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BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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INTRODUCTION

The prolonged slump in the Japanese economy hit bottom in the spring of 1999, and in searching for a key to rejuvenate the economy, scholars in the field of business administration began to seek a new direction in 1998 and 1999. At the same time a movement toward collating past research could also be seen as the century drew to a close. This review will not classify research into even narrower academic fields, but will attempt to arrange the trends seen in management studies circles as a whole under different topics broadly divided into five categories. Of these five categories, four deal with new directions while the remaining category puts in order past research.

The first category looks at research related to innovation and organizational capability. Although research on innovation has hitherto been undertaken, a distinguishing feature of this period was that, as a result of the type of industry having been narrowed down, there were numerous detailed empirical studies of outstanding quality on Japanese corporations. By focusing in particular on the innovation process and organizational background, these studies can be said to be searching for an ideal model for Japanese corporations in the coming twenty-first century, and this is at a time when innovations are unfolding before our very eyes.

Research related to organizational learning and decision-making is dealt with in the second category. In the past Japanese scholars had solely introduced and explained Western theories of this field, but during the period in question, research took root in Japan and may well become the cornerstone of innovation research, for example, empirical studies, studies based on sociopsychological experiments, and theoretical considerations, all focusing on Japanese corporations.

The third category looks at the life span of companies and an ecological approach. In the midst of a maelstrom of hysterical mass media reporting on the successive bankruptcies of leading financial institutions, epoch-making results are beginning to be seen in studies that use event history analysis to make dispassionate scientific estimations of the life span and merger effects of Japanese corporations, thus exploding the hitherto popular view and making clear that the life span of Japanese corporations is far longer than expected.

The fourth category is concerned with new business models, and emerging from research taking account of the influence of progress in information technology, there appeared during this period the germs of the IT revolution and business models that were to sweep through the Japanese economy and mass media in the year 2000.

The quest for Japanese-style management in the midst of internationalization is dealt with in the fifth category. In addition to specialists on international business studies, contributions to the discussion were also made by sociologists, social psychologists and economic historians. However, as opposed to the direction taken in the other four categories, no original ideas are apparent, with the focus being on reviewing previous research.

I. INNOVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

During the period under review research on the innovation process in Japanese corporations and its relationship with organizational capability blossomed. As is indicated by the publication of a collection of articles edited by Shimaguchi Mitsuaki, Takeuchi Hirotaka, Katahira Hotaka and Ishii Junzō [I-01] on new product development in Japanese corporations, there was already an accumulation of research on innovation in Japanese corporations centering on the first half of the 1990s. A characteristic of this period was that the approach itself was creative, and further the fact that careful empirical research focusing on organizational capability was undertaken.

Yano Masaharu [I-02] undertook a survey of all the researchers (numbering approximately one thousand) at a research institute of Fujitsu 富士通, using a questionnaire format requiring a signature, on the basis of which he was able to reveal that there is very little correlation between scores obtained for originality and the number of patents applied for or number of papers presented, and further that not only was there little correlation between scores for team originality and the team leader's individual score, but also there was little correlation

with the total score for creativity based on the sum of scores for each individual member of the team (leader and members). In other words, the team's originality does not depend on the sum total of scores for originality of individuals, i.e., the leader and team members, but depends on the specific character of the team as a whole. Based on this, the data bring to light the fact that the heterogeneity or diversity of research and development teams is related to originality.

Compared with the electrical industry, it is said that the probability of success in research and development for pharmaceuticals is between one five-thousandth and one six-thousandth, and to date this has largely been attributed to problems of individual capability as opposed to issues of organizational management. However, based on a survey of major pharmaceutical companies in Japan and statistical analysis of public data, Kuwashima Ken'ichi [I-03] indicates that the ability to judge "go or no go" together with protocol and design capability are important factors in organizational capability at the clinical research stage in the case of pharmaceuticals. Concerning this issue, he goes on to state that differences can be seen between corporations, which may in turn have an influence on research and development performance.

Among prolific research presented on the basis of research articles such as those mentioned above, a work that received particular attention was Numagami Tsuyoshi's extensive study [I-04] on the history of research and development competition in the liquid crystal display (LCD) industry. As a source material it has considerable value, and has been highly evaluated by academic circles. However, because of its overextensive scope, Numagami's argument becomes somewhat confused in the latter half of his work, and by reading his conclusion alone, one can interpret it as tautologically stating that "if one starts out from the general statement that a radical approach is desirable, then it may be said that Japanese corporations are radical." But Numagami defines "radical" in terms of consensus formation rather than performance, and essentially his strongest point lies in his definition of "radical" innovation. To be exact, consensus formation can be seen in various phases of innovation, and innovation as a whole can be interpreted as the process of forming a consensus. In the case of LCD, the development and announcement of LCD in 1968 by G. Heilmeyer, a researcher at RCA—the company which developed and announced liquid crystal display by connecting the concepts of liquid crystal and a wall TV—can be regarded as the initial consensus concerning this new product, and it was this itself that was radical. Prior to this even the concept of LCD performance did not exist. If

“radical” is thus defined independently of performance as the formation of consensus, the factual relations become clear. That is to say, rather than radical innovation, which is often vaguely considered to be desirable, incremental innovation such as that which has been undertaken by Japanese corporations in the LCD industry can in some cases be considered more desirable from the viewpoint of technological and economic performance.

Another characteristic of this period is that the key word “knowledge management,” which was originally coined on the basis of accumulated research on innovation, came to be used frequently as a catchphrase mainly among consultants. This applies even to researchers, and Harada Tsutomu [I-05], for example, analyzes the process of technological innovation in the Japanese machine tool industry from the viewpoint of the mutual interaction process between special-purpose technology and general-purpose technology, and in another work the same author [I-06] examines the concept of “gatekeeper,” referring to this process as knowledge interaction. The term “gatekeeper” can be traced back to T. Allen, who laid the foundations of the “communication approach” in American innovation research. Allen showed that within each group of technicians at research institutes there was someone who played a star-like role, holding the key to communication by having contact in some form with any given member of the same group, and he called the person playing this role “gatekeeper.” Labeling revelations such as this as “knowledge” became a type of boom. Harusawa Akihiro [I-07] deals with intellectual capital from the viewpoint of accounting while advocating knowledge management.

Sakikawa Takashi's study [I-08] attempts to find some kind of relationship between organizational culture and innovation by analyzing data from 403 respondents to a questionnaire on organizational culture, and by using case studies of three semiconductor companies including Fujitsu and NEC. Further, from the end of 1994 to 1997 during the lingering aftereffects of the third venture boom, studies began to appear that focused on the organizational background of new business development rather than technological innovation. Kutsuna Kenji, Yamada Kōzō and Akashi Yoshihiko [I-09] question the nature of support for new business ventures in their early stages. On the other hand, Kagono Tadao, Yamada Kōzō, and the Kansai Productivity Center [I-10], having held up two American companies, 3M and Hewlett Packard as model examples that have produced good results in new business development, then proceeded to use the results of a

questionnaire directed at 287 Japanese corporations on the formation of new business systems, and further give as examples Fujitsu, Toray Industries 東レ, Asahi Chemical Industry 旭化成, and SECOM, on the basis of which they maintain that there are four different models, i.e., the “opportunism model,” whereby the company seeks to create new markets based on technology and ideas devised within the company; the “restructuring model,” whereby new businesses are created to accommodate unused workers generated in the process of restructuring existing businesses; the “organization vitalization model,” whereby new business development is undertaken as part of vitalization of the corporation as a whole; and the “prop creation model,” whereby new business development is undertaken to create a business that will become the future support of corporation.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND DECISION-MAKING

In the past there had also been introductions to the theories of organizational learning overseas. During the present review period Nemoto Takashi [II-01] introduces the learning revolution in the United States, where American corporations, which had previously been held to have an aversion to learning from the others, sought out “best practice” corporations and began to utilize “benchmarking,” that is, using these “best practice corporations” as a standard for their own innovations. However, up until this point there had been no factual or theoretical studies in Japan dealing both directly and seriously with organizational learning.

What finally appeared was Andō Fumie's work [II-02]. In this study Andō analyzes data from a questionnaire conducted among approximately one thousand employees from eight Japanese corporations, and she goes on to advocate the new concept of an “intraorganizational map.” The relationship between questions considered to represent “organizational culture suited to learning” and questions considered to represent “active organizational learning” is spurious, and this study demonstrates that the formation of an “intraorganizational map” is of prime importance for active learning. Further, in applying this model to employees hired during the bubble economy period, an issue actually confronting corporations, the data reveals that the reason for the low level of learning activity among employees hired during the bubble economy period does not lie with problems in the organizational culture, but can be attributed to the bubble-period employees having failed for some reason to form an “intraorgan-

izational map.”

This argument that a certain type of pattern, such as an “intraorganizational map,” plays an important role in organizational learning tallies with research results on theories of organizational learning. Takahashi Nobuo [II-03] collates research results on organizational routines from the 1980s to the 1990s, and basing himself on the existing results of experiments and surveys, states that 1) organizational routine is in a manner of speaking a system composed of individual memory and that this individual memory is accumulated as procedural memory, and 2) even when constituent elements consisting of individual memory are replaced, the pattern of relationships between the constituent elements is such that continuity is preserved. Further, James G. March formulated an organizational learning model as the adaptation process based on intraorganizational ecology, and Takahashi, pointing out defects in his simulation model and errors in his conclusions, reconstructs March’s model, and using the results of computer simulation, makes clear that continuity in organizational routines is to an extent necessary for the improvement of organizational learning performance.

Thus, with the development of organizational learning theory, the view that elements such as “common sense,” “a cognitive frame,” and “world of meaning” play a significant role in human decision-making is becoming widely accepted. Human decision-making is influenced by various prejudices, and although these prejudices act to restrict cognition, this is something that occurs in order to determine the viewpoint of a person when making a decision and at the same time works to dispose of other possible viewpoints. In other words, prejudices themselves are in a sense also selected. Choosing from numerous possible viewpoints becomes a question of selecting a strategy.

In the course of experiments, Nagase Katsuhiko [II-04] states that, for example, metaphor is used as a strategy in the decision-making and that one’s attitude toward risk is a decision-making strategy that includes risk. Further, Nagase points out that group decision-making, which tends to be seen as an extension of individual decision-making, is in fact not simply an extension, but that there is an emergent strategy which only appears with the formation of a group. In other words, prior to making a decision there is the issue of selecting a decision-making strategy, for example, whether it will be decision-making on an individual basis or a representative decision by a group.

Similar assertions are being made conceptually in the field of marketing. Furukawa Ichirō [II-05] claims that human decision-making takes place dependent on heuristics, and that decision-making

is strongly influenced by the circumstances and context of the “place” where decision-making and attitudes are formed. Furukawa goes on to state that knowing the habits of customers provides hints for planning and designing a “place” for better relations and encounters.

Through a case study of the Japanese camera industry, Terahata Masahide [II-06] examines interaction between product line strategy and the phenomenon whereby customers who were originally “amateurs” with meager product knowledge make a transition to “professional” customers with ample product knowledge gained through actual use of products. Other publications include, for example, a collection of articles [II-07] that presents a general view of business administration, incorporating both microeconomic methods centering around the institutional school and decision-making and game theories.

III. COMPANY LIFE SPANS AND THE ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

Leading companies are also said to have a certain life span. *Kaisha no jumyō* 会社の寿命 (The Life Span of Companies), a book that advanced the “thirty-year company life span hypothesis,” was published in 1984, and became well-known among businessmen. When one considers the recent economic climate, no one would take exception to the fact that even large corporations have a life span.

However, in reality the fact that companies have a life span is not a serious issue in itself. The length of this life span is a serious issue. Supposing that the thirty-year company life span hypothesis is true, then even if new graduates find employment in a large corporation, those who manage to serve out their time contentedly until retirement can be described as fortunate. In other words, at the point of finding employment the company will already be several decades old, and before the employee in question reaches the stage to qualify as middle management the company will cease to exist. But if, for example, the company’s life span is around three hundred years, then at least during an employee’s own lifetime he or she will no longer need to be concerned about the life span of the company.

Academically speaking, there is a problem with the argument of the thirty-year company life span, and it has also been said that the life span appears to be longer. Taking, for example, the Hokkaido Takushoku Bank 北海道拓殖銀行 [III-01] or Yamaichi Securities 山一証券, two companies that created a commotion surrounding their bankruptcies, these were both in fact enterprises that had a life span of

approximately one hundred years. Studies concerning bankruptcies were already being undertaken prior to the period covered by this review. During the present review period, studies based on innovative research on models distinguishing between bankruptcies by using financial figures were also undertaken. Shirata Yoshiko's work [III-02] is an analysis based on a large quantity of data, including the financial data of 898 bankrupt corporations and 300 solvent corporations. However, the study of business management has not yet even attempted to provide a straight answer to the question of how long the life span of a company is, scientifically speaking.

On the other hand, the requisite methods and approaches for this type of research were already being reasonably well collated, if one considers that their introduction in the field of business administration had been lagging behind. What provided the breakthrough for the introduction of these methods and approaches in business administration was a collection of articles edited by Takahashi Nobuo [III-03] which discusses from diverse angles "life span" and "diversification" in business administration and, in more general terms, the concepts and phenomena of "survival" and "variety" based on methods using an ecological approach and event history analysis (survival analysis). As a result, empirical research is making even clearer the phenomenon of the life span of Japanese companies being lengthened not by diversification, but by mergers between companies in the same line of business. Furthermore, for example, by weeding out subsidiaries in the automobile industry, the capacity of the corporate grouping as a whole and its survival potential were heightened at the same time as diversity was reduced.

Also a contributor to the above-mentioned collection of articles, Shimizu Takashi [III-04], in response to the thirty-year company life span hypothesis, uses the same data as that used in *The Life Span of Companies* to similarly reexamine the length of time companies were ranked in a list based on assets of the top one hundred companies in the mining and manufacturing industry. According to Shimizu's study, when corrections are made for the effects of reappearance on the list and mergers, the average life span for ranked companies is a little under forty years, and this extends to sixty years if the postwar period alone is examined. Shimizu also shows that when the average length of time companies are listed on the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange is analyzed by event history analysis, the period is well in excess of one hundred years.

In fact, research to date on the effects of mergers has not necessarily

upheld the conclusion that mergers have a positive effect on management from the viewpoint of profitability and growth. However, the fact that numerous mergers are actually occurring suggests that mergers do serve to produce some kind of positive effect. Based on his study of the merger of Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries 石川島播磨重工業 (IHI), Shimizu [III-05] hypothesized about a positive effect on the life span. He undertook an event history analysis of the length of time corporations listed on the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange remain listed. The results of Shimizu's research revealed that mergers do in fact prolong the period of time corporations are listed and demonstrate that they have a positive effect on the life span of corporations.

In this way, the accepted view based on intuition and analogies that a company's life span is short and that it is vital to survival to diversify rather than clinging only to the main business has begun to be proved scientifically to be mistaken. In actual fact, conglomerates, which attracted so much attention in the past as the vanguards of diversification strategy, are now nowhere to be seen even in Japan. This being the case, what kinds of business models are there apart from those representing diversification?

IV. NEW BUSINESS MODELS

What kind of influence do advances in information technology have on business models? Inoue Tatsuhiko [IV-01] uses "coevolutionary spiral model" as a keyword in a review of literature on information technology and management organization, and a case study of three Japanese apparel companies. In another work Teramoto Yoshiya, Komatsu Yōichi, Shiotsugu Kiyooki and Seike Akitoshi [IV-02] use "mutual evolution" as a keyword in setting forth the necessary conditions for the creation of new industries and new businesses. However, the person who clearly defined the influence of advances in information technology on business models is Kokuryō Jirō [IV-03], and his book was one of the factors that led to the boom in business models and business model patents in Japanese business circles during the year 2000.

The points Kokuryō makes are striking. For example, Linux is a free operating system that has reached the stage of actually threatening the position of Microsoft's operating system, which should have already established network externality. Linus Torvalds, a student at Finland's Helsinki University, developed this operating system for a personal

computer and released the source code on an Internet newsgroup. Based on exchanges of opinion on the Internet among numerous supporters on his mailing list and a handful of core members, Torvalds's operating system evolved through a succession of improved versions within a short period of time. This demonstrates how it is possible to divide work into different parts so that it can be completed easily by a large number of people (modularization). Through decentralized development using modularization, technology and knowledge developed with a high degree of autonomy consolidate successively, adding reciprocal value and thus creating an explosive innovation spiral. With this in mind, companies make the connecting specifications (interfaces) with their products public in the hope that this will accelerate the development of additional products featuring interchangeability with their own products.

However, Kokuryō's arguments are logically weak because he embraces new phenomena in an overly affirmative fashion. For example, owing to rapid technological advances, the cost of reproducing (producing), storing and transmitting one unit of information has been reduced to the point where it can almost be negligible, and since, in a cost structure where the variable cost of information distribution is close to zero, there is a tendency for billing costs, in particular the cost of collecting fees of small amounts, to stay relatively high, then a variable cost, which would be unnecessary in the case of a free service, is generated when the service is fee-charging. In this case, if the service is provided free and the variable cost thus becomes zero, then since, according to price theory, the marginal costs balance out when they coincide with the price, the Internet economy becomes a world of zero pricing. This is claimed to be the mechanism whereby large amounts of digital material such as information and software are provided free of charge on the Internet. However, from the perspective of economics this argument is faulty. Certainly if the variable cost is zero, the total cost will become an invariable and thus the marginal cost will be zero. However, the kind of argument that suggests pricing is determined by the marginal cost is complete nonsense. The reason for this is that the proposition that "profits are maximized when the price equals marginal cost" stems from an argument based on the premise that price is determined by the market and corporations act as "price takers." To begin with, as can be seen in the case of ordinary manufacturers, even if the variable cost is positive there is no problem whatsoever in running the business as long as income is greater than the variable cost and profits are being made. Is it really necessary to engage in hair-

splitting over a variable cost of zero?

New business models were also sought out pursuant to changes in the system, such as the implementation of the Revised Antimonopoly Law in December of 1997, lifting the ban on pure holding companies that had been in effect in postwar Japan, and also, from the settlement of accounts for March 2000, the conversion to disclosure, which in Japan is centered around consolidated settlement of accounts. In a work that describes the formation process of zaibatsu from a historical point of view, Okazaki Tetsuji [IV-04] analyzes the process by which holding companies were introduced as a mechanism for governing diversified businesses. Itō Kunio [IV-05] states in his work that the key to reforming Japanese corporations lies in building up consolidated group management.

In these circumstances a study by Chūjō Hideharu [IV-06] attracted attention among a certain group of scholars in the field of traditional organization theory. Chūjō criticizes C. I. Barnard and M. Weber and maintains that Barnard's idea of an organization which includes customers as members is mistaken. However, Chūjō's idea of an organization is nothing more than a fabrication with no regard for reality. The fact is that Barnard's assertion is correct, and organizations have long existed as networks incorporating stakeholders such as customers, investors and suppliers. At the end of the twentieth century, a time when this fact has come to be clearly recognized, business models have come to be sought after based on a concept of an organization that is more clearly characteristic of a network. The retail trade and the distribution industry in particular are in the midst of a period of change [IV-07]. Katahira Hotaka [IV-08] formulates an idea for a brand that would precisely connect corporations with stakeholders. Further, Hayashi Shūji [IV-09], who previously wrote *Ryūtsū ka-kumei* 流通革命 (The Distribution Revolution), a publication which created quite a stir among the public, defines commercial science as the "study of tradespeople" who connect various things, and he discusses commercial science from an original perspective.

The quest for business models is being undertaken not only for profit-making corporations, but also for nonprofit organizations. In December 1998 the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities took effect in Japan, and interest in nonprofit organizations grew. Reviewing the existing literature from the viewpoint of organizational theory, Tao Masao [IV-10] has reviewed research on voluntary organizations. Having first summarized leading research on nonprofit organizations, Kojima Hiromitsu [IV-11] conducted a questionnaire on 141

nonprofit organizations. However, his work concludes with the verification of hypotheses that follow the former contingency theory. It is rather Yamauchi Naoto [IV-12] who succeeds in his aim by allowing the data on the present state of nonprofit organizations to articulate the position they occupy and the role they play in the main fields in which they are active, such as culture, education, health care, welfare, international aid and international exchange.

V. JAPANESE-STYLE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

In the past when Japanese corporations were sweeping the world, there was a tendency that Japanese management paired up with organizational culture. However, it is misleading to focus on the organizational culture of corporations that are successful for a temporary and short period of time. Organizational culture should be of a nature to influence corporate performance over an extended period of time. Actually in the 1990s, there was a major shift in interpretation from Japanese management closely related to Japanese culture to Japanese-style management that should function even in the context of other cultures.

To begin with, concerning the origin of Japanese management, Morimoto Mitsuo [V-01] points to the period of the shift from the semi-wartime regime to the wartime regime after the late 1930s and gives a general history of the formation and maturation of Japanese management from that period onwards. His chronological table of events and literature pertaining to Japanese management is a valuable reference source, comprising 111 pages and covering the years from 1936 to 1998.

Meanwhile, in the midst of the internationalization of Japanese corporations, notice began to be taken of Japanese-style management that should function even in foreign countries. Based on a fact-finding survey of fifty-eight Japanese companies in East Asia undertaken in 1995 during the peak of high economic growth in East Asia, a volume edited by Okamoto Yasuo [V-02] analyzes their management systems. The conclusion is that the efforts that were made to transplant Japanese-style management as Japanese multinational corporations adjusted to local conditions are not something that can be easily changed, no matter how large the short-term shock was that started with Thailand's monetary crisis in 1997. The reason for this is that any other choice would be close to a gamble, lacking foundation of experiential learning.

The collection of articles edited by Shiotsugu Kiyooki [V-03] is the result of a joint research project with Chinese and Korean researchers looking at the internationalization of Japanese corporations located in Fukuoka and its outskirts in northern Kyushu. This is a comparative study that looks at how these Japanese corporations are expanding their operations in developing Asia while drawing comparisons with the internationalization of Chinese and Korean corporations that have direct relations with northern Kyushu. Further, while almost no empirical research on economic history pertaining to distribution networks in Asia had been undertaken in the past, a collection of articles edited by Sugiyama Shin'ya and Linda Grove [V-04] shows in concrete terms how business networks in Asia were formed at various levels and how they have functioned.

Interest increased not only in Asia, but also extended to the Pacific region. Yamaguchi Ikushi [V-05] undertook an international comparative survey on motivation targeted at Japanese, American, and Australian white-collar workers. This theme is also taken up by Ushimaru Hajime [V-06]. Although Tanno Isao's work [V-07] is for the main part an outline of Australia's economy, industrial policy and labor-management relations, he goes on to discuss the local management of Japanese corporations in a foreign culture.

Conversely, Hoshino Yasuo and Takabayashi Shin'ichirō [V-08] use data covering the years 1994 and 1995 from 182 multinational corporations and foreign subsidiaries in Japan to show that the business performance of joint-venture companies surpasses that of wholly-owned subsidiaries and, moreover, that the performance of 50%-50% joint ventures exceeds that of other joint-venture companies.

While on the one hand there appeared studies such as these by researchers of international business studies dealing with Japanese-style management from the standpoint of international comparison, there also appeared a collection of ten empirical research articles edited by Fujimoto Takahiro, Nishiguchi Toshihiro and Itō Hideshi [V-09] regarding the supplier system, in this case focusing on the Japanese automobile industry which attracted attention worldwide during the 1990s. In addition, a collection of articles edited by Inagami Takeshi and Kawakita Takashi [V-10] discusses from a sociological perspective the Japanese-style employment system and diversifying modes of employment, the formation of expertise, and internationalization, all issues which have similarly attracted attention.

While the above-mentioned works focus on changes in the Japanese-style employment system, Takahashi Nobuo [V-11] investigates un-

changing decision-making principles. In addition to lifetime commitment and a wage system guaranteeing living expenses, which have repeatedly been pointed out as characteristics of Japanese corporations for almost the past half century, the phenomenon of Japanese corporations attaching little importance to discount rates when determining investments and phenomena such as *yarisugoshi* やり過ぎ (side-tracking problems which are assigned a low priority) and *shirinugui* 尻ぬぐい (taking the blame for another person) have on the face of it been dismissed as inexplicable from the perspective of game theory and decision theory. However, Takahashi maintains that these are rational phenomena ushered in by the “weight of the future,” and in addition to undertaking theoretical considerations, he actually attempts to measure and demonstrate the “weight of the future” by using a “perspective index.” Furukawa Hisataka [V-12] sounds the alarm regarding the type of argument that would suggest “anything and everything will change” in this period of turbulent changes, asserting that the basic principles of organizational management will remain unchanged and that it is rather the “creation of a basic stance” to clarify issues in managers’ own workplaces that is important for creativity and reforms.

It goes without saying that there is also criticism of Japanese-style management. In a study on total quality control, which had in the past been regarded as the secret to the strength of Japanese corporations, Tokumaru Sōya [V-13] undertakes a field investigation of corporations that have introduced total quality control, on the basis of which he concludes that total quality control is a negative legacy of Japan’s postwar prosperity. An investigative report by Takahashi Masayasu, Yamaguchi Yoshiaki and Ushimaru Hajime [V-14] looks at gender, an area in which Japanese corporations have lagged behind the times.

In addition, although they are of an abstract nature, there appeared a number of studies that attempted to discuss Japanese corporations from new angles. Tao Masao [V-15] and Kanai Toshihiro [V-16] discuss company employees and middle management with reference to various business management theories. In Japanese corporations it is common for a deputy general manager to be positioned under the general manager, and a deputy manager or assistant manager to be positioned under the manager. These “auxiliary” positions are discussed in a work by Hioki Kōichirō, Mori Katsushige, Takao Yoshiaki and Tae Wang-you [V-17]. Promotion is the subject of discussion in a study by Hioki Kōichirō [V-18] in which he takes up the phenomenon of the “Gulliver model” that occurs in social competition. Although Yokota Eri [V-19] discusses the “flattening” of organiza-

tions, it has not been clarified whether “flattening” independent of personnel cuts is actually taking place in Japanese corporations. Factual proof for these authors’ abstract arguments is insufficient and the assertions made do not go beyond generalizations.

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