

Drunken Angel One Page

Release Date: April 27, 1948

Duration: 98 Minutes

Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1 (Basically, it's not widescreen)

The Plot: An alcoholic doctor, Sanda (Takashi Shimura), attempts to cure a tubercular yakuza thug, Matsunaga (Toshiro Mifune) of his disease, though meets resistance when trying to convince Matsunaga to give up his hedonistic lifestyle.

An older yakuza, Okada, returns to the scene from prison, further complicating Matsunaga's recovery. To make matters worse, Okada's former woman, Miyo, lives with Sanada, serving as his assistant in his medical clinic.

Central Themes:

1. Crime in post-war Japan
2. The perpetuation of feudal Japanese values through criminal organizations in post-war Japan
3. Relationships between yakuza and Occupation forces during the post-war years
4. Negative influence of Occupation and its relationship to organized crime on post-war social development
5. Social progress and problems preventing it in the post-war climate

Metaphors:

1. The sump as post-war Japan – diseased, filthy, arisen directly from the war
2. Mosquitoes – from the sump – as yakuza, preying on the blood of the people
3. Tuberculosis as the social disease of organized crime, tearing apart the social fabric of post-war society

Conclusions:

1. Organized crime and feudal values are a scourge that could potentially destroy the post-war generations
2. Organized crime and its relationship with Occupation forces prevents social progress in post-war Japan – an end to feudal values AND negative Western influence necessary for progress
3. Rational thinking and self-sacrificing individualism as possible solutions to these problems
4. Post-war generation must be influenced by positive role models and taught positive values at a young age in order to heal social ills of post-war society.

Basic Facts

1. Tokyo firebombed extensively during World War Two – just one such bombing raid destroyed approximately 25 percent of the city and killed more people than either atomic bomb detonation.
2. Firebombing created craters throughout the city. These craters filled with liquid, becoming sumps. Liquid in sumps festered, incubated disease and bacteria.
3. A total of 146,241 tuberculosis-related deaths recorded in Japan in 1947, the year *Drunken Angel* was made.
4. A post-war study found 70 percent of Japanese citizens younger than 29 years old tested positive for tuberculosis.
5. The yakuza – Japanese criminal organizations – trace their origins to the 17th Century, and rose to social prominence in the years leading up to the Second World War.
6. In the wake of the war, the tightly controlled rationing system created by Occupation forces created perfect conditions for the rise of black markets, which the yakuza created and took full advantage of.