

REFLECTION OF KAIZEN AS THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE JAPANESE NATION'S LIFE IN RIKUOU DRAMA

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Abstract

Japan is one of the most developed countries in Asia. Japanese people are also famous for their work ethic. In addition, Japanese people also have the characteristics of discipline, persistence, loyalty and hard work. With such characteristics, Japan has become a very developed country, and can be in line with other developed countries such as America and other European countries.

This paper also reviews the Japanese philosophy of life, one of which is the philosophy of kaizen. A philosophy that emphasizes continuous improvement and refinement is also carried out simply and gradually, until it finally reaches perfection.

In the Rikuou drama, the writer finds many kaizen philosophies that are highlighted and displayed in every scene of the episode, so the writer feels interested in putting it in the form of this scientific article.

Keywords: *Japan, characteristics, philosophy, kaizen*

Introduction

The Japanese are known as a strong nation, never give up on all his weaknesses, although the natural resources are not rich, but they are able to process it to the fullest with using their advanced technology

According to [1] After the second world war, the big Japanese companies set up three employment systems, The three systems are :

1. A lifelong employment system, meaning that the company does not terminate the employment relationship.
2. Age-based salary increase system, where the company increases the salary of its workers according to the age of the employee.
3. Trade unions organized by the company.

With these three systems, employees have high loyalty to the company because they feel like members of the company, besides that the Japanese are also famous for their people who have high discipline, hard workers and their loyalty to their environment, both in society and where they work. When they are already working, they will truly devote themselves to the company they work for, Rarely do employees change jobs many times. In addition to having the characteristics previously mentioned, Japanese people also have a lot of philosophy of life. one of their philosophies that made them successful is *Kaizen*.

Kaizen is continuous improvement and perfection. The improvements contained in *kaizen* are not drastic massive improvements and extremes carried out in a short time but small and simple repairs, but carried out continuously in the long term[2].

A. Kaizen

According to [1] *Kaizen* is continuous improvement, the key elements in *kaizen* are:

1. Quality

The highest quality is the quality that can pleasant and give pride to its customers when using that product.

2. Cost Reduction

With continuous improvement in the production process, it is hoped that high efficiency (cost reduction) can be obtained.

3. Shipping

High quality products and low prices will not make the company better if the products produced do not reach customers on time.

Kaizen philosophy assumes that our way of life such as work life or social life as well as domestic life should focus on continuous improvement efforts. Improvements in *kaizen* are small and gradually. The opposite of innovation, which is used in western management in general and is a major change through technological breakthroughs, management concepts, or cutting-edge production techniques, *Kaizen* is not dramatic and the *kaizen* process is implemented based on common sense and low cost. ensure gradually progress that pays off in the long term, So *kaizen* is a low-risk approach [3].

The concept of *kaizen* way of thinking is process-oriented, while the way of thinking of Western countries is more about results-oriented renewal [4]

B. Kaizen Reflection in Rikuou Drama

The drama *Rikuou* consists of 10 episodes, tells the story of a *Tabi* (traditional Japanese footwear made of cloth) company located in *Gyoda* city in *Saitama* prefecture. The reflection of *Kaizen* philosophy in this drama is found in episodes 1, 2,3,4,5,6, and 9.

Gyoda City used to be nicknamed the *Tabi* city because it is estimated that there are about 200 *tabi* companies in the city. 84 million pairs of *tabi* or about 80% of *tabi* produced comes from this city, but as time goes by and because of the times, Japanese people now rarely wear *tabi*,and the effect, there are fewer *tabi* companies in *Gyoda* City, there are many went bankrupt, only a small number that can be survive, one of them is a *tabi* company called *Kohaze*.

Table 1

KAIZEN PRINCIPLE	
EPISODE	KAIZEN PRINCIPLE
1	Tabi which was originally just a traditional footwear made of feet became a running shoe with a tabi model
2	Tabi running shoes became running shoes that protect the wearer from injury because they are light and thin
3	Tabi's running shoes then given the name RIKUOU, and tested on a marathon runner named Mogi Hiroto for further improvement.
4	The second version of RIKUOU was made with the help of a professional shoe repairer for athletes named Murano.
5	shoe repair rests on the sole
6	After the shoe body was repaired Kohaze decided that RIKUOU went on sale to the public

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The launch of the fifth version of Rikuou which became the beginning of the glory of the kohaze, the advantages of this fifth version in addition to the thin sole, the body is lighter than the previous one, also the stitching results are more perfect than the fourth version

Episode 1

Told by *Koichi Miyazawa* as the owner of the *Kohaze tabi* company which has been operating for more than 100 years. *Koichi Miyazawa* is the fourth generation successor of the *Kohaze* company which still maintaining and trying to survive to produce *tabi*.

Kohaze is on the verge of bankruptcy but *Miyazawa* as the owner and director doesn't want to give up, efforts to stay afloat he continues to do, until it occurred to him to try making running shoes. The idea of making running shoes came to his mind when he saw a marathon athlete named *Mogi Hiroto* get injured during a competition.

Finally he tried to make running shoes with a model like *tabi*, *Miyazawa* strive to change the image of the *tabi* as a traditional footwear into a *tabi* shaped like a running shoe. His business has the full support of his Son, *Daichi Miyazawa*, family and all of his employees who have worked with him for decades.

Episode 2

At the beginning of his business, various obstacles until rejection from consumers did not make him despair, or reduce his steps to realize his dream of producing running shoes that can prevent the wearer from getting injured. He keeps on fighting to survive the bankruptcy.

After going through various obstacles, finally *Miyazawa*, who is always supported by all his employees and *Sakamoto* from the bank, found parties who are willing to cooperate with him, namely *Iiyama*.

Iiyama is the one who has invented silkray as a raw material for making fine shoe soles. After repeatedly refusing to cooperate, *Iiyama* finally touched his heart because of *Miyazawa's* tenacity, until finally handing over the patent rights for Silkray itself to *Miyazawa*.

At the end of episode 2, the first version of the marathon running shoe was created, named *Rikuou*.

Episode 3

The first version of *Rikuou's* marathon running shoes was then tested on a marathon runner named *Mogi Hiroto* who had suffered an injury during the competition. *Miyazawa* tries to sponsor *Mogi Hiroto*, although at first it didn't get a good response from the athlete.

During the test, *Miyazawa* asked for feedback from *Mogi* for further improvement, and made sure that *Rikuou's* running shoes were safe for running. The feedback from *Mogi* is that the shoes are still not comfortable to wear for training so they cannot be used to compete, because the soles wear out quickly.

Episode 4

After receiving feedback and studying *Rikuou's* shortcomings, *Miyazawa* finally tried to correct his shortcomings, To make the second version of *Rikuou* running shoes *Miyazawa* got help from *Murano*. *Murano* is a shoe repairman who resigned

from the Atlantic shoe company which is very popular among marathon athletes. It is said that Atlantic company finally considers the *Kohaze* company as its rival.

Episode 5

In this episode, it tells how the repair of shoes rests on the sole, but after being tested again, it turns out that the next problem is the body of the shoe. The drawback is that when you wear it, it is less stable and makes your feet easily wobble.

Episode 6

After repairing the shoe body finally got the best result, both from the sole which is thin but strong because it is made of silkray, as well as the light body. so it was decided that *Rikuou's* running shoes went on sale to the public.

The response from the public did not meet expectations, so sales were not smooth, finally it was decided to temporarily only be used for marathon athletes.

Episode 9

In this ninth episode, the completion of the fourth version of *Rikuou*, namely the fifth version, the fifth version finally became the beginning of the glory of *Kohaze* with its *Rikuou* running shoes. The advantages of this fifth version other than the thin sole, the body is lighter than the previous one, also the stitching results are more perfect than the fourth version.

With the advantages it has, finally *Rikuou's* shoes brought athlete *Mogi Hiroto* to victory. He won first place in the Toyohashi International Marathon competition. With his victory, *Mogi Hiroto* felt indebted to *Miyazawa* and all the employees of *Kohaze* with his *Rikuou* shoes, so at the press conference he thanked the people of *Kohaze* who always supported him in times of trouble and joy, on that occasion he also promoted *Rikuou* shoes which are perfect for running shoes that can make the wearer feel comfortable because it is guaranteed to avoid foot injuries.

From the scenes throughout the story, it is reflected how the Japanese never give up quickly, are persistent, disciplined and always care about the comfort of their His *Kaizen* philosophy is also clearly reflected in episodes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 consumers. How *Rikuou* shoes began to be made several times underwent minor repairs which eventually led *Rikuou* to become a shoe that was be sought after by consumers.

Conclusion

From this *Rikuou* drama we can see the characteristics of Japanese people. Japanese people who are persistent, hardworking, loyal, and never give up.

The philosophy of *kaizen* is very clearly reflected in Improvements on a small and simple scale but carried out gradually and continuously this drama.

The collaboration that is reflected in this drama is also a prototype of Japanese people who attach great importance to the spirit of togetherness in completing work.

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