Rethinking the Paternalist Paradigm in Japanese Industrial Management

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Observers on both sides of the Pacific have long identified paternalism as a distinguishing characteristic of industrial management in Japan. Paternalistic practices – the provision of welfare facilities by employers, the articulation of familial corporate ideologies, the use of personnel policies which emphasize job security and foster worker loyalty – have been seen as the hallmarks of a distinctively Japanese approach to managing industrial labor. Both mainstream scholarship and journalistic accounts have almost invariably assumed that this paternalistic proclivity was a natural outgrowth of Japan's cultural heritage, reflecting a unique accommodation of traditional values to the impersonal dictates of modern industry. Moreover, it has generally been supposed that paternalism formed the core of Japanese management practice both before and after World War II, and that alternate paradigms of labor management floundered in Japan because of the culturally-conditioned appeal of the paternalistic model.

According to Hazama Hiroshi, the most influential analyst of Japanese paternalism, Japan's prewar industrialists made "creative" use of tradition – "groupism, feelings of dependency, and a high regard for harmony" – in the creation of a singularly Japanese corporate welfare system. With such deep indigenous roots, Hazama concludes, paternalism has reigned supreme in Japan's industrial workshops while other approaches – notably Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management – have proven unable to penetrate Japanese industry [Hazama, 1979, p. 104; Hazama, 1969; Hazama, 1978]. Although Western scholarship has generally endorsed these views, in recent years some historians have begun to question the received wisdom about paternalism in prewar Japan. Andrew Gordon, for example, has suggested that paternalistic rhetoric was ineffective in swaying worker sentiment and that corporate welfarism was only one device in Japanese industry's arsenal of labor management strategies [Gordon, 1985; Gordon, 1989]. Sheldon Garon and William Dean Kinzley have similarly questioned the monolithic nature of Japanese paternalism and noted the extent to which Japanese managers were influenced by foreign models [Garon, 1987; Kinzley, 1991]. A number of historians have

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also begun to reappraise the Japanese experience of Taylorism, revealing a more profound impact than has commonly been supposed [Okuda, 1985; Sasaki and Nonaka, 1990; Tsutsui, forthcoming].

In this essay, I aim to challenge longstanding assumptions regarding the nature of Japanese paternalism. In the process, I will add to a growing literature which rejects the analysis of Japanese management as an anomalous "special case" and emphasizes instead the international contextualization of Japanese practice. I argue that Japanese paternalism was consciously modeled on developing Western ideas of "welfare capitalism," and that Japan's "emotional" paternalism was by no means incompatible with "mechanistic" management systems simultaneously being introduced from the West. In other words, I contend that in espousing paternalism, prewar Japanese managers were not looking backward to Japan's cultural heritage so much as following the "trend of the times" and attempting to implement the "best practice" methods of Western employers. These imported models were subsequently indigenized with traditionalist rhetoric and culturally-laden symbolism, their alien origins thus obscured and their entree into Japanese factories greatly eased.

At the same time, paternalistic employers in Japan were not dogmatic in their allegiance to corporate familialism, but fortified their paternalistic strategies with the latest innovations of American Scientific Management. As scholars have revealed was the case in many Western workshops, "warm" paternalism and the icy dictates of Scientific Management did not prove contradictory in practice. Thus in Japan, as in the United States and Europe, paternalism and Taylorism were found to be complementary and could be introduced simultaneously into industrial enterprises. As I will argue, it is far more accurate to characterize Japanese industrial management in the twentieth century in terms of a fusion of paternalistic humanization and Taylorite rationality, than to rely on dated (but tenacious) paternalist, culturalist stereotypes.

Taylorism and the Theory of Paternalism

Institutions commonly associated with paternalistic management (such as worker dormitories) are as old as modern industry in Japan. Yet the concept of paternalism (*onjōshugi*) only gained a sacred spot in the nascent national business ideology at the turn of the century, when industrialists brandished Japan's "beautiful customs" in employer-employee relations to counter governmental pressure for Western-style factory legislation [Marshall, 1967, pp. 51-76]. As one Japanese manager stated in 1910,

> Since ancient times, Japan has possessed the beautiful custom of master-servant relations based firmly on a spirit of sacrifice and compassion... This relationship is not weak like that of the Western nations, but has its roots in our family system... Because of this relationship, the employer loves the employee and the employee respects his master. Interdependent and helping each other, the two preserve industrial peace [Gordon, 1985, pp. 66-67].

Although much of the early enthusiasm for paternalist management was limited to such rhetorical bravado, not all industrialists were entirely cynical in championing "beautiful customs." Spurred by an incipient labor movement and chronic problems of worker retention, Japanese employers experimented with a variety of paternalistic management techniques from the late 1890s through the 1920s. According to Hazama, these decades witnessed the development of "systematic" paternalism, a distinctively Japanese model of labor management, adapted to modern factory production but derived from the customary affective relationship between lord and retainer, "combining innovation and tradition in ways that [were] emotionally satisfying to Japanese participants in industrial society" [Hazama, 1979, p. 104].

In theory at least, the "warm" paternalist approach appeared antithetical to the rational, materialistic assumptions of Taylorism. Yet Scientific Management entered Japan and flourished in Japanese industry during the heyday of Hazama's "systematic" paternalism: through the 1910s and 1920s, both Taylorite methods (time and motion studies, incentive wage schemes, and so forth) and ideological propositions (most notably the concept of the "Mental Revolution") attracted considerable interest among Japanese managers [Tsutsui, forthcoming]. Hazama, nevertheless, has argued that Taylorism proved irreconcilable with Japan's "emotional" employment practices, concluding that Scientific Management was eviscerated by the culturally-rooted logic of paternalism and was consequently unable to gain full acceptance in Japan [Hazama, 1978, pp. 170-186]. Hazama's analysis, however, overstates the influence of traditions and understates the impact of Taylorism: in fact, the rhetoric and institutions of Japanese *onjōshugi* were able to coexist and overlap with the methodology and philosophy of Scientific Management to a remarkable degree.

On the most basic level, of course, Scientific Management and paternalism alike appealed to Japanese employers' closely-related desires for labor peace and low costs. Both, in short, held out the promise of higher, more stable profits. At the same time, both strategies aimed to strengthen the authority of management in the industrial workplace. Whereas paternalism's approach was couched largely in moral terms and Taylorism's was premised on the managerial monopolization of "science," both sought to confirm management prerogatives by an ideological appeal to standards which transcended the shop floor [Okuda, 1985, p. 392; Okuda, 1989, p. 196; Okuda, 1972, p. 31]. The complementarity appears to have held on a more practical level as well. In the first place, *onjōshugi* was most powerful (and most frequently used) as a rhetorical device rather than as a comprehensive managerial strategy. Perhaps more importantly, paternalism prescribed no model of production management and gave no guidance in the design of the work process or the specifics of labor management (including wages), areas on which Taylorism focused. Scientific Management, meanwhile, paid little attention to the welfare facilities which were the main institutional components of paternalistic appeals. *Onjōshugi* and Taylorism could, it seems, thus interlock (and even reinforce each other) in practical application as well as on a more abstract level.

The manner in which Scientific Management and paternalism could be intellectually reconciled is apparent in the writings of Uno Riemon, one of prewar Japan's most prominent theorists of *onjōshugi*. A firm believer in a distinctive "Japanese spirit," Uno sought to create a systematic yet humane and culturally-continuous model of paternalistic labor relations in Japan. Like many who approached management from a spiritual perspective, Uno was sharp in a 1921 evaluation of Taylorism:

> Many books on the theory of increasing efficiency have already been published in Japan. However, since almost all of them are no more than translations of works originally written in America, their relevance to the situation of Japan's workers is highly tenuous... There are many factories which have temporarily adopted scientific methods of management...but they have for the most part ended in failure, and few have been successful. The reason for these failures lies in having brought in American-style [practices] which attach much importance to material things, and using them in an unmodified form on Japanese workers, who are more inclined to be moved by things spiritual [quoted in Hazama, 1979, pp. 99-100].

While Uno criticized the "literal translation" of Taylorism and its excessive materialism, he did not take issue with any of its methods specifically and conceded its value in "increasing industrial efficiency." Uno even admitted in 1915 that Taylorism could perform a constructive role in labor relations, listing Scientific Management and its promise of "increasing profits while elevating workers' income" as "effective supplementary measures" in the "warm treatment of labor" [quoted in Hazama, 1978, pp. 91-94]. Indeed, Uno did not oppose the introduction of Taylorism so much as he questioned its efficacy in Japan without a more "spiritual" approach. Significantly, Uno recognized the presence of this element within Scientific Management: "Researchers and importers of the Taylor System misconstrue it as merely a scientific technique, a dry-as-dust intellectual framework. They are unable to grasp its true meaning, that the vitality of the system lies in its Mental Revolution" [quoted in Hazama, 1978, p.186]. From Uno's perspective, then, the Taylorite philosophy of labor-management cooperation could exist in accord with Japanese emotionalism and the techniques of American management could be introduced within the rubric of *onjōshugi*: in short, Taylorism was not antithetical to the spirit of Japanese paternalism.

Paternalism and Taylorism in Practice

If the example of Uno gives some indication of the intellectual compatibility of Taylorism and *onjōshugi*, then the case of Suzuki Tsunesaburō and the Nikkō Electric Copper Smelting Company suggests the extent to which the two approaches could mesh in actual practice. Suzuki was one of the early breed of Meiji professional managers: an employee of the Furukawa interests, he was a

graduate of Keiō University and studied accounting at Harvard. In 1912, he was appointed head of the Nikkō smelter, a subsidiary of Furukawa's Ashio mine, and was charged with improving its lackluster performance and legacy of labor problems. Suzuki's success was legendary: within two years he cut production costs by a third, halved the number of workers yet doubled the income of those who remained, greatly increased productivity and machine usage rates, and calmed labor discord. Nikkō became a model factory of paternalistic management practices and Suzuki one of the nation's most celebrated practitioners of *onjōshugi* [Hazama, 1978, pp. 118-128; Okuda, 1985, pp. 340-345].

Suzuki's writings were rich with the standard paternalistic rhetoric: his essays dripped with praise for "beautiful customs" and were generous with scorn for Taylorite dehumanization [Suzuki, 1915]. Yet Suzuki's experience at Nikkō suggests that the practical distinction between Scientific Management and *onjōshugi* was far less extreme than the rhetorical dichotomy he claimed. Suzuki did establish the usual welfare facilities at the smelter – safety devices, rest areas, and so on – and he did show an uncommon interest in the economic well-being of his workers. Suzuki's factory was not, however, the "warm," familial and cooperative environment one would expect of a model paternalistic plant. In his first speech to the Nikkō workers, Suzuki sounded as much like Frederick Taylor selling the "Mental Revolution" as a feudal lord addressing his retainers:

> Although the facilities here are second to none in the world,... our products are expensive, their quality is inferior and workers' wages are only one quarter of those in other countries. This is a truly deplorable situation. I entreat all of you to work much more strenuously... If you do this, your wages can be increased fourfold. The interests of capitalists and workers are not inevitably opposed. In advanced foreign countries there may be instances where profits for capital result in losses for labor, but this is not the case in undeveloped countries like Japan, where the interests of the two groups are as one. In other words, if efficiency increases then the profits generated by this increase can be split between labor and capital [Suzuki, 1916, pp. 7-8].

Despite his critiques of Taylorite materialism, Suzuki was a firm believer in incentive wages, installing the Gantt system at Nikkō and putting his Harvard training to use by making the rate determination procedures as statistically precise as possible [Suzuki, 1916, pp. 56-78, 273-283]. Regardless of his protestations of compassion, Suzuki emphasized competition on the shop floor and was ruthless in pruning the work force at Nikkō. In what might well be cast as the Japanese version of Taylor's infamous "Schmidt experiment" [Taylor, 1911, pp. 41-64], Suzuki reputedly gathered one half of the haulers at Furukawa's Akihabara warehouse and offered to split the gains in productivity with them if they could double the amount they carried in one day. The group, aided by some primitive work study, gladly obliged, whereupon Suzuki fired the now-redundant other half of the haulers and distributed a portion of their

wages to the more productive men who remained. Suzuki later tried to apply the results of this experiment to cargo handlers at the Nikkō factory, dismissing half the crew and ordering the remaining laborers to pick up their productivity proportionately. The Nikkō workers, however, refused to participate and, in the end, Suzuki blithely fired them all for insubordination [Suzuki, 1916, pp. 7-8; Okuda, 1972, pp. 29-31].

The case of Suzuki Tsunesaburō apparently confirms that the reality of Japanese *onjōshugi* was hardly as warm and inviting as its propaganda. Even more revealing, however, is the light it sheds on the relationship between paternalism and Scientific Management in Japanese factories. It is important to note that Suzuki's smelter was far from being the only company to have championed *onjōshugi* while simultaneously applying classic Taylorite reforms to the work process. Indeed, evidence of such coexistence is provided most strikingly by the prewar spinning industry, where both approaches reached high levels of advancement. Kanegafuchi Spinning Company (Kanebō) makes a particularly instructive case study. Under the energetic leadership of Mutō Sanji, Kanebō gained a reputation as one of Japan's best managed firms in the early twentieth century. Production and labor management techniques developed at Kanebō became the prototype for managerial reforms applied through much of Japanese industry in the 1910s and 1920s. Indeed, Hazama has gone so far as to declare the Kanebō example "the forerunner of the present Japanese management system" [Hazama, 1977, p. 416]. Significantly, however, while Kanebō was most celebrated for its paternalistic management practices, it also stood among Japan's corporate pioneers in the Taylorization of the manufacturing process.

The architect of the Kanebō system was Mutō Sanji (1867-1934), who, along with Suzuki Tsunesaburō, was a member of Japan's first generation of professional industrial managers. Like Suzuki, Mutō had solid academic credentials and overseas experience: after graduating from Keiō, Mutō travelled to California in 1885 and enrolled at Pacific University. On his return to Japan in 1887, Mutō was employed by the Mitsui interests and was eventually transferred to Kanebō, where he served in a variety of positions (including factory manager, chairman, and president) between 1894 and 1930. When Mutō first joined the company, Kanebō was a relatively small concern, yet through a series of mergers and an aggressive expansion program undertaken during his tenure, it was rapidly transformed into one of Japan's leading textile producers. Mutō himself became a prolific writer and an animated spokesman for business interests, and he was particularly zealous in publicizing his accomplishments at Kanebō. As early as 1919, when he served as a Japanese delegate to the first ILO convention in Washington, Mutō was widely regarded as one of Japan's most influential business leaders and as a visionary innovator in humane, efficient, and profitable industrial management [Irimajiri, 1964].

Until the turn of the century, production techniques and labor practices at Kanebō were unexceptional: like other Japanese spinners, Kanebō's management style was autocratic and arbitrary, and few welfare facilities were provided. Between 1902 and 1907, however, an elaborate range of paternalistic programs

was established under Mutō's guidance. Although various concerns motivated this wave of reform, the most compelling was the desire to reduce labor turnover (and, in turn, to cut recruitment costs and lessen upward pressure on wages) by improving the living conditions of Kanebō operatives [Hazama, 1964, pp. 307-312]. Aiming for a complete embrace – that is, to provide for all aspects of the work and private lives of employees – the new benefits offered by Kanebō were impressive by any standard. As Hazama acutely observed, Kanebō's sweeping programs were "the functional equivalent of a welfare state" [Hazama, 1964, p. 387].

The specific features of Mutō's paternalist blueprint for Kanebō can be summarized as follows [Kanegafuchi Spinning, 1919; Kanebō, 1988, pp. 127-150; Hazama, 1964, pp. 307-321]. First, worker housing facilities, and especially dormitories for unmarried workers, were expanded and improved. Meal service was upgraded and company stores (selling at wholesale prices) were established. Second, better relief measures for the sick and injured were instituted. Company hospitals were provided, systematic rules for compensation in case of work-related accidents were elaborated, subsidized pension plans and a "Mutual Benefit Association" were chartered. Third, recreational and education programs were expanded. The company sponsored athletic meets, excursions, and hobby clubs. A technical training academy was provided for male workers, while the "Kanebō Girls' Schools" prepared female employees for marriage by teaching practical domestic skills. In fact, given the predominance of young women in the work force at the time, a number of welfare facilities – kindergartens, nursery schools, programs for pregnant operatives – were targeted specifically at this group.

Fourth, Kanebō designed means of encouraging (and even enforcing) "sobriety, industrious character and thrift" among the workers [Kanegafuchi Spinning, 1919, p. 68]. The firm supported savings campaigns and temperance societies, founded a "Consulting Office for Domestic Affairs" with a staff of welfare workers and home visitors, and appointed "Sanitary Inspectors" to investigate the housing conditions of employees not living in company facilities. Fifth, Kanebō devised new means for improving communications between workers and corporate management. Company newsletters – including one aimed specifically at women – were used to transmit managerial viewpoints to shop floor employees (as well as their families). To encourage the flow of worker sentiment upwards, suggestion boxes were installed and prizes awarded for constructive ideas. Employees could also request personal interviews with the company's managing director, who promised that all concerns would be "carefully listened to and considered" [Kanegafuchi Spinning, 1919, p. 71]. "In short," one Kanebō publication declared,

> the Company has aimed at the most complete protection of its workers from any and every distress. This has not been done in a spirit of boastfulness, but in the sincere hope that the example may be followed generally... The company does pride itself on its prosperity, [which is] due to the hearty cooperation between

> the Managements [sic] and the staff of workers. The latter respond cordially to the endeavors made to render the conditions of their employment the most desirable and beneficent [Kanegafuchi Spinning, 1919, pp. ii-iii].

Mutō himself, when writing of his reforms at Kanebō, drew heavily on the familiar rhetoric of Japanese paternalism. In numerous pronouncements, Mutō portrayed the Kanebō management system as an organic outgrowth of Japan's "beautiful customs":

> Japan's family system is distinguished from that of the West by the feelings of affection which lay at its core, and the spirit of respect and sacrifice which suffuses it... Everyone would be content if the intimate interpersonal relations of Japan's family system could be extended to society as a whole. Recreating between employers and employees the warmth which exists in a family will bring benefits to both sides: this is the sense of paternalism which I advocate in regard to the labor problem [quoted in Hazama, 1964, p. 388].

In crafting an ideological basis for Kanebō paternalism, Mutō stressed the exceptional qualities of Japanese *onjōshugi*:

> I think that those who are opposed to paternalism hold the view that it is to the interests of labour to settle labour problems by question of right [sic]. Such views come only from the fallacy of disregarding differences in conditions between Western and Japanese labouring men. No record of paternalism is to be found in the history of Western countries. So it is quite natural that Western labourers should always claim their rights [quoted in Marshall, 1967, p.88].

Yet despite such avowals of *onjōshugi*'s cultural specificity, the influence of Western models on the Kanebō system was apparent, a fact which even Mutō and the other ideologues of Japanese paternalism could not deny. Much like Suzuki Tsunesaburō, who seems to have learned much from the management philosophy of Edward Cadbury [Suzuki, 1916, pp. 2, 256-261], so Mutō appears to have found the methodological inspiration for his "Japanese" paternalism in the factories of Europe and the United States. For example, the idea of providing suggestion boxes in Kanebō mills did not derive from Japanese tradition, but was patterned after a system used at National Cash Register Company [Mutō, 1963, pp. 158-161]. Mutō was, moreover, profoundly influenced by the example of Krupp and its elaborate welfare system. Mutō obtained materials on Krupp labor practices in 1904 and immediately had them translated into Japanese. The Krupp model subsequently served as a virtual blueprint for Mutō's reforms at Kanebō and would later attract the close attention of many prominent paternalistic employers (including Shibusawa Eiichi and Ōhara Magosaburō) [Mutō, 1963, pp. 151-153; Marshall, 1967, p. 66; Hazama, 1964, pp. 319-320].

Beyond Krupp, the other Western managerial system to have a pervasive impact at Kanebō in the early twentieth century was Scientific Management. Along with fellow cotton spinners Kurashiki and Tōyō, Kanebō was among the first Japanese firms to study and implement Taylorite methodologies in a systematic manner. Stimulated by a number of factors – not least the need to standardize production techniques after a wave of mergers – Kanebō began to experiment with Scientific Management soon after Taylor's ideas were introduced into Japan in 1911 [Takahashi, 1994, pp. 53-61; Chokki, 1992, pp. 118-124; Okuda, 1985, pp. 92-104]. Among the pioneering initiatives undertaken during the 1910s and early 1920s were time and motion study, the establishment of standard operating procedures, fatigue research, the regularization of accounting practices, and the implementation of systematic "efficiency auditing." Kanebō – like the Nikkō smelter – also made extensive use of incentive wages, experimenting with a number of different American premium plans and rate-setting formulae [Hazama, 1964, pp. 317-318; Kanebō, 1988, pp. 128-129, 153].

Perhaps not surprisingly, Mutō had little trouble reconciling the simultaneous application of paternalism and Scientific Management at Kanebō. Indeed, Mutō articulated a vision of management that fused the two approaches, asserting that corporate success and worker welfare depended on the thorough utilization of both "scientific operating methods" (*kagakuteki sōgyōhō*) and "spiritual" ones (*seishinteki sōgyōhō*). In a 1912 announcement, Mutō established the goal of "scientific" operations, constituting "1. the planning of work, 2. management discipline, and 3. the reduction of fatigue." Echoing Taylorite convictions, Mutō claimed that "if wasted effort is reduced and output increased, the company will profit, higher wages can be paid to the workers, and both sides will reap greater rewards" [Kanebō, 1988, pp. 130-133]. Three years later, in 1915, Mutō supplemented this agenda with a less materialistic, more humanistic, "spiritual" element: "One can think of scientific practices as addressing the quantity of work, while spiritual ones deal with the quality. Alternately, scientific practices treat the techniques of production, while spiritual operating methods concentrate on human feelings." With the lofty aspiration of "building the character of each individual worker," Mutō's abstract "spiritual" appeal was a thoroughly paternalistic approach to boosting employee morale and, by extension, efficiency and output. If, Mutō promised, "everyone applies the combination of scientific and spiritual methods," then both "corporate prosperity" and "the sprouting of individual advancement" would almost inevitably result [Kanebō, 1988, pp. 134-137].

In this fusion of humanism and Taylorism, the enveloping warmth of *onjōshugi* and the cool materialism of Scientific Management, Mutō outlined a potent strategy of managerial ideology and practice. Based on vague yet compelling ideological appeals and an interlocking program of welfare facilities and Taylorite techniques, Mutō's Kanebō system was far more sophisticated than terms like "beautiful customs" – or even Hazama's "systematic" paternalism – connote. Mutō did not look to a rosy past of Japanese "tradition," except perhaps as a source of rhetorical embellishments. Rather, searching for

pragmatic, immediate means of attaining corporate objectives in labor and production management, Mutō and his contemporaries sought out the "best practice" from abroad, studying and selectively emulating Western models of management. And although Japanese paternalism has often been portrayed as antithetical to Western methods (and especially Scientific Management), as Mutō, Suzuki and others demonstrated, philosophical contradictions seldom translated into practical obstructions. Indeed, as Mutō's hybrid approach suggests, paternalism and Taylorism came to be seen as essential complements rather than polar opposites in the modern workshops of early twentieth-century Japan.

Japanese "Tradition" and the Western Example

As Okuda Kenji has observed, numerous prewar Japanese managers implemented Scientific Management – sometimes consciously, sometimes unwittingly – while simultaneously mouthing paternalistic platitudes and providing "warm" welfare facilities. In Okuda's view, paternalistic rhetoric and institutions functioned as essential correctives to Taylorism: welfare facilities easing the physical strains of new work patterns, the ideology of familialism smoothing the transition to a stratified bureaucratic order in the factory. In other words, paternalism seemed to round the sharp edges of Scientific Management as it spread through Japanese industry [Okuda, 1985, pp. 387-393].

As Gramsci noted, the rationalization of industrial production required both the carrot and the stick, "a skillful combination of force...and persuasion (high wages, various social benefits, extremely subtle ideological and political propaganda)" [Gramsci, 1971, p. 285]. In Japan of the early twentieth century, "persuasion" almost invariably took the form of paternalistic institutions and familial grandiloquence. Although Japanese industrialists like Suzuki and Mutō could readily endorse Taylor's "Mental Revolution" – and promise workers their slice of the proverbial "ever growing pie" – the high wage element of the Taylorite formula was seldom realized. While Japanese firms thus came to utilize the techniques of Scientific Management and affirm the ideological core of Taylorism – the necessity of science, the primacy of "objective" expertism, the nullification of workplace politics – the embrace was not complete. As Okuda concluded, "the biggest problem with the introduction of the scientific management system in the prewar days [was] the attitude of the industries which chose to adopt only the technical part of the system and sought to keep workers' wages at the previous low levels" [Okuda, 1971, p. 19]. At least through the 1920s, Japanese managers' concern for the "human element" was almost invariably translated into "warm," comforting familialism rather than cold, hard cash.

The extent to which the Japanese splicing of Taylorism and paternalistic "persuasion" was a conscious managerial strategy is unclear, as is its significance in explaining why Scientific Management was accepted by Japanese workers without the widespread opposition it frequently encountered in the West. What is certain is that a similar path was being traced in the United States, where

corporate paternalism (known as "welfare work") went from being a target of Taylorite contempt to a close adjunct of Scientific Management:

> To an increasing number of employers, the differences between Scientific Management and welfare work, which appeared so wide to Taylor...seemed less important than the potential benefits of combining the systems. During World War I, elements of Taylorism were joined with welfare work to create the new field of personnel management [Nelson and Campbell, 1972, p. 165].

The complementary and compensating nature of Japanese paternalism noted by Okuda also underlay the American melding of the two approaches:

> Personnel management was in no way seen as a replacement for Scientific Management. Rather, personnel management, with its various means of making workers feel part of a larger enterprise, was necessary precisely because Scientific Management and modern production techniques had, with few exceptions, reduced workers' control over their work and sentenced them to performing a series of repetitive, meaningless tasks [Gillespie, 1992, p. 26].

Thus, in both Japan and the West, paternalistic labor management and Taylorism came to coexist almost symbiotically during the early decades of the twentieth century. In this light, Japanese managerial thought and "best method" practice – although conditioned by Japan's particular economic, social and cultural context – would seem to have reflected international trends far more closely than some indigenous repertoire of "tradition." One can conclude, therefore, that the legacy of Suzuki Tsunesaburō and Mutō Sanji lays not in the construction of a distinctively "Japanese" paternalism, but rather in the elaboration of a hybrid managerial system inspired by and consistent with the contemporary Western "state of the art."

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