

[PDF] Tokyo Underworld: The Fast Times And Hard Life Of An American Gangster In Japan

Robert Whiting - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Tokyo Underworld: The Fast Ti

Author: Robert Whiting

Released: 2000-09-26

Language:

Pages: 400

ISBN: 0375724893

ISBN13: 978-0375724893

ASIN: 0375724893

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Description:

In this compelling history of the rise of Japanese organized crime since the end of World War II, Robert Whiting, author of *You Gotta Have Wa* (an excellent book on Japanese baseball), demonstrates that Americans have only themselves to blame for the omnipotence of the yakuza in Japanese politics and society and the rebirth of conquered Japan as one of the world's great financial giants.

Whiting's real-life protagonist, Nick Zappetti, arrived in Tokyo during the days of the postwar occupation and decided to stay. Jolted from a budding career in low-rent confidence games by a lingering bout of insolvency, Zappetti opened a restaurant on a whim. Against all odds, Nicola's Pizza became *the* Tokyo hotspot in the '50s for expatriates, ballplayers, entertainers, and politicians, and inevitably, the local mob. Zappetti's erstwhile adventures as a semi-honest restaurateur in a strange land frame the book's real story: the savage backstabbing and dirty dealing of Tokyo's business community, which overlaps so seamlessly with the yakuza at times that it's difficult to see where one entity ends and the other begins. Whiting expertly details the evolution of "the Great Transfer of Wealth," as he calls it (the shifting in funds from American to Japan), and explains why American foreign policy (and its fear of communism) may have unwittingly allowed it to happen. Whiting's writing is illuminating and engaging, and his conclusions belie the simplistic protectionist rhetoric heard from both sides of the fence.

As for Zappetti, he eventually became a Japanese citizen and took his wife's last name. In poor health and dogged by the financial ruin of his pizza empire, Zappetti turned rabidly anti-Japanese: "You ever see the movie *Rio Bravo*?" Whiting quotes Zappetti as asking one of his foreign customers one night. "You remember the scene where the leering cowboy throws the money into the spittoon ... and Dean Martin, who's the town drunk, crawls after it? That's Japan's fantasy image of us. They want us to beg like Dean Martin." --*Tjames Madison* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Whiting's probe of Japan's gangsters, corrupt entrepreneurs and political fixers reads like a James Bond thriller yet manages intelligently to illuminate the seamy underside of Japan's postwar economic boom. At the heart of his colorful tale is swaggering, thickset Nick Zappetti, a tough from East Harlem's Italian ghetto who arrived in U.S.-occupied Japan in 1945 as a 22-year-old marine sergeant. Zappetti stayed on to become a black marketer, branched out into illegal banking, pimping and armed robbery, then launched a Tokyo pizza restaurant, Nicola's, which became a favorite night spot for mobsters, diplomats and movie stars. After decades of booze, debauchery, multiple marriages, gangland ties and lawsuits, he lost control of his restaurant-chain empire to his former Japanese partner and to his Japanese fourth wife. Zappetti died in 1992, nearly bankrupt and consumed with hatred for the Japanese, whom he saw as arrogant swindlers intent on taking over America. Whiting (You Gotta Have Wa), an American journalist who lives in Tokyo and writes a weekly column for the Japanese press, sets Zappetti's rise and fall against juggernaut Japan's financial ascendancy over the U.S. and its current slide into economic malaise. In this critical, revealing look at a half century of U.S.-Japan relations, he blames General MacArthur's occupational government?with its massive embezzlement, theft, fraud and black marketing?for creating the environment that allowed Japan's organized crime syndicates to join forces with its ruling political and business elite, aided by strategic financial aid from the CIA. Eight pages of b&w photos. Agent, Amanda Urban.

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