

Hassojitz

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

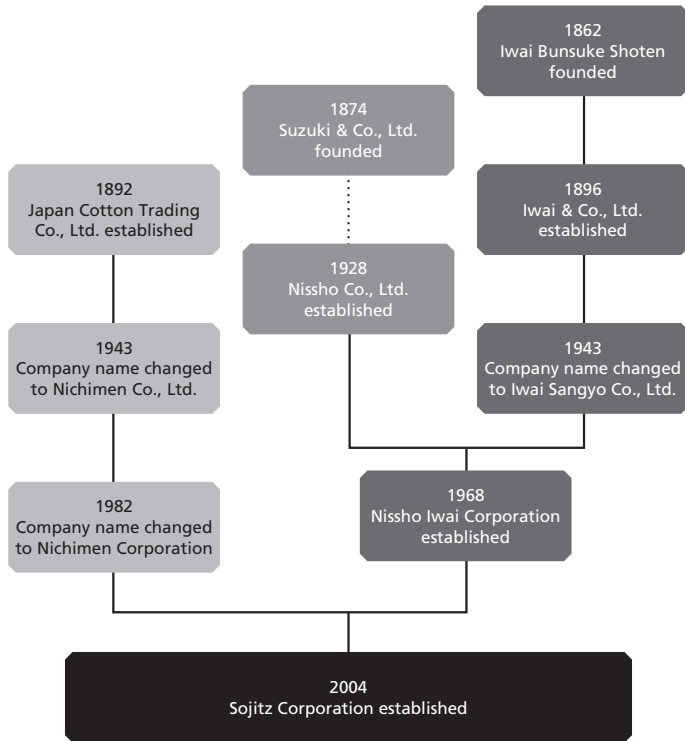


Volume
5

**Dark Clouds:
A Storm on
the Horizon**

 **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.

World War I proved to be a protracted war, despite predictions of a short-lived conflict. During the war, Japan's industrial revolution progressed, and the country was flooded with orders from around the world.

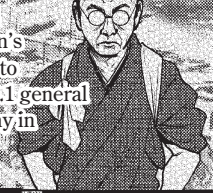
Japan's industrial sector grasped this opportunity to take a giant leap forward.

Suzuki & Co.'s London Branch Manager, Seiichi Takahata challenged the British Empire in the business arena.

Takahata was feared as a kaiser-turned-merchant. It was said that 10% of the ships that passed through the Suez Canal were carrying cargo for Suzuki & Co.

Naokichi Kaneko sends a famous letter to the London office known as the "Declaration of Three Kingdoms" to loudly proclaim Suzuki's business ascent.

In 1917, Suzuki surpassed Japan's conglomerates to become the No. 1 general trading company in Japan.

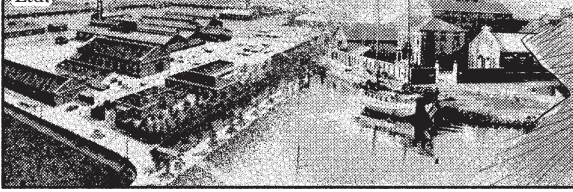


Before England became a battleground in the war, the country had been the world's largest cotton spinning country known as the "factory of the world." Matazo Kita of Japan Cotton Trading Co. encouraged his employees to take on Britain's export market.



Iwai & Co. aims to begin domestic production of the Soda Ash necessary for industrialization with the establishment of Nihon Soda Kogyo Co., Ltd (today's Tokuyama Corporation).

In order to reduce dependency on other countries for paint, Iwai & Co. also establishes Kansai Paint Co., Ltd.





Suzuki & Co. would face trials and tribulations amidst the U.S.'s participation in World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the of 1918 in Japan.

After the conclusion of World War I, the Paris Peace Conference was held in 1919. The war time recession would extend to the post-war years and bring the global economy to a standstill.

Despite these challenges, Sojitz's three predecessor companies would go on to raise their presence in the industrial area by shouldering Japan's industry and moving the country forward.

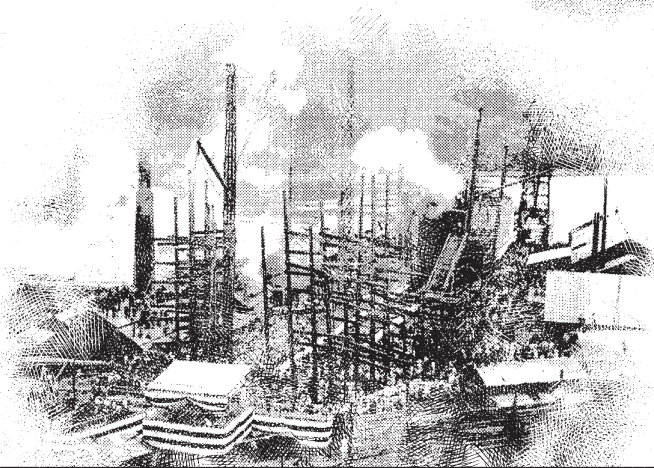
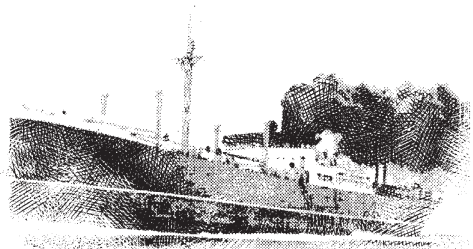
sojitz
Hassojitz

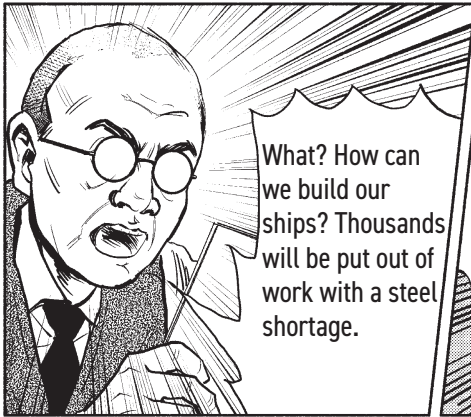
発想 × sojitz

Chapter 1

Suzuki & Co.

Agreement to Exchange Ships for Steel
Acquisition of Teikoku Oil Co. Ltd (renamed
Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K., today's Idemitsu
Kosan Co., Ltd.)

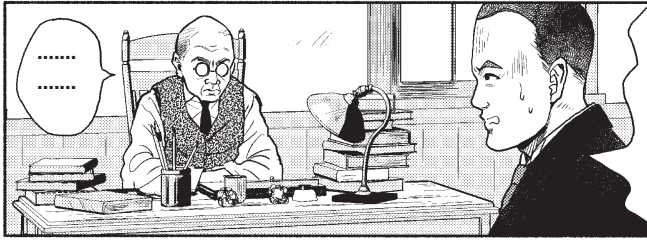




What? How can we build our ships? Thousands will be put out of work with a steel shortage.

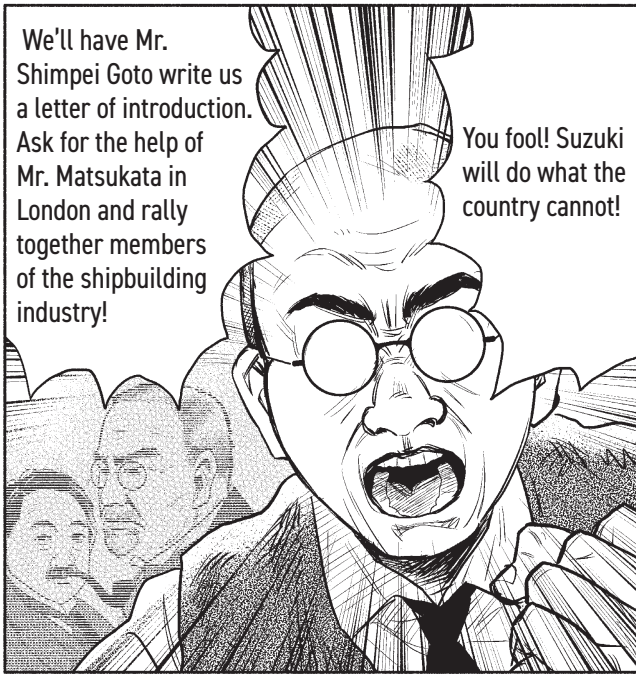


Bad news, Mr. Kaneko! Due to the war, the U.S. has announced a ban on steel imports!



.....
.....

Suzuki's orders amount to 120,000 tons, which is roughly one fourth of Japan's total of 460,000 tons in steel orders. Talks between the governments have broken down.



We'll have Mr. Shimpei Goto write us a letter of introduction. Ask for the help of Mr. Matsukata in London and rally together members of the shipbuilding industry!

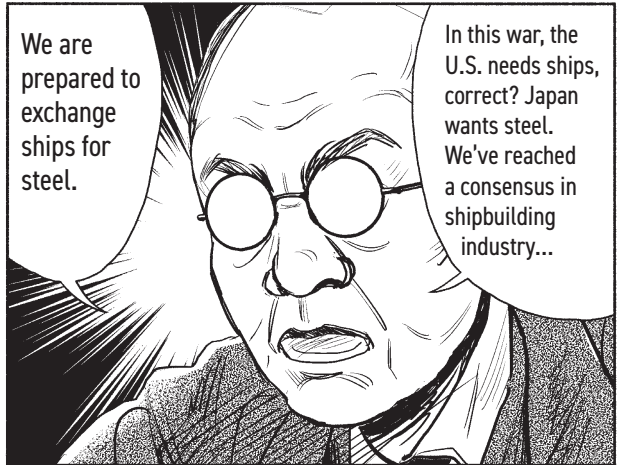
You fool! Suzuki will do what the country cannot!

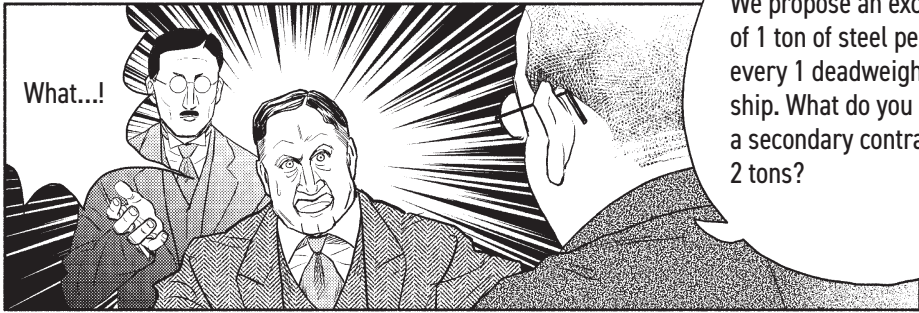


But even the government can't find a solution...

...I will handle this matter. Pack for Tokyo!

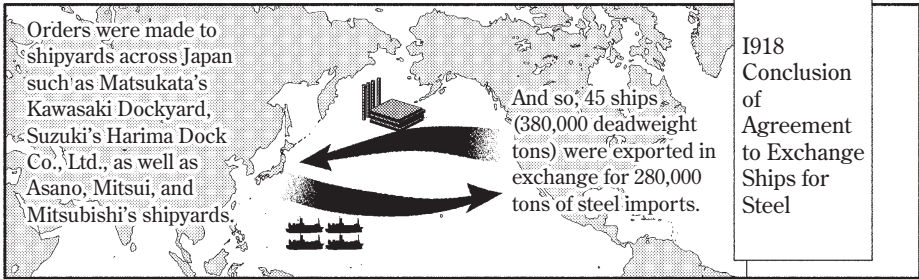
U.S.
Embassy
in Tokyo





What...!

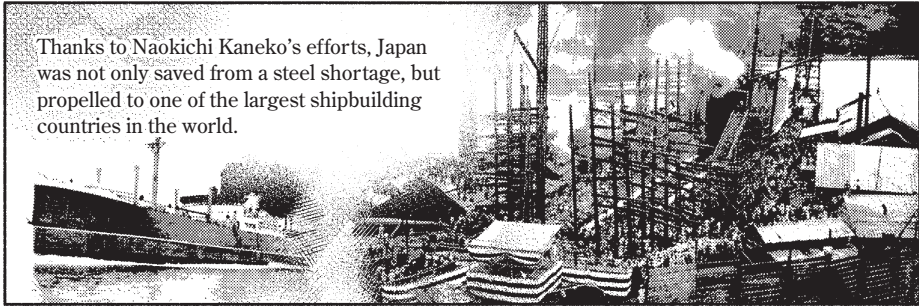
We propose an exchange of 1 ton of steel per every 1 deadweight ton ship. What do you say to a secondary contract for 2 tons?



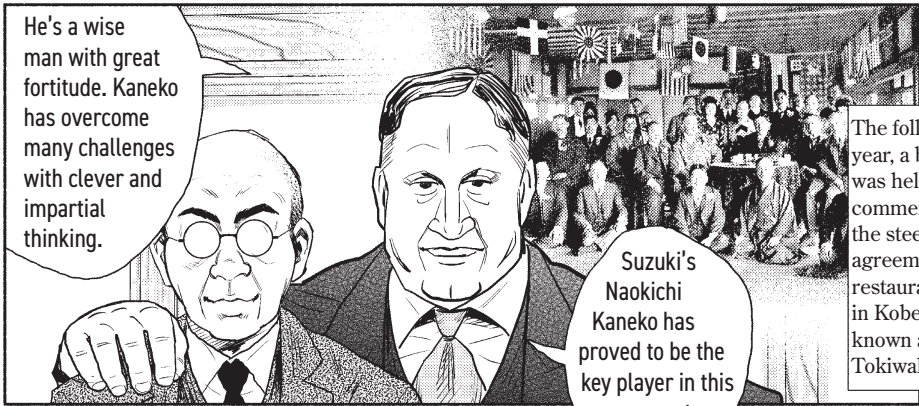
Orders were made to shipyards across Japan such as Matsukata's Kawasaki Dockyard, Suzuki's Harima Dock Co., Ltd., as well as Asano, Mitsui, and Mitsubishi's shipyards.

And so, 45 ships (380,000 deadweight tons) were exported in exchange for 280,000 tons of steel imports.

1918 Conclusion of Agreement to Exchange Ships for Steel



Thanks to Naokichi Kaneko's efforts, Japan was not only saved from a steel shortage, but propelled to one of the largest shipbuilding countries in the world.



He's a wise man with great fortitude. Kaneko has overcome many challenges with clever and impartial thinking.

Suzuki's Naokichi Kaneko has proved to be the key player in this agreement.

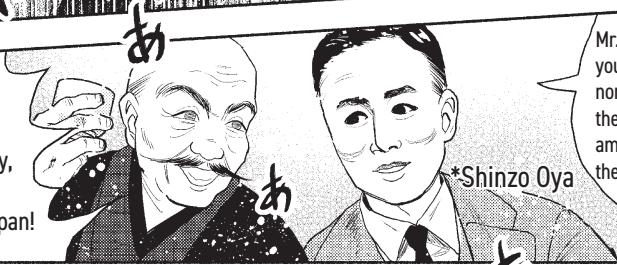
The following year, a banquet was held to commemorate the steel agreement at a restaurant in Kobe known as Tokiwakadan.



I can't praise him enough. Never have I met such a great man!

Cheers!

After being asked to lead the South Manchuria Railway, now you're on to ambassador of Japan!



Mr. Kaneko, I hear you have been nominated to be the Japanese ambassador to the U.S.

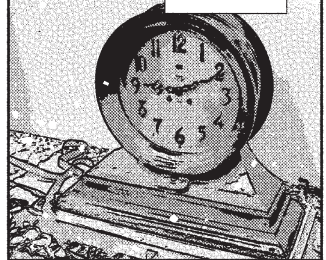
*Shinzo Oya

* later the President of Teijin, Minister of Transport, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Commerce and Industry

Naokichi Kaneko was active as ever in his business dealings.

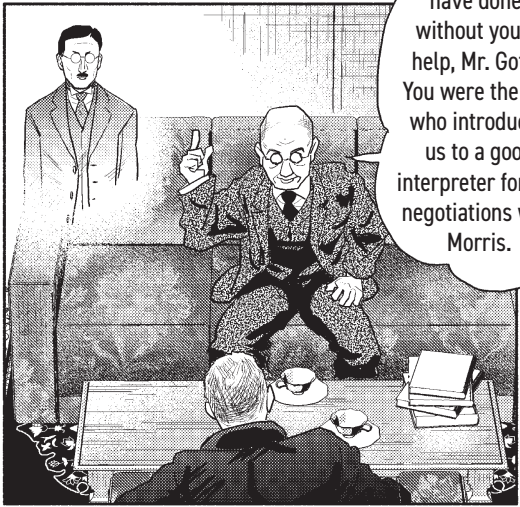
The commemorative clock gifted to Kaneko still exists today.

What a great achievement.

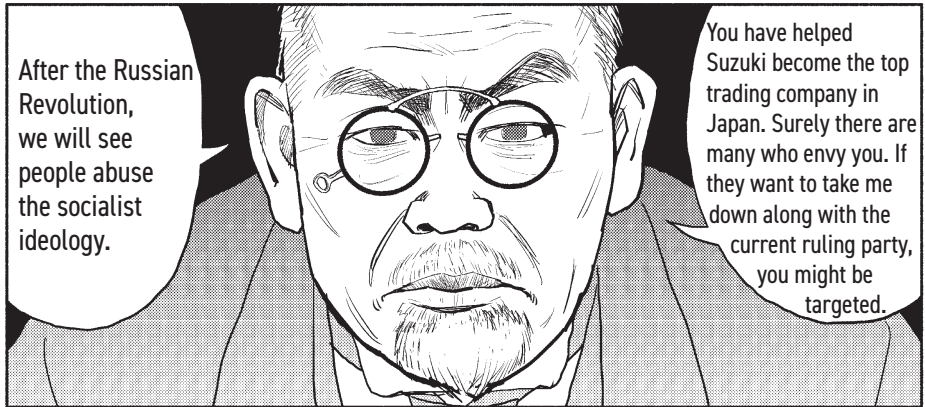




Beware, Kaneko. Conflict is brewing here in Japan.

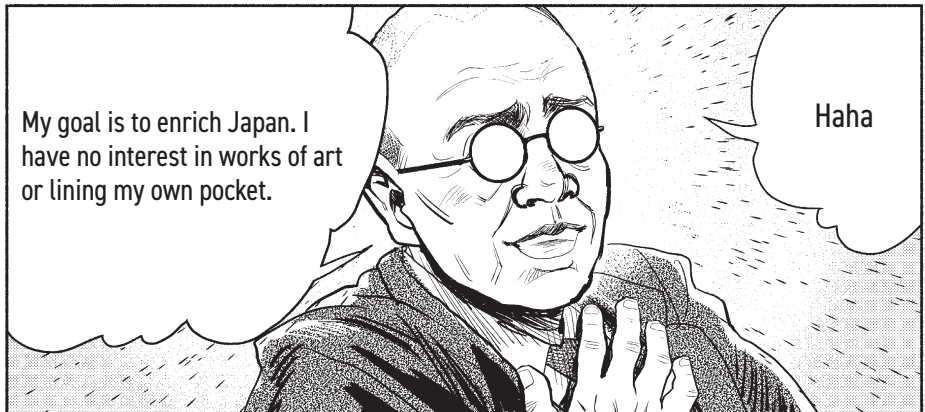


I couldn't have done it without your help, Mr. Goto. You were the one who introduced us to a good interpreter for our negotiations with Morris.



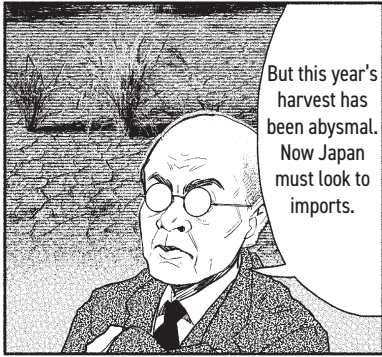
After the Russian Revolution, we will see people abuse the socialist ideology.

You have helped Suzuki become the top trading company in Japan. Surely there are many who envy you. If they want to take me down along with the current ruling party, you might be targeted.

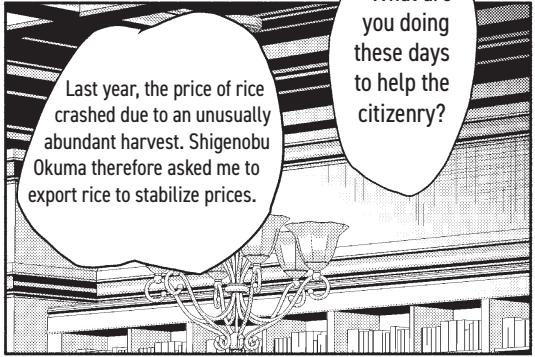


My goal is to enrich Japan. I have no interest in works of art or lining my own pocket.

Haha

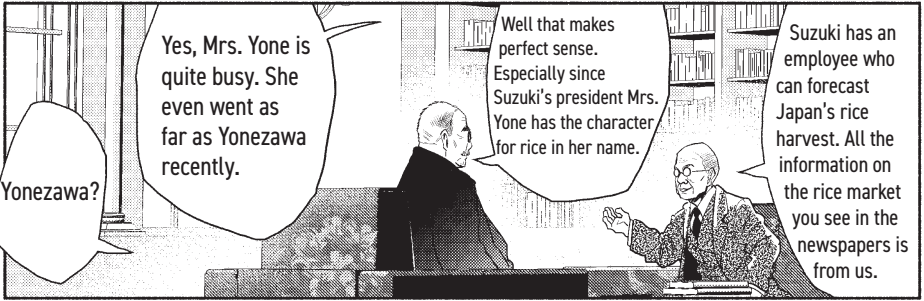


But this year's harvest has been abysmal. Now Japan must look to imports.



Last year, the price of rice crashed due to an unusually abundant harvest. Shigenobu Okuma therefore asked me to export rice to stabilize prices.

What are you doing these days to help the citizenry?

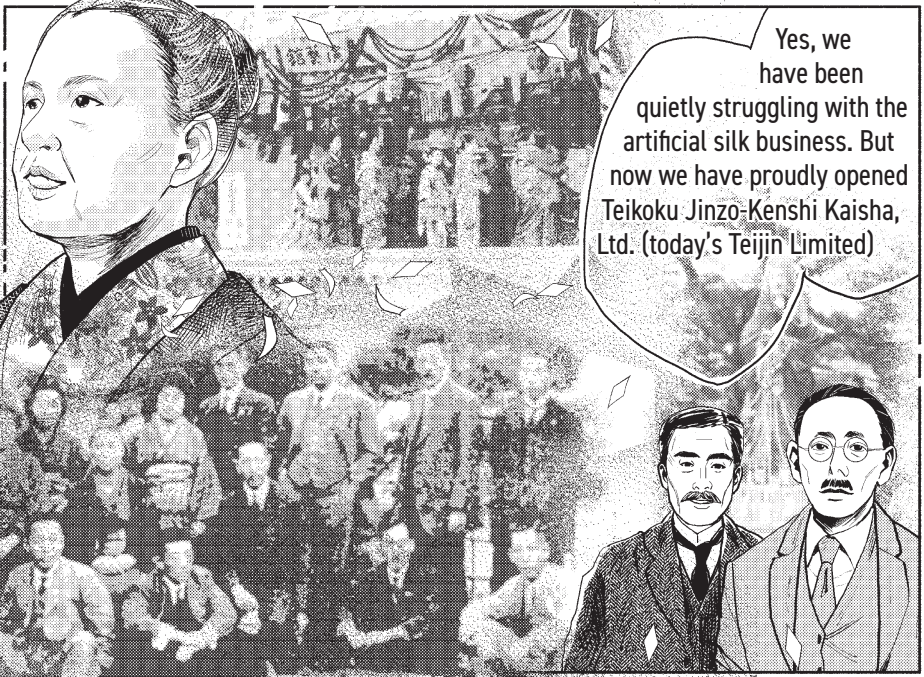


Yonezawa?

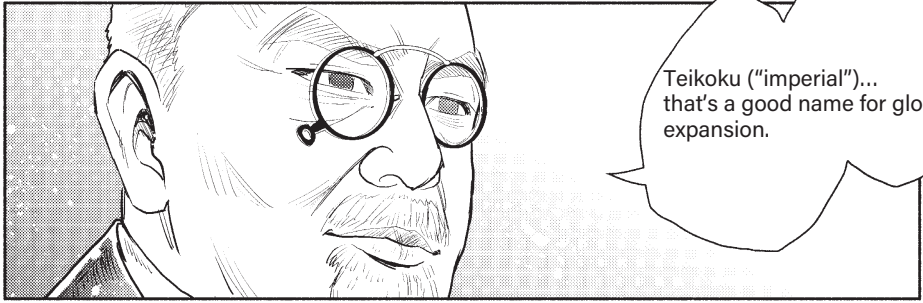
Yes, Mrs. Yone is quite busy. She even went as far as Yonezawa recently.

Well that makes perfect sense. Especially since Suzuki's president Mrs. Yone has the character for rice in her name.

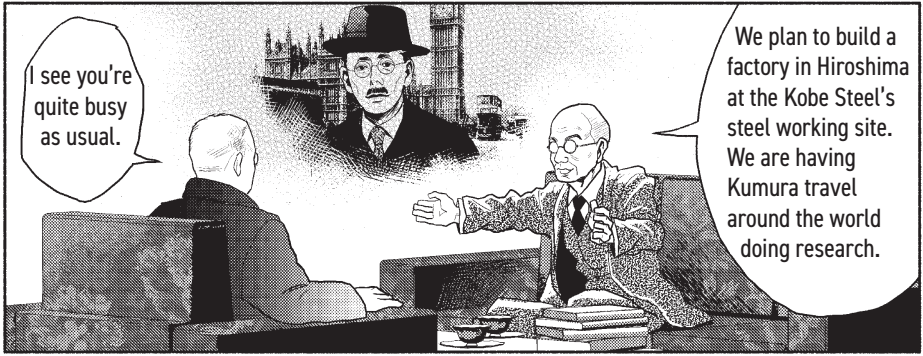
Suzuki has an employee who can forecast Japan's rice harvest. All the information on the rice market you see in the newspapers is from us.



Yes, we have been quietly struggling with the artificial silk business. But now we have proudly opened Teikoku Jinzo-Kenshi Kaisha, Ltd. (today's Teijin Limited)

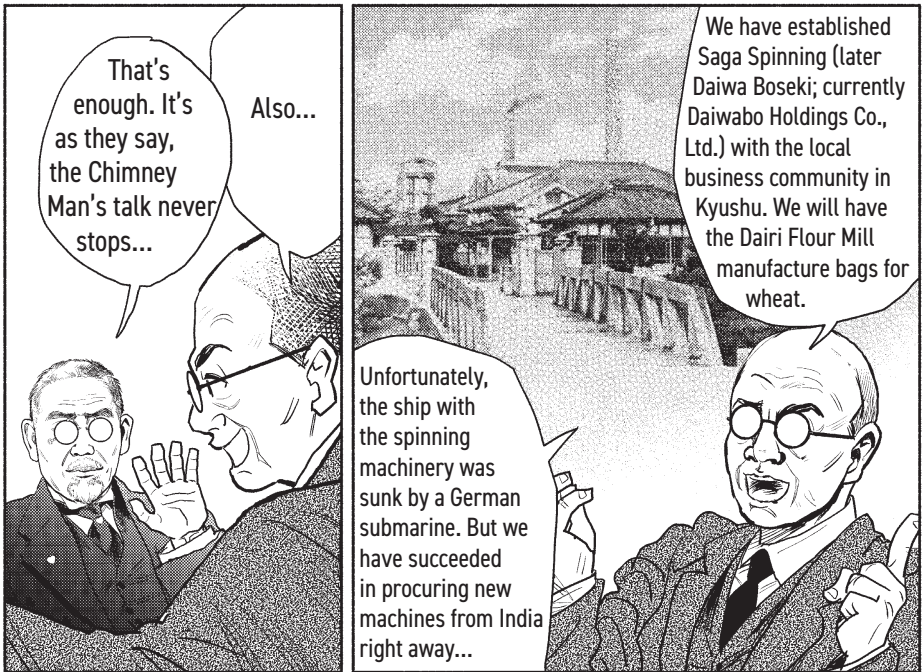


Teikoku ("imperial")... that's a good name for global expansion.



I see you're quite busy as usual.

We plan to build a factory in Hiroshima at the Kobe Steel's steel working site. We are having Kumura travel around the world doing research.



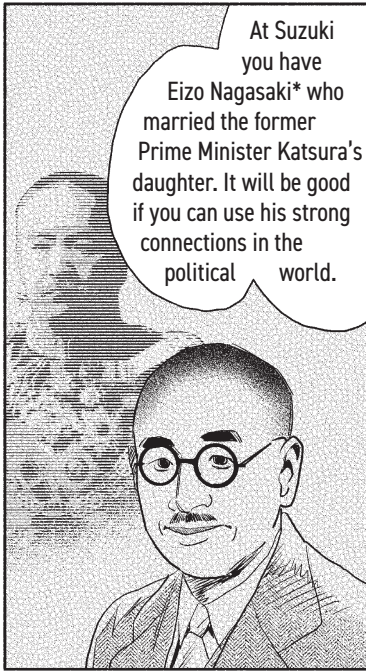
That's enough. It's as they say, the Chimney Man's talk never stops...

Also...

Unfortunately, the ship with the spinning machinery was sunk by a German submarine. But we have succeeded in procuring new machines from India right away...

We have established Saga Spinning (later Daiwa Boseki; currently Daiwabo Holdings Co., Ltd.) with the local business community in Kyushu. We will have the Dairi Flour Mill manufacture bags for wheat.

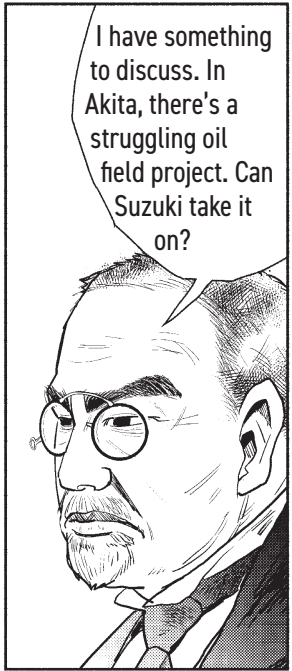
*After the war, Eizo Nagasaki served as an economic advisor to the Yoshida Cabinet as well as president of the Industrial Reconstruction Corporation.



At Suzuki you have Eizo Nagasaki* who married the former Prime Minister Katsura's daughter. It will be good if you can use his strong connections in the political world.



An oil field, you say? Suzuki has handled foreign oil since its founding.



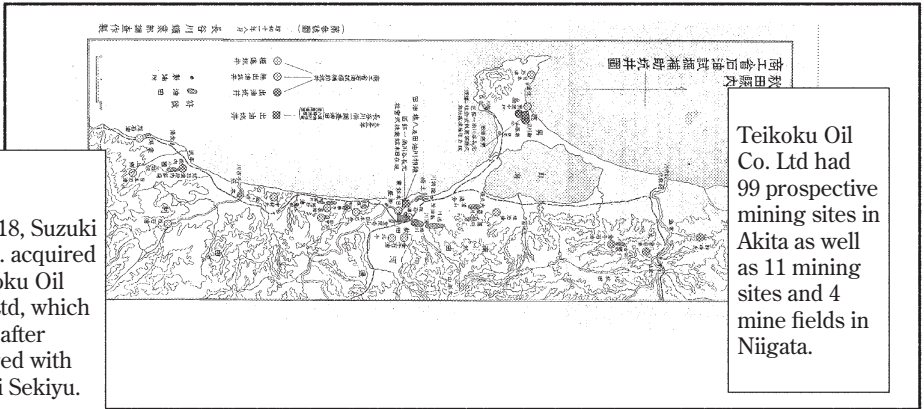
I have something to discuss. In Akita, there's a struggling oil field project. Can Suzuki take it on?



I'm counting on you.



I see. Leave everything to me.



In 1918, Suzuki & Co. acquired Teikoku Oil Co. Ltd, which soon after merged with Asahi Sekiyu.

Teikoku Oil Co. Ltd had 99 prospective mining sites in Akita as well as 11 mining sites and 4 mine fields in Niigata.

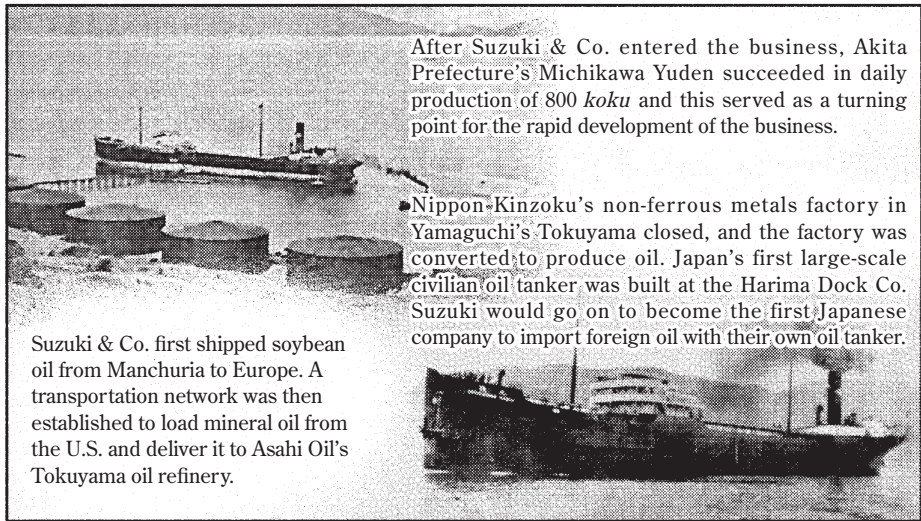


Kojiro Matsukata became the president and Eizo Nagasaki became an auditor at Shinsei Asahi Sekiyu.

I'm ready to realize any project!

We're dealing with Mr. Kaneko, so I'm sure he has a number of ideas up his sleeve.

Mr. Matsukata, Mr. Nagasaki - I will succeed in this challenge too!



Suzuki & Co. first shipped soybean oil from Manchuria to Europe. A transportation network was then established to load mineral oil from the U.S. and deliver it to Asahi Oil's Tokuyama oil refinery.

After Suzuki & Co. entered the business, Akita Prefecture's Michikawa Yuden succeeded in daily production of 800 *koku* and this served as a turning point for the rapid development of the business.

●Nippon-Kinzoku's non-ferrous metals factory in Yamaguchi's Tokuyama closed, and the factory was converted to produce oil. Japan's first large-scale civilian oil tanker was built at the Harima Dock Co. Suzuki would go on to become the first Japanese company to import foreign oil with their own oil tanker.



會社合併公告
 新津石油株式會社
 旭石油株式會社
 早山石油株式會社
 新津石油株式會社
 旭石油株式會社
 早山石油株式會社

After Suzuki & Co. went bankrupt, Eizo Nagasaki helped to realize a merger between Asahi Oil, Hayama Oil, and Nittsu Oil to form Showa Sekiyu (later Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K; today's Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd.). Nagasaki would serve as Showa Sekiyu's first president.