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NAAC ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE

Topic: Japanese Cinema

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# JAPANESE CINEMA

- Japan has one of the oldest and largest film industries in the world, it was the fourth largest by number of feature films produced.
- Movies have been produced in Japan since 1897, when the first foreign cameramen arrived. □ Some notable Japanese films are Rashomon, Tokyo Story, Seven Samurai, ras Godzilla, Ugetsu, Yojimbo, Harakiri, The Woman in the Dunes, In the Realm of the Senses, Tampopo, Grave of the Fireflies, Akira, Ninja Scroll, Ghost in the Shell, Hana-bi, Battle Royale, and Spirited Away.

# JAPANESE CINEMA

- The idea of the haiku as poetic art that narrates with images inspired the juxtaposition of shots in silent films by masters such as Kenji Mizoguchi and Yasujiro Ozu, and Japanese cinema thus found a distinctive feature that would serve as the basis of its identity.
- In short, the narrative structure of haiku is fundamental to understanding the foundations of Japanese filmmaking. Once that base was defined, that country's school of film clearly split into two: into realism and fantasy. The former found its first great representation in the film *Otome-gokoro-Sannin-shimai* (1935), by Mikio Naruse, while Mizoguchi took fantasy to its extreme in 1953 with the beautiful *Ugetsu Monogatari*. This film, set in medieval Japan, in the times of the Shogun, is part of a sub-genre that deals with a period in the country's history that is fundamental to understanding Japan's idiosyncrasy.

# Golden Age

- The 1950s were the Golden Age of Japanese cinema.
- The decade started with Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950), which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1951 and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1952.
- *Carmen Comes Home* is a 1951 color Japanese comedy film directed by Keisuke Kinoshita.
- Filmed using Fujicolour, it was Japan's first colour film. There was also a black-and-white version of this film available.
- *Gate of Hell* is a 1953 Japanese film directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa. story of a samurai.

# Golden Age

- Filmed using East man colour film and the first Japanese colour film to be released outside Japan.
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- Palme d'Or grand prize award at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival.
- Academy Honorary Award for "Best Foreign Language Film first released in the United States during 1954", and Academy Award for Best Costume Design, Color in 1955 the 1954 New York Film Critics Circle Award for "Best Foreign Language Film".
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- It also won the Golden Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival.

# Japanese New Wave

- The 1960s were the peak years of the Japanese New Wave movement, which began in the 1950s and continued through the early 1970s.
- Nagisa Oshima, Kaneto Shindo, Masahiro Shinoda, Susumu Hani and Shohei Imamura emerged as major filmmakers during the decade.
- Documentary played a crucial role in the New Wave, as directors such as Hani, Kazuo Kuroki, Toshio Matsumoto, and Hiroshi Teshigahara moved from documentary into fiction film, while feature filmmakers like Oshima and Imamura also made documentaries.
- Shinsuke Ogawa and Noriaki Tsuchimoto became the most important documentarists.

# Samurai cinema

- Samurai cinema is an obligatory genre, equivalent to the Hollywood western: duels in which, instead of Colt pistols, katanas are used, with honor as the theme of the plot, and revenge feeds the structure of the dialog and singular dress codes, among other elements.
- Samurai cinema was headed by Akira Kurosawa and his best films in this genre could be Yojimbo (1961) and Sanjuro (1962). Perhaps the most sophisticated samurai film is Hara-Kiri (Masaki Kobayashi, 1962), whose structural narrative, influenced by Rashomon (Akira Kurosawa, 1950), uses narration within narration, like a series of memories experienced by the film itself.

# Akira Kurosawa

- It is the integrity that gives the strength of the formal Western style to this director, whose main concern is the story. Kurosawa was the precursor of multiple cinematographic styles, and his work also influenced blockbusters such as *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977), whose narrative bumpers, among other resources, come from this master. Some of his greatest works are tragedies adapted from Shakespeare, such as *Throne of Blood* (1957) and *Ran* (1985), although his more intimate films, transcendental humanist works, such as *Ikiru* (1952) and his masterpiece *Dersu Uzala* (1975) feature overwhelming existentialist plots.

# Yasujiro Ozu

- A director adored and imitated by many, including Wim Wenders and Jim Jarmusch, who regularly used a 50mm at tatami level, designing an unusual way of frontally approaching the axis of action. Ozu told endearing tales, in simple ways, about the post-war Japanese middle class. He made several masterpieces, including *Tokyo Story* (1953), which simply describes how an elderly couple travels to Tokyo to visit their children and discover that they do not have time to see them. And such was Ozu's cinema, a moral lesson, but so close to his characters and with so much respect that they were neither sentimental nor sweet but totally the opposite.

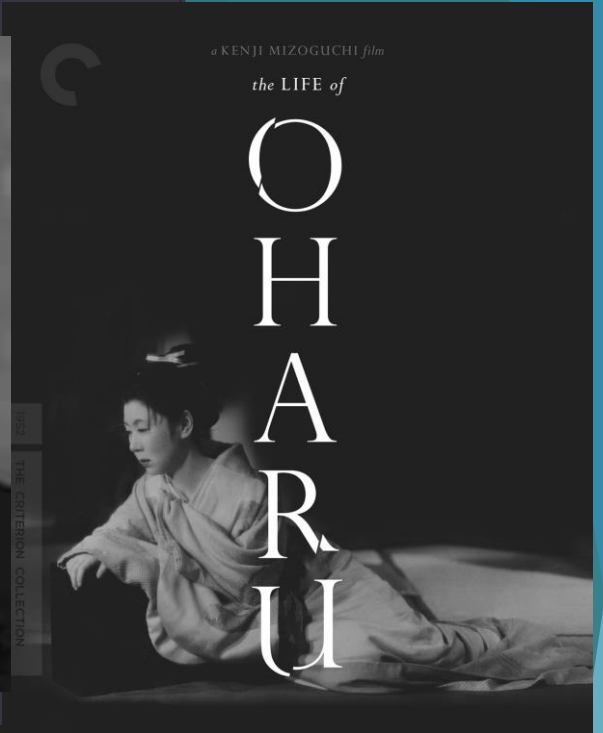
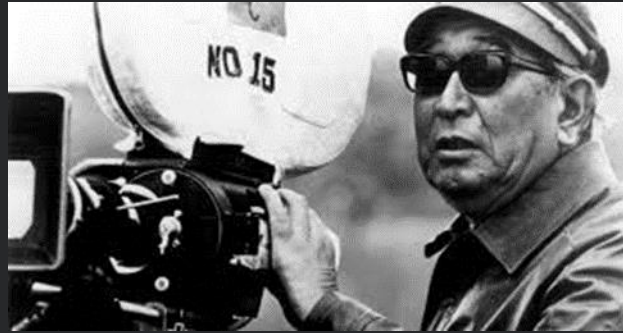
# Kenji Mizoguchi

- Mizoguchi was a Japanese film director and screenwriter.
- Mizoguchi's work is renowned for its long takes and mise-en-scène. According to writer Mark Le Fanu, "His films have an extraordinary force and purity. They shake and move the viewer by the power, refinement and compassion with which they confront human suffering.
- His film *Ugetsu* (1953) brought him international attention and appeared in the Sight & Sound Critics' Top Ten Poll in 1962 and 1972. Other acclaimed films of his include *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums* (1939), *The Life of Oharu* (1952), and *Sansho the Bailiff* (1954). Today, Mizoguchi is one of the most acclaimed filmmakers in cinema history.



AKIRA KUROSAWA  
**Rashomon**

1950



Reference:

- [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

