



DIJ Forum

In its series of public lectures, the German Institute for Japanese Studies will present on

Thursday, 21 June 2007, 18.30 h

Keiko McDonald

Professor, University of Pittsburgh

The Agony of Eldercare: Two Japanese Women Directors Study an Age-Old Problem

Alzheimer's Disease and senile dementia have become household words East and West in recent years. Cinema's close ties with contemporary life should make it the ideal venue for depicting this social phenomenon. In Japan, two women directors in particular responded to the problem of an aging population with thought-provoking studies of the problems of eldercare and dementia, Haneda Sumiko (b. 1929) and Matsui Hisako (b. 1946).

Haneda's *The World of the Senile* (1984) and Matsui's *Oriume* (2002) stand out as the most dynamic explorations to date of old age in crisis. Both skillfully conjoin the pity and the horror of the victim's plight with the equally troubling and complex consequences for the family.

Questions to be addressed in this lecture include: What is the salient feature of each director's treatment? How does each resolve the ageless moral issue of filial obligation (*giri*) in conflict with personal inclination (*ninjō*)? How do you account for each director's mode of representation? And how does she generate the desired audience response?

Keiko McDonald is Professor of Japanese Cinema and Literature at the University of Pittsburgh. Her publications include *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major Japanese Films* (1983), *Mizoguchi* (1984), *Japanese Classical Theatre in Film* (1994), *From Book to Screen: Modern Japanese Literature in Films* (1999) and *Reading a Japanese Film: Cinema in Context* (2006).

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on Thursday, 21 June 2007 at 6.30 p.m. at the DIJ. Admission is free. Space is limited, so please register with Ms. Dinkel at the DIJ.

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