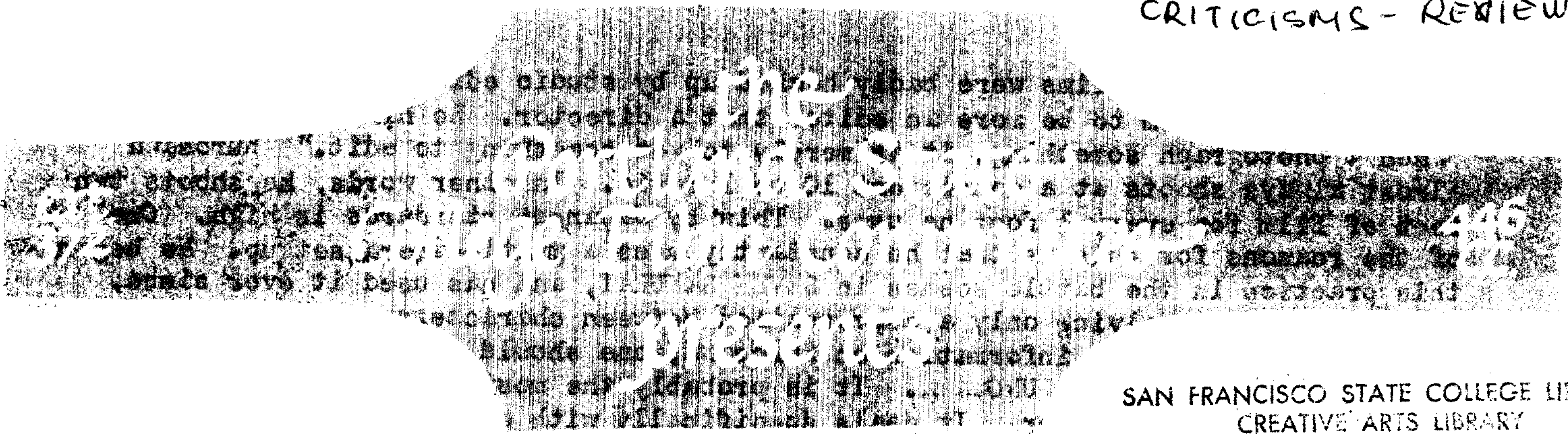


## Document Citation

Title	<b>Drunken angel</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Portland State College. Film Committee</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Yoidore tenshi (Drunken angel), Kurosawa, Akira, 1948





SAN FRANCISCO STATE COLLEGE LIBRARY  
CREATIVE ARTS LIBRARY  
1650 HOLLOWAY AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94122

DRUNKEN ANGEL

With their usual accuracy in pinpointing specific details, many critics feel that *DRUNKEN ANGEL* was Kurosawa's first film. Actually, he had made six features previously to it and had co-directed several others. *DRUNKEN ANGEL* was not the work of a budding young director. Kurosawa had been in filmmaking twelve years before he made the film. Japanese critics are fond of labeling this film "a realization of a major directorial talent". Kurosawa says in rebuttal: "I have undergone no major change. The only difference is that in earlier films I was never allowed to express myself properly". This interference with his earlier films had not come from the studio heads, but from the government: first from the militarist war regime, and later from the American occupational forces. By 1948 the restrictions were loosened and Kurosawa was given complete freedom to make the kind of picture he wanted to make. The result has been compared to the Italian Neo-realist films such as *BICYCLE THEIF*, *OPEN CITY*, and *PAISAN*. Actually the comparison is inappropriate. The Italian movement was based on simulating documentary techniques: filming in the streets, using non-actors, etc. *DRUNKEN ANGEL* was made in a studio with a large budget, a professional cast, a professional crew, and all of the polish that Kurosawa could put into it. The Italians were trying to come as close to reality as possible with their techniques, but Kurosawa when once asked about realism in his films replied that his films were not made to be realistic. He did not want to copy reality, but to create reality in his films.

Despite the major differences in Kurosawa's techniques and those of the Italians, there was a similarity. Kurosawa did produce a film that showed many of the problems that faced Japan after the war: the rise of gangsterism, the sanitation problems, the living conditions of many of the people, and a general decline in the moral fabric of the society. But this was almost an incidental part of the film. What Kurosawa really wanted to do in the film was to show what he considered to be "the silliness of gangsters as people". The postwar conditions were to be just a backdrop against which he played the struggle between the doctor and the gangsters. What Kurosawa had intended, however, and what the final product became were not the same. What happened to prevent this was Kurosawa's new star, Tshiro Mifune. Mifune proved to be a disrupting element in the films. "I had seen him before, in Taniguchi's *TO THE END OF THE SILVER OUTFITTERS*, but had no idea he would be like this", said Kurosawa of Mifune. Mifune's characterization was so powerful that it overshadowed that of the doctor altogether, and Kurosawa found himself rewriting the film in an effort to try and prevent this. But at the same time Kurosawa did not want to stop Mifune. He recognized in him a real talent for acting. "His reactions are so very swift. If I say one thing, he understands ten. He reacts extraordinarily quickly to the director's intentions". After the film was finished, Kurosawa told one reporter: "In the end, though the title refers to the doctor, it is Mifune that everyone remembers". Mifune has said of Kurosawa: "Kurosawa has this quality, this ability to bring things out of you that you never knew were there. It is enormously difficult work, but each picture with him is a revelation. When you see his films, you find them full realizations of ideas, of emotions, of a philosophy which surprises with its strength, even shocks with its power".

Mifune went on to appear in sixteen of Kurosawa's twenty-five films. He, like many others, including Takashi Shimura (the doctor in tonight's film), became part of the Kurosawa group. "Groups" are an important part of the film-making process in Japan. Each director gathers about him a group of actors, writers, cameramen, etc. that he regularly uses in his films. Although they may work for another director on occasion, they generally are known for their association with one specific director. Kurosawa's group is the best known in Japan. There are many who would like to be a part of it, but there are also many who would not. Kurosawa is a hard taskmaster and works his crew to their fullest capacity. One writer commented: "If you can stand, you can walk, and Kurosawa makes you stand". But he is not unkind to his group. He works, in fact, more closely with them than any other Japanese director. Most directors show up for work in the morning, do their work and go home, and never see the cast or crew off the set or away from the studio, except for social occasions. Kurosawa takes the crew home with him. Usually the entire group lives together at a hotel or inn until the film is finished. After the film is finished he takes the footage and disappears until the film is finished. Kurosawa does all of his own editing since



many of his earlier films were badly hacked up by studio editors. In fact many people consider him to be more an editor than a director. He himself has said: "When I photograph something, it is merely to get something to edit." Kurosawa almost always shoots at a consistent 10 to 1 ratio. In other words, he shoots ten feet of film for every 1 foot he uses. This by Japanese standards is high. One of the reasons for this is that he constantly uses a multi-camera set up. He began this practice in the battle scenes in SEVEN SAMURAI, and has used it ever since, even in scenes involving only a conversation between characters.

For further information on Kurosawa, one should read Donald Ritchie's book THE FILMS OF AKIRA KUROSAWA. It is probably the most complete book ever written about one director. It deals specifically with each of his films; its conception, technical problems, treatment, and production. For further information on Japanese films there are many books available including Donald Ritchie's book THE JAPANESE FILM. Anyone interested in film should certainly read up on the Japanese cinema, which has far more to offer than GODZILLA VERSUS KING KONG.

TONIGHT'S SHORT: 21-87

Running time: 10 mins.

A fast and impressionistic comment on the automation of people, done in the Lipsett manner (VERY NICE, VERY NICE). Directed by Arthur Lipsett.

#### Things upcoming---

The Film Committee has just finished booking of another JANUS film program to take place the Weekend of March 7-8-9. You may remember that two years ago we were one of the first groups in this country to book the Janus collection of short films. These were extremely well received and we feel that the next program is of equal merit. Actually there are two programs in this group as there were in the first and the second program will be run during Spring term but the dates have not been finalized. The winter term program will include three (3) short films, 2 Polish ones done in 1967 and a German one also done in '67. The feature film will be WILD HORSES OF FIRE by Sergei Paradjanov of Russia in 1965. Outside of showings at the New York and San Francisco film festivals this will be their first programming in this country. Watch for further announcements and spread the word as wide as possible. This program will be included in the price of the Term Pass.

A little more about the Term Pass: It will go on sale at the box office sometime during the holidays and will also be available at the door next term. It allows you to see at least \$6.00 worth of films for \$3.50, this price including in addition to the 8 regular films next term, both the Janus Program #3 and the International Tournee of Animation which will be shown Feb. 14, 15, and 16th. Buying a pass also helps you to avoid the ticket lines at the films, an item of inestimable value.

#### SPECIAL EVENT THIS WEEKEND:

Steve Paxton, dancer, will present an evening's diversion Sunday, December 15 (this Sunday night) at 8:00 pm in the College Center Ballroom here at PSC. His program, entitled STEVE PAXTON: DANCES AND LECTURES, has recently been given in Seattle at the Henry and White Galleries, and at the University of California at Berkeley. Admission is one dollar, and sponsors are EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology) and the PSC Educational Activities Art Exhibit Committee. Nothing like a traditional "dance concert", this program uses elements of "pedestrian movement" to examine space and movement in some new and fascinating ways. (Its of particular interest to film buffs). It might be added here that Paxton's work at the 1966 New York Armory Show was one of the highlights and gave much of the impetus to the Multi-Media events which have since been developing on the art scene.

#### At the Cabaret:

Fulton Lemuel Quartet, exponents of an unusual brand of modern jazz, play from 10 to 12:30 or so in the Cabaret (in the Viking Bar.) Poet Howard McCord will read at 10:30, and of course another thrilling(?) episode of KING OF THE ROCKET MEN is on the schedule. Free.....

The film committee is always looking for members, which means you get to help with a lot of the unglamorous work but you also get exposed to film catalogues, magazines, bureaucrats, etc. Drop around 446 College Center over vacation or next term. Also to be added to mailing list drop by or phone Ext. 372 or leave name, address, and zip-code with someone at door.

Next film showing will be, hopefully, GRANDE ILLUSION (1937) by Renoir which is an example of Late Reaction to World War I. It will be shown as part of film history series next term beginning on Tuesday January 7 at 7:30 here at 75 Old Main.

Next Friday night film will be 8½ by Fellini on January 10.

Watch for the opening of FACES by John Cassavettes coming to the Guild.