

## HAF 16 Seeing Nara Again



**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** Japan

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:** Drama | Digital Format | Mandarin, Japanese  
| 90 mins

**DIRECTOR:**

SONG Pengfei

**PRODUCER:**

KAWASE Naomi

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Co-producers

**BUDGET:**

US\$ 450,000

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2017 *The Taste of Rice Flower*

2015 *Underground Fragrance*

**ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS**

An old Chinese woman visits Japan to find her missing daughter whom she adopted in post-WWII China. Her granddaughter and a retired Japanese policeman join her search.

## SYNOPSIS

Shaozah, a Chinese girl who is studying at a university in Nara, Japan, receives a call from her mother informing her that her grandmother is coming to Nara to find her daughter, Lihua, whom she had adopted as a post-war orphan. In the 1980s, Lihua returned to her Japanese motherland, but she has disappeared in recent years. Shaozah and her grandmother visit the address of Lihua's last letter, but find she has moved away. Fruitless days pass until a retired police officer, Kitano, moved by their story, volunteers to help them look for Lihua. While the lack of information leads them nowhere, the three gradually bond in a love that overcomes the negative sentiments of history and ties them together across their two countries. On the way to the airport, however, a colleague calls Kitano to inform him that Lihua had a hard time integrating into Japanese society and died alone, five years previously. Shaozah does not know how to translate this and bursts into tears. Meanwhile, Grandmother has fallen asleep by the window.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

With the award I received at the Nara International Film Festival, I was offered an opportunity to make a film, and I am very excited. Sino-Japanese friendship is a theme that I have always wanted to shoot, and I think this is also a very important theme. Japanese culture fascinates me, and there is much to learn from the Japanese people. In their histories, nonetheless, China and Japan have gone through different phases: we have been brothers, teachers and students, friends, and enemies. Japan reminds many Chinese people about unforgettable war; negative sentiment from the conflicts between the two countries shadows people's beliefs and emotions. However, more importantly, there also has been strong love between the people of China and Japan, who share many warm and touching human stories. The last generation to have suffered through the war are now in their eighties. I want to record stories of great love and good deeds from the people of the two countries while they are still alive. That is the most universal and precious quality of mankind.

## DIRECTOR

### SONG Pengfei

After graduating in film at L'Institut International de l'Image et du Son in Paris, Pengfei returned to China and worked for the Taiwanese director Tsai Ming-liang. Under Tsai's direction, Pengfei was screenwriter and Assistant Director in *Stray Dogs* (2013) and Assistant Director in *Your Face* (2018). He was also Assistant Producer for the film *Night and Day* (2008) directed by Hong Sang-soo. His debut feature, *Underground Fragrance* (2015), premiered in Venice Days and was released theatrically in 2016. His second feature, *The Taste of Rice Flower* (2017), participated at Venice Days and won an award at Nara International Film Festival.

## PRODUCER

### **KAWASE Naomi**

Born in Nara, Japan, Kawase Naomi gained international recognition with her short films. In 1997, she became the youngest winner of the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for her first feature *Suzaku* (1997). In 2000, *Hotaru* won both the FIPRESCI and the CICAIE Prizes at Locarno. A series of feature films followed, selected for competition at Cannes: *Shara* (2003), *The Mourning Forest* (Grand Prix 2007), *Hanezu* (2011) and *Still the Water* (2014). In 2010, she founded the Nara International Film Festival, dedicated to promoting the work of young directors and has produced films for the festival's filmmaking project NARActive.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

### **Nara International Film Festival Organizing Committee**

The Nara International Film Festival (NIFF) Organizing Committee was established in 2010 to run a biennial film festival which aims at nurturing emerging filmmakers. Every two years, NIFF offers an opportunity the winner of the festival to direct a film in Nara. The purpose of the filmmaking project is to introduce emerging talent inside and outside of Japan while building cultural bridges through the creative process. Under Kawase Naomi as the executive director, NIFF has produced six films. The latest NIFF co-produced film with Emperor Motion Pictures and LDH Motion Pictures will be in theaters across Japan in January.