4 Scriptwriter as Author: Status, Space, Gender

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The inclusion of scriptwriting in film history appears to hinge on the idea of the writer being the author, or one of the authors, of a film. However, if one perceives it as a mere technical function in film production, it would be justifiable to relegate scriptwriting to historical footnotes, which has often been the case. As a result, it becomes crucial to scrutinise how the scriptwriter's status, tied to particular professional competencies, has been situated within the continuum of craftsmanship and creativity. It is important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive, and the interaction seems to have significantly informed the perception of scriptwriting in historical narratives. By dissecting certain terminological nuances and their ensuing implications, I aim to explore how the scriptwriter's social

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standing has been articulated in various sources, thereby contributing to canon formation.

Attempts to integrate scriptwriters' contribution into film history frequently encompass narratives about the unique aspects of the writing process, typically presented in an anecdotal manner.[1] This approach shifts the emphasis from the issues of text authorship to a more biographical viewpoint that can still underscore the intricate dynamics among different participants in film production. Interestingly, it seems almost symptomatic that scriptwriting is predominantly addressed by highlighting the everyday aspects of the profession. On one side, such narratives endow scriptwriters with visibility by attributing to them a distinct, albeit occasionally overstated, image. On the flip side, these narratives can also illuminate the workings of the script department and the collaborative nature of writing, both of which establish specific work environments for the writers.

In this chapter, I will examine the scriptwriter's role, covering their professional status, workspaces, and gender issues intertwined with these aspects. The recognition of scriptwriting in film histories often depends on the perception of scriptwriters as the film authors. Therefore, I will explore the language used to describe individual writers' works and its correlation with their acknowledged status. I will also investigate certain persistent aspects of scriptwriting's spatial dimension. Furthermore, I will reevaluate specific notions of authorship through a gendered lens and explore the representation of female scriptwriters during the era often referred to as the Golden Age of Great Men Directors.

4.1 Authorial and Canonical Writers

4.1.1 A Typology of Scriptwriters

Most Japanese film histories have been comparatively generous in their consideration of the role of the scriptwriters in filmmaking. In a historiographical analysis, I have surveyed various attempts to compose a history of Japanese cinema with a focus on scriptwriting (Kitsnik 2023). These histories include Iida's and Kobayashi's "Shinario hattatsushishō" (Sketches on Developmental History of Screenwriting, 1959) and Shindō's comprehensive two-volume *Nihon shinarioshi*. Shindō's work concludes with the unique image of script pages laid out along the country's railway network as detailed in Chapter

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[1] Quite in contrary to what Richard Corliss says about Hollywood writers being of the silent type, Japanese scriptwriters have left a sizeable body of practical advice, opinions, memoirs etc.

Two. While these historiographies outline the script's evolution towards the master-scene format and changes in the industry, they ultimately tend to become histories of writers due to the attention given to individual contributions.

Through an examination of these histories, one can identify a typology of Japanese scriptwriters based on criteria such as their backgrounds, thematic interests, versatility across genres, and innovative capabilities. This method mirrors auteurist approaches commonly used to discuss the work of individual film directors. For example, Satō presents the class identities and political leanings of several major filmmakers, and analyses how these factors influenced their work and impacted Japanese cinema during the 1930s (Satō 2006, 1: 60-3). To afford scriptwriters a comparable level of attention, they cannot be regarded merely as technical staff carrying out a specific task during the planning phase of filmmaking. Instead, it becomes essential to grant them creative, even authorial, agency.

A particular distinction that has proven efficient when discussing the work of scriptwriters is represented by pairs of terms: *sainō* (talent)/*tensai* (genius) and *doryoku* (endeavour)/*shokunin* (craftsman). The two silent era scriptwriters, Susukita and Yamagami, who are frequently mentioned even in general film histories, have been consistently referred to as geniuses of their trade. Shindō cites Yahiro, who has named three writers that, in his opinion, were responsible for the improvement in quality that *jidaigeki* went through in the 1920s. He added Saijō Shōtarō (1902-80) alongside Susukita and Yamagami. However, Yahiro bluntly notes that Saijō was not *kisaiteki* (devilishly talented) like Susukita but instead possessed the steady skills of a craftsman (*shokunin no ude no tashikasa*) (Shindō 1989, 1: 64). In turn, director Namiki Kyōtarō (1902-2001) has somewhat vaguely posited that while Yamagami was a genius (*tensai*), Saijō simply wrote excellent scenarios (Shindō 1989, 1: 66).

The terms *tensai* and *shokunin*, along with their various synonyms, permeate the discourse on scriptwriting in Japan. Iida even evokes the Aesopian fable about the tortoise and the hare to illustrate the distinction between the two extremes (Iida 1954b, 143). There appears to be a consensus among critics about which end of this typological continuum each writer belongs to. The distinction between artistic and artisanal subscribes to certain received values, but labelling someone a craftsman does not necessarily result in downplaying a writer's contributions or status, as the notion *shokunin* holds considerable dignity in the Japanese cultural context. Allegedly, Hashimoto continued to cherish his mentor Itami's dictum that, above all, scriptwriters should aspire to be craftsmen of words (*kyakuhonka wa ji o kaku shokunin de are*) (Shindō 1989, 2: 31).

Both Shindō (1989) and Satō (2006) highlight the scriptwriters' social backgrounds and how these are reflected in the scope and

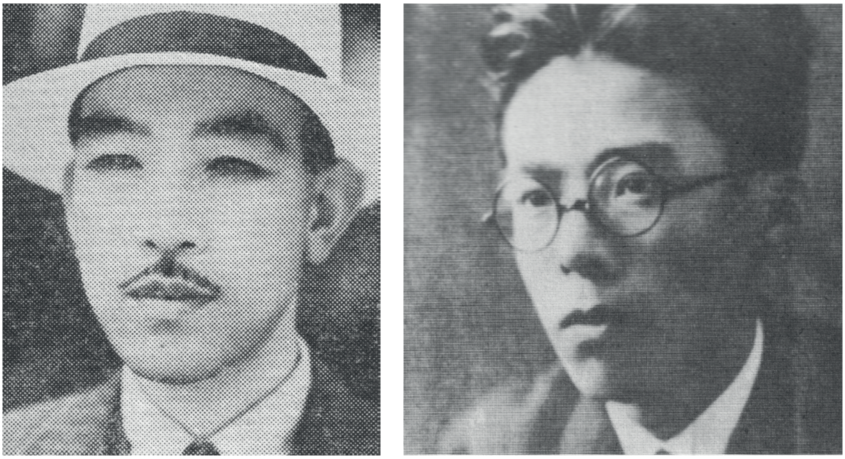

Figure 36 Susukita Rokuhei (1899-1960) and Yamagami Itarō (1903-45). Images sourced from *Nihon shinarioshi* (1989)

general tone of their writing. In this way, the diametric differences in the stylistic and thematic concerns of Yagi, who received only primary school education, and Ikeda, a graduate of the elite Waseda University, can be readily traced back to their respective rural peasant and urban bourgeois upbringing (Shindō 1989, 1: 149, 157). It also appears that in the case of a those endowed with talent, the familial or professional background seems to matter somewhat less, while this tends to be pointed out in the case of craftsmen-writers, perhaps suggesting that only the latter possess the right amount of tenacity.

Along similar lines, Umeda Haruo (1920-80), an essayist and playwright who also dabbled in scriptwriting, found an idiosyncratic way to comment on the genius-craftsman dichotomy.

> Most people would get fed up with having to do the same kind of thing for two or three hundred times, but I did not in the least. I have called this ability of not getting bored a *talent* [*sainō*, written in katakana]. I am not sure if it is the same thing they call talent [*sainō* in Chinese characters] but I think of it as a kind of *talent* in my own meaning of 'talent plus verve [*dasshu*]'. (Umeda 1955, 88)

Umeda appears to be pointing out the undeniable fact that in any writing activity, perseverance must come first even for those who excel in it, effectively blurring a clear demarcation between talent and endeavour.

4.1.2 Scenario Writers and Scenario Authors

A terminological distinction imbued with yet more gravitas is that between *shinario raitā* (scenario writer) and *shinario sakka* (scenario author). Within the discourse on scriptwriters' merits, the two largely overlap with the *doryoku/shokunin* and *sainō/tensai* dyad. *Shinario raitā*, deriving as it does from the English 'scenario writer', can be easily translated as such. *Shinario sakka*, however, poses certain challenges for finding a suitable rendition. In Japanese, *sakka* commonly denotes the profession of a novelist but also a writer or an author more generally.[2] At the same time, the term can be used for any creative artist. When applied to cinema, it necessarily comes very close to the notion of 'auteur'.

While the terms *shinario raitā* and *shinario sakka* can, to a certain degree, be regarded interchangeable, the former sounds rather casual and neutral while the latter contains further ideological traces about aesthetic qualities and social status in the cultural field. It appears that depending on which term is being used, certain scriptwriters can be effectively rendered as authors and others as mere writers. While *tensai* and *shokunin* seem to point only at different temperaments and working methods, the juxtaposition of *raitā* and *sakka* carries clear political implications in the context of film authorship. To examine the relevance of this distinction, it is instructive to survey relevant film histories for how the terminology has been employed.

In his four-volume *Nihon eigashi* (Japanese Film History, 1995, revised in 2006-07), Satō devoted several subchapters to scriptwriters, whom he consistently refers to as *shinario sakka*.[3] Within the overall structure of his history, these sections are part of larger sequences dealing with successive decades of Japanese cinema from the 1930s through the 1970s, following respective passages on major studios and directors, and preceding those on leading actors. In effect, Satō is (re)structuring film history around the contributions of scriptwriters and legitimises their place alongside the roles commonly provided more visibility; among general film histories, this certainly amounts

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[2] Another word, *sakusha*, is a more technical term for 'author'.

[3] Scriptwriters discussed in length in these subchapters include Shindō Kaneto, Uekusa Keinosuke (1910-93), Hisaita Eijirō (1898-1976), Yagi, Hashimoto, Kikushima Ryūzō (1914-89), Ide Toshirō (1920-88), Mizuki, Tanaka, Yasumi, Noda (Satō 2006, 2: 328-35), Shirasaka Yoshio (1932-2015), Ishidō Toshirō (1932-2011), Tamura, Ide Masato (1920-98), Matsuyama Zenzō (1925-2016), Wada, Narusawa Masashige (1925-2021), Abe Kōbō (1924-93), Hasebe Keiji (1914-?), Suzuki Naoyuki (1929-2005), Yamada Nobuo (1932-98), Yamanouchi Hisashi (1925-2015), Terayama Shūji (1935-83), Yoda (Satō 2006, 3: 86-91), Nakajima Takehiro (1935), Kasahara Kazuo (1927-2002), Kuramoto Sō (1934), Baba Masaru (1926-2011), Saji Susumu (1929-2001), Tanaka Yōzō (1939), Ido Akio, Katsura Chiho (1929-2020), Matsuda Shōzō (1928), and Arai Haruhiko (1947) (Satō 2006, 3: 190-5).

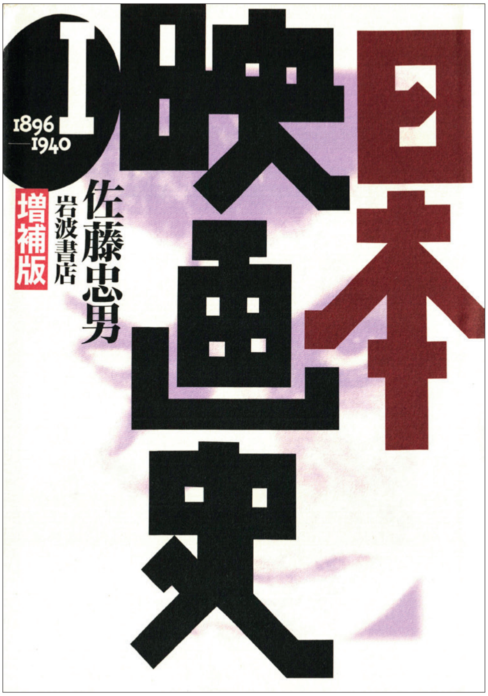

Figure 37
The cover of Satō Tadao's *Nihon Eigashi* (2006 edition, vol. 1)

to a radical gesture that questions dominant historiographical methods. The exclusive use of the term 'scenario author' is complemented by the recurring pointing out of the themes and motifs that permeate (*ikkan suru*) the work of writers in question, emanating from what Satō calls authorial capacity (*sakkateki shishitsu*) (Satō 2006, 2: 100, 331). By so doing, Satō also challenges the notion of directors as sovereign auteurs, as in his example of the collaboration between the scriptwriter Noda and the director Ozu, whose late-career shift to depicting the life of middle high class he locates in the preferences of the writer (335).[4]

While Satō's history provides due visibility to a selected number (35) of 'scenario authors', Shindō in his *Nihon shinarioshi* chose to employ the less pretentious term *shinario raitā*. It was by refraining from using that ideologically loaded term that Shindō was able to accommodate many more scriptwriters (he includes individual entries for nearly a hundred in his two-volume book) without having to make any exaggerated claims about their particular creative or authorial capacities. It is also possible that Shindō, himself a prolific scriptwriter and the two-time chairman of the Japan Writers Guild (1972-82 and 1997-2001), preferred the term *shinario raitā* simply for the fear of sounding self-important. At the same time, Shindō proceeds much like Satō in his history by trying to identify recurring characteristic thematic and/or stylistic traits in the work of major scriptwriters. By so doing, Shindō is in fact emulating *sakkaron* (author studies), the dominant mode in literary scholarship in Japan that seeks to find a central theme for encapsulating the oeuvre of the writer in question. However, Shindō appears to have some difficulties with applying this model to the majority of post-1960s scriptwriters and mostly limits himself to providing lists of major works, which perhaps suggests his relative disinterest in the more recent developments.

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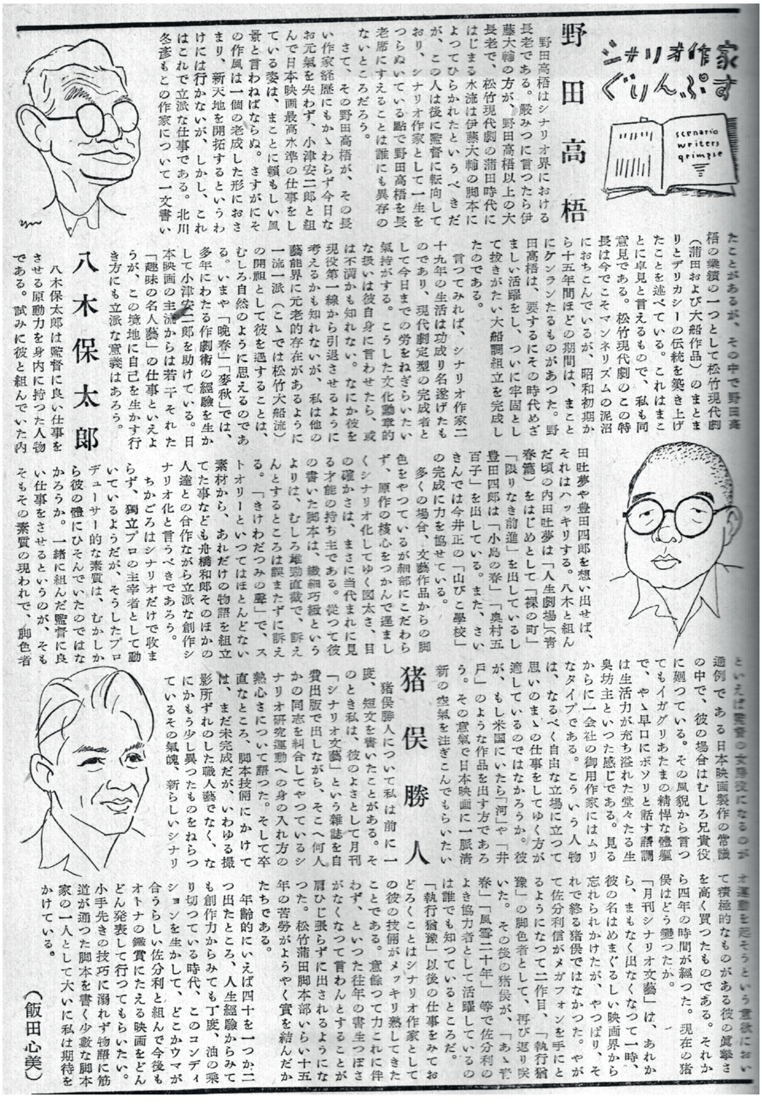
[4] An earlier version of this paragraph appeared in Kitsnik (2023, 322-3).

The juxtaposition of Satō's and Shindō's histories seems to indicate that term *shinario sakka* is used mostly by film critics rather than practitioners themselves. In fact, the older generation of Japanese scriptwriters has often preferred the affectionate but somewhat self-derogatory term *hon'ya*, an amalgamation of the word *kyakuhon* (script) and the suffix -*ya* (denoting a profession). It appears as if the writers cared less about their own social and industrial status than the critics who were eager to make such distinctions.

4.1.3 The Canon of Scenario Authors

A trend of examining the work of individual scriptwriters through an auteurist prism, suggested by the use of the term *shinario sakka*, can be detected in film criticism since the early 1950s. The first extended issue (*zōkan*) of the journal *Kinema junpō* specifically dedicated to scenarios (October 1952) offers a series of 'sketches' of fourteen scriptwriters under the title *Shinario sakka gurinpusu* (A Glimpse at Scenario Authors). This entry included short essays complete with friendly caricatures; in order of appearance, Hisaita Eijirō (1898-1976), Tanaka, Mizuki, Oguni, Yoda, Yanai, Kurosawa, Kinoshita Keisuke (1912-98), Shindō, Saitō, Uekusa Keinosuke (1910-93), Noda, Yagi, and Inomata Katsuhito (1911-79). It is notable that the list also includes the writer-directors Kinoshita and Kurosawa, and there are two women, Tanaka and Mizuki, among the fourteen scriptwriters.

The third volume of *Gendai eiga kōza* (Lectures on Contemporary Film, 1954), dedicated entirely to scriptwriting, introduces several writers, both Japanese and foreign, and their respective styles in a series of extended essays. In comparison to *Shinario sakka gurinpusu*, this list comprises twelve Japanese writers; Hisaita, Yanai and Uekusa have been replaced by Ide Toshirō (1910-88) (Wada 1954, 117-43). The essays are critical and polemical, often sharply pointing


scenario
writers
grimpse

シナリオ作家ぐりんぷす

野田高梧

野田高梧はシナリオ界における長老である。嚴みつに言つたら伊藤大輔の方が、野田高梧以上の大長老で、松竹現代劇の蒲田時代にはじまる水流は伊藤大輔の脚本によつてひらかれたというべきだが、この人は後に監督に転向しており、シナリオ作家として一生をつらぬいている點で野田高梧を長老席にすえることは誰にも異存のないところだろう。

さて、その野田高梧が、その長い作家経歴にもかゝわらず今日なお元氣を失わず、小津安二郎と組んで日本映画最高水準の仕事をしている姿は、まことに頼もしい風景と言わねばならぬ。さすがにその作風は一個の老成した形におさまり、新天地を開拓するというわけには行かないが、しかし、これはこれで立派な仕事である。北川冬彦もこの作家について一文書いたことがあるが、その中で野田高梧の業績の一つとして松竹現代劇（蒲田および大船作品）のまとまりとデリカシーの伝統を築き上げたことを述べている。これはまことに卓見と言えるもので、私も同意見である。松竹現代劇のこの特長は今でこそマンネリズムの泥沼におちこんでいるが、昭和初期から十五年間ほどの期間は、まことにケンランたるものがあつた。野田高梧は、要するにその時代めざましい活躍をし、ついに牢固として抜きがたい大船調組立を完成したのである。

言つてみれば、シナリオ作家二十九年の生活は功成り名遂げたものであり、現代劇定型の完成者として今日までの労をねぎらいたい氣持がする。こうした文化勲章的な扱いは彼自身に言わせたら、或は不満かも知れない。なにか彼を現役第一線から引退させるように考えるかも知れないが、私は他の藝能界に元老的存在があるように一流一派（こゝでは松竹大船流）の開祖として彼を遇することは、むしろ自然のように思えるのである。いまや「晩春」「麥秋」では、多年にわたる作劇術の経験を生かして小津安二郎を助けている。日本映画の主流からは若干それた「趣味の名人藝」の仕事といえようが、この境地に自己を生かす行き方にも立派な意義はあろう。

八木保太郎

八木保太郎は監督に良い仕事をさせる原動力を身内に持つた人物である。試みに彼と組んでいた内田吐夢や豊田四郎を想い出せば、それはハッキリする。八木と組んだ頃の内田吐夢は「人生劇場」（青春篇）をはじめとして「裸の町」「限りなき前進」を出しているし豊田四郎は「小島の春」「奥村五百子」を出している。また、さいきんでは今井正の「山びこ學校」の完成に力を協せている。

多くの場合、文藝作品からの脚色をやつているが細部にこだわらず、原作の核心をつかんで逞ましくシナリオ化してゆく図太さ、目の確かさは、まさに当代まれに見る才能の持ち主である。從つて彼の書いた脚本は、纖細巧緻というよりは、むしろ雄勁直截で、訴えんとするところは誤またずに訴える。「きけわだつみの聲」で、ストオリーといつてはほとんどない素材から、あれだけの物語を組立てた事なども舟橋和郎そのほかの人達との合作ながら立派な創作シナリオ化と言うべきであろう。

ちかごろはシナリオだけで收まらず、獨立プロの主宰者として動いているようだが、そうしたプロデューサー的な素質は、むかしから彼の體にひそんでいたのではなかろうか。一緒に組んだ監督に良い仕事をさせるというのが、そもそもその素質の現われで、脚色者といえば監督の女房役になるのが通例である日本映画製作の常識の中で、彼の場合はむしろ兄貴役に廻つている。その風貌から言つてもイガグリあたまの精悍な體軀で、やゝ早口にボソリと話す語調は生活力が充ち溢れた堂々たる生臭坊主といつた感じである。見るからに一会社の御用作家にはムリなタイプである。こういう人物は、なるべく自由な立場に立つて思いのまゝの仕事をしてゆく方が適しているのではなかろうか。彼が、もし米国にいたら「河」や「井戸」のような作品を出す方であろう。その意氣で日本映画に一脈清新の空氣を注ぎこんでもらいたい。

猪俣勝人

猪俣勝人について私は前に一度、短文を書いたことがある。そのとき私は、彼のよさとして月刊「シナリオ文藝」という雑誌を自費出版で出しながら、そこへ何人かの同志を糾合してやつているシナリオ研究運動への身の入れ方の熱心さについて語つた。そして卒直なところ、脚本技倆にかけては、まだ未完成だが、いわゆる撮影所ずれのした職人藝でなく、なにかもう少し異つたものをねらつているその氣魄、新らしいシナリオ運動を起そうという意欲において積極的なものがある彼の眞摯さを高く買つたものである。それから四年の時間が經つた。現在の猪俣はどう變つたか。「月刊シナリオ文藝」は、あれから、まもなく出なくなつて一時、彼の名はめまぐるしい映画界から忘れられかけたが、やつぱり、それで終る猪俣ではなかつた。やがて佐分利信がメガフォンを手にとるようになつて二作目、「執行猶豫」の脚色者として、再び返り咲いた。その後の猪俣が、「あゝ青春」「風雪二十年」等で佐分利のよき協力者として活躍しているのは誰でも知つているところだ。「執行猶豫」以後の仕事をみておどろくことはシナリオ作家としての彼の技倆がメッキリ熟してきたことである。意餘つて力これに伴わず、といつた往年の書生つぽさがなくなつて言わんとすることが肩ひじ張らずに出されるようになつた。松竹蒲田脚本部いらい十五年の苦勞がようやく實を結んだかたちである。

年齢的にいえば四十を一つか二つ出たところ、人生經驗からみても創作力からみても丁度、油の乘り切つている時代、このコンディションを生かして、どこかウマが合うらしい佐分利と組んで今後もオトナの鑑賞にたえる映画をどんどん発表して行つてもらいたい。小手先きの技巧に溺れず物語に筋道が通つた脚本を書く少數な脚本家の一人として大いに私は期待をかけている。

（飯田心美）

Figure 38 Short profiles and caricatures of Noda Kōgo, Yagi Yasutarō, and Inomata Katsuhito. Image sourced from *Kinema junpō zōkan: Meisaku shinario senshū* (October 1952)

out the deficiencies of each author and proposing solutions. In March 1958, another special issue of *Kinema junpō, Rinji zōkan meisaku shinarioshū* (Special Extended Collection of Scenario Masterpieces), presented separate entries on fourteen *shinario sakka* written by top film critics. Instead of caricatures, these essays were accompanied by high resolution 'special photogravures' (*tokubetsu gurabia*), a standard practice of the journal hitherto reserved for printing photos of actors (Okamoto et al. 1958, 145-52). This visual strategy would have made not only the work but also the faces of individual writers familiar to the wider audience.[5] In comparison to the previous list, Hisaita has been reinstated, while Ide, Noda, Saitō, and Shindō have been relegated, as have both Kinoshita and Kurosawa (ostensibly to make room for writers who are not also directors); newcomers include Kikushima Ryūzō (1914-89), Hashimoto, Kusuda Yoshiko (1924-2013), Shirasaka Yoshio (1932-2015), Yahiro, Yasumi, and Yamagata Yūsaku (1908-91).

In his review of contemporary scriptwriters in the *Kinema junpō* special issue *Shinario tokuhon* in 1959, Kitagawa makes a clear distinction: "In the world of Japanese cinema, there are many *shinario raitā* but extremely few *shinario sakka*" (Kitagawa 1959, 52). Kitagawa proceeds to single out fifteen authors. Hashimoto, Mizuki, Yoda, Kikushima, Shindō, Yagi, Kinoshita, Shirasaka, Yasumi, Inomata, Yamagata, Uekusa, Noda, Hisaita, and Kusuda are familiar from the previous lists, while the names of Kuri Sutei (the moniker for collaboration between Ichikawa Kon and Wada Natto), Kataoka Kaoru (1912-99), Narusawa Masashige (1925-2021), and Matsuyama Zenzō (1925-2016) have been added to the emerging canon for the first time. Notably, Kitagawa mentions another writer but places him in limbo due to his recent mediocre output: "Will he remain *shinario sakka*, or will descend to *shinario raitā*: we can say that Inomata Katsuhito is presently standing at such perilous crossroads" (Kitagawa 1959, 56). According to Kitagawa, anyone can become a scenario writer, but one has to earn the status of scenario author and even then there remains the chance of downward mobility.

At the turn of the decade, as the publication of scenarios had reached its all-time peak, *Kinema junpō* ran a series "Shinario sakka kenkyū" (Research of Scenario Authors) between 1959 and 1961. At considerable length, the series introduced the work of thirteen individual authors. A typical entry comprised an interview with the writer, essays by the writer as well as critics who evaluated their contributions and concluded with a complete list of scenarios made into films.[6] The lineup in this authoritative series, which no long-

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[5] Entries are as follows: Kikushima (written by Okamoto Hiroshi, 145), Inomata (Nagae Michitarō, 145-6), Oguni (Iida Shinbi, 146), Hashimoto (Okada Susumu, 146-7), Mizuki (Iwasaki Akira, 147-8), Kusuda (Oshikawa Yoshiyuki, 148), Shirasaka (Tanaka Yutaka, 148-9), Yagi (Kishi Matsuo, 149), Tanaka (Uryū Tadao, 149-50), Yahiro (Takizawa Hajime, 150), Hisaita (Kobayashi Masaru, 151), Yasumi (Mori Manjirō, 151), Yamagata (Izawa Jun, 151-2), Yoda (Tada Michitarō, 152).

[6] The series appeared in the following issues of *Kinema junpō*: 1 March 1959 (Hashimoto), 15 July 1959 (Yasumi), 1 November 1959 (Kikushima), 15 January 1960 (Shindō), 15 February 1960 (Wada), 15 May 1960 (Yagi), 15 July 1960 (Mizuki), 1 October 1960

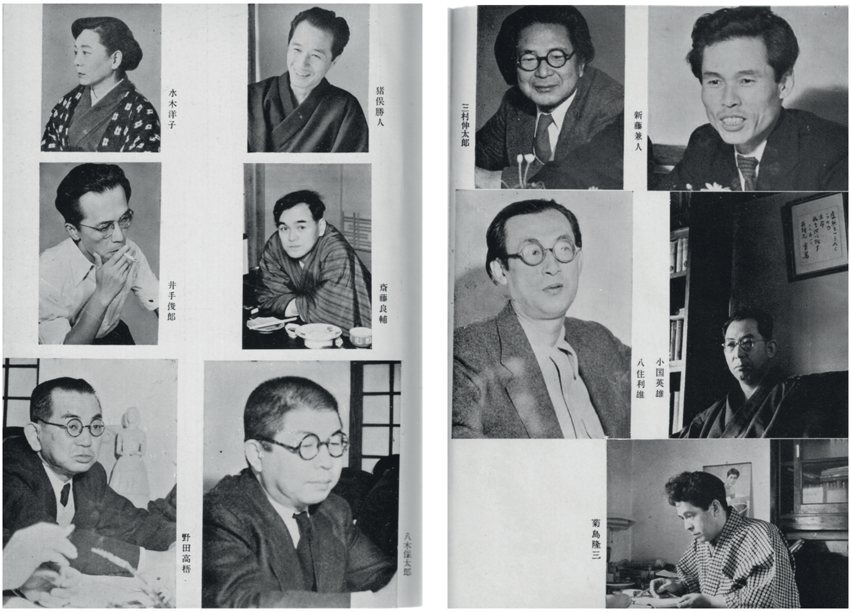
水木洋子
猪俣勝人
井手俊郎
斎藤良輔
野田高梧
八木保太郎
三村伸太郎
新藤兼人
八住利雄
小国英雄
菊島隆三

Figure 39 Photos of the scriptwriters Mizuki Yōko, Inomata Katsuhito, Ide Toshirō, Saito Ryōsuke, Noda Kōgo, and Yagi Yasutarō on the left, Mimura Shintarō, Shindō Kaneto, Yasumi Toshio, Oguni Hideo, and Kikushima Ryūzō on the right. Images sourced from *Gendai eiga kōza*, vol. 3 (1954)

er poses surprises, is, in the order of publication: Hashimoto, Yasumi, Kikushima, Shindō, Wada, Yagi, Mizuki, Matsuyama, Hisaita, Shirasaka, Yoda, Uekusa and Narusawa. Mizuki, Yagi, and Yoda are the only three writers to make appearance in all the lists surveyed from 1952 through 1961.

While the distinction between *shinario raitā* and *shinario sakka* is not always as rigidly defined as by Kitagawa, it is crucial for examining how certain writers were given or denied a place among canonical scenario authors. For some reason, it appears that at any point in time there was only a limited number of slots, approximately a dozen, available in that ever-fluctuating list. This was a dynamic canon where even writers of the stature of Noda or Shindō could at times be denied entry based on their most recent output. Another indication of the contemporaneous assessment and reputation of individual scriptwriters can be found from the winners' list in the scriptwriting

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(Matsuyama), 1 November 1960 (Hisaita), 15 December 1960 (Shirasaka), 1 April 1961 (Yoda), 1 May 1961 (Uekusa) and 15 August 1961 (Narusawa).

category of the annual Blue Ribbon Awards (Burū Ribon Shō). Awarded between 1950 and 1966 by the film critics working in the Tokyo area (Tōkyō Eiga Kishakai, The Association of Tokyo Film Journalists), the list reveals an almost oppressive presence of Hashimoto, who won five times out of seventeen (including the first and last), with Kinoshita and Kikushima sharing a distant second place with two awards each.[7] The Mainichi Film Awards (Mainichi Konkūru) from the same period show a similar pattern of five wins to Hashimoto (one shared with Kurosawa and Oguni) and three to Kinoshita.

The notion of *shinario sakka* and its many applications was a strategic device to bring scriptwriters into the limelight, even if only in film criticism. However, this would later have reverberations in subsequent film histories such as Satō (1995) where it became a common term to mark major scriptwriters invested with authorial capacities. While the term is mostly used by film critics and historians, there is one site where it has been employed by the practitioners of trade themselves. The Japanese name for the Japan Writers Guild, although not readily apparent from its English designation, is Nihon Shinario Sakka Kyōkai (literally, Japanese Association of Scenario Authors). The Japan Writers Guild was established in 1947 by a group of scriptwriters from all the major studios with the main purpose of establishing a standard for honoraria and copyrights (Ogawa 1986, 111-15; Shindō 1989, 2: 52-4). This postwar union had an antecedent, dissolved by the military government in 1941 along with other labour organisations. Founded in 1937, only a year later than the Directors Guild of Japan (Nihon Eiga Kantoku Kyōkai), the earlier guise of the union was ambitiously named Nihon Eiga Sakka Kyōkai (Association of Japanese Film Authors), which no doubt alluded to the growing self-awareness of the scriptwriters' role and status in film production and beyond.

4.2 Social and Spatial Conditions

4.2.1 The Script Department

Most histories of Japanese cinema,[8] even those that refrain from discussing the function of the script, mention the role that Shōchiku's script department (*kyakuhonbu*) had in developing the studio's trademark *shōshimin eiga* genre.[9] Tanaka Jun'ichirō, who otherwise pays very little attention to the work of scriptwriters in his five-volume *Nihon eiga hattatsushi* (History of the Development of Japanese Film, 1957, revised in 1968 and 1976), points out the significance of scriptwriting for molding the much-celebrated Kamata/Ōfuna 'flavour' of the 1930s (Tanaka 1976, 2: 59).[10] The Shōchiku *kyakuhonbu* is considered an epitome of its kind, presented as an exemplary, even idealised place that introduced the template for all subsequent script departments, underlining the studio's reputation as major innovator in film production and genre-shaping since the 1920s.

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[7] When the competition was reinstated in 1975 after being suspended for nearly a decade in 1966 due to a scandal, the awards no longer included a scriptwriting category.

[8] An earlier, abridged version of this section appeared in Kitsnik 2016.

Kido Shirō, who became the head of Shōchiku in 1924, was well known for his unwavering advocacy of the script, which he saw as the blueprint (*sekkeizu*) of film: "If a house has no proper blueprint, only a shaky thing can be built. In cinema, too, if the script is bad, even a talented director will not be able to make a decent film from it" (Ishizaka 1995, 36). This stance towards filmmaking, sometimes referred to as 'Kidoism', necessitated considerable scriptwriting skills from the writing and directing staff alike. At times, this made it possible for the assistant directors who proved themselves good at writing scenarios to be quickly promoted to full rank (Ishizaka 1995, 37). Several notable directors who began their careers at Shōchiku, such as Gosho, Naruse, Ozu, Shimazu, and Shimizu, benefited from this arrangement, all debuting when they were still in their early to mid-20s. Kido's emphasis on writer-director teams was part of his "secret plan for controlling stars" as he sought to challenge the star system that was dominant in film production at the time. In his words: "You can pick up stars on the street, but for film authors [*eiga sakka*] to be born, one must find talented young men and nurture them" (Ishizaka 1995, 36).

Kido, infamous for his hands-on approach, kept a chair at the script department on the second floor of the main building at the Kamata studios, in addition to his regular workplace in the studio administration. He stopped by whenever he had spare time to engage in lively discussion with writers and to brainstorm ideas for new films (Tanaka 1976, 2: 58; Satō 2006, 1: 216). Kido had modelled his *kyakuhonbu* on experiences gathered from his many foreign trips. Upon returning from the United States in 1924, he promptly established a research group (*kyakuhon kenkyūsho*) at Shōchiku, putting in charge none other than Noda (at the time better known as a young film critic writing under the *nom de plume* of Midorikawa Harunosuke). During

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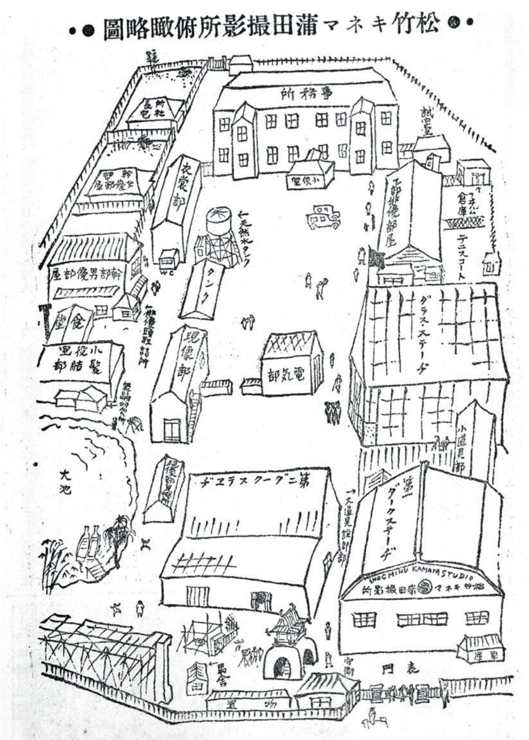
[9] *Shōshimin eiga* (lower middle class film, in Western scholarship often errenously called *shomingeki*) is a film genre that focuses on the everyday of the middle class in a often humorous, bitter-sweet mode.

[10] *Kamatachō* (and since the moving of the studio in 1936, *Ōfunachō*) with its light, comedic touch, is collectively attributed to the products of the Shōchiku studios.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グラス・ステーヂ
第二ダークステーヂ
第一ダークステーヂ
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Figure 40 A depiction of the Shōchiku Kamata Studios from around 1927. The script department was located in the imposing main office building at the back of the complex. Image sourced from *Eikō* (March 1927)

the studio's Ōfuna period since 1936, Kido appointed his personal secretary Tsukimori Sennosuke as the head of *kyakuhonbu* and held a strong grip over its proceedings and about fifty affiliated writers (Ishizaka 1995, 39).

Another aspect that characterised the Shōchiku *kyakuhonbu* was its intimate, family-like atmosphere. Ryū Hanami, the wife of the actor Ryū Chishū (1904-93) who was employed there since 1925 as a copywriter, reminisced about the working space in a conversation with Shindō half a century later.

> The head Kido came to work early in the morning, and so did the people from the script department. At night, they talked about scripts until late. That happened with quite some vigour and fury. Noda [Kōgo], Yoshida [Hyakusuke], Kitamura [Komatsu], Oda [Takashi], Murakami [Tokusaburō], Ochiai [Namio]. All still young. They were writing with a pen into a notebook, or on manuscript

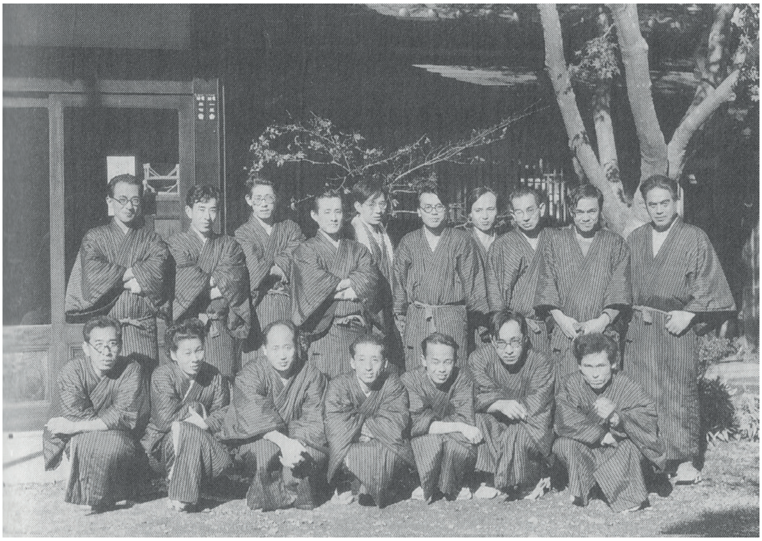

Figure 41 The members of Shōchiku's script department at Seikōen in Hakone Yumoto in 1947. Image sourced from *Shindō Kaneto no sokuseki*, vol. 4 (1994)

> paper [*genkō yōshi*], or on straw paper [*warabanshi*]. It was difficult for me [to type the scripts] because there were some who had bad handwriting. The wives of scriptwriters were often in the room, too. It was more like a family. (Shindō 1989, 1: 94)

Shindō himself recalls the warm and collegial welcome he received upon first arriving at the Shōchiku script department in 1943, which was very much in contrast with the markedly feudalistic attitudes he had encountered at his former workplace in Kyoto (Ishizaka 1995, 40).

However, the concept of family may not be as endearing and straightforward as it might seem. Price has observed that establishment of script departments in Hollywood served to both delineate and limit the trade:

> [O]nly those versed in the more esoteric arts of script writing could enter the portal […] the studios' recently created writing departments would function as a closed shop by professionalising the craft. (Price 2013, 54)

While appearing as one big family for its employees, or even as "Scenario Mecca" from the outside (Shindo 1989, 1: 148), the Shōchiku script department possessed and utilised its own mechanisms of exclusion. This trend is represented by the extremely competitive recruitment contests (six were held between 1928 and 1948, with only five or six hired from among several hundred applicants each time) organised with the stated aim of "employ[ing] graduates from the best universities as screenwriters" (Wada-Marciano 2008, 65).

Kido himself was a graduate of the Law Faculty of the Tokyo Imperial University, which was unusual at the time for someone working in the film industry that was yet to shed its associations with the world of organised crime. The fact that the majority of the studio's scriptwriters belonged to the educational elite (both Noda and Ikeda were graduates of Waseda University) raises important questions about the class dynamic between the writers and the directors, many of whom hailed from modest social backgrounds. If the Kamata/Ōfuna 'flavour' that Shōchiku was known for was indeed a collective effort rather than some combination of the personal styles of individual filmmakers, as some scholars have suggested (Wada-Marciano 2008, 26), the agency of scriptwriters should certainly be added to any reevaluating attempts. In devising the *shōshimin eiga* genre, Kido must have realised that it was with scripts written by the elite that catering for the middle-class audiences should really begin.

4.2.2 Situational Learning and Its Alternatives

Isolde Standish has noted that Kido

> broke with the rigid hierarchical systems that governed the traditional theatrical arts by encouraging an open environment where young filmmakers could freely discuss and criticize the works of other directors. (Standish 2005, 30)

However, the practice of training new staff under established writers somewhat diminished the democratic strides made at Shōchiku and lends it a somewhat feudalistic air. This method had reverberations of a more traditional master-apprentice relationship, where skills and knowledge are transmitted through conversation and practice rather than any textual means.[11] John Singleton (1998) has called this approach prominent in Japanese arts and crafts 'situational learning'. The importance of this hierarchical relationship is highlighted in Inomata and Tayama Rikiya's *Nihon eiga sakka zenshi* (The Complete

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[11] Yasumi points out that when he joined the PCL Studios in 1936, there was no single place where one could learn about scriptwriting, and there was not much in the way of a handbook. He suggests that the best way to learn about the trade was to find a teacher (*sensei* or *shishō*) (Yasumi 1964, 30-4). The claim about the paucity of scriptwriting manuals is not completely accurate, as the mid-1930s saw the publication of several such books.

History of Japanese Film Authors, 1978), where entries on individual scriptwriters routinely mention the master (*shishō*) under whom they had studied.

However, there were ways out of this stratified system. Okada and Hayashi Tamaki point out that the producing of new recruits by master-apprentice initiation (*shitei denju-teki shinjin-zukuri*) that characterised the Shōchiku script department generated its share of rebels (Okada, Hayashi 1965, 79). Their list includes Inomata from the prewar period, Shindō from the postwar years, and Ōshima Nagisa (1932-2013) as the most recent example at the time. According to Okada and Hayashi, Shindō, who made the 'Ōfuna flavour' his own through his diligent readings of prewar scenarios, subsequently broke with the studio after his script *Nikutai no seisō* (Body of Deception) was shelved.[12] Upon leaving the studio, he became the writer who actively shaped postwar Japanese cinema (*sengo o tsukuru kōdōteki na raitā*) (Okada, Hayashi 1965, 82).

Shindō's directorial debut, *Aisai monogatari* (*Story of a Beloved Wife*, 1951), a rare Japanese film for having a scriptwriter as its protagonist, provides a depiction of the master-apprentice system in action as well as its alternative. In this semi-autobiographical film, an aspiring writer, Numazaki (Uno Jūkichi, 1914-88), experiences a great deal of pressure and anxiety from the demanding film director Sakaguchi-sensei (a thinly disguised take on Mizoguchi).[13] Upon being requested repeated rewrites, Numazaki takes an entire year off to peruse the multi-volume anthology of plays from all over the world.[14] This case indicates a third possibility of learning scriptwriting by appropriating the dramatic aspect of cinema through theatrical tradition rather than the sources more commonly employed by Japanese scriptwriters: transcribed continuity scripts, published scenarios, and the master at the department.[15]

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[12] The script was later produced at Daiei as *Itsuwareru seisō* (*Clothes of Deception*, 1951, directed by Yoshimura Kōzaburō).

[13] According to Kishi, this aspect of the film depicts the relationship between Mizoguchi and his main scriptwriter Yoda rather than Shindō's own experiences with his one-time mentor (Kishi 1973, 807).

[14] Shindō recalls how he had no money to buy the books but borrowed them from a used book seller at Kyoto's Kawaramachi, one volume at a time (Tachibana 2011, 19).

[15] One of the types that Okada proposed to distinguish between different traditions of scriptwriting in Japan is exemplified by a small group of writers who made a transition from theatre to cinema, including Yagi, Hatta Naoyuki (1905-64), Hisaita and Yasumi (Okada 1963, 195).

4.2.3 Single and Collective Authorship

Despite the familial atmosphere of the script department and the initial learning of the craft from the master, the writer alone bore the responsibility of script production. While there are exceptions, it is common in Japan for a single scriptwriter to be credited for a film. Togawa Naoki highlighted the contrast between Japanese and American scriptwriting practices, noting the collaborative system (*gassaku shisutemu*) prevalent in Hollywood, where multiple writers contribute at various stages. He suggested that the Japanese film industry could benefit from adopting this approach (Togawa 1959, 30). Interestingly, the very concept of joint authorship that Togawa admires is what most scholars of American screenwriting find highly problematic, as it obscures clear authorship and complicates the attribution of agency to the writer(s) over the text.[16] The comparison of these two film production traditions also serves to portray the Japanese scriptwriter as more independent and author-like than their American counterpart.

Scriptwriters in Japan appear to stand out as a remarkable exception in global film history, yet it remains a matter of debate whether they had total creative control over the script and received appropriate recognition and credit for their work. There were script conferences where members of the production team suggested modifications to preliminary drafts (Umeda 1955, 93-4). However, the same writer continued to revise the script until the final stages, maintaining a certain level of integrity for the final draft (*ketteikō*). In other words, unlike the common practice in Hollywood, the script was not entirely taken away from the writer and handed over to others for completion. Even though adjustments were made to the script during filming, the final draft, which essentially became the shooting script (*daihon*), was preserved in its original form. Many of these scripts were subsequently published, serving a different purpose and reaching a wider audience, as I explored in the previous chapters.

While the prevalent practice in Japan was assigning a single writer to a project, there are numerous instances of collaborative scriptwriting. An early example of collaborative writing can be seen in the collective contributions of a group of writers known as Kajiwara Kinpachi. This group, active in Kyoto from 1934 to 1937, was also referred to as Narutakigumi. The group derived its name from the Narutaki neighbourhood in western Kyoto, where all the members resided. Notable members included writer-directors Inagaki and Yamanaka, as well as renowned scriptwriters Yahiro and Mimura (1897-1970). The group also included writer Fujii Shigeji (1908-70), and directors Takizawa, Suzuki Momosaku (1901-41), and Hagiwara Ryō (1910-76). Narutakigumi is credited with integrating script discussions into the filmmaking process, a practice also observed at Kido's Shōchiku. Inagaki later noted that their most significant contribution was modernising *jidaigeki* by incorporating contemporary Japanese language as cinema was making a transition from the silent era to talkies (Inagaki 1983, 128). Interestingly, the group was founded on principles distinct from studio-centric filmmaking, with an emphasis on the individual initiative and interests of its members, who were employed by different studios. Overall, Narutakigumi produced over twenty films across diverse studios such as Nikkatsu, PCL (and its successor, Tōhō), Shinkō, and Shōchiku, as well as independent production companies built around *jidaigeki* stars Kataoka Chiezō (1903-83), Arashi Kanjūrō (1903-80), and Ichikawa Utaemon (1907-99). Narutakigumi serves as a remarkable example of potential collaboration amidst the intense competition among studios in the mid-1930s, and its collective approach has been compared to that of Kurosawa's subsequent scriptwriting circle (Itō et al. 1966, 24).

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[16] This confusion is further supported by several seemingly arbitrary regulations of the American Screen Writers Guild concerning screen credit, such as allowing only three writers to be credited for a screenplay (Price 2010, 15), or disallowing credit to any director who has contributed less than fifty per cent of the dialogue (Corliss 1974, xxiii).

Some of the most enduring and acclaimed examples of collaborative writing are associated with the working methods employed by iconic Japanese film directors such as Kurosawa, Mizoguchi,[17] and Ozu. Apart from his first six and last three, all of Kurosawa's works were credited to multiple writers.[18] Much has been written about the *gasshuku* (lodging together) approach that the director adopted during his peak creative period from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s. Kurosawa himself confessed that "If I write alone, it tends to become very biased. I prefer to do it through discussions with two or more people" (Kurosawa 2010, 13). He would gather several writers in a single room and have them compete to devise the best solution for a specific sequence under review. In a tense environment akin to a school examination, the director had the final say (Ishizaka 1995, 153-4). Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, drawing on this practice, proposed a new theory of auteurship as 'collective negotiation' for reevaluating Kurosawa's body of work (Yoshimoto 2000, 54-7). While

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[17] While Yoda is consistently acknowledged and credited as the sole writer for Mizoguchi's films, it is widely reported that the director was the driving force behind the entire writing process. Known for his demanding nature that often pushed actors to their limits, Mizoguchi mirrored this intensity in his relationship with Yoda, to whom he subjected countless rewrites (Ishizaka 1995, 153-4).

[18] Oguni (12 credits), Kikushima (9), Hashimoto (8) and Hisaita (4) were Kurosawa's most frequent collaborators. Several different combinations of them composed the writing credits for the director's most emblematic films. All four, together with Kurosawa, are credited for *Warui yatsu hodo yoku nemuru* (*The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960).

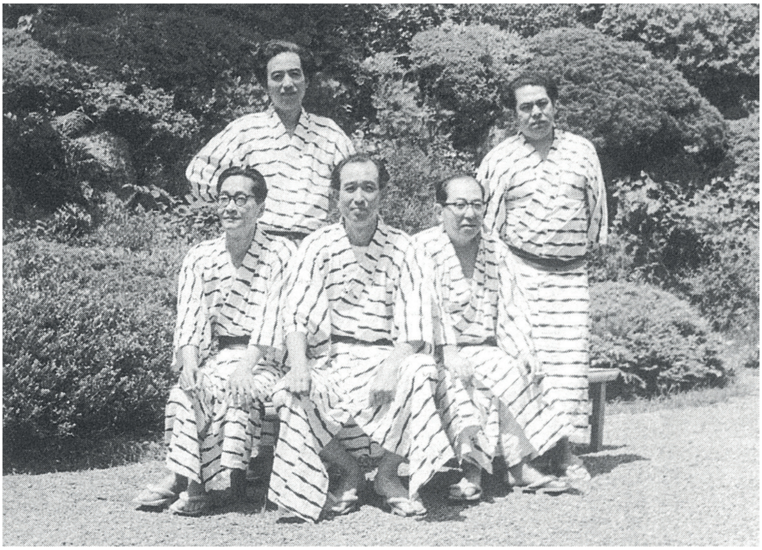

Figure 42 Kurosawa Akira (in middle) and his principal collaborators (from the left) Hisaita Eijirō, Hashimoto Shinobu, Oguni Hideo, and Kikushima Ryūzō. Image sourced from *Fukugan no eizō* (2006)

this introduces a much-needed balance to the auteurist interpretation of the director's work, the concept of negotiation appears somewhat ambiguous, particularly considering Kurosawa's dominant role in the process and the strong influence of the director's presence that ultimately shaped the final script.

Okada Susumu, in his typology of Japanese scriptwriting, recognised Kurosawa's approach as a fusion of various seemingly contradictory traditions. Okada identified four distinct schools (*nagare*) of writing: 1) silent *jidaigeki*, known for its focus on the film's rhythm (with Itō and Yamanaka as representative writers), 2) Shōchiku's *shōshimin eiga*, noted for its depiction of everyday life's subtleties (Ozu, Shimazu), 3) former playwrights who value drama and conflict (Yagi, Hatta, Yasumi), and 4) an ironic structure that contrasts words and images (Itami) (Okada 1963, 190-8). According to Okada, Kurosawa's strategy of engaging writers from each school allowed for an environment where the diverse strengths of Japanese scriptwriting could interact, leading to optimal outcomes (199). Regardless of whether we agree with Okada's interpretation, Kurosawa's team's efforts have been widely acclaimed and honoured with the highest international accolade for Japanese scriptwriting. Despite the strong emphasis on individuality among Japanese writers, the Jean Renoir Award for Screenwriting Achievement in 2013 (awarded by the Writers Guild of America West) was jointly (and posthumously) received by Kurosawa, Hashimoto, Kikushima, and Oguni.[19]

Ozu's approach presents a variant of the *gasshuku* model, distinguished by the fact that the collaboration was confined to the director himself and scriptwriter Noda. Despite having collaborated with other influential Shōchiku writers such as Ikeda and Saitō in the prewar years, all of Ozu's works since the 1949 release of *Banshun*, a film that arguably marked the onset of his late style, were co-written with Noda.[20] What stands out when compared to Kurosawa's view of his writers' role is Ozu's profound respect for Noda, whom he regarded as an equal, if not superior. This is exemplified by an anecdote where Ozu calls him from the set to seek his permission for altering a single suffix in the dialogue (Ishizaka 1995, 94). This meticulousness is tied to the perception of the script as the final version of the film, which should remain unaltered during shooting. According to Ozu, "when the script is ready, it is the same as having eighty per cent of the film done" (Ishizaka 1995, 17).

4.2.4 Homosocial Space of the Writing Inn

Japanese scriptwriting is intrinsically linked to specific workspaces. Despite the notable collaborative approaches mentioned above, scriptwriting, particularly when contrasted with the teamwork of film shooting, is often perceived as a solitary task. However, numerous accounts reveal a robust sense of community, which can be traced back to the familial environment of the Shōchiku script department. Ishizaka characterises this template as follows: "A scriptwriter teams up with a director, and upon deciding on the next project, secludes himself in the *jōyado* [the regular inn] to commence the scriptwriting process" (Ishizaka 1995, 40). The concept of *jōyado* is deeply ingrained in scriptwriting histories, making it inseparable from the narratives of the department and master-apprentice relationships. Notably, during the immediate postwar years, major studios maintained their regular *jōyado*, often situated in serene rural locations near Tokyo. Shōchiku, for instance, reserved one for its writers at the

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[19] "Our Jean Renoir Award, honoring those non-US writers whose work has raised the bar for all of us, this year goes to Akira Kurosawa, Hideo Oguni, Ryūzō Kikushima, and Shinobu Hashimoto, honoring the writing at the heart of the Japanese cinema", said WGAW Vice President Howard A. Rodman. "These four men, working in loose collaboration, are responsible for writing many, many masterpieces – films that reflect the Japanese culture, and have given all of us a taste of the sublime" (Mitchell 2013).

[20] Even before his postwar collaboration with Noda, Ozu often engaged in collective writing, which sometimes took playful forms. For instance, the *nom de plume*, James Maki, was used to designate his collaboration with either Fushimi or Ikeda (Kishi 1970, 402).

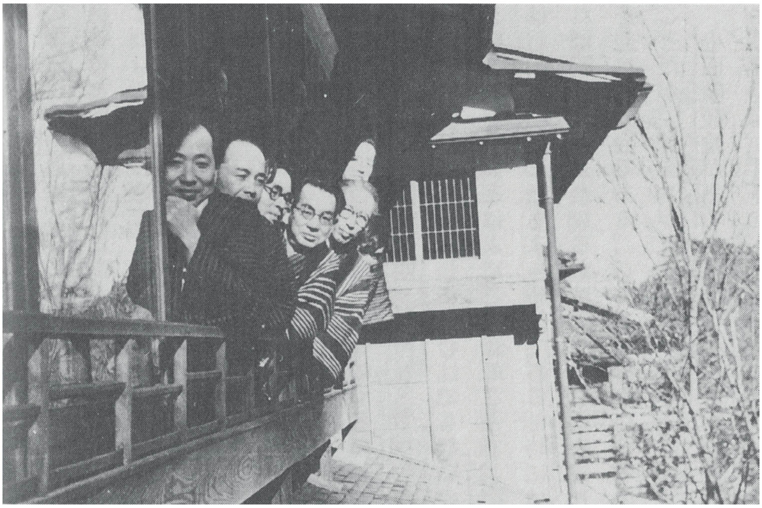

Figure 43 (From the left) Yanai Takao, Aramata Masao, Kiyoshima Nagatoshi, Noda Kōgo, Fushimi Akira, and Sawamura Tsutomu at Seikōen. Image sourced from *Shindō Kaneto no sokuseki*, vol. 4 (1994)

Hakone Yumoto hot spring resort and another in the seaside town of Chigasaki, known as Seikōen and Chigasakikan, respectively.[21]

Ishizaka Shōzō (1932-2003) observed that during the 1950s Golden Age, each of these places typically housed two to three writers or writing teams at any given time (Ishizaka 1995, 40). He devoted an entire book, *Ozu Yasujirō to Chigasakikan* (Ozu Yasujirō and Chigasakikan), to the unique role this *jōyado* played in Ozu's life and work from 1941 to 1957, exploring how the tranquil coastal resort town's specific environment and historical context contributed to the creation of numerous films now regarded as masterpieces. The relative proximity to the Shōchiku studios at Ōfuna and the mild winters were key advantages of Chigasaki. Reportedly, Ozu and Noda spent between 150 and 200 days a year at Chigasaki during the ten-year postwar period, consistently occupying the same corner room, Number Two.[22] All expenses were covered by the company (Ishizaka 1995, 42). Many accounts describe how the initial days after checking into the inn were spent playing mahjong with other resident writers,

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[21] Chigasakikan had been used by Shōchiku since its move from Kamata to Ōfuna in 1936 (Ichizaka 1995, 35).

[22] Number One was frequented by Saitō, nicknamed the Master of Chigasaki (*Chigasaki no nushi*).

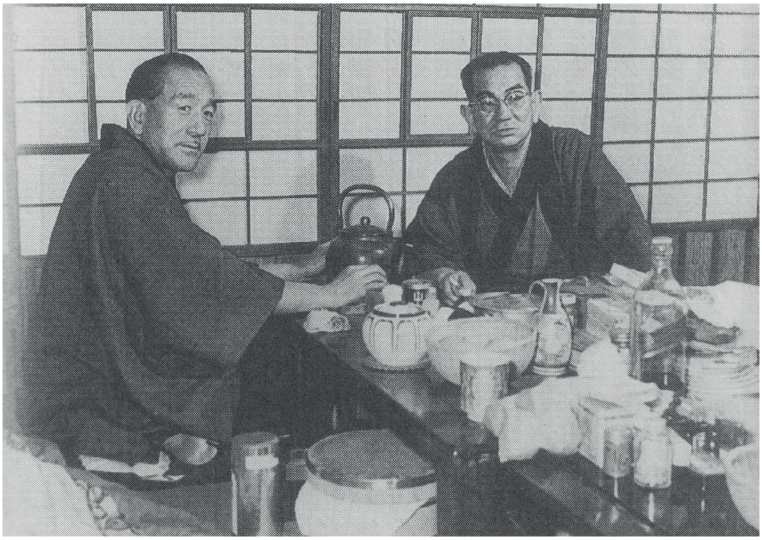

Figure 44 Ozu Yasujirō and Noda Kōgo in room Number Two at Chigasakikan. Image sourced from *Ozu Yasujirō to Chigasakikan* (1995)

with work commencing only a few days later. It appears that Ozu dedicated most of the early part of the day to preparing his special brand of miso soup for others (Shindō 1989, 2: 27).

Ashizawa Toshirō (1930-2020), who frequently lodged at Chigasakikan as Saitō Ryōsuke's assistant, reminisced about the ceaseless chatter and nostalgic conversations between Ozu and Noda, which began daily with little variation. Ishizaka highlighted how such casual conversations (*yomoyamabanashi*) consistently set the groundwork for a new project (Ishizaka 1995, 15). Donald Richie, in turn, contended that the fabric of Ozu's scripts invariably sprouted from these minor incidents and jests that "contributed both to the creation of character and to the form of the film itself" (Richie 1974, 35). The writing space and the communication it facilitated were fundamental to Ozu's working method, integrating the environment into the filmmaking process. Ozu himself stated that sharing certain daily habits was vital for such collaboration, or it would result in failure (Ishizaka 1995, 150). Conversely, in an attempt to maintain a certain mystique around the creative process, a myth that mere cohabitation would miraculously yield a completed script, Ozu and Noda never allowed others to witness them actually working. Ishizaka referenced an interview where a journalist struggled to find any evidence in the room that it was a writing space: there were no papers or pencils in sight. However, the apprentice Ashizawa once fortuitously caught a

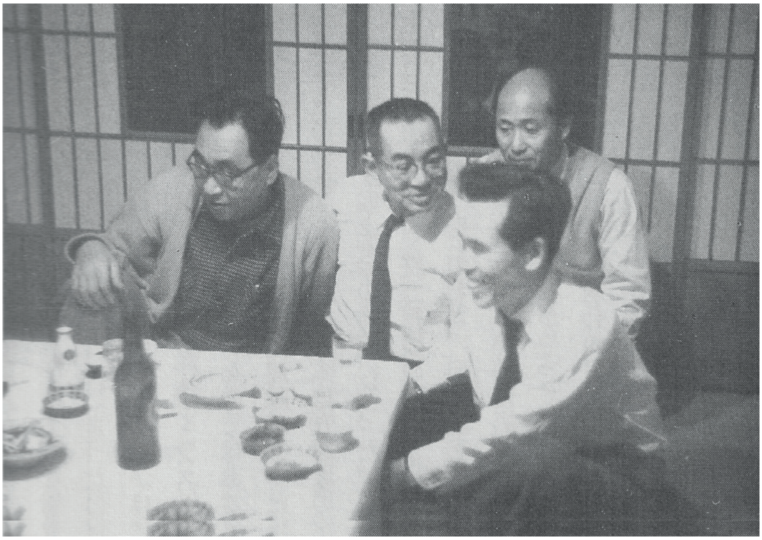

Figure 45 Young Shindō Kaneto (at right) with his elder colleagues (from the left) Saitō Ryōsuke, Noda Kōgo, and Yanai Takao. Image sourced from *Shindō Kaneto no sokuseki*, vol. 4 (1994)

glimpse at 03:00 am of the duo hunched over their *genkō yōshi*, writing fervently (Ishizaka 1995, 151-3).

Shindō provides an account of his time at Seikōen, where he primarily worked during his tenure at Shōchiku in the late 1940s. He refers to this as the leisure (*yoyū*) system, where each writer or writing team, while engaged in their individual tasks, always had ample opportunity for interaction (Shindō 1989, 2: 26-8). Indeed, numerous accounts of life in the *jōyado* might lead one to question how any writing was accomplished at all. Ultimately, this idealised portrayal presents an image of the Golden Age as a period not just for producing and viewing films, but also for writing them. Furthermore, the *jōyado* served as a space for initiation, where a novice writer, mentored by the master, both of whom were almost without exception male, was dispatched to the inn to complete their inaugural script. In essence, this particular setting fostered an image of the writer that stood in stark contrast to that of industrialised studio-based work.

However, this leisurely writing environment was not without its challenges. Saitō, who had recently penned several highly praised comedies directed by Shibuya Minoru (1907-80),[23] notoriously experienced writer's block while working on the script of *Seido no Kirisuto* (*Christ in Bronze*, 1955) at Chigasakikan in 1953. It took over a year to complete this single script, even with the studio bringing in additional writers (Ishizaka 1995, 40-1). In a conversation with Shindō, various individuals recalled the incident. Ashizawa mentioned that "[a]fter writing: 'A policeman chases through the streets of Edo', he didn't pen another word for three years". Inoue Kazuo (1924-2011), Shibuya's assistant director, confessed that occasionally he felt like assaulting Saitō. Yamanouchi added humorously that the blank manuscript paper had already yellowed with time (Shindō 1994, 27-8).

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[23] Most important of these include *Ten'ya wan'ya* (*Crazy Uproar*, 1950), *Jiyū gakkō* (*School of Freedom*, 1951), *Honjitsu kyūshin* (*Doctor's Day Off*, 1952) and *Gendaijin* (*The Moderns*, 1952).

Ishizaka suggested that to mitigate such scheduling risks, a balance was sought by employing efficient writers like Shindō, who could consistently produce scripts in three weeks (Ishizaka 1995, 41). There is an anecdote of a fellow scriptwriter who was staying and working at the same inn as Shindō. The unfortunate man developed writer's block after hearing a steady rhythmic pattern through the sliding door from the neighbouring room all night long. That was Shindō methodically turning and completing yet another manuscript page. However, not all writers had the luxury of the privilege of a company inn, even during the peak of the studio system in the 1950s. Shindō, who had become independent after leaving Shōchiku, had to rent a workspace in a modest inn in central Tokyo, adjacent to a small printing house. Shindō reminisces how the rhythmic sound of its machines provided a constant backdrop to his work, day and night (Shindō 1994, 62). This less glamorous setup might have actually suited the writer, sometimes characterised as a human writing machine. Shindō was also a teetotaller, which starkly contrasted with several other Japanese filmmakers, notably Ozu, who famously associated the production of the script with the number of sake bottles consumed during the process. As a result, while Shindō could sometimes complete scripts in just a few days, it took Ozu and Noda months to finish theirs.

Whether the story is about Ozu and Noda concealing their ongoing work, Kurosawa subjecting his writing team to a form of examination, Saitō's writer's block, or Shindō tirelessly jotting away, most narratives about scriptwriting tend to be light-hearted and anecdotal. The question that remains is that whether such accounts are sufficient to lend enough credibility for examining the history and practices of Japanese scriptwriting. However, the very least we can deduce from these often amusing tales is that the role of the scriptwriter, often seen as the most solitary in the filmmaking process, appears vibrant and communal, both in the familial ambiance of the *kyakuhonbu* and the relaxed pace of work at the *jōyado*. At the same time, no matter how idyllic this arrangement might have appeared from the outside, it was still deeply rooted in the industrial hierarchy that needs to be scrutinised, particularly in the context of how gender influenced scriptwriters' social status and spatial working conditions.

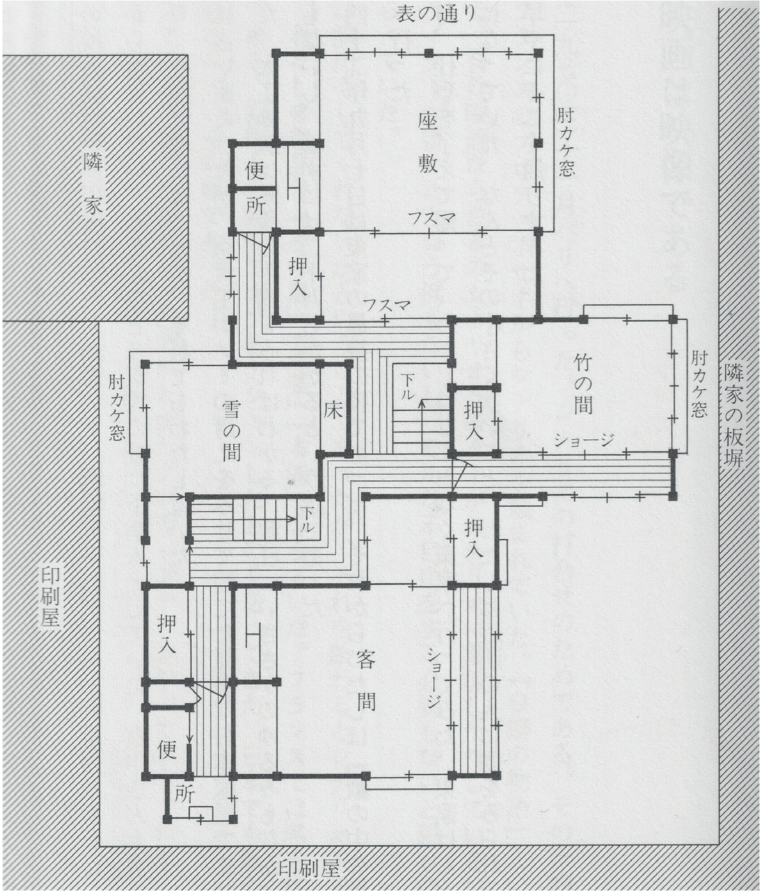
表の通り
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Figure 46 A depiction of Shindō's working space (Yuki no ma) in the middle left. Image sourced from *Shindō Kaneto no sokuseki*, vol. 4 (1994)

4.3 Gender in Scriptwriting

4.3.1 Writer as Wife

How do films come into this world? *Eiga kantoku tte nanda!* (*Cut! The Rights of Japanese Film Directors*, 2006, Itō Shun'ya, 1937) provides some surprising answers in vivid allegory. The opening scenes of the film depict the establishment of the Nihon Eiga Kantoku Kyōkai (Directors Guild of Japan) in 1936. When the founding members are shaking hands to congratulate each other, suddenly a baby's cry is heard, and in the adjacent shed a baby boy is discovered lying in a cradle – Moses-like – with ink-written characters of the newly established union covering the soles of his tiny feet. The next sequence takes the infant metaphor even further by introducing a newlywed couple in a *jidaigeki* setting. The grave-looking groom Kantoku Uemon (played by the director Oguri Kōhei, 1945), and his bashful bride, Kyakuhon Tayū (director Sakamoto Junji, 1958, in drag), retreat to the bedroom after the ceremony. The marriage is discreetly consummated behind a folding screen while a band of lookers-on, unmistakably resembling a film crew, watches and captures the action. Subsequently, an imposing man, introduced as Chosakuken Nijūkyū, appears at the couple's doorstep with his entourage and authoritatively commands the newly born baby to be handed over to him.

What does it all mean? The character names in this playful yet disturbing domestic drama are replete with wordplay. In Japanese, Kantoku is a homonym for film director (*kantoku*), while Kyakuhon denotes film script (*kyakuhon*) and *tayū* in the kabuki tradition designates a female role played by male actors. Chosakuken Nijūkyū quite literally refers to Article 29 of the Japanese Copyright Law. Once these visual and verbal cues are collated, it is easy enough to extrapolate that filmmaking requires the mutual effort between a director and a scriptwriter (as well as a shooting crew). The process reaches its end by the cruel appropriation of the nascent product of this creative union by its lawful owner.

What we have visualised here is an act purportedly immoral, albeit entirely within the legal limits stipulated in the article in question: "Copyright […] shall belong to the maker of cinematic work, provided that the authors of the work have undertaken to participate in the making thereof" (Copyright Law of Japan. Chapter II Rights of Author).[24] To an attentive eye, this bad case of legalese fails to conceal the emphatic distinction between the concepts of 'author(s)' and 'maker' in this statement that, while recognising the former's effort, makes the latter the sole possessor of any (copy)rights over the final product. In other words, filmmakers are allowed to keep to themselves the nebulous notions of authorship and credit, while the ownership of their work will remain in the firm hands of the company. This legal arrangement, where the rights of film directors (authors) and producers (makers) are set apart based on their respective industrial roles, is precisely what the film *Eiga kantoku tte nanda!* attempted to uncover and contest. It was released on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Directors Guild of Japan, and several notable members appear as actors in the film.

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[24] `http://www.cric.or.jp/english/clj/cl2.html`.

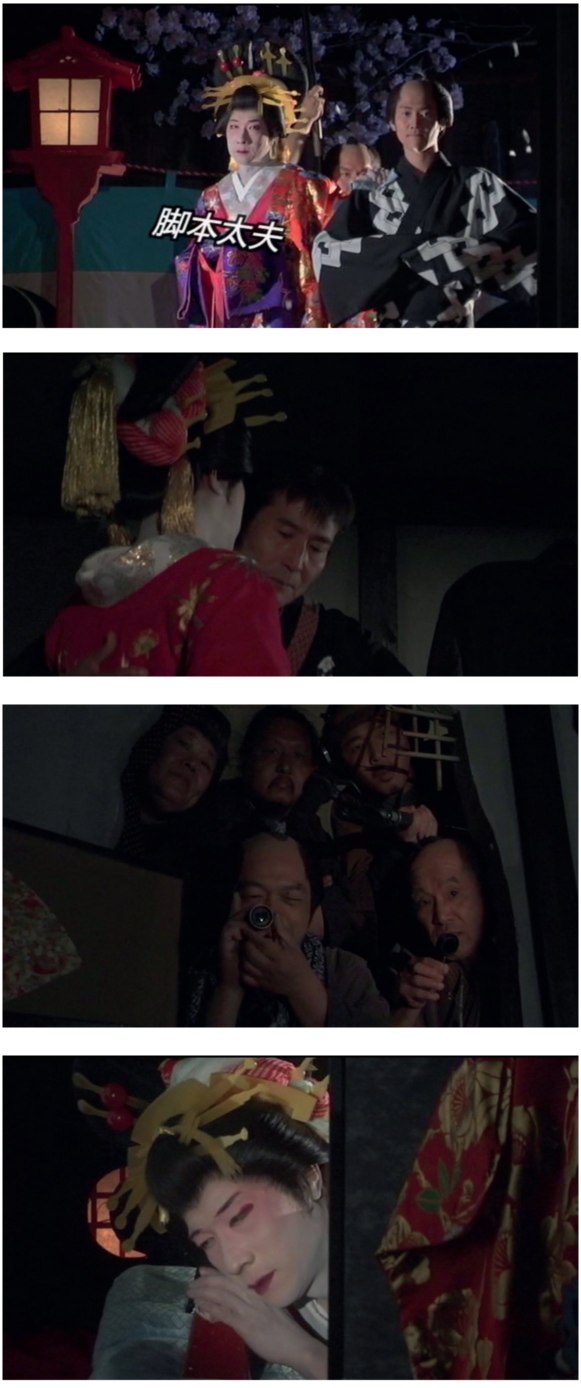

Figure 47 The director-scriptwriter wedding night scene from *Eiga kantoku tte nanda!* (2006)

But with the rights and agency of directors being so vehemently fought for, where does it leave the other cinematic parent, the scriptwriter? Why do they appear in such an overly feminised, if not outright emasculated, guise? Are we to understand their role simply as that of a passive recipient and nurturer of the spark injected by their male counterpart? Admittedly, the way gender is introduced here to depict a creative collaboration might seem quirky and original. However, this apparent exaggeration merely translates into images an understanding quite commonly found in writings on Japanese cinema. Namely, that in relation to the film director, the scriptwriter has a role akin to that of a wife (*nyōbō-yaku*). This gendering of filmmaking seems to hint at something more deeply embedded within the conduct of Japanese cinema that, until very recently, used to be an extremely male-dominated field of cultural production. While actual women rarely had roles in the world of cinema beyond their very central function as actresses and audiences, somehow it was still deemed necessary to conceptualise the otherwise markedly homosocial process of filmmaking in gender terms. I will return to some of these implications in the coda of the book.

4.3.2 Female Scriptwriters

Regardless of how we interpret the way gender relations are depicted in *Eiga kantoku tte nanda!*, scriptwriting is precisely the part of Japanese cinema where the contributions of women to filmmaking since the silent era can be clearly identified and discussed. Seemingly adhering to the idea of scriptwriting as a female role, there have indeed been examples of working relationships between real-life partners where the wife takes on the role of the scriptwriter. On a global scale, there was the creative collaboration between the German writer Thea von Harbou (1888-1954) and the Austrian (later American) director Fritz Lang (1890-1976).[25] In Japan, there was an equally celebrated team of the scriptwriter Wada Natto and her husband, the director Ichikawa Kon (1915-2008). Wada is credited for writing the majority of Ichikawa's films until 1963, including *Biruma no tategoto* (*The Burmese Harp*, 1956), Enjō (*Conflagration*, 1958), *Kagi* (*Odd Obsession*, 1959), *Nobi* (*Fires on the Plain*, 1959), and *Yukinojō henge* (*An Actor's Revenge*, 1963). Primarily focusing on adaptations of modern Japanese literature, Wada frequently incorporated elements of black humour and unexpected twists into the original narratives. Over the course of the 1950s, her work transitioned from predominantly lighthearted comedies to tackling more serious themes by the decade's end. The conclusion of this collaboration is often used as a benchmark to signify the end of Ichikawa's zenith as a director.

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[25] They worked together on some of Lang's most celebrated works such as *Dr. Mabuse der Spieler* (*Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*, 1922), *Metropolis* (1927) and *M* (1931). They divorced in 1933, at least partly for the reason that Harbou sympathised with the emerging Nazi regime while the Lang, who had Jewish ancestry, chose to leave the country.

The emergence of women as scriptwriters can be traced back to the silent film era. Mizushima Ayame is commonly credited as the first female scriptwriter in Japan. Born Takano Chitose, she adopted the pen name upon receiving her first screen credit for *Rakuyō no uta* (*The Song of Fallen Leaves*, 1924, Ogasawara Meihō, 1900-46); using her real name would have led to her expulsion from Japan Women's College, where watching films, let alone participating in their creation, was forbidden. The following year, Mizushima joined Shōchiku Kamata Studios, where she worked until the studio relocated to Ōfuna in 1936. At that point, she retired from the film industry to become a children's writer.[26] Just three months after Mizushima's debut, the competing Nikkatsu studio released *Shitaiyuku kage* (*Yearning Shadows*, 1925, Hatano Yasumasa), written by another female writer, Hayashi Yoshiko.[27] The third significant female scriptwriter of the era was Suzuki Noriko (1909-85), who has 27 film credits to her name. She worked for the Nikkatsu studios from 1933 to 1937, and then for Tōhō until 1941. *Chokorēto to heitai* (*Chocolate and Soldiers*, 1938, Satō Takeshi, 1903-78) is considered her representative work.

Given the limited presence of female scriptwriters before the war, it is particularly noteworthy that Mizuki, Tanaka and Wada emerged as some of the most distinguished figures in their field. The first two, contemporaries of Mizushima, Hayashi, and Suzuki, only began their film careers after the war, were most active in the 1950s and largely withdrew from the scene by the mid-1960s. Mizuki and Tanaka, both of whom had prior experience writing for the stage, scripted some of the most acclaimed films of the 1950s. Tanaka's frequently collaborations with directors Naruse, and Yoshimura Kōzaburō (1911-2000) resulted in critically acclaimed works, such as *Meshi* (*Repast*, 1951), *Bangiku* (*Late Chrysanthemums*, 1954), *Nagareru* (*Flowing*, 1956, all Naruse), *Yoru no kawa* (*Night River*, 1956), and *Yoru no chō* (*Night

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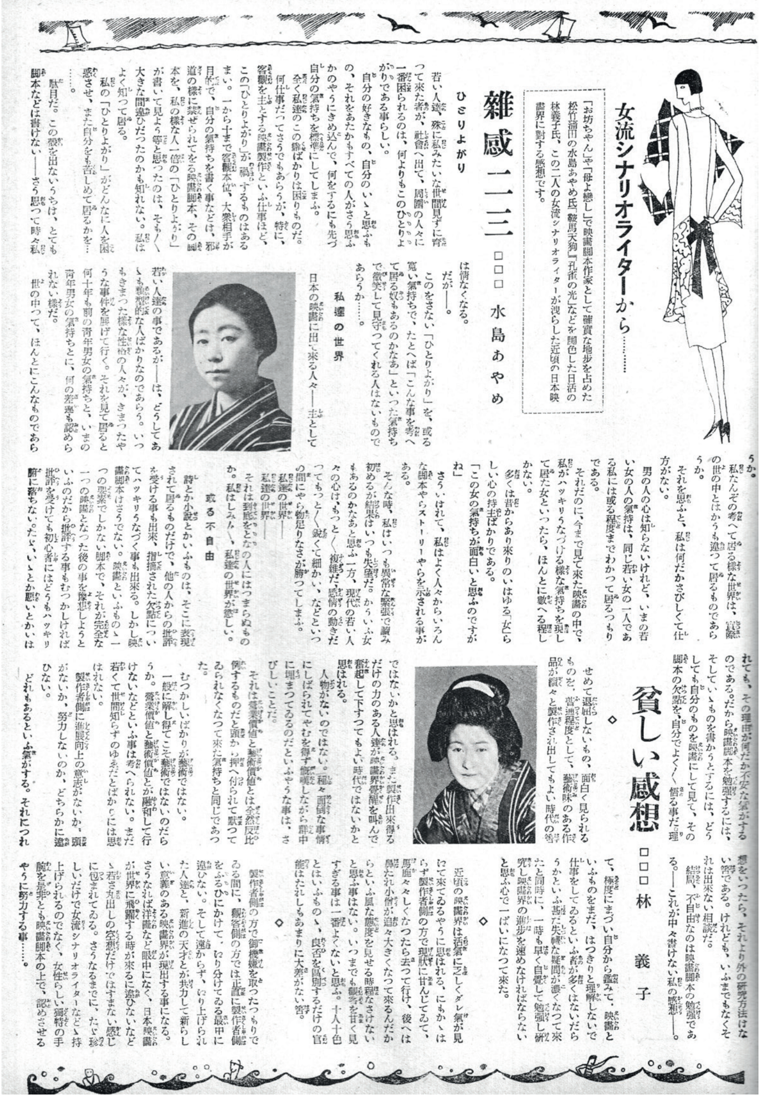
[26] Mizushima, known for writing comedies and melodramas, had 29 of her scripts produced at Shōchiku. Regrettably, most of the prints have been lost. The exception is *Akeyuku sora* (*The Dawning Sky*, 1929, Saitō Torajirō), which has been released in the Digital Meme's Talking Silents series. Mizushima's last film, *Kagayake shōnen Nihon* (*Shine On, Boy Japan!*, 1935, Sasaki Yasushi, 1908-93), a sports film commissioned to celebrate the birth of the Crown Prince (future Emperor Akihito), was also her only talkie. A highly informative and well-maintained electronic resource in Japanese on the life and work of Mizushima can be found at `https://ayamemizushima.petit-disc.work`.

[27] The July 1926 issue of the journal *Shibai to kinema* (Stage and Cinema), featured an illustrated introduction to Mizushima and Hayashi as flagbearers of newly emerging women scriptwriters (Mizushima, Suzuki 1926, 13).



女流シナリオライターから……

「お坊ちゃん」や「母よ戀し」で映畫脚本作家として確實な地歩を占めた松竹蒲田の水島あやめ氏「鞍馬天狗」「孔雀の光」などを脚色した日活の林義子氏、この二人の女流シナリオライターが洩らした近頃の日本映畫界に對する感想です。

雜感一二三 □□□ 水島あやめ

ひとりよがり

若い人達、殊に私みたいな世間見ずに育つて來た者が、社會へ出て、周圍の人々に一番困られるのは、何よりもこのひとりよがりである事らしい。

自分の好きなもの、自分のいゝと思ふもの、それをあたかもすべての人がさう思ふかのやうにきめ込んで、何をするにも先づ自分の氣持ちを標準にしてしまふ。

全く私達のこの癖ばかりは困りものだ。

何仕事だつてさうでもあらうが、特に、客觀を主とする映畫製作といふ仕事ほど、この「ひとりよがり」が禍するものはあるまい。一から十まで客觀本位、大衆相手が目的で、自分の氣持ちを書く事などは、邪道の樣に禁ぜられてをる映畫脚本、その脚本を、私の樣な人一倍の「ひとりよがり」が書いて見よう等と思つたのは、そも〳〵大きな間違ひだつたのかも知れない。私はよく知つて居る。

私の「ひとりよがり」がどんなに人を困惑させ、また自分をも苦しめて居るかを……。

駄目だ。この殼を出ないうちは、とても脚本などは書けない——さう思つて時々私は情なくなる。

だが——。

このをさない「ひとりよがり」を、或る寛い氣持ちで、たとへば「こんな事を考へて居る奴もあるのかなあ」といつた氣持ちで微笑して見守つてくれる人はないものであらうか……。

私達の世界

日本の映畫に出て來る人々——主として若い人達の事であるが——は、どうしてあゝも類型的な人ばかりなのであらう。いつもきまつた樣な性格の人々が、きまつたやうな事件を展げて行く。それを見て居ると何十年も前の青年男女の氣持ちと、いまの青年男女の氣持ちとに、何の差違も認められない樣だ。

世の中つて、ほんとにこんなものであらうか。私なんぞの考へて居る樣な世界は、實際の世の中とはかうも違つて居るものであらうか。

それを思ふと、私は何だかさびしくて仕方がない。

男の人の心は知らないけれど、いまの若い女の人の氣持は、同じ若い女の一人である私には或る程度までわかつて居るつもりである。

それだのに、今まで見て來た映畫の中で、私がハッキリうなづける樣な氣持ちを現して居た女といつたら、ほんとに數へる程しかない。

多くは昔からあり來りのいはゆる「女」らしい心の持主ばかりである。

「この女の氣持ちが面白いと思ふのですがね」

さういはれて、私はよく人々からいろんな脚本やらストーリーやらを示される事がある。

そんな時、私はいつも異常な緊張で讀み初めるが結果はいつも失望だ。かういふ女もあるのかなあと思ふ一方、現代の若い人々の心は、もつと〳〵複雜だ、感情の動きだつてもつと〳〵鋭くて細かい、などといつの間にやら物足りなさが勝つてしまふ。

私達の世界——

私達の世界——

それは到底をとなの人にはつまらぬものか。私はしみ〴〵、私達の世界が慾しい。

或る不自由

詩とか小說とかいふものは、そこに表現されて居るものだけで、他の人からの批評を受ける事も出來、指摘された缺點についてハッキリうなづく事も出來る。しかし映畫脚本はさうでない。映畫といふものゝ一つの要素でしかない脚本で、それが完全な一つの映畫となつた後の事を豫想しようといふのだから批評する事もむつかしければ批評を受けても初心者にはどうもハッキリ腑に落ちない。たゞ、いゝとか惡いとかいはれても、その理由が何だか不安な氣がするのである。だから映畫脚本を勉強するには、そしていゝものを書かうとするには、どうしても自分のものを映畫にして見て、その脚本の缺點を、自分でよく〳〵悟る事だ。理想をいつたら、それより外の研究方法はない筈である。けれども、いふまでもなくそれは出來ない相談だ。

結局、不自由なのは映畫脚本の勉強である。——これが中々書けない私の感想——。

貧しい感想 □□□ 林義子

◇

せめて退屈しないもの、面白く見られるものを、普通程度として、藝術味のある作品が續々と製作され出してもよい時代の筈ではないかと思はれる。また製作出來得るだけの力のある人達が映畫界覺醒を叫んで奮起して下すつてもよい時代ではないかと思はれる。

人物がないのではない。種々面倒な事情にしばられてやむを得ず慨嘆しながら群中に埋まつてゐるのだといふやうな事は、さびしいことだ。

それは營業價値と藝術價値とは全然反比例するものだと頭から押へ付られて默つてゐられなくなつて來た氣持ちと同じであつた。

むつかしいばかりが藝術ではない。

一般に解し得てこそ藝術ではないのだらうか。營業價値と藝術價値とが融和して行けないなどといふ事は考へられない。まだ若くて世間知らずのゆゑだとばかりには思はれない。

製作者側に進展向上の意志がないか、頭がないか、努力しないのか、どちらかに違ひない。

どれもあるといふ氣がする。それにつれて、極度にまづい自分から鑑みて、映畫といふものをまだ、はつきりと理解しないで仕事をしてゐるといふ者が多くはないだらうかといふ甚だ失禮な疑問が濃くなつて來たと同時に、一時も早く自覺して勉強し研究し映畫界の進歩を速めなければならないと思ふ心で一ぱいになつて來た。

◇

近頃の映畫界は活氣に乏しくダレ氣が見えて來てゐるやうに思はれる。にもかゝはらず製作者側の方で現狀に甘んじてゐて、馬鹿々々しくなつたら去つて行け、後へは鼻たれ小僧が追々大きくなつて來るんだからといふ風な態度を見せる時程なさけないと思ふ事はない。いつまでも觀客を甘く見すぎる事は一番よくないと思ふ。十人十色とはいふものゝ、良否を區別するだけの官能はたれしもあまりに大差がない筈。

◇

製作者側の方で御機嫌を取つたつもりでゐる間に、觀客側の方では正直に製作者側をふるひにかけて、ゑり分けてゐる最中に違ひない。そして遠からず、ゑり上げられた人達と、新進の天才とが共力して新らしい意義のある映畫界が現出する事になる。さうなれば洋畫など眼中になく、日本映畫が世界に飛躍する時が來るに違ひないなどゝ若さ丸出しの空想だけではすまない感じに包まれてゐる。さうなるまでに、たゞ珍しいだけで女流シナリオライターなどゝ持上げられるのでなく、女性らしい獨特の手腕を是非とも映畫脚本の上で、認めさせるやうに努力する事……。

Figure 48 Essays by Mizushima Ayame and Hayashi Yoshiko in *Shibai to kinema* (July 1926)

Butterflies, 1957, both Yoshimura). She also wrote two films directed by her namesake, Tanaka Kinuyo (1909-77), the first major Japanese woman director. Mizuki wrote the film that is often considered the high point of Naruse's directing career, *Ukigumo* (*Floating Clouds*, 1955); her collaboration with director Imai Tadashi (1912-91) will be

Figure 49 Tanaka Sumie (1908-2000). Image sourced from *Kinema junpō*

discussed in length at the end of this chapter. In his history of Japanese scriptwriting, Kobayashi highlighted that one of the four defining tendencies of postwar scriptwriting was the rise of female writers (*joryū raitā*) (Kobayashi 1959, 26). Interestingly, while praising these writers, Kobayashi uses the term *joryū*, a somewhat pejorative label, in contrast to the neutral term *sakka* that he uses for established male writers.[28]

One might ponder the specific conditions that enabled women to become scriptwriters. It could be argued that this was due to the overall atmosphere in postwar Japan, which, after its defeat in the war, was making strides towards becoming an egalitarian society, including in terms of gender. However, from an industry perspective, the emergence of independent production companies around 1950 set the stage for this development, following industrial upheavals such as the Tōhō strikes between 1946 and 1948 and the Red Purge, which targeted left-leaning members of the film industry.[29] As I have previously suggested (Kitsnik, Selbo, Smith 2015), the simultaneous shifts in audience composition and the literary canon may have contributed to this phenomenon. Film production companies began hiring female scriptwriters to cater to the rapidly growing female audience by offering films with a 'feminine touch'. Meanwhile, certain female fiction authors, such as Hayashi Fumiko (1903-51) and Yoshiya Nobuko (1896-1973), were experiencing a critical resurgence.[30]

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[28] In the context of modern Japanese literature, *joryū* is used as marker for second-rate fiction produced by female writers.

[29] For more on the Tōhō strikes and the Red Purge, see Hirano (1992, 213-53).

During that period, a handful of other female scriptwriters, including Kusuda Yoshiko (18 screen credits), who was the younger sister of director Kinoshita Keisuke, regularly wrote for cinema. However, following a rapid decline of the film industry during the 1960s, many female scriptwriters, including Mizuki and Tanaka, began to explore opportunities offered by the emergent television. This provided scriptwriters an alternative avenue for employment in a medium that was more democratic and flexible, while film studios largely adhered to hierarchical structures established in the 1920s and 1930s. A prime example of this transition was Hashida Sugako (1925-2021),[31] who can be considered as a bridge between the Golden Age of the studio system of the 1950s and the advent of television in the 1960s. Hashida was one of the six young writers admitted to Shōchiku's script department in 1949, marking the first female hire since Mizushima's departure in 1935. Facing the threat of demotion to secretary Hashida left the company in 1959 and successfully converted herself into a freelance writer for television dramas, including the internationally acclaimed series *Oshin* (1983-84).

4.3.3 A Critique of Privileged Workspaces

The relaxed pace and collegial atmosphere that characterised homosocial working spaces at Shōchiku may have seemed idyllic to its participants. However, some accounts add complexity to this otherwise self-congratulatory narrative about scriptwriting during the Golden Era of the postwar studio system. In an interview, Hashida expressed strong criticism of this practice. Despite being once invited to write at Seikōan, one of the company's regular inns, she immediately felt disadvantaged. This was primarily due to not being accepted as a mahjong player or a bathing companion to the male scriptwriters lodging there (Hashida, Yamada 1995, 81). (Hashida does concede that she might not have been the most congenial character herself.) While *jōyado* appeared blissful for some and a hub for engaging young writers, it could also be perceived as a place of exclusion. Undoubtedly, it would have been significantly more challenging for women to assume the role of an apprentice to a senior scriptwriter, although there are successful instances such as Yasumi mentoring Mizuki at the beginning of her career in cinema.

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[30] Conversely, Mizuki, Tanaka, and Wada adapted to the screen novels by Japanese literary luminaries such as Kawabata (*Izu no odoriko* (*The Dancing Girl of Izu*, 1960, written by Tanaka, directed by Kawazu Yoshirō, 1926-72), *Yama no oto* (*Sound of the Mountain*, 1954, written by Mizuki, directed by Naruse)), Mishima Yukio (1925-70, *Enjō*, 1958), and Tanizaki (*Kagi* (*Odd Obsession*, 1959, both written by Wada and directed by Ichikawa)).

[31] Hashida's 15 film credits include *Nagasaki no kane* (*Bells of Nagasaki*, 1950, co-written with Shindō, directed by Ōba Hideo, 1910-97), as well as a Yoshiya Nobuko adaptation, *Kyōshū* (*Nostalgia*, 1952, Iwama Tsuruo, 1918-90).

Moreover, Hashida recounted instances where the lead scriptwriter might have been asleep throughout the process, with the subordinates receiving no credit for the work they performed in his place. This casts the master-apprentice model in a light more akin to a master-slave system, raising doubts about the fairness of how scriptwriting credits are distributed. On the other hand, while it might have been challenging to earn individual recognition, the security of employment at Shōchiku came with a fixed monthly salary that was independent of the writer's productivity. (An additional honorarium was provided for any completed scripts.) Hashida confessed to having produced very little during her tenure at Shōchiku, even going so far as to label herself a wage thief (*gekkyū dorobō*) (Hashida, Yamada 1995, 84). While not particularly profitable, the role of a studio scriptwriter provided a measure of social security, at least until the early 1960s when studios stopped hiring new writers on a regular basis. Even before that development, most writers initially hired on contract terms had already transitioned to freelance work at some point during the 1950s (Kobayashi 1959, 21).

This industrial context raises question about the extent to which the hiring of women as scriptwriters was motivated by a desire for actual change. Indeed, this seems to have happened only after the studio system faced significant challenges. One might speculate that this only became possible once the master-apprentice system started to be phased out. However, it would be unfair to suggest that the postwar studio system completely lacked an initiative to promote women as writers, at least in relative terms. The final recruitment competition at Shōchiku in 1948, which resulted in Hashida securing a position, had as many as 25 women among the shortlisted candidates: women made up one third of the original candidates (Hashida, Yamada 1995, 83). Nevertheless, it appears to have been easier for already established playwrights such as Mizuki and Tanaka to maintain their creative integrity when working as writers for both studio and independent productions.

In addition to the regular inn serving as a place of exclusion, the script department also exhibited similar issues. Although the atmosphere there might have resembled a family, this concept inevitably carries certain negative implications along gender lines. This is evident in the way women were assigned only specific roles within the

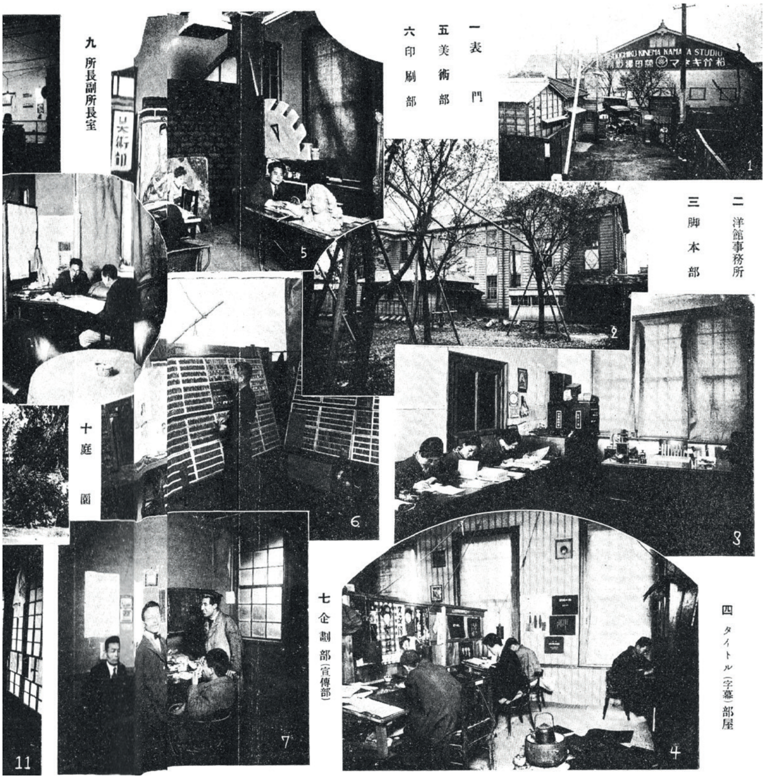

Figure 50 A photo (marked 3) of the script department of Shōchiku Kamata Studios. Image sourced from *Eiga no komado* [1928] (2006)

industrial hierarchy. Ryū Hanami, who recalled the challenges of producing clean copies, was among the many typists in the department who transcribed the manuscripts written by male scriptwriters into shooting scripts. This resulted in a clear gender-based division of labour between scriptwriters and typewriters, as discussed in Chapter Two. A photograph taken of the Shōchiku *kyakuhonbu* in the 1930s underscores this point, showing only women at work (Rokusha 2006, 254). Meanwhile, male scriptwriters were likely out enjoying a leisurely time at an inn or, even better, out in the streets, actively scouting new locations and ideas for their next script.

4.4 Towards an Agency of the Scriptwriter

4.4.1 Script Scouting AKA Writing by Feet

Iwasaki Akira, a prominent film critic, presents a fictional tale of screenwriting in Hollywood in his debut essay collection, *Eiga geijutsushi* (History of Film Art, 1930). The short narrative, titled "Shinario raitā" (Scenario Writer), is told by a young man who purports to be a writer at a Piedmont film studio. He starts by asserting that any aspiring writer must possess two qualities: tenacity and sturdy feet. The writer contends that his prior experiences working in a textile mill and as a chimney sweep's apprentice have equipped him better for the job than any writing ever could. He proposes that a writer should leave his desk in the script department and venture out into the streets to observe real life. The tale concludes with a script meeting where his scenario for a film named *Blondes Prefer Gentlemen*[32] is torn apart by the producers. However, after his last-ditch effort to turn the situation into a farce by suggesting the most absurd concoction of all conceivable film clichés, he is unexpectedly hailed as a new genius by the production team (Iwasaki 1930, 13-20).

Much like in Iwasaki's ironic portrayal of Hollywood screenwriting, engaging in writing or conversing with fellow writers was the standard for scriptwriting, even when situated at the script department or secluded in an inn. However, taking ample time to familiarise oneself with spaces and practices relevant to the story being developed was considered an integral part of the writing process. Noda, who mentored an entire generation of writers at Shōchiku's script department and authored the seminal how-to book, *Shinario kōzōron* (On the Structure of Scenario, 1952), emphasised that just as a film is grounded on the script (*kyakuhon*, the first character of which signifies feet), the writer should also prioritise footwork to gather material (Ishizaka 1995, 188). The metaphor of 'writing by feet' (*ashi de kaku*) is a recurring phrase found in various accounts on Japanese scriptwriting, making it appear as one of the crucial stages of the entire writing process. It is almost as if the eventual act of writing by hand on the manuscript paper, which I discussed in Chapter Two, had to be preceded by this ambulatory practice.

The process known as 'scenario hunting' (*shinario hantingu*, or *shinahan* for short) can be seen as a preliminary step to the more familiar 'location hunting' (*rokēshon hantingu*, or *rokehan*), which involves scouting potential filming locations. Kikushima, the scriptwriter of

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[32] The title is an obvious spoof on Anita Loos's comic novel *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1925) that had been adapted for the first time in 1928 (directed by Mal St. Clair). Loos wrote the book while working as a screenwriter in Hollywood.

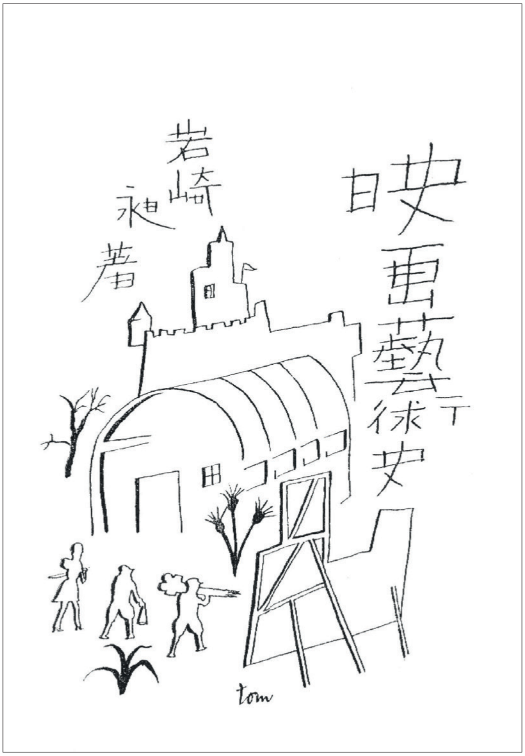
映画藝術史
岩崎昶著
tom

Figure 51
The cover of Iwasaki Akira's *Eiga geijutsushi* (1930)

the innovative detective film *Nora inu* (*Stray Dog*, 1949, directed by Kurosawa Akira), shared his experience of making numerous visits to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department to understand the daily operations of the profession. This was his first script, and Kikushima humbly admitted that his writing skills were still developing, emphasising the importance of immersing oneself in the real circumstances to capture the right tone for the story (Kikushima 1949, 13-14). Around the same time, but in a very different context, Shindō was in Kyoto, taking nightly walks to the Miyagawachō district to observe the lifestyle of geisha houses, while drafting his script for what, after prolonged negotiations with different studios, eventually became the film *Itsuwareru seisō* (*Clothes of Deception*, 1951, directed by Yoshimura Kōzaburō) (Shindō 1954, 51).

Kobayashi underscores the importance of script scouting, particularly in the postwar era. He identifies four writers – Hashimoto, Mizuki, Shindō, and Yagi – who incorporated this practice as a crucial part of their working methods (Kobayashi 1959, 27). Yagi has reminisced about a forty-five-day sojourn at a coal mine in Hokkaidō to find out more about the current working conditions of the labourers (Yagi 1958, 67). Interestingly, all four writers mentioned primarily worked freelance and predominantly for independent film production. This also suggests that they might not have had access to the privileged spaces provided by the studios. In response, they carved out their own spaces and took control of them. Script scouting, then, offers an alternative spatiality that complements the script department and the regular inn, allowing for preliminary research that goes beyond merely sitting at a desk, potentially enhancing the quality of the script. The case of Mizuki is particularly illuminating, highlighting key issues such as the constraints and opportunities presented by the studio system, and the implications for the scriptwriter's independence and agency.

4.4.2 Mizuki Yōko's Working Methods

During the 1950s,[33] Mizuki emerged as one of the country's most distinguished and celebrated scriptwriters. This status is further substantiated by the special issue *Shinario sanninshū* (Collection of the Three Scriptwriters, 1964), where Mizuki is featured alongside Hashimoto and Shindō. Mizuki's journey in the film industry began in 1949, almost concurrently with Hashimoto and Kikushima, both frequent collaborators of Kurosawa.[34] Mizuki primarily wrote scripts for two other renowned directors of the 1950s, Imai and Naruse. Satō has proposed that Mizuki's role was crucial for the work of those major directors of the day who, unlike Kinoshita, Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, and Ozu, did not participate in writing scripts for their own films (Satō 2003, 132). Mizuki's collaboration with Imai is of particular significance: in this creative relationship, she enjoyed considerable freedom and influence in projects that often spanned years due to their pronounced focus on meticulous research into unconventional subjects. The practice of script scouting underscores Mizuki's pivotal role in shaping the direction of each film project.

Despite scriptwriting being a markedly homosocial profession, Mizuki carved out a remarkable career as a freelance writer, working both for major studios and independent productions. Most of her scripts, often originals, were for what are often referred to as 'social issue' (*shakaiha*) films. These films scrupulously portrayed the anxieties and ambiguities of the post-war era, a time when the social

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[33] An earlier, expanded version of the following sections appeared in Kitsnik 2020.

[34] Mizuki began her career in cinema with *Onna no isshō* (*The Life of a Woman*, 1949, directed by Kamei Fumio), sharing credits with her former Russian language teacher, Yasumi, who had persuaded Mizuki to try her hand at screenwriting after hearing her castigate cinema.

Figure 52 Mizuki Yōko (1910-2003). Image sourced from *Kinema junpō*

fabric of Japan was undergoing radical reconfiguration as its people embraced the newly imported values of democracy and consumerism. When assessing Mizuki's contribution to Japanese cinema, Satō has posited that her greatest role as writer was to explore how the Japanese nation both succeeded and failed in transitioning its mindset from wartime militarism to post-war pacifism (Satō 2003, 134). Mizuki achieved this by addressing several contested issues in post-war Japanese society, typically experienced by those marginalised by class, gender or race.

Since 1953, all Mizuki's scripts for Imai had been originals, in which she focused on fictionalised accounts of real social issues of contemporary Japan. *Jun'ai monogatari* (*A Story of Pure Love*, 1957), Mizuki's fifth collaboration with the director, was the first to highlight the importance of footwork behind the script. The film's title is certainly ironic, as neither of the protagonists, Kantarō (Ehara Shinjirō, 1936-2022) and Mitsuko (Nakahara Hitomi, 1936), are particularly pure: their first meeting occurs when a gang that Mitsuko is part of suggests that Kantarō should assault her. Instead, he ends up saving her, and after teaming up to commit minor crimes, both are incarcerated – Mitsuko in a reform school and Kantarō in a juvenile prison. As they await their release and reunion, Mitsuko begins to exhibit symptoms of an undisclosed illness. After several visits to different doctors, it is revealed that as a small child she had visited Hiroshima just days after the atomic attack, and she is diagnosed with radiation disease – a condition still poorly understood at the time – to which she eventually succumbs. Unexpectedly, the film shifts from being a youth film to a kind of anti-war film with undertones of social class.

Jun'ai monogatari provided an opportunity for Mizuki to revisit and revise material she had been developing a few years earlier for a film tentatively titled *Yūkan kozō* (*Evening Paper Boy*). With the intention of making it a semi-documentary, Mizuki conducted research in the less reputable areas near Ueno Station, staying two weeks at an inn to take daily (and nightly) walks and converse with local people. When Imai approached Mizuki to make *Jun'ai monogatari*, she embarked on additional research, delving into issues such as the workings of the criminal court (Katō 2010, 275-7). This was much like Kikushima, who had spent time at a police station for his field work on *Nora inu*. Mizuki had also been collecting newspaper clippings relating to radiation disease since 1955. To write the scenes where an array of people states their physical complaints – and the circumstances through which they came into contact with the pathogen – to the doctors, Mizuki visited and conducted interviews at a hospital (Katō 2010, 283).[35]

At this juncture, what Mizuki began to contribute to each project was her original idea and its execution in the form of a script. While earlier films with Imai such as *Himeyuri no tō* (*The Tower of Lilies*, 1953) and *Koko ni izumi ari* (*Here Is a Spring*, 1955) required familiarity with archival and anecdotal sources, Mizuki's fictional work was equally reliant on meticulous research into its subjects. With *Jun'ai monogatari*, the focus shifted from fictional treatments of real-life events to fictional stories based on hypothetical situations embedded in actual social conditions. As Mizuki interest in the lives of the marginalised grew, she often found herself leaving the writing table and heading out to the actual locations. The two films discussed below precisely depict such individuals pushed to the fringes of Japanese society. The adjacent research activities arguably enhanced Mizuki's awareness of her role beyond submitting the completed script to the film crew, presenting her with opportunities to shape the entire filmmaking process.

4.4.3 Screenwriter's Self-awareness and Autonomy

In *Kiku to Isamu* (*Kiku and Isamu*, 1959), two mixed-race children, abandoned by their African American father and predeceased by their Japanese mother, are depicted living with their elderly grandmother in a village in rural Fukushima. Through a series of successive

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[35] The hospital's real name later had to be changed due to a possible conflict with US organisations that had made donations.

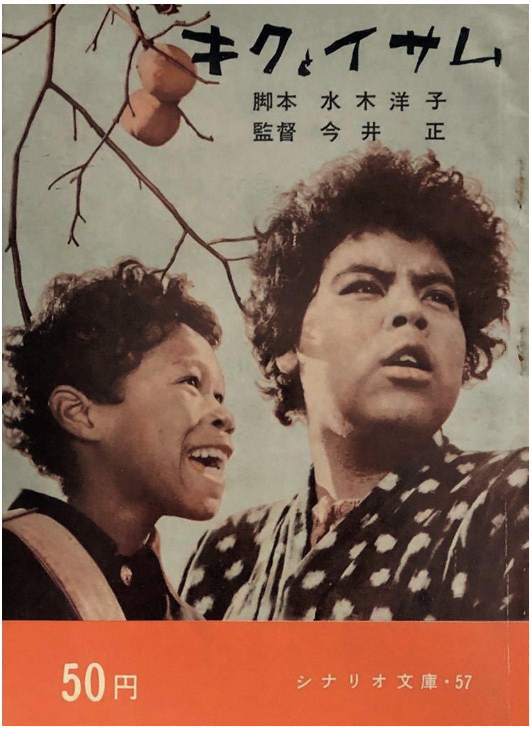

Figure 53 The cover of the published script of *Kiku to Isamu* (1959)

incidents, Kiku (Takahashi Emiko, 1947) and Isamu (Okunoyama George, 1947) gradually become aware of the differences between them and the people surrounding them. Arguably the finest collaboration by Mizuki and Imai, *Kiku to Isamu* is a film that has been almost criminally overlooked, despite winning the top spot in the *Kinema junpō* annual critics' poll and the Blue Ribbon Award for the scenario. The film's subject matter is certainly unusual, especially for its time. However, its treatment of the issue does not feel heavy, yet remains urgent and relatable, resulting in a decidedly light-hearted and comical mood despite the film's serious topic. The film comprises sketch-like episodes, contrasting with the Mizuki's typically plot-driven narratives, but no less effective. This approach was not incidental: knowing that *Kiku to Isamu* would be an independent production without studio backing or star power, Mizuki designed it from the outset to be low budget (Katō 2010, 258).

In his review at the time of the film's release, Satō wrote:

> It is said that films that make appeal to humanism often fall into the drama of pity [*dōjōgeki*]. Sympathy will not suffice because it

> is often the attitude of the strong towards the weak and does not include an opportunity for human respect toward others. However, outstanding comedy does include respect towards people who bring about this laughter [...] I marvel at the persistency of the *authorial attitude* of Mizuki Yōko, who by setting these scenes has shown how to draw ‘comedy’ out of the issue [of racial discrimination]. (Imai 2012, 222; emphases added)

Kiku to Isamu is certainly a valid example to highlight Mizuki’s authorship of the film: it began as her idea upon seeing a newsreel where a white girl was standing alone in the middle of a Japanese village. However, Mizuki decided to expand on this initial premise and introduced an additional facet of the race issue (Katō 2010, 258). More commonly encountered in locations with heavy US military presence such as Okinawa and Yokohama, this is yet another example of the legacy of war brought to the forefront by Mizuki.

Mizuki’s active role in the film’s production extended beyond scriptwriting and was particularly evident in the casting process. Initially, the search for suitable mixed-race children across the country began after obtaining a list of names from the Ministry of Education. After identifying about 70 potential candidates and auditioning ten, it took three months to decide who would play the part of Kiku. Mizuki had accidentally spotted Takahashi at Ueno Park in Tokyo and strongly insisted that she be cast, despite Imai’s resistance, who had a different, more conservative image in mind. It was only after the film’s completion that he admitted that Mizuki had been right about what was required to fully realise the intentions of the script (Katō 2010, 260). Another remarkable casting choice in *Kiku to Isamu* was Kitabayashi Tanie (1911-2010) in the role of the grandmother. Three years later, she had yet another leading role in *Kigeki: Nippon no obāchan* (*A Comedy: Japanese Grandmas*, 1962) in an urban setting as an elderly woman who has managed to escape from her retirement home. Mizuki’s choice to address the issue of an ageing society displayed incredible foresight, decades before it became an actual problem that today largely defines Japanese society.

Through working on *Kiku to Isamu*, Mizuki may have become aware of the need to challenge the common view of Japanese identity as being forged by the inseparability of race, culture, and language, a theme she would explore further. While the otherness of the siblings in *Kiku to Isamu* was all too apparent to their fellow villagers, this was not the case with the protagonist of the next film Mizuki and Imai collaborated on, *Are ga minato no hi da* (*These Are the Harbour Lights*, 1961). The film begins with a Japanese fishing vessel being attacked by the Korea Coast Guard. The reason for this was crossing the so-called Syngman Rhee Line that had been unilaterally established as a maritime boundary between the territorial waters of the neighbouring countries by the South Korean government, then headed by the eponymous authoritarian president.[36] Later, on shore, one of the Japanese crew members, Kimura/Park (Ehara Shinjirō), after a night out, meets a prostitute, Kim (Kishida Kyōko, 1930-2006), who immediately recognises him as a fellow Korean. Kimura is concerned about his real identity now in danger of being revealed to the world, but after another night with Kim, speaking together in Korean and sharing childhood memories, he decides to come clean. At first, the disclosure does not seem to bother the rest of the crew, but when approaching Korean waters on their next outing, doubts about him being a spy are suddenly voiced. In the ensuing climax of the story, when the ship is about to be seized by the foreign authorities, fellow sailors leave Kimura/Park to his own fate, and he is eventually shot by a Korean guard who, upon pressing a boot to his dead face, derogatorily calls him half-Japanese (*ban-jjokbari*).[37]

By creating an ethnic Korean protagonist – a rarity in Japanese cinema at that time – Mizuki expanded the issue of marginalisation, effectively embedding the legacy of militarism in the form of a maritime demarcation line within a character. As with *Kiku to Isamu*, this choice of material certainly demonstrates Mizuki's capacity for empathy, as she was by then transitioning from the post-war experiences of the 'pure' Japanese like herself to those forced to society's margins. Mizuki had obtained the idea for the story three years earlier from a radio broadcast about the dangers Japanese fishermen were facing when working in Korean waters. However, as had become common with her projects with Imai, the script took over a year to write. Mizuki decided to embark on two rounds of script scouting, travelling far to the fishing villages and interviewing local people, as well as several Zainichi Koreans, about their attitudes towards the issue (Naitō 2008, 99-100).

It appears that during the production of *Are ga minato no hi da*, Mizuki gained a profound awareness of her role and agency in filmmaking. She articulated this realisation in a column in *Yomiuri Shinbun* (4 November 1960, evening edition):

> [T]he filmmaking process has evolved significantly from the past. It is not just about the company deciding the type of film to make, assigning a director, and having a sort of studio writer do the writing. In my experience, it is common for the producer or director to ask me if I have any ideas, and then I present my theme. This is

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[36] Also known as the Peace Line, this disputed demarcation line was in effect from 1952 until 1965, when Japan and South Korea signed the Japan–Korea Fishery Agreement.

[37] A Korean ethnic slur specifically denotes Japanised Koreans. An approximation, *Pan Chopali*, has sometimes been used for the film's title outside Japan.

あれが港の灯だ
水木洋子
© Youko Mizuki

Figure 54 The cover of a Kindle version of the scenario of *Are ga minato no hi da* (2020)

> why I consider myself not just a writer, but also a planner/instigator [*kikakusha*]. (Naitō 2008, 99)

From this, it is evident that Mizuki was fully aware of her role as an empowered scriptwriter with considerable freedom to select her material and negotiate with the director and producers. Over the years, Mizuki and Imai developed a strong mutual trust and respect. Imai asserts that he treated Mizuki as an equal from the beginning, and it made no difference to him whether the script was written by a man or a woman (Mizuki, Imai 1995, 383).[38] Evidently, the division of labour between them in terms of writing and directing proved to be highly effective, a fortunate instance of two individuals with similar mind-sets and complementary creative skills working together.

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[38] This stands in a stark contrast to Mizuki's other frequent collaborator, Naruse. He shared that his initial impression of a Mizuki script was that it was women-like (*onna-kusai*; *kusai* also implies something foul or fishy) (Naruse 1952, 4).

In a paradoxical way, being a woman offered Mizuki certain advantages. She was not expected to conform to the predominantly homosocial practice of scriptwriting under the studio system, particularly in the privileged setting of the regular inn. This arguably led to a more balanced and dynamic filmmaking sociality in her collaboration with Imai. It is worth noting that Tanaka, another prominent female writer who collaborated extensively with Naruse and other directors, did not enjoy the same level of autonomy as Mizuki. During a roundtable discussion, Tanaka expressed her frustration that, unlike her, Mizuki has the freedom to choose her films and directors. Mizuki, in a self-deprecating manner, attributed this to her laid-back nature and the limited number of directors willing to accommodate her slow writing pace (Naitō 2008, 102). As a freelance writer, Mizuki had the freedom to select and explore her own material. This arguably heightened her awareness of her significant role in the filmmaking process, a contribution that extended far beyond scriptwriting.

In this chapter, I have explored how numerous Japanese scriptwriters have garnered significant recognition from film critics and secured their deserved place in the film canon over the course of the cinematic century. This acclaim is amplified by various anecdotal depictions of the creative environment embodied by the script department and the regular inn, both characterised by a leisurely writing pace. However, a challenge that persists is the degree to which the system could accommodate female scriptwriters who were making substantial contributions to Japanese cinema during its Golden Age in the 1950s. As the case of Mizuki demonstrates, the potential for a scriptwriter's self-awareness of their role in the filmmaking process is tied to specific spaces and practices, and when activated, it often enriches the thematic range of Japanese cinema.