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MY LOVE HAS BEEN BURNING

(Waga Koi Wa Moenu)

Director.....Kenji Mizoguchi

Screenplay.....Yoshikata Yoda
Kaneto Shindo

based on story by.....Kogo Noda

Photography.....Kohei Sugiyama
Tomotaro Nashiki

Music.....Senji Ito

Sound.....Taro Takahashi
Takeo Kawakita

Art Direction.....Hiroshi Mizutani
Dai Arakawa
Jun'ichi Osumi

Historical Research.....Sunao Kai

Production Manager.....Tomoji Kubo

Producers.....Hisao Itoya
Kiyoshi Shimazu

A Shochiku Production

35mm Black and White

Running Time: 84 minutes

Japan, 1949

A New Yorker Films Release

MY LOVE HAS BEEN BURNING

Cast:

Eiko Hirayama.....Kinuyo Tanaka
Kentaro Omoi (Shigei).....Ichiro Sugai
Chiyo.....Mitsuko Mito
Ryuzo Hayase.....Eitaro Ozawa
Tochiko Kishida.....Kuniko Miyake
Prime Minister Inagaki.....Koreya Senda
State Councillor Ito.....Eijiro Tono
Kusuo Arai.....Kappei Matsumoto
Chief at Filature.....Torahiko Hamada
Takeshi Sakazaki.....Masao Shimizu
Master of Eating House.....Makoto Kobori
Omasa.....Sadako Sawamura
Kaku, Eiko's father.....Shinobu Araki
Umeko, Eiko's mother.....Ikuko Hirano

Synopsis:

The story begins in Okayama in 1884, 16 years after the Meiji Restoration, which marked a movement toward modernized and Westernized political forms and a rejection of the feudalism of the shogunate. Eiko Hirayama, an idealistic schoolteacher, is inspired by the ideas of Toshiko Kishida, a leading feminist who visits Okayama.

Eiko's authoritarian father disapproves of her political ideas and of her association with Hayase, a young liberal who is departing for Tokyo. While saying goodbye to Hayase at the dock, Eiko notices that her family's servant, Chiyo, is being sold into bondage. Eiko protests to her father, but she is too late to save Chiyo.

Eiko leaves home to go to Tokyo. There she meets Omoi, a dynamic leader of the Liberal Party. She takes a room in Hayase's boarding house but learns that he is a spy for the opposition. Hayase admits his guilt and attempts, unsuccessfully, to rape her.

Omoi loses a major political battle when the moderates vote to dissolve the Liberal Party. Eiko is consoling Omoi when he declares his love for her. He embraces her, and her resistance is overcome.

Eiko joins Omoi in his political crusades, and they become involved with a group of farmers protesting the exploitation of mill girls. Acting as a scout, Eiko witnesses the abuse of the girls and watches in horror as a girl is raped -- it is Chiyo, her family's former servant. Afterwards, the half-crazed Chiyo burns down the mill. As a result, Eiko, Omoi, and Chiyo are thrown into prison.

Hayase visits Eiko in prison. He is still in love with her, and he offers to obtain her release if she becomes his obedient wife. Eiko flatly rejects him. Chiyo is abused by the guards in prison. Pregnant, she loses her baby. In the hospital, she confesses to Eiko that she is still in love with the first man who abused her, the father of her dead child -- "He made me a woman. Can you understand that?"

In 1889, a Constitution is bestowed by the Emperor, along with amnesty for political prisoners. The Constitution, however, contains no mention of women's rights. Omoi is released to great popular acclaim.

Eiko marries Omoi and takes Chiyo into her household. She discovers that Omoi and Chiyo have become lovers. Omoi justifies his behavior by asserting that he can both love his wife and maintain a mistress. Eiko is disgusted by Omoi's hypocrisy, although Chiyo declares her willingness to remain with him under any circumstances.

In Japan's first parliamentary elections, Omoi is voted into the Diet. Eiko decides to return to Okayama, where she will start a school and promote women's rights through education. In the second-class train compartment, Eiko overhears passengers reading in the newspapers of Omoi's triumphs. The door opens, and a woman appears out of the smoke. It is Chiyo. She asks Eiko to take her along -- "I want to learn more." The two women sit side by side, and Eiko draws her shawl around her companion's shoulders.

Director KENJI MIZOGUCHI:

Born in Tokyo in 1898, Kenji Mizoguchi worked briefly for a newspaper designing ads before drifting into work as an actor at the Nikkatsu Studios. He rose rapidly to the position of director and completed his first major work, FOGGY HARBOR, a drama based on Eugene O'Neill's Anna Christie, in 1923. Even at this early point in his career, Mizoguchi was adding a new dimension to filmmaking, creating a camera style that shifted the emphasis of the image to that of an autonomous pictorial medium in its own right rather than a mere recording of a traditional drama. That same year Nikkatsu Studios, like much of the rest of Japan, was decimated by the earthquake in Kanato. In the wake of reconstruction, a new realistic film style was born, to which Mizoguchi contributed, among other works, a searing portrait of the lower middle class in A PAPER DOLL'S WHISPER OF SPRING (1926). He was already an influential force in Japan at this point, but in 1928 he was also discovered in the West with the release of PASSION OF A WOMAN.

By the mid-30's, Mizoguchi's search for a new realism and his dedication to the exploration of the woman's condition in Japan had inspired two of his most renowned works, OSAKA ELEGY (1936) and SISTERS OF GION (1936), which has later reworked as A GEISHA (1953). OSAKA ELEGY, banned by the government for its decadent tendencies, was his first opportunity to work with screenwriter Yoshikata Yoda - this collaboration continued throughout the remainder of Mizoguchi's career.

Mizoguchi has said, "I only found my true voice after I was 40," and has elsewhere referred to the period from 1939 to 1944 as his favorite period in his work. During that time he concentrated on historical dramas on the Meiji era when western influence was causing traditions to crumble. In all of his films from that period, including STORY OF THE LAST CHRYSANTHEMUMS (1939), A WOMAN OF OSAKA (1940), and THE LOYAL 47 RONIN (1941-42), he was not so much oblivious to World War II as he was resentful for its uprooting of so many human souls.

The final ten years of his career, from 1946 to 1956, were the most productive and successful of Mizoguchi's life. He repeated won prizes at the Venice Film Festival and in Japan; his output for the period includes such films as UTAMARO AND HIS FIVE WOMEN (1946), MY LOVE HAS BEEN BURNING (1949), THE LIFE OF OHARU (1952), UGETSU (1953), A GEISHA (1953), and SANSHO THE BAILIFF (1954). In 1956, following the completion of his STREETS OF SHAME, Kenji Mizoguchi died at the age of 58, leaving a legacy of 97 completed feature films.