

I Hope to Encounter the Powerful Energy of New Approaches and Themes

An Interview with Adachi Masao

(Filmmaker / Juror of International Competition)

To me it doesn't really make sense to even ask what documentary film is. When you make a film, there is no drama and there is no documentary. For example, I was filming in Palestine once, and the soldiers at the liberation front began to act "the way soldiers ought to be" in front of the camera. I was disheartened, so I didn't bother shooting there; but that night, their commanding officer started lecturing the soldiers about how "this is propaganda, so if we can't be both actors as well as guerilla fighters, then we're not really guerillas." While that depressed me, I came to believe it was fine if that's what they say. And if these individuals turned into actors in front of the camera, I figured I too had to play the part of documentary cameraman.

There's the high-minded approach of making a record by sitting down in a certain spot, the way Sato Makoto and Ogawa Shinsuke do, and looking long and hard at what needs to be recorded, including the parts where those things themselves change, and coming to question yourself in that context. But when you take that and edit it all together, how is that different from manufacturing drama? I think documentary film and dramatic film become the same in the editing process. Newsreels and TV news are that way. After all, editing is done through the subjective viewpoint and opinions of the filmmaker.

With the things I want to film, I interrogate not just what's being shot but myself as well, and I come to see the relationship between the filmmaker and the filmed, in other words, how the author's subjectivity is reflected in the subjectivity of those being filmed. Moreover, the author's subjectivity is being interrogated the same time as the audience's. That's what's interesting about documentary films. And I'd like to think about documentaries from that perspective. For example, I'd thought of *The Red Army/ PFLP: Declaration of World War* (1971) as a newsreel-style film, but I'd heard that it was re-edited for a screening at a free jazz concert this year. I went to go see it, and it was good to make it about the present instead of replaying it the way it once was since

it was a newsreel-style film. You could even bring new images in. I praised it as wonderfully well done. That kind of thing is the virtue screening a film. While watching an older film is one way to shed light on the present, at the same time, it's terrific when the people screening the film can show us how we look at that work. That's where I want to go.

At the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, in the competition section and in the New Asian Currents section, we've gathered a lot of films in which young people confront the realities of today. I look forward to coming face to face with the work being amassed here and getting to know the differences between my conceptions of the world and reality and the reality these youth face. And I'm eager to discover the new approaches and new opinions on how they can try to express their own realities. Serving as a jury member is not about looking down from on high and judging these films, rather it's about maintaining the right to talk about how wonderful it is to encounter such originality. That's my role as a juror. I suppose there is a historical attachment to the people who have made this film festival possible, like Ogawa Shinsuke, but I hope to encounter the powerful energy of new approaches and themes gathering at an international site like Yamagata.

The filmmakers and their works we will encounter this year in Yamagata will surely be crusading for a way to confront the realities of the countries they come from. In a way, the act of filming a movie is itself a crusade. I hope to get a look at these crusades. While I'm sure there will be films that are completed artistic works, I suppose most are not. But rather than seeing them finish their work, I'd like them to bring us news about their crusades at the next film festival or the next one after that. That's what I look forward to.

Interview conducted by Iwatsuki Ayumi
(Curator, Kawasaki City Museum) in Tokyo on September 19, 2013

(Translated by Thomas Kabara)

■ Screening

AKA *Serial Killer* [JF] 10/15 10:00- [A6]