

## Making Films with What I Know

**Takashi Toshiko** (Filmmaker / Juror of New Asian Currents)

It was at a screening of the film *A Grass-cutter's Tale* (1985) when I met and became acquainted with director Fukuda Katsuhiko, around the time when I was assisting a four-wall film distributor in Kansai. I had always someday wanted to be involved with making films, and it was just when I had been thinking that there would be no better place than to work with Mr. Fukuda, that I was asked to be an assistant director and decided to move to Tokyo. In 1992, I founded the Tokyo Lesbian and Gay Film Festival with Suzuki Akihiro, who was also working as an assistant director as well as a cinematographer at Stance Company. During this period, we attended events such as the New York Film Festival and visited the Anthology Film Archives, and were introduced to a number of interesting things from overseas, such as lesbian and gay films. For our own festival, in addition to foreign lesbian and gay films, we screened works by Japanese directors such as Hashiguchi Ryosuke and Oki Hiroyuki, as well as the films of Donald Ritchie, but there were still no films by female directors.

Eventually, I fell ill and had to leave the festival after two years.

Since around that time, I would film everyday life like a diary with a video camera (Hi-8) that I had bought. I had just started considering making my own film and asking Mr. Fukuda to teach me editing techniques when he suddenly passed away. This was in 1998. The last time I saw him I had told him that I was filming everyday and he would look happy and nod approvingly. The person I thought that I could ask for advice at any time was all of a sudden gone. This made me realize that I should seize life by its horns, do what I always wanted to do, and see people before it is too late. With these emotions as a driving force, I completed *Ode I* in 1998. I create films with what I already know. This is why I have not pursued formal studies in editing or filming. In 1999, at a screening of my work at the Yamagata Film Festival, I was surprised that all of the seats in the audience had been filled. Perhaps one reason people came was because a sensationalistic photograph was used in the program. I believe

that it was the first time for an S&M show to be filmed in Yamagata. In certain cases, the Yamagata Film Festival may serve as an aim for artists when making a film. For me, that was the case with *Blessed* (2001). I am still close with the people I met in Yamagata, and to this day, we continue to work on various film projects together.

I moved to Itami about 10 years ago. I still filmed daily but wondered about how to make those recordings into a film work. I decided that I wanted to be in a situation in which I had set deadlines for the completion of a project, as if being bound by shackles. The format of a screening on a periodical basis seemed like a solution and so I talked to Gallery Maki in Kayabacho and they agreed to host "Quarterly Takashi." This series began in 2005 and continued on for 17 screenings until the gallery eventually closed its doors. At this age, the reason I continue to make films, even if they do not bring fame or fortune, is because of the audiences that have supported me and the places that have kindly been there to screen my works.

Interview conducted by Wakai Makiko  
(Coordinator of New Asian Currents)  
(Translated by Caroline Mikako Elder)

### ■ Screenings and Talk

Takashi Toshiko Screenings 2005–2013 — Gallery Maki in Yamagata  
10/11 15:00–20:00 | 10/15 13:00–17:00 | Yamagata Manabikan | Admission Free  
"Quarterly Takashi," a screening series held from 2005 to 2013 at Gallery Maki in Kayabacho, Tokyo, went into hietus after 17 installments. Films made by Takashi Toshiko from the "Itami Series" will be shown at the Manabikan.