

**A Portrait of the Educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi:
Radicalism and the pursuit of universal forms of knowledge**

Shoji Saito

Translated from *Nihonteki shizenkan no henkakatei* [The Process of Change in Japanese Views of Nature] by the distinguished cultural critic and historian of ideas, Shoji Saito (Tokyo Denki University Press, 1989).

A portrait of the educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi: Radicalism and the pursuit of universal forms of knowledge

I. A radicalist in the true sense of the word

If anyone were to ask me to encapsulate the far-reaching, multi-dimensional, dynamic ideas of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in a single word, I would reply “radicalism”—in the true sense of the word. Study Makiguchi’s thoughts on geography, his pedagogical theories and his religious ideas and in the end you inevitably arrive at Makiguchi the man of flesh and blood, a man who can only be described as a radicalist in its truest sense.

Radicalism is commonly defined as extreme left-wing thought. In broad terms this will suffice, but in the atmosphere of pragmatic political dynamism that has prevailed since the 1970s our understanding of the term radicalism has of necessity become less well defined. In both the West and Japan, it was in the past regarded as only logical to associate the left-wing movements of opposition parties and intellectuals in the period starting in the 1930s, continuing through the postwar era and into the 1960s in the context of and linked with the political history of the Soviet Union. The very foundations of this association are now, however, in question. In *Ima kibo towa* [My Hopes Now], notes from a series of interviews with Jean-Paul Sartre in his last years (Asahi Journal; April 18–May 2, 1980), the philosopher calls the Soviet Communist Party “a party of the extreme right.” Among sociologists and political scientists, there are those who have long regarded the communism of the Soviet Union and Stalinism as conservative, but as we watch the current suppression of striking workers in Poland this realistic appraisal of the Soviet Communist Party by Sartre as extreme right would appear to be most apt.

The true meaning of radicalism then is not a question of a set of beliefs being Marxist or otherwise (as not even the Soviet bureaucracy could be described as Marxist), but must rather be a question of whether people as *individuals* can continue to hold radical views. Extreme advances in the areas of science and technology have resulted, in the developed nations, in the creation to a greater or lesser degree of highly controlled social structures. In these circumstances, there is an undeniable need for strong individuals who refuse to submit to the ideology of supremacy of the state and conformity with the uniform modes of thought imposed on them by the state and by a controlling society, choosing to retain their independent spirit as individuals. Individuals capable of questioning the commands and symbols of machines that intrude in our lives unasked; individuals consistently able to find new intellectual methods for the dispassionate observation of an abominably overdeveloped society; individuals capable of retaining utopian ideals in order to maintain a barrage of criticism toward cultural structures that provide those in authority with limitless power to control; unselfish individuals of integrity who disdain worldly wealth and fame to allow them to engage in critical analysis of the current state of affairs; individuals, in any case, with a love for humankind. This is what it takes to be a radicalist in this day and age.

Through the most difficult of times, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi indisputably remained a radicalist individual. Makiguchi always viewed the current reality as defective and

engaged in a fierce ongoing duel with this reality. The publishing in sequence of the four volumes of *Soka kyoikugaku taikei* [The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy] constituted a continuing battle against the supremacy of the state and bureaucracy, which the people of Japan had submitted to unquestioningly since the Meiji period. Because Makiguchi continued to say what he thought, as an individual (supported of course by like-minded associates) rather than as a representative of the authority of the state, in our time his views have gained the support of many people. This is what may be described as the “paradox of history.”

II. The young Choshichi Makiguchi’s encounter with Satsuma officialdom

The reason we are justified in portraying the thinker Tsunesaburo Makiguchi as a radicalist is that he had a strongly defiant spirit and disdain for worldly advancement, traits that can only be described as innate (although strictly speaking, human beings are formed as a result of interaction with their environment, so we should not really describe anyone as having such characteristics from birth). We may speculate as to whether Makiguchi chose to be a contrary, eccentric person, deliberately putting himself in situations not to his benefit as a result of his natural tendencies, but what we can say for sure is that he was by nature an unselfish man of great integrity.

This aspect of his nature becomes apparent when we chart the course of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s life. At least three times in his life Makiguchi was blessed with chance encounters that, had he wished to, he could have used to “go up in the world” and win himself what is often called “a place in the sun,” the kind of encounters most people would jump at as the chance of a lifetime. Three times, and each time Makiguchi spurned the good luck that came his way. This casual disregard for opportunities to distinguish himself that a more worldly person would soon have taken advantage of is the very essence of who Makiguchi was, and these encounters represent in fact the most critical crossroads in his life in terms of the emergence of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi the thinker.

Makiguchi’s first chance for worldly advancement came at the age of 16 or 17, when he was still known by the name Choshichi Makiguchi.

The young Makiguchi traveled to Otaru in Hokkaido in 1885. His birthplace, the village of Arahama (now Arahama in Kashiwazaki City, Niigata Prefecture) had prospered considerably from the shipping that plied the waters of the Sea of Japan between Honshu and Hokkaido during the years of the shogunate. By the 1880s, however, the village was suffering from the rapid rise of modern steamships, resulting in a drastic decline from prosperity toward destitution. Choshichi would have witnessed every detail of the sudden drop in the standard of living of the family of his uncle, Zendayu Makiguchi, into which he had been adopted, to one of extreme poverty. Even had this not been the case, during this period farming all over Japan was in the process of polarizing between an affluent landlord class and a landless class, and a succession of economic policies enacted by the government and designed to advance the capitalist system, such as currency reform and excessive taxes, inevitably strained the already meager resources of mountain and fishing villages, which were very much at the bottom of the economic pile. To compound the

difficulties of rural areas, in 1885 the country was hit by a series of floods, contributing even further to the recession. These were the circumstances that prompted Choshichi to leave for Hokkaido with the help of another uncle, Shiroji Watanabe.

The young Makiguchi did not however find work immediately, only after much searching eventually securing a position as errand boy at the Otaru police station. This job of errand boy at the police station, in itself a humble post in the scheme of things, could, had Choshichi been so inclined, have opened the door to his place in the sun and become the first step on the road to worldly success.

The reason we can say this with such certainty is because ever since Lieutenant-general Kiyotaka Kuroda had risen to the position of director of the Hokkaido Colonization Office (in June 1874) that employed the young Makiguchi, men from the Satsuma clan (modern-day Kagoshima) had made a clean sweep of positions in the territory, monopolizing the administration. As an official of this Satsuma clique, Police Superintendent Nagayasu Mori who picked up and helped the young Makiguchi may naturally be considered to have been a man of influence. In *Otarukushi* [History of Otaru] (1914; published by Otaru-ku Hakubunsha), Yoshiaki Watabe attests to this monopoly of the Hokkaido administration by men of Kagoshima origins, writing in “Chapter 1: Overview”:

Although his achievements may be great, the frank and open disposition of Baron Kuroda not only allows those officials beneath him to have their own way in every matter, but has allowed a skewed culture of nepotism to permeate the administration, with only those from the Satsuma clan advancing to prominent positions. Whether officials are of the higher or the lower rank, only Satsuma people are able to rise to important posts, and the whole place is full of them, from the officials of the Colonization Office at the top to the employees of private companies at the bottom. Thus two camps are formed—those from Satsuma and those not from Satsuma, resulting in an endless litany of problems. This is why people call this the period of bureaucratic tyranny, despite that fact that these same officials did realize considerable achievements in the development of Hokkaido. The evolution of the post of governor of Hokkaido into a tactical weapon used in infighting among the Satsuma leadership also really has its origins in the colonial era.

Furthermore, a drinking song encouraging followers of the Higashi-Honganji sect to emigrate to Hokkaido contains the words: “High places are for *satsumaimo* (sweet potatoes), low places for wheat and rice—they develop the province exactly as they please. Not bad, eh, eh, eh, [Hokkaido, Hokkaido, Hokkaido!] nothing wrong with that!” and other ditties of the time referring to *satsumaimo*—in other words likening the deeply-rooted structure of Kagoshima bureaucrats in their burgeoning numbers to a potato crop—provide ample evidence of what the situation must have been.

It follows that if Choshichi Makiguchi had been a cunning and unscrupulous young fellow he would have ingratiated himself accordingly with the Satsuma officials he

encountered and become part of the mainstream of the Hokkaido administration. The biographies of Diet members and government ministers often mention the role of fate, i.e. “encounters with people,” in the success of their subjects, but in reality these encounters are no more than instances of someone in a lowly position in society winning the favor of someone of higher status at a particular point in time and skillfully using this break to their advantage. The young errand boy at the Otaru police station, however, did not do anything of the kind.

Instead, Nagayasu Mori, promoted to superintendent of the Sapporo police, entreated Choshichi to live and work in his home as a student houseboy, with the young man eventually entering the Hokkaido Normal School at Mori’s recommendation. Entry to normal school at that time was in accordance with the philosophy of Minister of Education Arinori Mori, who made county and district chiefs responsible for choosing their best students. In one of Mori’s speeches, he explains the idea as follows:

Recommending candidates for normal school is a task of county and district chiefs, who should first of all look for the following qualities among elementary school students: candidates should be manly and without any trace of cowardice, and consistently earn the affectionate respect of others. To obtain this type of candidate, elementary school teachers should be consulted and a record kept of the names of promising children. Family connections and personal favoritism should not play the slightest part in the process of recommendation. Sufficient discretion should be employed from the start and efforts made to ensure the best results are gained from the resources invested in normal school pupils.

Arinori Mori, in other words, aimed to further his philosophy that education should be conducted in the schools for the sake of the state by ordering county and district chiefs all over the country to scout gifted children. It follows then that young Choshichi Makiguchi’s admission to the Hokkaido Normal School was a result of his being caught in the net of this hunt for gifted children espoused by Minister of Education Mori, and there was nothing in that sense unusual in police Superintendent Mori’s recommendation. We can however assume this much: that the officials of an administration so dominated by Satsuma people would not have been able to resist demonstrating to both themselves and others the extent of their own prestige by faithfully carrying out the orders of a Minister of Education with the same Satsuma origins as themselves. It is highly likely that Superintendent Nagayasu Mori did remark to the young Makiguchi in the normal course of events, “The best future for you young man would be as a teacher. I’ll talk to the district head and make sure you get into Hokkaido Normal School.” In any case, Choshichi Makiguchi was admitted by recommendation (i.e. without having to pass any examinations) to the Hokkaido Normal School in April 1889.

There are no signs on this occasion of the young Makiguchi attempting to make use of his good luck. Even had it occurred to him, at 17 Makiguchi did not have the resources to do so, and one also suspects that in fact Makiguchi simply studied hard and suddenly found himself admitted to the normal school. All he did know was that had he not had the good fortune to meet an important personage of the Satsuma clan with direct links to the hub of

the Hokkaido administration, in other words if he had not encountered a Satsuma official, then he might perhaps not have been admitted to normal school. We should not therefore become too carried away and assume that the young Makiguchi did not use the good fortune that came his way, or that he rejected it out of principle. What we can safely say however is that in all probability even with a connection of this degree, in a country of the *Gemeinschaft* nature of Japan in which nepotism spread its tentacles far and wide, a shrewd young man hoping to work his way up to the rank of businessman or politician of stature would not have been so uncalculating. In other words we approach a true picture of Makiguchi if we understand him as someone who never possessed the innate shrewdness required to use others to make his way in the world, but rather as someone with a greater tendency than usual to think and act in exactly the opposite way.

The reason we can be justified in saying this with such certainty is that of all the ways of thinking that the young Makiguchi studied and mastered following his admission to the Hokkaido Normal School (our knowledge of which we have no choice but to base on the scant mention he gave to the subject in his works of later years), those which appealed to him most strongly were the developmental education theories of Pestalozzi and Johonnot, and it is obvious that Makiguchi did not agree in the slightest with the military-style training methods used at the school or the nationalist doctrines that the school authorities tried their best to inculcate in the students.

Arinori Mori's ideas on education were in one respect based on American-style progressive rationalist theories, and Mori did not demand that normal school education be composed entirely of the gung-ho militarist or nationalist teachings generally associated with the period, but following Mori's assassination [in 1889] the education authorities opted for this latter route exclusively, and the dormitories of normal schools took on the aspect of military barracks. The young Makiguchi was one of those forced to live in these barrack-like conditions, and we may safely assume he was subjected to the unreasonable private sanctions of older students. This is a time of his life, however, that he never mentioned, even in his final years. No doubt he had some unpleasant memories of this period.

In his works published in later years, incidentally, it is themes such as development, reason, education as economy and happiness as the goal of education, the main themes of Johonnot's *Principles and Practice of Teaching*, which he learned from his textbooks at the normal school (i.e. during classes) that are played out over and over in a symphony of ideas. In other words, while most normal school graduates learned and took to heart only the three essentials of "obedience, friendship and respect for authority" instilled by militarist training, the young Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (he changed his name from Choshichi to Tsunesaburo in 1893 aged 22) learned something completely different—the principles of development, reason, economy and happiness. Among all his classmates (in fact among all the graduates) he was the one student who picked up a totally different variety of knowledge at the Hokkaido Normal School.

In saying that Makiguchi picked up something completely different, however, what he in fact gained was a faithful and accurate assimilation of the progressive, rationalist aspects

contained within the ideas of Arinori Mori. Had all the graduates of the normal school been blessed with sufficient ability for dispassionate introspection, a capacity for accurate observation, and a way of thinking that remained unmoved by a vulgar desire for worldly advancement, they would no doubt have learned the same things that Makiguchi did. Instead they paid attention only to the military-style training, the “three essentials” instilled by that training, and the philosophy of conforming in order to get on in the world. As a result, there was an enormous gulf between Makiguchi and his normal school peers in later years. From the perspective of the vast majority of more worldly normal school graduates of the time, Makiguchi no doubt appeared an eccentric, a person with the perverse habit of thinking and behaving in a manner directly opposite to “regular” people.

It is perhaps the case that the capacity for correct observation and judgment is something only found among the eccentrics and contrarians (who have been described using any number of expressions including the cranks, the perverse, the unpopular, the freaks, those who stick out or are isolated from the rest), i.e. people whose thinking is opposite to that of the majority, or people at the edges and margins of society. There can be no doubt that even as a teenager Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was one such person.

III. Makiguchi criticizes normal school education and is pressed to resign

Let us take a look now at Makiguchi’s second chance for good fortune.

This second chance cannot necessarily be described as good luck, resulting as it did in an incident that cost the young Tsunesaburo Makiguchi his job. However if we think once again in hypothetical terms, we can imagine that if on this next occasion Makiguchi had maneuvered in a smarter fashion, he would not have sacrificed his posts of teacher and house master at Hokkaido Normal School and teacher at the affiliated elementary school—instead in all likelihood, he would have used the opportunity to arrange a transfer to another normal school, in mainland Japan.

Why then was Tsunesaburo Makiguchi driven to resign his teaching posts? Let us take a look at the *Hokkaido Sapporo shihan gakkō gojunenshi* [Fifty Years of the Sapporo Normal School in Hokkaido] published by the school in 1936, and think a little about what the reasons might have been.

The chronology at the back of the biography *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo* edited by the Seikyo Shimbun gives the reason for Makiguchi’s resignation as follows:

1901 30 years of age/April 18: resigns from his post as teacher and house master at Hokkaido Normal School and principal [sic] of the attached elementary school. Goes to Tokyo. His resignation was the result of a knifing incident involving students during a student strike in the autumn of 1900, for which Makiguchi was held responsible as house master by the Hokkaido authorities and advised to resign. Makiguchi decided that in one respect this was a good opportunity—to go to Tokyo and make public the book on geography that he had completed after many years of work.

As an individual it is not unnatural that Makiguchi would think this a good opportunity to carry out the dream he had nurtured for years and therefore leave his post and go to Tokyo; however in terms of an official reason, “was held responsible as house master by the Hokkaido authorities and advised to resign” in relation to a student strike that occurred the previous autumn and a knifing that accompanied it, does not quite add up.

To investigate further, let us look at the first chapter of the *Hokkaido Sapporo shihan gakko gojunenshi*, the chronology, and the entry for the year 1900. Here we find first of all, “January 19: Principal Okamoto suspended from duties, Principal Eiji Makiyama of the Akita Prefectural Normal School appointed as the school’s eighth principal.”

We see, in short, that the previous principal, Tsunejiro Okamoto (only recently promoted to the position on June 28, 1899) lost his job not seven months into his tenure. Was there something sinister happening at the school? Moreover nothing is mentioned anywhere about a student strike, either in the entry for 1899 or for the years immediately preceding or following. The new principal Eiji Makiyama spent only two years at the school before taking up a teaching post at a higher normal school for girls. Makiyama had authored works on pedagogy and was an academic of some repute in the education sector.

The editing of this 50-year history resulting in a complete omission of the strike is typical of prewar education history. A search for more information leads inevitably to “Chapter 4: Recollections and thoughts,” where we find not surprisingly a tiresome collection of hackneyed phrases from past and present staff members. Among the graduates, however, (including one who became a director of the Dai Nihon Beer Company, and others who ended up pursuing careers in sectors other than education) as might be expected there are intimations of less conventional activities. These include accounts of student strikes in the 1880s and 1890s, immediately arousing our interest because this includes the period during which Makiguchi was a student at the school. The question is, do any of the graduates mention the strike in 1899? Fortunately for us, some of them do.

Looking back 40 years
Midori Sukenobu
Graduated from the abbreviated course 1901

I started at the normal school in 1899 at the age of 16. I pretended to be 18 to get in, and was the only boy in the school all the way from Teshio. This was the year in which the normal school system was reformed and divided into full, abbreviated and preparatory courses of study, and I was notified that I had been permitted to enter the abbreviated course. I packed my bags and set out, grumbling a bit about the course I had been assigned, but not minding too much as at least I had been admitted.

It was in my second year in the time of Principal Makiyama that the third-year students in the full course went on strike in the Ishikari incident that caused an

uproar all over the country. I remember well how we all bore the brunt of the principal's tearful admonitions after that. (pp. 246-47)

A few memories

Tamekichi Murai

Graduated March 1902

Principal - Sapporo No. 2 Higher Elementary School

1898, the year I entered the normal school, was a watershed year for the school, its first period of expansion, and I believe it was around this time that the Hokkaido Jinjo Normal School, as it was known, became the Hokkaido Normal School.

My class of 57 students was permitted provisional entry to the school on April 20, but on June 14, the day before the Sapporo Jinja festival, the head teacher announced that entry exams would be held from the 16th. Naturally this was very sudden and we all got quite a shock, so there was certainly no enjoying the festival for me—just frantic preparations for the exams. The result of these exams was that 30 made it into the full course, 20 into the abbreviated course and 7 failed altogether. We had no warning about these exams, were told nothing when we applied, and few had even thought about the abbreviated course. There was nothing we could do however, and there were some who thought of quitting the school, but in the end we consoled each other and obeyed orders. Naturally those who ended up in the abbreviated course felt betrayed and resentful, as did those in the full course, and two years and four months later at events like our farewell party following graduation, while the atmosphere was harmonious, there was also an air of regret. Following the exams there had been a series of regrettable events such as the boycotts of classes after the Ishikirisan Marathon and the Ishikari incident, then in February of the following year the knifing, and in the end there were only seven of us left.

Out of consideration for my position I will say no more about the matters I have touched upon here. (pp. 247-48)

My impressions of that time

Kotaro Kon

Graduated March 1905

The Ishikari incident

It was a bright autumn day in 1900. For us it was our first trip away—we had trouble sleeping the night before, we were so excited. I say trip, but in fact it was for military training, and we were divided into a North and a South Army. We were in the South Army, with Nakamura-san as our company commander.

Everyone was involved except the fourth-year students, so it was quite an exercise. The first day we carried out exercises at Tobetsu and stayed there. We feasted on rice cakes and pumpkin and were treated very well, much like the troops on maneuver today. On the second day we finally arrived at Ishikari.

After dinner, there were instructions from our company commander: “This battalion was scheduled to depart for Zenibako early tomorrow morning; however, due to a change of plans we will be staying in this town. You may hear the trumpet calling you to assemble, but you don’t need to assemble. Tonight’s curfew is five o’clock; however, we will extend it on this occasion to nine o’clock. You may leave the compound as you please.”

We applauded and cheered.

The next day when the trumpet sounded we did not assemble. The school noticed the students’ attitude for the first time and began negotiations.

Our class wandered along Ishikari beach, went to Zenibako, stayed the night and returned to school the next day. Naturally the exercises were a complete mess. As for the third years, they stayed in Ishikari and marched proudly back to school in formation. They were even called a model class and I still cannot forget how disciplined they were, how tightly in formation, and how dignified their manner. Our corporal, Shigeyoshi Ishida, expressed great admiration for the preparatory course students, who were soft in appearance but sturdy in spirit.

Inquiries, expulsions, unlimited suspensions... the dormitory buzzed with rumors and panic.

I can hear the tearful words of Principal Makiyama in the assembly hall even now.

The third years who returned in January the following year, thanks to the efforts of their elders, just didn’t seem to settle down. This was because they had split, as often happens, into a radical and a moderate faction. This was when the terrible tragedy known as the “knifing incident” occurred. ... All those involved were expelled.

Several years passed. Our uniforms that made us look like black crows changed to distinctively colored summer clothing, our hooks to buttons and our small round caps to the more fashionable French style. But we should never forget the sacrifices that lay behind all these changes.

Young and old, new and old thinking, dynamism and quietude: the way of the world perhaps, but we still should take heed. (pp. 253-54)

Perhaps I have lingered a little long over quotes from former students, but this is the bare minimum of references required in order for us to obtain an accurate overview of the

Ishikari incident and the associated knifing incident that led the Hokkaido authorities to press the young teacher Tsunesaburo Makiguchi to “fall on his sword.” Even among this material there is an obvious desire to avoid touching on the very heart of these events making it difficult to ascertain the truth, typified by Tamekichi Murai in the second extract who remarks, “Out of consideration for my position I will say no more about the matters I have touched upon here.” Something lurks between the lines of the childish sentences of Kotaro Kon’s recollections, what we cannot be sure, but we have little choice but to sift through those clues we are able to dig up.

What we can be sure of thanks to these three recollections, however, is that education at the Hokkaido Normal School during this period was excessively oppressive. While Tamekichi Murai is circumspect in his description of events, we can deduce that one day, 57 of a class with provisional entry (permitted to enter the school by recommendation, i.e. without sitting examinations) were informed suddenly that a surprise entry exam was to be conducted. The subsequent weeding out or selection of the class left 30 in the full course, 20 in the abbreviated course and 7 failures (i.e. students expelled). As Murai says, “We had no warning about these exams, were told nothing when we applied,” making this a particularly treacherous move on the part of the school. Little wonder when those who did pass were subject to selection (i.e. discrimination) between full and abbreviated course students that they “felt betrayed and resentful.” We may surmise that this was the fundamental cause of the student strike that became known as the Ishikari incident, the result of which was that only 7 of the original 57 students succeeded in graduating, and indeed the list of graduates in the *gojunenshi* does record only seven names for the March 1902 graduation.

Kotaro Kon, however, who was three years behind this class, says of them, “They were even called a model class and I still cannot forget how disciplined they were, how tightly in formation, and how dignified their manner.” We can only assume therefore that because this class constituted a model class of particularly outstanding quality, more so than those students before or after, they were the kind of students who felt they had no choice but to stand up to the oppression they were subjected to by the school authorities.

In Kon’s contribution, after relating the particulars of the Ishikari incident, he adds as a final exhortation, “Young and old, new and old thinking, dynamism and quietude: the way of the world perhaps, but we still should take heed,” following a paragraph referring to a relaxation of former strictness as symbolized by the changes in the uniform of the Hokkaido Normal School, in which he comments “but we should never forget the sacrifices that lay behind all these changes.”

Are we assuming too much to imagine that the only teacher who stood by those 43 sacrificed (what an incredibly oppressive bunch the teachers of the Hokkaido Normal School must have been to expel 43 out of 50 students!) and fought for them was Tsunesaburo Makiguchi? The terms “young,” “new thinking” and “dynamism” used by Kotaro Kon allude without a doubt to those 43 “model” students who let loose and were expelled, but at the same time, surely to the young teacher Tsunesaburo Makiguchi who took their side as the drama unfolded.

If this were not the case, it is difficult to see, even taking into account the machinations of government departments, why the principal and renowned pedagogue Eiji Makiyama and the popular house master Manroku Soji were not held in any way responsible for these troubles by the Hokkaido authorities, and only Makiguchi pressed to resign.

Can we imagine that on this occasion the contrarian spirit, the eccentricity, that burned deep within the young Tsunesaburo Makiguchi flared up and broke through to the surface?

And at a time like this, anyone with the cunning of a social climber or talent for getting on in the world would surely have gone straight to Principal Makiyama or some influential person in the Hokkaido local government and asked for a transfer to another school (such as a normal school on the mainland), skillfully managing on the face of things to win sympathy, while at the same time actually working to secure himself a better post (a not uncommon tactic).

The fact that the young teacher declined to do this, instead taking on himself all the responsibility that should have been borne by the school and being the only person to tender his resignation, becoming a “masterless *samurai*” and traveling to Tokyo with no idea of how he was going to make a living, is just the kind of behavior we would expect from Makiguchi. It is also precisely how he was able to complete, at the young age of 32, what is surely one of his most enduring works, *Jinsei chirigaku* [The Geography of Human Life] (1903, Toyamabo), and take his first steps toward becoming the pre-eminent educational thinker of later years. As a rationalist, a natural outsider with a strong sense of justice, it was really the only path open to him.

IV. Thoughts from a place without sun

Makiguchi’s third chance for advancement came in 1910, when he had the fortune to begin interacting with the members of the *Kyodokai* (Community Studies Research Group) and participate in the presentation of their research and joint fieldwork.

The *Kyodokai* was a group of impressive personalities led by educator and later League of Nations Under Secretary General Inazo Nitobe and pioneering folklorist and ethnologist Kunio Yanagita, and including Baron Akamaro Tanaka, Undersecretary for Agriculture and Forestry Tadaatsu Ishiguro, doctor of science Shunsuke Kusano, doctor of agriculture Takeo Ono, doctor of agriculture Shiroshi Nasu, doctor of law Takeki Osatake, geographer Michitoshi Odauchi, scholar of folklore Taro Nakayama and Tokyo deputy mayor Tamon Maeda, who met monthly at the home of Professor Nitobe, where they would take turns to present a content-rich academic report. According to the chronology in *Makiguchi Tsunesaburo*, Makiguchi “became acquainted with Nitobe on the publication of *Jinsei chirigaku*, and was already acquainted with Yanagita in 1909, introduced by a writer they knew in common.” This alone would be considered good fortune, as the gulf in social status between the members of the *Kyodokai* and the masterless *samurai* Makiguchi was enormous, and his warm acceptance into the group

was a manifestation of the regard held by its members for the high academic standard of *Jinsei chirigaku*. Makiguchi must have been struck by the way a reputation of scholarship could open doors.

Further evidence of this would have been the introduction provided by Tokyo deputy mayor Tamon Maeda which led to Makiguchi's appointment, in 1913, as principal of Tosei Elementary School in Tokyo. It was perhaps a well-meaning gesture that Maeda waited until after the publication of Makiguchi's *Kyoju no togo chushin toshite no kyodoka kenkyu* [Research into Community Studies as the Integrating Focus of School Education] (1912, Ibunkan).

The appointment sought by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi on this occasion was another example of his lack of any desire for personal aggrandizement. Makiguchi had been a government official himself 13 years earlier as a teacher at Hokkaido Normal School and at the affiliated elementary school, and possessing in *Jinsei chirigaku* and *Kyoju no togo chushin toshite no kyodoka kenkyu* two well-known works of excellent reputation, plus working, albeit anonymously, on various texts published by the Ministry of Education, if he had wanted to press the advantage gained by these achievements, his sponsor Tamon Maeda's position in the administration being what it was, even had no such position been possible in Tokyo, chances were that Makiguchi could have made a brilliant comeback in the teaching profession as a teacher at the Kamakura or Saitama Normal Schools with very little trouble. Nor would it have been difficult presumably for him to fill a vacancy at a prestigious Tokyo municipal secondary school or higher girls' school. Despite all this, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi shunned the easier option and became an elementary school principal, and the principal of Tosei Elementary School at that, a school in one of the poorer parts of town that included a night school facility for children who had to work during the day. In view of the circumstances surrounding the appointment, Makiguchi would certainly have known that Tosei Elementary School had a night school and was located in a neighborhood of poor artisans next to the pleasure quarters of Yoshiwara; he may even have chosen the school precisely because of the nature of its students. No doubt Makiguchi thought that the children of poor, disadvantaged families, i.e. without their place in the sun, were exactly the children who could most benefit from the educational theories he had diligently accumulated and formed over the years.

This "eccentric" choice was what led to Makiguchi's eventual production of that classic of radicalism, *Soka kyōikugaku taikei* [The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy].

Ideas genuinely useful for educational reform do not originate with those in central authority issuing orders. They arise rather among the free spirits at the far margins of power, the eccentric thinkers, cut loose from their moorings but at the same time constantly digging deep in search of a vein of universal knowledge. It is when such thinkers first determine to educate themselves and then decide to be of some use to others and to society, that truly valid theories emerge.