



The Films of Akira Kurosawa, Third Edition, Expanded and Updated

By Donald Richie

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In an epilogue provided for his incomparable study of Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998), Donald Richie reflects on Kurosawa's life work of thirty feature films and describes his last, unfinished project, a film set in the Edo period to be called *The Ocean Was Watching*.

Kurosawa remains unchallenged as one of the century's greatest film directors. Through his long and distinguished career he managed, like very few others in the teeth of a huge and relentless industry, to elevate each of his films to a distinctive level of art. His *Rashomon*—one of the best-remembered and most talked-of films in any language—was a revelation when it appeared in 1950 and did much to bring Japanese cinema to the world's attention. Kurosawa's films display an extraordinary breadth and an astonishing strength, from the philosophic and sexual complexity of *Rashomon* to the moral dedication of *Ikiru*, from the naked violence of *Seven Samurai* to the savage comedy of *Yojimbo*, from the terror-filled feudalism of *Throne of Blood* to the piercing wit of *Sanjuro*.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Here is a chance to read a terrific study of Kurosawa's films by the foremost critic of Japanese cinema and a man who had a personal acquaintance with the filmmaker. Newly revised and updated, this classic study now covers all of Kurosawa's films, surveying an extraordinary 50 year career. If you have any interest in Japanese cinema or in the art of movies in general, you can't go wrong viewing Kurosawa's films. Ritchie's book will guide you through them, teaching you about the man and his genius.

From Library Journal

This third edition of a work first published in 1965 covers the four films made since the second edition was released, including *Ran*, arguably Kurosawa's biggest hit in America. Kurosawa is acknowledged as one of the greatest artists of the sound era, and he is easily the best-known Japanese director to Western audiences. This book concentrates solely on the films themselves; other than a brief biographical section that ends when Kurosawa began directing and a closing analysis of his style and methods, no additional topic is covered. Each film is analyzed separately along the lines of characterization, story, camera, production, music, treatment, and so forth. Greater space is given to the masterpieces: *Rashomon*, *Seven Samurai*, *Ikiru*, and *The Throne of Blood*. Richie's expertise is hard to miss; surely he overlooks no aspect of these films. Given Kurosawa's age (he's 86) and the difficulties of financing in Japanese cinema, it is unlikely he will produce any more movies. Highly recommended for academic and film collections; public libraries should buy according to demand. —Marianne Cawley, Enoch Pratt Free Lib., Baltimore

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Review

"A perceptive, detailed, and richly illustrated volume, it examines Kurosawa's choice of themes, story-telling techniques, camera work, and directorial style." -- "Cinema Canada"

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