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1964 • *Assassination (Ansatsu)*

pr: Shochiku (Kyoto); orig. story: Ryotaro Shiba; sc: Nobuo Yamada; 'scope ph: Masao Kosugi; music: Toru Takemitsu; cast: Tetsuro Tamba, Shima Iwashita, Isao Kimura, Eitaro Ozawa, Eiji Okada et al. Personality study of an enigmatic figure in the events leading up to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Hachiro Kiyokawa, the head of a prominent fencing school, had been a staunch supporter of restoration of the emperor to power. He had been jailed for killing a military government policeman who attacked one of his disciples. But he was released from jail when he sold the military government the idea of his forming a terrorist group to go to Kyoto and wipe out the pro-imperialist forces. Meanwhile his former colleagues try to understand his motives. They feel that it was either the massacre of pro-imperialist friends that he survived several years before, or the torture murder of his mistress, who refused to reveal their whereabouts, that caused him to become cynical about political ideals. The military government has decided in any case that he is untrustworthy, and sends a master swordsman assassin after him to Kyoto. Just when their leader is informing the supposedly pro-military terrorists that the emperor has given his authorization for them to join those who support him, the assassin arrives to murder him. Almost impossible to understand without a plot outline, due to involved flash-back construction and large cast, but a visually and psychologically powerful film. (AB)