

A Study on the Characteristics of the R & D in Japan

Katuaki Onishi

The R & D in many countries have constituted one of their principal elements of vitality and also one of the most important conditions for the growth of their economies. Especially, under the economic crises since the middle of the 1970's, the innovation has become the most important means to overcome them. This paper intends to make clear the characteristics of the R & D in Japan.

Since World War II, Japanese companies have adopted the strategy of quickly following up the innovations originally made elsewhere and then adding significant improvements in order to establish international competence. That is, Japanese companies have copied as faithfully as possible the external technologies and productive structures, particularly those in America. The external technologies have reduced the expenditure of R & D and expanded business chance for Japanese companies.

And Japan's well-educated and cheap laborers have worked hard for its reconstruction. At first, the innovation capacity of Japan has been particularly at the organizational and job efficiency level. Japanese companies then have created its own innovations which have taken on an increasing weight and depth.

Now, the important problem with which the Japanese companies and government are confronting, is to develop the high technologies on their own initiative. The total expenditures of R & D in Japan have increased despite economic crises. Normally, the government funds mainly flow into the governmental and non-profit research organizations and into the universities. But, the government-sponsored R & D projects in Japan, substantially, have placed emphasis on the high technologies only. Namely, the present strategy in Japan is to develop the high technologies and to strengthen a few very large companies. Thus, Japanese companies have achieved position of leadership in certain, even highly important sectors such as electronics and auto industries.

But, on the other hand, many other projects which were waited to develop

英文レジュメ

for the people have been neglected. The goal of R & D is not to break down the many probabilities but to realise. We must realize to keep the balance between the high technology and the many other projects. This paper places emphasis on this point.