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■ Specialist Idiot and Division of Labor

“Baka no Kabe” or Fool’s written by Prof. Takeshi Yoro is a million seller book in Japan which many Japanese read today most. In this book, Yoro warns that a man tends to build high walls around himself. The walls isolate him from other people. The deeper he is engaged in specialized areas of activities, the higher the walls are built. In modern society, new type of problems happens such as aircraft crashes, factory fires, traffic accidents, wrong medical treatments and product liability problems. When these problems are analyzed later by scientific methods such as FTA (Fault Tree Analysis), lack of communication is found to be the main cause among many others. People do not share necessary information because of the high walls between them.

“All Problems Are Human Problems”

The principle of “Division of Labor” was demonstrated as an effective and productive method by Adam Smith, a Scottish economist about 250 years ago in his famous classic book “The Wealth of Nations” science that, this principle has been widely used in industry bringing about high productivity. The most typical example is Ford Motor production system with moving conveyors.

The “Division of Labor” has created many job classifications and a huge herd of specialists in industry and society. Anything will become ineffective and inefficient when it goes too far. The same is also true with the Division of Labor.

Good companies -----.

- (1) Fewer job have classifications
- (2) Frequent and systematic job rotations
- (3) Fewer and lower partition walls between departments
- (4) Delegation of power
- (5) Better information sharing
- (6) Cross-functional teams

Carlos Ghosn rescued Nissan by breaking the partition walls and making the maximum use of the employees’ potential power by cross-functional team concept. For more detail, please read “Turnaround” by Carlos Ghosn