Paper Title: The Formation of the ‘Post-war Type’ Joint Consultation System and Its Characteristics in Japan

Name of Author: Sam-soo Kim

Institutional Affiliation: Professor, Seoul National University of Science and Technology

Proposed Program Stream: Economic History

Abstract:

The characteristic structure of industrial relations in Japan has consistently been ‘joint labor-management conference system’ since 1920’s except during the period of the Second World War. ‘Joint Consultation System’(Roshi-Kyougi-sei) was formed during the period of high economic growth under the initiative of ‘Japan Productivity Center.’ It is qualitatively different from that of pre-war ‘Worker’s Council System’(Kozo-Linkai-sei) under which even the right to organise was strictly prohibited. And it is also different from ‘Management Consultation System’(Keiei-Kyogikai-sei) where labour unions had powerful rights to consult and decide on the extensive matters of production and management(especially personnel management) in the 1940’s and 50’s.

This paper aims to investigate how ‘Joint Consultation System’(Roshi-Kyougi-sei) replaced ‘Management Consultation System’(Keiei-Kyogikai-sei) and analyses the main features and functional characteristics of the ‘post-war’ Joint Consultation System.

In order to identify the characteristics of Japanese industrial relations system and joint consultation system, the paper adopts the theoretical framework in which the concept of ‘joint consultation’ is to be differentiated from that of ‘collective bargaining’. This kind of analytical perspective comes from the complex model of collective bargaining and joint consultation in
European continental countries, typically Germany. The paper analyses the formation process of joint consultation system, noting that it coincided with the formation process of enterprise unionism which was eventually brought about by the collapse of the trans-enterprise union movements (‘industrial labour union movement’) in the middle-1960s.