



Acclaimed Directors Isao Yukisada and Daishi Matsunaga Discuss Experiences Working on the Asian Three-Fold Mirror Project

A press conference highlighting the *Asian Three-Fold Mirror*, a collaborative project jointly organized by the Japan Foundation Asia Center and the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), featured acclaimed filmmakers **Isao Yukisada** and **Daishi Matsunaga** at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ) on October 3.

Takeo Hisamatsu, Festival Director of the 31st TIFF, discussed this year's TIFF highlights and the significance of the Asian Three-Fold Mirror, while Japan Now Programming Advisor **Kohei Ando** discussed the **Japan Now Section**. **Hiroyasu Ando**, President of the Japan Foundation, then gave a short speech about the goals of the *Asian Three-Fold Mirror* project.



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Following the press conference, a special English-subtitled screening of *Pigeon* (from *Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2016: Reflections*) and a sneak preview of *Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2018: Journey* were held, and the two directors returned for a Q&A session.

The 31st TIFF will run from October 25 – November 3 in Roppongi and several other locations.

Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2018: Journey will world premiere at TIFF before being theatrically released from November 9 to 15 at three theaters in Japan, immediately following the theatrical release of the first Asian Mirror omnibus from October 12 to 18.

Quotes from Press Conference

-Takeo Hisamatsu, Festival Director, 31st TIFF

TIFF has been focusing on Asia and other themes, like animation, since my predecessor's time. Of course we're an international film festival, so we think it's important for a number of reasons, including distance, to have a strong relationship and interactions with other countries in Asia. In collaboration with other festivals in the region, we would like to continue positioning ourselves as a leading Asian festival. We would also like to continue working with the Japan Foundation Asia Center to focus more attention on the region, and we believe that Asian Three-Fold Mirror is a wonderful project, and we hope it will continue.

-Kohei Ando, Japan Now Programming Advisor

There's a global trend right now to reduce everything to a slogan, like "America First." With this year's Japan Now, we want to do the opposite, and focus on films that highlight Japanese ambiguity. We are highlighting the work of internationally renowned actor Koji Yakusho, who's famous for revealing the ambiguous natures of the diverse characters that he's played. We're starting with his starring in the film *The Eel*, which won the Palm d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival 20 years ago, and showing a total of five films, including his latest, *Blood of Wolves*, in which he portrays a very ambiguous detective. Mr. Yakusho will be attending every screening for a Q&A session, along with the film's directors. We are also showing nine other films that are among the best works of this past year.

-Hiroyasu Ando, President, The Japan Foundation

Since 2014, the Japan Foundation Asia Center and TIFF have been carrying out exchange programs and cooperative projects with partners in Asian countries and regions, including Japan. As part of the effort, the Asian Three-Fold Mirror project brings together three young directors from Japan and other Asian countries to co-create a series of omnibus films with a common theme. *Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2016: Reflections* was our first collaborative project. This year we have *Asian Three-Fold Mirror 2018: Journey*, which will be screened at TIFF for the first time. The Japan Foundation would like to continue working with TIFF on the cultural exchange between Japan and Asian countries. Asia is a vast region, and we're looking forward to hearing feedback from audiences at TIFF as well as around Asia, in regards to the direction of next Asian Three-Fold Mirror project.



-Isao Yukisada, Director

I realize that I've been really influenced by Asian films. In Malaysia, where I shot *Pigeon*, there's a very famous director called Yasmin Ahmad, whose work really influenced me. I really wondered how my own filmmaking would change by combining it with the atmosphere of Malaysian film. The tradition of filmmaking in each country should be enjoyed and appreciated, and it's a very fond memory, my experience working with the international cast and crew in Malaysia. When I heard about Masahiko Tsugawa's death, it was really a shock for me, as well as for the people we worked with on the film. He was famous for hating to work overseas, and therefore, it was an incredible honor that he agreed to accept the role and come to Malaysia. It was the only chance to work with him, and he was playing a role that was based on my grandfather. His intensity intimidated the cast and crew at first, but he became so loved by them. None of us will ever forget the experience of working with him.

-Daishi Matsunaga, Director

I worked with a crew from China, Indonesia, Myanmar and the UK on *Hekishu*, and it was really a great experience, allowing me to learn a lot and grow as a director. I had Skype meetings, as well as meeting in person, with my fellow omnibus directors, Degen Yun and Edwin, and we decided that we should have a common theme that would unite our three films. We also decided, since the Indonesian actor Nicholas Saputra had been cast to start in Edwin's film, that we could give him small cameos in each of our films, as a way to further unite the films. Nicholas' role in Edwin's film is a rather mysterious Japanese-like man, and that inspired both me and Degen in our scripts.

Guests' profile

Isao Yukisada

Director **ISAO YUKISADA** made his feature film debut with *Sunflower* (2000), which won the FIPRESCI Award at the Busan International Film Festival. His 2001 follow-up *Go* won numerous awards, including the Japan Academy Prize. He has cemented his status as a hitmaker with the box-office hits *Crying Out Love in the Center of the World* (2004), *Year One in the North* (2005), *Closed Note* (2007), *Parade* (2010), *Pink and Gray* (2016) and other films. He released *River's Edge* earlier this year.

Daishi Matsunaga

Writer-director **DAISHI MATSUNAGA** started his career as an actor and then moved into directing in a variety of media. His widely acclaimed documentary, *Pyuupiru* (2011), was featured in numerous international film festivals and his first narrative film, *Pieta in the Toilet* (2015), was a smash hit. *Ototoki*, a documentary about legendary Japanese rock band The Yellow Monkey, was released in November 2017 and screened at the 22nd Busan International Film Festival and the 30th TIFF. His latest film, *Hanalei Bay*, is based on a Haruki Murakami short story, and will be released in Japan in October 2018

Asian Three-Fold Mirror

The **ASIAN THREE-FOLD MIRROR** project brings together three talented directors from Japan and other Asian countries to co-create a series of omnibus films with a common theme. The three directors bring their own perspectives in depicting various characters and their lives in Asia to create a "three-fold mirror" that reflects each country, society and culture. The aim of this project is to generate discovery, understanding, and empathy among all Asian neighbors, and to explore the many Asian identities and ways of life.

Official Website: <https://asian3mirror.jfac.jp/ja/#project>

Please refer to the website for details on each film.



Speakers' profile

Takeo Hisamatsu - Festival Director, Tokyo International Film Festival

Takeo Hisamatsu joined Shochiku Co., Ltd in 1978, and in 1986 became manager of Shochiku USA's Little Tokyo Cinema, Los Angeles. He returned to Tokyo in 1989 and was appointed senior manager of the Exhibition Department. In 1994, he joined Time Warner Entertainment Japan as General Director of the Theatrical Distribution Department, Warner Bros. Pictures Japan. In 2001, he rejoined Shochiku as Director of the Theatrical Distribution Department, Production and Acquisition, and became an Executive Managing Director in 2003. He was named president of what is now Shochiku Broadcasting Co., Ltd. in 2006, and in 2010 rejoined Warner Entertainment Japan Inc. as Deputy General Manager of Warner Bros. Pictures Japan. In 2015, he established his own company, My Way Movies, where he serves as president. Over the past several years, Hisamatsu has participated in the production of such renowned films as Unforgiven (2013, directed by Lee Sang-il), Rurouni Kenshin (2012, Keishi Ohtomo), Air Doll (2009, Hirokazu Kore-eda), Dear Doctor (2009, Miwa Nishikawa), Still Walking (2008, Hirokazu Kore-eda), All Around Us (2008, Ryosuke Hashiguchi) and Love and Honor | Bushi no ichibun (2006, Yoji Yamada).

Hiroyasu Ando - President, The Japan Foundation

Hiroyasu Ando was born in 1944. After graduating from the Tokyo University in 1970, he entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. His oversea posting includes Washington D.C., Manila, London, and New York. He was Director-General in charge of Middle East and African Affairs between 2002 and 2003. He served Prime Minister Hashimoto as the Private Secretary. He also served three Prime Ministers as the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary. He was appointed as the Ambassador to Italy in 2008. Since October 2011, he has been the President of the Japan Foundation.

Kohei Ando - Japan Now Programming Advisor

Ando, who in his youth worked with Shuji Terayama, is known for his refined and creative expressivity as a filmmaker. He is a global pioneer in incorporating Hi-vision techniques into filmmaking. His films have received numerous awards, including the Silver Maile Award at the Hawaii International Film Festival and the Grand Prize at the International Electronic Cinema Festival in Montreux. His works are included in the collections of major art museums and film libraries in Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo and elsewhere. In both 2001 and 2005, Ando retrospectives were held in Paris. He is also a professor emeritus at Waseda University.