

Document Citation

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The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail

1945 60 min. B&W Rental: A

Directed by Akira Kurosawa; original title: "Tora no O o Fumu Otokotachi;" screenplay by Kurosawa, based on the Kabuki drama "Kanjinchō;" photography by Takeo Ito; music by Tadashi Hattori. With Hanshiro Iwai, Susumu Fujita, Kenichi Enomoto. Japanese dialog with English subtitles.

For Kurosawa, *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail* is unusual in its use of ambiguity and remarkably subtle irony to undermine a theme about which the director has grave reservations. The tale of the retainer who beats his disguised master to get him safely past the opposing force's barrier becomes a two-edged sword, ridiculing feudal standards of loyalty while appearing to celebrate them. Kurosawa considers not

only the fidelity of the retainer, but also that of the barrier keeper who lets the party pass even though he may suspect the identity of the beaten man. *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tale*, along with *The Lower Depths* is Kurosawa's most concise and psychologically complex work. (SR)
(35mm prints are available for rental)

