CREATIVE CHILDREN:

JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' NARRATIVES OF LIFE

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Japanese high school girls assert enormous creativity in actively and strategically pursuing educational and personal goals. Girls disregard their teacher's advice about academics because they rightly perceive that their school's in-class academics have little or no influence on their chances for success on university and junior college entrance exams. Girls argue that their high school education is tedious because it relies on rote memorization, and boring in-class lectures that bear no explicit relationship to the college entrance exams that determine their futures. Girls pursue educational opportunities outside of their school in the form of cram schools, self-study, one-on-one tutoring, and group study. The school reinforces the girls' negative views of in-class education by offering after-school cram classes focused upon entrance exam materials, and by allowing seniors in-school time to prepare for university entrance exams. The school's economic survival is dependent on girls' successes. Therefore their support of individual initiative is unsurprising.

Japanese young people are often portrayed as either obsessed with academics and controlled by their parents, or as defiant rebels, engaged in anti-social behaviors such as teen prostitution. In contrast to these pathologizing depictions, this work argues that within the constraints of a seemingly inflexible educational system, girls eagerly pursue educational opportunities and ideas, are highly motivated and focused on academic objectives and are not perceived as rebellious by their elders.

Studies of adolescence often rely on adult-centered views and thus stay comfortably within the confines of familiar negative images of the young. In contrast, by relying on the girls' view of their world this work builds a more complex portrait of Japanese young people. It argues that Japanese adults' anxieties about rapid socio-economic change often emerge as laments about the young. Relying on ethnographic data collected at a girls' private school in Tokyo, especially the use of taped diaries, this work provides an in-depth examination of Japanese high school girls' lives, culture and thinking. This approach allows for the opportunity to learn *about* the lives of girls *from* them as they teach us how they creatively pursue educational opportunities and manage their social lives in contemporary Japanese society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Many people in the United States and in Japan have assisted in the development of this thesis.

I would like to express my enormous gratitude to the Ito family, especially Reiko, for introducing me to Japan. I am forever indebted to the Ito family for their kindness, support and the wonderful meals they gave me as both a new student to Japan and later as a researcher in Tokyo. Each member of the Ito family gave much of their time, and collective good humor to me while I conducted fieldwork and I owe each of them more than these few words could ever convey.

Manabu Sato, as both a good friend and as a guide on the politics of Japanese society has helped me with too much to write about in this short space. Manabu and his wife Zheya Gai are very special people and I am fortunate to have them as friends. Professor Atsushi Sato provided an enormous boost by helping with my research and acting as my mentor while in Japan.

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Most of all, the girls at Yama are the ones who helped me, and without their lively interest in telling their stories and in sharing their ideas I would have had no project. I am still struck by how intelligent, thoughtful, hopeful and very interested these girls are in life and in people. Their enthusiasm and senses of purpose were and are inspiring. I hope that some of this work can convey even the smallest amount of their liveliness and the hope they have for their lives and their country. I owe each girl an enormous debt. Thank you to all of them. If Japan learns to rely on its' young people then it will be able to face whatever challenges come its' way in the future.

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In her illness and life, my mother showed me the fortitude, determination and grace needed to overcome and endure obstacles and she is the person I owe much to in this life.

This work began many years ago, and through many challenges in my life I have finished the dissertation. I began graduate school thinking my life would be one way. I now end graduate school knowing that the life I had envisioned is nothing to the wonderful life I now have with my husband Robert Maynard Miller and my lovely daughter Sophie. I hope that Sophie grows to be as spirited, talented and fun as the girls at Yama. Without Rob there would be nothing so I dedicate this thesis to Rob.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   MARIKO

At the end of a school day in May, I sat at my desk in the teachers' room of the school where I taught English. I sat watching teachers grade exams, work on computers, and talk with colleagues. Students ran in and out of the room asking their teachers questions and generally hanging around. Tanizaki-sensei, the head English teacher, came over to my desk to ask me a question. She asked me to speak with one of her homeroom students, Mariko. Tanizaki-sensei was very concerned about Mariko's repeated failing grades on English exams. She thought that if I spoke with Mariko we might be able to come up with a strategy to help Mariko pass her exams. I knew Mariko because she was an unassuming but engaged student in one of my own classes. I told Tanizaki-sensei that I would be happy to speak with Mariko.

The next day Mariko came to my desk. From all appearances Mariko was the young lady *(ojōsan)* that the school presented in its' recruitment brochures. She was quiet, shy, and seemingly obedient in her neatly pressed school uniform. However, my conversation with Mariko would lead me to question my assumptions and to look more deeply into the lives of "obedient" girls. Mariko made me question what I saw and thought. The obedient ladylike girls and their more openly rebellious peers in short skirts and dyed hair looked different to me after my talk with Mariko.

Mariko and I talked about her weekend plans. She talked about her exercise class on Saturday afternoons and her plans to go shopping on Sunday with a friend in Shibuya. I then turned the discussion to her exams and her future educational goals. I asked Mariko why she thought she failed her English exams. Mariko's response was most unexpected. It was then that Mariko told me that she had figured out her own strategy for learning English. Independent of any teacher's guidance and in response what she saw as poor teaching, Mariko decided at the start of the school year in April that she would develop her own "English brain." According to her method, translating between Japanese and English inhibited learning English, so on exams she simply left translation sections blank. Mariko left half of her exams unanswered and consequently failed them. Mariko intentionally failed her English exams even though she was in the English track at the school and seemingly should have been trying to achieve good grades in the subject. Mariko didn't worry about her failing grades because in her opinion it was more important to develop an "English brain."

Mariko carefully considered her options and came up with a strategy, and then outlined a plan for developing an "English brain." In contrast to the rigid rote based method of learning offered by her school and teachers, Mariko creatively decided to ignore the school's exam based approach. Mariko's strategy included following an NHK English language program, studying the TOEFL exam on her own, taking summer language classes, and reading English language publications. After our first meeting, I became incorporated into her plan as Mariko came to my desk every Tuesday afternoon to practice her English. On Tuesdays, together we usually rode home on the train. During the academic year Mariko's speaking abilities rose dramatically even while she continued to fail her school's English exams.

Mariko's plan was to attend a junior college after graduating from high school. Based on practice exams given in her high school, Mariko knew that she had an excellent chance of entering the junior college of her choice. Mariko argued that her high school marks would not matter and that her teachers would readily recommend her to the junior college because she didn't "cause any trouble." Consequently, Mariko reasoned that failing a few high school English exams would not hurt her academic chances, and that trying to develop an "English brain" would actually help her achieve her post-education goals of becoming a translator or working in the travel industry.

Mariko is not unique among the girls presented in this study. In fact, far from insuring uniformity in educational goals, the university exam system with its emphasis on early specialization allows girls to pick and choose what they want to study. Unlike their American college-bound counterparts who must excel across academic disciplines, Japanese girls argue that the Japanese education system is easier because Japanese students can choose to spend their time and energy on their strengths. Mariko understood this and used the rules of the system in her favor. She understood the educational system well enough that she was comfortable failing in the very area she wanted to excel in after school. She failed her English exams because she knew they did not matter in her own goal of pursuing fluency in English. Mariko found a way to be creative, and use creative thinking inside a rigid educational structure where creatively is supposed to be non-existent (McVeigh 1997).

Mariko was an average student at the school who was able to slide by because she did not look rebellious or confront her teachers. Mariko made her own path in a structure where her pathway was seemingly mapped out for her long before she entered school. Counter to academic and popular portrayals of Japanese teens as assiduous, achievement-oriented students obsessed

with academic competition, Mariko's decisions are those of a girl able to carve out a place for herself within a society where degrees and academics have regularly dictated one's choices and pathways (Lebra 1993).

Mariko's attitude is common among the high school girls I met during fieldwork. Mariko's quiet resistance, independent decisions, and thoughtful reflection were shared traits among girls. Many of them spoke about the challenges they face, such as the pressures to do well, choose good schools, study for exams, keep friendships, and figure out dating. Girls acknowledge that Japanese society is a gender, biased society with seemingly limited opportunities for girls. Yet, girls contrasted their own "privileged" existence with that of their grandmothers who they perceive has having had no opportunities and limited lives because of social and economic conditions. These girls are beneficiaries of social and economic changes that have occurred since their mothers married " (Nakano and Wagatsuma 2004).

Girls like Mariko are creative about achieving goals and preparing for challenges. Far from being obedient, passive bystanders or consumer-obsessed teen prostitutes, the girls in this study are able to see their situations, review options, develop strategies and make informed decisions about their futures. Mariko made her decisions independent of her teachers. This is in contrast to ethnographic works on Japanese young people that argue that young people may think they have free choice, but really they are guided and controlled by adults (Kotani 2004; McVeigh 2004).

1.2   PROBLEMATIZING THE MEANING OF ADOLESCENCE

Psychologists have assumed that adolescence as a stage in the life course exists across societies (Bulcroft et al,1998). Within this tradition, adolescence is assumed to be a negative period in which a person experiences emotional angst, anger, and conflict caused by the biological processes of puberty or by alienation inherent in industrialized life and its' resulting generation gap (Hall 1916; Freud 1946) A majority of adolescent studies emphasize the marginality, and social anomie of the young, especially in industrialized societies (Myers 2000; Santock 1997; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). A focus upon problems, anti-social behaviors, adolescent angst, obesity, eating disorders, negative body image, teen pregnancy, and school related stress (Torbjorn and Wold 2001; Fouts and Vaughan 2002; Garnefski and Legerstee 2002; Fonesca and Matos 2003; Boyer and Shafer 2003) are inherent within these approaches. The problems that plague some young people become the subject of inquiry while the actual person, their personality, and their surroundings are ignored. In these works the reader is presented with a "normal" adolescent who is typically male, angry or busy constructing a separate autonomous moral identity (Kohlberg 1981). Girls when they do appear in these works are typically presented as deficient and lacking essential qualities in moral and social development (Gilligan 1982) or busy engaging in sexually risky behaviors. Within feminist studies there is also a tendency to emphasize the vulnerability of female adolescents (Brown and Gilligan 1992) while ignoring where girls have voice, and make decisions.

There is a dearth of research on the ordinary adolescent (Larson 2000). By ordinary, I mean a girl who does not express anti-social behaviors and does not focus her energies on destructive behaviors. I argue that Japanese high school girls are able to find emotional connections and meaning in everyday life because they have their own strategies, definitions and

perspectives on the social and educational challenges they face. Japanese high school girls, even girls who appear marginal, define a personal meaning and importance to exams, school-related pressures, and relationships with peers, teachers and families. One goal of this work is to provide the reader with an understanding of how ordinary Japanese girls perceive the high school years and the social world in which they are coming of age. Given the dearth of ethnographic materials on the daily life of girls, this study provides a textured ethnographic perspective of girlhood in Japan.

1.3   JAPANESE CULTURE AND HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

In this work, I am interested in emphasizing Japanese cultural ideas of physical and social development during the high school years. I take it as a given that local biology (Lock 1993; 2001) matters and that any stage in a life course is ascribed different meanings based on local culture (Elder 1992). In Japan, a post-industrial country at the intersection of globalization and consumption the young are not expected to be out of control, nor are they "naturally" expected to be rebellious.

The American concept of a "teen" or an "adolescent" as a distinct, easily identifiable life stage beginning at puberty and ending at the start of adulthood does not correspond to the experiences of the Japanese girls in my study. In Japan, there is no discrete adolescent stage in the life course. At no time during my research did I hear a Japanese person use English loan words when talking about the girls in my study. Japanese informants did not talk about their high school students' behaviors being motivated by "raging hormones."

Using the terms adolescence and adolescent to refer to Japanese high school girls is problematic. These terms are biased with Western cultural assumptions about physical and social development. For these reasons, I prefer to use the terms "girl" and "high school student" to refer to the group I worked with in Japan. In essence, the Japanese do not have an adolescent stage in their life course; what they do have, though, is a critical period during the years a girl is in high school. In Japan age and educational place defines expectations while in America adolescence is a behavioral period defined by biology.

In Japan, informants referred to the girls in my study as high school student/girl (*joshi-kōkō-sei)* or as a child (*kodomo)*. High school girls are seen as and self-identify as children, albeit children with increasingly important social and academic responsibilities. Still, they are children in need of good advice and adult guidance. The middle and upper high school years encompass an important and critical epoch in the Japanese life course. During these years a girl prepares for her future. Girls and adults perceive that decisions and behaviors made in high school will directly influence the options and life that a girl will lead as an adult. Ideally, high school girls must develop self-discipline by forgoing momentary pleasures in order to excel at academics or to insure good social relations. Adults perceive that learning to master the self during the high school years leads to healthy emotional and moral development in girls. Thus, when a girl learns how to discipline herself she is well on the road to developing into a healthy woman.

1.4   IMAGES OF JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

Images of high school girls are ubiquitous in Japan. The selling and constant updating of these images is representative of what Takie Lebra labels "informationalization," or unrestricted access

to constantly changing up-to-date information (Lebra 1993). Girls dressed in school uniforms wearing shy smiles adorn the covers of magazines, appear on train posters selling products, are the subject of best selling comic books (*manga*), and appear as materialistic prostitutes (*enjo kōsai*) cruising Shibuya on television documentaries and dramas. High school girls are also portrayed as cynical, materialistic, sexual Lolitas (Kinsella 2002) concerned only with getting money from old men.

One example of this negative image is the kogal (*Ko gyaru*) phenomenon that the media presents to the Japanese public as representative of contemporary high school girls. The kogal is linked to the creation of a lifestyle and not simply a fashion (Miller 2004). Typically, the kogal actively pursues material goods, has no respect for authority, has little emotional contact with her parents and cares nothing for the norms of Japanese society. She dyes her hair blond or brown, wears blue contact lenses, gets a tan, wears her school skirt to her pelvis bone, has pierced ears and carries a cell phone. She talks back to authority figures and pursues her own desires and wants without considering the effect they may have on her family. These girls cut school often and have no desire to pursue an education or to plan for their futures. They live to hang out with their friends, shop, party, and to consume luxury goods. This image of the kogal is linked to images of teen prostitutes who actively pursue older men so they can get money. These media images of high school girls are typically negative because these girls are selfish (*wagamama*) and openly rebellious.

In contrast, values of obedience and deference towards elders are seemingly central to the raising of Japanese children and have been integral to the building of a modern state (Collcutt 1991; Dore 1965; Gluck 1984). A good child (*ii kodomo*) is obedient, deferential, and excels academically (Shwalb and Shwalb 1996; White and Levine 1986). Given gender hierarchy in

Japan, girls are ideally raised to be passive, kind, obedient, clean, polite and cute (Kinsella 1995).

There are serious problems among young people in Japan. Students can be stressed out, unhappy and depressed. Japanese newspapers and other media outlets transmit and sell the problems of the young, such as the scandalous behaviors of teen prostitutes (*enjo kōsai*) (Kawai 1997), bullying (*ijime*) related deaths of middle school students, the social withdrawal (*hikikomori*) of students and the refusal of students to go to school (*tōkōkyohi*). There are very real and heartbreaking accounts of the daily suffering of a segment of Japanese students.

What though of the ordinary high school girl? Where is she in all the media's hype about dangerous hedonistic teens? Is she a bad child or is she a passive, obedient, good child? This work explores these questions and finds that girls have problems but their stories and lives are more complex than any simple "bad" image or "good image."

In fact, teen prostitutes, as undesirable as their acts may seem are actually more conformist than the ordinary girls I write about here. Teen prostitutes, and I do not include kogals in this idea, conform to traditional male notions of sexual desirability and longing for a young girl (Allison 1994). An entire sex industry is built up around these girls. Being a sexualized, and available, although seemingly "innocent" girl is a known pathway in Japan. These young girls are following a path defined for them by predatory adults.

In contrast, girls like Mariko are making their own pathways, silently ignoring rules and subtly making long term plans for futures. Girls are able to explore new pathways because there has been a delegitimization of the adult Japanese social order. The past decade of economic down turn and social malaise has lead to the pluralization of values. Adults can no longer claim success, and thus alternative pathways to adulthood are opening up (Mathews and White 2004).

9

Mariko's seemingly compliant exterior and quiet interior plan counter to adult wishes emphasizes this point. As do the accounts within this study of girls ignoring bad teaching and studying subjects independent of their school.

1.5   YAMA GIRLS' IDEAS ABOUT THESE IMAGES

Yama girls are very sensitive about the "bad" images of high school girls transmitted by the Japanese media (Mainichi 2001). For example, one afternoon I came back after lunch to my desk to find three girls waiting to talk to me. We started to chat about their plans for Sunday afternoon. Lying on my desk was an article a teacher had given to me earlier that morning. The article was about teen prostitutes in Japan. The three girls asked about it and asked to read it. The three of them clustered close together and read the article. As they finished it, one girl who was dressed like a kogal exclaimed,

> "I wish, I wish…well, when adults see this they think we all act this way. When I
>
> ride the train and an old woman looks at me I think she thinks I do this."

When I asked girls whether they knew anyone who went on dates with older men they said no, or a few said that they knew a friend from grade school who went on dates with older men. Typically they said that these girls came from families where "no one in their family listens to them or loves them. They depend only on their friends. When their friends go with old men then they do it too." Yama girls felt sorry for girls who became teen prostitutes and expressed anger at the Japanese media for implying that all high school girls were behaving badly.

And yet, media images provide a framework of comparison for the girls. Girls compare and contrast media images with their own ideas, experiences and attitudes and those of their peer

10

group. The girls are not simple consumers of media-generated "teen identities" (Driscoll 2002); they pick and choose what they want from these images. After watching a television drama about unrequited love, the girls may sigh and exclaim how wonderful "love" is, but at the same time they will say, "Well, it was only a television drama and is not a part of real life."

1.6   THE FIELDWORK SITE: YAMA MIDDLE AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Yama is located in a Western suburb of Tokyo**.** Yama is a private girls' school for grades seven through twelve. There is a middle school and a senior high school. The middle school years comprise grades seven through nine. The senior high school years include grades ten through twelve. Average classroom size is 40 students. Students gain admission to the school by passing an entrance exam. Yama middle school students must take the entrance exam for the high school and are not guaranteed admission.

Yama high school is divided into three separate education tracks: upper, middle and lower. Girls are placed into a track upon admission and remain in that track for three years. There is no mobility between the tracks. Girls remain in the same homerooms for three years. Girls from different homerooms mingle during club and school related activities.

1.7   METHODS

The data presented come from ethnographic fieldwork I conducted while an English teacher at Yama in 1998. The research methods employed include participant observation, semi-structured

interviews, and teen taped diaries. I interacted with girls at the school and at the places frequented by girls such as trains, shops, and part-time jobs. An analysis of media materials and daily conversations provided additional materials. I also utilize fifteen taped diaries by Yama high school students.

For ease in reading I use labels to refer to girls in different grades. Girls in their first year of high school are HS1; girls in their second year of high school are HS2; girls in their third year of high school are HS3.

1.8 YOUTH AS METAPHORS OF CHANGE

I argue that adults see youth as metaphors of change in Japanese society. Typically, it is among young people—whether it is in their dress styles, language, sexual mores, leisure activities, career ambitions (or lack thereof), and lifestyle choices—where change is occurring, according to my adult informants. Whenever I broached the topic of demographic, economic or ideological changes in post-war Japanese society, adults quickly turned the discussion to one about high school students. It seemed, therefore, that how adults talked about high school students reflected how they felt about social changes more broadly.

One afternoon I sat talking to a group of part-time and full-time teachers about the school and about changes in students over the last few years. One teacher commented that the school was beginning to resemble a beauty parlor because in the middle of a class girls would open their compact mirrors, comb their hair, and play with their bangs. Another female teacher agreed and said,

"Yes, I think too many of them care about their looks, especially their hair. Imagine if there were boys here it would be worse, wouldn't it."

Other teachers agreed with her. I asked this group if contemporary girls were different from girls five, ten or twenty years ago. All the teachers, including a 22-year-old female math teacher, said that contemporary girls were more concerned with their looks than students were in the past. A variety of causes were put forth as reasons for this recent trend among the girls. Many of the teachers blamed the media for exposing girls to negative images.

Other teachers argued that problems were due to the decline in positive attention that girls received from their families. The less time and care given to girls by their families, especially by their mothers, resulted in the girls relying too much on media images and peer opinions. The argument continued that too many mothers had to work because the economy was so bad. This meant that they were not at home enough and therefore their students spent too much time away from the seemingly good influence of their mothers.

Another teacher, who had taught part-time at the school for eighteen years, argued that contemporary girls were too selfish and had too many material goods. She also offered the opinion that contemporary teens were not able to think about their futures or to persevere. The loss of this ability among young Japanese was resulting in a cultural shift. The inability of these girls to think about their futures and the high value placed on material pleasures resulted in problems among young people. Yet, within this context of criticism, and in contrast to it, I found, to my surprise, that these Japanese adults also felt sorry for their young students.

1.9   COMING OF AGE WITH CHOICES

People in their twenties belong to the wealthiest generation in Japan's history. Sugimoto labels this the "prosperity generation" (Sugimoto 1997). In a study of mothers and daughters, Nakano and Wagastuma found that young women had many more choices than their mothers had had at the same age (Nakano and Wagastuma 2004). According to the Japanese press, young people's values, choices and lifestyles are significantly different from that of their parents and grandparents. While the media everywhere writes about the sensational and the bizarre in order to sell papers, my informants who have children in their twenties argue that affluence has altered the experience of growing up. For example, the members of the postwar baby boom generation who are now in their 50s came of age when Japan was economically rebuilding itself after the war. The members of this generation did not have a perception of choice and option when they were coming of age. As one female informant in her mid-50s, who was raised in the Shitamachi section of Tokyo stated,

>"We were so worried as children about getting enough to eat and later when we entered school with competing successfully that we didn't even know that there were alternatives or choices. Well, actually there weren't many alternatives or choices. We wanted a job for our husbands where they could work at a big company or, in the case of my husband, at a prestigious university so that we could get housing and be assured of steady employment. We worried about not having any security and of being left destitute so we worked very hard at exams or at our companies to ensure that we had security."

She and others in her age cohort argue that people in their twenties and younger don't have the same life experience and so aren't afraid. If young people fail they know their parents

and grandparents will help them. They know that there is money to help them. They don't feel insecure about anything. They feel entitled to everything.

As the baby boom generation grew up in Japan, there were few teen-oriented consumer goods. They didn't have the access to electronic goods—such as CDs, play stations, cellular phones, pocket bells—or to television like their children now have. They also didn't have the same access to teen-oriented mass media, such as television shows, magazines or music. These materials either did not exist or were restricted to the wealthy. Hanging out at Jazz coffee shops was popular among some of my older informants when they were in their teens. However, these informants typically belonged to wealthier families and attended high schools that had universities attached to them. This meant they could make the time to hang out and didn't have to study as hard as other high school students. As Japan became wealthy, a market focused on adolescent consumers developed, and as a consequence a majority of young people have access to goods, mass media products and the image and ideas that are attached to them.

At the same time, Japan is going through a period of economic crisis and restructuring. At this time, Japan has an official unemployment rate of 4 percent, which is its highest unemployment rate since 1949. Companies are hiring fewer and fewer recruits each year. Prestigious financial institutions are faltering and failing, such as the shocking and unexpected failing of the prestigious Yamauri financial institution in the winter of 1997. At the same time, the male elite of Japanese workers, those at banks and major companies such as Sony and Mitsubishi, are being pushed out and laid off, a practice that was considered taboo a generation ago.

While the majority of Japanese workers, especially women, do not work at prestigious companies or enjoy lifetime employment, shifts at the elite level reflect shifts that are occurring

throughout the society. Unlike their adult counterparts, who stated during interviews that if they worked hard they where guaranteed a certain level of economic and social security in life, young people in their twenties can't expect the same experience. Girls like Mariko know this and thus they seek out pathways unknown to their mothers and grandmothers.

1.10   REVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter two is a review of the literature on adolescence, especially in the field of psychology. A section on relevant literature focused upon adolescent strategies across cultures is provided. The last section explores the attitudes of Japanese informants, and provides an overview of relevant literature in Japanese studies about the high school years and social maturation.

Chapter three explores the girls' own opinions about being young. Being a high school student and the girls' views of this stage in their lives is covered. The unlinking of biology and "adolescence" in Japan and the effect of this on the strategies girls pursue is discussed.

Chapter four provides a description of my place at the high school and the ethnographic methods I used for gathering information. My position as an unmarried American is discussed.

Chapter five is an account of the school I call Yama. Recent works have emphasized the negative aspect of schools on the development of Japanese children (Yoneyama 1999). Far from open rebellion, I found that most girls employ a quiet resistance strategy to achieve their own goals. In this chapter, I argue that girls are far from being victims of the school or their teachers.

Chapter six's goal is to describe an ordinary day in the life of a Yama high school student. Only by understanding the daily routines of girls can one begin to see the constraints and pleasures they experience.

Chapter seven gives the reader the girls' own opinions about the education they receive at Yama. Girls' narratives extracted from taped diaries illustrate the girls views. One finding of this chapter explains that there is a cycle to academic competition, which allows girls at certain stages in their youth to ignore their studies in favor of more pleasurable pursuits.

Chapter eight is about coming of age and the choices available to girls residing in Tokyo. Girls' lives and experiences in dating, shopping, sex, and part-time work are described. The pleasures in their lives are the focus of this chapter.

Chapter nine is the conclusion to this work. I argue that in Japan young people are seen as the arbiters of change and in a sense the losers of change in an era of economic recession, shrinking traditional families, and materialism.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter there is a discussion of historical and contemporary approaches to the study of adolescence and young people. A literature review on adolescent strategies is included in this section. The last section of this chapter examines the attitudes of Japanese girls and adult informants about the high school years, thus informing the reader of the cultural construction of this phase in the Japanese life course.

2.1   NEGATIVE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ADOLESCENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

A persistent debate within adolescent studies has been whether adolescents inevitably experience a period of storm, stress and emotional upheaval and if adolescents are inherently rebellious. G. Stanley Hall, the first president of the American Psychological Association, argued that adolescence was a time of great emotional and social turbulence driven by the hormones unleashed during puberty (Hall 1916). Anna Freud maintained that parent-child conflict was inevitable during adolescence (Freud 1946). Individuation, differentiation, and the search for autonomy were all taken as normal and healthy in theories of the development process and identity development (Erikson 1950; 1959). Themes of rebellion, conflict, anger, angst, individuation, anti-social behaviors and problems appear repeatedly in the study of young

people. Reading any one of these texts, the reader is presented with a "normal" adolescent who is typically male, angry and continually plotting how to align himself with his peers in opposition to the adults in his social world, while also learning to construct a separate autonomous moral identity (Kohlberg 1981). Girls, when they did appear in these works, were typically presented as deficient and lacking essential qualities in moral and social development (Gilligan 1982).

Anthropologists have contributed to this debate most famously in the Mead-Freeman controversy on Samoan adolescence (Cote 2000). Mead argued that given the cultural context the adolescent years could be peaceful (Mead 1928). Others have argued that Mead misrepresented Samoan girlhood for political and social reasons and that far from a peaceful period, Samoan girls went through a turbulent life stage rife with conflict and stress (Freeman 1999).

Inherent within these approaches has been a focus upon problems, anti-social behaviors, and adolescent angst, obesity, eating disorders, negative body image, teen pregnancy, and school related stress (Fonesca and Matos 2003), which reflects the almost exclusive focus upon pathology that has dominated much psychological research (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). The emphasis upon negative behaviors in psychology is demonstrated in Myers' analysis of PsychInfo since 1967, where he found 21 articles on negative emotions for every article on positive emotions (Myers 2000).

In recent years there has been a shift away from the negative to a "positive psychology" movement, which aims to examine the positive features that make life worth living, including the study of hope, wisdom, creativity, future mindedness, courage, spirituality, responsibility and perseverance (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Edwards and Huebber 2002). This overall shift has influenced contemporary works on adolescent development, which has led to a more positive outlook for teens (Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi 2003; Rich 2001) and the investigation

into strategies that healthy teens employ in their daily lives (Maatta et al., 2002). Contemporary researchers are revisiting many "traditional" ideas about adolescence and there is a profound paradigm shift occurring within adolescent studies (Bacchini and Magliulo 2003), one that focuses upon adolescent well being (Ben-Zur 2003; Bergman and Scott2001) rather than risk and adolescent stress.

Some researchers are slowly abandoning a stage-oriented model based on Eriskon's work and are now focusing upon a process-oriented model where the researcher investigates the interactions between the individual and the context (Petersen et al. 1996). Larson's work on the development of "initiative" in youth, a characteristic which he views as related to autonomy and agency and as central to positive development, grew out of this recent positive psychological approach (Larson 2000). Larson argues that initiative is the ability to be motivated from within and to direct attention and efforts toward a challenging goal and that initiative is necessary for the development of other desired characteristics, including creativity, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement.

Still, Larson's work is based within a Eurocentric approach that assumes initiative is a "good" value rather than acknowledging that local cultures help define the experiences and expectations of young people. Many of these newer studies demonstrate that most teens go through adolescence without significant traumas and are typically emotionally healthy during this phase in their lives (Offer and Schonert-Reichl 1992). By focusing upon Japanese girls and how they navigate their social worlds, rather than assuming a negative or solely problem-oriented approach, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the "positive psychological" movement.

A common drawback to the psychological literature is the reliance on survey data, questionnaires, and instruments. Narratives, stories, and the voices of adolescents, while appearing in the work of select feminist psychological researchers, have been left out of the psychological literature on adolescents. Culturally and contextually based views of peoples are also missing in these works. The reader gets a sense of how a group of adolescents measured up against other adolescents but no understanding of how the adolescents live their lives, or of the choices and decisions that they face every day. This dissertation addresses these two issues by relying on the narratives of girls and excluding psychological instruments or tests devised to assess how well participating adolescents measure up to the researcher's culturally biased questions.

I argue that the negative approach within mainstream psychological research has influenced and spilled over into the study of adolescent girls. This has contributed to a body of literature concerned with the victimization of girls within American culture (Brown and Gilligan 1992; Pipher 1994; Roberts and Glen 2003) while ignoring the quality of the adolescent experience among psychologically healthy girls. A research paradigm focused upon adolescent dysfunction, eating disorders, negative media images, teen pregnancy, teen violence, and academic difficulties, while relevant for groups of teens, has meant the exclusion of information and research on adolescents who creatively face the challenges in their lives. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap by using the girls' own narratives of their lives, and the choices and challenges they face as they progress towards adulthood.

21

2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES, ADOLESCENCE AND LOCAL CULTURE

A drawback to research in the psychological literature has been, and remains, the assumption that adolescence, and the social and biological meanings ascribed to it by American and Western European researchers, applies in non-Western settings. In essence, these works imply that local culture does not matter and that a stage-oriented model applies across cultures. Adolescence and the cultural-bound, context-driven nature of it is either ignored or seen as irrelevant (Bulcroft et al. 1998). This powerful bias ignores the anthropological and sociological literature, which demonstrates that the meanings of adolescence and biology are defined by local culture (Elder 1992).

I argue that to be 14 is different across cultures and even within any given society. Gender, class, race (Oyserman et al. 1995; 2001), religion, caste, and geography are important in determining a young person's experience. Ascribing one meaning, one definition, or any one set of behaviors to the young means ignoring the local behaviors, attitudes and experiences of the young as they face challenges and choices.

With the recent advent of cross-cultural psychology studies, there is growing recognition of the differences that exist in constructs of identity and the self, differences that are based within specific socio-cultural contexts (Brewer 1996). One of the groundbreaking works for psychologists in this area is the work of Kitayama and Markus (1997), in which the researchers write on the two constructs of the self: the independent and the interdependent. The independent is seen in the Western view of the individual as being different from others, while the interdependent self is a more non-Western construct that emphasizes connectedness and sees others as actively and continuously participating in self-description. Within this approach, Asian cultures are said to place more stress on the collective self. A problem with these approaches is

that they fail to take into account the heterogeneity that exists in social development within any given cultural context (Miller 1997). A second problem is that differences between cultures are overemphasized.

2.3 "DEFINING" ADOLESCENCE

Given that the local context and culture matters in determining the life course and subsequently the existence of adolescence, what then is a definition for adolescence? I take as a working definition that adolescence is a stage in the life course between childhood and adulthood. It is a period when a child learns and is prepared for adult responsibilities and roles. Just when this period occurs and what its duration and meanings vary a great deal across societies, cultures and history (Schlegel and Barry 1991). It may not even exist in a given culture. I argue that it is difficult to write about one unifying, universal theory of adolescence. There are many ways of becoming an adult; the pathways and meanings differ enormously across societies and are based within the local cultural or social context. This work presents the Japanese context and the coming of age experiences of Japanese girls.

2.4 PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is thought to begin with the advent of puberty in Western cultures (Kett 1977). This has and continues to bias theoretical approaches to the study of social adolescence. Van Gennep argued that there is a distinct difference between physical adolescence, or puberty, and social

adolescence, or social puberty. He argued that these two events should be examined as separate entities. He also argued that theoretical approaches to the study of these two events should reflect this distinction (Van Gennep 1960). Research in Japan supports his theoretical argument.

The onset of puberty may lead to the recognition among adults in a particular society that a child has become physically capable of procreation (Buckley and Gottlieb 1988). This can signal that she is ready for the specific initiation rites into adulthood (Burbank 1988; 1995; LaFontaine 1982). Puberty, though, does not universally signal a readiness to assume the procreative responsibilities and obligations of adults. This is the case in Japan, where a girl's first period is recognized as important but does not translate into new behaviors or the taking on of an adult role.

Puberty does not signal that a person has entered social adolescence in all societies (Mead 1928). Social adolescence is deeply embedded within local cultural constructs of identity formation, sexuality, kinship, personhood, gender, and in some cases within local constructs of biology (Lock 1993). Local constructs of biology make their imprint upon the cultural activities of people as Herdt demonstrated in his work on the initiation rites of the Sambia (Herdt 1987). Consequently, any theorizing on the "nature" of adolescence cross-culturally must take into account the specific cultural constructs described above.

Physical adolescence begins with the onset of menarche in girls and seminal emissions in boys. Puberty is a universal in the physical maturation of humans across cultures, but there is a great deal of physiological variation in the development of boys and girls within and across cultures, especially with regard to the first menarche. The social and cultural importance or significance of the development of puberty depends on the local interpretation of the event. Just as researchers have found that menopause in non-Western societies does not correlate with the

24

disease model of menopause in the West (Beyene 1989; Lock 2001) so it is misleading to apply universals to the local meanings of physical adolescence.

Theoretically, Western specialists on adolescence in psychology and sociology have been too ready to assume a model of adolescence that is deeply embedded in Western cultural constructs of maturity, gender and biology. They have also been too ready to claim these biased models as universals. They have ignored the diversity that occurs within this life stage across societies (Burbank 1988, 1995; Condon 1987, 1990) and even within similar cultural areas (Herdt and Leavitt 1998).

Schlegel and Barry argue that anthropologists have ignored social adolescence primarily because of a continual Western ethnocentric assumption that "adolescence" as a social stage is found only in modern industrialized countries. Yet, in their survey of 186 published ethnographies and accounts of cultures and societies, they found that 175 societies marked social adolescence as a distinct stage in the life course (Schlegel and Barry 1991).

A "modern" adolescent identity concurrent with the rise of modernity has been the topic of recent published works (Liechty 1995; Levinson 2001). An increase in education and expectations of longer educational careers, coupled with new teen images and identities in the media, has led to conflict between generations. Nonetheless, what it means to be a young person in Mexico does not easily translate to what it means to be an adolescent in Nepal. For example, the search for an autonomous identity is not a cross-cultural fact in adolescent development (White 1993). The universality of the "rugged individual" is questionable when we turn to research in Japan, a society which values social interdependence over "selfish" individualism. Erikson argued that adolescence is universally a painful period of self-exploration and

individuation from the family (Erikson 1959), whereas in Japan maturity occurs when one understands the interdependence of people (Shawlb 2000; Smith 1983).

2.5   LITERATURE REVIEW ON ADOLESCENT STRATEGIES

This section is concerned with the psychological literature on adolescent strategies. Works on adolescent strategy, and copying mechanisms across cultures and societies are included.

2.6   ADOLESCENT STRATEGIES

Despite growing awareness that culture matters in the social development of the young (Kitayama et. al, 1997) a majority of studies on adolescent strategies in cross-cultural settings begin with the assumption that symptoms, syndromes, and disorders are inherent in social maturation and adolescent development (Arnett 2001a; Lesko 2001). Psychological instruments developed in Western settings that measure the mental health of adolescents and resulting strategies are increasingly being applied in non-Western contexts (Dwairy and Menshar 2005; Omori and Ingersoll 2005). Researchers using these instruments report that psychosocial variables inevitably influence the results they find in their studies (Woo et.al, 2004). Given this bias it is unsurprising that adolescent depression across societies is an important area of inquiry (Facio and Batistuta 2002; Iwata et al. 1994). Other works on adolescent strategy ignore local culture and blame westernization or modernity for ills that befall their young. "It appears that, against the background of increasing Westernization, the illness is taking on a Western pattern,

in line with the suggestion that significant concern about weight in anorexia nervosa is a pathoplastic effect of Westernization." (Lai 2000). Yet, even works on adolescents living in Western settings but belonging to immigrant families within in which "Western" behaviors are considered unacceptable demonstrate that these children employ strategies that accept "prevalent family cultural conditions and expect to change social situations only gradually" (Talbani and Hasanali 2000).

The literature reveals two major trends in the study of strategy in adolescence, the examination of adaptive strategies and the study of psychopathology or maladaptive strategies. These works have typically been in the area of developmental psychology, where chronological age is seen as an important field of inquiry (Fallon and Bowles 1998). The focus on chronological age rather than culturally relevant markers of maturity is problematic, and a bias in the literature.

2.7   ADOLESCENT STRATEGIES AND COPYING

Adolescence is considered a critical phase in the development of coping skills because the young typically experience competing pressures from peers, school, family, as well as psychological and physical changes (Williamson et al., 2003). Works on adolescent coping have examined adaptive achievement strategies, as task oriented strategy (Skaalvik 1997) "illusory glow optimism" (Cantor 1990) self-effort strategies (Furnham and Rawles 1996) and mastery-orientation (Elliot and Dweck 1988). These strategies are marked by a high degree of persistence (Arnett 2001b;Dweck and Leggett 1988). The generating of options and the shifting of goals has been explored (Erdley et al., 1997) among adolescents. Optimism and thus making

an effort to deal with a challenging situation are areas of inquiry (Hokoda and Fincham 1995). In adolescence these adaptive styles have been linked to high levels of academic achievement, and motivation to excel (Skaalvik 1997). The psychological well being of the individual is assumed to be the major factor in achievement strategy (Nurmi and Aunola 2005).

Recent work has shifted the focus from achievement to the regulation of emotions and reactions to life stress among adolescents. Adolescents who regulate their emotions and emotional responses to stress such as positive reappraisal, and planning are topics for study (Garnefski, Kraaij and Spinhoven 2005). Psychosocial variables that influence the development and quality of emotional issues in the young such as internal and external locus of control are also investigated in these works (Takakura and Sakihara 2001).

Coping is an important area of research in the study of adolescents' lives. Many researchers are looking at multidimensional coping strategies in which the young employ a number of styles of copying such as active, avoidance disengagement distraction, accommodation and support-seeking (Causey and Dubow 1992; Connor-Smith et al., 2000). Researchers have found that active copying and support seeking strategies are healthier for the young while avoidance and passive copying strategies correlate with a marked increase of psychological problems.

Culture is seen as influencing the copying strategies of the young. For example, in a study of copying strategies among 17-18 year olds in India, Italy, Hungary, Seweden, and Yemen, Olah found that European adolescents were more likely to use assimilative strategies or active strategies than adolescents in India or Yemen, who used emotion-focused strategies to solve their problems (Olah 1995). Russian adolescents use social support and problem-solving strategies more than their counterparts in America (Jose et al., 1998). German adolescents

copying strategies are influenced by situational demands, with pronounced approach–avoidant behavior, while their Israeli counterparts cope by using cognitive factors (Seiffgekrenke and Shulman 1990).

Works that incorporate culture assist in our understanding the young as active in their own lives, rather than passive reactors to the world around them. For example, according to Liu, when faced with stress, Chinese adolescents were likely to use multiple coping strategies combining many active copying strategies (Liu et al., 2004). Kramer-Dahl demonstrates that far from being mindless exam takers Singaporean adolescents are "sophisticated meaning-makers who employ texts of different modes to construct shifting subjectivities in their everyday lives" (Kramer-Dahl 2004).

The study of academic achievement as an either or proposition is a bias in these works. That is, academic achievement and the reasons for it is the single focus of these works----students who opt out of academics are categorized as low achievers, having low self-esteem, coming from troubled families, or engaging in "learned helplessness" (Hankin et al., 1998) and as "self-handicapping" (Diener and Dweck 1978; Burke et al., 1985; Nurmi 1993).

I argue that this research bias creates a situation where the reader wonders if academic competence is the only measure of success among the young. These works link academic underachievement to future norm-breaking behaviors, such as unsuccessful socialization (Nurmi 1994) and delinquency. High levels of academic achievement are seemingly related to social adjustment, competency, high self-esteem and optimism (Maata et al., 2002). This linking seems ridiculous in a country like Japan where the "best and brightest" are often seen as socially less mature than their lower achieving counterparts, according to adult informants. Where are ordinary, normal adolescents in these works on strategy?

2.8   MALADAPTIVE ADOLESCENT STRATEGIES

The experience of some emotional distress and/or some misconduct in adolescence is considered to be normal (Garnefski et al., 2002). Maladaptive strategies such as helplessness in individuals, for example, is characterized as a belief that the individual has no personal control over events, this attitude commonly leads to passivity and task avoidance (Diener and Dweck 1978). In this situation, the individual does not trust herself to handle situations but expects to fail at tasks, and consequently relies on excuses rather than planning to explain failures (Midgley et al., 1996). It is assumed that this strategy is connected to depression and low levels of self-esteem in the individual (Seligman and Peterson 1986). In these works on maladaptive strategies, girls as compared to boys are seen to develop emotional problems such as moodiness and depression whereas boys are thought to "act out" their negative emotions (Offer and Schonert-Reichl 1992). Culture is perceived to have influence on the quality and type of maladaptive strategy among the young. "Negative socially oriented self-evaluation and cognitive inefficiency were important in Singaporean adolescents' conceptualization of depression and are likely to be Asian culture-specified dimensions" (Woo 2004).

To gain insight into the lives of the young these works use questionnaires and surveys to arrive at answers. Culture is perceived as simply one more variable that influences outcomes. Given my own research with young girls in Japan, I find the results in these works to be circumspect—young people, or at least Japanese high school girls, like to talk and when they talk they reveal the meanings in their lives; meanings that the simple use of psychological instruments can never get at or measure. The use of these instruments in Non-Western settings seems odd given that measurements developed in the West ignore cultural patterns that emphasize interdependence. As other researchers have argued, these Western instruments,

studies and thus the findings have been limited to mostly white middle-class samples and have not provided information on coping, strategy and adjustment in more diverse populations even in the U.S. (Compas et al, 2001). Expanding how stress, copying, and strategy occur in the lives of the young, how they are handled, or in fact if they even exist across cultures is a needed area for exploration (Liu 2004). Examining the lives of the young across cultural settings and societies requires the active pursuit of daily life and meanings behind or around the "supposed" structure and stereotypes of their lives (Moje 2002; Kramer-Dahl 2004). Rather than relying on survey, instruments, and questionnaires often developed in the West this work examines the voices of girls to arrive at an understanding of their own active and creative strategies**.**

2.9   JAPANESE CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The conflicted disaffected youth model is related to historical processes inherent in the development of Western industrialism (Davis and Davis 1989). The industrial revolution and the rise of mass education created the problem of how to deal with large numbers of adolescent children with the drives and capacities of adults, but denied their responsibilities (Chudacoff 1989). Simply put, youth became a problem because no one knew what to do with them. Yet, Japan provides a different perspective on the development of the young in a post-industrial society.

The fostering of the good child (*ii kodomo*) is the supposed cultural ideal in Japan (White and Levine 1986 Still, a good child (*ii kodomo)* is mild, gentle *(otonasii)*, obedient, compliant, (*sunao)*, energetic *(genki)*. Even White though has written against this ideal in her recent work on Japanese families (White 2002).

According to Sugimoto and Mouer, the notion of "the Japanese" is a false one and an image propagated by the anthropological approach to the study of Japan. Rather than the acceptance of "one" holistic approach for the study of Japan these authors argue,

> "While the holistic approach tended to assume social integration, there were too many facets of an increasingly complex society which could not be fitted neatly into a single package. How much easier it would have been had the fact simple been recognized that within the same society different groups of people have different interests and goals." (Sugimoto and Mouer 26: 2002).

Therefore, while this work reviews the good child concepts and other socialization concepts it is vitally important that the reader understand that Japan is a complex society where real people make decisions, and have values that have nothing to do with creating the "good child" or with for that matter share values that belong to "the Japanese." Japan is a complex, and diverse society and as such there is debate among those who make it their business to study Japan about the fundamental principles within the culture (Clammer 2000).

While trying to represent Japanese high girls' lives as unified wholes I am well aware that values related to the upbringing of children are in a state of flux, that these values change in radical and more subtle ways. That values in Japan are dynamic and that there is a climate for change, and that considerable variation may actually lie hidden behind what appear to be only subtle trends (Mohwald 2000) I take as a given within this work.

According to the anthropological tradition, there are a few "ideal traits" that children in Japanese society are taught to achieve through interactions with their families, schools, teachers and peer groups. The fostering of these temperamental qualities is ideally to begin through the early molding of children's behavior by their mothers (Hendry 2003) Takeko Doi, in his book

The Anatomy of Dependence (1973), postulates that the *amae* concept and its components of dependency, need, care and emotional fulfillment between a mother and a child can be utilized to understand relationships in the wider society; this idea has been argued against by some (Sugimoto 1997).

Japanese mothers also train their children in polite behaviors (*shitsuke.*) Children are also taught to master the body, and how to use polite language among adults (Lebra 1976). Japanese mothers will also discipline a child who has "gone too far" in acting bad within certain contexts, even if overall the child is generally indulged by the mother in the home. I have even seen a Japanese mother of a 23-year-old girl cross the living room of her own home to reposition her daughter's legs so that they were no longer hanging over a Western-style sofa.

As a preschool student the good child will begin to understand the differences between spontaneous free play in a mud field, and behavior in a place that requires restraint and self-discipline, as in a Temple (Tobin et al 1989). The good child is taught the importance that her culture places upon hard work and perseverance (*gambaru*) in the face of obstacles (Singleton 1989). Lock argues that the fostering of these qualities in children is designed to lead ultimately to the child's internalization of a basic moral style sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal cues of other people (Lock 1993). The good child concept and its' related meanings are also used by parents and educators to encourage and reinforce appropriate behaviors from children (White 1993).

Not all Japanese children internalize these "concepts and values" just as not all high school girls in this study cared to be good children. Girls choose to act up, dislike their teachers and go their own way at times. The above section has simply been designed to inform the reader of the anthropological tradition for examining social development in Japan. This tradition has

had a tendency to overemphasize the good child concept and the fostering of other "positive" traits in children..

The stereotype in America is that children are socialized to become "rugged" individuals, to find what will individually make him or her happiest, and that this process usually means that the child is expected to become an independent autonomous individual, whereas the stereotype in Japan is that Japanese children are taught that achieving maturity does not mean becoming a "rugged" individual; in fact, interdependence is valued.

A Japanese child learns that in order to participate in social life and to become a socially mature person, he or she cannot function fully in society on his or her own. As Edwards argues in his book *Modern Japan Through Its Weddings*, the wider realm of social relations is founded, like the husband/wife unit, on the principle of interdependence, further rendering the individual incomplete as a social being (Edwards 1989).

Edwards and other researchers on Japan have pointed out that the cultural construction/achievement of adulthood in Japanese society requires that the individual fulfill certain social roles. Consequently, a male is not an adult until he marries, even if he has a prestigious position in a highly ranked company, and a woman is not culturally considered an adult until she marries and becomes a mother.

Becoming mature in Japanese society is not a singular, individual, or personal route as it is conceived/stereotyped in the US, but the components of the maturation process carry over into other areas of someone's life. This is because people in your life have a certain "stake" in how you turn out (Brinton 2000). Japanese parents have an interest or stake in seeing that their children internalize the good child concepts and eventually become socially mature persons and thus capable of assuming certain responsibilities in life.

I take this idea of "stake holders" from Mary Brinton (1993), in which she applies the concept predominately to the development of women. Historically, a Japanese mother and father invested in the education of their children, specifically their son, because as older adults they would expect to be dependent upon their son for economic assistance and survival in their old age, and as ancestors. It is in their interest, then, to see that their son or daughter achieves certain temperamental qualities and internalizes the good child concept and its related components.

The process of becoming "more and more psychologically a part of society" continues long past childhood in Japan. Kondo (1990) writes on the "spiritual education" of workers and the development of one's sense of self as a mature social being through physical endurance training, self-reflection/critique, and group interactions.

Since ending my fieldwork in 1998 there has been a marked increase in the number of publications on young people in Japan. Many focus on the creation of girl's language (Miller 2004) on the pop cultural appeal of "cuteness" (Kinsella 1995; Miller 2004) and the development of "new ways" of being Japanese (White 2002). The importance of teen culture and the growth of a teen market have also become areas of analysis (White 1996; 2003).

The surveillance of the young, the problems of youth, and the ineptitude of the educational system are all topics of academic portrayals of Japanese young people (McVeigh 2002). What of the student's perspective of their school, their teachers and their educations?

This work looks at demographic, social, and cultural trends from the girl's perspective rather than as something that happens to them. I think Hashimoto argues correctly that there is a unwillingness in Japan to respect the power of the young (Hashimoto 2003). The other side of this argument is --- -- do young people even care what their elders think? This work provides narratives that demonstrate that lots of girls do not simply accept that their elders deserve

respect. Girls give respect to teachers when those teachers "deserve" respect. Girls respect some adults and see others as undeserving. And some girls find productive ways of getting around adults without open rebellion.

In this work I try to get out of the girl's way and let them speak--- as much as this is possible in any writing. Earlier works centered on adult's ideas about Japanese maturation and havewhat I think of as an adult-centered approach to the study of Japanese childhood. This work has a youth/girl-centered approach, which fills, in a gap in the literature on socialization in schools and on childhood in Japan.

It is clear that demographic, economic and social changes in the last thirty years have lead to the development of new pathways and behaviors for the young in Japan (Miller 2003; Nakano and Wagatsuma 2004). The development of the parasitic single (*parasaito shinguru*) or young unmarried men and women who continue to live with their parents even after they become adults, enjoying a carefree and well-to-do lifestyle (Yamada 1999; Yamada et.al., 2000) is one such pathway and begs the question which remains to be researched----—who is the contemporary adult in Japan?

2.10   THE UNLINKING OF BIOLOGY AND ADOLESCENCE AND THE POSSIBLE EFFECT ON THE STRATEGIES GIRLS PURSUE

As shown above, in the United States, adolescence is linked to puberty. This is a cultural belief, one that is not a shared with other societies. In Japan, high school girls' behaviors are divorced from biology, according to adult informants and the girls themselves. When girls do behave badly, social immaturity or social networks of family, peers, and school are blamed. Social

pathologies rather than nature or biology are responsible for either letting girls down by not helping them or the girls themselves are called immature and selfish by informants.

The divorcing of biology and thus negative assumptions about behaviors in Japan is a benefit for the young----unlike their American counterparts their social development occurs in a relatively more positive environment. One upside of the unlinking of biology and behavior in Japan is that girls are not living within a cultural world where their behaviors are preordained. That is, when a girl acts up or behaves badly adults don't simply scoff and say well, what can you expect—puberty.

The ideal that a young person can pursue and achieve goals if they work hard enough is a powerful message in Japan and one internalized to varying degrees by high school informants. The pursuing of these goals and the process is perhaps more important at their age than the actual achievement of the goal. The skills needed to think about dreams, to figure out a reasonable approximation of that dream and the idea that if they work hard enough they can achieve good things is a better message than that of the United States where the assumption is that "teens" are inherently biologically out of control and seemingly out of their minds.

During my research at Yama, I was often struck at the desire teachers have to prepare their students for the challenges of life. At Yama, pursuing a goal and the skills needed for the work of achievement are explicitly and implicitly taught to children. These messages of hard work, fortitude and the development of self-discipline are very different from a message based on the "inherent" inabilities of the young to control themselves or their behaviors.

3.0   YAMA GIRLS' VIEWS OF BEING YOUNG

In this chapter I examine and describe the experiences of Yama girls. Using examples drawn from interviews, taped diaries, daily comments, and observations, I discuss the cultural meanings assigned to both physical and social adolescence by girls and adults. The goal of this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of how girls perceive the high school years, and the social context in which they are coming of age.

3.1   HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

High school girls are seen as and self-identify as children, albeit children with increasingly important social and academic responsibilities. Still, they are children in need of good advice and adult guidance. The middle and upper high school years encompass an important and critical epoch in the Japanese life course. During these years a girl prepares for her future. Her decisions and behaviors will directly influence the options and life that she will lead as an adult. Ideally, girls develop self-discipline. Adults maintain that learning to master the self during the high school years leads to healthy emotional and moral development.

3.2   ENTERING "ADOLESCENCE": THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

As stated, rather than labeling certain years in the life course as an adolescent stage distinct from childhood and adulthood, Japanese talk about the middle and senior high school years as important for the development and future of their young people. Given that exams are critical in determining a girl's future, it is unsurprising that girls spoke of their middle and high school exams as important events in their lives. These exams cast a shadow on the lives of girls, and the passing or failing of exams marks a girl's entrance into and exit from distinct phases in her life.

Girls perceived entering high school and becoming a middle school student (*chūgakkō-sei)* as meaning that they have entered a new phase in their childhood. They are learning to take some responsibility for themselves and for their own behaviors. Over the course of my research, teachers increasingly made the middle school girls correct their language and behaviors. During one-on-one conversations, teachers corrected a girl's language and then made her repeat the words using polite terms and phrases. In this way, teachers hoped to teach girls how to correctly use polite language (*keigo).*

Middle school students must learn to balance academics with ever increasingly important social responsibilities and demands (LeTendre 2001). Yama teachers strive to teach their girls how to behave properly and admonished them to study hard. When girls were perceived as acting out or being lazy, their homeroom teachers scolded them and asked them to seriously consider their behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors. From their earliest middle school days, teachers instruct Yama girls to be excellent students and to get along well with their peers.

Teachers admitted to being both successful and unsuccessful with their middle school students. One girl was quietly disruptive in my English classes. The area around her desk was a mess with small pieces of paper, pens and erasers littering the area. Her shoes usually came off

sometime during the lesson and she couldn't seem to grasp even the simplest instructions. Her homeroom teacher, who was also my partner, told me that while the student was well liked by her peers, the student was a dismal failure as a student. This teacher commented that the girl was an only child and thus very spoiled by her family. The teacher thought the girl had never developed self-control or restraint. The teacher thought that the girl never would develop in a healthy way because of her family. The more the teacher tried to gently discipline the girl the less the girl seemed to understand. The teacher was frustrated by the girl's behavior but admitted to personally liking the girl.

3.3   THE PLACE OF *HANKŌKI* IN THE JAPANESE LIFECOURSE

Hankōki is a period when children rebel against their teachers, parents and adults, occurs before puberty. Japanese informants did not link *hankōk*i to puberty. Girls reported that their menstruation *(seiri)* experiences were unrelated to their *hankōki* experiences. *Hankōki* was thought to be a normal and healthy period of social development when children questioned the authority of adults.

Yama high school girls reported having a *hankōki* period anywhere from nine to eleven years of age. Girls said that by the time they were twelve they were usually out of the phase. *Hankōki* lasted anywhere from three months to a full year, according to high school girls. Girls reported not talking to their fathers for long periods of time, yelling at their mothers and only pretending to listen to their teachers. Girls said they were frustrated and angry during the period. One girl said that she was about ten when she realized that her parents had sex. She felt that this caused her to question adult authority and to rebel against her parents.

When asked for common behaviors during *hankōk*i, girls uniformly reported not talking to their fathers for long periods of time. One girl reported not talking to her father for nine months. She didn't understand why she didn't talk to him. She said that she simply did not want to talk to him. High school girls said it was normal to go through a *hankōk*i period as younger children.

Teachers talked about their own *hankōk*i experiences and the importance of going through a *hankōki phase* in the social and emotional development of children. Having a *hankoki* phase was considered healthy and normal for children. Sato-san a teacher in her forties said,

"Girls usually start their *hankōki* phase around ten. It begins when girls start asking why, why, why? Why do they have to study? Why do they have to listen to their teachers? Why do they have to listen to their parents?"

Tanaka-san, a female teacher in her forties thought *hankōki* was linked to a child's growing awareness of her extra-familial responsibilities. Tanaka-san thought there was an inherent conflict between school pressures and parental affection. When girls enter the school they become students who are challenged to perform, but when they are home their parents, especially their mothers, indulge them. This causes them internal conflict, and consequently girls need to go through a period of questioning to sort it all out. Conflict is seen as normal and healthy during the *hankoki* period.

Problems only arise for girls, their families, and teachers when a *hankōki* phase is too lengthy or too severe. Ideally, the phase should begin around nine or ten. Questioning and rebellion should be severe at the beginning, there should be stops and starts to the rebellion for the next two or three years, and then the rebellious behaviors should end before high school.

41

High school girls were considered too old to be in a *hankōk*i phase, according to adults and girls. Rather, teachers labeled "rebellious" high school girls as immature, selfish and lazy.

However, in recent years, teachers reported being worried about contemporary grade school and middle-school children's' *hankōki* experiences. In contrast to the ideal *hankōki* pattern, teachers reported that contemporary Yama high school girls were entering and exiting *hankōki at* later ages than their counterparts had in the past. Teachers reported that *hankōki* was occurring later because children were emotionally maturing at later ages than they had in the past. According to teachers, an emphasis on exams and preparing for exams means that grade school children spend valuable time perfecting their test-taking skills while sacrificing time with classmates and family. Losing valuable time with others means that grade school children do not gain the social knowledge and skills that they need at the appropriate age. Therefore, contemporary Yama students enter middle school more emotionally immature than their counterparts in the past. Teachers worried what impact delayed *hankōki* might have on the long-term emotional development of children.

3.4 BULLYING AT YAMA

Bullying (*ijime*), is a serious problem in Japanese schools; students are known to kill themselves because of it. The Japanese educational system has sought ways to combat it. It was considered such a serious problem that Yama held an all-day event on the subject while I was there. Middle school girls who had won writing competitions read their essays on bullying to the entire middle-school student body. Girls read essays about their own experiences in grade school with bullies. One girl read an essay about a grade-school friend who was experiencing severe bullying at a

different school. The girl reading the essay began to cry for her friend and many girls in the audience were teary-eyed during her speech.

One of my English teaching partners had many problems with his middle-school homeroom. Bullying among students in the second-year class was one problem. He told me about one victim in the class. One morning when the girl came in to school, she opened her locker, took off her outside shoes, and was beginning to take her school shoes out of her locker. She found that her school slippers were filled with water. Someone who was bullying her had filled her school slippers with water. She didn't know what to do since she couldn't put on her school shoes nor could she get help because she couldn't wear her outside shoes inside of the school. Finally, one of the teachers on duty at the entrance noticed her crying and helped her. The English teacher was very worried about the victim and the girls who were bullying the girl.

High school girls reported having been victims of bullying at different times in their middle school lives. Kaori, an HS3 in the lowest track, who had been raised in Nagasaki, entered Yama high school with a strong accent. She did not attend Yama's middle school. Kaori reported being a bullied child in her homeroom. She went home many nights crying because of the abuse. By her second year, though, she reported having many friends and that the abuse had stopped.

Most high-school girls reported either being victims of bullying or having witnessed bullying in high school. Interestingly, high-school girls said when you entered high school, bullying seemed to stop even though bullying did occur at the high school level. One girl thought that because girls enter tightly formed cliques in high school that these cliques or groups protected girls.

When I asked high-school girls why kids bullied each other, some girls shrugged their shoulders and said they didn't know. Other high school girls thought that the girls who bullied

were selfish, cruel and mean. They said it was very difficult for teachers or other adults to know what child was instigating the bullying. Many times the quietest, sweetest, and seemingly best students in a class were the ones who bullied or lead others to bully. According to the high-school girls, it was scary to see how well a bully could change their behavior. When adults were not present the head bully would cruelly turn on a victim and encourage others to do the same. When an adult entered the room the head bully quickly became the quiet good student again.

3.5   ENTERING HIGH SCHOOL

In Japan, entering high school and assuming the responsibilities of a high school student are viewed as significant indicators of social and emotional advancement in children's lives. Girls referred to studying for high school entrance exams and graduating from high school as signifying their own healthy and normal developments. When they entered high school they reported becoming more aware of the world and their own place in it. This usually meant that they knew where they ranked academically and how they competed with their peers. First-year high-school students typically talked about their success at gaining entrance into Yama, and a few of them talked about having tried for better high schools. Most girls were future oriented when talking about their academic pathways. They did talk about their failure to gain entrance to the higher track at Yama or a better high school. They usually began talking about their hopes for success at university entrance exams.

3.6   BEING A STUDENT, PASSING EXAMS: THE ROAD TO MATURITY

Girls perceive themselves primarily as students, and adults identify them as students. The primary responsibility of a student is to successfully pass exams, both school exams and university entrance exams. The Western concept of an individual adolescent rebelling against adults has little or no place in values ascribed by Japanese to the role of a student. A student works hard, sacrifices temporary pleasures, and excels at her exams (Rohlen 1983). A student's responsibility is to safely pass through "examination hell" and ultimately earn a good spot at a good school (White 1993). Teachers, parents and cram schools are there to encourage, push and guide girls so that they successfully fulfill their responsibilities as students.

Passing exams is important for both gaining a spot at a good school and for learning to master the self. Learning to discipline the self is required to become a mature and successful woman. To pass exams girls must learn to be patient, to work hard, and to sacrifice. These are the same skills a girl needs to develop into a good and moral woman in Japan. The high school years are a time for girls to either succeed or fail at developing the skills needed to master themselves. Teachers perceive that girls who are unwilling to succeed academically are unable to master themselves. Girls who fail their exams are consequently perceived as having severe character deficiencies. Girls who do master their exams are on the road to emotional maturity, according to teachers. Teachers perceive girls who fail exams as incompetent individuals with questionable futures. As "rites of passage" or endurance tests, exams serve as a method for individuals to compete against each other. The exams also serve as a method for successful girls to demonstrate that they are gaining the skills needed to be mature and competent adult women.

In Japan, success comes from working hard. Intellect or being smarter than others is not culturally perceived as a reason for academic success. IQ levels were never discussed by Yama

teachers or by Yama students. When I asked girls why they did well on exams or why they failed, they attributed their success and failures to how much they worked. Students talked about a personal preference for a subject, but students talked about how much or how little they studied as being directly related to their performances. When we talked about very successful students, girls talked about how hard those students worked.

Developing the ability to persevere is perceived as critical to becoming a mature adult. According to adults, girls who gain this ability will be successful at life. Girls who do not learn to fight through life's challenges will be unhappy.

3.7   BALANCE IN ADOLESCENCE

Over and over again, teachers said that their high-school girls needed to achieve two distinct goals. High-school girls should achieve scholastic goals and at the same time further refine and practice the interdependent skills they will need to be mature nurturing women. In high school, students work to balance these twin goals (Fukuzawa and LeTendre 2001). Yet, I found that for high- and low-ranked girls these twin goals are mutually exclusive. High-ranked girls must forgo social relationships; they simply do not have the time to nurture or care for friendships. Low-ranked girls reported high levels of satisfaction in their friendships. But because they failed to perform academically, low ranked girls reported high levels of discord with their parents and teachers. Only mid-ranked girls were able to achieve both the scholastic and social goals culturally perceived by adults as critical to mature development in Japan.

Girls in this group are able to achieve a balance between academics and social responsibilities. Middle-ranked girls are able to achieve these twin goals. Since their academic

46

goals are seemingly obtainable with some effort on their part, these girls could and did choose to forgo studying for time spent with friends, boyfriends, and family. Girls in this group are very savvy in choosing how much or how little time they spend on their studies. Their academic goals are respected by their teachers and acceptable to their parents. Consequently, parental pressure to study is minimal compared to higher-achieving students. Mid-ranked girls do not suffer from parental disapproval like their lower achieving counterparts.

Teachers express worries about girls who do not appear able to persist in the face of obstacles. These girls were seen as being on their way to becoming incompetent individuals with severe character deficiencies. Teachers labeled girls in the lowest ranked classes as girls who could not persevere. Yet, girls in the highest class who wanted to pursue non-academic or prestigious related goals were perceived as socially immature.

Teachers expressed their concerns about the social ability of high ranked girls. They thought that high ranked girls who spent their time and energy on school related matters were not able to devote the required time to making and sustaining close friendships. Teachers worried that these girls were unable to achieve a balance between academics and social goals.

During adolescence girls need to develop the interdependent social skills required to be the future caregivers of children, husbands and parents. High ranked girls were unable to learn or to practice their social skills and consequently their teachers worried about them. Teachers also complained that high-ranked girls were too dependent on their parents and that high ranked girls did not know how to take on responsibility.

3.8   PHYSICAL MATURATION IN JAPAN

The Japanese word *shishunki* is translated into English as puberty or physical adolescence. My informants, however, never used this word to refer to Yama girls.   I only heard the term discussed during a discussion with older female teachers about their menopause experiences. This period begins with menstruation and ends after the visible signs of puberty have ended. It is not a protracted period of emotional stress nor does it signal the beginning of a new stage in the lives of girls. This finding is consistent with the work of other researchers in Japan (Fukuzawa and Le Tendre 2001).

Menstruation *(seiri)* was a significant event to the girls. Girls reported having their first periods at thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen. The beginning of menstruation meant that the girl was on the pathway to womanhood. She was not a woman yet but she was starting the process leading to adulthood. In a survey of forty girls, thirty-eight reported receiving celebratory red beans and rice (*sekihan*) from their mothers when they first started their periods. This dish is traditionally given to girls when their periods begin. Girls in this survey ate the dish with only their mothers or other female family members present. Girls did not report eating the dish with their fathers in the room.

Girls reported signs of physical distress such as cramps, bloating and irritability occurring around their menstrual cycles. Girls used menstruation or the possibility of having a period to excuse themselves from boring classes. If a girl wanted out of a boring lecture she would raise her hand and ask permission to go to the ladies room. Teachers, especially male teachers, always let the girl go to the restroom. The girls perceived that having your period or even the possibility that you had your period meant that teachers would let you leave the room. The girls used this to

take breaks during the day or to meet a friend in the bathroom for a short chat. Girls said that it was a good technique for relieving boredom and stress during the day.

4.0   THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCH

The data presented comes from ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in 1998 at a private girls'

middle and high school. The research methods employed include participant observation, semi-

structured interviews, and teen taped diaries. I interacted with girls at the school and at the places

frequented by girls such as trains, shops, and part-time jobs. Daily conversations with adults, and

the girls provided additional materials for this thesis. As a method for providing narratives of

Yama girls, I also utilize fifteen taped teen diaries by Yama high school students in this

dissertation.

A ten-month advanced Japanese language program at the Inter-University Center in

Yokohama preceded dissertation research. I conducted a set of interviews and an analysis of

media materials while a student in the language program which provide a secondary source of

ethnographic data.

The main focus of my research was the examination of contemporary female adolescent

experiences and culture in Japan. Prior to going to Japan to conduct dissertation research, my

interest in Japanese adolescence was piqued by the comments of Japanese adults about the

problems of their teens. I first heard these comments while a language student in a small town in

Gifu prefecture in the summer of 1995. Initially, I became interested in Japanese adolescence

because when Japanese adults spoke of teen problems they spoke of social isolation and

emotional detachment as causes for adolescent angst and problems. The key to understanding

teen problems lay in understanding their social relationships, according to these Japanese adults. In contrast, as an American I had heard during my own adolescence that adolescent angst was an inevitable biological event.

In American culture, puberty and consequently social adolescence is assumed to bring on emotional outbursts, rebellion and adolescent problems (Arnett 2002). Calmness is replaced by anxiety"according to American cultural beliefs about the complex interaction between biological and social adolescence (Pipher 1994). Americans tend to blame biology, or physical adolescence, for teen social problems. Therefore, Japan provided a setting for interpreting and investigating adolescence in a cultural context where biology does not explain and is not held responsible for adolescent problems.

My interest in Japanese adolescence expanded to include questions arising around female adolescent choice and its relationship to educational goals. This research on the educational and social pressures girls face in high school arose during the first three weeks of research. These choices are always intimately linked to their education, whether they are good students or bad students. Questions surrounding "choices" for girls were always intimately connected to their social relationships.

4.1   PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

In typical anthropological fashion, my dissertation arises from a deliberate immersion in Japanese society.   In addition to using formal methods of information gathering such as interviews and observations, I learned the language; I stayed in Japan for an extended period, and

participated in the daily interactions, and experiences of my informants and other members of Japanese society.

My stay in Japan was lengthy, extending from August of 1996 to December of 1998. As a student at the Inter-University Center I began my search for a Japanese school to conduct research at for the following year. I also received advice, guidance and language tutoring directly related to my dissertation topic.

While at the Center I lived in a house built in 1933. The house was located in a small rural town an hour away from Yokohama in Kanagawa prefecture. I was afforded the opportunity to experience many aspects of life in the small town's neighborhood where I lived. Most of my neighbors were old people in their sixties and seventies. In this neighborhood, I first noticed the perceptions Japanese I met had of me as an unmarried, female student.

4.2   NOT BEING AN ADULT

I was never looked upon as a "woman" or as an "adult" in my neighborhood or later at Yama. I was an unmarried female student and within the Japanese context I was still a child. My dependent role was evident in how the old women in my neighborhood instructed me how to correctly hang my laundry, dry my futon, put out my garbage and cook food. If my laundry was hung "incorrectly" in the morning women in the community corrected my mistakes. If my futon wasn't out early enough on a Saturday or Sunday morning the grandmother next door would come to my door, slam the door open and tell me it was sunny and a good day to lay the futon out. She always told me to hurry up too.

My insight into the Japanese view of the young was definitely enhanced by the general perception of my unmarried status. I was consistently asked the following set of questions when meeting Japanese adults for the first time: "How old are you? Are you married? Why aren't you married? Don't you want to be married? Aren't you being too picky?"

I was in my early thirties while doing the research. Given their cultural assumptions the Japanese I met assumed that a woman in her thirties should be married and have children. Remaining single is becoming a more common lifestyle in Japan but without being married and having children a woman is not a "true" adult. I was not an adult within the Japanese context. I was an unmarried person without children and therefore I was still immature.

Given that Japanese schools do not begin their school year until April I had to wait until the following April, after the end of the program, to begin formal research. Before this I continued with my analysis of media materials, and continued tutoring Japanese high school students in the small community. Before starting my dissertation research I moved to a Western Tokyo neighborhood.

In the Tokyo neighborhood, I was again looked upon and treated as an adolescent. My landlords, the Kita family, expressed their worries about my health, my diet, and instructed me how to live in a Japanese style apartment. Not only did they look upon me as being culturally unaware but also they looked upon me as an immature girl. They asked questions about my unmarried status and told me that it was ok to be unmarried while in school but I had to marry quickly after graduating from school. They also said that I had to be more responsible towards my family. Getting married was perceived as acting responsibly towards my family.

4.3   BEING TREATED AS A GIRL AT YAMA

My lack of status was apparent in how the older female teachers treated me. They fussed over me if I looked tired. They worried about my diet and gave me special teas to drink to stay healthy in the winter. At lunch, many of them watched how much I ate. If I didn't eat enough food they would place more food on my tray and scold me if I didn't finish the food. I was scolded pretty much everyday.

One episode in particular demonstrates my subordinate childish position vis-à-vis the female teachers. One morning I came to school with some lint on my black sweater. As I sat at my desk reading over an exam I felt something on my back. One of the older female teachers was sticking tape to my back and pulling off the lint on the sweater. She did this without asking me if it was ok. Then she handed me more tape and told me to take off some lint on the front of the sweater. She checked my progress and then made me use more tape to get off the lint. After we were done she told me that now she was satisfied with my appearance.   She scolded me for having lint on my sweater too.

The female teachers placed me in the socially recognizable role of dependent child. The women and a few of the older men were interested in teaching me how to act properly in the Japanese context. I believe this is because I showed an interest in understanding the "Japanese way" and that my unmarried dependent position made it easy for the adults at the school to treat me as a child needing assistance. I was never going to become "Japanese" but I could learn to act in socially acceptable ways.

Female teachers warned me to stop being picky, settle down and get married. They told me that after I graduated it would be time for me to grow up and to become an adult. They warned me that I was being selfish by not marrying and giving my parents grandchildren. They

told me that I had to stop thinking of myself and warned me that after graduation I would have to care for others not just for myself. I was told that I was selfish (*wagamama*) for still being unmarried. They told me that I would learn to be less selfish once I married. According to these adults, after marriage and children I would understand the true meaning of being a "woman" and an "adult."

The girls appeared to accept my unmarried state. I believe it was because they thought I was in my early twenties. When girls asked my age and I told them they usually acted surprised. They usually said that they thought I was much younger. They never asked me why I wasn't married or even if I wanted to marry some day. However, they did ask questions about romance and dating in America. They also wanted to know what American men were like and how they compared with Japanese men. Given their young ages, it is unsurprising that questions about dating were more important to the girls than concerns about marriage.

4.4   ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FIELD

In February of 1998, Yama administrators hired me as an English teacher. Before being hired I was interviewed by the school's principal, the head English teacher and a second English teacher. The principal couldn't speak English so we switched from English to Japanese throughout the interview. The teachers asked me questions about my academic background, my interests in Japan, anthropology, my education, and my hobbies. At the end of the interview, I was informed that the school would hire me as an English teacher and that I could conduct fieldwork at the school.

From the beginning of my research, the second English teacher, Kawano-san, helped me by answering my questions and by talking about the girls. Kawano-san has taught at Yama for almost 30 years and is well liked by her homeroom students. She is a very kind woman with a strong commitment to assisting her students. She was very good at helping me understand the position of teachers at Yama and in helping me to understand the distinct personalities of her homeroom students. Her comments and reflections helped me to understand a teacher's viewpoints about the girls' interests, choices, and stresses. Her reflections also assisted me in gaining insight into how she perceived education for girls had changed during her thirty-year teaching career.

I taught 16 English classes a week. I was at the school from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. four days a week. Wednesday was a half-day at the school so I stayed until 2p.m. on Wednesdays. If I had a club activity I was at the school until 6:00 p.m.   Even when I had no work to do I stayed to talk with girls and with teachers.

I taught the middle high school students and the English tracked high school students in grades ten through twelve. At the middle school level I taught six classes of 40 to 42 girls basic English conversation. The Japanese Ministry of Education requires that a Japanese teacher be in a high school class while the English teacher teaches. In many schools, the Japanese and the foreign teacher teach together but at Yama I taught my own classes by myself but with an observer, another teacher, standing at the back or sometimes falling asleep in a chair. Typically the native teacher stood at the back of the class while I taught the class. One male teacher usually sat at a desk during the class and sometimes fell asleep during the lesson. Most of my "partners" worked along with the students. I taught the high school girls alone.

4.5   BEING AN AMERICAN

At first, I worried that being a teacher would restrict my access to girls and to their "real" opinions, attitudes and behaviors. I also worried that the girls would avoid me because I was a teacher. In fact, I found that being an American meant that girls sought me out.

While studying Japanese at the Inter-University Center I talked with my advisor about my research related worries. As Inamoto-sensei pointed out to me, Japanese adolescents spend most of their day at school. Therefore to gain access to them and to understand their lives I would have to conduct fieldwork at a school. According to her, the easiest method for gaining access to girls was to be an English teacher.

I still worried about being a teacher at a school. However, I quickly realized that being a foreigner (*gaijin*), specifically an American, helped me in gaining access to the lives of girls. Japanese-American researchers have written about being an American with a Japanese face (Kondo 1990; Hamabata 1990) but I found that being a white meant that my informants assumed that I was open, friendly and willing to listen them.   Their perception that Americans are willing and able to talk about their private lives and about problems came as a surprise to me.   The girls' perceptions of American society as free, open and friendly meant that girls assumed I was friendly and open. As one girl said to me, "I can talk to you because Americans are friendly and warm." Or as a group of girls told me, it is easy to talk to you because Americans are warm whereas Japanese are cold. One girl went so far as to ask me why I was in Japan. When I asked her what she meant she said*,* "Why would you leave America where everyone is so nice?"

Teachers shared this opinion, As Iwakami-san, a female teacher in her fifties told me, "In America it is all right to talk about your problems and to seek out counseling and help from others. But in Japan, we can't talk about our problems and we don't seek out counseling".

My position as an American resulted in my being sought out by high school girls too. First, many girls were curious about life in America and so girls with this interest sought me out. Second, highly motivated girls who wanted to practice speaking English came to me. Third, a group of girls who did not fit in at the school sought me out as an alternative to their strict native teachers.

4.6   RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

My relationship with full and part-time teachers varied. At first, full-time teachers either ignored me or smiled quickly and walked away. When they found out that I could speak Japanese, they became friendlier. One teacher had been assigned to 'look after me' at the school. Other teachers quickly assumed her responsibility especially a group of part-time teachers. Their 'looking after me' included a range of activities.

I became friendly with teachers who taught different subjects such as art, Japanese classics (*kobun)* and the sciences. Most teachers expressed a desire to assist me, as a foreigner, in understanding the 'Japanese way' of doing things. Conversations about Japan lead many of them to talk about themselves and their perspectives. They were also willing to explain basic matters and issues, sometimes in a paternalistic or in many cases a maternalistic way.

Often teachers wanted to know about practices in America or about American teens so I became a source of information for them. All of these interactions and the relationships that developed turned out to be invaluable informal sources of information.

I was invited to the PTA parties held for the teachers at a hotel in Shinjuku and I took part in a number of informal teacher get-togethers outside of school. As a result of daily contact I grew to understand the teachers' viewpoints on adolescents.

I also attended a series of meetings and lectures held by a private school teachers' association. The meetings were held at a coffee shop in Ikebukuro in the evenings. Members of the group usually met twice a week on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Attendance was not mandatory and members came when they could or when there was a lecture that they found relevant to their work. The association printed a handout with a schedule of events, topics for discussion and lectures for its' members. Members could attend a meeting or lecture on such topics as teen violence in schools, test taking and stress among grade school students.

After a discussion or a lecture on that days' topic the group sat together drinking, and eating. They talked about their own schools, recent scandals, and the current state of education in Japan. Members asked me about high school education in the United States, and about my research. We usually sat talking for about two hours. Many of the older teachers had attended private universities and had been members of student protest groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Informal conversations and chats at these meetings provided a method for me to check and compare my findings about Yama students with teachers from other Tokyo private schools. It also served as a means of understanding a wider set of teacher's concerns about education and its' role in Japanese society.

Part-time teachers are not required to attend morning meetings. They only attend meetings during exam periods when the school is on a special schedule. My desk was located by the door and in front of the part-time teachers' tables. As a result of sitting so close to the part-time teachers, I became familiar with their opinions and attitudes. The majority of part-time

teachers were women who had taught at the school for ten or twenty years. There were a few men, most of them young graduate students who were supplementing their income with part-time teaching.

While a majority of the part-time teachers had worked at Yama for twenty years or more they did not have the security of a tenured position. Unlike their full-time counterparts they were hired from year to year. Many of the part-time teachers worried about not being rehired by the school. A female math teacher who began at the school in March did not return after the summer recess. According to the full and part-time teachers, she had been mean to students and unwilling to answer their questions. She was fired and replaced by a young male teacher who was friendly to the students. In fact, a year after I returned to the US I received a letter from a part-time female teacher telling me that she had been rehired by the school for the next academic year. She was relieved and happy even though she had been teaching at Yama for fifteen years and was popular with students.

The tenuous position of part-time teachers was represented in their physical positions in the teachers' room. Regardless of the subject, or length of time teaching at Yama they all shared two large square tables. They had their own seats at the table and never sat in the seat of another teacher. They each had a drawer in a file cabinet and they left their purses and coats in the woman's' lounge. They chatted and laughed together a great deal. They would also quietly gossip about the full-time teachers and rate the full-time teachers' popularity with students and with other teachers. Sometimes, they complained that the full-time teachers did not show them any respect. They also maintained that as part-time teachers they were never insiders at the school. They complained that they had to guess at the feelings of the full-time teachers because as outsiders in the school.

4.7   SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

To gather background material on Yama, student-teacher relationships, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with full-time and part-time teachers. I interviewed five male teachers and five female teachers who ranged in age from twenty-five to fifty-six. Semi-structured interviews coupled with numerous daily conversations with all teachers enabled me to gain knowledge about the opinions and experiences of Yama teachers. Interviews and conversations aided me in developing an understanding of how teachers viewed the concept of "cohort' or "generation." This allowed me to see the distinctions which teachers made between their "generation" and contemporary teens. Hearing about postwar economic, social, educational changes and how these changes were perceived to have influenced different age cohorts meant that I became more aware of a multitude of factors responsible for influencing the lives and choices of contemporary teens.

During semi-structured interviews, I asked teachers general questions about education and more specific questions about single sex education. I asked them to talk about Yama's recent history and their own role at the school. I also asked them to compare Yama to other schools. Towards the end of each interview I asked teachers about their own high school experiences, and asked them to compare these experiences with contemporary teen experiences. Six of the teachers interviewed had children and were able to see contemporary high school students as both teachers and as parents. I conducted interviews in the female teacher's room or at a coffee shop across the street from the school. All the interviews were held during free periods in a school day. Interviews lasted thirty to forty minutes. Comments made by teachers during these interviews and daily conversations provide background material for this dissertation.

Like other Japanese adults, teachers argued that their families spoil contemporary Japanese children. In contemporary Japan, a "little emperor trend" is being blamed for many of the children's problems. On average contemporary Japanese children have one sibling or they are only children. Traditionally, children learned about human relationships by interacting with siblings. The family, particularly siblings, provided the first setting for learning how to get along with others. Children born into small families miss out on this critical stage in socialization. This leaves them ill prepared for social interactions with their peers in preschool and later on in their school years.

Only children are the sole focus of their parent's attentions, hopes, dreams and frustrations. A single child may also be an only grandchild which leads to even more spoiling by two sets of grandparents. According to Hattori-san, a male teacher in his forties, being a contemporary child means that you are unable or unwilling to share, to compromise or to have empathy for others. Being the center of your parents and possibly two sets of grandparents' lives is too much pressure on children. According to another male teacher, children raised in contemporary Japan are spoiled but are also unlucky. They will never have the strong warm bonds with siblings that he and his contemporaries enjoyed in childhood. He argued that contemporary children are lonelier than his cohorts were when they were children. Yama teachers' comments on spoiled children echo media articles (AERA 1998), and reflect an on-going debate at all levels of Japanese society on the "ideal" Japanese family (Lock 1993;White 2002).

Children raised in smaller families have less time to play too, according to my informants. Less play time with their peers also means that children have few social opportunities. Children played less because of the enormous academic pressures placed upon

them by their families. There is a tremendous amount of academic pressure placed on children in small families.

In the past, parents choose to educate one or two children, usually boys, with the goal of getting them into an elite university. A child with few academic interests who belonged to a large family was not pressured to study for rigorous entrance exams. He or she could pursue less academically competitive pathways. With fewer children in contemporary families most contemporary parents push their children into competing for entrance into competitive Universities. Teachers complained that there was too much parental pressure on the girls in their classes. They argued that there was more parental pressure on students and teachers than many of them had noticed earlier in their teaching careers. Teachers blamed Japan's low birth rate for this problem.

Teachers complained about the undirected enthusiasm of their students. Enthusiasm was good but it would not suffice, according to Yama teachers. Teachers extolled the Japanese virtues of effort, endurance and perseverance. Teachers perceived girls who expressed an enthusiasm for one goal one week and then switched to a new goal the following week as flighty. Being able to set a realistic goal, to sacrifice for that goal, and to achieve the goal was more important to Yama teachers than the fickle dreams of their students.

4.8   RELATIONSHIPS WITH GIRLS

During the first few weeks of fieldwork I was simply known as the English teacher. Slowly as more and more girls stopped by my desk in the teachers' room and talked to me they came to know more about me. Girls with an interest in speaking English, or in simply knowing a foreign

woman, came to talk to me every day during breaks between classes, at lunchtime, or after classes were over for the day. Gradually, even girls who had no interest in speaking English came to talk to me because they had heard from friends that I was friendly. The following illustrates this point. One Friday afternoon after I had finished with club activities and was getting my things together to leave for the weekend two HS3 girls came up to talk to me. An HS3 girl at a school event a few days earlier had introduced me to them. They had no interest in speaking or improving their English. They simply were curious about my life in Japan and in America. We started talking and as a result of their seeking me out one of them became an informant.

This girl, Yuki, became so interested in the research that I was doing that she would stop at my desk after school to ask me how my research had gone for the day. On the afternoons she went to cram school we would walk to the train station and ride to the center of Tokyo together. We would talk about her day and her hopes. She would also tell me about her cram school and how she felt about studying for entrance exams. Yuki was a high ranked girl who expressed feelings of frustration about her situation. She also confided that sometimes she felt lonely and cut off from her friends because she had to spend so much time studying, going to school and thinking about exams.

4.9   RUNNING A STUDENT CLUB

I became familiar with a new group of high school girls during the months from April to June. Yama conducts two overseas summer trips to America and Australia for second year girls. The girls stay with American families and attend a special intensive English language program for

five weeks during the months of July and August. I was asked by the head English teacher to run the American club for girls going to the United States. The club met every Friday afternoon from April to the first week of June. I was asked to teach the girls some basic English and about American culture. I soon found that the girls, 55 in all, had many questions and concerns about America. They had practical concerns about living with an American family, especially about American bathing rituals, and menstrual hygiene. The girls had many perceptions about America and Americans, some which were true and some that were false. Running the club gave me access to high school girls outside of the English track. I also learned more about the girls' attitudes, behaviors and worries.

Girls were excited about the trip to America, and acknowledged that they were fortunate to have such an opportunity. Some of them spoke about their dreams of trying to enter professions, or develop career routes that were based on international experiences, and foreign language skills specifically in English. These girls may well become members of an emerging group among Japanese urban women who makes her way as an "internationalist" through study abroad, work abroad and sometimes romance with a foreign male. Girls with this mindset have already begun a longing or desire for the "West" so aptly described by Karen Kelsky (Kelsky 2001).

Other girls complained that their mothers were forcing them to go on the trip. These girls wanted to stay home for the summer holiday and have fun with their friends. They saw going to America as more work for them to do during what should be a summer holiday.

After club meetings were over six or seven girls would stay behind to talk with me in a less formal manner. One afternoon after the club was over two of the girls asked me to sit with them and take a romance quiz that was in the popular teen magazine, "An An." I sat down with

the two girls to look over the quiz. Four other girls sat down with me. I took the quiz and then the other four girls took the quiz too. Naturally this started a conversation about boys and romance. These types of conversations, interactions and activities provided a method for my gaining knowledge about the girls.

4.10   SAMPLING

Daily conversations with a broad spectrum of girls at Yama constituted one method for my gaining knowledge about the girls. Daily interactions and spontaneous conversations allowed the girls and me to build rapport. The bulk of the data in this dissertation comes from what girls said to me spontaneously during our conversations or in response to questions and comments raised by other girls or me.

Informants talked specifically about their lives, and generally about the lives of Japanese high school students. A multitude of topics, factors, influences and issues pertinent to the contemporary experiences of Japanese high school students were discussed during these conversations. As much as possible, I tried to be a participant in group conversations and discussions with girls. In an attempt to avoid directing conversations I let girls talk to one another and to make comments to each other. As rapport developed between the students and myself, this method became easier and easier. Conversations took place in school at my desk, in classrooms, on school grounds, on trains, at stores, part-time jobs, and on the telephone.

Discussions provided opportunities for me to explain my research to the girls. Girls who were interested in participating in the research could then volunteer to be a part of it. Most of the girls who came to talk to me during the initial first six weeks of fieldwork participated in the

research. Their levels of participation varied during the course of fieldwork. Some girls brought me magazine articles about teens in Japan and then told me their own opinions about the images. Other girls taped their lives for a week or ten days. Some girls simply came to my desk after school to pick me up so we could ride the train home together.

This initial grouping of girls expanded to include girls from my English classes and club. Girls who were not in either of these two groups also sought me out for their own reasons. Eventually, a core group of girls came from merging these groups. This core group included thirty girls at the high school level.

As much as possible I tried to understand and hear the narratives of girls who belonged to the high, middle and low academic tracks at the school. By doing this I was able to discover that adolescent experiences, attitudes and narratives differed among the three groups. Conversations both inside and outside of the school provided a means for understanding the opinions and attitudes of girls within this core group.

4.11   TAPED TEEN DIARIES

To further understand what was important to girls, I asked fifteen girls from the core group to record their lives. They recorded anywhere from one week to ten days. Girls were asked to tape what they thought was important for a researcher to know about being a teen in contemporary Japan.

It is important to note that I did not ask girls in the highest track to record taped narratives. Given the pressures they are under I did not want to add stress to their daily lives by asking them to make tapes. I rely on the daily chats and conversations I had with them to record

their lives. The taped narratives of girls in the middle track who were planning for entrance exams to elite schools gives us a sense of the lives of higher ranked students.

These taped teen diaries allowed the girls to record chats with friends about shopping, boys and school and to record private late night reflections about their lives. Conversations with their parents about being a teen and nightly dinner chats with their siblings are also on the tapes.

Taped diaries allowed the girls to voice their opinions, to make decisions about subject matter and to contribute their own ideas to the research. To protect the girls' identities, I have changed their names, some identifiable characteristics.

Materials gathered from daily observations in the teacher's room, conversations in classrooms and outside of the school provide a method for understanding the girl's everyday world. I have included materials from daily conversations with girls both in classes and outside the school. These materials contribute to understanding the context in which all Japanese girls are coming of age.

Only one girl who initially sought me out declined to participate in the project. She was a returnee student who had spent five years in America. I believe she thought her participation would cause other girls to single her out and to make fun of her. She was very sensitive about her life at Yama and her position as a returnee at the school.

4.12   DATA COLLECTION OBSERVATIONS

From my desk in the teachers' room I could see students as they entered the room. I could see where they went in the room and their activities.   Throughout the day, I was able to observe both mundane and serious interactions between teachers and students.   After classes, the full-time

teachers used the part-time teachers' tables for talks with students about behavioral problems, academic goals and club activities. The tables were located directly behind my desk in the teachers' room. As a consequence, I was able to observe teacher-student conferences. From time to time a teacher drew me into these discussions. High achieving girls sought out their teachers' advice about potential futures or the odds of passing a university exam. Girls who wore their skirts too short, fell asleep in class or dyed their hair red sat reluctantly while a teacher talked or yelled at them. I became friendly with girls who were considered by teachers to be high academic achievers and with girls who were considered by teachers to be low academic achievers.

My presence tended to hinder a particular teacher from fully reprimanding students. I noticed that if I entered the teacher's room or sat at my desk during one of her tirades against a student's bad behavior, short skirt or lateness she would quickly calm down. She would either soften her voice or stop yelling at the student. Only once did she begin yelling at students while I was sitting at my desk. Two high school girls who were considered to be good students were wearing their skirts too short. The girls had rolled up their skirts at the waist so the skirts were about three or four inches shorter then school rules allowed. The teacher yelled at them to pull their skirts down. One girl quickly pulled her skirt down but the other girl made a face, said something under her breath and slowly pulled her skirt down.

4.13   MEDIA MATERIALS

Given that media materials, such as movies, television shows, music, and magazines are important to girls I decided to analyze these materials. I chose media materials that the girls gave

to me or recommended to me. I did this because the girls lent me material that they found interesting, and entertaining.

Their recommendations gave me a chance to understand their ideas and opinions about media materials. I was able to gain insight into their own opinions about the messages and meanings of materials generated by adults for teen consumption in Japan. I found that girls are not passive consumers of products. They are sophisticated and critical evaluators of consumer products, goods and images.

4.14   CD TRADING CLUB

In May, I became friendly with Yuka who was an HS3 and played the flute in the school's band. She loved popular music and we talked almost daily about pop music. She decided that I needed to know more about Japanese pop music so she began to loan me Japanese music CDs and then to ask me what I thought of them. She introduced me to a wide variety of Japanese pop musicians and their music. She loaned me CDs by TM REVOLUTION, the B'Zs, Hide, GLAY, and Luna Sea. She also loaned me CDs by her favorite Western pop musicians like The Who, Beck, and Mariah Carey. She said that she usually bought two or three CDs a month. Her older sister loved music and Yuka felt that her sister was the person who most influenced her music choices.

My CD exchanges with Yuka began a series of informal exchanges among ten girls and myself during the course of fieldwork. Exchanges of CDs were usually preceded by a short conversation about the music with the girls and the meaning that the music held for them. The girls discussed lyrics about love, anger, passion and violence.

All the girls in my study reported buying music. Out of twenty HS3 girls I asked about their CD buying habits, fifteen of them reported having bought one or more CDs a month for the last three months. They reported that they bought more CDs during their vacations because they had more time to shop, browse and listen to CDs then they did during their school terms.

Most of these girls had been to one or more concerts too. Emiko, an HS3 in the middle track, cramming for entry into a prestigious University took an evening off in the fall to go to a SMAPxSMAP concert at the Tokyo dome. She reported that she and her older sister had a wonderful time. She said that she was surprised at how loud the audience was at the concert. She was also surprised to see women in their late twenties at the concert and some younger girls with their mothers at the concert. Emiko and her sister had tickets about fifteen rows on the right side of the stage. They could see the band and the audience. She said she did not sit down for the entire concert but stood and danced throughout the event. Her ticket had cost almost 8,000 yen (about 60 dollars) but that she had seen tickets being scalped outside the dome for nearly 70,000 yen (about five hundred dollars). Emiko reported feeling guilty about taking time away from her cramming. She said that she woke up an hour earlier than usual for a week in order to study.

Yukiko, an HS3 in the highest track, who was cramming for a prestigious department at Waseda University told me that as a second year student she had gone to Tokyo clubs and listened to alternative rock bands and musicians. She said that she had given the practice up for her third year. Yukiko reported devoting her time and energy to studying for the exam. This chapter has specifically dealt with my introduction to cultural ideas about young people in Japan, the fieldwork site, data collection and my relationship with fieldwork participants. The chapter has also provided a brief overview of teachers' opinions of high school girls, and contemporary Japanese childhood.

5.0   YAMA HIGH SCHOOL

Japan's educational system has been famed for producing literate citizens, envied by American educational experts, and more recently vilified as the cause of childhood stress and psychological disorders (Yoneyama 1999). Below is an account of one school within this contemporary educational system.

The pressures, concerns and daily interactions of girls and their teachers are presented in this chapter. Girls are active navigators within the school and consequently within the Japanese educational system. Far from being passive reactors within this setting, girls are constantly deciding what does and does not "work for them." My contention is that girls come up with strategies for the challenges they face and are well aware of the environment in which they go to school. Some girls are willing to ignore the censure of teachers because they believe they can achieve their dreams and goals without the aid of a teacher. Many girls know how to present the "right" image, that of a "good" student so that teachers do not label them as "bad". Girls in this group can then seek the assistance of teachers when they need it. How girls respond to "boring" classes, and the potential of sexual harassment by male teachers is discussed.

In the last section of this chapter, I examine one girl's narrative of education and her own strategy for dealing with boring teaching.. Far from a meek subservient "good girl" Reiko's narrative demonstrates that behind the Yama uniform is a girl thinking about her world, deciding what to do about it and wondering about alternatives. Reiko may not be a revolutionary or

rebellious child but in her own quiet way she is rejecting adult models and standards for a "good" education.

5.1   FIRST WEEK OF APRIL: OPENING CEREMONY FOR YAMA STUDENTS

9:00 a.m. Meeting of students, teachers, and staff in the gym. Tomorrow there will be a school year opening ceremony for parents, students, staff and teachers. The high school girls were on the right and the middle school girls on the left facing the stage. The girls were standing in straight lines. Some high school girls acted up during the ceremony. Teachers periodically walked among the girls, and stopped to scold a girl. Some girls were escorted out of the gym.

By the end of the ceremony, many of the high school girls were no longer standing straight ahead but were in little groups talking to their friends. They looked very bored. They clapped for and "cat called" at the new male teachers.

The middle school girls were quiet. There is such a physical and social difference between the two groups. The middle school girls look like children while the high school girls are young women.

I saw no loose socks or outrageously short skirts and no dyed hair but there were many hairstyles. Some high school girls wore make up. After the ceremony homeroom teachers went down the line of their homerooms and inspected each girls' overall appearance.

5.2   THE JAPANESE SCHOOL YEAR

In Japan the school year begins in April. The first term begins in April and ends in mid-summer. There is a six-week holiday in the summer. The fall term starts at the end of August and finishes in December. After this there is a short two-week holiday. The winter term begins in January and ends in March. There is a series of five in-house exam weeks during the year. These weeks do not include the cram school and national exams students take during the school year.

5.3   EDUCATION AT YAMA

Yama is a private girls' school for grades seven through twelve. There is a middle school and a high school. The middle school years comprise grades seven through nine. The high school years include grades ten through twelve. Average classroom size is 40 students. Students gain admission to the school by passing an entrance exam. Yama middle school students must take the entrance exam for the high school and are not guaranteed admission.

Yama high school is divided into three separate education tracks, upper, middle and lower. Girls are placed into a track upon admission and remain in that track for three years. There is no mobility between the tracks. Girls remain in the same homerooms for three years. Girls from different homerooms mingle during club and school related activities.

Teachers also make recommendations, which determine whether a student gains entrance into the high, middle or low tracks in the high school. Contrary to reports that entrance exams are perceived as fair and objective, many of the senior high school girls I spoke with about exams

and placements complained that their test results did not correspond to their placements. This was true for girls in the highest ranked class and for the lowest ranked classes.

Compulsory education in Japan ends after middle school and constitutes nine years of education. However, more then 95 percent of male and female students go on to high school. In 1999, the matriculation rate to high school was 96.1 percent for males and 97.7 percent for females. High schools are divided into academic, technical and commercial schools. Yama is an academic school.

In Japan, high schools are divided into public and private institutions. Potential parents assess the quality of a high school by the numbers of students that a given high school gets into prestigious universities (Okano et.al, 1999). The more students that a high school can get into eminent universities the better the parents perceive that high school to be.

Admission to universities is by entrance exam, as per the meritocracy system developed after the Meiji Restoration (1868) and further advanced during the Allied Occupation of Japan (1945-1952) after the Second World War. Many schools, including public universities, give their exams on the same day and only once in a year. Other less prestigious schools may schedule their exams on weekends so as not to compete with the better universities. A student must choose the institution where they wish to matriculate even before the exam is given. This narrows a student's options and increases the pressure that is placed on the student, her parents, and teachers. Students must balance the status of their desired university, and the exam of the specific department they wish to enter with their chances of passing that school or department's entrance exam.

5.4   THE PERCEPTION OF A YAMA EDUCATION

Yama was founded to educate girls and make them into acceptable marriage partners but it has never been an elite girls' school. It is considered by Yama teachers and community members to be a second tiered school, trying to become a part of the academic first tier. As one female teacher told me, good students at Yama belong to the second rank of Japanese high school students. The best Yama students know that their educational chances are lower than students who go to more academically prestigious high schools. Girls said that Yama was usually their third or fourth choice and that they entered Yama after failing to gain admission to a better school.

5.5   YAMA'S CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

Middle school students sit for Yama's high school entrance exam in their third year of middle school. Based on their test results they are either rejected or accepted and placed into one of three educational tracks in the high school. A student's placement in one of the three tracks is dependent upon her scores on the entrance exam, her academic record, and teachers' recommendations.

Girls who are considered by teachers the best students are placed into the science track. They receive the broadest education and are instructed for three years in Japanese, World History, Japanese History, Social Sciences, Math, Science, Art, Health, Domestic Science, and English. The American equivalent would be the Honors track for students planning on attending good colleges and universities.

Students in the highest track receive special instruction in after-school classes. In the after-school classes, girls take cram school exams that mimic university exams. They then go over their answers with teachers during the after-school classes. In this way, girls gain useful knowledge about tests that theoretically increase their chances of passing prestigious university exams.

The middle track is the English track. In this track there is a mix of excellent students and less hard working students. Students who tested well in English but may have performed poorly in other academic areas may be admitted into the English track. Without scoring well in English these girls would have been placed in the lowest track. As for the good students, some of them could have entered the higher track but preferred to specialize in English.

In their first year of high school, these girls are instructed in Japanese, World History, Japanese History, Social Sciences, Math, Science, Art, Health, Domestic Science, and English. They receive more instruction in English then the other two tracks. These are the girls I taught. By their second and third year of high school they specialize in English.

The lowest academic track is the literature and science track. Girls who performed poorly on the entrance exam and did not garner good teacher recommendations are placed into the lowest track. In their first year, girls in this track are instructed in Japanese, World History, Japanese History, Social Sciences, Math, Science, Art, Health, Domestic Science, and English.

The materials used to teach girls in the three tracks may be similar but girls in the lowest track receive an inferior education. For example, the curriculum board located in the teachers' room indicates that girls in the lowest class have more free periods than girls in the English or science tracks. They can also leave school earlier than other girls. In one week, first year girls in the lowest track had one free period each day while girls in the science and English tracks had no

free periods. During free periods there were no teachers in the girls' room. While girls in the science and English track were learning or being prepared for exams, girls in the lowest track spent fifty minutes per school day learning nothing. In addition, they have the worse teachers, and are assigned less homework than girls in the other tracks.

Teacher's attitudes towards girls in the lowest track were negative and could adversely affect girls. Teachers labeled girls in the lowest track "bad students." Teachers complained that students in the lowest classes fell asleep during classes or spent their class time checking their reflections in their compact mirrors. When I walked by the homerooms of girls in the lowest classes I frequently saw many girls with their heads down on their desks who appeared to be sleeping during a class. These girls were blamed for their bad behavior not the teachers.

5.6   THE CURRICULUM

Curricula emphasize learning materials related to university entrance exams. In fact, three times a year Yama high school students take cram school (*juku)* related national exams. These exams are meant to help students, teachers, and parents assess students' academic strengths and weaknesses.   The results of these exams are then compared to admission standards at universities.

For example, a girl who wants to go to Nihon University and major in English can compare her test scores to the scores of students who entered the English department at Nihon. She and her parents can then assess her chances of passing the school's entrance exam. If her chances are good then they may decide to let her sit for the exam. If her scores are poor then her parents may send her to a cram school to prepare. If her scores are very low then her parents and

teachers usually steer her towards schools and programs where she has a better chance of passing the entrance exams.

According to Yama teachers, contemporary parents, especially mothers, expect their daughters to do well academically. They prefer their daughters attend four-year universities, not the junior colleges that they attended in their youth. Therefore, mothers expect that middle and senior high schools will provide the preparation that their daughters need to compete academically.

5.7 STUDY PATTERNS, TEST TAKING AND ENTRANCE EXAMS

HS3s, in all the tracks, reported not studying school-related materials and instead focused their time and energy on cram school materials. Mastering cram school materials was perceived by girls as being directly related to success in university entrance exams. Yama exams and materials were perceived by girls as not related to success and therefore they tended to either not prepare for Yama exams or to spend a short amount of time in preparing for Yama exams. With the assistance of their teachers and parents girls in the highest and middle tracks are always weighing their academic options and their potential for success on university exams. As a result of these resources girls in the highest and middle tracks tried to plan investments of time, energy, money and emotion.

Girls in the highest tracks worked hard for three years in order to garner recommendations from Yama teachers for special interviews in prestigious programs. If they passed their interviews then they knew in December of their third year that they were going to

enter a good school. Thus, they could skip "exam hell" in December, January and February of their third year.

A response by Yukiko, an HS2 in the middle track, was typical of the strategies of girls in the middle track. In response to my asking her if working three years was better than going through exam hell. Yukiko laughed and said that she would rather spend six months in exam hell and have two and half years of fun than study all the time.

In contrast, Keiko, an HS3 in the highest track worked hard for three years. Keiko received a recommendation from Yama teachers for an interview in a good department at Nihon University. Nihon University is considered a good university but not one of the elite universities in Japan. After passing an essay exam, Keiko and two other students were interviewed by five professors. During the interview she was asked to answer questions about contemporary social problems and Japanese politics. Keiko passed her interview and was admitted to the program. She didn't have to go through examination hell and she knew in December that she would attend a good school. A second girl in the highest track, Mariko, though, failed at her two university interviews and had to go through exam hell.

5.8   CYCLES OF ACADEMIC PRESSURES AND RANKINGS

The intensity of the girl's schedules and the related academic demands and responsibilities placed upon them are dependent on certain factors. I argue that the stresses and problems associated with academic pressures are dependent upon the girl's academic year, her academic ranking, her goals, and the school's calendar. Some years are more critical than other years in shaping and determining academic futures.

The test taking cycle begins in earnest during the last year in grammar school (Fukuzawa and LeTendre 2001) when students prepare for middle high school entrance exams. They take middle high tests, enter a middle high school and then the next two years of school are relatively easy. Then in the third year of middle high school they have to prepare for high school entrance exams. After passing a high school exam, they enter the school and, depending on their high school placement they can spend the next three years hard at work, studying occasionally for exams, or coasting through doing very little. Pressures and the cycle are dependent on a student's past performances on exams.

Groups of girls within Yama are under enormous pressure to study and perform while other groups are under less pressure. Future goals can also determine the quality of the pressure and the experience of the girls. Girls in the highest track are under enormous pressure during their three years in high school. Typically, they work hard during their three years. Girls in the highest track study the sciences and math. This education is supposed to prepare them for university entrance exams.

5.9   STUDYING FOR EXAMS AND SLEEP PATTERNS

In order to prepare for entrance exams girls had a variety of strategies. Conversations about study strategies usually revolved around sleep schedules. In a survey of twenty-three HS3s in the middle track, eleven girls reported getting four consecutive hours of sleep a night. Seven girls said they got five or more hours of sleep a night. Five girls reported getting six or more hours a night of sleep. Many girls took one or two hour naps immediately after returning home either

from Yama or from cram school. Girls also reported their own sleep and test preparation strategies.

For example, one HS3 girl, Michiko, took a short nap between ten p.m. and one a.m. then got up to study for a few hours, took a second short nap and then got up for school. Another HS3 girl went to bed at ten p.m. and got up at two a.m. After a quick shower and a snack, she reported that she studied for five hours until leaving for Yama at seven a.m.

5.10   THE GIRLS' INTERACTIONS WITH TEACHERS

Having a desk in the teacher's room gave me the opportunity to see a wide variety of student and teacher interactions. From these observations, I was able see certain patterns in student and teacher interactions. Student- teacher interactions ranged from quick exchanges about homework to hour-long conversations about the student's academic future or personal problems.

I was surprised by the ease with which many students talked with their teachers. Many students teased and joked with their teachers. Rather than a cold austere respect laden relationship where students showed their deference to teachers (Yoneyama 1999) I saw a great deal of laughter, teasing between students and many teachers. I also saw physically or verbally aggressive behavior against teachers on the part of some students.

Many teachers indulged their students, especially the younger ones. First year middle school homeroom teachers treated their students with kindness. They listened carefully to a girl and asked her questions in either a gentle and laughing manner or in a quiet manner. According teachers, the first few weeks of school were difficult for girls. The girls were feeling lonely and

unhappy without their grade school friends. Therefore teachers were patient with them and tried to listen to them.

Teachers were gentle during the first term before the start of the summer vacation in July. After the summer vacation though there was a marked increase in correcting the girl's language so that the girls where required to use polite forms rather than direct forms of the language when addressing a teacher or when talking about another teacher. There were also more conversations by these teachers with the young girls about responsibility. They also urged the girls to begin taking more responsibility for themselves, their peers and their academics.

Much has been written on the importance of forming and maintaining human relationships and of the interdependence of these relationships in the construction of Japanese identities (Kondo 1990). As Kondo demonstrated, the personalities of participants in relationships influence the type and quality of social relationships and interactions. This was true for the teacher-student relationship at Yama. I found that teachers who demonstrated their concern for their students and listened to their students were perceived as successful teachers. These teachers were popular and sought out by students at all grade levels even when the student knew that the teacher would scold them for an infraction or warn them about their behaviors. Teachers, male and female, who were perceived by the girls as bad listeners or blind rule enforcers, were seen as unsuccessful teachers. According to girls, successful teachers earned and deserved respect but unsuccessful teachers deserved nothing.

My desk in the teachers' room was located a few feet away from one of the two entrances. From my desk I could see the whole room and observe the daily interactions of teachers and students. My position in the room allowed me to see the students who entered the room and to see which teachers they talked to the most. It also meant that students saw me as

they entered the room and would usually stop at my desk for a chat about anything and everything that was on their minds. This also meant that I could ask them questions about activities in the teachers' room. The "Office Lady" also monitored me on a daily basis. She made sure that I knew where I had to be on any given day or time. The part-time teachers are careful not to gossip in front of her as she would go straight to a full-time teacher with the news. I learned quickly to show her respect and to ask her questions even when I knew the answers because she caused so much trouble for the part-timers. She had a lot of power for a "lowly" office worker (Osagawa 1998).

I suspect that because Yama is a private school there is a great deal of interaction between students and their teachers for those students who seek such contact. One part-time teacher I spoke with who worked at a large Tokyo metropolitan high school and reported that public high school students didn't have as much access to their teachers as the Yama students.

The PTA (Parent Teacher Association) at Yama is a vital and important group and the teachers are very concerned with maintaining good relationships with it. Typically, if a teacher had a PTA meeting or was meeting with a student's parent they were in their best clothes and they were very nervous before the meeting. On other days teachers would wear casual clothes like jeans. While Yama teachers are given tenure, and thus guaranteed employment until retirement, at the school they are sensitive to and try to insure good relationships with parents. Consequently, I assume that they may be more responsive to their students than teachers at lower ranked public schools. This does not, however, insure that teachers are always sympathetic, kind or supportive of students

5.11   MONITORING GIRLS AND MIWA'S NARRATIVE

Teachers were positioned outside of the school and at the train station after school and before the school day. Periodically, teachers conducted checks of the girls' uniforms, hair color, and school bags. One morning as I was walking with three high school girls towards the school, I saw that a teacher stopped Miwa. Miwa, an HS3 in the lowest track regularly dyed her hair reddish brown, wore a black bra under her uniform, occasionally wore make up and wore blue contact lenses. The teacher stopped Miwa because of her hair and wrote out a demerit for Miwa. Miwa appeared angry and when I asked her about it later she said she was disgusted by it and tired of the school. She had tried to get around the teacher but he had seen her at the last moment and so caught her.

The receiving of a demerit meant that Miwa's homeroom teacher would receive a copy and later she would talk to Miwa about it. Miwa's attitude wasn't improved after talking to her homeroom teacher and she complained bitterly about her homeroom teacher and other teachers being mean to her and not allowing her to do what she wanted. She couldn't wait to graduate and get away from them.

After this happened I asked the other high school girls about demerits. They said that they usually followed the rules about dress and hair at the school so they didn't get into trouble. Girls employed strategies to get around their teachers. Girls though got around these appearance regulations by avoiding the teachers on patrol at Kawa station. They walked half a mile to another station further down the line where no Yama teachers were on patrol in the afternoons or in the mornings walk from that station to avoid Yama teachers.

5.12   SPORTS DAY AND HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

Ethnographic works on the Japanese schools have highlighted methods the schools use to encourage group/school identity such as sports day (Benjamin 1997). However, Yama high school girls, especially HS3s, expressed frustration, boredom, and in a few cases active rebellion against the event by sneaking off and taking naps in a small forest behind the school. Girls talked about the cultural festival held in the winter where individuals, groups of friends and individual homerooms came up with short music skits, colorful paintings of pop stars, and funny takes on television shows as far more fun, and interesting than sports day which these girls perceived as more teacher directed and thus less fun for them.

5.13   AN INCIDENT

One day in the fall, I was sitting at my desk talking with three third year high school girls. Suddenly there was a loud commotion to my left. A young male math teacher and an old female Japanese teacher had been talking and laughing with a group of third year middle school girls. Suddenly one of the girls started screaming at the older teacher, "No, no please don't say it! No, please don't say it. Stop!" The student gripped the older female teacher around the neck and shoulders and started to pull her away from the group. The older teacher was laughing for a little bit but then it became obvious that she was uncomfortable and wanted the student to stop. The student and the teacher began to wrestle. The girl and the teacher were about the same size but it was obvious that the girl was stronger than the teacher. She was able to drag the teacher about twenty feet away from the group. The girl did not stop pulling the teacher until the male teacher

and other students intervened. They stopped the girl by yelling jokes at her and by pretending to cross the room to physically intervene. There was a mixture of laughter at this and obvious discomfort on the part of the female teacher. I was surprised at the level of physical aggression on the part of the student. The girl did not get into any trouble. Rather, the teacher involved and other teachers felt that the young girl was spoiled but didn't deserve any punishment for wrestling with a teacher.

5.14   SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF GIRLS

A female teacher in her late fifties brought up a molestation case that had occurred two years earlier at another private school. She had a close friend who was a teacher at the other school and her friend had sat next to the male teacher accused of molesting a female student. The male teacher had made a series of sexual advances towards female students for the three years he had been employed. He made sexually suggestive comments to girls and acted inappropriately towards girls. This male teacher was a swim coach and had after-school access to female students. Apparently, he asked a naive first year student to meet him at the school's pool one Sunday afternoon for a special Sunday practice. He claimed that other students would be there and that everyone would practice together. When the young girl appeared she at first thought she was early because no on else was in the pools locker room. As she was changing into her swimsuit the male coach walked in and started telling her how much he loved her and how much he knew she loved him. He then raped the young girl.

When the young girl finally arrived home she told her mother the whole story. The girl, who was fifteen at the time of the attack, was traumatized. After this the mother and father called

the student's homeroom teacher. After a brief discussion the homeroom teacher telephoned the school's new principal. Soon after this all the teachers at the school became aware of the incident.

The school administrators feared that news of the rape would be published in the newspapers. The publicity would damage the schools' reputation. According to school administrators, bad publicity could threaten the economic future of the school. With a declining birth rate Tokyo private schools compete for students whereas in the past there were more than enough students for all Tokyo area schools. Potentially, published reports of a rape at a school could result in the school gaining a "bad" reputation. If the school gained a "bad" reputation because of the publicity parents and teachers would by-pass the school in favor of better schools. In this environment, the school faced two possible outcomes: first, the school's rank would drop as it took inferior students, second, enrollment would decline to the point were the school would close.

The principal and administrators tried to get the accused teacher to quit voluntarily. The teacher refused to quit and he hired a lawyer to protect his interests in the negotiations with the school. The principal and the accused teacher's lawyer negotiated an agreement. They agreed that the teacher would stay on at the school. The accused teacher could not be a homeroom teacher for three years and he would receive only seventy-five percent of his salary. The incident occurred shortly before the New Year recess. Negotiations occurred during the holiday and the principal announced the results of the agreement after the winter vacation.

According to the Yama teacher, the teachers at the other school were furious when the new principal announced the outcome of the negotiations. One senior male teacher openly questioned the principal. The senior male teacher asked that the principal rethink the agreements

and fire the accused teacher. Other teachers made the same comment to the principal during the meeting. According to the Yama teacher, the principal argued that it was his responsibility to protect the reputation of the school. The principal perceived no other method for protecting the school except to let the accused teacher stay on at the school.

In the end, the accused teacher stayed at the school but the other teachers ignored him. They socially rejected him. She used the concept of ostracization (*murahachibu) to* illustrate her point. This means to ignore, scorn or to socially reject a family in a village. Village families shunned and ignored a family that acted in anti-social ways in all ways except those but fire and funeral rites, activities that could affect other village members. The teachers at the other private school ignored the accused teacher.

The discussion of this incident began a more general conversation among the teachers about the interactions of male teachers and female students. One female teacher said,

"It is awful how these old men act around these young girls."

Another female teacher said,

"Sometimes it's the girls who lift up their skirts in front of the male teachers."

A third female teacher said,

"I worry about my two daughters and their male teachers." This conversation and other conversations suggest that middle and senior high school teachers are well aware of sexually related issues and problems between male teachers and female students."

5.15   THE GIRLS' ATTITUDES ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I was warned by high school girls on more than one occasion to be careful around certain male teachers. Certain male teachers were known to be aggressive towards girls. The girls said that they were aware of which male teachers were bad and which were safe.

During one conversation with a few high school girls, Mie an HS2 student told me,

"Lisa, you better not be alone in a room with W-sensei because he will try to do something."

The other girls shook their heads in agreement. Mie, realized during her third year in middle school that a few of the male teachers were sexually perverted and that she had to be careful around them. She said,

"I hate them. They say and act differently."

5.16   TEACHER-STUDENT TALKS

The part-time teachers used the large tables behind my desk during the school day. Teachers and students used the tables after school as a meeting place for group discussions, one-on-one consultations and discipline or problem oriented talks. Every term homeroom teachers consulted with each of their students. I was struck by the importance of the personality of the teacher in determining the content and quality of these conversations. Some teachers talked only about academic issues and problems that students had on exams while other teachers mixed academic topics with conversations about friendships, the girl's hobbies, family and other related interests. Many teachers expressed their concern for students while other teachers gave the same speech to

90

each student and asked the same questions of each student. Some girls were very interested and participated a great deal in the conversation while other girls were obviously bored and wanted to get away from the teacher and join their friends who were waiting outside the teacher's office.

The severity of discipline and daily comments about dress and school infractions by teachers was dependent upon the teachers. One older female gym teacher yelled and sharply criticized girls for the slightest infractions. The girls did not like her but reluctantly obeyed her. A biology teacher gently rebuked the girls or asked them why they were wearing the skirt too short or no socks. The girls responded to her comments and questions in a positive manner. They usually fixed what she asked them to fix. The science teacher was well respected by the girls.

Girls complained about certain teachers and told me which teachers they liked and the reasons they liked them. The science teacher was liked and respected by the girls because she would listen. She rebuked them when it was evident that they were legitimately doing something wrong. Her authority was legitimate according to girls.

During the lunch period there were always groups of girls poking their heads in the cafeteria's doors looking for a teacher or requesting that a teacher come out to talk to them. Girls were not allowed in the teachers' cafeteria but they were allowed to look in and ask for a teacher. One day a group of three girls poked their head into the room and asked for a teacher. A male teacher in his 50s, who I had not seen before because he never came to morning meetings or sat at his desk in the teacher's room, started screaming at them to get out of the cafeteria. He yelled at them. He said that they had no right to disturb a teacher or to bother the other teachers in the room with their questions. The man appeared angry. One of the teachers I was sitting with said that he was an old teacher, near retirement who cared little for students. He had been hired when

Yama wasn't an academic school and he was hanging on until retirement. He didn't like the students and students usually slept during his classes.

5.17   TEACHERS' STRESS AND EDUCATION

Yama teachers are under enormous pressure to prepare their students for university entrance exams. Teaching for and teaching about entrance exams is the primary function of education at Yama. According to teachers, parents expect that their children will be prepared for entrance exams. Teachers hired twenty or thirty years ago when the school was simply a finishing school for young ladies are under pressure to keep up with the latest in exam oriented materials. These teachers had to be retrained or have been restricted to teaching only a few classes a week.

Many teachers find teaching for exams to be restrictive and discouraging. Teachers complain about the system, and worry that students have too many tests. The teachers complain that such a narrow focus on tests leaves teachers little time to help their students learn about other factors that make for a good life or a sense of well being. Itoh-san is a teacher in her late 50s who has taught at Yama for many years. She commented that she could only help girls who sought her out. She had little time in the classroom to assist girls because the whole purpose of the classroom was to prepare the girls for a future test. This meant that teachers could not address the immediate social problems or concerns of the girls.

She felt that more and more girls are isolated from other human beings. They have no one to turn to discuss their problems. Consequently, they never learn to verbalize their worries. This leaves girls in emotional pain.

There is an economic incentive though for teachers to focus on entrance exams. For a private or public school to be considered good it must be able to demonstrate a successful history of getting students into good universities. To achieve this objective Yama must focus resources on preparing students for entrance exams. If a school doesn't prepare its students for entrance exams or fails to get its' students into good universities then it will be unable to attract new students. A private school, which cannot attract potential students, will go bankrupt. Teachers will then lose their jobs.

5.18   REIKO'S NARRATIVE OF EDUCATION

Reiko, is an HS2 in the middle track. She enjoys learning but doesn't enjoy sitting in a classroom passively taking notes while a teacher lectures. She wants to have the opportunity to ask questions and to participate in her classes. She used to enjoy World History until her second year. According to Reiko, her male history teacher is not a good teacher. He stands in front of the class and only lectures. He reads directly from the students' book. Students are required to take notes and discouraged from asking questions or making comments.

Reiko became frustrated by the situation so she went to ask the teacher if there could be more student participation in the class. According to Reiko, he said no, and that she should be more concerned with writing her notes and learning the material from him than in classroom participation. After talking with him, Reiko cried to her friends in the class. According to Reiko, she and her friends in the class have given up. They have given up any hope of changing the teacher's style of teaching, or how they are taught at Yama. Reiko said that she no longer pays attention in classes but rather likes to study the materials on her own. She gathers educational

information from other sources such as television programs, and books. As she pointed out, some of Yama materials didn't matter for entrance exams so she could easily ignore her teachers and the materials that they teach.

This story demonstrates that Reiko and students like her perceive their school exams and the rote memorization required to excel as a waste of time and energy. Girls, like Reiko, in the middle track could quietly resist their teachers. Girls in the middle track could slide by at the school even if they quietly resisted their teachers. They weren't overly dependent upon their teachers like high achieving girls nor were they labeled bad girls like girls in the lowest track.

It was harder for girls in the highest and lowest tracks to resist their teachers albeit for different reasons. Girls in the highest track were dependent upon teacher recommendations for college interviews. They gained little by resisting their teachers. Teachers labeled girls in the lowest track lazy and ill mannered. Girls in this track were easy targets for teacher abuse or criticism. Teachers assumed that girls in the lowest track were always resisting them so teachers heavily monitored them. Teachers quickly dealt with even quiet signs of student resistance among girls in the lowest track.

Students in the middle track came up with their own strategies for achieving their academic goals. Not being in the highest or lowest track meant that they had more leeway than the other girls did. Students did not passively accept a teacher's advice or criticism. Girls in the middle track could and did ignore the advice or comments of their teachers.

5.19   COMPARING YAMA TO OTHER JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOLS

The following section focuses on how Yama high school compares to other high schools in Japan. There are a variety of types of high schools in Japan with diverse and specific school cultures that influence the lives of students who attend those schools (Rohlen 1983). There is no typical high school or for that matter one unifying experience of being a high school student in Japan.

High school girls attending a private school are the focus of this work, therefore I believe that gender ideals of "femininity" and "femininity training" may be more pronounced in this work than if research had been conducted at a public co-education school. The socio-economic class of students is middle class with girls from both higher socio-economic groups and lower socio-economic groups included in the general student population. Parents who send their daughters to Yama must be able to pay tuition fees. Parents expect that their daughters will be given training in "feminine arts" such as deportment, language, flower arranging, the tea ceremony and other markers of femininity and that teachers will monitor their daughters' behaviors both at school and in public.

5.20   YAMA HIGH SCHOOL AND OTHER JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOLS

In Japan, high schools are divided into private and public schools. Public schools offer their students either an academic or vocational curriculum. Private schools focus on preparing their students for entrance exams to colleges, universities and junior colleges with varying degrees of reputation. As of 2003, private schools account for 29.3 percent of the overall 97.3 percent of

students who enter high schools (http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statist/04120801/005.pdf).
Public schools are co-educational, whereas private schools are either single sex or co-educational.

Reflecting the wider society, all high schools public and private are ranked. Rankings are based on a school's record for getting graduates into prestigious public and private universities and colleges. A school's rank and a listing of where their graduates matriculate are well publicized in school handouts, recruitment brochures, newspapers, on school websites and are generally known by parents.

Good academically focused public high schools are generally ranked higher than private schools (Rohlen 1983) although certain private schools are highly ranked and in any given area may be ranked higher than local public schools (Hendry 2003). Girls' schools are ranked lower than co-educational schools. However, on the individual level, a girl from a highly ranked private girls' school may have a better chance of entering a prestigious university than her counterpart at a public co-educational high school. In theory the educational system is a meritocracy (Hendry 2003). In practice though, locality, familial socio-economic status, gender, and other factors influence the educational outcomes of children (Okano et.al 1999).

Acceptance into high schools is based primarily upon entrance exams, although as shown above, grades and recommendations play a part in determining the placement of a child into a track. Middle school students undergo an intense period of "exam hell" when studying and then sitting for high school exams. Their performance on high school entrance exams influences their later options for post-secondary schools and colleges. The belief is that if a student passes an entrance exam for a prestigious public high school then their chances of later passing an entrance exam for a prestigious college are enhanced. The majority of Yama middle school

students pass the entrance exam into the high school. The year after I completed fieldwork some 70 percent of middle school girls passed the high school entrance exam.

Children compete for entrance into highly ranked schools from an early age, some begin the competition as early as 3 vying for places in prestigious private schools with an escalator system---children entering in primary school ride their way up to university at the same prestigious school. Yama is not one of these elite Tokyo elevator schools.

Yama is a private girls' school and as such occupies a low position in the overall academic system. Within the world of private girls' schools Yama is considered a second-tier school. Yama does not have a large percentage of problem students nor is it vocational school. Yama enjoys what one female teacher referred to as a medium reputation, neither bad nor exceptionally good. Yama's position in the rankings though means even its' best students find it difficult to compete against the worst students at better schools for entrance into universities and colleges.

The second tier-status of the school reflects the overall historical purposes of an education for Japanese girls; where having a good reputation for "finishing" girls was more important than academics. Historically, and following the larger trends and shifts in the life courses of Japanese women, Yama prepared graduates for short periods of time spent at home before marriage, work before marriage, entrance into private junior colleges, and lower ranked private women's colleges. Junior colleges are considered "good" for girls because they "finish" and prepare a girl for marriage. Yama graduates used to enter well-known Japanese companies as Office Ladies, retiring upon marriage to men at those same companies. Founded as an institution for preparing girls to marry, Yama is trying to catch up with its' counterparts in Tokyo. To survive in a country with a declining birthrate and thus fewer applicants, Yama is

revamping its' curriculum and seeking to prepare girls for entrance exams to better university departments, colleges and in some cases more prestigious junior colleges.

5.21   GEOGRAPHY

Yama is located in Western Tokyo. The school recruits throughout the city but its' students come mainly from the Western suburbs of Tokyo. For example, only 1 girl in a class of 41 lived outside the prefecture of Saitama. The socio-economic status of girls is not highlighted in this work but girls polled reported that their fathers work as white collar "salary men" at large and mid-sized Japanese companies, as teachers, or as owners of small family businesses. A few girls reported that their fathers are employed in more "blue collar" jobs such as firefighter, and truck driver. Parents who send their daughters to Yama expect their children to be prepared to compete for spots at good junior colleges, and increasingly at four-year colleges and universities. The cost of a Yama education is comparable with second-tier private schools. Still there are private schools that are double the cost of Yama and unlike public high schools Yama is not free. Girls report that some of their mothers work part-time to pay for their educations at Yama and at cram schools. One girls' mother worked as a lunch lady at a nearby primary school. As one teacher explained to me over tea one day at a local café, the ability of parents to pay for private schooling is dependent on the "lifetime employment system" and the concurrent increasing pay schedule that male employees gain as they move up in companies. If that system should fail then private schools will close down because no one will have money for them. One day at lunch, three teachers explained to me that only families whose daughters can't pass entrance exams for

"good public schools" send their children to Yama and that this "failure" requires that parents find the money required for a Yama education.

5.22   MICHIKO

More than half of Japan's youth do not advance beyond high school level, and most make no preparations for university entrance examinations. (Sugimoto 1997). Therefore, Yama graduates who prepare for and enter institutions of higher learning are in the minority when compared to the wider population of high school students. In this work I write about both students trying for entrance into post-secondary schools and students whose formal educations stop at the high school level.

For example, Michiko, in the lowest HS3 class, refused to attend school sometimes, openly rebelled against her teachers, refused to sit for college entrance exams and upon graduation took a job at an American company. Michiko and her counterparts may be in the minority at Yama but do represent a significant number of Japanese high school students whose formal educations stop after high school graduation. There is another part to Michiko's narrative though---- Michiko's family is wealthy and her father a president of a family business and yet counter to portrayals linking high academic achievement to high socio-economic class, Michiko rejected higher education and choose to pursue her own ideas. Michiko's experiences mean that socio-economic class does not automatically correlate to high academic goals and achievement among Yama students.

5.23   TAKING CARE OF STUDENTS EVEN DURING LUNCH

Given that it is a private girls' school, Yama teachers express the view that they nurture students in ways that their public school colleagues did not. Yama teachers see a direct relationship to how they treat students and maintaining their positions at the school. Teachers fear the PTA, and parent complaints to school administrators. This sensitivity on the part of teachers can be seen in how lunch, a seemingly private time for teachers, is conducted at the school. As teachers sit in the teachers' lunchroom eating and talking to their colleagues, Yama students routinely open the lunchroom's doors and call out for a teacher. The teacher usually stops eating, gets up from their seat, leaves the room, answers the student's questions and then comes back to their lunch.

Teachers routinely complained about this but said that they needed to take care of student matters at lunch or there would be complaints from parents to school administrators. Old male teachers close to retirement usually yelled at or ignored students. The other teachers commented that they did this because they knew they could get away with it. They were close to retiring and no one expected anything from them, and because when these older teachers began their careers at Yama, the school didn't need to worry about "nurturing" students.

A part-time teacher, who taught at Yama and a well-ranked public high school, commented that at the public school students were not allowed to disturb their teachers at lunch. She maintained, that at the public school teachers had more flexibility in how they responded to their students because they worried less about parents. Private schools are concerned about recruitment, public schools are less concerned and so may not "nurture" their students in the same was as Yama "nurtures" its' girls.

6.0   A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A YAMA HIGH SCHOOL GIRL

This section describes an ordinary school day in the life of a Japanese high school girl. The reader follows Mayumi as she commutes to school, chats with friends, sits through classes, attends tennis club and then returns home. Mayumi is in her first year of high school. It is in daily life where girls like Mayumi make both mundane and critical decisions. We can better understand the range of choices open and closed to girls if we first understand their daily activities and the social world in which they make decisions. It is also in her daily life that a high school girl has fun and finds what one student called pleasures. In this section, the reader sees Mayumi having fun throughout her day.

6.1   THE MORNING COMMUTE IN TOKYO

Mayumi, stands on a Tokyo morning commuter train crowded in between a businessman reading his Yomiuri newspaper and a sleeping office lady hanging on to a strap. Mayumi is wearing a white blouse, a plaid skirt and a gray jacket with her school's crest on the jacket's pocket. Her school-issued book bag with Yama's crest is slung over her shoulder. By looking at Mayumi's uniform it is easy for the other commuters to identify where she attends high school. To keep her balance Mayumi shifts her weight with each swaying movement of the train car. Mayumi is quiet and her eyes are half closed. Mayumi has been riding the train for forty minutes.

Like other Yama students Mayumi will ride the train for an hour in the morning. She usually leaves her home around 6:45 A.M. and after walking to the train station she boards a train around 7 A.M.

Mayumi seems to be a modest and quiet young lady. Then the train stops at Oichi station and one of Mayumi's girlfriends boards the train. Mayumi loudly calls to her friend, "*Ai-chan kochi, koch.*" (Ai, here, here).   Ai giggles and pushes her way through the crowded train to stand next to Mayumi.

The two girls stand together laughing and talking about a television drama they watched the night before. Ai and Mayumi argue over the attractiveness of the Japanese actors in the drama. Ai points to one of the train's numerous advertisements and exclaims that the two boys in the musical group the "Kinki Kids" are cuter than any of the actors in last night's drama. Mayumi agrees with her and then they argue over who is the cutest member of the "Kinki Kids."

Mayumi and Ai make more comments to one another and giggle about the other commuters around them. This morning there is a particularly "odd" male commuter in their train car. In loud voices they make fun of the male commuter and say his glasses are weird, that he's fat and shaped like a bear. They talk so loudly that the man and the other commuters can hear their critical comments.

Mayumi and Ai maintain their distance from Yama HS3 students who are riding in the same train car. When older girls are around them, Mayumi and Ai are either silent or quietly whisper to one another. At each stop there is a massive influx of people departing and entering the train. With each movement of people the two girls push their way through the crowds so they can stand farther away from the older Yama students. Mayumi and Ai try not to attract the attention of older Yama girls.

6.2   WALKING TO SCHOOL

Mayumi and Ai get off at Kawa station after riding the train for another twenty minutes. The two mingle with hundreds of girls in Yama uniforms walking down the station's steps and exiting Kawa station. Mayumi and Ai usually arrive at the station somewhere between 8:00 and 8:20 A.M. They arrive earlier if they have homeroom responsibilities at school or if they plan to buy their breakfasts at one of the three convenience stores in their school's neighborhood.

Usually it takes Mayumi and Ai about five minutes to walk directly from Kawa station to their school. Along the way the girls pass two bookstores, three restaurants, two coffee shops, a flower shop, a *pachinko* parlor, two small family-run grocery stores, a coffee shop and two stationery stores. A few of the shops are just opening but most stores are closed during the girls' morning commute. All the shops will be open in the afternoon during the girl's commute home.

Today, Mayumi and Ai stop at a pastry shop located next to the station for a morning breakfast of a muffin and a donut. They wait in line behind other Yama girls who laugh, talk loudly and gossip.

Next, they stop by a new Ministop convenience store where they sit at one of the tables located in the store. Mayumi and Ai sit and talk for a few minutes with three other girls. The three other girls are finishing their sweet rolls and iced teas. All the girls complain about the amount of homework they were supposed to complete the night before. The girls confess that they didn't complete the homework and will try to get some of it done during the day. They all laugh about this.

As the girls walk their route to school five teachers are on the look out this morning. One teacher is positioned at the front of the station. Two teachers are standing in the crowded lane leading out of the station. They are located near a bakery frequented by Yama girls during their

morning commute to school. The fourth teacher is positioned at the crosswalk. A fifth teacher is across the street and watches the girls as they cross the street.

The teachers' presence is required to check on the students' safety. The teachers are also there to monitor the girls' behavior and to check on their appearance. Teachers glance at the girls' uniforms to make sure the students' skirts are not too short and that girls are not wearing loose socks. Loose socks are white and cascade down the calves. Girls glue the socks onto their calves with special sock glue. The socks taper from the girls' calf towards the shoes and then drag on the ground. Yama policy strictly forbids girls to wear loose socks. Other Tokyo high schools allow their students to wear them though.

Mayumi and Ai leave the convenience store and walk towards Yama. They join a cluster of other friends and laugh and talk loudly on their walk to Yama. As students enter their gate at the school the two teachers on duty at the gate greet the girls. Some mornings Yama's principal, Yoshida-sensei, is at the gate. Yoshida-sensei greets each group of girls with a good morning. Girls use the honorific greeting, "*ohayō gozaimasu*" (good morning) to the teachers and the principal. If a girl makes a mistake and uses the less honorific form of good morning, her peers correct her. Her peers laugh and make a joke of it and the girl who made the mistake usually smiles shyly and blushes.

6.3 HOMEROOM

Mayumi and Ai enter the school and put outside shoes, their black loafers, into their lockers and take out their school shoes. These shoes look like a cross between a gym shoe and a slipper. The girls write their family name on the slippers. The rubber tops of the slippers are in different

colors corresponding to the grade that the wearer is in. As the school year progresses girls write pop star's names, friend's names or cartoons on their shoes. By mid-year their school slippers are covered with writing and look quite messy.

Mayumi and Ai enter their section of the school and then enter their homeroom. Their classroom is located on the second floor of the school building. The room is on the same floor as the teacher's room. The room is a typical classroom with rows of students' desk facing a teacher's desk. The teacher's desk is elevated so that the teacher looks down on the students. Behind the teacher's desk is a long green chalkboard. There is a row of long windows that look out onto the school's courtyard and which provide natural light. Students have hung up a calendar next to the front door. Next to the door there is a list comparing the homeroom's recent test scores with the results of other first year homerooms. This homeroom did well in some subjects but not as well in other subjects. The homeroom ranks in the middle for final results.

There are 41 students in Mayumi's homeroom. In the other first year English homeroom there are 42 students.

Before the start of the school day, students are loud and rambunctious in their homerooms. Mayumi and Ai greet their friends and proceed to take off their coats and hang them up in their homeroom. They go to their desks and dump out the contents of their school bags. Erasers, schoolbooks, comic books, magazines and "Hello Kitty" key chains fall out of their bags and onto their desks and the floor.

Mayumi's cell phone falls out of her school bag. She quickly grabs it, turns off the ringer and puts the phone back in her school bag. Yama students are not allowed to have or to carry cell phones although at least half the members of Mayumi's homeroom have a cell phone. In fact, friends remind one another to turn their cell phone ringers off before the start of the school day.

After school, on the way back to the train station or while on trains friends remind one another to check their phone messages and to turn on their phone's ringers.

Mayumi goes outside her classroom and puts what books she doesn't need for the morning away in her locker. As she is doing this there is a great deal of yelling, teasing and running around the rooms by the other high school students. The noise level is deafening. Little can be heard above the yelling, laughing and giggles of the girls. Some girls are finishing homework or quietly reading a book or a comic book *(manga)*. Most girls are visiting with their friends and talking before the school day officially starts. Other girls are eating their first or second breakfasts of the day.

In Mayumi and Ai's classroom there is a group of eight girls clustered around the desk of Yuriko. Yuriko is standing and doing a variety of imitations of teachers. She is holding her body as a male teacher does and mimicking his high-pitched voice. The other girls are laughing at her very good imitation of him. Yuriko makes fun of one of the female gym teachers by barking out orders and running in place. The other girls laugh and exclaim how well she does each teacher.

After school, Yuriko will share her imitation of my teaching with a few friends and with me. Yuriko mimics other teachers for me and makes me guess which ones she is doing. She is so good that even I can guess correctly. She makes me laugh too.

At another desk, a few girls debate the athletic merits of members of Japan's soccer teams. Soccer players, especially when Japan made the world cup playoffs, were very popular idols and objects of affection among the middle and senior girls.

There is nothing quiet, somber or serious about these girls as they run from schoolroom to schoolroom chatting with friends. The majority of these girls like school but not because they

love learning. If you ask them if they like school they will say they don't like certain subjects or certain teachers but they love to come to school to be with their friends.

Before classes start students talk, laugh and shout greetings to one another. Students grow quiet only after homeroom teachers enter their rooms. But even then the level of noise and teacher-student interaction does not conform to some outside standard. Rather a teacher's own personality and approach to teaching makes a difference in the behaviors of the students. The personality of a homeroom teacher influences how students act. If a homeroom teacher is open, friendly and easy going then his or her students will continue their easy morning banter, giggles and conversations. The only difference is that the homeroom teacher will join in the girls' conversations. A teacher's personality will also influence how other teacher's perceive his or her homeroom.

6.4   CLASSES

The school bell rings and the school's middle and high school gates are closed at 8:30. Any girl who arrives late is met by one of two teachers on duty at the gates. She must write her personal name and class name in a book. She must also give a reason for being late. Girls are supposed to be sitting at their desks at 8:30 but as the bell rings many are still running around the school, their rooms, or talking to teachers inside or outside the teacher's room. When the bell rings the teachers quickly tell their students to hurry back to their homerooms. Girls run down the halls of the school laughing and yelling. They apologize if they knock into anyone and they say good morning to everyone as they run at full speed to their homerooms.

From 8:30 to 8:40 the girls have homeroom. Their homeroom teachers arrive at their rooms sometime after the bell rings and stay for five minutes. Teachers take roll and make announcements. The homeroom experience of Mayumi and Ai is a good one because they have a kind and supportive male teacher. He is quick to assist girls and to make sure they understand what is required of them. They like him even though they mimic him. Sometimes they draw a picture of him on the board saying something funny, singing lyrics to a pop song or doing a dance. They draw it in the morning before he arrives for homeroom. Then they wait for his response after he enters their room. He usually laughs and makes a funny comment to them.

Girls in other homerooms are not so lucky. Compared to Mayumi's homeroom teacher other girls' homeroom teachers are strict, cold and unsupportive. Girls perceived that having a strict and unresponsive homeroom teacher contributed to stress in their lives. Girls reported that having a good homeroom teacher who helped them navigate and understand their academic careers reduced their school related stress. In addition, mean teachers did not deserve respect, according to the girls in my study. Warm responsive teachers though did deserve respect, according to students.

Classes begin at 8:45. Mayumi and Ai's homeroom starts its' day with math. They will have a math lesson for fifty minutes and then a ten-minute break. During the break they have to quickly change into their gym clothes in their classroom. Then they run to the gym which is located on the other side of the school for their gym class. After gym they run back to their homeroom, change their clothes and prepare for their science lesson. After this they will have their English class. They have a fifty-minute lunch break after their English class.

Before eating their lunches Mayumi and Ai turn their desks around and form a six-desk cluster with other friends in their homeroom. Other girls in the room will eat their lunches

together too. Girls form clusters with their desks or switch seats to sit and eat lunch with their own cliques in their homerooms. In one-second year homeroom I observed as many as eight clusters in a room with 42 students. Membership in lunch eating cliques remained fairly constant over a three-month period. One or two girls defected to other lunch eating cliques for a short time but usually rejoined their original clique. When I asked girls who they ate lunch with they said they usually ate lunch with their closet friends in their homerooms. A few girls ate lunch alone and typically studied while they ate.

After moving their desks, Mayumi and Ai run to get a drink at one of the six vending machines located in the school. Standing in line for the vending machines is a social event for the girls. While waiting in line Mayumi and Ai chat with friends who are in other homerooms. This is an opportunity for Mayumi and Ai to catch up with friends and to gossip about teachers, classes and other girls.

The vending machines only operate during the lunch hour and for a few hours after school. They sell a variety of soft drinks and real fruit juices. After getting their drinks the two girls run back to their homeroom. Today, Mayumi's mother made her a lunch ofsmall pieces of fried chicken and a little potato salad. She drinks a can of coke with her lunch. Then she eats a large chocolate donut for dessert. Her lunch is in a pink plastic container, with "Hello Kitty" on the lid. Ai finds that her mother has made her a lunch with three small meatballs, a little tomato salad with mayonnaise dressing and a large snickers candy bar for dessert. Ai's lunch box is just a plain red plastic box, although she has "Hello Kitty" chopsticks. During lunch Mayumi and Ai sit with four other friends and spend forty minutes chatting, laughing and eating.

During lunch, some girls leave their own homerooms and run to their friend's homerooms to talk. Other girls write comments in friendship books; friendship books which are shared

among the girl's closest confidants. Some girls go to the teacher's room to talk to teachers. During lunch girls compare and swap print club pictures and paste their friend's pictures into their own schedule/diary books. One girl sits alone and reads, "The Diary of Anne Frank." Other girls cluster around a desk and pull out a picture of "Luna Sea", a popular music group in Japan. The girls discuss who is cute in the group and fight over who is the cutest member of the group. The noise level is high in the rooms.

By the time the girls have finished their lunches their desks are littered with plastic wrappers, cans, plastic containers and pink and blue handkerchiefs. Before their next class begins they clean up their rooms and take their garbage to recycling bins located in the courtyard of the school. Their homeroom teachers do not tell them to clean up their homerooms. The girls are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and for making sure that their homerooms are tidy before their next class begins.

After lunch Mayumi and Ai have three more classes. The school day ends at 3:30. After school they and other members of their homeroom clean their homeroom. If it's their turn they will have to take a written report to their homeroom teacher and he or she will sign the report stating that the room has been cleaned. The teacher will not check the room before signing the report.

Mayumi and Ai give their homeroom diaries to their homeroom teacher. In classroom diaries students report the activities of the class for the day and homeroom member's birthdays. Depending on the homeroom teacher students may write about their favorite teen idols and ask their teacher's opinion.

In one homeroom diary, the teacher and his students kept up a month long dialogue about a popular teen idol. There were pictures drawn of the idol by the students and the teacher made

comments asking why they liked him but not other teen idols. The teacher also asked girls to think about the pop star's personality and whether the pop star was a good person. The girls replied that he was cute and that the pop star looked kind.

What is included in these books depends on the relationship between the homeroom teacher and her/his students. If the homeroom teacher is open to students then a wide variety of topics and concerns of the girls will be in homeroom books. A written dialogue between teachers and students begins in the middle school years. Students are required to write self-reflection essays throughout their middle and senior high school careers. Teachers read their students' essays, make comments and then return the essays to their students. Subsequently, there is written dialogue between teachers and students. This dialogue can and does grow more serious as the girls grow older.

Along with a homeroom book, middle school girls hand in their own individual books. Girls write about the academic subjects they like or dislike and what they could do to improve as students and people. These personal diaries are meant to help students think about how they act, and how they can improve. They must also write about their school trips, club activities and important social issues affecting young people in Japan.

6.5   SCHOOL CLUBS

Today is Thursday so Mayumi has tennis club. Mayumi watches the younger girls set up the tennis nets and get out the tennis balls for practice. Then at the start of the club members greet one another and their teacher. Today, they break into groups of two and practice hitting the ball back and forth. After the club is over the older girls will supervise the younger girls cleaning up.

Many of Mayumi's classmates join her in the tennis club but other classmates are in the dance club, the music club, the English club and other clubs. Other girls belong to the workout club, the tea ceremony club or the Ping-Pong club. Students are required to join one club at the school. Attendance is mandatory in some clubs but less important in other clubs. The level of student participation in clubs is dependent upon a few factors including club membership, the preferences of the teacher who coaches or assists in the clubs, and the requirements of the club.

Attendance and full participation are required of tennis club members. The youngest girls set up the courts and the baskets of balls that will be used during tennis practice. Attendance is mandatory because practice is considered important for learning tennis. The youngest girls are rarely allowed near the courts but practice their swings and serves outside the court areas against a large net. The older girls practice and play on the court. The tennis coach is not well liked by the girls and is scary according to the youngest girls. He is known to hit girls on the head who don't listen to him or who don't practice well. He barks commands and screams at the girls.

The atmosphere is more relaxed in other clubs. For example, the middle high school English club were I assisted another teacher was well attended by the youngest girls but the older girls attended infrequently. The teacher did not take attendance nor was she demanding of the girls. Many times the club was a clustering of groups of girls sitting together talking and laughing. They usually ignored what the other teacher said and what I said to them. The only time they were quiet was when they watched a film, usually a Disney film in English with Japanese subtitles.

6.6   CRAM SCHOOL CYCLE

As HS1s in the middle track, Mayumi and Ai are fortunate because they don't have to attend a cram school. If they decide to sit for competitive University entrance exams they will start to attend a cram school during the summer between their first and second year of high school. By the end of their second year in high school they will attend a cram school a few times a week. Some girls went to cram school as much as ten hours a week. By their third year they will attend a cram school two or three nights a week, a half-day on Saturdays and a full day on Sundays. The process will culminate in an intensive period of cram school attendance and cramming from December of their third year until January or early February when they sit for university exams. From mid December to late February third year student will not be required to attend Yama except for a few special events and half days.

For now, though, Mayumi and Ai enjoy their freedom and the luxury of having time. They can choose to go directly home or if there is time they can hang out with their girlfriends at a bookstore or a McDonalds restaurant. Unlike, older high school girls who go to cram school directly after school and prepare for university entrance exams until 9 or 10 at night, Mayumi and Ai can make decisions about how and where to spend their after school time.

6.7   THE AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUTE

After tennis club Mayumi returns to her homeroom and changes back into her school uniform. She hurries to put on her uniform, get her books together and join her friend, Ai. Together Ai and Mayumi chat and laugh about the tennis club. They retrieve outside shoes from their shoe

113

lockers and head out the gate with other students. Ai and Mayumi are on their way to the train station. On the way they stop at a bookstore and browse. Ai buys some new penguin shaped erasers and Mayumi buys a new notebook.

Mayumi and Ai leave the bookstore and walk to the station. It is about 5 p.m. and the streets outside are filled with middle high girls in black and white sailor uniforms and Yama high school girls in their plaid skirts and white blouses.

Ai and Mayumi says she hates Japan because it's so dirty and its environment is so bad. She says this because a big dump truck has just emitted a large cloud of black smoke and it's rising towards Mayumi and Ai as they cross the street. The smoke is at waist level. Ai says that when she grows up she wants to leave Japan and live in a clean country. Mayumi agrees with her but says other countries are dirty too. I ask them how they know about other countries and they say that they learn about other countries by watching television shows. Mayumi says she's afraid because the North Koreans have just fired a missile near Japan and she's afraid that one will hit Tokyo. I ask her how she knows about this and she says that it was on a TV show in the morning and her mother was talking about it.

As we enter Kawa station groups are heading for a line leading to Shinjuku, a major Yamanote station located within Tokyo. Other girls head toward Western suburban communities. Mayumi, Ai and I walk up the stairs to ride the line that heads towards the suburban towns.

We get on the train. Fortunately the train is not crowded and we all get to sit down together. Mayumi and Ai laugh on the train and discuss the events of the day. They also exchange information about their favorite television program, "L.L" which is on tonight at 8p.m. The show will have a variety of musical guests on it and performances by some of their favorite pop stars. Again, they discuss and compare one pop star to another. Mayumi says that tonight she

has to practice her piano before the show and Ai says that she may be going to her grandmothers' house and so she won't be able to watch the whole show.

Usually after leaving school for the day, Mayumi and Ai stop off at a McDonalds to spend an hour talking about the day. They unwind by talking about their friends, classmates, and complaining about their teachers and about tests. Today, though, Mayumi has to go directly home because she has to practice the piano. Ai gets off at her stop and says goodbye to the two of us. Then Mayumi gets off at her stop and we say goodbye to one another too.

6.8   RETURNING HOME

Mayumi usually arrives home between 6 and 7 p.m. Her mother does not work so she is at home when Mayumi arrives home. Mayumi's brother is a university student who typically arrives home around 8 p.m. or gets home after the family has gone to bed. Mayumi's father usually arrives home around 8 p.m. and the family eats dinner together when they can. Mayumi reported that she ate dinner with her whole family two or three nights a week and always on a Sunday.

I asked thirty-nine first year students who they typically ate dinner with during the school week. Fourteen of them reported eating dinner three to four nights a week with their whole family, including their fathers. They usually ate dinner one-week night with their whole family and ate with their whole family on Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights. Given that the Japanese media maintains that the Japanese father is rarely at home for dinner I was surprised by the girls' answers. These same reports blame absentee fathers for teen problems. In discussing their dining patterns I found a few patterns.

115

The majority of girls said that their mothers delayed dinner until their fathers arrived home rather than feed their children separately. This meant that families ate as late as 8:00 or 8:30 in the evening. If their fathers were going to be later than 8:30 the kids and the mom would usually eat together.

Nine girls said they usually ate dinner with the whole family two nights a week. They usually ate with their whole family one-week night and either on Friday, Saturday or Sunday night. Girls in this group typically ate dinner with the whole family on Sunday nights. They usually ate dinner with their whole family on Sundays because their fathers didn't have to work on Sundays.

Ten other girls said they usually ate dinner with their whole family on Sundays. Six girls said they ate dinner with their whole family only twice a year. Usually they shared a meal with their whole family at New Years or during the summer holidays. Girls in this last group usually ate at a kitchen table with siblings or alone while their mothers were cooking, cleaning or doing other household chores.

As high school girls get closer to sitting for university entrance exams, they have fewer and fewer dinners at home with their families. In fact, HS3 girls in my study usually ate fast food before or after cram school with friends. They only ate dinner with their families on Saturday nights. Sundays were spent at cram schools and girls reported that they ate fast food during lunch and dinner breaks at their cram schools. One girl, Hiromi, reported that earlier in her high school career she had eaten with her family two or three nights a week and that her whole family still ate together even when she wasn't present.

The Japanese media has made much of the working absentee father and the negative impact that his absence in families has on the social development of children (AERA 1998). The

role of nurturing fathers who do spend time with their children is a less explored topic (AERA 1997). Far from blaming absentee fathers for not being at home with their families, the time, year in school and academic goals of a child can be the reason why families do not eat dinners together and do not have the time to spend with each other. The hours required to prepare for exams, to attend cram schools and to commute leaves Japanese teens little or no time for their families. If a Japanese child is to succeed academically they have to give up family dinners, time with siblings and time with their parents. Sundays typically the only full day off from work for Japanese workers, especially men, and usually a day for fathers and children to socialize is not a holiday for children preparing for entrance exams. Children spend their Sundays at cram schools, not with their fathers.

6.9   MAYUMI'S HOMEWORK PATTERN

Tonight Mayumi eats dinner with her brother, father and her mother. Afterwards she does one hour of homework. She has a lot of homework but she decides not to work on it tonight. This week there are no tests to worry about so she decides to take it easy. Last week she had to study three hours a night because it was an exam week at the school. In comparison, this week she has only spent one hour a night working on her school assignments. She completes her homework while listening to her new Mariah Carey CD.

6.10   LATER IN THE EVENING

After finishing her homework, Mayumi leaves her room and goes downstairs. She turns on the TV and watches, the musical show, "L.L." Her mother watches part of the show with her. By the time the show is over it's past 11:00. Her mother reminds her that tomorrow is a school day so Mayumi gets ready for bed. She brushes her teeth and puts on her "Hello Kitty pajamas. She turns on her "Kinki Kid's" CD and gets into bed. She falls asleep around 1:00 a.m. Mayumi, like other Yama students in her school year, gets five or six hours of sleep a night.

Tomorrow is a Saturday so it is a half-day at school. Sunday is her only day off from school. Saturday and Wednesday mornings she has school in the morning but not in the afternoons. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays are full days at school. Saturday night Mayumi may stay up until two or three a.m. listening to music and reading a novel. Sundays she will usually meet friends to go shopping and to see a movie in Ikebukuro or Shinjuku.

7.0   THE GIRLS' VIEW OF EDUCATION AND LIFE

"Obviously, because of the pyramidal shape of status in both Japanese education and employment, the "better" the school or job the fewer opportunities there are to win a place at the top. The most restrictive view has it that success comes only through a Tokyo University degree, only from its law department, and only by assuming a Class I position in the ministry of finance. Given that, training for other ways of making a living is necessarily ranked lower: yet, because of the egalitarian and meritocratic ideal of the Japanese educational system, a definite stigma is placed on anything that early on smacks of reducing a child's chances to climb to the very top."

Merry White, *The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children*

Academic and popular portrayals of Japanese teens as assiduous, achievement-oriented students have given rise to a monolithic image of Japanese high school students—an image that presents academic competition as the overwhelmingly dominant concern in the minds of the young. Though academic competition is no doubt important, these portrayals simplify the complexities and diversity among girls.

In this chapter, I discuss the girls' views of the educational challenges that they have faced and will face in the future. I also demonstrate that girls have their own and, in some ways,

contrary views of what a good education means. Far from accepting that educational credentials will determine their futures, these girls seek ways to find fulfillment and potentially interesting futures without a prestigious degree. In some cases girls overtly reject educational pathways that seemingly lead to prestige. Inherent in the girls' narratives are their social and emotional concerns that are intertwined with their educational goals. I argue that educational goals and pathways of the girls cannot be divided from their current emotional lives. In this chapter I also write about the girls' view of relationships with classmates, group dynamics and friendships within Yama.

7.1   YUKIKO'S NARRATIVE

"I can't escape tests if I want to get into a good University. In Japan, to get a job

to enter a good college is a course of the elite. I don't want to be the elite. I want

to be a normal human and to have a normal life. Right now, because I don't want

to be elite I want to find my own pathway. I want to search and I will try to find a

pathway but to tell the truth I don't know what to do."

Yukiko is an HS1 in the middle rank. My first introduction to Yukiko was as her English conversation teacher. I was also her English club mentor. Later during the fall term she started coming to my desk after school and we talked about a variety of subjects. According to her homeroom teacher, Yukiko was a hardworking student whose grades and test scores steadily improved over the course of her first year.

She went to the United States on a Yama sponsored trip during the summer of her first year. She and 42 other HS1s spent six weeks in Oregon living with American home stay families

and going to ESL courses five days a week. After the trip to America, Yukiko sought me out and we began a series of conversations about Japanese young people, American teens, and her own life goals.

Yukiko had many questions in and out of class. In class, she asked well-reasoned questions about English grammar and word usage. She also asked questions about American culture and habits. Yukiko laughed and talked with other girls in the class. She had two close girlfriends in her class and a wider circle of friends in the class and in her English club. She appeared to be a well-adjusted girl, a good student who got along well with her peers and with her teachers.

Yukiko's taped narrative reinforced my view of her as a happy well-adjusted girl. On her tape she included chats with friends. She talked about her family and her friendships. Yukiko's father owned his own business and she saw him one or two nights a week for dinner, and on Sundays he was usually at home. Yukiko's mother did not work outside of the home and her mother was always home when Yukiko and her two younger brothers returned from school.

Yukiko expressed doubts about studying so much. Yukiko also talked about her worries and fears. Yukiko said she had some problems with her parents. Mainly, they told her to study more than she wanted to study and she felt pressure from them to perform academically. She said stress came from her parents, from her school and sometimes from her friendships. She felt that school was stressful because there was too much pressure, too many tests, and too few choices, although like many of her peers she maintained that she enjoyed going to school everyday because she could spend time with her friends, which helped her get through the pressures of school.

She said,

"I am a young person, of course, and I, and all of us, have problems. I have big

problems and little problems. Problems with school, with our teachers, problems

with our parents and, of course, problems with our friends. All of these problems

are stressful. But I have friends and my mother helps me too."

Yukiko, like her counterparts, worried and dreamed about her future. She wanted to

please her parents and with this in mind she tried to do well in school. She said that the better she

did in school the happier her parents were. She felt supported and loved by her parents but

occasionally she had arguments with them or fought with her mother. Still, Yukiko wondered

and worried how to balance competing demands on her time and energy. She wanted to do well

in school both for her parents and to insure that she had a good future. She also wanted to be

with her friends and read books, watch movies and talk with her girlfriends, like many of her

counterparts.

Still, Yukiko expressed ambivalence about her choices and about her future. She felt

unsure about her life and the reasons why she studied. She was unclear about her future and

expressed frustration with the school's guidance,

"What do I want to be in the future? I don't know! I don't really know what I

want. I always wonder what I want to do. When I think about it I get confused and

I worry. The school guides us into making a decision. They tell us to hurry up and

make a decision. They tell us we have to make a decision. I wonder if it is

appropriate or right to decide our future so early. I think it's too early to decide. I

think it's too early to make us choose classes, a track or a career. I hear that deciding on a future is very, very important but in my mind this is a very big problem. I am a young person. I can't decide. I really can't find anything. Really, I can't decide. It's really too tough. We are too young."

7.2 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GIRLS: SENPAI AND KŌHAI RELATIONSHIPS

Girls considered and called any Yama student older than them a *senpai*. A *kōhai* was a Yama student who was younger than one at the school. I argue that the quality of *senpai-kōhai* relationships is dependent on the personalities of the girls involved in the relationships. To illustrate this point I will refer to two different examples. First, I draw from material I gathered on Yama's dance club where girls enjoyed good *senpai-kōhai* relationships. Second, to further illustrate that personality makes a difference in the content and quality of these relationships I refer to an event that occurred one day before the summer break.

The older girls in the dance club created a relaxed and friendly environment in which younger girls felt comfortable. Younger girls sought out the advice of their dance club seniors and compared to their counterparts who avoided their own elders in Yama's hallways younger dance club members happily greeted their dance club *senpai*.

Rie is an HS2 in the highest track and a co-captain of the dance club. Rie is a very gentle girl who worked very hard at whatever she took up. She seemed to be one of those rare high achievers who could combine both academics with social pursuits. She did comment that she would probably have to give up being in the dance club when she became an HS3.

123

One day while talking to her in the hallway outside of the teacher's room two middle school students came up to ask me a question. They realized that Rie was talking to me and they greeted her in a very friendly and open manner. She greeted them back in a warm and kind manner. Their greetings struck me as significant because of the warmth, openness and friendliness the girls showed towards one another. We all chatted for a bit and then the two younger girls left. After the younger girls left I asked Rie about them and about the *senpai-kōhai* relationship. She said she felt protective of the younger girls and really appreciated how hard they worked for the last dance competition. Later, I asked the younger girls about Rie and they said she was very kind to them and friendly. They felt lucky to be members of the dance club and to have her as their *senpai*.

The open and relaxed environment that the older girls created helped them win too, according to Rie. In December, the dance club won a nationwide high school dance competition and the dance club was quite happy about this. Members of the club had worked for over a year to perfect their steps and to be ready for the competition.

The above example of a good *senpai and kōhai* relationship contrasts with a second *senpai and kōhai* situation I saw one day before the summer vacation began. As I was leaving my high school English club and walking with four HS1 girls down a hall we started talking about the *senpai and kōhai* relationship. The girls said that they had bad experiences and good experiences. What mattered, they said was the type of girl who was your elder. If an elder student is nice then the relationship would be a good one but if she is mean the relationship would be difficult. Throughout fieldwork, I solicited the opinions of a multitude of girls on the *senpai and kōhai* relationship. They all said that the character or personality of the s*enpai* was critical in *senpai and kōhai* relationships.

For example, as five of us walked down a school hallway on one summer day I noticed that Yurie, who was usually a very lively and open person suddenly shrank back and whispered to me to stand in front of her. I did this and as we continued down the hall two HS3 girls passed us. The younger girls I was with stopped talking and stared at the ground as the older girls walked towards us. The older girls eyed our group and quietly passed us by. Yurie and her friends only began talking when the older girls were out of sight. Yurie and her friends expressed their fear of the two older girls.

After the older girls passed, Yurie said they were really scary *senpai* and that it was best not to have any contact with them. She said that the one girl loved a particular math teacher and would bully other girls who didn't like him or who liked him too much. She would find out whether you liked him by asking your friends or others. Yurie explained that the year before in a school club one of the *senpai* had gotten into a fight with Yurie's friend. Yurie's friend also loved the math teacher and this caused the *senpai* to yell and abuse the younger girl. All the younger girls learned not to say anything too negative or positive about the math teacher. They expressed their fear of the two *senpai* and other *senpai* too.

7.3   RESISTING EXAMS

A majority of girls in this study didn't focus their time and energies on taking exams; rather, they studied in cycles related to test taking. If there was an exam period approaching, they crammed for tests if there were no tests they didn't study. When I asked twenty-two mid-ranked HS2 girls whether they would rather take an entrance exam or have an interview at a university, all the girls said that they would rather cram during the months leading up to university entrance exams

than study for three years and be granted a recommendation by the high school for an interview at a university. They said they didn't want to spend all their time in high school studying, but that they would rather pursue their own interests, hobbies and fun.

Marikos' story at the beginning of this work illustrates a route taken by many girls, ignoring their teachers. Reiko's story in chapter five also shows us that girls ignore teachers who do not teach. Mariko and Reiko perceived their school exams and the rote memorization required to excel on exams as a waste of time and energy. Girls like Reiko in the middle track could quietly resist their teachers. Girls in the middle track could slide by at the school even if they quietly resisted their teachers. They weren't overly dependent upon their teachers like high-achieving girls, nor were they labeled bad girls like girls in the lowest track.

It was harder for girls in the highest and lowest tracks to resist their teachers, albeit for different reasons. Girls in the highest track were dependent upon teacher recommendations for college interviews. They gained little by resisting their teachers. Teachers labeled girls in the lowest track lazy and ill mannered. Girls in this track were easy targets for teacher abuse or criticism. Teachers assumed that girls in the lowest track were always resisting them so teachers heavily monitored them. Teachers quickly dealt with even quiet signs of student resistance among girls in the lowest track.

Students in the middle track came up with their own strategies for achieving their academic goals. Not being in the highest or lowest track meant that they had more leeway than the other girls did. Students did not passively accept a teacher's advice or criticism. Girls in the middle track could and did ignore the advice or comments of their teachers.

Teacher's interactions with students and the messages they transmit to students are dependent on the student's school year. First-year middle school girls are counseled by teachers

to learn how to get along with other students and are admonished to self-correct their speech habits. Many teachers complained that they had to tell the older girls, over and over again, that if they didn't study they would end up spending a whole year of their lives going to special cram schools so they could get into a university.

The teachers complained that such a strong focus on academics and test taking left them little time to focus on other factors that make for a good life or a sense of well being. One teacher showed me a collection of essays her third year students wrote to her at the end of their high students are counseled to think about the future and to work hard at their school careers in December. The girls' essays discussed such diverse topics as divorce in their families, problems in their family relationships, problems with boyfriends, and the idea of love and other frustrations. She commented that only the girls who physically sought her out and asked for some assistance could she help because the whole purpose of the classroom was to prepare the girls for a future test and a future exam. This meant that teachers could not address the immediate problems or concerns of the girls even when the teacher was a thoughtful and considerate person who was accessible and popular with the girls. She felt that more and more girls were being isolated from other human beings and that consequently they had no one with whom to discuss their concerns.

Consequently, by not being able to verbalize or emotionally express their frustrations or worries the girls were left alone and their problems turned inward and they were left in pain.

7.4   SACHIKO'S REBELLION AGAINST AN EDUCATION

In contrast, Mariko's counterparts in the lower track expressed conflicts between family duty and self-realization. Sachiko, an HS3, worked at McDonalds part time, slept during many of her classes, and couldn't wait to leave school at the end of each day. Another student introduced me to Sachiko while I was sitting at my desk. Sachiko and I chatted about her day and she asked me to stop by her at McDonalds after school one day when I had time.

A few weeks later I talked with Sachiko about Yama, and about her post-secondary plans. On that day, Yama had a sports festival and as I was wandering around the sports field Sachiko called me over to her and her group of friends. I sat down with them and we talked. She said that in the morning she and her friends had snuck off the Yama campus and taken naps for a few hours in the woods behind the campus. They all said they were bored with high school and with their lives at Yama. They couldn't wait to be free.

When I asked Sachiko what she planned to do after high school graduation she frowned and said she wasn't sure. Maybe she would go to a junior college or try to get an office job. She said her brother had done well in school and attended a good University but she had never liked to study. Sachiko's parents were urging her to take an exam for a prestigious junior college but Sachiko refused to attend cram school or prepare for the exam. She thought she would try to enter a much less prestigious school with an easier entrance exam. She said that she argued with her mother in the evenings about her future, but Sachiko said she didn't want what her parents wanted for her.

7.5   MASAKO WANTS A DIFFERENT FUTURE

Compared to Sachiko, Masako was motivated to find a job quickly after high school graduation. Masako reported daily fights with her parents and arguments with her grandmother, too. She skipped school, was yelled at by her homeroom teacher, and fought with her mother in the mornings before leaving their home. Masako's expressed obligation towards her parents and this expression was no different from her higher achieving counterparts but she said she simply wanted to be "free." Masako said that what she wanted---- a job, money, clothes, fun, and to have adventures—----conflicted with what her parents expressed that they wanted for her. They wanted her to go to a junior college and then to get a job.

7.6   HARUKO'S NARRATIVE OF OPEN REBELLION AGAINST HER FAMILY AND TEACHERS

In the narratives, conversations and interviews with the girls in my study, they constantly talked about the impact and influence they felt their decisions would have on someone else in their social worlds. For example, Haruko, a member of the lowest academic class at Yama, often skipped school. In her taped oral diary she reported the following,

> "Oh, Lisa I'm in trouble with my parents. They are very angry with me. I didn't go
> to Yama today. I went to Shibuya with a friend. The school called my mom today
> and so now they know that I skipped school. I have to go to school tomorrow. I
> hate my homeroom teacher."

Haruko then says good night into the tape recorder.

The next recording on the tape is of a conversation between Haruko and a girlfriend. They are sitting at a McDonalds restaurant in Shibuya. Haruko explains that she didn't go to school again. She knows that her parents will find out that she skipped school again but she needed to spend time with her girlfriend. Combined with her hatred of her homeroom teacher and the school is her desire to be supportive of her close friends. She always picks helping a girlfriend over her school-related obligations and responsibilities. She feels pressure from her parents and from her homeroom but she argues that school doesn't mean anything to her. She never studies for exams and she frequently leaves school early or skips going to it. Haruko feels she has no choice but to skip school when her friends call her in the early morning. Her friends, some of whom attend Yama and some that she has known since grade school, are more important to her than her Yama-related obligations. Haruko talked about her stress a lot to me. Haruko claimed that her teachers had given up on the members of her homeroom. She said they didn't care about her or the other girls. As a result, she felt that she didn't owe the teachers any respect either.

One morning in December, a week before the term exams were to begin, I sat with the part-time teachers talking. As we sat there, Haruko's homeroom teacher came up to the table and said that finally she had perfect attendance in her homeroom. The part-time teachers congratulated her on this and said they hoped it would continue for the rest of the term. Haruko's homeroom teacher smiled and laughed and said she doubted that she would be able to get all of her student to show up again. Perfect attendance was something she had not had in her homeroom for over two months. Typically she had a 20 to 30 percent absentee rate. In comparison, the mid-ranked classes typically had a 5 percent to perfect attendance rate during the fall term. In fact, it was surprising to have even one student missing from school in the

middle-ranked classes. Girls who were ill would usually come to school for at least half a day, either in the morning or in the afternoon.

During conversations with teachers, I began to realize that teaching the girls in the lower ranked classes was not a high priority at the school. Teachers complained that girls in these classes usually fell asleep during their classes. Teachers reported that during exams most of the girls filled out the name and school number on the exam paper and then put their heads on their desks and fell asleep. Other students took out their mirrors and combed their hair. Other students wrote letters or simply sat staring out the window. One teacher, who was popular with students, said she felt very sorry for the girls in the lower classes but that nothing could be done to help them because the girls just didn't care. The school's lack of academic investment or care for these girls is reflected in the large numbers of free periods in their schedules.

Haruko felt pressure from her parents and homeroom teacher to attend school. She said she felt pressure from her parents to study, but she had made it clear to her parents that she didn't want to attend a college or even a junior college after she graduated from high school. Therefore, she felt no need to attend school every day. Haruko felt that her homeroom teacher berates and embarrasses students, both those in and out of her homeroom.

I asked teachers what girls who had been in the lowest classes did after they graduated from Yama. Ten or fifteen years ago, these girls would have remained at home for a year or two and then married, according to the teachers. Yama administrators maintained relationships with certain firms and companies and were able to assist some graduates with obtaining jobs at these firms and companies. In fact, Yama employed Yama graduates as clerical workers. One of these women sat across from me in the teachers' room. She did routine clerical work, such as making copies for tests, insuring that the teachers signed in every day, and taking messages for teachers.

According to many teachers she had been a very poor student. Some of them could still recall how poorly she had performed on exams and in her classes even though she had graduated from Yama fifteen years earlier.

According to the teachers, it was becoming almost impossible to place or assist girls in finding employment because the economy was bad. Firms were simply not hiring. As a consequence, girls at the lowest academic level were left on their own to find employment. In the past, if a girl was a "good" girl but not academically successful she would be rewarded by the school with an interview at a well-respected firm, but because firms were no longer able to employ Yama graduates there was less and less incentive for girls in the lowest academic classes to behave.

7.7   A TRIP TO MIOKO'S RESTAURANT

On a Friday night during the fall I visited Mioko at a German restaurant where she worked part-time as a waitress. When I entered the restaurant Mioko ran up to seat me. We chatted and then she ran off to deliver an order for another table. Whether she was in a school hallway, on a train or at her part-time job, Mioko was always running. The restaurant was quiet and the only customers in it were Japanese and German businessmen.

Mioko was a low achiever at the school. Her teachers warned her that she would never be able to enter a university or get a job at a good company because she was too lazy. Mioko reported feeling stressed and unhappy at school. She reported feeling hounded by teachers because her hair was dyed or her skirt was too short. The teachers did not know that Mioko had a part-time job. The school forbids Yama students to have part-time jobs. The majority of low

132

achieving girls had a part-time job during the school year. Aki worked at McDonalds and Yuki worked at a second burger restaurant called Mosburger.

The night I visited Mioko at the German restaurant she was wearing a Yama-issued school blouse and her skirt was rolled up at the waist in order to shorten it.   Before waiting on tables Mioko had removed a Yama issued pin that would have identified the school and might have led to her being reported on by a customer.

Mioko ran around the restaurant talking to customers and co-workers in Japanese and a smattering of German. Since the restaurant was nearly empty that night, many of the restaurant's employees came to sit at my table. In addition, friends of Mioko were seated at a table next to mine. I spent the evening talking to Mioko and her friends, co-workers and male customers.

Spurred on by Mioko's negative comments about her school, a group of us started talking about education in Japan. Mioko complained that her teachers were always trying to make her do something she did not want to do.

Mioko's parents knew that she worked part-time at the restaurant. They had visited the restaurant two weeks earlier and met with the German owner of the restaurant.

Mioko's friends were college students who she met at a club in Tokyo. Her friend's talked about Mioko and other high school students they knew.

7.8   AIKO'S NARRATIVE OF EDUCATION

Aiko is an HS2 in the middle track. She has a round face, open eyes and a ready smile. Aiko is among the best and the brightest at Yama. She had the choice of going into either the highest track or the English track. Aiko chose the English track because it would help her in her long-

term goal of doing something in the "foreign" sector. Eventually she hoped to sit for Waseda University exams and to study abroad either in America or Europe.

Aiko's family lived in a European country for three years while she was in grade school. As a result, her English was good, and she could speak some French, some Dutch and some Italian. Aiko's life experiences had given her an understanding of the world, the world's problems, and Japan's position in the world. Aiko was a returnee. As a private school, Yama is perceived by parents and teachers to be a better place for returnee children then a public high school or junior high school. At private schools returnees are better able to find other students with international experiences and are more likely to have teachers who have traveled or lived abroad or at least value international experience.

In fact, when Aiko returned to Japan in the sixth grade she faced a lot of bullying at a public school. Her parents and she felt it would be better for her to attend a private high school, so she studied for the entrance exam to Yama. She entered the school for the first time as a high school student and she entered the English curriculum class.

Aiko and I became close during my time at Yama. She was curious, like many of her counterparts at Yama, about the countries outside of Japan. One thing that struck me as significant about Aiko and her classmates was their curiosity about life and the world. Like her classmates, Aiko had many dreams for her future. Dreams, she confided in me, that she knew she couldn't achieve but that were important to her. Aiko argued that without dreams life is impossible. She said that when she was a little girl she wanted to be a super model, like Cindy Crawford or Kate Moss. She laughed when telling me this because she said that of course this was impossible and she had given up the dream.

Aiko's dreams reflected the society in which she lived and wider cultural events in Japanese society. As a result of her international experience, Aiko wanted to live and travel abroad in the future. She felt this was a dream that she could achieve. Her other dreams were more far fetched, according to her.

Aiko wanted to be an actress when she grew up and to work on the stage, specifically to go to Broadway and to become a Broadway actress. At the time of my research she was performing in plays at the school. She also won a major acting award at a national competition. While her dream seemed far-fetched she, in fact, was acting and performing. She was not merely watching television dramas and wishing to become a famous media or television star, a wish or a dream that many girls in my study stated they had but were doing nothing to work towards or work on.

If Aiko didn't become an actress, she wanted to work for human rights somewhere in the world. As she stated, "I live in a rich country. We can eat a lot and we can stay in school to study but lots of people in developing countries don't get the some chances. They suffer from poverty, starvation and death. A lot of kids don't even get to go to school. I feel sorry for them and I want to help them and to help them solve their problems."

Aiko's dream and attitudes sharply contrast with the Japanese media's representation of teens. According to the media, Japanese teenagers are selfish, materialistic beings unable to empathize with or care for others. Because of her international experience, I would argue that Aiko was more aware than her classmates about the world outside of Japan, although I would argue that her sentiments and hopes for helping others were shared by a majority of the girls in my study. A desire to understand the world outside of Japan and to help people who were less fortunate than them was a stated goal or dream of many girls in my study. This goal related to

helping people in developing countries rather than helping the poor in Japan. When asked about poor people in Japan and helping them, the girls were usually at a loss for anything to say or talk about. They were aware of economic differences between themselves or between televised images of wealthy people and their own lives but they had little or no awareness of poverty in Japan.

Aiko's other dreams reflected two major social events that occurred in Japan during that time. The Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, occurred during the winter term, before I entered the school, but its influence could still be felt and observed at the school in March. Many of the girls realized that they were too old to begin training for an event in the Olympics, but the Olympics had left another impression on the girls. A large percentage of the girls made a connection between seeing foreigners on television and a desire to travel to other countries and to learn about other cultures. Aiko's dream of working at an international event like the Olympics and being able to communicate with people from other countries was not unique for her age group.

Every adult who I talked to about this project, regardless of their age, made a reference to the Summer Olympics held in Tokyo in 1964. The 1964 Olympics symbolized the reconstruction of Japan after the war and the entrance of Japan into the postwar international community. The Nagano Olympics didn't have the same emotional impact upon these adults, except for those who watched the Japanese ski teams win big, but the Olympics brought the world to Japan. This made girls more aware of the world outside of Japan.

Girls like Aiko were proud of Japan and respected Japanese traditions. Many of their comments related to either economic concerns or to the stability of Japanese families. As Aiko commented to me one time, Japan has many problems but at least we try to take care of people.

We have lifetime employment and Japanese companies do not fire people like they do in America. Girls perceived that American companies were cruel to their employees and that American families suffered because of high rates of divorce. None of the girls could imagine having to choose between their parents. They perceived that American children were lonely and sad because their parents were divorced.

Aiko and her peers were savvy enough to question why the United States should "tell the Japanese" how to fix their ailing economy. Unlike their parents and older Japanese who focused their attentions on America, Yama girls were interested in both American society but more importantly they were interested in Asia. They identified Asia as the next socially and economically powerful region in the world. To young Japanese, Asia and good relationships with Asian neighbors may matter more than good relations with the United States or European countries. Some girls even professed to dislike the United States and the presence of US military bases in Japan.

While conducting fieldwork at Yama, Japan's first female astronaut, Chie Mukai, took off with NASA astronauts to conduct scientific experiments in space. Instantly, she became a media star and her interviews in space were televised on Japanese morning shows and evening news programs. Aiko's last dream was to become an astronaut and work with NASA.

As Aiko stated,

> "Some of my friends say they want to swim in the sea with dolphins but I want to swim in no gravity in space."

137

7.9   LOVE AND DREAMS

Aiko's thoughts on love, dating, and boys were formed without personal experience. Unlike some of her counterparts in her class she had never had a romantic relationship but she did know what type of guy she wanted to date. She said she wanted someone "cute and sexy," someone with a good sense of humor, and someone who would make her happy. She and her friends discussed love, boys and relationships all the time, especially at slumber parties at her house or friends' houses. She said,

> "I can't find boys around me, and the only boys I know are from grade school. We can't meet boys easily because we go to a girl's school. I don't know about real love yet." She said, though, "I'll do my best about love some day."

7.10   SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Aiko said that she liked clothes and wished that at school they could wear their own clothing. She hated wearing a uniform because everyone looked the same and she said that it made her feel uncomfortable. She didn't want to look like everyone else at the school. She said that uniforms hid people's real characters and personalities. She said that some of her friends didn't want to wear their own clothes to school because it would be a bother to pick out clothing every morning, but to Aiko wearing clothes and deciding what to wear wasn't a bother. She said, "I don't think we have to be so conscious of what we wear or look gorgeous everyday. Wearing jeans and t-shirts would be OK." She went on to say that many girls spent a lot of money on

clothing and paid a lot of attention to how they look, trying to be fashionable. But that she didn't worry about fashion too much. Harajuku, a teen fashion area, was a place that she visited on a monthly basis.

According to another girl, Haruko, the fashions in Harajuku are strange. She told me a story about a girlfriend who goes to school where no uniform is required but who wears the same set of clothing everyday. This friend wears a gray skirt, a white Ralph Lauren sweater and loose socks to the school everyday. She wears a uniform, which was something Haruko couldn't understand. She said that she never wanted to hide her own personality behind an outfit or behind a uniform. She doesn't like the latest trendy clothes either. As an example, she talked about wearing a muffler or scarf to school during the colder months. When talking about mufflers that girls wore, she said that many girls wore the same brand-name mufflers but that she preferred a plain blue and white striped muffler with no label. In Tokyo during the colder months of the year, Japanese schoolgirls wear scarves around their necks. Rather than hiding the label that is on the scarf or cutting it off, the scarf is tied so that the label is front and center and easily seen. Therefore, when looking at these, girls you can see that one girl has a Burberry's scarf on while no other girl has a Calvin Klein scarf on. The label and showing the label is important to these girls. In not picking a designer scarf and in not showing the label of her scarf, Aiko was consciously rejecting the choices of her more mainstream peers.

7.11   INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND BEING DIFFERENT

There is little doubt that Aiko's international experience influenced her views. She was aware of the world outside of Japan because she had lived in Europe. She experienced the bullying and

scorn of her peers as a returnee to Japan but this bullying stopped when she entered Yama. Aiko's dreams were shared with many of her peers.

The stresses and pressures to perform well in school are ones she also shared with many of her peers. Aiko was aware that there were alternatives to the Japanese school system but she didn't openly rebel against her Yama teachers, or against the school's hierarchy. She was critical of the school though but was never considered a problem student by her teachers. As she commented,

> "I think Yama is a good school but I always complain about it. There are too many tests. I hate tests. The teachers aren't always kind or understanding of their students. There are too many rules, such as cut your nails, don't eat between classes, wear your jacket all the time, and don't wear your skirt too short. They try to make us all look alike and be alike but I don't like that. My mom says don't be a person who looks the same as other people. I try to follow her advice because I think its good advice."

Aiko's international experience allowed her to see the world outside of Japan and therefore to be able to imagine a life very different from her Tohoku-born grandmother's life. This international experience allowed her to imagine alternative lives with a multitude of experiences. It also allowed her to see the lives of women and men outside of Japan and to understand that the Japanese pressure to perform well on academic exams is important but must be balanced with the pursuit of non-academic concerns and goals.

Teachers did not actively encourage nor did they actively discourage these dreams. Teachers who are pressured to make their students perform well on university exams have little time or energy to listen to students' non-academic dreams. Aiko never discussed her dreams with

a teacher, except with me. Perhaps because I asked her and cared to know about her she felt comfortable talking to me. Aiko's dreams were about personal development and were not concerned with human relationships. She never mentioned finding a perfect mate and having a family as a primary goal in her life, although she didn't rule these things out for her future. Her dreams were about being an active and interesting person with a career.

7.12   FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Aiko was very close to her mother. Her mother stayed at home and took care of the household and the family. Her father worked for a large well-known company and he was a white-collar executive. She had a brother who was a university student. She could talk to him about a lot of things and she felt that they were close. She and her mother talked about Aiko's day when she returned home from school. According to Aiko, her mother gave her good advice and listened carefully to her. Aiko said,

> "My mom knows everything about me. I tell her all about what teachers said in
> class, and what friends talked about during the day. I talk to my dad when he gets
> home at night, too. We all have dinner together after he returns home and we talk
> about our days and our problems. I love my parents and they love me. I'm lucky, I
> think."

7.13   FRIENDSHIPS

Girls can have close friends in their homerooms and friends from outside their homerooms. Girls without close friends in their homerooms have problems at lunchtime and on school trips. These girls usually sit alone during lunch. When they are finished lunch they ran to a friend's homeroom to chat.

Conflicts among girls within homerooms arise during the planning of school trips. For example, HS2 girls negotiated long and hard among themselves over sleeping arrangements for their class trip to Kyushu. One student told me that girls argued over who would or would not share rooms during the school trip. Negotiations among girls were very emotional. Some girls felt rejected and there were still bad feelings among girls about the final decisions. A year after the trip, some HS3 girls still complained about their room placements.

Clubs and sports teams are another structural circle or group to which Yama girls belonged. All Yama students are required to belong to one club. A girl will remain a member of the same club throughout her time at Yama.

Far from avoiding conflict and arguments with their peers Yama girls fight with each other. Cliques form around certain pairings and friendships brake up when girls fight. Girls gossip about one another, and ignore each other in the hallways. They give each other dirty looks when they were fighting. The following narrative is an example of a friendship that fell apart during the course of my fieldwork.

7.14   A FRIENDSHIP FALLS APART: THE STORY OF MICHIKO AND ERIKA

Michiko and Erika are HS3 girls. Michiko is in the lowest class at Yama but is studying for entrance into a four-year university. She hopes to study English, French or German in college. Erika is in the highest class at Yama.

Erika and Michiko were very close when I first met them in April. They spent much of their time inside and outside of school together. They were always laughing and talking together when I met them. They had been friends for three years and while both had other friends they considered one another their best friend. Before the summer break they planned many excursions together for the summer holiday.

After the summer break, I noticed that Erika and Michiko were no longer talking to one another. In fact, they would avoid one another in the halls. If they saw one another they would usually silently glare at one another. In addition, they no longer ran up to me together to talk to me or to plan to meet outside of school. I noticed that if I were talking to one girl the other girl would wait outside my desk area or come back at a later time to talk to me.

One afternoon, I asked Yuri, a friend of both of them what had happened? Yuri said that she didn't know the exact details but that the two were no longer friends. She said that something bad had happened between them over the summer. She said that neither of them would talk to the other. Yuri also commented that it was a bad situation but that it was normal for friends to fight. Yuri didn't think the two would make up or become friends again because they were so mad at one another. She said nothing could be done about it.

A few days later, as Michiko and I were going to a McDonalds restaurant I asked Michiko about the situation. According to Michiko, Erika had been gossiping about Michiko and saying bad things about her to a mutual friend of theirs. Erika accused Michiko of selfishness.

143

Michiko didn't or couldn't understand why Erika would say that about her. Michiko asked Erika about the gossip but Erika denied saying anything bad about Michiko. After this, they never spoke to one another again. They both started having new friends and their intimate circle of friends shifted and adjusted to the situation.

For example, Yuri remained a friend to both of them but she had to divide her time between the two. The three of them could no longer spend time together. As the year went on, Yuri grew tired of the feud and grew closer to Michiko. She said, that she was too busy with school, band and exam preparation to listen to Erika complain.

For a time, Erika even stopped talking to me and would avoid me too. Slowly, though she started to talk to me and started to seek me out at the school. After a while, I asked Erika why she and Michiko were no longer friends but all she said was that Michiko didn't want to be her friend anymore so there was nothing she could do about it.

7.15   GIRLS' NARRATIVES OF FAMILY LIFE AS THEY RELATE TO EDUCATION

Below are accounts of girls taking about their families, and interacting with their families. Given that academic performance and "exam hell" are portrayed as the overriding concerns of Japanese students I have decided to focus on 2 girls experiences during the period of "exam hell." It is clear that while studying can be stressful for girls and families, families respond to this period in different ways.

More research on the daily lives of Japanese families and their children needs to be carried out, especially research on sibling relationships. Far from a monolithic image of the

"Japanese family" the girl's narratives demonstrate that there is diversity among and differences between the families of girls and thus perhaps in Japan (White 2002).

7.16   CHIKA'S NARRATIVE

Chika was in the highest academic level and a HS3. Chika was a lively, friendly girl who loved music. She played the flute in Yama's band, played piano outside of school and spent Sunday afternoons shopping for the latest CDs at Tower records in Shibuya. She was interested in attending a University with an arts or music related focus. She did not attend a cram school but spent her afternoons at the school either in special afternoon prep courses or in the band room.

Chika's father was a grade school principal and her mother was a teacher. I asked Chika if she felt her parents pushed her to excel academically and what influence she felt they played in her University decision making process. Chika said that her parents wanted her to do well and occasionally talked to her about her future. Still, according to Chika, "My parents think its' my future so they let me make decisions about it. I consult with them but its' my future."

Chika was very close to her older sister who was twenty-one, lived at home, and worked as an Office Lady at a small company. In fact, the first part of Chika's taped narrative is a conversation on a Friday night. We hear Chika and her sister discuss their day over cake while their father sat in the other room watching television. Their mother was not home. Chika's sister has just gotten out of the bath and Chika and her sister are discussing the cake and its flavor while their father made occasional comments. Chika and her sister talked about the clothes in a fashion magazine that Chika's sister had brought on the way home from work. They giggled

about the short skirts in the magazine, the models' silly expressions and discussed how their own body types would look in the latest fashions. Their father was in the background laughing and joking with his daughters. Far from an authoritative family, Chika enjoyed closeness with her family even as she struggles to determine her own pathways and dream about a future.

7.17   AYA'S NARRATIVE OF FAMILY, CRAM SCHOOL AND BEING A TWIN

On a summer Sunday morning at six-thirty a.m. during the school's summer vacation, I boarded a local train to go into the center of Tokyo. As I was sitting on the train, Aya an HS3 in the middle track entered the train. To my surprise she was dressed in her school uniform. I was shocked to see her on the train so early in the morning during the summer vacation. She saw me after she entered the train car and sat down next to me.

We chatted for the next twenty minutes. She told me that she was on her way to Yama. When I asked her why she told me that she was going to the high school in order to have a quiet place to study. She said if she remained at home she would never get any studying completed. She said she would end up watching television with her father or just sitting around talking to her mother. Aya told me that she and her twin sister both hoped to enter a prestigious private university, but that she didn't think she had as good a chance as her twin sister did because her sister went to a better high school than Yama.

Aya attended a cram school four nights a week and studied on the weekends with her sister. She relieved her stress by watching television and videos with her twin sister. Aya and her sister did attend the same cram school and studied together on the weekends and at night after returning home from cram school.

146

Aya dreamed about becoming a newscaster for either Fuji television or NHK. She said that Fuji television would be more fun to work at but that NHK was well respected and serious. She wanted to enter a university that would help her achieve her goal. According to Aya she had to enter an elite school to achieve her dream.

"Yesterday I went to cram school where I study English, Japanese history and world history. I returned home around 9:30 with my sister. We are both so tired of studying and we can't wait for all of this to be over. English is the hardest subject for both of us."

7.18   STUDYING WITH HER TWIN SISTER

On a Thursday evening at 11:30 Aya recorded a study session with her sister. Aya and her sister have just returned from their cram school and are reviewing an English lesson they covered at the cram school. Aya and her sister are reading over an English essay and trying to answer test questions about the essay. At various points during the session they both yell out in Japanese how little they understand about the essay. They also yell out how difficult cram school assignment are and how little English they really understand. They both say how much they hate English grammar too. They compare their answers and neither one of them is sure that her answers are the correct ones. Around midnight they decide to have a snack and to take a break from studying.

On Saturdays after a half-day at their high schools, Aya and her sister attended cram school for a few hours and then returned home to study. One Saturday afternoon they decided to

watch the Japanese woman's team play in the International Volleyball championships. Aya recorded their shouts of encouragement for the Woman's team. "Win! "Come on Japan win! Win!" They were both disappointed when Japan lost.   On Sundays they both went to cram school and then returned home to eat dinner and spend sometime with their parents. After talking and eating with their parents they usually studied for a few more hours.

Aya recorded that on one Sunday night she and her family watched a television show. Aya reported that her father had started crying during the sadder segments of the drama. She said that her father never cried when she was little but that he was getting more emotional as he got older. She said that when she was young he would show his anger but that now he cries easily and none of the women in their family quite know what to do when he cries.

7.19   FAMILIES AND "EXAM HELL"

Despite the fact that the girls' relationships with their families is not the subject of this current study based on these narratives and my field work with the girls I believe that for the most part girls enjoy good relationships with their families. Girls who argued with their parents and fought against their plans for them still talked about the love they feel for their parents. It is also clear that families respond differently to "exam hell" and that there is no one monolithic experience of this period within their families for Yama girls.

8.0   COMING OF AGE WITH CHOICES, LIVING IN TOKYO

This dissertation makes the argument that time and place matter a great dealt in determining how people experience their own life course events and how they then perceive the life course events of others. Because time and the composition of a place change, the experience of life course events and the meanings attributed to it by different people also changes. For example, Rohlen argued that when he conducted fieldwork in Kobe in the early 1970s, a consumer teen-oriented market did not exist in Japan, and as a consequence there was no indigenous Japanese teen identity or consumer market (Rohlen 1983). He stated that much of the music that was enjoyed by Japanese high school students in the late 1970s originated in the United States. He found no native Japanese music scene.

This situation has changed radically in the last thirty years. The Japanese music scene is huge and its market is aimed at young Japanese who have the spending money and interest to support it. For example, it was reported that the contemporary musical group "The BZs" sold close to twenty million CDs of their 1998 release in Japan, excluding the wider Asian markets.

Unlike their counterparts from thirty years ago, youths now go to teen-oriented concerts, television tapings, and they congregate at music stores on holidays and after school in order to buy the latest music from their favorite Japanese artists. Being a "teen" as a consumer concept has come of age in Japan and therefore the social and economic experiences of contemporary girls are very different from their earlier counterparts.

The rise of affluence in Japan during the last 30 years, and the concurrent development of a material youth culture, has led to a discontinuity between contemporary teens and their elders in the experience of the high school years. The lengthening of years spent in school has also contributed to this discontinuity. As in many industrial settings, spending more time in school requires that children and adolescents remain economically, socially and emotionally dependent on their parents for longer and longer periods of time.

As pointed out by adult informants, affluence and education have resulted in young Japanese having a sense of entitlement and expectation. Young people expect that they will have access to money and material goods, according to older informants. Japanese kids know that even if they fail their parents will care for them. Contemporary kids feel secure. My older adult informants, raised during periods of post-war economic rebuilding and austerity, did not feel a sense of entitlement during their own adolescences; rather they argued that they felt fear. According to them, fear motivated them to work. One woman in her 50s argued that her generation had to achieve security, and to achieve it she and her cohorts had to work hard.

8.1   COMING OF AGE WITH CHOICES

According to the Japanese press, their values, choices and lifestyles are significantly different from that of their parents and grandparents. While the media everywhere writes about the sensational and the bizarre in order to sell papers, my informants who have children in their twenties say that affluence has altered the experience of growing up and the values that their young people have. For example, the members of the postwar baby boom generation who are now in their 50s came of age when Japan was economically rebuilding itself after the war. The

members of this generation did not have a perception of choice and option when they were coming of age. As one female informant in her mid-50s, who was raised in the Shitamachi section of Tokyo said,

"We were so worried as children about getting enough to eat and later when we entered school with competing successfully that we didn't even know that there were alternatives or choices. Well, actually there weren't many alternatives or choices. We wanted a job for our husbands where they could work at a big company or, in the case of my husband, at a prestigious university so that we could get housing and be assured of steady employment. We worried about not having any security and of being left destitute so we worked very hard at exams or at our companies to ensure that we had security."

She and others in her age cohort argued that people in their twenties and younger don't have the same life experience and so aren't afraid. If young people fail they know their parents and grandparents will help them. They know that there is money to help them. They don't feel insecure about anything. They feel entitled to everything.

As the baby boom generation grew up in Japan, there were little teen-oriented consumer goods. They didn't have the access to electronic goods—such as CDs, play stations, cellular phones, pocket bells—or to television like their children have. They also didn't have the same access to teen-oriented mass media, such as television shows, magazines or music. These materials either did not exist or were restricted to the wealthy. Hanging out at Jazz coffee shops was popular among some of my older informants when they were in their teens. However, these informants typically belonged to wealthier families and attended high schools that had universities attached to them. This meant they could make the time to hang out and didn't have to study as hard as other high school students. As Japan became wealthy, a market focused on

adolescent consumers developed, and as a consequence a majority of contemporary adolescents have access to goods, mass media products and the images that are attached to them.

At the same time, Japan is going through a period of economic crisis and restructuring. At this time, Japan has an official unemployment rate of 4.7 percent, which is its highest unemployment rate since 1949 (Mainichi 2004). Companies are hiring fewer and fewer recruits each year. Prestigious financial institutions are faltering and failing, such as the shocking and unexpected failing of the prestigious Yamauri financial institution in the winter of 1997. At the same time, the male elite of Japanese workers, those at banks and major companies such as Sony and Mitsubishi, are being pushed out, a practice that was considered taboo a generation ago by Japanese companies. While the majority of Japanese workers, especially women, do not work at prestigious companies or enjoy the assurance of lifetime employment, shifts at the elite level reflect shifts that are occurring throughout the society. Unlike their adult counterparts, who stated during interviews that if they worked hard they where guaranteed a certain level of economic and social security in life, young teens and people in their twenties can't expect the same experience.

8.2   TEEN SPACES AND PLACES

In this section I illustrate how Yama girls use public spaces in Tokyo. I argue that Yama girls, and Tokyo young people behave in private ways in public spaces.   Adults complained that teens behaved badly when they were in public. They complained that teens talked loudly, shouted, ate on trains, made fun of people and were generally careless in public. In contrast, Yama girls "acted out" in public spaces and disagreed that their behaviors were bad or impolite. I believe the

152

gap between adult complaints and teen behaviors represents a generation gap. I think that what constitutes appropriate public behavior and the meaning attached to it is different for teens and their elders.

Yama girls use public spaces such as fast food restaurants, public parks, stores, coffee shops and movie theatres as places where they can privately spend time with their friends. Private behaviors, such as laughing too loud, yelling, eating or making fun of others are normal Tokyo teen behaviors in public spaces. Given the lack of space in Japanese houses, hours required to commute, and the physical distances between Yama girls' houses, it is unsurprising that girls utilize public places for their own private gatherings. In contrast to American teens, who have privacy in their bedrooms or cars, Tokyo teens use public spaces for private meetings.

A blending of private and public space and the behaviors appropriate to these two spheres can be seen in the reactions of young and old to the sitting behavior of young people. Young guys and girls sit on the ground while they wait for their friends. Older Japanese consider sitting on the ground, especially in public spaces, to be disgusting. Urban older Japanese stand and wait for people. Yama girls don't see anything wrong with sitting on the ground.

Shifts in expectation have, according to my adult informants, led to shifts in thinking and behavior among Japanese young people. Many adults pointed to public displays of affection between teen couples as a prime example of the differences between adults and teens. It was not unusual to see a young couple holding hands on a train and sometimes kissing goodbye on train platforms, but older Japanese found this behavior revolutionary and strange. A 55-year-old woman raised in Western Tokyo said that when she was a young girl, everything seemed very different. If she walked down the street and a boy was coming the other way, she would have to avert her eyes and body from him. If she didn't do this, people would assume that she and the

153

boy where having a relationship, specifically a sexual relationship. If she didn't avert her eyes and body, the news would travel back to her family. She would then be in trouble with her father and family. Now, though, teen couples walk holding hands and kiss on the street. Her opinion was that it wasn't so bad and that public displays of affection represented a revolution in male and female relationships. A revolution, she felt, would benefit her granddaughter.

8.3   TRAINS AS TEEN SPACE

A Yama high school girl can spend up to three hours a day commuting from home to school. The majority of Yama high school students come from Saitama prefecture or the Western suburbs of Tokyo. Girls, though, can commute from as far away as Yokohama. At first glance, commuting would seem to restrict the amount of time that girls have to spend together, but in fact, commuting increases the amount of time they have to spend together.   Commuting time does provide a space for peer interactions and the sharing of teen-related information. They commute with their friends and spend their time gossiping, laughing and socializing. I argue that commuting time allows for adolescents to freely engage in peer activities. Furthermore, depending on who rides or doesn't ride in the same train cars, they may have more freedom on the train than they do at school, around the school, or at home under the supervision of their parents, teachers or fixed community members.

Weekly advertisements on trains inform girls of the latest magazine and gossip headlines, electronic goods, and television shows. The media, therefore, has easy access to teens. Girls comment on, debate about, and may purchase or watch these teen-related materials. Materials

created for a teen market are then seen, and later consumed, by the girls. The talking about and consumption of teen-related goods reinforces a teen identity.

The Tokyo transportation system provides adolescents with space for peer interaction and mobility. The system provides quick, safe and reliable service. The system travels throughout the major metropolitan area and the outlying suburbs. The ease and mobility of the system is well known to anyone who has ridden it. Yama girls are able to travel to teen cultural centers like Harajuku and Shibuya. They are able to meet teens from other schools on trains and in teen spaces, like Harajuku or a McDonald's restaurant.

Mobility allowed the girls the opportunity to take part-time jobs far from their school. If a Yama student worked part-time it was critical that her job be far away from the school. Having a part-time job was forbidden and if a girl worked too close to the school then her teachers could easily discover that she had a part-time job.

Yama girls are exposed to a variety of people, including foreigners, when they ride trains. For example, Yuki, an HS2 in the middle track, told me the following story during a conversation about riding trains. She and two friends were riding the Yamanote line on their way to Shibuya on a Saturday afternoon. They were talking together when an old man dressed in filthy clothes who was clearly drunk got on the train. People on the train moved away from him, but she and her friends noticed him too late to be able to move. He started ranting and raving to himself. He then opened his pants and exposed himself to the girls without realizing that he was exposing himself to them. He seemed to think that he was alone on the train. While she was telling me this story I initially thought her laughter was because she was nervous or upset about the whole incident, but as we talked she started to laugh so hard that she had tears in her eyes. She said that she felt sorry for the man but that her friends' reactions to him were so funny that

155

she couldn't stop laughing. At first they tried to ignore him but then they all started to wonder what he would do next and whether he would relieve himself in the train car or not. Yuki said that at first they didn't realize that he had exposed himself so that when her one girlfriend saw the man exposing himself she turned bright red and her eyes bulged out. This made Yuki laugh. The man didn't do much else because he passed out. This story is meant to illustrate that Tokyo suburban teens are mobile and exposed to a variety of experiences because of trains.

The transportation system not only allows Tokyo high school students easy access to shopping centers and amusement sites, but it ensures that they are exposed to a wide variety of Japanese. They can also see and can talk with foreigners. This ability, whether they take advantage of it or not, means that they potentially get a lot more exposure to people not like them in dress, in age, and in other ways than their country-residing counterparts and their American counterparts residing in an ethically and socially homogenous neighborhood.

8.4   SEXUALITY

During many one-on-one chats and larger group discussions, girls asked me questions about love and sexual practices among teenagers in the United States. They wanted to know at what age most girls lost their virginity in the United States. They wanted to know when and where it was appropriate for a girl to have sex with a boyfriend in America. They also wanted to know what love meant to American teenagers.

As a consequence of these conversations, I learned that the girls perceive that American teenagers have sex "out in the open" and that teens in America don't have to hide their sexual behaviors from adults. Girls in this study commented that they or their peers could have sex but

if it became obvious or the "neighbors" found out then and only then would they get in trouble with their parents. Sex was to be kept private.

I did not poll girls about their concepts of safe sex, but the following story/narrative illustrates that Yama girls are having sex and that they don't always insure that they use condoms or have safe sex.

8.5   ETSUKO'S NARRATIVE OF UNSAFE SEX

One afternoon while I was standing in the hall outside the teachers' room, Etsuko, an HS3 came up to me. Etsuko is in the lowest class at Yama, and usually skipped morning classes because she could never get up on time for school. Etsuko dressed in the Yama uniform but with dyed reddish brown hair told me about her recent adventure. She had skipped school the day before because her foreign boyfriend was in Tokyo visiting her. They spent the day at Tokyo Disney world. In the evening they went to a club, and she complained that she drank too much and she had a hangover. I asked Etsuko if she was practicing safe sex because I was concerned. She told me that she was not practicing safe sex, which she had forgotten to ask him to use a condom. To be honest, I was more concerned about Etsuko's health than any research study. We talked about AIDES, and I warned her that she could contract the disease if she was not careful and practiced safe sex. Etsuko promised to start using condoms with her boyfriend.

8.6   AI'S NARRATIVE OF LOVE AND QUESTIONS ABOUT SEX

Below is the narrative of an HS2 girl in the English track. She taped her narrative during an exam week at Yama, so I was expecting her to talk about her tests and studying. I was very surprised to find that there was nothing about exams on her tape. Ai, who was seemingly supposed to be burying her head in her books and buckling down to study for exam week with little thought for outside pleasures or ideas, was spending her time either with her new boyfriend or thinking about the meaning of being in love with someone. She spent very little time studying for her high school's exams. This makes us understand that far from every Japanese high school student laboring away well into the night, many are focused on other activities, concerns and decisions that have nothing to do with academics.

Ai is a tall, lovely 15-year-old girl who is very curious about my life and the choices I had made. She is a good student who excels in her classes and causes no problems for her teachers. She was in the mid-ranked classes but was considered an excellent student with a good chance of entering a prestigious English program at a good school. Ai's homeroom teacher said Ai was a sweet good-natured girl who was kind to other girls. Ai was especially interested in the history and current state of my love life.

When I asked Ai to tape a week in her life, she readily agreed and asked no questions about what would be good to put on the tape. Ai's recording gave me a concrete understanding of the immediate concerns, goals and questions of the girls in the study. I was struck by the maturity of Ai's reflections and questions. Her questions and thoughts mimicked the concerns of Japanese adult women who I interviewed throughout the study. Questions about the meaning of love and its relevance to social relationships and appropriate behaviors were foremost in Ai's mind. Purity and real love were linked together in Ai's narrative. She worried that if she

engaged in sexual relations with her boyfriend, if she gave him her body, that their love would no longer be "pure." Although, she didn't see anything wrong with girls her age having sex, she worried about when was the best time to have sex.

Ai's concerns about love, social relationships, and about physical attractiveness reflected the concerns of all the girls in this study. Ai's first comments were about love. She was trying to understand and to define the meaning of love. Recently, she had started dating a boy. She told me:

"Even, though, it's a test taking time and I should study for my exams, I met my boyfriend today. It was his birthday and so we decided to meet. We went to eat and then we roamed around Shibuya for a few hours. We talked and talked the whole time. When we go out we usually go to Shibuya, Ikebukuro or Shinjuku where we can go into shops and eat at restaurants. On the train coming home, for the first time he told me he loved me. I told him I loved him too. Then he kissed me on the train. I wanted to kiss him, too, but I was embarrassed because we were on the train. If my mother found out that I was kissed on a train she would be very angry and I would be in trouble. Oh, I hate to think about it if she found out. I love my boyfriend because when we talk he understands me and I understand him. I love his heart too. I'm worried, though. Am I in love with him or am I in love with being in love? How do I know which is the true feeling? I think I love the feeling of being in love. Today, like always, we talked about our hobbies and our schools. He acts so much like how a boyfriend is supposed to act. He's considerate and kind. When he said, "I love you," though, did he really mean it?

159

Does he really love me? We talked about love and about our moods. I keep asking

myself is it, love? Is it too much for both of us, for me?"

Ai's questions about the meaning of love were important to all the girls in my study.

8.7   PURE LOVE

According to the girls, a person didn't need to wait until she became a wife to have sex. Virginity

was not perceived to be a requirement of marriage among the girls. It was important, though, to

love a man that you "gave your body to." Knowing that you truly loved the man and that he

loved you was difficult, according to the girls. Sharing a "pure" love with a boy was important to

the girls. Real or pure love was considered a requirement for having sex with a man. Defining

"real love" was more difficult for the girls. When asked what "real love" meant, most girls

replied, "He understands you and you understand him" or "You decide things together" or "He

makes you happy and you make him happy."

When asked if their own parents shared a "real love," the girls would laugh and say that

their parents shared "married love," which was different from "real love." "Married love"

required that women become mothers and care for the home while men were required to work.

"Real love" was an emotion one felt for another person. "Real love" was not an emotion

specifically tied to responsibilities. The distinction between "real love" and "married love" was

made clear to me one day when I was talking to five senior girls about romance. They were

asking me questions about American teenagers' love lives and we got into a discussion about

love and marriage. To these girls, marriage meant a commitment to a family. The ideal would be

to combine "real love" with "married love," according to these six girls. The ideal, though, was rarely achieved.

8.8   TIME AND YAMA GIRLS

How time is constructed and used by Yama girls varies according to their year in school, their placement level, and their future academic goals. Middle-ranked girls have time and can make decisions about how to use time. Lower ranked girls have time but much of their time is spent avoiding teachers and parents. High-ranked girls spend their time, even during summer holidays, studying and preparing for exams.

Middle ranked girls can and do make decisions that enable them to balance their social desires with academic responsibilities. Their time is spent either at school or in leisure activities that they reported helped relieve stress. They reported feeling better about their choices and reported having time to make decisions. Girls in this group experienced pressure, but intense pressure was only reported during the end of their junior year and during their senior year. Many of the girls in this group said that they could "goof off" during school and that the only time they studied was during exam periods. They knew that their senior years would be demanding, so they usually wanted to have fun during the first two years of high school. They reported making time for fun. Even cram school was fun for girls in this group. They made new friends, attended classes with boys, and went to dinner or lunch with their cram school friends. Girls in this group spent their time in both future-oriented pursuits and in activities that pleased them in the present.

In contrast, higher achieving girls spent their time studying and preparing for either high school exams or university entrance exams. Their time was spent on future-oriented tasks. Their

lives were focused on achieving good grades and entering good universities. Leisure time was usually late at night alone in their rooms where they listened to music and dreamed of life after high school. They self-reported that on Saturday afternoons and Sundays they usually studied or went to a cram school. Unlike their middle-achieving counterparts, who reported enjoying cram school, high-achieving girls reported that cram school was hard.

Lower achieving girls had a lot of leisure time. Girls in this group skipped school, had fewer classes, and received less homework than girls in the other two groups. They also had more free periods in school than their counterparts, free periods in which they could chat with friends, sleep or just hang out. Girls in this group had time for social activities and friends. The lives of girls in this group were focused on the present.

 This does not mean that the lives of girls in this group were carefree; rather girls in this group spent their time feeling nervous and avoiding their teachers and parents. Girls in this group had time for their friendships and reported having close friends but self-reported feeling anxious and worried. There were both internal and external reasons for the girls to worry.

In Japan, where being a "good student" is equated with being a good child, low-achieving girls were labeled and, in some cases, self-identified as "bad students" and therefore bad children. Teachers targeted and labeled girls in this group. Teachers were hyper-vigilant of low achieving girls. Failing school tests has a special meaning in Japan where working hard is culturally constructed as crucial to achievement. The individual is responsible for success in Japan. Passing exams means that a child has the necessary stamina, fortitude and self-discipline required becoming a responsible member of society. Girls who are not able to "cut the mustard" and pass exams are viewed as having serious character deficiencies. Girls were failing both their academic exams and a "rite of passage" in Japan. According to teachers, girls in this group were

162

not developing the life skills required to become responsible adult members of Japanese society. Girls understood these messages and self-reported that when they thought of their futures they worried.

8.9   KATORI SHINGO AND A DAY AT YAMA HIGH SCHOOL

One morning on my way to Yama, I noticed a crowd of people gathered outside the Ministop, a convenience shop located next to the school. I saw housewives in their aprons standing next to the bicycles and old men gathered around a big window looking into the shop. I stopped to find out what was happening in the store. I asked a woman what was going on inside and she told me they were filming a segment for a television show. I looked into the store to see a famous Japanese television star, Katori Shingo of the musical group SMAP. Katori Shingo was dressed like a fish. I watched for a little bit and then hurried to the school for my first class of the day.

When I entered the teacher's room I told a few teachers who and what I had seen at the store. A few had seen the filming, too. We discussed this for a little bit and then the bell rang and classes started.

I went to a middle school classroom to find that the girls knew that Katori Shingo was next door. They could barely stay in their seats so I let them go to the balcony to catch a glimpse of him leaving the store. The other teachers let their students do the same. As a result, when Katori Shingo left the store to get into a van he was greeted by about 200 little girls screaming: "love," "love," "Shingo," "love." They used the "English" word, "love." Katori Shingo was obviously used to this response from young girls because he waved and quickly got into a van

163

and left the area. The girls returned to their seats in the classroom but it took a long time to get them to quiet down. They were so excited at having seen him.

In Tokyo teens can and do come across the famous. Media stars, for the most part, live and work in Tokyo, which increases the chances that the girls in my study will come across someone famous. In fact, after the Katori Shingo incident, I found that many teachers and girls had seen at least one or two famous television stars while in Tokyo.

One afternoon after school was over, I started walking towards the train station with two senior girls. We started talking about their plans for the winter break. They told me that they had gotten tickets to watch a taping of the Fuji television show "SMAPxSMAP Bistro." They were looking forward to seeing the members of SMAP, especially Kimutaku. We talked about their favorite pop stars or talents and why they liked them. They both liked Yutaka Takenouchi because he was so handsome and seemed very sweet.

The movie "Titanic," with the actor Leonardo Dicaprio, was enormously popular with the girls in my study. The story of a doomed love affair between a wealthy girl and a poor boy on board the Titanic was a topic of conversation among the girls. Girls of all ages had seen the film at least one time. Others had seen the film two or three times. When the video went on sale during November of 1998 many of the girls received the video from their parents as an early New Year's gift or a Christmas present.

When I asked the girls why they enjoyed the film typically they answered because the movie was all about love—a doomed love without hope but still beautiful. One day, while walking down the hall a second-year middle-school student came to me with a group of her friends. She was a very lively person. As this girl approached me, she started saying, "Come back, Come back" in a high squeaking voice. She wasn't simply trying to get my attention; rather

she was mimicking a line from the movie that the female lead, Rose, uses to call back a rescue boat. I immediately understood what she was referring to and so did the other girls. We all laughed because she was being very funny.

I asked her about the movie and she told me that she had seen it twice and loved it. When I asked her what she loved about it, she said it was the love story between Rose and Jack that she found the most interesting. I asked her what love meant to her and she said that it had many different meanings to it but that Jack and Rose's "love" wasn't realistic, but still it was a romantic movie. She was also making fun of the film because it was overly dramatic and she said that even though she had cried during some parts of it, other parts to her were too dramatic and she couldn't take them seriously, like the "Come back, Come back" scene.

9.0   CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I argue that Japanese high school girls are active actors in their lives and have their own ideas about the challenges they face. They are neither the passive or rebellious by-standers portrayed in much of the psychological literature. Inherent within this literature is the idea that adults view young people negatively and usually blame the young for problems in society. Yet, in Japan I found that even while adults expressed negative views about their young, within this was also something different: sympathy for their young. This adult sympathy for the young is discussed in this conclusion, as well as the idea that youth in Japan are seen as metaphors of change and, in a sense, the victims of change in postwar Japan.

9.1   YOUTH AS A METAPHOR OF CHANGE IN JAPANESE SOCIETY

Since Plato, adults have complained about the debauchery of youth. Therefore, in Japan I wasn't surprised to find adults who complained about the young. "They dye their hair strange colors, their socks are too loose, their skirts are too short, they'll kill themselves in those high heeled black boots" were some of the comments made by adults to me about high school students.

Yet, within this context of criticism, and in contrast to it, I found, to my surprise, that Japanese adults felt sorry for their young people. I suggest that this feeling sorry for the young is not a typical older-generation attitude that one usually finds in the psychological literature on

generational differences or on lifespan development. Instead, this attitude of Japanese adults towards young people is intimately linked with adults' perspectives on change, especially socio-economic change since WW II. Adults see youth as metaphors of change in Japanese society.

Typically, it is among young people—whether it is in their dress styles, language, sexual mores, leisure activities, career ambitions (or lack thereof), and lifestyle choices—where change is occurring, according to adults. I found that whenever I broached the topic of demographic, economic or ideological changes in post-war Japanese society, adults quickly turned the discussion to one about high school students. It seemed, therefore, that how adults talked about high school students reflected how they felt about social changes more broadly.

These adults sense that various ills of Japan's post-war history have come home to roost in the lives of Japan's young people. And not only do the adults see these ills as worthy of pity, but they also feel a sense of responsibility for helping bring them about. Therefore, these adults feel torn. On the one hand, they enjoy a sense of pride and satisfaction for creating one of the world's most extraordinary economic success stories; on the other hand, they feel regret and confusion over the way that this economic success is manifesting itself in the lives of the young.

I would like to turn towards a brief overview of demographic changes that are perceived by adults in my study to be influencing the lives of Japanese young people.

9.2   DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Japanese families have become smaller during the postwar period. In 1960, families with five or more members numbered about 42.1 percent. In 1980, around the time when today's high school students were born, families with five or more members numbered only 20.2 percent (Ministry

167

on Internal Affairs and Communication report on the national census 2004 (http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/kokusei/2000/outline.htm.) Today Japan's birthrate is 1.33.

According to the adults I interviewed, being raised in small families resulted in social and emotional problems for the young. Typically these problems centered on the young being selfish and unable to compromise with others. Yet the more I talked with adults the more aware I became that adults perceived the young to be lonely. I would like to give two examples that illustrate why adults think the young are lonely.

Suzuki-san, a chemistry teacher in her late 50s, recalled that, as an adolescent there was always someone at home to talk with her. Raised in Tokyo, in an extended family, which included her grandparents, her parents and two siblings, Suzuki-san never had to be alone. When she had worries she turned to family members. If one member was not available there was always another family member to consult with about her worries. Suzuki-san remembered long family dinners shared with seven people who cared for her. She remembered being cared for and scolded by both family and neighbors in her community.

In contrast to Suzuki-san's experience, Mie, a contemporary Yama student, returns home late at night after going to a cram school. Mie has already eaten dinner. Mie and her mother may spend a few minutes talking to one another about their day but both are very tired. Mie's father rarely eats dinner at home and she rarely sees him during the week.

Suzuki-san's narrative mirrors the coming of age histories of the adults I interviewed. Adults' narratives typically spoke about the importance of having many family members accessible held for them. In contrast, Mie's narrative tells us that Japanese adolescents have fewer family members to talk to about their problems and that time together is limited.

The adults I interviewed worry that young people such, as Mie will grow up to be lonely adults. Sato-san, a teacher in his late-50s, told me that his two children have more material goods than he did when he was young. Yet he feels sorry for them. They have never known the daily support that comes in an extended family. As an example, Sato-san told me about the pleasure that came for both he and his grandmother when she spoiled him. Sato-san argued that Japan was becoming a cold and lonely society where the warmth that had characterized social relationships when he was young was disappearing, along with large families. As a consequence of this change, Sato-san felt that he and his wife had failed their children.

9.3   EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The shrinking Japanese family and the decreasing birthrate have both had a profound impact on the contemporary educational careers of Japanese young people. According to adults, fewer children within a family means that all the children, including girls, are pressured to perform academically.

On average, a wife and husband have two children in contemporary Japan. Yet, in previous generations, if a child, especially a girl, didn't perform well it was all right because the parents had two or three other children they could rely on to do well academically. In the hopes of ensuring a secure economic future for their children and for themselves, contemporary parents have no choice but to pressure all their children, even daughters, to do well on academic exams.

According to Sato-san, increased parental pressure on children means that young people spend less and less time with their peers. The less time young people have to spend with peers, the less chance they have for forming friendships and the more socially isolated they become. He

argued that not only were contemporary high school students isolated, but also they have no time to develop interests, hobbies or concerns not directly related to test taking. Sato-san, a graduate of a prestigious Japanese university, felt that when he was in high school he had time for reading books, watching movies and playing baseball with his friends. He also said that during high school he developed a lifelong concern for politics and social justice. He said that young people would never develop skills outside of test taking, and therefore he worried about the future quality of their lives.

9.4   FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Historically, Japanese families lived in three-generational households where younger members owed obedience to their elders. Of course, this was the ideal and there were variations on this pattern. Still, younger family members were dependent on their elders and were required to show their elders respect and deference. Senior adults held authority and power within families. Children were assigned a lower status than adults. This arrangement meant that traditionally Japanese families were "adult focused."

With a shift to two-generational households and family compositions, the focus of Japanese families has moved from adults to one centered on children. According to adult informants, this shift has translated into creating an environment in which children have greater freedom than their historical counterparts. Contemporary children have more room for self-expression and assertion than any past generation. Along with this shift has come the desire to educate each child.

170

This shift to children and their education can be seen in special advertisements for the building of new houses. Japanese builders offer Japanese parents houses built to suit the needs of their children's education. Houses with child-friendly study areas are being built. The areas have specially designed desks, good lighting and bookcases to suit the needs of children. The special areas are connected to kitchens. Mothers can prepare dinner and keep on an eye on their children as they sit studying.

9.5   ECONOMIC AND CHANGE

According to adults, belonging to generations who had rebuilt Japan after the war meant that they had confidence in their own ability to work through difficulties. Adults cited the ability to persevere, as a necessary skill for achieving a successful life. They connected the learning of persistence with the economic deprivations and insecurities of their own childhood. In contrast, adults fear that contemporary young people are unable to do this. According to adults, the young are unable to fight their way through difficulties because they were born during a time of prosperity and affluence. However, in 1989 the Japanese stock market plunged, and since that time Japan has experienced a severe recession. This recession is resulting in the restructuring of Japanese banks and layoffs at large and small companies as well as consumer insecurity. Adults fear that young people, having been raised in an affluent society, do not have the ability to *gaman* through the difficult economic period that lies before Japan.

Ironically, Japanese adults feel responsible for not instilling *gaman* in their young. Japanese adults expressed guilt for not providing an environment that fostered the learning of *gaman*. Therefore, what I found is that there is in the minds of the adults a mixed attitude

171

towards Japan's post-war economic story. They feel that there is both a blessing and a curse to the story, and that the lifestyles of the young embody both the good and the bad. They are grateful that young people can enjoy the benefits of post-war affluence. Yet, they worry because the young are not aware of the work that is required to maintain economic security.

While we tend to think of life stages and their meanings as predictable from one generation to the next, in fact, like all culturally constructed social categories, ideas about persons in particular age groups have histories tied to specific socio-economic processes. These processes are responsible for altering the environments in which people come of age. Japanese adult narratives remind us that comments about the young are intimately linked with adult perspectives on these processes within postwar Japan. Rather than a simple list of complaints about young people, my adult informants evoke feelings of sympathy, confusion and responsibility for the young. It is this conflict—sympathy amidst prosperity for an otherwise affluent youth—that represents an ironic contradiction within the complexity that is modern Japan.

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