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Yasukuni: The Stage for Memory and Oblivion.

A Dialogue between Li Ying and Sai Yoichi

Translated by John Junkerman

Li Ying's documentary film "Yasukuni" opened in Tokyo on May 3, without incident but under heavy police protection. The original launch of the film, scheduled for April 12, was postponed when four theaters in Tokyo and another in Osaka cancelled their screenings of the film after conservative members of the Japanese Diet raised questions about the film's political stance (See also David McNeill and John Junkerman, Freedom Next Time. Japanese Neonationalists Seek to Silence Yasukuni Film.

Japanese media and civil liberties organizations quickly protested what they considered to be government interference and a threat to freedom of expression. More than 30 declarations were issued (see the texts of these declarations and of statements at an April 10 press conference, in Japanese. An English-subtitled video of director Li Ying's remarks at the press conference can be found here and here.

In the aftermath of the cancellations, more than 20 movie theaters across Japan announced plans to screen the film. Officials from Yasukuni Shrine have asked that a number of scenes be deleted, on the grounds that they were filmed without proper permission, but the production company, Dragon Films, has released the film without making any changes. Discussions between the shrine and lawyers for the production company continue.

The 123-minute documentary, filmed over the course of decade, focuses on the annual events at the Shinto shrine in central Tokyo on August 15th, the date of Japan's surrender at the end of World War II in 1945. Interspersed with this footage are scenes of craftsman Kariya Naoji, the last surviving member of a team of sword smiths who forged 8100 "Yasukuni swords" on the grounds of the shrine during World War II. The film also documents efforts by indigenous Taiwanese, Okinawans, Koreans, and non-Shinto Japanese to have the souls of their relatives removed from the shrine's register. It ends with an extended sequence of archival footage, depicting the history of Yasukuni, visits to the shrine by Emperor Hirohito, and scenes from World War II.

The film premiered at the Pusan International Film Festival in October 2007 and is scheduled for wide release in South Korea this spring. "Yasukuni" won the Humanitarian Award for documentaries at the Hong Kong International Film Festival in March. Theatrical release in China is planned, but the schedule is yet to be determined. The film also screened at the Sundance Film Festival in the US in January and at the Berlin Film Festival in February. North American and European distribution of the film have not yet been announced.

"Yasukuni" was funded in part by the Japan Arts Fund and by two funds administered by the Pusan International Film Festival's Asian Network of Documentary. It was coproduced by the Beijing Film Academy's Youth Studio, Beijing Zhongkun Film, and Dragon Films. (JJ)

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Sai Yoichi: These past few years, with the overall shift to the right in Japan, the taboos surrounding Yasukuni have been amplified, with some loving Yasukuni without understanding it, and others hating Yasukuni. In other words, it's dyed with passion.

When you hear that a director who is Chinese has filmed Yasukuni, anyone would expect that it would be filmed from an extremely severe and critical perspective. Let me start by giving my impression of the film. It is not at all like that. It shows the reality of what is taking place in the country where I myself live, but it felt as if I was observing an entirely different world. In this film "Yasukuni," which you spent 10 years documenting, you've captured the reality that takes place on the stage of Yasukuni Shrine. I'm an ideal member of the audience for this film, because I live an ordinary life (laughs). I encounter scenes of Yasukuni Shrine in passing, but it doesn't really have any particular, special significance for me. The Yasukuni Shrine that is wrapped up in Japan's foreign policy, both external and domestically, is something I encounter as news. Of course, I know this as information, but for me, internally, the place Yasukuni was nearly nonexistent, and I didn't care if it existed or not.

But at the same time, there are people, some of whom appear in the film, who, despite being from the postwar generation, put on military uniforms and parade with the Japanese flag. There was one scene that surprised me somewhat. In front of the shrine, a group of these men, with great spiritual intensity, put their hands together in prayer (gasshô). This is something that takes place in Buddhism, putting your hands together in prayer to the Buddha. It made me wonder when Yasukuni had become a hybrid of Buddhism and Shinto, and I worried, gratuitously, this might make the shrine officials angry (laughs). There was the group of quite chubby young men, decked out in imitation Self-Defense Force uniforms, who far from marching in perfect order as they approached the shrine, were in complete disorder, and others who present an appearance that approaches caricature, completely at odds with their consciousness. There are comical scenes that, if watched by a foreign audience unfamiliar with the Yasukuni problem, would surely make them laugh.

Sai Yoichi

I think people should be free to have whatever perspective, ideas, or historical understanding they choose, but seeing people who

discover their identity and sense of belonging in a certain extremism, I felt sandwiched between amusement and fear. Laughter and fear are two sides of a coin. There are these elements, and at the same time there is an accumulation of emotion. Hysterical speeches and public opinion are linked in some way to fear. There's a strong sense that part of this isn't simply extracted from the ghosts of the past.

While this frenzied situation is unfolding under the eyes of the media, the film intersperses images of the solitary artisan, the sword smith, silently focused on forging a Yasukuni sword. You'd think that having a Chinese film director coming to visit would cause something of a stir, but he sits quietly, face-to-face with you. He doesn't speak much, but his calm expression and demeanor conveys the kind of life he has lived. He certainly has a distinctive status, but I had the feeling that he was also, conceptually, one of the "silent majority" that has sustained Japan as a country and a people, that he symbolized this. Of course, your observational eye, your critical eye comes into play in how he is captured, because we perceive your camera eye directly through the images. In any case, I sensed a very cool perspective at work in presenting the hard-to-digest Yasukuni problem, without reducing it to code.

Film directors somehow find themselves paying intense attention to sets of values that are different from their own. Why did you commit over ten years to documenting Yasukuni and turning it into a film?

Li Ying: I've been living in Japan for 19 years, since I came here in 1989. I started a TV and film production company in 1993. My life as a film director began here in Japan. Residing here, working and living here, I began to notice, from my dealings with a variety of people, that Japanese have a consciousness that "we are different and distinct from other Asians."

It may seem a matter of course to Japanese, but you hear people say, "That smells of Asia," or "That has an Asian feel." In casual phrases like that and in other ways, you catch glimpses of an Orientalism, a sense of superiority that Japan is different from Asia. This is true of Japanese film, too. If there's a special issue of a magazine devoted to Asian film, Japanese films are not included. In film festivals, Japanese films are not placed in the Asian films section. I felt this curious self-consciousness of Japan as a nation firsthand, and I especially sensed the gap when it came to perceptions of history.

Li Ying speaks at a press conference protesting the cancellation of his film

An Orientalist Self-Consciousness

Sai: One of the things you and I have in common is that neither of us has Japanese nationality. I have South Korean nationality, although I was born and raised in Japan. By the way, I'm nearly 60 years old. Japan's traditional culture and native religious values, and the history of how these have been used as a political dynamic, are things I have absorbed through my skin without knowing it, and it's hard to extricate myself. I'm very interested in your perspective on this.

Li: For me, being born and raised in China, I've always perceived Japan as one country within Asia.

There were a number of episodes that presented the impetus to film Yasukuni, although at first it was more of a shock than simply an impetus. To begin with, there was a symposium in Tokyo in 1997, at the time of the 60th anniversary of the Nanking Massacre. They screened "Nanking," a propaganda film made by the Japanese military after the battle. The film showed the formal ceremony marking the fall of Nanking, with the raising of the Japanese flag and the singing of the national anthem. An unbelievable sound began to spread through the auditorium. For a moment, I thought I was hearing machine-gun fire. It was passionate applause. I found myself shaking involuntarily.

There was a woman in the audience, the daughter of an army lieutenant who was convicted of war crimes at the Nanking tribunal, and she made a plea for her father's innocence and the restoration of his honor. I was shocked at how the gap in our perception of history and our perceptions of problems was much larger than I had imagined. What was behind this divergence? Why was it that, 60 years after the end of the war, the problems were still unresolved and the same phenomena were repeating themselves?

This symposium wasn't just for intellectuals and scholars. It was an open, public meeting. In the audience, there were men wearing suits, students, women, the types of people you could see anywhere. It was these people who were applauding and cheering. From that point, I began to think that maybe the problem of Yasukuni wasn't simply a problem of the right wing.

"Off to China, off to Taiwan…"

Li: Another episode happened during cherry blossom season. My parents happened to be visiting Japan, and I took them to Yasukuni Shrine, because the cherry blossoms are gorgeous there. A stage had been erected near the statue of Omura Masujiro, and there were young geisha (maiko) dressed in pretty kimonos, dancing on the stage. The maiko took models of airplanes, and in time to the music—martial music—they tossed them in the air, saying, "Off to Shina (China), off to Taiwan…" My father nearly collapsed when he heard the lyrics to the war song "Joshû" [Xuzhou]. My father was born in Xuzhou, and he remembered that song. He didn't have very good memories of it. Decades and decades have passed, but just as he had during the war, he heard the sound of army songs. Things that elsewhere would be subjected to at least some rebuke are done at Yasukuni Shrine without scruple.

My father suffered a heart attack that day. I had invited him here to show him how wonderful Japan is, but after coming into contact with that part of Japan, it was as if he had no desire to see or know anything else in Japan.

Sai: Yasukuni Shrine was established in 1869 by the Meiji emperor. To think about Yasukuni is to trace what the modern era since Meiji has implanted in the Japanese. What impact has that had on Japan's neighboring countries? It's symbolized by the slogan, "leave Asia, join the West." To leave Asia behind and catch up to the West. It meant explosively putting into practice what was absorbed from the West. And that manifested itself in the invasion of China, and the pursuit of colonies in East Asia, South Asia, even the South Seas. But when you look at what's taking place at Yasukuni, it makes you feel that what was done in the pursuit of modernization still continues unchanged nearly 140 years later. The clothes they wear are the height of fashion, but the content is incongruously the same as it was in the past.

Li: And within the consciousness of it being high fashion, there's that sense of superiority. It seems as if there's no consciousness of defeat, of having lost the war.

Ito Shunya's film, "Pride: The Fateful Moment," was another impetus for making the film. It's the story of Tojo Hideki fighting his last battle in defense of the country on the witness stand at the Tokyo tribunal. I spent three hours once in a dialogue with Ito about this film. What impressed me then was how large the United States loomed for the Japanese after the war. Japan was the victim of the US dropping the atomic bombs. The film expresses, Ito said, how the Japanese who fought to protect their nation maintained their pride in the midst of this humiliation.

But will the history of the war between Japan and Asia be forgotten in the gulf of this victim consciousness? Or be ignored? It's not something people want to look at, to begin with. After this dialogue with Ito, I began to feel that as long as there is this kind of complex perception of history, no amount of talking will ever resolve the problem. If that was the case, the best way to respond was by making a film of my own, and I committed myself to doing so. "Yasukuni" is, in that sense, my answer to "Pride: The Fateful Moment" and to the director Ito Shunya.

The "Yasukuni Sword" as a Key

Li: This complex historical consciousness can also be seen as the pain that Japan carries. I began feeling that I wanted to immerse myself deeper into Japan and to look from the inside at the question of just what exactly Yasukuni Shrine represents.

Every year on August 15th [the anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II], a wide variety of people make their appearance at Yasukuni Shrine. On that day, Yasukuni becomes a special stage, under the glare of media attention, and I wanted to portray that distinctive atmosphere. There is really a wide variety of expressions scattered throughout the shrine. Different perspectives on Asia passing by each other, the scenes you mentioned that are like caricatures… what kind of reality is communicated by the variety of things I witnessed? In a sense, I'm tossing out that question.

While we were filming, I studied a great deal. I looked at every document, I went to all of the symposia, and in the process I discovered the existence of the Yasukuni swords. The object of worship at Yasukuni—in other words, its spirit—is a sword. I realized this was the key that would explain all of the things I had been wondering about. I could use this key to open the doors that had been closed to me. What exactly is the spirit of Yasukuni? I wanted to think about this question, together with those who see the film. I didn't want to confine the film to the standard Chinese perspective. For me, in filmmaking, this has always been paramount.

Sai: I think your approach is absolutely correct. It is not widely known that a sword is the object of worship at Yasukuni Shrine. This shines a light on our fundamental ignorance, where we thought we were well informed. At the same time, there are images that lead beyond the conception we have of Yasukuni from the facts we know. It is not biased. This film must come as a shock to those who reject ethnic and intellectual diversity, because what is shown is simply the calm presentation of reality.

"Yasukuni" opened in early May, under heavy police protection, intense media attention, and large audiences

Li: The history of war is etched in the present that I captured with my camera. The contradictions and conflicts are still roiling, and the distortions. I think what's critical here is that there has been a double standard throughout the postwar period regarding the resolution of the problem of the responsibility for the war. Externally, the existence of war criminals was acknowledged through the Tokyo war crimes trials. But on the other hand, they have been honored as heroes who died fighting for their country. Great honor has been lavished on soldiers who died in the war, as well as on war criminals.

Who is the one most responsible for awarding this great honor? The war responsibility of the emperor was exempted from judgment during the American-led Tokyo tribunal, right? As we mentioned, the Meiji emperor established Yasukuni Shrine. It's a place that was built to memorialize and confer honor on soldiers who died in battle on behalf of the emperor. An internal document describing how the

Ministry of Health and Welfare worked hand in hand with Yasukuni to prepare the names of the war dead for enshrinement appears in a collection of documents published by the National Diet Library. You can see Japan's double standard at work there.

The Spiritual Culture that Sustained Asia's "Model Student"

Li: Yasukuni Shrine is a like a beautiful garden that gives expression to the heart of this double standard. The difficulty of thinking about the Yasukuni problem is not simply a matter of whether politicians make visits to pray there. Since it involves pride and honor and aesthetics, it's a troublesome problem that isn't easily resolved.

Sai: World War II was, in short, an imperialist war. It was a war in which a small imperialist power lost to the imperialism of the world powers. At the furthest extension of politics lies the clash of violence against violence. War as the ultimate form of politics. Armed forces as a mechanism of violence. War means killing people, you can't win if you don't kill. But it seems human thought cannot fully grasp the reality that war is concretely an act of murder.

Li: The same is true of people's attitude toward the sword. When people look at a sword, they tend to see it as some kind of spiritual symbol. But in fact it is a weapon for killing people. We aren't very conscious of this dual character. But the fact that the sword is the object of worship at Yasukuni Shrine is consistent with the essential fact that war is propelled by the twin forces of spirit and violence.

Sai: Compared to the other countries of Asia, Japan was the "model student" that raced into the modern world. But if you ask whether it achieved this with stability, that wasn't at all the case. At the time that modernity was introduced as a system to administer the state, the Boshin War occurred within Japan, and there was a struggle over the vested interests of the samurai class. When Fukuzawa Yukichi and Omura Masujiro declared themselves to be modern men, in fact the structure of their thought formed a pillar of support for the emperor system. You could say that the indigenous spiritual culture supported Japan's modern age from the rear.

What Is Visible to an Outsider's Eye

Li: There is a scene in the film where I asked the sword smith what kind of music he listens to when he takes a break. The cassette of "music" he pulled out was a recording of the Showa emperor's voice. He really relaxed, listening to it. It provided heartfelt rest. Watching him, I sensed that, at an unconscious level, the emperor sustained him in an important way. What was recorded on the tape is very interesting. The emperor is praising the efforts of the people who sustained Japan's modernization, attributing the achievements of the country from the Meiji period to the present to the wisdom and courage of the people who came before. But there was no reflection on what the path to modernization since Meiji had resulted in The Yasukuni-style mode of thought that we discussed earlier is distilled in those speeches. I tried to express that fissure using images and music.

The film's pamphlet

Sai: It just occurred to me as you were talking that emperors essentially do not reflect on the past. This is not only true of emperors and kings, but also of deified leaders such as Mao Zedong and Kim Il-sung. It's possible that the modern era is the age of those who failed to become emperors. There was no emperor in the United States. The fellow who separated from Great Britain ended up sitting pretty above the king. This suggests that it has been anti-monarchism that has been more influential on the world scene.

Li: The film was invited to this year's Berlin film festival, and I spoke there with the founder of the Forum section [Ulrich Gregor]. He was startled by Japan's double standard, epitomized by the Yasukuni problem. While Japan and Germany share a history as imperialist nations that suffered defeat, why is there such a difference between them? This is how he sees it. Just like Japan, Germany established a modern state in the 19th century, but the imperial era in Germany ended after its defeat in World War I. At that point, the symbol of the state ceased to exist. In Japan's case, it was defeated, but the symbol of the state has continued to exist. Even in the Japanese constitution, the emperor is declared the symbol of the state, and he thinks that has led Japan on a different postwar path than Germany.

Sai: The reason that the question of the emperor's war responsibility wasn't pursued was because the US believed he was a powerful presence as a spiritual pillar of society. The US decided that [trying the emperor] would make a thorough resolution through international law impossible and make it difficult to implement occupation policy. Under postwar law, Yasukuni Shrine is simply one religious institution. To me, it's nothing more nor less than that. If I say that, people will probably say, "Sai Yoichi is anti-Japanese, after all" (laughs), but a part of me has moved further and further away from identifying with any country or ethnicity. For the last two years, I spent time in South Korea working on a film, but in my daily life I often feel very out of place.

Li: There is a sense of being an outsider, only able to live in the crevices between countries. I feel that all the time (laughs).

Sai: But I think being in that position also gives an individual a certain privilege. As a matter of course, you have to see things from diverse perspectives. For example, in South Korea I'm often told, "It's impressive that you're working as a film director in Japan." I don't have much use for comments like this that are largely based on an ethnic affiliation. A film director, as an expressive artist, makes films for the freedom of thought and belief, which are an individual's fundamental rights. Who is from what country is completely beside the point. I tell people, "Don't place me in some scheme of nationalist confrontation, as if it's a sporting event where either South Korea wins or Japan wins." And they come back with, "Aren't you a Korean?" So I kid them by saying, "There's no greater Korean than me," and they usually end up laughing (laughs).

To me, both Japan and Korea are very important presences in my life, and it doesn't make much sense to choose one, to belong to one rather than the other. It's not something you choose.

Li: My film has been called "anti-Japanese" by some. But I feel a strong resistance to that term. "Anti-Japanese" is a term that was used most effectively by the Japanese government in the period preceding the Second Sino-Japanese War to inflame nationalist sentiment. I live here in Japan, and there are many aspects of the country that I respect, aspects that I think are wonderful. There's nothing in my daily life that would occasion the use of "anti-Japanese." In 2003, I made a documentary called "Aji" (Dream Cuisine). It depicts a Japanese couple who run a Chinese restaurant. I felt very happy meeting these wonderful people. I don't make films to criticize or out of ideology. But to brand the film "anti-Japanese" is an emotional response that appears to be a kind of nationalistic response.

"Defeat" vs. "End of the War"

Li: I often watch NHK documentaries, and for the most part those that trace the history of Meiji praise the accomplishments of the emperor and the illustrious victory in the Russo-Japanese War. But they never discuss the dark side of what resulted from this. Through the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, Japan obtained Taiwan and turned Korea into a colony. It's a glory that derived from a succession of invasions. The Yasukuni problem can't be reduced to how one sees the people who died in World War II.

In addition to pride and honor, a sense of loss is closely linked to manifestations of nationalism. During the postwar period, when August 15th comes around, the Japanese mass media talk about "the end of the war" rather than "the defeat." I think those words tell the story. It's pride talking: We didn't lose, the war ended. For Japan, "leave Asia, join the US" followed in the footsteps of "leave Asia, join the West," but after the end of the Cold War, Japan was faced with the need to think about a new relationship with Asia. In both economic and cultural spheres, a new interrelationship and order is being born, but at the same time it's a very sensitive period, when it's easy for nationalist sentiments to arise. My film has been labeled "anti-Japanese," but to me, it's a love letter to Japan. I have lived here a long time and thought a great deal about Japan. I'm not sure if disease is the best metaphor, but if a dear friend is suffering from some kind of illness, you hope that somehow he or she will recover. You want to help. You want to heal them. It won't do to close your eyes and let your friend get worse. The Yasukuni problem is clearly one of the aftereffects of the war. Just as it has become an issue both internationally and domestically, it causes conflict within the society as a whole. It's a very regrettable situation, and it always causes me pain. It was intensely agonizing to make this film. It may be quite difficult for Japan to accept the film, but I'm committed to facing whatever the response might be.

Sai: It's true that a label like "anti-Japanese" takes on a life of its own. There will be divided opinions, including those colored by prejudgment, but I think the film will be accepted. Even if there are those who react emotionally, I think the film is strong enough to present them with the fundamental question of why they respond with such anger.

Michael Moore also makes documentaries, but his approach is different. There's something dubious about Moore (laughs). I can understand the way he beats up on the bad guys, as entertainment, but that simplified pose actually makes it harder to understand the other side. But your approach is very composed, and you let your critical stance work through others. You don't deform the subject at all. I think this film will be influential for its method as much as its subject. I can understand how the film was highly regarded at the Berlin and Sundance film festivals. Though it makes me a bit jealous… (laughs).

Neither Ant-Japanese nor Japan-Loving

Sai: Whether it's a documentary or a feature film depicting a fictional world, a film cannot exist entirely separate from the times. There's always an element of filmic expression that's a companion of the times. The Coen brothers' "No Country for Old Men" won four Academy Awards. It's not a Hollywood-esque roller-coaster film, and it doesn't involve any grand spectacle. It's a film that depicts cold-blooded violence and crime, filled with tension. I suppose the Coens would say they simply depicted a world they're drawn to, but the film is fully infused with the atmosphere of the times. Even in films produced with funding from big business that end up winning entertainment-oriented prizes, the subtle changes of the times appear.

What you want to convey through this film, once again, is not ideologically forced on the viewer. The last shot in the film makes this quite clear. It's a beautiful aerial shot that floats over Yasukuni at night and then widens out on the Tokyo skyline. Then this large overhead shot takes the line of sight out to the jet-black ocean beyond the city.

I don't know how many people will make films on Yasukuni in the future, but I think all audiences have to be attuned to the changing times and changing people that surface in films, because people's values are not fixed for all time. And in order to be sensitive to this, there can be no "anti-Japanese" or "Japan-loving."

Li: Ever since I came to Japan, I have sensed the deep bond that links Japan, China, and Korea. People say that Asia lags behind the rest of the world, because it hasn't achieved the kind of cross-national solidarity that exists in Europe, which allows you to explore the bigger picture. Looking to the future, I think it will be increasingly important to cross national boundaries to express ourselves. In fact, I have crossed out of the country of my birth to live in Japan, and you have been doing the same. It's important for Japan, China, and Korea to have multiple perspectives. But, in reality, how do we avoid getting caught up in narrow national consciousness?

It's entirely by chance that I finished this film now, but I also think there's maybe an element of inevitability about it. We are planning to release this film not just in Japan but in Korea and China as well. I want to reexamine the relatedness of Asia through the Yasukuni problem, and I hope the film will provide a stimulus for productive debate.

Sai: One of the things that strikes me when I go to film festivals here and abroad is how the filmmakers of the world are picking up on and expressing in their distinctive ways the kind of squirming that is going on around us.

Li: What's been interesting to me at the film festivals I've been invited to is that audiences draw connections to their own country's history when they watch "Yasukuni." At Sundance, there was the response that the Yasukuni problem is one of the problems that were left unresolved by America's postwar policies. At the Berlin festival, people drew comparisons to the behavior of Nazi Germany. I really got the sense that films are a form of cultural dialogue. They can be mirrors in which we see ourselves. There's nothing more wonderful than sharing critical influences through film. I can't help but hope that "Yasukuni" resonates in that way.

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Li Ying was born in China in 1963. After working as a director for China Central Television, he moved to Japan in 1989, where he established the film and TV production company Dragon Films. His first film, "2H," was released in 1999 and won the award for outstanding Asian film at the Berlin film festival. Li's other films are the feature "Flying" (2001), the documentary "Dream Cuisine" (2003), and the mixed documentary-drama "Mona Lisa" (2007). All of his films have been invited to Berlin. He has also produced documentary specials for television. "Stardust Dreams" (2003), about aspiring actors at the Beijing Film Academy, won the Hoso Bunka Foundation and ATP awards for best documentary.

Sai Yoichi was born in Nagano Prefecture in 1949. He served as first assistant director on Oshima Nagisa's "In the Realm of the Senses" (1976). His

debut film as a director was "Jûkai no mosquito" (The 10th Floor Mosquito). Sai's 1993 film "Tsuki wa dotchi ni dete iru" (All Under the Moon), is the story of a Korean taxi driver in Japan; it won over 50 awards, including a Japanese Blue Ribbon and the Kinema Jumpo best film and best director awards. Among his best-known films are "Marks no yama" (Marks, 1995), "Keimusho no naka" (Doing Time, 2002), and "Chi to hone" (Blood and Bones, 2004), which won four Japanese Academy Awards, including best director and best screenplay. "Soo" (Double Casting, 2007) is his first film made in South Korea. Sai also serves as president of the Directors Guild of Japan.

John Junkerman is an American documentary filmmaker and Japan Focus associate living in Tokyo. His most recent film, "Japan's Peace Constitution" (2005), won the Kinema Jumpo and Japan PEN Club best documentary awards. It is available in North America from First Run Icarus Films. Junkerman has written the English subtitles for a number of Li Ying's films, including "Yasukuni."

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