

Driven to Do Our Best



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It has been a long time, and I don't remember exactly when, but several years ago, I remember seeing a documentary on TV called "Contemporary Master Craftsmen."

I remember that the interviews focused on craftsmen who had refined their production of pottery, lacquer and swords into works of art. The main theme of the program was not the beauty and wonder of the works themselves but the craftsmen's drive to develop their skills, setting down principles of their craft, and making things.

I was not really concerned with them, but sometimes when the interview began there were things in what the craftsmen said that here and there attracted my interest. For example, one thing that drew my interest was that many people said that this was not an occupation which they wanted to do or were made out for. This type of assertion was something I did not expect.

Most of the people were quite old. Given their generation and background, some of them from an early age took over the family's occupation; some were brought up in another family as adopted sons to carry on a traditional art or craft; and some were forced to begin their rigorous training in a traditional occupation just as a way of getting by and making a living.

When they were asked how a person should look at work he or she has started, whether the person likes it or not, they answered in surprisingly similar ways. They gave answers such as "At the beginning, I hated it so much I wanted to escape," "Anyway, there was nothing I could do but do the work," "I thought this was the only way open to me, and I did it believing that this is the way I have to go," and "There was nothing special that I did, I was just lucky that I kept at it

for a long time." Their faces were impressive as they gave these answers matter of factly, without any trace of pedantry or pretense.

What they said reminded me of these words of novelist Fujisawa Shuhei: "I just go on doggedly with my life and do with care the work I have chosen, without taking any pride in my special self or my work... I just persist with that way of living and I will gain something from what I persist in. I take life affirmatively, and while sometimes compromising with it and sometimes confronting it, I was able to escape hard times, and that's how I can look this pleased. Fujisawa seems to have said something like this, and I think that the master craftsmen in Japanese society have been the key to the support of the arts and crafts culture.

In going forward with one's job, whether it is big or small, a person asks, "Really how should I do this?" and "What do I want to do?," and obsessing and thinking about these questions is ultimately connected with making clear the hidden essential features of a job. Furthermore, when these essential features begin to appear somewhat as one thought them to be, one becomes able to judge about proceeding to the next stage. If you come that far, then afterwards the only thing you have to do is trust your team and carry out the job, and at that stage, you want to have not only "drive" but in some situations you want to change and spice up the seasoning with "balance."

In July of this year, we will celebrate NTT DOCOMO's 20th anniversary, and we would like once again to recognize and offer thanks to our customers.

The NTT DOCOMO R&D Center will celebrate its 15th summer as a research and development base. More than 5,000 customers have visited our exhibition room WHARF since its opening. In December of last year the total number of visitors to WHARF passed the 100,000 mark.

Last year, starting with Yokosuka City and extending our collaboration with neighboring communities, we were able to have many more of you experience WHARF, when we set up "Out of KidZania" and gave many children the opportunity of performing jobs and role playing adult occupations in this environment.

In the future as well, we can continue contributing, even if only in a small way, to improving the presence of the R&D Center, by focusing on transmission of new services and the results of NTT DOCOMO research and development. In addition, fiscal 2012 is the final year of "Innovation and Challenge."

Aiming at carrying out NTT DOCOMO's Medium Term Vision 2015 "Shaping a Smart Life," in this year we will accelerate our focus on value creation by moving toward advancing mobile services and becoming a corporation providing general services. In addition, by taking advantage of our strength in having an R&D Center, we have high expectations for the advances and services that the R&D Center can bring forth.

All of us in the R&D General Affairs Department will continue providing "warm, heart to heart communication" and "Safety and Security" as the lubricant for the R&D Center. We believe in supporting the "Development of attractive new services" and "Research into leading technologies" of the future, and we hope to steadily continue doing so with "drive" and "balance."