



INTERNATIONAL MOTION PICTURE CO., INC.

Hattori Bldg., Takara-cho, Tokyo, Japan.

Cable: IANMUTSU Tokyo

TEL: 563-1341~4

Japan Screen Topics

ISSUE No. 80-10

NEW TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN OSAKA

63 feet 1 min. 45 sec.

1. (TRAM RUNNING) A revolutionary new transport system is currently undergoing operational tests in Osaka and is expected to begin serving the public in the spring of 1981.

Called the Osaka South Port New Tram, this line will connect a residential district built on reclaimed land in Osaka Bay to a terminal station of the metropolitan subway system.

2. (PLATFORM: DOORS) New Tram station platforms are enclosed for safety, with the platform doors opening automatically with the coach doors to allow passengers to board and exit. The New Tram is completely automated and will operate unmanned when it goes into service. No motormen or conductors will be required at any stage.

All operations of the New Tram line are controlled from a single computer center. Advanced monitoring equipment keeps track of operating factors, as the cars run between stations at speeds of 40 to 60 kilometers per hour.

3. (TEST OPERATION) Rather than using the standard steel wheel steel rail system, New Tram coaches run on large rubber tires, with electrical pickups and guidance instructions from strips along the guardrails. Quiet and non-polluting, New Tram also saves considerable space and allows sharper, smoother curves thanks to its use of tires.

"TALKATIVE" MONKEY

63 feet 1 min. 45 sec.

1. (BUILDING: SIGN) A fascinating experiment is being carried out at the Primate Research Institute of Kyoto University, although it is difficult to say whether the work should be termed 'experimental' or 'educational' --- researchers here are learning to communicate with a four-year-old chimpanzee named "Ai" which means "love".

2. (COMPUTER) Experiments in communicating with the lower primates have been underway at the Institute for several years. A number of primates are involved in the work, and Ai has so far proven to be the most 'talkative' of them. In fact, she has learned to operate her computer keyboard to communicate with and respond to researchers with better than 90 percent accuracy.

Ai's vocabulary currently includes several dozen design elements, lexigrams, objects, colors, etc. And the research staff hopes to eventually expand her communicative abilities even further.

3. (CHIMPANZEE) This research aims not only at developing rudimentary means of genuine communication with other primates, but more importantly at contributing to our better understanding of human intelligence itself --- how our reasoning abilities evolved and how they operate. Such knowledge could prove invaluable in attaining a truer understanding of our own thought processes, capabilities and potentials.

MASTER SEAL-MAKER

150 feet 4 min. 10 sec.

1. (SEALS BEING USED) Personal seals have been in use for thousands of years as a means of official recognition, approval or commitment. Although the Western world has turned mainly to the signature for such purposes, personal seals remain today the primary means of official identification throughout the Far East.

Every Japanese has an official personal seal, registered with municipal authorities, which cannot legally be copied or duplicated. Seals are also registered for official use by companies and public offices and for other purposes.

Standardized name seals are available for all common names in Japan, and are used widely in everyday life. But when an important document must be 'signed', it is the official seal that is used --- always in red ink.

2. Mr. Hidesaburo Mita, Master Craftman, is currently training two apprentices in the art of seal-making, teaching them the minute techniques which give mastery to each seal. Under his keen eye they are slowly learning to produce finished works.

3. (VARIOUS SEALS, MAKER AT WORK) Mita, 72, has been making personal seals for more than five decades. Known today as one of the finest craftsmen in this field, he receives orders from clients all over Japan. Mita makes seals in all sizes and shapes, and from all sorts of materials. His finest work, however, is done in certain types of ivory and soft stone.

4. (DRAWING DESIGN) As the first step in making an original seal, Mita draws the design on paper, using his expert calligraphic skills to create a truly original design --- even for such a common Japanese name as "Suzuki", shown here.

Next step in the process is the careful tracing of the design onto the seal block itself. This step is quite tricky, since naturally the design must be drawn backward.

5. (CARVING THE SEAL) Now Mita begins the painstaking task of carving out the block, so that only the design itself will remain raised. Using various knives and chisels he works slowly, gouging out the unwanted background and leaving only the precise design elements he has created intact.

The slightest slip of a knife could completely ruin weeks of work, so Mita concentrates intently on following precisely the pattern he inscribed.

After more than 50 years, this master knows his work so well that he can immediately recognize it, even a seal made dozens of years ago. And he can tell at a glance just how much wear and tear the seal has undergone, and if any imperfections have developed after countless thousands of stampings. He can also recognize the work of other well-known seal-makers by the designs and cutting techniques employed.

6. (POLISHING SEAL) After a final polishing and cleaning, Mita tests the seal before delivering it to the client. And with each piece of his work, Mita provides a 'pedigree', noting the client's name, the date of completion, and the fact that this seal is Mita's own work.

And naturally he gives official recognition to this pedigree by stamping it with his very own personal seal.

OUTDOOR NOH THEATER

72 feet 2 min. 00 sec.

1. (TEMPLE SCENES) Almost a thousand years ago, the city of Kamakura was Japan's capital. Dozens of shrines and temples were constructed, which still today attract thousands of visitors who come to view the Great Buddha and other sights from the historic past.

Twice each year, those lucky enough to have received tickets gather at the Kamakura Shrine for an evening of outdoor Noh drama. Tickets are especially prized, since they are distributed by lot among the hundreds of applicants applying for each seat.

2. (FULL MOON: BONFIRE) Under the autumn and spring full moons, these semi-annual Noh performances are held on an open-air, roofed stage in the precincts of the shrine. Bonfires light up the evening and the dramatics begin shortly after sundown.

Noh is one of the world's oldest dramatic arts, and is a highly stylized, formalistic theatrical form. Each player wears a mask depicting the fundamental emotional state of the character being performed. The dramatics are accompanied by equally ritualistic music performed on flute and drum.

Each gesture and movement in Noh is enormously symbolic and charged with meaning; players must study for years before appearing publicly in even the most minor roles.

Although Noh does not have the popularity of the more famed Kabuki drama, Noh fans are enthusiastically dedicated to the art, and these outdoor performances in Kamakura attract audiences of 1,500 -- absolute capacity -- on every occasion.