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of her illness was shot this way.

For all night interiors and exteriors Goswamy reached for his favourite film stock, KODAK VISION2 500T 5218. “The shadow detail this stock renders with rich blacks is unparalleled,” he enthuses. “We shot exterior dusk shots without the 85 filter, but with the LLD filter on the camera.”

Goswamy considers 5218 perfect for shooting late after sundown, just before nightfall and ideal for immensely low light situations. “That half hour or so where one gets to grab the shot is a slightly nervous time,” he smiles. “But the stock gave me much more comfort. I was shooting three stops under the ambient with no problem at all.”

Working with a director of Aparna Sen’s reputation and stature also brought their own set of expectations and pressures for the young cinematographer. “We struck a camaraderie pretty early, which helped enormously and I am grateful to her for the opportunity,” he comments.

# Romance among the mangroves

## The Japanese Wife

*The Japanese Wife* is the latest film from acclaimed actor-turned-director, Aparna Sen and is based on an unpublished story by author Kunal Basu.

Starring Rahul Bose as teacher, Snehmoy who lives in Sunderban and Japanese actress, Chigasu Takaku as Miyage, his lover in Japan, the film explores the challenges of a long-distance romance between the two.

The couple begin their unusual relationship as pen friends who exchange wedding vows through letters. Fifteen years pass but they never meet. The shy school teacher is caught between the pull of his marriage – a long standing intimacy devoid of domesticity – and another undefined relationship that offers a comforting domesticity without any possibility of intimacy – thus becoming an unwitting partner to two solitary women.

Produced and distributed by Saregama Films, the English, Japanese and Bengali language film was shot by debutant cinematographer, Anay Goswamy who graduated from the Film & Television Institute of India two years previously and was the Asia Pacific regional winner of the

Kodak Filmschool Competition in 2006 for his work on *The Pocket Watch*.

### Widescreen format

Primarily location-based, *The Japanese Wife* boasts the privilege of being the first major Indian production to shoot in the dense forest of West Bengal’s Sunderban, the world’s largest mangrove forest and sanctuary of Royal Bengal Tigers. Other locations included India’s Kolkata and Yokohama, Tsukuba and Ibaraki in Japan where the natural beauty of ‘Shakura’, the Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival, also became part of the film.

Goswamy worked with an ARRI 435 ES camera with a series of T-1.9 ultra prime lenses; primarily a 24mm and 32mm. “We chose to shoot in the widescreen 1:1.85 format to help keep the film intimate rather than overwhelming,” he explains. “We were finishing the film with a digital intermediate so I did some preliminary tests to check on the grain factor between shooting S35 2.35 and ending up with a blown-up squeezed print as opposed to 1.85. The grain loss on the latter was negligible helping

confirm our decision about the 1.85 route.”

Aiming for a natural, muted look, Goswamy tested film stocks through processing laboratory Adlabs. He preferred the KODAK VISION2 250D 5205 for all daytime interiors and exteriors. “The soft color rendition of the 250D worked beautifully with the Sunderbans,” he recalls. “We shot during the height of summer when the temperatures soar to 44 degrees centigrade and the entire region looks harsh, drab and insipid. The 250D delivered a true rendition of the pale, grey waters of the Matla River.”

### Night interiors

Shooting in the 100 year-old house in Tsuchiura had its advantages and disadvantages. “Whenever there was cloud cover I just opened the typical Japanese sliding doors of the façade of the home and pumped in the soft ambient light with two 8’ x 8’ silver skimmers and two 4’ x 4’ mirrors. We were measuring T-1.05 and I ended up shooting at T-2.0 with only ambient spill and no generated fill.” The scenes where Miyage is lying on the floor in a red kimono when the audience is told