

## Document Citation

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**THE LIFE OF O-HARU** 1952 B&W 133 min. Rental Apply

Mizoguchi considered *THE LIFE OF O-HARU* his masterpiece. Most critics agree, and many consider it among the greatest films of all time\*. Based on a 17th Century novel by Saikaku, the film chronicles the decline of a beautiful court lady who ends as a prostitute. The Genroku period background is evoked in images of staggering beauty, and camera movements of truly epic sweep. As the woman of Osaka exiled for loving a commoner, Kinuyo Tanaka gives a performance of soul-rending depth and sensitivity. Mizoguchi's sympathy for the plight of women in feudal society is here given its most perfect and profound expression. Beyond its themes of social criticism, *THE LIFE OF O-HARU* achieves, in its narrative of human suffering and redemption, a final catharsis and realization of *mono no aware* (the elegaic awareness of the need for all things to pass) that is truly transcendent. With Toshiro Mifune.

*\*In a 1961 International Critics' Poll, Both Variety Film Critic Gene Moskowitz and French New Wave Director Jacques Rivette ranked THE LIFE OF O-HARU Number One in their lists of the Ten Greatest Films of All Time.*

