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The Kuomiko mystery (Le mystere Kuomiko). A film by Chris Marker. New Yorker Films, 43 W. 61st St., N.Y. 10023. 1965; educational release 1975. 47min., \$60. Rental \$6.95.

When in 1958 Francois Truffaut made his first feature film, *The 400 Blows*, he used a question-and-answer structure in a sequence containing an interview between a psychiatrist and the movie's young hero,

Antoine. The structure not only formed the dramatic substance of the sequence but enlisted a new cinéma-vérité technique of character portrayal that was later used by such other French filmmakers as Jean Rouch, Jean-Luc Godard, and Chris Marker. In *The Kuomiko Mystery* Marker uses the technique to full advantage in his rapturous voice-over inquiry of Kuomiko, a young Japanese girl who in her archaic Oriental beauty wanders around Tokyo during the 1964 Olympic games, answering Marker's questions (in French with English subtitles) about what she likes and dislikes and about how she feels toward herself and the world. In his earlier science-fiction film *Le Jetée* (BOOKLIST 67:646 Ap 1 71), Marker dealt with the collapse of a futuristic world after World War III. Some of the same qualities appear in this film, in the transient nature of the World's Fair kind of atmosphere, infused with the impermanence of jerry-built structures designed to house and entertain visiting foreigners. As Kuomiko ambles along the streets, vaguely commenting on her feelings of separation from people and animals, drifting with the tide of an anxious, hurried world, the "mystery" of the title becomes apparent. It is, quite simply, the mystery of individuality. Slowly, as the film alternates television and radio news reports familiar in their sterile objectivity with shots of Kuomiko posing like a fashion model, smiling into the camera, or distractedly viewing an industrial landscape covered with steel and iron, one begins to perceive a social mood that must have been new for the children of *The Bomb*: the acceptance of estrangement. Captivating for public library film programs and loan to film societies, and for use in senior high school and college language arts, social studies, and film classes. Ages 16-adult. MZ. 75-704370