

## Document Citation

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Miyamoto Musashi (Musashi Miyamoto), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1944  
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Gion no shimai (Sisters of the Gion), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1936  
Yoru no onnatachi (Women of the night), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1948  
Waga koi wa moenu (My love has been burning), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1949  
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Chikamatsu monogatari (A story from chikamatsu), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1955  
Orizuru Osen (The downfall of Osen), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1935  
Gubijinsô (Poppy), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1935  
Fujiwara Yoshie no Furusato (Home town), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1930  
Uwasa no onna (A woman of rumor), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1954  
Yôkihi (Princess Yang Kwei-Fei), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1955  
Josei no shôri (The victory of women), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1946  
Akasen chitai (Street of shame), Mizoguchi, Kenji, 1956

Pacific Film Archive  
University Art Museum  
Berkeley, California  
Telephone: (510) 642-1412

## **Kenji Mizoguchi**

**Series schedule:** Date, time title, year of production

### **Friday, September 6**

7:30 pm: **Cascading White Threads** (*Taki no shiraito*/aka The Water Magician, 1933)  
9:25 pm: **Osaka Elegy** (*Naniwa hikâ*, 1936) **New Print!**

### **Sunday, September 8**

5:30 pm: **The Downfall of Osen** (*Orizuru Osen*, 1935)  
7:05 pm: **Poppy** (*Gubijinso*, 1935)

### **Friday, September 13**

7:30 pm: **The Love of Sumako the Actress** (*Joyu Sumako no koi*, 1947)  
9:20 pm: **My Love Has Been Burning** (*Waga koi wa moenu*, 1949)

### **Sunday, September 15**

5:30 pm: **The Famous Sword** (*Meito Bijomaru*), 1945)  
6:55 pm: **Musashi Miyamoto** (*Miyamoto Musashi*, 1944)

### **Friday, September 20**

7:00 pm: **The 47 Ronin**, Parts I and II (*Genroku Chushingura*, 1941/1942) **New Prints!**

### **Saturday, September 21**

7:00 pm: **The Victory of Women** (*Josei no shori*, 1946)  
8:35 pm: **Utamaro and His Five Women** (*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*, 1946)

### **Sunday, September 22**

5:30 pm: **Sisters of the Gion** (*Gion no shimai*, 1936) **New Print!**  
6:55 pm: **The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums** (*Zangiku monogatari*, 1939) **New Print!**

### **Friday, September 27**

7:30 pm: **Women of the Night** (*Yoru no onnatachi*, 1948)  
9:00 pm: **Miss Oyu** (*Oyu-sama*, 1951)

### **Sunday, September 29**

5:30 pm: **A Woman of Rumor** (*Uwasa no onna*, 1954) **New Print!**  
7:10 pm: **Street of Shame** (*Akasen chitai*, 1956) **New Print!**

### **Friday, October 4**

7:30 pm: **The Princess Yang Kwei Fei** (*Yokihi*, 1955)  
9:25 pm: **The Taira Clan Saga** (*Shin Heike monogatari*, 1955)

### **Sunday, October 6**

5:30 pm: **Hometown** (*Furusato*, 1930) **New Print!**  
7:15 pm: **The Life of Oharu** (*Saikaku ichidai onna*, 1952)

### **Sunday, October 13**

5:30 pm: **A Geisha** (*Gion bayashi*, 1953) **New Print!**  
7:15 pm: **Crucified Lovers: A Story from Chikamatsu** (*Chikamatsu monogatari*, 1954)  
**New Print!**

### **Sunday, October 20**

5:30 pm: **Ugetsu** (*Ugetsu monogatari*, 1953)  
7:20 pm: **Sansho the Bailiff** (*Sansho dayu*, 1954)

**General admission: \$5.50 for one film; \$7 for double bills.**



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## Kenji Mizoguchi

A series of 26 films at Pacific Film Archive  
Friday, September 6 through Sunday, October 20

September 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 21, 22, 27, 29; October 4, 6, 13, 20

Kenji Mizoguchi (1898-1956) has been called "a veritable Shakespeare of film" by Robin Wood, "Japanese film's truest creator" by Kurosawa; but perhaps Donald Richie put his finger on it when he said, "In Japan he is now considered a classic, which means that his films are more talked and written about than seen." In September and October we have the extraordinary opportunity to see most of Mizoguchi's surviving films, many of them in new 35mm prints. They are testament to a precise but ravishing beauty, a chilling obsession with desire, an artist's lifelong cry for social justice.

Peter Scarlet, who organized PFA's first big Mizoguchi retrospective, in 1976, wrote, "The most noteworthy element of Mizoguchi's visual style is his remarkably fluid use of the moving camera. In his hands the sequence-shot, uninterrupted by editing, becomes a means of exploring the world in which his characters exist while respecting its spatial and temporal continuity. Rarely cutting in for closeups, contrary to traditional film aesthetics, Mizoguchi is able to elicit our sympathetic understanding of his players, paradoxically because of the distance he so rigorously maintains from them. Few directors have created so many memorable images, not so much for the perfection of their composition—though Mizoguchi's painterly eye is everywhere evident—as for the ineluctable fragility with which he invests them. For the world is almost always lost to his protagonists, usually women with extraordinary powers of endurance and understanding. It is the implacable anger with which Mizoguchi views their plight—an almost imperceptible anger, seething just below the apparently placid surface of his films, rather like that of Carl Dreyer—that provides the clue to still-unexplored depths in his work."

### FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 6

*Mizoguchi* is presented in collaboration with, and thanks to the generous support of, The Japan Foundation.

Our series is part of a touring exhibition organized by James Quandt, Cinematheque Ontario. Prints are provided by The Japan Foundation and the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute except as noted.

We gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance of Marie Suzuki and Tomozo Yano of The Japan Foundation, and Kanako Hayashi of the Kawakita Memorial Film Institute.

Cascading White Threads 7:30  
*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1933)*



### Bruce Loeb on Piano

(*Taki no shiraito*/a.k.a. *The Water Magician*). This late silent Mizoguchi is already characteristic of his mature style in being a film of delicate passion and crushing irony. Takako Irie portrays the star of a traveling show, lonely but large hearted, and given to extreme generosity that flies in the face of wisdom. When she inadvertently causes a young coach driver to lose his job, she insists on making amends by putting him through law school, in the process falling hopelessly in love and dangerously into debt. Years later she is brought to trial before the former student, now a judge. "Mizoguchi has given us one of his best controlled, most economical, most justly paced films....He has created an entire world for his heroine to inhabit. Like the real world it is made up of many parts." (Donald Richie)

• Written by Yasunaga Higashibojo, Shinji Masuda, Kennosuke Tateoka, based on the book by Kyoka Izumi. Photographed by Shigeru Miki. With Takako Irie, Tokihiko Okada, Suzuko Taki, Ichiro Sugai. (96 mins, Silent with Japanese and English intertitles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Matsuda Eigasha)

### Osaka Elegy 9:25

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1936) New Print!*

(*Naniwa hikâ*). 1936—the year of *Osaka Elegy* and *Sisters of the Gion*—was a turning point for Mizoguchi, when "I was able finally to learn how to show life as I see it." In an Osaka sparkling with the seductive allure of commercialism, Mizoguchi depicts the humiliations of a switchboard operator after she is seduced by her boss. Isuzu Yamada, Mizoguchi's leading lady through the forties, stars. *Osaka Elegy*, Joan Mellon writes, was "Mizoguchi's most brilliant pre-war film, shot in twenty days and banned after 1940 for 'decadent tendencies,' a euphemism barely concealing the military government's fear of the radicalism of Mizoguchi's satire of the ruthless, all-pervasive Osaka capitalism. In this film the mature Mizoguchi style emerges for the first time as he creates, entirely through visual means, a balance between the fate of the heroine Ayako and the corrupt, degenerate values of Osaka."

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda, based on a story by Mizoguchi. Photographed by Minoru Miki. With Isuzu Yamada, Kensaku Hara, Benkei Shiganoya, Yoko Umemura. (71 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Films Inc.)

### SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8

### The Downfall of Osen 5:30

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1935)*

A pivotal work in Mizoguchi's career and a critical hit in Paris recently, *The Downfall of Osen* bridged the silent and sound periods. (The voice-over was recorded by a *benshi*, the traditional narrator of Japanese silent films.) Still remarkable for its narrative structure, which unfolds largely in flashback, it tells a quintessentially Mizoguchi tale of a woman (played by Isuzu Yamada) who sacrifices everything, including her body and her sanity, so that the man she loves can achieve success. "*The Downfall of Osen* is the most dramatic example of this persistent theme in Mizoguchi's work, one which film critic Tadao Sato attributes to the director's guilt feelings about the sacrifices his own mother and sister made for him." (David Owens)

• Written by Tatsunosuke Takashima, from the novel by Kyoka Izumi. Photographed by Minoru Miki. With Isuzu Yamada, Daijiro Natsukawa, Genichi Fujii, Ichiro Yoshizawa. (78 mins, Benshi narration, music track, English titles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Shochiku)

### Poppy 7:05

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1935)*

(*Gubijinso*). A popular novel by Soseki Natsume is the source for this ornately complicated story of



desire and ambition. The beautiful Fujio is engaged to a rising young diplomat, but falls in love with Ono, her English tutor, who is attracted by her beauty and wealth but who in turn is bound by an engagement to Sayoko, the virginal daughter of his mentor, Professor Inoue. A gold watch heirloom promised and rejected becomes the cipher for love of impure motivations. Though he enjoyed a lavish budget on this picture, the film flopped. But it was occasion to experiment, as critics have noted, with European-style dramatic editing. Noël Burch: "It is as if Mizoguchi felt the need to give the Western mode one serious, thorough-going try before striking out resolutely in his own, Japanese direction."

• Written by Haruo Takayanagi, based on the novel by Soseki Natsume. Photographed by Minoru Miki. With Kuniko Miyake, Ichiro Tsukida, Daijiro Natsukawa, Chiyoko Ogura. (72 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Shochiku)

### FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 13

## The Love of Sumako the Actress 7:30

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1947)*

(*Joyu Sumako no koi*). In a Meiji period setting, around the turn of the present century, Mizoguchi's protagonists are Sumako Matsui, Japan's first modern stage actress, and Hogetsu Shimamura, one of the founders of the Shingeki movement advocating theatrical realism. Again the subject was made even more attractive to him by its possibilities for promoting democracy, for Sumako Matsui risked everything for a career in the theater and a place for women in an art form that previously had been closed to them. "After opening with a magnificent debate (on whether the meaning of *A Doll's House* would be compromised if a female impersonator played the lead), Sumako goes on to chronicle the rise of modern, western theater in Japan by focusing on the stormy career of [Sumako Matsui]. The feminist thrust of the plot is gradually subsumed by the melodrama of Sumako's affair with her director...which rises to Sirkian heights in its counterpoint of life with theater." (Tony Rayns)

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda from a story by Hideo Nagata. Photographed by Shigeto Miki. With Kinuyo Tanaka, So Yamamura, Eijiro Tono, Kikue Mori. (93 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Shochiku)

## My Love Has Been Burning 9:20

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1949)*

(*Waga koi wa moenu*). Notable for the prophetic and amazingly militant feminism of its subject, this story is set in the 1880s, a crucial period in the modernization of Japan when both liberalism and feminism were nascent under the Meiji Restoration. With the blunt universality characteristic of this great director, the conflicts of the era are embodied in the struggles of a determined young woman (Kinuyo Tanaka) who leaves home to become involved in the political turmoil in Tokyo. The film ends with a hauntingly simple image of two women forming a mystical bond that both includes and transcends politics. Visually, the film demonstrates the dense, dark, and emotionally charged style characteristic of Mizoguchi's immediate postwar period—"a detailed, living fresco of protest, street battles, intrigues, and the claims of the individual conscience." (John Gillett)

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda, Kaneto Shindo, from a story by Kogo Noda. Photographed by Kohei Sugiyama. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Ichiro Sugai, Mitsuko Mito, Eitaro Ozawa. (84 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission New Yorker)

## SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15

**The Famous Sword 5:30***Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1945)*

(*Meito Bijomaru*). "The type of late wartime movie of which Mizoguchi told Donald Richie, 'I avoided the draft by making films like this.' At barely over an hour, *The Famous Sword* is a slim fable of magic and myth about obsessed swordmakers who seek perfection by a fanatic loyalty to the Emperor rather than harboring personal grudges. The mid-nineteenth century late Tokugawa period is recreated through sets reminiscent of *47 Ronin*, but most interesting is the manner in which the aristocratic lady Sasae (Isuzu Yamada) appears first in ghostly form to shore up the flagging spirits of the loyalist swordsmiths, then fights the climactic duel herself with a treacherous samurai. Even in this piece of period propaganda, the strongest image is of a strong woman taking her fate in her hands."—Andrew Sarris/Tom Allen, *Village Voice*

• Written by Matsutaro Kawaguchi. Photographed by Shigeto Miki. With Shotaro Hanayagi, Isuzu Yamada, Ichijiro Oya. (66 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Shochiku)

**Musashi Miyamoto 6:55***Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1944)*

(*Miyamoto Musashi*). A short wartime fable based on the exploits of the seventeenth-century master swordsman legendary for defeating Kojiro Sasaki with a wooden oar rather than a sword. As Musashi Miyamoto, "Chojuro Kwarazaki, bearded and intense, is a fine figure of a hero seeking through celibacy and contemplation for the perfect stroke in both swordplay and sculpture. While the philosophy is Zen Buddhist, the conventions are clearly reminiscent of the Western showdown in search of the best and the fastest. The samurai mystique is very much a spiritual metaphor, however, and in its ritual resolutions of minimalist, bloodless swordplay, *Musashi Miyamoto* captures the essence of the steel blade as a pure, cleansing instrument." (Andrew Sarris/Tom Allen)

• Written by Matsutaro Kawaguchi from a story by Kan Kikuchi. Photographed by Shigeto Miki. With Chojuro Kwarazaki, Kanemon Nakamura, Kinuyo Tanaka. (53 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Shochiku)

## FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 20

**The 47 Ronin (Genroku Chushingura)****Part I 7:00, Part II 9:10***Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1941/1942) New Prints!*

The vengeance of the retainers of Lord Asano in 1703 following his forced hara-kiri formed the basis for a classic kabuki drama and several films. Mizoguchi's was based on a more recent kabuki version by Seika Mayama, an austere and meditative interpretation centering on the personal drama of Kuranosuke Oishi, who suffered having to play a false role (the dissipated roué) while awaiting the protracted day of vengeance. Mizoguchi was given a lavish budget—during the war, no expense was spared to invoke the spirit of "the loyal 47"—but the joke was on the government. "The tone is intriguingly ambiguous: although the sentiments seem to accord with the military's concept of bushido, the warrior's code of devotion, Mizoguchi consistently avoids the large gestures and obvious action scenes and invests the story with a subdued, elegiac feeling for both the dead and the living. Stylistically, it is one of his most extraordinary achievements." (John Gillett)



• Written by Kenichiro Hara, Yoshikata Yoda, based on the play by Seika Mayama. Photographed by Kohei Sugiyama. With Chojuro Kawarazaki, Yoshizaburo Arashi, Mantoyo Mimasu. (Pt. 1: 111 mins, Pt. 2: 108 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Films Inc.)

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21**

**The Victory of Women 7:00**

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1946)*

(*Josei no shori*). "One year after the war ended, Mizoguchi's Japanese military overseers were replaced by American ones. Suspicious of films that might rekindle enthusiasm for feudal or militarist values, they encouraged themes that would illustrate democracy in action. Women were to be given special prominence in building a newly democratic Japan. Mizoguchi, who in many of his pre-war films had been obsessed with the theme of women victimized by society, embraced the new directives wholeheartedly" (David Owens, *The Japan Society*). *Victory of Women* is the story of a determined young lawyer, Hiroko (Kinuyo Tanaka), engaged to an imprisoned critic of the wartime government. While defending a destitute woman who has killed her baby rather than see it grow up an orphan after the war, Hiroko's opposition to the harsh sentences meted out to wartime dissidents is radicalized: now she sees the problem in terms of the oppression of women. The great actress Kinuyo Tanaka would become Mizoguchi's female alter-ego in his films of the fifties.

• Written by Kogo Noda, Kaneto Shindo. Photographed by Toshio Ubukata. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Michiko Kuwano, Mitsuko Miura, Shin Tokudaiji. (80 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 16mm, Permission Shochiku)

**Utamaro and His Five Women 8:35**

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1946)*

(*Utamaro o meguru gonin no onna*). Mizoguchi made films that seemed to come from the other side of the grave. He viewed human passions with the stately, detached sympathy of someone who has seen it all, and his cinematic style, unfurling with the loveliness of a succession of magnificent Japanese prints, was the most consistently transcendental of any film director. *Utamaro and His Five Women* is perhaps the closest he came to an autobiographical statement about the making of art. He took as his subject the great *ukiyo-e* (color print) artist Utamaro, who broke with the conventional nature-subjects of the eighteenth century to form a supple, popular style based on the lives of geisha houses and sensuality. Mizoguchi portrays Utamaro as so absorbed in the act of vision that he can do little but watch helplessly (if compassionately) the thrashings and destructive love affairs of the women who are his models.—Phillip Lopate

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda from a story by Kanji Kunieda. Photographed by Shigeto Miki. With Minosuke Bando, Kinuyo Tanaka, Kotaro Bando, Hiroko Kawasaki. (93 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 16mm, From New Yorker)

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22**

**Sisters of the Gion 5:30**

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1936) New Print!*

(*Gion no shimai*). "1936 may be considered the year when, in a Japanese film world ruled by sentimentalism and heroism, realism came into its own. The evidence is Kenji Mizoguchi's film *Sisters of the Gion*."—Akira Shimizu.

In telling the story of two sisters, both geisha in the Gion entertainment district of Kyoto, Mizoguchi strips away the romantic veneer of the geisha business. Of the two sisters, the elder is trapped in her



allegiance to the traditional ways of the geisha, while the younger is slyly rebellious and cynical about the merchandising of women. In the end, neither can truly escape her predicament. Both in the story and in a starkly beautiful visual style in which the camera maintains "a certain distance from the action" (his words), Mizoguchi capitalizes on the narrow alleyways and shuttered windows of the Gion to create a milieu closed off to the traditional machinations of well-meaning narrative.

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda. Photographed by Minoru Miki. With Isuzu Yamada, Yoko Umemura, Benkei Shiganoya, Fumio Okura. (70 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Films Inc.)

## The Story of the Last Crysanthemums 6:55

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1939) New Print!*

(*Zangiku monogatari*). In 1939, probably under pressure from an increasingly watchful military government, Mizoguchi turned away from his "social tendency" films of the mid-thirties to the Meiji period drama, which allowed him to develop a favorite theme—the problem of female self-sacrifice—under the guise of romantic fiction. In a famous quote, he spoke of the appeal of the Meiji Era (1868-1912), to which he was repeatedly drawn throughout his career: "Let us say that a man like me is always tempted by the climate of beauty in this era." Based on a fictionalized account of the life of a kabuki actor who owes his artistic development to his lover's encouragement and ultimate self-sacrifice, this film marks a peak in Mizoguchi's art. It is his first use of the one-shot/one-scene approach to mise-en-scène—long mobile shots that "create a delicately artificial mesh of cross-rhythms and modulations" (Tony Rayns, NFT).

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda from a story by Shofu Muramatsu, adapted by Matsutaro Kawaguchi. Photographed by Shigeto Miki, Yozo Fuji. With Shotaro Hanayagi, Kakuko Mori, Gonjuro Kawarazaki. (148 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Films Inc.)

### FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27

## Women of the Night 7:30

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1948)*

(*Yoru no onnatachi*). Mizoguchi's searing look at the disintegrating social conditions in postwar Japan focuses on the degradation of women, whose position was rendered even more marginal by the black-market atmosphere that made scavengers and fighters out of the disenfranchised. Filmed on location in Osaka, it is the story of a young widow (Kinuyo Tanaka) forced into prostitution, and her sister, the mistress of a narcotics smuggler. Donald Richie noted that "until [relatively recently] prostitution was legal in Japan and consequently the prostitute had a certain standing in society. It was the ambivalent attitude of society toward these 'women of the night' which especially interested Mizoguchi." Elsewhere, Richie wrote, "Mizoguchi sees women as the best vehicle for the complaint he is making or the truth he is showing. He did not, therefore, make films for women, but about them."

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda, from a story by Eijiro Hisaita. Photographed by Kohei Sugiyama. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Sanae Takasugi, Mitsuo Nagata, Tomie Tsunoda. (75 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Films Inc.)

## Miss Oyu 9:00

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1951)*

(*Oyu-sama*). A contemplative and ambiguous account of a love triangle, based on a Tanizaki story and translated through Mizoguchi's use of the long, mobile shot infused with emotion. Kinuyo Tanaka portrays a young widow who rebuffs the advances of a wealthy man, then becomes the center of a scandal when he marries her sister to be near her. "An exceptionally poignant melodrama...the period scenes

among Kyoto gentry and the squeeze between social proprieties and affairs of the heart evoked [Mizoguchi's] sensitive hand. There are many scenes of uniquely Japanese social rituals. At the core is Tanaka...as the older sister who unwisely allows arranged marital customs to ruin three lives. The perennial mystery of Mizoguchi's films is his revelation of Tanaka's iron will and transcendental appeal....The final shots of the distraught husband among marshy reeds is reminiscent of soulmate Murnau's *Sunrise*." (Andrew Sarris/Tom Allen)

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda, from a story by Junichiro Tanizaki. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Nobuko Otowa, Yuji Hori, Kiyoko Hirai. (95 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Daiei)

## SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 29

### A Woman of Rumor 5:30

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1954) New Print!*

(*Uwasa no onna*). For American critics Andrew Sarris and Myron Meisel, this was the signal discovery of the 1981 Mizoguchi tour. Meisel: "Mizoguchi returns to the world of Kyoto prostitutes....Kinuyo Tanaka (in her last film for Mizo) plays the owner of a brothel who sends her daughter away to be educated. She returns after a love affair has broken up due to her mother's occupation, and begins to compete with her mother for the attentions of a cynical client. The film is particularly acute about the growth of sisterhood between mother and daughter born of the suffering caused by male manipulation and female rivalries. [The] mastery of emotional dynamics within a complex *mise-en-scène* sets it beside all but the best of his works." Sarris: "The film has the feeling of late Ford or Buñuel, of a director who has rummaged through all the styles of expression and arrived at the most subtly exquisite, minimalist ways of expressing his deepest, most complex sentiments."

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda, Masashige Narusawa. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Tomoemon Otani, Yoshiko Kuga, Eitaro Shindo. (83 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Daiei)

### Street of Shame 7:10

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1956) New Print!*

(*Akasen chitai*). Mizoguchi's last completed film presents portraits of five prostitutes in a brothel called Dreamland in the Yoshiwara district of Tokyo. The women are in "the life" for a variety of reasons—including one would-be bride who finds that being a whore might be preferable to being enslaved to a husband. Peter Morris calls the film "a realistic and violent study of the feminine condition....In it, Mizoguchi seems to be seeking a new style, more detailed and accumulative, which will allow him to reveal the underlying moral attitudes of a society which creates 'red-light districts' and the people who inhabit them. Despite the intrusive melodramatic incidents, the film remains a penetrating social analysis [and] the acting is excellent." A box-office success at a time when prostitution was being debated in the Japanese Diet, it is said that the film contributed to the 1958 anti-prostitution ruling.

• Written by Masashige Narusawa. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Ayako Wakao, Machiko Kyo, Aiko Mimasu, Sadako Sawamura. (86 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Kino)

## FRIDAY OCTOBER 4

### The Princess Yang Kwei Fei 7:00

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1955) New Print*

(*Yokichi*). Part fairy tale, part ghost story, *The Princess Yang Kwei Fei*, set in eighth-century China, tells the story of Huan Tsuang, the last T'ang emperor, who falls in love with a servant girl (Machiko Kyo) and makes her his empress. The film's incredibly moving final scenes show Huan Tsuang losing his



Cinderella, then regaining her in a mystical embrace from beyond the grave. Mizoguchi's only Chinese subject was produced by Hong Kong's Run Run Shaw. Andrew Sarris called it "one of the most beautiful films ever to treat beauty as a subject. Beauty and memory and vanity....The backgrounds are unusually fake for a lyrical landscape artist like Mizoguchi [but it was] produced in the '50s when many realists began experimenting with abstract styles and revolutionary concepts of color....*Yang Kwei-Fei* is ultimately an introspective experience expressed in mordant blues....Of all the filmmakers I have ever seen, Mizoguchi comes closest to expressing through the formal unity of his mise-en-scène something approximating Sophoclean irony."

• Written by To Chin, Matsutarō Kawaguchi, Yoshikata Yoda, Masashige Narusawa. Photographed by Kohei Sugiyama. With Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, So Yamamura. (98 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, Color, 35mm, Permission New Yorker)

## The Taira Clan Saga 8:55

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1955)*

(*Shin Heike monogatari*). "In his period spectacles, of which *The Taira Clan* is most epic in scope, Mizoguchi resembles Shakespeare in his ability to establish a narrative viewpoint that is godlike in its omniscient serenity and wholeness; like Shakespeare also, he refuses to separate psychology from history in showing the life of men in society." (Tom Luddy) In twelfth-century Kyoto, during a power struggle between the landed gentry and the monastic forces, a young man of the military class seizes power and changes the course of Japanese history. Raizo Ichikawa plays the young samurai whose moral growth is at the core of the film. "The first shot opens on a view of the distant mountainous horizon, held for a brief moment of majestic calm before craning down into the middle of a vast chaotic marketplace teeming with people. Seldom has a historical period been evoked so vividly as by this image of the brutal, frenzied, and uncertain daily life of twelfth-century Kyoto." (Michael McKegney)

• Written by Yoshikata Yoda, Masashige Narusawa, Hisaichi Tsuji, from the novel by Eiji Yoshikawa. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Raizo Ichikawa, Yoshiko Kuga, Michiyo Kogure, Eitaro Shindo. (108 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, Color, 35mm, Permission Daiei)

## SUNDAY OCTOBER 6

### Hometown 5:30

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1930) New Print!*

(*Furusato*). Like many early sound films, Mizoguchi's first sound picture has a music-related theme. A young singer, talented but unlucky, marries a chambermaid who encourages him to establish his reputation, but he becomes corrupted and ultimately disillusioned. "My first talking film with Yoshie Fujiwara and the Western Electric System—used then for news-films: great difficulty, small result," Mizoguchi recalled. "Our sound engineer was a technician from the Ministry of Post and Telegraph who had no theatrical background. When we asked him to record the voice of a sick man in bed, he refused, saying it was impossible. He didn't think much of Art." "This was the Nikkatsu Company's first sound feature, using a sound-on-disc system. The dialogue was written on blackboards in the manner of the Teleprompter and actors constantly looked off the set to reassure themselves." (Peter Morris, *Mizoguchi*)

• Written by Iwao Mori, Toshi Kisaragi, Shuichi Hatamoto. Photographed by Tatsuyuki Yokota. With Yoshie Fujiwara, Shizue Natsukawa, Fujiko Hamaguchi, Isamu Kosugi. (86 mins, Partial sound, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm)



**The Life of O-Haru 7:15***Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1952)*

(*Saikaku ichidai onna*). Mizoguchi considered *The Life of O-Haru* his masterpiece and critics have placed it among the greatest films of all time. Based on a seventeenth-century novel by Saikaku, *The Woman Who Loved Love*, the film chronicles the decline of a beautiful court lady (Kinuyo Tanaka) who is gradually stripped of social respectability until she is reduced to prostitution and beggary. "The Genroku period background is evoked in images of staggering beauty and camera movements of truly epic sweep. 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 elegiac awareness of the need for all things to pass) that is truly transcendent." (Tom Luddy)

- Written by Yoshikata Yoda from the book by Ihara Saikaku. Photographed by Yoshimi Hirano. With Kinuyo Tanaka, Toshiro Mifune, Ichiro Sugai, Hisako Yamane. (137 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, From Milestone)

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 13****A Geisha 5:30***Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1953) New Print!*

(*Gion bayashi*). An updating of the themes of the 1936 *Sisters of the Gion*, significantly set against the occupied Japan of 1953. It is the story of the friendship of two women, Miyoharu (Michiyo Kogure), an older geisha, and Eiko, her 16-year-old protege. Ayako Wakao was the "discovery" of this film as Eiko, whose initial idealism about becoming a geisha—she buys into the myth about being a national treasure—is brutally quashed. A wealthy businessman who desires to become her patron manipulates Eiko's forthrightness and Miyoharu's sacrificial submission so that both become his kept property. "The charm of *A Geisha* is the compassionate but completely unsentimental way it regards the two women's friendship [and] the manner in which this friendship changes and deepens as their responsibilities, each to the other, are acknowledged. Miyoharu is much the more interesting of the two, but it is the younger Eiko who is more often right." (Vincent Canby, *NY Times*)

- Written by Yoshikata Yoda, from a story by Matsutaro Kawaguchi. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Michiyo Kogure, Ayako Wakao, Seizaburo Kawazu, Chieko Naniwa. (87 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission New Yorker)

**Crucified Lovers: A Story from Chikamatsu 7:15***Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1954) New Print!*

(*Chikamatsu monogatari*). This is the story of an illicit love between a merchant's wife and her husband's servant in the days when the punishment for adultery was crucifixion. Here Mizoguchi is at his most painterly, particularly in the two processions which frame the film, and in the scenes of the lovers' flight from their pursuers. Chikamatsu's seventeenth-century puppet play was based on an actual event, which also served as the basis for a story by Saikaku that provides many of the film's most important elements. But Mizoguchi and screenwriter Yoda make significant departures from their famous sources. For Chikamatsu, the point is fatality; for Saikaku, the violation of the social order, which he condemns despite his sympathy for the outlaws. For Mizoguchi, the lovers are right in the tradition of the romantic outlaw couple; Osan and Mohei are only a gun barrel away from such film noir protagonists as Bowie and Keechie or Bonnie and Clyde.—Peter Scarlet



- Written by Yoshikata Yoda, based on works by Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Ihara Saikaku. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Kazuo Hasegawa, Kyoko Kagawa, Eitaro Shindo, Sakae Ozawa. (102 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, Permission Daiei)

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 20**

**Ugetsu 5:30**

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1953)*

(*Ugetsu monogatari*). *Ugetsu* is evocative of the Buddhist universe of Noh drama, where time is a movement of consciousness, memory is as tangible as the present, and the dead return to voice their grief or longing. Blending a tale of karmic law, a ghost story, and a love story, Mizoguchi also refers to other Japanese art forms such as narrative picture scrolls in his use of perspective and his signature long takes that move us seamlessly from one scene to the next. In sixteenth-century Japan, with the pandemonium of civil wars a looming presence in their lives, the potter Genjuro and his wife long to be "rich and safe," respectively. But artistic vanity draws Genjuro into the paradisiacal realm of a phantom princess. Mizoguchi builds the "other" world entirely out of what he is given in this one: shadows and lighting, decor and texture, and the graceful chicanery of desire.

- Written by Matsutaro Kawaguchi, Yoshikata Yoda, based on two stories by Ueda Akinari (1768). Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, Kinuyo Tanaka, Mitsuko Mito. (96 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, PFA Collection, Permission Kino)

**Sansho the Bailiff 7:20**

*Kenji Mizoguchi (Japan, 1954)*

(*Sansho dayu*). In eleventh-century Japan, two children are kidnapped and sold into slavery while their mother Tamiki withers away on a distant island, dreaming only of being reunited with her children. After many years the son assumes his rightful post as provincial governor and sets about deposing the cruel bailiff who brought tragedy upon his family. As probing and rigorously worked as a Greek tragedy, this film's distanced determinism vies with the direct engagement of the characters to effect the richest form of drama, a purity of emotion. In Mizoguchi, the long-shot is as psychologically astute as the close-up. As Tamiki, Kinuyo Tanaka haunts as in *Ugetsu* (where she plays a ghost). Her presence, established in the early sequences, is thereafter felt largely through her absence; banished to an off-screen hell, she is nonetheless perceived, not as an apparition but as a feeling, like a voice carried by the wind.

- Written by Yoshikata Yoda, Fuji Yahiro, from a story by Ogai Mori. Photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa. With Yoshiaki Hanayagi, Kyoko Kagawa, Kinuyo Tanaka, Eitaro Shindo. (125 mins, In Japanese with English subtitles, B&W, 35mm, PFA Collection, Permission Films Inc.)