



"A culture in which women play a more active role" (Summary)

Norihiro Oe (Head Editor, WEDGE) vs Shigeru Oe (The Outlook Foundation)

A culture in which women play a more active role

I had an interview with Norihiro Oe to discuss the greater involvement of women in our culture, from the perspective of men, who are supposed to hold great responsibility on this issue.

The standard of a male-dominated society

I think it is a good idea to come up with an antithesis to the standards of a male-dominated society, which took root long ago in Japan, if we are to create a society in which women can play an active role. Establishing new standards for the 21st century may lead to this goal.

A generation gap?

Our current society, in which it is difficult for women to become involved on an equal footing, was established during the era of rapid growth to protect vested interests. I am not sure whether this order is related to sexual differences. Perhaps it is linked to the generation gap.

The antithesis we seek means a shift in emphasis from our conventional hierarchical relationship to a flat relationship.

Women are more rational

In Japanese society, tradition and order are of the highest value; however, women are more rational in this respect.

Judging ability appropriately

We assert that that we should adhere to a merit system, but in fact the ability of women is not evaluated appropriately.

Can you work without having any doubts?

It is considered good to work without having any doubts about instructions from one's superior. But many women find this idea senseless and therefore avoid assuming a position of responsibility. Perhaps what women dislike most is being assigned to middle management in a large organization.

Suitable or unsuitable?

There are many occupations which are generally considered appropriate for women: PR, product development, etc. One thing that is certain is that women develop greater ability when they receive recognition for their work.

A better working environment

It is impossible to return to the time of the three-generation household, though it still lingers today in Fukui prefecture. But we may be able to derive the same benefits if we consider child-rearing at the community level. Furthermore, more women will be able to work if home offices become more prevalent.

One step toward reform of assessment criteria

There are increasing numbers of people who attach great importance to the pursuit of the ideal work-life balance. There are also more people than before who work very efficiently. I think work habits have changed significantly.

Work sharing has another utility

To promote work sharing, it is necessary to standardize jobs. If jobs are appropriately standardized, parents can return to work any time after maternity or child-care leave.

The traditional style of doing business, which is not standardized or efficient, still endures in many Japanese companies. In the process of standardization, the productivity and profitability of Japanese companies will significantly improve.

Profile of Norihiro Oe

Born in Nara in 1977. Graduate of University of Tokyo (BA in Economics). Editor of WEDGE since 2006. Specializes in energy, healthcare, etc. Head editor since 2011.



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