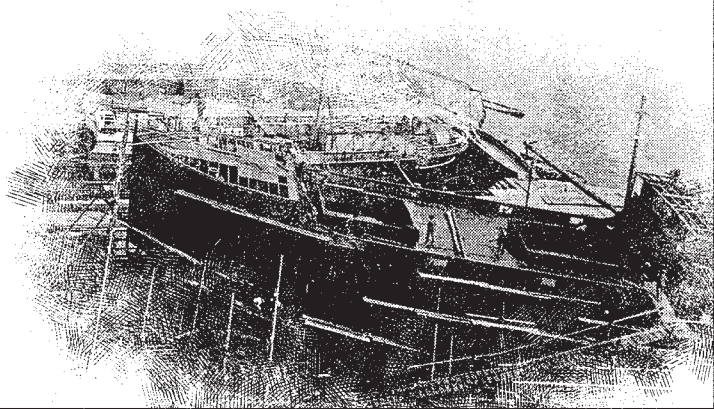
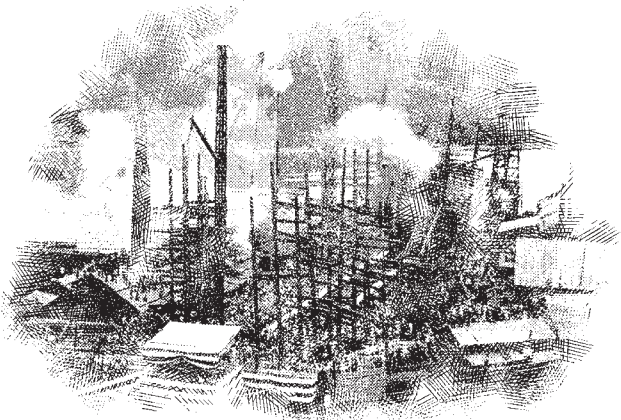


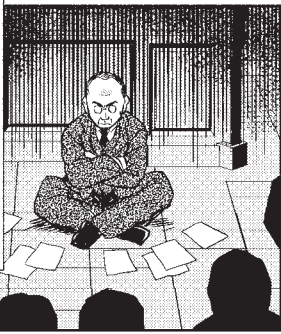
Chapter 3

Suzuki & Co.

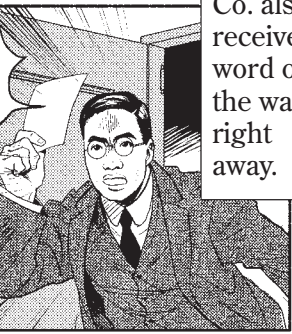
Naokichi Kaneko's Command and Suzuki's
Entrance into the Shipbuilding Business



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.

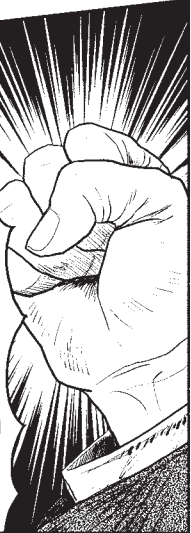
Also add that I leave Takahata in charge.

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...



おおっ

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!

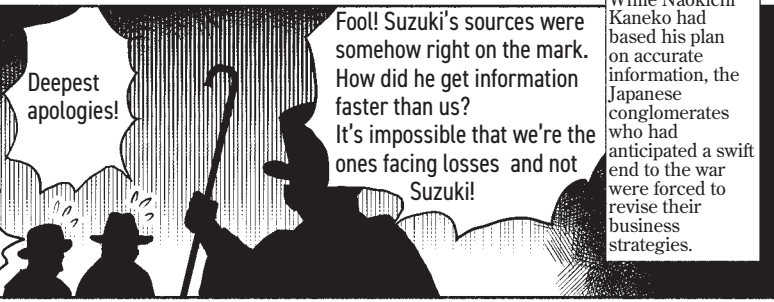


Grrr...No wonder Mr. Shibusawa held Naokichi Kaneko in high regard.

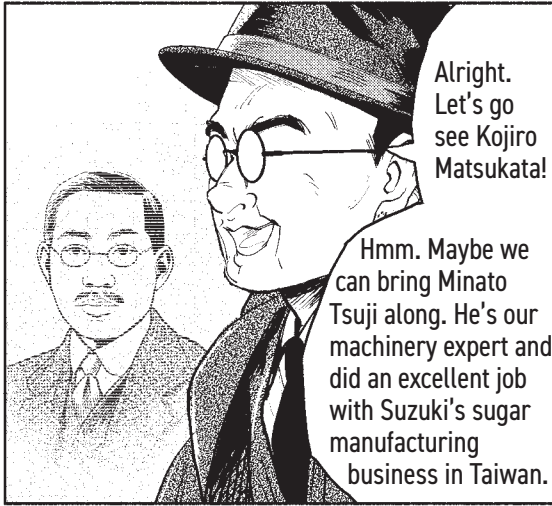
Deepest apologies!

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.

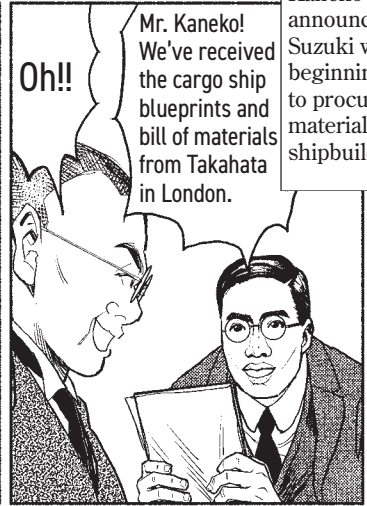


As Naokichi Kaneko had announced, Suzuki was beginning to procure materials for shipbuilding.



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.

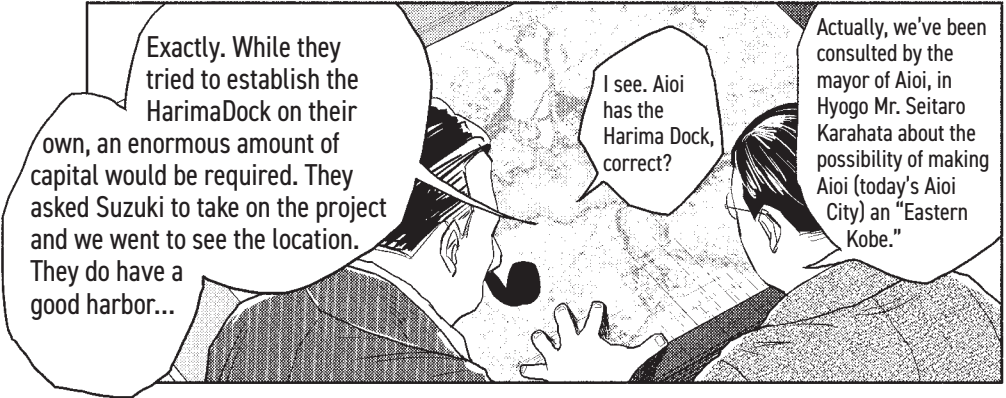


Yes!

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."

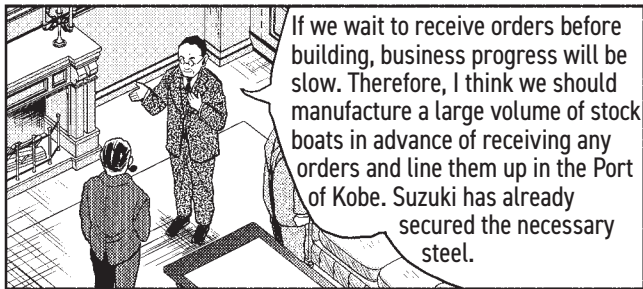


Your plan is impressively detailed. I'd expect nothing less from Suzuki & Co. Mr. Kaneko, you certainly gather the best engineers. I'll provide any advice as necessary. We can work together to make Japan one of the world's top shipbuilding countries. I'll provide any advice as necessary.

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.

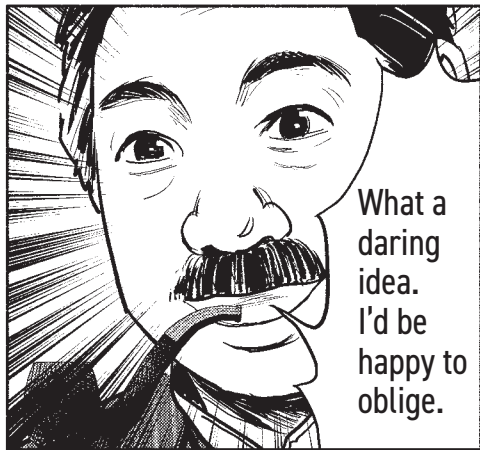


You and Takahata—our London branch manager—can sell our ships all throughout the British empire!

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.

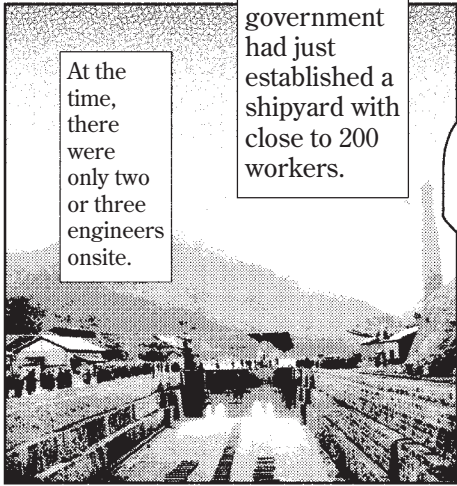


You're right, but we need to look even further ahead.

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

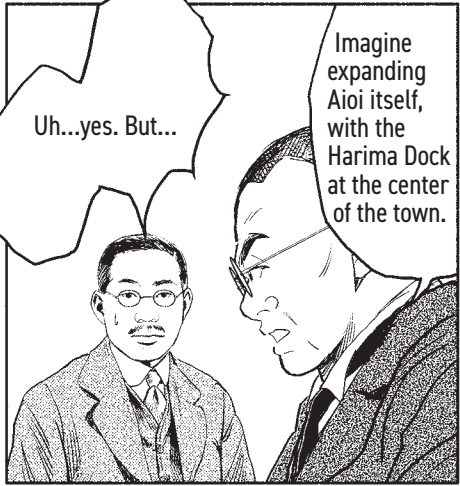
Tsuji - We've received Mr. Matsukata's stamp of approval. Let's give it everything we've got!

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



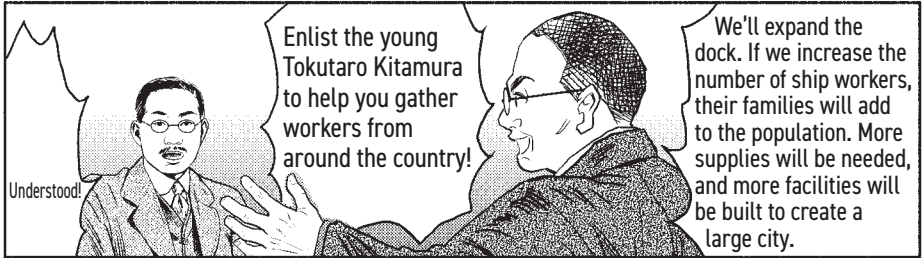
At the time, there were only two or three engineers onsite.

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!

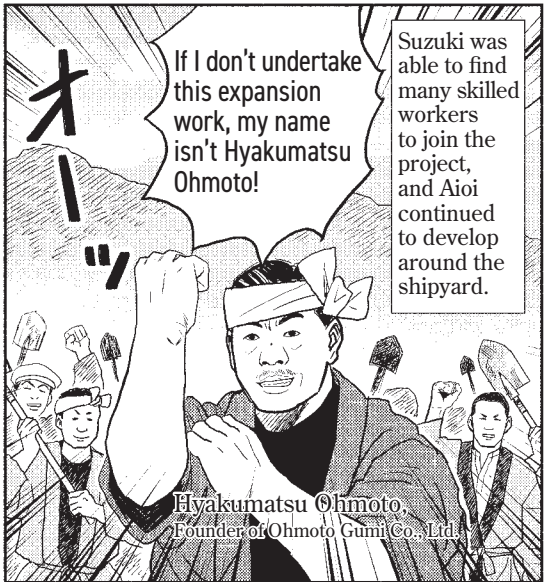
Enlist the young Tokutaro Kitamura to help you gather workers from around the country!

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.

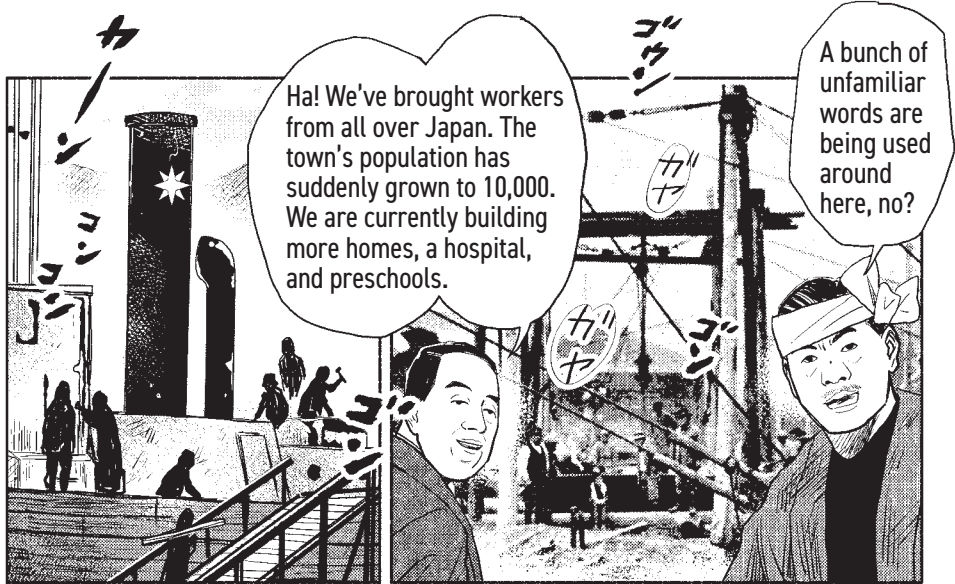
Tokutaro Kitamura
(later to become the Minister of Transport and Minister of Finance)



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.

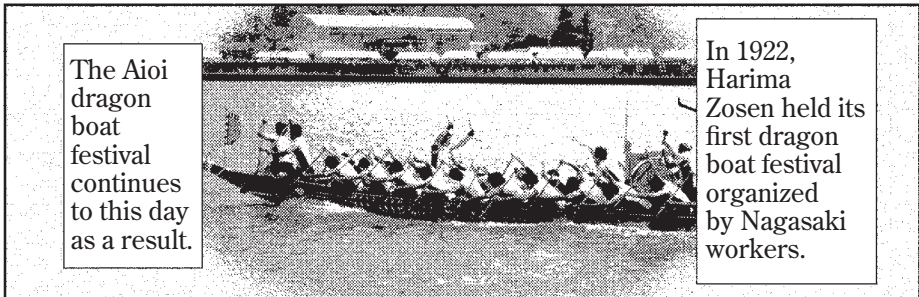
Mr. Yokoo, the men you brought from Nagasaki keep talking about doing a dragon boat race. What in the world are they on about?



Hello, Ohmoto. The more the merrier, right?

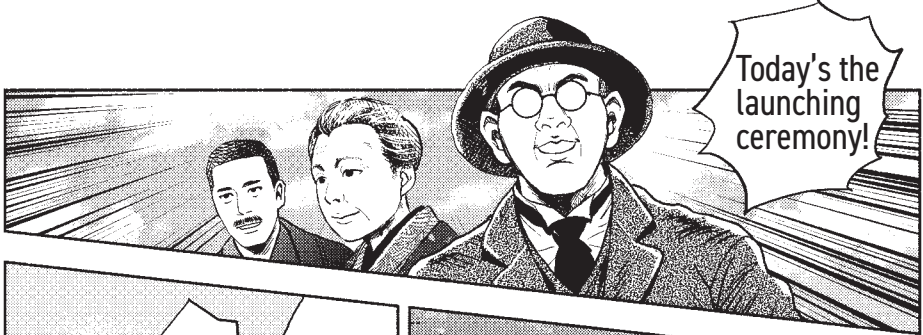
In fact, many workers had gathered in Aioi.

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.

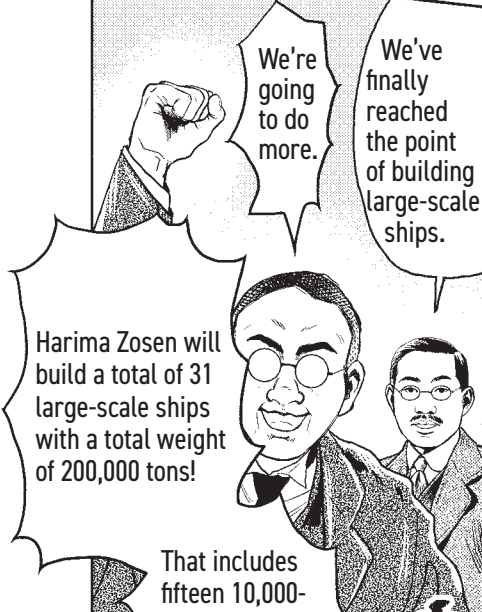


The Aioi dragon boat festival continues to this day as a result.

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



Today's the launching ceremony!



We're going to do more.

We've finally reached the point of building large-scale ships.

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.



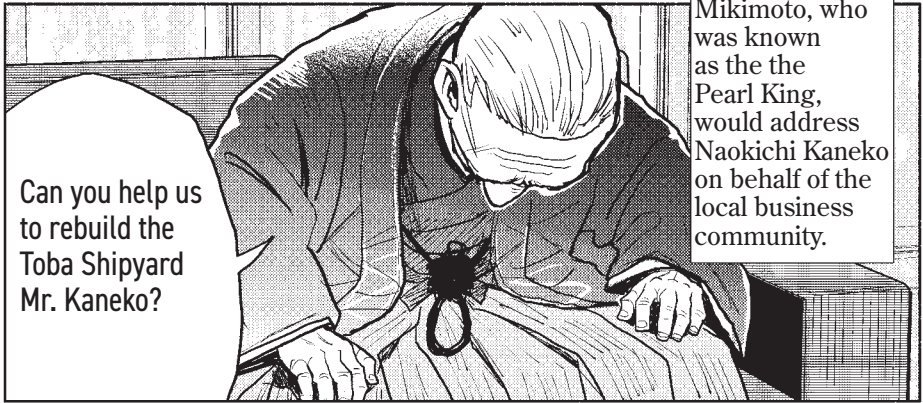
Just when Harima Zosen was sailing ahead, Suzuki received a new takeover bid.

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



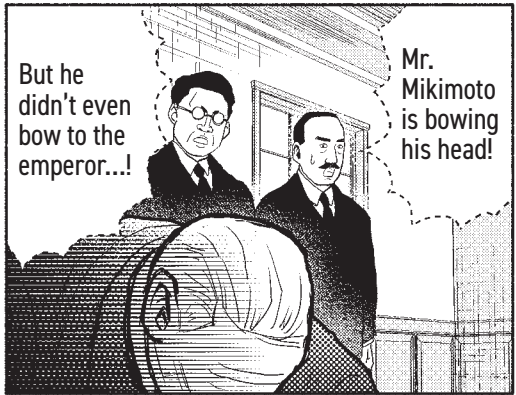
Yes, Mr. Mikimoto is here to speak with you.

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



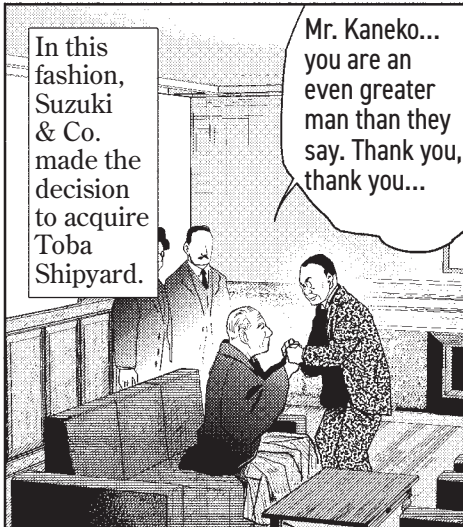
Can you help us to rebuild the Toba Shipyard Mr. Kaneko?

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



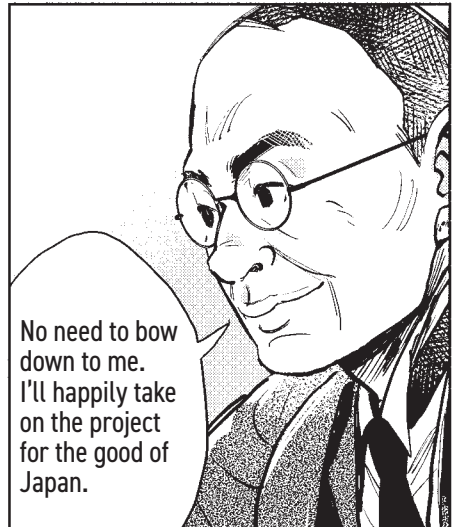
But he didn't even bow to the emperor...!

Mr. Mikimoto is bowing his head!

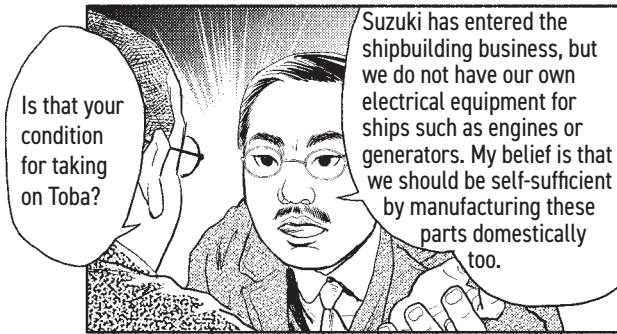


In this fashion, Suzuki & Co. made the decision to acquire Toba Shipyard.

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

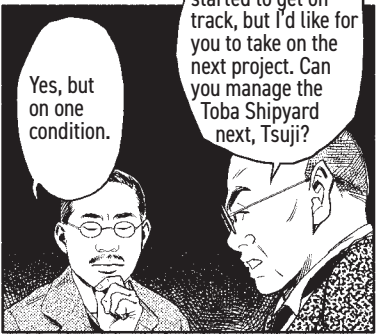


No need to bow down to me. I'll happily take on the project for the good of Japan.



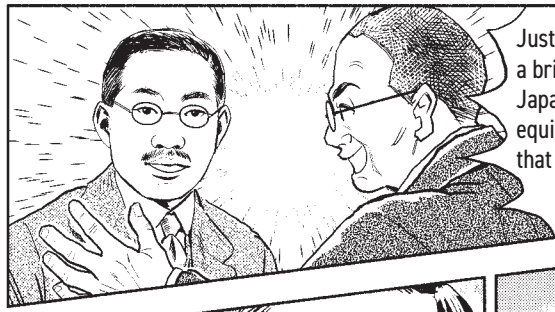
Is that your condition for taking on Toba?

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.

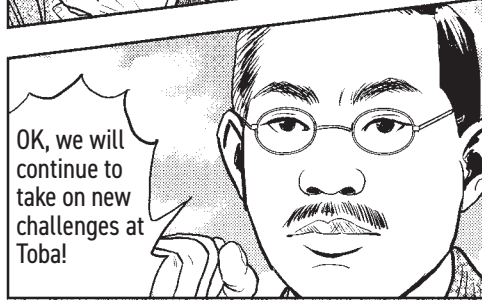


Yes, but on one condition.

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?

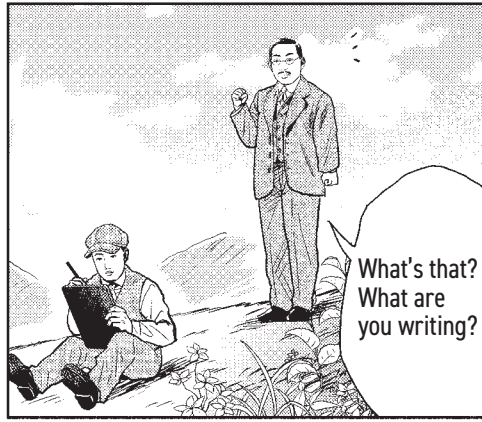


Just what I'd expected from you, Tsuji! What a brilliant idea. You have my full support. Japan must develop its own electrical equipment. I trust this business will be one that can support Suzuki in the future!

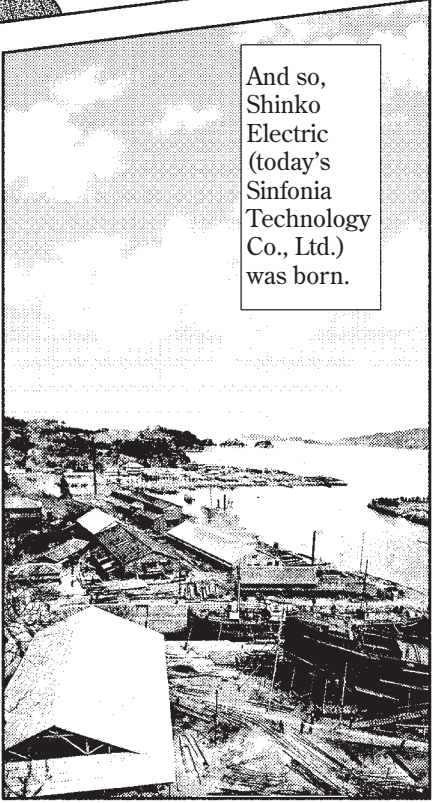


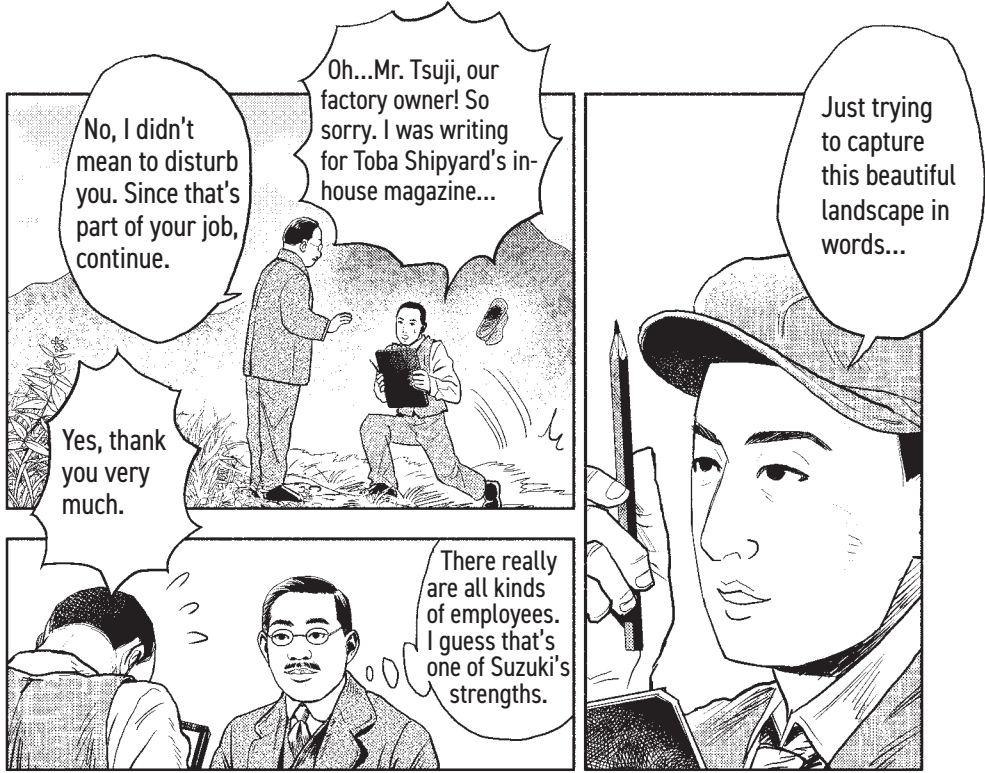
OK, we will continue to take on new challenges at Toba!

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



What's that? What are you writing?





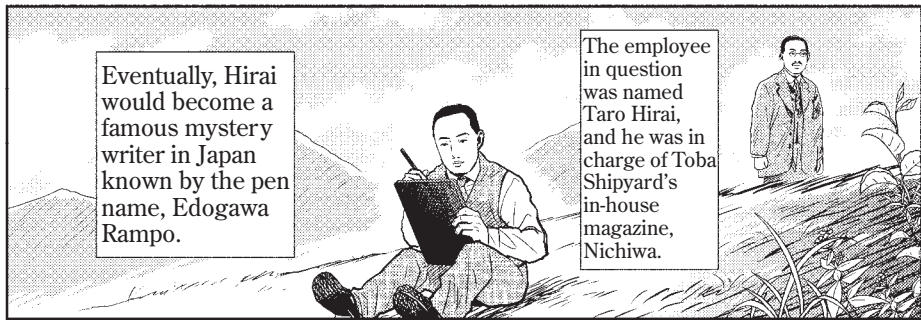
No, I didn't mean to disturb you. Since that's part of your job, continue.

Oh...Mr. Tsuji, our factory owner! So sorry. I was writing for Toba Shipyard's in-house magazine...

Just trying to capture this beautiful landscape in words...

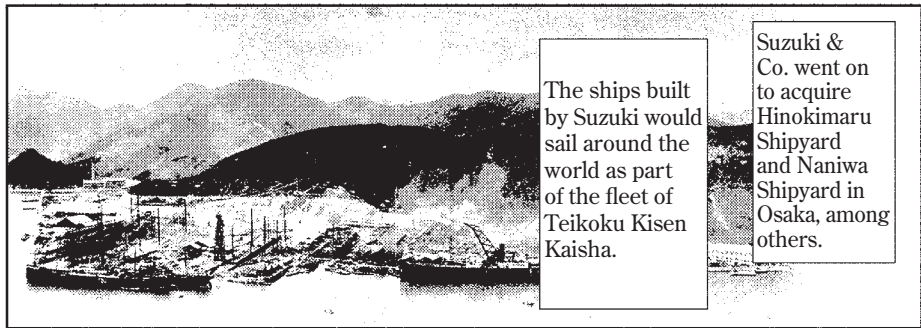
Yes, thank you very much.

There really are all kinds of employees. I guess that's one of Suzuki's strengths.



Eventually, Hirai would become a famous mystery writer in Japan known by the pen name, Edogawa Rampo.

The employee in question was named Taro Hirai, and he was in charge of Toba Shipyard's in-house magazine, Nichiwa.



The ships built by Suzuki would sail around the world as part of the fleet of Teikoku Kisen Kaisha.

Suzuki & Co. went on to acquire Hinokimaru Shipyard and Naniwa Shipyard in Osaka, among others.