



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
la Biennale di Venezia 2016

Orizzonti
Competition

愚行録

GU KOROKU - TRACES OF SIN

A FILM BY KEI ISHIKAWA



SYNOPSIS

Tanaka is going through a tough time trying to support his younger sister Mitsuko, recently arrested and on hold in jail. An investigative reporter, he immerses himself into a story about a shocking murder case gone cold. The "perfect" family—successful businessman, beautiful wife and adorable child - were brutally murdered a year ago and the case remains unsolved. Tanaka interviews their friends and acquaintances, and as stories of their true nature unfold, he begins to discover that the family was not as ideal as believed. The interviewees themselves unveil their own hidden natures, revealing a disturbing portrait of social elitism.



GU KOROKU - TRACES OF SIN is a haunting and intense tale of the demons we face every day – inside and out. Satoshi Tsumabuki (*THE ASSASSINS* by Hou Hsiao-Hsien, *THE LITTLE HOUSE* by Yohji Yamada, *VILLIAN* by Lee Sang-il) and Hikari Mitsushima (*HARA-KIRI: DEATH OF A SAMURAI* by Takashi Miike, *LOVE EXPOSURE* by Sion Sono) star as the reporter Tanaka and his troubled sister Mitsuko.

A graduate of Łódź Film School and director of short films selected at New Directors, New Films and Sitges, Kei Ishikawa makes his feature directorial debut, from a screenplay by Kosuke Mukai (*LINDA LINDA LINDA*, *MATSUGANE POTSHOT AFFAIR* by Nobuhiro Yamashita), based on the Naoki Prize nominee novel *GU KOROKU* by Tokuro Nukui. Office Kitano's Makoto Kakurai produces with executive producers Masayuki Mori & Takio Yoshida (*OUTRAGE BEYOND*, *HANA-BI* by Takeshi Kitano). The crew includes director of photography Piotr Niemyjski (*FOREIGN BODY* by Krzysztof Zanussi) and casting director Takefumi Yoshikawa (Academy Award for Best Foreign Film *DEPARTURES* by Yojiro Takita). *GU KOROKU - TRACES OF SIN* was shot in selected locations around Tokyo in Spring 2016.



COMMENTS FROM DIRECTOR KEI ISHIKAWA

REACHING FOR THE TOP

I remember when I started living in Tokyo about 7 years ago, I was really struck by the Shibuya crossing. It seemed like people were all rushing about to reach the center of the world without really knowing what or where that actually is. There isn't really a center point in Tokyo, so people just circle around. Everyone keeps walking as part of a massive crowd. This is how I interpret the dynamic of Japanese social cliques. The characters in GUKOROKU, while each admiring, dreaming and striving for that center point, reaching for the top, but they end up finding themselves in a downward spiral of nothing. These characters represent a microcosm of Japan today. To me, GUKOROKU is THE GREAT GATSBY of present day Japan, wrapped up in a mystery.

THE INSIDERS

I'm from the countryside and I studied up north in university, so I didn't have any experiences with social cliques. I discovered this more urban phenomenon when I came to Tokyo. Japanese social cliques are somewhat different. In Europe, those social cliques are visible somehow and you would be pushed out. But here in Japan, they are invisible. Most of the time, such attitudes arise from an inferiority complex.

CHAPTERS

What attracted me the most about this novel was that it wasn't written with the intention of becoming a film. It's a confession style novel with some chapters of interviews and I knew it would be challenging to adapt it. In other words, we had to invent our own way but because of this we could put our own interpretation in the script. I also liked that it's not a pure crime mystery novel. Who killed the family is a big twist in the story, but that's not the point of the story. And my true interest wasn't there either.

ABSURDITY

I didn't imagine a mystery film would be my first feature. My original ideas for a film were mostly dramas and absurd comedies. One of the biggest challenges for me in working with this material was probably when I explained the complex story to my grandmothers... I'm not very picky when it comes to genre. I look for themes and characters. Comedy, sci-fi, it doesn't matter. My interest is always about how absurd this world can be and how absurdly we live in it.

POLISH EYE

We didn't intend to achieve anything special for the film to look different from other Japanese films. GUKOROKU is an example of how I like to film and how I work with a cinematographer. Of course, my Polish cinematographer's eye affects the frame a lot. Probably where he places the camera is slightly different from Japanese cinematographers.

ŁÓDŹ

My film studies in Łódź, Poland, changed my views a lot. When I was making films in Poland, nothing seemed real to me. It was not my language, not my childhood. When I shot a documentary there, the reality turned out surreal and absurd to me. I started to seek out something universal in the subject and characters. Interestingly I had to do the same here as well, when making a film in Japan about my own culture. I had to look for something universal in this story and characters.

I'm not sure if studying in Lodz has added any European tendencies to my filmmaking. I generally feel that I have been more influenced by Kon Ichikawa's or Shohei Imamura's films. I am interested in exploring different frames and more dynamic camera works. I would also like the chance to make features not only in Japan, but also in Europe and elsewhere.



Satoshi TSUMABUKI (as Tanaka)

is a versatile actor comfortable and successful in both mainstream entertainment and challenging roles. Since his explosive feature film debut in WATERBOYS ('01) directed by Shinobu Yaguchi, he has continued to be one of the most popular and talented actors in Japan today. Major awards include Best Actor - 77th Kinema Junpo Awards for JOSEE, THE TIGER AND THE FISH ('03) directed by Isshin Inudo and Best Actor - 34th Japanese Academy Prize for his outstanding performance in VILLAIN ('10) directed by Lee Sang-il. Other film credits include 2006's THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT, Takashi Miike's FOR LOVE'S SAKE, Yoji Yamada's TOKYO FAMILY ('13) and Hou Hsiao-Hsien's THE ASSASSIN. Born on December 13, 1980, in Fukuoka, Japan, he is also active in TV and theater.



Hikari MITSUSHIMA (as Mitsuko)

was born November 30, 1985, in Okinawa. In 2009, she emerged into the limelight with her outstanding performance in Sion Sono's LOVE EXPOSURE ('09), receiving numerous Best New Talent awards. The following year she was awarded Best Supporting Actress 83rd Kinema Junpo Awards for her performance in PRIDE directed by Shusuke Kaneko and WONDERFUL WORLD OF CAPT. KUHIO directed by Daihachi Yoshida and LOVE EXPOSURE. In 2010, she performed in SAWAKO DECIDES by Yuya Ishii that won her the Best Actress Award from Montreal Fantasia International Film Festival. She also starred in VILLAIN by Lee Sang-il and KAKERA: A PIECE OF OUR LIFE by Momoko Ando that earned her the Supporting Actress Award from the 34th Japanese Academy Prize. She also received the same in 2015 for KAKEKOMI directed by Masato Harada. Her filmography also includes A CHORUS OF ANGELS ('12) by Junji SAKAMOTO and SUMMERS END ('13) by Kazuyoshi Kumakiri.



KEI ISHIKAWA

GUKOROKU - TRACES OF SIN is Kei Ishikawa’s first feature film. Born in Japan in 1977, Kei Ishikawa studied physics at Tohoku University (Japan) and film directing at the Łódź Film School (Poland). He has made several short films that have been screened at film festivals worldwide: 2008’s DEAR WORLD (Sitges, Mar Del Plata) and 2009’s IT’S ALL IN THE FINGER (New Directors, New Films). DEAR WORLD received the Special Prize from the Akira Kurosawa Foundation. In 2013, his Japanese-Polish co-production feature project BABY won the Bucheon Award from the Network of Asian Fantastic Films (NAFF) hosted by the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival .

- 2016
- GUKOROKU - TRACES OF SIN
- 2009
- IT’S ALL IN THE FINGER (short)
- 2008
- DEAR WORLD (short)



a BANDAI VISUAL, TV TOKYO, WARNER BROS. PICTURES JAPAN,
TOHOKUSHINSHA FILM CORPORATION AND OFFICE KITANO production

GUKOROKU - TRACES OF SIN
a film by Kei Ishikawa

2016 – Japan – 120 minutes – sound 5.1 – ratio 1:2.35 - in Japanese

MAIN CAST

Tanaka Mitsuko	Satoshi TSUMABUKI
Takou Junko Miyamura	Hikari MITSUSHIMA
Emi Inamura	Keisuke KOIDE
Ogata Yukie Natsuhara	Asami USUDA
Watanabe Ms. Tachibana (lawyer)	Yui ICHIKAWA
Psychiatrist	Tomoya NAKAMURA
	Wakana MATSUMOTO
	Hidekazu MASHIMA
	Mari HAMADA
	Mitsuru HIRATA

MAIN CREW

Directed and edited by	Kei ISHIKAWA
Based on	Tokuro NUKUI's novel "Gukoroku"
Screenplay	Kosuke MUKAI
Director of Photography	Piotr NIEMYJSKI, P.S.C.
Lighting	Kenjiro SO
Production Designer	Tatsuo OZEKI
Sound Design	Yoshifumi KUREISHI
Editor	Yoshinori OTA
Casting	Takefumi YOSHIKAWA
First Assistant Director	Hirofumi KAWAGUCHI
Production Manager	Masato DATE
Costume Design	Seiji MORIGUCHI
Set Decorator	Koji SHINODA
Make-up Artist	Suguru NASUNO
Sound Effects Editor	Kenji SHIBASAKI
Music	Takashi OHMAMA
Music Producer	Toshihiro SUGITA
Line Producer	Shinji KOMIYA
Executive Producer	Masayuki MORI
Co-Executive Producer	Takio YOSHIDA
Associate Producers	Kazumi KAWASHIRO, Tetsuo OTA, Kiyotaka NINOMIYA
Producer	Makoto KAKURAI

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