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JOURNEY 岸辺の TO THE SHORE 旅

A FILM BY KIYOSHI KUROSAWA



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128 minutes / Color / 2.35 / HD / 5.1 / 2015

SYNOPSIS

Mizuki's husband (Yusuke) drowned at sea three years ago. When he suddenly comes back home, she is not that surprised. Instead, Mizuki is wondering what took him so long. She agrees to let Yusuke take her on a journey.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In Japanese, there is a verb for the act of accompanying a dying person, or watching over them until their death. It is called «*mitoru*». It remains to be seen if it is possible to translate all the subtleties of this word into a foreign language...

Rare are those who have gone through the experience of remaining next to a dying person, delicately taking their hand and feeling a vague mutual intention without ever looking away from their face. Fortunately, I have never been confronted with this myself. But according to those who have, those few days, those few hours spent face-to-face with this person constitute a precious and truly sacred moment of sharing. Inside this moment, the past they have shared, the parts of their respective pasts that the other has never known, but also the future that both will one day experience together – all these moments are evoked, evaluated, and understood. The verb «*mitoru*» includes this entire process.

In reality, this extremely intimate and emotional dialogue takes place at the dying person's bedside. But in the world of fiction, why not stretch time and space out to however long the process requires, narrating it in the form of a «journey»? This is the audacious premise upon which the original novel *Kishibe no tabi* was built.

In light of the experience I have acquired as a director, the subject I am most attracted to right now is adapting a vision like this for the screen.

For the longest time, it has been my opinion that the body and the spirit exist on different planes. That is why I have always found it a little hasty to think that death takes both simultaneously. Despite this, whenever I thought of portraying ghosts in fictional terms, my inspiration limited itself to a story like: «They become ghosts and do their utmost to exact uncompromising revenge.» As you know, this type of ghost is a classic among classics and has long-existed in Japanese *kaidan* (TN: horror films), but also in Shakespeare.

In *JOURNEY TO THE SHORE*, a completely new form of death appears. Better yet, the figure described here is fundamentally different from the usual ghosts or dead people one usually finds. Carried away by a temporary death (a physical death), Yusuke remains in the world three more years in order to gently prepare himself for his true death (the death of the spirit). The fact that this temporarily dead man impassively

continues to possess a body is only natural. First of all, the body is a moving system that has nothing in common with a substance like stone. Experiments have proven that the substances that make up the body, beginning with the brain, are entirely renewed after one year. With this in mind, seeing the body as a physical base for the spirit is already absurd. And yet, though I may not understand the miracle by which the spirit manages to exist beyond a fluctuating system, I can nevertheless maintain that it does not belong to the material plane. Thus, even though the original body has already disappeared (in the book, his body is supposed to have been eaten by crabs at the bottom of the ocean), it is absolutely plausible to imagine this system recreating itself by amassing other substances. Likewise, there is nothing surprising about imagining Yusuke's vagabond spirit finding a new home. (Besides, he drinks, sleeps, and his beard grow.)

Finally, the other protagonist in the story is Mizuki, who clutches onto the temporarily deceased man who has come back to her. She travels with him and gently accomplishes the task of accompanying his death. After being taken away by Yusuke, she meets many people, a number of whom are temporarily dead like him. Throughout their travels, Mizuki learns «*you can never turn back*» but she clings to the faint hope that, by continuing their journey, this temporary death will remain just that: temporary. And their daily life together will continue as unchanged as always. But is that really possible? Whatever the case, Yusuke's three years of absence will eventually be filled with his presence and Mizuki will enjoy a sense of fulfillment she has never yet known. Their shared past, the past they never shared, and their future together will be examined, evaluated, and understood.

It seems to me that no film has ever described both this kind of «accompaniment» (*mitoru*) and the act of «being accompanied towards death» in as rich and lively a way as through the story of this couple.

Kiyoshi Kurosawa

KIYOSHI KUROSAWA SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY

- 2014 **JOURNEY TO THE SHORE**
- 2013 **SEVENTH CODE** *Rome 2013 - Best Director*
REAL *Locarno 2013 - in Competition*
- 2012 **PENANCE** *(TV series)*
- 2008 **TOKYO SONATA** *Cannes 2008 - Un Certain Regard, Jury Prize*
- 2006 **RETRIBUTION**
- 2005 **LOFT**
- 2003 **DOPPELGANGER**
BRIGHT FUTURE *Cannes 2003 - in Competition*
- 2001 **PULSE (KAIRO)**
- 1999 **CHARISMA**
- 1997 **CURE**





CAST

Mizuki
Yusuke
Mr Shimakage
Tomoko
Mr Hoshitani

Eri Fukatsu
Tadanobu Asano
Masao Komatsu
Yu Aoi
Akira Emoto

CREW

Production Japan

Production France
Screenplay

based on the novel
by
Directed by
Cinematography
Lighting

Sound design
Production design
Editing
Costumes
Music

Amuse
Wowow
Showgate
Pony Canyon
Hakuhodo
Office Shirous
Comme des Cinémas
Takashi Ujita
Kiyoshi Kurosawa
KISHIBE NO TABI
Kazumi Yumoto
Kiyoshi Kurosawa
Akiko Ashizawa
Hidenori Nagata
Hiroshi Iimura
Showa Matsumoto
Norifumi Ataka
Tsuyoshi Imai
Kumiko Ogawa
Yoshihide Otomo
Naoko Eto



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