



Tokyo Twilight (Tōkyō boshoku)

Director: Yasujiro Ozu

©: Shochiku Co. Ltd.

Production Company: Shochiku Co. Ltd.

Producer: Shizuo Yamanouchi

Assistant Director: Kozo Yamamoto

Screenplay: Kogo Noda, Yasujiro Ozu

Director of Photography: Yuharu Atsuta

Lighting: Akira Aomatsu

Camera Assistant: Takashi Kawamata

Editor: Yoshiyasu Hamamura

Art Director: Tatsuo Hamada

Costumes: Yuji Nagashima

Music: Ichirō Saitō

Sound Recording: Yoshisaburo Senoo

Studio: Shochiku Ofuna

Cast:

Setsuko Hara (*Takako Numata*)

Ineko Arima (*Akiko Sugiyama*)

Chishu Ryu (*Shukichi Sugiyama*)

Isuzu Yamada (*Kisako Soma*)

Teiji Takahashi (*Noburo Kawaguchi*)

Masami Taura (*Kenji Kimura*)

Haruko Sugimura (*Shigeko Takeuchi*)

Sō Yamamura (*Seki Sekiguchi*)

Kinzo Shin (*Ysuo Numata*)

Kamatari Fujiwara (*noodle vendor*)

Nobuo Nakamura (*Sakae Aiba*)

Seiji Miyaguchi

Fujio Suga

Kumeko Urabe

Eiko Miyoshi

Haruo Tanaka

Kazuko Yamamoto

Teruko Nagaoka

Mutsuko Sakura

Junji Masuda

Toshio Shimamura

Tsusai Sugawara

Japan 1957©

141 mins

Digital 4K (restoration)

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SIGHT AND SOUND

A FAMILY AFFAIR: THE FILMS OF YASUJIRO OZU

Tokyo Twilight (Tōkyō boshoku)

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

Tokyo Twilight (1957) is still one of Ozu's most moving films, and perhaps the blackest and most desolate in tone. It concerns a family thrice ruptured: a mother (Isuzu Yamada) long separated from the father (Ryu); one daughter, Takako (Setsuko Hara), leaving her husband and moving back in with her father; the other daughter, Akiko (Ineko Arima), committing suicide after an abortion and a stormy reunion with her mother. *Tokyo Twilight* is decidedly pessimistic, where *Early Summer*, say, is optimistic. But the pessimism is understated, distilled in sounds and silences. The dialogue is for the most part functional. (There is one memorable line: after her elder daughter pays her a visit expressly to accuse her of causing the younger's death, the mother changes her mind in favour of moving north: 'I don't like Tokyo any more.')

Generally, Ozu and Noda use dialogue to angle in on meaning, but in *Tokyo Twilight* dialogue is often at best counterpoint to the centre of a scene – the face of a person waiting for someone, or mechanically continuing an action (brushing hair, operating a pinball machine) as he or she absorbs a disquieting idea or piece of news (Akiko suspecting that she has seen her long-lost mother; the father informed that she has gone to a neighbour for a loan). The words in such scenes are unimportant – the scene is in the empty, compulsive action or in the face, the signs of internal turmoil.

In *Tokyo Twilight* the film is, simply, in the face of Akiko, whether she is looking for her boyfriend, Kenji, or waiting for him, or crying after she asks him what to do about the baby – her sobbing blending with the sounds of boat engines and muffled hammering from the harbour around her as she sits, almost motionless. The sounds and the image suggest finality, questions without answers. Akiko's set, unsmiling face dominates the film, cutting knife-like through its fabric. Ozu respects the character's dissatisfaction. He doesn't attempt to placate her. By juxtaposing her sobbing with the muted thudding of engines, he likens the end of her subjective world to the dull continuation of the objective world. By giving these disparate sounds equal weight, he gives her anger and despair their proper authority as objective fact.

Tokyo Twilight is unusually, unnaturally quiet for an Ozu film. The bland, functional dialogue, the silences, the cheerless black and white photography and the subdued, ironically lilting background music at once set off and mute the mood of despair. The meaning of the film rests in the pointed silences of the characters. Those silences are like psychic dead ends, intimations of defeat: the father at the pinball machine; Akiko refusing to answer his questions; Takako refusing to talk to her mother when she brings flowers for the dead Akiko; the boy stunned and silent after Akiko slaps him and runs out; the mother waiting in the train compartment for Takako (who purposefully does not come to the station to say goodbye) as a military chorus sings in the

A FAMILY AFFAIR: THE FILMS OF YASUJIRO OZU

Tokyo Story (Tōkyō monogatari)

From Fri 1 Sep

I Flunked, But... (Rakudai wa shitakeredo)

Sat 2 Sep 16:15; Wed 13 Sep 20:35

Tokyo Chorus (Tōkyō no kōrasu)

Sat 2 Sep 18:30; Sun 17 Sep 16:00

An Autumn Evening with Yasujiro Ozu

Mon 4 Sep 18:15

I Was Born, But... (Umarete wa mita keredo)

Mon 4 Sep 20:30 (+ intro by Jinhee Choi, King's College London); Fri 15 Sep 18:30

Tokyo Twilight (Tōkyō boshoku)

Thu 7 Sep 18:00; Wed 27 Sep 20:15

The Only Son (Hitori musuko)

Fri 8 Sep 20:40; Sat 16 Sep 18:10 (+ intro by season curator Ian Haydn Smith)

A Story of Floating Weeds (Ukigusa monogatari)

Sat 9 Sep 11:50; Sat 23 Sep 16:00

Good Morning (Ohayō)

Sat 9 Sep 18:10; Sat 30 Sep 20:40

Floating Weeds (Ukigusa)

Sat 9 Sep 20:30; Sun 1 Oct 11:30 BFI IMAX; Mon 2 Oct 18:00

Late Spring (Banshun)

Sun 10 Sep 12:15 (+ intro by season curator, Ian Haydn Smith); Fri 22 Sep 20:50

Early Summer (Bakushu)

Sun 10 Sep 15:00; Wed 13 Sep 14:30; Sat 23 Sep 20:35

Brothers and Sisters of the Toda Family (Todake no kyōdai)

Mon 11 Sep 18:00; Sat 30 Sep 18:20

There Was a Father (Chichi ariki)

Mon 11 Sep 20:40; Thu 28 Sep 18:20

City Lit at BFI: Ozu: Cinema of Everyday Life

Tue 12 Sep – 3 Oct 18:30-20:30

Record of a Tenement Gentleman (Nagaya Shinshiroku)

Tue 12 Sep 20:30; Wed 20 Sep 21:00; Sat 23 Sep 18:30

Early Spring (Sōshun)

Thu 14 Sep 20:10; Sun 1 Oct 18:00

The Flavour of Green Tea Over Rice (Ochazuke no aji)

Fri 15 Sep 20:45; Sat 30 Sep 15:30

The Anatomy of Ozu

Sat 16 Sep 12:00-17:00

Late Autumn (Akibiyori)

Sun 17 Sep 18:20; Sat 30 Sep 12:30

Equinox Flower (Higanbana)

Thu 21 Sep 18:00; Sun 1 Oct 15:10

An Autumn Afternoon (Sanma no aji)

Sun 24 Sep 18:25 (+ intro); Tue 3 Oct 20:45

Influence and Inspiration

Make Way for Tomorrow

Sat 2 Sep 12:40; Sun 24 Sep 15:50 (+ intro by season curator Ian Haydn Smith)

Tokyo-Ga

Sun 3 Sep 14:00; Mon 2 Oct 20:45

With thanks to

With special thanks to Janus Films
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background. (The latter an almost excruciatingly powerful scene of slowly extinguished hope, of irreconcilability.) These are the crucial, illuminative moments, revealing each character as essentially alone, helpless with his or her own feelings, like streams running down into nothing rather than out into the sea.

The chill melancholy of the film anticipates the air of anomie of characteristic late 50s/early 60s European films like *La Dolce Vita*, *The Fire Within* and *Eclipse* (and also recalls the chilliness of Val Lewton's study of a suicide, *The Seventh Victim*, 1943). All Ozu's films to some extent concern the effects of isolation and the dissolution of the family. But *Tokyo Twilight* is only about such isolation and alienation, and is not necessarily a lesser film than, say, *Tokyo Story* for its delimiting of subject. The muted sounds of a clock ticking, a train whistle or a dog barking late at night serve to underline the human silences at the heart of the film. The one sound that is not muted, that is perhaps even augmented, is that of a baby's rattle, which its mother, Takako, accidentally kicks once and which Takako's father picks up and shakes at the end of the film. That sound is the closest *Tokyo Twilight* comes to a note of hope. Yet in the context of shattered lives and seemingly unaccountable breakdowns in relationships, the too harsh sound of the rattle becomes itself – if not quite pessimistic – ambiguous. The end of the film leaves the viewer with an overwhelming sense of helplessness, a helplessness that comes from seeing these two people left alone after the tragedy of the daughter's suicide, with the tragedy of her suicide. As in *Late Spring*, we have been living with the daughter's anguish and forgetting that of the father (and sister); and at the end we are still on the outside looking in, at these strangely ambiguous people we now realise we hardly know, and will never know. For the film ends with the father on his way to work, 'like any other day'.

Don Willis, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1978-79

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