THE SCHOOL CULTURE OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY STATE SCHOOL IN JAPAN

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Introduction

In our society, school exists in the cultural sphere. First of all, school is the most important agency to reproduce the culture of a society. Although it is under the influence and pressure of economic and political spheres, such influence and pressure are transformed into cultural processes in the area of school, as W. Waller points out in his book (1932 pp.15-17). Thus, it is certain that school is a cultural entity.

When we say, "School has its culture," however, the meaning of 'school culture' is not necessarily so clear. J. Prosser, the editor of a book entitled "School Culture," begins the first chapter of the book as follows:

> The term 'school culture' is popular and frequently used but despite over thirty years of research, it remains enigmatic and much abused (Prosser 1999: p.1).

The situation around the term might be similar to that of Japan.

This paper is an attempt to clarify the 'enigmatic' character of 'school culture' with some theoretical discussion on the concept and also by some analysis of empirical data on Japanese school culture.

We will first define the concept of 'school culture.' Second, we will identify the sub-cultures included in school culture. These are two points that we need to consider before analyzing Japanese school culture, and these will compose Section I. Thirdly, we will analyze the concrete character of 'the school culture of the junior secondary state school in Japan' using a set of empirical data, and this analysis will compose Section II.

Through the paper, we would like to clarify the meaning to address the concept of 'school culture' theoretically and empirically.

I. The Concept of 'School Culture' and the Composition of Its Sub-cultures

In many modern societies, people attend school for four years, or six, nine, ten, twelve or more years, during their childhood. And if you have children, you also have experience of school as a parent of your children who also attend school. So there are probably very few who do not have memories of school. Now, the existence of school is an aspect of everyone's life in our modern society.

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But school has its specific atmosphere and unique climate that other social institutions do not have, such as the free time that most people do not enjoy as adults, and intimate communication with friends with freedom from economic and social interests. At the same time, in school, students face rather strict rules and regulations that are not in the world of adult citizens. Among these regulations, there is the school class, which is organized to have same-age students.[1] The class order provides the conditions on both positive and negative sides for students to develop their group atmosphere. Here, we use the term 'school culture,' which addresses this specific atmosphere and climate at school.

In general, the term 'culture' means a way of life or symbolic system that develops, preserves, and reproduces a way life.[2] Or it means a system of symbolic power that gives an individual specific meaning to each thing in the world (Geertz 1973). Even if we grasp the concept of culture as either a system of symbols producing a certain lifestyle or a system of symbolic power constituting a meaningful world, it is certain that 'culture' has the nature of forming the values, norms, dispositions and patterns of conduct of the people who live in it or who learn it, in order to reproduce both the society and the culture. In other words, culture has the power to form people with its meaningful world. We call it 'cultural power' here.

Then, if we use the term 'school culture,' we can see that it has the cultural power to form the patterns of conduct that compose school life together with the internal character to produce and reproduce the patterns among the people concerned, especially students.

Nevertheless, the expression 'school culture' or 'the culture of school' poses some problems. This is because the concept of 'culture' corresponds totally to human life and the concept of an institution, such as 'school,' only corresponds to it partly. It is a paradox that a part is the total. So when we use the term 'school culture,' we have to pay attention to the cultural character of the institution. The school institution has not only the cultural power mentioned above but is also a field where people live for rather a long time together. And a new culture might emerge among the group of people who share the field.

By taking notice of this cultural character of school, we can identify several sub-cultures that produce the atmosphere and climate of school either cooperatively or in opposition. These sub-cultures show their character at certain levels: in the total school system; at each grade of the school system (primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary); in each sector of state and private; in each local community; and at each school. So we find various patterns of school culture in society. Nevertheless, the sub-cultures, theoretically expected to be the following, might be found at all levels of the school system.

[A] The culture of the institution

The school organization is a field where some sub-cultures exist and operate. In the field, we first find the cultural function of the school institution itself. It includes the school curriculum together with some educational goals. These have the cultural power to consciously and continuously affect the development of children. It is the explicit or manifest side of the

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[1] K. Mannheim points out the specialty of this order as follows:
Let us first of all look at a class of thirty-five twelve-year-old children. How are they organized? Throughout their school careers, they will be grouped with their contemporaries and so they will become accustomed to having the limitations and oddities of each age group intensified. (Mannheim and Stewart 1962: p.136)
[2] The classical paper of C. Kluckhohn & W. H. Kelly, 'The concept of culture,' points to both sides, external and internal, of culture. (In Linton ed. 1944 pp.78-106)

sub-culture.

The school institution has the specific orders of time, space, and human relations or groups. These orders are the frame of the school institution and also exert a strong cultural power unconsciously and continuously. It is the implicit or hidden side of the sub-culture.

[B] The culture of teachers

The two main members composing school are teachers and students. There are a very large number of teachers in the whole society of a nation; for example, there are about one million in Japan. Teachers are employed to teach in the school system. The work of teaching at a modern school has a unique nature together with some problematic themes, as D. H. Hargreaves points out[3] (1980). The social stratum of teachers has historically given rise to some specific cultural patterns through coping with the uniqueness or the themes and ensures that they are continuously handed to new members, who have sometimes reorganized them (Kudomi 1992). We call such a professional culture 'the culture of teachers.' Teachers fundamentally have their culture as a social stratum, and there are some varieties of it at various levels of the school system. Cultural patterns of teachers are often invisible to school students. Students are able to see only a phase of the culture, such as an image of teachers and the relational character of it to students.

[C] The culture of students

Students are the other main members of school. Ordinarily, their number is the largest in a school. They live together for several hours per day and they have lived for several years in a school sharing the orders of time and space. They produce and operate the culture of students in a school. Students' activities, which are recommended by the school and teachers, are the explicit side of this culture. This side is visible to teachers. Students also operate the implicit side of their culture in the sub-field in the school, and this side is usually invisible to teachers. Such a sub-field may be penetrated strongly by certain trends of youth culture. Both sides show a concrete character as discussed in Section II of this paper.

[D] The culture of school ethos

We can identify the existence of a fourth sub-culture. Usually, the implicit side of [C] is opposed to [A] and the explicit side of [B]. Then, for the sake of the coexistence of [A], [B], and [C], it is necessary for the school to exert some cultural power symbolizing the unity of the school and fill the gap between sub-cultures. The fourth one tells the members of the school that this school is a unity historically and currently and that each member contributes to the school unity. It also tells them the meaningful and legitimate nature of relations between several divided groups of members at school (teacher-pupil relationships, age differentiation, and so on). B. Bernstein points them out as consensual rituals and differentiating rituals (1973 pp.54-66). We call such symbolic power and symbols 'the culture of school ethos.' It sometimes operates unconsciously and also sometimes consciously.

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[3] D. H. Hargreaves mentioned in his paper three themes of teachers: the status theme, the competence theme and the relational theme. (Hargreaves 1980 pp.125-148)

TABLE 1. FOUR SUB-CULTURES OF SCHOOL AND TWO SIDES
(explicit and implicit) OF EACH OF THEM

	[A] The culture of the institution	[B] The culture of teachers	[C] The culture of students	[D] The culture of school ethos
<Explicit Side>	school knowledge (goals, subjects, curriculum and assessments)	the images of teachers and teachers' methods making teacher-pupil relationships	students' activities recommended by school and teachers	some symbols or rituals that symbolize the unity of a school, or that ligitimize the asymmetry relationships between several groups of school members
<Implicit Side>	hidden curriculum (the orders of time, space and human relations)	patterns of behavior, common beliefs and values that the social stratum of teachers has held	patterns of students' cuduct at the sub-field of school that is usually invisible to teachers	

Some aspects of the relations between sub-cultures

Table 1 shows a summary of the discussion above on the four sub-cultures of school and explicit and implicit sides of sub-cultures, [A], [B], and [C].

[A] is the core of school culture and gives it its fundamental frame. The explicit orders of knowledge and the implicit orders of time, space, and human relations regulate the fields where other sub-cultures, the cultures of teachers and students, emerge or operate.

In front of students, teachers are the agents and representatives of [A]. At this time, most elements of [B] are invisible to students except its explicit surface.

For students, the formal culture of school corresponds to [A], the visible side of [B], and the explicit side of [C]. If the formal activities of students are sustained by the implicit side of [C], the gap in the school culture will be very small. And if not, the gap will be bigger.

One more factor that coordinates the gap is the function of [D]. Such a function exerts to fill not only the gap between sub-cultures; [A], [B] and [C], but also the gap between the explicit and the implicit sides of the culture of students. If the function of symbolizing the unity of a school and coordinating some gaps in school culture operates successfully, students feel that the school is 'my school' or 'our school.' This is a good scenario for the school and the teachers.

Shortly to be addressed, [A] is the order or frame, the surface of [B] is in front of students, and [D] is the symbol or ritual. Then [C], the culture of students, is the most dynamic cultural part of school culture. And the most important aspect of these sub-cultures is what influences each sub-culture has on students. In the next section, we will focus on how students feel about each sub-culture during their school lives.

II. *Negative Part of Student Culture*

The research report[4] analyzed here was carried out at the request of the Ministry of

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[4] See Morita (2003) for details.

Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 1999. It contains 281 cases of a telephone interview survey that anyone can access. The respondents were in the third grade at junior secondary state schools all over Japan. They have experience of having been absent from school for the reason of 'disliking school' for more than 30 days in a year in 1993. They were asked to complete half-structured questionnaires that were mainly about their school experiences.

There is certainly a meaningful world shared by 'every student' that is called student culture in the interview data. The result of this analysis may throw light on the negative part of student culture in Japanese junior secondary state schools. Of course, there is also the positive part of student culture. However, this section is only concerned with the negative part of student culture. Because the data are filled with school experiences of ex-students who have a sense of distance from school, the negative part of student culture will be clearly seen through the analysis. It seems to be one of the explanations of non-attendance.

As we have mentioned in Section I, there are two sides of student culture. One of them is the explicit side of student culture that usually has been visible to teachers and the other is the implicit side of student culture that is hidden and subterranean at school. A picture of the negative part of student culture including both the explicit and implicit side will be obtained in this section, being composed of some quotations from the 281 cases analyzed.

In addition to the culture of students, the culture of the institution, the culture of teachers, and the culture of school ethos will be seen to some extent through the eyes of ex-students, although the three sub-cultures are not shared in common by the students themselves. To our regret, it is difficult to grasp the last sub-culture, the culture of school ethos, because it can be most clearly seen in an individual school. Although we do not focus on a particular school but depict general student culture across Japan, the three other sub-cultures may be shown in this section, too.

Student culture is a meaningful world formed through students' interactions with others. Most of the interactions are based on relationships between students and teachers and among students themselves. The former relationship can be seen by teachers, but the latter does not seem to be visible to teachers. That is, explicit student culture is mainly based on the relations between teachers and students. On the other hand, implicit student culture is based on the relations among the students themselves.

This section is divided into three parts. The first part of this section focuses on the explicit side of student culture. In the second part, the implicit side is emphasized. Lastly, the culture of the institution, the culture of teachers, and the culture of school ethos are partly shown through the negative part of both explicit and implicit student culture.

1. Explicit Side of Student Culture

It is generally accepted that schooling is more concerned with a student's academic learning than anything. However, Japanese junior secondary state school teachers are dedicatedly involved in guiding students' lives, counseling them regarding their academic life and careers after graduation and through special school activities such as club activities[5] and

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[5] Students are forced to participate in club activities after school in many Japanese junior secondary state schools.

school events in addition to teaching. There are many episodes concerning these four categories in the interview data.

Academic learning

School is an institution that influences children to have them develop by cultural power. As such, teachers teach and students study what they are taught in order to reach some educational goals, especially to obtain some school knowledge. They just sit down and listen to what teachers tell them in the lessons. Students are treated as objects being taught at school.

They are forced to learn even if they do not understand what they are learning. Even if they are bored with learning, they do not want to learn any more, and they do know neither the reasons that they must learn nor whether school knowledge will be useful or not in a future, they have to study at school willy-nilly.

> School lessons always move rapidly even if there are many students who cannot understand the contents at all. Teachers should help their learning. If students could understand what they are taught, they would be interested in learning and think, 'It's fun.' However, they refuse to study because they cannot catch on to what they are learning.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 254)

> School only crams worthless things into our brains. They are no longer useful in the real world. But we might have had no idea what was useful then. Even if we thought learning was useless at that time, it would be useful someday. As far as I am concerned, I was not good at math, but now it is useful for me.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 245)

> I believe students had better go to school if they can. However, not only learning but also each student's individuality should be given great value at school. The teachers really disappointed us. They always made us study. I think it is important to study, but there is no way they should force us students to do only studying.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 261)

> After I entered junior secondary school, I found it difficult to learn. I couldn't get the academic record that I wanted to at junior secondary school. Though I tried to keep up with learning, I felt it was harder and harder to catch up with it. I was required to learn more than I could do . . . As school is a place for learning, it was worthless for me to go because I became an underachiever and couldn't understand academic learning at all . . . Nowadays, school exists for the purpose of giving good academic records and academic qualifications to students. We are judged only by academic record and tortured by a sense of failure. Eventually, we don't feel like going to school.
>
> (Morita 2003: pp. 132-3)

In fact, quite a few students do not learn or want to learn school knowledge. One of the reasons for rejecting school knowledge and lessons is because they do not understand what they learn in the lessons. And the other is because they doubt whether school knowledge will be useful to them outside school or in the future. Not only do they refuse to learn but they also refuse to be forced to study, especially by teachers.

Moreover, they feel that they receive a hidden message from teachers and probably from

school as an institution. The message is that going to school is good, schooling is good, gaining a high academic record is good, school is a place to learn and to acquire academic qualifications, and so on. The students who are not good at academic learning cannot but feel that they are out of place in school. They realize that teachers have a discriminative attitude to underachievers.

School rules

The number of students is larger than that of teachers at school. A teacher needs to teach many students. So, a school needs rules and regulations as an institution in order to make it easy for both teachers and students to teach and learn. There are explicitly or implicitly things that are considered to be good or bad behavior at school. In almost all cases, the decision on what counts as good or bad is made only by teachers. As a result, the process of making decisions sometimes comes to be arbitrary depending on its context. Students are just forced to observe such explicit and implicit school rules, even though they are temporary rules.

There were many more strict school rules at secondary junior school than primary school, to the extent that hairstyle and length of skirt were regulated in fine detail.
(Morita 2003: p. 70)

Whenever my teacher found my slipshod shoes in the shoe cupboard, he fixed their shape without my permission. And he always endlessly scolded me in detail without giving me a chance to explain, like 'Dye your hair black!' 'Your skirts are too long!' . . . My mother was invited to school by the head teacher and told that I was insane because I was affectionate with my boyfriend so often. It was ugly that I was treated and seen like that.
(Morita 2003: pp. 188-9)

I had been interested in dressing up since my first grade. I wanted to be the most stylish girl in the whole school. I wanted to stand out from the others. So, I wore appealing clothes and I had stylish hair, which did not fit the school rules . . . I wanted to go to school and take school lessons with my friends, but I was not permitted to enter my school because of my clothes and hairstyle. So, I gave up going to school and started to play around. I missed my friends at school because I could not see them. I really wanted my teacher to let me go into my classroom.
(Morita 2003: p. 191)

My teacher hit me when I was in the first grade, too. When our school went camping in the mountains, because my class was disorganized, I, the class president, was scolded and beaten by the teacher. I felt very angry and lashed back. So, I did not go to school any more since then.
(Morita 2003: p. 107)

When I entered junior secondary school, my teacher was good to me because my academic record was high. But I was treated badly since I started to be absent from school and my academic record worsened . . . I sometimes went to school. However, when I went to school, my teacher said to me, 'Don't come to school if you can't come everyday. Everyone is annoyed by you.'
(Morita 2001: p. 235)

Students do not want to and sometimes they are unable to behave according to the rules teachers establish. Teachers' arbitrary decisions and attitudes to school rules tend to make students be frustrated and hurt. Students reject school rules that are usually too detailed and sometimes become arbitrary, and refuse to observe them. Furthermore, they object to being forced to do so and they are dissatisfied with teachers' one-way making of school rules.

If they do not conform to such school rules, they are often punished or sanctioned. On some occasions, the punishments by teachers become a violation of the rights of children such as violence or refusal to allow attendance. The problem is that there are surely more vulnerable students, mostly underachievers, who receive penalties more than any other students. Students are likely to get hurt emotionally because of the sanctions by teachers and their biased sanctions.

Careers guidance

Almost all junior secondary state schools have only a three-year course. It means that students have to graduate at the end of the third year and decide their life courses after graduation. So, many ardent Japanese teachers enthusiastically give specific academic and career examples to students because they believe that their students should set sail for brighter future after graduation.

> My teacher introduced a school to me, saying, 'This is the only school you can go to.' It was a school that combined an upper secondary school and a vocational school. I went to the school, but I dropped out in the first semester because I did not get used to the school life. My junior secondary school forced me to go there one sidedly. I feel that it's because my school would be in trouble if there were students who hadn't decided what to do after graduation. I am not satisfied with my school's careers guidance . . . I wish I had been given more information and choices.
>
> (Morita 2003: pp. 127-8)

> At a trilateral meeting on going to upper secondary school, my teacher said to my mother and me, 'You don't have to take the entrance exam of the school that you wanted to go to because you will not pass it,' and suggested that I should go to private upper secondary school, which did not require a high academic record. My mother said to the teacher, 'Because she wants to do so, I will let her do what she wants.' As a result, I passed the entrance exam . . . In careers guidance, I wanted the teacher to neither ignore nor deny my hopes. My hopes should have been valued.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 230)

> I wanted my teacher to discuss my career as eagerly as other students' careers. But my teacher had been totally ignoring me. A teacher who was in charge of guidance came to me and gave me two brochures. Even if I was non-attendant, I was a third-grade student whose life course should have been of concern.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 86)

> Teachers dislike the students who intend to find jobs. They discriminate us from the students who will go to upper secondary school. I did not want them to treat us as unnecessary students in the class. Although we were a minority, we were not a few.
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> (Morita 2003: p. 112)

Generally speaking, the poorer the academic score students have, the more limited choice of life courses they will have so that they cannot go to any school. Because of a sort of enthusiasm, teachers adhere to talking about the choice of taking any upper secondary school's entrance examination and the possibility of passing the exam depending on the student's academic record. So, students feel that they are forced into their careers one sidedly by teachers and school and that their aspirations and hopes are not valued. This dissatisfaction with careers guidance may stay with them throughout the future.

They are also dissatisfied with teachers' discriminative attitudes and interest in their careers guidance. There are certainly a few students, generally underachievers, who do not go to any upper secondary school. Students, especially underachievers, know that teachers tend to be less interested in the careers of students who get low academic scores because teachers are likely to have no careers guidance with them and seem to be indifferent to their careers. They also feel frustrated over teachers' message that going to a good school that requires a high academic record is good.

Special school activities

As Bernstein (1973) indicates, school rituals are necessary so as to keep order within a school. In Japan, there are special school activities that have almost the same function as the school rituals indicated by Bernstein (1973). So, Japanese special school activities are considered to be a part of school rituals.

They mainly fall into two categories. Firstly, there are school events such as school festivals, ceremonies of graduation, and so on. And, the second category contains many kinds of club activities after school.

> In the club activities, close friends with whom I used to have good relationship suddenly started to ignore and tease me. Maybe there are such bullies in all clubs of junior secondary school.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 127)

> I had been bullied and teased since primary school years, especially during school excursions or school events. Because I was so scared to take part in them, I sometimes did not participate, using all kinds of excuses.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 163)

> My teacher got angry if I did not take part in school events. I had to participate in events. Because I was asked to take part in them insistently by my teacher, I did so. As a result, I have good memories of having fun there now.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 137)

> Our school forced all students to take part in the sports club activities. We were forced to do that and were not allowed not to. If there had been any artistic or cultural club activities, I would have continued going to school. The volleyball club I belonged to was very hard and strict. I could not catch up with the activities though relationships with others in the club were OK.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 132)

Japanese teachers are eagerly involved in special school activities. All students are expected to join in them actively. Most students enjoy these activities. On the other hand, some students want to leave. Some of the reasons are that teachers become less careful of students and that students can behave more actively than usual in these activities, and that the negative part of their world, such as bullying, develops in them.

They also feel that they are compelled to attend special school activities and that they are sent the exaggerated message that participation in the activities and the unity gained from them are good for all students. Reaction against the forced participation is another reason for their refusal to take part in special school activities.

2.   Implicit Side of Student Culture

Students meet many people of the same age and make friends with them at school. They spend much time with them and have fun communicating with them. Because such relations among peers may have no small impact on an individual, many episodes concerning peers are told in the interview data analyzed. They are divided into four relationships, which are the relationship among classmates, friendship, the bully-bullied relationship, and the senior-junior relationship.

Classmates

School as an institution needs classes for education and divides all students into them. One class normally consists of one teacher and twenty to thirty students of the same age. Needless to say, students spend most of their time attending the classes. That is, they mostly share their time and space with their classmates while they are at school. They have to construct some relations with other classmates whom they usually do not know well at first.

I was always at the center of my class and leading the other students. I was a bully. My academic record was higher than most of the others'. It was always within the fifth highest in my class. I studied hard because I always felt the pressure school imposed me in studying.

(Morita 2003: p. 246)

Finally, I quitted the club activities. This fact brought me a sense of failure. I felt that because I could not keep on belonging to the club for three years, I was a loser. And I was so tired that I hardly felt like going to school. Other classmates continued club activities, but I could not do the same thing as my classmates did. So, I was depressed . . . Although there was no bullying in my class, it was difficult for me to enter the classroom because I was sometimes absent.

(Morita 2003: p. 252)

At school, we were forced only to study, study, and study. Academic records were always on our mind . . . This pressure prevents us from making friends with classmates.

(Morita 2003: p. 254)

I was not stylish at all. There are many girls who put on make-up and reform their school uniforms. I was childish compared to them, so I could not get along with them in the classroom.

(Morita 2003: p. 95)

Students seem to think of classmates as rivals with whom they compete to get a higher academic record than any one else. They are also involved in a kind of identity competition where 'they must identify themselves by differentiating themselves from others from the viewpoint of their body, appearance, academic achievement, ability, talent, and personality' (Takeuchi 1998: p. 182). It is hard to get used to the whole class and to make friends with all classmates in such a difficult situation.

At the same time, they try to be the same as other students. They have the pressure to be better than others and the pressure not to be outstanding. They manage to keep themselves between these two pressures and get along with other students under these two contradictory pressures. As it is difficult for them to do this, students come to think of classmates as just classmates and not as friends.

Friends

In some cases, friendship is born and develops among classmates. However, it seems difficult for students to find friendship in the classroom. Furthermore, as there are too many students in a class, it is almost impossible to communicate with all classmates easily. So, they come to be divided into small groups. One group usually has nothing to do with the other groups. Students usually communicate with only their group members and find friends in their own group.

I was afraid that others might take my friends away from me, and I tried hard to keep my friends with me by giving them sweets and so on.

(Morita 2003: p. 233)

Members of my group soon rejected me. Because I could not belong to any other group, I could not find my place in the class. I was always alone between classes, even at lunchtime. There were not a few days when nobody talked to me all day.

(Morita 2003: p. 169)

Friendship only exists in one's own group after entering junior secondary school. We cannot make friends with students who are outside of our own groups. Even if we want to leave the group, we can't. If we missed the chance to belong to one of the groups in the classroom, we will not belong to any group at all. It's quite a burden for me.

(Morita 2003: p. 176)

I wanted to have some close friends. However, I became bothered by the process of making friends, which was very troublesome. Soon, I was tired of making friends at school.

(Morita 2003: p. 270)

Close friends are necessary to avoid loneliness. However, if students do not belong to any group, it means that they cannot have friends. This leads them to be to cohere within the group. If they want to leave it, they give up doing so because they are afraid of being alone. The process of making friends brings them feelings of fear, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. It is difficult and sometimes troublesome for them to make friends.

Bullying

The most negative part of student culture is bullying. It is deeply and broadly embedded in their daily lives.

Among peers of the same grade, they are similar in that they are the same age. Maybe this makes them sensitive to slight differences between them. Although there is the aspect of wanting to be the same as others, they attempt to be better than others among their peers and they find how they are different even slightly and rank the differences. Then power relationships come to emerge. Students try to decide who stands in the upper place or the lower. It often turns to bullying. Students play a kind of power-game in which they compete to gain self-identity of a higher status by ranking each other's subtle differences.

As a result, bullies have high status, and the victims are placed in a low position. And once this competition starts, it sometimes continues, escalates, and expands to confirm the hierarchy. Alternative victims of bulling are sometimes needed in turns.

> Because I was fat, I was teased by boys so many times . . . If my personality were spoken ill of, I could put up with this kind of treatment. But I could do nothing with the shape of my body. So, it was very, very painful.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 120)

> Because my sister and I were good at playing softball, I was envied and started to be bullied though I was liked as a cheerful person.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 82)

> There were some bullies. From in the morning to after school, they complained about me or teased me between classes. Whenever I went to toilet or hall, they always followed after me and kicked, teased, or made fun of me. The bulling kept on going for months . . . There was nobody who helped me and solved this problem.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 134)

> Members of my group suddenly pushed me out of it, though I was very close to all of them. And they said to me, 'How could you ask teachers questions? You try to flatter them!' I think the cause of being excluded from the group was because I was close to the teachers.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 175)

> I wish I went to school where teachers immediately coped with bullying. Friends definitely bully students in turns within the group. I wish there were no bullying at school.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 153)

> After I rescued a classmate who was shy and could say no word to a bully to avoid being beaten, I started to be bullied by everyone including the classmate I helped . . . Bullying became dark and shady in junior secondary school, and it was hidden behind a curtain. People hardly saw the bullying.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 150)

There is no reason for bullied students to be bullied because bullies invent and attack their slight differences from others. In most cases, bullying starts suddenly, so the bullied person

becomes confused. Even if the bullied and the bully used to have good relations, it begins. There is no knowing how long bullying will keep on and who will be the next victim because bullying is concerned with an individual's subtle oddness. It is so fuzzy and obscure that people outside bullying, including teachers, do not recognize it easily. No one helps bullied students cope with bullying, so they feel negative feelings such as helpless, anger, depression, loneliness, and so on.

Senior-junior relationship

In addition to the same-grade peer relationship, a peculiar relationship among students appears in most Japanese junior secondary schools. It is the senior-junior relationship fixed in the grade system. This senior-junior relationship is particularly developed in club activities where tradition is taken over by juniors from seniors for many years.

> Because I was tall, seniors thought I was strong and had their eyes on me as an enemy. They intentionally broadcasted gossip about me, though it's not true.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 156)

> The school I went to was disruptive and there were many thefts. Seniors were threatening and I hated their impudence. I belonged to the softball club. One day, when I kept myself inside a room in the toilet, some seniors came to get me out of it forcibly.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 82)

> I joined the volleyball club, but seniors told me many disgusting things. There were too many restrictions and rules made by them. I could not enjoy playing sport.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 85)

> At that time, there were many disruptive and disorderly acts in the whole school. I tried to be careful about not being glared at by horrible delinquent third-year seniors. I enjoyed playing the flute in the club activity, but fierce seniors were there, too. I was very scared and did not feel at ease even in the health-support room.
>
> (Morita 2003: p. 235)

First- or second-year students feel much more pressure than seniors do. They are afraid of the presence and attitudes of seniors. And they sometimes keep enduring seniors' bullying.

In the senior-junior relationship, seniors can so easily stand in a high position that they tend to bully juniors in direct ways such as beating and kicking compared to same-grade students' bullying that cannot be clearly seen by others such as teasing the victim because of some uniqueness and spreading rumors about it. Juniors are made to realize that this relationship cannot be reversed and that they must endure it.

3. Three Other Sub-cultures at School

We have drawn a picture of both explicit student culture and implicit student culture. The picture of student culture in 2.1 and 2.2 gives us a glimpse of the culture of the institution, teachers, and school ethos. However, we are still on the way to understanding how these four school sub-cultures influence and relate to each other in the dynamical cultural part of school culture, student culture. This will be clarified by looking at explicit culture and implicit culture

in detail.

From the picture of explicit student culture

The things that a school institution requires of students such as academic learning, obeying school rules, receiving career guidance, and undertaking special school activities seem to be taken negatively by them. Furthermore, the enforcement of these activities by teachers and the message that these activities are good are also taken negatively.

The primary tragedy is that students are the objects of schooling at the request of the school as an institution. So, they cannot help being influenced by the culture of the institution. For example, students are required to attain school knowledge, to observe school rules, to decide careers after graduation, and to participate in special school activities at school. At the same time, they receive the message from it that doing these things is right. They are directly influenced more strongly by the explicit side of institution culture than the implicit side of it, if anything. Compared to academic learning, school rules, and careers guidance, the area of special school activities is most strongly influenced by the culture of school ethos, which is also affected by the culture of the institution.

Students are also affected by them in the way that their cultural power is mediated by the culture of teachers. Institution culture and school ethos culture influence not only students but also teachers. Because teachers are employed by the institution, they have to fulfill its demand for schooling. So, they force or urge students to attain school knowledge, to observe school rules, to decide careers after graduation, and to participate in special school activities. Teachers are concerned about students as representatives of the school institution.

Apart from the culture of the institution, there are certainly original and direct relations with their students, as it were, which is the implicit side of the culture of teachers, and this also influences students. Japanese teachers are enthusiastic and considerate to their students (Kudomi 1999). So, they are eagerly engaged in all things concerning their students. The areas of academic learning, guidance, careers guidance, and special school activities are not only a part of their work but also areas that it is taken for granted for them to be involved in. They are likely to do whatever they think good for their students. Anyway, teachers' approach to students may cause negative attitudes and feelings such as rejecting learning, breaking school rules, dissatisfaction with careers guidance, and refusal to participate in school special activities.

From the picture of implicit student culture

The relations among students that include not only the peer relationship but also the senior-junior relationship are prepared by school as an institution. There are some difficulties in getting along with peers and seniors. Moreover, teachers' influence invisibly spreads into peer relations and this brings more difficulties to students. Even though students do not recognize that the background of the difficulties lie in the influences of teachers and school as an institution, they realize that it is difficult to cope with the relations among students.

The institution invents the system of grades and the scholastic year. The result produces the relationships of classmates, friends, and the bully-bullied among same-grade students and between seniors and juniors. One of the reasons that students find it difficult to get along with other students is because the school sets up such a grade system. It can be said that they are directly influenced by institution culture and school ethos culture.

In fact, teacher culture, which is influenced by institution culture and school ethos culture, influences students latently, too. There are some examples as follows. There is pressure to achieve more highly exists among classmates, groups in the class are basically formed in accordance with academic scores (Kouno and Iwasaki), and students who try to live up to teachers' expectations or fail to do so tend to be the target of bullying more than others (Morita and Smith). Students are sensitive to their teachers' expectations because they are embedded in the unequal power relationship between teachers and students that is internalized in the school organization. Students must accept their position as the recipients of schooling and respondents to teachers. So, there comes to be a 'teacher-directed' disposition that is "insured by their tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of" (Riesman 1950: p. 9) teachers among students.

However, if a student is only eager to meet teachers' expectations, he/she may begin to be disliked by peers (Takeuchi 1998). One must stand in a very fine balance between 'teacher-directed' disposition and 'peer-directed' disposition. As both dispositions sometimes become ambivalent, it is very hard for students to get on and get by among students. There are already difficulties in the relations among students influenced by the culture of the institution and school ethos. In addition, the difficulties become harder and harder as the culture of teachers silently drips onto the student culture.

Conclusion

We have attempted to define 'school culture' in Section I. It is an overall meaningful world with 'cultural power' at school. Therefore, it also contains sub-cultures. In particular, we have suggested the necessity that four sub-cultures, which are the culture of the institution, the culture of teachers, the culture of students, and the culture of school ethos, should be focused on.

The interview data of ex-junior secondary school students who have experience of non-attendance in Section II have been analyzed, based on the established definition in Section I. We have drawn a picture of explicit and implicit student culture, which is limited to the negative part, by showing ample empirical examples from the interview data.

And we have shown how the other three sub-cultures exert their cultural power on student culture. We have argued that the culture of the institution, teachers, and school ethos directly have effects on the explicit side of student culture. We have also argued that the implicit side of student culture is influenced by the culture of teachers behind which are the culture of the institution and school ethos.

As above, 'school culture' can be described "as a screen or lens through which the world is viewed" (Stoll 1999: p.33), and we have described what Japanese junior secondary state schools look like through the concept of 'school culture.'

There are always some movements to improve school. The problem is how they grasp the reality of the school that they want to improve. And there is another problem, which is that they tend to be optimistic because of their misunderstanding of school. If they use the framework of 'school culture,' it can be said that they are able to be close to the school. Two examples of problematic school improvement movements are presented as follows.

Firstly, there is a movement to improve the school system, which is very close to school

as an institution, every a few years. However, as the culture of the institution is closely related to the other school sub-cultures, changing the system is not inadequacy. They must consider how the institution and school culture influence each other and how school sub-cultures are entangled with each other. Otherwise, the reform may fail.

Secondly, there is the movement of 'effective schools' in recent Japan. Effective schools are considered to be schools where all students achieve good learning and performance regardless of their background such as ethnicity and class (Shimizu 2003). Learning and teaching in effective schools are primarily examined in the research. That is, the culture of the institution, teachers, school ethos, and maybe the explicit side of student culture, are considered. However, the underground aspect of school culture, the implicit side of student culture, is likely to be ignored or disregarded, even though it is closely related to the other sub-cultures. It is doubtful that the movement of 'effective schools' really improves student culture, too.

Although there is certainly students' original meaningful world, what is called student culture, the idea of improving school systems or schools does not involve improving the culture of students, especially the implicit side of it. Considering this, one of the solutions to school improvement may be how it is linked with other sub-cultures and how the gap between it and the others is filled. The culture of school ethos should be focused on so as to do this. However, as Bernstein (1973) suggests, the function of school rituals as a unifying factor has already started to decline. Besides, school special activities may be taken negatively by some students in Japanese junior secondary schools today from the viewpoint of 2.2. Therefore, the improvement of student culture may be left to students themselves because it is their world.

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