

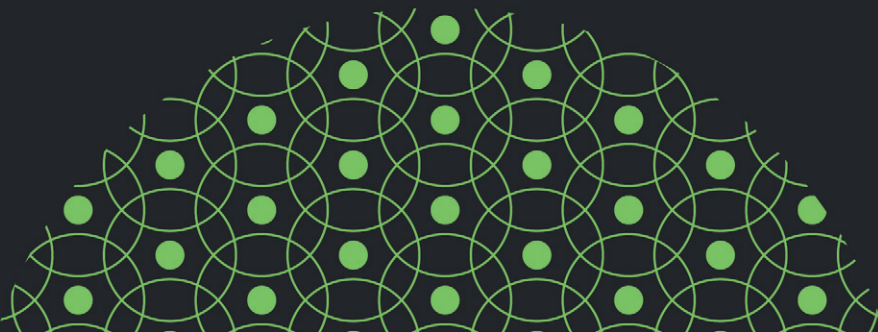


EMERALD POINTS

KAIZEN-21

The Philosophy of Continuous
Improvement and Operational
Innovation in the
New Global Environment

MANUEL F. SUÁREZ-BARRAZA, PhD



KAIZEN-21

This page intentionally left blank

KAIZEN-21

The Philosophy of Continuous
Improvement and Operational
Innovation in the New Global
Environment

BY

MANUEL F. SUÁREZ-BARRAZA

Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP), Mexico



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2023

Copyright © 2023 Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza.
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80455-845-4 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-80455-844-7 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-80455-846-1 (Epub)



ISOQAR
REGISTERED

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001

ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For my children Naia and Manuel Alejandro.

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	ix
<i>About the Authors</i>	xi
<i>Book's Structure</i>	xv
Introduction	1
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
1. KAIZEN and Its Origin in ZEN Buddhism and Shintoism	3
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
2. What Is KAIZEN? Definition, Characteristics, Guiding Principles, Techniques, and Tools	13
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
3. Guiding Principle 1. Basic Elements	25
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
4. Guiding Principle 2. Maintenance and Improvement	37
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
5. Guiding Principle 3. Process Approach	43
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
6. Guiding Principle 4. Focus on People	55
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
7. Guiding Principle 5. Improving Daily Work	83
<i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	
8. KAIZEN as a Driver of the Nippon Production System (NPS)	113
<i>Mario Alberto Del Valle Vélez and Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	

9. KAIZEN in the Development of People's Purpose (K'AAT-KAIZEN) <i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	119
Lessons Learned. Evolutionary Stages of Implementation of KAIZEN-XXI <i>Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza</i>	125
<i>Bibliographic References</i>	131
<i>Index</i>	141

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Chapter 1

Figure 1.	Note of the Return of the Leather Jacket.	8
-----------	---	---

Chapter 2

Figure 2.	Meaning of the KAIZEN <i>Kanjis</i> .	15
Figure 3.	Kaizen and Its Guiding Principles.	19

Chapter 3

Figure 4.	Example Picture of the 5'S.	30
Figure 5.	CS-1 SOP Example.	35

Chapter 4

Figure 6.	The SDCA and PDCA Kaizen Cycles.	38
Figure 7.	Miyauchi Integrated Cycle.	42

Chapter 5

Figure 8.	SISTOC System.	46
Figure 9.	Systems Diagram of a Case Study.	50
Figure 10.	Example of the Flow Chart With Actors of the Case Study and ANSI Symbols.	51

Chapter 6

Figure 11.	Example of Hiyari Reports.	60
Figure 12.	Comprehensive Training in Education and Training in Kaizen-XXI.	62
Figure 13.	Typology of Teams in the KAIZEN-XXI.	65
Figure 14.	Network of Improvement Teams in KAIZEN-XXI.	67

Chapter 7

Figure 15.	The Term Kata in Japan.	84
Figure 16.	5 Why Iceberg.	94
Figure 17.	Pareto Principle or 80–20 Principle.	99
Figure 18.	Example of a Frequency Table and Pareto Chart.	100
Figure 19.	Example of Ishikawa Diagram Applied in the Case Study.	104

Figure 20.	Example of an Improvement Action Plan.	105
Figure 21.	Example of A3 Executive Format.	110
Chapter 8		
Figure 22.	NPS Deployment.	114
Figure 23.	NPS Model Adapted.	116
Chapter 9		
Figure 24.	The K'AAT-KAIZEN Model.	121
Lessons Learned		
Figure 25.	Evolutionary Stages of KAIZEN-XXI Implementation.	127
Chapter 2		
Table 1.	Guiding Principles, Techniques, and Tools of KAIZEN-XXI.	21
Chapter 3		
Table 2.	Detailed Description of 5'S.	27
Chapter 5		
Table 3.	Description of Suárez Barraza's Process Innovation Methodology (2010).	47
Table 4.	Analysis of the Dry-finishing Operation Process.	53
Table 5.	KAIZEN-XXI Report of Process Innovation.	54
Chapter 6		
Table 6.	Comparison Between Natural Improvement Teams and Project KAIZEN Teams.	71
Table 7.	Sample Operating Rules and Performance Evaluation of a Natural Improvement Team Meeting.	76
Chapter 7		
Table 8.	Description of the Improvement Kata Methodology of Suárez-Barraza (2010b).	88
Table 9.	Example of Case Study Checklist.	97
Chapter 8		
Table 10.	Guiding Principles, Systems, Techniques and Tools of the NPS Model.	117

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Manuel Francisco Suárez Barraza,
PhD
World KAIZEN Expert
Research Professor
Sensei Level 1, JICA-ASEMEJA
Member of N.R.S. Level 2 (México)



Manuel F. Suárez Barraza holds a Doctorate (PhD) in Management Science from the Higher School of Business Administration and Management at ESADE Business School of the Ramón Llull University in Barcelona, Spain. He graduated Cum Laude. In 2022, he obtained an Emeritus PhD for the Doctoral International College and the UNAM. He has been a member of the National System of Researchers in Mexico, Level 2, since 2010. He has a Postgraduate Specialization in Total Quality Management (TQC) and Continuous Improvement of Productivity (KAIZEN) at Sophia University and the Central Industrial Association of Japan (CHU-SAN-REN) in Tokyo and Nagoya, Japan. He received training at Toyota Motor Company's Tsutsumi plant in Toyota City, Aichi Province, Japan. His professional experience of more than 10 years focused on collaborating with Bimbo (an international bread company) and Pemex Exploration and Production (a Mexican oil company). Furthermore, he has an undergraduate diploma in Biochemical Engineering (the best average grades in his generation).

He is currently the academic director of International Business at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP). He worked as a full-time professor at the Graduate School of Administration–EGADE Business

School of the Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM). Moreover, he has been a professor at the ITESM campuses in Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador, and a visiting professor at ESADE Business School in the Master of Operations Management in Barcelona, Spain, for seven years. Since 2019, he has been a visiting professor at the ICADE Business School of the Universidad Pontificia de Comillas in Madrid, Spain. He has taught at institutions such as the Barcelona Business School, ESERP Escuela de Negocios de Barcelona, Universidad Pompeu Fabra, Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, Barcelona Management Institute, Universidad de León in Spain, and Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco in Mexico.

He writes as a research professor in at least 50 articles in the international academic field in refereed journals, among which are as follows: *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (ISI Web of Science, SCOPUS), *Business Process Management Journal* (ISI Web of Science, SCOPUS), *TQM Journal* (ISI Web of Science, SCOPUS), *INNOVAR Journal of Administrative Science Magazine* (ISI Thomson Reuters RANKING), TQC and Business Excellence (ISI Thomson Reuters RANKING), and *TQM Journal* (indexed journal, C1, and C2). He authors 10 books on the subject of KAIZEN philosophy, some with more than 4,000 copies sold, such as the “KAIZEN philosophy of Panorama publishing house,” 2,000 copies of the “KAIZEN-GP of Porrúa,” 1,500 of “Process Innovation of Editorial Ágora,” 700 of “KAIZEN-Coaching,” and 500 of “My Meeting with the KAIZEN of Editorial UDLAP.” In 2021, he published his new book: “K’AAT-KAIZEN,” the Mayan–Japanese model that gives meaning to your daily life.

He is a member of the literary faculty of Emerald and a scientific editor of the *International Journal of Quality and Service Science* (ÚNICO MEXICANO) and *Innovar* of the University of Colombia, *Dyna Management* of Spain, and the *International Journal of Business and Research Management*. In addition, he is a member of the GRACO Research Group for Learning and Knowledge of ESADE in Barcelona. He is also a columnist in popular management magazines: *Expansión*, *chief executive officer (CEO) Expansión*, *Pyme Adminístrate Hoy*, *UDLAP Context*, *Hidalgo Business Link*, *CONTACTO*, and the *Total Quality Magazine*, including in print media: “La Jornada, El Sol de Puebla, and Milenio Diario.”

He won the first prize in the case writing competition of the EFMD of the European Union in the category of continuous improvement and innovation and journal of excellence, with the case “KAIZEN in Public Service: A case study in a public environmental organization in Mexico.” Finally, he has been an advisor and consultant to Mexican, Spanish, and South American companies in the field of manufacturing (distribution and production) and services,

such as hotels, restaurants, mechanical workshops, public government organizations, and city halls. He is also an advisor to the UN on issues of modernization of the public sector to reduce failures in public management.

Mario Alberto Del Valle Vélez, Industrial and Systems Engineer Graduated from the University of Monterrey (UDEM, 1995), TPS researcher focused on Japanese culture with postgraduate studies by the Agency of Japan International Cooperation (JICA, 1997), The Central Japan Industries Agency (CHUSAN REN, 1998), and by the Agency for the Development Industrial and Human Resource Administration of Japan (HIDA, 2015). Consultant with more than 20 years of experience implementing management systems based on the Japanese Kaizen Philosophy and the system of Toyota Production (TPS). He is currently President of Jidoka Consulting Group, which includes the companies Jidoka Technologies and Kaizen Innovation Center, being also President of ASEMEJA NORESTE Association of Former Mexico – Japan scholarship holders in Monterrey, Mexico and Vice President at ASEMEJA Central at the Federal level.

This page intentionally left blank

BOOK'S STRUCTURE

In the twenty-first century, amid the global pandemic, resource crises, wars that have paralyzed supply chains, and excessive stress on workers, companies are immersed in perhaps the greatest challenges of their last years. The KAIZEN-XXI can represent light in such operational darkness. In that sense, Masaki Imai placed the term KAIZEN in the world management arena with his book *KAIZEN: the Key to Japanese Competitive Advantage* in 1986. Since then, the managerial approach has been used in different organizations as a strategy for the continuous improvement of operations. In 2018, he addressed a KAIZEN Special Issue in *TQM Journal* (EMERALD) to observe the rise of KAIZEN in the academic field, resulting in 22 papers sent and 11 accepted, most of which attempted to consolidate the roots, definitions, and theoretical part of philosophy. Hence, KAIZEN continues to have strength in this new century in the business and academic fields. Therefore, the “KAIZEN-XXI” has as its central purpose, that is, *to establish a theoretical-practical guide for organizations to implement KAIZEN in their operational processes in the midst of a chaotic and complicated global environment such as that of the twenty-first century*. The guiding principles, techniques, and tools of “KAIZEN-XXI” are designed to put human beings at the center as a guiding axis of change and innovation. Moreover, although operation, productivity, and operational efficiency have improved, people are finding healthy work environments to be happy.

The book is comprised of nine chapters that start from the origins of KAIZEN to its definition, the theoretical-practical guide model of guiding principles, techniques and tools, and the application of each guiding principle with its technique and tools in the rest of the chapters. The book presents techniques, such as 5’S, standardization (*hyojunka*), Standardize-Do-Check-Act (SDCA), and Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles. The book also introduces process innovation, *bitosukuri* (management of people), to close with techniques for improving daily work, such as the KAIZEN events; the Kata of Improvement (the A3 format), to close with three chapters on links of

“KAIZEN-XXI” with the Toyota Production System (TPS); and the Mayan work model. This book is essential to help improve processes and people in the twenty-first century.

INTRODUCTION

Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza

INTRODUCTION

The theme of KAIZEN as an approach and philosophy of continuous improvement is still valid in the second decade of the twenty-first century. An example is the considerable papers that were presented at the Production Operation Management Conference POMS 2022 held online, including that to be held in Nara, Japan on the topic of KAIZEN. Quantitative empirical articles, case studies, qualitative studies, and even some theoretical ones continue to be presented. From another aspect, in the practical arena, in virtually every social network in the world, the term KAIZEN appears in different forms of training, seminars, conferences, and webinars. In simple terms, it is a concept that is still valid and widespread to this day.

Organizations are probably experiencing one of the most turbulent environments they could experience in recent years. The global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has resulted in COVID-19 pandemic, broken supply chains as a result of it, scarcity of resources, aggressive intense competition, and of course, very high levels of stress in among the employees of the organizations. Therefore, organizations try to work on improvement (KAIZEN) as a means to remedy the very complicated environment that exists today. The economist Keniichi Ohmae (1998) points out in his book: “*the mind of the strategist*” that the current world environment has radically changed to the extent that there are factors that impact organizations in the twenty-first century on a daily basis. Ohmae points out two specific ones: (1) technological development and the future world and (2) the emergence of new universal standards of consumption.

Therefore, the technological development presentations that emerged at the World Economic Forum in 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, showed advances in different scientific fields such as: (1) the FluXXion, a device that is capable of filtering bacteria from beer liquids without the need for pasteurization, preserving its original flavor at all times; (2) the CyberKnife Robotic Radiosurgery

System, a robot that painlessly removes cancers without open surgery using radiation; (3) Z-RAM, computational memory developed by the Swiss Federal Technological Institute that cuts the price of memories of this type in half, being the cheapest in the world; and finally, (4) Toyota Motor Individualized Transportation Corporation, a robot-shaped vehicle in which a person can be transported quickly, safely, and without polluting the environment, ergonomically adjusting to the driver's body. In 2022, the issue of artificial intelligence, current social networks (TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn among others), the Internet of Things, Industry 4.0 are deployed in all aspects of the life of companies and people.

The twenty-first century has already reached us; the organizations of this century are experiencing the greatest challenge in their knowing history. Therefore, the ability of your top managers, middle managers, supervisors, and employees to solve problems, and above all learn to improve creatively and at low cost, is critical in your management system. The pressures and stress that these people experience on a day-to-day basis to reduce operating costs becomes an "urgent" issue at all times in the reality of today's organizations (of the twenty-first century). The KAIZEN-XXI should represent a great "improvement capsule" of "medicine" not only at the organizational level, nor at the process level, but also at the individual level. This managerial approach should help all organizations of the twenty-first century to face all these current pressures and challenges with an improvement approach at the organizational level, at the process level, and above all at the individual level. Precisely, the name of the book: "KAIZEN-XXI" was thought with the purpose of creating this group of "improvement capsules" so that all organizations of this century with such a complicated environment apply in a systematic, continuous, participatory, and deep way, the KAIZEN philosophy.

This book aims to show the KAIZEN philosophy from the KAIZEN-XXI perspective in a systemic and structured way based on guiding principles that guide the orderly implementation of KAIZEN-XXI in organizations. Through this, academics and practitioner managers can have a theoretical, practical guide for applying KAIZEN-XXI in the management of organizations. Hence, I invite open-minded readers who delve into the KAIZEN-XXI philosophy and can apply KAIZEN-XXI in the management systems of their organizations.

Lancaster, United Kingdom, September 21, 2022

KAIZEN AND ITS ORIGIN IN ZEN BUDDHISM AND SHINTOISM

Manuel F. Suárez-Barraza

This chapter attempts to develop certain hypothetical lines of origin, supported in the literature, to explore the origin of KAIZEN from its perception of the values of Japanese culture and Shintoism, including its relationship with ZEN Buddhism. In this sense, Taichi Sakaiya (1995) questioned, “what is Japan?” and pointed out that the Japanese are more like a 1,000 synchronized clocks working around a life purpose (an *ikigai*). Each of these clocks looks and strikes at the same time, but each one is a machine that follows its own rhythm to improve. Based on Sakaiya’s statement, the following question arises: *where in Japan did this innate desire to improve originate?* The answer, of course, is complex and difficult to complete, and multiple factors may be considered to answer this question.

The reality is that tracing the origin of KAIZEN in the management literature is very difficult. Some authors argued that its origin rose from the influence of William Edward Deming and Joseph Juran’s seminars on Japanese businessmen in the 1950s (Imai, 1986; Ishikawa, 1988). By contrast, others placed its origin in the very roots of the evolution of Toyota Motor Company as an organization. Ohno (1978, p. 42), the founder of the Toyota Production System (TPS), noted that “improvement has two profiles: infinite and eternal.” Moreover, its success and its link with Toyota are similar to that in Japan, in that there is a clear trend for several organizations in any industry to try to implement KAIZEN in the same way that Toyota Motor has done over the years (Katayama & Bennet, 1996; Magee, 2007; Nikkei Sangyo Shimbun, 2007). However, going into more detail in texts published only in the Japanese language and by other authors specialized in the subject is necessary to glimpse that KAIZEN, as such, can be traced back to

the Japanese culture itself. In this sense, following AOTS (1985), Yoshikawa (1971), Takanaka (1995), Sakaiya (1995), Fujimoto (1997), Saruta (2006), and Saeko (2022), the values of the Japanese culture in which the possible origin of KAIZEN could be based are as follows:

- (1) *Honor*
- (2) *Discipline and perseverance*
- (3) *Teamwork*
- (4) *SHU-HA-RI principle*
- (5) *Responsibility toward others*

In Japan, *Honor* is intrinsically linked to “daily DNA,” which could be simply understood as the fulfillment of each person’s word, that is, the congruence by which they live. Thus, if someone says something, then he or she has to keep it. One particular anecdote I observed while living in Japan was that a fellow student asked one of our Japanese classmates for 1,000 ¥ (Yen) and told him, “tomorrow I will pay you.” As a good Mexican, he forgot, and passed it unnoticed. When they met again 2 weeks later, the Japanese classmate was quite offended because the Mexican student had not kept his word that he would pay “tomorrow.” In world-class Japanese organizations, deals and business deals are made by word of mouth, and contracts are subsequently signed (Sawada, 1995). Some authors placed this value of honor in the era of the Kondei system (unconditional youth young warriors recruited to confirm the Shogun’s Army) of the samurai class in Japan around 792 BC. Inspired by ZEN Buddhist philosophy and Shintoism,¹ the

1 In Japan, the first major religion to be adopted was Shintoism. Shinto can be translated as “The Path of the Gods.” Emerging at the dawn of the Japanese history, Shintoism has colored every aspect of the country’s emotional experience, conditioning its responses to nature, existence, death, community life, social organization, political ideology, festivals, and aesthetics. The term Shinto expresses the importance of the concept of kami within the tradition. The kami are the powers of nature and the forces of destiny. The relationship between kami and nature is already reflected in the introduction of the creation myth in the Nihongi: “Before heaven and earth were created, there was something comparable to a cloud floating on the sea. Nothing held its root. In its bosom was formed a thing that looked like a tender reed when it had just sprouted from the mud. Then it became a god (Kami)” (kami translates into God). Although the kami were not personalized forces or celestial figures who judged human affairs from on high, both men and women could seek their help or appease their wrath through rituals of diversion and purification. They were said to number eight million, but were, in reality, countless, forgiven that any person, living or dead, and any place or object with mysterious or transcendental qualities could be considered and venerated as a kami. They used to inhabit the skies, rocks, trees, waterfalls, or islands, and this included emperors and courtiers, warriors, and fearsome spirits (Falero, 2007).

samurai class, which had its heyday in the early seventeenth century (1,603) in the Tokugawa era, focused on a strict and upright code for their daily lives (Low, 1997). Their obsession with details and perfection was fundamental. According to Yoshikawa (1971) and Sakaiya (1995), the value of honor in Japanese culture began to merge as a tough and hard katana (Japanese samurai sword) within their daily actions.

The maximum splendor of the so-called bushido code was embodied in the so-called “Book of Five Rings,” written by Miyamoto Musashi in 1,645, a samurai without a feudal lord or “rebel” known as *ronin*, considering that a forced peace reigned in the Tokugawa era. In other words, samurai no longer had jobs. Moreover, although this book is considered a guide to the Japanese martial art of kendo, this document is an excellent fusion of the Confucianist and Shintoist philosophies (Low, 1997, p. 160). Its first principle is fundamental in linking the value of honor in Japanese society: “never think dishonestly.” In simple terms, you have to be an honorable person always and at every moment.

The following two values that show the foundation of KAIZEN are *Discipline* and *Consistency*. These two are closely linked values, which are the key to forging an honorable person centered on the new KAIZEN-XXI. For Miyamoto Musashi, a samurai had to train in a constant and disciplined manner until he achieved perfection with his main weapon: his katana (Japanese sword). In Japanese organizations, *discipline* is understood as the performance and follow-up of any activity in a systematic manner following a method as part of their daily routine (Saruta, 2006). Strict adherence to standard operating procedure (SOP) guarantees that any process and product are of the required quality. Therefore, consistency is to maintain that routine discipline day after day, minute after minute, and second after second. Only in this way, the quality of the work process and the product can be really maintained and eventually improved. Two excellent examples of these values in Japanese culture are reflected in the punctuality of bullet trains (the Shinkansen, in its three modalities, Nozomi, Hikari, and Kodama – generally the 700 series). If a train is supposed to depart at 12:23, it will leave at that time, not a minute more, not a minute less. It is surprising to see how the discipline of all those responsible for these operations sometimes leads to a difference of up to 15 minutes between the time a train leaves and arrives at the Tokyo station. Another characteristic example is the discipline and consistency of Toyota Motor Company employees at the Tsutsumi plant in conducting their improvement team meetings. That is, every week, or every 2 weeks, they take 30 minutes out of their lunch hour to conduct meetings. Both values represent a continuous daily rhythm of discipline and consistency.

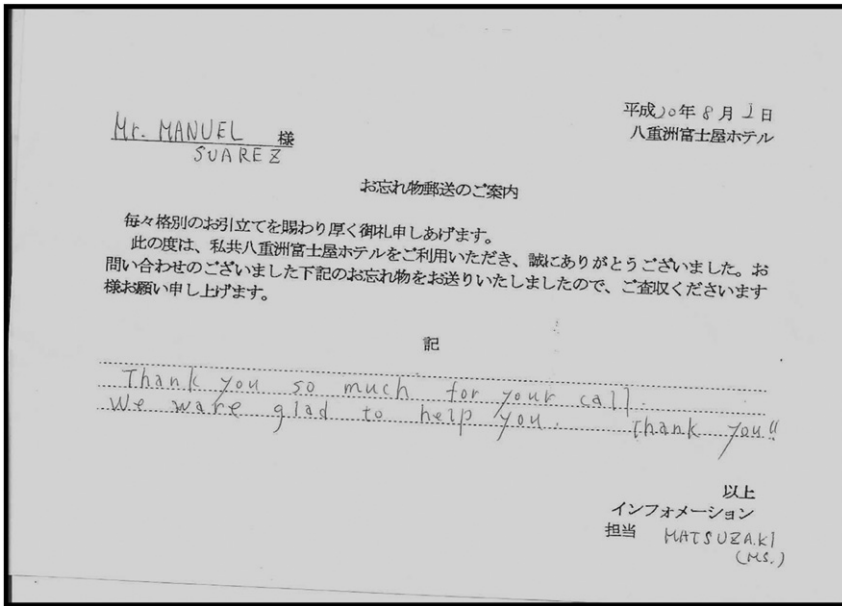
The third KAIZEN value analyzed is *Teamwork*, which is totally rooted in Japanese culture. According to Sakaiya (1995) and Fujimoto (1997), this value may have originated in rice cultivation, the basis of Japanese society. For these authors, planting, and cultivating rice, was a completely impossible task for one person during the Japanese feudal era. Hence, the union of the tribes around this work of agriculture and food outlined the value of teamwork in their culture. Today, teamwork seems to be lived and breathed intrinsically in Japanese society. The group is more important than the individual and goes beyond any individual initiative within its society (Saeko, 2022). Dr. Ishikawa used his strength and rootedness in Japanese culture in the 1960s to find and advance the quality circle movement, which to this day has produced a truly impressive number of improvement ideas in Japanese companies. According to Professor Bessant (2003, p. 24), companies like Kawasaki generate nearly 7 million improvement ideas, 10 per worker; Nissan, 6 million, 3 per worker; and Toshiba and Matsushita, 4 million. By contrast, according to Osono et al. (2008), the Toyota Motor Company comes to produce between 5 and 7 million ideas for improvement in groups and individually (the so-called KAIZEN TEIAN). According to Akiira Takanaka *sensei* (1995), the *SHU-HA-RI* (守破離) *principle* is the expanding force of Japanese cultural learning. *SHU* means “copy,” *HA*, means “adapt,” and *RI* means “create.” Thus, by copying, adapting, and creating, the Japanese take the best of other cultures and adapt them to their reality. Then once they have mastered it, the Japanese improve it to create their perspective. An example of these principles is the philosophy of quality itself. From the teachings of Deming and Juran, it was possible to forge what today is known as company-wide quality control (Martínez-Lorente, Dewhurst, & Dale, 1998). A century earlier, the Meiji reform brought several Japanese intellectuals visiting Western countries to modernize Japan, not to mention the TPS, which, according to some authors, arose from the ideas embodied in Henry Ford and the American supermarkets (Hino, 2006). Thus, the readers should not be surprised when a group of Japanese tourists takes pictures of such strange things (from our own point of view) as a traffic light, a building, some mechanical equipment, or anything else that catches their attention. In this sense, when workers are able to look at other ideas in other work processes or in other areas of the organization (*SHU*), adapt them to their operational reality (*HA*), and then innovate them (*RI*), we are in the presence of KAIZEN. Even Aikido in martial arts has similarities, as Endo Seishiro Shihan (2005) stated:

“It is known that, when we learn, or train in something, we go through the stages of SHU, HA, and RI. In SHU, we repeat the

forms, and discipline ourselves so that our bodies absorb the forms that our ancestors created. We remain true to these forms without deviation. Then, in the HA stage, once we have disciplined ourselves to acquire the forms and movements, we make innovations. In this process forms can be broken and discarded. Finally, in RI, we completely rid ourselves of the forms, open the door to creative technique, and come to a place where we act according to our heart/mind's desire, with no limits beyond the laws."

Finally, there is the value of RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD OTHERS. In Japan, the welfare of others is paramount and fundamental. In fact, Japanese children are taught from a very young age to respect others, to consider the feelings of others, and of course, to respect the community (AOTS, 1985; Sakaiya, 1995). In Japan, such terms are known as *Tatamae*, that is, in relationships with others, where one should always express safe, politically correct opinions that will not disrespect and hurt other people's feelings. In general, personal opinions *Honne* are kept to maintain such respect (AOTS, 1985). In this way, the approach to the customer, whether external or internal, and the master-apprentice relationship, takes place in a climate of trust and respect. In this case, community responsibility, that is, respect for others, is fundamental in their culture. In KAIZEN, achieving customer satisfaction is fundamental for improvement to be fully aligned with a simple approach: *adding value to the customer*.

In this regard and to exemplify this value, I would like to describe a short story that happened to me in Japan when I was again in the land of the rising sun in August 2008. When I was leaving one of the hotels in Tokyo located in front of the central station, I left my leather jacket in my room. I did not notice this incident until I was on the bullet train (Shinkansen) on my way to Kyoto. Hence, when I arrived at the hotel in Kyoto, I called the hotel in Tokyo where I had forgotten my leather jacket. To my surprise, they told me they were already aware and were just waiting for me to contact them. I then asked them to send my leather jacket to the new hotel in Tokyo, where I would be staying when I returned from Kyoto, this time, in the Shinjuku neighborhood, near Gakushuin University, where the lectures would be held. Without further ado, when I returned to Tokyo, I was pleasantly surprised that not only had they sent me the leather jacket to the new hotel but they had also sent it for dry cleaning, placed it in a plastic wrapper delicately adorned with a red ribbon, and left a note "*Thank you very much for your call, we were glad to help you. Thank you!*" (Fig. 1).



Source: By author.

Fig. 1. Note of the Return of the Leather Jacket.

Apart from thinking that the hotel had a management system based on service quality, the hotel manager and his collaborators were concerned about my case. They also put themselves in my shoes, that is, they considered how I would feel if I lost my leather jacket. This event, dear readers, is another intrinsic value of the KAIZEN philosophy: responsibility toward others.

In addition to the intrinsic values in Japanese culture and Japanese Shintoism, another perspective of the origin of KAIZEN-XXI has been projected to the present day, the famous ZEN Buddhism. An ambivalence of religious perspectives, ZEN Buddhism, and Shintoism is generally believed to exist in Japanese society in daily life, where each is influenced by Taoism and Confucianism (Coll, 2015). Therefore, the possibility of the origin of KAIZEN in ZEN Buddhism is possible and has begun to be studied by academia (Chiarini, Baccarani, & Mascherpa, 2018).

The term ZEN can be traced in Chinese (*Ch'an* equivalent to the term ZEN in Chinese) and Indian languages and refers to the process of meditation (Morton, 2004). According to D'Apollonio (2018), ZEN Buddhism is a branch of Chinese and Hindu Buddhism that focuses on meditation. Other authors indicated that ZEN Buddhism is the fusion and conceptual interrelation between Lao Tzu's Taoism (focuses on practicality) and Mahayana