Miners on Mining: *Sākuru-mura*

Sous la plume des mineurs : Sākuru-mura

Makiko Andro-Ueda

Translator: Karen Grimwade

This text was automatically generated on 13 September 2023.

Miners on Mining: *Sākuru-mura*

Sous la plume des mineurs : Sākuru-mura

Makiko Andro-Ueda

Translation : Karen Grimwade

My arm gouged out by a lump of coal has healed.
Flesh bulges from the scar
Like foreign matter[1]

1. *Sākuru-undō* and *Sākuru-mura*

1   The 1950s saw Japanese society attempt to get to grips with the new civil liberties acquired following the defeat and make sense of the idea that each person was now considered an autonomous individual. This process was driven by a desire for new social relationships and the exposure of the population to previously banned or inaccessible cultural practices. The result was a flourishing of association-led activities known as *sākuru-undō* (サークル運動 circle movements). The word *sākuru*, or circle, refers to any group or coalition of people whose members join by choice. It is this freedom of membership that distinguishes circles from professional organisations and groups based on family ties or proximity of residence.[2]

2   The transition from coal to oil prompted large-scale social unrest at Mitsui-Miike Coal Mine in 1953 and 1959, and this was subsequently echoed at several smaller mines in northern Kyūshū. Yet miners did not restrict their voices to the fight for social justice. Shortly after the defeat, hundreds of circles were created in the country's coalfields, as elsewhere in Japan.[3] Thanks to one of these in particular, certain facets of life in the declining coal-mining region of Chikuhō remain accessible to us today. As part of this

circle a large number of texts, mainly penned by industrial workers, were published in the form of poems, diaries, debates and stories in the journal *Sākuru-mura*[4](サークル村 Circle Village).[5] The journal was published from September 1958 to October 1961 in the small mining hamlet of Nakama in northern Fukuoka Prefecture. A total of 34 issues were published over three years, with a print run of around one thousand copies each. The founders' decision to base the journal in Chikuhō was a strategic one, designed to reflect the symbolic power of coal at that time.[6] They chose Nakama as their base because one of their members, Ueno Eishin 上野英信 (1923–1987), already lived there. Ueno had abandoned his studies at prestigious Kyōto University after Japan's defeat and his irradiation by the atomic bomb. These events left him determined to "take revenge for Hiroshima by becoming a miner".[7]

1.1. The context

3 Despite its remote location and rather short life span, *Sākuru-mura* "was highly influential in the 1960s", shaping the thinking of intellectuals like Tsurumi Shunsuke 鶴見俊輔 and key figures in Japan's New Left.[8] It can legitimately be described as a vast experiment in human emancipation driven by similar motivations to the "subjectivity debates (主体性論争 *shutaisei-ronsō*)" underway in the Japanese capital. Since the early 2000s scholars have shown renewed interest in the circle-movement phenomenon, and *Sākuru-mura* in particular.[9] It has garnered attention as a social movement but also due to the texts written by key figures who shaped the mentality of the 1960s. However, few scholars have examined the exact contribution of miners and former miners, nor the nature of the texts they produced. With this in mind, it is worth giving a brief presentation of *Sākuru-mura* from this angle, focusing on the events and writings directly linked to coal mining (either thematically or by author). Indeed, miners were not simply "mobilised" by the circle's organisers, either passively or symbolically. The journal was edited by the Research Group on Kyūshū Circles (九州サークル研究会 *Kyūshū sākuru kenkyū-kai*), founded by three individuals: Tanikawa Gan 谷川雁 (1923–1995), Morisaki Kazue 森崎和江 (1927–) and Ueno Eishin. All three had a well-established writing vocation and published significant works during this period. Tanikawa Gan, a poet and the movement's linchpin, had recently emerged from a long convalescence from tuberculosis, having been dismissed from the newspaper *Nishi-nihon shinbun* 西日本新聞 for his communist activities. Morisaki Kazue, originally born in occupied Korea, was a new mother who wrote poetry. Ueno Eishin, as we saw, was a former soldier-turned miner (in Nakama) who had been irradiated during the bombing of Hiroshima. In all, more than 230 people contributed to the journal, most of them activists involved in a variety of circles as well as company unions. These unions were affiliated to the national federations in their fields: the coal-mining sector of course, but also the steel industry, the postal service, local and regional authorities, and teaching. It is not known what exact proportion miners represented because contributors to the journal did not specify their job unless the text was a debate or had a militant content.

1.2. The publication

4 The aim of the Research Group on Kyūshū Circles was to "create a village" by linking together all the circles of Kyūshū and those on the western tip of Honshū (Yamaguchi

Prefecture), the idea being to stimulate them via debate (S-m, 1-1-4). The group's founders considered internal conflict (内部抗争 *naibu kōsō*) to be a necessary part of any well-functioning association: "the violent rifts and splits between workers and farmers, intellectuals and the masses, old and new generations, centre and periphery, men and women, from one field to another, can only be overcome through the unity that comes from explosive clashes and confrontations, as well as wide-scale exchange (交流 *kōryū*)" (S-m, 1-1-3).[10] It is also worth noting that Chikuhō's mines were a melting pot and a fertile breeding ground for creativity thanks to the large number of former soldiers in the workforce from other parts of Japan. These individuals had returned from the continent having had their lives broken by war. They were better educated than the average miner, a population that in normal times consisted mostly of the younger sons of farmers from southern Kyūshū or the offspring of miners.

5   Among the circle members who hailed from the mining sector, none appears to have worked at the industrial giant Mitsui-Miike, despite circles having flourished there.[11] Sākuru-mura recruited members from small and medium-sized mines locally. Working conditions at these smaller outfits differed from those enjoyed at large collieries. Miners had to accept working in dangerous or unproductive mines that had been overlooked – or abandoned – by the large mining conglomerates. One miner at a medium-sized colliery in Nakama, having recently returned from supporting the strikers at Miike, wrote: "Anyway, workers at small and medium-sized mines don't trust the workers at large mines. Because there are so many of them, they have a high budget from union dues, so they're arrogant yet never join our struggles" (S-m, 3-5-21).[12]

6   The journal was enthusiastically received at its launch in 1959. It quickly established a sizeable network, sparking opposing debates among the different social groups and between northern Kyūshū (reputedly "advanced") and southern Kyūshū (considered "backward" but seen by Sākuru-mura as having a greater potential for a working-class regeneration). Thanks to its links to cultural figures within the Japanese Communist Party and to certain intellectuals in Tokyo, the journal was also known to militants in faraway regions, leading several similar initiatives to be announced elsewhere. At the same time, the divide between Sākuru-mura and the large coal-mining unions became definitive in 1959.

7   The journal began to show signs of flagging in 1960. It reduced its length starting with the April issue and ceased publication for four months after the May issue. The revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance in mid-January and the end of the 282-day strike at Mitsui-Miike in early November dealt a blow to morale among Sākuru-mura members. This was compounded by the expulsion of Tanikawa Gan and two other members from the Japanese Communist Party for being "enemies of the people" (S-m, 3-6-15). When the journal reappeared in October (in its second series), it had abandoned printed script in favour of mimeographed text, had no fixed page numbering and no set publishing frequency. It ceased publication abruptly in October 1961.

1.3. The founders' contributions

8   Before we turn our attention to the texts penned by miners, let us look at the coal-related contributions of Sākuru-mura's three founders. Tanikawa Gan, the movement's pivotal figure, does not appear to have written any texts directly tackling the miner's

condition, other than a handful of unpolished short stories. Nevertheless, he created a living language space for people unaccustomed to expressing themselves, enabling them to showcase their differing centres of interest and resist the centripetal force of Tokyo (progressive discourse of intellectuals and the Communist Party).[13] Sākuru-mura's members were no doubt already familiar with the rallying call of this Japanese Narodnik through his poems: "*Don't go to Tokyo, invent your homeland // in the guest room where the moss cools our bottoms / invite sailors farmers turners miners /our shames are many, our gaze unique / it is there! the capital of this world, hidden beneath the ferns*".[14]

9 Tanikawa Gan was also the brains, albeit behind the scenes, of a protest at a smaller mine in which many Sākuru-mura members took part. This new dispute, organised after the defeat at Mitsui-Miike, monopolised the pages of the journal. The editors publicly voiced their support of workers at the mine in question, the nearby Taishō Coal Mine (大正炭鉱, S-m, 3-8-14/15), as if channelling all the group's repressed energy there. Young Sākuru-mura members created the Taishō Action Group (大正行動隊, *Taishō kōdō tai*) followed by the Group to Overcome the Crisis in Kyūshū Mines (九炭危機突破隊, *Kyūtan kiki toppa tai*) as a way to protest against the rejection of minority initiatives. They also infiltrated union rallies to ensure that dissenting voices were heard. Certain members even managed to get themselves elected to top positions in local union branches. However, at the same time there was growing hostility and even physical altercations with other trade unionists. An increasing number of texts took the form of activist journals in which the writers gleefully related their activities. Faced with this escalation, Tanikawa, himself the victim of an attack by young trade unionists, was the only person to engage in genuine reflection. One subject he explored was the decision-making process in democracies.[15] Another was the issue of violence, which he condemned in two articles while simultaneously expressing his desire to support young people in their direct action (S-m, 3-5-7/9, 4-2-1/5). These articles show that Tanikawa already questioned the craze for direct action, well before history illustrated the dead end to which internal violence led.

10 Morisaki Kazue was born to Japanese parents in Daegu, in the south of occupied Korea. Her entire body of writing is conditioned by the trauma of having been born to the oppressors. Although she later no longer saw the utility of *Sākuru-mura* – other than for the texts penned by miners –, the journal was instrumental in the maturing of her writing. In fact, it was for *Sākuru-mura* that she penned her first collection of recollections and accounts in the style known as *kikigaki* (聞き書き).[16]

11 Morisaki chose to interview women with experience working underground. The idea was to preserve this mining memory before it disappeared, since women had been banned from the pit in 1947. These interviews reveal that the ban was not seen by women as a protective measure but as a way of getting rid of a workforce that had become superfluous since the economic downturn. In 1961 Morisaki published her first book, a collection of six articles originally published in *Sākuru-mura*. The title was *Makkura: onna kōfu kara no kikigaki* まっくら　女坑夫からの聞き書 (Pitch Black: Interviews with Women Miners). Underground, women worked as *atoyama* (後山, literally "rear of mountain"), carrying away the coal extracted by the male hewer or *sakiyama* (先山, "front of mountain") in baskets. *Atoyama* and *sakiyama* were often father and daughter, or a married couple, but they could also be complete strangers. Whatever happened between the pair, labouring half naked in the darkness, nothing

would be said. Morisaki saw this as the antithesis of the prostitute and the housewife, whose sexuality was confined to the role of wife.[17]

12   Ueno Eishin published several works of value to anyone interested in the lives of miners in this region of Japan, due to his first-hand experience at small and medium collieries. He published two landmark works while editor of *Sākuru-mura*, between 1958 and 1961: *Oya to ko no yoru: minna de kaita rakugaki* 親と子の夜：みんなで書いたラク書き (Parents and Children's Nights: Graffiti Written Together, 1959) and *Owareyuku kōfutachi* 追われゆく坑夫たち (Miners Driven Away, 1960). *Oya to ko no yoru* is a collection of five illustrated stories on the lives of miners. Ueno strove to write in a language accessible to miners unused to reading, and also attempted to highlight the moments of happiness in their everyday lives. One of these stories, "Hitokuwa bori" ひとくわぼり (One Chop of the Hoe), depicts the hero of a local folk tale. In contrast, *Owareyuku kōfutachi* adopts a standard reporting style aimed at an audience accustomed to reading.[18] The book helped raise awareness of the mining condition, beyond the dramatic situation in Chikuhō.[19] The text opens with the description of a failing small mine. In it, the author details the harsh working conditions, the nomadic existence of miners, the injustice, invalidity and destitution, and gives former miners a voice to recount their life stories.[20]

13   Ueno's contributions to the journal notably included a report published in issue 2. Entitled "Retsu" (裂, meaning "break"), it focuses on the flooding of Eguchi Coal Mine in 1958, in which 14 miners died. The harrowing account features photos of lifeless victims, texts written by their children and "testaments" etched into the victims' helmets with stones. "Retsu" was actually a reprint of an article originally written for *Gekkan tanrō* 月刊炭労 (Monthly Bulletin of the Japan Coal Miners' Union). In the original version, Ueno had not concealed the tensions between the workers at Eguchi, a small mine, and Tanrō, the national coal-mining union, with the former criticising the latter for its hypocrisy and bureaucratism. As a result, any passages deemed damaging to Tanrō had been censored. The article's republication in full in *Sākuru-mura* thus signified the journal's non-submission to the union.

2. The miners' contributions

14   *Sākuru-mura* abounds with texts on the everyday lives of miners: the work, machinery, baths, accidents, bunkhouses in the shadows of the spoil tip, debts, "desertions" (ケツ割り *ketsuwari*), trade unions – whose leaders were highly criticised –, alcohol, families and children. Yet these portraits were mostly written by third parties, rarely by miners themselves, despite the fact that *Sākuru-mura* was contemporaneous with the Writing of Everyday Life Movement (生活綴り方運動 *Seikatsu tsuzurikata undō*).[21] Allusions to the harsh existence of miners can be found in third-party testimony (such as the interviews given to Morisaki Kazue, for example) and in fictional stories. Non-fiction by miners included accounts of their interactions with other social groups and, to a lesser extent, aesthetic reflections. Far from wallowing in pessimism, miners were curious about the world. The only genre they avoided was abstract discourse offering, for example, suggestions for a more liveable society.

15   For convenience, my analysis will begin with texts that can be broadly described as non-fiction (events within the journal, debates, autobiographical accounts, journalistic

reports), followed by fiction (poems and short stories on miners' lives), and finally, a short reflection on photography.

2.1. Non-fiction

16   Most of the miners' non-fiction texts focused on events within the journal. As an example, barely two months after the scandal of Ueno's censored report, a similar incident occurred within Yamada Bungaku 山田文学, a literary club at Mitsubishi-Kamiyamada Coal Mine, where several members also contributed to *Sākuru-mura*.

17   Under pressure from the trade union, which financed the circle's journal in order to censor certain texts, Yamada Bungaku imploded. *Sākuru-mura* published several articles on the subject, including one by Kimura Hideo 木村日出夫, a miner at Mitsubishi-Kamiyamada and a member of Yamada Bungaku. According to his article, the day after the decision was made to shut the publication down, Kimura was surrounded by over a dozen miners as he descended into the pit. Despite having never shown an interest in literature before, they suggested creating a new literary journal called *Newborn Cry* (*Ubugoe* 産声).[22] The article does not say what became of it, but the anecdote illustrates a spirit of openness among the miners at Mitsubishi-Kamiyamada.

18   In stark contrast to these militant texts on current events, two authors wrote about their family history. Tomonari Hajime 反成一 was not of mining stock and only occasionally worked in the mines himself. In terse and sober prose, he masterfully describes his family's past, including a schizophrenic father long incarcerated on a false charge of rape and murder. The story is punctuated by bouts of illness, family disputes and multiple house moves (S-m 1-1-14/19, 1-3-22/28).

19   Hanada Katsumi 花田克己 submitted texts across several genres, including documentary reports, song lyrics and newsbites. The most remarkable of his contributions were two autobiographical stories. The son of two generations of miners, he sought to understand his father's difficult life. Instead of turning the story into a militant fight against the ruling class, he sought the root of his father's struggles in the fact that he was neither the eldest nor the youngest son, and thus had little power in this world. As far as Hanada was concerned, the only thing he had inherited from his father was a resentment of society. And yet, curiously, this had not stopped him from loving his job and wanting to pass it on to the next generation. Whereas life in the mines as described by non-miners is rarely devoid of drama, miners' introspection is discreet and undertaken with detachment. Virtually none of the stories features scenes inside the pit. For all that, one senses the invisible past that burdens all those who accept a life in the mines.

20   In between these two extremes of militant writings and autobiographical stories, miners also wrote reports and *kikigaki* oral histories. Out of curiosity, Hirano Shigeo 平野滋夫 visited the state-owned mine of Kasuya, where he saw different social issues to those at his own mine (S-m, 2-10-28/32). Kobinata Tetsuya 小日向哲也 held discussions with workers from other sectors and interviewed an elderly woman about her life in Tokyo as a maid (女中 *jochū*) (S-m, 1-4-45, 2-11-6/8, 3-2-11/15, 3-8-24/25). Sakata Masaru 阪田勝 even described his visit to a centre for the new religion Aanai-kyō (ああない教) in a humorous yet non-judgmental text (S-m, 3-4-2/5).

2.2. Fiction

21   Miners' fictional writings focus exclusively on life in the mines. While none has the epic scope of Emile Zola's *Germinal* or George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*,[23] some are skilfully written. Generally speaking, these fictions show a desire to tackle the question of salvation in the mines. They describe the tensions generated by unionism, denounce living conditions or adopt the viewpoint of a child to highlight certain moments in their lives. Writings in the latter category often resemble a reassuring children's bedtime tale.[24] This is true of the stories written by Kusabue Kensaku 草笛健作 (S-m, 2-12-24/28, 3-1-23/27, 3-2-29/32).

22   In three of the five short stories penned by Yamazaki Kiyoshi 山崎喜与志, miners' interactions with the unions provide the framework and background to the narrative. Of the two remaining stories, one describes the tensions between a miner and his young son who aspires to a different life; the other depicts the young daughter of a miner, who is sold by her parents into prostitution (S-m, 1-3-42/48, 2-6-31/36, 2-10-35/37, 2-11-32/39, 4-5-28/40).

23   Many miners tried their hands at free verse and *tanka*.[25] Given the difficulties associated with free verse and its absence of formal constraints, many of these texts remain immature. Nevertheless, this type of poetry seems to have provided a space where miners could develop their thoughts. The themes of death, blood, bereavement and vermin appear frequently, and to a lesser extent, those of anger and hope.

24   One rare exception is "Taiyō o kajirinagara, Shittai-ninpu wa kataritsuzukeru" 太陽を齧りながら　失対人夫は語り続ける (Biting into the Sun – The Labourer Benefiting from Unemployment Measures Continues to Speak), by Isayama Masanobu 諫山昌信. This long poem shows great rhetorical complexity, revealing snapshots of the everyday life of a militant miner now working as a road-maker as part of the relief measures for the unemployed (失業対策 *shitsugyō taisaku*). Unfortunately, there is not enough space to analyse the poem in detail here. Suffice it to say that the author superimposes the narrative of a young man who wants to set up home with a woman with the tale of his negotiations at the employment centre. The image of an invisible eye overlooks the scene, full of desire and rage (S-m, 2-6-10/18).

25   The following poem is written in a simpler style and requires no comment. "Kyōdai yo nikushimi o" 兄弟よ憎しみを (Hatred, my Brothers!) by Tamaki Makoto 玉木誠 resembles an autobiographical tale.[26]

> In his youth,
> Father loved *geisha* and *sake* above all else
> He wielded absolute power over Mother
> Back up from the pit, he always drank
> A bottle of *makkari*[27]
> Such was my father.
> Just once, he took me into town
> To exchange our millet for rice substitution powder,
> Making me carry the bag.
>
> That same evening,
> Crushed by a slab of coal as big as a *tatami*
> Father was killed.
> As the days went by
> I missed him more and more

But I didn't feel sad at the funeral.
What I hated most
Was that people would see our ripped *tatami*.

Father left us nothing.
Not even the tools he used in the pit.
Mother cried every day.
Another time she cried
Was when second older brother
Was killed by a Yankee incendiary bullet.
No matter how we pulled at the long hexagonal bullet nailing down his head,
It would not come out.
Mother filled the hole in his head
With three or four wads of cotton,
Weeping all the while.

And now,
Third older brother, deprived of ever working again
By a cave-in.
Mother
Her tears
I must teach her to swallow them drop by drop
To transform them
Not only into despair and sorrow
But into hatred of the enemy.
I must teach my many brothers
To turn sadness into hate.

26 *Tanka* poems were unquestionably the most important contribution of miners in terms of their maturity and power. *Sākuru-mura* had three excellent *tanka* poets working in the pit. Their poems illustrate the ability of this genre to convey both an emotion and the circumstances surrounding it.

A ray of light guides
The low row of houses
In the stark shadow of the spoil tips
   OKITA Hiromi 沖田活美 (S-m, 1-1-20)[28]

Wiping blood on a timber prop
Filling the mouth with water
To spray over the wound
   OKITA Hiromi (*ibid.*)[29]

As we push the rock drill, arms linked
Breathless
Our familiar half-naked bodies converge
   OKITA Hiromi (*ibid.*)[30]

Cursing the slow pace of work
The foreman all day long
At our backs
   TAKAMURA Kunio 篁邦雄 (S-m, 2-1-26)[31]

A strike lost through betrayal
As we are poor – we hope
for a strong and organised party
   TAKAMURA Kunio (*ibid.*)[32]

Dirty at end of day
A detour to eat drink
Sadness like an impatience
   TAKAMURA Kunio (*ibid.*)[33]

Reply without hesitation
Speak with pride
Of your father killed at work
   TAKAMURA Kunio (*ibid.*).[34]

The gust of expelled air carries away
The dynamite smoke
Mingled with my breath
   YAMAMOTO Tsuguru (S-m, 1-1-21)[35]

In the evening I wipe the day's
Coal dust from my eyes
As I would tears that fall
   YAMAMOTO Tsuguru (*ibid.*)[36]

Under the light eats happily
The little family supported by me,
Fragile in health
   YAMAMOTO Tsuguru (S-m, 2-1-27)[37]

27   In the history of *tanka* poetry, the latter half of the 1950s corresponds to the period characterised by *zen'ei tanka* (前衛短歌 "avant-garde *tanka*"), which was experimental and anti-realist in nature. This was preceded by a period of socially engaged and resolutely realist *tanka*, written for example by the Shinkajin Shūdan (新歌人集団 "new poets collective"). The poet-miners of *Sākuru-mura* did not always strictly respect the *tanka* metre, instead exploiting realism to the full, as if following the ideal set by others a decade earlier.

2.3. Critical reflection

28   Although miners took no part in the ideological debates on how Sākuru-mura should be run or the theoretical disputes over culture, a few did engage in critical reflection in fields like literature and painting.

29   Ueda Hiroshi 上田博 and Shōda Akira 庄田明, two artist-miners (illustrators/ printmakers/photographers) responsible for the journal's front cover, co-wrote an article entitled "Domon Ken no yūki to gosan" 土門拳の勇気と誤算 (The Courage and Miscalculation of Domon Ken) (S-m, 3-4-13/16). The article was a dialogue on *Chikuhō no kodomotachi* (The Children of Chikuhō), a photography series published by the renowned photographer Domon Ken shortly before. Domon had visited Chikuhō late in 1959, spending two weeks documenting the desperate situation of miners there. Each copy was printed on low-quality paper and sold for 100 yen in order to reach as wide an audience as possible. In all, one hundred thousand copies were sold. Along with *Hiroshima*, it is considered a masterpiece of Domon's characteristic social realism.

30   Although they readily acknowledged Domon's technical prowess and good intentions, Ueda and Shōda, both photographers themselves, analysed his approach point by point.

To depict the suffering in Chikuhō, Domon focused on children in a former mining hamlet, in particular two young sisters whose mother had left and whose father was ill. The final pages featured images of the strike at Mitsui-Miike, as if to end this harrowing book on an optimistic note. Ueda and Shōda felt that this combination was unacceptable, since victory at Mitsui-Miike would in no way ease the suffering of Chikuhō's children, given the two groups' differing needs. In fact, according to Shōda, the link between the everyday lives of these children and large-scale industrial action was the opposite to what Domon had imagined. The strike at Mitsui-Miike drew its strength from the community spirit of impoverished miners (who convinced a large proportion of the workforce at Mitsui-Miike to liberate themselves from the "politically correct" fetters of Tanrō). In Ueda's and Shōda's eyes, the Tokyoite Domon had relied too heavily on eliciting compassion for the weak, failing to capture the complexity and contradictions of everyday life in Chikuhō – something that would be impossible to perceive in just two weeks, even for a master like Domon. Destitute miners showed solidarity and generosity; they continued to fight, express themselves and seek solutions together despite being unorganised. Ueda and Shōda's arguments are convincing and represent an authentic, opposing stance from outside "the establishment" (i.e. Tokyo and its elite).

Conclusion

31   Given the everyday struggles of the authors, the rich body of work they produced is absolutely remarkable. These scattered texts illuminate a short period of time in which culture provided the working classes with a wealth of opportunities before being replaced by mass culture and consumer goods.

32   Nevertheless, this fails to explain why *Sākuru-mura*'s texts continued to be influential in the 1960s. A comparison with the literary circles at Mitsui-Miike provide some possible clues. I was not able to consult any of the 38 literary journals at Mitsui-Miike listed in Cha'en Rika's "Rōdō-tōsō no naka no bungaku: Miike to bunka-undō" 労働闘争のなかの文学 ― 三池と文学運動 (Literature Within Labour Disputes: Miike and the Cultural Movement). The sole *tanka* cited by Cha'en suggests that, in this genre at least, there were some extremely talented author-miners.[38] According to Cha'en, the literary circles at Mitsui-Miike were distinctive for their focus on collective creations (offering of song lyrics to choir circles, mutual reading sessions, etc.). However, these circles were ultimately absorbed by the unions' own journals (disappearance of independent journals, creation of literary pages in union bulletins). The novelist Noma Hiroshi 野間宏 (1915–1991), then a Communist, pointed out during one of his visits to Miike that concealing the personal problems hinted at in the texts produced at that mine was a threat to collective creation.[39] However, in the case of *Sākuru-mura*, where collectivity was always seen as an unfinished process, something under construction, the problem did not arise. We saw earlier the diversity of subjects tackled by miners; yet even more remarkable is the variety of all the contributions to *Sākuru-mura*. Reading these works, one often has a sense of witnessing the birth and maturing of ideas. It is no doubt this that sets *Sākuru-mura* apart from other mining publications.

33   Although *Sākuru-mura* was relatively independent of the Japanese Communist Party and Tanrō, it was not entirely free of the influence of certain intellectuals in Tokyo who took an interest in the publication. Some New Left thinkers idealised *Sākuru-mura*

because "real miners" contributed texts, just as *Sākuru-mura* itself idealised southern Kyūshū because it was less industrialised. Tanikawa Gan's eye was constantly turned towards Tokyo, which he visited regularly. When the author of "Don't Go to Tokyo, Invent your Homeland" moved to the capital to join forces with Yoshimoto Takaaki, and subsequently headed an educational publishing company, many of those within the movement must have felt their hopes betrayed.

34   Despite this, *Sākuru-mura* remains an unparalleled example of a working-class appropriation of a vast creative field. Reading the miners' texts challenges some of our preconceived ideas about this population, such is the power of these writings, their humility, diversity and profoundness. These auto-portraits also present an enigma: why, for example, do some texts convey a blistering hatred of the harsh working conditions and yet a fierce pride and desire to pass on the profession to the next generation? This enigma, inherent to any exploration of otherness, is a constant source of questioning.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AMANO Masako 天野正子, 2005, *Tsukiai no sengo-shi: sākuru to nettowāku ga hiraku chihei* つきあいの戦後史ーサークルとネットワークが拓く地平 [History of Post-war Human Relationships: The Horizon Opened up by Circles and Networks], 吉川弘文館 [Yoshikawa Kōbunkan], 東京 [Tokyo], 10 pages + 286 pages + 6 pages.

ARAKI Yasutoshi 新木安利, 2010, *Sākuru-mura no jiba: Ueno Eishin, Tanikawa Gan, Morisaki Kazue* サークル村の磁場ー上野英信、谷川雁、森崎和江 [The Magnetic Field of *Sākuru-mura*: Ueno Eishin, Tanikawa Gan and Morisaki Kazue], 海鳥社 [Kaichō Sha], 福岡 [Fukuoka], 319 pages.

CHA'EN Rika 茶園梨加, 2010, "Rōdō-tōsō no naka no bungaku: Miike to bunka-undō" 労働闘争のなかの文学ー三池と文学運動 [Literature Within Labour Disputes: Miike and the Cultural Movement] in *Ritsumeikan gengo bunka kenkyū* 立命館言語文化研究 [Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture], no. 22, 立命館国際言語文化研究所 Ritsumeikan Kokusai Gengo Bunka Kenkyū-jo [International Institute of Language and Culture Studies, Ritsumeikan University], 京都 [Kyoto], p. 49–61.

KYŪSHŪ SĀKURU KENKYŪ KAI 九州サークル研究会 [Research Group on Kyūshū Circles], *Sākuru-Mura* サークル村, 2006 [1958–1961], 不二出版 [Fuji Shuppan], 東京 [Tokyo].

MATSUBARA Shin'ichi 松原新一, 2001, *Gen'ei no komyūn: Sākuru mura o kenshō-suru* 幻影のコミューン サークル村を検証する [The Commune Illusion: Examining *Sākuru-mura*], 創言社 [Sōgensha], 福岡 [Fukuoka].

MATSUSHITA Hirofumi 松下博文, 2006, "'Hasamareru' shisō: *Sākuru-mura* kaisetsu ni kaete" はさまれる」思想ー『サークル村』解説にかえて ["Divided" Thoughts – A Commentary on *Sākuru-mura*] in KYŪSHŪ SĀKURU KENKYŪ KAI (ed.), *Sākuru-Mura* サークル村 [Sākuru-Mura], 不二出版 [Fuji Shuppan], 東京 [Tokyo], p. 5–9.

MATSUURA Sōzō 松浦総三, SHIBANO Tetsuo 柴野徹夫, MURAYAMA Kiyohiko 村山淳彦, Uchino Nobuyuki 内野信幸, 1990, *Ruporutāju wa sekai o ugokasu: Jon Rīdo kara gendai e* ルポルタージュは

世界を動かす：ジョン・リードから現代へ [Journalism Moves the World: From John Reed to the Present Day], 大月書店 [Ōtsuki Shoten], 東京 [Tokyo], p. 153–189.

MIZUTAMARI Mayumi 水溜真由美, 2013, *Sākuru-mura to Morisaki Kazue: kōryū to rentai no vijon*『サークル村』と森崎和江－交流と連帯のヴィジョン [*Sākuru-mura* and Morisaki Kazue: A Vision of Exchange and Solidarity], ナカニシヤ出版 [Nakanishiya Shuppan], 京都 [Kyoto], 424 pages.

SAKAGUCHI Hiroshi 坂口博, 2006, "*Sākuru-mura* sōkan zenya" サークル村創刊前夜 [The Night Before the Launch of *Sākuru-mura*] in KYŪSHŪ SĀKURU KENKYŪ KAI (ed.), *Sākuru-Mura* サークル村 [Sākuru-Mura],不二出版 [Fuji Shuppan], 東京 [Tokyo], p. 16.

TANIKAWA Gan 谷川雁, 1968, *Tanikawa Gan Shishū* 谷川雁詩集 [Collection of Poetry by Tanikawa Gan], 思潮社 [Shichōsha], 東京 [Tokyo], 123 pages.

TSURUMI Shunsuke 鶴見俊輔, 1976, "Naze sākuru o kenkyū suruka" なぜサークルを研究するか [Why Study Circles?] in SHISŌ NO KAGAKU KENKYŪ KAI 思想の科学研究会 [Research Group on the Science of Thought] (ed.), *Kyōdō kenkyū – Shūdan: Sākuru no sengo shisō-shi* 共同研究 集団 サークルの戦後思想史 [Joint Research on Groups: The Post-war History of Thought on Circles],平凡社 [Heibonsha] 東京 [Tokyo], p. 5–7.

UENO Eishin 上野英信, 1985, *Ueno Eishin-shū 2, Naraku no sei'un* 上野英信集 2, 奈落の星雲 [Ueno Eishin Collection, vol. 2, A Nebula in Hell], 径書房 [Komichi Shobō], 東京 [Tokyo], 389 pages.

YUCHI Asao 湯地朝雄, 1991, *Puroretaria bungaku undō: sono risō to genjitsu* プロレタリア文学運動－その理想と現実 [Proletarian Literary Movements: Ideals and Reality], 晩聲社 [Banseisha], 東京 [Tokyo].

NOTES

1. 炭塊にえぐられて癒えし吾の腕に異質の如く盛り上がる肉あり   Tankai   ni egurarete ieshi ano udeni ishitsuno gotoku moriagaru niku ari: *tanka* published by miner Yamamoto Tsuguru 山本詞 in the literary journal *Sākuru-mura*.

2. Several scholars, among them Tsurumi Shunsuke 鶴見俊輔 (TSURUMI, 1976, p. 5–7), have suggested a similarity between *sākuru* and the confraternities and lay organisations known as *kō* (講), which developed from the Middle Ages onwards. However, *sākuru* appear to have been perceived as having the workings of a modern movement. The term was first used in the sense of an association in 1931 by Kurahara Korehito 蔵原惟人 (1902–1991), a leading theoretician in the All-Japan Proletarian Arts Federation (全日本無産者芸術連盟 *Zen-nihon musansha geijutsu renmei*). After his return from Moscow, Kurahara proposed setting up "Soviet-inspired cultural circles in factories" (YUCHI, p. 405), meaning cultural, and above all literary, groups set up by company employees. Circles evolved after Japan's defeat in WWII. Sociologist Amano Masako describes the extent of the circle phenomenon between 1945 and 1955 in the following terms: "Following the defeat, one of the forces defining the spirit of the times was American-style democracy, the other was Marxism, which saw a rise in influence. The latter became a particularly substantial force, creating a climate of discord between circles and the political parties and unions keen to exert an influence on them" (AMANO, 2005, p. 21).

3. MIZUTAMARI (2013, p. 39–42) situates the heyday of these coal-industry circles between 1954 (after the effects of the Red Purge had died down) and the late 1950s (when circles shifted their focus from social activism to consumerism).

4. A distinction is made throughout this paper between Sākuru-mura, the group, and *Sākuru-mura*, the journal, with roman type indicating the former and italics the latter.

5. The only missing genres were *haiku*, no doubt too short to adequately describe the worker's condition, and novels, too long to produce and too difficult to disseminate in a journal.

6. One young miner described the atmosphere within the group and the peculiar treatment reserved for coal workers: "They've nicknamed me 'big talker', 'Don Quixote' and 'strapping lad', names which seem to apply to coal workers too. I accept these names gratefully, but why do the sharp-tongued circle members speak to me with a disconcerting politeness, sentimentally, as if looking at me askance? With a peasant's craftiness, so to speak?" 「大ぶろしき」で「ドン・キホーテ」で「陽気な野郎」で、とはサークルの皆さんが私にくださったタイトルだ。と同時に炭鉱労働者にいってる言葉とも受け取れる。どれについても私は有難く頂戴しているわけだが、それにつけても毒舌を持って任じるサークルの皆さんが、あんがいインギンに、しんみりと、横目でものを言うのが気にくわないのだ。言うなれば、農民的ずるさ、とでもいうか。 (S-m, 2-4-25). Perhaps working in the coal sector in 1960 made others feel uncomfortable, like someone suffering from an incurable illness might. The journal organised visits to the pit for non-miners. ("Bokutachi wa yami ni attekita" ぼくたちは闇に会ってきた [We've been to the darkness and back], S-m, 1-3-35/41).

Henceforth, any citations from *Sākuru-mura* will include reference details in brackets: "S-m" followed by a number indicating the year of publication, the journal issue and the page numbers separated by dashes. The first number corresponds to the year; so for example "1" refers to the year the journal was launched, i.e. 1958. If the citation spans more than one page, the entire page range is given, separated by a forward slash. For example (S-m, 3-3-23/27) refers to pages 23–27 of issue 3 in 1960. The "posthumous" success of the journal illustrates the symbolic power of coal throughout the post-war period.

7. Ueno was preparing to join the elite of the Japanese colonial administration in Korea, convinced of the ideal of Five Races Under One Union (五族協和 *gozoku-kyōwa*, literally "harmony of the five races"). After Japan's defeat in WWII, his feelings of betrayal, guilt and hatred of America prevented him from returning to his preordained life. He reconciled himself with humanity by working underground and discovering the miners' solidarity in the face of accidents: "All I wanted was to erase Hiroshima from my mind. I couldn't possibly go on without erasing the image of a living hell so atrocious no human being should ever have to see it. What would have become of me if the darkness of Chikuhō hadn't enveloped me?" 私はただやみくもに、心からヒロシマを消したかっただけである。あの、人間が見てはならない凄絶な生地獄の光景を消さなければ、到底、生きて行かれなかったのである。もし、あの時筑豊の闇が私をつつんでくれなかったら、私は果たしてどうなっていたことか。 (ARAKI, 2010, p. 15).

8. MATSUBARA, 2001, p. 5.

9. Matsubara Shin'ichi laid the foundations of this body of research in 2001 with his book *Gen'ei no komyūn: Sākuru-mura o kenshō-suru* 幻影のコミューン サークル村を検証する [The Commune Illusion: Examining *Sākuru-mura*]. The journal itself was republished in full in 2006.

10. 労働者と農民の、知識人と民衆の、古い世代と新しい世代の、中央と地方の、一つの分野と他の分野の間に横たわる激しい断層、亀裂は波瀾と飛躍をふくむ衝突、　対立による統一、そのための大規模な交流によってのみ超えられるであろう。TANIKAWA Gan, "Sōkan sengen: Sarani fukaku shūdan no imi o" 創刊宣言さらに深く集団の意味を [Manifesto of the Inaugural Issue: Exploring the Meaning of Being a Group] (S-m, 1-1-3). Clashes were encouraged between the following groups: steelworkers vs peasants; miners vs steelworkers; miners vs savings bank employees; miners vs inhabitants of the Aso region; sons of farming families who had become labourers vs those who had taken over the family farm (eldest sons); foremen vs labourers; permanent workers vs subcontractors; employees vs students; private mines vs state-owned mines; state schools vs private schools; local population (farmers and fishermen) vs new population (white-collar workers), etc. Remember that in 1956 Mao Zedong had launched the Hundred Flowers Campaign encouraging debate and criticism of the Chinese Communist Party.

11. CHA'EN, 2010, p. 49.

12. SAKATA Masaru 阪田勝, "Tōitsu-kyōsen ni igi ari" 統一教宣に意義あり [I Oppose Unified Propaganda].

13. One of these differing centres of interest led to a feminist offshoot of *Sākuru-mura*, *Mumei Tsūshin*, see note 14.

14. 東京へゆくな ふるさとを創れ//おれたちの尻を冷やす苔の客間に/船乗り 百姓 旋盤工 坑夫をまねけ/かぞえきれぬ恥辱 ひとつの眼つき/それこそ羊歯で隠されたこの世の首府. Excerpt from "Tōkyō e yukuna" 東京へ行くな [Don't Go to Tokyo] (TANIKAWA, p. 26). In 1960 Tanikawa shifted the focus of his activities to Tokyo, where he supported the Zengakuren 全学連 (Federation of Student Self-Government Associations) alongside literary critic Yoshimoto Takaaki 吉本隆明, among others.

15. Since the majority voting system made it impossible for minority voices to be heard, Tanikawa imagined a democracy in which the right to veto would be randomly attributed to a limited number of voters who were not part of management (S-m, 3-8-10/18, 4-2-1/5, 4-5-20).

16. Morisaki's early texts tended to be a hermetic blend of poetry and critical reflection. In contrast, her interviews were written in a highly accessible language and won her a large readership. She is widely known today for her documentary works, in particular *Karayuki san* から ゆきさ [The Ladies Gone Abroad] (1976).

17. The *kikigaki* genre was popular in *Sākuru-mura*. Following on from Morisaki's interview series, three *kikigaki* were published by different members of the group. These included "Kibyō: Minamata-wan gyomin no ruporutāju" 奇病 水俣湾漁民のルポルタージュ [Strange Illness: A Report on the Fishermen of Minamata Bay] by Ishimure Michiko 石牟礼道子 (1927–2018, S-m, 3-1-34/48), which was a key episode in the famous *Kugai-jōdo* 苦海浄土 [Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow]. Morisaki Kazue was married when she decided to set up home with Tanikawa Gan, and like him, had two children. In August 1959, realising that women were not free to express themselves even in militant circles, Morisaki launched a monthly journal for women from her

kitchen, entitled *Mumei Tsūshin* 無名通信 [No-name Correspondence]. This almost-exclusively female publication marked the birth of one of the "native" roots of Japanese feminism.

18. *Owareyuku kōfutachi* was published in the Iwanami Bunko 岩波文庫 series, the first paperback collection in Japan, created in 1927 to make scholarly texts accessible to a mass audience.

19. "In the black deserts stretching as far as the eye can see, with countless lakes of all sizes created by cave-ins, in the folds of disintegrated mining residue, tens of thousands of abandoned people mill around like headlice or mites. If you were a traveller in these parts for the first time, with no prior knowledge, you would have thought that all the tramps and beggars of Japan had been stationed here; it is not easy to acknowledge that this innumerable mass of 'living corpses' is what has become of the miners who, until yesterday, worked."
大小無数の陥落湖沼を抱えて果てしもなく広がる黒い砂漠、その風化したボタ土のひだの間にさながらシラミかダニのごとく蠢いている幾万の棄民群。もしあなたがそれについての一片の知識も持たないはじめての旅行者であるならば、まるで日本中のルンペンや乞食を一地域に集結させたかと　思われるほど累々たるこの「生ける屍」の大群が、すべて昨日まで働き続けてきたあの炭鉱労働者の今日の姿であることを承認するのは、おそらく決して容易なことではありえないであろう。（UENO, 1985, p. 113)

In contrast to Tanikawa and Morisaki, Ueno provides no future blueprint for society in his non-fiction works, and in this sense, his militant writings are not visionary. Whereas Tanikawa's and Morisaki's writings carried a germ of the future, Ueno's was a requiem.

20. Matsuura Sōzō and Shibano Tetsuo hold this collection in high esteem, likening it to the work of American reporter John Silas Reed (1887–1920) and of Hosoi Wakizō 細井和喜蔵 (1897–1925) (MATSUURA & SHIBANO, p. 170–171). They even compare it to *La Condition ouvrière* [The Working-class Condition], written in 1934 by Simone Weil (1909–1943) based on her experiences as a factory worker. However, the two texts differ significantly in the way the narrator interacts with their field of observation. While Weil's narrator distances herself from the people around her, Ueno's constantly allows himself to be affected by the world he describes.

21. A few exceptions exist, such as the poignant "Kōnai dewa shinitakunai!" 坑内では死にたくない！ [I don't want to die in the pit!] by Matsuoka Yasufumi 松岡 保文 (S-m, 2-4-25/30).

22. "Hakkin sono go" 発禁その後 [After the Ban], (S-m, 2-2-9/14).

23. ORWELL, 1937 (work documenting the mining proletariat in northern England).

24. This desire to protect readers is shared by the song lyrics composed by miners.

25. A poetry form with a basic structure of five units composed of 5/7/5/7/7 syllables.

26. 若い頃/芸者買いと　酒が何よりも好きだった親父/おふくろには絶対的　権力を振るっていた親父/坑内から昇ると必ずマッカリを一升/呑んでいた親父/そういう親父が/黍を米代わりの粉と換えるため/袋を俺にもたせ/たった一度　町に連れて行ってくれた//その夕方/畳一枚ほどもある硬の下敷になって/おやじは死んだ/僕は日がたつにつれ/だんだん淋しくなったが/　葬式の時　あんまり悲しいとは思わなかった/それよりも　破れた畳を/大勢の人から見られるのが厭だった//親父の残してくれたものは何もない/　坑内で使っていた道具すら返ってこなかった/おふ

くろは毎日泣いた/もう一つおふくろが泣いたのは/二番目の兄貴が/アメ公のしょうい弾で殺された時/引っぱっても引っぱっても　頭を/地面に釘づけにした六角の長い弾　　は/抜けなかった/穴のあいた頭に/脱脂綿を三袋も四袋もつめながら/おっおっ　と泣いたのはおふくろ//いままた/三番目の兄貴が落盤で/一生働くことを取りあげられたが/おふくろに/それら涙を/ただ絶望や悲しみだけでなく/涙の一滴一滴を呑み下し/敵への憎しみに替えることを教えねばならない/多くの兄弟に/悲しみを憎しみに替えることを/教えねばならぬ (S-m, 2-6-14/15)

27. Japanese name for *makgeolli*, a Korean rice wine.

28. あざやかに硬山の投影移しゆく低き屋並みをみちびくひかり Azayakani bota no tōei utsushiyuku hikuki yanami o michibiku hikari

29. 坑木の端にて血糊を拭いとり水をふくみて傷に噴きつけぬ Kōbokuno hashinite chinori o nuguitori mizu o fukumite kizuni fukitsukenu

30. 鑿岩機もろ腕くみて押し合うと息荒げ寄す親しき半裸 Sakuganki moro ude kumite oshiauto ikiarage yosu shitashiki hanra

31. 捗らぬ作業を罵る職制の一日われらのうしろにつきてHakadoranu sagyō o nonoshiru shokusei no ichinichi warera no ushironi tsukite

32. うらぎられ敗れしストに貧しければ恃めり組織して強き党 Uragirare yabureshi suto ni mazushikereba tanomeri soshikishite tsuyoki tō

33. 一日を汚れて帰れば倚りてゆく飲食は悲し焦燥に似て　Ichinichi o yogorete kaereba yorite yuku onjikiwa kanashi shōsōni nite

34. 労働に斃れし父を誇らかに言いて澱みなく人に答えよRōdō ni taoreshi chichi o hokorakani iite yodominaku hitoni kotaeyo

35. 　発破煙もわが吐く息も同化されて押し流さるゝ排気の風に　　Happaenmo wagahaku ikimo dōka sarete oshinagasaruru haikino kazeni

36. 一日溜りし眼の炭塵を取る夕べ溢れくる涙の如きも拭きて Ichinichi tamarishi meno tanjin o toru yūbe afurekuru namida no gotoki mo fukite

37. 病み易き吾に支へられ灯の下に幸せさうに食ふ小家族 Yamiyasuki ani sasaerare hino shitani shiawasesōni kuu shō-kazoku

38. Twenty crates of coal loaded in the night, again and again I cough up the ever-black mucus　徹夜して積みたる石炭二十函吐きても吐きても出づる黒き痰　Tetsuyashite tsumitaru sekitan niuppako hakitemo hakitemo izuru kuroki tan. (CHA'EN, 2010, p. 53).

39. CHA'EN, 2010, p. 56.

ABSTRACTS

A variety of social and cultural movements emerged during the post-war democratisation of Japan, including so-called *sākuru undō* or circle movements. One in particular has drawn interest from historians due to its conceptual novelty and influence on left-wing intellectuals in the 1960s: Sākuru-mura (Circle Village), a debate and social reflection group and eponymous journal active in northern Kyūshū from 1958 to 1961. Its location in a key coal-mining region reflects the

importance of the mining industry in the history of Japanese labour disputes at the time. Nevertheless, a number of non-miners also took part. This article examines the many connections between the mines and Sākuru-mura. A brief chronological introduction is followed by a focus on the mining-related writings of the movement's three leaders (two of whom were not miners). Finally, an analysis of the styles, aesthetics and themes of the many texts penned by miners will highlight the diversity of these writings and the clues they hold about life inside the mines.

Avec la démocratisation de l'après-guerre, le Japon a vu émerger divers mouvements sociaux. C'est le cas des mouvements culturels dits sâkuru-undô (mouvements de « cercles »). Pour sa singularité et en raison de son influence chez des intellectuels de gauche des années 1960, certains historiens se sont intéressés à l'un de ces sâkuru, ayant existé entre 1958 et 1961 dans le nord de Kyûshû : le Sâkuru-mura (Village des « cercles »). Son enracinement dans une région houillère s'explique par l'importance de l'industrie minière dans l'histoire des conflits du travail. Des personnes extérieures du monde de la mine s'y sont également investies. Dans ce texte, nous examinerons la réalité des rapports multiples entre les mines et le Sâkuru-mura. Après une brève présentation chronologique, nous aborderons les travaux directement liés à la mine des trois acteurs principaux du mouvement (dont deux non mineurs). Nous analyserons ensuite les textes, nombreux et variés, rédigés par les mineurs afin d'en mesurer l'étendue, et de saisir ce qu'ils donnent à sentir de la vie de la mine.

INDEX

AUTHORS

MAKIKO ANDRO-UEDA

Inalco / IFRAE (UMR 8043)