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—Voices of the WGO? Staff and Members of the Volunteer Guide Seminar—

May Salaries

In today's Japanese corporate culture, youth, or specifically Generation Z, enjoy a relatively privileged working environment.

But inconsistently, I often hear that various companies have a problem with "early retirement" when new and young employees leave their jobs after only a short time.

My son is no exception. Soon after he entered the company, he found he couldn't fit in the sales department of the branch office, and in the first year, he hinted to HR that he wanted to quit.

I thought he was going to get fired, but his boss listened to him, and HR decided to move him to the head office where he could do a different kind of work.

In general, companies don't let new employees go easily. They sometimes walk on eggshells as to avoid making dissatisfied workers.

As companies promote work-life balance, providing flexible working styles, the work environment has become comfortable for younger employees. For instance, bosses try not to force subordinates to attend afterwork drinking parties, something which was considered a part of the job before.

Still, it is inevitable that many young workers dissatisfied with their current employment will move to more suitable companies and hope for better salaries.

When I was working for a company in my 20s, my co-workers would rarely change jobs. Dedicating yourself to one workplace until retirement was (and probably still is) considered a virtue by my generation.

It is surprising that today, there are retirement agency services so that unhappy employees can avoid direct contact with HR when they quit.

After the Golden Week holiday in late April and early May, some people hesitate to resume work even though as new employees they have only been at their jobs for one month. This is the time when retirement agents are most busy.

Is this high turnover rate due to a lack of grit and perseverance among young people?

Today's young workers value freedom and individualism, and they are less likely to conform to traditional social norms.

Fear of what the future might bring is leading to early worker turnover. Generation Z employees embarking on new careers anticipate that Japan's future pension system will be unstable and unreliable.

I hope our society will become such that young people can feel at ease in their chosen careers.

But, above all, they should take pride in their work and pursue it.

(Miwa N.)

Some time ago, I was sitting in an okonomiyaki joint watching Yomiuri hand the Carp an ass whooping, and normally I wouldn't have begrudged them the win.

But the Giants management bought airtime during the game and ran a commercial so irritating that it only served to prove one thing once and for all.

Being a Giants fan requires only a vestigial brain if one at all.

The casting director must have tipped off the vice squad and rounded up as many thugs resembling Kanye West as they could find, touts working the hostess bars, intimidating office workers into going inside and ordering \$100 beers.

Then they invited only the most predatory bar hostesses along with the promise of as many Vuitton bags as they could shoplift.

Herding them forward with cattle prods, telling them they were on their way to loot refrigerators, the slogan "Better Get Your G-Armor" is flashed over the whole sorry scene, relegating this once proud Japanese sport to the status of pro-wrestling. Only not as classy.

"Boy," I recall thinking, "baseball sure is getting commercialized these days."

Then along comes Ohtani Shohei.

Rather than make a list of all the products Ohtani currently promotes on television, online and in print it's much easier to list the things he doesn't flog.

As of this writing, Ohtani does not sell adult diapers, hemorrhoid cures, magic healing crystals, autographed personalized astrological charts or Crystal meth.

Never mind that he signed with the Dodgers for \$700,000,000. If your company can afford to pay his fee, he'll be happy to shill anything you wanna sell, everything from orthopedic mattresses to rice balls.

Come to think of it he does shill mattresses and rice balls.

And besides, the \$100,000,000 he's expected to rake in this year partnering with over 20 brands might come in handy if he ever decides to buy, say, Burkina Faso or make a few spare clones of his dog Dekopin.

To put this in perspective, the estimated salary for a High School Teacher in Japan is JP¥5,800,000 per year, at the current exchange rate, \$40,888.26.

Good to know the world has its priorities straight.

And his fans don't seem to mind this in the least. This, in a society that rides herd on celebrities' behavior like an army of border collies snapping at their heels.

Kusanagi Tsuyoshi of pop stalwarts SMAP, finding the spotlight of fame too glaring, took off all his clothing and ran around a park screaming. Something your average, stressed-out Japanese salaried worker probably contemplates doing on a daily basis.

But it wasn't okay with the sponsors buying commercial spots for TV shows on which Kusanagi appeared. Never mind running around naked. Kusanagi had...been...drinking.

Alcohol.

Not whatever brand of tea Ohtani currently advertises.

Unforgivable, right?

But Ohtani's second career as a shill doesn't hurt his credibility as a baseball phenomenon in the least.

Ohtani is now the proud father of a baby girl, but if I really do see him selling diapers, I'm giving up on baseball and following a sport that's a little less mercenary.

Like pro wrestling.

(Editor)