

Hakamada Discussion Guide

How to Use this Guide: The discussion questions are listed after a brief summary of information about the film. If you watched the film with a group, use these questions to guide a conversation about the film. If you watched it alone, write down your answers to these questions to reflect on the film.

Film Description

Hakamada exposes the failings of the Japanese criminal justice system through the plight of Iwao Hakamada—the longest-held death-row inmate in the world—and his sister’s 47-year-long fight for his innocence. The film reveals the human cost of Japan’s 99.9% conviction rate. When conviction is guaranteed, justice is lost.

First Impressions

1. In a few words, how did the film make you feel?
2. What aspects of the film surprised you? What aspects of the film were familiar?
3. Was there a moment in the film that you found particularly inspiring or disturbing? What was it about that moment that moved you?

Reflection

1. The film explored the Japanese prison system’s use of solitary confinement, death penalty, and unethical investigations. What about each surprised you the most to learn and why?
2. What pressures existed for the officers and judges in Hakamada’s case to convict him?
3. What does Hakamada’s story reveal about Japan’s system of justice?

Connection

1. What did you learn from the film that you wish everyone knew? What would change if everyone knew it?
2. If you were going to tell a friend about the film, what would you say?
3. How did what you learned in the film change, challenge, or affirm your perspective on systems of justice?

You can access additional resources about the film here and look for ways to take action on the film festival website [here](#).

*Several questions from the edublog “TUNE IN Next Time” by Faith Rogow, Ph.D.,
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