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INTRODUCTION

This is not the first collection of papers on visual anthropology to appear in English. A dozen years back Paul Hockings edited *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, a book that has been widely consulted ever since and which, like the present volume, includes valuable contributions by Colin Young, Timothy Asch, and Jean Rouch. If that earlier book had any national bias, it arose from the preponderance of American contributors.

The present volume of *Senri Ethnological Studies* understandably has a Japanese bias instead, since it was an outgrowth of the Tenth International Taniguchi Foundation Symposium on Ethnology that was held in Osaka in 1986, and half of the participants in that were Japanese scholars. Yet it is difficult to pinpoint a particularly Japanese approach in visual anthropology. This may be an effect of the diversity in Japanese academic formation at the present time. Some scholars were trained in historical institutes, others in a folkloristic tradition, others in anthropology departments overseas. The noted anthropologist Takao Sofue, who also contributes to our volume, wrote a review of the history of anthropology in Japan [SOFUE 1961] in which he traced the subject back to the year 1884 and the founding of the Japanese Society of Ethnology in Tokyo. Despite this early start, the various subdisciplines remained isolated from each other, pigeon-holed as it were in a variety of research institutes in a dispersed spread of universities. Archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistics and folklore each had its separate development, and visual anthropology was especially slow to appear. Despite the use of audiovisual equipment by a number of researchers, as illustrated in various parts of this volume, it is arguable that even today there are less than a dozen professional visual anthropologists in the country: Junichi Ushiyama, some of his producers (like Yasuko Ichioka), and Yasuhiro Omori; and of those mentioned, the first was actually trained in Oriental History and Miss Ichioka in Sociology. In short, visual anthropology is only just getting off the ground in Japan. The tremendous potential provided by the existence of numerous top-ranking camera companies in the country has yet to be aligned with the research interests of many of the anthropologists. But the recently created Nippon Audio-Visual Library (NAVL) in Tokyo and the Videothèque at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka are full of promise for a brighter future in the educational uses of the moving image.

This statement does not do justice, though, to the tremendous work of Junichi Ushiyama and his staff at NAVL, in creating and popularising a television series, "Our Wonderful World", which has now presented ethnological programmes to the general public for over twenty years. Yasuko Ichioka, perhaps the most successful and prolific of all his producers, describes the making of these films in her article. Junichi Ushiyama himself has usefully outlined the rationale behind them in an earlier article [USHIYAMA 1975].

If there is one factor that clearly distinguishes the present volume from the earlier *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, it is precisely in the emphasis on the uses of documentary film in television. Although the earlier book covered a very wide range of topics in visual anthropology, from the research uses of still photography [COLLIER 1975] to the utility of television in teaching biological anthropology [MAVALWALA 1975], its one evident weakness was the inability of its contributors to discuss the "real world" of commercial television and financing. With the exception of one short article [HOFFMAN 1975] no attempt was made to grapple with the twin questions of "What should the public expect from us?" and "Where will all the money come from?"

The present volume of *Senri Ethnological Studies* goes a long way towards making up this deficiency, at least by answering the first question; indeed almost half the volume is concerned with it.

At the outset the distinguished critic Colin Young sets the stage for the entire volume with a detailed paper explaining some contemporary theories of the documentary film, and showing how film is used in the television programming of various developed nations. It is not altogether a comforting picture that he presents, for he shows how the politics of the business world, even the politics of the nation, is commonly put ahead of the people's right to know and the television industry's commitment to inform. Young also discusses audiences, and that subtle interplay of belief and distortion that normally characterizes their response to televised and cinema fare. He shows how the assumptions of both the producers and the public define and limit the form of information that is available visually, and structure our view of the world. Young points out the paradoxical nature of this interaction, how the televised image tends to distort and yet audiences tend to believe.

He is able to indicate some alternative forms of television, at least in Anglophone countries, but is sanguine about the eagerness of either television organizations or their critics to democratize access to the airwaves. Observational cinema, he suggests, is one style of film-making which tends to open up, rather than close down, the audience's opportunity to interact with their source of visual information.

Many of the same themes in Colin Young's paper are taken up again by Faye Ginsburg and elaborated on with reference to the transmission of anthropological information. Although he deals only peripherally with ethnographic film, she shows it to have established itself as a distinct genre over the past several decades, with its own concerns about style and substance. Television, she shows, has made a big contribution to the establishment of this genre, and much of her paper is concerned with the interaction between the television industry and professional anthropologists which has led to some remarkable film series in Britain, Japan and the United States. Ginsburg argues strongly for a relationship between anthropologists and the mass media, on both pragmatic and ethical grounds. Yet it is noteworthy that of all the ethnographic series on television which she discusses, only Japan's "Our Wonderful World" is still running.

One of its senior producers is Yasuko Ichioka, who writes about her experiences over the years in creating films for the general public on an incredibly diverse range of cultures in Eastern Asia and the Western Pacific. Even those anthropologists who are not much interested in ethnographic filming—and several of the papers, especially I. Ushijima's, lament that their numbers are still legion—will find Ichioka's paper of interest when it describes her problems and strategies while pursuing her filmic aims in the field. It would be out of the question to attempt to learn all of the languages in the areas where she has worked, so she explains how she handles the delicate problems of translation and interpretation that can make or break her work. Her energy and common sense should serve as a beacon to all who attempt filming in traditional cultures.

Iwao Ushijima is another Japanese anthropologist who, out of frustration with the "visual illiteracy" among his colleagues, was motivated to try his hand at ethnographic filming, first with 8mm. film and then with 1/2-inch videotape. Although he had almost no prior training in the technique, he was able to make films that record significant events encountered during fieldwork in the Pacific area. He ruefully notes, with scant exaggeration, that Japan today has only a couple of professional visual anthropologists, but hopes that by efforts such as his own more students may be trained in this subdiscipline.

The training of Japanese students is also of central concern to Takao Sofue, who is responsible for a cultural anthropology course at (or on?) the innovative University of the Air. Sofue discusses in some detail how the course was designed for television presentation. Almost unique in the literature of visual anthropology at the present time is his experimental research on audience perception, on the most effective ways for teaching students via television. It is regrettable that his programme is almost unique too.

Antonio Marazzi is yet another scholar who writes about the contemporary relations between anthropology and television. His own experiences were dogged by the administrative gulf which separates Italian universities from the State Television (RAI). Marazzi draws a distinction between ethnographic and anthropological film—something that several other contributors also attempt to do, though regretably without a general agreement on how precisely the terms visual anthropology, ethnographic film, and anthropological film are to be defined. By ethnographic film Marazzi means the visual recording of some aspects of the reality encountered during fieldwork—what Paul Hockings and others call footage—whereas anthropological film, it is suggested, differs from this because of interpretation and formalization. Marazzi devotes some space to the distribution and "consumption" of anthropological films, as indeed do Young, Ginsburg, the Asches and others.

Timothy and Patsy Asch have jointly written a paper on the role of film and videotape in anthropological research, but their basic terms are at variance with Marazzi's. In a wide-ranging essay they emphasize the value of using film as an observational tool, but are not so naive as to discount the effect of psychological factors in creating a film record. In some parts of the paper they take a philosophical

approach to the relations between film and reality, while elsewhere they discuss specific technical procedures that are of great value for any fieldworker to know about.

Yasuhiro Omori also takes a philosophical approach, as he distinguishes between footage films, monographic films and "direct" films. In many respects this distinction parallels one that may also be found in writing, a point that is reiterated by Hockings and the Asches. But Omori goes on to argue that the two main types of ethnographic film have been kept artificially separated for too long. It is now time to make films which will incorporate both aspects of visual anthropology. As an illustration of what he means, Omori cites his own activity in making a film about a Japanese fertility rite and later using that film as a stimulus to promote physical and mental reactions in several informants from the host village, reactions which are recorded with a variety of instrumentation. Although several Americans have tried to do this kind of research, it is something new in Japan, and the author believes it can both clarify forms of scientific analysis and promote the understanding of cultures as wholes. It is certainly rather different from the kind of student audience research discussed by Takao Sofue.

In some ways the most extraordinary paper in this collection is that by Tsutomu Oohashi, dealing with a highly technical experiment recently conducted in Japan. It involved the televising of numerous cultural events around the country, their transmission by earth satellite to a hall holding 350 people, and the active participation by those people not only in the interpretation of the events but even in their televising and to some extent their very conduct. A unique and extremely costly experiment which continued for six months, this venture points to a possible anthropology of the 21st Century which we can only be dimly aware of today. Many will of course say that the fragility of its electronic equipment, the large manpower, and a cost that must have run into some millions of dollars, all make this an impossible dream, and one that anthropology has no business pursuing. But only time will tell.

The essay by Paul Hockings grapples further with one persisting question: why has ethnographic film made so little impact on the general conduct and history of anthropology? He makes a detailed comparison of the process of recording on film and writing fieldnotes, which leads him to suggest that while the two methods are logically very similar, filming is phenomenological in its nature and thus something which is anathema to most contemporary anthropologists.

It is perhaps not a very positive conclusion, and it is one that is certainly at odds with the lively essay provided by the noted French film-maker Jean Rouch. In a paper that is frankly autobiographical in character, Rouch shows how his interest in the people of West Africa led him to the formal study of anthropology, how his contacts with Marcel Griaule led to the making of films in postwar Africa, and how the screening of those films in West African villages led to a new sort of participatory anthropology in which the villagers took a big role in the making of films. Rouch focuses on half a dozen of his best-known films so as to demonstrate how the

actual making of them taught him much of value about African cultures and human nature. His personal account of all this forms a stimulating conclusion to the volume.

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Yasuhiro Omori

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