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General Survey

An Interim Report by the Free and Vital Economy Committee of the Economic Council

The Free and Vital Economy Committee attached to the Economic Council, which advises the prime minister, compiled a five-chapter interim report, the pillar of which is an action plan. The action plan sets out concrete goals for deregulation in 10 fields, such as finance and public works, with the objective of rectifying the high-cost structure of the Japanese economy. This report will form the core of the interim report of a new Five-Year Plan for 1995-2000 to be compiled at a general meeting of the Economic Council. Under the new economic plan, the government will project the nature of the nation's future economic society and will offer fundamental and underlying policy and priority-based measures and policies. The present Five-Year Plan for Achieving a Better Quality of Life (1992-96) sets out a variety of goals with emphasis placed on people.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the basic direction in which Japan will proceed in years to come, and points out the following. In recent years, people have raised doubts about the traditional system against the background of the speculation-driven "bubble economy," and the second longest recession in the post WW II period that followed. This, in turn, produced fears of the hollowing-out of industry and employment. Furthermore, people have expressed a growing dissatisfaction that they do not feel a sense of affluence. This is observable in the delay in nurturing new business fields and the gap between prices at home and abroad which increase industry's costs. To deal with these problems, Japan must undertake drastic structural reform of society, moving away from the traditional relationship of mutually-dependency toward one in which businesses and individuals freely engage in activity on their own initiative and responsibility.

In Chapter 2, the report proposes that, the government implement measures to create a free and invigorated economic society, through deregulation, fostering of new business opportunities, encouragement of technological development, fostering of human resources development, furthering of sophisticated information telecommunications, creation of jobs and consolidation of the labor market, building of industry and society in harmony with the environment, and publication of information and improved financial disclosure.

Chapter 3 calls for the development of vital industries and necessary policies. To consolidate an environment which will stimulate dynamic corporate activity, the government will review laws and systems involving businesses as promptly as possible and will encourage

foreign countries to boost direct investment in to Japan. Specifically, it will simplify procedures for M&As in the Commercial Code, consolidate provisions for division of corporations and examine corporate taxation on the basis of fairness and neutrality, with the basic aim of lowering the tax rate, while expanding the taxation base, in view of changes in industrial structure.

Chapter 4 refers to the development of vital regional communities and necessary policies. The report sets out measures and policies for the development of a balanced natural land, reduction of the excessive concentration in Tokyo, characteristic development of the regional economy and reinvigorated rural, forestry and fishing villages.

Chapter 5 describes building of an economic-social system which responds adequately to emergencies such as disasters.

Working Conditions and the Labor Market

New Minister of Labour



Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, who is chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), prior to reshuffling his 13-month-old Cabinet on August 8, urged his two key coalition allies to remain in their ministerial posts. With the inauguration of the new Murayama Cabinet, Mr. Aoki, a SDPJ member, was appointed Minister of Labour, his first Cabinet portfolio.

Mr. Aoki, who was born in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1926, devoted himself to labor union activities before becoming a Diet member. He joined the former Japanese National Railways (now Japan Railway) in 1942, became head of the Shizuoka Prefectural General Council of Labor Unions in 1967. He was chairman of the SDPJ Shizuoka Prefectural Headquarters Committee.

Mr. Aoki has worked in the political world since 1974, and became chairman of the Upper House Special Committee on Land Problems in 1992. He served as a member of the Upper House Communications Committee as well as the Upper House Construction Committee. He admires Mr. Asanuma, who was a former chairman of SDPJ, and his motto is "with the people" which reflects Asanuma's political spirit.

Human Resources Management

The 1995 Survey on Employment Management

Around 30 percent of persons hired in mid-career were afforded lower positions and wages than proper employees who were with the firm they switched to and who had the same level of career experience, it was learned from the Ministry of Labor. 1995 Survey on Employment Management which was released recently. The survey was conducted on about 6,000 private firms with 30 and more employees to probe the current situation as of January 1, 1995, with a 82.4 percent response rate.

The percentage by job type of firms which plan to hire mid-career persons in the next three years represented 28.2 percent for those in managerial jobs, 37.5 percent for those in clerical jobs ("*sogoshoku*" :see*) and 44.1 percent for those in technical and research jobs. By size of company, the smaller the size, the higher the percentage of those which plan to employ workers in mid-career in any of the job types. When asked about the grading of mid-career persons in terms of positions and wages, 28.8 percent answered they "treat mid-career employees in managerial positions and proper employees with the same level of career experience equally;" while 29.4 percent replied they do so for *sogoshoku* employees; and 30.3 percent responded they do so for those in technical and research jobs. The percentage of firms which "afford mid-career employees a lower grading than proper workers with the same level of career experience" represented 22.7 percent for those in managerial jobs, 36.6 percent for those in *sogoshoku* jobs and 27.2 percent for those in technical and research jobs. Furthermore, the proportion of companies which grade mid-career employees irrespective of whether or not they have career comparable with proper employees with the same level of career experience stood at 37.3 percent for those in managerial jobs, 25.0 percent for those in *sogoshoku* jobs and 31.3 percent for those in technical and research jobs. Thus, approximately 30 percent treat mid-career employees in any of the three job categories equally with proper employees with the same level of career experience, grade the former at a lower level than the latter or grade the former irrespective of the latter. On the other hand, less than 2 percent "grade mid-career employees in any of the three job categories higher than proper employees with the same amount of career experience."

As the yardstick for grading mid-career persons in the context of positions and wages, a large percentage of firms cited "strike a balance between wages for employees on the payrolls and those for mid-career employees," as well as "age" and "ability" in any of the three job categories. More specifically, "strike a balance between wages for employees on the labor rolls and those for mid-career employees" was cited by 53.2 percent, 60.2 percent and 53.5 percent,

for managers, *sogoshoku* workers and technical and research workers, respectively. Meanwhile, "age" was cited by 51.5 percent for managers, by 58.1 percent for *sogoshoku* workers and by 55.1 percent for technical and research workers, and "ability" by 49.5 percent for managers, 36.9 percent for *sogoshoku* workers and 42.5 percent for technical and research workers. In addition, the percentage of firms which cited "professional knowledge" and "licenses and qualifications" as the yardstick for grading mid-career persons in technical and research jobs was high at 39.7 percent and 28.2 percent, respectively.

*"Sogoshoku" means those engaged in core jobs and are expected to be future top executives in the firm. Many companies hire *sogoshoku* workers apart from "*ippanshoku*" workers engaged in general office jobs.

Labor Management Relation

1995 *Shunto* Wage Talks Settled-Final Reports by Ministry of Labor, Nikkeiren and Rengo-

At the end of June, the Ministry of Labour published the final results of its survey on the outcome of 1995 spring wage negotiations agreed upon at 282 major private firms with 1,000 and more employees. With this, all the wage-hike results including those compiled by Nikkeiren (The Japan Federation of Employers' Associations) and Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation) were made public. The firms surveyed are listed on the first section of stock exchanges and are capitalized at over 2 billion yen. According to the survey results, the weighted average wage hike agreed upon was 8,376, yen or 2.83 percent, down 742, yen or 0.30 point from the year before. It is fair to say that reflecting the faltering economy and stable prices, the low wage-increase demand of 15,471, yen down 1,253 yen from the previous year, symbolized this year's *shunto*. By industry, the highest wage increase was registered in construction with 13,140, yen followed by newspapers and printing, wholesale and retail trade, land transport and broadcasting and telecommunications. In contrast, the lowest wage raise was posted in the steel industry of 3,771, yen followed by rubber products, textiles, nonferrous metals and electricity.

Nikkeiren, meanwhile, compiled the final results of wage hike talks settled upon at 311 major firms. Labor and management agreed on a weighted average wage increase of 8,245, yen or 2.80 percent, down 642, yen or 0.3 point over a year earlier. By sector, newspapers, oil and commercial broadcasting alone won a pay raise of over 10,000, yen while all the remaining sectors agreed upon a wage hike of less than ¥10,000.

The results of Rengo's survey covering 1,412 affiliated labor unions were released in three different systems: one, the "individual system" under which a wage increase is represented by way of wages for a model worker at a certain age; two, the "average system" which adopts the average wage obtained from wages for all workers; and three, a combination of the two systems.

Rengo devised this new system as a last resort, considering that an increasing number of labor unions, major ones in particular, have adopted the first "individual system" in recent years. Viewed by the average wage system, labor accepted a weighted average wage hike of 8,121, yen or 2.86 percent, down 730, yen or 0.34 point from last year's level. Labor unions of the public-interest industries such as Zendentsu (Japan Telecommunications workers' Union), Shitetsu-soren (General Federation of Private Railway Workers' Unions of Japan), and Denryoku-soren (Confederation of Electric Power-related Industry Workers' Unions of Japan), all abandoned their usual strike option during wage talks to give top priority to recovery and relief operations in the areas ravaged by the January 17 Great Hanshin Earthquake, indicating that the quake cast a dark shadow over this year's *shunto*.

The rate of spring wage increase in major private firms in 1995

INDUSTRY	%	INDUSTRY	%	INDUSTRY	%
Construction	2.81	Cement	2.72	Wholesale & Retail Trade	3.10
Foods & Cigarettes	2.93	Iron & Steel Products	1.32	Land Transport	3.04
Textiles	2.68	Nonferrous Metals	2.68	Broadcasting & Telecommunications	2.81
Pulp & Papers	2.86	Machine Metals	2.89	Electric Power	2.85
Newspapers & Printing	3.46	Electrical Machinery	2.96	Gas	2.92
Chemicals	3.02	Shipbuilding	2.55	Services	3.05
Oil Products	2.94	Vehicles	2.96		
Rubber Products	2.19	Automobiles	2.76	AVERAGE	2.83

Note: The firms surveyed are listed on the first section of stock exchanged are capitalized at over 2 billion with a workforce of 1,000 and more and labor unions.

Source: The Ministry of Labour, *Settlement and demand for the spring wage increase in major private firms in 1995*.

International Relations

International Conference on Labor Law

On April 28-29, the International Club of Labor Law Journals (ICLLJ) hosted an International colloquium at the Kluwer's Building in the Hague, Netherlands. The ICLLJ, an academic society organized during the mid-1980's by major labor law magazine editors and concerned scholars of industrialized nations, has sponsored conferences to promote consultations on cooperative relations and strengthen networks of labor law magazines. Along with these conferences, the ICLLJ has held international colloquiums on comparative labor law since 1993.

This year, Professor Lammy Betten of the University of Utrecht (Editor-in-chief of the

International Journal for Comparative Labor Law and Industrial Relations) made extensive arrangements for the colloquium under the theme of "the Role of the Contract in Future Labor Relations." The discussion covered such topics as the development and role of the individual employment contract, the relationship of the employment contract with the collective bargaining agreement, and an agenda for the 1990s. After the presentation of national reporters, a panel discussion was held, chaired by Professor Max Rood of the University of Leiden. The audience also engaged in very fruitful discussion. The next colloquium will be held in Tokyo.

Public Policy

Research Report-Prospects and Tasks Related to Labor Supply and Demand

In response to requests from the Ministry of Labour, the Study Group for Employment Policy (Head: Prof. Shunsaku Nishikawa at Keio University) on July 5 published Projects and Tasks Regarding Labor Supply and Demand which worked out a plan for the nation's labor policy between now and the year of 2010. The report predicts that premised on public works investment and decontrol, the unemployment rate will stand at around 2.7 percent in 2000 and will rise from 2.8 percent to 3 percent in 2000 and beyond. It calls for "fostering workers who can respond adequately to industry which creates jobs and at the same time to improve an environment which assures smooth labor mobility." The Ministry will respond by working out the details of a concrete policy at the Employment Council, an advisory panel to the Minister of Labor, and by making up the 8th Basic Employment Measures Plan for fiscal 1995-2000.

Regarding future labor supply and demand, the report predicts greater labor demand at a given growth rate due to progress in shortening working hours and the growing ratio of employed persons in services which require more labor than manufacturing. The labor population will grow from 66.45 million in 1994 to 68.46 million in 2000; but with fewer children and the swelling ranks of the elderly, it will show the first decline thereafter, falling to 67.45 million in 2010. Gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow 2.6-2.9 percent to around 3 percent till the year 2000 and hover at 2.1-2.4 percent till 2010 based on the assumption that the Basic Plan on Public Works Investment will be implemented and structural reforms such as deregulation and rectification of commercial practices will progress. Labor supply and demand will be thus balanced in the year 2000, the report concludes. In 2000 and beyond, the supply of and demand for labor will tighten due in part to the shrinking labor population, but unemployment will likely rise because of a mismatch in labor supply and demand between sectors and regions, the report points out.

To respond properly to the changing situation, the report proposes such measures providing more job opportunities, improving treatment in the context of wages and working conditions and assuring individual workers employment opportunities which enable them to have something to work for. More specifically, it is necessary, first, to foster people who will be able to produce higher value-added industries; second, to consolidate supply-demand adjustment for smooth labor mobility; third, to review the system of treatment of middle-aged and older persons; and fourth, to provide an aid system which allows for a balance between career and family.

Special Topic

Promotion Structure of White-Collar Workers

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1. Introduction

The Japanese employment system is beginning to fluctuate. A great wave of restructuring is threatening the statuses of the salaried employees of large-sized corporations, who have enjoyed considerable security in employment, promotion and wages under lifetime employment and the seniority-based promotion system. Many salaried employees have been expecting guarantees of employment until fixed retirement age and automatic annual wage hikes. However, fear of unemployment, pressure for early retirement and constraints on wages are now serious problems which make their life-planning much more difficult. Worse yet, to salaried employees who toiled for lifetime security, sacrificing their family life and community life, losing identity as the company man is equivalent to loss of the meaning of life.

However, transforming to higher-value added activities is crucial for many corporations in Japan to survive, and the restructuring of corporate organization and employment rules is an urgent task. At the same time, abrupt changes of organizations with no guarantees to employees would be very likely to provoke their tough resistance. It is a very important task to clarify the realities of promotion and careers under conventional Japanese employment

systems based on empirical data and to consider the future response.

In this paper, I would like to consider the future of careers in Japanese corporate organizations, referring to the results of the research, "Promotion Structure of White-Collar Workers," which analyzed panel data for about 8,000 male white-collar employees at the OLL Company (anonymous name, one of the nation's leading heavy-industry firms.)¹

2. Japanese Structure of Career and Promotion

It is extremely difficult for companies, however big they are, to unconditionally realize lifetime employment and seniority-based promotion which are generally thought of as features of Japanese employment systems. For it is impossible under the pyramidal structure of the organization to get and keep school graduates until a fixed retirement age and offer the majority of them pay raises and promotions on the basis of length of service. Yet the Japanese employment system functioned effectively as an institutional rule at least in large companies. The rule had been considered a significant frame of reference, or norm, by both employers and employees and thus to consider it fictitious is not realistic. What is important in understanding the Japanese employment system, it can be said, is not to elucidate whether lifetime employment and seniority-based promotion exist but to shed light on the mechanism of adjusting the organization and personnel.

What was clarified by our analysis may be summarized as follows. The Japanese structure of careers typically observable in the nation's big corporations cannot simply be described as the seniority system and lifetime employment system. It should be understood as a total entity of diversified mechanisms which adjust organizational structure and personnel, with the two systems functioning as a major frame of reference. It is never unchangeable and is constantly undergoing evolution through modifications, alterations and additions of adjustment mechanisms to respond adequately to indigenous and exogenous changes of the organization.

Adjustment mechanisms which were clarified through analysis of the OLL include the following. First is the traditional method of differentiating careers based on sex and educational attainment, which facilitated seniority-based promotion of male employees with college education. Second are measures to assure employment by expanding job opportunities outside of the company by passing on excess staff members to subcontractors and affiliates or farming them out to subsidiary companies. Third are measures in which multi-dimensionalization of the reward system (prestige for grade, authority for job status and wages for job levels) leads to buffering of the pressure for positions and wages brought on by the seniority-based promotion system. At the OLL, these adjustment mechanisms have

taken root as a personnel management system.

Another adjustment mechanism which is more important is the multi-stepwise promotion system. It is not a simple seniority system, nor is it America's simple competition-oriented system. The rules of promotion change from the uniform seniority-based system to speed race-oriented scheme to the tournament race-oriented system according to the initial stage, the middle stage and the latter stage of a person's career². At the initial stage of a person's career, the system is strongly colored by seniority and is gradually becoming race-oriented to get quick or slow promotion. As the stages of career advance, the principles of competition appear and finally separate the winner from the loser. In a nutshell, the system does not involve selection at an early stage as seen in American organizations; but this is not to say that no selection takes place. Selection is reinforced in a phased manner.

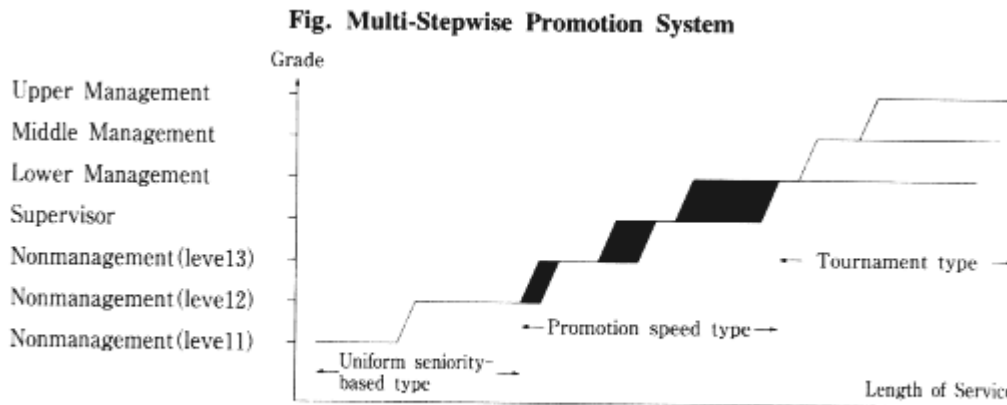
Japanese careers are considerably different from the image that "the worker gets a pay hike and promotion on the basis of length of service from graduation till fixed retirement age."

3. Multi-Stepwise Promotion System

How will Japanese careers change? This issue is deeply connected with trends in the aforementioned adjustment mechanism and in particular, trends in the multi-stepwise promotion rule will be a major focal point. Let us now examine what the future trends will likely be.

The promotion rule for male white-collar workers with college degrees can be diagrammed as in Fig.1. The vertical axis represents grade, while the horizontal axis, length of service.

For several years after joining the company, white-collar workers with college education are equally promoted on the basis of years of service. Later, they will be divided in two groups: those who are promoted to a higher grade and those who are not, even if they are in the job for the same length of service. But the entry to a higher grade is not closed to those who are several years behind in getting promotion. They follow those who are quick in promotions so that they do not remain too far behind. This trend, however, ends at a time when the worker is promoted to the grade of lower management (*kacho*). Above this grade workers are clearly divided between those who win promotion and those who don't.



Source: Imada, S. & S. Hirata, 1995,
Promotion Structure of White-Collar Workers, JIL, p. 150.

As shown in Fig.1, the rule applicable to the initial stage of a person's career may be called the uniform seniority-based promotion system. It applies to the first several years after entering the company and is characterized by uniform promotion, based on seniority.

The rule applicable to the middle stage of a person's career may be called the promotion speed type. Promotion is not uniform and a gap is created in the time of promotion among workers. The gap is narrow at first between those who are quick in getting promotion and those who are slow, but becomes wider as they go on up the line. Yet the two sides do not differ from each other by more than one rank. Furthermore, there is a period when all are lined in the same grade again in the race for higher posts. The trend in this period is neither of the pure seniority-based type nor of the sheer race type and is in between, so to speak. The promotion speed type is just the name for the middle stage of a person's career, where whether a person is quick or slow in promotion is a matter of concern.

Furthermore, the rule applicable to the latter stage of a person's career is close to the tournament type verified at America's corporate organizations.³ Starting with the stage of the lower management and up, this type separates workers between those who advance to the upper grade and those who don't, not between those who get quick promotions and those who get slow promotions. There arises a disparity in grade by more than one rank between those who get promoted and those who don't.

It can be pointed out that the multi-stepwise promotion system is superior not only in adjusting the organization and personnel but also in accomplishing tasks at individual stages of a person's career. The initial stage of his career is the period when he settles down in the company. At the time of joining the organization, critical selection has already taken place in terms of education or the level of school, with talents varying little. The OLL, one of the country's leading corporations, which was studied in this survey, in particular, can hire

graduates of selective universities and colleges. This means competition or selection is not really necessary for workers at the initial stage of their careers. What matters is rather that workers are incorporated into and adapt well to the organization. The rule considered to be suited to this requirement, is the uniform seniority-based system.

The uniform seniority-based system, however, will likely provoke lower morale; once workers have adapted well to the organization after a certain period of time, they are treated uniformly whether or not they make efforts or whether or not they are capable. The promotion speed type in the middle stage of a person's career can arouse emulation and gradually enable all to participate in the race. To put it another way, it is a system under which a person cannot drop out of the race. It can also be regarded as a system which under the rule of lifetime employment, prevents workers from losing motivation early in the race. The front-runners who advanced to the grade of supervisor (*kakaricho*) or lower manager in the shortest time possible and the followers who advanced to these positions later on, fall in line with each other and start out again for the rest of the race. In other words, those who stand behind can "start all over again." Thus, the promotion speed system adjusts the gap in the time of promotion arising from job rotation and organizational requests and assures workers an opportunity to join the race again.

The latter stage of a person's career is the period when strict selection is explicitly executed for advancement into scarce vacant posts. The tournament system is a system designed to respond adequately to the pyramidal organization and personnel adjustments. This is close to America's rule of promotion, which clearly divorces those who will get promoted from those who will not. What matters at this stage is not whether promotion takes place early in a person's career; instead, fact of critical selection between those who can get promotion and those who cannot becomes clear.

As we have seen, the Japanese career system is not a simple seniority system on the basis of age; nor is it a system based on the strict principles of competition. It is rather a system under which the principles of competition are gradually reinforced according to stages of a person's career. The great merit of this system is to bring out stronger motivation in more employees. In short, the system, it is fair to say, is intended to take time to groom and select more talented people. Yet the system is not without defects.

4. Toward Reconstruction of Japanese Career Structure

It has been pointed out that the multi-stepwise promotion system institutionalized under Japanese employment rules is defective in terms of fostering leaders.⁴ But a bigger problem with the system, it seems, is its tendency to result in a waste of labor after the middle stage of

a person's career.

As stated earlier, the multi-stepwise promotion rule, the promotion speed system in the middle stage of a person's career in particular, is an excellent system for fostering many talented people. But the possibility of "starting over" (return match), for instance, can no longer be sustained after the first half of the middle stage of a person's career. Falling behind early in the race for the grade of supervisor can be offset by advancing to the grade of lower management later on. But whether advancement to the grade of lower management comes earlier or later in a person's career takes on a decisive meaning for his subsequent promotion. In other words, it is difficult to make up for the delay in promotion. Many workers join the promotion race over a long period of time. In actuality, however, the time when a person is promoted to the grade of lower management is a major turning point. To be more specific, he can bring the race to an end by retaining the grade of lower management or middle management (*jicho*) for a long time, but the reality is that the time when a person holds the grade of supervisor marks a significant career turning point.

To make a long story short, many workers join the race toward the same goal of managerial posts and the race comes to an end considerably later in their careers. But the critical point at which the race is won or lost comes substantially earlier in the process of advancement. The natural consequence is a bulging middle--the bulge of lower managers and middle managers.

This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that the rule of job rotation is not necessarily clear. Lack of space precludes detailed explanations of job mobility in this paper; but the key point is that no clear rules are set for the pattern of mobility from one job to another in terms of the correlation between jobs. It has been clarified that job mobility has "fuzzy" unstructured characteristics,⁵ which will create the following problems from the perspective of career development of individual employees: bleak prospects for a person's career; the impeded diversification of career in the sense of choice; difficulty in developing a career consciously. All these problems concerning career development will suddenly come to the surface when a person becomes middle-aged or older.⁶

The multi-stepwise promotion rule fosters a greater number of talented people while on the other hand, it results in a bulging middle and a waste of middle-aged and older workers abilities. This is not only a tremendous loss to corporate management, but also it is highly likely to be a fatal defect when viewed from the fact that the nation's labor force will continue aging in the years ahead. It should be noted that the promotion race is actually fought out at the relatively early stages. The time of promotion to the grade of lower management forms a

significant turning point, which means a person's career as supervisor is important and its evaluation determines his later career life.

Thus, designing a person's career as a supervisor is significant in developing his future career. So far, the career of the supervisor has been viewed as an opening in the race; but it is too late to switch to join a new race, say, the professional career race, at a time when a person stays at the grade of lower management or middle management in terms of the timing of career change. Career choice or career formation on a planned and autonomous basis in a person's thirties which has a great impact on the development of his career is an extremely important task facing white-collar workers. Toward this end, it is necessary to reform the one-dimensional career structure centering around promotion towards an alternative career structure.

Notes

- 1) Imada, S. and S. Hirata, 1995, *Promotion Structure of White-Collar Workers*, The Japan Institute of Labour. In this book, we clarified the career structure in a corporate organization by analyzing two aspects of promotion and job rotation on the basis of panel data covering 7,937 male white-collar workers in clerical and technological divisions of the OLL.
- 2) The three-layered promotion rule is characteristically applicable to promotion of white-collar workers with college diplomas and graduate-school degrees. The rule for white-collar workers with high-school education is not three-step but two-step; that is, the uniform seniority-based rule and the tournament rule are applicable to them.
- 3) Rosenbaum, J.E., 1984. *Career Mobility in a Corporate Hierarchy*, New York: Academic Press.
- 4) Koike, K., 1993. *White-Collar Workers in the United States*, Toyokeizai Shimposha.
- 5) The rule of job mobility is not necessarily clear. True, several notable trends in job mobility have been confirmed. For example, it was confirmed that in terms of the relationship between the stages of career and the frequency of mobility, technological workers with college education experience high intrajob mobility at the relatively early stages, and they experience high inter-job mobility as years of service are longer. But these trends are not observable among clerical workers with college education and those with high-school education. Moreover, those in technological jobs confront a certain mobility barrier between specific jobs. It is quite rare to overstep the barrier for job mobility. But there are also many cases where no such barrier is erected between jobs and diversified forms of job mobility occur among technological workers. Such trends are more conspicuous among clerical workers. With no inter-job mobility barrier--not even a partial one--erected, clerical workers make seamless transitions to and from various jobs.
- 6) Professional job careers symbolically show this. Many corporations eagerly studied the professional-career system as a measure to foster experts in specific jobs different from line management. The OLL, too, endeavored to develop this system within the firm. However, as was the case with many other firms, the OLL has yet to see the scheme take hold in the true sense of the term. The reality is that the professional job career has not necessarily been recognized as a career intended to foster specialists in specific job fields and tends to be a job area for those who are no longer in the race. There are several reasons why this was brought about, the major cause seems to be the fact that the rules of job mobility are not clearly specified. Fostering experts should be achieved in such a manner that both the employee and the corporate organization join together in pursuing career development on a planned and autonomous basis. This is an extremely difficult task to realize in organizations in which "fuzzy" job mobility is dominant.

Statistical Aspects

Recent Labor Economy Indices

	May 1995	April 1995	Change from previous year
Labor force	6,734 (10thousand)	6,690 (10thousand)	-14 (10thousand)
Employed	6,526	6,475	-31
Employees	5,281	5,234	-7
Unemployed	208	214	17
Unemployment rate	3.1%	3.2%	0.3
Active opening rate	0.63	0.65	-0.01
Total hours worked	151.8 (hours)	164.7 (hours)	1.3
Total wages of regular employees	(¥thousand)	(¥thousand)	
	279.7	283.5	1.7

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.

Trends in Number of Female Employees and Ratio of Part-time Female Workers



Source: Statistics Bureau,
Management and Coordination
Agency, Special Survey of the
Labour force Survey