



## WAKASUGI Mitsuo (HUA Keyi) 若杉光夫 (華克毅) (1922–2008)

### Director

Wakasugi was born in Ooita Prefecture, Kyushu. He graduated from the Law Faculty of Kyoto Imperial University. In 1947, he joined Daiei's Kyoto Studio as an assistant director, and worked with famous directors Marune Santaro and Kurosawa Akira. Wakasugi and Kato Tai worked as assistant directors for Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950). The two resigned from Daiei in September 1950 when an anti-Communist witch-hunt was spread among filmmakers. Wakasugi switched to work for a theatre group and later founded a film society. He became a director of films, television programmes and theatre. His directorial debut was *Children Without Mothers and Mothers Without Children* (1952). His well-known works included *Giving My Life for You* (1953), *Mistress of a Foreigner* (1954), *Battle of Ishiga* (starring Hamada Mitsuo, 1955), *The Girl in Glass* (starring Yoshinaga Sayuri, 1960) and *Autumn Interlude* (starring Yamaguchi Momoe, 1976). He also took part as a screenwriter for Nishikawa Katsumi's *The Izu Dancer* (1974). With a serious tone, his films frequently revealed a sense of indignation at social injustice and a sincere affection for humanity.

In 1957, introduced by Hattori Chisho, the chairman of Shintoho (New Toho), Wakasugi and Nishimoto Tadashi joined Shaw & Sons Ltd to make the Hong Kong-Korean co-production, *Love with an Alien* (co-directed with Tu Guangqi and Chun Chang-geun, 1958). Wakasugi thus became the first Japanese director to work for Shaws. Due to anti-Japanese sentiments of the South Korean president Rhee Syngman, Wakasugi was persuaded to adopt a Chinese pseudonym 'Hua Keyi'. While in Hong Kong, actress Yamaguchi Yoshiko (aka Li Xianglan) requested Wakasugi to direct the black-and-white action film *The Lady of Mystery* (1957), which she played the leading role. In 1972, Wakasugi won a Soviet Union film award for *Stand Up Women*. He directed over 50 films; his last work was *Starry Pastures* (1987).