

be a failure because of a deep cleavage in their physical affection. At times they live apart, and once she even thinks of committing suicide. The woman's mental anguish lasts for some twenty years, until her husband's death.

The author describes how she tries to find a meaning in life through her child to compensate

her for her lack of satisfaction in her husband. The story deals with the age-old problem of physical and spiritual affection between husband and wife, and the author is particularly interested in trying to discover the root of the discord with regard to the influence of marital relations.
—Tsutomu Narasaki

ON THE SCREEN JAPANESE PRODUCTIONS

Sugata Sanshiro, directed by Akira Kurosawa. In the leading parts: Susumu Fujita, Denjiro Okochi, Yukiko Todoroki, and Ranko Hanai.

This is the first Japanese film dealing with *judo* and showing a number of *judo* matches.

The founder of the *judo* art of fighting was the late Jigoro Kano, a member of the House of Peers, who, in the Meiji Era, established Kokokan as the center of *judo* training in Japan. A traditional martial art known as "jijitsu" had been popular in Japan since the days of the Tokugawa Period, and there were many masters of jijitsu in Tokyo. Jigoro Kano, who had just graduated from the Tokyo Imperial University, deplored the degradation of these masters of jijitsu and proposed the foundation of *judo*, for which purpose he opened a *judo* training hall. Jijitsu is simply an art of self-defense. *Judo* has added an ethical meaning to this. Being a pedagogue who taught ethics at the Peers' School, Kano created *judo* mainly as an art for training the spirit. Today, thanks to his efforts, jijitsu has been entirely replaced by Kodokan *judo*.

The film *Sugata Sanshiro* is a popular melodrama. Its hero, Sugata Sanshiro (played by Susumu Fujita, so successful as a squad commander in *Sea Battle off Hawaii and Malai*), is the best pupil of the *judo* teacher Yano Shogoro (modeled after Jigoro Kano and played by Denjiro Okochi, Japan's Emil Jannings). He distinguishes himself by his outstanding ability and goes on to conquer many masters of jijitsu. The story, which also contains the necessary love element, is about an imaginary person and has been adapted from a popular novel by Tsuneo Tomita.

The film starts off with a thrilling scene in which Yano Shogoro is attacked late at night by seven lawless jijitsu professionals. With his *judo* methods, Yano throws them one by one into a river. He finally holds down the leader of the gang and makes him apologize. In revenge, the enemy later challenges him to a bout. The challenge is accepted by Sugata Sanshiro, who throws his opponent and thus causes his instant death. Sugata feels pity for this man's daughter (played by Ranko Hanai). Although killing one's opponent in a *judo* match does not constitute a crime, it none the less causes mental anguish to young Sugata.

This is the first work by a new director, Akira Kurosawa. It is interesting in its dynamic description of *judo* matches. Although *judo* matches are always held in a hall nowadays, it was not uncommon for them to be held outdoors at the beginning of the Meiji Era. The weak point of the picture is that its story is too complicated. Moreover, the psychology of Sugata's mental anguish and of his attitude towards women is ambiguous.

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Flowery Phantasm (*Hanayaka-naru-Genso*), directed by Kichindo Ochiai. In the leading parts: Michitaro Mizushima and Yumeji Tsukioka.

The hero of this picture, a music teacher at a high school for girls, is called to the colors in the Greater East Asia War and loses both his eyes. Returning from the front, he starts a new life as a composer. He devotes himself to composing a symphony called "Dawn of the Gods." The hero is played by the young star Michitaro Mizushima, and the heroine by a rising actress of intellectual beauty, Yumeji Tsukioka.

The blind composer then goes to Tokyo to hold a concert, which turns out to be a success. The relations between the hero and the heroine do not develop into either love or marriage, and the film only suggests her yearning for him.

In the last scene, the Japan Symphony Orchestra plays a symphony, a composition by Masao Ohki, a rising composer. This is probably the first time that a Japanese musical film has taken a symphony as its theme. Unfortunately, the presentation of the concert is a failure, owing to the weakness of its filming. The picture is unique in that it depicts the life of a wounded soldier; however, it cannot be regarded as outstanding. One cannot help realizing the slow progress of Japanese musical films.

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War Records of the Army Air Force and Construction of a Base. Documentary films photographed by staff members of the Press Section of the Imperial Army and Navy.

The first picture shows the activities of the Army air corps in the battle of Burma, with the camera focused on the daily operations at its base. Although the film does not contain breath-taking scenes of aerial combat, it teaches the nation the important role played by the air force in modern warfare. It is too much to expect a perfect and diversified description of such large-scale operations from a single cameraman who worked without a director. Moreover, since it is poorly edited, its eight reels seem too long. We are shown the constantly advancing air-force base, which was originally established in Thailand and later moved into Burmese territory. We see the activities of the air wireless corps and air surveying corps, as well as the important mission of scouting planes. There are some impressive scenes showing the rescuing of the crew of a scout plane which had made a forced landing. Before bidding farewell to the plane, the crew and the rescue corps set fire to it with their own hands.

Construction of a Base was photographed by several members of the Navy Press Section. Its four reels show Papuan natives working in the construction of a naval air base in the South Pacific. The atmosphere of the picture is bright and cheery, and the photography remarkably beautiful. The film makes us realize how smoothly the Japanese military administration is being carried on in the occupied areas of the South and how the native inhabitants are co-operating with the Imperial forces. There are interesting scenes of Papuan laborers being paid for their work with such goods as food, tobacco, and loincloths. Most impressive are the scenes showing these Papuans working shoulder to shoulder with Japanese workmen. Then we see Japanese sailors acting as Japanese-language teachers in elementary schools, and Papuan, Malayan, and Chinese children, the coming generation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, happily going to school together in the same truck. On their way home from school, the children play mouth organs and sing Japanese songs. Depicting as it does the life of native inhabitants at a Japanese base in the South, the film is a success.—Hideo Tsumura.

THE OPIUM WAR

The Opium War (Toward Eternity), a joint production of The China Film Co., The China United Film Production Co., and the Manchoukuo Motion Picture Co. In the leading parts: Kao Chan-fei, Wang Yin, Mon Nah, Yen Djuen, Lee Hsiang-lan, Nancy Chen, Yuan Mei-yun.

Modern Chinese do not like to have their attention drawn to certain features of old Chinese life. Any reference in foreign films to such things as bound feet, pigtailed, or opium smoking, invariably calls forth indignant protests. Until *The Opium War* no Chinese film has ever made the slightest allusion to the opium habit which, we must admit, is still prevalent in China today. Hence *The Opium War* deserves much praise for its candor, its many-sided approach to a painful subject. In other respects, too, the film is an event in China's brief movie history. In spite of all handicaps and limitations imposed by the consequences of a world war, in spite of the fact that the capital employed was only a small fraction of that spent on even a minor Hollywood production, the result is impressive.

The story revolves around the rise and romance of Viceroy Lin Chih-hsu, the dominating figure in the Opium War of a hundred years ago. A subsidiary plot concerns a friend of Lin's and a girl selling candy in an opium den. Lin and the two women in his life fight against the opium habit in the masses. Lin's friend struggles against the habit in himself, and the candy girl against that in her lover.

The film is already crowded with dramatic material. The excuse for adding a romance "which might have been" as a subplot is probably to provide a role for the Manchoukuo star Lee Hsiang-lan. With her songs, Miss Lee proves to be the most eloquent spokesman of the piece; for the dialogue, though polished and concise, is not free from the doubtful mixing of modern phraseology with the classical language—the usual trouble with costume plays.

On several occasions, the actual words from Lin's official decrees are inserted into the dialogue. Kao Chan-fei, in the part of the Viceroy, recites them in a clear, colorless tone. Kao's attitude toward the role is evidently one of great reverence bordering on fear. The same fear limits the makers of the film in the scope of their interpretation. In keeping to the beaten track of romantic melodrama, they show themselves distrustful of the ability of the audience to follow more complicated political and military developments. This distrust does not take into account the fact that the Chinese public, trained during the last thirty years to be attentive newspaper readers, is now extremely well versed in journalistic literature and would prove fully receptive to Lin's story, the mere straight telling of which would be deeply moving.

Lin miraculously defends Canton with the scanty forces and ammunition at his command. The British leave Canton to attack the ports farther up the coast. China makes a humiliating peace, undoing all that the Viceroy has accomplished against the importation of opium. The film does not sufficiently utilize such excellent ready-made drama and chooses instead to magnify an attempted assassination for its climax. All we see of the Opium War is a map showing the British expedition. During the action in Canton, the movie is preoccupied with the intersection of the parallel careers of Lin and his old flame, an enterprising lady who echoes his crusade against opium and, leading the population like a rather un-Chinese Joan of Arc against the British, dies in battle.

The beginning is a masterly synthesis of concrete details. Mon Nah and Yen Djuen animate the opium-den scenes with their robust caricatures of Britishers. Viceroy Lin is nursing his hatred, gathering up his power for the blow. At last he strikes, and meets with defeat. As a stimulus for revenge, the defeat portrayed is too paltry, largely due to the story being fined down to individual threads when it should expand. At the signing of the treaty, we hear that Lin has been dismissed and banished. He leaves Canton, exchanging stately speeches with the adoring multitude that sees him off. On his way he visits the grave of his old love.

As the girl who, but for a misunderstanding, would have married the Viceroy, Nancy Chen overacts. Her technique clashes with the straightforward acting of Lee Hsiang-lan and Wang Yin (Lin's friend) and with the reticence of Kao Chan-fei. Yuan Mei-yun as Lin's wife is charmingly Chinese.

Considering the fact that the Chinese film industry has never before handled such a large capital and so great a number of talents as in *The Opium War*, this clinging to details is justifiable. Most of the detail is very well done, for example the one chopstick on the pot in which the medicine is boiling, to ward off evil spirits. In a few instances still greater historical accuracy would have helped as, for example, in the manner in which the slave girls hold the arm of their mistresses and in the performance of proper kowtows.

The film provides a splendid background of the China of the last century—the shameful part of which present-day China, with her more mature self-consciousness, is no longer anxious to keep in the dark.—Eileen Chang.