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### ENGLISH TRANSLATION

## **A hoarse candidate: “Campaign” by Kazuhiro Soda**

Rush-hour in Kawasaki, Japan. A man is talking through a megaphone trying to attract the attention of passer-bys hurrying to the station. He has the slight build of a typical office worker. Immediately, you notice that he is wearing a large sash over his dark suit. Nobody stops. After a while he gets into a van and leaves, heading to a mall for another round of performance or to simply stand on the roadside, permanently waving his hands.

Yamauchi Kazihiko is a candidate of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), campaigning for a seat on the Kawasaki city council. He only knows a few flowery phrases about his party’s platform and the word ‘reform’ appears in his speech in abundance. But specific arguments are not that important to him. The mighty leaders of his party, the “sensei”, drummed into his mind that he must repeat his own name three times every minute to so that the sound of his name is permanently ingrained into the elector’s brain. So it’s no surprise at the end Kazuhiko is not only completely exhausted, but hoarse. However for the unemployed university graduate, the expense of a self-financed campaign is a necessary investment for a successful career in the future. Political ignorance will never hinder his climb to power. Far from it, his naivety and the flexibility of his views make the politically unambitious Yamauchi an attractive candidate in the eyes of the leaders of the party who are only interested in their own career advancement.

Politics—a Mafia-like marionette game about positions and property. The film by Kazuhiro Soda, a Japanese filmmaker living in New York is not an in-depth analysis of Japanese politics but an informative inside view in the daily fight and struggle of a candidate. “Campaign” is “Direct Cinema” at its best. Soda has known his protagonist since their time together at university. He produced his documentary as a one-man production, without any script or any official funding. Though the main character is tragic, this film may also be the funniest in the forum program. The collateral damage for prestige for the state of parliamentary and politics seems to be considerable everywhere in the world. Therefore, the fact that “Campaign” is set in an exotic culture is not the subject of its criticism.

By Silvia Hallensleben