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"Camcorder with Auto Image Stabilizer (AIS)"

Becomes a Big Hit in the U.S.

Matsushita (now Panasonic) Ships 17,000 Units in Just Six Months

The camcorder with AIS, developed by Matsushita Electric Industrial (President Akio Tanii), features an Auto Image Stabilizer (AIS) mechanism and has received significant attention in the United States.

This world-first consumer technology has been highly praised for its ability to capture stable images even while walking or filming from a moving vehicle, producing footage that is nearly indistinguishable from that taken while stationary.

Since its release in May, total shipments have reached 17,000 units in just six months, including OEM (original equipment manufacturer) supply to two other companies.

The company plans to further miniaturize the AIS mechanism and expand its application beyond the current full-cassette type to a broader range of camcorders. Among industry experts, there is growing consensus that AIS technology will become a standard feature in camcorders within the next five years.

[Expected to Become Standard in Five Years]

With the miniaturization of video camcorders (weighing under 1 kg), the expansion of the user base, and the increasing use of zoom shooting, there is a growing demand to prevent image blurring caused by camera shake.

While professional-use cameras, such as those for broadcasting, already feature Auto Image Stabilizer (AIS) technology, they are large in size and, more importantly, extremely expensive-costing around 10 million yen.

Matsushita has successfully commercialized a compact, high-performance, and

low-cost camcorder equipped with Auto Image Stabilizer (AIS) technology through a joint project involving three entities: the Development Laboratory (Director: Masahiro Nagasawa), Matsushita Electronic Components Co., Ltd. (President: Yoshio Yamamoto), and Matsushita Kotobuki Electronics Industries, Ltd. (President: Takayoshi Inai).

The system is based on a newly developed tuning fork-type angular velocity sensor introduced in October last year. Unlike conventional camcorders, the lens unit in this model can move up, down, left, and right–like a bobblehead–allowing it to actively compensate for camera shake.

Featuring a highly sensitive and high-performance angular rate sensor with a sensitivity of 15 mV and a resolution of 0.02°/sec, the system can detect even the slightest lens movement quickly and accurately. The microcomputer and servo motor then work together to correct the shake, enabling video recording as stable as if the camera were stationary.

To accommodate the AIS system, Matsushita has introduced a new design innovation by relocating the autofocus function to the master lens at the rear of the lens unit–an approach that differs from previous models.

Despite the technological advancements, the company has successfully kept the price under \$2,000, with the AIS-equipped model priced at \$1,900-just

\$ 400 more than conventional models.

At present, Matsushita offers only one AIS-equipped model, the "PV-460."

However, the company plans to expand the technology to other models, including S-VHS camcorders, with the long-term goal of making AIS a standard feature across its entire camcorder lineup.