



Junk Food

Masashi Yamamoto

JAPAN, 1997

82 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Junk Food**

Connection

Executive Producer: **Koichi Omiya,**

Kazunao Sakaguchi, Eisuke Ishige

Producer: **Toshihiro Isomi**

Screenplay: **Masashi Yamamoto**

Cinematographer: **Hiroshi Ito**

Editor: **Syuichi Kakesu**

Production Designer: **Toshihiro Isomi**

Sound: **Osamu Takizawa**

Music: **D.J. Krush, Ko Machida**

Principal Cast: **Shizuko Yamamoto,**

Miyuki Iijima, Akifumi Yamaguchi, Keigo

Naruse, Yoichi Okamura, Rumi Otori

Print Source/Foreign Sales Agent:

Stance Company, 4th Floor Tsumakoi

Building, 3-1-5 Yushima Bunkyo-ku,

Tokyo 113, Japan. T (81-3) 3839-0981

F (81-3) 3839-0982

Production: **Junk Food Connection.**

T (81-3) 3839-0981 F (81-3) 3839-0982

From the director of the acclaimed *Carnival in Darkness* and *Robinson's Garden* comes a thoughtful, funny and occasionally brutal new film. While Masashi Yamamoto's *Junk Food* certainly touches on some familiar themes of recent Japanese cinema, particularly in its more violent moments, the film consciously tries to explore elements of the country, especially within Tokyo, rarely seen: South Asians and Chinese struggling to make ends meet, the hidden handicapped and business people who just can't take the stress anymore.

The film consists of several interwoven stories which take place over exactly one day.

For a blind old woman – doubly invisible in today's Japan – her daily routine is told in lingering shots on her subtly involving movements. She frames the film and her simple experiences set the context for its wilder tales.

Miyuki is a businesswoman and a drug addict on the edge. Desperate for a score, she embarrasses herself with her boss, commits murder and finally hooks up with a hideously violent drug dealer. Their sexual encounter is disturbing and intense. Later she returns to her husband. These sequences are shot in cool, heightened tones which add to her sense of danger and displacement.

Four guys, two involved in internecine gang violence through the night, one in town from Kyoto and happy to spend a few hours with a saucy Chinese prostitute from the United States, and still another a

Pakistani dealing badly with thwarted love and an evil mentor. They gather in the morning light for an unusual funeral ritual.

We also spend time with a homesick Latin woman wrestler.

Masashi's world is deeply involving and has the feel of a deep, memorable dream. Never a shaggy dog story, *Junk Food* consistently reveals its unusual cast of characters with grace and wit. By employing a variety of subtly different styles, Masashi reinforces the idea that these people's easily digestible lives may not be "junk" after all.

■ **Noah Cowan**

Masashi Yamamoto was born in 1956. He began making Super-8 films in 1975, and directed his first feature, *Carnival in Darkness*, in 1982. Other films include: *Robinson's Garden* (87), *Tenamonya Connection* (90), *Atlanta Boogie* (96), *Junk Food* (97).

Sponsored by

President's Choice.