

The Museum of Modern Art

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HEINOSUKE GOSHO: 7 FILMS

December 5 - 14, 1989

A ten-day retrospective of films by the Japanese film director Heinosuke Goshō opens on December 5, 1989, at The Museum of Modern Art. Goshō (1902-1981) is one of Japan's most significant directors, yet his work remains relatively unknown in the West. The series features seven of his finest films.

The films in the exhibition range from Japan's first successful sound film; a comedy, Neighbor's Wife and Mine (1931) to the wide screen, An Innocent Witch (1965), which for Goshō has uncharacteristic harshness and anger.

The other films in the series such as An Inn at Osaka (1954), Where Chimneys Are Seen (1953), and Dispersing Clouds (1951), feature Goshō's idiosyncratic mixture of everyday realism with warm humor and painful sorrow. This unique blend of feeling was labeled "Goshōism" by critics and has been described as "something which makes you laugh and cry at the same time." This quality gives Goshō a universal appeal which has led him to be compared with Charlie Chaplin.

Of the one hundred films Goshō made between 1925 and 1968, only a third have survived. These however confirm his reputation as master craftsman and as one of the most important directors in the Shōmin-geki or "slice of life" genre of films, which use the lives of common people as subject matter. Goshō shares a number of thematic concerns with luminary directors such as Ozu and Naruse: most notably, a warm identification with various aspects of his protagonist's

lives and a particularly subtle feeling for the social and domestic pressures exerted upon his female characters.

Gosho was born in Tokyo in 1902, the illegitimate son of one of his father's mistresses. Upon the death of his father's legitimate son, Gosho, while still in his teens, was suddenly made heir to his father's substantial tobacco business. Despite his family's objections, Gosho began his film career in 1923 as an assistant director at the Shochiku Studios in Tokyo. Although he had suffered artistic slumps, conflict with the studios, and ill health in his later years, he continued making films through his sixty-fifth year.

GOSHO: 7 FILMS has been organized by Adrienne Mancia, Curator, Department of Film in collaboration with Kyoko Hirano of Japan Society. The Heinosuke Gosho's Retrospective, a series of twenty four films, opens at the Japan Society, 333 East 47th Street, on December 1, 1989.

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No. 112

For further information or film stills, please contact Sarah Eaton, film press representative, Department of Information, 212/708-9750.