

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Japanese Golf Books

Japan is a country with a rich golf history. Four of the world's top 100 ranked courses are located in Japan (Kawana, Hirono, Naruo and Tokyo Golf Club). Other world class courses such as the Kasumigaseki Golf Club have hosted the world's great players such as Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player. It was an Englishman, Hugh Alison, who probably had the greatest impact on Japanese golf course architecture. Alison visited Japan in the 1930s and designed many of its great courses.



The image above is from a booklet published in 1934 by the Japanese Government Railways as an attempt to draw tourists and lists 70 or so golf courses.

While it is not possible to do an entire country's golf books a proper overview in a short newsletter, we will focus on three areas: books about Japanese golf written in English, club histories for the world renowned courses in Japan and books by famous authors.

Club Histories

The Kobe Golf Club was the first course built in Japan and was designed by an English businessman living there, A.H. Groom. *Kobe Golf Club History 1903-1973* was published to celebrate the courses' 70 year anniversary. The first fifteen pages are a color spread with pictures of the golf course. The text in the book is in Japanese with the exception of the forward written by the club captain which is in English. The book has many historical black and white pictures, the most interesting are those taken in the early 20th century while the course was under construction and recently after it opened. The

early cards show that the course used the English tradition of assigning each hole a name. The course also published a 100 year history in 2003.



The Hirono Golf Club, written by Masakuni Akiyama tells the story of Japan's top ranked course. Although the text is in Japanese, the pictures tell the story of what makes the course unique (cover below). The book is almost entirely pictorial with up to four color pictures per page. Included in the book are pictures of female Japanese caddies in their traditional head-to-toe outfits and hoods. The course also published *The Steps of Hirono: 30 Years* in 1953.



Kasumigaseki Golf Club published four histories in 1960, 1969, 1979 and 2004 celebrating the club's 25th, 40th, 50th and 75th year anniversaries and all are in Japanese.

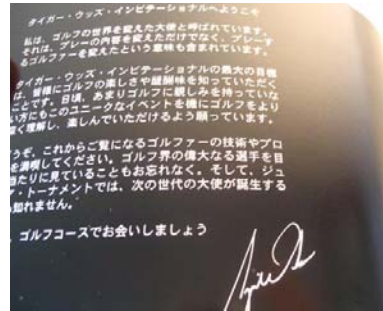
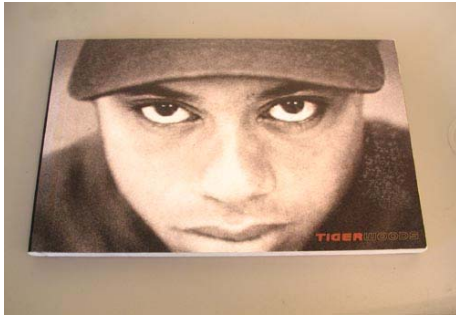
Heart of Green: Naruo Golf Club - 70 Year Anniversary was published by this world-ranked course in 1992.

Tokyo Golf Club: 50 Year History was published in 1966 and *Tokyo Golf Club: 75 Year History* was published in 1988 and tells the story of this interesting course with double greens.

Famous Authors

Several notable English language books have been translated into Japanese including *Bobby Jones on Golf*, Ben Hogan's *Five Lessons: The Modern Fundamentals of Golf* and Gary Player's *Grand Slam Golf*. David Joy's *St. Andrews and the Open Championship* published by Sleeping Bear Press in 1999 was also published simultaneously in a Japanese language version. A Tiger Woods Flip Book was published in 1997 in Japan

with the text in Japanese. The book is in color and shows tiger swinging the club as an adult as you flip forward and him swinging the club at roughly age five if you flip backwards.



The Psychology of Golf and Brainful Play published in Tokyo in 1933, *Safety Driving in Golf* published in 1966 and *Speedway to Best Golf* published in 1972 are some of funniest titled books we have ever seen.

Written in English

Although most books on Japanese golf are written in the native language, one exception is the *Official Program of the Third World Amateur Golf Team Championship for the Eisenhower Trophy, Oct 10-13 1962, Kawana Japan*. This 46 page book was written in English and has forewords in the form of typed letters by Dwight D. Eisenhower, Bobby Jones and Prince Takamatsu (Honorary Chairman). The World Amateur Golf Championship was a team competition with teams from 25 different countries including: Argentina, Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, etc. The Kawana golf course in Japan is often referred to as the Pebble Beach of Japan and was designed by Hugh Alison in 1936.

Nigh Shah! Nice Shot! Memoirs of an American Duffer in the Far East by Wilder Durand was published in 1972 and recounts the authors golfing travels to Japan and Asia during the 1950s and 1960s.

Joe Murdoch's *The Library of Golf 1743-1966* lists seventeen Japanese golf books under Foreign Language books at the back. The U.S.G.A. Library has over 150 Japanese golf books.

A fascinating and golf-crazed country, Japanese golf books are an interesting lot.