



JAPAN 2021: 100 YEARS OF JAPANESE CINEMA

The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice

Well into the master's post-war golden age, this often overlooked *shoshimin-eiga* (contemporary domestic drama) explores once again the generational divide Ozu was so interested in. A typically precise, almost Chekhovian screenplay, co-written as always with Kogo Noda, dissects a traditional marriage, which is fraying silently in the conflict between *omiaï* ('arranged' marriage, as translated here) and modern sensibilities.

Keiko Tsushima is the errant niece who rebels against the matchmaking, a dilemma confronted mostly by her aunt and uncle (Michiyo Kogure and Shin Saburi), whose own childless arranged union is marked by spite, lies, bullying and avoidance. In a rich and organic interweaving of supporting voices and perspectives, the primary dramatic crisis comes down to weighty silences and suddenly empty rooms – always Ozu's most resonant visual flourish – but tied into the gender war are eloquent critiques of the Japanese bourgeoisie (even the marriage in question boils down to class difference) and of the modern era's loss of respect and meaning.

Of course, Ozu leavens the dynamic with ambivalence, understanding and grey regions of doubt, and the ending reaches an awkward state of happy/sad we may feel within our rights to doubt, but the master's steady gaze alone can absolve us from cynicism.

Michael Atkinson, *Sight & Sound*, Summer 2020

'I took this script out of storage where it had been since it was censored by the Army, because there was no reason for it to stay there. In the original version the main character departs for the war. But because times had changed, I rewrote it so that he departed for South America. But this weakened the dramatic development. I just wanted to reveal some qualities of a man from the viewpoint of a woman, such as a man being good-looking or having good taste.' – Ozu on Ozu, from *Cinema*

Ozu did not seem to be very fond of this film which is surprising for, although a little rambling and anecdotal and lacking the final impact of the best of the 50s films, it is one of his funniest and most easily enjoyable works. Many of the themes touched on reach back to the 1937 film *What Did the Lady Forget?*, especially in regard to the rather snobbish wife and the easy-going husband (beautifully played by Shin Saburi), and the earlier film's domestic squabbles are wittily re-created and enriched in the equivalent scenes here. The clandestine gathering of the wives at the spa near the beginning is one of Ozu's sunniest scenes, as they all begin to get a little tipsy and start comparing their husbands with the swimming carp in the pond outside. Ozu's critical attitude to arranged marriages is also evident in the perky portrait of the young girl who feels torn between the old obligations and her own inclinations. It is also particularly rich in dialogue exchanges (as far as translated subtitles will allow), with a plethora of little verbal jokes and those marvellously timed moments when a single remark or the sudden re-appearance of a character totally reverses what the audience (and the other characters) expects.

John Gillett, National Film Theatre programme notes

THE FLAVOUR OF GREEN TEA OVER RICE (OCHAZUKE NO AJI)

Director: Yasujiro Ozu
©: Shochiku Co. Ltd.
Production Company: Shochiku Co. Ltd.
Producer: Takeshi Yamamoto
Assistant: Shohei Imamura *
Assistant Director: Kozo Yamamoto
Screenplay: Kogo Noda, Yasujiro Ozu
Director of Photography: Yuharu Atsuta
Lighting: Itsuo Takashita
Camera Assistant: Takashi Kawamata
Editor: Yoshiyasu Hamamura
Art Director: Tatsuo Hamada
Music: Ichirô Saitô
Sound Recording: Yoshisaburo Senoo
Studio: Shochiku Ofuna

Cast
Shin Saburi (Mokichi Satake)
Michiyo Kogure (Taeko)
Koji Tsuruta (Noboru)
Chishu Ryu (Sadao Hirayama)
Chikage Awashima (Aya Amamiya)
Keiko Tsushima (Setsuko)
Kuniko Miyake
Eijirô Yanagi
Hisao Toake
Yûko Mochizuki
Koji Shitara
Mie Kitahara
Toshinosuke Nagao

Japan 1952©
115 mins

* Uncredited

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Tokyo Story (Tôkyô monogatari)
Mon 18 Oct 20:20; Thu 21 Oct 14:30; Sat 13 Nov 14:10; Tue 30 Nov 14:00
Throne of Blood (Kumonosu-jô)
Tue 19 Oct 18:10; Thu 21 Oct 20:35 (+ **Inside Cinema: Akira Kurosawa**);
Wed 27 Oct 20:30; Tue 9 Nov 20:40; Fri 12 Nov 14:15 (+ **Inside Cinema: Akira Kurosawa**); Sat 27 Nov 20:50
Early Spring (Sôshun)
Tue 19 Oct 14:30; Wed 20 Oct 20:15; Thu 21 Oct 17:30; Sat 20 Nov 14:50; Tue 23 Nov 17:40
Early Summer (Bakushû)
Tue 19 Oct 20:35; Wed 20 Oct 17:50; Thu 18 Nov 20:20 (+ intro by Professor Alastair Phillips, University of Warwick); Sun 21 Nov 11:30
Yojimbo
Tue 19 Oct 20:55; Thu 21 Oct 17:55; Fri 19 Nov 14:30 (+ **Inside Cinema: Akira Kurosawa**); Fri 26 Nov 18:10; Sun 28 Nov 12:00 15 (+ **Inside Cinema: Akira Kurosawa**)
An Actor’s Revenge (Yukinojô henge)
Wed 20 Oct 14:15; Mon 1 Nov 14:30; Thu 11 Nov 20:40 (+ intro by Jennifer Coates, The University of Sheffield); Sat 20 Nov 12:15
The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice (Ochazuke no aji)
Wed 20 Oct 20:40; Thu 21 Oct 14:40; Mon 8 Nov 14:30; Tue 23 Nov 14:40
Souls on the Road (Rojô no reikion)
Fri 22 Oct 18:00; Sat 30 Oct 15:30
A Page of Madness (Kurutta ichipeiji)
Sat 23 Oct 13:00; Mon 15 Nov 20:50
Silent Cinema presents: I Was Born, But... (Otona no miru ehon – Umarete wa mita keredo)
Sat 23 Oct 15:00; Sun 28 Nov 14:45 (+ intro by Bryony Dixon, BFI National Archive curator)
Our Neighbour, Miss Yae (Tonari no Yae-chan)
Sun 24 Oct 12:40; Mon 1 Nov 18:15 (+ intro by season co-programmer Alexander Jacoby)
Humanity and Paper Balloons (Ninjô kami fûsen)
Sun 24 Oct 15:00; Tue 2 Nov 20:45
Talk: A Time of Change and How Japanese Film Bore Witness to It
Mon 25 Oct 18:20

Children of the Beehive (Hachi no su no kodomotachi)
Mon 25 Oct 20:45 (+ intro by season co-programmer Alexander Jacoby);
Mon 8 Nov 18:20
The Life of Matsu the Untamed (aka The Rickshaw Man) (Muhomatsu no issho)
Tue 26 Oct 20:40; Sun 7 Nov 11:40
Fallen Blossoms (aka Flowers Have Fallen) (Hana chirinu)
Sun 31 Oct 13:00; Wed 3 Nov 18:20 (+ intro by Japanese film scholar Alejandra Armendáriz-Hernández)

In partnership with:



With special thanks to:



My Love Has Been Burning (aka Flame of My Love) (Waga koi wa moenu)
Fri 5 Nov 18:30; Mon 15 Nov 17:40
Love Letter (Koibumi)
Sat 6 Nov 12:30; Sun 21 Nov 14:40 (+ intro by Irene González-López, co-editor of ‘Tanaka Kinuyo: Nation, Stardom and Female Subjectivity’)
An Inn at Osaka (Ôsaka no yado)
Sat 6 Nov 15:30; Sun 21 Nov 18:00 (+ pre-recorded intro by Professor Hiroshi Kitamura, College of William & Mary)
Godzilla (Gojira)
Sun 7 Nov 15:50; Tue 23 Nov 20:40
Marital Relations (Meoto zenzai)
Sun 7 Nov 18:20; Thu 25 Nov 18:00 (+ pre-recorded intro by Professor Hideaki Fujiki, Nagoya University)
Sansho the Bailiff (Sansho Dayu)
Mon 8 Nov 20:40; Sun 28 Nov 18:20
She Was Like a Wild Chrysanthemum (Nogiku no gotoki kimi nariki)
Tue 9 Nov 18:20; Tue 30 Nov 20:40
Harakiri (Seppuku)
Wed 10 Nov 18:00; Tue 16 Nov 20:25
Night Drum (Yoru no tsuzumi)
Wed 10 Nov 20:50; Tue 16 Nov 18:15
Talk: Female Archetypes in Classical Japanese Cinema
Thu 11 Nov 18:10
Yearning (Midareru)
Fri 12 Nov 18:20; Fri 26 Nov 21:00
Elegant Beast (aka The Graceful Brute) (Shitoyakana kedamono)
Wed 17 Nov 20:50; Sat 27 Nov 18:30 (+ pre-recorded intro by Professor Yuka Kanno, Doshisha University)
Talk: The Family and Home in the Golden Age of Japanese Cinema
Thu 18 Nov 18:00
Onibaba
Fri 19 Nov 20:50; Tue 30 Nov 17:50
Tokyo Olympiad (Tôkyô orinpikku)
Sat 20 Nov 16:40; Wed 24 Nov 18:40

J-HORROR WEEKENDER

Ring (Ringu)
Fri 29 Oct 18:10
Dark Water (Honogurai mizu no soko kara)
Fri 29 Oct 20:30
Cure (Kyua)
Sat 30 Oct 18:00
Pulse (Kairo)
Sat 30 Oct 20:40
Audition (Ôdishon)
Sun 31 Oct 15:20
Ichi the Killer (Koroshiya 1)
Sun 31 Oct 18:00
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