

The Great East Japan Earthquake that hit on March 11, 2011
A fictional film based on the true stories depicting persons with disabilities affected by the disaster and the people who sought to assist them.

Talking to the Starry Sky

Directed by Yurugu Matsumoto



《 Prologue 》

The Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011. Though this unprecedented disaster caused more than 18,000 people to be declared dead or missing, it is not well known that the mortality rate of people with disabilities was twice that of people without them.

The film depicts this little-known fact through a fictional narrative based on the true stories of witnesses whose accounts were collected in the areas hit.

《 Story 》

The community workshop "Aogiri," located in the city of Rikuzen Takada in Iwate Prefecture, managed to escape the direct damage caused by the tsunami, but its members became discouraged due to the loss of their colleagues. The woman who was directing the workshop strove to cheer up those members and began working hard to enable them to get back to regular life as soon as possible.

In this situation, the Japan Disability Network, which was about to start support activities in cooperation with support groups from all over Japan, received information that persons with disabilities in the disaster areas had disappeared, and also was confronted with the mysterious fact that no people with disabilities were found in any of the evacuation centers they visited.

At the same time, people in the city of Minami Soma in Fukushima Prefecture were forced to evacuate due to the nuclear power station accident. However, representatives of the community workshop "Crossroad House" have continued to support persons with disabilities who were left behind because they could not leave by themselves while fighting the hazards of radioactivity. The workshop needed to obtain information on disabled persons in emergencies in order to confirm their safety, but it was not disclosed because of laws protecting personal information.

Thus, laws protecting human rights became a hindrance for people working to save the lives of disabled persons. What was the real situation of disabled persons hit by the disaster and the people working to help them whose life-saving efforts were hampered by the personal information protection laws?

《 Message 》

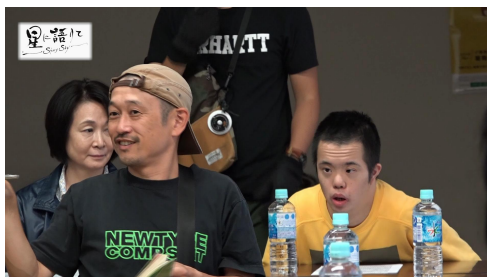
People do not know when they may begin to suffer from a disability. It may happen due to an illness or accident, and a healthy person can become a person with a disability as she or he gets older. This is a simple fact, but there are many people who are unaware of it.

While focusing on a past event, the Great East Japan Earthquake, this film depicts a reality that all of us will face in the future.

I would like as many people as possible to see "Talking to the Starry Sky" and realize this situation.

With this in mind, I sought to create an attractive work which that recounts a human drama.

I believe that only in Japan can a film be made on the basis of the three themes, "Great Earthquake", "Great Tsunami" and "Nuclear Power Plant Accident," since it is only here that the three were experienced at the same time. "Talking to the Starry Sky" is certainly the first film to take up these three themes with a focus on persons with disabilities.



《 Overview 》 Trailer URL : <https://youtu.be/ZSaDilxWe0w> 【Contact : Kyosaren <https://www.kyosaren.or.jp/contact/>】

Title : Talking to the Starry Sky <2019 / DCP / Color / 5.1ch / Vista / 115min>

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Project Design by Katsunori Fujii / Screenplay by Osamu Yamamoto / Music by Yohei Kobayashi /

Directed by Yurugu Matsumoto

《 Director Profile 》

Director : Yurugu Matsumoto

《 Biography 》

Born in 1969 in Tachikawa City, Tokyo, Japan.

In the '90s, he started filming original movies with 8 mm films as a student at Image Forum Institute of the Moving Image. Then, he became a freelance assistant director for commercial films working with directors such as Takashi Ishii, Takashi Yamazaki, Yoshihiro Nakamura, Hitoshi Yazaki, Banmei Takahashi, and Shinsuke Sato. The last piece he worked for was Nobuhiko Obayashi's HANAGATAMI as a chief assistant director.

Now he focuses on directing his own works, mainly documentary TV dramas. His short film MIX, an original movie for the first time in 20 years, became the nominee for many film festivals. The next film GACHA GACHA won a lot of awards at film festivals, followed by another short PAY PHONE that was well-received and screened at over 30 national and international film festivals, winning 11 awards including 4 Grands Prix.

〔 Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia 2018 Japan - Best Actor in Official Competition Japan 〕

Its sequel CASSETTE TAPE premiered at 6th Hachioji Short Film Festival won both Grand Prix and Audience Award. After that, it won Grand Prix and Best Actress at 23rd Yokohama Cinema Paradise, making Matsumoto become the very first director of the festival who won four Grands Prix in a row.

From an idol movie to a socially aware drama, he directs a wide range of films: VIRGIN BREEZE which he wrote and directed for the Japanese female idol group called Nogizaka 46 was favorably received, and a feature film STARRY SKY captured untold situations that people with disabilities had experienced after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

In writing, his script TSUREZURE was nominated for a synopsis competition called 3rd MPA/DHU Film Workshop, and director Carlos Saldanha (ICE AGE: THE MELTDOWN and RIO, etc.) highly recommended it. The project was selected for the last stage as one of the best nine scripts at Sundance Institute/NHK Award 2017.

In his hometown Tachikawa City, he energetically contributes for developing movie culture as a teacher at the local Movie Production Workshop and as a judge for Tachikawa Meigazadori Cinema Festival.

《 Filmography 》

AZUSA (1992), CRIMSON TEARS (1993), OPEN TO VISITORS (1993), MIX (2015), GACHA GACHA (2016), VIRGIN BREEZE (2017), PAY PHONE (2018), CASSETTE TAPE (2019), Talking to the Starry Sky (2019)

Talking to the Starry Sky Visual

