



KUROSAWA

The Bad Sleep Well

(Warui yatsu hodo yoku nemuru)

Introduced by season co-curator Ian Haydn Smith (Sunday 29 January only).

SPOILER WARNING The following notes give away the film's ending.

Tangentially a version of *Hamlet*, Kurosawa's rebuttal to an emerging culture of corruption within Japan's business world sees Toshiro Mifune take on one of his most understated roles as Koichi Nishi, the son of a man who apparently committed suicide because of his involvement with corrupt executives. Now Nishi has the chance to take revenge, skilfully plotting his way into the confidences of the men he holds responsible.

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The Bad Sleep Well, the first film made by Kurosawa's own, newly founded production company, was also the first over which he had complete control. He wanted to make 'a movie of some social significance' and decided to target the culture of corruption he saw pervading post-war Japanese society. This impressive tale of greed, corporate corruption and revenge is a powerful indictment of the dark side of business and politics with distinct overtones of *Hamlet*.

Koichi Nishi (Toshiro Mifune) is a grieving son seeking revenge for the 'suicide' of his father. By assuming a new identity he rises through the ranks of the Public Corporation and cynically marries the President's daughter to better infiltrate the company and expose the corrupt practice that was responsible for his father's death. However, as Koichi falls in love with his wife, disaster looms.

Kurosawa directed three adaptations from Shakespeare. Two were recreated as samurai movies: *Macbeth* became *Throne of Blood* (1957), and *King Lear* inspired his last major film, the epic *Ran* (1985). *The Bad Sleep Well* comes between the two and is the least-known. In addition to its contemporary setting it is the freest adaptation of the three.

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Kurosawa on 'The Bad Sleep Well'

This was the first film of Kurosawa Productions, my own unit which I run and finance myself. From this film on, everything was my own responsibility.

Consequently I wondered about what kind of film to make. Making a film just to make money did not appeal to me – one should not take advantage of an audience. Instead, I wanted to make a film of some social significance. At last I decided to do something about corruption, because it has always seemed to me that graft, bribery, etc., on a public level is the worst crime that there is.

These people hide behind the façade of some great organisation like a company or a corporation – and consequently no one ever really knows how

dreadful they are, what awful things they do. Exposing them I thought of as a socially significant act – and so I started the film.

But even while we were making it, I knew that it wasn’t working out as I had planned, and this was because I was simply not telling and showing enough. Like the final scene with Mori on the telephone. That suggests, but it is not explicit enough. An even worse man is at the other end of that telephone line, but in Japan you cannot go further than that.

[Kurosawa’s comment means the above but is almost untranslatable. In Japanese it reads: *Sodo made tsukondeiku to hobo ni sashisawari ga dete kuru* or ‘if you go (too) far you (might) make trouble come to someone (else?)’ –but the inference here, as in the final telephone scene where the villainous Mori calls someone and tells them that the matter (Mifune’s murder) is taken care of, is that the greatest corruption of all in Japan is governmental. Kurosawa had suggested this in *Ikiru*, but there he was only dealing with a single ward office in the city government. In *The Bad Sleep Well* he was, ostensibly, incriminating big business, but if he had tried to show a corrupt government, trouble would indeed have come to someone. The revelations of the film, even so, were considered quite sensational in Japan, though in Europe and America they seemed tame indeed.]

At any rate it was too bad I didn’t go further. Maybe I could have in say, America, a big country. Japan, however, cannot be this free and this makes me sad.

Akira Kurosawa, edited by Donald Richie, *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1964

THE BAD SLEEP WELL (WARUI YATSU HODO YOKU NEMURU)

Director: Akira Kurosawa
©: Toho Co. Ltd.
Production Company: Kurosawa Productions
Producers: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Akira Kurosawa
Production Supervisor: Hiroshi Nezu
Production Assistant: Hidehiko Eguchi
Chief Assistant Director: Shiro Moritani
Assistant Directors: Yoshimitsu Sakano, Kazuko Kawakita, Kiyoshi Nishimura, Yoichi Matsue
Script Supervisor: Teruyo Nogami
Screenplay: Shinobu Hashimoto, Hideo Oguni, Ryuzo Kikushima, Eijiro Hisaita, Akira Kurosawa
Suggested by an unproduced screenplay by: Mike Y. Inoue *
Inspired by the play Hamlet by: William Shakespeare *
Director of Photography: Yuzuru Aizawa
Lighting: Ichiro Inohara
Assistant Lighting: Sei Arai
Assistant Cameraman: Takao Saito
Stills Photography: Masao Fukuda
Assistant Editor: Reiko Kaneko
Art Director: Yoshiro Muraki
Assistant Art Director: Jun Sakuma
Properties: Koichi Hamamura
Kyoto Costumes: Shoji Kurihara
Hair: Tomoko Asami, Junjiro Yamada
Music: Masaru Sato
Sound Recording: Fumio Yanoguchi, Hisashi Shimogawa
Sound Assistant: Masanao Uehara
Sound Effects: Ichiro Minawa
Transportation: Ginzo Junjiro

Cast

Toshiro Mifune (*Koichi Nishi*)
Takeshi Kato (*Itakura*)
Masayuki Mori (*Iwabuchi*)
Takashi Shimura (*Moriyama*)
Akira Nishimura (*Shirai, contract officer*)
Kamataru Fujiwara (*Wada, accountant*)
Gen Shimizu (*Miura, accountant*)
Kyôko Kagawa (*Keiko, Iwabuchi’s daughter*)
Tatsuya Mihashi (*Tatsuo, Iwabuchi’s son*)
Kyu Sazanka (*Kaneko*)
Chishu Ryu (*Nonaka, public prosecutor*)
Seiji Miyaguchi (*Okakura*)
Nobuo Nakamura (*lawyer*)
Susumu Fujita (*commissioner*)
Koji Mitsui (*journalist*)
Ken Mitsuda (*president of Public Corp.*)
Kôji Nanbara (*Horiuchi*)
Yoshibumi Tajima (*reporter*)
Yoshio Tsuchiya (*ADA secretary*)
Sensho Matsumoto (*Hatano*)
Kin Sugai (*Tomoko Wada*)
Natsuko Kahara (*Mrs Furuya*)
Nobuko Tashiro (*Mrs Moriyama*)
Atsuko Ichinomiya (*Mrs Ariyama*)
Toshiko Higuchi (*Masako Wada*)
Jun Kondo (*reporter*)
Yutaka Sada (*wedding receptionist*)
Ikio Sawamura (*taxi driver*)
Hisashi Yakomori (*reporter*)
Kunie Tanaka (*professional assassin*)
Kyoro Sakurai (*prosecutor*)
Ryoji Shimizu (*worker in Public Corp.*)
Soji Ikukata, Shiro Tsuchiya (*construction company employees*)
Kyoko Ozawa (*Iwabuchi maid*)
Akemi Ueno (*receptionist*)
Hiromi Iwabuchi (*second Iwabuchi maid*)

Japan 1960©
151 mins

* Uncredited

KUROSAWA

The Bad Sleep Well (Warui Yatsu hoho Yoku Nemuru)
Sun 22 Jan 18:00; Sun 29 Jan 14:30 (+ intro by season co-curator Ian Haydn Smith)

Scandal (Shûbun)
Tue 24 Jan 18:10 (+ intro by season co-curator Ian Haydn Smith)

Sanjuro (Tsubaki Sanjûrô)
Thu 26 Jan 21:00; Tue 31 Jan 17:50

The Hidden Fortress (Kakushi Toride no San-Akunin)
Fri 27 Jan 17:45

Seven Samurai (Shichinin no Samurai)
Sat 28 Jan 15:30 BFI IMAX

High and Low (Tengoku to Jigoku)
Sun 29 Jan 18:00 (+ intro by season co-curator Ian Haydn Smith)

The Lower Depths (Donzoku)
Mon 30 Jan 20:20

Kagemusha
Tue 31 Jan 19:35

Stray Dog (Nora Inu)
Wed 1 Feb 20:35; Mon 13 Feb 18:10

Drunken Angel (Yoidore Tenshi)
Thu 2 Feb 18:20; Fri 10 Feb 20:40

The Silent Duel (Shizukanaru Kettô)
Thu 2 Feb 20:40; Sat 11 Feb 18:40

Sanshiro Sugata (Sugata Sanshirô)
Fri 3 Feb 18:20 (+ intro by Ian Haydn Smith, season co-curator);
Sun 12 Feb 15:50

Sanshiro Sugata Part Two (Zoku Sugata Sanshirô)
Fri 3 Feb 20:45; Sun 12 Feb 18:20

The Gathering Storm: Kurosawa Study Day
Sat 4 Feb 12:00

Living (Ikiru)
Sat 4 Feb 17:50; Wed 15 Feb 20:15

**Kurosawa and Shakespeare, Adaptation and Reinvention:
An illustrated talk by Adrian Wootton**
Sun 5 Feb 15:15

Ran
Sun 5 Feb 17:30 (+ intro by Adrian Wootton, CEO of Film London and film
curator); Sat 11 Feb 11:50; Sat 25 Feb 17:20

I Live in Fear (Ikimono no Kiroku)
Mon 6 Feb 18:10; Mon 13 Feb 20:40

Dreams (Yume)
Wed 8 Feb 20:30; Sun 26 Feb 15:30

Throne of Blood (Kumonosu-jô)
Sun 12 Feb 13:00; Fri 17 Feb 20:40; Tue 21 Feb 18:10

Dersu Uzala
Thu 16 Feb 18:10 (+ intro by Ian Haydn Smith, season co-curator); Mon
27 Feb 20:10 (+ intro by Doug Weir, BFI Technical Delivery Manager)

Yojimbo (Yôjinbô)
Sat 18 Feb 20:45; Thu 23 Feb 20:15 (+ intro by Asif Kapadia, season co-
curator)

Rhapsody in August (Hachigatsu no Kyoshikoku)
Sun 19 Feb 18:30; Sat 25 Feb 12:40

Mâdadayo
Mon 20 Feb 20:20; Tue 28 Feb 18:00

Philosophical Screens: Throne of Blood
Tue 21 Feb 20:10

A.K.
Wed 22 Feb 20:50; Sat 25 Feb 20:45

Course: The Kurosawa-Effect
Wed 11 Jan – Wed 22 Feb 18:30

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