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SAKARIBA: ZONE OF 'EVAPORATION' BETWEEN WORK AND HOME?

General Characteristics

It is, perhaps, surprising that in the Japanese literature on leisure behaviour almost no attention has been paid to what is—in Western eyes at least—one of the most conspicuous kinds of leisure and to the behaviour connected with it—namely the amusement quarters or *sakariba*.[1]

Sakariba is defined by a widely used Japanese dictionary as *hito no ōku yoriatsumaru basho* or *hankagai*, 'a place where many people come together' or 'a busy street' (Shinmura 1969: 871). *Ba* is 'place' and *sakaru* means 'to prosper' or 'flourish'. The noun form *sakari*, then, is 'height', 'peak', 'prime', 'bloom' (as well as 'heat' of animals), so that a direct translation would be 'a flourishing place', 'a prospering place', or simply 'a top place'. *Sakariba* is not necessarily an amusement quarter, since it can also refer to a shopping centre; but here I will confine myself to the treatment of those places full of neon lights, bustling with people, where many small drinking-places line the streets. In a typical *sakariba* one will find *akachōchin* (red lantern pubs), cabarets, bars, discos, *no pantsu kissa* (literally, 'no-pants coffee-shops'), *pachinko* parlours, cinemas, strip shows, and many other kinds of places.

1. In Confucian terminology a *sakariba* and its predecessors in the Edo period are *akusho*, 'bad places'; this Confucian tradition might be partly responsible for the neglect of research into *sakariba* leisure behaviour. Typically, one of the most extensive treatments of *sakariba* in the sense in which I use this term here is a moralistic article in a series on urban social pathology (see Shikata 1973).

These *sakariba* nowadays exist in every large town and, on a smaller scale, in the smaller provincial towns as well. The names of the famous *sakariba* of the ten big cities with more than one million inhabitants are known practically all over Japan. Sapporo's Susukino, Nagoya's Sakae, Osaka's Minami, Fukuoka's Nakasu—not to mention Tokyo's Shinjuku, Roppongi or Akasaka—are only a few of the many place-names which can be heard time and again in the Japanese popular songs called *enka*. 'Sakariba Blues', of the popular singer Shinichi Mori, is a simple enumeration of the better-known places from northern to southern Japan, starting with Ginza and ending with Ikebukuro. It would not, perhaps, be going too far to suggest that the *sakariba* to a certain extent are substitutes for other sightseeing places, in which Japanese cities are often rather poorly endowed. If one buys a travel guide written for Japanese men, there is usually an extensive treatment of these attractions of modern cities—where to dine, where to drink and so on.

One important characteristic of the *sakariba* is that such a place always has to be crowded and noisy. Lots of people are coming and going or just strolling about, because they cannot decide which shop they should enter. There is music in the air, there are the *'Irasshai!'* yells of welcome from the boys—and the more polite *'Irasshaimase!'* greetings from the girls—to tempt customers to visit their establishments, there is the noise and the smell of fried delicacies and the laughter of drunken men everywhere. For the sociologist Ikei this overcrowding is *the* main characteristic of a *sakariba*, and he speaks of *zattō no miryoku*, 'fascination of the crowd', which pulls many men to the amusement quarters at night (Ikei 1973b: 22). Japanese festivals and holidays are usually marked by enormous crowds, a feature journalists commonly like to describe, for example in reporting on Golden Week at the beginning of May. In the *sakariba* at night the crowd is omnipresent in the narrow streets as well as in the little restaurants or drinking-places. What for many Europeans may be something quite unpleasant seems to be for Japanese an enjoyable setting. Many Japanese seem thoroughly to enjoy their daily ride to their workplace on crowded railways and underground trains; they simply cannot fall into a relaxed, leisurely mood if a *sakariba* is not full of people. They are disappointed if too few people are there—an emply place is not the right atmosphere for drinking.

Nowadays, every small provincial town tries to provide a kind of *sakariba* with a handful of drinking-places—but there is no crowd, so these places tend to look rather odd to an inhabitant of a large town. There is no sight as sad as an empty *sakariba* during the morning hours, with all the glitter gone, and only the dirt left behind. Ikei even links the definition of a 'big city' to the existence of a *sakariba*. For him, people who go to a *sakariba* enjoy an almost religious feeling among the crowd there, comparable to a traditional festival, as one of the reasons for coming to a *sakariba* is, for many men, not only to get drunk with alcohol but to do so in the company of crowds of people (ibid.: 28).

Historical Development

According to the *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (dictionary), *sakariba* is an expression that was already in use during the Tokugawa period, and it cites the *kokkeibon*, or humorous work, *Ukiyoburo* (*Bathhouse of the Floating World*) (1809–1813) of Sanba Shikitei as the earliest literary source (1974: 649). But Miyao tells us (1979) that the *sakariba* in the big towns of the Edo period had a meaning different from that of today. Open places which served as places of refuge in times of fire were used by various people to offer attractions, and this drew the masses to those *sakariba*. Such places were sometimes called 'broad roads' (*hirokōji*) or 'river banks' (*kawara*). Famous examples in Edo include Ryōkoku, Asakusa Okuyama, and Ueno Hirokoji, and in Kyoto Shijō Kawaramachi. The kinds of attractions offered at the *sakariba* of the Edo period have nowadays largely disappeared, although traces can still be found in the *yose* plays (music-hall or vaudeville).

Another origin of the modern *sakariba* can be found in the amusement quarters next to religious centres in the temple towns (*monzenmachi*). Since ancient times, when people went to a religious place from afar, they have wanted to amuse themselves after offering their prayers and buying their amulets. Tokyo's main *sakariba* before the Second World War, Asakusa, was built around the famous Kannon temple, and there are many other examples.

Modern *sakariba* can, thirdly, be seen as having developed out of former red-light districts (*yūkaku*). Many modern *sakariba* have in fact been built up out of places which formerly served as quarters licensed for this purpose. Besides this spatial continuity there is a certain behavioural continuity also. According to Ikei, the sort of poorly regarded leisure pattern which is typical for the modern *sakariba*—drinking alcoholic beverages, playing *pachinko*, mahjong gambling, looking at naked women—is often left out of account in descriptions of Japanese *rejā* ('leisure'), because *rejā* as a loan-word from English denotes only noble actions or behaviour that is well thought of, rather than more basic human desires. At any rate, this kind of amusement dates back to the second half of the Edo period (Ikei 1973a: 15).

Other elements that added to the development of modern *sakariba* were local shopping centres, which included small restaurants and drinking-places, and which sometimes developed into substantial amusement centres. The urban sociologist Okui states in his description of life in Meiji Tokyo that at that time every urban neighbourhood (*chō*, *machi*) within Tokyo had its own neighbourhood *sakariba* (*chōnai sakariba*), with a shopping street, amusement and recreational facilities, shops open in the evening, and traditional festival days called *ennichi*. The most representative amusement facility was a simple *yose* theatre, which in this century, at the end of the Meiji period and the beginning of the Taishō, was often transformed into a cinema called *katsudō shashin koya* (moving-picture hut), a denomination which is a good linguistic example of the difference between the small neighbourhood *sakariba* and the luxurious *sakariba* in the town centres, where cinemas were more likely to be given names such as 'Cinema Palace'. When people had ended a day's work, they would change their clothes and take a stroll in a relaxed mood to the *sakariba* nearest to their home (Okui 1975: 406–7).

With the development of the inner Tokyo railways there began a new developmental stage of the *sakariba*. When the stations of the Yamanote circle line were opened, at least a small *sakariba* developed around almost every station. On the other hand, previously prospering *sakariba* within the Yamanote district which had no direct access to the railway, such as Shibajinmei or Azabujūban, lost a great deal of their former importance. With the growing orientation of Tokyo to the west, and the establishment of new private lines from Shinjuku and Shibuya stations, inner-Tokyo *sakariba* such as Yotsuya, Ushigome, Kagurasaka and Shiomachi lost a great deal of their night population to the new centres (ibid.: 194).

People who chose to live in the suburbs differed from the traditional town inhabitants, and so did the new centres from the old *sakariba*. Katō Hidetoshi, who uses the phrase 'terminal culture' to denote those urban developments that occurred in the Taishō and early Shōwa period in Osaka as well as in Tokyo, states that the 'banish-one's-worries' sub-centres of Sennichimae in Osaka and Asakusa in Tokyo were old middle-class, while Umeda and Shinjuku or Shibuya were new middle-class centres for the petty bourgeoisie (Katō 1972: 381). But the new centres had only local importance before the war, compared to Tokyo's two big amusement areas of Ginza and Asakusa. The *yose* theatres were no longer representative: cinemas and *kafē*, the predecessors of the modern bars, had taken their place, and *shamisen* music was replaced by foreign-influenced music from the radio or from records.

After the Second World War the devastation of the big towns also resulted in a restructuring of the amusement districts. Some amusement centres, like the red-light district of Tamanoi, masterly portrayed by Nagai Kafū in his novel *A Strange Tale from East of the River* (1937), were never to be rebuilt for the same function. The trend to sub-centres at the starting-points of the suburban railway lines and to the development of big *sakariba* then continued, while on the other hand the old centres lost even more importance. When prostitution was officially abolished in 1958, the red-light districts were often transformed into *sakariba*—though in effect the *sakariba* now also performed the functions of those former pleasure quarters.

Some modern *sakariba* owe their existence and development purely to fashion, which is especially true for places which are dominated by youth culture such as Roppongi or Harajuku in Tokyo. This is also partially true of Kichijōji, which at the same time fulfils the functions of a suburban centre.

The Activities

There are different names for the activities people engage in at the *sakariba*. One author speaks of *naito rejā* (night leisure) or of *sakariba rejā* (Saitō 1976: 153 ff.), another of *taun rejā* (town leisure) (Ujigawa and Uemura 1970: 103 ff.), but most

Japanese go there simply to play, *asobu*, or to relax, *kutsurogu*. *Asobu* for many Japanese men can be divided into three activities: *nomu*, *utsu*, *kau* (drinking, gambling and buying women), all of which are representative of *sakariba* leisure behaviour.

Drinking can have many different aspects. Takada (1980: 130) has offered a typology of Japanese drinking-places (*nomiya*) and has divided them into six different kinds according to the main function which they perform:

1) The prototype of a *nomiya* consists of five elements: a place, the alcoholic drink, something to eat with the drink (*tsumami*), a person who serves the drink, and the guest. *Tachinomi*, *nawanoren*, and *akachōchin* are examples of this category.[2]

2) The second kind is a place where one goes to eat and drink, e.g. a *sushi* shop or a *sukiyaki* restaurant.

3) Specialized drinking-places include beer halls, Western bars with male bartenders, pubs etc.

4) A variety of erotic drinking-places, using names such as bar, club, salon, cabaret etc.

5) Many drinking-places specialize in information exchange. Typical are the so-called *sunakku* (snack), which have shown a tremendous increase during the last two decades.

6) Many drinking-places specialize in music. Examples of this kind include discos, jazz pubs, and *utagoe* pubs.[3] The *karaoke sunakku*, which is very popular at present, falls in-between categories five and six.[4]

There are primarily two kinds of gambling at the *sakariba*: *pachinko* and *mājan* (mahjong). These two games can be interpreted as a good imitation of blue-collar work and white-collar work respectively. *Pachinko*, slot-machine games, remind one of the monotonous, repetitive work at a factory assembly line, while *mājan* recalls the duties of an office worker or a company employee—'the complicated addition of numbers, calculating the probability, the busy exchange of information, and the decision-making process' (Inoue 1973: 94), all well known from such a person's daily experience. When I undertook research into the differences in life-style of white-collar and blue-collar workers in Tokyo and its vicinity in 1972–3, I found that among 27 given activities *mājan* occupied rank 8 in frequency among the white-collar workers and *pachinko* ranked 23, while with the blue-collar workers it was the other way round: *pachinko* 13 and *mājan* 20 (Linhart 1976: 221). Other activities which might be included in this category

2. *Tachinomi* is a place where one stands while drinking, *nawanoren* is a drinking-place with a rope curtain and *akachōchin* is a drinking-place with a red paper lantern (the cheapest kind of drinking-place).

3. *Utagoe* pubs are places where people sing folk-songs, often Russian folk-songs, with guitar or accordion accompaniment. They used to be popular after World War II in student circles and among leftist intellectuals, who formed something like an *utagoe* movement. Nowadays *utagoe* pubs have almost completely disappeared.

4. *Karaoke*, literally 'empty orchestra', is a device which provides backing music and a microphone so that customers can have automatic accompaniment to their singing (for a detailed description see Stroman 1983).

are playing *gō* and *shōgi* (Japanese chess), or hard-core gambling, usually with gangsters, in the form of the card game *hanafuda* etc. Bowling, which has enjoyed several booms during the last decades, could also be included here, although its gambling character is less pronounced. Recently, darts has also been enjoying a boom at the *sakariba*.

The third category of activities, *kau* (buying sex), belongs to the realm of the so-called Turkish baths and pink saloons. The most famous chains of the latter kind are called Monroe and London. It is little wonder that the Turkish baths are often located at the same places where brothels stood until 1958, as is the case in Yoshiwara. There is not only spatial continuity, but also continuity with regard to the activities engaged in.

To the three activities mentioned—drinking, gambling and sex—at least a fourth can be added: visiting cinemas, theatres and shows of all kinds.

It is very difficult to obtain reliable figures about these various activities, because many people prefer not to speak about their *sakariba* leisure. The 1973 time-management survey organized by NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, the Japan Broadcasting Corporation) discovered that on a normal day 26% of the male white-collar workers go for a drink after work, compared with 20% of all blue-collar workers and 17% of the self-employed. For women the figures in the same occupations were lower: 17%, 7%, and 3% respectively (Furukawa 1974: 39). Another investigation produced the result that roughly 30% of all male company employees interviewed very often do not return straight home after work. 45% of them usually go for a drink, and 27% play mahjong. Asked with whom they usually go, 70% said 'with other people from their company' (Ishikawa 1972: 55–6).[5] More important than the figures, which can never be exact, is the fact that so many people go to visit the various *sakariba* every evening after work. Takada has calculated that the Japanese drank 2·5 times more alcoholic beverages per head in 1977 than they did in 1935 (1980: 132). Shikata Hisao reports that in 1970 there were 12,241 pubs in Nagoya, of which 939 belonged to Sakae, the town's biggest *sakariba* (1973: 147–8). These figures and the actual crowds seem more convincing than those found through interviews in leisure studies carried out by sociologists.

Sex Roles

As should be clear by now, the *sakariba* is predominantly a place for men. Men take the active role; they are the guests who pay for amusement, while women's role is mainly to serve the men and earn money. Women add an erotic touch to

5. It is difficult to distinguish between visiting the *sakariba* for one's own pleasure, for relief of stress, as a kind of obligation as in business meetings, or when drinking with people from the same workplace (*tsukiai*). For the latter kind see Atsumi 1979.

the place and give lonely, motherless men a feeling of belonging. In performing these roles, the 'water trade' (*mizu shōbai*) women, as they are called, behave very conservatively and traditionally, as the men expect them to. This role behaviour is musically expressed in the *enka* (see below). But on the other hand, the *sakariba* women are, out of pure necessity, among the most emancipated of women. Many of them mothers who have to care for one or more children after an unsuccessful marriage, they go to the *sakariba* every night to work, not to play as men do. For women who strive for liberty from their husbands or families, the *sakariba* is often the only refuge.

Of the younger unmarried generation, both sexes amuse themselves in coffee-shops, pubs or discos. This holds true for teenagers, students, young *OL* ('office ladies') or *BG* ('business girls') and is no new trend either. As long ago as the late 'twenties, *moga* and *mobo* ('modern girl', 'modern boy') used to stroll around the Ginza hand in hand.

So-called *kyaria uman* ('career women'), such as female university teachers, sometimes drop in for a drink with their male colleagues, but usually even they attend only more official parties like *bōnenkai* (party at the end of the year) or *shinnenkai* (party at the beginning of the year). On such occasions they usually return home after the official party is finished and before the more interesting part of the evening begins—in the form of a *nijikai* or *sanjikai*, a 'second' or 'third party'. Some of the *kyaria uman* in their middle years, unmarried and without children, have adopted a more or less male life- and leisure-style. Like their male colleagues, they go out frequently in the evening, have their favourite pub, which they visit several times a month, and even copy men in their relations with the opposite sex by visiting 'host clubs', where they can enjoy being entertained by men and, if they wish to do so, can buy the male hosts, often students, as sexual partners.[6]

In spite of such exceptions, the *sakariba* by and large is a place for the male sex, and for every host club there exist dozens of Turkish baths and hundreds of clubs, bars and cabarets catering to a male clientele. According to prevalent thinking, the *sakariba* is no place for a married middle-class wife or mother to visit.

The Time for a Visit

As already mentioned, evening is the proper time to stroll around a *sakariba*. Although some restaurants and *pachinko* saloons are also open in the daytime, a

6. Ms Yoko Fujita Hirose has told me (personal communication) that it is well known among Japanese historians that high-ranking female attendants of the women's quarters of the *shōgun*'s palace in the Edo period used to buy actors as sexual partners (*yakushagai*), so that it can be said that there exists a certain tradition of this behaviour in Japan.

sakariba at noon is a rather sad sight. Five o'clock in the afternoon is the time when the work officially ends in many companies, and it is after this hour that most places at the *sakariba* open their doors. It has to be dark if one is to enjoy the right atmosphere of a *sakariba*—hence the expression 'night leisure' which Saitō uses interchangeably with '*sakariba* leisure' (1976: 153 ff.).

In Japanese society drinking in the daytime is generally frowned upon, and in contrast to Europe no Japanese worker can be found drinking beer at his workplace: '*Konna ni akarukucha yoe ga shinai*' ('I can't get drunk, when it is still so bright'), '*Asa kara sake o nomu no wa dōmo ki ga hikeru*' ('I feel bad if I start to drink already in the morning') (Watanabe 1975: 3), '*You ni wa dōmo akarukusugiru*' ('It is still too bright to get drunk'), or '*Aitsu hiruma kara sake o nonde iyagaru*' ('I hate him because he starts to drink in the daytime') (ibid.: 43) are typical Japanese expressions frequently heard in this connection. *Sakariba* leisure always starts after work, and it must never conflict with work obligations.

Words about the time of day that one would normally find in the *enka* are all associated with evening or night: *yoru* (evening), *akari* (light), *neon* (neon), *hoshi* (star), *yogiri* (night fog), *yozora* (night sky), *tsuki* (moon), *kurai* (dark), *konya* (tonight), *tsukiyo* (moonlit night) are only a small sample of the many words connected with evening which can be heard in almost every *enka*.

There seems to be a certain weekly rhythm at the *sakariba*. Since Saturday ceased to be a normal working day for Japanese office workers, the crowds at the *sakariba*—according to Japanese sociologists—reach their peak on Friday and Monday. On Friday groups of employees hold their weekly farewell parties, and on Monday they go out to celebrate their reunion after having had to spend a weekend as strangers together with their families, cut off from the company. According to Tada Michitarō, on Monday Japanese men can finally feel like human beings again ('*Hisashiburi ni shokuba de atte, yatto ningenteki na kibun ni nareru no dasō desu*'; Kawazoe *et al.* 1980: 113). Sunday is a rest day for many pubs and bars, because their regular visitors, the company employees, are busy with their families performing 'family service' (*katei sābisu*) and cannot come.

At the seasonal level, little variation is to be noted except that on the days around important festivals like the Bon Festival in summer or New Year the *sakariba* are rather empty. The same is true for the weeks during the rainy period in July. There are generally more visitors in autumn and winter than in summer, although modern air-conditioning tends to minimise this difference.

The Functions of the Sakariba

The most typical *sakariba* nowadays are located near the stations of the suburban railway lines. In Tokyo, the stations of Ikebukuro, Shinjuku and Shibuya, for example, from where the suburban lines to the Tama region and Kanagawa prefecture start out, have shown a substantial development over the last three decades or so. Uncontrolled growth of Japanese cities has resulted in rather long

daily trips to work and back; it is at these stations that the company employees have to change trains, and so these places are best suited for an interruption of the long journey home after work. It is understandable that many people break their journey at a *sakariba*, in order to reduce the accumulated feeling of stress after a long working day. Since many people need take only one more train from the big stations at the periphery in order to get home, it is convenient to visit a *sakariba* on the way, even if only for a couple of drinks.

For Saitō Seiichirō the *sakariba* constitute a 'space of evaporation' (*jōhatsu kūkan*) for the office worker (1976: 155). *Jōhatsu*, a word fashionable in the 'seventies, designates people who suddenly disappear—because they can no longer bear the strain of work at the company or of discord within the family. But unlike the many thousands of people who disappear every year, never to return, disappearing at a *sakariba* is only temporary, as expressed in the phrase '*Chotto jōhatsu shite mairimasu*' ('I am going to disappear and shall come back again') (Morris 1973: 121). Disappearing at a *sakariba* is by no means complete. Although there exist discreet 'love-hotels'—and similar places at pubs, bars and snack-bars—the Japanese custom of exchanging visiting-cards is as valid there as in any other context in Japanese society. A good *mama-san* (the term used for the manageress of such establishments) will always try to uphold a certain standard among her guests—there are bars or snack-bars for employees of big companies, for university professors, for small entrepreneurs, and so on, and the identity of at least the regular customers is no secret. The *mama-san* knows who her guests are and where they are from—which means that certain social norms are functioning even in these amusement quarters; 'evaporation', therefore, is nothing more than an illusion. Furthermore, the male guests feel safe only if they can make a personal relationship with the people who work at these bars or pubs; if they succeed in doing so, they affectionately call the place which they visit most frequently 'my nest' (*watashi no su*). It has to be added that many company employees spend several years away from their families when they may be temporarily transferred to some other town. In such cases a *sunakku* or a *bā* at a *sakariba* for these men can really become their second home.

Modern Japanese company-men have few opportunities to act as free individuals. Group pressures are at work in the company and in the family, the latter often being based on an arranged marriage and concluded by giving way to social pressures for the single aim of producing children so as to guarantee the family line. So the *sakariba* in the world-order of Japanese company-men constitutes a zone of liberty (*kaihō kūkan*), often the only one they have. When a man is visiting a modern *sakariba*, he is on a journey, and for the Japanese 'on a journey shame can be thrown away!' ('*tabi no haji wa kakisute*'). The *sakariba* is the only place where the organization-man, a 'correct person' (*majime ningen*)—necessarily 'correct' because he has a lifetime commitment to both his firm and his family—can act *fumajime* or 'incorrectly' (Ikei 1973b: 36). Here he can drink, gamble, sing and make love with women other than his wife. Of course a *sakariba* is not a good place according to general opinion, and therefore people go there with a bad conscience. The degree of bad conscience depends on the particular kind of place where one goes, but the feeling of doing something which is not

accepted by society, by the firm, by one's wife, will always be present.[7] So people who visit a *sakariba* without companions are usually very bashful when they meet acquaintances, while on the other hand there can develop a certain kind of solidarity between strangers. Ikei speaks of the 'sympathy of wrongdoers' (*hanzaisha no kyōkan*) (ibid.: 37). Another proverb about travelling is worth mentioning here: 'On a journey your fellow travellers will help you, but in the world nobody but God!' ('*Tabi wa michizure, yo wa nasake*'). The sympathetic manner in which drunken men are treated in Japan, compared to the somewhat rougher reaction Western drunkards can expect, well illustrates the full meaning of this saying.

The *sakariba* with its various forms of amusement offers wide scope for self-expression and self-fulfilment. Best known in recent years is *karaoke*-singing, which need not be discussed here.[8] The *karaoke* bars and snack-bars promise their guests that they will become star singers ('*Anata o sutā ni!*'). This act of becoming a star singer, be it only in *karaoke* bars, is a kind of temporary metamorphosis (*henshin*). This change of roles is a form of behaviour which can also be observed in most traditional festivals, which no longer have any meaning for the modern city-dweller.

> Farmers took the role of gods in the plays and rituals; ordinary people had a chance to be special. It was a release from farming, a let-up of rules, an 'orgy after abstinence'. *Hare* functioned to renew and refresh for the next season of work. (Murray 1975: 92)

Modern men need not wait for special holy occasions (times of *hare*) to change their appearance. In the big cities they can undergo a metamorphosis daily by going to the *sakariba*—they can become an Elvis Presley, a seductive Casanova, or a daring gambler. The anthropologist Ishige Naomichi has noted with regard to Japanese eating and drinking habits that special food and drink in the course of Japan's modernization have become a daily affair (1982: 26 ff.). The same phenomenon can be seen in *henshin*. But of course nowadays those 'dreams of becoming someone else or of doing something other than what we do' are stage-managed. It is the producers of hit songs and of *karaoke* sets, of whisky and beer, who create those dreams and dream figures; they may function as outlets for societal pressure, but they are created for their own commercial profits.

A special kind of escapism is the so-called *bureikō* or Japanese psychotherapy. When, for example, people of the same company go out together, it is permissible to get drunk rapidly, and the drunken man is allowed to complain about everything and to make all kinds of accusations. As long as everyone agrees that the *bureikō* continues, such behaviour is tolerated and even encouraged, but it is

7. One example to illustrate this bad conscience is that when Tamanoi still served as a pleasure quarter before the war, people had to go there by train from Asakusa. But almost nobody bought a ticket to Tamanoi itself. One usually asked for a ticket to Kanegafuchi, the next station, at the same price, so as to conceal where one was in fact going (Asahi Shinbun Tōkyō Honsha Shakaibu 1978: 56).

8. See above, footnote 4.

expected that the man who has found relief at the *bureikō* will return to his usual behaviour the following morning.

To sum up: the *sakariba* constitutes a third zone between company and home, complementary to these other two spheres. It is not, according to Japanese thinking, a real leisure sphere as such. Leisure is something connected with Sundays and hobbies, more removed from the daily routine. Using the scheme of Japanese leisure concepts which I have introduced elsewhere (Linhart 1984), going to a *sakariba* belongs to *ikoi* (resting, relaxing) rather than to *yasumi* (holiday).

Japanese critics have explained the existence of the many huge *sakariba* as a result of the bad housing situation (Kawazoe *et al.* 1980: 113). For me the continuing popularity of *sakariba* leisure is rather to be connected with the stress put upon the company employee at his workplace and with Japanese family organization. Whereas in most European cultures the conjugal family relationship fulfils the function of offering relief from the stress which has accumulated over the day at the workplace, in Japan there typically exist two separate worlds of men and women, with the effect that the *sakariba* institution functions to refresh and revitalize the male labour force for the next working day.[9]

9. Since *sakariba* behaviour as described above is not normally available to the average housewife, it is little wonder that many housewives nowadays tend to drink at home. The increase of female alcoholism has become a topic of considerable interest to the Japanese mass media during the last decade.

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E. Ben-Ari

A SPORTS DAY IN SUBURBAN JAPAN: LEISURE, ARTIFICIAL COMMUNITIES AND THE CREATION OF LOCAL SENTIMENTS

Yamanaka, a commuter village, and Hieidaira, a new housing estate, lie a few kilometres to the east of Kyoto's northern suburbs. The village has a population of about 230 people (62 households), who are organized into extended families of three or four generations. The estate, by contrast, has a local population of 2,500 people (in 600 households) and is made up of mostly young nuclear families and elderly couples. Most of the local work-force—which includes a variety of middle-class occupations such as *sarariiman* (company employees, lit. 'salary-man'), merchants, professionals, teachers and artisans—commute daily to jobs outside the two communities in the nearby cities.

With the construction of a joint school a few years ago, Hieidaira and Yamanaka were formally amalgamated into one school or administrative district. This amalgamation, which was the outcome of the initiative and decision of both the two communities and the city and prefectural authorities, has had a number of concrete implications. The most important of these is that there has now come about a new need for the establishment of and co-operation in joint village–estate organizations, such as an alliance of neighbourhood associations, Parent–Teacher Associations (PTA), or children's and sports' committees.

In this paper I would like briefly to describe and then analyse an annual event which is organized by the joint Hieidaira–Yamanaka sports committee, and which draws to it the greatest number of local residents and representatives of local organizations.[1] The analysis of this, the yearly sports day (*undōkai*) can, I

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