



Sundays and holidays. The price will be about ¥4,000, depending on where you board the bus.

However you get around this peninsula, you are sure to be glad that you made the effort to come here. Kunisaki can't be beaten, for travelers who like to get off the beaten track.

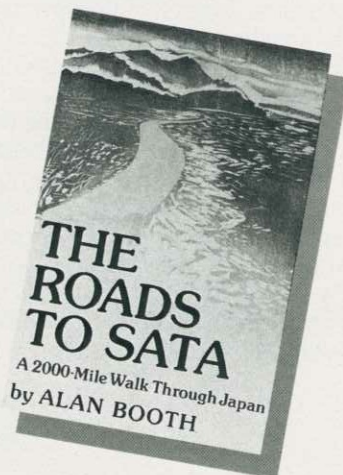
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Cape Soya on Hokkaido to Cape Sata on the southernmost tip of Kyushu.

There are probably as many views of Japan as there are foreign visitors and residents. Some come to Japan hoping to pursue the "exotic." To these visitors, Japan might be haiku and pottery. To others who come as expatriate managers of foreign firms, Japan is a rung on the corporate ladder, to be negotiated on the way to bigger and better things. Regardless of motive, however, most Westerners use Tokyo as their interface with whatever drew them to Japan.

Booth's underlying supposition, however, is that Tokyo is not all of Japan and that somewhere out there another Japan waits to be discovered.

In the narrative of his quest for the real Japan, Booth manages to make statements about native Tokyoites that may sit well with neither natives nor long-term foreign residents. For example, he characterizes Tokyo office workers (male, of course) as being overly preoccupied with their daily routine of killing time, followed by hours of drinking surrounded by a bevy of fawning bar hostesses.



Having accepted both Booth's implied belief that there is more to Japan than all this time-killing and fawning, and his hope that somehow another Japan is waiting to be discovered outside of Tokyo, the reader is then treated to a never-ending situation comedy of clichés, albeit amusing clichés, that should surprise readers without experience of Japan. These stereotypes, however, will elicit groans and rolled eyes from foreign residents with even a few years of close-range Japan-watching behind them.

The reader is subjected to an endless series of encounters in which Booth is pointed at by local inhabitants and verbally accused of being a foreigner. The author pleads guilty to this charge, but the real offense is using this naive behavior to characterize the populace in rural Japan.

Non-Japanese readers who have lived in the big cities in Japan will be quick to point out that this type of reaction can be observed on virtually any street corner in any city, with the possible exception of the chic, foreigner-ridden district of Roppongi in Tokyo.

To be sure, there are some scenes which will make the reader envious of Booth for his solo trek through Japan. One of these is his initiation into the world of drumming at local festivals, with the author making a good argument for participating in, rather than gawking at, these events.

Booth also does a creditable job in getting most of the facts straight. One notable exception is the inclusion of what seems to be a Kyushu song in a description of a Bon festival in Hokkaido. Perhaps this was the author's way of saying that "internationalization" in Japan starts at home.

For the reader expecting the uncovering of new basic truths about Japan and the Japanese, this book will be somewhat disappointing. As a travel diary describing some of the seldom-seen aspects of the Japanese countryside, *The Roads to Sata* will appeal to the newcomer to Japan and things Japanese.

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Bookshelf

The Roads to Sata —A 2000-Mile Walk Through Japan

By Alan Booth
Published by John Weatherhill, Inc.
1985, Tokyo
281 pages; ¥2,500
(Penguin Books \$6.95)

In his almost step-by-step tour over the back roads in search of yet "another" Japan, Alan Booth takes the reader through parts of Japan unknown both to casual visitors and to long-time residents. The author's basic premise seems to be that there was little for him to learn from the big city. In view of the little that most non-Japanese ever learn about even big-city life in Japan, readers may wonder how the author managed to master the big city in the seven short years before starting out on his 2,000-mile (3,220 km) hike from