from their *senpai* students learn new skills (TDU 2003)



some of the more traditional aspects of *gakkousai* include the cheer club – members must dress and march in military style (TDU 2003)



the photography club prepares for its exhibit (TDU 2003)



teams of students take on a variety of duties (TDU 2003)



using every space available students work while the office manager watches from a distance (TDU 2003)



liability is not as important and issue as it is in the U.S. (TDU 2003)



these signs advertise some of the various goods and activities (TDU 2003)



preparation for *gakkousai* occurs throughout the year – here students hang a sign prepared earlier in the semester (TDU 2003)



need anything more be said? (TDU 2003)



the night before opening day students work well into the night (TDU 2003)



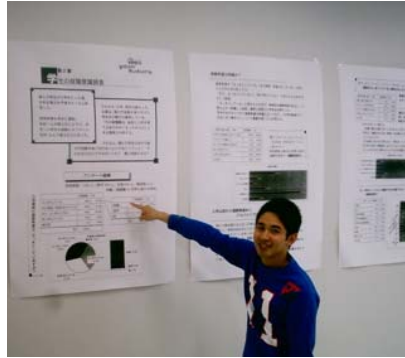
with much enthusiasm students beckon customers to try their menus (TDU 2003)



the film club (TDU 2003)



with their performance about to begin the jazz club makes one last announcement (TDU 2003)



one student presents his senior thesis on labor trends in Japan (TDU 2003)



food of all types is offered for sale (TDU 2003)



contestants vie for prizes and fame (TDU 2003)



*taiyaki* – a traditional Japanese pastry – on the final day prices are drastically reduced (TDU 2003)



a student choir perform (TDU 2004)



taking on roles from the popular *anime* salior moon students perform in costume



students are quizzed on a variety of topics



traditional taiko drumming



in Japan the legal age for smoking is 20

### Seijinshiki – Coming-of-age day



dressed in fine kimono students gather outside while a speech is given inside



in cooler climates a stole is often added for warmth



in the electronic age students use coming-of-age day to connect with old friends in a variety of ways



hairstyles are intended to display the nape of the neck while *obi* are elegantly tied in back



## The Cycle Begins Early



*ongakkai* or music festivals are just one of the many celebrations built into the school calendar (Saitama 2003)



*undokai* – sports festivals – are highlighted by choreographed group performances (Saitama 2003)



first-grade *nyugakushiki* – entrance ceremony (Saitama 2003)



a member of the school board welcomes students (Saitama 2003)



“your teachers and staff welcome you” (Saitama 2003)



the principal outlines expectations for the year (Saitama 2003)



a proud grandparent (Saitama 2003)



each *gumi* – class – identified by their caps (Saitama 2003)



welcome to daycare (Saitama 2003)



*bunkasai* – culture festival – is marked by the making of *mochi*, a traditional confectionary (Saitama 2003)



sports day at kindergarten (Saitama 2003)



community festivals require everyone's effort (Saitama 2003)



pulling a miniature *omikoshi* or portable temple shrine (Saitama 2003)



much like *gakkousai* food is a staple item sold at community festivals (Bunshu Nagase 2003)



everyone pitches in to build the stage for the neighborhood festival (Bunshu Nagase 2003)

## Appendix 7

### List of survey questions

Below are questions used in surveys submitted between 1995 and 1999 to first-year university level students. Surveys were submitted in a classroom setting during a regular class period. Questions were submitted in various combinations, generally covering a single topic. Almost all (99%) of the students were first-year university students with only a very small number of second-year or older students participating in the surveys. All second or third year students who participated in a survey were repeating a first-year course after failing to pass one or more times. These questions were used in order to make an informed selection of students for follow-up interviews. Follow-up interviews were done on a one-to-one or small group basis.

How old are you now?

Are you male or female?

What is your major course of study?

Are you from this prefecture (Hokkaido or Saitama)?

If you are not from this prefecture where is your hometown?

What color is your hair now?

What color was your hair in High School?

If you changed your hair color, when did you change it?

Why then?

Did you attend your university entrance ceremony?

What color was your hair for the entrance ceremony?

What did you wear for your university entrance ceremony (include any jewelry)?

Besides you, who (family/friends) attended your university entrance ceremony?

After the entrance ceremony what did you do?

After the entrance ceremony was there a party or some celebration?

After seeing your name on the on the acceptance list for your university did you have a party or celebration?

Which event, seeing your name on the acceptance list or the entrance ceremony was more meaningful to you?

Please briefly describe your emotions at your university entrance ceremony?

Please briefly describe your emotions when you saw your name on the acceptance list?

Was (this university) your first choice university?

Are you now a member of a student club/circle?

Which one?

Any other?

Why did you choose this club/circle?

Are you planning on going to the school festival?

Will you work at the school festival or give a performance?

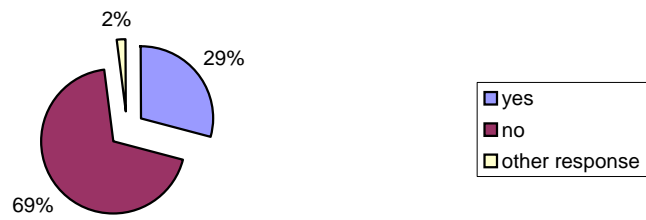
How far do you live from university?  
What is the purpose of the school festival?  
Did you enjoy your school festival?  
What made the experience memorable?  
Will you participate next year?

Are you planning on attending your the coming-of-age ceremony?  
What will you wear?  
Why are you planning on going to the ceremony?  
Have you heard that sometimes there are problems at the ceremony?

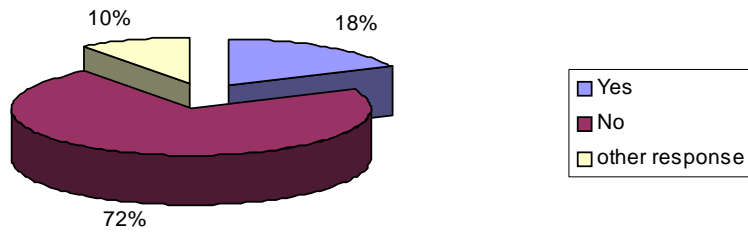
Did you attend you coming-of-age ceremony?  
Did you enjoy it?  
What made it a memorable experience?  
Who spoke at your coming-of-age ceremony?  
Was it a memorable speech?  
What did you wear?

**Additional measurements of student responses.**

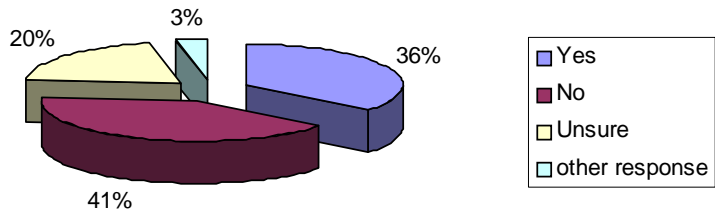
**Did you have a party or celebration after seeing you had been accepted to university? (660)**



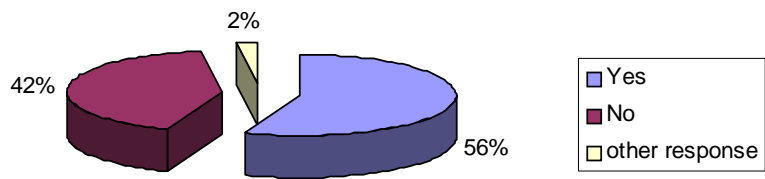
**Did you have a celebration after your entrance ceremony? (540)**



**Do you plan on attending the university school festival? (737)**



**Did you attend the university festival? (563)**



Appendix 9

Sample Budget for *Gakkousai* - Japanese

平成15年度東京電機大学理工学部自治会決算報告書

平成16年3月31日

1、収入	
平成14年度繰越金	¥ 3,703,966-
平成15年度予算(自治会費)	¥ 19,251,100-
銀行利息	¥ 17-
コピー代収入	¥ 13,320-
鳩山祭参加団体援助金返却分	¥ 143,049-
鳩山祭芸能人企画強化予算返却分	¥ 297,450-
総計	¥ 23,408,902-
2、支出	
執行委員会予算	¥ 864,000-
鳩山祭実行委員会予算	¥ 4,435,000-
鳩山祭参加団体援助金予算	¥ 2,860,000-
鳩山祭芸能人企画強化予算	¥ 1,350,000-
放送委員会予算	¥ 1,220,000-
体育会予算	¥ 4,123,990-
学術文化部会予算	¥ 2,624,215-
会計監査委員会	¥ 280,000-
選挙管理委員会予算	¥ 4,504-
議長団予算	¥ 4,145-
体育祭実行委員会予算	¥ 1,100,000-
自治会放送機材維持費	¥ 1,117,989-
コピー機、印刷機リース代	¥ 482,580-
コピー印刷機保守料	¥ 147,420-
総計	¥ 20,613,843-
3、差引残高	
収入	¥ 23,408,902-
支出	¥ 20,613,843-
残高	¥ 2,795,059-

¥2,795,059-を平成15年度自治会予算残金として繰り越します。

東京電機大学理工学部自治会  
会計





**Sample Budget for Gakkousai – English**

TDU

March 31, 2005

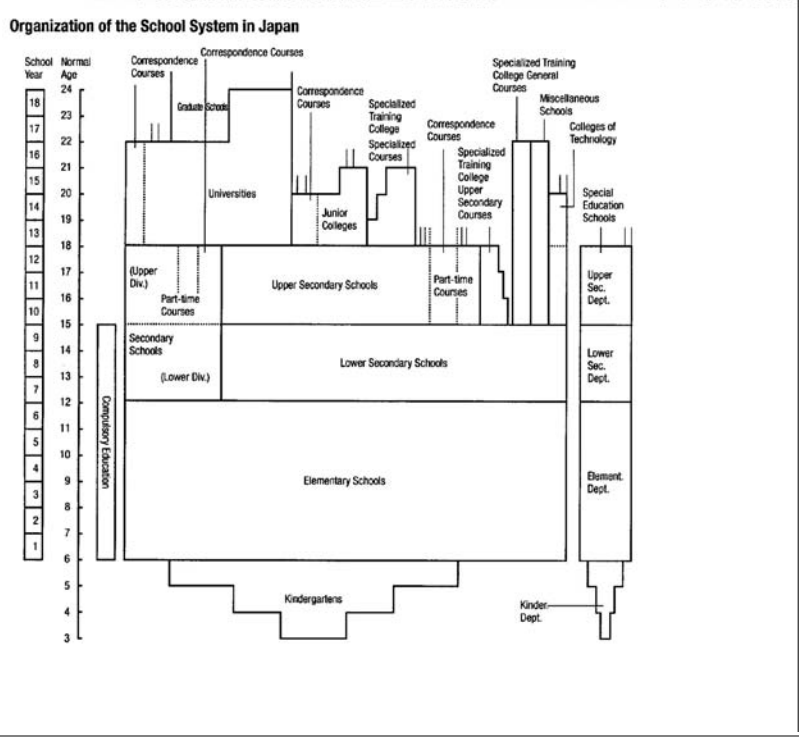
1. Income	
Balance from 2003	¥ 3,703,966
Budget for 2004	¥ 19,251,100
Bank interest	¥ 17
Income by photocopy fee	¥ 13,320
Return money from the financial aid for the participating parties of Hatoyama Festival	¥ 143,049
Return money from the budget for the enhanced talent event of Hatoyama Festival	¥ 297,450
<u>Total</u>	<u>¥ 23,408,902</u>
2. Expenses	
Budget for the board committee	¥ 864,000
Budget for the Hatoyama Festival planning committee	¥ 4,435,000
Budget for the participating parties of Hatoyama Festival	¥ 2,860,000
Budget for the enhanced talent event of Hatoyama Festival	¥ 1,350,000
Budget for the broadcasting committee	¥ 1,220,000
Budget for the athletic clubs	¥ 4,123,990
Budget for the academic culture clubs	¥ 2,624,215
Account audit committee	¥ 280,000
Election administration committee	¥ 4,504
Budget for the chairman's union	¥ 4,145
Budget for the planning committee of PE festival	¥ 1,100,000
Maintenance fee of the broadcasting equipment of the students' committee	¥ 1,117,989
Lease fee of the copy machine	¥ 482,580
<u>Maintenance fee of the copy machine</u>	<u>¥ 147,420</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>¥ 20,613,843</u>
3. Balance	
Income	¥ 23,408,902
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>¥ 20,613,843</u>
Balance	¥ 2,795,059

We will bring ¥ 2,795,059- forward as the balance from students' association fee budget in 2004.

TDU science and engineering department students' association  
Accountant  
Toru Kono

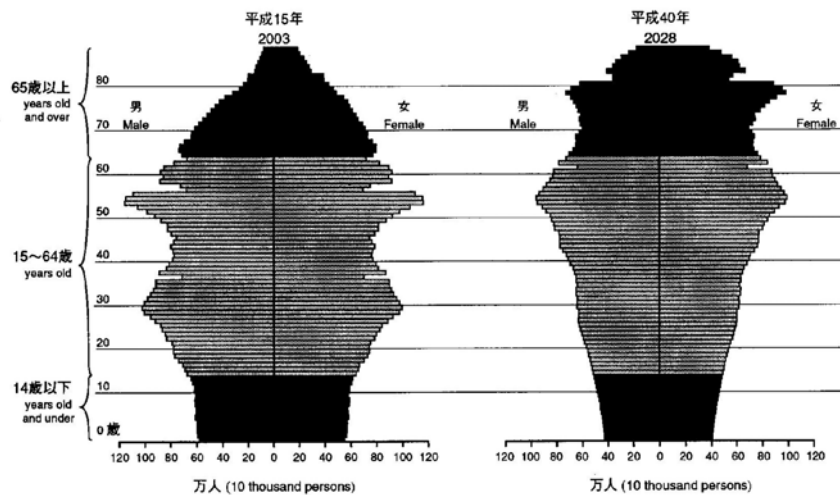
# Appendix 10

## Organizational chart or the school system in Japan



Appendix 11  
Population Pyramid for Japan

図 2-2 人口ピラミッド POPULATION PYRAMID





注) 90歳以上人口 (平成15年: 男22万7千人、女70万4千人、平成40年: 男75万7千人、女237万6千人) については作図の都合上、省略した。  
Note) Population 90 years and over (2003: 227,000 males and 704,000 females, 2028: 757,000 males and 2,376,000 females) are omitted from this figure.

第2-2及び2-6表参照。  
See Table 2-2 and 2-6.

Appendix 12

Sample of student I.D. cards

	date	no.
	川崎 恭平 Kyōhei Kawasaki	
	02SK035 Information systems technology	
	My name is Kyōhei Kawasaki and I like to go fishing.	
	I live in Tachikawa in Tokyo. So it takes about two hours from my home to here.	

	① date H15 . 4 . 14	no.
	Yousuke Seki 三ツツ 幸	
	03SR049 Major : Department of Mathematical Sciences	
	I am 19 years old and I like baseball. So I belong to the baseball club. And I like "Festival". Of course I belong to "Hatoyama club". I glad to meet you.	
	Thank you 