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NOTES FOR OSHIMA RETROSPECTIVE BY TADAO SATO

"The Forgotten Army, (Wasurerareta Nogun)"

This is a thirty-minute documentary film for television, but it is one of the most important works produced by Nagisa Oshima.

In the postwar days, at the amusement quarters of the cities in Japan, there were frequently seen the figures of disabled ex-service men begging the public their kindness. They were usually in pairs mostly clad in the style of white kimono used in military hospitals and wearing army caps; a blind one playing old military songs on the accordion, the other equipped with an artificial arm or leg, sitting on the roadside and getting some money from passers-by.

Most of the people at first felt pity for them. However, seeing them still begging in the same manner even after the lapse of ten years, they were inclined to have disgust against them. As a matter of fact, most of them, although handicapped, had respectively got employment in a few years and were rehabilitated into society. Rumors were murmured that the disabled ex-service men still going on begging for more than ten years were not real ones, but only frauds lazy enough to pretend to be disabled, and this softened the mind of the people who felt their conscience pain every time they saw the aspect of those disabled ex-soldiers.

Nevertheless, Nagisa Oshima and his staff happened to know the fact that the majority of those keeping on begging were in reality the Koreans. Since Korea had been one of Japanese colonies until Japan's defeat in World War II, during the wartime a large number of the Koreans joined the Japanese army as soldiers and workmen and got injured.

Shortly after the end of the war, the Japanese government supplied Japanese disabled soldiers with pension, but the Koreans were incapable of getting any. The reason was that Korea had already been independent at that time and therefore they had acquired the nationality of Korea.

Nagisa Oshima and his staff started the shooting of ~~the~~ this film from

the stage where the ex-servicemen from Korea were going to negotiate with the Japanese government for pension as one-time Japanese soldiers. The Japanese government, however, did not accept their request. Consequently, they go to the representative agency of the Korean government in Tokyo for help. But the Korean government replies that it is the problem to be solved by the Japanese government.

Incapable of being helped by anyone, they begin to make speech on the street. But the Japanese public are quite indifferent to them. Having attained no results, they hold a poor party in a room of a cheap restaurant. Heavily drunk, they get into a quarrel with each other. Shivering with anger, ^{a blind} ex-soldier takes off his dark glasses. The instant, tears run out of his eye-sockets with no real eyes.

All of these incidents Nagisa Oshima recorded as based upon the shameful moral defect and indifference of the whole Japanese people, and called the attention of the Japanese to their own introspection.