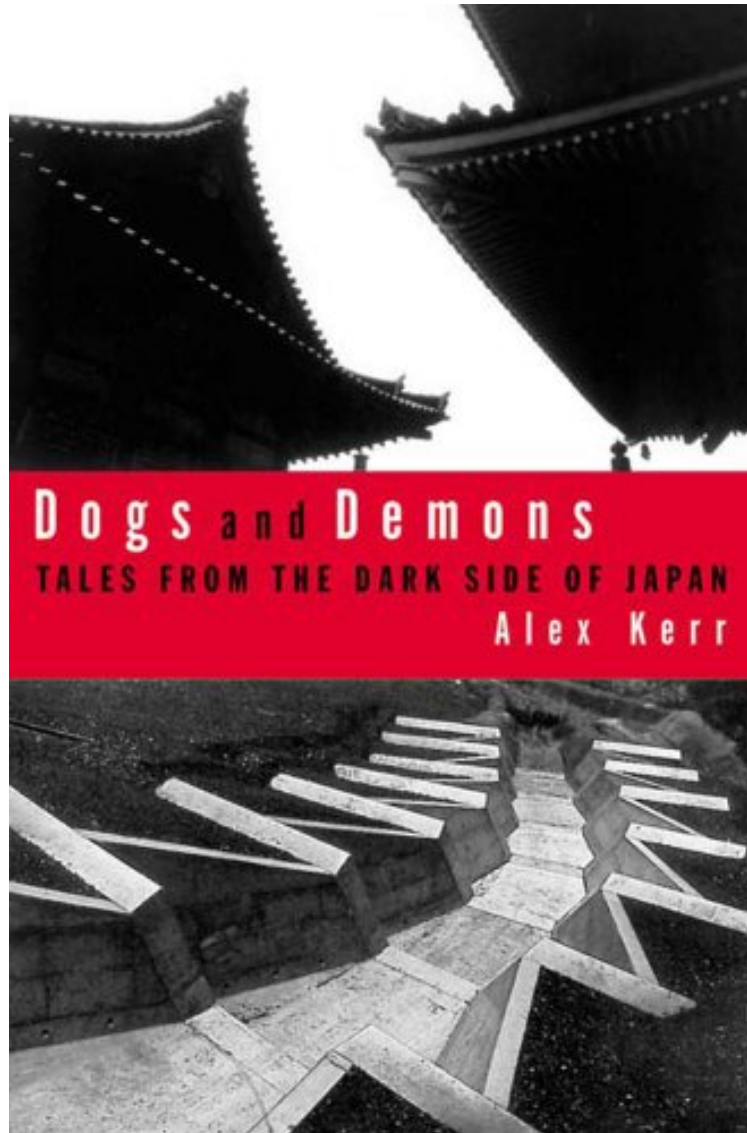


[Ebook pdf] Dogs and Demons: Tales From the Dark Side of Modern Japan

Dogs and Demons: Tales From the Dark Side of Modern Japan

Alex Kerr

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Alex Kerr : Dogs and Demons: Tales From the Dark Side of Modern Japan before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dogs and Demons: Tales From the Dark Side of Modern Japan:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Biased-romanticized view of what Japan should beBy J.Z.An eye opener, but some times very hard on the Japanese and their country.For example, my country, Costa Rica, is an ecotourism mecca, and by using the same arguments by Mr. Kerr, we would need to keep my country as a jungle in order to preserve its cultural identity as perceived by the foreigners, or stop the construction of tall buildings because it

is expected from us to be a small country with a small capital city like a mountain village where everybody knows each other, which isn't the case anymore. I admit I also have a very similar idea of what Japan must be like, and many of the facts presented in the book are very concerning and I agree with the author on many of those. But what is happening in Japan, is happening all over the world, and I felt very identified with many of the issues. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. employment on destructive projects and media control are a perfect storm! For me perhaps the most important aspect ...By Mrs Heather R MarshallThe book reveals the destructive entanglement of government, bureaucrats, business, and co-opted citizens. Leading to endless pointless construction. Bribes, government spending, employment on destructive projects and media control are a perfect storm! For me perhaps the most important aspect of this revealing book is the ripping of scales from my eyes in regard to my own society! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Why?By VTWhy do the Japanese not see that replacing their beautiful, soaring rooflines and spacious wooden frame residences with small, cold, concrete warrens is several steps backwards in architectural development? This book is Alex Kerr's lament. He treasures Japan's craftwork heritages, and laments their ongoing replacement with materials and designs that are uninspired and ugly. The people of Japan who have their feet firmly planted in their creative traditions are still making things beautiful every day. They need help. This book is a start. Make it part of your book club reading and discussion. From that will come welcome change.

The crises--and failures--of modernization in Japan, as seen up close by a resident expertJapan is a nation in crisis, and the crisis goes far beyond its well-known economic plight. In *Dogs and Demons*, Alex Kerr chronicles the crisis on a broad scale, from the failure of Japan's banks and pension funds to the decline of its once magnificent modern cinema. The book takes up for the first time in the Western press subjects such as the nation's endangered environment--its seashores lined with concrete, its roads leading to nowhere in the mountains. It describes Japan's "monument frenzy," the destruction of old cities such as Kyoto and construction of drab new cities, and the attendant collapse of the tourist industry. All these unhealthy developments are, Kerr argues, the devastating boomerang effect of an educational and bureaucratic system designed to produce manufactured goods--and little else. A mere upturn in economic growth will not quickly remedy these severe internal problems, which Kerr calls a "failure of modernism." He assails the foreign experts who, often dependent on Japanese government and business support, fail to address these issues. Meanwhile, what of the Japanese people themselves? Kerr, a resident of Japan for thirty-five years, writes of them with humor and passion, for "passion," he says, "is part of the story. Millions of Japanese feel as heartbroken at what is going on as I do. My Japanese friends tell me, 'Please write this--for us.'"

From Publishers WeeklyKerr (*Lost Japan*), a 35-year resident of Japan and the first foreigner to win that country's Shincho literary prize, contends that the Japanese miracle has become a Japanese mess. Once admired, and perhaps feared, for its spectacular economic successes, Japan, Kerr claims, has become a land of "ravaged mountains and rivers, endemic pollution, tenement cities, and skyrocketing debts." What happened? He says that ideology and bureaucracy are to blame. Japan is in effect managed by an autonomous and corrupt government bureaucracy, driven by an ethos of economic growth at any cost and a mania for control. Everywhere Japan's natural beauty is being destroyed by useless construction projects, as nature must be controlled and construction companies rewarded. The great ancient cities too representative of old, underdeveloped Japan are being replaced by monuments and hotels that are concrete monstrosities. Japan's banking system has failed, yet no one really knows the extent of the damage, as the bureaucracy keeps accurate information hidden. Meanwhile, the bureaucracy continues to pour money into older industries, while Japan falls dangerously behind in the development of new information technologies. There is popular discontent, but protest is hard to come by, because the bureaucratically controlled educational system emphasizes obedience above all else. Japan is stuck, concludes Kerr, and he sees no easy way out. While perhaps alarmist in his message, Kerr fascinates with detailed descriptions of Japan's dilemma and offers a surprising, if controversial, vision of a land in trouble. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From BooklistIn what may prove to be a highly controversial book, Kerr argues that Japan is in big trouble: a self-destructive country that is systematically destroying its landscape, its environment, its very culture by adherence to ideas and policies that are decades out of date. The author describes land-preservation schemes that end up destroying the land; a national health program that's near collapse; an education system that values conformity over originality; money-eating government programs that no one can seem to stop. In 1994, Japan produced 91.6 million tons of concrete (30 times as much as the U.S.), much of it used to build structures that serve no purpose. In 1998, Japan's government spent \$136 billion on public works, more than what it cost to build the Panama Canal. It's hard to know if Kerr hits the mark here, but he makes a strong case. Expect him to start showing up on talk shows soon, and when he does, the requests for this inflammatory position paper will begin to build. David PittCopyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved "Keen insight into the unique causes and disastrous results of the once heralded 'Japan Model' of development . . . a must read." -- Michael Judge, *The Wall Street Journal*"Should be required reading for anyone who writes about or studies the Japanese economy . . ." --Eric Johnston, *The Japan Times*