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Red Angel

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A shocking and controversial masterpiece, Yasuzo Masumura's no-bullshit antiwar film tells of an army nurse (Mizoguchi discovery and Masumura regular Ayako Wakao) in the Sino-Japanese war who sexually services an amputee and falls in love with a drug-addicted surgeon. Shot in black-and-white 'Scope, this 1966 feature can't be recommended to the squeamish or to viewers bound to the politically correct, but neither its nuanced eroticism nor its passionate, unpredictable moral focus can be easily shaken off. Roughly contemporary with *M*A*S*H* (as in Altman's film, scenes of war-front surgery provide a corollary to Vietnam), it sometimes suggests a less comic treatment of the same

theme—how to preserve one's humanity amid impossible circumstances—but its ethics are considerably more developed. This single screening of a 35-millimeter print is an encore to Facets Multimedia Center's revelatory Masumura retrospective last year, an opportunity equal to discovering Samuel Fuller, Nicholas Ray, or Douglas Sirk. In some respects *Red Angel* is the strongest Masumura film I've seen, and on September 25 Facets will screen his *Hoodlum Soldier* (1965), which I haven't seen; both screenings are part of an ongoing series, "The Return of the Japanese Outlaw Masters." Facets Multimedia Center, 1517 W. Fullerton, Sunday, September 5, 1:00, 773-281-4114.

—Jonathan Rosenbaum