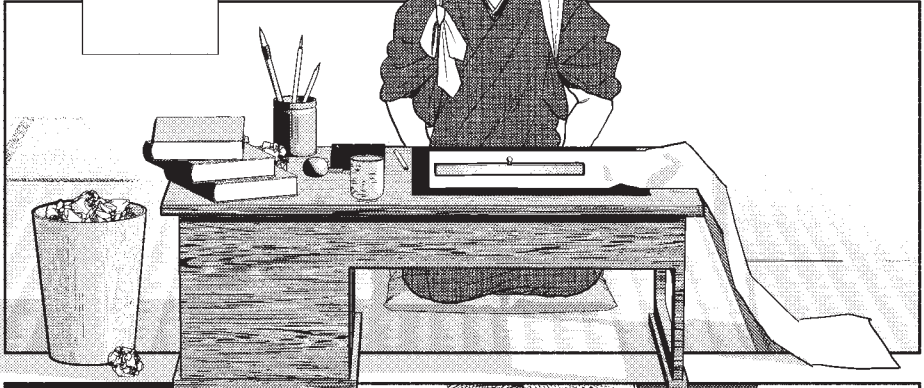
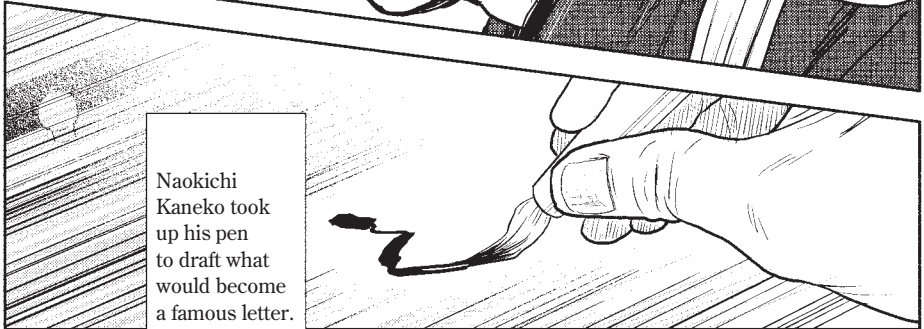


The year
was 1915.



I must
communicate
my thoughts
to Takahata
and all those in
London...



Naokichi
Kaneko took
up his pen
to draft what
would become
a famous letter.

Our business plan is progressing such that we are on track to achieve at the highest level to date. We have all been forged as merchants through these tumultuous times, and it is a true honor to be engaged in global commerce. We have achieved substantial gains during this transitional period of war, and we now are in a position to surpass Mitsui and Mitsubishi. It is only natural that we shall divide the business world into three kingdoms, which is the ideal position for all members of Suzuki & Co. I will have no regrets if these endeavors reduce my lifespan by half or even a full decade. In short, I have been struggling to find the best path forward for our continued success and even the German Emperor does not work as hard as I do.

I ask for your cooperation in London. I am penning this letter from my home in Suma prior to departing for work. To conclude, as General Heihachiro Togo said, "The fate of the Empire rests on the outcome of this battle."

November 11th

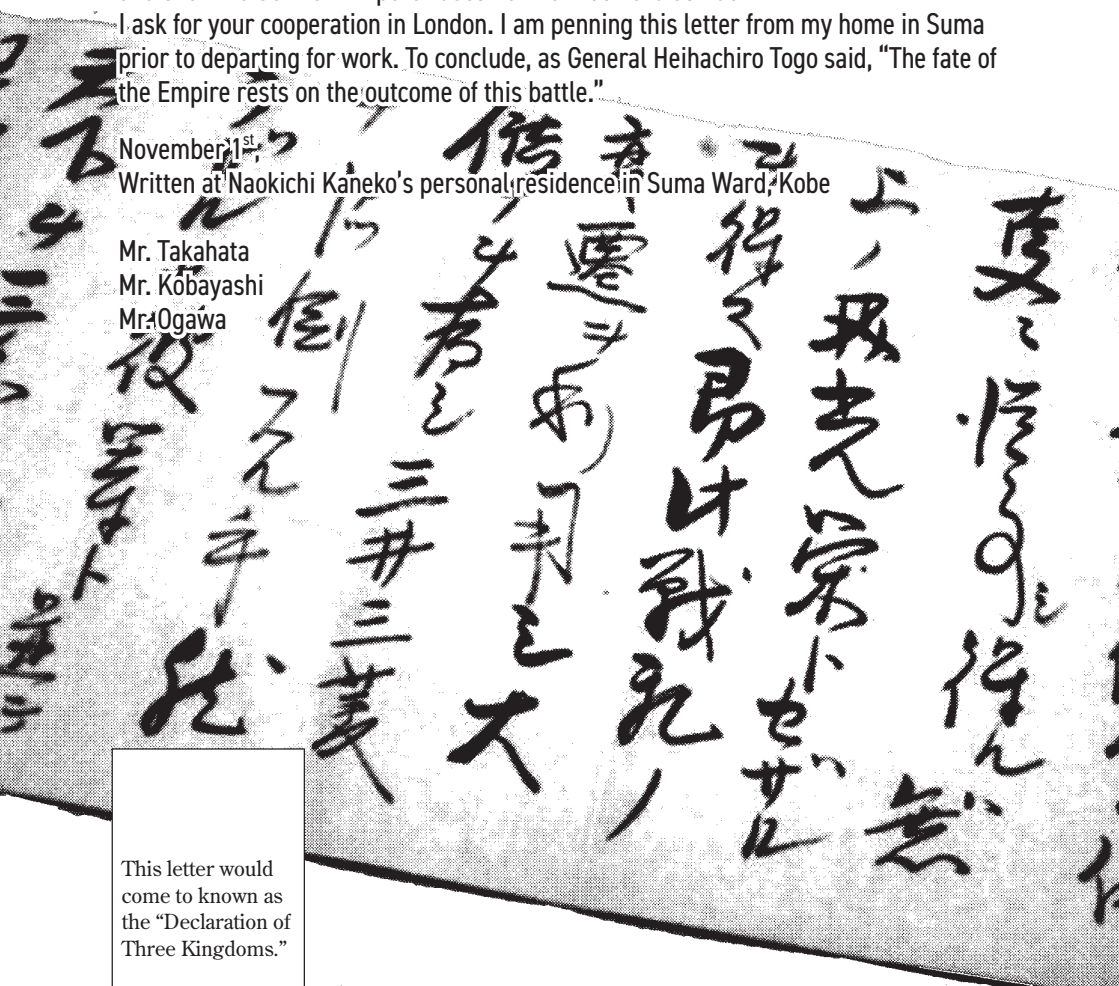
Written at Naokichi Kaneko's personal residence in Suma Ward, Kobe

Mr. Takahata

Mr. Kobayashi

Mr. Ogawa

This letter would come to know as the "Declaration of Three Kingdoms."





In 1917, Suzuki & Co.'s annual trade volume reached 1.54 million yen, and the company far outstripped other Japanese conglomerates.



Sojitz & Co. thus become the No. 1 general trading company in Japan, recording sales worth 10% of Japan's GNP.