

Abstract Drawing on the author’s professional experience working inside a Japanese company, the essay examines the cultural construction of managerial responsibility in Japan, and explores the tensions between Eastern and Western notions of responsibility in the Japanese workplace. The author proposes two idioms that shape local notions of responsibility as “webs of engagement.” Based on the Japanese concepts *ba* and *kokoro*, these idioms suggest significant departures from Western notions of workplace corporate social responsibility. Since much of the literature on CSR focuses on Western countries and examines the more public, corporate aspects of CSR, the article is meant as a contribution to a better understanding of managerial responsibility in an Asian context, and more generally of the relationship between culture and responsibility. Theoretically, the article draws on works in interpretive and symbolic anthropology, anthropological writing on Japanese culture and society, and cross-cultural CSR research.

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