



sor Miyamoto of Osaka University, it was this chaos that caused Osaka to decline as an economic power.)

Local chambers of commerce were eventually formed, as a means of filling the gap. But these were voluntary organizations; their membership was small and they could not function as a substitute for a commercial code. Finally, in 1893, a commercial code came into being.

The influence of these early chambers of commerce peaked around the turn of the century, and declined with the changes in Japan's industrial structure prior to World War I. In 1917, an organization called the Industry Club of Japan (Nihon Kogyo Kurabu) was established. Its membership came largely from the manufacturing sector, and reflected the growth of heavy industries in Japan. The ICJ was led by powerful figures from Mitsui, Mitsubishi and others, and, to quote the author's understatement: "There is no doubt that *zaibatsu* expected much from the ICJ."

One of the first problems the newly created ICJ was faced with concerned labor. The Russian Revolution had influenced workers in Japan, whose numbers were increasing rapidly as heavy industry expanded. Faced with large numbers of workers who were demanding the right to exercise collective bargaining, the ICJ—and the government—had to deal with the situation. A brief discussion of Japan's labor movement can be found in this book; for a more detailed presentation, see *The State and Labor in Modern Japan* by Sheldon Garon (University of California Press, 1987).

The next major business organization to be formed was the Japan Economic Federation (Nihon Keizai Renmei) in 1922. This was set up with the backing and the blessing of ICJ, because, in 1921—on a business mission to the U.S. and Britain—the leaders of the ICJ realized that Japan needed an organization more broadly based than the ICJ or than the National League of Chambers of Commerce, to deal with business organizations overseas. The NLCC membership came mostly from medium- or small-scale enterprises.

In fact, the JEF, like the organization that spawned it, was identified with big business; the major area in which its membership was expanded over that of the ICJ was that it included bankers as well as industrialists. The JEF had its office in the ICJ building. Among the activities promoted by the JEF were those aimed at reducing trade friction between Japan and other countries. The exchange of business missions was a top priority, and a Japan-U.S. Trade Council was created in 1934. When an American business mission visited Japan and China that year, "the council exerted great efforts to appeal to the mission to understand Japan's situation and to avoid friction between the two nations."

In the introduction to this book, Professor Yamazaki of the University of Tokyo says that some Japanese trade associations—such as Keidanren (the Federation of Economic Organizations)—are cited by foreigners as examples of the "Japan, Inc." phenomenon. Thus, this reader assumes that one of the purposes of the book—and of the conference whose proceedings resulted in the book—was to disprove this notion. The reaction of this reader is that it does not do so very convincingly.

Three chapters of this book deal with Japanese trade associations, and six chapters deal with trade associations in the U.S., Britain, France and Germany. Each chapter emanates from a paper presented at the 14th Fuji International Conference on Business History, held in 1987, on the theme of "Trade Associations in Business History."

The conference organizers sacrificed depth for breadth. Because the theme is so broad, we have papers (chapters) on such diverse topics as the use of public

relations by the National Association of Manufacturers in the 1930s and 40s in the U.S., and the trade associations participated in by a major French glass and chemical company (Saint-Gobain) from 1830 to 1939.

The three Japanese chapters give an overview of 1) the major business organizations in prewar Japan, 2) cartels and 3) local trade associations. Each of these overviews is informative, if you are a non-specialist who wants a general introduction to the subject. But if you are looking for systematic, in-depth coverage, you will have to look elsewhere.

Anne G. Pepper
Tokyo-based journalist

Outside Tokyo

Fukui: A Slice Of Old Japan

Situated on the Japan Sea a pleasant one hour 40 minutes by train from Kyoto or Nagoya, Fukui is a prefecture that many Japanese seem to know little about. Yet Fukui, forgotten and unchanged by the Japanese of the modern cities, is well worth a visit. The short journey to the port of Tsuruga and on through the mountains to the plains of Fukui has the feeling of a journey back in time. The 21st century of bullet trains and intense industrialization gives way to the lifestyle of traditional Japan.

Fukui is famous overseas as the home of Soto Zen's head temple—Eiheiji—in the mountains near the city, and perhaps infamous for having the largest concentration of nuclear power plants in the world. There are already 12 power plants in a span of less than 70 kilometers along the Japan Sea between Tsuruga and Takahama, and three more are under con-



struction. One of these three will contain a new type of reactor, which, paradoxically, is named after the Buddhist deity of wisdom, Monju.

Coastal scenery

To compensate for its selection as the prime site for nuclear power stations, the Fukui district receives large subsidies from the government, and the aesthetic environs of the area have been enhanced by the creation of a beautiful golden beach at Mihama. Here the excellent public information center built by the Kansai Electric Power Co. extols the benefits of nuclear power, but one still has an uneasy feeling while swimming under the shadow of the large reactor dome. However, one is soon lulled into a state of uncaring bliss by the beautiful golden beach fringed with spindly tropical trees. Especially in the hot summer, the beaches are crowded with campers from Kyoto and Osaka as well as Fukui, all coming to enjoy the crystal clear water and beautiful coastal scenery.

Not far away, toward Obama, the 21st-century nuclear age is contrasted with the prehistoric era. At Torihama Kaizuka

(shell mound) in Wakasa Bay, some of the oldest artifacts in Japan have been discovered, dating back 6,000 years ago to the Jomon era. They have been preserved because this area was on the side of a lake in prehistoric times and mud at the bottom preserved the tools and utensils that accumulated from the surrounding villages. Among the items found are wooden bowls and combs, and the wooden canoe discovered recently is one of the oldest examples of wooden construction in the world. These relics are all on display in the Wakasa Folklore and History Museum.

Being on the Japan Sea coast and close to Korea, the port at Obama acted as the main port for the introduction of Chinese and Korean culture. It was here that some of the early forms of Buddhism entered Japan and one can take a pleasant walk back to those days by visiting the many temples and shrines in the area. For foreigners wanting a deeper insight, the Hoshinji temple here is an ideal place to stay and study the Zen form of Buddhism, there being several foreign monks living here. Eiheiji, being the head temple of Soto Zen in Japan, is perhaps the ultimate

pilgrimage destination for most Zen enthusiasts, however.

Place for meditation

Zen Buddhism, unlike the other schools of Buddhism which are mainly religious, penetrates deeply into every layer of the cultural life of the Japanese people. Because of its emphasis on strict spiritual training centering around *zazen* (sitting meditation), it was widely supported by the samurai class, and Eiheiji temple was built in 1244 for Dogen Zenji, the founder of Soto Zen, by Hatano Yoshishige, one of his devoted samurai followers.

It is situated in the mountains behind Fukui City and can be easily reached by local train from Fukui station. Although also a tourist mecca, it is a tranquil place for meditation, the tourists times being different from the hours kept by the monks who rise at 3:30 a.m. (4:30 in winter) and follow a strict spiritual training centering on the teachings of Dogen, who taught the simple *shikan-taza* (just sitting) meditation as a way to purification of the mind and enlightenment.

Most of the monks here are trainees

from other temples. Lay meditators are also welcome for periods of from three days, and a tourist-type course is also available consisting of a one-night stay. With Fukui the home of Soto Zen, it is rather paradoxical that the main Buddhist movement in Fukui is the Jodo Shinshu school of Buddhism in which the followers call on a deity to help deliver them from their weaknesses.

The bigger the prayer the more the merit, and perhaps the biggest prayer is actualized in the huge Echizen Daibutsu at Katsuyama. This is the biggest *daibutsu* in Japan—bigger than the previous record holder at Nara's Todaiji temple, although perhaps lacking in maturity, it being only completed last year. It is a gift to Katsuyama City from a local business-

man who struck it rich with his taxi business in Osaka and created it to honor his debt to the Buddhist deity.

Famous for snow

However, Fukui is not only known for its Buddhism. It is perhaps best known by Japanese for its heavy snows in winter, when more than 20 centimeters can fall in one hour. But the snow is really a blessing in disguise, keeping away the population and industry which is the curse of the Pacific coast. In the winter there are many relaxed ski slopes where one can enjoy family skiing in a beautiful setting, a welcome change from the over-commercialized slopes of the Japan Alps. In summer it is a welcome relief to be able to travel around amid nature, there being many

beautiful sites which would be expected to be covered with houses, until one remembers the heavy snows in winter.

Obviously, Fukui really has a lot going for it. A complete stratum of old Japan before the pollution and population, bullet trains and baseball—but it is rapidly changing due to the influence of satellite television, not to mention foreign teachers. There is always also the potential for that ultimate irreversible change that could be wrought by nuclear fusion. So it is worth making it a must on one's itinerary. It is one of the few remaining areas that gives a flavor of old Japan, but perhaps not for much longer.

John Service
Teacher at Fukui Institute
of Technology

Table Talk

Kyushu Jangara Ramen

Be it Britain's fish and chips, Italy's pizza or Mexico's tacos, every country has a dish beloved by the common people. One of the pleasures of traveling overseas is to find, from among the countless restaurants in the bustling cities, an eatery offering tasty food to the masses, and to wash it down with beer or wine while enjoying conversation with the local people.

To the question, what is the representative "people's food" of Japan, the answer without hesitation would be *ramen*. *Ramen* (pronounced [ɑ:men]) satisfies all the requirements of a people's daily fare: Its flavor was created in Japan. It is found in every corner of the country, from the center of Tokyo to the most isolated towns. There are myriad variations in taste and ingredients, yet it has special characteristics common to all. In surveys on frequently eaten foods, it always ranks at or near the top, regardless of age, occupation or sex. It is downed by children,

students, office girls and white-collar workers. And above all, it is synonymous with eating on the cheap.

Although it was only after World War II that *ramen* became the national staple, its roots go back to around 1860, when a Cantonese restaurant in Yokohama's Chinatown placed "Raomien" on its menu. Over the decades, it has evolved into the universal meal we know today.

Nowadays, different regions of the country compete to devise local versions of *ramen*, creating distinctive flavors with ingredients boasting plenty of local flavor. Life in Tokyo, however, brings a special bonus. Here we can appreciate the full spectrum of *ramen*, gathered from all over the country.

For those who are trying *ramen* for the first time, a good place to start is the Kanda main restaurant of Kyushu Jangara Ramen at Akihabara. This shop specializes in Kyushu *ramen*, featuring a thick, whitish soup stock produced by boiling pork and chicken bones for nine hours. The heaviness characteristic of Kyushu *ramen* is still there, but it has been constrained to suit Tokyo palates.

The menu prices begin at ¥470 and go up to ¥880, which is for "zenbu-iri," meaning "the works." A bowl of *zenbu-iri ramen* contains all eight ingredients used by the shop for its different varieties of *ramen*.

The dishes are priced according to how many ingredients go into the bowl. A second helping of either stock or noodles costs ¥120.

It's a small shop, becoming cramped when 12 customers are at the counter. On Saturdays and Sundays, queues form up outside, and when the day's supply of stock runs out—usually around 9:30 p.m. at weekends—the doors close.

Close by Akihabara, the district famous as Tokyo's electronics bazaar, the shop presents an opportunity to experience the bustle and vitality of this district at firsthand.

But one word of advice about *ramen* etiquette. No matter how finicky you may be, it's best to imitate the locals sitting next to you and slurp your noodles. Slurping is the only way to eat *ramen*... and it's guaranteed to make it taste even better.

Address: 3-11-6 Sotokanda, Chiyoda-ku
Tel: (03) 251-4059

Business hours: 11 a.m. until stock runs out (around 11 p.m.)

Open every day except New Year's

