



KINUYO TANAKA: A LIFE IN FILM

Kinuyo Tanaka: Film Pioneer

Join us for this richly illustrated talk exploring the career of Kinuyo Tanaka, which guides you through our film selection. This season introduction event will trace how Tanaka came to be considered one of the greatest actors in the history of Japanese cinema, and charts her move to being a ground-breaking female filmmaker, producing films about distinctly feminine topics.

‘I have never considered acting unsatisfying. But I love cinema and realised I couldn’t stop myself from wanting to become a director.’ – Kinuyo Tanaka

Contracted as a teen to Shōchiku studios in 1924, Kinuyo Tanaka flourished during the first golden age of Japanese cinema, acting for major directors including Yasujirō Ozu, Mikio Naruse and Kenji Mizoguchi. As Japan emerged from the destruction of the Second World War, societal roles for women radically shifted. Tanaka seized this opportunity, moving from superstar actor to directing commercial films. ‘I have never considered acting unsatisfying. But I love cinema and realised I couldn’t stop myself from wanting to become a director. I guess my ambitions came to the surface.’

Leveraging her experience as an actor, working for various directors, and inhabiting multiple personas, Tanaka’s films gracefully shapeshift across genres. Irrespective of their diverse styles, when viewed collectively these six films offer a unique perspective on a nation grappling with the scars of war, social upheaval, and modernisation: all seen through the lives of its female citizens.

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Love Letter (Koibumi)

Mon 1 Aug 18:15; Sat 6 Aug 12:00; Sat 20 Aug 12:15; Fri 26 Aug 18:15

Forever a Woman (aka The Eternal Breasts) (Chibusa yo eien nare)

Wed 3 Aug 20:45; Mon 8 Aug 20:40; Sun 21 Aug 14:45; Mon 29 Aug 14:30

The Moon Has Risen (Tsuki wa noborinu)

Sun 7 Aug 15:40; Sat 20 Aug 18:00; Fri 26 Aug 20:40

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Mon 8 Aug 18:30

The Wandering Princess (Ruten no ohi)

Sun 14 Aug 12:20; Sun 21 Aug 18:10; Sat 27 Aug 20:50

Girls of the Night (Onna bakari no yoru)

Sun 14 Aug 18:10; Sat 27 Aug 16:00; Mon 29 Aug 18:20; Wed 31 Aug 20:30

Love under the Crucifix (Ogin-sama)

Tue 16 Aug 20:45; Sun 28 Aug 18:20; Tue 30 Aug 20:45

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In September we will screen six films with Kinuyo Tanaka as actor, including *The Life of Oharu* and *A Hen in the Wind*

Programme notes and credits compiled by the BFI Documentation Unit

Notes may be edited or abridged. Questions/comments? Email prognotes@bfi.org.uk

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