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Nihon no higeki (A Japanese tragedy), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1953

Yorokobi mo kanashimi mo ikutsohitsuki (Times of joy and sorrow), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1957

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Yuyake-gumo (Clouds at twilight), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1956

Sri Lanka no ai to wakare (Love and separation in Sri Lanka), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1976

Natsukashiki fue ya taiko (Eyes, the sea and a ball), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1967

Shito no densetsu (Legend of a duel to the death), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1963

Utae wakado-tachi (Sing, young people!), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1963

Futari de aruita iku haru aki (The days we spent together), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1962

Onna (Woman), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1948

Haru no yume (Spring dreams), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1960

Nogiko no gotoki kimi nariki (She was like a wild chrysanthemum), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1955

Yotsuya kaidan (The Yotsuya ghost story), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1949

Nijushi no hitomi (Twenty-four eyes), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1954

Kazabana (Snow flurry), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1959

Kotoshi no koi (This year's love), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1962

Kyo mo mata kakute ari nan (Thus another day), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1959

Sekishuncho (The bird of springs past), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1959

# Japanese Film Directors by Audie Bock

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Among the postwar masters of the Japanese cinema, Keisuke Kinoshita is the only one for whom the movies were his first love and true calling. Even today, when he has virtually retired into television production from the directing of feature films—aside from giving in to five years of pressure to make the 1976 *Love and Separation in Sri Lanka*—it is still the movies that fascinate him and for which he pours out ideas. With his own peculiar combination of modesty and pride, "I can't help it," he laughs, "ideas for films have always just popped into my head like scraps of paper into a wastebasket."<sup>1</sup>

The result is that this small and gentlemanly director has proved to be the most prolific giant of his generation, turning out some 42 films in 23 years. The temptation is to assume that such a prodigious output could only characterize someone who repeated himself continually. But Kinoshita has consistently surprised critics by refusing to be bound by genre, technique or dogma. He has excelled in both comedy and tragedy; the "home drama" of the contemporary family in isolation from social problems, and period films exposing social injustices; "all location" films and films shot completely in a one-house set, he has pursued a severe photographic realism with the long-take, long shot method, and he has gone equally far toward stylization with fast cutting, intricate wipes, tilted cameras, and even medieval scroll-painting and Kabuki stage techniques. Each film has had some major facet of experimentation for Kinoshita. But he claims that his determination to try everything has prevented him from becoming a master of any one thing: "Everything I've done has been somehow half-baked."<sup>2</sup> Others would disagree, for there are many who, like director Masaki Kobayashi, a Kinoshita pupil, attribute his breadth to genius. Kinoshita's modesty might even be motivated by guilt, for he repeatedly apologizes for having had such a wonderful time and doing exactly as he pleased throughout his filmmaking career.<sup>3</sup> It is the apology of the gifted natural talent who cannot understand why providence has singled him out for greater endowment than his fellows.

Despite his many innovations, however, there is a consistency to Kinoshita's work. It is the high value placed on innocence, purity and beauty that has caused him to be labeled "the eternal youth."<sup>4</sup> His own statement that "I have always believed since I was a child that beautiful things were true" has been extended to include the friendships of youth, maternal love, youth's dreams of the future, and young love.<sup>5</sup> His social and political criticism has accordingly been leveled at whatever and whoever deceives these pure and innocent notions. Kinoshita may consequently be accused of a certain naiveté, even a studied sentimentality, for many of the purest notions are inevitably betrayed with the course of simply living, and investing these moments with the weight of

tragedy is of course going too far. But Kinoshita's persistent naiveté, his devotion to a sentimental ideal of purity and beauty, is precisely what lends his films their characteristic flavor. In his finest endeavors he succeeds in creating a nostalgia for these values that is next to excruciating. For the Japanese, who have revered simplicity, honesty, purity, devotion and especially straight-forwardness since the days of the samurai, the infallible attraction of the Kinoshita film has lain in seeing heroes who appear to be ordinary people like themselves, but are actually as pure, innocent and good as they would like to be. And yet there is no duplicity, no hypocrisy in Kinoshita's characterizations. The director who believes what is beautiful and pure is the truth sees all kinds of movies, and his most recent favorite at this writing is Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky*. It is part of what he sees as a long current of "beauty" in American films, and if Kinoshita has foregone other ideals in the course of his career, he has not given up on this one: "I admire beautiful, simple, pure relationships between individuals. These are what we need for world understanding and peace. We must have something to believe in."<sup>6</sup>

## Movie Runaway

Kinoshita was born in December 1912 in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture, about half-way between Tokyo and Kyoto, where his family had a grocery store. By the time he was eight years old, he was already a passionate movie fan, and was sure he wanted to become a film director. But he dutifully attended technical high school in Hamamatsu, and in his late teens unwillingly began study for entrance examinations to the college his parents wanted him to attend. But just at this time Hamamatsu became the location for the shooting of a period film, and the actors came to shop for local products at the Kinoshita store. Keisuke befriended actor Junosuke Bando, who helped him run away to Kyoto, where most period films are still made, and where he thought he would not be found, since runaways from Hamamatsu always headed for Tokyo.<sup>7</sup> But his grandfather came after him and took him back home the next day. The outcome of this display of rebellious devotion was felicitous, however, as Yasujiro Ozu's resistance to his family's opposition to a film career had been about a decade before: if the boy is so determined, they concluded, they ought to let him go into movies. "I'm the only director I know of who has always been this crazy about film,"<sup>8</sup> says Kinoshita, as if it were a congenital disease that turned out to be a blessing.

Resigning themselves to their son's desires, the family set about trying to help him, and at last his mother secured an introduction to Shochiku's Kamata studios, where Ozu, Naruse, and Yasujiro Shimazu were already creating their contributions to the first golden age of

Japanese cinema—with the *shomin-geki* genre. But the response to Kinoshita's appeal was that he would have no chance of entering as an assistant director without a university education, but there might be room for him as a photographer.<sup>9</sup> Although neither Shimazu, Ozu, nor Naruse had had a university education, Kinoshita believed what he was told and immediately applied to the Oriental Photography School, where he was told he could not be admitted without at least a half year's practical experience. Undaunted, he went to work in a photography shop in Tokyo's Hibiya district. He soon fought with the owner and moved to another shop in the Kanda district, and finally gained enough experience to enter the school. After graduating he was ready to apply to Shochiku, only to be told no camera assistants were needed, but he would be welcome in the film processing laboratory. Kinoshita's determination never flagged, however, and he took the job. "If it doesn't work out," he thought, "I can always go back to Hamamatsu and open a photography shop."<sup>10</sup> This was in 1933.

From the processing laboratory, which he hated, Kinoshita was at last summoned to the photography section to work under the chief cinematographer for Yasujiro Shimazu. He would spend three years as a camera assistant, during which he developed his personal ideas about composition and editing and made a bargain with his colleague Hiroshi Kusuda to take him along as his cinematographer should he succeed in becoming a director.<sup>11</sup> His seniors would scold him for watching the acting rehearsals instead of concentrating solely on the camera, Kinoshita recalled, but finally one of the several Shimazu assistants to become great directors in their own right, Kozaburo Yoshimura (1911–), told him he really ought to switch to the directors' section.<sup>12</sup> Shimazu himself asked Kinoshita's superior to send him over to become assistant director after he had been camera assistant for two years, but the chief refused, and Kinoshita spent another year at the camera before Shimazu came directly to him. He accepted, only to incur the wrath of both the chief cinematographer and all the assistant directors he was bypassing without taking the entrance examination for their section. Shimazu tried to make peace, but Kinoshita said he never felt so trapped in his life.<sup>13</sup> With his entry into the Shimazu group, chief assistant Shiro Toyoda (1906–77) was promoted to director and would go on to make many excellent films, while Yoshimura became next under Shimazu.

Kinoshita would spend another six years as assistant director, working like a slave and without respite for the tyrannical Shimazu. "Yoshimura and I got the worst of it," Kinoshita said, "but in retrospect I'm glad he was reluctant to let his assistants work for anyone else."<sup>14</sup> Although Kinoshita became chief assistant to Yoshimura when he was promoted in 1939, it is Shimazu that he names as his real mentor. "He relied heavily on

his intuition," Kinoshita says, "and didn't like calculating everything in advance," which Kinoshita says is very much like his own method. "When the actors come onto the set in full costume and makeup for the first time, it changes the director's image. It grows in fits and starts during the shooting process. I learned this from Shimazu."<sup>15</sup> Out of this experience came Kinoshita's own intuitive, experimental approach as well as his autocratic attitude toward his own production staff, whom he did not like to lend.

But at Shochiku the real criterion for advancement was scriptwriting for Shiro Kido, and Kinoshita set about this too with a vengeance. "I knew everything I submitted would be rejected, so I'd write a melodrama, give it to him, and have a comedy ready by the time the melodrama came back, and then start on a tragedy."<sup>16</sup> It was a good experience, Kinoshita feels, in developing variety, for he turned out about two scripts a month before he was promoted, some three a year thereafter, as he was also writing for Yoshimura. Just when he was about to make a test film for his promotion, however, he was drafted, and on return was sent back to Yoshimura's staff. It was another year of writing scripts under the uncomfortable conditions of the Pacific War before the definitive promotion, deserved many times over, came at last in 1943.

## Purity and Laughter

The first script Kinoshita wrote with Kido's blessing was rejected by the Information Ministry, but the second, *The Blossoming Port*, passed censorship, and he set out with a large budget and star cast to film on location in the southern Kyushu port town of Amakusa. Kinoshita was radiantly confident and had a wonderful time, with a full 40 days spent on location and another 20 in the studio. He feels he owes much to Kido for giving him such a rousing start and all the way along for "bringing him up" as a director.<sup>17</sup> Indeed his debut 1943 *The Blossoming Port* shows occasional odd technical indulgences, such as a fantasy rear-screen projection sequence during a carriage ride into town, but overall has the look of an experienced director's work.

As with the first film Kinoshita's friend Akira Kurosawa made the same year, *The Blossoming Port* reveals much of what would come later. The idyllic seaport location would reappear in *Twenty-Four Eyes* (1954) and *Lovely Flute and Drum* (1967). The city-country contrast would be a theme of comedies like the Carmen set. Most striking, however, is the comedy form, with which Kinoshita would establish the highest reputation in the postwar era rivaled only by Kon Ichikawa, and then rush off in other directions and return to it only periodically. It has been held that in Japan "comedy of character is rare and satire is almost

unheard of," and that "both would be even more rare were it not for the work of Keisuke Kinoshita. . . ."<sup>18</sup> *The Blossoming Port* is built around a confrontation between two stereotypes, city slickers and country bumpkins. A great deal of the hilarity derives from the breaking of these set images, however. The two crooks quickly reveal their lack of slickness by bungling their arrival in town: both come posing as the same person. After they straighten things out between themselves, the one who takes a painter's role (Ken Uehara superbly cast against his romantic type) then proceeds to destroy his stereotype further by falling in love with a local girl. She in turn proves to be not quite the gullible simpleton the crooks have taken all the townspeople for, and confronts him with the fact that she knows what they are up to. Unlike Kurosawa's 1943 *Sanshiro Sugata*, which presages the introspective, self-perfecting, existential hero, the Kinoshita debut is a drama made from close personal relationships in search of purity. When the purity emerges and the social conditions allow it to flourish, we have comedy—the crooks relent in shame and end by taking nothing.

Kinoshita would pursue comedy of the sort he began with *The Blossoming Port* into the postwar era, with no change in the values he upholds. Just as he satirized city slickers, country bumpkins, and blind reverence for University of Tokyo graduates (as one of the crooks also pretends to be) in his first film, he went on to satirize the nouveau riche and the impoverished aristocracy in *A Toast to the Young Miss* (1949), the feudalistic patriarch and the independent postwar individualist family he tries to control in *Broken Drum* (1949), city and country again in *Carmen Comes Home* (1951), and all manner of postwar stereotypes in *Carmen's Pure Love* (1952). The avaricious, lazy and untalented playboy artist, his wealthy playgirl fiancée, her militarist-politician mother, and Carmen the stripper's conviction that she is an artist, all come under the fire of Kinoshita's gags and witty dialogue. Much later he would revive his satire in the tyrannical suburban grandmother and the pseudo-tough hoodlums of *A Candle in the Wind* (1957), and the bored bourgeoisie confronted with a sweet-potato vendor who turns out to have been the grandmother's first love in *Spring Dreams* (1960). The Kinoshita flavor of optimistic sentimentality infuses all these comedies: class differences and country-city barriers can be broken down, and this is usually brought about by love as a matter of individual choice. This is best seen in *A Toast to the Young Miss*, but is a strong theme also in *Broken Drum* and *Spring Dreams*, where daughters defy parents' commands and pick their own husbands. Kinoshita's comedy, in sum, affirms the movie myths of love conquering all and the good, honest, and pure succeeding in the end.

The Carmen character, however (Hideko Takamine cast against her serious, intelligent type), introduces greater complexity and consequent-

ly greater realism into the comic portrayals. Not only is she a country girl with a citified veneer of outrageous manners (smoking cigarettes, for example) but she retains such pure good-heartedness and innocence that she verges on stupidity (there is talk in *Carmen Comes Home* of her having been kicked in the head as a child by a cow). Kinoshita takes a kind of "blessed are the simple-minded" attitude toward her, but he does not let her win in the end. Carmen shows yet another virtue, one that becomes the key to Kinoshita's tragedies: she continues in her self-sacrifice, both for her "art" and for her love, even when she knows she is not loved in return.

### Reverse Angle

The thinness of the line between comedy and tragedy cannot be overstressed in Kinoshita's case. One of the reasons he was able to move back and forth so freely between the two is that his protagonists in both retain the same traits—innocence, devotion, and self-sacrifice. Just as his villainous protagonists in *The Blossoming Port* are redeemed by discovering their own capacity for self-sacrifice, his tragic heroes—who are almost all heroines—accept this virtue as given. Again in the tragic realm, little difference between a wartime style and a postwar refinement of the same ethical stance can be found in Kinoshita's work.

*Army* (1944) has been maligned as a fascist film,<sup>19</sup> as well all films made under wartime Information Ministry regulations may be. In actuality, however, it is a film about a family focusing on the relationship of devotion between mother and son. The father, honest and unbending, is one of those male characters Kinoshita has been criticized for making "more shame-conscious than necessary for men"<sup>20</sup>—ashamed of anything impure or less than straightforward, which is why he makes a poor businessman. But at the time Kinoshita was subjected to virulent criticism for his ending to the film, in which his own philosophy completely undermines the war effort. Scenarist Ikeda had written only one sentence, "The mother sees the son off at the station," and told Kinoshita he expected the director, being who he was, would improvise as he saw fit in any case.<sup>21</sup> Kinoshita has the mother (one of the late Kinuyo Tanaka's great mid-career roles) refuse at first to see off her son, called up for duty at the front, because she knows she will cry. Alone in the shop she feels a sudden dizziness come over her. In closeup she begins to recover, mumbling to herself the code of the military man. The camera moves in closer on her distracted, almost crazed face and her mumble begins to fade, replaced by the sound of bugles. She revives, the camera pans around the empty house, and finally picks her out in long shot running down the street. A fast montage of the crowd of well-wishers

rushing to the station increases the tension. The mother, stumbling through the mobs of flag-waving, shouting townspeople, catches sight of her son in uniform, marching with the others. Orchestral music rises as the camera shows the crowd running; the mother cries; the troops march; the film ends with a low angle medium closeup on her tear-stained face, praying as the crowd jostles her from all sides.

Needless to say, the emotion that surges up in this ending is hardly one that promotes a war effort. The very length of the scene, the close concentration on the mother's almost delirious sorrow at her son's departure—rather than on his enthusiasm or readiness to die—turns the whole into exactly what it was labeled by the Information Ministry, an "anti-war film." His next project on the Kamikaze troops was rejected because the Ministry now felt that such a director could never portray the correct spirit of the suicide corps. The next was also rejected, this time because it had nothing to do with national policy. Kinoshita was ready to quit film, recognizing his inadequacies: "I can't lie to myself in my dramas. I couldn't direct something that was like shaking hands and saying 'come die.'" <sup>22</sup> Like Kurosawa, Kinoshita could not keep himself from pursuing authentic emotions and realistic characterizations despite national policy; both were criticized and ended—Kinoshita a year earlier—by waiting out the end of the war.

Immediately after the war, Kinoshita took up the very same theme he had introduced in *Army*. In *Morning for the Osone Family* (1946) a widow whose personal beliefs and child-rearing method have been very liberal has to stand by as two of her sons die in military service and the third is imprisoned for his anti-war publications. The film also introduces Kinoshita's only real, incorrigible villain, the militarist uncle who encourages the youngest son's enlistment in the Kamikaze corps. As in *Army*, the central focus is really on the women, the mother and daughter, their recognition of what is right and their inability to make themselves heard. The daughter's pleas for justice are treated as insolence by her uncle, and the mother simply gives in to the man's insistence on running his dead brother's family. Kinoshita shows the mother as weak, never openly renouncing her beliefs but allowing them to be denigrated and her authority trampled upon. In the face of a brother-in-law whose viciousness is supported by the society at large, her own ethical purity has no power.

Kinoshita's women, the central figures in all of his tragedies, always know that war, political oppression, class distinctions and individual selfishness are evils. Their values always side with freedom of expression, love of family and, at the same time, romantic love, and overall honesty and straightforwardness. What they do in situations where their values are threatened is endure, sometimes in silence and suffering, sometimes

protesting, but in extremity they choose death rather than forfeit the purity of their emotion and commitment. Such is the case of the persecuted girl who has been sent to the prison-like boarding school to keep her away from the boy she loves in *The Garden of Women* (1954), as well as the self-sacrificing mother abandoned and scorned by her children in *A Japanese Tragedy* (1953). In *The Ballad of the Narayama* (1958) the aging heroine, in a horrifying self-sacrifice so that others in the family can eat, destroys her front teeth and hastens her own death. In Kinoshita's great chronicle tragedies *The River Fuefuki* (1960) and *Twenty-four Eyes* (1954, his most popular film in Japan), the war-hating heroines endure the loss of husbands and children, unable to restrain them from participating. The schoolteacher of *Twenty-four Eyes* opposes the persecution of leftists and the fascism that leads to war by resigning from her job. In what is perhaps Kinoshita's most heart-rendingly simple, sentimental film (and one of his own favorites), the 1955 *You Were Like a Wild Chrysanthemum*, the young country girl mutely gives up the younger boy she loves and who loves her because his mother has greater social ambitions for him. Subjected to an early arranged marriage, she dies in pregnancy, clutching his letters but never having uttered his name. In *The Bitter Spirit* (1961), a woman forced to marry into a powerful local family endures far from mutely, but endures nonetheless, until she can help her children escape from the feudalistic surroundings that ruined her own life.

This consistent strain of morally pure if not always courageous women who sacrifice, endure, and sometimes even bring about change (*The Garden of Women*, *The Bitter Spirit*) act as the conscience and the vindicators of the female movie-going audience. Whether they emerge as politically weak or, in very rare cases like the aforementioned, as strong, whether they suffer at the hands of the family system or represent its most loving and comforting aspects, their moral imperative is always purity of feeling. They partake of a dominant flavor in the films of the Shochiku company that began as early as the development of the Kamata studios' style by Shiro Kido in the 1920s. Kamata went into the making of films for a female audience—the so-called woman's film (*josei eiga*)—because “women have much stronger feelings than men” and because “art is founded on feeling; movies are art, so women would necessarily view movies as important.”<sup>23</sup> But even more important than the emotional basis of dramatic films for Kido was the moral basis: “The old morality oppressed women and in so doing gave rise to many dramatic situations . . . they had nothing to rely on but maternal love. Kamata movies tried to cultivate obedience and gratitude on the part of the children toward mothers for their many sacrifices. We made women our allies and praised their virtues.”<sup>24</sup> Kinoshita, avowedly raised by Kido, continued

this tradition at Shochiku's postwar Ofuna studios, and became in the 1950s the major creator of women's films labeled as “Ofuna flavor”—warm, sentimental, subscribing to myths of basic human goodness, romantic love and maternal righteousness. The director's work is by no means limited to this viewpoint on life, but his most popular films—comedies and tragedies alike—have displayed these traits.

## Beyond Genre

Kinoshita's method, from the very beginning of his career, prevented him from falling into a single genre trap. Already as an assistant director he experimented with melodrama, tragedy, comedy, light romance, as much variety as possible in order to make an impression on Kido. When he became a director he continued alternating genres as the ideas overcame him, always testing out new methods as he treated new material. His philosophy of beauty and purity, with the sentimentality it engenders, and some of his staff members, are perhaps the only constants in the staggering multitude of subjects and techniques in his work. In this respect, he is very much like his friend Kurosawa, whose philosophy of existential humanism and individualism pervades an entire career. But in the prolific Kinoshita's case, there are almost twice as many films in which to find this marriage of constant philosophy and varying form. He has been compared, because of his musical methods, including song as diversion or commentary on the action, with René Clair, whom he met in France in 1951.<sup>25</sup> But Kinoshita himself denies any single influence from abroad: “Yes, I loved Clair very much when I was young, but Duvivier . . . I always wanted to be a director like Julien Duvivier—he did everything. And Renoir . . . I would say my own style really changed after I saw Jean Renoir's *The River* [made in India in 1951] . . . and Billy Wilder, and Carol Reed . . . but you see, I like too many different things, so I could never stop naming directors whose work has impressed me.”<sup>26</sup>

Kinoshita, unlike Kurosawa and Kon Ichikawa, has always preferred to write his own original scripts. However, he has worked with a number of scriptwriters, including Tadao Ikeda (*Army*) and Kogo Noda (*The Good Fairy*, 1957), who also wrote for Yasujiro Ozu and Mikio Naruse; Eijiro Hisaita (*Morning for the Osone Family*, *Apostasy*, 1948, and *The Yotsuya Ghost Story*, 1949), who also wrote for Kurosawa; his own sister Yoshiko Kusuda (*Clouds at Twilight*, 1956); and some who were or would become directors in their own right: Akira Kurosawa (*The Portrait*, 1948), Kaneto Shindo (*A Toast to the Young Miss*), Masaki Kobayashi (*Broken Drum*), and Zenzo Matsuyama (*Distant Clouds*, 1955). After 1956, however, with only one exception, all of his scripts are his own, including the literary adaptations. Earlier he was encouraged



to stimulate his own style by using other people's ideas, but now he insists his own ideas are the best and the quickest. "Unless you are working with a great scenarist, like Hisaita, for example, who took my idea for *Morning for the Osone Family* and did exactly as I wanted him to, they are all very jealous of every word they've written. Trying to make corrections is too time-consuming and troublesome. My mind is always ahead of theirs by several steps anyway."<sup>27</sup> Perhaps as a result of doing all his own scripts, however, his later works show a certain uniform sentimentality. Nevertheless, the breadth of material is immediately evident in everything from adaptations of serious modern novels like *Apostasy*, based on Toson's *Hakai (The Broken Commandment)*, to the boisterous Carmen comedies, to reflections on oppression of the peasants in the feudal era like *The River Fuefuki*.

In his treatment of actors, Kinoshita presents the opposite of the mute severity of a Mikio Naruse. Hideko Takamine, who stars in some eleven Kinoshita films, including masterpieces such as the Carmen comedies, *The Garden of Women*, *Twenty-four Eyes*, *The River Fuefuki* and *The Bitter Spirit*, aside from admiring the many different types of women Kinoshita can portray with great depth, finds him easy to work with because he is so straightforward about likes and dislikes, praise and blame.<sup>28</sup> She quotes him as repeating, "The two types of people I can't stand are the stupid and the slow," and (whenever he took a shot he liked), "see what a good director I am?!"<sup>29</sup> In Takamine's estimation, Kinoshita would seem to share with Kon Ichikawa the conviction that actors have to be treated with great tenderness or they cannot perform well, while demanding almost as much of his staff as he did of himself. A measure of the enthusiasm of the players who have worked with Kinoshita—and he has worked with many top stars and introduced many a new face ("Nothing can equal their freshness, and besides, the experienced actors lead them.")<sup>30</sup>—is the fact that Takamine thinks she appeared in more Kinoshita films than she actually has. Credit must be given to what she describes as his "maternal" attitude—he was also intermediary for her marriage to his assistant, Zenzo Matsuyama.

A familiar approach carries over into Kinoshita's cinematography, which has always been executed by his brother-in-law and former colleague in the Shochiku photography section, Hiroshi Kusuda. Again this is a way for Kinoshita to retain total control over his films. "When I first started out Kido opposed the idea of having a director and a cinematographer who were both unknowns working together, but I got my way. I knew I had to have someone who would do exactly as I wanted, and Kusuda and I had agreed on this."<sup>31</sup> As in the case of scriptwriters, Kinoshita finds cinematographers with their own way of doing things more of a hindrance than help. He designs every camera setup himself.

With his inspirational method of shooting, this is of course a necessity. "Only the director can know how one shot is going to follow another," he maintains, "and besides, I had to start out as a cinematographer, so I know what to do."<sup>32</sup> His confidence has aided him in attacking as wide a variety of photographic situations as dramatic situations. The 1946 *Morning for the Osone Family* was all shot with a one-house interior set (except for the ending the U.S. Occupation forced him to shoot at a prison, and which he feels subverts the aesthetic intention of the film); the 1948 *Woman* was all shot on the steep hillsides, farms and winding streets of the seaside resort town of Atami. The 1951 *Carmen Comes Home*, most of it, too, shot on location, was the first all-color feature-length film in Japan; fortunately, Kinoshita shot it simultaneously in black-and-white, which doubled the work, because the early Fuji film process did not prove lasting. In 1955, to give an antique flavor to the recalled story, he used masks throughout *You Were Like a Wild Chrysanthemum*. In the 1958 *Ballad of the Narayama*, he used color, wide-screen, spotlighting, dimming and curtains for scene changes, and set that drop or slide out of the frame to simulate the feeling of the Kabuki stage. For the 1960 *River Fuefuki*, he drew on his training in the processing laboratory to achieve medieval battle picture-scroll effects: eerie green, lavender, and sepia cloud patterns, and cartouches with the names of the famous battle scenes intrude constantly to remind us of the aesthetic recording of this ghastly sixteenth-century reality.

Music has, like cinematography, been a family affair for Kinoshita. When his brother Chuji, who had studied composition, had no work at the end of the war, he invited him to come work with him. Since 1946 all of Kinoshita's film music has been done by his brother, who even plays the role of the pianist brother in *Broken Drum*. In comedies and lighter musical films like their first one together, *The Girl I Loved* (1946), the Kinoshita brothers team excels, but Chuji's experimental approach has served other films less well—the flamenco guitar theme in *The Bitter Spirit*, for example, sounds disturbingly inappropriate to western ears, but perhaps startled the Japanese no more than Fumio Hayasaka's use of Ravel's "Bolero" did in Kurosawa's 1950 *Rashomon*.

When it comes to editing, Kinoshita feels he has done enough. "Except for Kurosawa, the Japanese follow a shooting order that is exactly the same as the finished film. If you want a closeup in between two medium shots, you stop and shoot that closeup." He leaves the editing to the staff editor because, he says, "After doing my own writing, directing of actors and camera setups, I'd rather have a little time left to eat, drink, and talk about movies with my friends."<sup>33</sup> At the rate Kinoshita made films, however, usually producing two for every one the company requested, one wonders where he found any free time at all.

## A Japanese Tragedy

Although Kinoshita's production rate was extraordinarily fast, like most directors he retains deepest affection for the works on which he spent the most time and had the largest budget. For Kinoshita, predictably, there is no single favorite, but several that tend to be his most technically experimental and his most tragic: *The River Fuefuki*, *You Were Like a Wild Chrysanthemum*, *The Ballad of the Narayama*, *The Scent of Incense* (1964), and *A Japanese Tragedy*.<sup>34</sup> The story behind the making of *A Japanese Tragedy* fully reveals the depth of Kinoshita's feeling for it.

In exchange for Akira Kurosawa's script for *The Portrait* in 1948, Kinoshita had promised to write a script for a Kurosawa assistant who was to be promoted.<sup>35</sup> He felt an obligation to do a good job, and gathered a great deal of information for the film, gradually becoming so interested in it he was loathe to give it away. But when he turned it over to Toho, they decided it was too difficult for that particular director, and in fact would not be a good commercial risk.<sup>36</sup> A delighted Kinoshita immediately had Shochiku buy it back and he set about filming it in 1953, using newsreel footage in a way that had never been done before to produce one of his most moving films.

*A Japanese Tragedy* has been called "a *haha-mono* or 'mother film,' but one of the very finest."<sup>37</sup> In essence this means it succeeds in doing what Shiro Kido said the Kamata film was designed to do in the late twenties and early 1930s: show that the self-sacrificing mother deserves gratitude and obedience. Indeed the widowed mother who has to work as a maid in a resort inn to support her two contemptuous children strongly recalls the middle-aged geisha of Mikio Naruse's 1933 *Apart from You*. In Kinoshita's modern version of the unappreciated mother story, however, there is no one to convince the children to love their mother but the mother herself, and her attempts at demanding her due end in miserable failure. What Kinoshita shows, by combining parts of the broad contemporary scene with newsreel footage and newspaper headlines, and flashbacks from the past of the mother and her two nearly adult children, is that social conditions are responsible for the tragedy. The very same year Yasujiro Ozu said he was making a film about the breakdown of the Japanese family system in *Tokyo Story*, but actually made a film about the acceptance of permanent separation and lowered expectations. Kinoshita's film showed not just lack of love for their elders on the part of children, but shame, scorn, exploitation and abuse. And he points to identifiable causes for both the children's callousness and the mother's suffering: all its part of the aftermath of that great deceit, the Pacific War.

Haruko (Yuko Mochizuki), who lost her husband in the war, has worked

at every manner of degrading occupation in order to raise her two children. She is uneducated and trusting, and as a result loses even her one possession, her land, to her unscrupulous brother-in-law (Shinichi Himori), who promises to care for the children but actually lets his wife mistreat them and teach them their mother is "off having a good time in her flashy clothes" when she works to support them in another town. By the time they are young adults, they have learned to think that money will solve all of their problems. Haruko works in Atami to send her daughter Utako (Yoko Katsuragi) to sewing and English conversation schools and her son Seiichi (Masami Taura) to medical school in Tokyo. But the two children use their education as excuses to keep demanding more money from their mother and live in freedom away from her. Utako is raped while a young girl and hates men. She takes revenge on her married English teacher (Ken Uehara) who falls in love with her, and ruins his family life. Seiichi announces to his mother that he intends to become the adopted son of a wealthy physician who lost his own child in the war, and when the distraught Haruko rushes to Tokyo to see him about Utako, all he talks of is changing the family records. Completely rejected by her children, Haruko throws herself in front of an oncoming train on the way back. Only her two friends back in Atami, a street musician (Keiji Sata) and the inn's cook (Teiji Takahashi) remain to speak of her as a good person.

While its morality is quite traditional, the form of *A Japanese Tragedy* is one of the most modern of its time. A series of about 21 very fast-cut scenes showing the progress of the mood of the postwar reconstruction age precedes the title and credit sequences. These show montages of newspaper headlines on war crimes trials, newsreel footage of the courtroom scenes, the pardoned Emperor greeting the cameras, and jump through intertitles to the present-day political dissatisfaction and social unrest—demonstrations, strikes, assassination attempts, suicides, poverty and gangster takeovers. Before he focuses on his protagonists, Kinoshita uses an intertitle to warn, heavy kettle drums, bells, and cymbals on the soundtrack, that this story is an allegory about a problem that is so close to us that it could spread throughout Japanese soil.

Through such devices, the realism of the story is extremely calculated. Deep focus, long-take photography in the opening sequences at the Atami inn stresses the bustling, vulgar actuality of the scene, and song is smoothly incorporated in the character of the street musician. The flashbacks show determinism of the personalities of the vicious, cold children. Cutting from the boy and girl facing each other across a table of food, the first flashback shows them as small children in the identical composition. We then see the ruins, the mother getting black-market rice for them, and talk of hunger and disease. The most telling part of this flashback

sequence is in the sister's classroom, however, where the teacher writes the subject for an essay on the blackboard: "New Japan." A pupil asks why they were taught the war was good before, but now it is a "mistake." She accuses the teacher of deceiving them, but the teacher responds, "No, I was deceived along with everyone else." From a closeup of the sister's face, newsreel footage of riots, trains derailing, police and military troops and exploding bombs follow. In subsequent flashbacks, more reasons for the children's mercenary, selfish attitudes appear: a street politician lectures on the meaning of democracy while the two small children watch in the crowd. What emerges is that if someone else does wrong, freedom allows me to do the same. The camera cuts to a Japanese girl and a U.S. serviceman kissing, the children observing, and then their mother laughing with a man under the light of a street lamp.

Kinoshita's message explodes all over the screen through his montage and manipulation of time. He even worked out with Kusuda how to get the contemporary dramatic footage to match the old newsreels, and was extremely proud of the results.<sup>38</sup> The war was a case of insincerity, deceit, and the distortion of the meaning of democracy in the postwar era is just as impure, resulting in children who destroy their own parents out of avarice and contempt. Kinoshita drives home all that Ozu left out of *Tokyo Story* except as a joking conversational reference—extreme parental self-sacrifice and severe neglect on the part of children in return. The deterministic form of the film construction, couched in surprising experimental feats, underscores Kinoshita's immutable philosophy of purity, maternal love and beauty, which are corrupted by outside, impersonal, unfeeling political and social forces.

## Ofuna Flavor

There is a noticeable change in the sting of Kinoshita's message after *A Japanese Tragedy*, and the following year's *Garden of Women*. By the time he reached the subsequent *Twenty-four Eyes* the protest became submerged in sentimentality. The schoolteacher of the small Inland Sea community resigns when books she believes are good for teaching purposes are condemned as "Red" literature, and she does not return to her job until after the war's end. But the greater emphasis of the story is on its "three-handkerchiefs"<sup>39</sup> aspects of the film, the widowed teacher's personal sorrows and courage. It would be this sentimental quality that director Nagisa Oshima would point to as the finest example of "Ofuna flavor" when he and others sought to overthrow Shochiku's calcified forms in the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>40</sup> It was a glorification of purity and innocence that became, for the eager and sophisticated young of the New Wave generation, inapplicable to their own lives. The

destructive violence and sexuality, the potential insincerity of ordinary people that they insisted were part of daily life were what Kinoshita would have labeled as unbeautiful, and therefore not part of what he feels society and film should be.

Kinoshita had found long before Oshima that social protest in film had no effect. He was disappointed in Japan in the war and nearly quit film when he had just begun, but he came back again. After his sojourn in France in 1951 he returned with a new critical eye to Japan and made his finest satires and deepest social tragedies. But, he says, "the Japanese people did not take me seriously, and I decided it was useless to try to say anything meaningful to them."<sup>41</sup> *The Garden of Women* shows a school headmistress whose cruelty results from her own hidden tragedy in youth, but Kinoshita's message is that people like her should nevertheless be deposed, just as children like Haruko's in *A Japanese Tragedy* are in the wrong no matter how understandable their behavior may be. But starting with *Twenty-four Eyes* the evil in society becomes more anonymous, less possible to pinpoint and attack, and Kinoshita's protagonists become simultaneously weaker. The "eternal youth" has never changed his ideas, as his admiration of *Rocky* shows, but his presentation of the pure, the meek, the honest, the young has become even more indulgent. A film like his 1963 *Sing, Young People!* refuses to deal with the possibilities he confronted so openly in *A Japanese Tragedy* and somewhat less rationally as late as 1956 in *The Rose on His Arm*. His sympathies remain with the young, the loving family, and all who retain the purity and innocence of youth. "Today the word 'young' [the English loan word *yangu*], as far as I can see in the media, is synonymous with 'idiot.' I think it's outrageous what mindless trash the young people allow to be foisted upon them today,"<sup>42</sup> he says, reconfirming his respect for youth and wishing they would protest.

Nevertheless, Kinoshita remains almost totally ensconced in television production, where he cannot make movies with the wonderful scenic long shots that marked his style and have been perpetuated by younger directors like Yoji Yamada at Shochiku. "But," he says, "I still have too many ideas for movies, and if I had to work in theatrical films I'd only be able to make one a year at the most under today's bad financial conditions. To make features now requires too much compromise with the financiers who demand a sure thing—and of course I'm no good at compromise."<sup>43</sup> Many today decry the loss of Keisuke Kinoshita to the tiny screen in the little box, but he believes his audience remains at home, and in his seven years of television production, his dramatic series have been among the most popular in the country. "Of course I would rather make features," he admits, "but in television I can do whatever I want and a lot of it."<sup>44</sup>

## KEISUKE KINOSHITA: FILMOGRAPHY

1943 *\*The Blossoming Port (Hana Saku Minato)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Kazuo Kikuta; sc: Yoshiro Tsuji; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Jo Abe; cast: Eitaro Ozawa, Ken Uehara, Mitsuko Mito, Chishu Ryu, Eijiro Tono et al. From his debut work, Kinoshita shows his taste for comedy of character, idyllic locations, romance and faith in human goodness. Two adventurous crooks attempt to defraud the entire population of a sleepy southern port town by posing as long-lost heirs to a defunct shipyard they intend to "revive." Collecting money from all the townspeople, they intend to abscond with it, but one of them falls in love with a local girl, and finally both are won over by the sincerity of the people and the outbreak of the war. Eiga Hyoron #4. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

*The Living Magoroku (Ikite Iru Magoroku)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Hikaru Saotome; cast: Ken Uehara, Yasumi Hara, Reikichi Kawamura, Mitsuko Yoshikawa, Fumiko Okamura et al. Confused story aimed at promoting food production for the war effort, but with underlying themes of attacking superstition and encouraging young love. A family of rural gentry is finally persuaded to give up their fields to grow crops for the troops when the local military advisor convinces them that their son will not die if the ground is broken. It turns out that the ailing son suffers not from tuberculosis, but mere nervous exhaustion. Interwoven is an irrelevant story about establishing the identity of a prized sword. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1944 *Jubilation Street (Kanko no Machi)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kaoru Morimoto; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; cast: Ken Uehara, Eijiro Tono, Mitsuko Mito, Choko Iida et al. Made to promote the drive to evacuate the cities, this story focuses on one particular family waiting for the father to come home, their fears about leaving until he does, and their relations with the other people and businesses on their street. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

*\*Army (Rikugun)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Ashihei Hino; sc: Tadao Ikeda; ph: Yoshio Taketomi; cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Chishu Ryu, Ken Mitsuda, Haruko Sugimura, Ken Uehara et al. Amazingly honest film that should have been war propaganda. Three generations of a family with a career military tradition are traced from feudal times down to the current Pacific War. Attention focuses on the son of the second generation, who has been unable to live up to the family tradition because of poor health and also proves a failure as a merchant because of his military frankness. His own son is also a weakling, and he fears that this boy too will prove a military failure. But the son grows strong in his adolescence, and the film closes with his tearful mother following the parade as he goes off to the front. One-scene, one-take technique with much camera movement. Criticized on release—and justly so—for being anti-war. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1946 *\*Morning for the Osone Family (Osone-ke no Asa)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Eijiro Hisaita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Takaaki Asai; cast: Haruko Sugimura, Eitaro Ozawa, Mitsuko Miura, Eijiro Tono, Shin Tokudaiji et al. A bitter look back at responsibility for the war, a new interpretation of democracy as popular justice instead of license, and encouragement for women to assert themselves. A widow with three sons and an outspoken daughter relies on her militarist brother-in-law to manage the family during the war. The oldest son is jailed for his pacifist thoughts, and the uncle breaks his niece's engagement as a result. The two younger sons are drafted and both die, and by the end of the war the widow realizes that her brother-in-law's counsel has all been self-aggrandizement. She throws him out and joyfully receives her newly released pacifist son as morning dawns for the liberal family. KJ #1. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

*The Girl I Loved (Waga Koi Seshi Otome)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Yasumi Hara, Kuniko Igawa, Chieko Higashiyama, Yoshindo Yamaji, Junji Soneda et al. Pastoral idyll about a farm boy who loves the orphan girl he grew up with, only to see her marry a handicapped school teacher from the village. Kinoshita's first work with his brother's music, interweaving songs in René Clair style and creating the best of his escapist sentimentality. KJ #6. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1947 *Marriage (Kekkon)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. idea: Kinoshita; sc: Kanoto Shindo; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Ken Uehara, Kinuyo Tanaka, Eijiro Tono, Chieko Higashiyama, Kuniko Igawa et al. Promotion of postwar female emancipation ideals as a young woman opposes her family and marries the man of her own choice. (Non-circulating print; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

*Phoenix (Fushicho)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Yoshiro Kawazu; sc: Kinoshita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Toyoko Takahashi, Keiji Sata, Isamu Kosugi et al. Melodrama set in wartime and including one of the shocking new kiss scenes. Two young people are finally able to marry, but the war intervenes almost immediately and the husband never returns from it. The wife, however, lives on like an ever-reviving phoenix through her destructive experiences. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1948 *Woman (Onna)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Mitsuko Mito, Eitaro Ozawa et al. Melodramatic semi-thriller about a long-suffering woman and the worthless man she loves, but with an unusual emancipation twist. A Tokyo dance-hall girl goes to a hot spring resort to meet her former lover. He begs her to run away with him, finally admitting that he was involved in a robbery. He convinces her her career is worthless anyway and invokes their old love for each other. She makes an effort to stay with him, but realizes she will be im-

plicated in his spontaneous criminal acts. She escapes amid a crowd during a fire in a resort town and returns to her job in Tokyo. Typical Kinoshita beautiful seaside locations, but too many forced action scenes. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

***The Portrait (Shozo)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Akira Kurosawa; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Kuniko Igawa, Kuniko Miyake, Mitsuko Miura, Ichiro Sugai, Chieko Higashiyama et al. With the idea of challenging his own patterns, Kinoshita asked his forceful friend Kurosawa to do this script, but the result is cinematically reserved in Kinoshita's usual style. A woman who is a mistress poses for a portrait in which she is rendered as a pure and honest person. Her own self-image is changed by this experience and she runs away from her unsavory patron to change her life. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

***Apostasy (Hakai)***

pr: Shochiku (Kyoto); orig. novel: Toson Shimazaki; sc: Eijiro Hisaita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Ryo Ikubo, Yoko Katsuragi, Osamu Takizawa, Jukichi Uno, Yoshi Kato et al. Social protest film showing Kinoshita's sentimental humanism. A young schoolteacher, member of Japan's pariah class, hides his identity until the pariah intellectual leader he admires is killed. Rumors spread about his heritage and school authorities try to have him removed, but he confesses before his sobbing pupils, and the message of freedom and equality is heavily underscored with tears. Interesting to compare with Kon Ichikawa's 1961 version of the same story. *KJ* #6. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

**1949 *A Toast to the Young Miss/Here's to the Girls (Ojosan Kampai)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kaneto Shindo; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Shuji Sano, Setsuko Hara, Sugisaku Aoyama, Keiji Sata, Sachiko Murase et al. Sentimental egalitarianism in a love story that crosses class barriers. A lower-class entrepreneur on his way up is proposed a match with a lovely girl of an aristocratic family. He soon learns her household is bankrupt and hoping he will bail them out, and he feels he has none of the refined culture this girl enjoys. But in the end the girl herself realizes she is really in love with this boorish but charmingly frank and devoted young man, and she runs off to stop him from leaving town in despair. *KJ* #6. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

***The Yotsuya Ghost Story, Parts I and II (Yotsuya Kaidan, I-II)***

pr: Shochiku (Kyoto); orig. Kabuki play: Namboku Tsuruya; sc: Eijiro Hisaita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Ken Uehara, Haruko Sugimura, Choko Iida et al. New interpretation of the famous story of revenge by the spirit of a scorned wife. Leftist playwright Hisaita's script concentrates on the human relations elements and foregoes much of the grotesquerie. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

**\**Broken Drum (Yabure-daiko)***

pr: Shochiku (Kyoto); orig. sc: Kinoshita and Masaki Kobayashi; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Tsumasaburo Bando, Sachiko Murase, Masayuki Mori, Jukichi Uno, Chuji Kinoshita et al. Rollicking satire on the nouveau riche. A blustering father tries to run his family, composed of very modern strong individuals, along feudal authoritarian lines. Teased by all, he fails and relents. *KJ* #4. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

**1950 *Engagement Ring (Konyaku Yubiwa)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Jukichi Uno, Kinuyo Tanaka, Toshiro Mifune, Mitsuko Yoshikawa, Nobuko Otowa et al. Beautiful seaside locations in a maudlin love story about a wife who nearly deserts her sick husband for the young doctor who is treating him. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

**1951 *The Good Fairy (Zemma)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Kunio Kishida; sc: Kogo Noda and Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Masayuki Mori, Chikage Awashima, Rentaro Mikuni, Yoko Katsuragi, Chishu Ryu et al. Protest against scandal-mongering in the press centering around a young reporter sent to cover a divorce case in which his sympathy for those involved makes him judge the assignment. *Impassable snow country settings; Mikuni's debut film.* (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

**\**Carmen Comes Home (Karumen Kokyo ni Kaeru)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita and Toshiro Mayuzumi; cast: Hideko Takamine, Shuji Sano, Chishu Ryu, Kuniko Igawa, Takashi Sakamoto et al. Musical satire on postwar manners involving Tokyo stripper Lily Carmen and her colleague Akemi meeting the battle-dreaded folks back home in the country. They find themselves shunned, ridiculed and lonely until they put on a benefit performance for the local elementary school and leave town as heroines. Takamine as a remarkable comedienne. *KJ* #4. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

***A Record of Youth (Shonenki)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Isoko Hatano; sc: Sumie Tanaka and Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Akiko Tamura, Akira Ishihama, Chishu Ryu, Rentaro Mikuni, Toshiko Kobayashi et al. Another critical look at wartime thought control, couched in a story of a boy growing up in the country. His father, formerly a university English professor, spends all his time reading and doesn't help his mother with the work at all. The boy finally comes to understand when his father is accused of being anti-war and tells him if he must die he wishes to spend every possible minute left reading his liberal books. (FC; dupe positive at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

***Fireworks over the Sea (Umi no Hanabi)***

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Michiyo Kogure, Yoko Katsuragi, Chishu Ryu, Keiji Sata,

Rentaro Mikuni et al. Undistinguished melodrama with a huge cast set in a port town in northern Kyushu. Hastily executed so that Kinoshita could leave for France. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1952 \**Carmen's Pure Love (Karumen Junjosu)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita and Toshiro Mayuzumi; cast: Hideko Takamine, Masao Wakahara, Chikage Awashima, Toshiko Kobayashi, Eiko Miyoshi et al. Stripper Carmen again devoted to her art and a playboy artist she meets by accident. Postwar confusion of ideals of patriotism, liberation, and equality interestingly expressed through tilted camera angles and camera movement. Parodies on all the extreme types, especially the superpatriot played by Miyoshi. Originally shot in color as well as BW, but the process was unsuccessful. *KJ* #5. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1953 \**A Japanese Tragedy (Nihon no Higeki)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; asst. dir: Masaki Kobayashi; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Yuko Mochizuki, Yoko Katsuragi, Masami Taura, Keiji Sata, Ken Uehara et al. Sentimental criticism of postwar ruthless individualism. At the close of the war, a widowed mother makes every possible sacrifice to bring up her ungrateful son and daughter. They gradually reject her in their search for the material comforts she cannot provide by working as a maid at an inn, and she commits suicide in despair. Newsreel footage intercut throughout integrates the individual mother's tragedy into the larger historical context. *KJ* #6. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1954 \**The Garden of Women (Onna no Sono)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Tomoji Abe; sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Mieko Takamine, Hideko Takamine, Keiko Kishi, Yoshiko Kuga, Takahiro Tamura et al. Protest against vestiges of feudalism in the teaching profession, reminiscent of Leontine Sagan's 1931 *Mädchen in Uniform*. A proud and severe headmistress in a private girls' school shows leniency to a rich girl despite her leftist ideas and extreme cruelty toward a poor girl sent to school to keep her from getting married. Rebellion breaks out when the poor girl commits suicide. *KJ* #2. (FC, PFA/SH)

\**Twenty-four Eyes (Nijushi no Hitomi)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Sakae Tsuboi; sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Yumeji Tsukioka, Toshiko Kobayashi, Kuniko Igawa, Chishu Ryu et al. Chronicle of a teacher and her pupils in a small Inland Sea village beginning in 1928 and carrying through twenty years of their joys and sorrows. Criticism of wartime thought control and the tragedies wrought in the lives of the island people, presented in a very touching and sincere reserved camera style with emphasis on the beauty of the setting. *KJ* #1. (FC, PFA/SH, AB)

-1955 *Distant Clouds (Tol Kumo)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita and Zenzo Matsuyama; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Keiji Sata, Takahiro

Tamura, Kuniko Igawa, Akira Ishihama et al. Melodramatic love story exploiting the setting of the old castle town of Takayama. After many years a man returns home before being sent away to a new job, and he falls in love with a local young widow. She too is attracted to him, but gossip, sabotage, and anxiety on the part of relatives conspire to keep the woman with her dead husband's family. (FC, PFA/SH)

\**You Were Like a Wild Chrysanthemum (Nogiku no Gotoki Kimi Nariki)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Sachio Ito; sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Noriko Arita, Shinji Tanaka, Chishu Ryu, Takahiro Tamura, Haruko Sugimura et al. Story of unrequited love resulting from a mother's ambitions for her son. An old man returns to his home town in the mountains after 60 years and recalls his youth in flashbacks, remembering the cousin he loved but was not allowed to marry because he was to go away to school. While his own worldly success went as planned, she was forced into marriage and died from early childbirth. *KJ* #3. (FC, PFA/SH)

1956 \**Clouds at Twilight (Yuyake-gumo)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Yoshiko Kusuda; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Shinji Tanaka, Yuko Mochizuki, Takahiro Tamura, Yoshiko Kuga, Eijiro Tono et al. Delicate treatment of the transition from childhood illusions to the reality of adulthood. A boy whose family runs a fish shop fantasizes with his close friend about what they see through a telescope, his window to a world where he escapes from his life to the shop. His ambitious older sister marries for money and deserts her family, his friend moves away, and when his father dies he reluctantly but dutifully takes over the family business. (FC, PFA/SH)

*The Rose on His Arm (Taiyo to Uta)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Akira Ishihama, Katsuo Nakamura, Sadako Sawamura, Yoshiko Kuga, Noriko Arita et al. Kinoshita's response to the *taiyo-zoku* ("sun cult") films about rebellious youth. A lower-class boy despises his hard-working mother and gets involved with petty gangsters at first, then a rich boy who makes a plaything out of him. He ends by breaking his mother's heart. *KJ* #9. (FC, PFA/SH)

1957 *Times of Joy and Sorrow/The Lighthouse (Yorokobi mo Kanashimi mo Ikutoshitsuki)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Keiji Sata, Katsuo Nakamura, Masako Arisawa, Yoko Katsuragi et al. Chronicle of two generations of a family that operates lighthouses, covering the period from 1935 up to the present. Their vicissitudes during the war and after, treated with gushing sentimentality. *KJ* #3; Geijutsusai Grand Prize. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

*A Candle in the Wind/Danger Stalks Near (Fuzen no Tomoshibi)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji

Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Keiji Sata, Akiko Tamura, Shinji Nambara, Toshiko Kobayashi et al. Comedy of family relations recalling Kinoshita's 1949 *Broken Drum*. Everyone in this suburban household is after everyone else's money, but when they win a valuable camera in a contest, the schemes come to a head, only to be further complicated by a group of young thieves who have their eye on the house. (FC, PFA/SH)

1958 \**The Ballad of the Narayama (Narayamabushi-ko)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Shichiro Fukazawa; sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Tameharu Endo; cast: Kinuyo Tanaka, Teiji Takahashi, Yuko Mochizuki, Seiji Miyaguchi, Yunosuke Ito et al. Allegory about parent-child relationships, skillfully employing Kabuki stage techniques. In the remote mountains certain poor villages traditionally abandon the aged on a mountaintop in order to ensure that the younger people can eat. The heroine, near 70, forces her unwilling and loving son to follow the horrible tradition. *KJ* #1. (FC, SH)

*The Eternal Rainbow (Kono Ten no Niji)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Teiji Takahashi, Yoshiko Kuga, Takahiro Tamura, Kinuyo Tanaka, Chishu Ryu et al. Documentary-like treatment of life in a north Kyushu steel town, touching on many people's joys and tribulations and emphasizing collective life. (FC, PFA/SH)

1959 *Snow Flurry (Kazabana)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Keiko Kishi, Ineko Arima, Yoshiko Kuga, Yusuke Kawazu, Chishu Ryu et al. Typically resplendent, nostalgic location for a rural story. Various residents of a farming village suffer under the onus of feudalistic tradition and gradually extricate themselves. (FC, PFA/SH)

*The Bird of Springs Past (Sekishuncho)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Keiji Sata, Ineko Arima, Masahiko Tsugawa, Akira Ishihama, Toyozo Yamamoto et al. Set against the mountain scenery of Aizu, sentimental story of the friendship of five young men and how it is affected over the years by war, illness, postwar progress and the like. Poor construction and pacing. (FC, PFA/SH)

*Thus Another Day (Kyo mo Mata Kakute Ari Nan)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Teiji Takahashi, Yoshiko Kuga, Kankuro Nakamura, Kanzaburo Nakamura, Takahiro Tamura et al. Melodrama set in the Karuizawa mountains involving a white-collar worker's family, a retired career military man and threatening gangsters. (FC, PFA/SH)

1960 \**Spring Dreams (Haru no Yume)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Mariko Okada, Yoshiko Kuga, Eitaro Ozawa, Shuji Sano, Chishu Ryu et al. Upper-class family comedy with fresh, biting

repartee. The family's life is thrown into confusion by a sweet-potato vendor who has a stroke in their house. (FC, PFA/SH)

\**The River Fuefuki (Fuefukigawa)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. story: Shichiro Fukazawa; sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Takahiro Tamura, Somegoro Ichikawa, Shima Iwashita, Mannosuke Nakamura et al. Period drama chronicle about five generations of a poor farming family during the war-torn sixteenth century. Their doom is finally brought about by the young people's ambitions to become warriors. Experimental techniques incorporating medieval battle scroll-painting effects. *KJ* #4. (FC, SH)

1961 \**The Bitter Spirit/Immortal Love (Eien no Hito)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Tatsuya Nakadai, Keiji Sata, Nobuko Otowa, Akira Ishihama et al. Another chronicle film with an overpowering setting: Mount Aso. A rural woman loves a man from the same town, but he goes off to war and she is raped and forced to marry the son of the village headman. She never recovers from her resentment of her husband, and helps her children escape from him. Greatly flawed by inappropriate flamenco guitar score. *KJ* #3. (FC, PFA/SH)

1962 *This Year's Love (Kotoshi no Koi)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Mariko Okada, Teruo Yoshida, Masakazu Tamura, Chieko Higashiyama, Chieko Naniwa et al. As the title implies, this is a sentimental love story made for New Year's release. (FC, PFA/SH)

*The Seasons We Walked Together (Futari de Aruita Iku Shunju)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. poetry: Dokko Kawano; sc: Kinoshita; 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Hideko Takamine, Keiji Sata, Toyozo Yamamoto, Yoshiko Kuga, Chieko Baisho et al. Family drama about a man repatriated after the Pacific War and unable to find work. He becomes a road construction worker, and he and his wife labor many years to see their son through college. Landscape settings again play a major role. (FC; negative at Shochiku, Tokyo.)

1963 *Sing, Young People! (Utae Wakodo-tachi)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Taichi Yamada; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Tsutomu Matsukawa, Yusuke Kawazu, Shinichiro Mikami, Kei Yamamoto, Shima Iwashita et al. Comedy about university life and one student who becomes a television star. Plot lacks realism, but dialogue, especially between parents and children, is often amusing. (FC, PFA/SH)

*Legend of a Duel to the Death/A Legend, or Was It? (Shito no Densetsu)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. sc: Kinoshita; color and BW 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Shima Iwashita, Mariko Kaga, Kinuyo Tanaka, Go Kato, Bunta Sugawara et al. Hokkaido setting for a melodrama

216 *Keisuke Kinoshita*

Kinoshita originally intended to make right after the war. A country girl is about to be married to the son of the village headman when it is revealed that he was involved in war crimes. A duel with pistols consummates the unlikelihood. (FC, PFA/SH)

1964 *\*The Scent of Incense (Kogo)*

pr: Shochiku (Ofuna); orig. novel: Sawako Ariyoshi; sc: Kinoshita; 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Mariko Okada, Nobuko Otowa, Kinuyo Tanaka, Haruko Sugimura, Go Kato et al. Very long story of the bitter relations between a mother and daughter in the geisha world. The mother is conceited and wanton, but much as the daughter resents her, she obeys. *KJ* #3. (FC, SH)

1967 *Lovely Flute and Drum (Natsukashiki Fue ya Taiko)*

pr: Kinoshita Prod./Takarazuka Eiga/Toho; orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Hiroshi Kusuda; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Yosuke Natsuki, Mayumi Ozora, Kumeko Urabe, Kazuya Kosaka, Kamatari Fujiwara et al. Attempt to recapture the nostalgia of Kinoshita's 1954 *Twenty-four Eyes* with a similar Inland Sea setting and focus on children who live in poverty but still have happy experiences. *KJ* #9. (FC, SH)

1976 *Love and Separation in Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka no Ai to Wakare)*

pr: Toho Eiga/Haiyuza Eiga Hoso; orig. sc: Kinoshita; color 'scope ph: Asakazu Nakai; music: Chuji Kinoshita; cast: Kinya Kitaoji, Komaki Kurihara, Hideko Takamine, Keiju Kobayashi, Keiko Tsushima et al. Love story about two Japanese who meet in Colombo and console each other's loneliness. Melodramatic and sentimental.