

Power and Terror: Chomsky in Our Times in Kitakyushu

Film and Lecture

Presented by the *Chomsky in Our Times* in Kitakyushu Organization Committee
Cosponsored by the West Japan Chapter, the Japan Society of Image Arts and Sciences
Supported by the University of Kitakyushu

What should we learn about the 21st-century global situation?
Chomsky's words are full of wisdom and possibilities.
Let us share inquiries from various fields and discuss these possibilities.
Also, let us envision the future we desire, while we still have alternatives.

Time & Date: 1:30 – 4:00 p.m., Saturday, April 26, 2003

Venue: Auditorium A-101, Main Building, the University of Kitakyushu

Material Fee: ¥500 (Donations are welcome.)

Access from Kokura Station: Take the monorail to Keibajoo-mae Station
10-minute ride

Access from Hakata Station: Take JR Kagoshima line to Kokura Station

Access from Tenjin area: Take Nishitetsu highway bus Nakatani line to Keibajoo-mae/
Kitakyushu-shiritsu-daigaku-mae stop

*No parking space available on campus. An adjacent parking lot for JRA Kokura Race Course is open to the public and is in operation until 5:30 p.m.

Program

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|-------------|------------------------|
| 1:30 - 1:35 | Opening Remarks |
| 1:35 – 2:45 | Film |
| 2:45 – 3:00 | Break |
| 3:00 – 4:00 | Lecture and Discussion |

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About the film

Noam Chomsky, who will turn 74 in December, is a linguist and Institute Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the pioneer of the theory of generative grammar, which has brought about a paradigm shift in the field of linguistics, and has received many academic awards, including the Kyoto Prize. While accumulating distinguished achievements in academia, he has also been a steadfast critic of U.S. foreign policy ever since the Vietnam War. In particular, his acute political essays and comments have attracted wide attention in and out of the United States in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Labeled as the "rebel without a pause" by Bono, lead singer of the band U2, he is an anti-establishment activist intellectual. The film compellingly portrays Chomsky as the most important voice of dissent in the United States today.

The film is directed by John Junkerman, who was nominated for the documentary feature

category of the Academy Awards for his "*Gooka: Hiroshima-kara-no Tabi* (Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima)" depicting the painters Iri and Toshio Maruki. He has also directed "*Roojin-to Umi* (The Old Man and the Sea)," in which an 82-year-old fisherman's attempt to capture a marlin is portrayed. The movie broke Tokyo box-office records. He also won an Emmy Award for documentary films with his "*Musoo: Niwa-to-no Katarai* (Musoo: Conversation with Gardens)" on Japanese gardens.

What does Chomsky talk about?

What was the top story of the paper you read this morning? What kind of scene was being broadcasted as you were zapping through stations? In today's high-tech, info-tech era, do you think it is a mere coincidence that every piece of information you receive is so much alike, so ad-hoc, and never gives you the right kind of answer to what you really want to know: Why a war again?

In the film Chomsky talks calmly but vigorously about how America the country of freedom has executed oppressive violence against weak and poor countries, and how they have justified their vandalism through forging these ugly facts into the heroic acts for truth and justice.

Chomsky as a linguist seeks to explain the species-specific universal behind human linguistic competence through precise argumentation in the theory of generative grammar. Likewise, based on elaborate thoughts on historical perspectives and factual analysis, he explicates universal principles across time and space behind politics and war. He pays attention to the function of commercial media in global politics: What is the purpose of manipulating information through media and arousing a sense of crisis among people by appealing to apparent "right" and "justice"?

What Chomsky criticizes does not necessarily stop with America as a nation-state. Things American are permeating all over the world now. In this game, the world politics is directed in favor of a tiny proportion of the rich on earth, and the rest will be all losers. Everyone knows that, but cannot quit the game.

Chomsky gives a rational analysis of the clever mechanisms of the greedy market economy, which often disguises itself as blatant "freedom." It is a real eye-opener.

Why is the film shown at a university?

Being a theoretical linguist who is deeply involved in the academia, Chomsky relentlessly criticizes the "roles" played by the institutionalized academy. What are the studies at the university for? Are they simply for qualification degrees or for future careers? Do people gather here for the authority the university grants them?

No. The somber and enduring experience of studies cannot be carried on without limitless intellectual curiosity. We would like you to think over what is being done and can be done at the university. All are welcome, including those who have just come here, those who have once experienced the university, and those who have spent a long time at the university.

We, the members of the committee, are also eager to think and learn. Our curiosity

has no bounds. The very reason that this film is shown at the university is because this is a place where people who like to think and talk can get together.

What do we want to think about?

We are preparing for a lecture and discussion session. But it is not going to be a one-way presentation of professional information. Our lecturers will view the film from their own standpoints, and exchange their ideas in their own words. This is because we believe that resistance to global media control stems in part from small voices on the periphery.

Mr. Yamagami, the producer of the film, says: "This film is not something that presents an answer to what we should do." Indeed, it is we ourselves that must find the answer.

There is no answer

Chomsky says: "It is not so hard to listen to the voices outside your cocoon."

We reiterate, what we seek in this film is the desire to learn. It is a necessary exercise for everyone to think about why war breaks out.

The Organization Committee sincerely hopes that those who are full of curiosity will experience the power of learning.