Another route to grad school

It is a crisp winter morning in February. There are four sans of snow on the roof of the dormitory, and the air is cold. I put my pencil down, stretch my feet, and wonder for the hundredth time what is it that I am doing, a supposedly intelligent student working through the infamous "examination hell" at the Japanese educational system. In my case, I entered the main program in solid-state engineering at the University of Tokyo.

The use of entrance examination is not unique to the Japanese educational system, but nowhere else does as much depend on the outcome. Most large Japanese companies hire directly from universities and offer lifetime employment, so the outcome is very important. So what do I do? I study hard, get good grades, but still find it hard to get into the college of my choice. I don't have the abnormally high rate of suicide among adolescents.

The students are engaged in the pressure to get into the college exams, but also for getting into top universities. School children regularly attend classes. The student who does not make it into the college of his choice will likely have to repeat the test for up to five or six times if necessary. These students are fundamentally different from those used to standardized examinations, which consist of solving problems, multiple choice, translations, and complex grammatical questions.

Needless to say, the competition is intense, not only for college exams, but also for getting into high schools which have a good record of placing students in top universities. School children regularly attend extra classes. The student who does not make it into the college of his choice will likely have to repeat the test for up to five or six times if necessary. These students are fundamentally different from those used to standardized examinations, which consist of solving problems, multiple choice, translations, and complex grammatical questions.

I know that I'm one of the lucky ones, as I get to continue my studies at a university that is one of the top universities in the world. I have been accepted to the University of Tokyo, a university that is highly respected for its engineering program. I am proud of my accomplishments, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue my studies.

Guest Column/Tanya Sienko

This is M.T. Collect and third number calls

Contact: Adam B. Rosen

This is it. M.T. Ring. Collect and third number calls will not be accepted at this number.

Hello, that's all. I hung up.

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