

degrees warmer than central Tokyo in the winter, and several degrees cooler in the summer. With map in hand, planning your own course gives you the thrill of discovery. And unless the traffic on the coast highway is light, you're likely to enjoy the small inland roads more.

### The Izu Islands . . .

If you have time for an overnighter, the Izu Islands that run in a line south out of Tokyo offer a special cycling environment. Unlike anywhere else near Tokyo, they are never overrun by cars and trucks on weekends.

Two of the islands are especially good for cycling: Miyake-jima and Hachijo-jima. Small ships to these two islands leave Hinode Pier near Hamamatsucho station in Tokyo at 10:10 most nights, arriving at Miyake-jima at 5:10 a.m. and Hachijo-jima at 8:30 a.m.

Get there about 30 minutes early so you'll have time to go through the line and fill out the little form and get your passage squared away. Once aboard, you can rent a blanket for a few hundred yen and sprawl with all the other passengers on huge hard carpets for the duration of the voyage. Or for about double the economy fare, you can get a smaller, quieter room with your own space on a nicer floor. Tokai Kisen Company runs these lines; call them at 432-4551 for further information.

Miyake-jima has beautiful roads and isn't very hilly. Lush and green, Miyake-jima is a very verdant island with an almost tropical feeling. It's a world-famous bird sanctuary, so bring your binoculars. A single highway circles the island, with a long steep grade up to the volcanic crater at the top.

Warmer, more open and distinctly subtropical, Hachijo-jima is enjoyable for all riders. There are two distinct courses, each running around the island's two main mountains, Mihara-yama and the Hachijo-Fuji, so named because it's shaped like Mt. Fuji. The course around the base of Hachijo-Fuji is almost flat, with good views of the ocean and the offshore island of Kojima. Riding around clockwise is a good choice because you'll usually have a tail wind.

Most of the riding around Mihara-yama is fairly protected from the wind, with fewer views of the sea but with lots of long hills. The views are much more picturesque. Riding around clockwise is recommended, stopping at the vista point just before the first summit. There are many places to stay in the main town area where the two courses meet, but the south end of the island has a hot spring, many *minshuku* and much more of the island flavor.

Oshima, the largest of the Izu Islands, has been another good place for riding. But in the wake of recent volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and total evacuation of island residents, a relaxing weekend of cycling there depends on the condition of the island by the time you read this.

### Finally . . .

Keep in mind that rain is almost always a possibility, so be prepared with an extra pair of

socks and a lightweight raincoat with hood. You will never be too far from a store, so you can always buy what you may end up needing. Chances are you won't. Keep your bag light, and don't get too prepared so as not to ruin that spontaneous "escape" feeling.

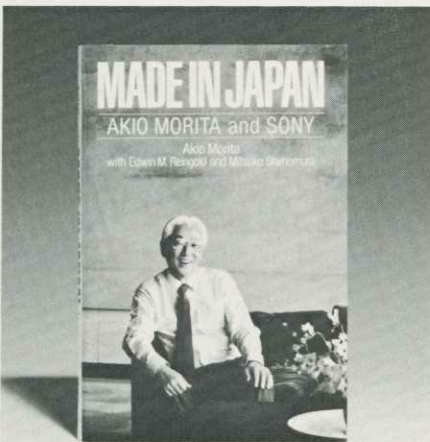
Bryan Harrell

A Tokyo-based writer and journalist, and founder and editor of *OIKAZE*, a nonprofit English-language cycling information newsletter in Tokyo

## Bookshelf

### Made in Japan: Akio Morita and Sony

By Akio Morita, with Edwin M. Reingold and Mitsuko Shimomura  
Published by E.P. Dutton  
1986, New York  
309 pages; \$18.95



Akio Morita and Sony Corp. are perhaps two of the most important reasons for the sterling reputation worldwide of Japanese consumer electronics products. *Made in Japan* is Morita's story of his life at Sony, the company he helped found. But it is also a record of Japan's come-from-behind domination of a multibillion dollar industry. For that reason alone it deserves to be read.

The words "Made in Japan" at one time evoked only derision. These same words now command respect—and often envy. Japanese companies were quick to appreciate the competitive advantage of zero-defect manufacturing. Now their goods are second to none in quality and, depending on one's point of view, in innovation. Indeed, only a Japanese company like Sony dares to advertise its products with a slogan as simple as "It's a Sony."

Innovation—Japanese innovation—is a major theme in *Made in Japan*. Despite the undeniable success of Sony, with sales of around \$7 billion a year, Western critics are quick to discount Sony's and other firms' achieve-

ments in the marketplace because of alleged underachievement in the laboratory. Yet Sony, by any standard, is a remarkably innovative company. Sony's developmental work on a Bell Labs discovery, the transistor, led to the transistor radio. A onetime Sony engineer went on to win a Nobel Prize based on his discovery, while at Sony, of the electron tunneling effect.

But in Morita's view, the key issue is not the revolutionary idea itself. Rather, "the important thing is how you are going to interpret that idea in your industry." Morita's account of Sony's many successful ventures in new markets makes for fascinating reading and gives *Made in Japan* its focus. But there are some blurry parts to the story. The great risks entailed by Sony, the new kid on the block, rushing into untried markets, are given brief treatment.

Sony did indeed ignite the demand for VCRs with its Betamax video recorder, and other companies, most notably Matsushita, followed Sony into the market—but with a different format VCR called VHS. Sony has since fought a losing battle against the VHS manufacturers. It is unclear if Sony will in the end be forced to exit the market it created. Sony is counterattacking with still another video technology—8 mm. To preempt a repeat of the VHS-Beta struggle, Sony has worked to arrange an industrywide standard format for 8 mm. This raises a key question, one that should have been addressed in the book: Why was Sony unable or unwilling to have Beta recognized as a standard? Does this reflect a weakness in Sony's ability to forge strategic alliances?

There are other areas as well where Morita gives us little information. This brevity is due to the perhaps too ambitious scope of the book. Morita has combined in one thin volume his autobiography, Sony's corporate history, a commentary on U.S.-Japan relations and an overview of the problems facing world trade. The account of Sony's early days is an area where more detail would be welcomed.

However, Morita's comments on the shortcomings of U.S. business and the erosion of American manufacturing are crisp and on target, though they will be familiar reading to trade observers. He indicts American companies for turning into mere distribution networks for imported goods, or "hollow corporations." He points out that Japanese companies, including Sony, produce electronic products in the U.S. that U.S. companies, allegedly for cost reasons, now have to produce offshore. If Japanese companies can manufacture in the U.S., so can American firms. To Morita, it is a matter of managerial will, and his criticisms are hard to refute.

On international trade, Morita's most forceful plea is for a global system to control exchange rates. The world's financiers manipulate the money markets to such a degree that the industrialists can no longer make informed decisions. Painfully wrought cost reductions are nullified overnight by currency swings. As for

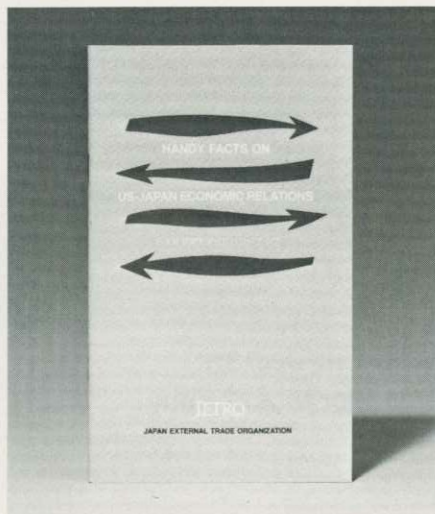
other trade issues, Morita states frankly that Japan is moving too slowly in opening up its markets. On the key issue of tuning up Japan's domestic consumption, Morita is virtually silent—an irony given that his company is built on consumer demand.

Throughout *Made in Japan* Morita forwards ideas that in Japan have gained him a reputation as an internationalist and sometimes an iconoclast. In a country where your alma mater determines your career, he ignores educational credentials. He actively promotes imports through Sony Trading Company and urges Japan to dismantle trade barriers. And he presides over a relatively new company that regularly steals the thunder of Japan's old-guard corporations. This irreverence for Japan's business traditions occasionally gives rise to allegations that his loyalties are suspect. The title of his book may serve to remind his detractors that, like Sony, he too is made in Japan.

Bradley K. Hankinson  
 Manager, Corporate Planning & Administration  
 TRW Overseas Inc.

## Handy Facts on US-Japan Economic Relations

Published by Japan External Trade Organization  
 1986, Tokyo  
 31 pages; free upon request



Many years ago, there was an excuse for ignorance about Japan. The information just was not available except in Japanese, and only the most determined observer was expected to learn the language.

No more. There is an outpouring of information from Japan today. In addition to this *Journal*, interested English-reading observers can subscribe to *Economic Eye* and other Keizai Koho Center publications, *Japan Echo*, the local English-language press and a host of other fine publications.

If you want a compact handbook of facts on U.S.-Japan economic relations, try this convenient publication from JETRO. It includes, for example, the percentage of manufactures to all U.S. exports to Japan (52.3% as of 1985), the scale of Japanese investment in the U.S. (third-largest investor), exports by U.S.-based Japanese companies (\$22.9 billion, or 11.4% of total U.S. exports, in 1983) and many more facts that give the lie to the old shibboleth of a closed Japanese market or Japanese companies interested only in exporting and the overseas public be damned. There is no excuse for that kind of ignorance any more.

## Taste of Tokyo

### Restaurant Le Récamier

Last October, the Japan Economic Foundation and the Aspen Institute cosponsored the third U.S.-Japan Forum at Wye Plantation on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. Taking advantage of proximity, I visited several other locations in the U.S. as well.

The blue crab of Chesapeake Bay was as delicious as ever. I also had steak at various places, and my opinion is that, properly seasoned with salt and pepper and broiled to retain its juices, American steak is even better than Japan's famous Matsuzaka beef. American steak has an appealing rusticity and the portions are bigger than in Japan. I have the impression that Matsuzaka beef is overvalued, just like the Japanese yen.

As an individual consumer, I am hoping that it will be possible to import delicious beef as early a date as possible. At Los Angeles Airport, I bought a pack of beef which cost \$78. It was sufficient for two meals for our family of five.

I noticed that the meals at Manor House on the Wye Plantation of the Aspen Institute had improved tremendously. When I mentioned this, I was told that the cook had changed and I was congratulated on being able to tell the difference. That renewed my confidence in writing this column.

Le Récamier, the subject of today's column, is exactly like the suburban Paris restaurant that appeared in the 1967 film "*Vivre pour Vivre*." The first surprising point is that a French restaurant with such an unpretentious and serene atmosphere can be found in the middle of Tokyo. The unified color scheme of the exterior and the interior is a refreshingly simple white.

The à la carte menu is changed every month to suit the season. It offers French cuisine from the Ile de France, Provence and Alsace. Some recommended dishes are: *Terrine de foie gras armagnac* at ¥2,800, *Rognon de veau aux champignons* at ¥2,400 and *Navarin de homard* at ¥3,000. Fixed-price lunches are available from ¥2,000 up.

Dinner can be enjoyed at the reasonable cost of around ¥7,000 per person, including wine.

Chef S. Fujiwara speaks French, and discussing and dining on French cuisine in Le Récamier's home-like atmosphere is a rewarding evening.

(Yoshimichi Hori, editor-in-chief)

Address: 2-3, Moto-azabu 3-chome, Minato-ku (about 12 minutes walk from Roppongi subway station)

Open: 11:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.; 5:30 p.m.—11:00 p.m.; closed on Mondays

