

Hassojitz

**Sojitz – A General Trading Company
The Pioneers who Paved the Future
of Japan**

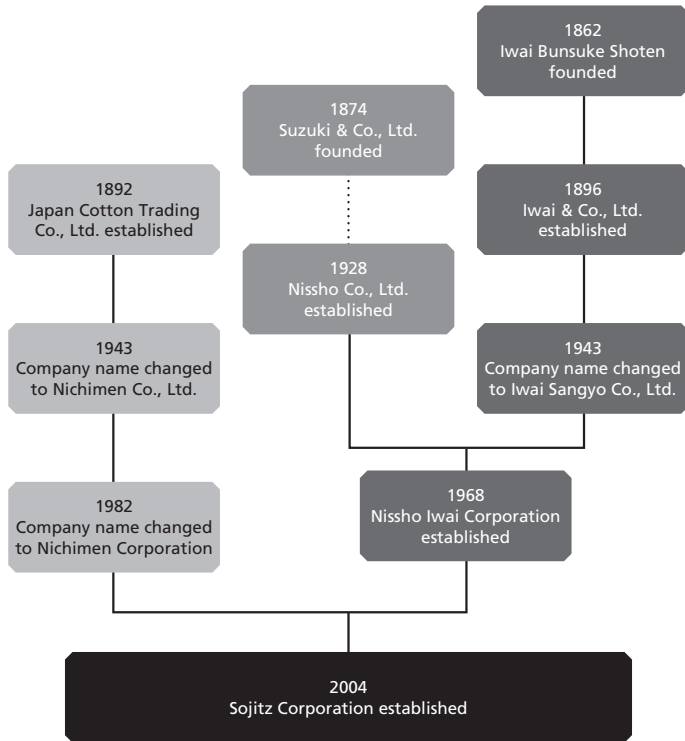


Volume
3

Taking
Flight

 **sojitz**
New way, New value

Sojitz's Lineage



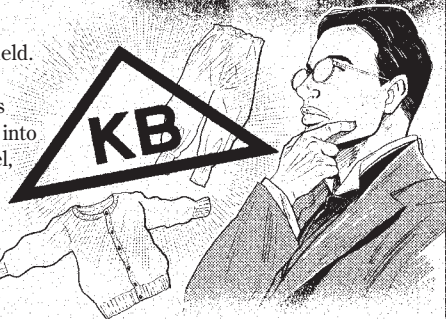
This historical account is based on archived materials from the companies and organizations involved. While Sojitz strives for historical accuracy, certain expressions and depictions have been adapted for the manga. In addition, character dialogue is fundamentally based on historic quotes, but also includes conjecture.



Suzuki & Co. builds a new industrial park in Dairi, Kitakyushu. The company begins manufacturing sugar, wheat, beer, and shochu.

Iwai & Co. enters the knitwear manufacturing field.

The government-run Yahata Steel Works begins operations, which propels both Suzuki and Iwai into the steel industry. Suzuki establishes Kobe Steel, while Iwai takes on management of the galvanized steel sheet through Zinc Co., Ltd.



At the same time, Japan Cotton Trading was expanding its locations to include branches in India and China as well as to the U.S., which was the world's largest producer of cotton.

In addition to procuring raw materials from around the world, Japan Cotton begins exporting cotton cloth as part of its accelerated entrance into the global market.

Japan's industrial revolution was gradually progressing until...





A major event shook the world.
In 1914, WWI breaks out and jolts
Japan's industrial economy.

Would there be an economic boom or
collapse?
What actions would Sojitz's
predecessor companies take when
faced with these obstacles?

Japan's Industrial Revolution would
make rapid strides forward...!

sojitz
Hassojitz

発想 × sojitz

Chapter 1

Japan Cotton Trading Co., Ltd.

Outbreak of war, decline of the spinning industry, and Matazo Kita's future predictions



Headquarters of Japan Cotton Trading

June 1914
Matazo
Kita
returned
to Japan
after a year
of traveling
around the
world.

It's been a
while, but Japan
Cotton Trading's
business seems
to be booming
more than ever.



I did. It's rare
enough to see a
director in his 30s,
but I'm shocked
he's traveled
around the world
to boot.

Have you
heard?
Mr. Kita is
back.



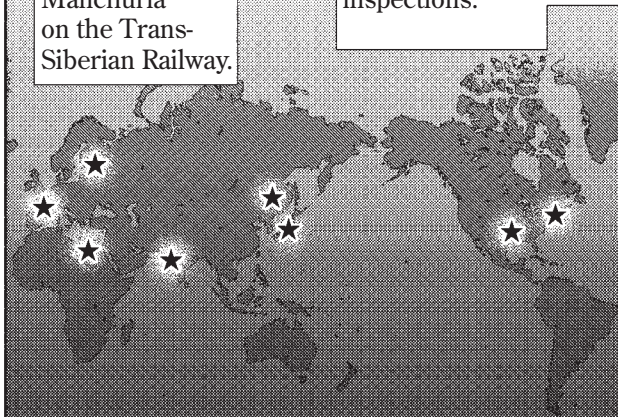
What
story?

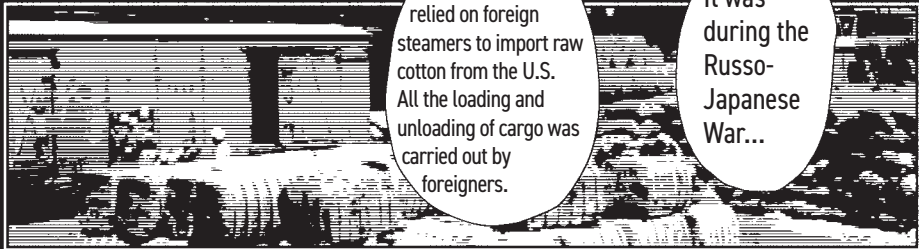
Have you
heard
the story
about Mr.
Kita?

Maybe
you never
heard.

Kita explored
Egypt, Italy,
Switzerland,
France, Great
Britain, and
Germany. He
then returned
to Osaka via
Manchuria
on the Trans-
Siberian Railway.

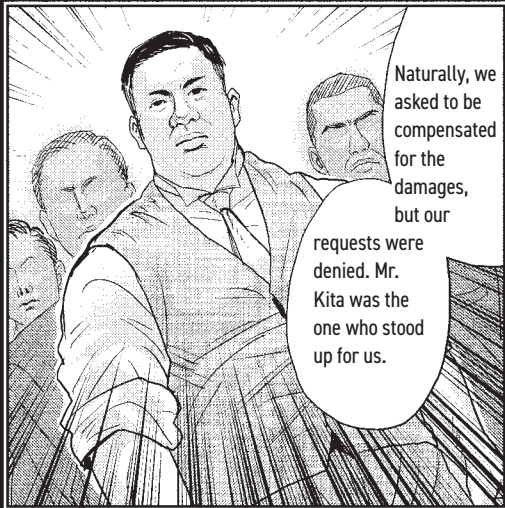
Last August, Kita worked
in the U.S. in Fort Worth,
Texas. From there, he visited
New York and traveled
through Europe and India to
carry out a series of intensive
inspections.



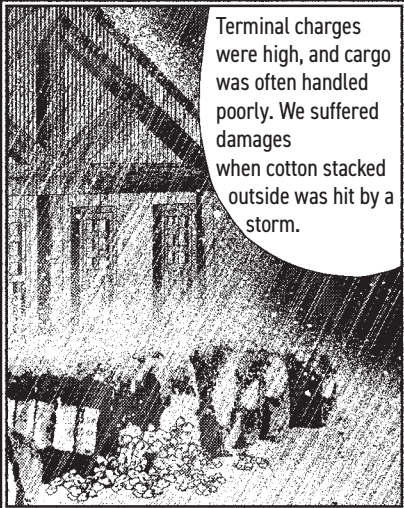


At the time, Japan relied on foreign steamers to import raw cotton from the U.S. All the loading and unloading of cargo was carried out by foreigners.

It was during the Russo-Japanese War...

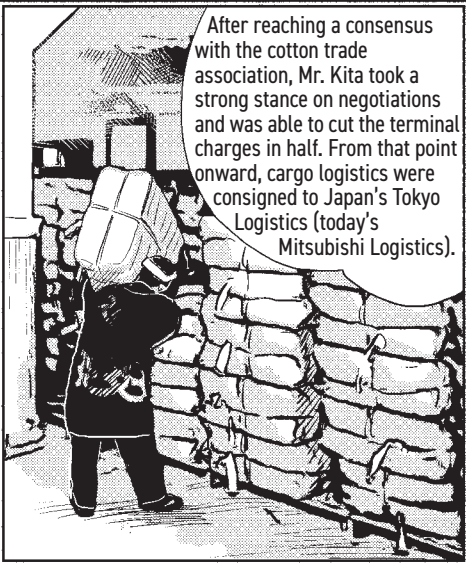
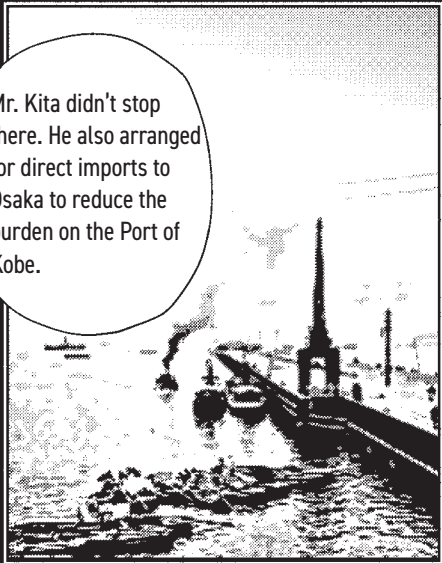


Naturally, we asked to be compensated for the damages, but our requests were denied. Mr. Kita was the one who stood up for us.

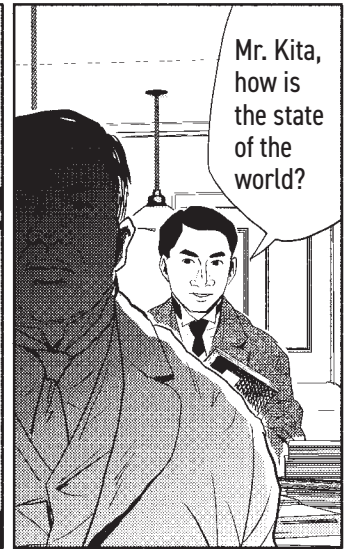
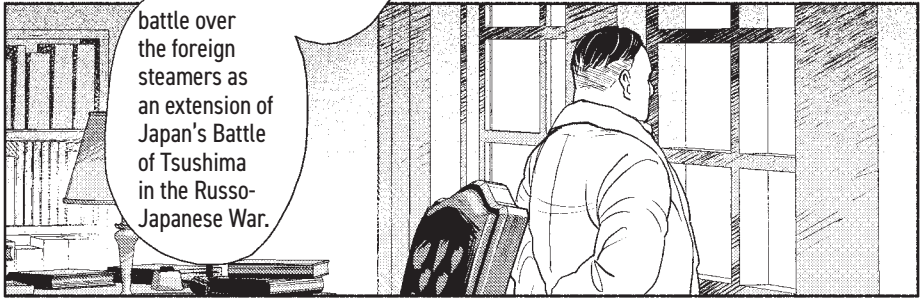


Terminal charges were high, and cargo was often handled poorly. We suffered damages when cotton stacked outside was hit by a storm.

Mr. Kita didn't stop there. He also arranged for direct imports to Osaka to reduce the burden on the Port of Kobe.



After reaching a consensus with the cotton trade association, Mr. Kita took a strong stance on negotiations and was able to cut the terminal charges in half. From that point onward, cargo logistics were consigned to Japan's Tokyo Logistics (today's Mitsubishi Logistics).

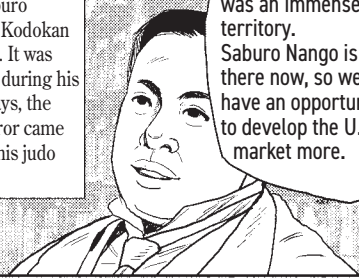


Saburo Nango went on to marry the daughter of the late Ichibei Tanaka (the former president of Japan Cotton Trading) and crossed the ocean to the U.S.

Saburo Nango was related to the founder of judo, Jigoro Kano. From the time he was eight years old, Saburo trained at the Kodokan Judo Institute. It was rumored that during his Gakushuin days, the Taisho Emperor came to see one of his judo matches.

In any case, the U.S. was an immense territory. Saburo Nango is there now, so we also have an opportunity to develop the U.S. market more.

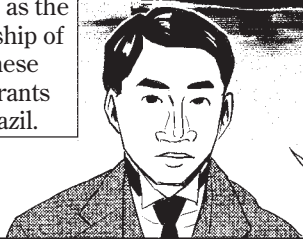
Mr. Nango's samurai spirit will surely hold sway in the U.S.



In 1908, the Kasato Maru departed Kobe as the first ship of Japanese emigrants to Brazil.



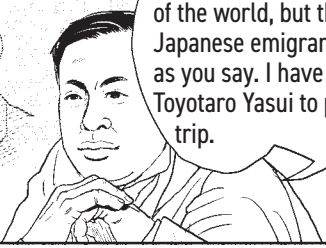
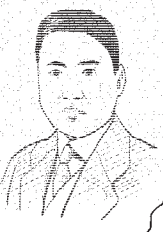
South America makes reminds me of the Brazilian immigrants...



Actually, there are some regions Japan hasn't explored...

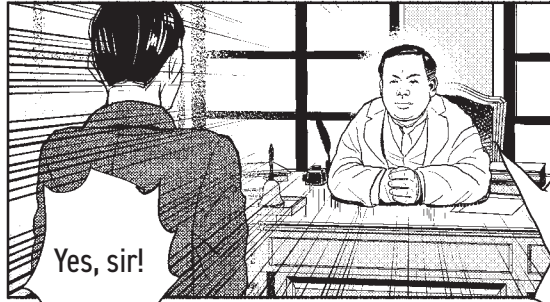
What are your thoughts on Africa and South America?

Brazil is on the other side of the world, but there are Japanese emigrants there as you say. I have asked Toyotaro Yasui to plan a trip.



For exports, we'll go beyond cotton yarn and add cotton cloth. Let's also expand our business in China. We're a top importer of cotton, but from now on we must focus on building our presence as an exporter. Let's increase the lineup of products we handle.

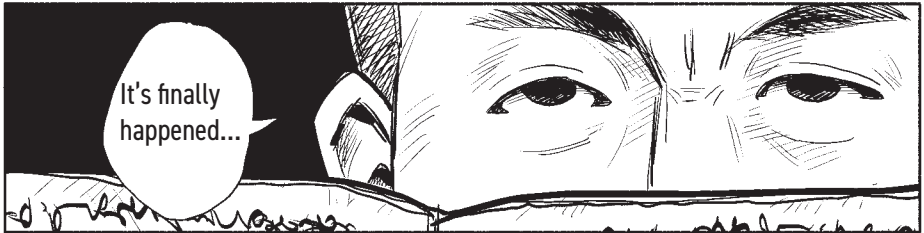
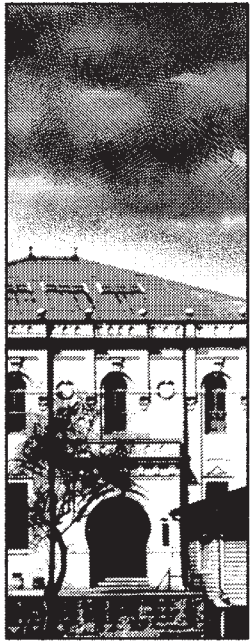
Yes, sir!



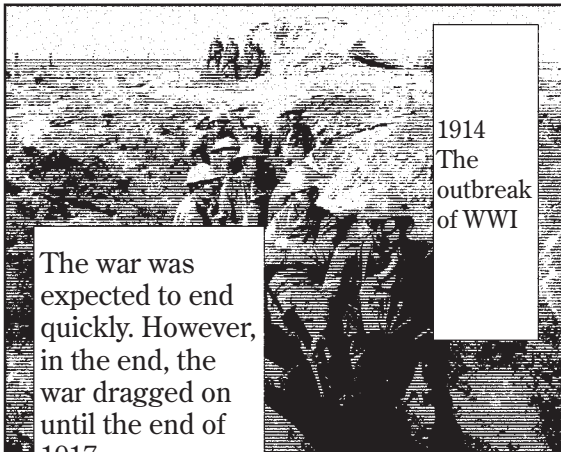


I got the feeling in Europe that a conflict would break out shortly....

Bad news! Europe's at war!



It's finally happened...



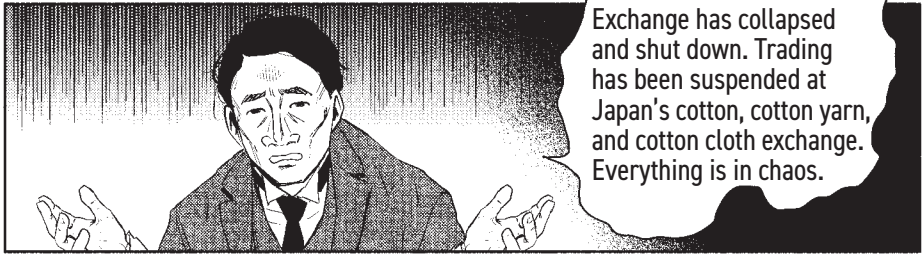
1914
The outbreak of WWI

The war was expected to end quickly. However, in the end, the war dragged on until the end of 1917.

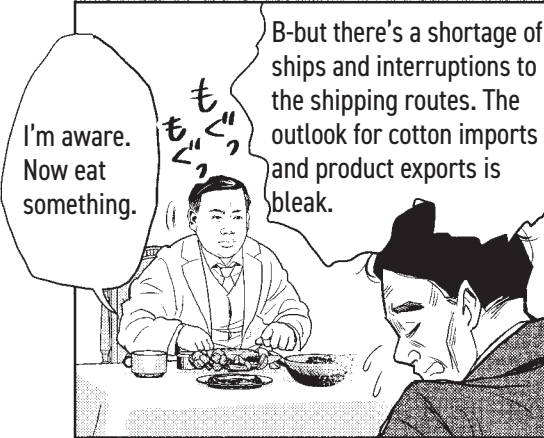


What should we do, Mr. Kita?

Calm down. First, we'll gather more information. This war will impact Japan.



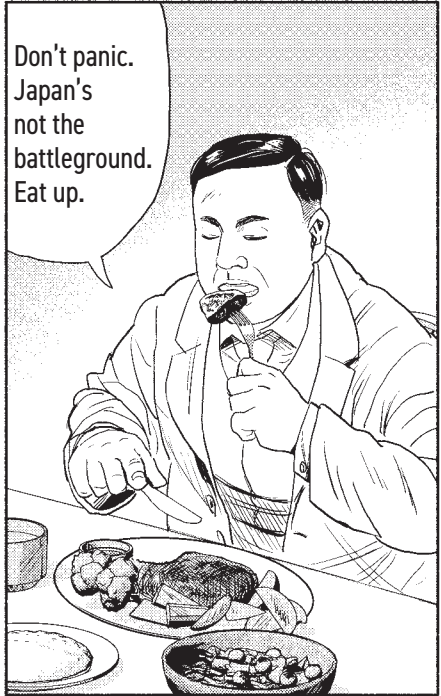
The New York Cotton Exchange has collapsed and shut down. Trading has been suspended at Japan's cotton, cotton yarn, and cotton cloth exchange. Everything is in chaos.



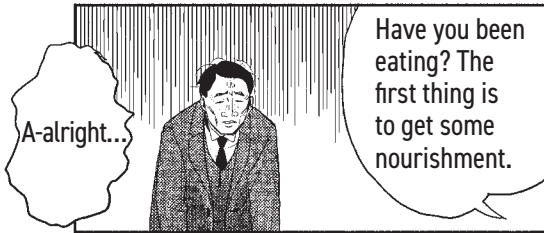
I'm aware. Now eat something.

もぐもぐ

B-but there's a shortage of ships and interruptions to the shipping routes. The outlook for cotton imports and product exports is bleak.

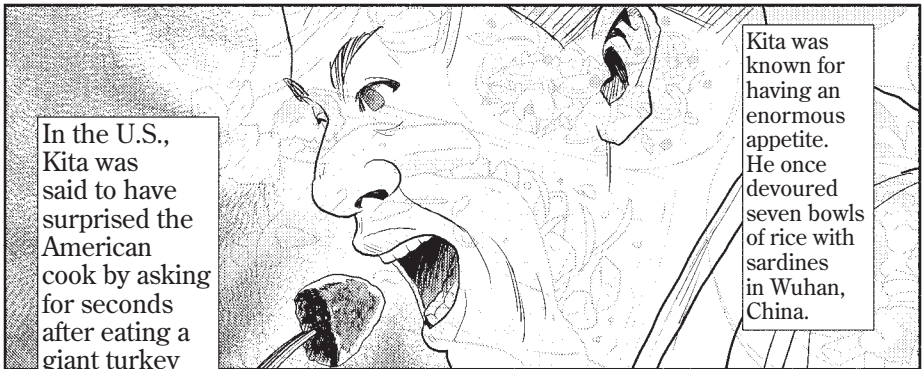


Don't panic. Japan's not the battleground. Eat up.



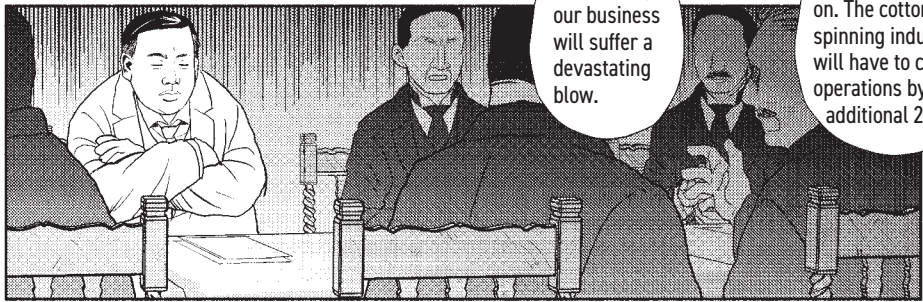
A-alright...

Have you been eating? The first thing is to get some nourishment.



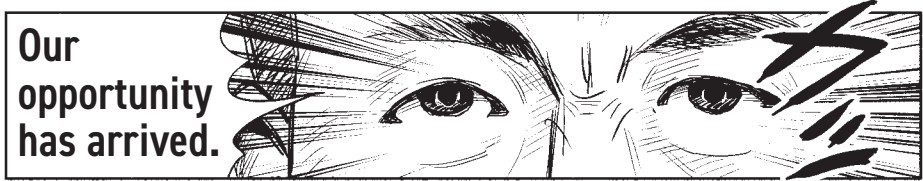
In the U.S., Kita was said to have surprised the American cook by asking for seconds after eating a giant turkey thigh.

Kita was known for having an enormous appetite. He once devoured seven bowls of rice with sardines in Wuhan, China.

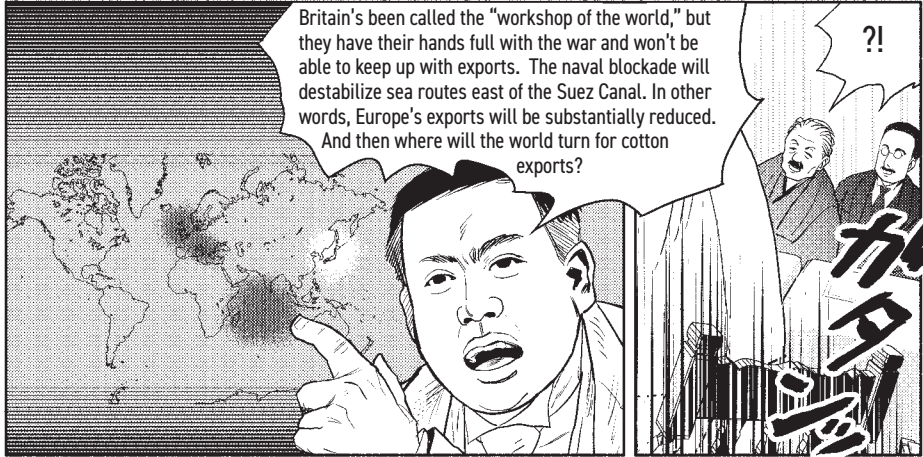


At this rate, our business will suffer a devastating blow.

The war in Europe's dragging on. The cotton spinning industry will have to cut back operations by an additional 20%.



Our opportunity has arrived.



Britain's been called the "workshop of the world," but they have their hands full with the war and won't be able to keep up with exports. The naval blockade will destabilize sea routes east of the Suez Canal. In other words, Europe's exports will be substantially reduced. And then where will the world turn for cotton exports?



Just what you'd expect from a man who's traveled the globe. You've become worldly.

President Shikata, please prepare to increase capital for Japan Cotton Trading's business expansion. This will be a giant leap forward for Japan.

...That makes sense.

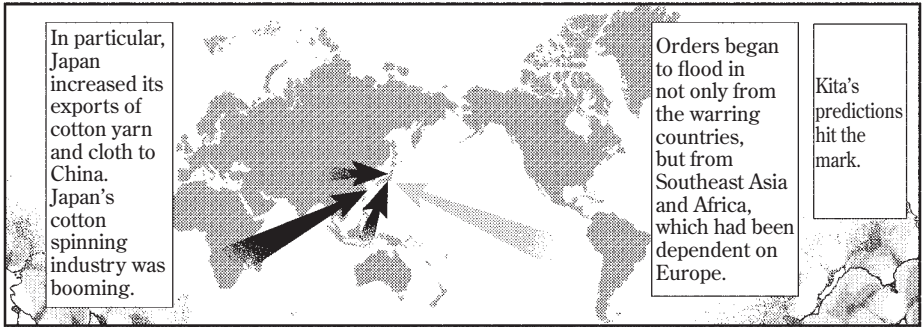
It's no wonder that Mr. Sanji Muto of Kanebo and Mr. Seiji Miyajima of Nishinbou speak so highly of you.

We would never have had your foresight...



Yes!

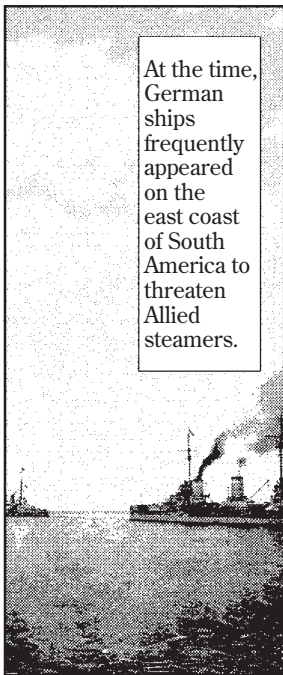
We must be able to take on a high volume of orders. Direct all our regional expatriate employees to prepare for procurement! The orders will start pouring in. When they do, be sure you can handle any request!



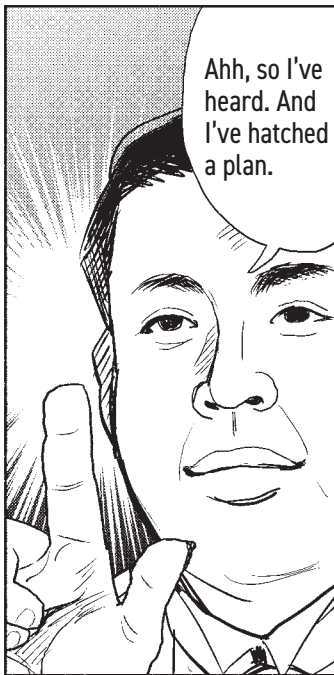
In particular, Japan increased its exports of cotton yarn and cloth to China. Japan's cotton spinning industry was booming.

Orders began to flood in not only from the warring countries, but from Southeast Asia and Africa, which had been dependent on Europe.

Kita's predictions hit the mark.



At the time, German ships frequently appeared on the east coast of South America to threaten Allied steamers.



Ahh, so I've heard. And I've hatched a plan.



In 1915, Kita formulated a secret plan.

Mr. Kita - Wool exports from the British colony of Australia have been banned and wool companies are in trouble.

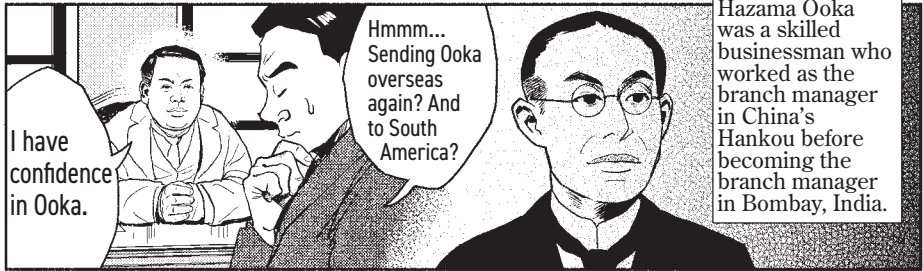


Argentina?!
That's
in South
America!



Kita's field
of vision
extended
to the other
side of the
world.

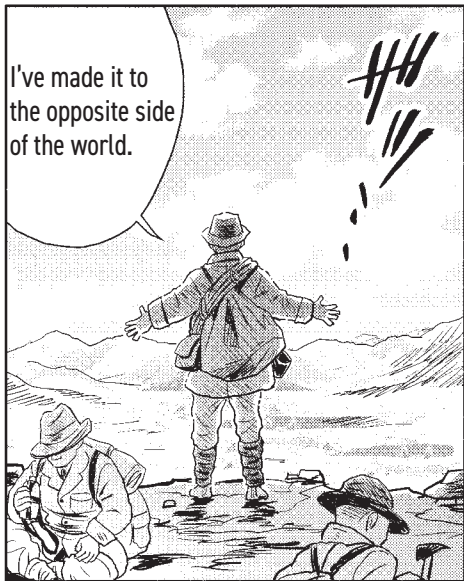
Send a telegram to
Hazama Ooka right
away. We'll have Ooka
go to Argentina.



I have
confidence
in Ooka.

Hmmm...
Sending Ooka
overseas
again? And
to South
America?

Hazama Ooka
was a skilled
businessman who
worked as the
branch manager
in China's
Hankou before
becoming the
branch manager
in Bombay, India.

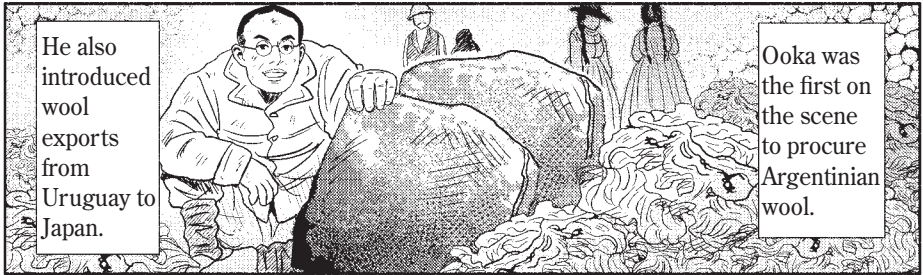
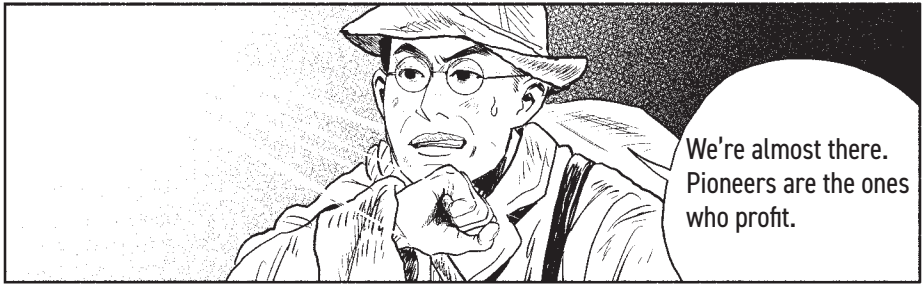


I've made it to
the opposite side
of the world.

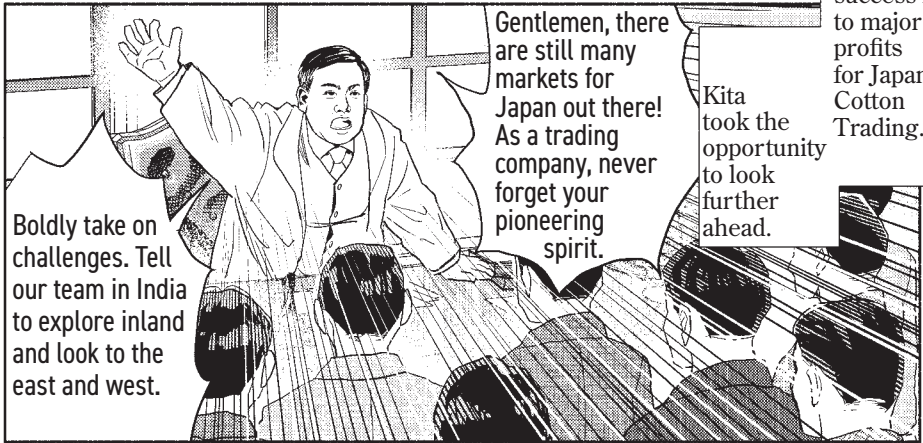


the Andes
Mountains
along the
western
coast of
South
America
to enter
Argentina.

Ooka
traveled
through
New
York and
across the
Panama
Canal
before
crossing



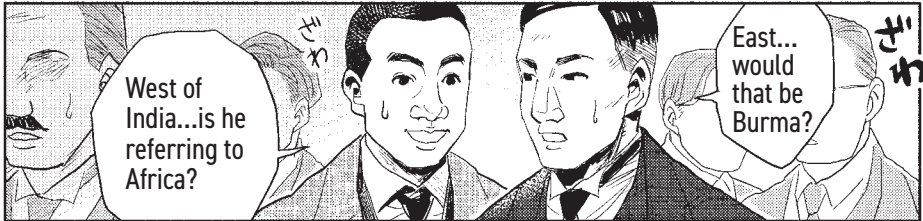
Ooka's success led to major profits for Japan Cotton Trading.



Boldly take on challenges. Tell our team in India to explore inland and look to the east and west.

Gentlemen, there are still many markets for Japan out there! As a trading company, never forget your pioneering spirit.

Kita took the opportunity to look further ahead.



West of India...is he referring to Africa?

East... would that be Burma?



Japan Cotton Trading was only just getting started.

Here's to the pioneer spirit!

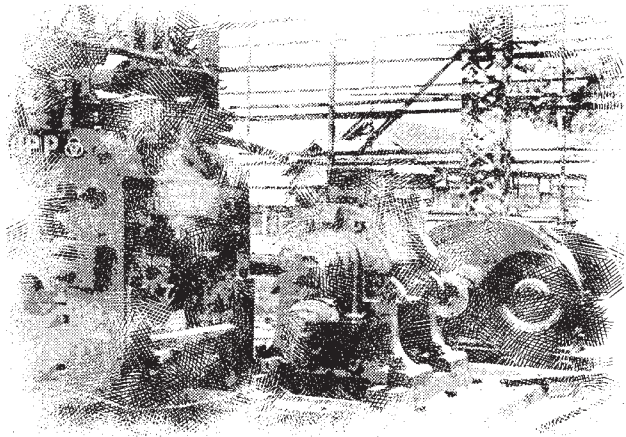
Bring it on! Let's make it happen.

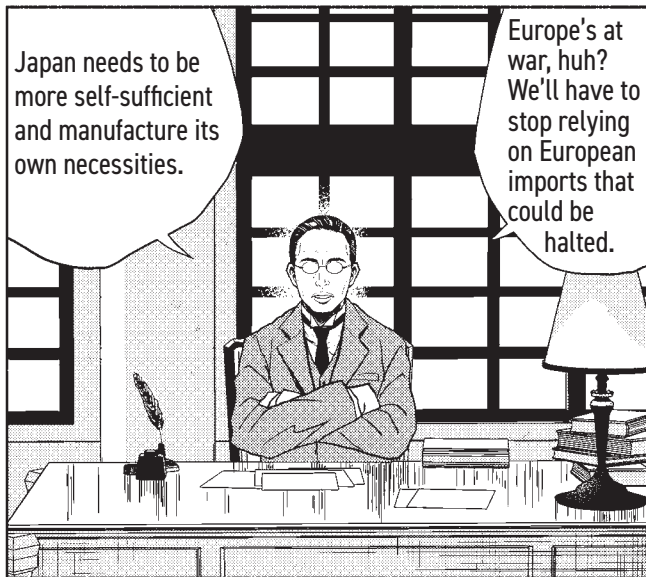
Chapter 2

Iwai & Co.

Taking on the challenge of establishing an
independently run celluloid factory

Entering the steel plate business





Japan needs to be more self-sufficient and manufacture its own necessities.

Europe's at war, huh? We'll have to stop relying on European imports that could be halted.



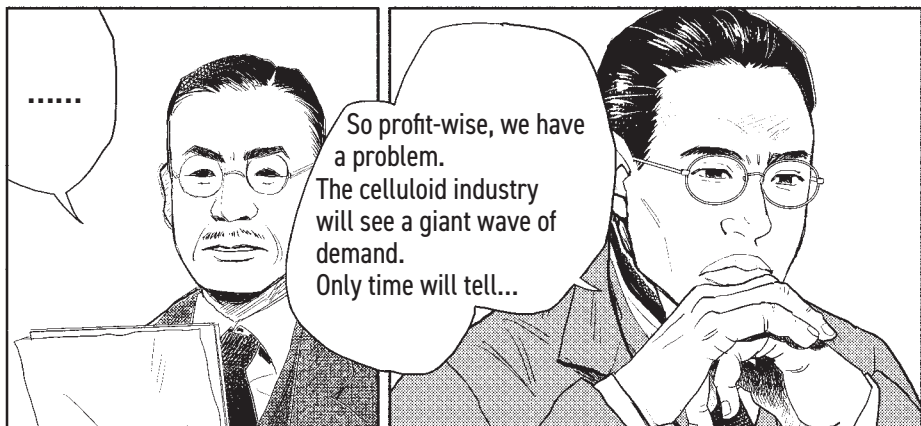
Iwai & Co. had also been impacted by the outbreak of WWI, and the company was looking to take on new business projects.



Yes, we're on track with production. But Mitsui's Sakai Celluloid is also producing steadily. If we count our production volumes too, production will exceed the domestic demand.

All progressing smoothly?

President Katsujiro, I have a report for you on Nippon Celluloid's artificial silk.



.....

So profit-wise, we have a problem. The celluloid industry will see a giant wave of demand. Only time will tell...



Sometimes he would spend up to three full hours in meditation.

Katsujiro Iwai had his own management philosophy which included tenets of Zen Buddhism. Iwai practiced Zen meditation.



What happened? Is it news from Europe?



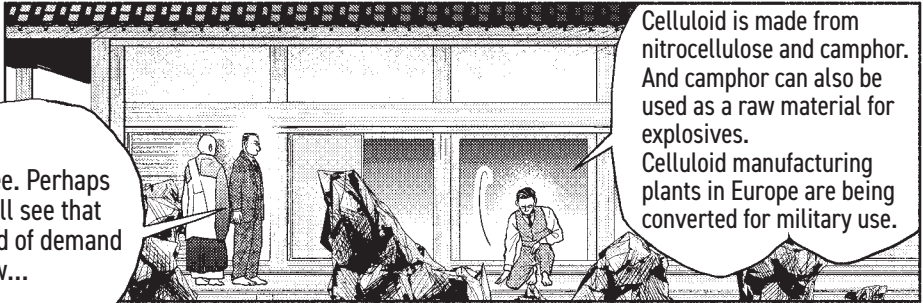
Quiet. Mr. Iwai is meditating now.

President!

This news can't wait for three hours!



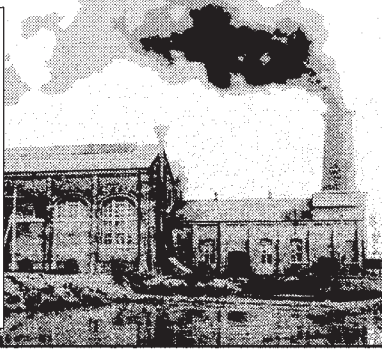
Russia's Major Germonius is coming to visit the factory...



I see. Perhaps we'll see that kind of demand now...

Celluloid is made from nitrocellulose and camphor. And camphor can also be used as a raw material for explosives. Celluloid manufacturing plants in Europe are being converted for military use.

Nippon Celluloid and Artificial Silk Co., Ltd. in Hyogo Prefecture's Aboshi was thus converted into an explosives factory. A manager from the military was brought in.

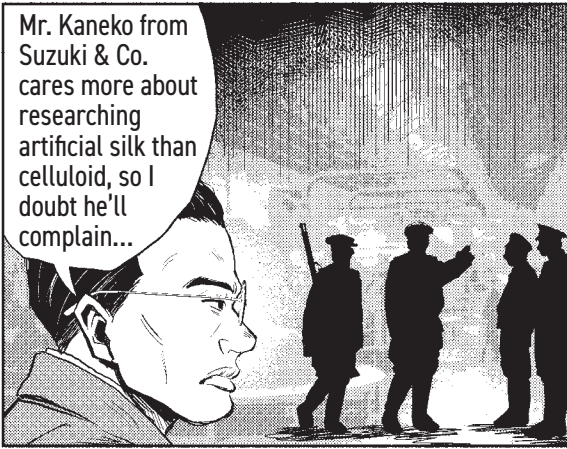


Russia has joined the Allies in the war. Unlike Britain, we haven't joined the treaty, but we'll have to cooperate. Comply with their requests and those from the government, but -

Yes, I am aware.



Mr. Kaneko from Suzuki & Co. cares more about researching artificial silk than celluloid, so I doubt he'll complain...



Listen up! I have an announcement.

Celluloid and plastic will continue to be important.

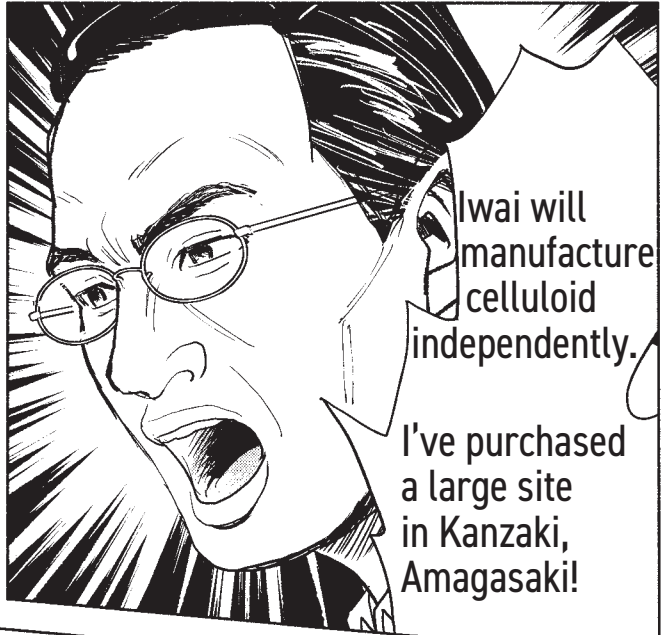
At this time, celluloid factories in Europe were rapidly converted for military use, and Japan received a large number of orders for celluloid fabrics to be made for civilians.

But I am resigning from my role as director of Dainippon Celluloid Co. Ltd.





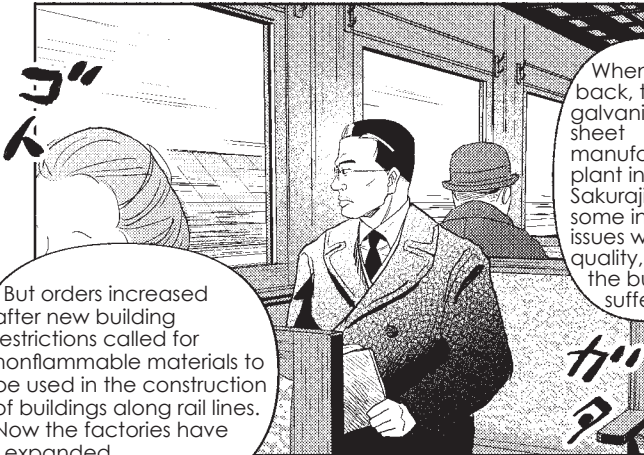
Ohhhh!



Iwai will manufacture celluloid independently.

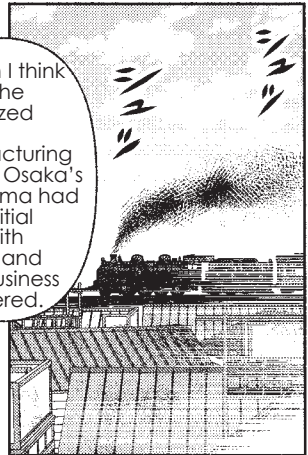
I've purchased a large site in Kanzaki, Amagasaki!

In 1916, the Osaka Sen'i Kogyo Co., Ltd. (currently Daicel's Kanzaki Plant) was established to manufacture celluloid.



When I think back, the galvanized sheet manufacturing plant in Osaka's Sakurajima had some initial issues with quality, and the business suffered.

But orders increased after new building restrictions called for nonflammable materials to be used in the construction of buildings along rail lines. Now the factories have expanded.



Business requires persistence...



President Katsujiro!
Bad news!

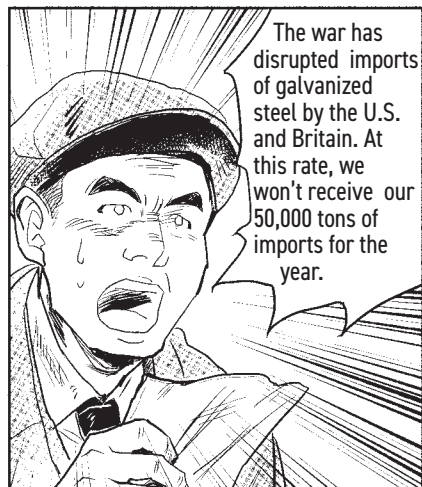


This is a good opportunity.

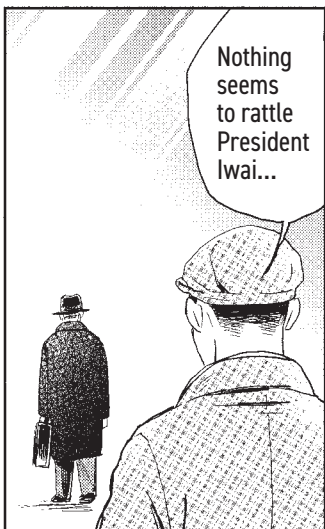
But we can't meet demand if imports stall.

Don't panic. Demand exists.

Huh?!



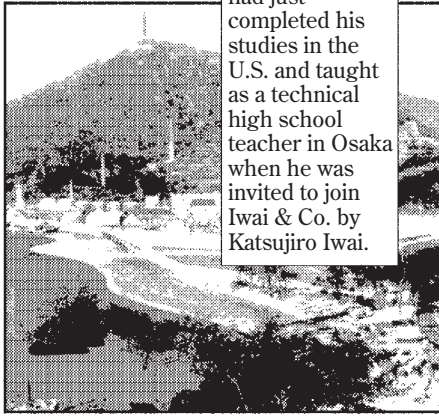
The war has disrupted imports of galvanized steel by the U.S. and Britain. At this rate, we won't receive our 50,000 tons of imports for the year.



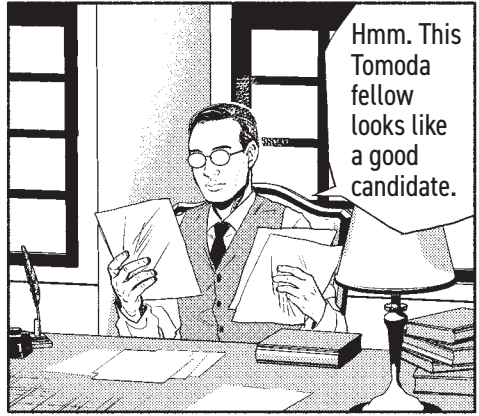
Nothing seems to rattle President Iwai...



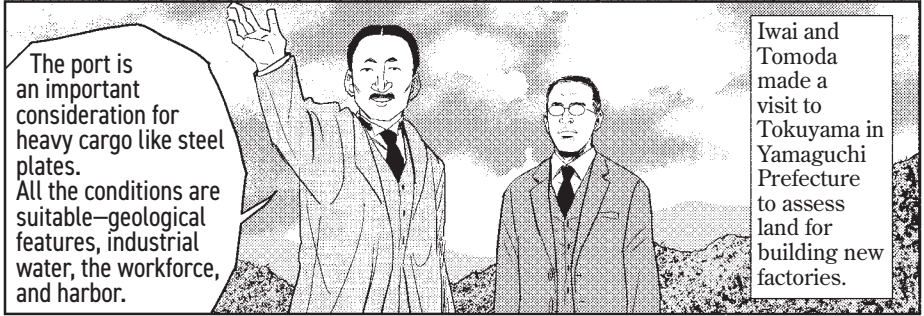
We will free ourselves from a dependence on foreign imports. Let's look for skilled engineers to build a new factory.



Ichita Tomoda had just completed his studies in the U.S. and taught as a technical high school teacher in Osaka when he was invited to join Iwai & Co. by Katsujiro Iwai.

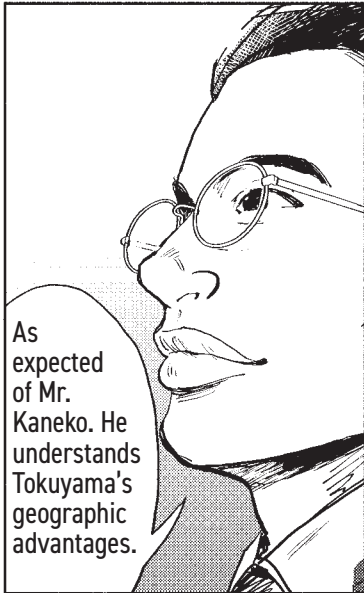


Hmm. This Tomoda fellow looks like a good candidate.



The port is an important consideration for heavy cargo like steel plates. All the conditions are suitable—geological features, industrial water, the workforce, and harbor.

Iwai and Tomoda made a visit to Tokuyama in Yamaguchi Prefecture to assess land for building new factories.



As expected of Mr. Kaneko. He understands Tokuyama's geographic advantages.



Oh, what's that chimney?

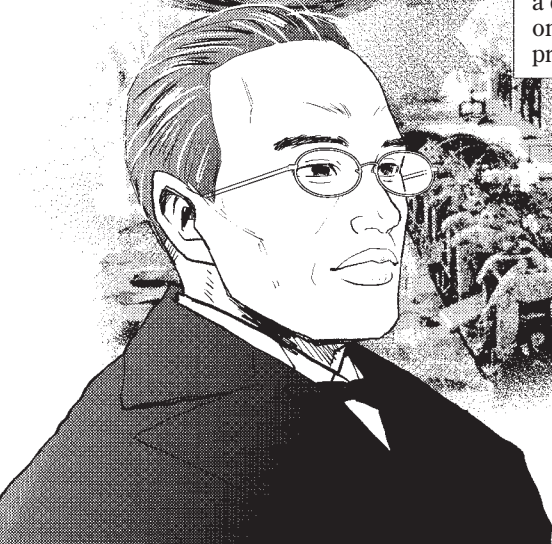
Suzuki & Co. is planning something. It's rumored they're aiming to build the tallest chimney in the East.



Alright,
let's
build a
factory in
Tokuyama!

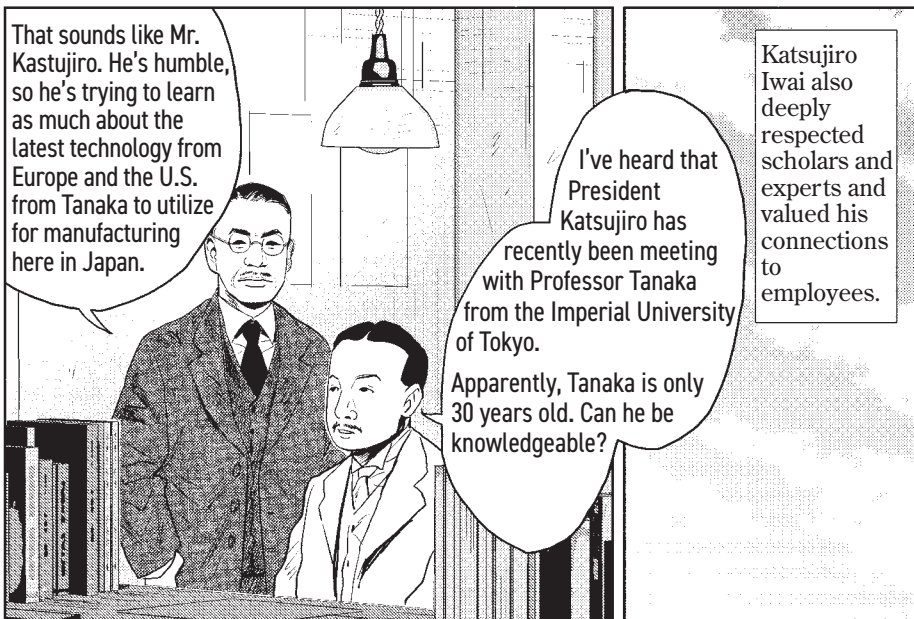
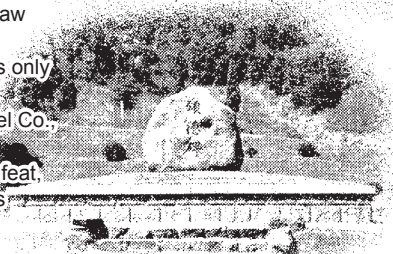
In 1916, Iwai & Co. made the decision to build a Tokuyama branch factory for manufacturing rolled steel sheets. The factory became Tanaka Galvanizing Works (today's Nisshin Steel Co., Ltd.)

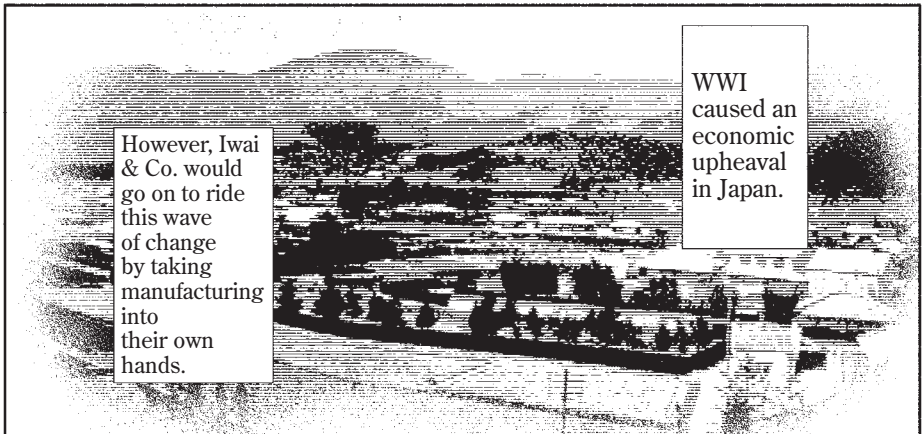
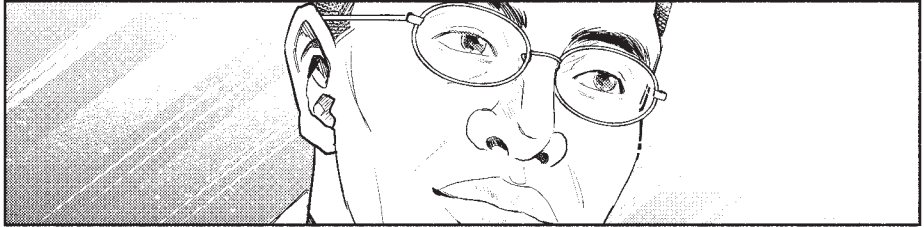
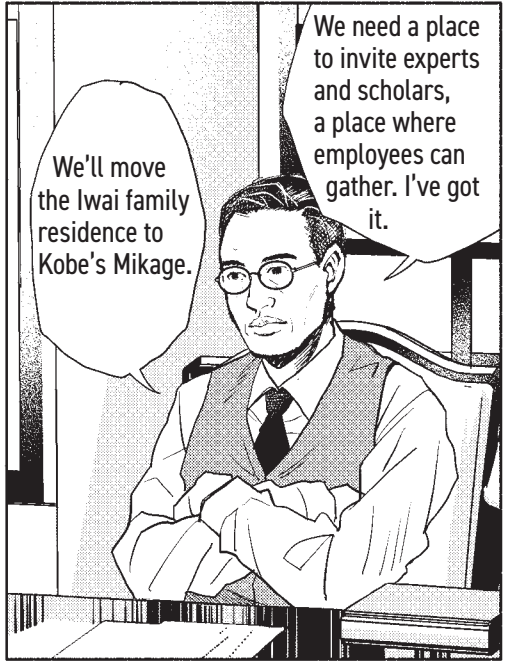
The following year, the company changed its trade name to Osaka Steel Manufacturing Co., Ltd. Katsujiro Iwai, who had been a director, took on the role of president.



Katsujiro Iwai is an independent and self-reliant merchant who does not cater to power and influence. Compared to the political merchants of Tokyo, Katsujiro Iwai has demonstrated himself to be an honest merchant of Kansai: a great man who has made a substantial contribution to the development of our country's industry. As a merchant that recognized Japan's future industrial potential, Iwai established companies in industrial fields such as steel, chemicals, and textiles. In 1910, Iwai established Osaka Steel Manufacturing Co., Ltd. to manufacture galvanized sheet iron, which was only available as an import. In 1918, a branch factory was built on this site to produce iron plates, which are the raw material required for galvanized sheet iron production. At the time, sheet iron was only produced in small test batches by the government owned Yawata Iron & Steel Co., Ltd. Beginning a large-scale sheet iron business in Japan was an unprecedented feat, and Japan's sheet iron business originates here.

In 1955, a monument with the following engraving was built at the Tokuyama factory.

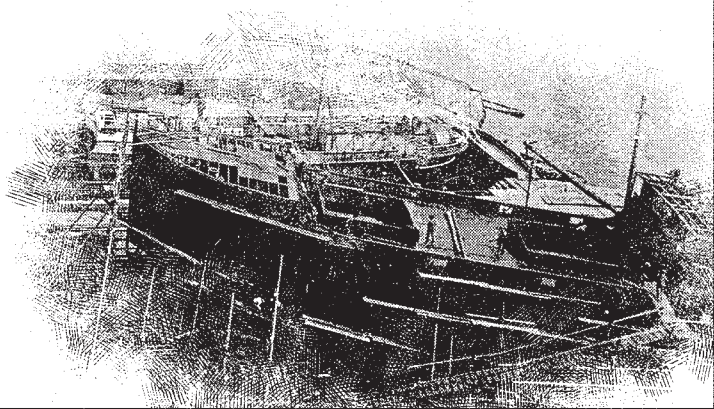
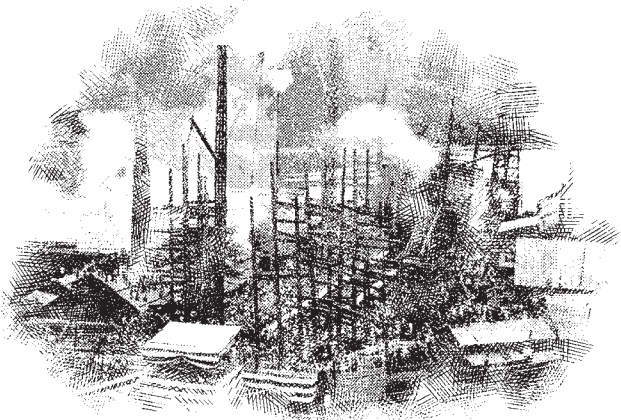




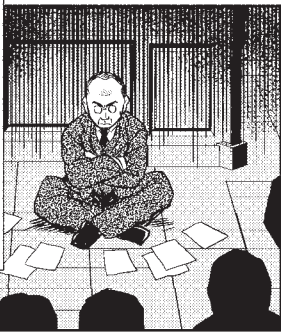
Chapter 3

Suzuki & Co.

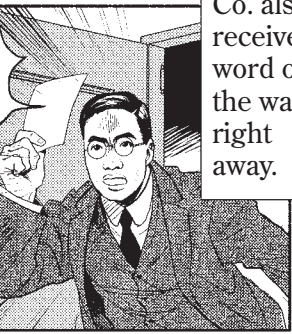
Naokichi Kaneko's Command and Suzuki's
Entrance into the Shipbuilding Business



Suzuki & Co. had built its own communication network. International telegrams arrived each day from young employees dispatched around the world.



Terrible news, Mr. Kaneko! A war has broken out in Europe!



Suzuki & Co. also received word of the war right away.

Buy any steel at any quantity and any price!



Listen carefully. Send a telegram to Takahata in London first! This war is going to be drawn out.

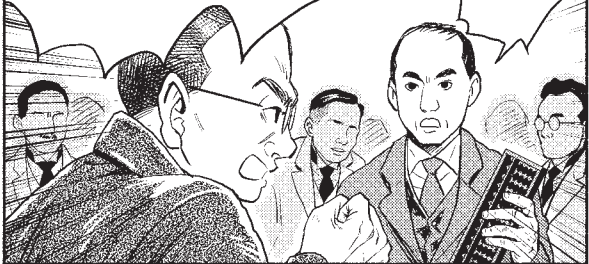
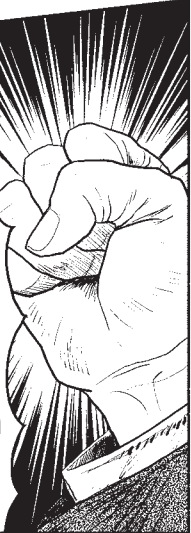
Also add that I leave Takahata in charge.

Moving forward, I want you to fully use Suzuki's credit and assets to prepare as much capital as possible, so that we can have more financial flexibility. No matter what obstacles you face, don't say anything to lose your fighting spirit. We must move full force ahead in the dark. Only come to me when you see no possible path forward.

Where's our accountant, Mr. Masayoshi Hino?

Here, sir!

This is Suzuki's chance to realize major growth in one go!



When all's said and done, Suzuki's just a privately-run business trying to assert their presence.

Suzuki's preparing for a long war. What a stupid move.

However, Japan's major conglomerates strongly believed the war would end quickly.

Trust the information we've received from Suzuki employees stationed around the world. That's why we've hired the best and brightest from Kobe Higher Commercial School (today's Kobe University).

But most expect the war will end soon...



おおお...

Use the steel procured from Takahata in London to order three 10,000-ton ships from Mitsubishi Shipbuilding Co., Ltd. . We'll place orders to other shipbuilding companies too. Suzuki's ships will deliver essential goods around the world.

After my failure short selling camphor, I made the decision never to naively speculate again. Suzuki gets information faster than anyone else. Our decisions are based on actual demand.

And then...Suzuki will build its own ships!

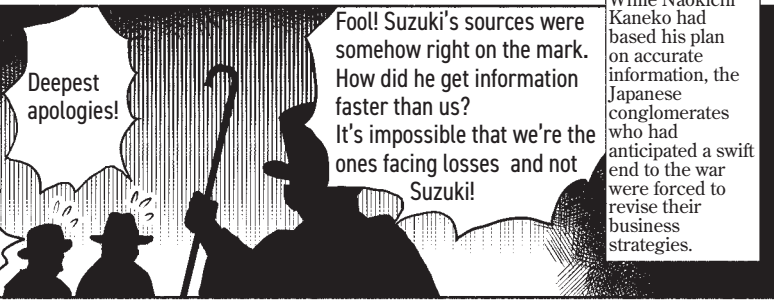


Grrr...No wonder Mr. Shibusawa held Naokichi Kaneko in high regard.

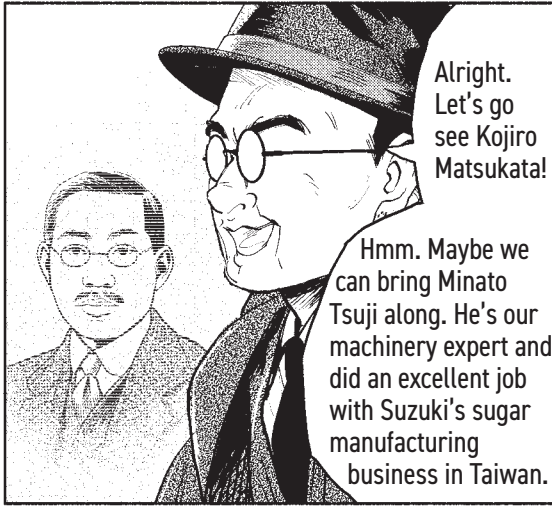
Deepest apologies!

Fool! Suzuki's sources were somehow right on the mark. How did he get information faster than us? It's impossible that we're the ones facing losses and not Suzuki!

While Naokichi Kaneko had based his plan on accurate information, the Japanese conglomerates who had anticipated a swift end to the war were forced to revise their business strategies.

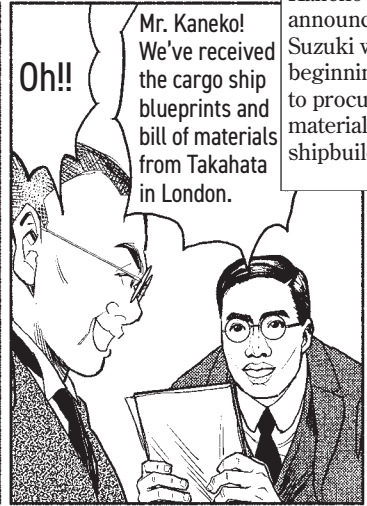


As Naokichi Kaneko had announced, Suzuki was beginning to procure materials for shipbuilding.



Alright. Let's go see Kojiro Matsukata!

Hmm. Maybe we can bring Minato Tsuji along. He's our machinery expert and did an excellent job with Suzuki's sugar manufacturing business in Taiwan.



Oh!!

Mr. Kaneko! We've received the cargo ship blueprints and bill of materials from Takahata in London.



Unlike Naokichi Kaneko who had no formal schooling, Matsukata had received an elite academic education at Yale University.

Kojiro Matsukata was the third son of Masayoshi Matsukata, who had served as prime minister of Japan.



Mr. Matsukata!



Whenever I look out at Kobe's gantry cranes, I'm struck by the urge to build our own ships.

Well, well, if it isn't Mr. Kaneko. I've been waiting for you.

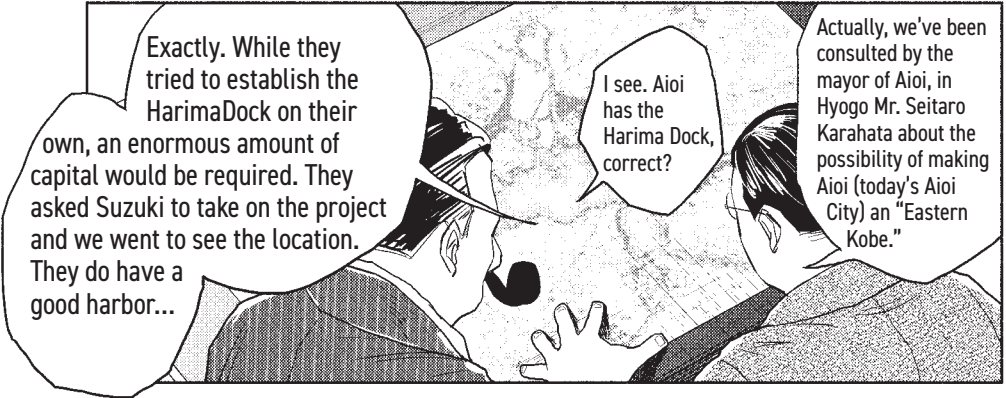


Yes!

Just the response I'd expect from the great Mr. Matsukata. OK, Tsuji. Present our materials.



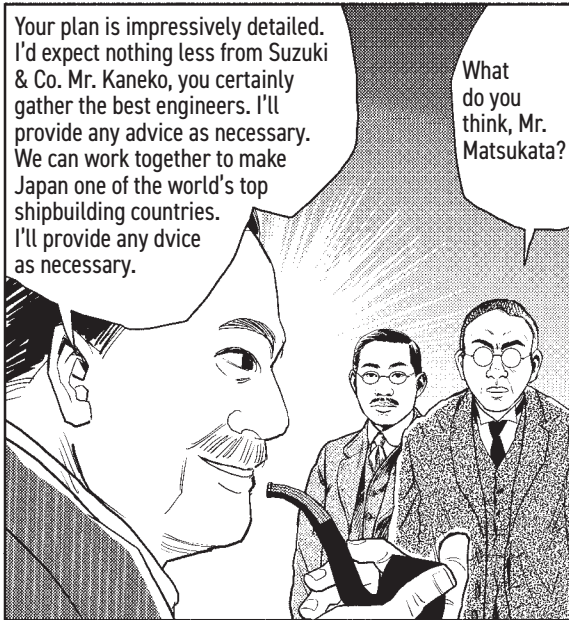
If you're saying that, you must already have a plan?



Exactly. While they tried to establish the Harima Dock on their own, an enormous amount of capital would be required. They asked Suzuki to take on the project and we went to see the location. They do have a good harbor...

I see. Aioi has the Harima Dock, correct?

Actually, we've been consulted by the mayor of Aioi, in Hyogo Mr. Seitaro Karahata about the possibility of making Aioi (today's Aioi City) an "Eastern Kobe."

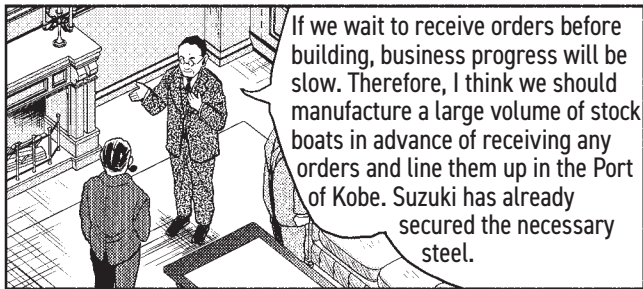


Your plan is impressively detailed. I'd expect nothing less from Suzuki & Co. Mr. Kaneko, you certainly gather the best engineers. I'll provide any advice as necessary. We can work together to make Japan one of the world's top shipbuilding countries. I'll provide any advice as necessary.

What do you think, Mr. Matsukata?



If we're going to participate, we want to expand the project and make it a success. First, we need to tear up this mountain and place the dock there.



If we wait to receive orders before building, business progress will be slow. Therefore, I think we should manufacture a large volume of stock boats in advance of receiving any orders and line them up in the Port of Kobe. Suzuki has already secured the necessary steel.



A proposal?

Appreciate your offer! To demonstrate our thanks, I have a proposal for you.

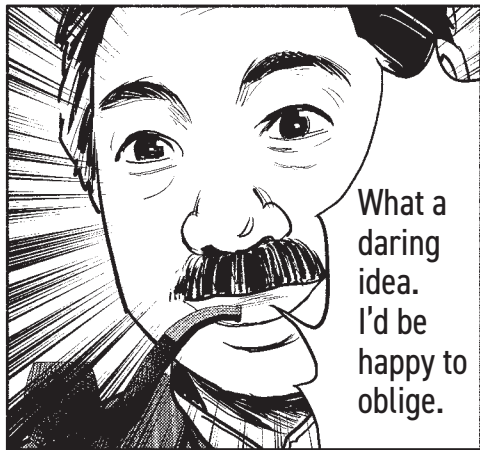


You and Takahata—our London branch manager—can sell our ships all throughout the British empire!

I would therefore like you to travel to London Mr. Matsukata. We will provide you with one of Suzuki's rooms.



I look forward to working with Suzuki's staff in London.



What a daring idea. I'd be happy to oblige.

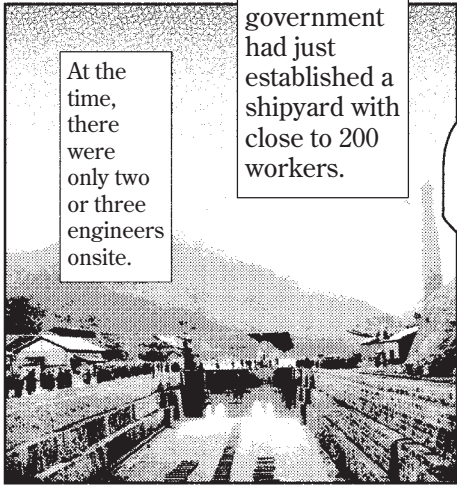


You're right, but we need to look even further ahead.

Yes, sir! First, we should focus on expanding the dock.

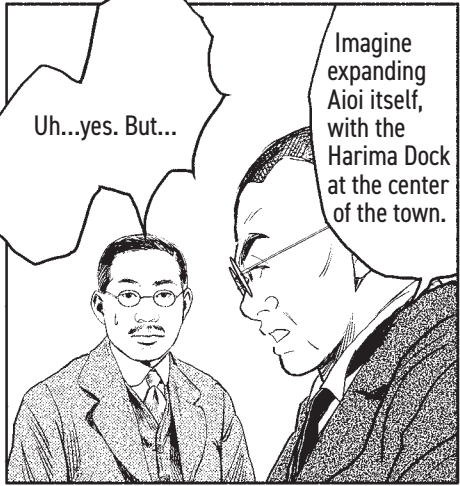
Tsuji - We've received Mr. Matsukata's stamp of approval. Let's give it everything we've got!

In this way, Suzuki & Co. officially entered the shipbuilding business.



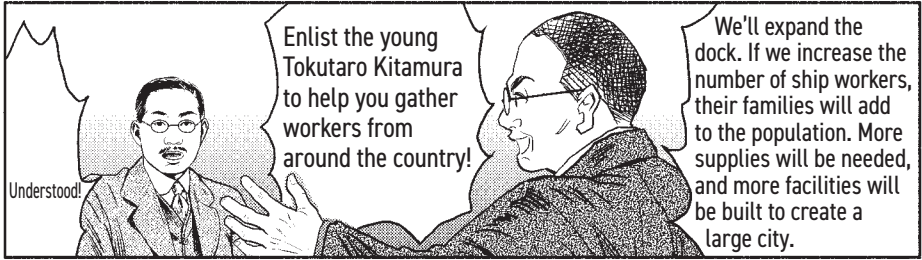
At the time, there were only two or three engineers onsite.

Aioi's town government had just established a shipyard with close to 200 workers.



Uh...yes. But...

Imagine expanding Aioi itself, with the Harima Dock at the center of the town.



Understood!

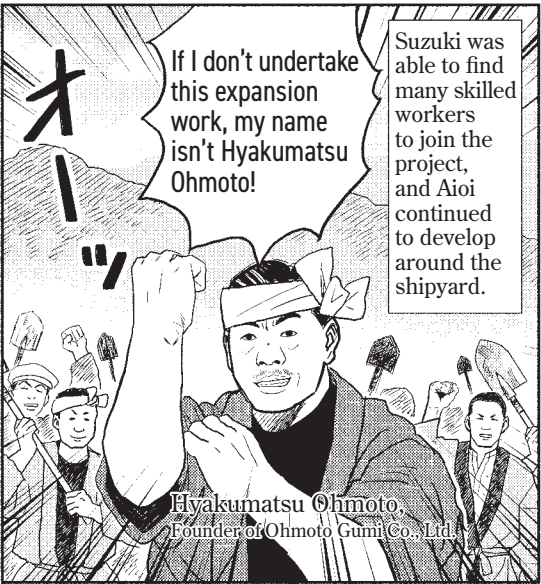
Enlist the young Tokutaro Kitamura to help you gather workers from around the country!

We'll expand the dock. If we increase the number of ship workers, their families will add to the population. More supplies will be needed, and more facilities will be built to create a large city.



I see some dependable reinforcements have arrived.

Rokutaro Kitamura (later to become the Minister of Transport and Minister of Finance)

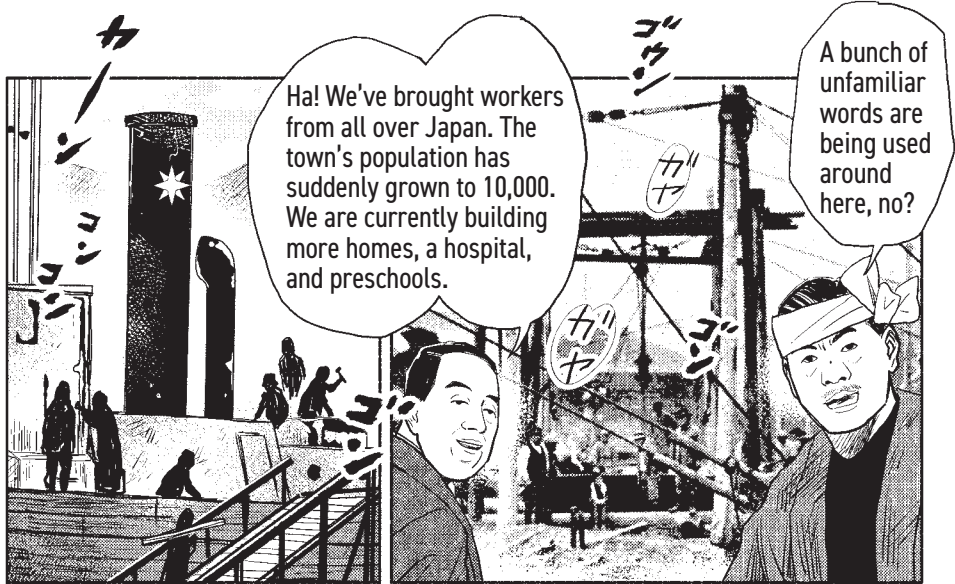


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If I don't undertake this expansion work, my name isn't Hyakumatsu Ohmoto!

Suzuki was able to find many skilled workers to join the project, and Aioi continued to develop around the shipyard.

Hyakumatsu Ohmoto, Founder of Ohmoto Gumi Co., Ltd.



Ha! We've brought workers from all over Japan. The town's population has suddenly grown to 10,000. We are currently building more homes, a hospital, and preschools.

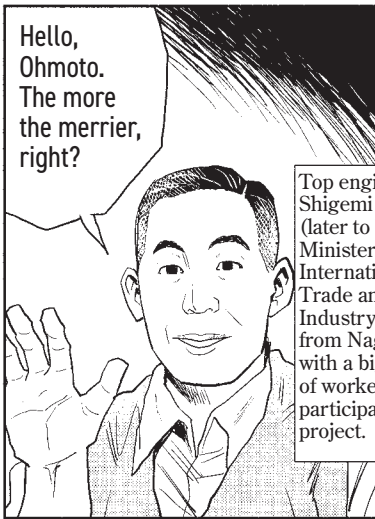
A bunch of unfamiliar words are being used around here, no?



Ah, it's part of our Nagasaki festival. Since this is a harbor town, I think we can set up similar event.



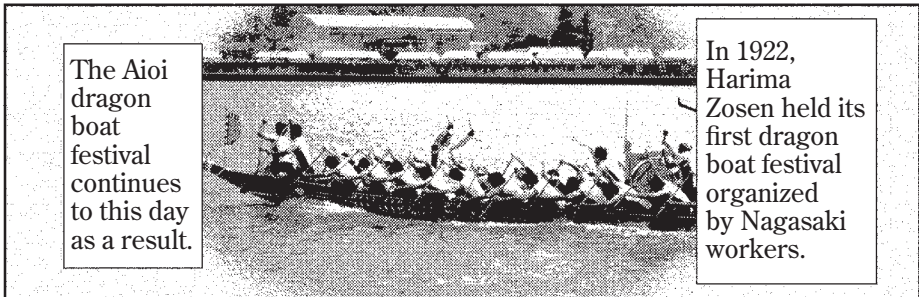
Mr. Yokoo, the men you brought from Nagasaki keep talking about doing a dragon boat race. What in the world are they on about?



Hello, Ohmoto. The more the merrier, right?

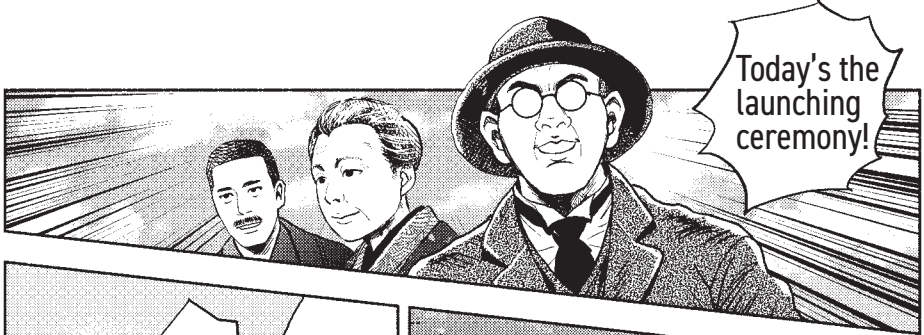
In fact, many workers had gathered in Aioi.

Top engineer, Shigemi Yokoo (later to become Minister of International Trade and Industry) came from Nagasaki with a big group of workers to participate in the project.

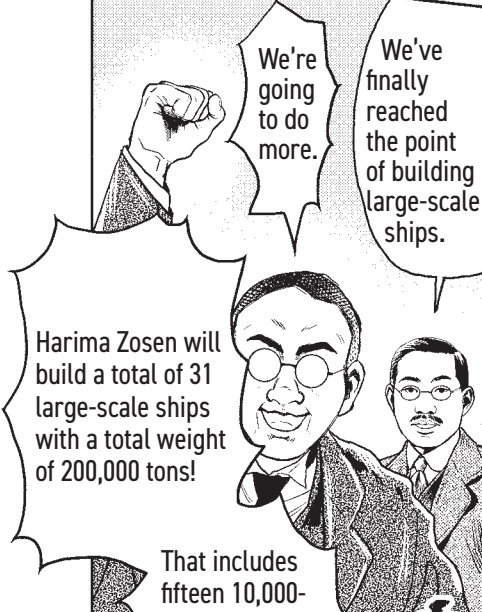


The Aioi dragon boat festival continues to this day as a result.

In 1922, Harima Zosen held its first dragon boat festival organized by Nagasaki workers.



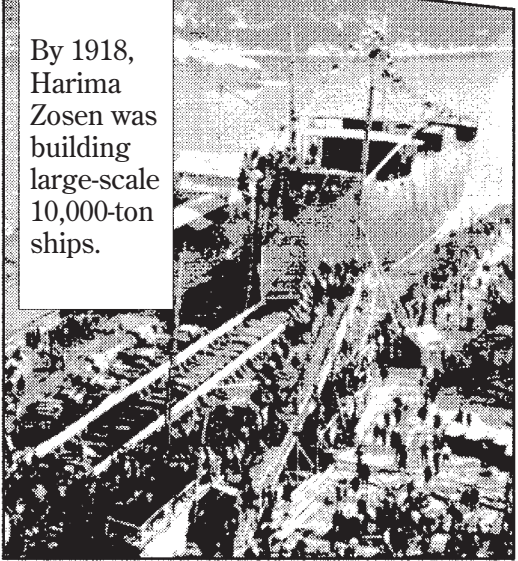
Today's the launching ceremony!



Harima Zosen will build a total of 31 large-scale ships with a total weight of 200,000 tons!

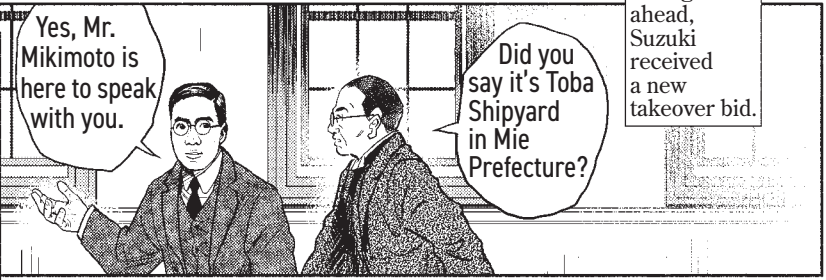
That includes fifteen 10,000-ton ships, six 5,000-ton ships, and ten 2,000 to 3,000-ton ships.

By 1918, Harima Zosen was building large-scale 10,000-ton ships.



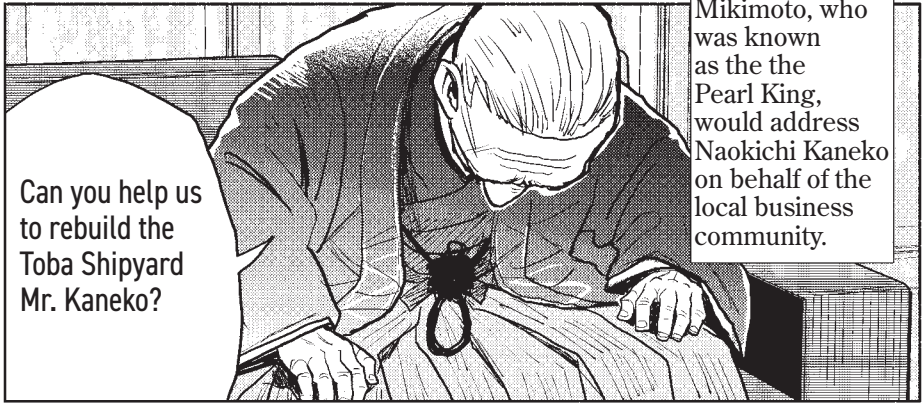
Just when Harima Zosen was sailing ahead, Suzuki received a new takeover bid.

Toba Shipyard was on the brink of bankruptcy and the local business leaders were trying their best to keep the business afloat.



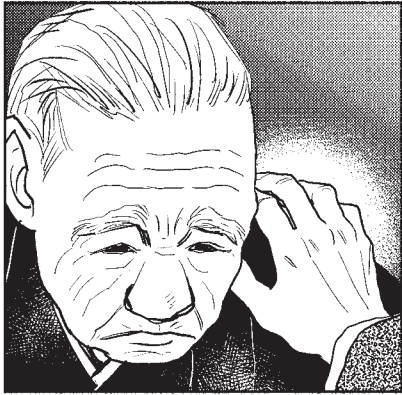
Yes, Mr. Mikimoto is here to speak with you.

Did you say it's Toba Shipyard in Mie Prefecture?



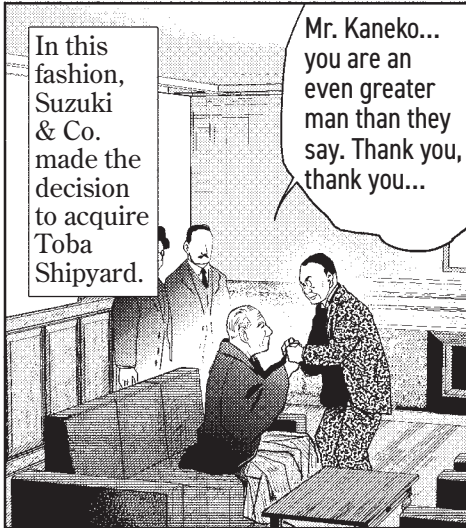
Can you help us to rebuild the Toba Shipyard Mr. Kaneko?

Kokichi Mikimoto, who was known as the the Pearl King, would address Naokichi Kaneko on behalf of the local business community.



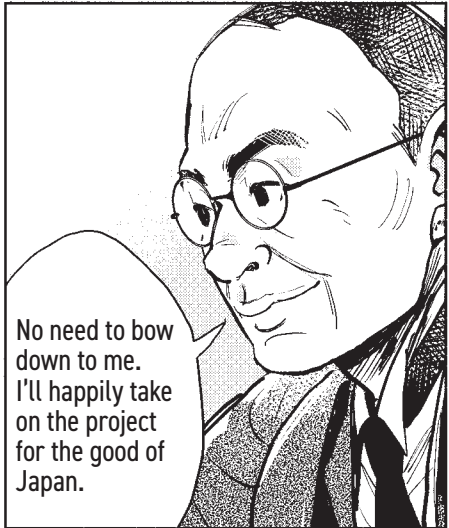
But he didn't even bow to the emperor...!

Mr. Mikimoto is bowing his head!

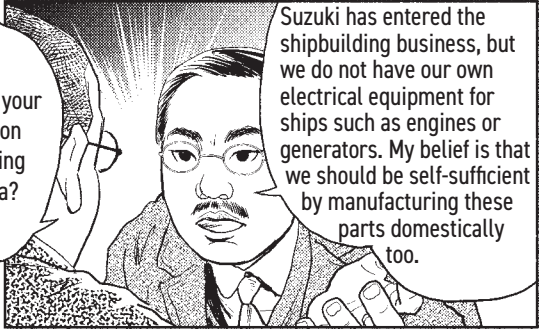


In this fashion, Suzuki & Co. made the decision to acquire Toba Shipyard.

Mr. Kaneko... you are an even greater man than they say. Thank you, thank you...



No need to bow down to me. I'll happily take on the project for the good of Japan.



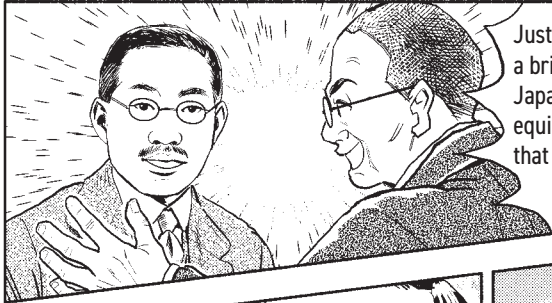
Is that your condition for taking on Toba?

Suzuki has entered the shipbuilding business, but we do not have our own electrical equipment for ships such as engines or generators. My belief is that we should be self-sufficient by manufacturing these parts domestically too.



Yes, but on one condition.

Harima Shipyard has just started to get on track, but I'd like for you to take on the next project. Can you manage the Toba Shipyard next, Tsuji?

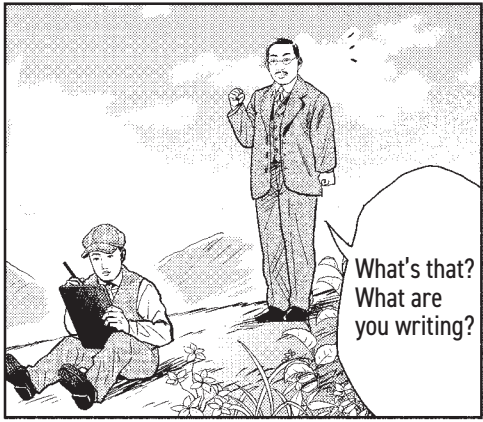


Just what I'd expected from you, Tsuji! What a brilliant idea. You have my full support. Japan must develop its own electrical equipment. I trust this business will be one that can support Suzuki in the future!

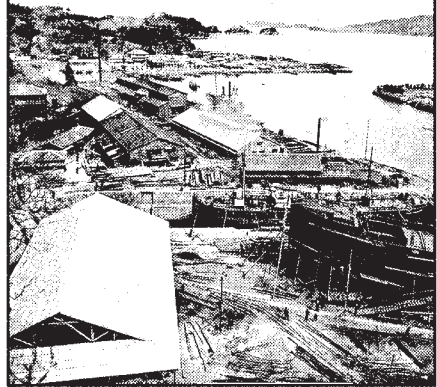


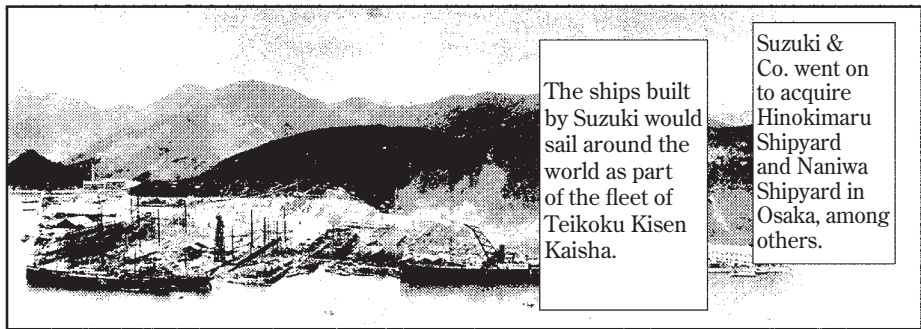
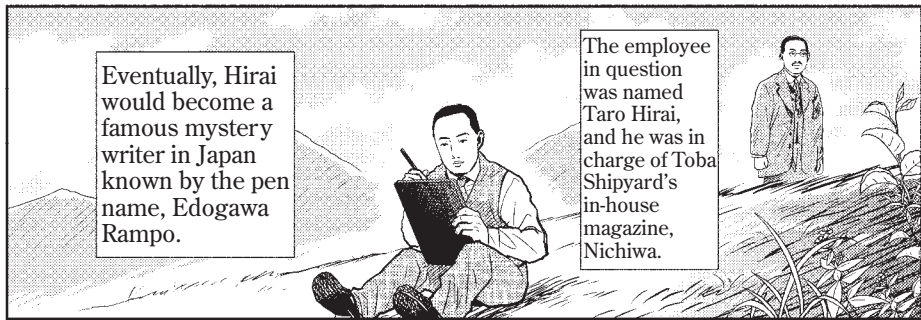
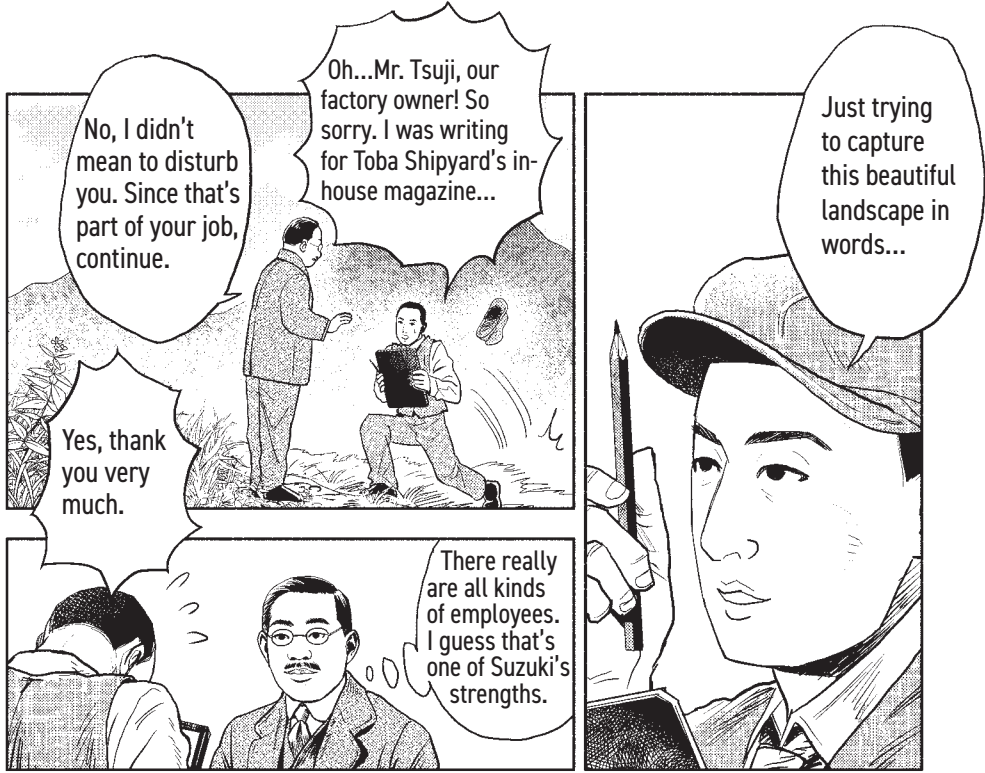
OK, we will continue to take on new challenges at Toba!

And so, Shinko Electric (today's Sinfonia Technology Co., Ltd.) was born.



What's that? What are you writing?



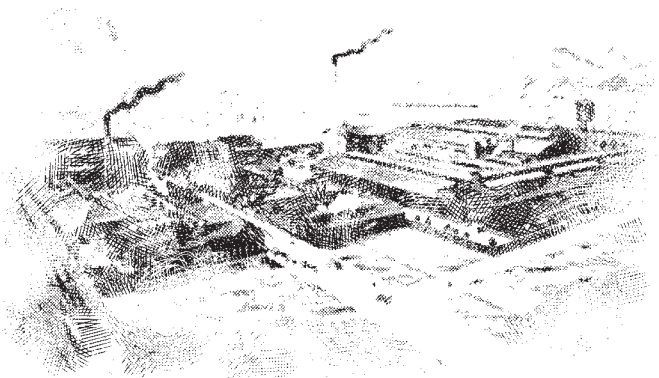


Chapter 4

Suzuki & Co.

Japan's first hydrogenated oil business

Partnering with a world traveler to start a
rubber business

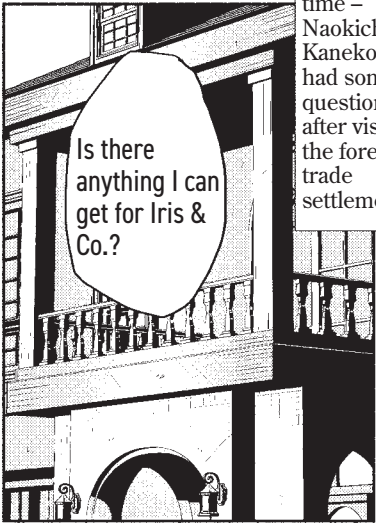


Going back earlier in time – Naokichi Kaneko had some questions after visiting the foreign trade settlement.

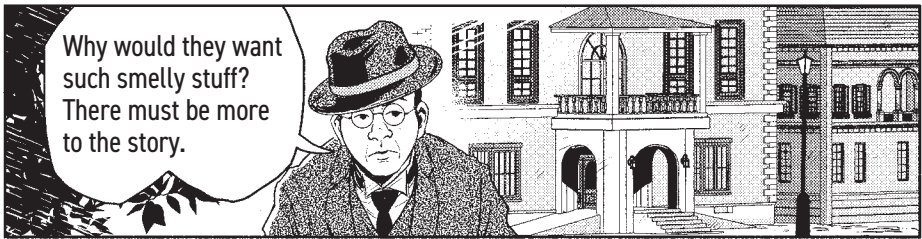


Oho. Fish oil? Leave it to me.

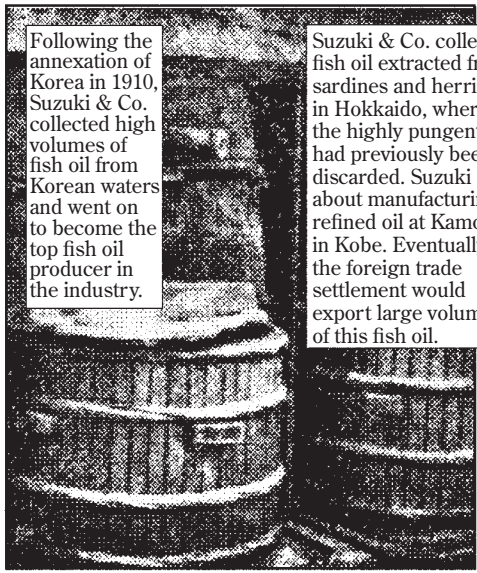
Well, we would like you to collect fish oil and sell it to us, but only us.



Is there anything I can get for Iris & Co.?

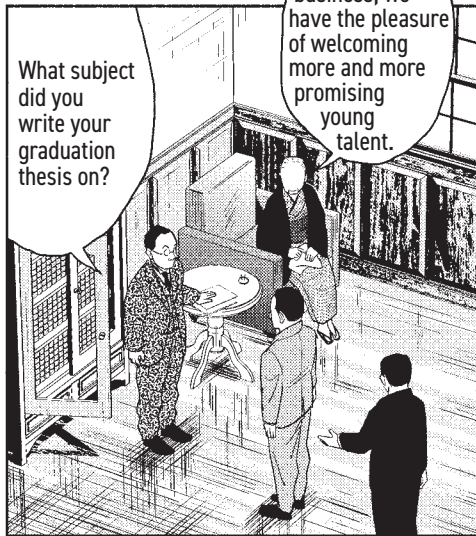


Why would they want such smelly stuff? There must be more to the story.



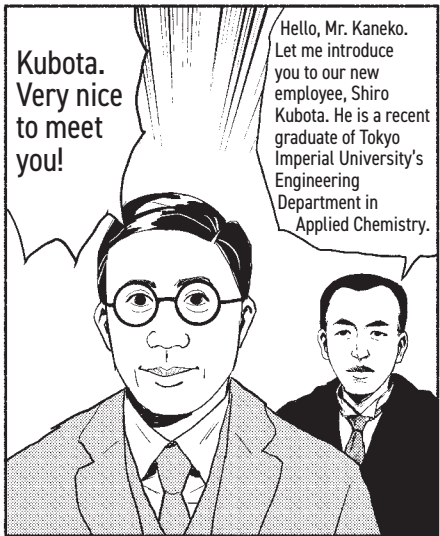
Following the annexation of Korea in 1910, Suzuki & Co. collected high volumes of fish oil from Korean waters and went on to become the top fish oil producer in the industry.

Suzuki & Co. collected fish oil extracted from sardines and herring in Hokkaido, where the highly pungent oil had previously been discarded. Suzuki set about manufacturing refined oil at Kamojima in Kobe. Eventually the foreign trade settlement would export large volumes of this fish oil.



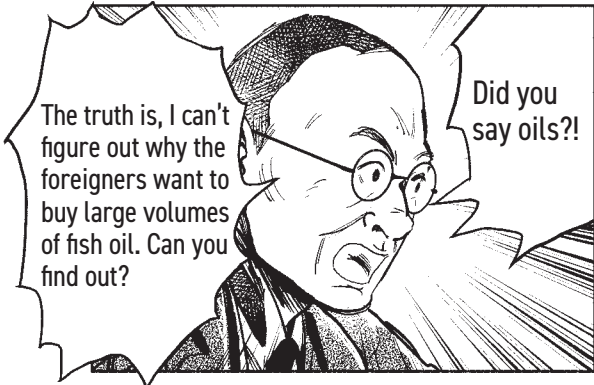
What subject did you write your graduation thesis on?

As Suzuki grows as a business, we have the pleasure of welcoming more and more promising young talent.



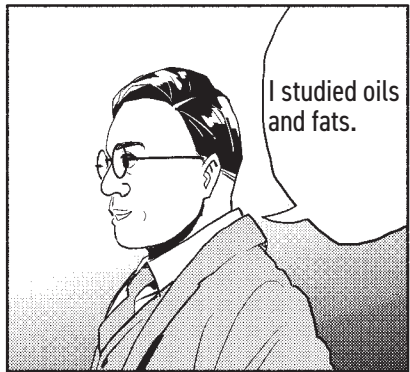
Kubota. Very nice to meet you!

Hello, Mr. Kaneko. Let me introduce you to our new employee, Shiro Kubota. He is a recent graduate of Tokyo Imperial University's Engineering Department in Applied Chemistry.

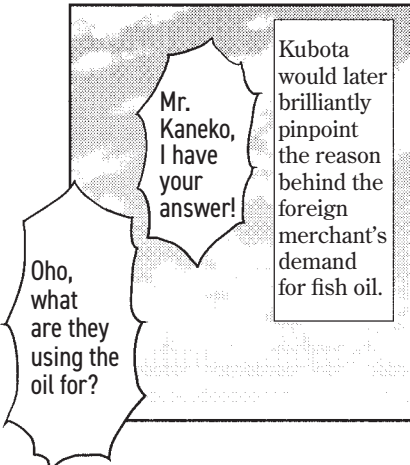


The truth is, I can't figure out why the foreigners want to buy large volumes of fish oil. Can you find out?

Did you say oils?!

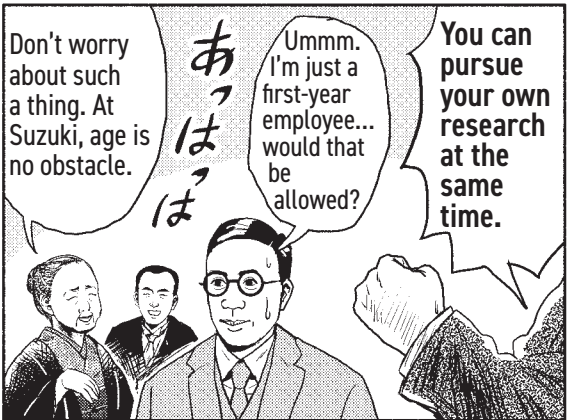


I studied oils and fats.



Mr. Kaneko, I have your answer!

Kubota would later brilliantly pinpoint the reason behind the foreign merchant's demand for fish oil.



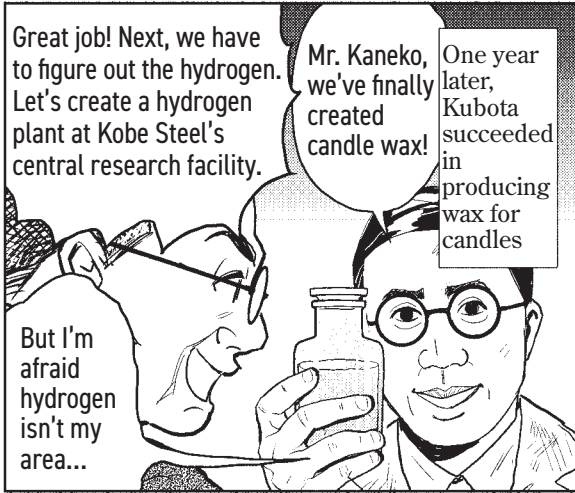
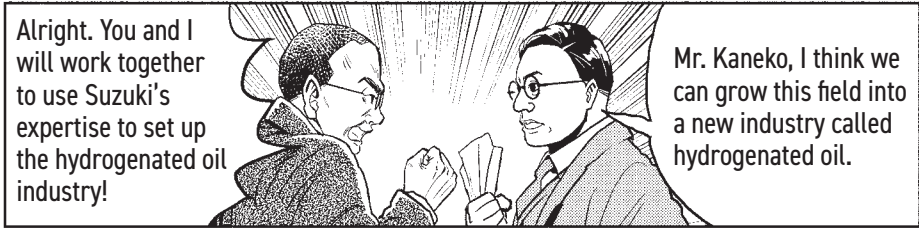
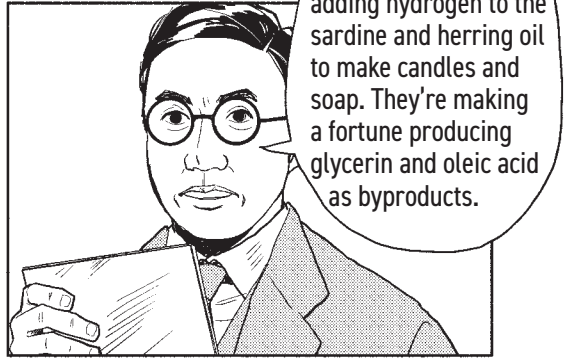
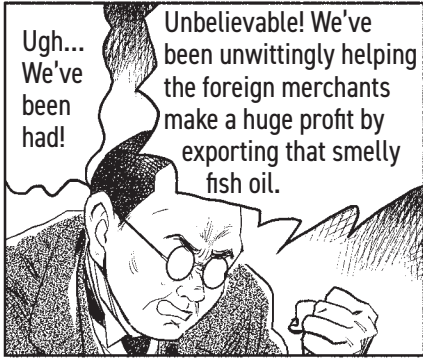
Don't worry about such a thing. At Suzuki, age is no obstacle.

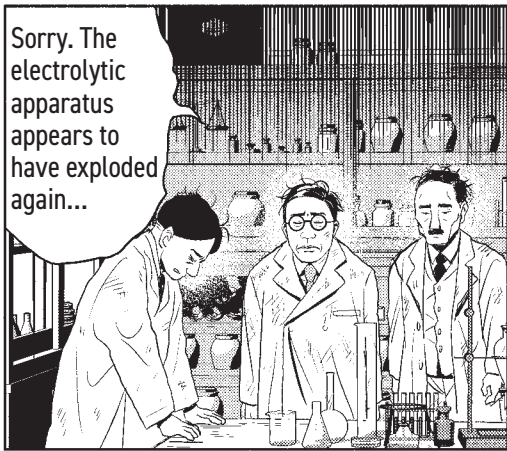
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Ummm. I'm just a first-year employee... would that be allowed?

You can pursue your own research at the same time.

Oho, what are they using the oil for?

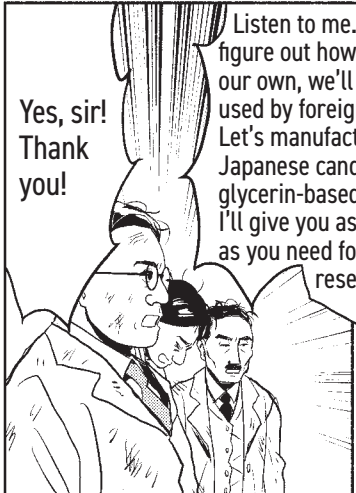




Sorry. The electrolytic apparatus appears to have exploded again...

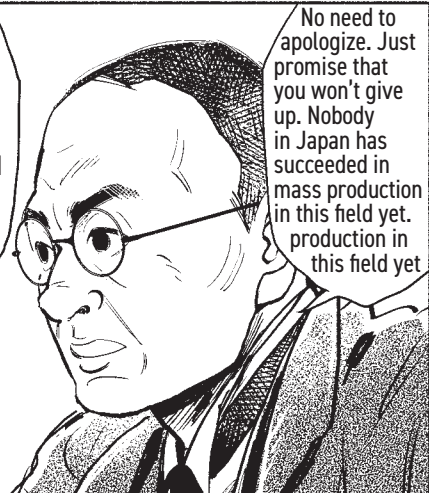


However, attempts to mass produce hydrogen did not go smoothly.



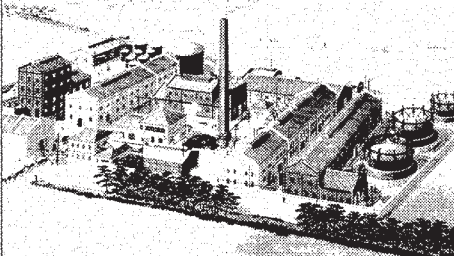
Yes, sir! Thank you!

Listen to me. If we don't figure out how to stand our own, we'll forever be used by foreign traders. Let's manufacture our own Japanese candles, soap, and glycerin-based explosives. I'll give you as much money as you need for this research.

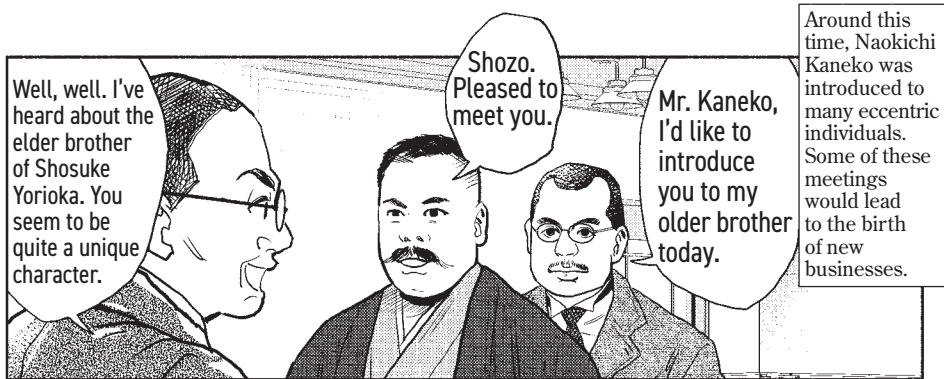


No need to apologize. Just promise that you won't give up. Nobody in Japan has succeeded in mass production in this field yet. production in this field yet

Investment for the research phase through mass production ultimately cost Suzuki & Co. as much money as they had earned from sale of the Dairi Sugar Refining Co.



Mass production finally started to seem like a reality. In 1915, construction began on Suzuki & Co.'s Hyogo Oil Refinery cross the shore from Karumo under Murahashi's leadership.

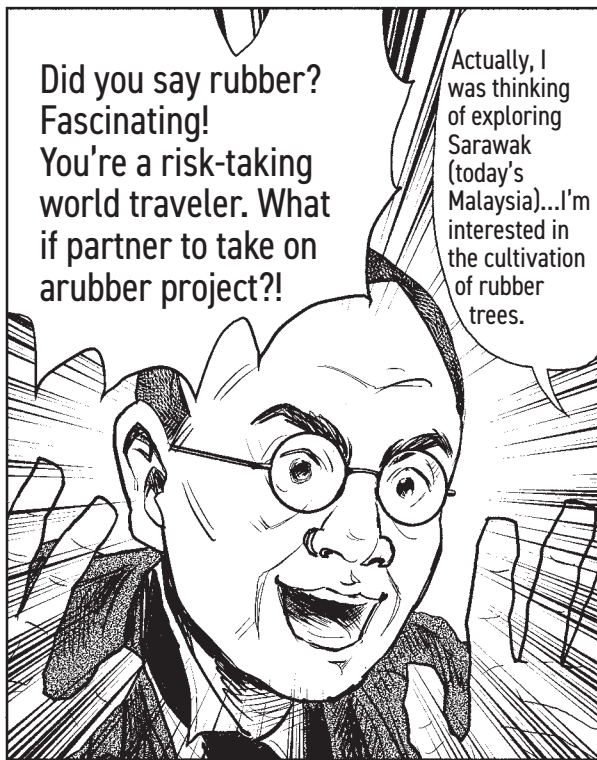


Well, well. I've heard about the elder brother of Shosuke Yorioka. You seem to be quite a unique character.

Shozo. Pleased to meet you.

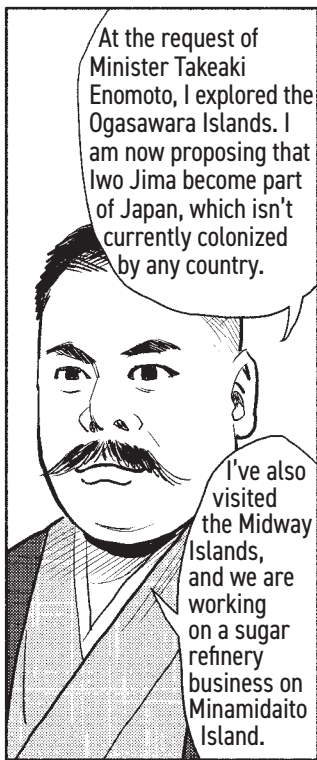
Mr. Kaneko, I'd like to introduce you to my older brother today.

Around this time, Naokichi Kaneko was introduced to many eccentric individuals. Some of these meetings would lead to the birth of new businesses.



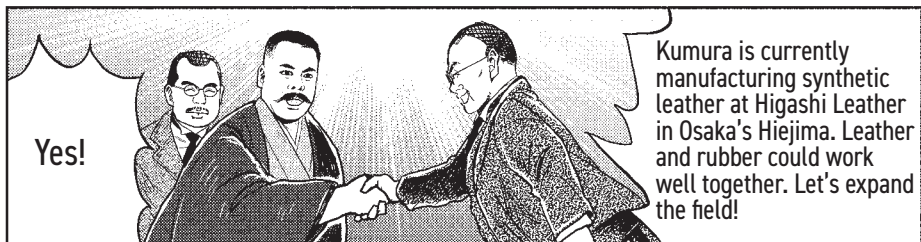
Did you say rubber? Fascinating! You're a risk-taking world traveler. What if partner to take on arubber project?!

Actually, I was thinking of exploring Sarawak (today's Malaysia)...I'm interested in the cultivation of rubber trees.



At the request of Minister Takeaki Enomoto, I explored the Ogasawara Islands. I am now proposing that Iwo Jima become part of Japan, which isn't currently colonized by any country.

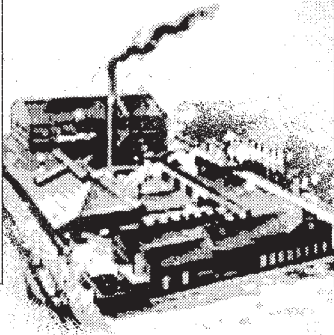
I've also visited the Midway Islands, and we are working on a sugar refinery business on Minamidaito Island.



Yes!

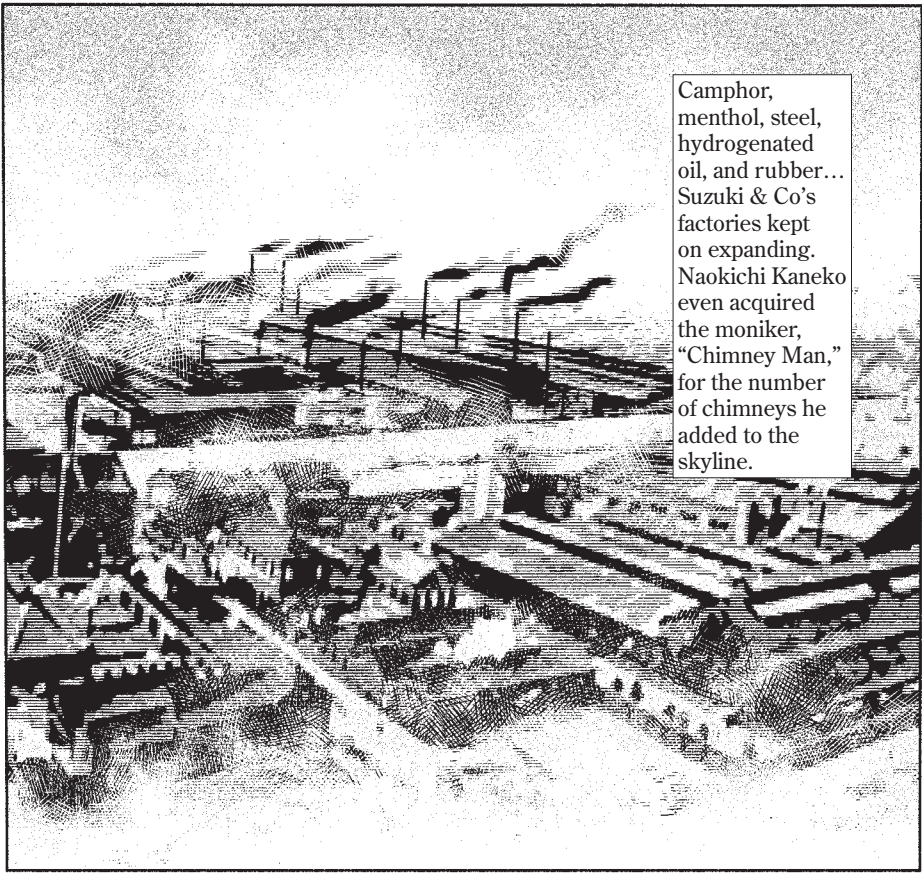
Kumura is currently manufacturing synthetic leather at Higashi Leather in Osaka's Hiejima. Leather and rubber could work well together. Let's expand the field!

Suzuki & Co. also began manufacturing fiberboard. Nissa Shokai founded Toyo Fibre Co., Ltd. (today's Hokuetsu Toyo Fibre Co., Ltd.)



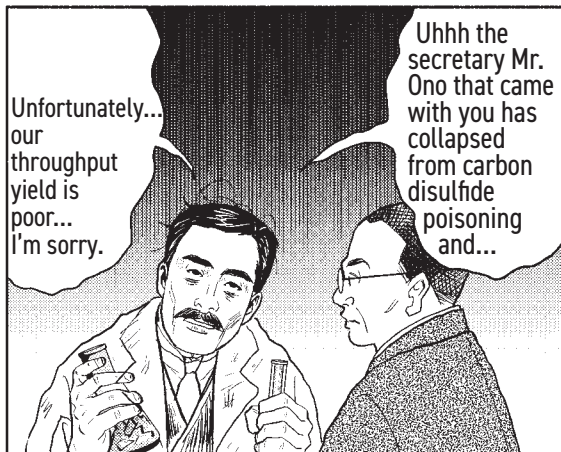
In 1914, Suzuki established a rubber manufacturing plant in Minume, Kobe. The plant would become Nippon Ringyo Company. (today's Nichirin Co., Ltd.)

And so, Suzuki & Co. expanded into the rubber business.



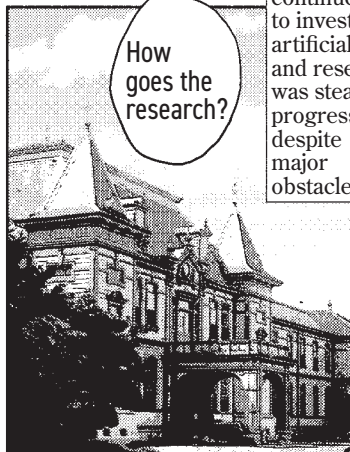
Camphor, menthol, steel, hydrogenated oil, and rubber... Suzuki & Co's factories kept on expanding. Naokichi Kaneko even acquired the moniker, "Chimney Man," for the number of chimneys he added to the skyline.

Kaneko Naokichi continued to invest in artificial silk, and research was steadily progressing despite major obstacles.



Unfortunately... our throughput yield is poor... I'm sorry.

Uhhh the secretary Mr. Ono that came with you has collapsed from carbon disulfide poisoning and...

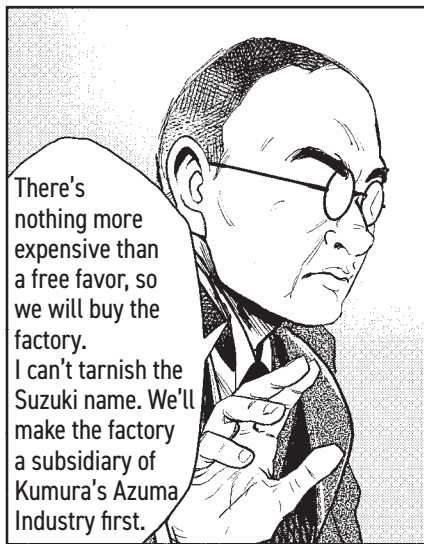


How goes the research?

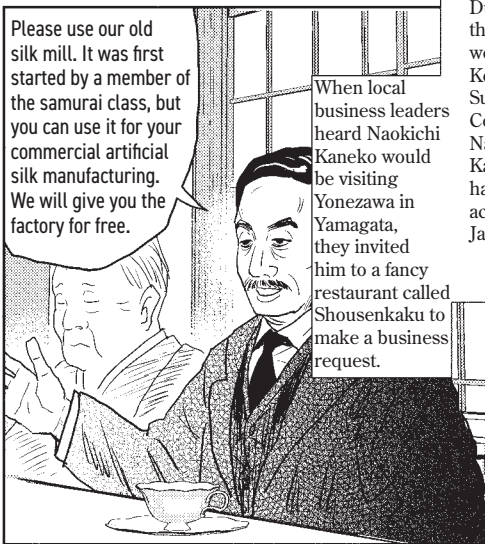


At that point, we'll be making a huge profit!!

Well, the current throughput yield is 60% at 4 yen. When the technology and machinery and workers all come together, we'll have a 90% yield at a cost of close to 80 sen.



There's nothing more expensive than a free favor, so we will buy the factory. I can't tarnish the Suzuki name. We'll make the factory a subsidiary of Kumura's Azuma Industry first.



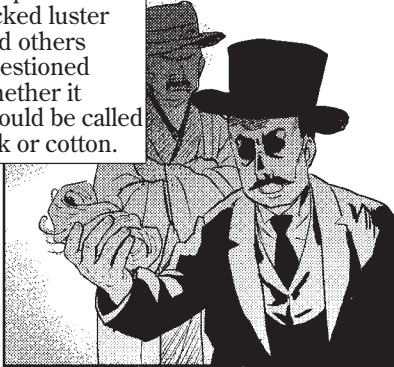
Please use our old silk mill. It was first started by a member of the samurai class, but you can use it for your commercial artificial silk manufacturing. We will give you the factory for free.

When local business leaders heard Naokichi Kaneko would be visiting Yonezawa in Yamagata, they invited him to a fancy restaurant called Shousenkaku to make a business request.

During this period, word of Kobe's Suzuki & Co. and Naokichi Kaneko had spread across Japan.

In May 1916, the factory began operations. Sample products were presented to customers.

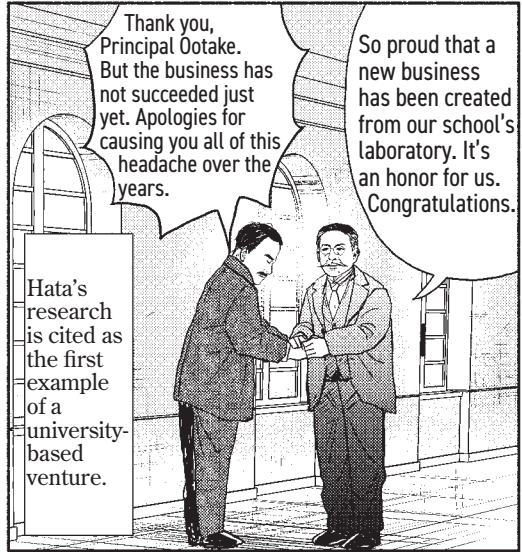
However, the reviews were mixed. Some complained the product lacked luster and others questioned whether it should be called silk or cotton.



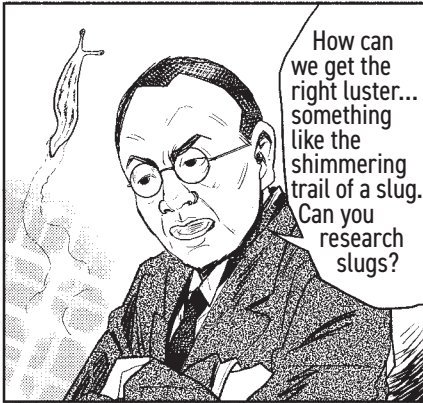
Thank you, Principal Ootake. But the business has not succeeded just yet. Apologies for causing you all of this headache over the years.

So proud that a new business has been created from our school's laboratory. It's an honor for us. Congratulations.

Hata's research is cited as the first example of a university-based venture.



How can we get the right luster... something like the shimmering trail of a slug. Can you research slugs?



I'm grateful to you, Mr. Kumura.

We must make this business a success!

Kumura came to Yonezawa to assist with manufacturing.

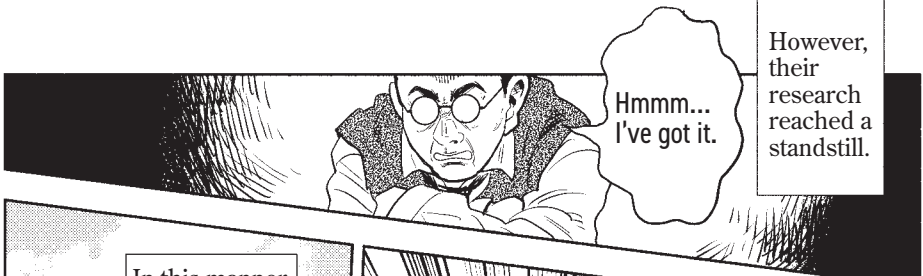


Naokichi Kaneko had no background in the field, but it didn't stop him from trying to offer outlandish advice.

Yes, add the slugs to the viscose!

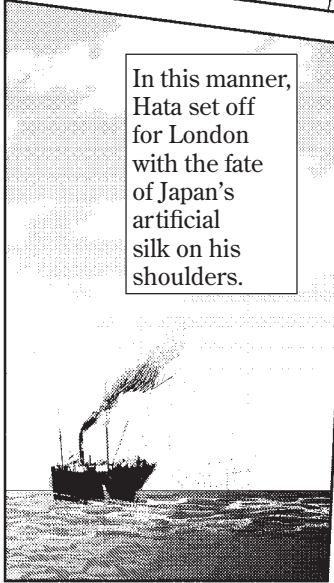
Slugs?!



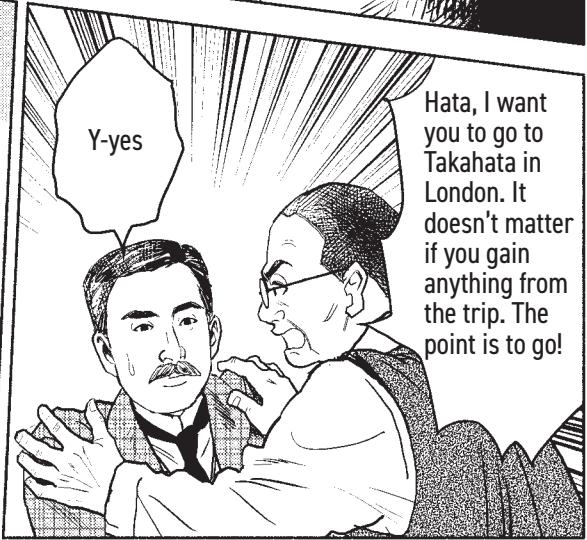


However, their research reached a standstill.

Hmmm... I've got it.

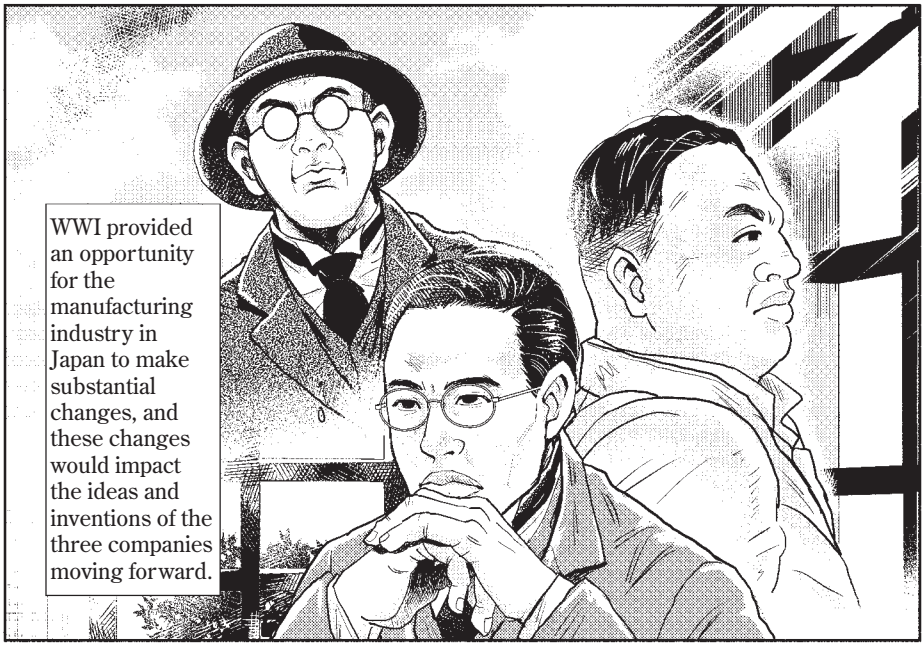


In this manner, Hata set off for London with the fate of Japan's artificial silk on his shoulders.



Y-yes

Hata, I want you to go to Takahata in London. It doesn't matter if you gain anything from the trip. The point is to go!



WWI provided an opportunity for the manufacturing industry in Japan to make substantial changes, and these changes would impact the ideas and inventions of the three companies moving forward.

Nissa Shokai and the Raj of Sarawak: Comprehensive Rubber Production on the Island of Borneo

Shozo Yorioka (1865–1911), the older brother of Kobe Steel, Ltd. executive Shosuke Yorioka (1873–1937) had a reputation as an adventurer and world traveler. He even made a proposal to the Japanese government that the country incorporate Iwo Jima, an island in the Pacific that at the time did not belong to any nation. In Shozo's first meeting with Naokichi Kaneko, he put forward the idea of establishing a rubber plantation in the Raj of Sarawak (present-day Sarawak, Malaysia and a portion of Brunei), an independent state located in the northwest region of the island of Borneo. Kaneko quickly took a liking to the bold and adventurous Shozo.

Despite the Rajah (king) of Sarawak's reputation for refusing land to foreigners, Shozo successfully persuaded him and was granted the license to establish a plantation. Shozo proceeded to establish a new company called Nissa Shokai. Nissa Shokai took over the rubber business of Azuma Kogyo (now Nichirin Co., Ltd.), a subsidiary of Suzuki & Co., and the company went on to develop an integrated business structure that encompassed the entire rubber manufacturing process, from cultivation of the rubber plant to production of rubber goods. However, Shozo contracted malaria during a visit to Japan and passed away suddenly in 1911. Shosuke Yorioka, Shozo's younger brother, shared his brother's ambitions and took on the role of president of Nissa Shokai. He dedicated himself to fostering trade and friendship between Japan and the Raj of Sarawak. In 1929, the Rajah and Ranees (queen) of Sarawak paid a visit to Japan. The journey was made possible through planning and facilitation by Nissa Shokai. It is said that this visit played an important part in the transmission of rice cultivation practices from Okinawa to Sarawak and further strengthened the ties between Japan and Sarawak.



Shozo Yorioka



Nissa Shokai



Shosuke Yorioka



Nissa Shokai facilitated the Rajah and Ranees's visit to Japan in 1929. Charles Vyner Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak (pictured front row, second from left) with his delegation, Shosuke Yorioka (back row, second from left), and other members of Nissa Shokai senior leadership

Japan Cotton Trading's Headquarters Became an Annex for the Bank of Japan's Osaka Branch after WW1



Headquarters of Japan Cotton Trading, completed in 1909 (right) and the new facility completed in 1953 (left)

Japan Cotton Trading's headquarters building was constructed in Nakanoshima, Osaka City in 1909. The two-story Western-style structure became one of Osaka's most iconic architectural works and drew in visitors from around the country. Japan Cotton Trading used the building as its head office for 44 years until 1953, when construction of a new facility at the original building's west side was completed. The first structure went on to be used as an annex for the Bank of Japan's Osaka Branch for many years.

Devout Zen Buddhist Katsujiro Iwai

Katsujiro Iwai's daily life consisted of just two things: work and Zen. He sat in zazen meditation, a Zen Buddhist meditative practice, for at least three hours every day. Iwai began each morning before sunrise, joining his servants in sweeping the walkways around his home with bamboo brooms. He continued this practice every single day, rain or shine, due to his unwavering belief in its power as a method for maintaining good health. Iwai was introduced to Zen by Sumitomo's Teigo Iba, the businessman known for resolving the conflict over the Besshi Copper Mines in Ehime Prefecture. It is also said that Iwai originally pursued Zen practice as a way to overcome his short-tempered nature.



In his later years, Katsujiro Iwai established the Nagaoka Zen Training Center in Nagaokakyo City, Kyoto Prefecture



Katsujiro Iwai was a devout follower of Zen Buddhism