

Always Sunset on Third Street

Family and its roles in Japanese culture

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While reflecting on immediate post-war Japan, this movie reflects various aspects of family values and dynamics in Japan. Everything culture-oriented is bent towards showing families and how they were at that time. How men as fathers were, women as mothers, and even different children. One such aspect was that not all fathers were quite the same. In fact the main family's head of the house was considered poorly mannered and not very sophisticated. As a child character, Junnosuke displayed a timid characteristic while trying to not be a bother. This feels so out of the ordinary for Western culture, as in Western culture we often see children as the parents' responsibilities regardless of whether they are a bother or not. Being a bother does not sit on the minds of kids in Western society, though it might be on their parents'.

The camerawork in this film made some great scenes. Wide shots allowed the audience to see just how big something was, while closer shots revealed how small something was. While character conflict and dialogue became center of attention in some shots, others showed a broader view so that the character had some room for their activities. Mutsuko's refusal of the tickets is an example of how the camera worked in favor of the dialogue. Putting aside any distractions, it focused on the characters respectably. In Ryunosuke Chagawa's fit of temper, the camera sat at a wide pan to the room, so that the character was allowed to move around. Instead of following the character, the angle took in the entire room and thus also took in the entirety of the damage the character was causing. The music was well paced, setting the mood at intervals, without overpowering the scene. Even shots where noise was missing, where dialogue was left out, made for a better overall film. The scene where the boys are stuck in the rain, for example, does not show the audience how they are saved, or why Ippei is crying, until he returns home and later reveals how he got the money to get both of them home. It kept the audience in suspense just long enough, without holding out on the viewers.

Aside from character development, the actors themselves felt natural. Being the characters, they did not feel like they were out of their element. Rather, they felt like they were fit for the position, rather than trying to fill a position they are not meant for. Chagawa's desire to be a writer as a career and his feeling of self-worth is completely believable because of this. The whole Suzuki family works together and acts like a family, without necessitating dialogue that would assure the audience that they are related somehow. Instead, the dynamic is made clear, and throughout the movie, the dialogue used is the only dialogue necessary. And the most tear jerking moments are certainly those without dialogue, or are otherwise missing the dialogue that would fill in blanks.

There is a lot to relate to in this movie. While there was a lot of culture oriented aspects in the movie, the main theme about family was very easy to relate to. The Suzuki family had a big dream to become a big company, something my own family can relate to. Growing up, I remember my father working to gain a reputation as an employee, while working on building his own company. I related to Mutsuko's plight, feeling cast aside and apart from her family. Feeling somewhat adopted into a family is welcoming for somebody who feels like their family does not want them around. Just knowing that one's presence is a burden can be harsh on the psyche, which is what made Mutsuko's final breakdown so tear jerking, not because she was crying, but because of the silent buildup. I can especially relate to her silence, as that feeling of not being wanted around is not something you would share with anybody, even those you see as being closest to yourself.

This movie had a lot of natural comedy, relying on the family dynamics and interesting character traits themselves to form the humor. It was a laughable yet tear jerking story that I

thoroughly enjoyed. Its scenes are beautiful, well timed, and well planned. The script is well written and none of the acting felt awkward. I give it five out of five.