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The Situation of Visual Anthropology in Japanese Universities

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The Situation of Visual Anthropology in Japanese Universities

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In Japan, films and ethnographic footage are not being fully utilized in teaching anthropology at the universities.

There is a difficulty in getting hold of representative ethnographic films, even the well-known ones, from abroad; such distribution has not yet been established.

In contrast to written anthropological work, ethnographic film-making has not yet reached a high scholarly standard.

MY STANDPOINT

In spite of the conditions summarized above, students are becoming interested in visual anthropology. Yet there is a lack of competent teaching staff who could provide the necessary training to students. Except for Professor Y. Omori of the National Museum of Ethnology at Osaka, Japan has no academic specialist in this field. In order to propagate this discipline we teachers and researchers of anthropology should deepen our understanding of ethnographic film so as to overcome our reluctance in employing the medium for teaching and research.

At present, a light-weight synchronic sound video camera is available and may be utilized by researchers to shoot footage in the field. Footage taken during fieldwork is an initial step to further film-making.

It is hoped that initiatives on our part may stimulate young students and researchers for the development of this discipline. Thus, on my own, I have begun to explore the medium with the hope of furthering the spread of visual anthropology in Japanese universities.

Until a few years ago, I had no interest in ethnographic films. My research initially focused mainly on kinship and exchange relations in Okinawa and the Amami Islands, and in the past ten years I have concentrated on an anthropological investigation of Yap Island and the Ulithi Atolls in the Western Carolines. Parallel to these, I have studied the folk society in Japan, my most recent interest being in town festivals.

The reasons I became interested in film-making are as follows:

A) Due to technological innovations in the past few years, the miniaturization of film-making equipment has been achieved and light weight synchronic sound 8mm.

movie and video cameras have become available at reasonable prices. In particular, video cameras have sufficient capacity for long takes, besides having the advantage of instant playback and cutting the cost of film development. This simplification of filming and sound recording has created the conditions for a single researcher to engage easily in visual recording.

B) Although I had always wanted to use films in university classes, the lack of information on available ethnographic films on foreign cultures and the absence of a network of distribution were practical problems. At that stage, I had not got hold of the list of ethnographic films collected by the National Museum of Ethnology and Nihon Eizo Kiroku (NAV). On the other hand, I was reluctant simply to use television programmes. I believed that it was only proper to use films or footage created and produced by people with ethnographic knowledge. Moreover, I felt that simple visual records of skills and folk arts were not enough. At such a juncture I came across an edited film on a festival which had survived in a Japanese mountain village, assiduously made over a long period by Shinkichi Noda, a man who had been engaging in independent film-making for years. This work stimulated me to think that one valid method of research was for the researcher to shoot and edit films in the course of his work, and better still after he has obtained sufficient knowledge of his subject.

C) At that time I was participating in several research projects overseas and within Japan and was very active in field work. One of the projects concerned town festivals in Shimokita Peninsula in Aomori Prefecture, Northern Japan. At the same time, my overseas research on Yap Island was nearing an end and I was counting on the possibility of using films to supplement the written reports. That is, I thought it would be possible to make a film which would reflect the ethnographic knowledge and observations that I had obtained so far. On the other hand, I felt a great need to use films as research records or fieldnotes in my research in Japan.

The combination of the above circumstances led me to begin experimenting with film-making. Here I will introduce my experience in experimenting with film-making, being an anthropologist who has heretofore been limited to writing reports only, and some thoughts that were provoked in the process (such as that visual images may be able to supplement the presentation of what cannot be expressed by words; there may be a possibility of composing ethnography by supplementing expression by words with expression through visual images, or by integrating the two). Secondly, I present some suggestions on the strategy and problems of popularizing visual anthropology in Japanese universities under the present conditions. In other words, by relating my own trials and tribulations as an ethnographer who has ventured from writing into film-making, I will offer suggestions for future work in the field.

EXPERIMENTS IN FILM-MAKING

A) My first attempt at film-making was with a synchronic sound 8mm. movie

camera. This was during a research project to clarify *the structure of town festivals* by observing and analyzing the festive phenomena of summer festivals held in some port towns on Shimokita Peninsula. These festivals basically consist of three elements: the *mikoshi* (portable shrine), the *dashi* (decorated float), and the *shishimai* (lion dance). Executive committees are organized to handle the operation of the three. While new elements are actively incorporated into the process, old forms are firmly retained. The festivals are held in a multi-dimensional manner, with interweaving of the elements on show and the meaning behind them. Before I made visual records of the festivals, considerable field investigation had been conducted by graduate students, and the prospects for making observations and analysis had become quite clear. Moreover, footage taken a year before was available for preview. Through discussion and preview of the footage, a certain insight into the festival had already been formed. The actual filming focused on the energetic action seen in the town festivals and the organization for their functioning. In the filming process, and mainly owing to economic considerations, the amount of film was insufficient, which led to inadequate coverage. Moreover, the subjects were over-dispersed, resulting in a failure to express our viewpoint clearly. The footage was edited into a 60-minute film. Charts and short narrations were added to explain things (such as the organization of executive committees) that could not be presented in visual images.

The conclusions I gathered at this stage were that it is not impossible to make films for research purposes, that visual images supplement written ethnographies, and that visual images can be used as a research record. This insight was gained while viewing and reviewing the footage in the editing process. In the movements captured in a sequence of scenes, a great amount of information was covered. Viewing the film in several playbacks draws attention to various aspects that have escaped notice during the filming. This applies not only to the subject primarily in focus, but also to those things around it, in the nooks of the frame, and unintentionally shot scenes. The film, which concretely records events at a particular point in time, leads to the discovery of new problems by faithfully reflecting those events. This should be one aspect of the use of visual images as fieldnotes.

B) *Records of Yap Island*. My next experience was recording with a light-weight video camera on Yap Island, where I had conducted fieldwork for years. I was invited to an inauguration of a meeting house and took the opportunity to experiment with a synchronic video camera for home use which came onto the market at that time. However, a large-scale ritual exchange involving the whole island happens only once in several years, and it was my first occasion personally to observe such an event. I had already acquired considerable ethnographic knowledge, and in particular had been able to observe and analyze the exchange of precious objects and transactions between villages. Furthermore, I was familiar with the protocols of the rituals of exchange that are performed on the occasion of an inauguration of the meeting place, as well as their meanings.

On those occasions, the ceremonial exchanges are conducted at the village

level, involving not only the particular village, but all the allied villages and their chiefs, and even competing villages and chiefs. In Yap, the traditional valuables (mother-of-pearl shell, red-shell necklaces, stone money, and so on) are exchanged on every important occasion, and the exchange itself functions to confirm social relations. Solidarity among villages of the same rank is demonstrated by the mutual exchange of gifts and services. Competition between rival villages is channelled into a peaceful contest of generosity and display of wealth. At this inauguration of the meeting house, allied chiefs come with shell money for unveiling, and the original gifts are returned with additional valuables and plenty of rum and beer. In short, the festivities include food, dance, and the distribution of shell money and stone money to the villages which brought gifts to the unveiling and to others who attend.

The visual records were focused on the ritual visits with shell money for the unveiling, the return gift-giving of the original gift with plenty of additional strings of mother-of-pearl shell and beer that were placed on the piles of stone money, the distribution of shell money between women's dances for the village chiefs who were invited, and the parade of men, which continued until all valuables for distribution were displayed. In short, I recorded the tape by focusing on the two days of ritual exchange involving exchange of valuables and of dances, and the performances involved.

It is those performances that visual records can show in concrete and specific terms by a series of movements in a sequence, and that written words would show in abstract expression.

The filming process was adversely affected by several factors. Technically, I was not very used to handling a video camera; in particular, not enough attention was paid to the colour adjustment. I was also working alone, and in a village with no electricity—thus I was always worrying about battery capacity. The result was that shooting had to be very selective. As to the proceedings of the exchange rituals, although I was shooting while relying on information from the natives, I still missed several phases of the affair. Despite these many shortcomings, the product was edited into a 40-minute videotape.

I have used this videotape several times in my lectures on exchange in classes in Oceanian Ethnography. In the video, general information on Yap Island was supplied in the beginning by a short narration and charts, and a simple explanation of the proceedings of the rituals was also added. For a more profound understanding of the significance of this inauguration of a meeting place in Yap society, the students were told to read written texts. Yet by first giving an explanation through narration—a short description of the proceedings, the types of exchange, and so forth—and then showing the film, I think I was able to make the students understand in concrete terms that in Yap society the exchange of valuables is a motive force in maintaining social relationships and that the process of exchange is a performance. In seminars at the graduate level, there were spontaneous attempts at inferring to other scenes not included in the film. This showed the importance of visual footage being used as ethnographic texts in small classes. On the other hand, I realiz-

ed that in the process of making ethnographic films it is necessary to understand the subjects beforehand, and that the visual images are, after all, created through the filter of my perception. In other words, I realized that if possible objects outside the sphere of my interest must also be put into films.

C) *Third Experiment, a Comparative Study of Town Festivals on Shimokita Peninsula.* This research project was an extension of the previous investigation of town festivals. It consisted of a comparative study of the phenomena of summer festivals, wherein the distinctive features of town folk culture throughout the whole area of Shimokita Peninsula are most vividly manifested. In the course of field research, visual images were used as recording devices. Since the town festivals were held simultaneously, on the same day and at the same time, it was impossible for a single researcher to see all of them. So researchers were sent to record four different festivals with video cameras; in particular, intensive records were made of Ohata-Machi. These visual records were subjected to preliminary editing, mostly in chronological order, and shown in a discussion session. Although the respective researchers responsible for each town festival had previously discussed and evaluated how to view the town festivals and the points of emphasis, still there were minor differences in each researcher's perception of the town festival, and this was reflected in the differences in focus in their footage. For example, one researcher focused on the total context of the festivals, another emphasized aspects of the organization of the events according to a town's thinking, a third was interested in the participation of the outlying villages in the lion dancing, etc. That is, the aspect of the festival which most strongly impressed each researcher was subtly reflected in the films. Despite this fact, each researcher was able to get a general picture of town festivals in Shimokita Peninsula in a comparative perspective by viewing the films after actually observing only one festival. The act of shooting films is not really different from the act of selective observation. However, even if films reflect the perception of the one who took them, both objects purposely selected by the filmmaker and objects outside his perception are imprinted. Films even lead to speculation concerning objects outside the visual frame. Thus viewing the footage in a comparative perspective as we did is meaningful in that it cultivates the habit of viewing films as texts or actively searching for new discoveries in visual records.¹⁾

In addition to using films as visual records, we tried to edit the intensive

1) In this experiment, however, we were not able to make full use of the process of "feedback". We brought the preliminarily edited videotapes to Ohata-Machi, where its festival had been intensively recorded, and showed them to several informants. We thought that our understanding of the festival, gained through observation, could be supplemented by the local people's own concept of the festival. On this point, we did gain additional knowledge on the proceedings of the festival and on aspects we had missed or failed to investigate. However, the people's interest in the videotapes was very different from our expectations: their attention was often attracted by the appearance of acquaintances in the video. This, by itself, is an interesting phenomenon in another sense, but as a "feedback" process for analyzing the footage taken it is quite inadequate.

coverage of the festival in Ohata-Machi into a documentary record. Unlike the previous occasion, in Ohata we were used to operating a video camera and there was no worry over the power source. We took footage for around five hours. After several stages, the footage was finally condensed into a 38-minute film depicting the festival. The *mikoshi*, *dashi* and *shishimai* were the three basic elements (as I mentioned above). The energetic movements of the town people were seen in the rituals at the Shinto shrine, the parade of the *dashi*, door-to-door visits of the lion dance, and other aspects of the festival portrayed.

The main problem in the course of producing the film was how we should view the town festival; this is not any different from writing an ethnography. While the executive unit composed of the organizations operating the *dashi* is managed and carries on its affairs according to the town's thinking, participation of the villages in the lion dancing is supposed to have magical power. One outstanding feature of the town festival is that elements from the villages are incorporated and they are multi-dimensionally structured alongside the *mikoshi*, which is an old religious form.

In short, we wanted to show visually that;

- (1) The town festivals basically consist of three elements, *i.e.* the *mikoshi*, the *dashi*, and the *shishimai*.
- (2) Such elements for display as the *dashi* represent the thinking of the town.
- (3) The *mikoshi* represents an old religious form and maintains traditional ritualism.
- (4) The *shishimai* and other divine performances represent the elements from outlying villages, and town people are purified by being exorcised by them.

At first, we wanted to express our understanding of town festivals entirely through the visual medium if possible. We thought that since the festival was structured according to a premeditated plan, and in the course of the festival the combination of several patterns of repeated action could be seen, we could communicate our understanding of the festival by following the chronological order or by showing in turn each component part, such as movements related to the *dashi*, the *mikoshi* and the *shishimai*, and by picking representative performances.

It was our task to reflect the above ethnographic knowledge gained from observation and investigation in visual form. But since this film was only part of an ethnographic research project, abstract generalizations could be done separately in a written form.

Films are exceptional in their vividness and realism: they are strongly concrete. Thanks to these characteristics, an event or action can be shown in a specific form. Ethnographic research, on the other hand, consists of observing individual phenomena and investigating and analyzing them in the overall context. In written reports, the fieldnotes cannot record the observed phenomena as they are, but have to rewrite and integrate them. In contrast to this, events are reproduced on film as they are. The problem is how to reconcile this difference in content and method of

expression in ethnography using words and ethnography using films, and how to handle their distinctive qualities. By a series of movements in a sequence, films can communicate in concrete and specific terms what in written words would be abstract expressions—such as solemnness, mystery—and would require several adjectives to describe. For example, films are able to convey people's facial expressions as they lay straw mats on the street during the festival, meet the *mikoshi* and clap their hands, or the solemn mood as people bow before the lion. In such a way, written ethnography is supplemented by visual records. The power of films lies not in explaining written ethnography in a simpler form but in the complementary relationship between the lexical quality of ethnography and the visual quality of films.

How to embody this point concretely in the editing process was a big problem for us, due to our lack of knowledge of film language and the immaturity of our editing techniques. In other words, as an anthropologist, I have been trained to express myself in words and observe and analyze by weaving a great variety of words in my head. I was not used to expression with visual images, that is, producing concise expression through films by integrating or eliminating images and their movements.

Our actual work was to edit rationally and appropriately the separate pieces of footage, incorporate the above-mentioned ethnographic knowledge and compose all into an expository whole. The festivals were held for two days. For a transient period of time, the extensive space of the town was turned into a festive space. There were seven *dashi*, five different lion dances, and the *mikoshi* criss-crossed the whole town. During the period of the festivals, various performances were staged. Summarizing all these in less than an hour was itself a great condensation of the whole affair. As the means to achieve our end, we settled on one of two choices after a process of trial and error. During the festival, together with the procession of the *mikoshi*, the door to door call of the lion dance, the parade of the *dashi* and so forth were repeated in the same manner in different locations and at different times of the day for the duration of two days. There were the choices of editing following the chronological order, that is, the order the footage was shot in, or by focusing on specific themes such as the performances and movements of the *dashi* and the lion dance. In the end, we decided on the second approach. This was because although the festival was managed according to the thinking of the town as represented by elements for show such as the *dashi*, it actually consisted of two more elements: the *mikoshi*, which is an old religious form, and elements from the village such as the lion dance and other divine performances—that is, the town people accepted the lion dance presented by villages around it and were purified through being exorcised by it. We wanted to show that elements of the village also enter town festivals and thus traditional ritualism is strongly maintained.

In the end, although the festival was held for two days, only the movements of one day, the procession of the *mikoshi*, the door-to-door calling of the lion dance, the parade of the *dashi*, rituals at the Shinto shrine—that is, only each structural element, the performances involved in each, the movements of the people, the attitude

of the people meeting the performances and so forth—during that one day were included. In other words, various aspects of the festival which were held over two days were cut down into the first day. As to coverage of events of the second day, we limited ourselves only to activities held exclusively on that day. All the rest were eliminated. On the other hand, events in the evening were included in the part of the tape dealing with the second day, and footage taken on the first night was largely cut out. We tried to edit the tape based on the above arrangement. The end product, a videotape of 80-minute length was still too tedious and overflowing with information. This was no doubt due to my deficiency in editing techniques. However, in another sense, another reason could well be because I myself, as cameraman, also doubled as the editor who ought to bring an objective second point of view. The film-maker is inevitably attached to the footage taken: he is subjective. It would be necessary for another more objective person, someone who was not involved in making the film and who saw only the footage taken, to be responsible for editing the film. However, in reality, except for professional film-makers and organizations blessed with a professional staff, technicians with editing skill are not usually available. This could be one obstacle in an anthropologist's attempt to make films. In my case, I had a friend who was experienced in making documentary films and who willingly gave me advice. He saw the footage I edited and taught me some editing techniques. Following his guidance, unnecessary parts were considerably reduced, the presentation was simplified, and the footage was edited into almost half the original length, a videotape now of 38 minutes.

Thus were my attempts at making films based on ethnographic knowledge. Such experiments, apart from making me realize the difficulty of editing, taught us a few lessons for the future. Aside from the above-discussed videotape, we also edited separately the footage on the lion dance. This was because we wanted to keep a record of folk arts and there was a request for it from the townspeople. Additionally, although we had thought of producing short edited footage of some parts of the festival, we had not settled on this before starting to film and did not shoot with this in mind. Thus we were unable to accomplish this task. We only succeeded in making a record of the lion dance because we had intended to do so right at the beginning. At that stage, we had not yet had an opportunity to view the sequence-films of Asch and Marshall.²⁾ If we had done so, we might have attempted making a film with the same orientation. Aside from this, in the future I would like to make a film that can be available also for popular viewing by focusing on two or three participants in the festival and tracing the behaviour of specific individuals.

The above work was supplemented by a bit of written ethnography just to show the general pattern of some phenomena. A certain leeway was left for the visual images to explain themselves and narration was limited to information on the change of location and the passage of time during the festival. When this was shown

2) For example, *The Feast* (Timothy ASCH and Napoleon CHAGNON, 1968) or *A Joking Relationship* (John MARSHALL, 1969).

to a group of students, probably because they were primarily interested in a storyline and were looking for a coherent story, or because they were looking for the ideas and propositions usually contained in a documentary film, they were watching passively and asked for more explanatory narration. This is a point for consideration in future work.

This, then, is the account of my experimental work in attempting to make films that are not simply recording tools or technical films, but are rooted in ethnographic knowledge. The conclusion so far is that basically anthropology should not be limited to understanding through written words: films should be included as an additional or complementary medium in anthropology's repertoire of methods. In other words, it is desirable to supplement ethnography with films when it comes to phenomena that cannot be described by words; written ethnography tends to describe specific events in general statements.

WAYS TO POPULARIZE VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN JAPAN

How can we popularize visual anthropology in the Japanese university and what kind of problems must be solved for that purpose? As to whether visual anthropology has the potentials for development in Japan, I am quite optimistic, at least for the younger generation, which is beginning to take an interest in visual anthropology. However, there is a dearth of professors who are able systematically to impart the necessary knowledge and ideas. While ethnographic films by and for television (for example, from NAV) are highly successful, Japan belongs to the Third World when it comes to the situation of visual anthropology in universities. What are the remedies?

A) *Reluctance and Prejudice toward the Use of Films.* Until a few years ago, there were technical reasons for this situation. Today, however light-weight synchronic sound 8mm. movie cameras and small video cameras have become readily available, so that it has become possible for one or a small number of anthropologists to shoot films during their fieldwork. Of course, in the case of videos, the editing system is still expensive. This remains an obstacle. Still, editing systems for $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tape have been developed and they are not out of the reach of university budgets. A greater barrier than these technical problems, is the prejudice and misunderstanding of films among anthropologists. It is often claimed that research based on interviewing and observing becomes impossible when the researcher starts shooting films, and it is indeed difficult to do both simultaneously. Nevertheless, several anthropologists have succeeded in shooting footage with 8mm. movie or video cameras at various stages of their research. This material however is used only as research footage and is not shown outside their classrooms. It is never made available as explanatory or commentary sequence films or as illustrative footage. I would like to question this attitude.

To put it simply, there is a belief that anthropology, which is a field of knowledge based on words, is not suitable for presentation through films and that

any observation and analysis not presented in written form is not academic work. Yet this does not constitute sufficient reason for a negative attitude towards the film medium. We must overcome the beliefs that films are merely recording tools, that cameras can only present reality in a simple and straightforward manner, and that ethnographic films are only supplements or teaching tools for university lectures in ethnology. In other words, ethnologists need to become more familiar with modern theories of the film.

Heretofore films have been considered a suitable method for data gathering: they have normally dealt with concrete things and not abstract ideas. It is also true that films cannot clearly express things that are highly intellectual. Besides, it may not be fruitful to use films for theoretical matters: it is easier to make general statements with words, since the specificity of film images makes generalization difficult. Since films make contributions in a form that cannot be evaluated with existing anthropological terminology, these contributions may not be appreciated at all. Ethnographic films cannot satisfy all the needs of ethnography: it is hard to imagine how they can provide enough ethnographic context and generalization.

However, even though it is not appropriate to expect the same level of abstraction in films as that in writing, anthropologists should still strive to deepen their understanding of a medium which has the capacity of embodying and presenting things that cannot be expressed in words. Films are capable of supplementing ethnographic exposition in words and showing the patterning of related phenomena. The unique visual characteristic of films presents the observed phenomena and conditions directly, so written ethnography can be supplemented with films and they can be a part of ethnographic projects. Anthropologists who have always presented their findings in words should nonetheless be able to take steps to embody ethnography in cinematography. This is because anthropologists have always investigated human behaviour by describing and analyzing it in the context of the cultural norm, and thus they possess the proper perspective for looking at a variety of events and should know very well when, where and how to shoot footage. Although all films are in a sense selective, and reflect the specific perception of the film-maker, anthropologists are able to place events in the cultural context and give an appropriate interpretation. Any anthropologist who has the minimum interest and who has come in contact with modern symbolism and communication theory should have no difficulty in getting used to modern theories of the film. We may hope that by thorough comprehension of the lexical characteristics of written ethnography and the unique visual characteristics of films, and building on their complementary relationship, new insights can be gained. By having such a perspective, we shall be able to make use of sequence-films (presently controversial among film-makers) which are reportorial but not ethnographic. Thus the scheme of using the native point of view in films while leaving analytic ethnographic interpretation in written reports will also gain acceptance. Only by developing an interest can we commit ourselves to solving the various controversial problems in visual anthropology, such as how to make films achieve the standards and objectives of

ethnography, how to make films provide information that cannot be transmitted by written ethnography, and how to make the visual characteristics of films supplement the lexical nature of ethnography.

B) *Systematic Screening of Ethnographic Films*. To achieve popular acceptance of visual anthropology, along with a change in the attitude of anthropology professors toward film, it is important to provide guidance by systemically showing ethnographic films to students. For one thing, one needs to be skilful in showing the films. Up to now, there were not many Japanese professors lucky enough to be able to borrow ethnographic films and show them in lectures. Even when they are able to do so, films have been used only as supplementary or reference material for the main lecture. Superior ethnographic films, that is, films produced on the basis of ethnographic knowledge, have never reached the stage of being shown very much. In fact, even mere screening is still difficult under present conditions in Japan: the universities are still inadequately equipped for screening films, due not only to lack of understanding of this medium but also to the prevailing conditions of having no network for distribution of such films.

We need to begin using films in upper classes in the university or in the graduate school; films or edited footage produced on the basis of ethnographic knowledge should be shown, discussed and assessed. Students should not only see what is expressed in the visual images but develop an eye for discovering things from the films, as texts, and forming their own judgements therefrom. Since upper class students will already have a firm grasp of relevant written texts and will be trained in comprehension, with a little effort it will not be difficult to make them understand recent outstanding ethnographic films which leave the interpretation to the viewers. Toward this end, it will be good to start with films that are supplemented by written ethnographies, that is, films that were produced from the perspective of an anthropologist. I think this stage is a necessary step to eliminate the prejudicial idea that films are simply reference material or field recording tools, and also to cultivate the perspective in order to assess the direction today's ethnographic film-makers are heading towards, that is, creating forms of expression reflecting anthropological thinking or grouping for new means to take the place of understanding through written words, etc.

Secondly, it is important to show ethnographic films systematically. To guide students' understanding of film, they must appreciate the history and theories of ethnographic films. This will give them the perspective to appreciate the films and consider visual anthropology to be no less academically respectable than other branches of anthropology. Furthermore, by viewing the various works and methods of film-makers in the past, students acquire a model for their future use and even pro-

3) For example, *Nanook of the North* (Robert FLAHERTY, 1922), *Dead Birds* (Robert GARDNER, 1963), the Bushman series (John MARSHALL), the Yanomamö series (Timothy ASCH and Napoleon CHAGNON), *Desert People* (Ian DUNLOP, 1969), *The Lion Hunters* (Jean ROUCH, 1970), the Netsilik Eskimo series (Asen BALIKCI), etc.

duction of films. Thus it will be good to select and show them, with relevant discussion, epoch-making works in the history of visual anthropology, such as the works of Flaherty, Gardner, Marshall, Asch, Dunlop and Rouch,³⁾ and the Netsilik Eskimo series. I believe that such a curriculum lasting one semester would be appropriate.

Are the above proposals realistic? At present, except for Dr. Omori, there are no Japanese professors who have studied visual anthropology; no university has a class in visual anthropology, although Yasuhiro Omori and Junichi Ushiyama teach this subject sometimes as guest lecturers. However, by reading papers on the history and theories of visual anthropology and combining this with theories of symbolism and communication, it might not be impossible to develop lectures on the subject. The greatest obstacle remains the practical difficulty of showing ethnographic films to students. It is true that thanks to the efforts of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka and Nihon Eizo Kiroku (NAVL) in Tokyo, both institutions open to the public, a considerable number of ethnographic films have been collected. However, mainly owing to copyright problems, they are not readily available for use in classrooms; not even a list of the collections is available. A network for loan of films at a reasonable price should be considered eventually. In this connection, problems over the management of state property, copyright and so forth will have to be resolved. On the other hand, conditions must be created for more understanding on the part of institutions which will make use of visual records. The university must also strive to improve educational methods in anthropology, obtain the necessary funding, and experiment with new educational curricula.

C) *Show by Example How to Make Films as an Anthropologist.* To stimulate the younger generation, anthropologists ought to show by their own example some active involvement in film-making. It seems certain that ethnologists are the best qualified people to make ethnographic films, and they should shoot films in the field situation they have explored after having conducted detailed investigation. It will also be good for them to be more aggressive in using the footage they shot in their research as fieldnotes.

I would also like to encourage more active use of films in research projects within Japan. I believe that young students are enthusiastic about using film, and such people are slowly increasing in number in my university. It is probably my colleagues who are the ones refusing to understand films. In order to eliminate the false impression that films are merely reportorial and tools for recording, or that ethnographic films cannot go beyond the framework of technical films, it is necessary to demonstrate the process of editing from an anthropological viewpoint. I feel that this is a necessary requirement for understanding the recent controversial issue of use of footage and the significance of sequence films and observational cinema.

Visual anthropology has not yet begun its germination stage in Japanese universities. It should be possible to advance along a fruitful path by first understanding the present situation.

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1981 *Shimokita Wakinosawa-mura no maturi* [Festival in Wakinosawa, Shimokita Peninsula]. 8mm. colour film, 50 mins.

1983 *The Dedication Ceremony of a Meeting House in Yap Island, Micronesia*. Colour videotape, 40 mins.

1985 *Ohata no maturi* [Festival in Ohata, Shimokita Peninsula]. Colour videotape, 38 mins.



Shishi-Mai (Lion Dance), Oohata-machi (Photo by Imamura)



Shishi-Mai, Oohata-Machi (Photo by Imamura)



Dashi (float), Wakinosawa-mura (Photo by Imamura)



Dashi, Wakinosawa-mura (Photo by Imamura)