

FILM REVIEWS

Shadows in the Sun

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED
BY FRANK RIJAVEC

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Japanese aggression during World War II not only brought huge devastation in Asian Pacific countries, but victimized its own people as well. This is the main theme of *Shadows in the Sun*. The film, directed by Frank Rijavec, follows a group of Japanese veterans of the Pacific War and families who lost their loved ones during the war. They all come from the city of Kochi in Shikoku and are visiting Papua, New Guinea, where over three

Guinea no one returns alive." This wartime saying reveals the terror. Through varied sources including survivors' recollections, and soldiers' letters to families, the film proves that instead of dying in battle, many soldiers actually died of hunger and disease. Others committed suicide in desperation. "They had no food, and had many regrettable thoughts as they were dying," said the president of the association, who was a veteran of the campaign. The

on the one hand, and their condemnation of the wartime government's policy on the other. While performing religious services for remembering the deceased, what survivors express are the feelings of anger and disapproval of Japan's aggression. "In history there have to be some righteous wars," one visitor states, "but the war we were involved was not." While praying for the dead to rest in peace, the visitors believe their visits are compelling lessons about Japan's past mistakes.

However, in the words of one visitor, "there are still many strange ideas in Japan about the war." The value of this video also lies in that it shows the Pacific War is still a controversial issue in Japan. Some high ranking Japanese government officials have repeatedly denied Japan's crimes and responsibility during the war on a wide range of issues including the Nanjing Massacre and "Comfort Women." Some still insist that Japan went to war for the purpose of self-defense, and prosperity of the Pacific Region. This film is a powerful and clear message that the Pacific War was a Japanese mistake.

The reviewer recommends this video for Japanese Studies classes. It also should be translated and used in Japan.

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Papuan New Guinea man greets Japanese man.

Photo courtesy of First Run Icarus Films

thousand Japanese soldiers from Kochi lost their lives in the Pacific War jungle campaigns. The Kochi New Guinea Association, a local organization for war survivors, organizes this program to remember and rethink the war by arranging tours to the war site on the island.

The film documents the horrors and sadness of the war. Japan sent 150,000 troops to New Guinea during the war, and less than ten percent survived. "Burma is hell; from New

visitors' tears and sighs explain that for millions of Japanese families, the war brought nothing but misery and tragedy. Wives lost their husbands, parents lost their sons, and the children became a fatherless generation.

As an educational tool, this video clearly shows us what many contemporary Japanese think of the war. The film does an excellent job by drawing a line between emotion and rationality. It depicts visitors' passions towards their beloved