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a film by YOSHISHIGUE YOSHIDA

A PROMISE

(NINGUEN NO YAKUSOKU)

1986

presented by

SEIBU SAISON GROUP
TV ASAHI
& KINEMA TOKYO

Director's monologue.

Euthanasia, is it really a crime ?
Or is it only a piteous choice of men doomed to death ?

A bedridden old woman, living on the outskirts of Tokyo, was murdered.
Three people are suspected: her husband, her son and the son's wife.
In our era, aren't we destroying the cult of death ?
In the past, the aged readied their mind for death. Today this is gone.

On a rainy night, the old woman was found dead, her head plunged in
her bedside bowl full of water.

Water symbolizes the boundaries between life and death.

Yoshishige Yoshida

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A film by YOSHISHIGUE YOSHIDA

A PROMISE

(Ninguen No Yakusoku)

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TITLES

Directed by: **YOSHISHIGUE YOSHIDA**

Produced by: **SEIBU SAISON GROUP**
TV ASAHI
KINEMA TOKYO

Screen play: **YOSHISHIGUE YOSHIDA**
FUKIKO MIYAUCHI

From **SHUICHI SAE** novel.

Pictures	YOSHIHIRO YAMAZAKI
Screen music	HARUOMI HOSONO (Y.M.O.)
Montage	AKIRA SUZUKI
Lights	SHOSAKU KATO
Settings	YOSHIE KIKUKAWA
Sound	TOSHIO NAKANO
Distributor	TOHO TOWA

CAST:

Ryosaku, the grand'father**RENTARO MIKUNI**
Tatsu, his wife**SACHIKO MURASE**
Yoshio, the son**CHOICHIRO KAWARAZAKI**
Ritsuko, his wife**ORIE SATO**
Takao, Yoshio's child**TETSUTA SUGIMOTO**
Naoko, Yoshio's child**KUMIKO TAKEDA**
Yoshio's mistress**REIKO TAZIMA**
Inspector Yoshikawa**KOICHI SATO**
Inspector Tagami**TOMISABURO WAKAYAMA**

Lasting: 2 hours 3 mn.

Size: 35 mn VISTA-VISION 1,85

Color by FUJI

OUTLINES

Director: **YOSHISHIGUE YOSHIDA**

Born in 1933. After working as assistant to the director Keisuke Kinoshita, he begins with "The Scoundrel", 1960. Since he has made about 16 films of which the main ones are "Akitsu, thermal resort", 1962, "Story written with water", 1965, "Eros + Slaughter", 1970 and "Coup d'Etat", 1973.

Screen music: **HARUOMI HOSONO**

His records: "Yellow Magic Orchestra» (YMO)
«Multiplies» (YMO)

Starring: **RENTARO MIKUNI**

Mains films: "Gods' deep desire" 1968, by IMAMURA, "Coup d'Etat", 1973, by YOSHIDA.

SACHIKO MURASE

Born in 1905. Dean of the modern theater.

She played in "The Dawn", first speaking film in Japan. Since then, she has acted in many others.

CHOICHIRO KAWARAZAKI

His main film: "Gods' deep desire", 1968, by IMAMURA.

ORIE SATO

She played many Shakespeare and Brecht characters (theater).

TOMISABURO WAKAYAMA

Main film: "Oh, my son !" by IMAMURA

PRODUCTEURS

SEIBU SAISON GROUP

The compagny contributed to:
"Fire in Himatsuri", 1985, by YANAGIMACHI

KINEMA TOKYO PRODUCED

"The Birmanian Harp", 1985, by ICHIKAWA.

SYNOPSIS

In the city of Tama, a new development on Tokyo's outskirts: one morning, at the Morimotos', old bedridden Tatsu (Sachiko Murase) is found dead. Although the expression of her face is peaceful, she shows signs of congestion.

Old inspector Tagami (Tomisaburo Wayakama), assisted by the young police inspector Yoshikawa (Koichi Sato) carry out the inquiry. Tatsu's husband Ryosaku (Rentaro Mikuni) first declares the murderer to be the wife of their son Ritsuko (Orie Sato). But that evening he retracts his statement and claims he himself was the true killer, declaring that he committed the crime by strangling the woman. But Ryosaku is senile and his confession cannot be taken seriously. What is more, the pathologist had no trouble proving that the crime was not committed by strangling but that the poor old woman suffocated by having her face forced into the water in the bowl at her bedside.

In the meantime, Tatsu's vigil and funeral take place... Suspicions weigh heavily on everyone involved.

Three generations of Morimotos live under the same roof: the Ryosaku couple, Yoshio, their son (Choichiro Kawarasaki), Ritsuko his wife, Takao and Naoko, Yoshio's two children; all live together.

Yoshio had had the house built and paid the instalment interests with his parents' money while the rest was covered by loans. The parents had been obliged to move from their birthplace home and move in with their son in Tokyo.

One day, Ryosaku suddenly decided to have his wife committed to a hospital for the aged. But in the seriously-ill patients ward, a horrible took place before his eyes: old people were wandering through a corridor and one of them was tearing a sheet into shreds and pushing the pieces into his mouth or winding them around his neck.

The days go by, then suddenly Ryosaku disappears. He is discovered in the process of digging a grave near the tomb of his ancestors built in Onuma, his birthplace. He begs the people who had come across him to leave him alone, with tears in his eyes, imploring them "Let me bury myself here !".

Where he came from the land had been a watery marsh. Weeds floated lazily on the surface. Industrialization changed all that. The old man and his son who came to bring him home stood side by side in silence, gazing bitterly at the marshland.

Full of pity about Tatsu's fate, Ritsuko offers to have her signed out the hospital and take care of her at home herself. This was done as she wanted. Even so, in spite of the young woman's efforts of goodwill, an aversion more bitter than before grew between daughter in law and mother in law in the home. One evening, while attempting to force the resisting old woman to take a bath, a gleam of hatred flickers in Ritsuko's eyes.

She lets go Tatsu's hands, letting her body slip under the water. At the very last moment, she is saved by Ryosaku's last minute intervention. To the thunderstruck Ritsuko he screams "If my old wife wants her life finished off then I will be the one to do it for her !".

That evening, Ryosaku, with his wife, attempts to take his own life by leaving the gas tap open. But one again, his son circumvents the disaster when he hears the strange noise and takes action in good time.

Family life at the Morimotos' takes on a frantic rhythm. New quarrels break out every day.

The decisive moment comes at last. Very late one night when everybody is deep in sleep, Tatsu moves toward the basin near her bed and plunges her head into the water. Suffocating she lifts her face out of the water. Someone must hear her call out "Let me die !". She repeats it. But just then a hand reaches out and furtively pushes down on her head.

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