

オピニオン

『塾教育』の役割を考える

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A Study of the Role of “Juku School Education”

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It has been thirty-five years since my wife and I started to run a small *juku* school without the help of any other teachers. Small *juku* schools like ours usually focus not only on “teaching,” but also “nurturing” children. We call this “*Juku* School Education.”

At *juku* we also instill discipline into the children by using good manners and appropriate language. Some children are at a rebellious age, and do not listen to what their parents say. However, if we *juku* school teachers maintain good relationships with both the children and their parents, children will open their minds to us, which can also lead to building a healthy parent-child relationship. I think the *juku* school teacher’s presence as a “third party” alongside parents is necessary to educate children at home.

At school, our role as this “third party” between teachers and students helps the children to be motivated, facilitate a good teacher-student relationship, and focus on studying. So far, we have played the role of the “third party” between teachers and students. For example, I have spoken at a newly-recruited teachers’ training seminar at Osaka Yao High School, at teachers’ seminars at Konko Yao Junior and Senior High Schools and Naniwa Junior and Senior High Schools. I have also given lectures for first- and second-year students at Yao High School at their study camp, and at a newly-enrolled student orientation camp for parents and students who are enrolled in humanities and sciences courses at Kinki University High School. These are just a few examples. Periodically held “discussion meetings” by enthusiastic school teachers and *juku* school teachers have also produced synergetic effects on school education and *juku* school education, and the cooperation of regular school teachers and *juku* school teachers on an equal footing has achieved desirable results that exceed our expectations. I hope people will recognize *juku* school education as the “Fourth” education category.

Keywords : Juku School Education , the third party , the “Fourth” education category

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1. The Start of the “*Juku* School Education” Concept

Mr. Ryoudou Yasui, the chief chairperson of the Uenomiya Gakuen Board of Trustees and a former priest of Chion-in Temple said, “Education is not only teaching, but also nurturing children.” I heard these words some ten years ago when Mr. Yasui was a principal and I have cherished his words as the basis of our education since then. I was also convinced that our teaching as *juku* teachers has been on the right track for the past twenty years. Since 1979 – for thirty five years – I have been running a *juku* school with my wife, and we have maintained the same concept of education described by Mr. Yasui. I assume most *juku* school teachers have the above-mentioned educational philosophy. This is what we call “*Juku* School Education.”

1.1. What is *Juku* School?

Home education means that parents teach their children things that help them to live as humans as they grow up, such as language, morals, life habits, knowledge and wisdom, communication, and study habits. It could also be rephrased as “parenting” or “discipline.” Parents tend to rely on private tutors or *juku* schools rather than teach their children by themselves when their children cannot keep up with the classes or when parents want their children to deepen their understanding of what they learn in school or to acquire higher level education. During the baby boomers’ “examination war,” I believe there were many parents who made their children go to *juku* school, hoping for them to enter high-level schools. “*Yutori kyoiku* (pressure-free education)” also spurred highly-educated parents who were concerned about this education style to put more trust in *juku* schools.

Thus, *juku* schools have been established as a supplement to home education. This type of teaching has garnered increasingly positive results, and has, therefore, gained recognition from society. I believe that *juku* schools are necessary today. It is easy to imagine that if there were no *juku* schools, students' scholastic abilities would deteriorate. As there are different sizes and forms of *juku* schools, it is difficult to point out what the “greatest common denominator” is among *juku* schools. What are the distinctive differences between *juku* school education and regular school education? I would say that the greatest difference is that the *juku* school does not need to follow the Ministry of Education’s curriculum guidelines. Each *juku* school decides its own guiding principles, and parents and students choose the *juku* school

which best matches their needs. Another significant difference is that students can quit a *juku* school at any time.

It is next to impossible to enter a private unified junior-senior high school without studying for an entrance exam at *juku* school because the difficulty of the questions on entrance exams go beyond the range and level of what students learn in regular schools. Besides, in these private junior high schools, students cover three years' worth of public school material in the first two years. For example, an average private junior high school English textbook contains three times more material as an English textbook used in public schools. It is possible for *juku* schools to cover subject contents which are beyond the Ministry of Education's guidelines if necessary, and also possible for *juku* schools to provide a much higher level of instruction while staying within the Ministry of Education's guidelines. Parents generally strive for these goals.

Furthermore, while school education tends to be uniform and standardized, the teachers in *juku* school can take more time for individual, level-appropriate instruction for students. In addition, public schools sometimes have a disruptive atmosphere that prohibits students from studying attentively. I believe one of the reasons why *juku* schools exist is to provide a supportive place for students to study.

In this way, there is freedom from the Ministry of Education's guidelines, but *juku* schools are still chosen and directed by parents and social needs.

1.2. "Home Education" and "Juku School Education"

Juku schools, especially small-sized *juku* schools, are usually closer to the student's family than regular schools because the *juku* schools not only teach students, but also give advice to students and their parents regarding the student's discipline, future career, etc. In fact, the number of parents seeking such advice has been increasing. At public schools, there is an individual conference each term when they discuss the students' future career and give advice to them regarding how they can study. However, there is a word called "*Getabako PTA* (Shoe Cupboard PTA)"; parents who do not say much during the PTA conference, but secretly express their true feelings or complaints to other parents that they are on good terms with as they change their shoes to go home. This is a word that I learned and practically experienced over 20 years ago when I took the position of PTA chairman at an elementary school.

However, as you could infer from this word, parents are generally hesitant to be forthcoming with school teachers face-to-face. Parents are concerned about how homeroom teachers and subject teachers may treat their children if they offend the teachers. This is all the more the case if a grade report that can affect their children’s career paths exist. Even if they have complaints or are discontent, both parents and students would need to spend much energy and have courage to quit a regular school, while it is easy to quit a *juku* school. This is why it is easier for parents to speak to the *juku* school teachers than it is for them to speak to the regular school teachers.

On the one hand, *juku* schools make an effort to listen to students and parents carefully, because from their perspective, losing students is a problem that is related to their ability to continue to exist. From an administrative standpoint, besides being part of a capitalist economy, *juku* schools are also destined to be selected according to the needs of the parents and society, as was mentioned before.

For *juku* schools, “education” and “administration” are interrelated. In this respect, *juku* schools are very similar to private schools. This is why, in giving career guidance, *juku* schools outperform regular schools with their wealth and accuracy of reliable data. Even if regular schools and *juku* schools offered the same services, with regards to quality and quantity one could say that many parents would choose to place their trust in *juku* schools.

Due to prolonged recession and increasing divorces, the number of mothers who have part-time jobs has been increasing. Because of this, the ability to teach children at home has been in decline. Some parents lack confidence in raising and educating their children, and in extreme cases, they even abuse their children. Kenji Kiyonaga, a juvenile delinquency researcher, says in *Motomerareru Kodomo wo “Shimin” ni suru Kyoiku* (Educating Children to Become Citizens) to Kazuo Nishimura, who wrote *Gakuryoku no Dodai* (The Groundwork for Academic Abilities) that “It would be better to leave children to able teachers or caring communities than to uncaring parents who have no educational ability.” I do not agree that we should act as surrogate parents, but I think that small-sized *juku* schools play a role in this. Not only do *juku* schools focus on the education of students, but also a large part of *juku* school lies in “home education.” I think this shows there is a strong connection between “*juku* school education” and “home education.”

When going through a rebellious phase, junior or senior high school students do not listen to what their parents say. As Japan has shifted to the “nuclear family,” there

are fewer household members living together, and neighbors and local communities have become less connected. “Home education” consists mostly of only parent-child interactions. I think, however, the presence of the “third party” serving as a mediator is needed to raise children.

It has been confirmed that *juku* schools, especially small-sized *juku* schools, are able to adopt this role as the “third party” through the interaction of parents and students. The most important thing is that both parents and *juku* school teachers should raise children hand in hand. *Juku* school education will function best with support and understanding from parents. As a result, *juku* schools strengthen the relationships between students and their parents. Even after graduation, students and parents tend to come back to their *juku* teachers and talk about career choices, jobs, marriage, etc. This is because *juku* school education focuses on “nurturing” as well as teaching.

1.3. “School Education” and “*Juku* School Education”

We do not need to regain the prewar teacher-student relationship as it is described in the movie called “*Twenty-Four Eyes*,” but the relationship between teachers and students/parents was much closer in the mid-Showa Period just after the war than now where both students and parents respected and trusted teachers. Most children obeyed their parents when they were threatened, “I will tell your teacher about this!” I believe it was because teachers were viewed as “clerical professionals.”

However, at present, teachers typically transfer to another school in five to seven years, and even if former students visit their schools which they have graduated from, they can rarely see their former teachers. Even in rapidly-growing private schools, instructors and teachers who are sent from temporary staff services sometimes teach classes. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to ask these teachers to be dedicated to their school, and it cannot be helped if the image of a teacher as “clerical professional” fades away. Thus, the educational function of schools is currently declining.

Kazuhiro Fujiwara, a former principal of Wada Junior High School, said in a talk with Professor Takehiko Kariya from Tokyo University, “When I asked a woman who loved reading to come to the library, children who didn’t like reading but had nowhere else to go turned up. This woman became a mentor for them. I didn’t expect the library would become like the second school nurse’s office... Although their elder

brothers and sisters who are in “*dotera*” (*juku* schools in former days) helped them with their homework, sharing experiences with them was more important than doing homework to connect children with society.” As stated above, in the past, teachers and people who lived in the neighborhood were often the woman in the library and the sisters and brothers in *dotera*. Although this may be unusual at most public junior high schools, it is a daily occurrence in small-sized *juku* schools. Why then could this not be called “*juku* school education”?

In the past, I was also such a person, but there are quite a number of *juku* school teachers who participate as members of public high school discussion committees. Furthermore, at present, we have reached the point where *juku* school teachers participate in and supplement school education. We should eradicate the barriers between regular and *juku* schools and put away our prejudices, so that we can educate our children on an “equal footing,” not from a supplementary relationship. This is what I desire and am striving for.

1.4. “Social Education” and “*Juku* School Education”

If people look at social education from a broader perspective, home education and school education could be considered a part of social education. However, in general, social education excludes home education and school education, and is also considered “lifelong learning education.” In my opinion, social education, in a narrow sense, includes events such as children’s group activities, local festivals, volunteer activities, and so on. Therefore, social education may also be rephrased as “community education.” In other words, this is to raise children locally and with society.

Even now there are town assemblies and organizations in each community. For example, they hold public sports festivals and traditional festivals using public schools’ playgrounds. However, due to the population decrease in urban areas, the bond between the new suburban residents and already established residents is becoming weaker. In the past, small *Bon* dance festivals were held everywhere, and people in the neighborhood took care of children in the community as if they were their own. Nowadays, it is better not to be involved with other people’s business. Furthermore, the local state of affairs is that not only are women’s social advancement and declining birth rates that make it more difficult to gather organizers and members

for civil sports festivals, but they are also leading to a problem where the continuation of children's organizations is endangered.

Under these circumstances, as a role of their "school education", regular schools are practicing forming bonds with society by having their students clean the streets that they use to go to school or visit senior care homes as part of their club or circle activities. Among private *juku* schools there are also those that follow activities conducted at regular schools by having their students participate in local environmental projects, or delivering rice cakes made at a rice cake-making event to elderly neighbors. *Juku* schools are making great efforts to integrate into the community as *juku* school students who have become members of young men's associations participate in collecting contributions for local festivals, and at times, visit their own *juku* schools. In this manner, small *juku* school owners tend to become "community educators" and offer advice on education. Therefore, there is a strong possibility of *juku* schools strengthening closer relationships in the communities.

2. *Juku* Education as the "Fourth" Education Category

What I insist here is that *juku* schools may, or rather should, be in the position of the "third party" in school education. Not only in home education but also in school education, the "third party" presence, which knows both teachers and students well, encourages the students to focus more on studying. Then, why would it be easy to motivate students to study? Why can school teachers, students, and parents cultivate a better relationship?

I gave a lecture to first- and second-year students at a prefectural high school. I showed changes in students' academic ability between when they entered and when they graduated, disseminated accurate data regarding university admittance, presented specific learning methods, and encouraged the students to build up their confidence. Two weeks later, surprised at the responses of students who listened to the lecture, the school principal visited me. The principal very happily said, "I have been telling the students something similar to what Mr. Suhara said at the lecture, but...." The student motivation for learning had definitely increased.

I believe what the principal told me explains everything. The principal and school teachers say the same thing to the students on a regular basis, but when I, as the "third party" presence, mention it, it sounds more plausible, and the students trust the school teachers even more. Also, lecture topics such as realistic, specific, and

practical learning methods and topics related to career course that are not often taken up in classes persuade students more easily due to the accurate and rich data presented by *juku* school teachers. Thus, the students can have a clear sense of purpose and be easily engaged in learning. They can be motivated by thinking: “I can do it if I try, so let’s do it,” which ultimately leads them to focus on classes at school. This has been proven through the students’ comments and responses concerning my lectures.

School teachers are not familiar with situations at other schools or students in other schools. Students hardly know the conditions of other schools, either. However, *juku* school teachers have close relationships with many schools through school-sponsored orientations or consultation meetings regarding entrance examinations. The *juku* school teachers also have close contact with school teachers on a personal level. They can also obtain abundant information from the students who go to various schools and their parents. Therefore, in lectures at schools and periodical discussion meetings with school teachers, *juku* school teachers can provide objective information for school teachers and the students. They can provide fresh air to schools that tend to remain closed. And what is more, the discussion meeting, where school teachers and *juku* school teachers exchange their honest opinions, is not only good for school teachers but also beneficial to *juku* school teachers in giving educational guidance to the students. I think it is truly a synergy of school education and *juku* school education.

2.1. Eradicating the Barriers between Regular Schools and *Juku* Schools

In my *juku* school, we support our students both academically and mentally. We have not changed our approach since we started our school. We have published a newsletter called “*Kyoshitsudayori*” for many years. When we started our school, it had only two pages and was printed on coarse paper, and distributed every month or two to the students’ parents to let them know how students were doing in class.

Nowadays, we distribute it once a year, but it has become a forty- to sixty-page booklet with colored pictures. It tells not only about what is happening at our school, but also my personal opinions on timely topics such as “The importance of verbal aptitude,” “Warning against PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) education,” and “Touching the first rank,” and it has become an informative educational magazine. We currently distribute around 50 copies of the booklets to parents, and over 500 copies to *juku* school graduates, *juku* school teachers, regular

school teachers, and some publishing companies. We will soon publish the 130th issue. It especially attracts favorable comments from school teachers, and through “*Kyoshitudayori*,” we gain opportunities to get acquainted with school teachers on a personal level.

At my *juku* school, there were some delinquent students in the past who had poor academic performance or who were suspended from school. We appreciated it when we had a teacher whom we had close relationships with in schools those students attend. By liaising and collaborating closely with each other, these students tend to regain confidence in themselves and show interest in learning. In the long run, they pass entrance exams to their first choice school, and the students themselves, their parents, school teachers, and I will be happy with the results. By eradicating the barriers between regular schools and *juku* schools and providing instructions to the students on an equal footing by abolishing prejudice, we will be able to create exceptional results as described above. This is where the “Small *juku* school’s educational function” exists.

It may be easier to understand if we look at “home education,” “school education,” and “social education” in the below diagram with three rings. As I have mentioned before, there were some areas where the functions of the three educational categories overlapped. However, I think these three rings now seem to be shrinking and are either separated or have smaller overlapping areas due to the social phenomena of an increasing number of nuclear families, women's more active participation in society, parents’ higher level education which either equals or surpasses that of teachers, and a decline in the educational functions of parents and school teachers. Again, in social education, heavy emphasis is laid on the viewpoint of “lifelong education” and currently I cannot escape the feeling that the “society as a place to raise up children” section has indeed become smaller.

“*Juku* school education” not only contributes the educational activities within *juku* schools but also makes home education and school education successful by joining in education activities as the “third party.” Furthermore, from here on out it should also deepen its relationship with social education in the narrow sense. I am hoping that “*juku* school education” may be able to stop the decline in academic ability and social morals. It should be considered that the fourth ring, “*Juku* School Education,” organically overlaps with the original three rings. Nowadays, I am keenly

Diagram: Functions of *Juku* School Education

Functions of *Juku* School Education

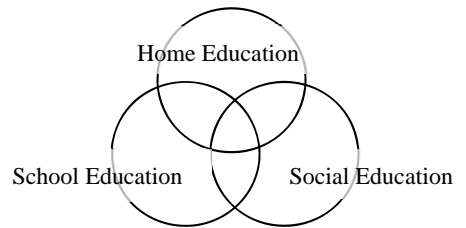
1. Education at *juku* school
2. Cooperation with “Home Education”
3. Cooperation with “School Education”
 - Individual basis : guidance of students with school and *juku* school teachers
 - Holistic basis : guidance of students and teachers through lectures given by *juku* school teachers

- “Home Education,” “School Education,” “Social Education” used to overlap and function well.

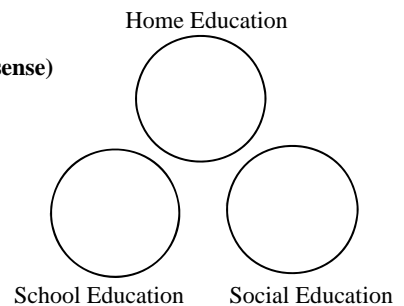
Home Education: education provided to the child by the parents to help the child enjoy a humanly life in the future

School Education: education provided to the child by the teachers at school

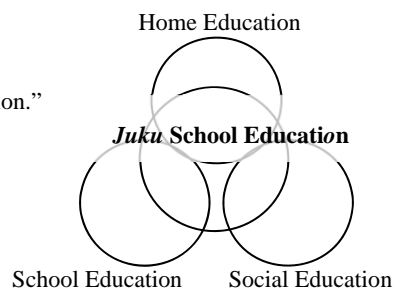
Social Education: education provided to the child by the adults of the community (in a narrow sense)



- Nuclear families, women’s participation in society, and parents’ advanced levels of education have caused the three rings to become loose or separate.



- “*Juku* School Education” functions as the “third party” presence between “Home Education” and “School Education.” “*Juku* School Education” organically binds the three rings as the fourth education category.



aware from my practice that this is the role being demanded of *juku* schools, especially small *juku* schools,.

3. Prospects of *Juku* School Education

At the beginning of “*Shi Juku, Shi Gaku, Kigyō Kyōiku Net Youran (13th edition)* (Private *Juku* Schools, Private Schools, and Companies Education Net Directory)” published on June 10th, 2013, Mr. Hakubun Shimomura, the Minister of Education, commented, “... when Central Council for Education report was submitted in July, 1999, newspapers revealed: “the Ministry of Education approved *juku* schools” (Yomiuri), “the Ministry of Education coexists with *juku* schools” (Asahi).” The Ministry of Education at that time acknowledged *juku* schools. In addition to this, the Japan *Juku* Association, the only official *juku* group, became a public interest incorporated association from an incorporated association in April of the same year.

On June 10 of last year, Mr. Shimomura also gave high praise and recognition to *juku* school education. He actually gave a speech at a ceremony to celebrate the status change of the Japan *Juku* Association. He said that few people knew that *juku* schools not only focus on studying, but also teaching good manners and social rules, and thus *juku* schools are conducting moral education as well. This is the time when we can proudly demonstrate the significance of *juku* school education to the public. *Juku* schools started as supplementary education, but now they are expected to play a greater role in society.

On the other hand, there aren't many scholars who research *juku* school education in Japan. Dr. Julian Dierkes, associate professor at the University of British Columbia in Canada, contributed his paper about *juku* school in the book “*Gakusyu Juku 100 Nen no Rekishi (100-Year History of Juku Schools)*” published in April, 2012. The book took six years to complete and had 160 writers and 24 editors nationwide. Dr. Dierkes mentioned in the book that he conducted interviews with many Japanese people about *juku* school education. I would heartily like to pay homage and express my appreciation to Dr. Dierkes for his research.

However, unfortunately, at the beginning of the paper, there is a part that is translated as “The existence of *juku* schools is not good. However, it cannot be helped. As it is metaphorically expressed in such words, it is still a fact that it is illegal and suspicious.” Even without any qualifications, anyone can open a *juku* school anywhere that they please. It is no wonder then that suspicious *juku* schools exist.

Therefore, this may be a partial truth, but it is not the entire truth. I have been teaching for thirty five years with my wife, but I have never thought that we have continued doing what is “illegal” or “suspicious.” I thought someone should raise their voice to tell the world that *juku* schools have other facets. “I cannot stand the situation as it is!” is what I felt. This is why I made a presentation about “*Juku* School Education” at the International Education Society.

Nurturing is not only limited to studying, but it is also seen in sports, music and other various arts. It is the *juku* school, however, that plays a significant role in both teaching and nurturing in the field of studying. In that sense, *juku* school teachers should be aware that they are contributing to society and should be proud of and responsible for what they are doing.

I am a practitioner of *juku* school education, but not a researcher. *Juku* school education is still unknown territory. We have not yet seen the words “*Juku* School Education” on the spine of a book on the shelves of large book shops. I hope many Japanese educators will also conduct studies on *juku* school education. My teaching practice as a *juku* school teacher may be a small step, but I am sure that the saying “the longest journey begins with a single step” will prove to be true. As *juku* schools were recognized by the Ministry of Education in 1999, I hope that *juku* school education will also be recognized before too long as the “fourth” education category along with “home education,” “school education,” and “social education.” Lastly I strongly desire that the phrase “*Juku* School Education” will prevail in the public sphere, finally supplanting the phrase “supplementary education.”

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