

実化しているが、本書は、この最新情勢を理解するにも、貴重な示唆を与える。 [金田辰夫]

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『アジアの熟練』

— 開発と人材育成 —

Konosuke Odaka, ed., *Skill Formation in Asia, Development Issues in Manpower Training*, Tokyo: The Institute of Developing Economies, 1989, 385 pp.

This book is a collection of research papers on the state of skill formation in industrial enterprises in Asia. It is the result of eight Japanese authors, plus a number of other researchers, meeting 24 times over a 3 year period (1985-7) under the auspices of the project "The Formation of Skilled Labour Force in Developing Countries" at the Institute of Developing Economies. These meetings served as a forum for discussing their respective empirical work in a selected number of Asian countries. Each author addresses a diverse range of issues and employs varied research methodology. But the common brief of the project was to identify obstacles to the formation of industrial skills and to think of ways of dealing with them. The book as a whole tackles the former (i. e. analysis) better than the latter (i. e. prescription). For this reason, while the book is of interest to both researchers and practitioners, either group of readers would have to do their own thinking as to the implications of the research results presented in the book for Japanese multinational companies, local Asian entrepreneurs and managers, and Asian government policy-makers.

The book is structured as follows. In an introduction in Chapter 1, the editor, Odaka, besides outlining the structure of the book, discusses the concept of "jukuren", often translated as "skills", and makes explicit the fact that it involves both manual dexterity acquired through experience and mental capacity for judgement and concentration (p. 6).

Chapter 2, by Izumi, traces the history of training provisions for skilled workers in Japan since the Meiji period. According to

him, the Japanese government's intention to imitate the German dual apprenticeship system faltered due to the lack of guilds, the education system in which vocational education was conferred a low social status, and the development of internal labour markets. Consequently, skill formation in Japan has been driven by large enterprises which gave on-the-job training a central role, while only smaller firms relied on the public provision of training. This historical background is said to be essential in understanding the nature of training in contemporary Asia which has been much influenced by Japanese practices either through Japanese multinational companies, joint ventures or technology transfer agreements between Japanese and local Asian firms.

The rest of the book explores the state of training in Asia, through the analysis of fieldwork results. Chapter 3 by Odaka is based on a questionnaire survey of 45 Japanese production technologists who have been posted to one of the Japanese-local joint venture car assembly companies in Asia. The production technologists were asked to assess skill levels of local core employees as compared to Japanese counterparts. Odaka found the skill differentials to be not so large, and concluded that the scope for improvement lies in reforming the management control system so as to motivate workers, enhance workers' ability to suggest ideas and supervisors' ability to teach skills.

Chapter 4 by Fujimori is based on case studies of 4 automotive components factories and 3 consumer electronics companies in the Philippines, whose ownership varies from 100 per cent Japanese to 100 per cent Philippine with a technology transfer agreement with Japan. Chapter 5 by Yoichi Koike analyzes the state of machinery industry in Taiwan through a questionnaire survey of skilled workers in a subsidiary of a motor bicycle company. Similarly, in Chapter 6, Mizuno presents the result of a survey of skilled workers in a machine tool company in South Korea. Common to all three chapters is the finding that training provided by companies is narrow-based, for a single skill which is immediately relevant to the current job. The authors concur that knowledge-based off-the-job instruction is required to cope with more

complex equipment, such as CNC machines, in the future.

In Chapter 7, Izumi compares the process of technology transfer and training at firms located in Kumamoto technopolis and Japanese multinational companies located in Thailand and Malaysia. The major difference between Kumamoto and Thailand/Malaysia was found to be the relative absence in Asia of training in problem solving skills through what the author calls on-th-job development (OJD). This was attributed to an inadequate performance appraisal system, a lack of promotion tracks for local staff, and a more Taylorist work organisation giving little discretion to workers. This last factor was also identified with respect to quality control by Yahata in Chapter 8 in her study of 4 Japanese car assemblers and 15 local components suppliers in Thailand, although the survey evidence indicated local Thai management intention to increase discretion for supervisors and middle managers in production control and training.

In Chapter 9, Kiyokawa, on the basis of surveying 16 silk reeling factories in India, attributes bad quality to a number of factors, such as the payment system and the non-use of government quality standards, but above all to management's lack of quality consciousness and commitment to improve it.

Lastly, Chapter 10 by Watanabe explores the psychology of technology transfer, by surveying a sample of 35 Japanese technologists at one car manufacturer posted to its overseas subsidiaries in Asia over a 3 year period. The source of information, therefore, is similar to that used by Odaka in Chapter 3. But Watanabe's interest lay in what "frame of reference" Japanese technologists had when they were training local Asian workers. Significant characteristics of those who found overseas postings worthwhile were identified as a pro-active orientation (i. e. the perceived need to make reasons for an action and effects or evaluation of such action explicit) and a desire for good mutual personal relationships among other things.

A common theme running throughout the book is that as compared to Japanese companies, Asian-based companies have (a) workers who are narrowly trained and not multi-skilled, (b) managers who give little

discretion to workers, and (c) workers who lack problem-solving skills, who, combined with (b), give rise to lower quality levels.

Differences emerge also between Asian countries. For example, the recession in the Philippines was found in Chapter 4 to be having an adverse effect on training particularly for multi-skilling, while firms in the rapidly growing South Korean machine tool industry were conjectured to have kept up their training effort despite high inter-firm labour mobility in Chapter 6. This contrast gives rise to a hypothesis that the more rapid growth is, the more willing employers are in providing and financing training.

It is a shame that theoretical underpinnings for these similarities and differences between different authors' findings were not fully explored by the editor either in the introductory chapter or in a concluding chapter which is lacking. An even better, though demanding, research design would have been for the authors to test out a core set of common hypotheses, which would not have been impossible given an enviably high frequency of their meetings—8 times a year over 3 years—by any comparative research standards.

Odaka himself recognizes the limitations of this book, in researchers' time and budget, and in their research design (p. 13). But if it is permitted to press the point further, it appears that there are a number of unanswered questions which could have been addressed by at least some of the researchers.

First, some of the standard questions economists would pose remain unanswered. For instance, the correlation between inter-firm labour mobility and enterprise training provisions is not theorized; in Taiwan, Koike (in chapter 5; p. 134) reports high labour turnover as responsible for dampening training effort, while Mizuno in Chapter 6 wrote that inter-firm labour mobility appeared not to have hampered skill formation in Korea (p. 184). The latter is attributed to mobility which enhances individual workers' motivation to train and better themselves. But this is difficult to assess without the knowledge of the workers' wage profile, which would indicate who is bearing the cost of training. The standard human capital theory predicts that as long as workers bear the cost of general training, employers are willing to provide it.

Second, several authors(e.g. Yahata in Chapter 8)hint at the desirability of creating internal labour markets to provide training for multiple skills and to stabilize quality. But how do internal labour markets emerge? What factors are hampering the internalization of labour markets today in some countries? Would some Asian countries be more successful in pursuing the route of creating occupational labour markets along the West German model to promote skill formation? These questions are not addressed in the book.

This is partly because, thirdly, comparisons with Japanese plants in Japan remain largely implicit(e. g. p. 176). One gets little sense of variations in training practices within Japan, between industrial sectors and between companies.

It is also due, fourthly, to the fact that larger national institutions(such as the education system and the role of the state)in each Asian country are not taken into account in any of the studies. A national strategy as between promoting internal labour markets and creating occupational labour markets cannot be addressed without a nation-wide analysis in at least one Asian country. In the absence of such analysis, the historical overview of training policy in Japan in Chapter 2 has not been put to good use.

Overall, the book constitutes stimulating reading for its empirical research findings, but unanswered theoretical and policy questions may leave some readers dissatisfied.

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