Original Version

Mimesis and Musicality in the Documentary of Ogawa Shinsuke

By Abé Mark Nornes

Open virtually any history of Japanese cinema, and it will prominently feature the work of documentary filmmakers Ogawa Shinsuke and Tsuchimoto Noriaki. Despite documentary's relegation to the margins of history, these two filmmakers have been canonized for their contributions to political cinema in Japan. Their careers began about the same time and follow a similar trajectory. After learning their craft in the public relations film industry, they went independent and made films aligned with the 1960s student movement. In the late 1960s, each began their own monumental series of films. Tsuchimoto's examines the tragic consequences of industrial pollution in the Minamata area, where the food chain was poisoned by the dumping of mercury into the ocean. Ogawa directed a series of documentaries about the uprising provoked by the expropriation of farmland for Narita International Airport—the epicenter of what many activists expected to be revolution. The films achieved their place in history both because of the importance of the social struggles they document, and also for their contribution to the development of progressive documentary cinema. The advances they represent are both stylistic and conceptual, and because Japanese filmmakers enjoyed little access to foreign non-fiction films their conception of documentary developed in relative isolation from well-known forms such as Direct Cinema and Cinéma Verité. This essay will examine the contours of Japanese political documentary in the 1960s and 1970s by looking closely at Ogawa Shinsuke's *Sanrizuka: Peasants of the Second Fortress (Sanrizuka: Dainitoride no hitobito*, 1971), suggesting that Ogawa forges a special network of relationships between filmmaker, filmed and audience.

Sanrizuka: Peasants of the Second Fortress is the best known issue of the Sanrizuka Series. It is also the most emotionally draining of the films. It records the first land expropriation, which took place between 22 February and 6 March 1971. In January the Hantai dômei (the farmer-led opposition organization) anticipated the expropriation, which was only announced a week ahead of time, by digging tunnel networks in critical locations. The tunnels were protected by five fortresses scattered across the construction site. Made of wood, scrap metal, logs and barbed wire, the farmers fully expected the fortresses to be bulldozed and the tunnels turned into graves. You could call this film *The Seven Samurai*

of social protest documentaries for the epic scale of its depiction of farmers fending off invading "bandits," its moving commentary about power and human nature, as well as its revered place in the history of Japanese cinema.

By the 22nd of February, the Hantai dômei had amassed a reported 20,000 protestors, who faced off against 30,000 police. The spectacle had grown to tremendous scale, turning into something far more than a "demonstration." In the open fields surrounding the fortresses, scrams of various units squared off with long rows of riot police. The women's action brigade locked arms and marched up to the police to taunt them. The student sects attacked with rocks and sticks. These protests were a regular feature in mainstream journalism by this time, but were always rendered from a "critical" distance that put the reporters behind police lines in every sense. By way of contrast, Ogawa's crews traversed the barricades and fortress walls freely, literally diving into the thick of the clashes. Some of the scenes recorded by cameraman Tamura Masaki are absolutely heart-wrenching, as when young women confront a long line of riot policemen who have constructed an ad hoc wall with their shields. The women grab the shields and peer over into the helmeted faces, crying, "Can't you see you're killing us?!? What would your mothers think!?!"

The film climaxes with the methodical invasion of the fortresses. The police attack with water cannons, but are repeatedly rebuffed by students lobbing Molotov cocktails and thrusting bamboo spears through holes in the fence. Upon their final assault the riot police, the representatives of the state, storm the entrance and beat everyone in their path. They rip away mothers and children who have chained themselves to trees. This film is like a mirror image of Tsuchimoto's *Minamata Revolt—A People's Quest for Life* (Minamata ikki—issho o to hitobito, 1973), the most memorable image of which is the calm, fortress-like face of the Chisso CEO surrounded by insurrection during a shareholders' meeting. Breaking down the door with the battering ram of verbiage, activist Kawamoto Teruo sits cross-legged on the conference table inches from the CEO's face. In contrast, the very real fortresses of Sanrizuka are violently invaded by representatives of the state. In these films, the revolt in Minamata appears to be on the verge of some fleeting, if bitter, victory, but the Sanrizuka Struggle results in assault, annihilation and retreat. Upon watching *Peasants of the Second Fortress* at a government sponsored symposium in the 1990s, even the president of the airport authority admitted, "As we just saw in that movie, what shall I say? Those were conditions we should properly call a war. We are now at a point when we have the sense that we don't want this to occur again."[1]

As in their previous films, there are occasional moments when the action of Ogawa's film grinds to a halt and people simply talk. While the students were once Ogawa's main focus back in the 1960s, they are now contained in the background of the film, appearing only occasionally to clash with mobs of riot

1 "Narita kûkô mondai shimpojiumu kirokushû," *Narita kûkô mondai shimpojiumu kirokushû*. Sanrizuka, Narita: 1995, 290.

police. In their stead, the farmers take center stage, and in the most awkward of styles. Their speech is halting, filled with pauses and repetition. Where the typical filmmaker would search out the most articulate conversations and speakers (usually male leaders) and give them voice, Ogawa photographed unexceptional discussions and strategy sessions in long takes. The breaks, silences, sidetracks, and repetitions were left untouched by editing. It is clear that as the farmers' comprehension of their situation deepened, so did Ogawa Pro's understanding of the farmers themselves. While this basic structure of discussion/interview alternating with chaotic action is familiar to anyone who had seen previous Ogawa Pro films, there is an essential difference here. Their approach had transformed in subtle, but decisive ways.

This is particularly evident in one scene shot under the earth. As I mentioned above, one of the strategies of the farmers was to burrow underground—under their ground—and build catacombs of basements under their fortresses. Groups would rotate duty, living in the tunnels to make eviction and construction impossible. When the Ogawa Pro cameras tour the tunnels, their guide stops at a small hole designed for ventilation; after briefly describing how it works, the farmer holds a candle up to the hole: "See, when I put the flame near the hole the fresh air nearly blows it out," and proceeds to repeat this action for several minutes. The point is clear the first time around, when the typical documentarist would cut to the next scene, but this ventilation hole is important to the farmers; it allows them to survive under the earth, and Ogawa refuses to interrupt the demonstration. When I asked farmers at Heta Village about this scene 30 years after the fact, they insisted it was not excessive. They rather liked the way it captured their neighbor's distinctive way of talking and the peculiar situation in the tunnels. This was, after all, the way they hoped to retain their land, by burrowing beneath it and refusing to leave. This scene was paradigmatic of a new attitude toward documentary forming within Ogawa Pro. It became the predominant stance in the rest of their work.

Moreover, this approach became generalized throughout the discourse on documentary, in part because Ogawa Pro was closely watched by everyone interested in the relationship between film and politics. For example, in 1969 a group of filmmakers including Ôshima Nagisa, Wakamatsu Kôji, Matsumoto Toshio, Matsuda Masao and Adachi Masao helped bring back *Eiga hihyô*, once an important forum for film theory in the era surrounding the previous AMPO. The writers of the new *Eiga hihyô* attempted to theorize the contours of a "movement cinema" (*undô no eiga*). To this end, they resurrected decades-long debates over *shutaisei* (subjectivity). For example, in a typical debate from 1970 the *Eiga hihyô* writers discuss the complex relationship between the "conscious subject," "image," and "conditions." The image came to be perceived as a record stamped by the assertive hand of the filmmaker—that conscious, active subject—in the midst of the volatile "conditions" of the world. This "world" hid enemies and was structured by powerful institutions handed down from the past. As the new *Eiga hihyô* group saw it, the quality of that relationship had

implications for a politicized aesthetics. In the early 1970s, writings on Ogawa Pro and Tsuchimoto developed such ideas, focusing on the nature of *shutai/taisho* relations. It must be said that while we can certainly find continuity with earlier discourses on nonfiction filmmaking, the new discussions about *shutaisei* have none of the rigor or intertwining engagement typical of other moments in film theory—especially those in other parts of the world. Writers seem to selectively appropriate, rather than rigorously contest and develop, previous arguments. The result is a protean *shutaiseiron*, the very vagueness of which may have made it more aesthetically productive in actual practice. For example, we sense only distant echoes of Matsumoto's discussions of subjectivity in *Eizô no hakken* when Ôshima Nagisa writes that Ogawa's method,

> returns to the original intention of documentary, realizing the principle of documentary. What are the principles and original intention of documentary? First it is a love toward the object documented, a strong admiration and attachment, and it is carrying this first principle over a long period of time. Nearly all the films considered masterpieces fulfill these two conditions.[i]

By the early 1970s, it was hard not to describe the films of Ogawa and Tsuchimoto, indeed most independent documentary filmmakers as well, in these rather vague terms. By *Peasants of the Second Fortress* these tendencies were in place and in 1973 they arrived at their natural conclusion with Ogawa's *Heta Village* (*Heta buraku*). This approach starts from the position of the filmed "object" and ends there, too. It is described variously as "letting the *taisho* enter the *shutai*," "going with the *taisho*," "betting on" or "depending on the *taisho*," or becoming "wrapped up in the *taisho*." Suzuki Shiroyasu, who will soon figure prominently into this developing story, described this approach in the following manner: Significantly, this was also the moment when Ogawa began thinking about the implications of collective work in a self-conscious way.

> I think that "symbiosis," (*kyôseikan*) as a goal or aim for the documentary, first came into parlance with Tsuchimoto...The filmmaker tries to take in and accept all the troubles, the conflicts, really the whole existence of the object being filmed. That's fundamentally different from the Western style of filmmaking. In the West, the object is never anything more than an element of the work, a particular work that is being made by a given filmmaker for him or herself. I think you can also see the effects of the Japanese attempts at a "symbiotic relationship" in the way the objects of the film are treated, or in the way the director refers to them. For example, Tsuchimoto doesn't call those suffering from Minamata disease simply *kanja* (victim), but he adds the polite suffix "-san": *Kanja-san* (victim-*san*). Ogawa refers to the farmers in his films with the honorific expression "*nômin no katagata*." They elevate the object of the film to their own level, or are treating the relationship with their objects and the objects themselves with a degree of respect.[ii]

A reviewer for *Asahi shinbun* puts it most simply in describing Ogawa's *Heta Village* (*Heta buraku*, 1973):

> If we were to deepen the methodology that has the documentary camera facing two poles, between assimilation and othering, this film represents

> the move to the assimilation end. One could say the camera is one of the people appearing in the film.[2]

By way of contrast, Western theory since the post-structuralist intervention has theorized the documentary in terms of subject and representation, putting the referent (*taisho*) in brackets and only reticently discussing it. This is to say, Western documentary film theory focuses on the relationship of signified and signifier raked by the subjectivities of producer and spectators. Because these two groups approach the referent only through this signification system, the theory closes off extensive discussion of the profilmic world. The referent is used primarily to set the documentary apart from fiction film, as well as to lend documentary theory remarkable ethical resonance. The referent reminds us that, as Fredric Jameson puts it, "history hurts."[3] Less academically inclined discussions of documentary practice in the West are just as revealing in their own way. As noted above, in English we generally refer to the *taisho* as "subject," strongly implying a desire to see the filmed human beings as acting and not acted upon, as free subjects rather than the objects they are in the context of cinematic representation. This is an artifact of earlier discourses of objectivity, forms of documentary realism that discount the subjective, creative force of the filmmaker.

Japanese theoretical and popular discourses do not suffer from this linguistic confusion between subject and object. In post-1960 film theory and film making, it is precisely the relationship between the subject and the referent that produces the sign. Where the American filmmaker creates a sign from a referent in the world, the Japanese filmmaker's intimate interaction with the referent leaves a signifying trace we call a documentary film. It is a subtle but decisive difference in emphasis that one can find in virtually every discussion of nonfiction film in Japan, a difference one would have difficulty articulating with the critical tools of contemporary documentary theory outside of Japan.

The discourse over the *taisho*, however, is primarily concerned with the relationship of the filmmaker and *taisho* as it is represented in the cinema. Furthermore, it primarily attends to the quiet passages between the action sequences. What of the relationship between the filmmakers/*taisho*/film with the audience?

The documentary that emerged from these debates about *shutai* and *taisho* were politicized in their contrast to the modes that came before and simply in the context of their production, distribution, and exhibition. However, simple, strong identification with the *taisho* is ultimately not enough for a political film culture hell bent on social change—even revolution. The films had to move people. In one of many surveys Ogawa Pro took after their films, a respondent succinctly frames the problem. This was from a survey for *Summer in Sanrizuka*, and was written by a worker at the Nakano Ward Office in Tôkyô: "Will I

2 *Asahi shinbun* (26 May 1974); quoted on *Heta Village* flier, Sanrizuka Archives Box 030

3 Fredrick JAMESON: *The Political Unconcious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981, 102.

support you? If all this means is a screening, then I'm against it. Basically, it's the idea of peddling humanism. If we can't provoke revolution, then making films that inspire sympathy is nonsense. The beginnings of struggle may start with sympathy (as long as it does not befall oneself). However, does not one need an after-film discussion that makes this sympathy your own problem?"[4] This comment was circled in red pencil by someone from Ogawa Pro, so it must have struck a nerve. I am also interested in this problematic and I believe the key lies in Ogawa's scenes of combat, with its brand of narrative stasis embedded in chaotic visual movement. I find Jane Gaines' theory of political mimesis in documentary a compelling and inspiring starting point.

Gaines starts with the simple fact that despite the rhetoric of social action that always surrounds the political documentary, there is little evidence that they have actually "changed the world." There are no documentary blockbusters—few are seen beyond a handful of the already converted. It would seem the connection between sweeping social change and documentary might be mythical, buttressed mostly by anecdote and flamboyant personalities of directors like Ivens, Eisenstein and others. Gaines asks some good questions:

> What do we count as change?
>
> How do we know the effects a film has produced?
>
> How do we determine where consciousness ends and action begins?
>
> What moves people to act? What "moves them to do something rather than nothing in relation to the political situation onscreen?"[5]

These are some of the key questions I have been wrestling with, and I am doing this as I watch the films, talk to former members of the collective and their audiences, and sift through the archive. The latter provides some interesting, if obscure, clues which provide good starting points for the discussion.

First, the archives contains a wide variety of fascinating surveys (*anketto*) for many of their films. Most of these were conducted by Ogawa Pro, but some were sent in from sympathizers in other parts of Japan. In Table 1 I have tabulated the results from a survey from *Summer in Sanrizuka* screenings. Note the framing of the questions, which are written in an active voice asking for action, not just opinion. Inspiring people to participate and join the movement is their overarching goal, and judging from the answers perhaps they were successful. In question three, 171 people had not participated in the Sanrizuka Struggle, yet after the screening 98 express their intent to go. This certainly suggests the film had the power to inspire action, despite their ultimate inability to stop the construction.

The archive is filled with documents that evidence Ogawa Pro's ability to mobilize people across Japan to join their screening movement, . Curiously enough, when you talk discuss their film movement with former members of the

4 Survey for *Summer in Sanrizuka*.

5 GAINES, Jane. "Political Mimesis," ed. Jane GAINES and Michael RENOV: *Collecting Visible Evidence*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 84–102.

collective, they automatically assume you are asking about the distribution and exhibition of their films. When filmmakers involved in film movements in other parts of the world inevitably locate their "movement" in the production of their films. Ogawa and Tsuchimoto located their film movements in the reception context, working to insert local struggles onto the national public stage. At the same time they made attempts at negotiating a borderline between public and private spheres—territory generally mapped out by the state and by capital on their own terms. In the high growth economy after the occupation, public space increasingly became privatized and nationalized. In the film industry, a hand-full of heavily capitalized film studios controlled "mainstream" spaces for cinema production and exhibition. Thus, mainstream theaters—those deceptive places that pose as public places—would not touch the work of dissident filmmakers. As one kind of media, the movie theater could provide an arena for shaking the hegemony of the *keiretsu* system, as the short-lived New Wave attempted to do at Shochiku Studios. Significantly, these feature filmmakers went independent; many also made documentaries. Cultural critic Ikui Eiko points out that it is more appropriate to think of the cinema underground of the 1960s and early 1970s as functioning quite above ground. This is a measure for their success in carving out a space for public discourse, unmediated by state and capital—a place like a park, where strangers could meet and shake up each other's worlds. In the case of these filmmakers, this public exchange occurred within a dynamic between the local, regional and national levels.

Since we usually consider this filmmaking in the context of a national cinema, our sense for these films' meanings is easily homogenized into the space of the nation-state. However, in some cases the most politically effective interaction was local. As a compelling example, we can look to Tsuchimoto. While his films may have excited the national environmental movement and anyone suspicious of the collusion between government and business, back on the coast surrounding Minamata Tsuchimoto's films informed the families of fishermen of the mercury lacing their fish. In the face of government inaction and the chemical industry's denials, Tsuchimoto was saving the lives of people who did not know their food supply was dangerously polluted. This is not an exaggeration; the filmmakers were taking their films from village to village, informing the residents of the perils of eating their own catch.

Ogawa Pro was far more aggressive at constituting an alternative sphere for public discourse. Beginning with their independence from Iwanami they were forced to distribute their films alone. The student movement provided a ready network. Upon their move to Sanrizuka, they sent projection teams across Japan, showing the print wherever they could set up a screening, in villages and cities alike. They also began to transform the spaces where they showed their films. Teams of collective members from Tôkyô would also set out for the countryside, setting up showings wherever there were people that wanted to see the film. Ogawa would only give them one-way tickets. These small teams would set out with a print and a projector, and the Ogawa Pro name was their calling

card. Just saying they were from Ogawa Pro in Sanrizuka would open doors; sympathizers would put them up, feed them, and help them gather crowds. More often than not, they could not use regular theaters and had to rely on community halls, gymnasiums and classrooms. If there was no screen available, they'd use a bed sheet. In most of these places, they came to expect speakers with holes in the cones, rickety projectors, fold-up seats, and poor electricity that would force the music out of tune. Ogawa recalled screenings where serendipity would turn the film into a "mysterious living creature." Wind would make the sheet=screen gently wave. Hands would occasionally shoot up in the audience and make playful shadow animals over the image. When it was very crowded, some places would allow people to watch the film from behind the screen. During the era of the Sanrizuka Struggle there were times that Ogawa would suddenly appear during the movie and, if he felt like it at the time, starting talking—a kind of ad lib, aural footnoting to the finished film.[6] Apparently, there were also occasions when Ogawa stopped the movie for a mid-film discussion. These examples suggest a conception of cinema in which the "creation" of the film, the production of meaning, continues long after the development of the print. It is no wonder that they nominated their distribution and exhibition the site of the film movement, as it was ultimately about *moving people*. Eventually, they codified their network into branch offices in Tôhoku, Hokkaidô, Kansai and Kyûshû. The public their ambitions envisioned was a collection of localities connected by cinema—not a homogenized national space based on a collective defense, an imperial symbol system, or a corporate network of production and consumption.

A third archival trace of the films' power to move people are the vast records of contributions flowing through the offices of Ogawa Pro. They range from massive grants to pocket change, duly recorded after every screening. The fundraising campaigns waged in the theaters were targeted at both the production of more films and the issues they were supporting. These records also raise a number of troubling ethical questions about the way Ogawa managed these monies, particularly loans which have yet to be repaid; however, this is a topic that I will address elsewhere. More pertinent to the discussion at hand is the fact that so many people were willing to hand over hard-won money to support the production of new films and farmers in Sanrizuka.

The last way we may see the films moving people is also the most intriguing. It has to do with the gestures of the audience. Anyone who watched Ogawa's films back in the 1960s and 1970s can describe a scene of amazing participatory spectatorship. Audiences clapped, booed, chanted, and sang. When they saw something they liked, they would shout "*Igi nashi!*" ("Right on!"); when the police arrived onscreen, they'd yell, "Nonsense!" The most provocative part of Gaines' article suggests political documentary—with its spectacles of bloodied bodies, marches, clashes with police—is akin to what Linda Williams has called

6 Nagoya, 63-64.

body genres. She begins where so many theorists locate their ethics of documentary: the body, here split between two locations, in the theater and on the screen. Above and beyond their efforts of "consciousness raising," political documentaries strive for mimesis, an embodied knowledge where representations of the world, energized and empowered by the world, make people move. Gaines writes, "There could sometimes be an aspect of the involuntary, an aspect that (kicks in) on top of politicized consciousness."[7] She suggests that filmmakers have historically used mimesis to raise consciousness and make activists more active.

What makes Ogawa Pro's films a productive place to think through issues of political mimesis is that these two functions were boldly treated in separate and distinct styles, and also that these styles underwent certain transformations as the political landscape changed over time. These two styles represent the manner in which Ogawa rendered discussion and protest scenes, which alternate throughout every issue of the Sanrizuka Series. For the former, the long sequences of discussions or interviews are shot with a stable camera and are so lengthy they take on a sense of stasis. However, they do feature a discursive movement that the action scenes lack, which is to say we learn things that affect our understanding of the historical events and, by extension, the scenes of violence that inevitably follow. At the same time, these discussions do not impart information in the manner we are accustomed to in the conventional documentary. We really do not learn much about the circumstances of the Sanrizuka Struggle as the airport progresses toward completion. These scenes are, rather, about what the combatants are thinking at a given moment. They are what allow us to come into that "sympathetic" or "symbiotic" relation with the films' *taisho*. They also locate the concerns of the filmmakers on larger issues such as the ethics of using violence, rather than on the morass of specifics of the Struggle's history and its mind-boggling complexity. They are also an important reason the films rise above their historical context and are as powerful today as they were when they were made.

As for the scenes featuring clashes between farmers, students, and riot police, they are furious and chaotic. Visually they are exact opposites of the static shots of the discussions and interviews. The editing is largely accomplished in long takes, but the craziness of the fighting, rendered as it is with jerky handheld camerawork, gives it the feel of rapid fire editing. These scenes allow the spectators to experience the assault of the state's proxies directly, if from the safety of the theater. One survey respondent called their approach to these scenes "cinematic *gebara*," using the German loan word for violence that had come to signify the positive use of violence by the student movement.[8] Ogawa Pro's goal, stated over and over again, was two-fold. First, they intended to

7 GAINES, 92.

8 TOBIAS, James, *The Feeling of Action: Music and Gesture from Apparatus to Instrument* (Los Angeles: dissertation from the University of Southern California, 2002?).

stand firmly and unapologetically on the side of the oppressed and, second, they would use no hidden cameras and take whatever the riot police directed at them.

These latter scenes are the basis for political mimesis. Gaines writes, "This idea of documentary as having the capacity to produce political mimesis assumes a faculty on the part of its audience that is only narrowly analytic. It assumes a capacity to respond to and to engage in sensuous struggle, in the visceral pleasure of political mimesis."[9] Gaines is unclear how this works exactly, but she suggests it has to do with the way documentary realism takes an event in history and aesthetically heightens it to create impact. However, the techniques she points to are only music and editing, which are indeed the likely starting points. What is interesting about Ogawa's films in this regard is that generally deploys a long take aesthetic and uses music only sparingly, so Gaines' examples are less than useful for understanding the mechanisms of political mimesis in the Sanrizuka Series.

Taking a cue from James Tobias, I would like to suggest that Ogawa's Sanrizuka Series are musical—the visual movement in these films have musical qualities. Tobias' work stakes out new terrain for thinking about film and musicality (and not simply film music). He rejects the binary construction "music is affect/image is meaning," a structure that Gaines begins to overcome by combining editing with music in the affect column. Tobias asserts that musicality is the "performative discourse binding subjects and objects as collectivities."[10] He writes,

> Musicality comprises those effects of music as they may be performed or represented in other media: performances which only mime or otherwise do not produce music; qualities specific to music presented in visual terms. Musicality includes visual lyricism, and performative rhythms like foot tapping, head nodding, hand clapping. Musicality is what Eisenstein attempts to exploit in his plans for isomorphic movements between visual and sonic domains; what Eisler aims to enrich with film music that counterpoints the film image; what Berkeley immerses the audience in with his kaleidoscopic visual patterns set to music; what music video uses to advertise pop music; how television's jingles enhances the appeal of cigarettes and hygiene products; how film and television narrative appeal to viewers in face of ambiguous visual images.[11]

And I would add what Ogawa does in Sanrizuka Series to make activists act. The films have a kinesthetic quality built out of a gestural "language" that is aesthetic and participatory. Through their own brand of sensuous lyricism the films constituted their audiences through a complex of interaction: cat calls, booing, clapping, flinching, crying (even today spectators will produce the last two). Tobias is interested in musicality for the way it can account for interactivity of various sorts, from toe tapping to graphical user interfaces, and move from individual oriented modes of being such as agency, intentionality and

9 Ibid., 100.

10 Ibid., 33.

11 Ibid., 26f.

identification to think about creative audiences whose participation in making meaning reproduces gestures in the film. In the Sanrizuka Series, this means moving audiences far beyond a personalized sympathetic identification with the *taisho* to constitute collectives ready to act once brought into relation with raw state power.

The musicality of the film is not restricted to the action scenes. The interview and discussion scenes have their own kind of lyricism, and at a macro level the constant alternation between these static scenes and the dynamic protest sequences are like the movements of a musical score. There is a rhythmic shifting back and forth that evokes Eisenstein's vertical montage, a "seismographic curve of anxious expectation giving way to the release of a pent-up sigh." It is as natural as breathing.

To suggest that it is "natural" is not to say that political mimesis is essential to the human animal. This peculiar production of meaning by an audience is historically situated, which is to say collectivities of viewers are not naturally equipped with faculties for political mimesis. An audience today, for example, will not show up wearing helmets, waving banners, and shouting "Nonsense!" They will, however, squirm and flinch and some will cry; they will probably tap their toes at the drum beating and chanting on the soundtrack. I am not talking about some kind of universal language of political mimesis, but of specific experiences informed by human beings' relationship to their environment. As their socio-political environment changes, so does their relationship to the documentary.

Although Ogawa's films were at their most effective (or perhaps I should say affective) around the time of the production of *Sanrizuka: Peasants of the Second Fortress*, the political landscape was quickly transforming beneath their feet. The government had successfully driven the AMPO Security Treaty through passage, and the country was reeling from a series of crises relating to currency and oil. In August 1971, Nixon opened up relations between the United States and China, throwing Japan's international standing as the primary Asian nation into doubt. When Japan followed suit shortly thereafter, it confused the ideological allegiances of the communist left. There were also new plans to protect the dollar and let the yen float.

After the failure of stop the Security Treaty, the student movement started losing steam. It was in a weak position to deal with a simultaneous escalation in violence, particularly that of the Red Army. Starting on 29 February 1972, a handful of members of the United Red Army (Rengô sekigun) stood off police in the mountain cottage they had been hiding in deep in the mountains of Nagano. The siege lasted 10 days, until the police stormed the building, resulting in the deaths of two policemen and the arrest of the fugitives. Now prisoners, they made a shocking revelation. Over the past winter, while hiding from police, the group had tortured and murdered 14 of their own for "ideological deviation." A few months later, the Red Army claimed responsibility for a bloody attack at Tel Aviv airport. At virtually the same time, the struggle at Sanrizuka

reached its violent climax at Toho crossroads, The crossroads are just up the hill from Heta Village where Ogawa Pro lived—a stone's throw away from the present-day Terminal 2. On the morning of 16 September 1971, a group of 260 riot police from Kanagawa Prefecture found themselves under attack at the crossroads. The clash was particularly fierce, leaving over 100 of the police with serious injuries; seven of their cars were reduced to smoking frames of iron, and when it was finally over three policemen lay dead. Shortly thereafter, one of Ogawa Pro's neighbors, the young Sannomiya Fumio, committed suicide.

This escalation in violence forced many supporters of the struggle to disillusionment with the movement just as construction of the airport rapidly approached completion. Thus, a vast number of contradictions emerge in the left precisely when the high-growth economy grinds to a halt and the power of Japan's geopolitical position is thrown into doubt. Thanks to this knot of overdeterminations, the social movements of all kinds quickly lost steam and Ogawa lost his audience. The collective could tell their audience was transforming. We could say they seemed to be losing their faculty for political mimesis. Ogawa Pro responded first by zeroing in on the world of the farmers, plumbing the depths of their consciousness. By 1973's *Heta Village* the action scenes out at the protests had receded to the deep background; this film gestures to them, but only shows interviews and discussions. After this film, the collective left Sanrizuka for a quiet village in Yamagata. Tsuchimoto made his last large scale effort at documenting the situation at Minamata with *Shiranui Sea* (*Shiranuikai*, 1975), and a new breed of filmmakers like Hara Kazuo and Suzuki Shiroyasu—filmmakers that concentrated on their own subjective worlds rather than on social movements—forged a prestigious form of "private film" that has constituted the mainstream of independent documentary up to the present day. Today, political documentarists inevitably look to the example of Ogawa Shinsuke to think through their most pressing issues; however, to really understand the lessons of the Sanrizuka Series, they must be attentive to Ogawa's audience and their faculty for political mimesis. How to nurture this capacity in present day Japan may be their most urgent challenge.

Survey for *Summer in Sanrizuka*

We are working to create an independent screening organization in every ward and city to support the "guerrillas" of this self-styled film world from below. Thank you for cooperating in participating in this survey. And please join our organizing committee.

1) How did you hear about this film?
Newspaper: 27 Magazine: 32 Poster: 89
Other: Misc.: 16 Friend: 39 Pamphlet: 5 Sanrizuka: 1 Union: 10

2) Have you participated in the struggle to stop the Sanrizuka airport?
No: 171 Yes: 1x: 14 2x: 6 3x: 6 Total = 27
One answer was "1 1/2 Years"

3) **From now on do you want to participate in the obstruction struggle and farming support activities?**
I will participate: 98 I cannot participate: 27 I cannot judge: 60

4) **Can you sympathize with the philosophy of the Sanrizuka Shibayama farmer's struggle?**
I sympathize: 166 I don't sympathize: 6 I cannot judge: 18

5) **Do you support the idea of our independent screenings?**
I support: 189 I can't support: 1

6) **Do you feel like joining the organizing committee?**
I'll join: 29 I won't join: 61 I cannot judge: 82

[culled from 200 out of 400 surveys; Tôkyô screenings in 1968]

Table 1: Survey from Summer in Sanrizuka

i Ôshima Nagisa, "Ogawa Shinsuke: tôsô to datsuraku," (Ogawa Shinsuke: struggle and loss), *Eiga hihyô* (December 1970): 17.

ii Abé Mark Nornes, "Documentarists of Japan: An Interview with Suzuki Shiroyasu," *Documentary Box II* (April 1993): 14-15.