



A FILM BY SABU

CHASUKE'S JOURNEY

天の茶助

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

RICHARD LORMAND - FILM | PRESS | PLUS

www.FilmPressPlus.com

phone: +33-9-7044-9865 (*leave messages*)

IntlPress@aol.com

AT THE BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL (Feb 5-15)

phone: +49-152-3801-7733

WORLD SALES

FILMS BOUTIQUE

Köpenicker Strasse 184

10997 Berlin - Germany

phone: +49.30.6953 7850

info@filmsboutique.com

www.filmsboutique.com

SYNOPSIS

In the afterlife, busy playwrights are writing scenarios for mankind. What they write dictates everyone's destiny. Celestial tea server Chasuke constantly pours to keep them going at their endless task. He can't stop himself from eavesdropping on the writing process, and he is especially interested in the story of a young woman, Yuri. A careless remark changes Yuri's destiny to a fatal car accident later today. Only Chasuke can rescue her by returning to the physical world and stopping her fate. Some playwrights have promised him surprise help from their protagonists – antique dealer Taneda and noodle restaurant owner Joe. But in Okinawa's old shopping district, Chasuke soon realizes there are enemies working against him, too. Chasuke will discover his interesting new powers and the yakuza past he was supposed to forget. But he must stay focused: time is running out and Yuri's fate is in his hands...



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Chasuke's Journey is the highly anticipated adaptation of writer-director Sabu's debut novel. *Chasuke's Journey* tells the story of a celestial tea server who returns to the physical world to save the life of a young woman fated to be killed in a car accident. Sabu retained the novel's basic elements in adapting it for film, but instead of the book's fictional town, he relocated the action to Okinawa, where he has been living for the past three years.



Sabu crafted a unique screenplay that incorporated various traditional Okinawan performing arts into the story as well as showing a side of the island rarely seen in films, the dark narrow alleys and run-down shopping arcades of traditional old neighborhoods.



All scenes of *Chasuke's Journey* were shot in Summer 2014 throughout Okinawa's main island. One of the primary sets in the story, the Taneda Antique Shop, was built in Okinawa city's Ichibangai shopping arcade. A key location in Naha City was the well-known tourist attraction Makishi Public Market and its surrounding alleys. In a sequence where Chasuke has to get to Yuri to help her, he tears through the alleys at breakneck speed, showcasing exactly the kind of kinetic action Sabu is known for. In the sequence where Chasuke emerges from the gates of the afterlife, filming took place at the UNESCO World Heritage ruins of Nakagusuku Castle.



Chasuke's Journey features various traditional performing arts from across Okinawa. Chasuke encounters the internationally celebrated Eisa folk dancers. As he wanders through the shopping arcade at night, he catches sight of the singular Kokkei procession. The sequence was realized based on Sabu's burning desire to capture the performance on film. The film's climax mounts an unprecedented collaboration of troupes from throughout the region.

COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR SABU

SIGNS ALONG THE WAY

Several of my films up until now have had themes of fate or predestined encounters, and even looking back at the path that's led to my current life as a film director, it's been shaped by the various people I've met. I felt those encounters were not mere coincidence but controlled by someone, or that there were certain signs along the way. I became who am I today because I noticed those signs. I tried to base the novel around that theme, and began writing without a specific ending in mind.

SURPRISING AUDIENCES

In many respects, my films up until now have been classified as action films or comedies, but I've always tried to surprise audiences and shake up their notions of what those genres are supposed to be. There have been other films with characters coming down to earth from heaven, so I think people will come to see *Chasuke's Journey* with that kind of fantasy in mind, but I want to betray their expectations in a good way, which is reflected in the central character.



A DIFFERENT SIDE OF OKINAWA

I've been living in Okinawa for the past three years. There are still old shopping arcades and alleys of the kind you don't see in Japan anymore. I love places like that, and while the shopping areas are busy in the day, there's almost nobody walking around at night, which is perfect for filming. There have been plenty of films set in Okinawa, but the majority of them are made from a more tourist-friendly perspective, with scenery of the blue ocean and remote islands. There haven't been many films depicting where the people of Okinawa actually live their daily lives, such as those arcades and alleys I mentioned. I wanted to show a different side of Okinawa.

LIFE AND DEATH

Rather than conveying some sort of message, my aim was to create something purely entertaining for audiences. I didn't make a conscious effort for *Chasuke's Journey* to reflect my views on life and death, but they may be reflected on a subconscious level. In the end, I'm a very optimistic person. Although death is a sad event, I've always felt there must be something more. That thinking has had an influence on the

films I've made so far. I suppose if there were a message in *Chasuke's Journey*, it'd be that even if our fates may be predestined, if we live each day with strong, positive intent, things definitely change for the better. I've lived my life that way. If I didn't, I don't think I could go on.



SABU (Writer-Director)

Born in 1964 in Wakayama Prefecture in Japan. As an actor, he received his first lead role in "World Apartment Horror" (1991) by Katsuhiro Ohtomo, for which he won a Best Newcomer Award at the 13th Yokohama Film Festival. Began penning his own screenplays from 1995, and made his directorial debut in the following year with "D.A.N.G.A.N. Runner" (aka "Non-Stop", 1996), which was selected in the Berlin Fest's Panorama. His second film "Postman Blues" (1997) was acclaimed at Sundance, and also received a New Blood Award at the Cognac Police Film Festival. With "Unlucky Monkey" (1997) and "Monday" (1999), he achieved the feat of having both works selected by Berlin's Forum, and also won a FIPRESCI Prize for the latter. Subsequently "Drive" (2001) won the Best Asian Film at Fant-Asia Film Festival in Canada, "The Blessing Bell" (2002), won the NETPAC Award at Berlin's Forum. "Dead Run" (2005) was selected by the Panorama, "Kanikosen" (2009), was selected by the Forum, and "Bunny Drop" (2011), a box-office success in Japan, all expanded his range while also achieving critical recognition. To date, retrospectives of his work have been held in Chicago, as well as in Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro, Hong Kong and others. His previous film, "Miss Zombie" (2013) won the Best Film at Geradmer and Fantasporto Film Festival. "Chasuke's Journey" (2015) makes its world premiere in Competition at the Berlin Film Festival.



CHASUKE'S JOURNEY 天の茶助

a Film by SABU

2015 - Japan - 106 minutes - sound 5.1 - cinemascope - in Japanese



MAIN CAST

Chasuke **Ken'ichi MATSUYAMA**
Yuri **Ito OHNO**
Taneda **Ren OHSUGI**
Joe **Yusuke ISEYA**

Pon **Hiromasa TAGUCHI**
Chako **Tina TAMASHIRO**
Kuroki **Susumu TERAJIMA**

KEN'ICHI MATSUYAMA (as Chasuke)

Born in 1985. After gaining much popularity with his performance in "Death Note" (2006), directed by Shusuke Kaneko, Matsuyama has been active as one of the leading actors in the Japanese film and television industry. His major works include "Kamui" (2009) by Yoichi Sai, "Norwegian Wood" (2010) by Tran Anh Hung, "My Back Page" (2011) by Nobuhiro Yamashita and "Homeland" (2014) by Nao Kubota. "Chasuke's Journey" is his second collaboration with Sabu, following "Bunny Drop" (2011).



ITO OHNO (as Yuri)

Born in 1995. Began her career as a model, Ohno made her first screen appearance in "High School Debut" (2011), directed by Tsutomu Hanabusa. Her recent credits include "The Legend of Love & Sincerity" (2012) by Takashi Miike, "Until the Break of Dawn" (2012) by Yoichiro Hirakawa and "Live" (2014) by Noboru Iguchi.



MAIN CREW

directed by
written by
cinematography
lighting design
editor
production design
music
costumes
hair & make-up

SABU
SABU (based on his original novel)
Daisuke SOMA
Akiyo MIYOSHI
Naoichiro SAGARA
Michitoshi KUROKAWA
Junichi MATSUMOTO
Yukiko NISHIDOME
Shinji HASHIMOTO

sound design
sound effects
VFX supervisors

Michitoshi YOKOZAWA
Keisuke SHIBUTANI, Shoko SATO
Shinji OHAGI, Yoshikazu FUJII

producer
executive producer
co-executive producers

Shozo ICHIYAMA
Masayuki MORI
Kazumi KAWASHIRO
Tadashi OSUMI
David ATLAN-JACKSON