

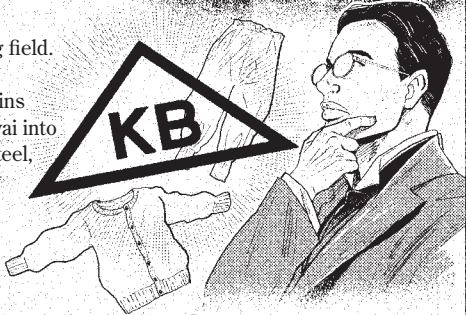
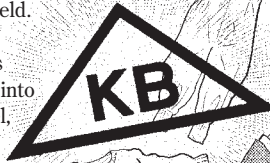


**Suzuki & Co. builds a new industrial park in Dairi, Kitakyushu. The company begins manufacturing sugar, wheat, beer, and shochu.**



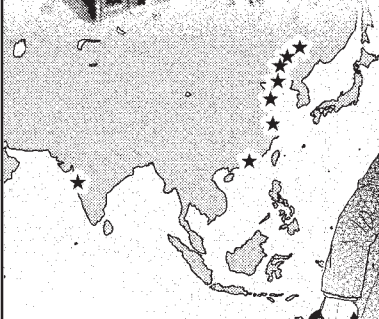
**Iwai & Co. enters the knitwear manufacturing field.**

**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.

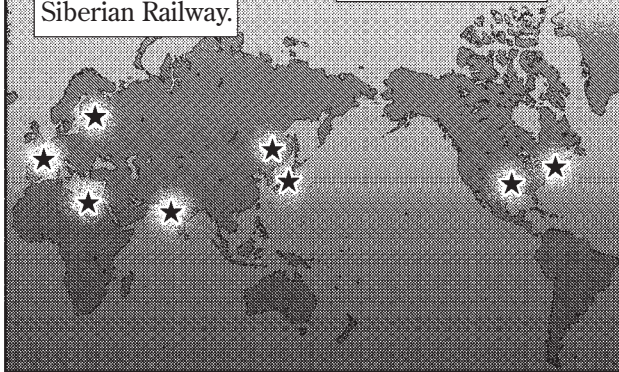
What  
story?

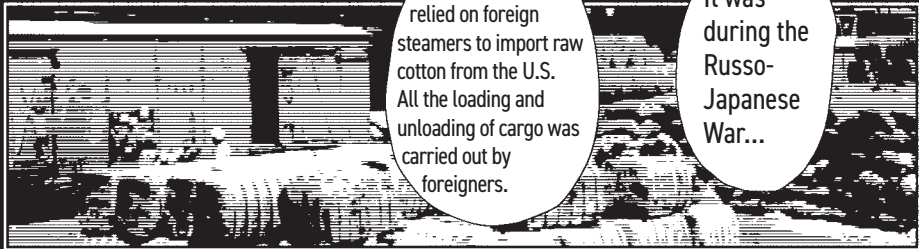
Have you  
heard  
the story  
about Mr.  
Kita?

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.

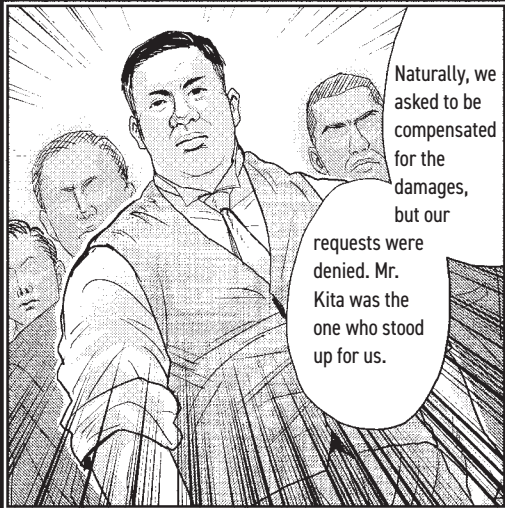
Last August, Kita worked  
in the U.S. in Fort Worth,  
Texas. From there, he visited  
New York and traveled  
through Europe and India to  
carry out a series of intensive  
inspections.



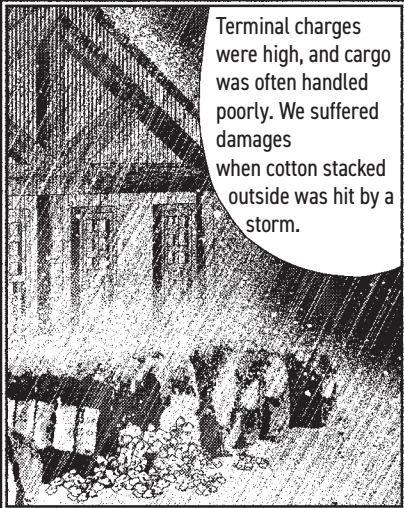


At the time, Japan relied on foreign steamers to import raw cotton from the U.S. All the loading and unloading of cargo was carried out by foreigners.

It was during the Russo-Japanese War...

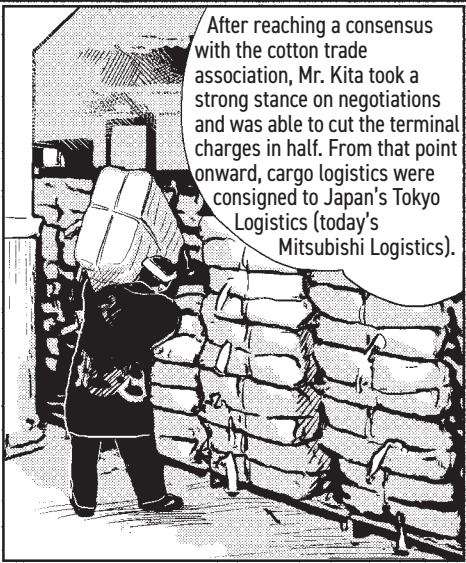
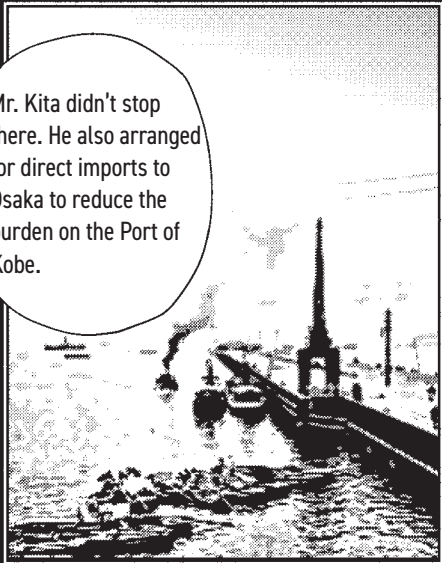


Naturally, we asked to be compensated for the damages, but our requests were denied. Mr. Kita was the one who stood up for us.



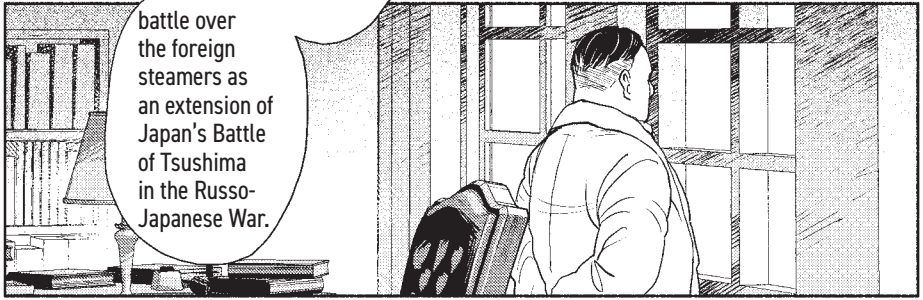
Terminal charges were high, and cargo was often handled poorly. We suffered damages when cotton stacked outside was hit by a storm.

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).



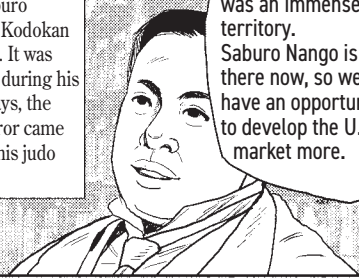


Saburo Nango went on to marry the daughter of the late Ichibei Tanaka (the former president of Japan Cotton Trading) and crossed the ocean to the U.S.

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.

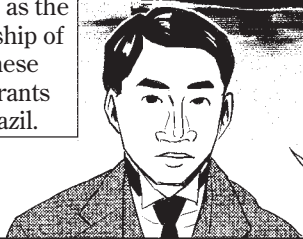
Mr. Nango's samurai spirit will surely hold sway in the U.S.



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



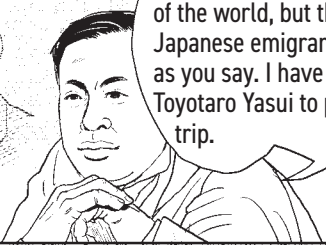
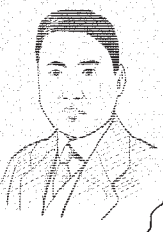
South America makes reminds me of the Brazilian immigrants...



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

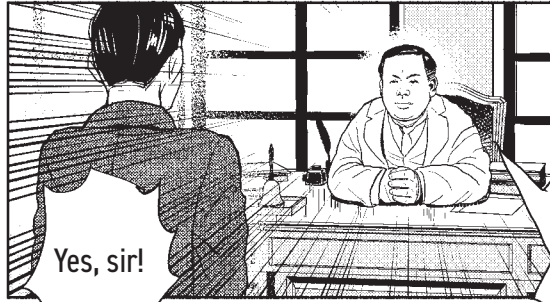
What are your thoughts on Africa and South America?

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.



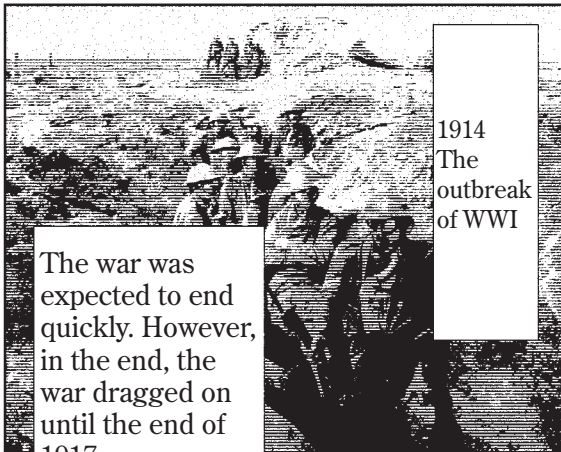
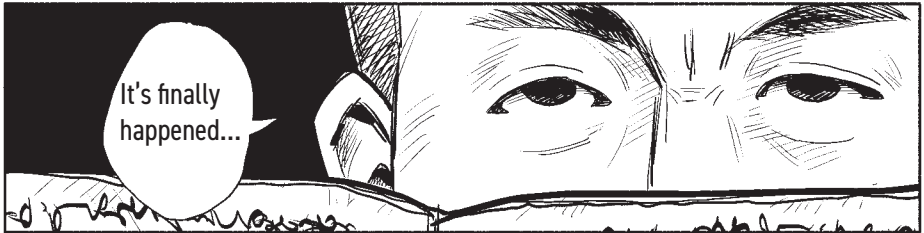
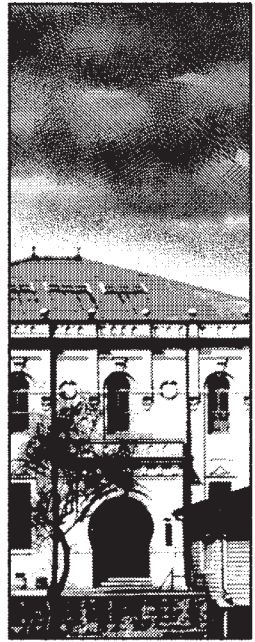
For exports, we'll go beyond cotton yarn and add cotton cloth. Let's also expand our business in China. We're a top importer of cotton, but from now on we must focus on building our presence as an exporter. Let's increase the lineup of products we handle.

Yes, sir!





**Bad news!  
Europe's  
at war!**



1914  
The  
outbreak  
of WWI

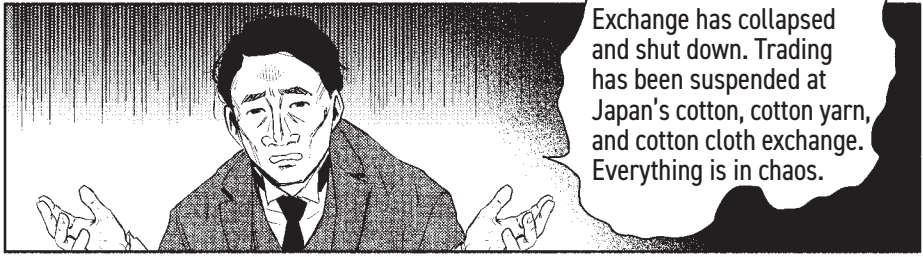
The war was expected to end quickly. However, in the end, the war dragged on until the end of 1917.



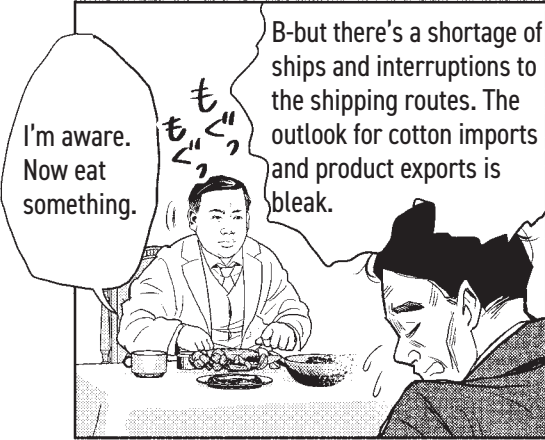
What should we do, Mr. Kita?

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





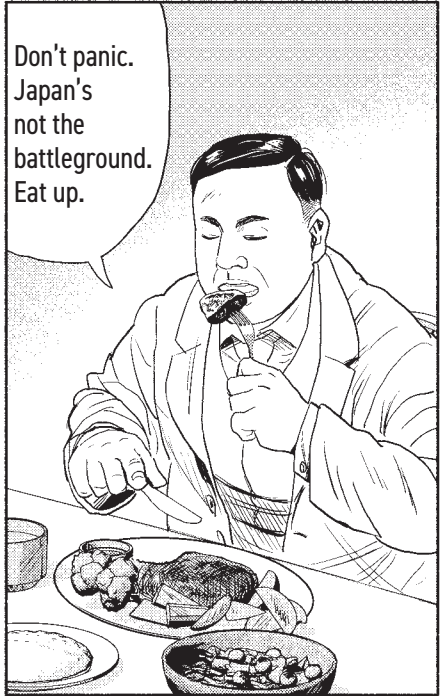
The New York Cotton Exchange has collapsed and shut down. Trading has been suspended at Japan's cotton, cotton yarn, and cotton cloth exchange. Everything is in chaos.



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.

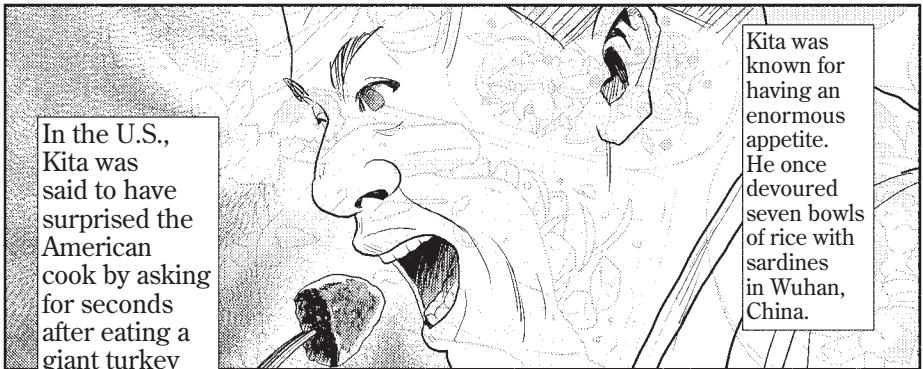


Don't panic. Japan's not the battleground. Eat up.



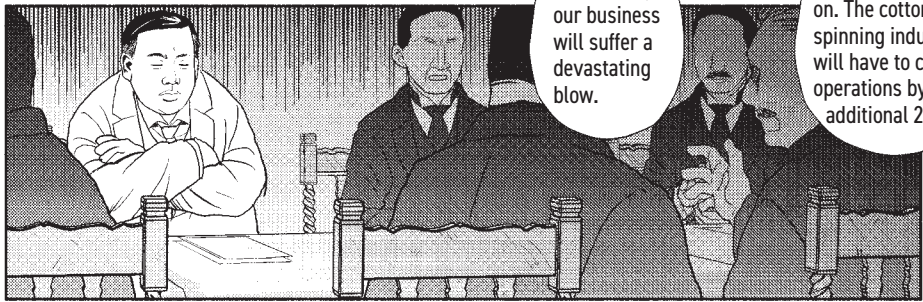
A-alright...

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



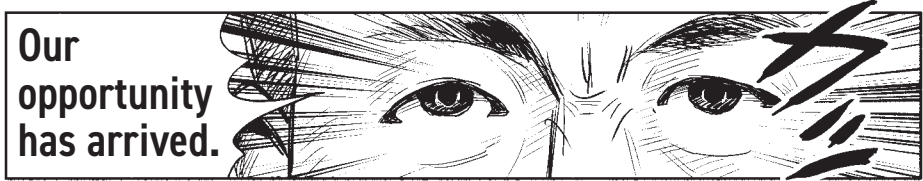
In the U.S., Kita was said to have surprised the American cook by asking for seconds after eating a giant turkey thigh.

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

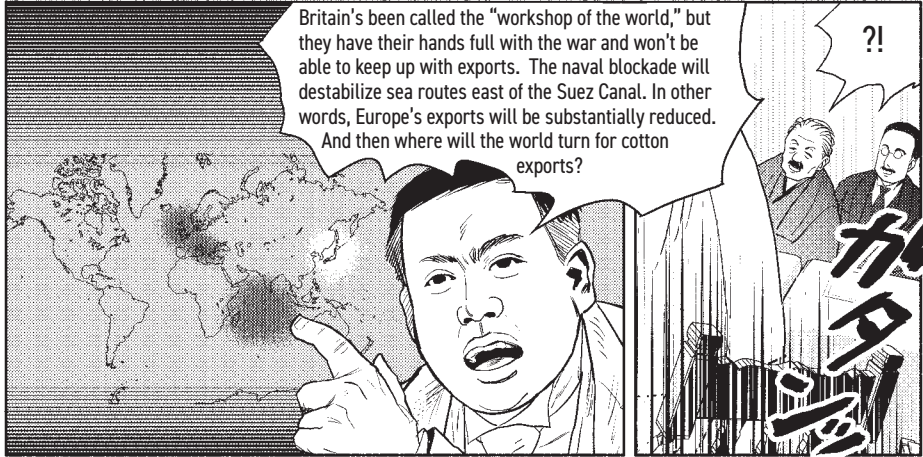


At this rate, our business will suffer a devastating blow.

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?

?!  
か  
た  
ら  
し  
や  
う



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...



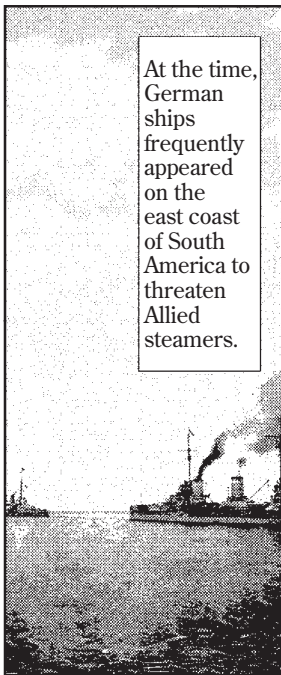
We must be able to take on a high volume of orders. Direct all our regional expatriate employees to prepare for procurement! The orders will start pouring in. When they do, be sure you can handle any request!

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

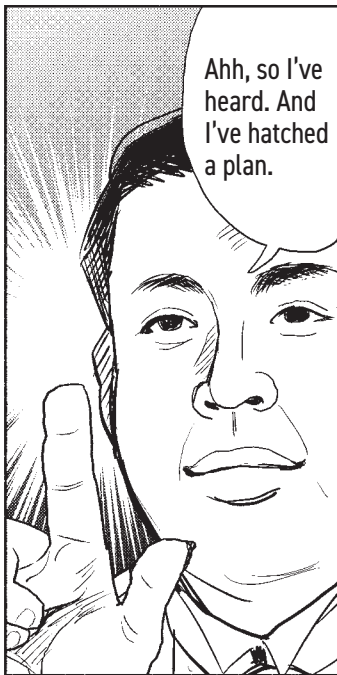


Orders began to flood in not only from the warring countries, but from Southeast Asia and Africa, which had been dependent on Europe.

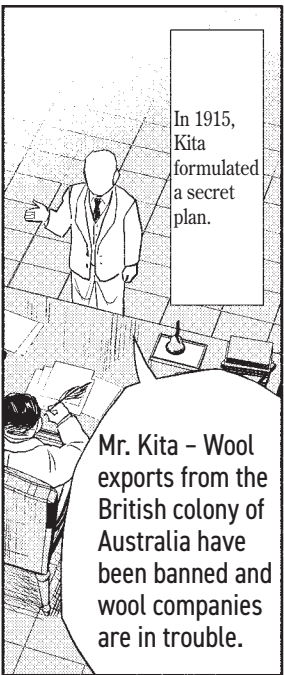
Kita's predictions hit the mark.



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.



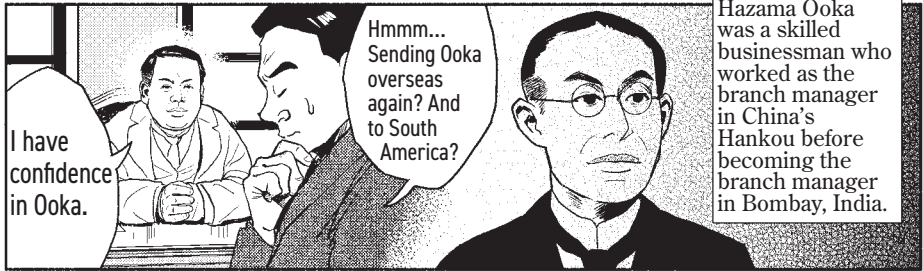


Argentina?!  
That's  
in South  
America!



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

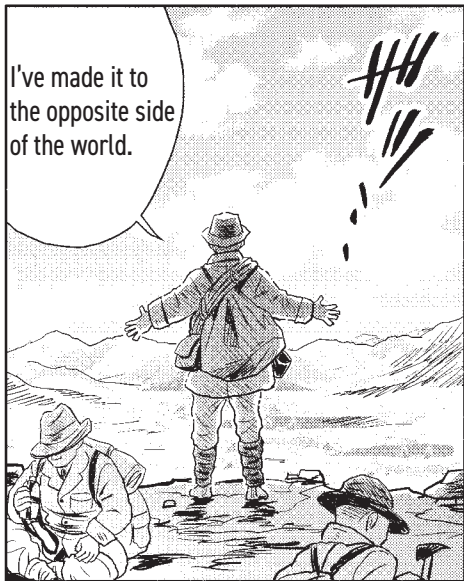
Send a telegram to Hazama Ooka right away. We'll have Ooka go to Argentina.



I have confidence in Ooka.

Hmm... 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.

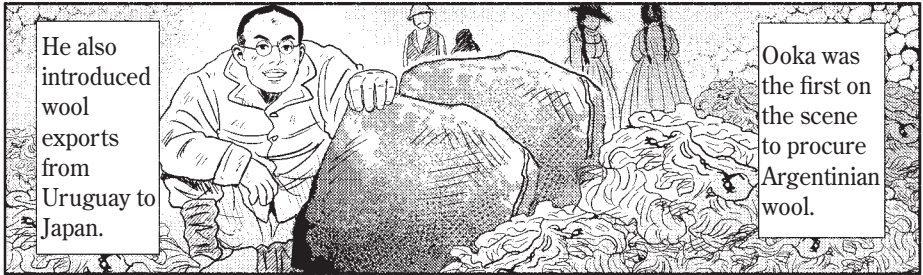
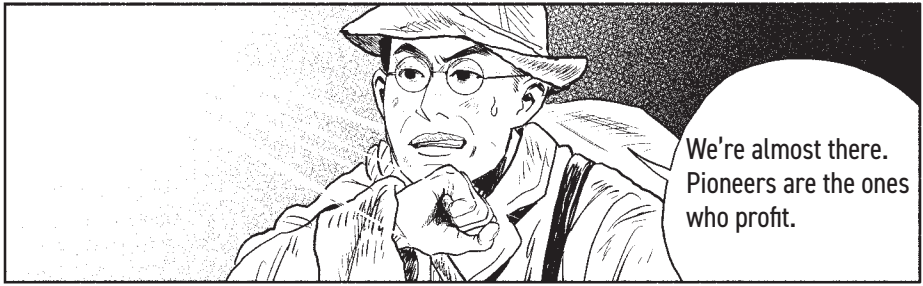


I've made it to the opposite side of the world.

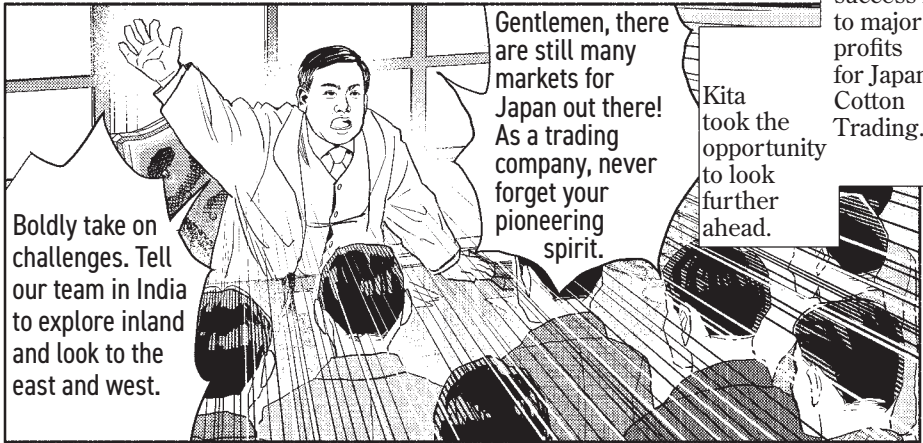


the Andes Mountains along the western coast of South America to enter Argentina.

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



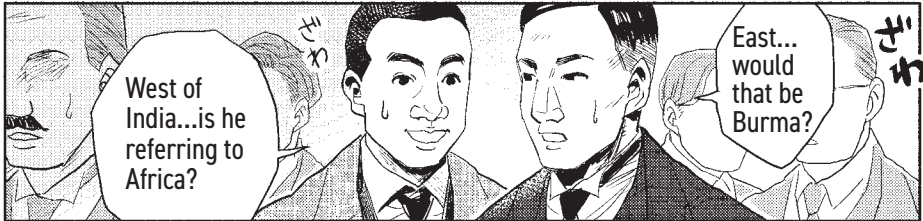
Ooka's success led to major profits for Japan Cotton Trading.



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

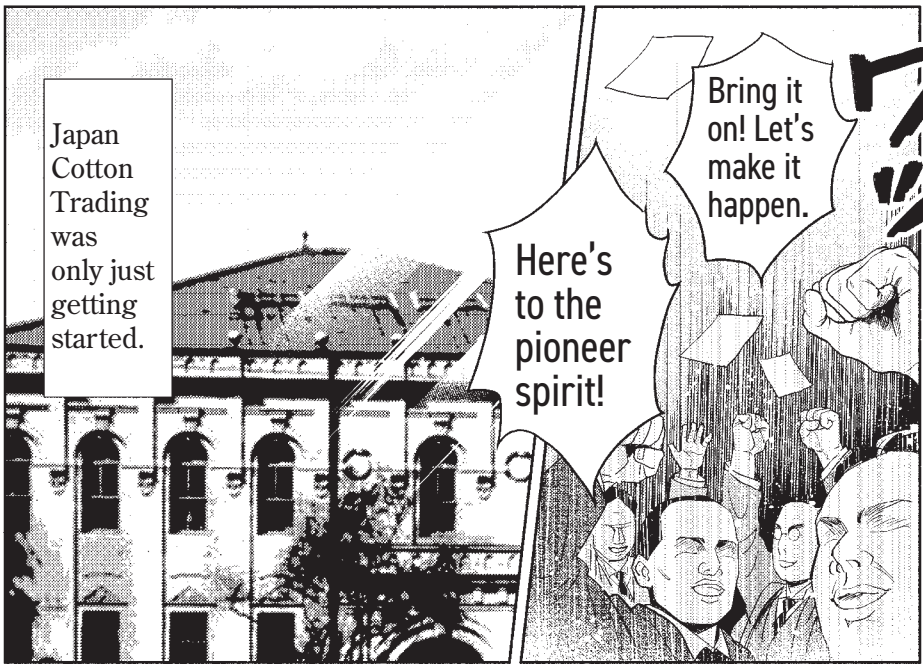
Gentlemen, there are still many markets for Japan out there! As a trading company, never forget your pioneering spirit.

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.