

Lecture 26

Topic: the world of the samurai as seen in films. Let's brainstorm a bit about themes:

What themes emerge in the films?

- *Hoichi the Earless*: (about the Heike, about blind biwa players) popular spirituality/ghosts/placating dead spirits
- *47 Ronin*: loyalty/conflicting loyalty; honor
- *Seven Samurai*: (Warring States/Muramachi period) relationship between samurai and villagers; ideal vs. reality
- *Samurai Rebellion*: conflicting loyalties (between to one's private sphere and to lords); place of women in society
- *Ugetsu*: (Warring States) popular spirituality; familial loyalties; what it says about the period: the difficulty of life causes people to compromise their morals
- *Throne of Blood*: some popular spirituality; ideals vs. reality; personal ambition vs. loyalty; Asaji and samurai women and their place in society

Try to relate these to that week's readings. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these movies as portrayals of history?

Also, think about distinctly Japanese themes and the more universal themes.

Floating World: flourishing of the arts such as Bunraku, kabuki, haiku, etc. "Floating" implies that this world is detached from the normal world; it's a place of pleasure, but also sad, and decadent.

[finished *Kagemusha*]