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Gangsters, Geishas, Monks & Me: A Memoir of Three Years in the Underbelly of Japan

Gordon Hutchison

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As a young American in a Zen monastery in a small Japanese fishing town and later as that town's only resident foreigner, Gordon Hutchison knows mistakes have consequences. But when he befriends the local yakuza boss, his life takes a dramatic turn into the unforgiving dictates of gangsters and geishas—where one misstep could cost him much more. Irreverent yet introspective, Gangsters, Geishas, Monks & Me chronicles Hutchison's odyssey through the foreigner-hostile backdrops of Zen, the yakuza and the "water trade" in his trial-by-fire initiation into Japanese culture. From below-freezing monastery winters to mob meetings with murder on the agenda to love cabaret-style, his graphic narrative is as thought- provoking as it is improbable. A story so rare, so revealing, that 60 Minutes tracked Hutchison down to interview "the only foreigner to hang out with yakuza," Gangsters, Geishas, Monks & Me takes readers deep inside clandestine worlds where few Japanese dare venture and no foreigner has gone before.

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