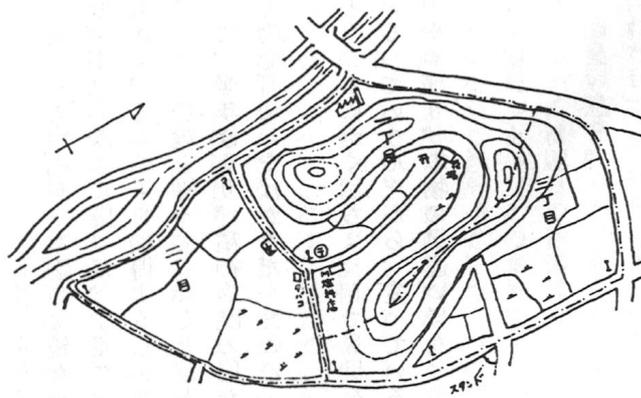


“Nokogiriyane 100 Years Map” and “The Ruined Map”

(Fragment "Landscape with Nokogiriyane" Part 8)



▲ Illustration for "The Ruined Map"

"On June 27, the turn of the Nokogirian Bunko(Library) Fair (May 23-July 25, 2021), we held a symposium titled "What we can see from the landscape with Nokogiriyane(sawtooth roofs) ". Although it was called a symposium, in reality it was more of an "exchange of opinions" with people who had some kind of interest in the fair. Personally, I was hoping to find something that would lead to the future development of my work, "Landscape with Nokogiriyane.

One of the participants presented us with a "map". Or, more correctly, a book. It was Kobo Abe's "The Ruined Map". He (let's call him Mr. M) said that he learned about the symposium by visiting Nokogiri 2 the day before the symposium. I was delighted to hear that he had read through the entire "Landscape with Nokogiriyane" before attending the symposium.

When Mr. M mentioned the words "Kobo Abe" and "The Ruined Map", I was extremely upset. In fact, I had been thinking that I should read "The Ruined Map" before the symposium. To my surprise, I could hardly remember what Mr. M had said, referring to "The Ruined Map". And for some reason, I didn't leave any notes.

Since that day, "The Ruined Map" has occupied a corner, or rather many parts, of my mind. It seems that I need to reconsider the "Nokogiriyane 100 Years Map" from the perspective of "The Ruined Map".

The "symposium" was not over yet.

Nokogirian (Lives in Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture
/ Established Nokogirian Kouba in Nokogiri 2)

1. The era that disappeared from the "Nokogiriyane 100 Years Map".

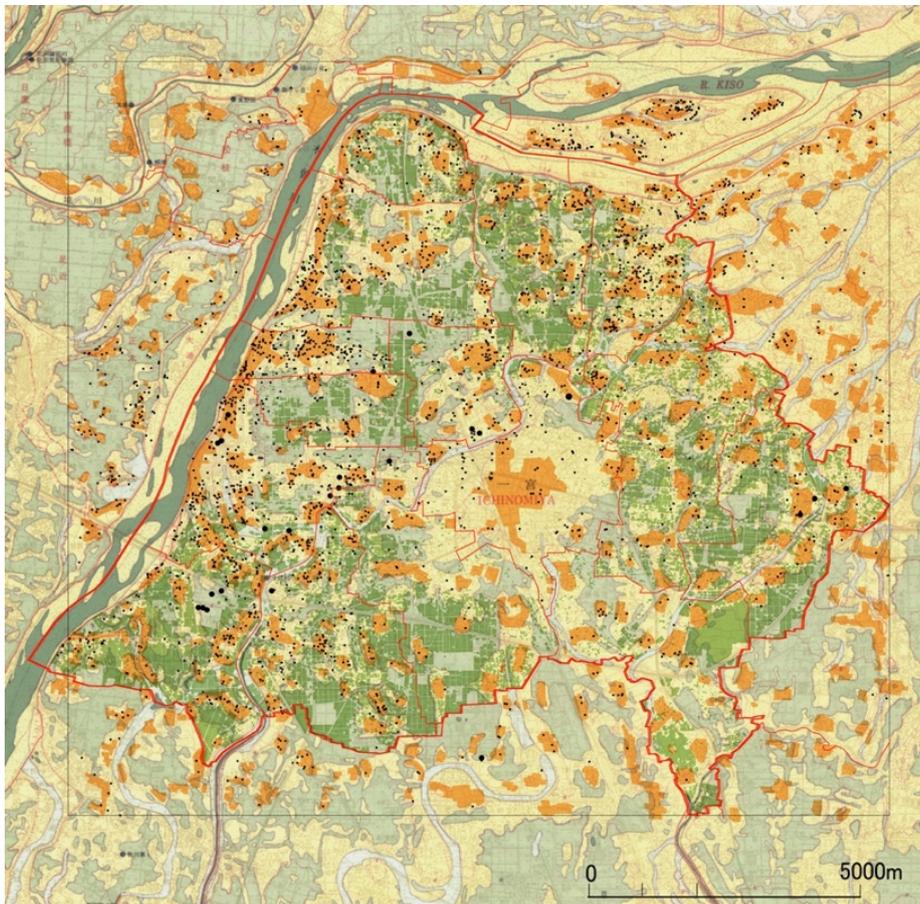
(M for Mr. M, N for Nokogirian)

N: "The Ruined Map" by Kobo Abe is a full-length novel published in 1967. Set against the backdrop of the maze that is the city, in the midst of the era of rapid economic growth, the story is about a detective who searches for a person who has suddenly disappeared. In the course of his investigation, he encounters various incidents, loses his memory, and disappears himself. The map can be read as a clue to the investigation and a purpose for living.

In fact, I have consciously kept my distance from the works of Kobo Abe. I was very interested in Kobo Abe, but I think I was concerned that it might lead to a denial of my own work, "urban planning". This time, I was able to read it with great interest. To use the theme of this work as an analogy, I myself am a disappeared person who left my hometown Ichinomiya for Tokyo.

M: In the sense of being a disappeared person, I am the same way. I studied architecture at a university in Yokohama and got a job, but now I'm back here, so I guess I'm a double disappeared person. I first encountered Kobo Abe and this book in a seminar on urban planning. I grew up in a rural landscape near the Kiso River, and the new towns of Yokohama and Tama overlapped with the bleak landscape of apartment complexes described in "The Ruined Map".

N: Actually, the "Nokogiriyane 100 years Map" is not overlaid with the map of 1970, the time of "The Ruined Map", and the time 50 years ago is missing. That's right, it's "disappearance".



▲ Nokogiriyane 100 Years Map

2. The community and myth of Owari and Ichinomiya

N: I grew up in Ichinomiya in the 1960s to 1980s, a time when there was a sense of community. I was interested in the "city" and wanted to go to Tokyo. But now I am becoming more conscious of my "hometown".

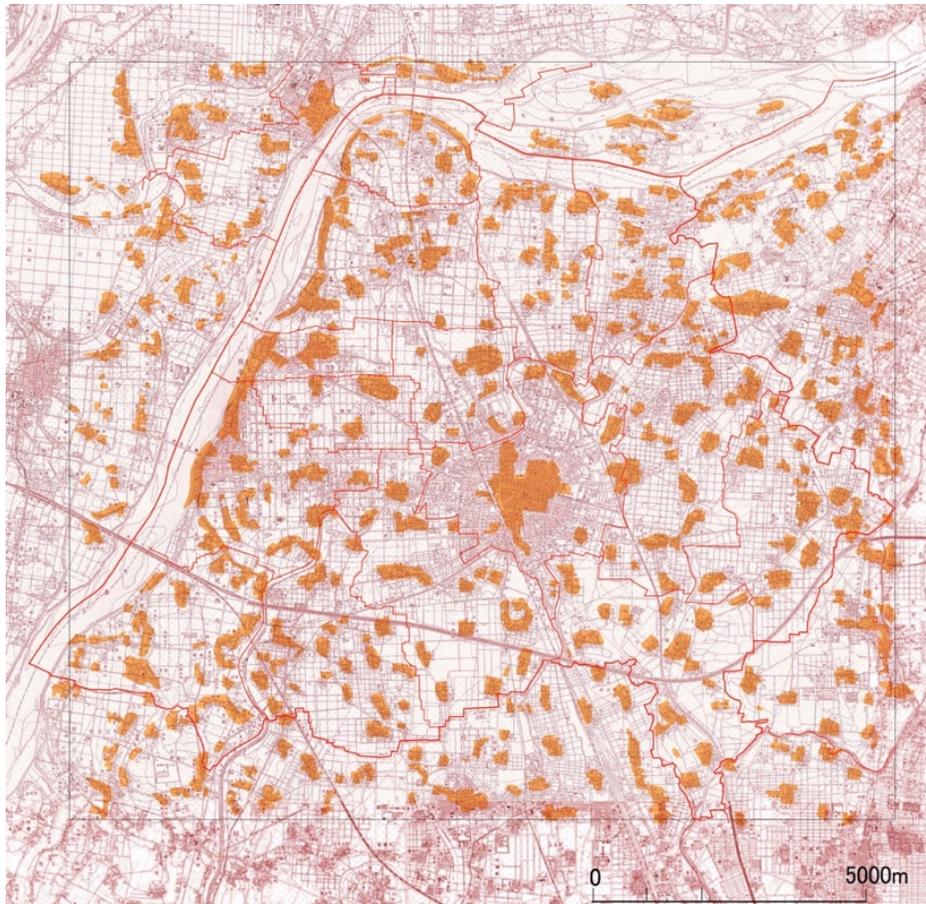
The "Nokogiriyane 100 years Map" is based on the "rural community" of Set of landings from 100 years ago, and overlays the myths of Owari and Ichinomiya. Mythology is essential to the formation of a community.

M: Mr. Nokogirian's generation is the "shirake generation"(apathetic about social issues) or the docile generation after the baby boomers. It's been 30 years since the war ended, and the university conflicts are almost over. They're not very assertive...

N: Yes, I guess it's the beginning of the "otaku generation". Unlike the baby boomers who are a year older, many of them don't like to assert themselves much. Of course, we can't lump them all together as a generation, though.

Kobo Abe rejects all communities and "grounds" such as hometown. It is said that people who flee from rural areas to the city create a "pseudo-community" within the city and run away again. They create a "mura" in the city. It means that they are not independent.

I have never been able to become an urbanite in the true sense of the word, as Abe thinks. Perhaps this is why I have instinctively avoided Kobo Abe. That said, I don't intend to simply glorify the communities of the past. There must be a form of community for the future. It may not be a big community, but a small one. Yes, like the stories that are created by individual Nokogiriyane.



▲ Overlap of 1920 settlement and 1970 urban area

3. The Ruined Map of 1970: The Disappearance of Nokogiriyane

M: When I was born in the 80's, as a child, the sound of Nokogiriyane(factory) echoed through the town. There was one in my grandparents' house. It had already closed, though. Before I knew it, many of them had disappeared from my surroundings. It was the disappearance of Nokogiriyane.

N: Oddly enough, in 1970, the number of textile factories in Ichinomiya City (including Bisai City and Kisogawa Town) peaked at 8,000. Almost all of them can be considered as Nokogiriyane. Now it is only 2,000.

The disappearance of Nokogiriyane was also the disappearance of the people who worked there. Especially the female workers who came from outside to work (they were also the ones who disappeared from their hometowns). Since the 1960s, rural society has been disintegrating and the nuclear family(核家族/kaku Kazoku in Japanese) has been growing. But on the other hand, the "extended family" (拡家族/kaku Kazoku in Japanese) community of Nokogiriyane, including these women, may have supported this region.

And while destroying farmland, the urban area sprawls in an uncontrolled manner beyond urban planning. This is what Abe himself wrote about The Ruined Map. It is the age of the City, where no departure is possible except to burn down one's own map and walk out into the desert of others...

M: Unlike the era of rural communities with stable social systems, in the era of rapidly transforming cities, are maps no longer able to indicate future destinations? If so, maybe the map of 1970 would have been ruined. Although it was the height of Nokogiriyane.



▲ 1970 Overlap of urban area and farmland (present)

4. The future as seen through the reversal of ground and figure

M: Kobo Abe says that he feels sympathy for the waste and garbage that is constantly reproduced in the city. In the sense of being discarded and forgotten, I think there is something similar to Nokogiriyane. Of course, there are Nokogiriyane that are still in use, but they are probably in the process of being discarded.

N: Sympathy for Nokogiriyane. It is now treated as a waste, but it should be able to attract attention. This is if the future society really thinks about sustainable and diversity, not just as a fad. The same goes for bricolage. If we are to think about the future in terms of natural ecosystems, it is obvious that agriculture will have an extremely important meaning. I would like to pay attention to the existence of the open space of farmland.

A map is composed of a ground and a figure. It is the relationship between positive and negative. What happens when you flip it around? From the troublesome of waste, garbage, and vacant houses and land, we may be able to see the future.

M: Well, let's flip the 100 years map.

Wow... that's quite a "ruined map", isn't it? We can see Nokogiriyane clearly now. In my pitch-black world. Missing person found! Kaa, kaa, kaa...

N: Eh, M... Are you... are you a Masumida Crow?



▲ Nokogiriyane 100 Years Map, reversed from color to monochrome

Epilogue: And back to the beginning. But it's not the same place.

I must say, for the sake of Mr. M's honor, this is a completely imaginary dialogue. However, Mr. M may have been a "Malebito(visitor from afar)" sent by Masmida Karas.

Thanks to him, I was able to read "The Ruined Map" and many other related reviews and critiques, which gave me the perspective to think about the "Nokogiriyane 100 years Map ". Also, through Kobo Abe, I was able to revive the feelings I had for the "city" when I was young. At the end of "The Ruined Map", the detective "I", who had lost track of himself and was hoping that someone else would find him, decides, "Being found is no solution. What I need now is to find myself. What I need now is a world of my own choosing. What I need now is a world that I have chosen for myself, a world that I have chosen with my own will". I can't help but feel that this is exactly what Mr. M was thinking when he came to the symposium.

I look forward to the day when I can have a real dialogue with Mr. M.

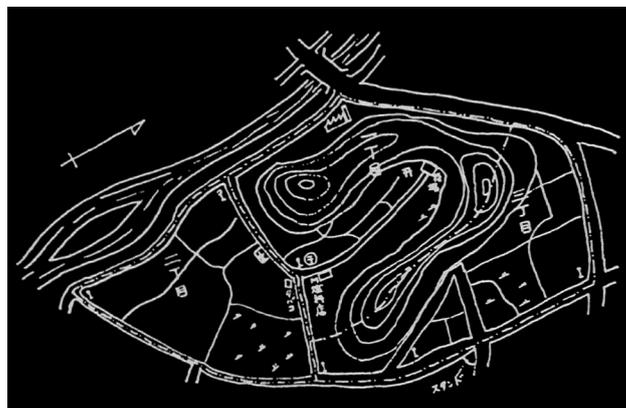
One of the interesting things about Kobo Abe's works is that the end returns to the beginning. This work is no different. The description of the slope leading to the apartment complex where the disappeared person lived in the beginning is repeated at the end of the story. However, he believes that his own house is at the end of this road. He confuses his own memory with that of the disappeared person. He's become a missing person himself.

Back to the beginning, it is not the same place. The "Nokogiriyane 100 years Map" may be a map of the distribution of Nokogiriyane that are on the verge of becoming waste. However, by reversing the map, I think we can see the future.

This time, I tried to make a map of the distribution of Nokogiriyane before their disappearance. 8,000 Nokogiriyane. Although we don't know the individual locations, we can get an idea of the distribution by district. However, due to the small scale of the map, the urban area is completely black. Is this a trap of a Masumida Crow? I need to be a little more creative in my expression. I would like to try again.

Before that, there is something I would like to do. I would like to search for the Oni, the missing person from Nokogiriyane(see "Landscape with Nokogiriyane, Part 4"). The Oni is nothing more than an alien existence that the community came up with for its survival. I'm going to start looking for the Oni, which has been absent for a while.

2021.8.16 (the anniversary of the end of the war, a day late)



▲ Illustration for "The Ruined Map", reversed in negative