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**Mode Gakuen Cocoon
Tower // Tokyo // Japan //**
Tange Associates

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Mode Gakuen (<http://www.mode.ac.jp/lang/english.html>) Cocoon Tower in Shinjuku Tokyo Nishi-Shinjuku's 'skyscraper forest' of concrete opened in October 2008. Looking like a six-sided fountain pen wrapped in masking tape, the 81,000 square-meter structure houses retail spaces and the Mode Gakuen design school. Standing in Tokyo's distinctive high-rise district of Nishi-Shinjuku, **Tange Associates** (<http://www.tangeweb.com/>) ' Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower stands as a symbol of innovation and exception in educational design. This awesome construction was recently awarded as Skyscraper of the Year by Emporis. ([more http://www.archicentral.com/boutique-monaco-emporis-skyscraper-silver-award-2008-9077/](http://www.archicentral.com/boutique-monaco-emporis-skyscraper-silver-award-2008-9077/).)

Before selecting a design for their new Tokyo location, Mode Gakuen held a competition asking architects to submit design proposals for the building. The only condition was that the building could not be rectangular. Mode Gakuen received more than 150 proposals by approximately 50 architects. The winning proposal was a cocoon-like structure designed by Tange Associates. According to Tange, the building's cocoon shape symbolizes a building that nurtures the students inside. White aluminum and dark blue glass exterior form the structure's curved shell, which is criss-crossed by a web of white diagonal lines earning it the name 'Cocoon Tower'.

The 50 level building contains 3 different schools: Tokyo Mode Gakuen (fashion), HAL Tokyo (IT and digital contents) and Shuto Iko (medical treatments and care). Tange Associates advise: 'The building's innovative shape and cutting edge façade embodies our unique 'Cocoon' concept. Embraced within this incubating form, students are inspired to create, grow and transform.'

The vertical campus, which completed in October, can hold 10,000 students and incorporates a 3-storey high atrium to substitute as a 'schoolyard', called the 'Student Lounge' and multi-use corridors where communication can flourish.


The tower floor plan is simple. Three rectangular classroom areas rotate 120 degrees around the inner core. From the 1st floor to the 50th floor, these rectangular classroom areas are arranged in a curvilinear form. The inner core consists of an elevator, staircase and shaft.

Between each classroom is a three-storey student lounge where students can socialise or do their homework. These lounges face three directions, east, southwest and northwest.

Greenery planted at lower levels brings nature and softness to the design and its elliptical form swathed in an aluminium curtain wall creates a form pleasing to the eye from every level whilst minimising the building's footprint.

'The students will study among the action to 'create, grow and transform,' says the architect.

The 204-metre-tall (669 ft) tower is the second-tallest educational building in the world (surpassed only by the main building of the **Moscow State University** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lomonosov_Moscow_State_University)) and is the **17th-tallest building in Tokyo** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings_and_structures_in_Tokyo).

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