

## Document Citation

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Film Subjects	Hitori musuko (The only son), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1936 Todake no kyodai (The brothers and sisters of the Toda family), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1941 Chichi ariki (There was a father), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1942 Ohayo (Good morning), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1959 Tokyo no yado (An inn at Tokyo), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1935 Tokyo monogatari (Tokyo story), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1953 Dekigokoro (Passing fancy), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1933 Wakaki hi (Days of youth), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1929 Sono yo no tsuma (That night's wife), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1930 Kohayagawa-ke no aki (The end of summer), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1961

Rakudai wa shita keredo (I flunked, but...), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1930  
Tokyo no gassho (Tokyo chorus), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1931  
Seishun no yume ima izuko (Where now are the dreams of youth?),  
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Banshun (Late spring), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1949  
Ochazuke no aji (The flavor of green tea over rice), Ozu,  
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Soshun (Early spring), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1956  
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Ukigusa (Floating weeds), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1959  
Akibiyori (Late autumn), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1960  
Samma no aji (An autumn afternoon), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1962  
Umarete wa mita keredo (I was born, but...), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1932  
Higanbana (Equinox flower), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1958  
Bakushu (Early summer), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1951  
Ukigusa monogatari (A story of floating weeds), Ozu, Yasujiro,  
1934  
Haha o kowazuya (A mother should be loved), Ozu, Yasujiro, 1934

Most of Yasujiro Ozu's 54 films were about family life. Many told similar stories, with titles that rang the changes of the seasons, but today, unfortunately, only 33 films still survive.

Ozu's career fell into two halves, roughly divided by the war. His breezier early work - unafraid to mimic Hollywood melodramas or to flirt with farce - contrast greatly with his later masterpieces which portray a uniquely contemplative style. A style so rigorously simplistic that it amounted to one of the most profound visions of familial life on earth.

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**Days Of Youth** (*Wakaki Hi*)

(1929) approx 103 mins

This is Ozu's earliest extant picture, though not especially typical and preceded by seven others, now lost. Set on the ski slopes, it's a variant on the then popular comedies depicting students at work and play. Two students endeavour to pass their exams and impress the girl to whom they have both taken a fancy. Stylistically it abounds in close-ups, fade-outs and tracking shots which Ozu was later to leave behind.

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**Walk Cheerfully** (*Hogaraka ni Ayume*)

(1930) approx 100 mins

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**I Flunked, But...** (*Rakudai Wa shita kerodo...*)

(1930) approx 94 mins

An example of the college comedies popular in Japanese silent cinema; Ozu made several. Notable, like *Days Of Youth*, for a liberal use of devices Ozu later abandoned (nearly a dozen). Look for the ironic use of Hollywood film posters and an early appearance by the great actress Kinuyo Tanaka, star of *Equinox Flower*.

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**That Night's Wife** (*Sono Yo no tsuma*)

(1930) approx 65 mins.

A masked gunman, victims bound and gagged, a police dragnet, a pistol-packing mama - this is one of Ozu's several Hollywood-style thrillers he made in the silent era. Behind the overseas borrowings it's still an Ozu film, with the melodrama rooted in social and domestic distress and so effectively told in pictures that it needs only a handful of intertitles.

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**The Lady and the Beard** (*Shukujo to Hige*)

(1931) approx 97 mins

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**Tokyo Chorus** (*Tokyo no Gassho*)

(1931) approx 90 mins.

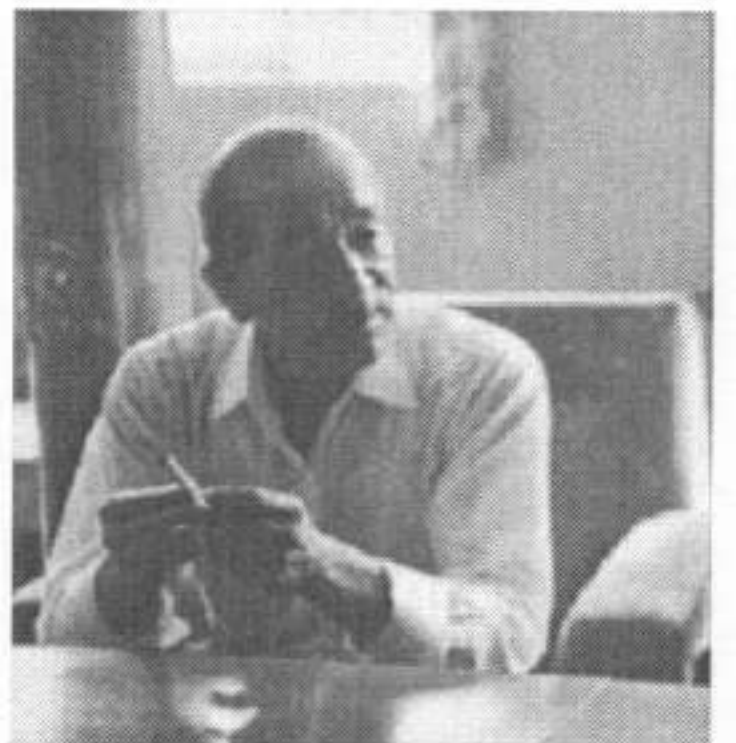
This is the Ozu film that most poignantly illustrates what it means to be a parent; paper darts skim across the room, children whine and supper's boiling over. It's the truest of family films, especially from the mother's angle, striking chords similar to *I Was Born, But...* as the children accept that the father, to whom they look up, has become a billboard merchant in the Depression simply to feed them.

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**I Was Born, But...** (*Umarete Wa mita keredo...*)

(1932) approx 91 mins

Generally recognized as Ozu's first major film, this moving comedy/drama was a great success both critically and financially and was his first to top the Kinema Jumbo poll as best Japanese film of the year. One of cinema's finest works about children, the film begins as a riotous Keatonesque comedy but quickly becomes darker as it portrays a classic confrontation between the innocence of childhood and the hypocrisy of adults. Two kids learn through experience why they will always be flunkies while the son of their father's obnoxious boss goes from strength to strenght. 'Tell him off', they bid the local bully, whose





folk own the neighbourhood store. But his family buy a lot more than theirs do and in the end purchasing power prevails. Ozu liked it so much that he remade it as *Ohayo (Good Morning)* in 1959.

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**Where Now Are The Dreams Of Youth?** (*Seishun no Yume Ima Izuko*)  
(1932) approx 90 mins

A kind of sequel to *I Was Born, But...*, and an unsuccessful one. It was made when the filming of *I Was Born, But...* was interrupted when one of the children in that film got hurt. Four boys are graduated from college. Three of them eventually have to ask the fourth, the son of a company president, for jobs. He, in turn, gets one of their girls.

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**Woman Of Tokyo** (*Tokyo no onna*)  
(1933) approx 47 mins

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**Dragnet Girl** (*Hijosen no onna*)  
(1933) approx 100 mins

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**Passing Fancy** (*Dekigokoro*)  
(1933) approx 100 mins

>From a story by "James Maki", a nom de plume often used by Ozu, this Kinema Jumbo first prize winning film concerns the relationship between an illiterate brewery worker and his educated son. The subtle plot focuses on the father's unrequited interest in a younger woman and the effect this infatuation has on both father and son. An early example of Ozu's masterful chronicling of the evolution of family ties and the minutiae of family life. In one scene the young boy bops his father's shins with a baseball bat to wake him up because they can't afford an alarm clock.

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**A Mother Should Be Loved** (*Haha O kowazuya*)  
(1934) approx 72 mins (but incomplete)

The only surviving print lacks the first and last reels, set eight years before and three years after the main story. So it now focuses on the troubled relationship between two boys who discover they are only step-brothers. The prologue, in which the father dies at the office, showed their former happy domestic life and the epilogue the reconciliation with mother after the traumatic central section.

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**Story Of Floating Weeds** (*Ukigusa Monogatari*)  
(1934) approx 86 mins

This moody, lyrical work is loosely based on an American silent called *The Barker*. Infinitely superior to its model, it is the story of the leader of a small group of traveling players who returns to a small town and meets his son, the product of a distant affair. Ozu transforms the slightly melodramatic tale into an atmospheric and intense drama. Donald Richie has called this film, "the first of those eight-reel universes in which everything takes on a consistency greater than life: in short, a work of art." Its best feature is the depiction of life on the boards - the empty bowls to catch raindrops through the leaking roofs, the pantomime 'dog' who misses his cue and the casual cigarettes between exits and entrances. Ozu remade the film in colour in 1959 as *Floating Weeds*.

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**An Inn In Tokyo** (*Tokyo No yado*)  
(1935) approx 80 mins

One of Ozu's most touching pictures, showing how the Depression hit Japan. A father and his young sons trudge the byways of Tokyo vainly seeking work and, with dwindling reserves, must choose between food and shelter. In many ways it anticipates *Bicycle Thieves* (with an even more powerful ending). 'Talkies' had reached Japan by 1935 but Ozu, like Chaplin, held out for silence. He couldn't, however, stop the studio adding music.

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**The Only Son** (*Hitori Musuko*)  
(1936) approx 103 mins

Ozu's first 'talkie' depicts a mother's sacrifice to ensure her son gets the best available education. Cast, like *Tokyo Story*, in the form of a family visit years later, it's a moving study of how generations diverge and no longer have anything in common. Even a trip to the new-





fangled talking pictures sends mother to sleep. But it's not depressing: family in the end is still family, as the wonderful scene of reconciliation proves.

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**What Did The Lady Forget?** (*Shukujo wa Nani o Wasuretake*)  
(1937) approx 73 mins

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**Brothers And Sisters Of The Toda Family** (*Toda-ke no Kyodai*)  
(1941) approx 105 mins

This film, the first made in collaboration with Yuharu Atsuta, who would become Ozu's regular cameraman, was a great critical success. An account of the tensions which arise when a widow and her daughter move in with a married son, the film would also be Ozu's first box-office hit. Shot during the war, the film found a receptive audience in the Japanese public which had been subjected to suffering, separations, and losses of its own. Still life shots (clocks ticking, hats left in a row in the hall) - which persist long after the actors have left the shot - are increasingly used as the visual equivalent of punctuation marks.

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**There Was A Father** (*Chichi Ariki*)  
(1942) approx 87 mins

The only film Ozu made during the Pacific war, but shot almost as if it was not in progress. Mortified when a pupil dies through his carelessness, a teacher resigns and trusts his son to succeed where he failed. There are token propagandist elements as the son is bidden to do his duty and think of his country, but they are subsumed by the human factor. This is a film about father/son relations, with the war an off-screen irrelevance.

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**Record Of A Tenement Gentleman** (*Nagaya Shinshi Roku*)  
(1947) approx 72 mins

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**A Hen In The Wind** (*Kaze no Naka no Mendori*)  
(1948) approx 90 mins

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**Late Spring** (*Banshun*)  
(1949) approx 108 mins

The first and finest telling of a story Ozu was to remake with variations many times. A young woman (Setsuko Hara) who lives happily with her widowed father (Chishu Ryu) will not consider marriage, preferring her state of comfortable dependence to the responsibilities of childbearing and household duties. The father, afraid that she will live a lonely and barren life, leads her to believe that he intends to remarry in order to free her. Through a dispassionate observation of the characters' environment and emotions, Ozu creates a masterpiece of simplicity and restraint.

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**The Munekata Sisters** (*Munekata Shimai*)  
(1950) approx 112 mins

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**Early Summer** (*Bakushu*)  
(1951) approx 124 mins

This extraordinary film about the lives of ordinary people focuses on a young woman who rebels against the wishes of her family by choosing her own husband. Through small stories and smaller moments Ozu meticulously observes the lives of some 19 characters, transcending the boundaries of the film's simple plot, creating an elliptical narrative. The film is driven forward not by its plot but rather by Ozu's unique use of space, time and constantly changing rhythm of the action.

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**Flavour Of Green Tea Over Rice** (*Ochazuke no Aji*)  
(1952) approx 115 mins

A moving portrait of a middle-aged, middle-class couple who realizes that their arranged relationship is growing stale, this is certainly one of Ozu's most light-hearted films. As he examines the tradition of the arranged marriage, Ozu departs from his traditional style, employing frequent camera movement and showing both internal and external action, including baseball games, car rides and train trips. A subtle and delicate story of rekindled love and optimism.

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**Tokyo Story** (*Tokyo Monogatari*)

(1953) approx 136 mins

Ozu's sad, simple story of generational conflict is often regarded as the filmmaker's greatest masterpiece. An elderly couple's visit to various busy, self-absorbed offspring in Tokyo is met with indifference and ingratitude, only serving to reveal permanent emotional chasms. Ozu's examination of the slow fracturing of the Japanese family is filled with quiet resignation, and the realization that tradition is subject to change. The last scene - a wake and its aftermath - is one of the most poetic ever filmed and Setsuko Hara's performance when she receives a gift from her mother-in-law is heart-stopping. Melancholic, spare and restrained, *Tokyo Story* is a meditation on life, love, and mortality.

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**Early Spring** (*Soshun*)

(1956) approx 144 mins

A young salaried office worker is bored with both his job and his wife. He has a slight affair with the office flirt; he and his wife quarrel. Later he accepts a transfer to the country. Ozu said of the film, "Although I hadn't made a white-collar story for a long time, I wanted to show the life of a man with such a job - his happiness over graduation and finally becoming a member of society, his hopes for the future gradually dissolving, his realizing that, even though he has worked for years, he has accomplished nothing."

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**Tokyo Twilight** (*Tokyo Boshoku*)

(1957) approx 141 mins

Ozu's last black-and-white film, this is perhaps his darkest and harshest depiction of the disintegration of the family. Ozu regular, Chishu Ryu plays a father living alone with his two daughters. The women discover that their mother, whom they thought dead, is actually living nearby with another man. This shocking information results in despair, destruction and isolation reflecting an extreme pessimism without precedent in Ozu's work.

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**Equinox Flower** (*Higan-Bana*)

(1958) approx 118 mins

Another close examination of family life, Ozu's first, gorgeous colour film is presented from the viewpoint of the younger generation. Focusing on a modern young woman (Fujiko Yamamoto) who wishes to choose her husband over her father's objections, Ozu opens an age-old discussion on respect for the beliefs and values of elders and the tensions spawned by youthful rebellion. As the father is slowly won over, the entire family is subjected to Ozu's gentle irony and loving detail. The colour enhances the tone and mood of the film and showcases Yamamoto's famous beauty. The film begins and ends ironically on the railway - first with a warning sign 'strong winds expected', finally with a train gliding into a blissful autumn afternoon, all parties reconciled.

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**Good Morning** (*Ohayo*)

(1959) approx 94 mins

Two little boys live with their parents in a suburban Tokyo housing development. A misunderstanding among the neighbour ladies is innocently compounded by the two boys. After an argument with their parents (they want a television set and their father refuses to buy one), they are told to shut up. Taking their parents at their word they shut up completely, not speaking to anyone, even the neighbours. Ozu himself never mentioned the film's close resemblance to *I Was Born, But...* but it was the first in a series of three "remakes" and one of Ozu's funniest films.

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**Floating Weeds** (*Ukigusa*)

(1959) approx 119 mins

A small theatrical troupe revisits a remote island town after some years' absence. The aging leading actor is particularly anxious to stop because he had a son by one of the local women and wants to see him again. It was photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa, one of Japan's greatest cinematographers (*Rashomon*, *Yojimbo*, *Ugetsu*, *Enjo*, *Kagi*). Ozu said, "About this time, CinemaScope was getting popular. I wanted to have nothing to do with it, and consequently I shot more close-ups

and used shorter shots." (Reacting against the long shots and long scenes typical to Scope movies of the time). Donald Richie called this film, "the most physically beautiful of all of Ozu's pictures".

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**Late Autumn (*Akibiyori*)**

(1960) approx 128 mins

The lightest variant on Ozu's favourite theme. Instead of a father/daughter relationship, it focuses on a widow and the daughter who finds even the thought of her mother's remarriage offensive. There are new touches here: the comic chorus of old rogues trying to sort out both women's future and Mariko Okada as the 'modern miss' who cuts through tradition to ensure a happy ending. She's proof that not all Ozu's characters are meek and passive.

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**End Of Summer (*Kohayagawa-ke no Aki*)**

(1961) approx 103 mins

An older man has had three daughters by his wife, one by a former mistress. The eldest daughter is widowed but getting ready to remarry: the second is married and her husband runs the family business, a sake plant; the third has already had her husband picked out by the family. When the father decides to take up with his former mistress, the daughters are upset. Ozu here creates a picture about an entire family, enriching the several strands of his story with many anecdotes. The film is unusually rich in character vignettes: at the same time it is one of the director's bleakest films. The Japanese title "*Kohayagawa-ke no Aki*" literally translates as *The Autumn Of The Kohayagawa Family*. Donald Richie said of the film, "It is perhaps the only Ozu picture in which there is no spiritual survivor. One of Ozu's most beautiful films, it is also one of his most disturbing."

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**An Autumn Afternoon (*Samma no Aji*)**

(1962) approx 118 mins

Undoubtedly influenced by the death, during filming, of his mother, with whom he had lived all his life, Ozu's final film is both a serene meditation on aging and loneliness, and a very funny film in places. Having arranged the marriage of his only daughter, a widower becomes painfully aware of his advanced age and his isolation. Solace is sought in alcohol and drunken comradeship which give rise to some of the funniest scenes of Ozu's later films. Ozu died a year after making this film so it became his last thoughts on a recurring subject. Recalling *Late Autumn* and *Early Spring*, Ozu's film is simple and sublime. [Literally, the Japanese title "*Samma no Aji*" means *The Taste of Mackerel*]



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