



Contact:

Cathy Fisher, 212-989-7425, cfisher@pov.org

Karen Reynolds, 212-989-7425, kreynolds@pov.org

Online Pressroom: www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom

**P.O.V.'s "Campaign" by Kazuhiro Soda Is a Fascinating Look Inside 'J-Democracy' —
The Japanese Way of Elections, Tuesday, July 29 on PBS and on www.pbs.org/pov**

A Co-presentation with the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM)

"Appreciation of this film hardly depends on an intimate knowledge of or interest in Japanese politics. . . . 'Campaign' may invite a certain skepticism about democracy, but it will surely restore your faith in cinéma vérité." — A.O. Scott, The New York Times

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Air

Date: **Tuesday, July 29, 2008** at 10 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.) **The film will also be streamed in its entirety on the P.O.V. website, www.pbs.org/pov.** The P.O.V. series (a cinema term for "point of view") is now in its 21st year on PBS, is broadcast June through October, with primetime specials in the fall and winter.

Summary: This is democracy — Japanese style. **Campaign** provides a startling insider's view of Japanese electoral politics in this portrait of a man plucked from obscurity by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to run for a critical seat on a suburban city council. Kazuhiko "Yama-san" Yamauchi's LDP handlers are unconcerned that he has zero political experience, no charisma, no supporters and no time to prepare. What he does have is the institutional power of Japan's modern version of Tammany Hall pushing him forward. Yama-san allows his life to be turned upside down as he pursues the rituals of Japanese electioneering — with both tragic and comic results. *A co-presentation with the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM).*

Campaign came about by chance. Director Kazuhiro Soda was preparing to make another film when he learned that an old Tokyo University schoolmate, Yama-san, had been selected by the LDP to run for a key city council seat. Sensing an opportunity, Soda quickly got agreement from Yamauchi and the LDP — perhaps surprisingly, given the candor with which LDP local operations are shown — to film the campaign. Equipping himself as a one-man film crew, Soda embarked on an experiment in "observational film" as he followed Yamauchi on the campaign trail for 12 hectic days in October 2005.

Filmmaker's

Statement: "I don't think of **Campaign** as a political piece, though politics is its subject matter," says director Soda. "Rather, it is what I call an 'observational film' in which the viewer is expected to perceive and interpret the complex, difficult-to-articulate reality of an election campaign run by the Liberal Democratic Party, the party that has held power in Japan for the last 50 years.

"Campaign asks viewers to observe and think about what they see on screen. In this sense, reality is not painted in black and white. Instead it is gray and complicated, the way we experience it every day. I hope that viewers will be left with unanswered questions, ones they will continue to think about for days, weeks, even years to come."

Director's Bio: Kazuhiro Soda, Director/cinematographer/editor

Kazuhiro Soda was born and raised in Japan and has lived in New York since 1993. He has directed numerous fictional films and television documentaries; **Campaign** (*Senkyo*) is his first feature documentary. While he was a student, his short fiction film "The Flicker" (1997) competed for a Silver Lion Award at the Venice International Film Festival in Italy. "Freezing Sunlight" (1996) was nominated for a New Filmmaker's Award at the Sao Paulo International Film Festival in Brazil.

"A Flower and a Woman" (1995) won a Special Commendation in the Canadian Annual International Film Festival. Among the many television documentaries Soda has directed, "Landscape Without Mother" (NHK) won a Telly Award in 2001. He holds bachelor of fine arts degree in filmmaking from the School of Visual Arts in New York and bachelor of arts in religious studies from Tokyo University. He and his wife, Kiyoko Kashiwagi, a choreographer, live in Astoria, Queens. Soda is currently finishing "Mental" (working title), his new documentary about mental illness.

The candidate: Kazuhiko Yamauchi

Kazuhiko Yamauchi was born in Tokyo in 1965. His nickname is Yama-san. He briefly attended Meteorological College and Shinshu University before graduating from Tokyo University with a degree in linguistics. He was making his living selling stamps and coins when he was chosen by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to be their official candidate for the Kawasaki City Council seat. "My plan was to become famous first and then run for office," he says.

Length: 56:46

Festivals: Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) *ContemporAsian* Film Series, 2008
Official Selection, World Premiere, Berlin International Film Festival (Forum), 2007
Official Selection, SXSW (Competition), 2007
Official Selection, Cinema du Reel in Paris (Competition), 2007
Official Selection, Fribourg Film Festival, 2007
Official Selection, Hong Kong International Film Festival, 2007
Official Selection, Buenos Aires Independent Film Festival
Official Selection, Barcelona Asian Film Festival, 2007
Official Selection, Sydney Film Festival, 2007

Credits: Director/cinematographer/editor:Kazuhiro Soda

P.O.V. Web: In addition to streaming the film in its entirety, the **Campaign** companion website (www.pbs.org/pov/campaign), offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with filmmaker **Kazuhiro Soda** (video, podcast and text); a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide and classroom activity; and these special features:

Background: Learn more about the Japanese electoral system in this excerpt from Gerald Curtis' *Election Campaigning, Japanese Style* (Columbia University Press).

Photo Gallery: View a gallery of photos of Yamauchi, including images from before, during and after the filming of **Campaign**.

Video Update with Yamauchi: In November 2006, Yamauchi visited the filmmaker's studio in New York City and answered a few questions about his experience as a city councilman.

Outreach: P.O.V. is working with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in **Campaign**. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events, go to: http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php

P.O.V. also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a facilitation guide with discussion questions and background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan; Susan Conlon and Martha Perry of the Princeton Public Library [have](#) compiled a multimedia resource list of related fiction and nonfiction books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at: www.amdoc.org/outreach.

Pressroom: Visit P.O.V.'s pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

P.O.V.: Produced by American Documentary, Inc., the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought more than 250 documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

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DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.



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