

Humanization of Work and Current Personnel Management Systems in Japan*

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Abstract

Humanization of work has been known even in Japan since the 1970's, but the focus of such studies has recently expanded from exploring how to make production work better for blue-collar workers to studying how to create a favorable balance between the working and private lives of both white and blue-collar workers. In response to this trend, many companies have introduced new personnel management systems, the essence of which is the "autonomy" of the individual. That is why we recognize this movement as a link with Humanization of Work. From the practical point of view, it is most important for companies to choose personnel management systems which allow employees to work autonomously.

Keywords: Humanization of work, Autonomy, Life outside work, Administrative work systems, Diversified personnel management systems

抄 録

わが国では1970年代から労働の人間化が注目されてきたが、その焦点は、生産労働者の仕事そのものを変革し、仕事において自律性を発揮することにあてられてきた。しかし、近年においては、労働の人間化の射程は、ホワイトカラーや仕事と仕事を離れた生活との関係にまで拡大されてきた。最近の新しい人事管理制度をみても、労働者自身が仕事を離れた生活を含めて自律的に働き方を決定できるような制度が導入されてきている。こうした一連の動きは、労働者が自律性を発揮しているという点において、新しい労働の人間化の展開としてとらえられる。

キーワード：労働の人間化、自律性、仕事を離れた生活、裁量労働制、複線型人事管理

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Introduction

It has been a long time since special words such as Karou-shi (death from overwork) or Kaisya-Ningen (a workaholic) were in widespread use in Japan. Although we Japanese now use these words with some of self-reflection, we accepted our way of working and thought nothing of workers devoting all of their lives to their companies only, ignoring their family and social life. Employees working in this way were almost all male. So, a husband worked all day outside the house and a wife did housework, took care of their children and was responsible for relationships within the community. It was rare for married women, especially those with children, to work full-time outside the home because of their household duties. It is undeniable that this was the typical Japanese family employment situation.

In this situation, it is needless to say that companies' interest was primarily in nucleus workers, an almost entirely male group. The companies made their personnel management systems in order to make the best use of these human resources and did not cover the other work forces as a main target. Female workers and aged male workers were considered an assistant workforce. We called them, especially female workers, peripheral workers. Their personnel management systems were not well-suited for those workers except for male nucleus workers and it was not easy for even male nucleus workers to spend enough time outside their work under these systems.

However, Japanese people have had doubts about their way of working recently. And, the relationship between workers and their companies has also been changing. Keeping step with this movement, many companies have been changing their personnel management systems.

In this paper, I will see this trend from the view point of Humanization of Work (hereafter abbreviated as HW) in Japan.¹⁾ First, I will briefly summarize HW in Japan until the middle of the 1980's and from it extract major characteristics. The reason I divide my study into two eras is that in the mid-eighties we find a junction from which we can recognize two new trends of HW study in Japan. Until then, HW had been discussed mainly with regard to monotonous work caused by conveyer systems. After that point, there was a sharp increase in HW research. One of two main targets was the impact

1) Though there are no special differences between them, we use the terminology "Humanization of Work" instead of "Quality of Working Life (QWL)" because HW (rodo no ningenn-ka) was more often used than QWL (rodo seikatsu no shitsu) in the past in Japan and the situations in those days are discussed in this paper.

of new technology on job content and work methods. The second was to expand the area covered by the study from blue-collar workers to all kind of work forces. The crucial concept connecting these two eras is autonomy. Subsequently, it is necessary to discuss the differences between HW in the past and that of today as defined by two kinds of autonomy. Finally, personnel management systems of some current companies will be discussed with regard to HW.

Humanization of Work in Japan until the middle of the 1980's

A surge of HW in Japan occurred in the first half of the 1970's. It is generally said that the starting point goes back to the attendance of a Japanese professor at the International Conference about Quality of Working Life (QWL) held in New York in September, 1972. As seen in Europe and America, the main reason for the spread of HW was a critical consciousness of alienation at the work organization level with the progress of industrialization. In those days, Japanese interest in HW was higher among academic people than among practical business people. This is because Japanese employment system and the management system were combined in order to alleviate the impact of the alienation syndrome and to integrate labor and management sides (Mine, 1983). In Japan work organization has by nature many of the same characteristics as were sought in Europe and the United States in the HW movement. There naturally is a weak sense of job demarcation, multi-skilled workers and good fellowship among workers. When one worker has not yet finished his job others come to help him, or when one worker is absent, others cover his duties. So the need to make a new work organization based on HW concepts was not so strong. That is why the real damage at a practical level was less serious in Japan than in other countries and absentee and turnover rates were not as high.

However the first movement of HW spread like wildfire in Japan for the following reasons: 1) Many companies introduced new work organizations based on the concept of HW; 2) Researchers engaged in a heated argument of HW in the academic field; 3) Japan Society of Business Administration (Nippon Keiei Gakkai) picked up HW as one of the main themes at the 54th national conference held in 1980.

At this conference, three presenters expressed their opinions (K.Murata, 1983; M.Murata, 1981; Okubayashi, 1991; JSBA, 1981). We can find three similarities. First, these scholars recognized HW as one of management's means to give workers a better work environment to make humanity and productivity compatible. Secondly, the means

concretely included job-rotation, job-enlargement, job-enrichment and autonomous work groups. The third point of similarity is that a socio-technical systems theory developed by Tavistock Institute's members (Emery & Trist, 1969) was relied on as a theoretical prop. Representative examples of HW in Japan are Mitsubishi Electronic Nakatsugawa Work and Kanto Seiki, where conveyer system work was given up and group work was introduced. They introduced new work organization which was quite the same as autonomous work group based on a socio-technical systems theory (Takezawa, 1976).

Here, we should pay attention to the fact that the real contribution of HW concepts in Japan occurred only at the work organization level, though some researchers defined HW as covering a much wider area than work organization level.²⁾ We even called this sort of HW "micro HW" (Okubayashi, 1991).

Therefore companies' main purpose concentrated on fulfilling worker satisfaction, especially blue-collar workers, and simultaneously accomplishing productivity at the work organization level, by building new work organization based on the HW concept. The key points of HW in those days were male nucleus blue-collar workers, work organization level, changing work itself and working life not including the other part of worker's lives.

Autonomy as a key factor

The former section confirms what characteristics the study of HW had until the middle of the 1980's. The word humanization was used because in acquiring autonomy by means of changing work itself, recovering humanity, which workers were deprived of by monotonous work as a result of industrialization, especially conveyer work, was intended. We emphasized autonomy as a key factor among many ingredients constituting humanity. So the essence of HW is how much autonomy people exhibit in their working life, mainly in doing work itself.

Turning our attention to autonomy, we notice that autonomy was discussed in connec-

2) Delamotte, Y and S.Takezawa considered QWL as "a set of new labour problems and their countermeasures which have gained recognition as important determinants of worker satisfaction and productivity in many societies during the period of their sustained economic growth." (Delamotte and Takezawa, 1984, p.3) Walton says that QWL encompasses eight conceptual categories: 1) Adequate and fair compensation; 2) Safe and healthy environment; 3) Development of human capacities; 4) Growth and security; 5) Social integration; 6) Constitutionalism; 7) The total life space; 8) Social relevance (Walton, 1974). Other scholars also proposed HW concepts containing a wider range. But, in reality, changes occurred only at the work organization level.

tion with autonomous work group, which was found to be the most effective solution to the crisis of alienation. The most important contribution of this way of working is that it gave workers the possibility of breaking the spell of the 'one-man, one-job' principle originating from the scientific management proposed by F.W.Taylor. Escaping from the work planned by the scientific management allowed workers to exhibit their own will in doing their jobs, even though the freedom was not so great. Therefore the 'one-man, one-job' principle was superseded by the 'one-task, one-team' principle (Okubayashi, 1991).

Susman pointed out that autonomy "is more often associated with work groups than with individual jobs" (Susman, 1979, p.34). Gulowsen (1977) picked up eight standards to check whether a work group has autonomy or not, and in Japan, Akaoka (1983) selected four indicators.³⁾ All discussed autonomy at the work organization level with regard to the autonomous work group.

Though I can not deny the effectiveness of organizing the autonomous work group, autonomy was exhibited only within a limited area, the allotted group work, as long as our discussion remained at the work organization level. Autonomy was related to such matters as who was responsible for the job, what procedures workers took, and so on. In the past autonomy was defined as "the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures used in carrying it out" (Hackman and Oldham, 1975, p.162) or "the amount of discretion the worker is expected to exercise in carrying out assigned work activities" (Turner and Lawrence, 1965, p.21). Here, we should direct our attention to the phrases, "carrying it out" or "carrying out assigned work activities". These phrases also follow our assertion that autonomy is used in a limited area..

Is work organization the only place where we can exhibit our autonomy? We have much leeway to display our autonomy in our working life. For example, we also exhibit an autonomous behavior in deciding what time we will start our job or when we will take our salaried holiday. The focus of HW in Japan has been changing and that means our recognition of autonomy has being extended as well. We will see this movement in the next section.

3) Gulowsen says that the group can decide or influence the formulation of the group's goal, where to work, when to work, the choice of the production method, the group's own internal distribution of tasks, the group's own membership, crucial matters of leadership and the way of work operations' performance (Gulowsen, 1972, pp.376-378). Akaoka chooses adjustment of work speed, decision of procedures, decision of allotted task and self-inspection (Akaoka, 1983, p.21).

The current movement of the study of HW

After the mid-eighties, the study of HW in Japan proceeded in new directions. It is useful to classify the new directions into two groups. In one direction we can discuss the impact of new technology on work patterns. Though this issue is also on the work organization level, what I want to emphasize here is the impact of new technology and in this regard we can say that this is a new pattern of study in HW. The other is to discuss a completely new matter which is not categorized in the basic model of HW. Specifically, our interest extends not only to blue-collar workers but to white-collar, aged and female workers. And we depart from the work organization level and broaden our outlook to the whole company organization level and to the whole 24 hours of life, not simply time spent in the work place. We may call this kind of study Macro HW (Okubayashi, 1991). What I will discuss here is the latter movement, but before turning to a closer examination of it, a few brief remarks should be made concerning the new technology.

New technology — CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled machine), CAD (Computer-Aided Design), CAM (Computer-Aided Manufacturing), FMS (Flexible Manufacturing Systems) and CIM (Computer Integrated Manufacturing) — has played a leading role in a wide-ranging discussion in which scholars from many fields are involved, not only in Japan but worldwide. The main points are whether or not new technologies cause degradation of work, what kind of management system is suitable for the organization introducing new technologies and in a wider ranging discussion, whether new technology leads to the end of mass production and brings new production patterns. (Wall, Clegg and Kemp, 1987; Bamber and Lunsbery, 1990; Kenny and Florida, 1993). Using our key term, autonomy, we focused on whether we can work with autonomy in the work place where new technologies have been introduced. To this point we can accept that this argument has been on the same line as the former study of HW in that the focus of the study is on blue-collar workers and work organization. To discuss the matter as a whole is beyond the scope of this paper. So we will mention the core of this matter instead of discussing it in depth.

To state our conclusion first, the impact of new technology on work pattern in Japan is less severe than that of other countries and it is not often laid on the table for consideration of the study of HW. The reason is almost the same as I mentioned above in discussing the influence of monotonous work. The Japanese work organization has a flexibility to moderate and absorb the external change because of its loose job-demarcation, job

rotation, educational system and non-linkage between job and wage. These characteristics in Japanese work organization, supported by Japanese management systems, helped us dispense with the new technology problem as much as in foreign countries.

Environmental change in recent Japan

In this section, I will shift the emphasis away from the first direction of the current study of HW, new technology problems, to the second one, Macro HW including white-collar, female, and aged workers and the life outside the work place. First, to understand the reason Macro HW has occurred, it may be useful to look closely at the change of environment from the view point of the former study of HW.

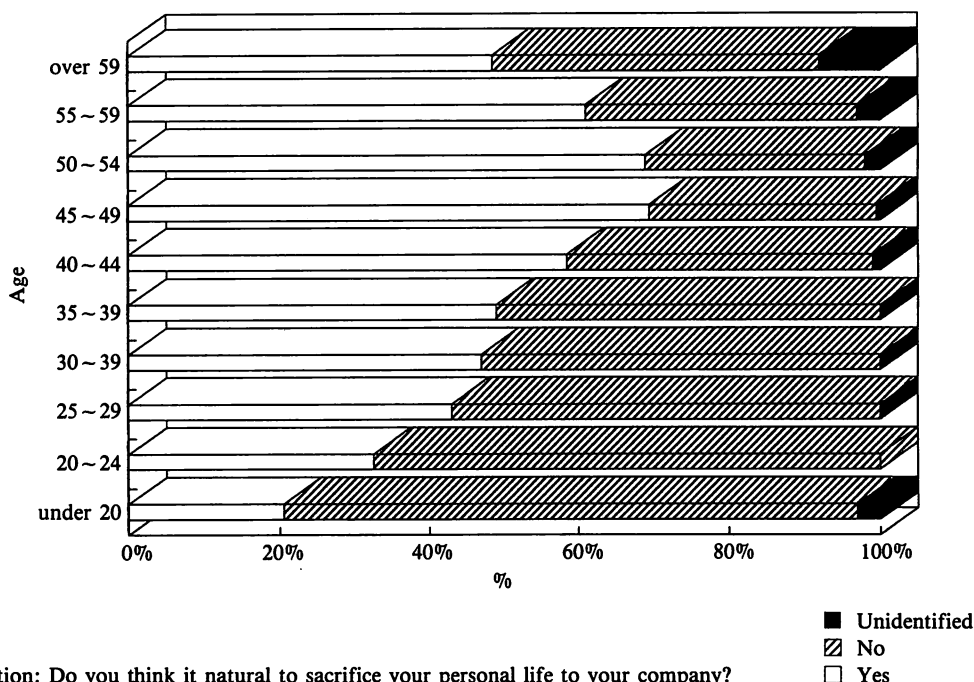
In the former study, we focused on male nucleus blue-collar workers, work organization level and their lives in the work place. It is the basic model of HW. But nowadays, the environmental change has made our focus extend to the other worker groups which were not included in the basic model of HW. Those groups are white-collar worker, aged worker and female worker groups. So I would like to focus attention on those worker groups.

To begin with, although the number of blue-collar workers has remained almost unchanged, the rapid increase of white-collar workers has been recognized. After becoming even around 1970, the difference between two groups has been widening and the number of white-collar workers was about 9.3 million more than that of blue-collar workers in 1992. The ratio of white-collar workers in all work forces including the agricultural and fishery workers has also been increasing and expected to have a majority in the year 2000 (Policy Planning and Research Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Labour, 1987).

Secondly, Japan as a society is aging dramatically. The increasing ratio in our country is the sharpest in the developed world. Though the proportion of people older than 65 was about 10% in 1980 it is expected that about a quarter of the nation will be older than 65 in 2025. The work force ratio in the bracket between 60 to 65 years old is astonishingly higher than that of any other developed capitalistic country. We can no longer ignore aged people.

Furthermore, many female workers have come to the labor market. The number of male employed workers rose by 5.3 million, from 26.1 million in 1980 to 31.4 million in 1992. In the same period, that of female employed workers had increased by 6.2 million,

Figure 1. Your personal life or your company?



Question: Do you think it natural to sacrifice your personal life to your company?

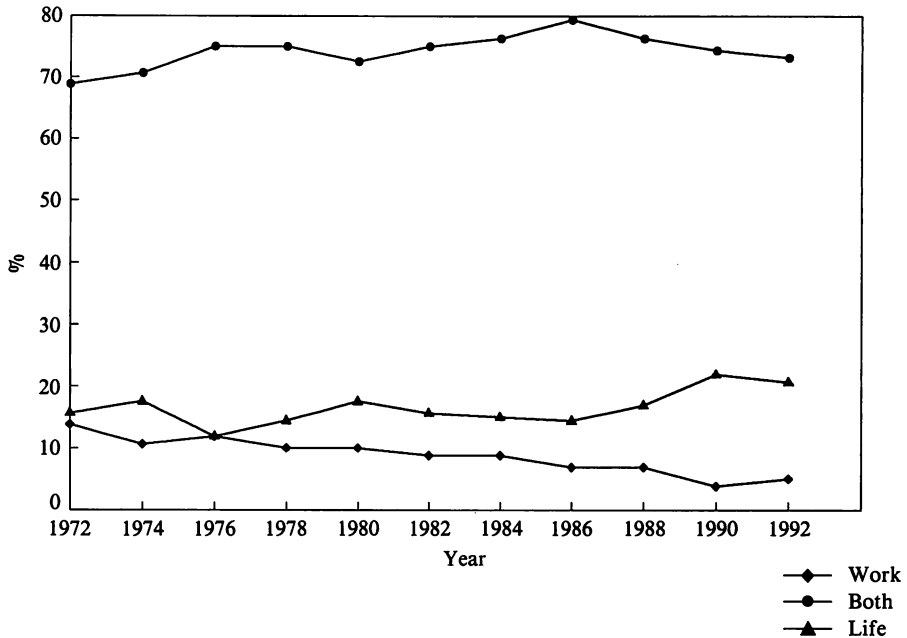
Source: Policy Planning and Research Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Labour, 1987, p.148, Table III-95.

from 13.5 million to 19.7 million. These figures fully prove that female workers have greater participation in many vocational fields. Now, about 40% of employed adults are female and a little less than 30% of female employed workers are involved in part-time-jobs.

As we have seen, the constitution of the work force has been changing and this change is one of the factors which opened our eyes to wider areas in the study of HW. The other big change occurring around us recently is reconsideration of the relationship between the life spent in the work place and the life spent outside the work place. Figure 1 demonstrates this change in our consciousness with regard to the importance we place on our own life both in and out of the company.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of people, in certain age brackets, saying "yes" or "no" to the question, "Do you think it natural to sacrifice your personal life to your company?". The younger the respondents become, the bigger the proportion answering "no" is. We can see the same trend from Figure 2 in which newcomers have been asked,

Figure 2. Which is central, your personal or working life?



Source: Japan Productivity Center, Industrial Relations Department, 1992, p.89, Q6.

“Which is central, your personal life or your working life?” Although the number of those answering “compatibility”, drawn in the broken line, has remained steady, the dotted line showing the newcomers answering “life” has rapidly risen in last 5 years and the thin line, representing those who answered “work”, has gradually decreased.

From these two figures, we can learn that the consciousness of working people has been changing and they have begun to consider their own life apart from work important. This trend is found more clearly in the younger generation. Other researchers also reinforce this characteristic. Inagami and Sato, discussing the concept “central life interest”, state that our life has been changing from the one where working is everything to the one where we seek a balance between working and the life outside working. (Inagami and Sato, 1986, p.235)

In this way, the environment with regard to vocational activity has been turbulently changing in Japan. This radical change caused the study of HW to broaden and also forced the companies to adapt this situation and some of companies introduced new personnel management systems suitable for this environment. The following section will examine these points.

The forfeiture of the utility of the Nenko Model

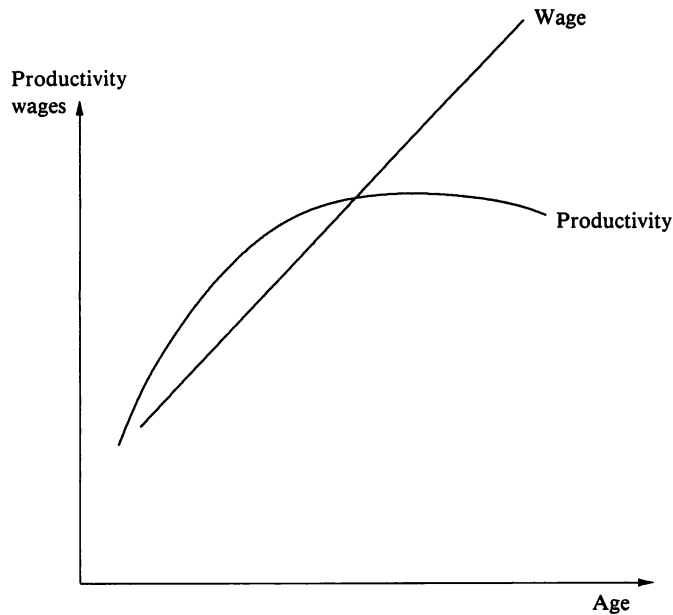
Coping with these changes mentioned above, many companies have been changing their personnel strategies and introducing new personnel management systems. The key point of the new movement is to give employees wider autonomy than before. Giving this choice to employees is more suitable for today's work settings, where work forces live and work with various kinds of action patterns. Today, we can find some established systems under which employees can decide what time they would begin their job or what career they would choose. The characteristic of these systems is that they give employees room for showing their autonomy even in deciding the relationship between their working life and their life outside the work place, which was not recognized in the former movement of HW.

Before discussing this movement in detail, I believe I should mention the change of employers' recognition of their employees. Because employers originally and unintentionally have some psychological model of their employees, they make an institution suited best to their model of the employees. To use Schein's phrase, every employer "has a total view, and his or her view of why people work and how one should motivate and manage them is part of that world view" (Schein, 1971, p.52).

In Japan, employers tacitly thought that employees would continue to work in one company until their retirement, that the effective workforce should be male, that employees' central interest was in working life, and that they would accept any kind of offer from the company even if they have to transfer and live apart from families. (Tanshin-funin). We call this model the Nenko (seniority) model, which is composed of seniority wage and life-time employment systems by offsetting employees' contribution and their wages through their whole working life, not based on individual contribution. (Figure 3) Under this system, the main attention of employers have not been paid employees' autonomy regarding their working life and their life apart from the work place, but have been paid only to keeping them employed to their retirement age. Employers viewed employment as a lifelong obligation and thought almost any kind of request would be accepted as long as employment would be guaranteed, therefore it was thought to be natural for the employees to put up with unreasonable demand.

We have noticed, however, that the Nenko model does not work to cover various work forces, which do not consist of male nucleus workers as before. Many of these workers do not only place importance on working life and they feel that they should free them-

Figure 3. Invisible Investment



Source: Kagono, 1990, p.20.

selves from the model to make their whole life comfortable, both in and outside work place. This breakaway from the Nenko model, on the one hand, lightens employers from the burden of paying salary to the employees whose ability and contribution are not enough to warrant the salary expected. On the other hand, it gives employees the feeling that they are evaluated as they work and changing one's occupation becomes a possibility as the life-long obligation on both sides is lessened. As shown in the former part, nowadays, employees are less likely to suppress their own will, though premised under the Nenko model, and they want to work as autonomously as they can. That is one of main reasons many companies find it necessary to arrange new personnel systems suited to the situation and introduce new ones in obedience to their personnel strategies.⁴⁾

4) The lack of positions in the organizations and the burden of personnel cost for the organizations could be mentioned as other reasons. But I do not argue this point any more because following up it further would take us beyond the scope of this paper.

New personnel management systems

These new systems introduced by the change of personnel strategies are following: The first group covers almost all work forces, particularly white-collars, and includes female and aged labor. The group includes a diversified personnel management system (Fukusen-gata jinnji kanri), an administrative work system (Sairyo-rodo sei), a self-reporting system (Jiko-shinkoku seido), a flex-time system and so on. A detailed account of the first two systems will be given later, so here we will see the other institutions briefly. A self-reporting system formally allows employees to express their opinion as to what kind of job they want to try or at which branch they would like to work. Management develops the future strategies and personnel reshuffling by taking their requests into consideration, though requests are not always accepted. Flex-time systems have also been becoming popular in Japan recently. Under the system, employees can change the starting and ending time of their work as personal occasion calls. This allows workers to avoid traffic jams, to finish their personal matters before going to or after leaving their office, and to concentrate on their jobs whenever they like though the system usually has a core time when we have to be at work. Some companies introduced these two systems previous to these days, but the number of companies arranging these systems have been increasing and the importance of these systems have been recognized.

The second group is intended for the aged workforce. A re-employment system for retired workers, a special company established for retired workers and a selective retirement system (Sentaku-teinen seido) are included in this group. These first two systems are chiefly introduced in manufacturing companies represented by, for example, motor companies, where skilled workers' age does not affect their ability. In most cases, they can choose full-time or part-time work from several work patterns. Management expects this system to give workers the feeling that they live lives worth living rather than to give them monetary support. A selective retirement system, which is introduced in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing companies, gives older employees, usually more than 50 years old, choices. In Sanyo electric, the choices are whether they will remain working in the same company until the mandatory retirement age, or transfer to subsidiary companies with the right to work some years longer than the head office's retirement age, or be given special financial support for starting their own business on condition of retiring (The Nihon Keizai, 23, September, 1992). All these new systems aim at giving employees options with regard to the relationship between working and private life.

The third group is related especially to female workers. The reason I will mention both a childcare leave system and an infirmed-care leave system is that they are categorized in the new system which keeps an eye on the importance of the life outside the work place. Here, we have to pay special attention to the fact that both childcare and infirmed-care are not only duties for females and I emphatically say that these important matters should be cared for by both men and women cooperatively. However, it is undeniable that in reality these have been treated as women's issues and have been preventing women from working as well as men. The right to childcare leave is protected by the law enacted in 1992 and the Ministry of Labour recommends employers endeavor to introduce the infirmed-care leave system. Some companies started their own childcare leave systems which brought more thoughtful care than the legal standard and under which employees could take two or more years leave though the law requires companies to admit leave of one year at the longest. There are other well-thought out care programs. Certain companies have a special program for making the temporary retiree return to work easier. Other companies take over social insurance contributions during the leave term to lessen the temporary retiree's monetary burden since no salary is usually paid during the period. In other companies, employees who have a small child or an old parent or a patient that needs their help are exempt from overtime work when they offer reasons. All these new institutions giving us time to care for a member of our family allow us to work even if we have to care for a baby or a patient in the family. This allows workers who had no choice but to exit the labour market because of child or patient care to continue to work and helps us build our whole life with respect to both work life and private life.

All these systems categorized into three groups pay attention to the important part that former personnel management systems over looked; life outside the work place. It is imperative that we live a life outside of work in the vocational period and after retirement. Behind this movement, companies recognize that workers need to decide for themselves, both on a daily and a long-term level, the relationship between their work and their private life. These decisions are autonomous activities and, here, autonomy is accepted as much wider than recognized in the former study of HW. This is why these new personnel management systems are discussed in line with the study of HW and recognized as a new development of HW. Next, we will see the administrative work system of MURATA MACHINERY, LTD. (MURATA KIKAI) and the diversified personnel management system of Nitto Denko Corporation.

Case 1: An administrative work system

MURATA KIKAI introduced a system called “free time system” in April 1986, earlier than the Labor Standards Act officially admitted that kind of working style. One characteristic of MURATA KIKAI’s administrative work system is that the union took initiative in starting the system with management’s understanding and support. The most discussed problem in introducing this system was how to make employees consent to substitute the “administrative work allowance”, which is 30.6 percent of standard wage without regard to their real working time, for the previous overtime allowance. About 80% of employees were against the introduction of the system because in those days the average overtime per month was over 42 hours in technological departments. The union leaders persuaded the members, insisting that performance and working time did not always correspond, and that they should move away from the notion that the longer they stay in the office, the better evaluation they would receive. After assiduous persuasion, more than 80% of union members agreed to the proposal and the system was introduced.

This system is applicable to engineers and employees mainly engaging in research and development duties whose number is about 680 or about 20 percent of all employees. Under this system, they can control their working conditions including when they come to and leave their office and whether they work at home or not. Ultimately, they do not have to come to the office as far as the institution says though almost all of them come to the office at least once a day for reasons of their work. That is to say, they are free from the management’s control of time and space of their work environment. They have more room for designing a more flexible combination of working life and non-working life, and they are almost completely autonomous.

MURATA KIKAI aims at breaking from “a company driven by manufacturing” to “a company driven by creativity” and recognizes that to have creative human resources is their most important asset. In order to cultivate creativity, “working diligently with efficiency” is sought after instead of “working diligently for a long time” and this system is regarded as a successful way for employees to extract their autonomy to attain the company’s goal. Almost all employees enjoying this system highly value it. Management also considers it good and has already begun re-arranging activities in order to make the system much better.

Case 2: A diversified personnel management system

While undergoing reorganization from a functional organization to a divisionalized one, Nitto Denko Corporation changed their personnel systems and introduced a diversified personnel management system at the management staff level in April 1992 and at the general staff level one year later. Figure 4 shows both the former and new systems. As is shown in the Figure 4, the former system also had a dual course, but the company's personnel policy dictated the course rather than workers' discretion. We could not deny the possibility that an employee's job held upon entering the firm might decide the future course of their career. There were plural standards of treatment according to the job tracks, so whenever an employee changed his or her job, individual arrangements would be needed.

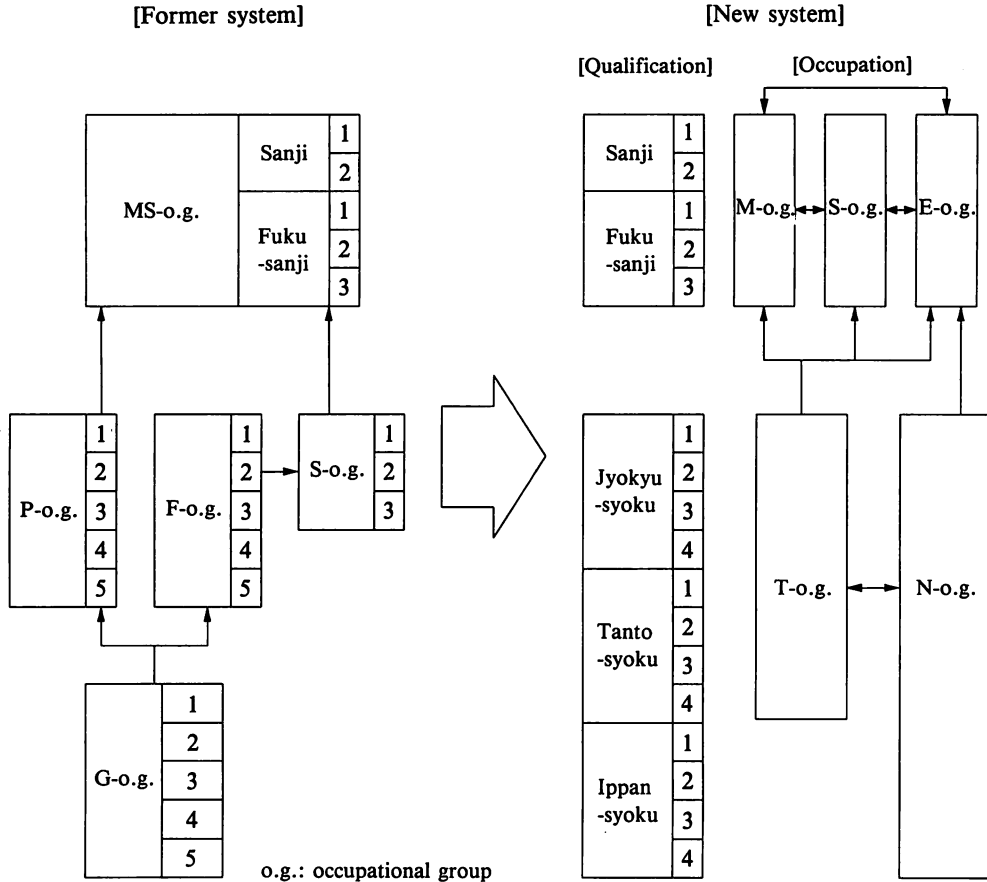
Under the new system, only one standard of treatment, Qualification, is introduced and the occupational group is recognized as "a bundle of ability and aptitude" rather than a sphere of duty. The expected roles at each occupational group are different. The most noteworthy characteristic of this system is that the decision of choosing a course is entrusted to employees themselves in order to make a better fit between the role expected of them and their future expectation. The system is also arranged to make an appropriate appraisal according to the diversified ability and role required for each course. The focus of this system is on fostering employees through good evaluation and feedback. A special training for evaluators is also introduced so that they may perform a better evaluation and inculcate values.

In 1993, the first opportunity for self-determination of work course was done and the ratio of employees hoping T-occupational group and N-occupational group was about fifty-fifty in around 2,300 participants. There is no institutional limit of changing courses except for once a year at the general worker level. The individual employees' will is more respected than any other thing. Many employees, especially younger ones, seem to regard this system as good. Though management says that there are some points which should be improved and it is too early to do a final evaluation of the system, they give a passing mark as of today.

Conclusion

In Japan, the target of the study of HW has been changing from work organization level to company level and from workers engaged in production work to the other work forces including white-collar, women, and aged workers. This does not mean that no

Figure 4. The former and new systems of Nitto Denko Corporation



[Former system]

- <G — occupational group> New comers.
- <P — occupational group> Employees engaged mainly in office work.
- <F — occupational group> Employees engaged mainly in shop-floor work.
- <S — occupational group> Shop-floor supervisors.
- <MS — occupational group> Managerial staff.

[New system]

- <T — occupational group> Employees aiming at acquiring wide and special knowledge for management. They can be promoted depending on their ability.
- <N — occupational group> Employees aiming at accomplishing their jobs. They tackle their work thoroughly and steadily. Promotion depends on their skills.
- <M — occupational group> Managerial staff.
- <S — occupational group> Specialists having expert ability applicable outside their company.
- <E — occupational group> Employees making use of their experiences by teaching younger employees and forming the basis of reliable performance.

Source: In-house materials.

interest is taken in the blue-collar workers, but instead it means that many more problems occur in the new worker groups and much more attention is paid to the new groups than the production workers at the work organization level. This is saying the area the study of HW is covering is widening its application in two senses. In one sense, as I mentioned, the work force aimed at by the study is expanded from blue-collar workers to all members of the force. The second is that we open our eyes to the relationship between working life and life outside the work place and simultaneously, autonomy is recognized as wider than that in the former study of HW. Performing our jobs at our own discretion in our work place is an autonomous activity but making a good relationship between our two lives mentioned above is also really an autonomous activity. The reasons of this change are the increase of white collar, female workers and aged work forces caused by the changes of the industrial and population structures and the change of consciousness about work and life. These changes cause another transition that employers start taking leave of the Nenko model widely accepted in Japan.

Following this movement, many companies have been introducing new personnel management systems suited to the trend. These new systems are an administrative work system, a diversified personnel management system, a child care leave system, a selective retirement system and so on. The main point of this change is that for making the best use of human resources of the company, the uniqueness of each employee is taken into consideration and much attention is paid to responding to the employees' needs. This consideration gives employees room for extracting their autonomy by making good relationships between working life and life outside the work place. Two cases show that employers and most employees working under the systems welcome the new personnel systems. Japanese economic growth has slowed, an advanced age society will come in the near future and our consciousness about work will certainly continue to change. In this situation, those changes of personnel management systems which respect employees' autonomy should be highly valued since working and living autonomously is a very basic need of human beings. So these movements should be recognized in line with the study of HW. It is time for Japan to take these kinds of working styles and life styles as a matured society.

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