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

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

Kazabana (Snow flurry), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1959

Kono ko wo nokoshite (Children of Nagasaki), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1983

Fuzen no tomoshibi (A candle in the wind), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1957

Hana saku minato (A blooming port), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1943

Osone-ke no ashita (Morning for the Osone family), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1946

Hakai (Apostasy), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1948

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

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

Koge (The scent of incense), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1964

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

Rikugun (Army), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1944

Karumen kokyo ni kaeru (Carmen comes home), Kinoshita, Keisuke, 1951

KEISUKE KINOSHITA

TIMES OF JOY AND SORROW

It is rewarding in these days when part of the Anglo-American cinema seems lost in a quagmire of excruciating violence, war-lust and hatred of other peoples, to discover in Keisuke Kinoshita a director actually interested in finding some element of love, beauty and truth in his characters. Not that he is unaware of the world's evils: several films explore the legacy of a feudalistic past and, more frequently, confront the implications of thought control, hypocrisy and militarism in the 30s and 40s.

Kinoshita was born in 1912 and began his career in the photographic department of Shochiku before becoming assistant to the influential Yasujiro Shimazu. He began directing in 1943 and we are able to present about half his output (an unusually high percentage for a classical Japanese director). After the prolific first 20 years, he disappeared into television production for about a decade, re-emerging in the late 70s as a movie director once more, which has always been his first love. Like Mizoguchi, Goshu and Naruse, Kinoshita invariably places the weight of meaning on his woman characters, shown either conquering, capitulating to or struggling against the pressures of environment and the family circle. Many famous actresses flower under Kinoshita's direction, not least the incomparable Hideko Takamine whose glowing inner personality encompasses both his tragic heroines and his more extrovert stripper, Carmen.

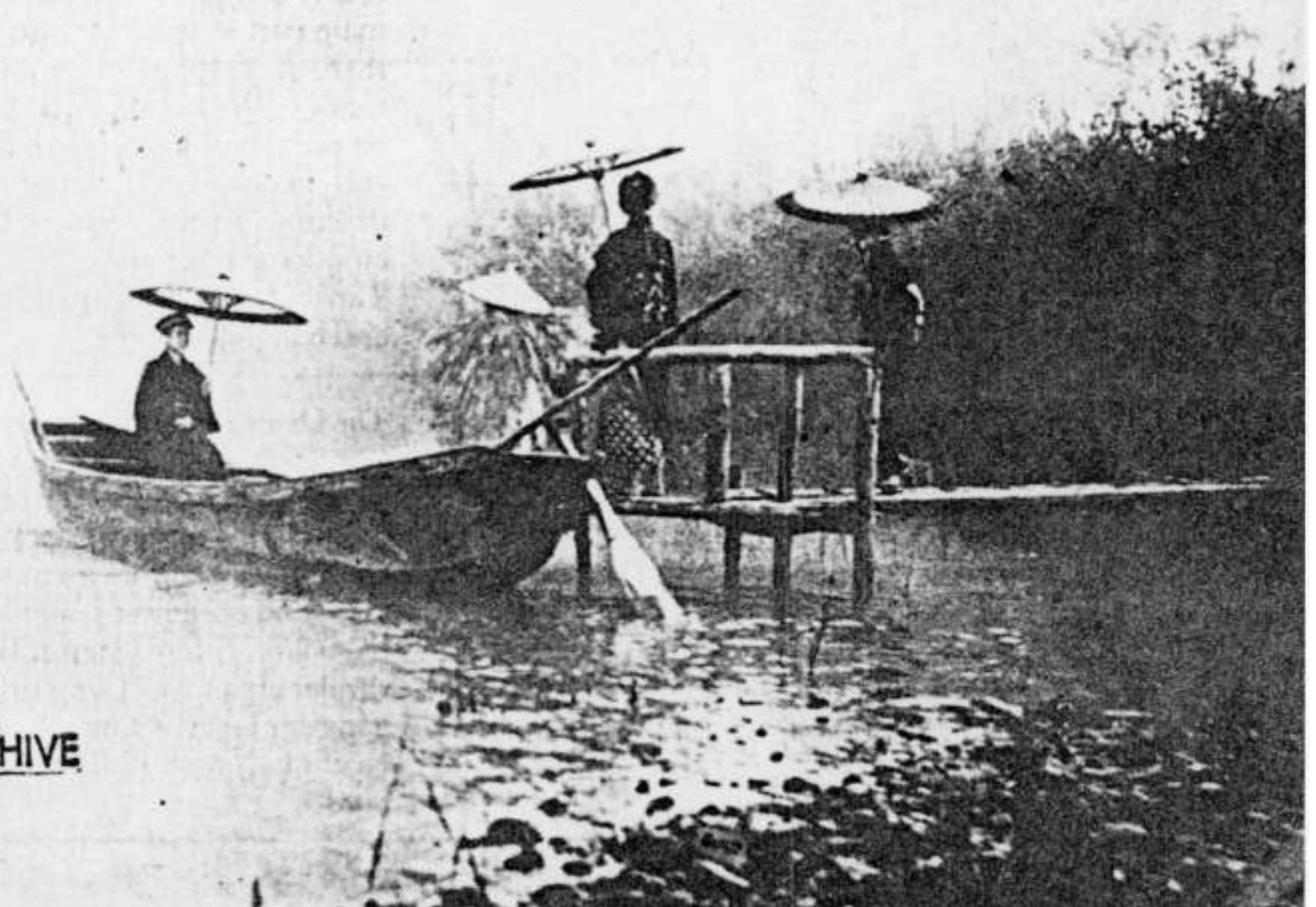
Kinoshita's range is tremendous, taking in comedy,

satire, tragedy, historical reconstruction, literary adaptation. His lighter works earned him the label of 'the Japanese René Clair', but this season reveals the full variety of his themes and preoccupations. The disparate subject matter is matched by an equally flexible formal response involving innovative flashback techniques, the division of the screen into varied shapes and an original use of black and white, colour and sepia. Plus, of course, his instinctive feeling for the CinemaScope format, balancing and forming beautiful visual patterns with the skill of a master juggler. This essentially 'modernist' approach applies both to the stylised studio productions and those films shot on luscious locations, with the sea never far away. So here is a chance to enter the world of yet another major film-maker – a unique opportunity not to be missed.—John Gillett.

Tue 24 Mar 7.00

Seminar on Kinoshita's career. Admission free, no pre-booking.

Thanks are due to Mrs Kawakita and the Kawakita Memorial Institute; Film Centre and the Japan Foundation; Ms Hiroko Govaers (Paris); also the Pacific Film Archive (Edith Kramer), Shochiku Co (Tokyo) and Ms Audie Bock (Japanese Film Directors, Kodansha International) for useful background information.



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Tue 3 Mar
6.30

The Ballad of Narayama

(Narayama bushiko)

We begin with two magnificent productions in colour and 'Scope. This original version of *Narayama* is less explicit than Imamura's later adaptation, although it follows the same story line of a village where tradition has it that old people are taken up the mountain to die, when they reach a certain age. This version is entirely shot in stylised studio settings, owing something to Kabuki traditions and with a mobile camera tracking wildly up and down the mountain in a shattering climax. Kinuyo Tanaka is sensational. *Japan 1958.*



Tue 3 Mar
8.45

Snow Flurry

(Kazabana)

One of Kinoshita's most formally daring films, about the changes in a farming community weighed down by feudalistic traditions. He uses cutting and camera devices to juxtapose events many years apart and to comment on parallels in the lives of the characters, which eventually resolve into an overall pattern. The film not only abounds in strikingly beautiful colour compositions, but employs the 'Scope format as an integral part of the narrative. *Japan 1959/With Keiko Kishi, Ineko Arima.*



Thu 5 Mar
6.15

The Blossoming Port

(Hana saku minato)

Kinoshita's debut work 'shows his taste for comedy of character, idyllic locations, romance, faith in human goodheartedness' (Audie Bock). Quite a feat at this difficult historical period, yet Kinoshita constructs a quirky, bizarre comedy from a plot premise involving two crooks who devise a scheme to defraud the population of a sleepy southern port town. An oddball film, sometimes a little too broad in tone, but an interesting pointer to the future. *Japan 1943/With Eitaro Ozawa, Ken Uehara, Chishu Ryu.*



Thu 5 Mar
8.30

Army

(Rikugun)

A revealing example of a propaganda film which finally wags its tail in an unexpected direction. The main part is devoted to an often strident account of three generations of a military family, from feudal times to the Pacific War. Eventually, it concentrates on the son of the modern family who is conscripted and, in one of his greatest sequences, Kinoshita describes an epic scene of farewell in which the emotional reactions of the mother (the great Kinuyo Tanaka) turn empty patriotism into something human and real. *Japan 1944.*



Sun 8 Mar
8.15

A Morning for the Osone Family

(Osone-ke no asa)

Woman

(Onna)

The Osone Family is a sharp, bitter look back to the war years, as a large family disintegrates under war-time pressures, but the widow finally asserts herself and welcomes back her pacifist son. With a fine sense of confinement within the large mansion and good ensemble playing. *Japan 1946/With Haruko Sugimura, Eitaro Ozawa.* *Woman* is a tough semi-thriller about a girl who finally revolts against her gangster lover, set mainly amidst beautiful seaside locations. *Japan 1948/With Mitsuko Mito. Total 148 mins.*

Interesting to compare with Ichikawa's 1961 version of the same story, it concerns a young schoolteacher who hides the fact that he belongs to Japan's pariah class. His tribulations end with an emotional reunion with his pupils. The film's message of freedom and equality for the post-war age has its fair share of sentimentality, and is an updated version of a 1906 novel touching on the tentative democratisation of the Meiji period. *Japan 1948/With Ryo Ikebe, Yoko Katsuragi.*

Mon 9 Mar
6.00

Outcast

(Hakai)



This elaborate version of a much-filmed ghost story is drawn from a celebrated Kabuki play centring on a plan for revenge by the spirit of a scorned wife. Hisaita's scenario attempts a new interpretation, more modern and psychological, and Kinoshita responds by developing atmosphere through purely cinematic means – use of space and decor, angles, complex lighting – and largely ignores the obvious spookiness which characterised other versions. *Japan 1949/With Kinuyo Tanaka, Ken Uehara. 158 mins.*

Mon 9 Mar
8.00

The Yotsuya Ghost Story I-II

(Shinshaku Yotsuya kaidan, I-II)



Another of Kinoshita's probing looks back to the war as it affects a family living in the country. The young son doesn't understand his anti-militarist father's seclusion in his work until the father confesses a fear that he will be arrested and a need to immerse himself in his liberal books. As usual, Kinoshita moulds the settings and ambience into the lives of the characters, tellingly realised by Akiko Tamura, Akira Ishihama, Chishu Ryu, Rentaro Mikuni. *Japan 1951.*

Fri 13 Mar
6.15/

Fri 20 Mar
8.30

Childhood – A Record of Youth

(Shōnenki)



Japan's first colour feature, this stars the wonderful Hideko Takamine as a country girl, who has succeeded as a stripper in the big city, whose return to her post-war country community causes much consternation and hilarity among her old friends. With its touches of song and dance and broad humour, this is Kinoshita in unbuttoned mood, but its satirical tone is enclosed within a framework of fine craftsmanship, especially in its joyous use of locations and colours. *Japan 1951.*

Fri 13 Mar
8.45

Carmen Comes Home

(Karumen kokyo ni kaeru)



This second Carmen film finds the stripper again devoted to her art and a playboy artist she meets by accident. The visual style is free-wheeling and disorientated, with satirical barbs directed at post-war patriotism, liberation, love and Carmen's bizarre collection of friends. It is all centred on another lively performance by Hideko Takamine. Although originally shot in colour, the process was deemed unsatisfactory and it was released in black-and-white. *Japan 1952/With Chikage Awashima.*

Sun 15 Mar
6.15

Carmen's Pure Love

(Karumen junjosu)



Reminiscent of Sagan's German *Mädchen in Uniform*, this is also set in a private girls' school afflicted by a proud and severe headmistress whose treatment of a poor girl causes a tragedy. Kinoshita's handling of a mainly female story again reveals his understanding of the pressures of close-quarter living and he is marvellously served by a starry roster of players, including a rare appearance of both Takamine sisters plus Keiko Kishi and Yoshiko Kuga. *Japan 1954. 141 mins.*

Tue 17 Mar
6.15

The Garden of Women

(Onna no sono)





Sat 14 Mar
6.30

A Japanese Tragedy

(Nihon no higeki)

Set just after WWII in Atami (the Japanese Miami), this concerns a widow who has made every sacrifice to bring up her children, only to have them gradually reject her in their search for material comforts. Kinoshita mixes this personal story with a panoramic view of Japanese social history, utilising newsreels and newspaper clippings in a dynamic montage. Formally, it makes an innovative use of flashbacks and the tragic climax (echoing *Anna Karenina*) has extraordinary force. *Japan 1953. With Yuko Mochizuki.*



Thu 19 Mar
8.10

24 Eyes

(Nijushi no hitomi)

One of Kinoshita's most popular successes, this is a chronicle of a teacher and her pupils in a small village beginning in 1928 and continuing through 20 years. Extremely detailed and loving in its evocation of the lives of this island people, with Hideko Takamine leading her charges superbly. The location work is a constant delight, yet another triumph for Kinoshita's regular cameraman, Hiroshi Kusuda. We shall show the uncut, 155-minute version. *Japan 1954.*



Thu 19 Mar
6.15

You Were Like a Wild Chrysanthemum

(Nogiku no gotoki kimi nariki)

One of Kinoshita's most romantic, nostalgic films, this tells of a man's unhappy love at the time of his youth. It also introduces a novel and charming device: the sections dealing with the past are mistily enclosed in an oval-shaped part of the screen. Thus the figures, delicately framed, seem to move about their exquisite countryside as in a dream, evoking the world of old family photographs. *Japan 1955/With Noriko Arita, Shinji Tanaka, Chishu Ryu.*



Mon 23 Mar
6.15

Clouds at Twilight

(Yuyake-gumo)

This delicate treatment of a difficult subject – the transition from childhood illusions to the reality of adulthood – is centred on a young boy whose family runs a fish shop. We see him on his daily rounds, making friends and fantasising about the outside world as an escape from his environment. Full of detailed observation of the boy's world and his eventual fate, it features an outstanding performance by the young Shinji Tanaka. *Japan 1956/With Yuko Mochizuki, Takahiro Tamura.*



Mon 23 Mar
8.30

The Rose on his Arm

(Taiyo to bara)

Also known as *The Sun and the Rose*, this is Kinoshita's contribution to the 'rebellious youth' cycle popular at the time. It concerns a lower-class boy who despises his hardworking mother and becomes involved with petty gangsters and a rich layabout. Some sharp psychological insights give the film a hard, rough surface but, like other films of the genre, it tends to be less convincing when it becomes more melodramatic. *Japan 1956/With Akira Ishihama, Katsuo Nakamura.*



Fri 27 Mar
6.15

A Candle in the Wind

(Fuzen no tomoshibi)

Another wild Kinoshita comedy of family relations, somewhat reminiscent of his unavailable 1949 film *Broken Drum*. Everyone in this suburban household is after everyone else's money; and all their frenetic comings-and-goings complicate the plans of a trio of young thieves who have their eyes on the house. Shot in 20 days in a single set, it features all-out performances from the redoubtable Hideko Takamine, Keiji Sada and Akiko Tamura, among others. *Japan 1957.*

One of the Kinoshita films I have not seen at time of writing, this is another of his colour/'Scope satires, with a grotesque and wacky theme. In Audie Bock's description, it is 'an 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'. The players include such brilliant actresses as Mariko Okada and Yoshiko Kuga. *Japan 1960.*

Wed 25 Mar
6.15
Spring Dreams
(Haru no yume)



Another delirious colour/'Scope production about the tribulations of three generations of a farming family during the war-torn 16th century, exacerbated by the young people's desire to become warriors. Innovation and experiment again abound in Kinoshita's sombre, ballad-like handling, in the colour contrasts and, most interestingly, in his use of medieval battle-scroll painting effects which periodically dominate the compositions. Hideko Takamine is here supported by another great actress, Shima Iwashita. *Japan 1960.*

Wed 25 Mar
8.30
The River Fuefuki
(Fuefukigawa)



Also known as *The Bitter Spirit*, this concerns the resentment of a village woman who, after losing her lover to the Sino-Japanese war, is raped and forced to marry the son of the village headman, whereupon a tragedy of thwarted love between the generations ensues. As Arne Svensson commented: 'the wide fields and the imposing Mount Aso are the main elements of a pictorial style rich in well-balanced 'Scope compositions.' *Japan 1961/With Hideko Takamine.*

Fri 27 Mar
8.45
Eternal Love
(Eien no hito)



Probably Kinoshita's finest black-and-white 'Scope picture and a summation of his preoccupations in the 50s and 60s, this concerns the fluctuating relationship between a mother (once an energetic 'top lady of the quarters') and her daughter, also a prostitute, who tries to break out of the milieu. A great chronicle of lives battered by tradition, it features resplendent performances by some of Japan's greatest actresses – Mariko Okada, Nobuko Otowa, Kinuyo Tanaka. *Japan 1964. 188 mins. Tickets £3.75, standby £3.50.*

Sun 29 Mar
7.00
The Scent of Incense
(Koge)



A film about the *other* city which received the atomic bomb on 9th August, 1945, this consists of reminiscences of a son about his father, a writer/doctor who valiantly tried to assist the bomb survivors as he was fighting against leukaemia. One of Kinoshita's comeback films of the 80s, it has much poignancy, some over-statements and a striking evocation of the city and countryside on that fateful day over 40 years ago. *Japan 1983/With Go Kato.*

Mon 30 Mar
6.15
The Children of Nagasaki
(Kono ko o nokoshite)



Kinoshita's most recent production is a sublime affirmation of his 'modernity'. Against the picturesque canvas of Japan's far-flung lighthouses, Kinoshita traces the interweaving stories of three generations linked by a pact of complicity with the sea. There is old Kunio with his collection of photographs and his son who is perturbed by the young hitchhiker they pick up on one of many lighthouse transfers. The family unit is questioned and tried but remains solid. –*Don Ranvaud.* *Japan 1986.*

Tue 24 Mar
8.30/
Mon 30 Mar
8.45
Times of Joy and Sorrow
(Yorokobi mo kanashimi mo ikutoshitsuki)

