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General Survey

Labor Circles' Trends towards Hosokawa's Resignation Announcement

On April 25, immediately after Tsutomu Hata, leader of Shinseito (Japan Renewal Party), was appointed Japan's 51st prime minister in plenary sessions of both houses of the Diet, Shinseito, the Japan New Party (JNP) and the Democratic Specialist Party (DSP) proposed that a parliamentary group, called Kaisin from which the Socialist Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) was excluded, be created. The SDPJ, opposing this move, left the ruling bloc, bringing seriously weakening the coalition and making the political climate become fluid. This left Hata to form a minority government and possibly encounter an early House of Representatives dissolution for a general election after the fiscal 1994 government budget bill is compiled. The SDPJ pledged to cooperate in debate on compilation of the budget bill.

At its April 26 extraordinary meeting of three leaders, Rengo (Japanese Confederation of Trade Unions) expressed understanding for SDPJ's departure from the ruling coalition. It then confirmed its policy of reviewing a cooperative relationship with the coalition bloc and of coping with matters, particularly policies, on clear-cut principles. It expressed its view that it will give a top priority to maintaining unity of labor unions which will be likely eroded as a result of the SDPJ's withdrawal from the ruling coalition in which the DSP stays.

Consisting of labor unions which support the SDPJ and which are affiliated with the former Sohyo and those backing the DSP associated with the now-defunct Domei, Rengo has its political and election policies premised on the supposition that both the SDPJ and the DSP will join hands with each other. The recent political upheaval split the SDPJ and the DSP into one camp that is less friendly to the coalition and one camp close to the coalition, respectively. Their Rengo is pressed to come up with response to how it can set forth strategic moves toward a general election, which has suddenly become more plausible.

Unlike the era that saw one part of labor supporting the SDPJ and the other backing the DSP, changes in the political climate do not immediately lead to confrontation between labor unions. Yet Rengo and its umbrella industrial unions find themselves baffled about what to do about SDPJ's decision to pull out of the alliance.

On April 26, when SDPJ chief Tomiichi Murayama announced his party decision to withdraw from the ruling coalition, the "conference of labor unions which join hands with SDPJ," consisting of SDPJ-backing unions, called an emergency six-member committee meeting and confirmed that "it will support the pullout decision." It asked the SDPJ to stay

united to "respond to the situation in strict order."

Yuaikai, comprised of DSP-supporting labor unions, on the 26th held an emergency meeting of three executives and urged the DSP to make efforts to "restore the relationship of trust among individual parties." In addition, it issued a statement stressing the need for the DSP to take enough care to emphasize a cooperative relationship with Rengo and Yuaikai."

Within Rengo, many executives expressed outright antipathy toward Ouchi who had so far joined forces with the SDPJ and the New Party Sakigake but then suddenly tilted toward Shinseito.

Working Conditions and the Labor Market

A Survey on Realities of *Sogoshoku* Women

About 80 percent of *sogoshoku* women (women expected to be faithful employees and do the same work as men) feel they can give full play to their abilities at the current workplace and a shade over 60 percent are satisfied with their present jobs. What is more, three out of every four want to continue their careers in the years ahead, according to a Ministry of Labour's survey. The survey on the employment realities of women on the managerial track thus revealed *sogoshoku* women's positive attitude toward work. However, it also showed that over 68 percent felt discriminatory treatment against women at the company and one in five felt they are unable to display their abilities. Since the inception of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986, many companies, particularly large ones, have adopted the two-track personnel administration system. The dual path system groups new employees into two categories, those in positions with promotional opportunities to managerial and executive (*sogoshoku*) levels and those in positions with limited promotion opportunities and pay hikes (*ippanshoku*). *Sogoshoku* women are given responsible jobs and feel a sense of self-fulfillment. However, they are asked to do the same work as men, including overtime and transfers. Many women who were hired as *sogoshoku* workers quit, making it clear that the way the two-track system of hiring women operates has a problem.

The first survey, conducted between September and October 1993 by the Ministry, is designed to gain deeper insights into the attitudes and realities of *sogoshoku* women. It covered 744 *sogoshoku* women in 360 companies utilizing the dual-path system. Replies were received from 41.3 percent of the 744.

As reasons for choosing *sogoshoku* employment track, 57 percent of the women cited "to

give full play to my ability." The majority replied "can largely display my ability" (66.8%) or "can display my ability to the fullest extent" (10.2%). On the other hand, 23 percent answered to the contrary. Asked about necessary steps to improve the situation, the most, or 70.9 percent of those answering "unable to give full play to my ability" said "further improvement in the awareness of superiors and coworkers towards the utilization of the potential of women workers is sought." In addition, 37 percent noted "it is necessary to substantiate support systems to balance career and family, such as improvement of childcare leave and nursing care, and substantiation of day-care centers," and 26.7 percent said "equal treatment of the sexes in the company's personnel system should be further promoted."

Many expressing dissatisfaction with their work did so for the following reasons: "job does not suit me" (28.1%), "a responsible job is not assigned, which makes me unable to feel a sense of self-fulfillment" (28.1%), and "unable to have future prospects for promotion" (23.4%).

The survey fails to cover *sogoshoku* women who quit and does not offer a full clue to probing the realities and issues involving *sogoshoku* women, commented the Ministry.

Human-Resources Management

Rationalization and Streamlining Efforts toward Indirect Divisions

Corporate moves are increasingly notable aimed at improving management through downsizing and rationalization of such indirect divisions as administration and accounting.

Kyocera, a general maker of ceramics, such as semiconductor parts and components, has formulated a personnel cut program with downsizing of indirect divisions as a pillar. By the end of 1994, the company will reduce its workforce by 500 to 13,000 and will lower the percentage of workers in indirect divisions in the total workforce to 8 percent. Unable to expect large growth in its corporate profits, the firm will put workers on on-site jobs on a priority basis to improve productivity.

Since the spring of 1993, Kyocera has been cutting back its workforce in such indirect divisions as administration and accounting which are down to around 1,240, or 9.2 percent of the total workforce. It will further reduce, by attrition such as mandatory retirement, the number of its workers to 13,000. It will also cut those in the indirect divisions by another 200 to 1,040. Specifically, the firm will assign 29 college graduates newly recruited for clerical jobs this spring to sales jobs. Also, it is studying how to consolidate adjoining factories and switch surplus workers in indirect divisions to production jobs.

Nippon Steel, the nation's largest steelmaker, will launch large-scale integration and abolition of the administrative division in its head office as well as its core steel divisions. It will decrease 12 departments in the administrative division to an about half their current size and reduce 26 departments by 30-40 percent in steel engineering and sales divisions. Against the backdrop of the intensifying competition stemming from the stronger yen, the firm plans to create a "smaller head office." Through slimming efforts it will also cut labor costs by a total of 100 billion yen in 3 years starting with fiscal 1994.

60% of Managers are Content with Annual Pay Scheme

According to a survey taken by the Research Institute of Labour Affairs Administration (RILAA), approximately 60 percent of managers (section chiefs and above) evaluate adoption of the annually-based wage system as "good." The survey, carried out between December 1993 and January 1994 by the RILAA, covered 1,684 section chiefs or above in 15 major firms in machinery manufacturing, construction, banking and advertising who are paid on an annual basis. Replies were received from 367, or 21.8 percent of the 1,684.

The annual pay scheme is a wage system under which a basic portion of the annual remuneration determined by an individual worker's ability and performance as major yardsticks. Under the seniority-based wage system, one of the features of Japanese management, the major portion of wages has been determined by length of service and age rather than by the employee's ability and performance. However, mounting calls for corporate restructuring in the wake of the recent recession have made an issue of the productivity of middle-aged and older white-collar workers. Under these circumstances, many firms are beginning to adopt annual pay schemes.

The survey found 8.3 percent of the respondents were "very contented" with the annual pay system and 51.3 percent were "satisfied" with the system. Thus, a total of 59.6 percent evaluated the scheme positively. Meanwhile, 4.9 percent considered adoption of the annually-based pay scheme as "not very good" and 1.4 percent answered it was "bad," thus indicating that those who were against the system were 6.3 percent. On the other hand, 34.1 percent replied "can't say which," suggesting a considerable number of managers find themselves, uncertain and unable to respond adequately to adoption of the new system.

Looking now at what aspects of the annual pay systems are evaluated either positively or negatively (multiple replies), the positive aspects of the scheme included "greater emphasis on

ability and performance" cited by the highest, or 63.5 percent of the surveyed, followed by "stronger sense of being a member of the management staff" (58.1%), and "improved morale" (52.3%). The negative aspects, on the other hand, were "more demanding job" (26%), followed by "more anxiety over future years" (23.5%) and "longer work hours" (19.6%). However, "no change," even after the introduction of the system, was voiced by 40 to 70 percent.

International Relations

The 1994 Asian Regional Conference on Industrial Relations

The Japan Institute of Labour (JIL), in cooperation with the Japan Industrial Relations Research Association (JIRRA), held the 1994 Asian Regional Conference on Industrial Relations on March 17-18. The conference meets alternately at the domestic level and at the international level. This year's international gathering focused on the theme of "Human Resource Management and Economic Development in Asia." At the conference, researchers from individual Asian countries reported on the current situation of skill formation.

In Thailand, major businesses have introduced the apprenticeship system to encourage workers to acquire skills. Dr. Nipon Poapongsakorn, director of the Thai Development and Research Institute, said, "Under the apprenticeship system, those wanting to land a job are first employed as apprentices immediately after leaving school and will be obliged to remain as apprentices for a long period of time until they become full-fledged workers." Workers who have received training tend to switch to other jobs for higher paychecks, which in turn works against businesses.

While undergoing training, workers are low-paid and must pay for training expenses on their own. Therefore, they must be well prepared to acquire skills. Due in part to the still small demand for skilled labor, the majority of poor workers, it seems, remain unskilled without participating in training programs.

The greater part of small- and medium-sized firms in Indonesia, apparently believing that workers' skills are adequate enough, have yet to encourage skill formation.

Skills training programs are not implemented adequately at Taiwanese companies, either. Therefore, the Taiwanese government has established vocational training centers in 13 locations nationwide in order to offer training programs in the field of electrical machinery and electronics for businesses.

The majority of people who start their businesses in Japan once worked for smaller-scale firms. According to a report by Shigemi Yahata, JIL senior researcher, many would-be entrepreneurs first acquire broad-based knowhow and establish interpersonal relations while they are on the job for 6-10 years at smaller firms before becoming their own bosses.

South Korea's corporations are presently giving top priority to human resource development in their management tasks. In actuality, however, the government is taking the initiative in human resource development through such measures as developing a vocational training system and enacting the Vocational Training Law in 1986. Dr. Young-Bum Park, senior fellow of Korea Labor Institute, pointed out that "government-led human-resources development cannot satisfy the needs of industrial firms."

Special Topic

College Grads' Careers-Massification and Diversification

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1. Introduction

The postwar period of expansion of higher education in Japan may be classified into two major parts, quantitative expansion period until the mid-1970s and the diversification period from the late 1970s. Universities and colleges rapidly expanded from 1960 to the mid-1970s, with the proportion of students going on to universities and colleges jumping from 8.2 percent in 1960 to 27.6 percent in 1976. Although the proportion has been roughly constant since the late 1970s, institutions of higher learning have widely diversified as exemplified in the introduction of the special training school system in 1976. Looking at trends in the number of graduates finding employment, in 1960 only 100,000 college graduates landed jobs, accounting for a mere 7.2 percent of new school graduates who found work. Now the number of college graduates exceeds 300,000, and in 1990 the ratio of college graduates accounts for 28.4 percent of the total, four times the figure for 1960.

In short, the percentage of those possessing college diplomas in new school graduates has risen, resulting in the fact that almost all their new recruits at many firms have college educations. What is more, even today many college graduates start careers as white-collar

workers in clerical and technological fields.

Even though the quantitative expansion of college graduates and their getting a simultaneous start to begin a new career go together, some types of structural changes in it are taking place in job content. For instance, labor per se has undergone qualitative changes, which will be reflected in the development of an individual's career after he or she has found work. Kazuo Koike and others (1991) pointed out the following. First, college graduates will be assigned to on-site work for the purpose of more practical business training rather than that for executives. Second, there are many "careers which are developed in an in-depth manner within a single workplace" as well as "careers demanding work on rotation in a broad-based manner" which is in keeping with the traditional image of jobs for college graduates. Third, engineers with college degrees are offered two separate tracks after around 15 years on the job, the management track and the specialist track.

Suppose that career patterns for college graduates are diversified. What kind of experience, then, have they had career wise after finding work and reaching a point at which they choose between the two tracks? More importantly, how is their college education given full play?

2. College Grad's Career Survey

The research introduced here is intended to provide deeper insights into the history of an individual with a college diploma during the decade from employment to early career development in terms of relations between popularized and diversified college education and changes in the economic and employment structure. Let us see the initial stage of career development with particular attention to the field of study in college.

Note

The survey, conducted in the period between December 1992 and March 1993, covered 55,997 seniors at 63 departments of 35 universities across the nation who had graduated between March 1983 and March 1992. Replies to the questionnaire sent by mail were received from 20,335, or 36.3 percent of the 55,953. Here 14,329, excluding those who graduated from education departments and those who went on to graduate school, were subject to our analysis. See "College Employment Guidance and Early Careers for College Graduates Part 2-Employment and Job Separation and Job Change of Graduates of 35 Universities and Colleges" in No.56 of *the Japan Institute of Labour Research and Study* (1994)

3. College Grad's Diversified Career Development

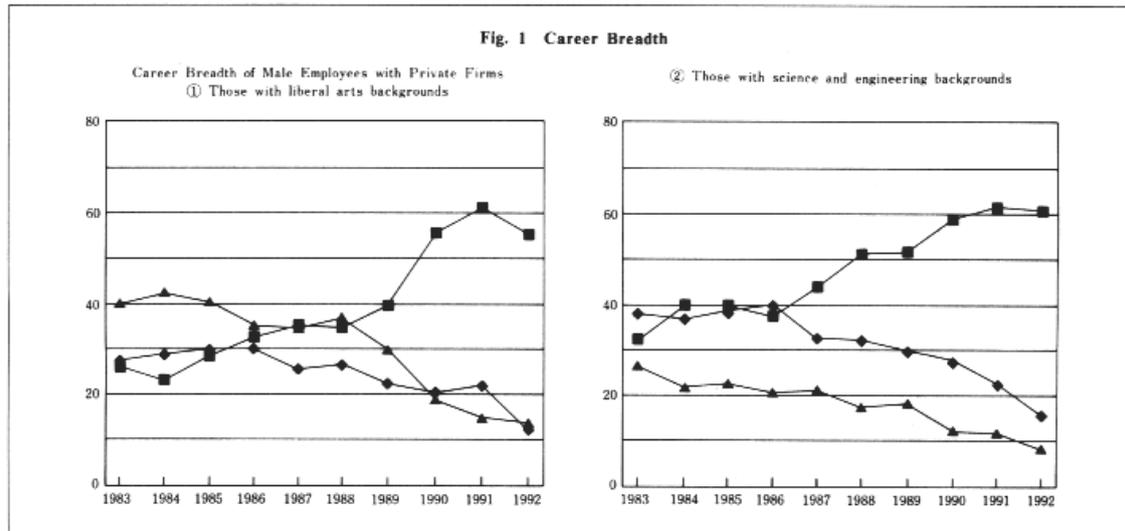
Selecting 3,491 workers with 7 to 10 years on the job who are employed by private firms and we looked at what kind of a career path they had in the decade after college graduation. When asked about the jobs they experienced from the time of employment by the 23 jobs, such jobs, as 'sales jobs to corporations,' 'development and designing' and 'sales jobs to individuals' were more experienced than others.

Let us compare the number of jobs they experienced out of the 23 types. Nearly half, or 46.9 percent of male employees with humanities backgrounds had worked in more than 3 types of jobs, while 37.8 percent of those with social science backgrounds worked in more than 3 types of jobs. On the contrary, those with science backgrounds experienced working in a smaller number of jobs, and 46.7 percent of males in the engineering field in particular, having worked in only one job. As we have seen, whereas those in general administrative fields have had broad-based experience including sales, those in technological fields, it seems, have had an in-depth experience in one specific job with "development and designing" the most common example.

In the survey sheet, the pollees were then questioned about the "breadth" and "depth" of a career in its initial stage from different aspects. First, observing the breadth of vocational experience, as shown in Fig.1 the number of those who "continue to hold their first job" declines with the passage of years after employment, while on the other hand, those who are engaged in "jobs related to the field which they took first" and "in broad-based jobs" rises. Male workers face a turning point in the third or fourth year of employment. More than half are engaged in the first job for the first three years after employment, but after the fourth year they begin to take "jobs in related fields" or "broard-based jobs" in significant numbers. In the tenth year of employment, substantially the same percentage of workers will experience these three different patterns of jobs. By field of study, of those male employees with humanities and social science backgrounds who have been on the job for over 7 years, nearly 40 percent were in "broard-based jobs," while about 40 percent of male employees from the science field continued in the first job they had been assigned" and another 40 percent "were in jobs in fields related to the first job" (See Table 1).

Table 1 Breadth of Jobs Assigned (Those employed with private firms for 7 and more years)

(%, Multiple choice)				
Sex and field of study	Total No. of those covered	Still hold- ing first job	Engaged in jobs related to first one	Did broad-based jobs
Total	100.0(3,491)	33.6	35.4	30.0
Males Subtotal	100.0(3,072)	34.0	35.0	30.8
Humanites	100.0(168)	26.8	29.2	38.1
Social science	100.0(1,579)	30.0	31.9	37.7
Engineering	100.0(1,027)	39.9	41.1	20.4
Natural science	100.0(298)	38.6	33.9	25.8
Females	100.0(419)	30.8	38.4	23.6



Second, on the "depth" of a career, the pollees were asked about the active use of knowledge and technologies learned in colleges and universities. The longer they had worked, the ratio of both men and women workers in "jobs not demanding knowledge and technologies acquired in college" dropped, while those in "jobs related to the knowledge and technologies acquired in college" increased. In addition, the proportion of those who were in "gradually more sophisticated jobs" rose (Table 2). About 60 percent of males with a humanities background replied that "knowledge and technologies acquired in college was unnecessary," and the same was true with nearly 50 percent of males with a social science background. For male employees with a social science background, on the other hand, the longer they have been on the job, the lower the percentage of those who answered that their knowledge gained from college was "unnecessary" with the percentage dropping to 26.7 percent for those with 10 years of service. On the contrary, they were increasingly engaged in "jobs requiring gradually more sophisticated professional knowledge and technologies," and 41 percent of those with 10 years on the job answered they were in work "related to knowledge and technologies acquired in college."

It can be seen from these different aspects that after from 7 to 10 years on the job, there emerges a difference in the breadth and depth of career in relation to the features of college education, such as the field of study, and that workers with college degrees themselves begin to become aware of it.

Table 2 Relations between Jobs and College Education (Those employed with private firms for 7 and more years)

		(% , Multiple choice)			
Sex	Field of study	Total No. of those covered	Related to knowledge & technologies acquired in college	Switched gradually to more sophisticated duties	Knowledge of technologies acquired in college unnecessary
	Total	100.0(3,491)	23.6	26.5	42.3
Males	Subtotal	100.0(3,072)	23.4	27.3	41.6
	Humanities	100.0(168)	17.3	19.6	57.1
	Social science	100.0(1,579)	11.7	24.3	47.9
	Engineering	100.0(1,027)	38.4	32.8	30.2
	Natural science	100.0(298)	37.9	28.5	38.3
Females		100.0(419)	24.8	20.8	47.7

The ongoing massification of higher education means a greater possibility for an earlier separation of career tracks. College graduates' early job separations, which have recently posed a problem, can be understood from this perspective. In the survey, job separations were reported from those workers with college diplomas who have worked for a period of 10 years at private firms-32.9 percent of male workers and 79.1 percent of female workers. In particular, 62.8 percent of male workers with humanities backgrounds left work a decade after graduation from college. Behind this perhaps lie their personal characteristics. In actuality, however, this lays bare the fact that cooperations do not provide all white-collar workers with college educations with the expectation that they will become executives.

4. Marketization and Structurization of the Job Market for College Grads

We can also detect an emerging differentiation of careers for workers with popularized college education in the way they seek jobs while in college. The survey covered college graduates in the period between 1983 and 1992. The period witnessed such dramatic changes as a rising proportion of those who apply to work for private firms rather than public enterprises. The proportion sharply rose particularly in females who had previously were less likely to find jobs at private companies in comparison with males with social science and engineering backgrounds. The same is true for males majoring in humanities and science excluding engineering. The greater demand for male and female college graduates at private firms has transformed their job-hunting behavior.

Employment practices in Japan are that each year college students graduate at the end of March and begin to work for companies en mass in April. To be recruited in April, potential graduates usually commence job-hunting activity a year before they graduate (sometimes two years before graduation). To find employment with private firms, they go through several steps such as information gathering, job interviews, applications, and offers of *naitei*, informal guarantees of employment from the firm to which they apply for a position. According to our survey, all these steps were different by field of study and sex. Take offers of *naitei*, for example. Male students with social science backgrounds received employment

promises from an overwhelmingly large number of firms, followed by male students with humanities backgrounds and female students. On the other hand, male students majoring in science backgrounds received offers of *naitei* from a few companies because of the traditional style that they get only one *naitei* with recommendation from their professors. Furthermore, the time they received employment promises was also different by sex and field of study. Male engineering students were assured of employment the earliest, followed by male social science students, male students majoring in science excluding engineering, and female and male students with humanities backgrounds.

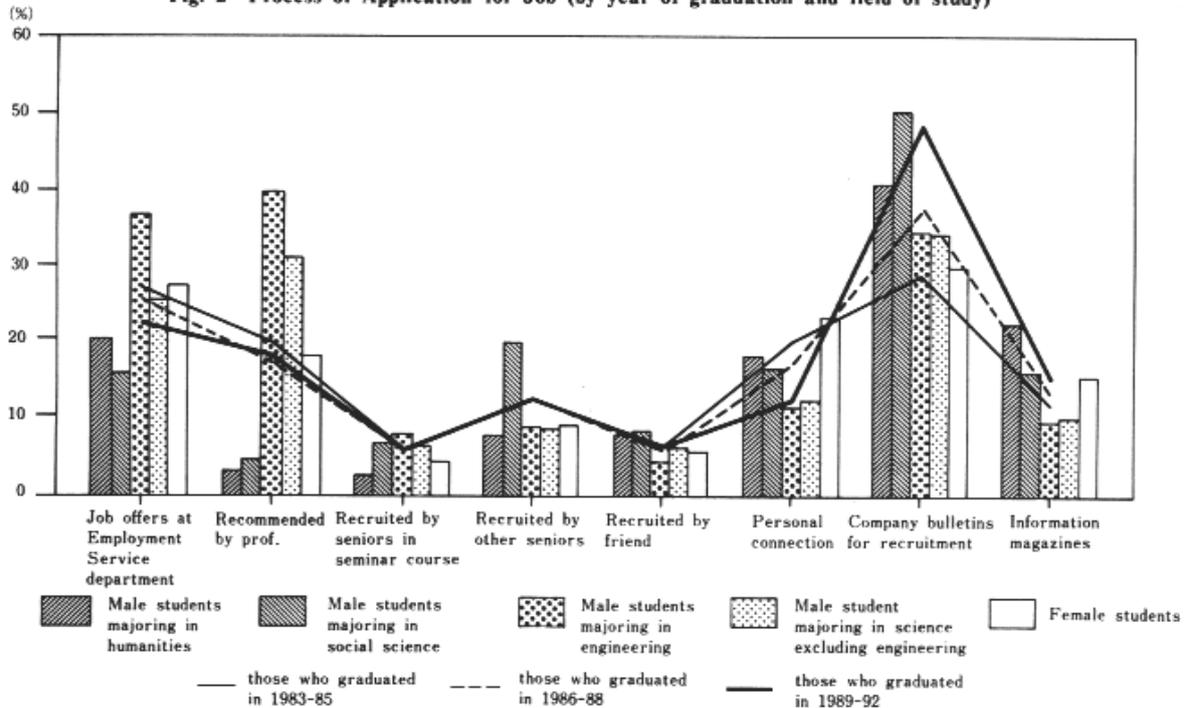
Moreover, partly because of the seller's market for college graduates, those who graduated in later years of the 1983-1992 period were given a promise of employment earlier and by a larger number of firms. By sex and field of study, however, the above-mentioned situation remained largely unchanged. Thus, it can be surmised that firms continue to have more interest in recruiting male students majoring in engineering and social science. In the present recession, the difficulty in finding employment is more deeply felt in fields of study where most students land jobs in private companies.

The process in which students apply for a job at a firm also reveals a great difference by field of study. As shown in Fig.2, male seniors with social science backgrounds in particularly significant numbers seek jobs through "company recruitment bulletins" sent out by employment-information firms trying to attract them. This process is dubbed "free application" since job seekers freely apply for a position by looking at bulletins without obtaining recommendations from college or university seminar groups or job placement offices. Many male students in the sciences, on the other hand, seek employment through their professors and seminar courses or through college or university career service departments. This is, it is safe to say, the traditional way, but the trend has been fading in recent years, and a rising number of college seniors find employment through "company recruitment bulletins." For men students majoring in humanities and women students, the free application, the career service department's help, and personal connections are the best route, in this order, for successfully finding employment. However, they tend to depend less heavily on job placement offices and personal connections and instead, increasingly rely on company recruitment bulletins. Fig.2 tells us that recent years have witnessed a rapid rise in those majoring in any field of study who use "company recruitment bulletins" for job information and thus freely try their luck.

Meanwhile, an overwhelmingly large number of social science male students find jobs through the aid of "other seniors" than those at seminar courses. This route takes on a unique meaning. In Japan, the rules, or the gentleman's agreement on the recruitment period are

concluded between universities and private companies, thus setting the period in which formal recruitment activity can be conducted. The activity before this period is therefore informal. Students visit in person their seniors who work for firms they aspire to join, or the latter personally invites the former to join in anticipation of the company's intentions. This is criticized as being virtually the same as recruitment activity.

Fig. 2 Process of Application for Job (by year of graduation and field of study)



Adopting the informal route is particularly evident for social science male students. Especially graduates of national universities who cited "other seniors" represented 35.8 percent, while those of private universities who listed this method were 10.8 percent, showing a large gap between the two. This means, it is fair to say, that corporations try to approach, in the main, prospective graduates majoring in social science at national universities. Meanwhile, the growing tendency to use "company recruitment bulletins" is evident among graduates of private universities and is barely visible for those in national universities.

The general trend is that corporations recruit people in a broad-based manner through "free applications," not through the good offices of universities and colleges. But on the other hand, another route exists which allows individual prospects to be chosen from among many rank-and-file seniors at universities and departments.

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Statistical Aspects

Recent Labor Economy Indices

	February 1994	January 1994	Change from previous year
Labor force	6,497 (10 thousand)	6,509 (10 thousand)	54 (10 thousand)
Employed	6,302	6,326	16
Employees	5,152	5,163	26
Unemployed	191	182	37
Unemployment rate	2.9%	2.7%	0.6
Active opening rate	0.65	0.67	-0.23
Total hours worked	157.0 (hours)	146.5 (hours)	-1.8*
Total wages of regular employees	272.9 (¥thousand)	270.8 (¥thousand)	1.6*

Source: Management and Coordination Agency, Ministry of Labour.

Notes: 1. *denotes annual percent change.

2. From February 1991, data of "Total hours worked" and "Total wages of regular employees" are for firms with 5 to 30 employees.

Percentage of Labor Unions by Worker Unionization/Worker Classification

Worker classification	Total of labor unions which have applicable workers	Unionists	Subtotal	Not unionists(M.A.)				Percentage of unionists with applicable workers (%)
				Quasi-unionists	Efforts made to unionize	Cooperation made with organization with applicable workers	No specific efforts made to unionize	
Those in managerial/professional jobs who do not represent employer's interests	100.0	30.6<28.1>	69.4<100.0>	(2.8)	(3.3)	(1.7)	(92.4)	84.0
Temporary workers	100.0	3.3< 4.7>	96.7<100.0>	(3.2)	(7.3)	(0.9)	(89.3)	61.5
Part-time workers	100.0	8.9< 6.6>	91.1<100.0>	(3.0)	(8.5)	(1.4)	(87.2)	69.6
Retirees at mandatory age	100.0	3.5< 8.9>	96.5<100.0>	(2.6)	(3.1)	(3.1)	(91.4)	59.4
Transferees to related firms	100.0	76.0<73.5>	23.8<100.0>	(6.3)	(4.8)	(7.9)	(81.2)	48.8
Transferees from related firms	100.0	13.0<14.5>	86.8<100.0>	(1.2)	(2.4)	(13.2)	(84.2)	37.0
Dispatched workers from other firms	100.0	1.4< 3.1>	98.6<100.0>	(0.3)	(0.8)	(3.6)	(95.7)	35.9
Employees at subcontracting firms	100.0	1.4< 1.0>	98.6<100.0>	(0.3)	(3.4)	(6.5)	(90.2)	35.0
Foreign workers	100.0	13.8	86.2<100.0>	(0.6)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(98.7)	16.7

Note: Figures in < > are for 1985

Source: Ministry of Labour, 1994 Survey on Realities of Labor Unions