

Subject: A Reflecting Mirror of Japan's High-Growth Period: 'Dialects' and 'Standard Language' in *Suna no Utsuwa*

Speaker: TANAKA Yukari, Professor, Nihon University, Japan

Translator: KASHIMA Takumi

*Suna no Utsuwa* is a serialized novel by Matsumoto Seicho that made its debut in the evening edition of *the Yomiuri Shimbun*, also marking his debut in a national newspaper. It is a mystery story that revolves around the presence of similar linguistic features in distant regions, a well-known phenomenon in dialect research, which is used as a tool for misdirection in the mystery genre.

The crux of the mystery centers on the creation of misleading impressions and is encapsulated in the testimony that the individuals associated with the murder at Kamata Station were speaking in 'a dialect resembling the Zu-zu dialect.' Kamata Station is situated in Tokyo, and since Tokyo falls within the Eastern Japanese dialect region, the mention of the Zu-zu dialect within the story initially invokes the dialect stereotype of the Tohoku region. However, while there are similarities between the Tohoku dialect and the Umpaku dialect, differences exist. In this context, we will delve into how Matsumoto Seicho depicted the linguistic characteristics attributed to the dialogue of the characters in the story and whether they align with the real distribution of dialects and their linguistic features.

Firstly, the victim, Miki Kenichi, is portrayed as a character who speaks in a dialect resembling the Tohoku accent. Witnesses reported to the police that his speech had 'an accent that is not typical of the Tokyo dialect,' and they believed he was from Tohoku. They also noted the frequent use of voiced sounds in his speech. However, we cannot confirm the accent from written text alone. Nevertheless, certain features resembling the 'Tohoku accent' can be observed in Miki's dialogue. In standard Japanese pronunciation, "ureshii" is written in kana as /uresui/ (嬉スい) so the Zu-zu accent is expressed in this dialogue. On the other hand, the phenomenon of voicing in the word cannot be confirmed from this dialogue. This is because /koto/ (嬉スいこと) should be written in kana as /goto/ (嬉スいごと) if voiceless consonants were voiced in the word.

If we closely examine the linguistic features present in Miki's dialogue, it becomes evident that Miki's dialect is not actually the Tohoku dialect but is,

in fact, the Umpaku dialect. However, the witnesses are led to believe that Miki's speech has 'a noticeable use of voiced sounds.' This is a deliberate misdirection by Matsumoto Seicho, as he intentionally sets up a misleading reference to the Tohoku dialect. Those well-versed in dialects could have early on confirmed the true dialect by carefully analyzing Miki's dialogue, making it a mechanism for an 'answer check' right here.

The early 1960s, when *Suna no Utsuwa* was written, coincided with the establishment of the foundation of modern dialect studies and the widespread dissemination of its findings. It is highly likely that *Suna no Utsuwa* was written while incorporating the results of the new dialect research that was being published one after another during that period. While Matsumoto Seicho was originally a novelist with an interest in dialects, it is essential to note the background of incorporating dialect-based misdirection tools in *Suna no Utsuwa*. This period also corresponds to Japan's high-growth period, which heightened dialect consciousness within Japanese society. This is a significant aspect that should not be overlooked. When analyzing the trend in the number of articles related to 'dialect' in five-year increments using the "Newspaper Articles Database on Language" from the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, it becomes evident that the number of reported events related to 'dialect' saw a rapid and substantial increase from 1965 to 1969. This increase coincided with the late period of Japan's high-growth period. In terms of content, numerous articles and letters related to 'dialect suicide' and 'dialect murder' emerged, indicating this was a period characterized by the stigma of dialects.

On the other hand, during this period, there was a growing trend where dialects began to be assigned to major characters in serialized newspaper novels. This suggests that *Suna no Utsuwa* can be reconsidered as one of the 'dialect newspaper serial novels' that reflected the dialect consciousness of Japan's high-growth period.

In *Suna no Utsuwa*, dialect is used as a stigma for Miki Ken'ichi, who is privy to the hidden past of Waga Eiryō. In contrast, to hide the stigma, pseudo- or quasi-standard language is employed for Waga Eiryō, who had already altered his own past. During the serialization of the novel, dialects were skillfully used as symbols of stigmas deeply intertwined with one's birth and background, something to be ashamed of and concealed. *Suna no Utsuwa* can be described as 'dialect newspaper serial novels' that reflect the

hidden aspects, such as the past or stigmas one may want to conceal, of Japan's high-growth period. It does so by using the unfamiliar Umpaku dialect, dialectal knowledge not widely known, and dialectal stereotypes from Eastern Japan.

During this period, other serialized newspaper novels with main protagonists assigned dialects include Shiba Ryotaro's *Ryoma ga Yuku* (1962 – 1966, Evening edition of *the Sankei Shimbun*) and Kawabata Yasunari's *Koto* (1961 – 1962, Morning edition of *the Asahi Shimbun*). The 'Tosa dialect' in the former is considered a representation of the 'brightness' of Japan's high-growth period, carrying the aspirations and dreams of one's homeland. Meanwhile, in the latter, the 'Kyoto dialect' symbolizes the 'vanishing beauty' of Japan, representing a bygone era.

Subject: The Popularization of Matsumoto Seicho's Literature through Media Mix – Reception of Suna no Utsuwa in China

Speaker: WANG Cheng, Professor, Tsinghua University, China

Translator: KASHIMA Takumi

There is a 30-year time gap between China's reform and opening-up period and Japan's high-growth period. The Matsumoto Seicho boom that occurred during Japan's high-growth period in the 1960s was replicated in China after the reform and opening-up in 1978. The success of the movie Suna no Utsuwa in China led to a surge in popularity, and Matsumoto Seicho's literature gained mass appeal through various media formats, including comic books called *lianhuanhua* books, translated novels, and dramas.

The Chinese-dubbed version of the movie Suna no Utsuwa was released in China in 1980 and became a huge success, forming a shared memory for a specific generation of Chinese people.

With the release of the movie, various reviews of Suna no Utsuwa emerged, sparking significant discussions among the Chinese audience about how to perceive the film. Some young Chinese viewers watched the movie while identifying with the character Waga Eiryō. Waga was not merely a character they have to criticize, but someone from whom they drew life lessons. During the period when Life Philosophy Discussions were exchanged, the release of the film Suna no Utsuwa served as a tailwind, facilitating its penetration into Chinese society.

During that time, the translators of the movie Suna no Utsuwa interpreted its themes as 'sympathy for Waga Eiryō' and 'the tragedy of youth in a capitalist society.' They made great efforts to faithfully translate the empathy that scriptwriters Hashimoto Sinobu and Yamada Yoji had towards Waga Eiryō. This played a significant role in the movie's popularity.

This research revealed that during the movie's release, the Chinese script for Suna no Utsuwa, found in the Japanese Film Drama Book was distributed and used as a textual source of the film. The 'explanatory notes' provided in the published script had a significant influence on how the Chinese audience watched Japanese films.

The subsequent section introduces *lianhuanhua*, which constitutes a variant of Chinese-style comic art. The *lianhuanhua* adaptation of Suna no Utsuwa features printed scenes from the movie with explanations in Chinese

underneath. During that time, two different versions of *Suna no Utsuwa* in *linhuanhua* format were published. One was published by the Tianjin People's Film Arts Publishing House in March 1981, with a print run of 276,000 copies that quickly sold out. The other was published by the People's Film Arts Publishing House in April 1981, with a print run of 780,000 copies. The script in both versions closely follows the original, comprising 211 scenes. However, the Tianjin People's Publishing House version contains 158 scenes, while the Film Publishing House version has 177 scenes, edited in a manner like storyboards by the editors.

It has been discovered that these *linhuanhua* versions offer different explanations, even for the same scenes. For example, in the final scene, the movie conveys a form of plea against leprosy discrimination through subtitles, but the *linhuanhua* versions offer distinct interpretations. In the Film Publishing House version, below a scene depicting children crafting a sand bowl by the sea, the Chinese text explains that even if *Waga Eiryō's* life may serve as a temporary vessel, like a sand bowl, it will break if blown by the wind and soaked by the rain. In the version by the Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House, there is an explanation beneath a scene depicting a leprosy-afflicted parent and child wandering, stating that *Waga Eiryō*, who is controlled by 'destiny,' must be treated.

Following the success of the movie *Suna no Utsuwa*, there was a rush to publish Matsumoto Seicho's mysteries throughout China. Mass publication led to the widespread translation of his works. Notable translations of *Suna no Utsuwa* include the 1985 translation by Cao Xiulin, translations by Sun Mingde and others, as well as another translation by Zhao Deyuan in the 2000s. In the 1980s, translations remained faithful to the original works, while more recent translations have tended to adapt the content to cater to a broader readership, aligning with Matsumoto Seicho image as a master of Social Detective Fiction.

The key word 'fate' does not appear in the original *Suna no Utsuwa*, but it has been extensively used in Chinese translations as a promotional slogan. The translation of novels has also been influenced by the power of media, including movies and *linhuanhua*, and the central theme of *Suna no Utsuwa* revolving around the concept of 'fate.'

Subject: Toward the Horizon of Media Content: A (Preliminary) Study on the Reception of *Suna no Utsuwa* in North America

Speaker: TSUNODA Takuya, Assistant Professor, Columbia University, USA

Translator: KASHIMA Takumi

In 1989, Soho Press, a publisher founded in 1986 and specializing in specific genres such as suspense fiction, published an English translation of *Suna no Utsuwa*. This book remains available for purchase in North America to this day. The translator for this work was Beth Cary, who has not only translated Matsumoto Seicho's works but has also worked on books related to Studio Ghibli and served as an interpreter for Miyazaki Hayao. The English version is titled *Inspector Imanishi Investigates*. In this title, the character of Detective Imanishi is emphasized as a central figure to the story.

This time, I would like to introduce a book review that appeared in *The New York Times*. The author of this review was Herbert Mitgang, who was also a journalist and an author himself. The title of the book review is 'Tea Ceremonies, Haiku, And of course, a Body.' The literal translation is 'Tea ceremony, haiku, and, of course, a corpse.' It is a humorously titled review that prominently features Japanese elements like tea ceremonies and haiku. Matsumoto Seicho is introduced as 'one of the most popular authors in Japan.' Furthermore, the review delves into various genres such as 'detective fiction' and 'police procedural,' with Mitgang even using terms like 'forensic novel' and 'scientific investigation story.' One noteworthy aspect of his review is how Mitgang provides a comparative framework by mentioning the names of Western mystery novelists like Georges Simenon (Belgium) and Nicholas Freeling (United Kingdom). Regarding Simenon, the series centered around the character Inspector Maigret is well-known. As for Freeling, Amsterdam serves as setting, and his novels feature Inspector Van der Valk as the protagonist. By explicitly referencing renowned Western novelists who base their works around characters, the review can be analyzed as focusing on Matsumoto Seicho's 'inspector Imanishi' while evaluating "Suna no Utsuwa."

I would like to transition to the topic of streaming services. *Suna no Utsuwa* has been available for streaming since 2017, under the title *Castle of Sand*. When examining its significance in the context of Japanese film history in English-speaking regions, I will explore the insights provided by Nomura Yoshitaro's *Suna no Utsuwa* by introducing the keyword 'media

genre.'

The Criterion Collection, Inc., founded in 1984 and based in New York, is engaged in sale of media formats such as DVDs and Blu-rays, licensing for sales, and digital remastering. One of its distinctive features is its focus on world cinema masterpieces rather than Hollywood-driven entertainment works, and it also places a significant emphasis on high-quality digital restoration. Software released by the Criterion Collection, Inc., which is used exclusively in university classes, is highly regarded.

In 2018, the Criterion Channel, a subscription-based streaming service dedicated to films, was launched. It is noteworthy that *Suna no Utsuwa* is available for streaming on this unique platform and remains accessible. Currently, five Nomura-Matsumoto collaboration works can be viewed on the platform. These include *Kichiku*, *Suna no Utsuwa*, *Kage no Kuruma*, the well-known *Zero no Shoten*, and *Harikomi*.

A film critic named Benjamin Mercer contributed an article titled 'The Crime Thrillers of Studio Maverick Yoshitaro Nomura,' on the Criterion official website. While directors like Kurosawa Akira and Oshima Nagisa are widely recognized in North America, Nomura Yoshitaro is not so well-known. Benjamin Mercer positions Nomura as 'genre filmmaker' in this context. Another crucial point to note is the generational perspective presented here. Specifically, while Kurosawa is associated with the golden age of the studio system, and Oshima is seen as a leader of the Shochiku Nouvelle Vague, the generation of Nomura Yoshitaro is portrayed as somewhat neglected. He is considered too young for the golden age and not as young as Oshima's Nouvelle Vague generation, placing Nomura in an 'intermediate' category as an underappreciated filmmaker.

For those who watch films in unique media environment like the Criterion Channel, what significance do the works of Nomura Yoshitaro and Matsumoto Seicho hold today? In the age of the attention economy, we observed that Japanese films are 'emerging' through recommendation systems. Additionally, through streaming, one can consider the works of Nomura and Matsumoto as a media experience that has been brought back to life.