

Double Trouble

Kaoru Nakayama
Keio University ESS

What did you want to become when you were in high school? A pilot? A nurse? Or maybe an ordinary businessman or a housewife?

Well, I wanted to be a CPA, certified public accountant. CPAs' job is, for instance, to audit the financial papers or file tax reports for big corporations or individuals.

When I was in high school in the United States, I took an accounting class for beginners, which I liked very much. Since then, I started to dream of becoming an accountant.

So when I applied to college, I chose the department of economics because I thought this department would be helpful for me to pass the exams for CPA since they offer almost all the classes we need to take for passing the CPA qualification test.

However, my dream has come to an end shortly after I started my university life. In my university, useful classes for CPA tests are offered but if you really wanted to become a CPA, it would be much faster and more effective if you went to a preparatory school for CPAs such as TAC, Tokyo Accounting Center, only to learn the technique of passing the exams.

Those people who go to both universities and the preparatory schools are called "double-school" students, because they literally go to two schools at the same time. Most of you are probably familiar with this phenomenon. Double-school students go to two schools, pay twice as much tuition as normal students and spend twice as much time on studying as other "single-school" students do.

For example, one of my double-school friends comes to Keio campus twice a week and goes to preparatory school for four or five days a week. She is so busy with two schools that she hardly has a time of her own. She is doing all this to become a CPA.

But when I was a freshman, I did not want to double-school. I joined two clubs, Keio English Speaking Society and a golf club. Also I had to take many classes in school. And there were many other things I

wanted to experience. I did not have time to go to a preparatory school for CPAs. So there was no way for me but to give up the dream of becoming a CPA.

But I wondered. Why isn't there any university program, which will prepare students to become CPAs? For those people who want to become doctors, there are medical schools. People don't go to preparatory schools to pass the state examination for doctors. Medical students don't have to double-school to become doctors. So why are the CPAs educated in preparatory schools, not in universities?

If we take the example of the United States, there are some extension schools in universities where people can be educated to become CPAs. There is no preparatory schools like the ones in Japan, which are rather commercialistic.

Moreover, if we look at the present Japanese school system, it is not only the college students who have to double-school these days in Japan. We often see elementary, junior-high and high school students going to preparatory schools after their regular schools. At preparatory schools, they study the subjects, which they should be studying in regular schools. Why do they have to spend twice as much time and money to learn one single thing? If they didn't have to go to preparatory schools they can play sports or music. Or they can experience many other things, which they can do only when they are young. The importance of regular schools is getting less and less. If students depend so much on preparatory schools, why do they go to regular schools?

Ladies and gentlemen, it is time for us to reconsider the role and duty of regular schools. Many of the Japanese young from elementary to college students are now the victims of double schooling.

They can spend their time more effectively and usefully if they have only one school to go to. Let us finish the double-school age, which is almost becoming a Japanese bad custom.

What is school for? Are we getting enough education from the present Japanese schools? School is the place where children are supposed to be educated. Through the elementary and secondary education, children will not only study basic subjects but also learn human relationships and the way of life. And through the higher education, some people may immerse themselves in advanced academic studies,

and other people may choose to get more practical knowledge of law and accounting.

School is the place where the young prepare themselves to become intelligent, responsible adults. It is definitely not some place where children spend their pastime before going to preparatory schools.

Ladies and gentlemen, single school should be enough. We should demand the Japanese Ministry of Education that they regulate the operation of preparatory schools and let the regular schools be more meaningful so that somebody like me will no longer have to give up the dream of becoming a CPA.