

## I Became a High School Girl

Yasuna Tanaka

Hello, everyone. I am from Japan. My name is Yasuna Tanaka. I am going to talk about myself. I hope you will enjoy my talk.

I successfully passed the entrance examination to a prefectural part-time high school in 2010. I am now a high-school girl. I enjoy my school life. I attend school every day. I enjoy school supper as well.

I find school classes not easy, yet I love mathematics, Japanese, and English.

I enjoy talking with my classmates about Pokemon, Anpan-Man, and young singing groups called in general "the Johnny's".

I wanted to choose swimming as extra-curricular activities, but I chose track-and-field instead, as I found no swimming club at school. During the school festival, I cooked chow mein at a stall.

My hobby is cooking and going to pop-music concerts. For cooking, I cook well stew and curry. For concerts, I love going to the Jannies' concerts. I feel too embarrassed to disclose specifically whose concerts I go to.

I will now talk about my early childhood.

I was enrolled in a regular class at Asaka-Daiichi elementary school near where I live. My mother went with me to school when I began attending school, before I became able to attend alone in the second school semester. Then, one of the deputy homeroom teachers came to be in charge of my class. As the summer holiday began, I also began going to an after-school childcare program for children with disabilities.

One of my classmates, however, asked her mother, saying "Why doesn't Yasuna come to the same after-school program as I do? If she does, I can play with her longer." In response, my mother asked me if I would like to go to the same program as my friends did. I answered yes, as I wanted to play with them. She took the procedure to put me in the same program as theirs when I was just about to start my second school year. In the new program, where 150 children were taken care of, instead of 14 of the previous one, I had a lot of fun with my friends, riding on a monocyte and stilts till dark, when I was collected. I was a little unhappy, however, smaller volume of snacks offered by the program.

In the second year at school, I still had a deputy homeroom teacher caring for my class.

The homeroom teacher for my third and fourth years at school, who saw no need for a deputy homeroom teacher, was a caring and interesting lady, and she made my school life enjoyable those two years.

When I went on to the fifth grade, however, a boy began to bully me. Upon hearing from a friend of mine about him, my mother became upset, went immediately to school to talk with the headmaster. This led to the assignment of a support staffer to my class, who protected me from the bully. Nobody bullied me any more, or said or did nasty things to me.

I had a lot of fun at a summer camp for the fifth graders, particularly when we had a bath together in a big bathtub.

In the sixth year at the elementary school, I had from the beginning a support staffer to help me.

I was to be in charge of public announcement on a school sports day when I was a sixth grader. It was so hard for me to announce a prepared text correctly through the loud speaker that a girl classmate offered to spend breaks with me to practice together reading the announcement text. The practice worked, and I did a good job on the sports day.

I also had a very good time in Nikko, a famous tourist spot in Japan, which I visited as part of a school outing.

As I went on to a junior high school, I wanted to be with my old friends and asked to be enrolled in a regular class. Just like when I was in elementary school, a support staffer and available teachers stayed with me to care for me. At my mother's request, the school had a room available for me to rest, when I was annoyed by noise and irritated.

The school was also kind enough to allow me to take periodical exams alone in a different room, as I would become annoyed by noise that my classmates made.

I put in a lot of efforts in extra-curricular activities as well. As a member of the home economics club, I crafted a "Kitty-chan" and "Cinnamon-chan" dolls, and exhibited them during a school festival. I am good at needlework.

I found skiing not equally enjoyable in my second year at the junior high, when I participated in a ski tour program organized by the school. No support staffers who could ski were available, and a college student filled that role on my trip. After having falls after falls, I became scared and my legs hurt. That's the last time I ever ski.

In the third year, a school outing took me to Kyoto, where I saw a lot of old temples.

Then, I worked very hard to get prepared for the entrance exam. My mother asked them to allow me to take the test in a room separate from other examinees.

In the entrance interview, I told them that I would study hard, though I would not reach full marks.

Having passed the examination, I am now a high-school girl.

I have a supporting staffer, a college student, who helps me at the high school as well. At the part-time high school I attend, I have classmates with a variety of backgrounds, like those who used to stay away from school and those who spent some time overseas before being enrolled. Unlike me, some of them cannot write kanji (Chinese characters) properly, or cannot recite a multiplication table. Those students who have trouble understanding classroom teaching have one-on-one or small-group lessons. The school even gives supplementary lessons prior to exams.

The school allows us to bring in notebooks and textbooks in the exam room, and if we fall short of the pass criteria, they give us additional assignment to submit research paper, in an effort to help the students to move up to the next grade.

When I was a first-year student, I was given an assignment of manually copying one of the textbooks. I had to copy as many as 30 pages every time. When I sometimes lost track of which part I was transcribing, my mother reminded me whenever I unknowingly skipped some portions. It was hard, but I did it untiringly. When I showed the completed assignment to the teacher, she recognized my hard work. That made me happy.

The teachers sometimes need external help from, for example, a special school nearby in order to understand me. They also attend some training sessions for their own education to get insight into the difficulty that I face.

I would like to be a fashion model after graduation and reaching adulthood.

To attain that aspiration, I play badminton, table tennis, and tennis in PE at school. I find it hard to play them, yet my classmates and teachers praise me when I play well.

I turn to track and field after school. I will run hard, and work hard on my diet.

I have stayed in regular classes throughout my school life. I have made lots of friends.

I have been always very happy, and I would like to stay with all my friends in the future as well.