

[研究ノート]

THE EVOLUTION OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN OSAKA : THE CASE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY*

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I

During the first half of the twentieth century, the textile industry played a very important role in the Japanese economy. In particular, Osaka was known as "The Manchester of the East", for as in Manchester, there were a large number of cotton spinning companies. In those days, these companies employed many workers, especially young female workers from rural areas (Table 1, 2). Therefore, it is very important to give them due attention in order to understand the characteristics of industrial relations in the textile industry.

For instance, Sanji Muto, who was a president of the famous Kanegafuchi cotton spinning company, emphasized the significance of labour management for female workers. As mentioned above, most of them came from rural areas and lived in the company dormitory. Most were under 20 years of age. Thus, along with employing them, the employers also had to take care of them in place of their parents. This special relationship between employer and employee was called as 'paternalism'. It is noteworthy that Sanji Muto appreciated the advantages of paternalism in the textile industry.

Although male workers were employed in many cotton spinning companies, they were present in

(Key Words)

Textile Industry, Industrial Relation, Labour Management, Female Worker, Benefit in Kind

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上述のように、本稿はコンファレンス提出ペーパーであるが、テーマとして日本の女子労働史の一断面を扱っており、竹中先生の退任記念号に掲載させていただく形で、これまでの先生の学恩に対する私のささやかな報いになりたい。なお、本稿はすでに発表した二つのペーパー（参考文献の〔5〕と〔6〕）に連続するものであり、事前にこれらを一読されることを希望する。

fewer numbers than female workers. Rather, the main characteristics of industrial relations in the textile industry reflected the fact that many young female workers were employed for short periods. After a few years, most of them returned to their homes in the rural areas. Therefore, the employers not only engaged these workers in manual works, but also provided pre-marriage welfare activities such as sewing and household education. In this sense, the working and living conditions for young female workers were very important.

As a matter of fact, large, well-known cotton spinning companies such as Kanegafuchi and Toyo were able to provide excellent employment and welfare systems for their workers. For instance, the following practices were reported by Sanji Muto:

Meals and Rest Hours. In factories where the twelve hours shift systems is in force, all the machinery stops for forty minutes at noon and at mid-night, for meals and rest; and at three o'clock every afternoon and morning for thirty minutes, for rest. Where the ten hours system is in force, forty minutes rest at noon is allowed.

Dining Halls and Recreation Rooms. Special attention is given to the meals of both male and female operatives, served in Dining Halls equipped with every comfort. Rest after meals, either in the Dining Halls, or in specially appointed Rest Rooms, or in the garden, is provided for.

(Sanji Muto, *Employers and Workers*, 1919.)

Of course, other welfare provisions such as housing and clothing for female workers are also noted in this pamphlet. They were very unique and significant benefits in kind. If we try to understand the substance of industrial relations in the textile industry, we should note the important role of benefits in kind. During the inter-war period, some foreign countries criticized what they regarded as the poor working conditions, especially the low wages, of Japanese textile workers. Certainly, we can show some unfair cases. However, if one looks at the working conditions as a whole in the textile industry, it is very important to pay attention not only to cash wages but also to benefits in kind.

This paper aims to deal with the evolution of industrial relations in the textile industry. In the next section, I will discuss the importance of labour management in the textile industry because it greatly affected other industries as a useful model to maintain the friendly relationship between employer and employee. In this sense, it seems that the textile industry played a very important role towards the institutionalization of labour management in Japan. On the other hand, I will refer to two serious labour disputes in the textile industry. Here, I would like to examine the shortcomings of industrial relations in the textile industry through analyzing background of these labour disputes

both of which occurred in Osaka.

II

In 1919, the Kyocyo-kai was established as the organization which aimed to maintain friendly relations between employers and employees. The Japanese Home Office, in particular, promoted the establishment of the Kyocyo-kai. After the First World War, social unrest and class conflict increased in Japan. As a response, the Kyocyo-kai carried out various researches concerning labour problems and presented methods for social reforms. In order to understand Japanese labour policy during the inter-war period, it is essential to study the activities of the Kyocyo-kai.

For instance, the Kyocyo-kai published a pamphlet entitled 'The case study of workers' education in Japan' in 1928. This pamphlet presents model cases of contemporary labour management practices. Here, it is surprising to find many examples from the textile industry. This seems to show that the textile industry practiced the most useful labour management. In particular, we should pay attention to the practices in cotton spinning companies. The Home Office hoped that the other industries would improve their own labour management systems by learning as much as possible from the practices in the cotton spinning companies. In other words, it can be said that the textile industry had contributed as a pioneer to the institutionalization of labour management in Japan.

Several interesting cases are presented in this pamphlet. First, I would like to mention the case of the dormitory at the Kurashiki cotton spinning company. The Japanese dormitory for female workers had often been criticized for poor living conditions. This is not necessarily wrong. However, the large cotton spinning companies such as Kurashiki could provide dormitories suitable for workers' education. Here, the case of the dormitory facilities in the Kurashiki Masu factory is relevant. These facilities were divided into three sections. New young female workers lived in the dormitory called 'Yosei-ku' where they learned the basic working and living conditions in the factory for one month (Figure 1). They then moved to another dormitory where they spent two months and learned the history of the Kurashiki cotton spinning company and so on. Finally, they lived in the dormitory called 'Jichi-ryo' where they learned such subjects as mathematics, literature and so on.

On the other hand, we can show the case of the night school in the Fuji-gas cotton spinning company. In this company dormitory, a night school for female workers was held. After work, they gathered in the dormitory and read some text books in order to increase their knowledge. According to the above pamphlet, the young female workers attended this seminar gladly and studied some useful subjects. This fact shows that the Fuji-gas cotton spinning company provided not only

employment but also primary education for young female workers.

Finally, we can show the case of the Toyo cotton spinning company. This company was very well-known for its unique labour management. For instance, the Toyo cotton spinning company established a school for workers. In particular, young female workers could get a good education by studying text books written by specialists. These text books published monthly, covered subjects such as household work, sewing, writing and so on. Thus, as with the above-mentioned night school, this school also provided special education for young female workers. Here, we should note that these schools played a very important role in improving the working and living conditions in the companies.

As mentioned above, the Kyocho-kai pamphlet introduced useful examples of labour management, especially concerning workers' education. Included are a number of model cases in the textile industry. This shows that the textile industry, chiefly cotton spinning companies practiced the welfare provision system prior to other industries. In other words, labour management in the textile industry became an important model for other industries. Practices in the textile industry demonstrated the significance of the institutionalization of labour management that could be applied to other industries. In this sense, it is evident that we should pay much attention to the evolution of industrial relations in the textile industry.

III

Certainly, it can be said that the welfare provision system discussed above was very useful for maintaining friendly relations between employer and employee. However, we should not overlook the cases of labour dispute in the textile industry. It is very important to analyze labour disputes as they often formed decisive turning points in industrial relations.

In this section, I would like to discuss two well-known labour disputes which occurred, respectively, at (a) Kanegafuchi cotton spinning company and (b) Ohmi Kenshi company. The labour dispute at Kanegafuchi occurred in 1930. As for the background of the dispute, Kanegafuchi had been paying a special allowance to the workers since the period of the First World War. However, in 1930, Kanegafuchi proposed to abolish the special allowance and replace it with another. Obviously, this meant a cut in benefits in cash. In the Osaka Yodogawa factory, the workers rejected the proposal and insisted upon the special allowance. Nevertheless, Kanegafuchi rejected the workers' appeal. As a result, the workers went on strike.

This labour dispute spread to the Kyoto and Hyogo factories. However, workers at Hyogo factory suddenly relented, and after two months this labour dispute came to an end. The result was a cut in benefits in cash. However, the workers could reduce the loss of the special allowance by claiming

another benefit. During the dispute, company staff contacted the parents of the young female workers and requested that they brought their daughters back home. This action in the dispute reflects the main characteristics of the industry in which it occurred, namely, the company of many young female workers.

In the Kanegafuchi dispute, it can be said that the workers maintained their good working and living conditions because of special allowance they continued to receive after the First World War. It is natural, however, that the employer cut the special allowance in a period of depression. Rather, it is strange that they had continued to pay the special allowance for such an extended period. In this sense, we should note that the Kanegafuchi labour dispute was a very rare case due to the above background.

Next, let us turn to the second labour dispute, that which occurred at the Ohmi Kenshi company in Osaka in 1954. The Ohmi Kenshi company was notorious for its poor labour management. For instance, the company forced its workers to obey certain rules and endure poor conditions such as follows.

1. The forced practice of religion
2. Long working hours
3. Harsh dormitory rules
4. Unfair dismissal and job rotation
5. Inspection of private letters

The Ohmi Kenshi workers proposed to improve the worst working and living conditions and to establish a new trade union. However, the Ohmi Kenshi company rejected these proposals. Consequently, the workers went on strike. Here, we should note that this labour dispute included serious issues concerning basic human rights. In addition, it is surprising that the worst labour management still existed after the Second World War. As with the case of Kanegafuchi, the Ohmi Kenshi company contacted the parents of young female workers and required them to bring their daughters back home.

On the other hand, it is very interesting that members of the British Labour Party visited Japan during this labour dispute and visited the Fujinomiya factory in order to encourage the workers. Thus, this labour dispute aroused concerns regarding harsh labour management practices in the textile industry. In particular, we should pay attention to the harsh conditions that infringe upon human rights. Although this labour dispute came to an end in September, it was enough to show one important aspect of industrial relations in the textile industry.

I have briefly discussed two labour disputes in the textile industry. The main issue in the Kanegafuchi dispute was the wage cut, whilst the dispute in the Ohmi Kenshi company concerned

human rights. During these disputes, each company contacted the parents of young female workers. This fact is very useful for understanding the characteristics of industrial relations in the textile industry. Particularly, we should bear in mind the high percentage of female workers.

IV

Kazuo Okochi, a very well-known scholar of social policy in Japan, published his book entitled 'Labor in Modern Japan' in 1958. This is a short history of labour problems and the labour movement in Japan in an English edition (Table 3). If one were to rely on this book, one would find out very little about the evolution of industrial relations in the textile industry especially after the First World War, for the author concentrated on industrial relations in heavy industry up to that time. Certainly, it can be said that Okochi's approach has been popular in Japan.

However, the textile industry played a very important role as the leading sector of economic growth in Japan during the first half of this century. This being the case, we should pay much greater attention to the evolution of industrial relations in the textile industry after the First World War. As mentioned above, many young female workers were employed in the textile industry, especially in the cotton spinning companies. As they came from rural areas and were mostly under the age of 20, many employers had to provide the welfare services such as dormitory accommodations, schooling and so on. This reflects fact that the employers could not manage their companies unless they recruited many young female workers.

In this sense, many companies made efforts to establish friendly relations between employers and employees. In Japan, this relationship was called 'paternalism'. In other words, paternalism was thought of as one type of labour management which spread very quickly in the textile industry. As we saw, the Kanegafuchi cotton spinning company instituted a very useful welfare system which became a model case in Japan. Although a labour dispute occurred in 1930, we should not regard its origin as the breaking off of friendly relation. In addition, as mentioned above, the employment of young female workers made the labour dispute complicated.

On the other hands, we must refer to the case of the Ohmi Kenshi company. The background of this labour dispute was obviously located in the harsh working and living conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to study different cases of paternalism so as to grasp the evolution of industrial relations in the textile industry. However, we should bear in mind that labour management practices in the textile industry often impacted upon those in other industries. That is to say, we can say that such practices fully contributed to the institutionalization of labour management in Japan. Although the textile industry has been declining, we can show the useful measures that originated in the practices in textile industry. Of these, the Japanese labour management system seems to be

one typical case.

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Table 1: List of Workplaces Employing More than 100 Persons

1. Textile Industry

a. Osaka City

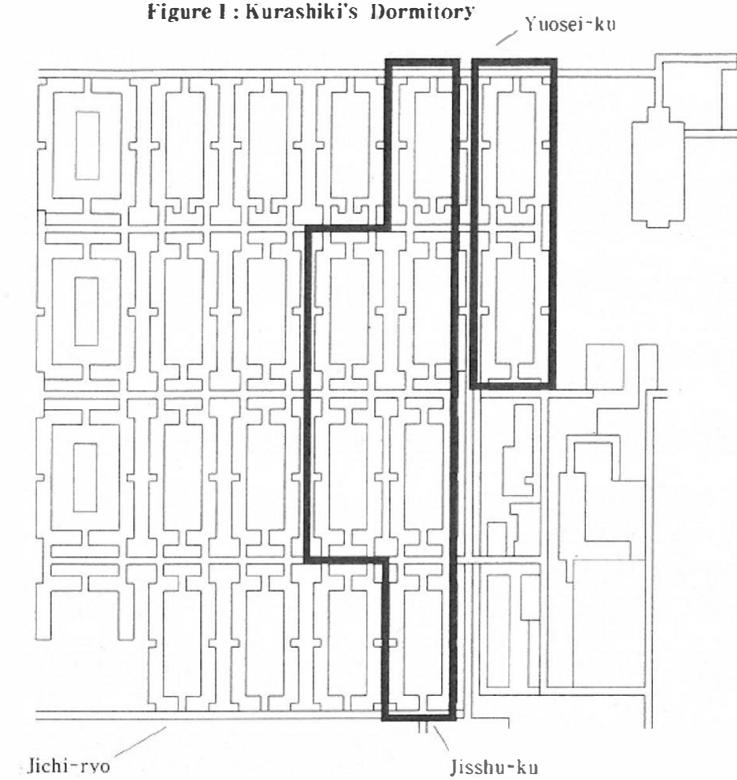
Workplaces	Male	Female	Total
1	845	3,000	3,845
2	89	120	209
3	70	196	266
4	622	2,581	3,203
5	114	639	735
6	630	1,803	2,433
7	95	256	351
8	686	1,010	2,696
9	28	120	148
10	30	75	105
11	97	83	180
12	395	1,085	1,480
13	544	2,470	3,014
14	210	976	1,186
15	162	16	178
16	162	16	178
17	24	98	122

b. Suburbs of Osaka City

Workplaces	Male	Female	Total
1	460	1,774	2,234
2	93	271	364
3	225	803	1,028
4	329	61	390
5	949	190	1,139
6	74	117	195
7	626	3,257	3,883
8	268	747	1,015
9	110	20	130
10	315	78	393
11	99	118	287
12	167	21	188
13	66	99	165
14	53	64	117
15	305	57	362
16	54	180	234
17	90	20	110
18	95	165	260
19	30	134	164
20	21	115	136
21	15	105	120
22	110	628	738
23	137	568	704
24	318	973	1,291
25	669	3,198	3,867
26	50	230	280
27	265	867	1,132

Source: Osaka Municipal Office (1922). *Rodo Chosa Hokoku 17* (A Research into Working Conditions No. 17).

Figure 1: Kurashiki's Dormitory



Source: Kyocho-kai (1928). *Rodosha Kyoku no Jitsurei* (Case Studies of Workers' Education).

Table 2: Percentage of Female Workers in Osaka (1925~36)

	(%)				
	1925	1929	1931	1933	1936
Textile	73.0	71.1	72.2	73.1	73.9
Sewing	69.5	69.9	70.3	67.4	64.4
Printing	14.9	12.1	11.1	6.1	13.6
Chemical	32.2	32.8	31.2	31.6	32.6
Rubber	37.0	46.0	46.9	46.0	43.6
Leather	4.7	7.6	9.8	8.0	8.6
Ceramic	22.1	16.6	14.9	15.3	18.6
Metal	5.6	5.9	5.0	4.5	4.8
Machine	5.8	5.5	6.0	6.8	6.1

Source: Toru Watanabe and Toshio Kimura eds. (1989). *Osaka Shakai Rodo Undo Shi* (The History of the Labour Movement in Osaka).

Table 3 : Kazuo Okochi, *Labor in Modern Japan*, 1958.

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