

WAKE UP KOREA!

My work is giving me a headache. I returned to Korea after three years in a middle management position in a large company in the US.

After deciding to return to Korea, I'm finding it very difficult to work for my Korean company.

The differences are huge. For a start, in Korea I have to do whatever the boss says even if it's a mistake or bad judgment. However, in the United States the boss asked us for our opinions and valued our expertise. If we saw the boss was about to make a big mistake, we were duty-bound as part of the management team to say something. Even factory workers, if they see a problem with the production, they are required to report it through the proper channels.

However, if you do the same thing in Korea, it could cost you your job even if you are right. Just recently, my boss made a finance error which cost the company 20 million won! Everyone in the office knew it was the wrong thing to do, but people were afraid if they told the boss of his error that he may lose face.

Another thing that truly bothers me is the fact that just because I am a woman, my boss continually patronizes me and treats me like I'm some 24-year-old Korean receptionist even though I have a master's degree from a well known Western University.

It also seems, to get a position or even a job in this country you must look the part. The whole attitude seems to be it is better to be "Pretty and Dumb rather than plain and competent."

People in Korea are complaining because the economies of their neighboring countries are growing much faster than Korea's. Well, from what I've seen of Korean companies, I'm really surprised that the Korean economy is growing at all.

Vocabularies:

management -the person or persons who control or direct a business or other enterprise

valued-to regard highly, esteems; appreciate

expertise-skill or knowledge in a particular area

duty-an act or course of action that is required of one by position, social custom, law, or religion

bound-being under legal or moral obligation

patronize-to treats in a condescending manner

attitude-manner of carrying oneself

plain -lacking beauty or distinction

competent - properly or sufficiently qualified

Questions for discussion:

1. What is your opinion about the topic?
2. Do you think the way Koreans run their companies affect how well the economy does?
3. Do you think your boss deserves respect just because he's your boss?
Why or why not?
4. Do you believe that a job should be based on how good you look?
Why or why not?