Abstract

Throughout its history, the Japanese strategy for adopting foreign values, ideas, arts and technology can be summarized as *Wakon-Kansai* 和魂漢才 ‘Japanese spirit, Chinese learning’ and *Wakon- Yosai* 和魂洋才 ‘Japanese spirit, Western learning’. To run the risk of oversimplification, this strategy still seems alive and strong in the era of globalization. Many Japanese values have been tested in the international scene. The most well-known cases are Japan’s modernization, colonialism and militarism in the prewar period, and Japanese management style and business practice in the postwar period. This strategy might give a clue to a still-touted question as to why, in 1945, the Japanese surrendered to and accepted many American values and systems without much resistance; it helped the Japanese to believe that they would be able to maintain traditional values and spirit, even if they adopted western values and systems. We can observe a stark contrast in the current conflict between Iraq and the U.S.A. Most Islamic nations seem to feel that they will lose their identity if they adopt North American values. It is well known that the Japanese approach has been one of being immersed in new values, knowledge and skills first, to mitigate the differences between the Japanese values and the imported values, and to improve upon them. As the pendulum swings back and forth, Japan has maintained a balance between Japanese and non-Japanese values. The question, however, is whether or not this is still a viable strategy in the era of globalization. In the area of pop culture, such as *anime*, this seems to be working very well. Hayao Miyazaki’s宮崎駿great success is indeed indicative of this. In business practice, concepts such as *kaizen* have influenced industries worldwide. In this paper, this tradition will be re-examined in the context of globalization through the work of various people, including Inazo Nitobe 新渡戸稲造and Kanzo Uchimura 内村鑑三. Efforts to express and explain Japanese ideas to other nations are essential in the global village. In this area, the following people are well known: Tenshin Okakura岡倉天心, Shuzo Kuki九鬼周造, Daisetsu Suzuki鈴木大拙. The new emerging approach to overcome some of the limitations of *Wakon-Yosai* 和魂洋才can be coined as *Wakon-Wasai* 和魂和才 ‘Japanese spirit with Japanese learning’. This tradition, however, has roots in Japanese history as the antithesis of *Wakon-Kansai* and *Wakon-Yosai*. This paper discusses its significance as the catalyst for Japan’s juggling act between globalization and localization.