

Passing the Baton

“Sports can provide helpful hints at work. In baseball, for example, imagine if we drew boundaries in the infield and said only the second baseman could play within his boundaries while the third baseman could only play within his. Not only would the game not be as much fun to watch, it wouldn’t even be the same game.

Similarly, things will not run smoothly at work just because we think we have assigned clear areas of responsibility. Teamwork is essential in the real world.”

Passing the Baton

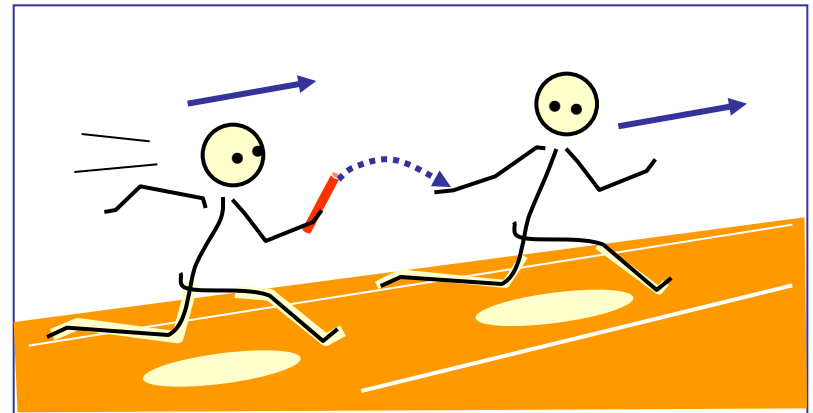
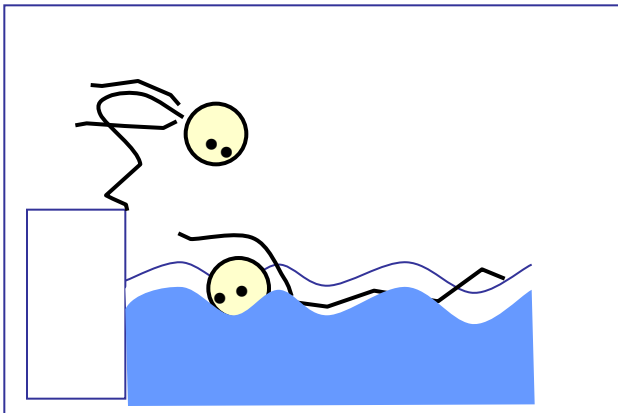
➤ Skill in Passing the Baton

“About the time I began work on the Toyota Production System, the Korean War was just coming to an end. Newspapers were calling the so-called 38th parallel a national tragedy for Korea. The same is true in work.”

Passing the Baton

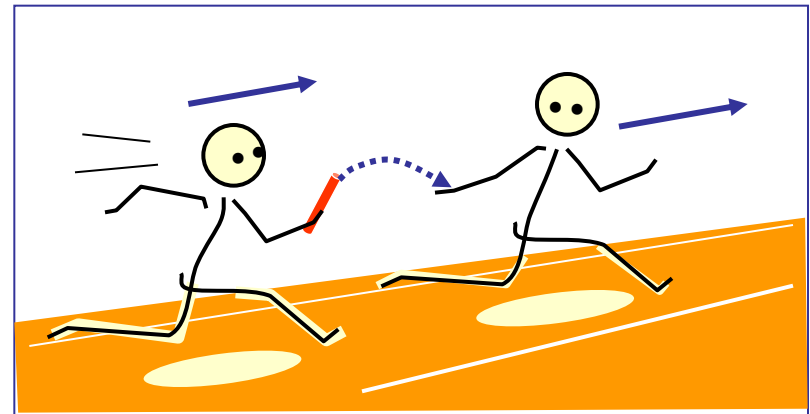
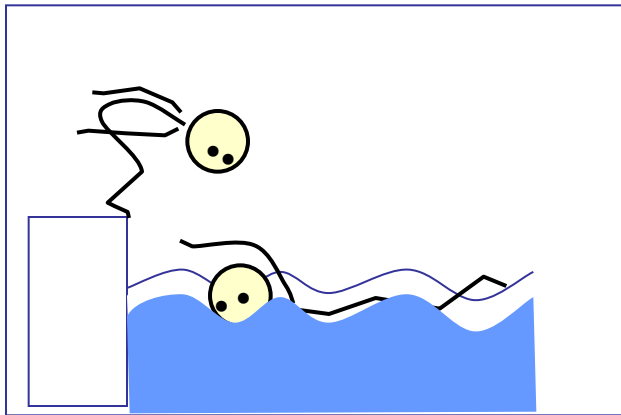
Be careful of “38th parallels” between work areas!

“Think of team work at the gemba like a track relay --- there is an area within which the baton may be passed. If the baton is passed well, the final result can be better than the individual times of the runners. In a swimming relay, a swimmer cannot dive before the previous swimmer’s hand touches the wall. In track, however, rules are different and a strong runner can make up for a weak runner. This is an interesting point.”



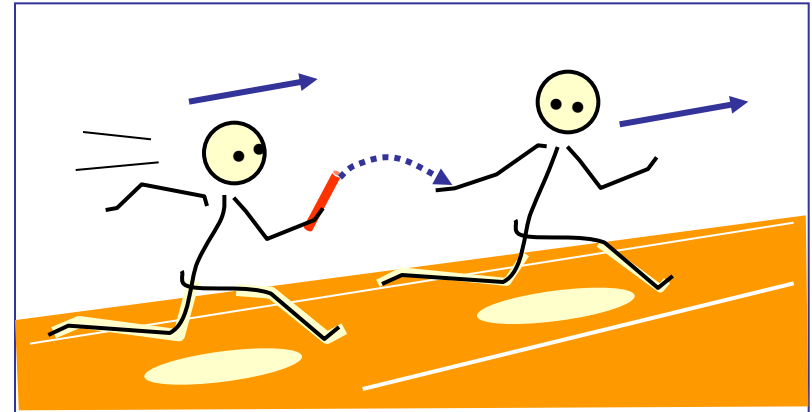
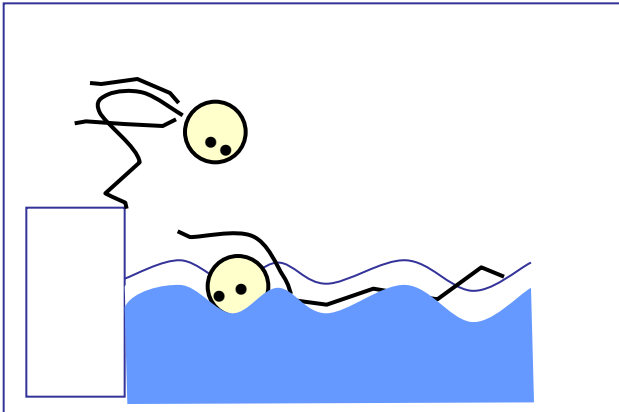
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“In a manufacturing job done by four or five people, the parts should be handed over as if they were batons. If an operator in a later process is delayed, others should help set up his or her machine. When the work flow returns to normal, everyone returns to their usual positions. I always tell workers they should be skillful in baton-passing.”



Passing the Baton

“In work and in sports, it is desirable for team members to work with equal strength. In actuality, this is not always the case, particularly with new employees who are unfamiliar with the work. At Toyota, we call the baton-passing system “Mutual Assistance”. It generates powerful teamwork.”



From *Toyota Production System*, Taiichi Ohno, page 24~

Passing the Baton

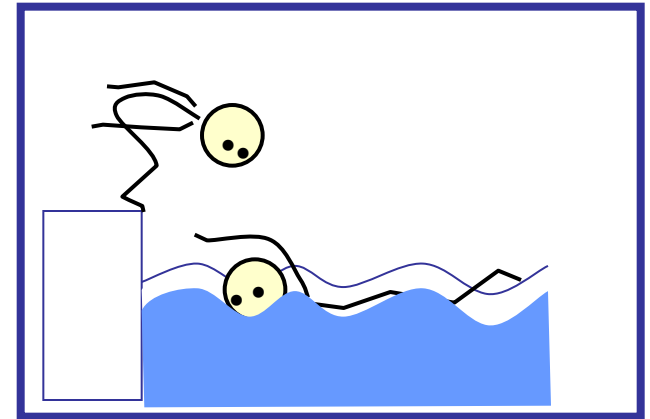
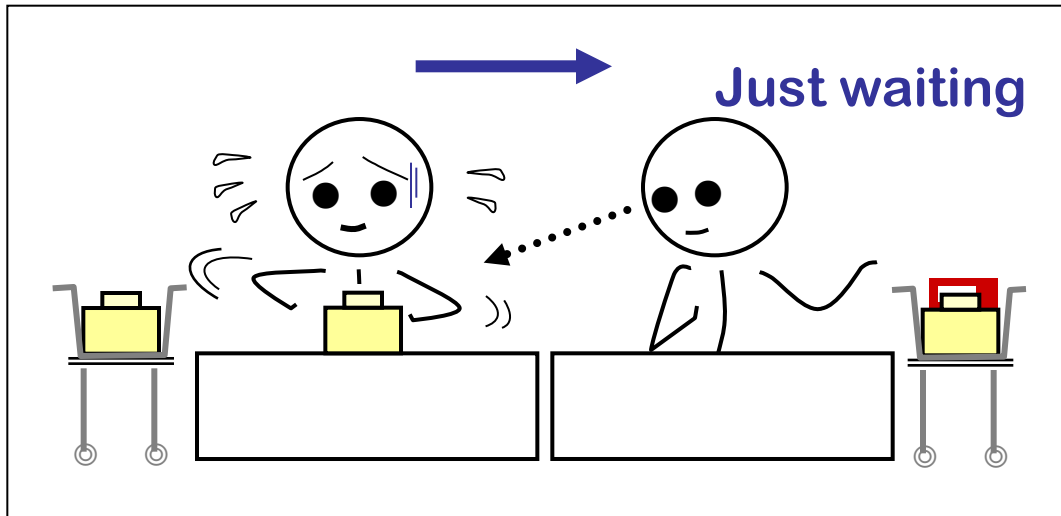
“I feel the most important point in common between sports and work is the continuing need for practice and training. It is easy to understand theory with the mind; the problem is to remember it with the body. The goal is to know and do instinctively. Having the spirit to endure the training is the first step on the road to winning.”

From *Toyota Production System*, Taiichi Ohno, page 24~

Mutual Assistance Teamwork

Production Line Example [Ou-ju-en Line]

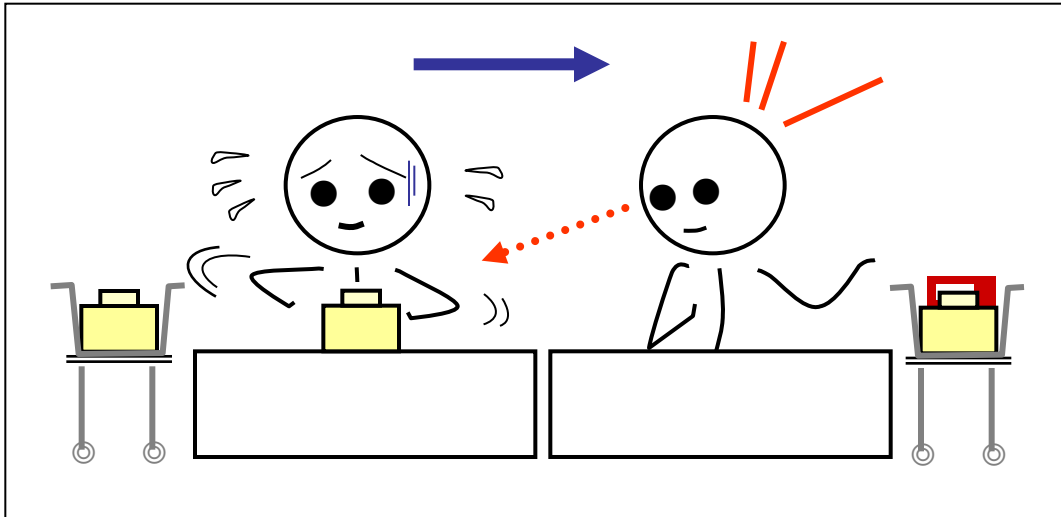
Before Mutual Assistance



Mutual Assistance Teamwork

Mutual Assistance Line [Ou-ju-en Line]

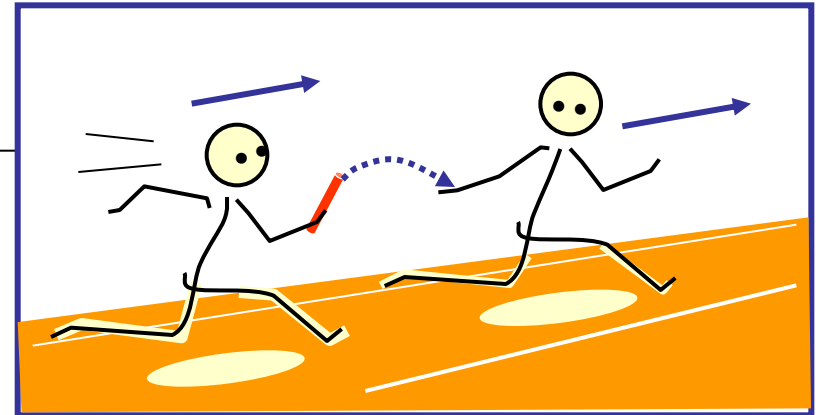
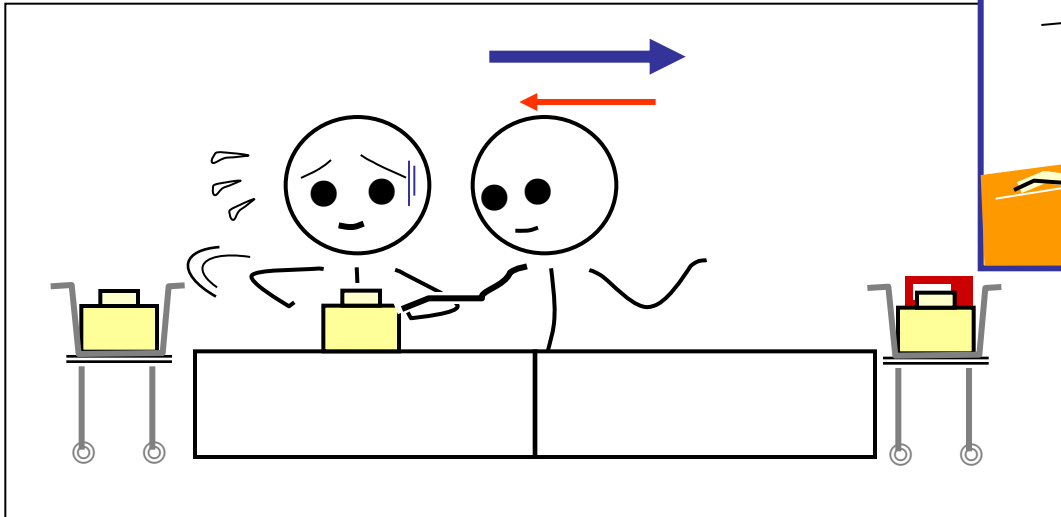
With Mutual Assistance



Mutual Assistance Teamwork

Mutual Assistance Line [Ou-ju-en Line]

With Mutual Assistance

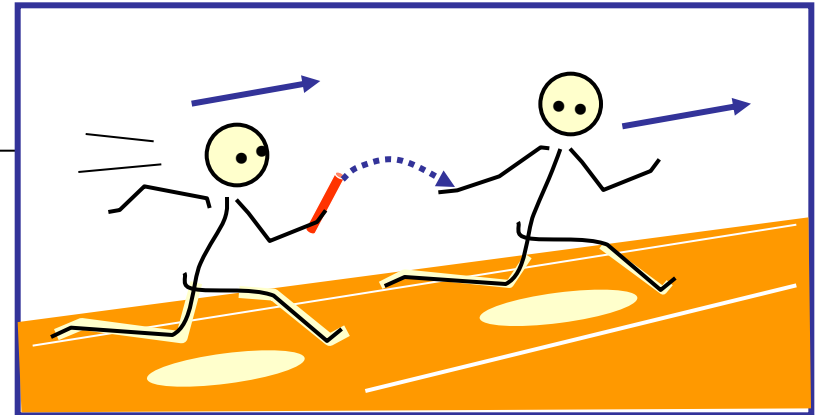
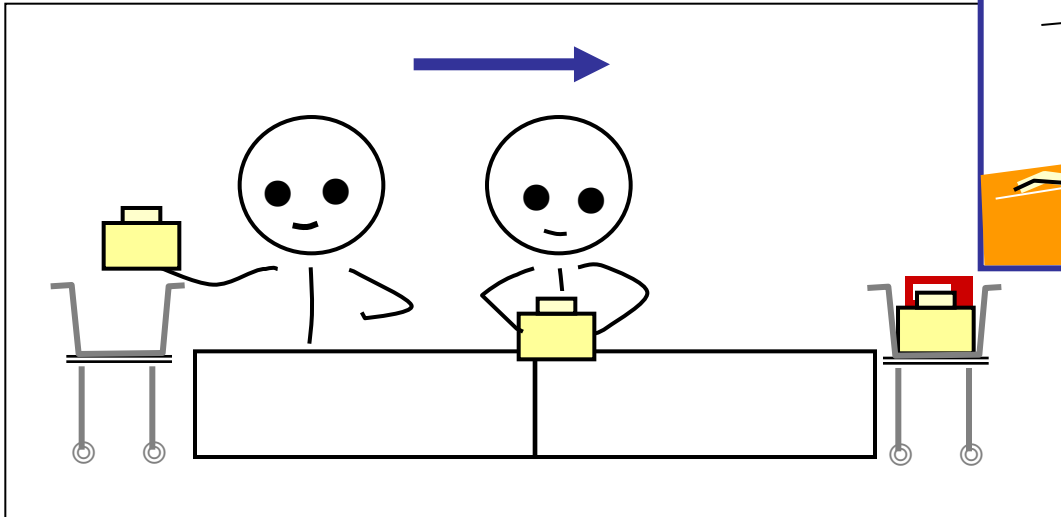


Mutual Assistance Teamwork



Mutual Assistance Line
[Ou-ju-en Line]

With Mutual Assistance

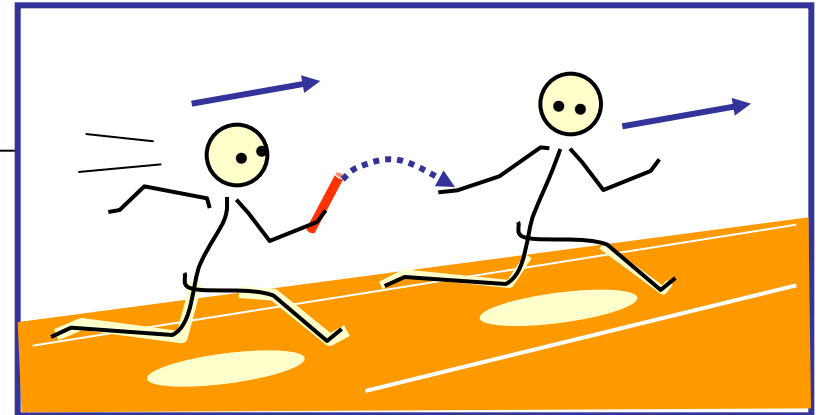
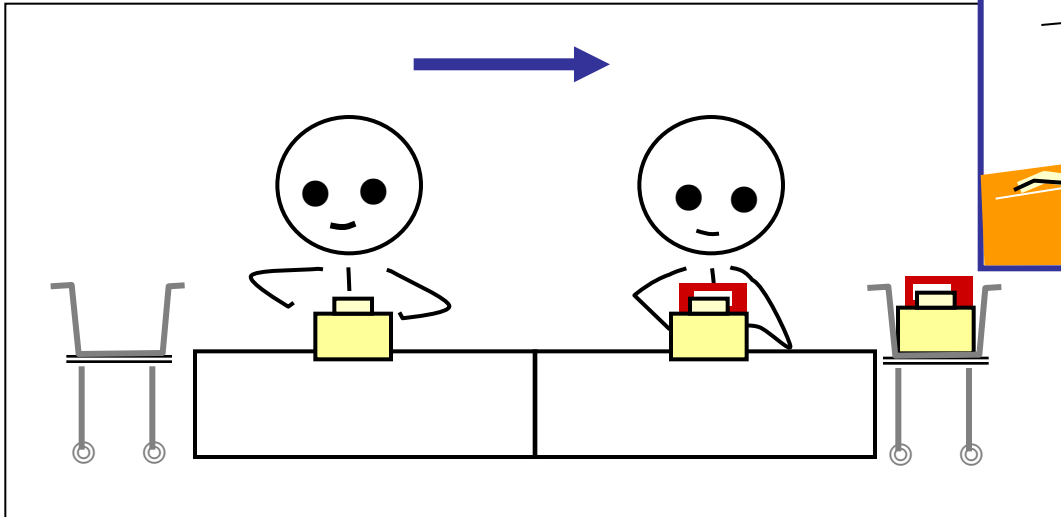


Mutual Assistance Teamwork



Mutual Assistance Line
[Ou-ju-en Line]

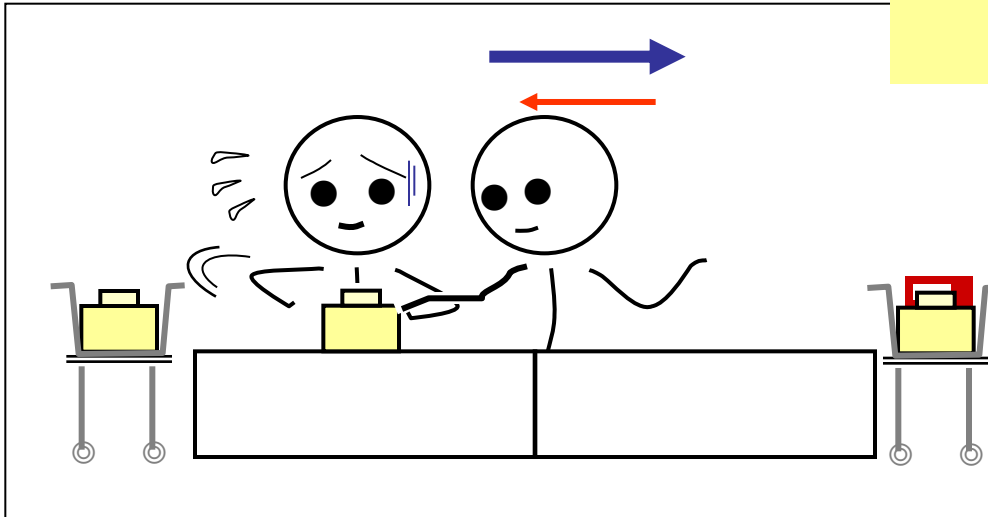
With Mutual Assistance



Mutual Assistance Teamwork

Mutual Assistance Line [Ou-ju-en Line]

With Mutual Assistance



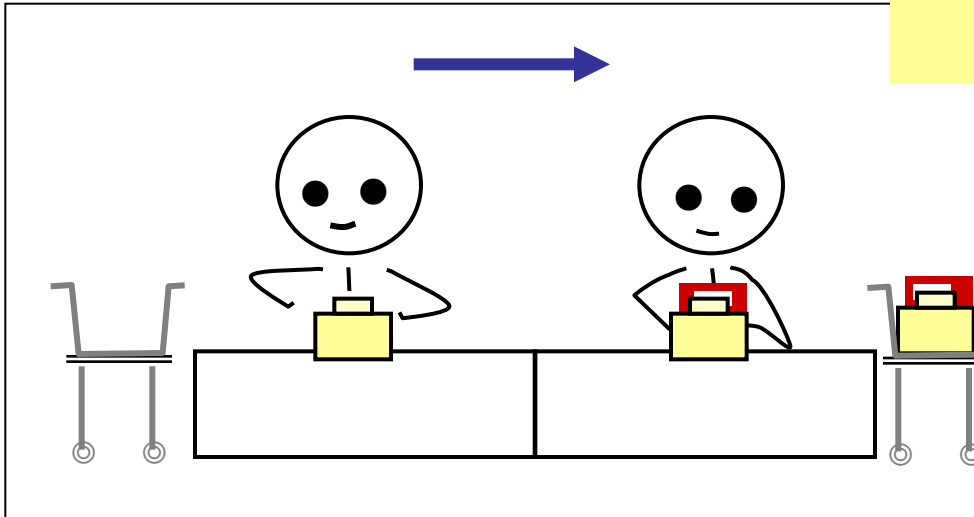
**However, we have
a dilemma.**

When defects occur at a mutual assistance gemba, it can become very hard to immediately identify who made them! Also, it can be difficult to see and improve imbalance.

Mutual Assistance Teamwork

Mutual Assistance Line [Ou-ju-en Line]

With Mutual Assistance



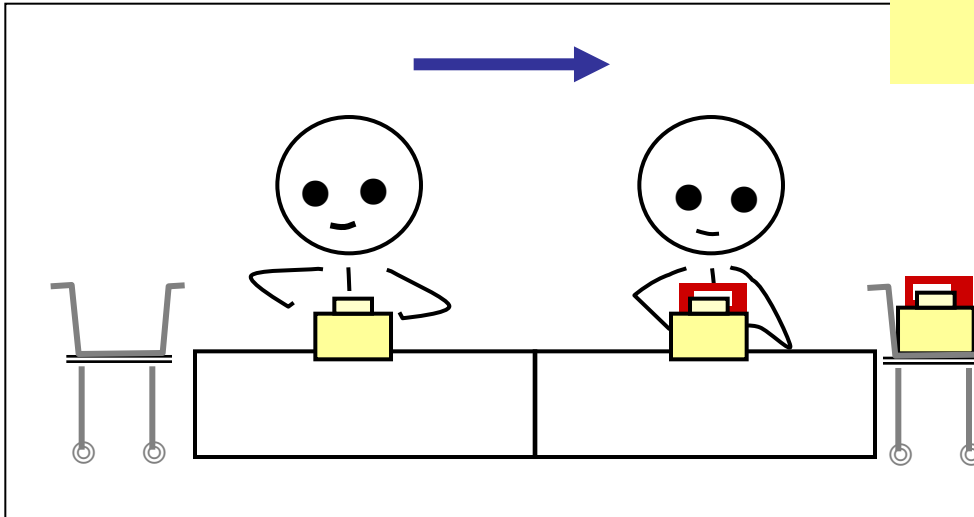
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Mutual Assistance Teamwork

Mutual Assistance Coordination Line [Ou-ju-en Line]

With Mutual Assistance



**However, we have
a dilemma.**

When defects occur at a mutual assistance gemba, it can become very hard to immediately identify who made them! Also, it can be difficult to see and improve imbalance.

So, some TPS sensei dislike mutual assistance operations. Others love it. How about you?