Wu, Li-Hsueh

Truth and Beauty:
Confucian Philosophy in the Films of Akira
Kurosawa
Through the Documentary Film Medium

Doctor of Design
2008

Swinburne
Abstract

This doctoral research consists of two 90 minute DVD documentaries and a complementary text about the Japanese film director, Akira Kurosawa, a major figure in 20th century cinema. It focuses on how the Confucian cultural heritage has informed many aspects of his approach to filmmaking, especially his manifestation of philosophical and aesthetic concepts.

To bridge the gap in the existing critiques of Kurosawa’s films, the research incorporates critical analysis of interviews with twelve filmmakers and scholars in philosophy, history, arts, drama and film. The interviews discuss the aesthetic elements from traditional arts and theatre, and address a failure in the literature to draw from the deep meaning of the Confucian cultural heritage.

The first documentary, *An Exploration of Truth in the Films of Akira Kurosawa*, has three sections: *The Way of Self- Cultivation*, *The Way of Cultivating Tao* and *The Way of Cultivating Buddhism*. It explores how the films of Kurosawa manifested the Confucian philosophy via inner self-cultivation, which displayed his humanist values. It also examines the ‘outer enlightenment pattern’ in Kurosawa’s films which effects profound dramatic tension. The interrelationship between Confucianism, Shinto and Buddhism in different periods of Kurosawa’s films is explored, focusing on issues of historical background, cultural heritage and philosophy and film narrative elements.

The second documentary, *The Origin and Renovation of Traditional Arts and*
Theatre in the Films of Akira Kurosawa, has three sections: Structure and Mise-En-Scene from Noh and Kabuki, Representation and Symbolism from Noh Masks and Chinese Painting and Color and Mise-En-Scene from The ‘Five Elements’ Theory and Japanese Prints. It explores not only the deeply symbolic aspects of the films of Kurosawa, by tracing the roots of his cultural heritage including Noh, Kabuki, Chinese painting and Japanese prints, but also his use of those traditional arts and theatre to inform his film aesthetics and narrative elements.

As an adjunct to the two documentaries, the written text explores the truth of the constant virtues and the beauty of yugen in Kurosawa’s films, to address the existing inadequate film critiques. The text focuses on how Kurosawa injected Confucian principles of ‘self-cultivation’ (修身), ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ (五常) and human nature into the philosophy and action of his characters. It also examines the aesthetic concept of yugen (幽玄) and the philosophical concept of the Tao in Kurosawa’s films, which manifested the Confucian philosophy, and its inter-relationship with Taoism and Chan Buddhism (禪宗). The aesthetic concept includes the forms and symbolism of traditional art forms consisting of elements of Noh and Chinese painting, including flash back structure, spirit character, symbolic use of colors, and mise-en-scene, which was drawn on by Kurosawa. This text also includes the production strategy and production process of the two documentaries. It intends to provide an overview of the conceptual, craft and collaborative skills required in the phases of development, pre-production, production and post production of the two documentaries.

This research shows how the films of Akira Kurosawa could be both an illustration of a philosophical theory and also sites of deep thought on the value of humanity within
the Confucian philosophy. The two documentaries may advance film research by communicating visual and audio interpretation of film philosophy and aesthetic narrative elements in Kurosawa’s films, to both contemporary film makers and students. It is hoped that the text will contribute to film theory by recognizing the distinct use of Confucian philosophy in the films of Kurosawa.
Acknowledgements

This study could not have been completed without the generous assistance of many people and organizations in Australia, Japan and Taiwan. I ask in advance for the forgiveness of those whose names I may have neglected to mention here.

For crucial financial support, I would like to thank the following organizations: the Ministry of Education and Chaoyang University of Technology in Taiwan, who have supported me with a scholarship and made possible my doctoral study at the National Institute of Design Research, Swinburne University of Technology in Australia.

I owe a sincere debt of gratitude to Akira Kurosawa and several film companies. Due to their production and distribution of the films of Akira Kurosawa, the researcher can study this doctoral project. The companies are Toho Films Co, Ltd, A Shochiku Films Production, Daiei Films Production, Kurosawa Film Production, Greenway Film Production, Herald Arc, Int., Nippon Herald Films, Inc., Moscow Film Corporation, Warner Brothers Entertainment Inc., Steven Spielberg Presentation, and Dentsu Production.

This study began as a doctoral project at the National Institute of Design Research, Swinburne University of Technology, I would like to thank Professor Allan Whitfield, Dr. Deirdre Barron, Dr. Carolyn Barnes, Dr. Keith Robertson, and Dr. Gavin Melles, whose academic standards and generous guidance helped me to shape my ideas. I am most grateful to the members of my project committee, who worked with me on the
research over several years: Professor Allan Whitfield, Nanette Carter and Elizabeth Ninnis. I would also especially like to thank Pam Green and John Bowden and their staff at the Office of Research and Graduate Studies of Swinburne University of Technology, who organized research events for graduate students to advance our skills and knowledge of research.

I would also like to thank the following people who took the time to share their knowledge with me by agreeing to be interviewed for my doctoral project: Chen, Wei-fen (陳瑋芬), Ho, Sze-Shen (何思慎), Tsang, Roy (曾壯祥), Chang, Chang-Yen (張昌彥), Tseng, Lien-Jung (曾建榮), Hung, Ya-Wen (洪雅文), Lin, Yu-Pin (林于竒), Wong, Zdmond (黃建業), Chen, Mei-Ho (陳美合), Wong, Toon (王童), Lin, Tsan-Ting (林贊庭), Liao, Ching-Song (廖慶松). I would also like to thank my technical crew, Chan, Ping-Chun (詹秉錦), Peng, Guel-Sheng (彭貴祥) and Wang, Chen-Yu (王鎮宇), who helped me to record the interviews. The names of the interviewees and my technical crew are gratefully listed in the credits of my two documentaries. Some interviewees are also listed in the bibliography of this text.

Any success in my life belongs to my father Wu, Yung-Chang (吳永常) and my mother Lee, Lai-Yu (李來有). If I had not been educated with their honest mind and had not been supported by them to complete my doctoral research, I would be unable to further my career and attain the realization of this study. Finally, I would like to dedicate my doctoral project to all the members of my family, especially my parents, my sisters, my husband Yee, Mun-Bew (余文彪) and my daughter, Yee, Diane (余馥安). Thank you for supporting me and understanding my need to spend time away from home in pursuing this research overseas.
Declaration

I declare that this doctoral research project contains no material previously submitted for a degree at any university or other educational institution. To the best of my knowledge, it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the project.

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Truth and Beauty:
Confucian Philosophy in the Films of Akira
Kurosawa
Through the Documentary Film Medium

A Doctoral Research Project
Presented to the National Institute of Design Research
Swinburne University of Technology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Design

By
Wu, Li-Hsueh

September 2008
Part One

Truth and Beauty: Confucian Philosophy in the Films of Akira Kurosawa
Chapter 1  Introduction

1.1 The Field of Research

When *Rashomon* (1951 羅生門) was awarded a Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, journalists and film critics from all over the world began to show an interest in the films of Akira Kurosawa (Figure 1.1). In 1990 he won a Career Achievement Award of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. Kurosawa was regarded as an international director in the company of such figures as Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman, Michelangelo Antonioni and Satyajit Ray. In his 86 years, Kurosawa directed 30 films which propelled him to world fame, and introduced international audiences not only to Japanese cinema, but also to a complex and sophisticated film philosophy and aesthetics founded in East Asian culture.

Film critiques of Kurosawa’s films have ranged from traditional areas of thematic interpretation, stylistic analysis, and auteur study to specific fields of genre study, gender issues, semiotics, deconstruction, Japanese cinema study, and cross-cultural study. These critiques have explored
influences on Kurosawa’s films including western film genres, literature, philosophy and aesthetics. They have also sought to position him in the Japanese social context following World War Two. However, a crucial deficit in these film critiques is the failure to acknowledge Kurosawa’s debt to his Confucian philosophy. The research presented here addresses this deficit. It seeks to articulate the relationship between Kurosawa’s films and the Confucian philosophy and aesthetic concepts expressed in his films, and also the significant Japanese culture derived from Confucian influence. This is the main focus of this research. Confucianism and its East Asian values have occupied a central position in Japanese culture for more than one thousand years. While used by some critics to explain the characteristics of Japanese literature and arts, Confucianism has been overlooked as a significant influence on philosophy and politics. However, film critics have not recognized or understood that the humanist concerns in Kurosawa’s films are manifestations of a Japanese variant of Confucian philosophy. They have also failed to explore Confucian influence manifested in the forms and symbolism of traditional art forms. These traditional art forms
consist of elements of *Noh* (also called *No*, 能劇, a Japanese traditional theatre for more than six hundred years) (Figure 1.2) and *Chinese painting* (*shanshui hua*, 山水畫, landscape painting in black ink and colored ink, also called scroll painting, 卷軸畫) (Figure 1.3), including flash back structure, spirit character, symbolic use of colors, and mise-en-scene, which were drawn on by Kurosawa.

Facing social and economic chaos in Japan after World War Two, Kurosawa injected Confucian principles of ‘self-cultivation’ (修身) and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ (五常) into the thoughts and action of his characters. These characters were used by Kurosawa to communicate with the Japanese public about their experience and to combat the widespread nihilism caused by the aftermath of the war and the impact of Westernization and American occupation. Kurosawa encouraged people to treat each other with *honesty* (*cheng*, 誠, also understood as sincerity, sincerity of intention or honest mind) and *benevolence* (*jen*, *ren*, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity), key principles of Confucian philosophy. These principles encouraged them to cultivate their moral character and practice moral culture, and to oppose evil in the form of evil people and the ideology that had led the Japanese to their suffering. He incited them to oppose the oppressive social order and the vexed political situation. Confucianism taught people to follow the core principle of honesty in order to aim for a sage like state, the perfect position of human beings. This can be achieved by ‘self-cultivation’ and practice of the constant virtues of Confucianism to embark on the *Tao* (*dao*, 道, the true way). It has been understood as a pattern of enlightenment. Within this
Confucian system, common people are educated by teachers, who have come to know the Tao through their strict efforts and extreme commitment in the form of thought and actions that lead to tangible outcomes. This Confucian philosophy is clearly manifested in Kurosawa’s films, as will be discussed in this research.

This research also examines the aesthetic concept of *yugen* (幽玄) in Kurosawa’s films, which manifested the Confucian philosophy of Taoism and Chan Buddhism (禪宗). *Yugen* is a significant aesthetic concept of Japanese arts, which means ‘a profound mysterious sense of the beauty of the universe, and … the sad beauty of human suffering’ (Ortolani 1990, p. 307). *Yugen* in the form of Noh theatre and Chinese painting was drawn on by Kurosawa to develop his spectacular visual style. He created not only an innovative film style, but also incorporated the principle of heaven-earth-human (ten-chi-jin, 天地人) in many of his films. It highlights the harmonious relationships between heaven (*ten, tian, t’ien,* 天, refers to the symbol of the cosmos), earth (*chi, di,* 地, refers to the symbol of nature, including beings and non-beings) and humankind (*jin, ren,* 人). Through the aesthetic concept of *yugen*, Kurosawa’s achievement in refining film aesthetics was regarded as pioneering in this field.
1.2 The Gap in Previous Research: the Debate on ‘Humanism’ in Kurosawa’s Films

Film critics have pursued a range of different approaches to investigate how Kurosawa’s films shaped or reflected cultural attitudes or rejected the dominant modes of cultural thinking. From the 1950s to the 21st century, film critics have strongly emphasized Western influence on Kurosawa’s films. A clear example is their identification of the characteristics of heroes in the Western genre and in Kurosawa’s films. They identify both as similar, and interpret this as evidence of “international values”. They have also focused on humanist critiques that consider Western influence on Kurosawa’s films and how his heroes represent “individualism”. They point out that these characteristics of “individualism” are the same as those of the Western genre, and regarded as “international values”, caused by challenging the Japanese “traditional values”. They try to define the characteristics of Westernization in Kurosawa’s films as being different from the Japanese “traditional values”.

These critiques have tried to emphasize Kurosawa’s modern transformation by Westernization. However, they have not understood the characteristics of samurai (武士, the Japanese warrior in the feudal society) (Figure 1.4), who always...
displayed their wisdom (chih, zhi, 智, also understood as intellect and knowledge), benevolence (jen, ren, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity), and courage (yong, 勇, understood as bravery) as Jun Zi (chun-tzu, 君子, a gentleman or perfect person who cultivates himself with Confucian virtues and act as a moral guide to the rest of society) to resist evil. Wisdom, benevolence and courage are called ‘The Three Virtues’ (三達德) of Confucianism which can lead people to cultivate their perfect character and attain the perfect state of human beings. Film critics have failed to interpret the distinction between “individualism” and Japanese “traditional values”, as well as between the accepted Post War social order and the individual action of Confucianism and bushido (武士道, the way of samurai) (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5
Seven Samurai
七武士, 1954
(Courtesy of Toho Films Co, Ltd.)

Other critics focus on the study of national cinema through an examination of Kurosawa’s films. They point out that Kurosawa manifested bushido, Japanese “traditional values” which were influenced by Shinto (神道, Japanese traditional beliefs from the ancient period), Confucianism and Zen Buddhism (禪宗). However, so far film critics have only dealt with the origin of aesthetics drawn from the code of bushido and the art of Zen. They ignore how Confucian philosophy influenced Chinese Chan Buddhism and how Chan Buddhism influenced Zen Buddhism, which is
one school of Japanese Buddhism that influenced the aesthetic concepts of Noh theatre and Chinese painting; and how Kurosawa drew from them in his films. Some of them even do not know that Chan (Ch’an, 禪) is the Chinese pronunciation of dhyana, commonly translated by the English word “meditation”. It also was known as Zen in Japanese pronunciation. Zen and Chan are different in English translation, but both mean meditation in a philosophical way, influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The inter-relationship between the philosophies of Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Zen, and bushido, as well as their influence on the aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films in different periods, has not been explored either.

Some critiques point out that the humanism in Kurosawa’s films reflects “international values” influenced by Westernization. On the other hand, some critiques indicate that Kurosawa’s films manifest Japanese “traditional values”. So there has been contradiction by film critics with different approaches, such as Anderson and Richie (1960), Tucker (1973), Burch (1979), Price (1991), Goodwin (1994a; 1994b), Richei and Joan (1998).

Other critiques pay attention to the influence of the West through the approach of comparative literature (Capello 1999; Collick 1989; Davies 1988; Simmons 1994; Simons 2005), genre film critics (Desser 1983; Goodwin 1994a; Mostafa 1991; Russell 2002), film critics of inter-cultural issues (Goodwin 1994a), and film critics of Japanese cinema (Mellen 1975; Yoshimoto 2000). Most critics consider that Kurosawa’s films were
strongly influenced by William Shakespeare, John Ford, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Western novelists. Some of them compare the narrative elements of Western genres with the Japanese genre of *jidai-geki* (時代劇, historical uniformed costume drama). Most critics compare the narrative elements used in the films with the original works. However, how the narrative elements drawn from traditional arts are condensed into aesthetic concepts, and the meaning of the aesthetic concepts in relation to Confucian philosophy, has not been explored.

1.3 The Method and the Significance of this Research

This doctoral research consists of two 90 minute DVD documentaries and a complementary text. These incorporate critical analysis of interviews with twelve senior filmmakers and scholars of Confucian philosophy, Japanese history, arts theory, *Noh* theatre and films. Incorporating views from experts, with selected excerpts from Kurosawa’s films, the two documentaries and their supporting text, seek to advance film research by illustrating and documenting this Confucian interpretation for contemporary filmmakers, theorists and audiences.

The first documentary focuses on the historical and philosophical aspect by exploring the interrelationship between *Shinto*, Confucianism, *Zen* Buddhism and *bushido* in Kurosawa’s films in different periods. It explains the relationship between film, historical background, cultural
heritage, philosophical concepts and film narrative elements. It can tell us how Confucian philosophy influenced Japanese culture and Kurosawa’s films. It analyzes Kurosawa’s films to understand the manifestation of ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ (五常) of Confucian philosophy which gives rise to profound dramatic tension.

The second documentary explores the deeply symbolic aspects of the film aesthetics in Kurosawa’s work by tracing the roots of his cultural heritage. These include Noh theatre, Kabuki (歌舞伎, a traditional Japanese theatre for more than four hundred years), Chinese painting and Japanese prints. It also illustrates his use and incorporation of those traditional arts and theatre into his aesthetic concepts and narrative elements, including structure (flash-back, crossing the structure of comedy and tragedy, multiple view points of narrative using multiple cameras), performance (music, dance and acting) and his spirit characters. It explores the aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films and how they are presented and perceived.

The text is complementary to the two documentaries and seeks to contribute to film critique by articulating the distinct embodiment of Confucian philosophy in the films of Kurosawa. It explores the historical, philosophical and aesthetic aspects of his films. This focuses upon their basis in Confucian philosophy and his development of film aesthetics drawing upon Noh theatre and Chinese painting. This research concentrates especially on the analysis of Kurosawa’s manifestation of the Confucian concept of philosophical truth and the concept of aesthetic beauty, to achieve his Tao of Arts, with which he sought to influence
1.4 Outline of the Text

This research is presented in two parts. The first part is a text consisting of five chapters. The second part is a project in DVD format, consisting of two documentaries.

Part One: The Text
Truth and Beauty: Confucian Philosophy in the Films of Akira Kurosawa

Chapter One is an overview of the text and the two documentaries. It explains the Confucian philosophy in Kurosawa’s films and explores the Confucian cultural heritage which film critics have failed to consider. The research method is introduced with an explanation of the interview strategy and the theoretical framework, which includes the historical, philosophical and aesthetic aspects used to analyze Kurosawa’s films. It also introduces the structure of the two documentaries and the contents of each chapter of text.

Chapter Two introduces the historical background to the influence of Confucian philosophy on Japanese culture and Akira Kurosawa. It points out the debate about humanism in his films, which has been documented in the literature. It explains that the essence of humanism in Kurosawa’s films manifested Confucian philosophy, which has not been explored. It also focuses on the lack of understanding displayed about the
philosophical symbolism within the aesthetic concepts in his work. Finally, the conclusion argues that Confucian philosophy has not been recognized as a formative element of Kurosawa’s thought and works. It provides a creative response to the challenges of the hegemonic discourse in film critiques, which emphasizes the notion that Westernization is identical to modernization.

**Chapter Three** is an interpretation of the notion of ‘self-cultivation’ in the films of Kurosawa, an expression of significant Confucian values and principles. They are: first, the process of ‘The Eight Articles’ (八條目, also called the theory of guwu zhizhi, 格物致知, the extension of knowledge through the investigation of things) in *The Great Learning* (大學, a significant and classical Confucian book); second, the principle of honesty (cheng, 誠, also understood as sincerity or honest mind) in *The Doctrine of Mean* (中庸, a significant and classical Confucian book); third, the constant virtues including loyalty (zhong, 忠 also understood as faithfulness), filial piety (xiao, 孝, dutiful as children in the light of Confucianism), benevolence (jen, ren, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity) and justice (yi, 義, also understood as righteousness), the core virtues of ‘The Five Human Relationships’ (also understood as Five Substantial Relationships, 五倫) and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ (五常). Finally, the conclusion highlights Kurosawa’s films as a manifestation of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism; that is, the achievement of a harmonious relationship between heaven, earth and humankind, to facilitate peace in the world.
Chapter Four explores the aesthetic elements drawn from Noh theatre and Chinese painting in Kurosawa’s films. It investigates the aesthetic concept of yugen, which manifests Confucian philosophy, Taoism and Chan Buddhism, and the deep philosophical meaning in cultural heritage. Especially, it focuses on relationships within yugen, the symbols of ‘The Five Elements’ (五行, which includes metal, wood, water, fire, and earth used in the ancient Chinese cosmology), the aesthetic concepts in the teaching of Motokiyo Zeami (世阿彌, AD 1363-1443, a Japanese aesthetician, actor and playwright of Noh) and the theory of ‘Illusion And Reality’ (虚實) taught by Lao Tzu (老子, ca. BC 570-470). These inform us aesthetic concepts underlying East Asian art. It is the Tao of Arts in the Confucian way, to share with others, via art works, the concept of philosophical truth and the beauty of aesthetics.

Chapter Five, the conclusion, presents the contribution of this research as a critical revision for film study, in which Confucian philosophy may be used to better understand film culture in East Asia. The aim is to inspire the exploration of values from a different cultural heritage, through film production or analysis of the meaning of such films.

Part Two: The Two Documentaries in DVD format

The structure of the two documentaries is as follows:

The first film, An Exploration of Truth in the Films of Akira Kurosawa, has three sections: The Way of Self- Cultivation, The Way of Cultivating
Tao and The Way of Cultivating Buddhism.

The second film, The Origin and Renovation of Traditional Arts and Theatre in the Films of Akira Kurosawa, has three sections: Structure and Mise-En-Scene from Noh and Kabuki, Representation and Symbolism from Noh Masks and Chinese Painting, and Color and Mise-En-Scene from the ‘Five Elements’ Theory and Japanese Prints.

Appendix:

1. Project Report on the Two Documentaries
It focuses on the production strategy and production process of the two documentaries. It includes an introduction to the structure of the two documentaries, a description of the production strategy and the method of semi-structured interviews to collect raw material for the two documentaries. It also presents an introduction to the filmmakers and scholars who are interviewed as well as the crew, equipment used and the process of documentary filmmaking, including the phases of development, pre-production, production and post-production. The intention is to provide an overview of the conceptual, craft and collaborative skills required, as well as some orientation to followers who study film and culture by making documentary films.

2. Glossary
This provides a list of terms and proper nouns used in this text with short definitions and translation, including phonetic and traditional Chinese
transcriptions.

3. Filmography of Akira Kurosawa

Information on each film is provided, including the date of release in Japan, the film title in English, Japanese and traditional Chinese, the Japanese poster, the film production company, running time, main production crew and main cast.
Chapter 2

Historical Background, Cultural Influences
and the Western Reception of Kurosawa’s Films

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter introduces the historical background and main concepts of the four major Confucian ideas and the roots of the *Tao* (dao, 道, the true way) (Figure 2.1), which have influenced Japanese culture and Kurosawa. It traces the essence of humanist values in Japanese art forms and Kurosawa’s films, a manifestation of the philosophy of ‘self-cultivation’. It also explains the Confucian concepts adopted by major schools in different periods, and the interrelationship between *Shinto* (神道, Japanese traditional beliefs from the ancient period), Buddhism, *bushido* (武士道, the way of the samurai) (Figure 2.2) and Westernization.
The chapter surveys the existing literature on the films of Akira Kurosawa. It presents the arguments of different film critiques that claim the influence of the Western genre and *bushido* on his work. It argues that most film critiques fail to interpret the distinction between ‘the code of *bushido*‘ and the virtues of Confucianism; traditional values and international values; Westernization and modernization; individualism and ‘self-cultivation’ in Kurosawa’s films. The chapter examines how Confucian philosophy has not been acknowledged as a formative element of Kurosawa’s thought and works. It emphasizes that the exploration of Confucian formal qualities in the films is an important key to address film critiques that lack understanding of the essential meaning of cultural heritage.

Finally, the theoretical framework of this research is introduced. It provides a methodology to analyze the manifestation of philosophical and aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films. It is a philosophical approach, drawn from the Confucian philosophy, to highlight that the beauty of these films is the manifestation of the truth, an advocating of the constant virtues in humane relationships and reconstruction of beautiful forms from traditional culture within the art of contemporary film. It aims to explore the *Tao* of Arts in Confucian philosophy through understanding how it is manifested in Kurosawa’s films.
2.2 Historical Background of the Main Concepts of Confucianism and their Influence on Japanese Culture

Main Concepts of Classical Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism

The word Confucianism in Chinese script is 儒學, written with two characters: 儒 and 學. 儒 is written with 人 meaning human beings, and 需 meaning need. 學 means learning and knowledge. Therefore, 儒學 (Figure 2.3) in the Chinese etymology means the knowledge that human beings need to learn. The English translation of this word is different to the Chinese meaning of its etymology. Sometimes English translation of a different language changes the original meaning within its cultural context.

Confucianism was not actually founded by Confucius (孔子, BC 551-479) (Figure 2.4); rather, he believed that his mission in life was to restore the Tao of the ancients by
reviving the ancient values. However, Confucius was the most significant
scholar who developed and maintained Chinese ancient values and
compiled them in *The Six Classics* (六經), including *The Classic of Rites*
(《禮記》), *The Classic of History* (《書經》), *The Classic of
Poetry* (also called *The Book of Odes*, 《詩經》), *The Classic of
Changes* (also called ‘I Ching’, 《易經》), *The Spring and Autumn
Annals* (《春秋》, also known as 《麟經》) and *The Classic of
Music* (《樂》). After *The Classic of Music* was lost in the ‘Burning of
the Books and Burial of the Scholars’ (焚書坑儒) in the time of the Qin
Dynasty (秦朝, BC 221-206) in BC 213, *The Six Classics* (六經) was
changed to be *The Five Classics* (五經).

Confucius was the first private teacher in China who taught not only
nobles and officials but also common people. He taught his followers to
learn *The Six Classics*, which were not only knowledge for
‘self-cultivation’, but also the path to pass the Chinese ancient values to
following generations. Since BC 134, during the period of the Han
Dynasty (漢朝, BC 206-AD 220), Confucianism was regarded as the only
orthodox form of education in China. It was chosen for use as a political
system and the official ideology to govern the Chinese imperial state.
Between the Han Dynasty and the Sui Dynasty (隋朝, AD 581-619) was
one of the bloodiest periods in Chinese history. It was marked by chaotic
infighting between warlords in various parts of China. It includes the
*Three Kingdoms period* (三國時期, AD 220-280, involving the kingdoms
of Wu 吳, Shu 蜀 and Wei 魏), *the Jin Dynasty* (晉朝, AD 265-420), and
*the Southern and Northern Dynasty* (南北朝, AD 420-589). During these
periods, people suffered from war and chaos and Confucian scholars could not bring their talent into politics and practice moral guidance in their society. Confucianism was permeated by Taoism and Buddhism. Some Confucian scholars became hermits in order to avoid political persecution. During the Sui Dynasty, Buddhism gained prominence and created a unifying cultural force that lifted the people out of war. However Confucianism was the official ideology for the Imperial examinations (科举) in China, which determined who among the population would be permitted to enter the state's bureaucracy. Study of the Confucian classics became the basis of the government examination system and the core of the educational curriculum. No serious attempt to replace Confucianism arose until 1905, near the end of the Qing Dynasty (清朝, AD 1644-1911).

Government control in the Tang Dynasty (唐朝, AD 618-907) was based on the ideology of Confucianism, which was merged with Taoism and Buddhism. During the Song Dynasty (宋朝 AD 960-1279), Confucianism was developed to become the School of Li (理学派, Li, 理, meaning principle), the first branch of Neo-Confucianism, which marked one of the highest peaks by Zhu Xi (朱熹, also called Chu His, AD 1130-1200). Zhu Xi developed the teaching of Zhou Dun Yi (周敦頤, AD 1017-1073), Cheng Hao (程颢, AD 1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (程頤, AD 1033-1107) who were all famous Neo-Confucian scholars. Zhu Xi sought the unifying principle, called li (理, identified with the Way) which he believed was inherent as both a natural phenomenon and a moral principle in the external world. During the Ming Dynasty (明朝, AD 1368-1644), Neo-Confucianism was developed by Wong Yang Ming (王陽明, AD 1472-1529) to become the School of Mind (心學), which is the second
branch of Neo-Confucianism.

The major Chinese Confucian scholars whose teaching deeply influenced Japanese Confucianism and culture, include Confucius and Mencius (孟子, BC 372-289), whose teaching is called classical Confucianism, and Zhu Xi and Wang Yang Ming, whose school is called Neo-Confucianism.

Confucius has the most popular posthumous name, Zhìshèngxiānshī (至聖先師), which means the former teacher who arrived at sagehood. His teachings and philosophy have also deeply influenced East Asian life and thought. The essential features of Confucius’s teaching are ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ (五常): benevolence (jen, ren, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity), justice (i, yi,義, also understood as righteousness), rites (li, 禮, also understood as propriety and courtesy), wisdom (chih, zhi, 智, also understood as intellect and knowledge) and honesty (sin, xin,信, also understood as trust, fidelity and honest mind), and ‘The Five Human Relationships’ (wulun, 五倫, also understood as Five Substantial Relationships). The traditional cardinal human relationships of Confucianism include those between monarch and courtiers, father and sons, husband and wife, and those between siblings, and friends. He also outlined the principle of filial piety (xiao, 孝) and the principle of honesty (cheng, 誠, also understood as sincerity, sincerity of intention or honest mind) in The Doctrine of Mean (中庸). The words and acts of Confucius and his disciples, as well as the discussions they held, are recorded in The Analects of Confucius (論語). It is the closest primary source we have for thought of Confucius relating his sayings and
discussions with rulers and disciples. Confucius emphasized that no matter how proficiently one performs one’s roles, one cannot become a truly cultivated person without an inner ‘self-cultivation’ of morality and an outer practice of harmonious ethics. Confucians believe that to understand the Tao of heaven, human beings must continuously practise ‘self-cultivation’ (Tu 2001). He pointed out that the significance of ‘self-cultivation’ depends upon these principles and constant virtues, including ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ and ‘The Five Human Relationships’ which are basic to harmonious relationships between humankind (ren, jin, 人, includes individuals, family, society and nations), earth (chi, di, 地, refers to the symbol of nature, including beings and non-beings) and heaven (ten, tian, t’ien, 天, refers to the symbol of the cosmos) (Tu 1979).

The most significant proponent of the Confucian philosophy is Mencius (孟子, BC 372-289) (Figure 2.5), who believed that each of us is born with an instinctive morality. He used a metaphor to emphasize that instinctive morality is as important as our body. Mencius said: ‘All human beings have a sense of compassion…The sense of compassion is the beginning of benevolence; the sense of shame is the beginning of righteousness; the sense of modesty is the beginning of decorum; the sense of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Human beings possess these four beginnings just as their four limbs’ (Xunzuo 1998, p. 117).
Mencius also believed that living through no major deprivation, such as poverty or wars, human beings would develop a sage-like wisdom (Houser et al. 2006). Due to the predisposition to goodness of human beings, Mencius set forth the ‘Tao of Monarchy’ (王道, the true way of monarchy), a political administration drawn from the Tao of heaven, which meant monarchs must rule their people under the virtue of benevolence. According to Mencius, people are more important than countries and rulers. Mencius even regarded a tyrannical ruler as a despot forsaken by all, whose rule should be overthrown. It was called a revolution with justice. The ‘Tao of Monarchy’ highlighted that the good relationships between rulers and their people is based on the core virtue, benevolence. His philosophy deeply influenced the people in Japan to accept democracy in the modern period. Many of Kurosawa’s films manifest this kind of philosophy, to challenge the accepted social order. This is explored in Chapter Three.

Zhu Xi (朱熹, also called Chu His, AD 1130-1200) (Figure 2.6) wrote commentaries on The Analects of Confucius (論語), on The Book of Mencius (孟子), on The Great Learning (大學), and on The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸), known as The Four Books (四書). It is the most important contribution of the Neo-Confucian School of Li to Confucianism in China. The Four Books and The Five Classics were regarded as the core curriculum for official examinations and became Confucian orthodoxy for
about 700 years in China (Zhang 2003). The essential feature of the teaching of Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism was regarded as having absorbed many elements from Taoist and Buddhist teachings, but Zhu Xi denied this. Zhu Xi did not want ‘self-cultivation’ to become the emptiness of Buddhism, according to his understanding. Zhu Xi drew from ‘The Eight Articles’ (八條目, also called the theory of guwu zhizhi, 格物致知) of The Great Learning (大學), emphasizing that ‘honesty’ (cheng, 誠, also understood as sincerity, sincerity of intention or honest mind) is an important principle to reach ‘self-cultivation’, that would ultimately lead to the regulation of the family, the state and the world. It provides a methodology for people to cultivate their morality, and a doctrine instructing people to practice important values in their society, politics and other fields including the arts. Zhu Xi emphasized that to study the phenomena of nature led to the acquisition of knowledge; however, the investigation of things is the basis of true knowledge, which underlay the significant principle of honesty. The significant principle of honesty was introduced in The Great Learning (大學) and The Doctrine of Mean (中庸). Zhu Xi pointed out that moral principles could not function without material force. It provides a rebuttal of Buddhism and Taoism, in the idea of the transformation of souls, showing that rationality or spirituality do not exist apart from in individual human consciousness. It also emphasizes that rationality is an instrument for worldly activities. The School of Li spread from China to Japan in about AD 1211 (Zhu 2000a). It was also used as the Confucian orthodoxy in Japan, Korea and Taiwan, as well as other South-East Asian countries, before being challenged by Confucian scholars, who wanted to go back to the Confucian classics before they
were abridged into *The Four Books*. In the 20th century, Neo-Confucianism learning saw its revival in East Asia during what one could call a Chinese Diaspora, where large Chinese communities were established in Southeast Asia and America (Lia 2006).

Wang Yang Ming (王陽明, 1472-1529) (Figure 2.7) was a major scholar of the second branch of Neo-Confucianism, known as the School of Mind (心學派). It was established in the Ming Dynasty (明朝, 1368-1644) in China. Wang Yang Ming stated that ‘The great human can regard heaven, earth, and the myriad things as one body. It is not because he (or she) deliberately wants to do so, but because of the humane nature of his (or her) mind which allows him (or her) to do so...’ (Tu 1979, p. 5). He emphasized the humane mind, as a natural and spontaneous feeling inherent in the very structure of the human. Wang Yang Ming also *unified knowledge and action* (知行合一) regarding such knowledge as intuitive and not rational. Wang regarded mind as containing an innate moral goodness and understanding of what is good. He suggested people have to follow their good nature and to practise this in the world. This is similar to the thinking of the Greek philosopher Socrates (蘇格拉底, BC 470-399), who argued that knowledge is virtue (Cua 1982). Wang Yang Ming’s teaching of the unity of knowledge and action deeply influenced the *samurai* (武士, the Japanese warrior in the...
feudal society) philosophy of Japan.

Most East and South-East Asian countries are strongly influenced by Chinese Confucianism, including Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam. These countries make up ‘the cultural region of Confucianism’ (儒教文化圈). Confucianism has played a significant role in the process of cultural assimilation in East Asia, emphasizing harmony and peaceful co-existence in mutual respect and interdependence (Kyung Hee 2005). Chinese Confucianism has been developed over more than 2500 years. It is not only a system of philosophical, moral, social, political and religious thought, but also a rich cultural heritage which has strongly influenced poetry, painting, architecture, literature, drama, film and other art forms.

The Influence of Chinese Confucianism in Japan

Ancient Japan including the Jomon period (繩紋時代, ca. BC 100,000-BC 300), Yayoi period (彌生時代, ca. BC 300 –AD 248), and Kofun period (大和或古墳時代, AD 248-AD 538)

Early Japanese chronicles state that with the introduction of Confucianism by The Analects of Confucius from Paekche (百濟, people who lived in southwestern Korea) in AD 284, the Japanese began to have Chinese books. In AD 513, Paekche sent Confucian scholars who taught The Five Classics, Taoist diviners and healers, and Buddhist icons and texts to Japan.
Classical Japan including the Asuku period (飛鳥時代, AD 538-710), the Nara Period (奈良時代, AD 710-794) and the Heian Period (平安時代, AD 794-1185)

The development of Confucianism in classical Japan included official dispatching of thousands of envoys and students to China nineteen times during the Sui Dynasty (隋朝, AD 581-619) and the Tang Dynasty (唐朝, AD 618-907) in China from AD 607 to 894. The Japanese started to broadly and systematically study many aspects of Chinese culture. They completely transplanted Confucianism and Buddhism as well as laws, institutions and other elements of civilization from China. During that time, the Japanese culture assimilated Buddhism and Confucianism, which were studied by many scholars and officials and used as the philosophical foundation for areas of knowledge, including politics, education and culture (Lin 2005).

During this period in Japan two Buddhist sects emerged, Tendai (天台宗) and Shingon (真言宗). Tendai is a form of Buddhism learned from Chinese Esoteric Buddhism, but usually called Tantric Buddhism in India. Shingon is associated with a unique style of meditation that involves mandalas (曼陀羅) (Figure 2.8). The mandala is an artistic
representation of various Buddhas (佛) and bodhisattvas (菩薩), or of the world as seen by those enlightened beings. However, for many Japanese practitioners, gaining union with the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in the mandala was also understood as a way of gaining supernatural powers (Watt 2003). Japanese Buddhism in the classical Japanese period was also combined with the indigenous system of Japanese belief, Shinto (神道). It was a characteristic of Japanese Buddhism until the beginning of the Meiji period (明治時期, AD1868-1912).

After AD 894, in the middle of the Heian period (平安朝, AD794-1192), Japanese officials became less accepting of Chinese culture, and began to combine the essence of Confucianism with the traditional culture of Japan, drawn from the traditional Shinto beliefs. However, scholars and monks continuously went to China to infuse new knowledge of their schools of Confucianism and Buddhism. Over time, the Confucian philosophy became the foundation of Japanese morality, politics, culture and art forms. The aesthetic concept of the Japanese art forms emerged as a conscious manifestation of Confucian philosophy. The most important principles and values in The Five Classics, which highlighted ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’, were regarded as the central code of ethics and philosophy in Japanese art forms (Zhu 2000a).

The Japanese moral code, consisting of Confucianism, Buddhism and the indigenous thinking of Shinto in the Japanese classical period, underpinned the Japanese system in the following feudal period.
Feudal Japan, including the Kamakura period (鎌倉幕府, AD 1192-1333), Muro machi period (室町時代, AD 1336-1573) and Azuchi – Momoyama period (安土桃山時代, AD 1568-1600)

The history of the Japanese shogunate (also understand as bakufu, 幕府, where the political administration was organized by generals) began in AD1192 at the end of the Heian period. The first shogunate was called the Kamakura shogunate. The Kamakura shogunate used Confucianism as the official education for the samurai, a new powerful class that had emerged in the Heian period (Lin 2005).

The Kamakura shogunate adapted teachings from the ‘Five Human Relationships’ as moral ethics to consolidate their feudal system. This aimed to create harmonious relationships between common people, including tato (田堵, farmer), landlords and myosyu (名主, farm owners), samurai, shogunate, and the emperor’s family (Lin 2005).

Neo-Confucian philosophy did not achieve independent status in the beginning of the feudal period in Japan. It was combined with Buddhism. However, since Zhu Xi’s teaching originated with a rational alternative to Buddhism, the possibility of rupture between these two philosophies always existed. On the other hand, Zhu Xi incorporated the philosophy of Chan (Ch’an, 禪, is the Chinese pronunciation of dhyana, commonly translated by the English word “meditation”. It was also known as Zen in Japanese pronunciation) and Taoist concerns about the cosmos into his framework. Due to this reinvigoration, Confucianism was considered as an
intellectual discipline. It strongly influenced Japanese philosophy and aesthetic concepts of art forms, including literature, painting, architecture and Noh theatre.

**Edo period (江戸時期, also understood as Tokugawa shogunate, 德川幕府 AD 1603-1867)**

From AD 284 to the beginning of the Edo period, Confucianism had been studied in Japan for more than one thousand years. In the Edo period, there were three major factions of Confucianism, as follows.

**First** was ‘The School of Zhu Xi’ (朱子學派) which drew from the first Chinese Neo-Confucian branch, the School of Li. According to Fujiwara Seika (藤原惺窩, 1561-1619) and Hayashi Razan (林羅山, 1583-1657), this school won the orthodoxy of the Tokugawa period in 1605 and was regarded as the official teaching in Japan until 1906. Fujiwara Seika paid attention to the principle of honesty in order to pursue the state of harmony between man and heaven. He regarded Li (principle) as the only origin of the universe. According to his view, the Tao of heaven, human nature and ‘The Five Constant virtues’, including benevolence, righteousness, rites, wisdom and honesty, all belong to the principle of the universe. Hayashi Razan was an important scholar for the Japanese Renaissance at that time. He built the unique Tokugawa version of Chinese Neo-Confucianism. He rejected the emptiness of Buddhism, as Zhu Xi and Fujiwara Seika had done, and instead infused the ethics of Neo-Confucianism into Shinto. He claimed loyalty and obligation, which provided a standard code of conduct
for the Tokugawa shogunate to govern autonomous territories. It was a way for the Japanese to maintain their social order and create peace during the Tokugawa period for more than 200 years (Zhu 2000b).

**Second** was ‘The School of Ancient Learning’ (古學派) which focused on the knowledge of Confucius and Mencius. The major proponents of this school included Yamaga Soko (山鹿素行, 1622-1685) (Figure 2.9), Ito Jinsai (伊藤仁齋, 1627-1705), Ito Togai (伊藤東崖, 1670-1736), and Ogyu Sorai (荻生徂徠, 1666-1728). The important cultural application of Confucianism in Japan was the invention of *bushido* (武士道, the way of the warrior). According to Yamaga Soko, the purpose of the *samurai* class was to serve as a model of cultural, moral and intellectual development for the rest of society. In addition to these qualities, the *samurai* would cultivate intellectual, cultural, and political arts. As a Confucian intellectual the new role for the *samurai*, as Yamaga Soko saw it, was to assume political and intellectual leadership. The Tokugawa shogunate took over from Chinese Confucian theories which divided their society into four classes: intellectuals, farmers, artisans and merchants. They depended on their imposition of a *samurai* dominated structure and divided their society into four classes: *samurai* (as administrators), *nomin* (as peasants), *kojin* (as artisans) and *shomin* (as merchants). The *nomin* provided the bushels of rice, the income of the *samurai*, and the *kojin* made swords and other weapons, the vital accessories of the military class (Ortolani 1990). The term *bushido* would
in later years be applied to Yamaga Soko’s writing on the role and character of the *samurai*, which he called *shido* (侍道, the way of the *samurai*) and *bukyo* (武道, the warrior’s creed) (Hooker 1999). The main influence on *bushido* was the ethics of Confucianism, which were used to combine the beliefs of Zen Buddhism and the nationalism of *Shinto* with Japanese Confucianism. ‘The code of *bushido*’ included *gi* (義, justice, also understood as righteousness), *yu* (勇, courage, also understood as bravery), *jin* (仁, benevolence, also understood as humanity), *rei* (禮, rites, also understood as proprieties or etiquette), *makoto* (誠, also understood as honesty, sincerity, love and fulfilled promise, 信, shin) which were manifested in Confucian principles and constant values. However, the script of 誠 changed the meaning from “honesty to everyone” in Chinese etymology, to become “honor and loyalty to their lord and people” in Japanese meaning. In particular, the *samurai* would exemplify a devotion to *giri* (義理, the duties in the Japanese feudal period) and *chu* (忠義, unswerving loyalty) drawn from the nationalism of *Shinto*. The life of the *samurai* would be devoted to their *meiyo* (名譽, honor and glory) and *chu* (忠義, unswerving loyalty), the core code of *bushido*. The moral life of a *samurai* was focused around his obligations, which he willingly agreed to meet for his lord. The life of a *samurai* would be one of temperance, self-sacrifice, high discipline, and fearlessness, particularly fearlessness in the face of death (Nitobe 新渡戸稻造 1969). It is different to the original teaching of Confucianism and *Chan* Buddhism (禪宗) in China.

**Third** was ‘The School of Wang Yang Ming’ (陽明學派, also called J.
Yomeigaku or Ōyōmei-gaku in Japanese) founded by Toju Nakae (中江藤樹, 1608-1648). Toju Nakae was influenced by the second Chinese Neo-Confucian branch, the School of Mind, but he added a more religious aspect, drawn from Shinto, which called the human conscience “the divine light of heaven”. Nakae's works also supplied his followers, such as Banzan Kumazawa (熊沢 蕃山, 1619–1691), with the moral foundation for political action (Carr and Mahalingam 1997). However, the revolutionary ideas of Wang Yang Ming inspired Japanese Kokugaku (國學, national study or Japanology) scholars like Motoori Norinaga (本居宣長, AD1730-1801), who argued that because of the Shinto deities, Japanese people alone had the intuitive ability to distinguish between good and evil without complex rationalization. The school of Wang Yang Ming also greatly influenced the samurai ethic in the early modern and modern periods in Japan (Zhu 2000a).

**Meiji period (1868-1912),**

The culmination of the sustainability of Neo-Confucianism instead of Buddhism came under the Meiji government. The first Chinese Neo-Confucian branch, the School of Li (理學派) outlined a method of knowledge which stressed the close observation and study of material and human nature. It not only led to the development of an empirical science in China, but also formed the predominant characteristics of Japanese Neo-Confucianism. It helped Japan to achieve the rapid assimilation of Western science and culture following the Meiji Restoration (明治維新, AD1866–1869) (Hooker 1999).
During the Meiji period, the Japanese were also influenced by ideas of democracy, science and freedom, which were spread from Western Europe. All of these ideas began to be combined with Confucianism and Shinto to become the main ideology of the Japanese people during the Meiji period. There was a famous philosopher whose picture was printed on the Japanese ten thousand yen note, Yukichi Fukuzawa (福澤諭吉, 1835-1901) (Figure 2.10). He was the founder of Keio University which was established more than one hundred years ago. He wrote a famous book, *An Encouragement of Learning* (勸學), which outlined the importance of understanding how knowledge is acquired, including the principles of equality of opportunity and study as the key to greatness. It is like a textbook for teaching people ‘self-cultivation’. An important sentence in the book is ‘Heaven neither created people above people, nor created people below people’ (Tseng 1988, p. 35). It is similar to the philosophy of Mencius (孟子), who outlined principles of human rights.

Since the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese have been devoted to modernization and Westernization through industrialization. Many politicians tried to cast away the shackles of East Asian traditions. Nevertheless, Shigeki Nishimura (西村茂樹, 1828-1902, a famous Confucian scholar in this period) edited textbooks in 1880 for Japanese education on ‘self-cultivation’, to counter the neglect of tradition. He was
devoted to the use of ‘The Eight Articles’, ‘The Five Human relationships’ and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ as significant moral doctrines and principles. In accordance with ‘The Five Human Relationships’, ‘The Five Doctrines’ involve the following:

First is ‘self-cultivation’.

Second is to keep one’s family in order.

Third is to treat the clan, village and town with kindness.

Fourth is to rule the country with benevolence.

Fifth is to establish friendships with people of other nations (Koyasu Sen 2004).

The official Japanese Educational Doctrine was based on ‘The Five Doctrines’ announced in 1890. Kurosawa (1982) recalled that he had to lead his classmates to read ‘The Five Doctrines’ every morning before their teaching, when he was a class leader in primary school. In the period of Kurosawa’s childhood, the principles and values drawn from Confucianism deeply influenced the Japanese, not only in their traditional values, but were also manifest in their modern life and soul.

However, Confucianism was transformed by the Meiji government from the moral purpose of ‘self-cultivation’, to the more political purpose of nationalism. The Meiji government used Confucianism to teach their people to honor their own country, rather than build up harmonious relationships between self, humankind and nature. After the victory over China in 1895, Japan began a process of establishing a colonial empire (Lu 1997). The Meiji government used Confucianism to reinforce the
spirit of *Shinto* and their promotion of super nationalism. They also separated *Shinto* and Buddhism to intensify the *Shinto*-based divine status of the emperor. Neo-Confucianism was used as part of this legitimization process and to define their national identity. However, national identity became an alliance of super nationalism with militarism in the following years. This was influenced by Nazism (納粹黨) and Western imperialism and led towards the international crisis and more especially, World War Two in the Pacific.

### 2.3 The Influence of Confucian Philosophy on Akira Kurosawa

Kurosawa was influenced by Confucianism through Japanese history and culture, his education, family and friends. He was born in 1910 during the Meiji period, with a family descended from a noted *samurai* clan. *Samurai* and Japanese soldiers in particular were always trained in the traditional philosophy and beliefs including Confucianism, Buddhism and *Shinto*. These also influenced Kurosawa, as described in his book *Something Like an Autobiography* (Kurosawa 1982).

Kurosawa was educated with patriotism and loyalty to the throne at school in his childhood. In Japan, people bequeathed this loyalty to their eldest son when they died. Teachers taught such doctrine to their students as well. This phenomenon could be explained in terms of influence and enlightenment in *Shinto* and Confucianism. Kurosawa (1982) explained...
that he was influenced by his father, who was a teacher of physical education in a junior high school, after being discharged from his military service. Kurosawa’s father trained him strictly to develop a stronger physique by practising *kendo* (剣道, a way of traditional skill using swords) (Figure 2.11). On the other hand, Kurosawa was encouraged in ‘self-cultivation’ and to learn traditional Chinese Confucian culture, through reading literature, poems and essays and practising *shodo* (書道, calligraphy also called *Shu Fa*, 書法 in Chinese) (Figure 2.12) every day during his childhood.

Confucianism highlights the significance of ‘self-cultivation’ by the process of teaching and learning. It is a way to pass on traditional values from the past to the present. Its constant virtues have been manifested in a range of art forms, including literature, poetry, essays, and calligraphy, which deeply influenced Kurosawa.

During the Meiji period, there was a famous journal, *Shirakaba* (白樺, a literary journal, also called *the white birch*). The main editor of the *Shirakaba* journal was Saneatsu Mushanokoji (武者小路実篤, 1885-1976) who was not only famous as an artist, novelist and writer, but also as a
philosopher. He taught Hideo Koguani (小國英雄, 1904-1996) who was an important scriptwriter for Kurosawa. Kurosawa said that Hideo Koguani was a key figure in his scriptwriting group, which included Kikushimi Ryuzo (菊島隆三), Masato Ide (井手雅人) and others. Hideo Koguani was not only a good scriptwriter and a friend of Kurosawa, but also a key person who influenced Kurosawa to become a humanist filmmaker in the Confucian way (Tseng 2005).

‘The School of Shirakaba’ (白樺派, also called ‘The White Birch Group’) was a literary and art group which was founded by the members of Shirakaba Journal. The Shirakaba Journal began publication in 1910 against a background of the idealistic, humanitarian, and individualistic work which was being produced in Japan at that time. The writers and editors of Shirakaba reflected the ideas of anti-realism. They were opposed to the trend of contemporary literature, which only described the ugly and routine life. In addition, they placed emphasis on positive human nature and created an optimistic view of life. They shared their knowledge of European art, especially the late Impressionist painters and emphasized the importance of respect for individuality. In the beginning, they were criticized as egotistical. Subsequently, they were regarded as humanitarian idealists when they argued that the beauty of the works is the manifestation of ‘The Five Human Relationships’ and the compassion of human nature as presented in the Confucian way (Tseng 1988). The writers of the Shirakaba journal published and promoted a philosophy of humanity and expanded its influence in the Taisho period (大正時期).
1912-1926), thus becoming the most significant literary faction to assert the principle of humanity in modern Japan (Odagiri 1975).

During modern times, most intellectuals in Japan, including Kurosawa, were influenced by this kind of humanitarian idealism. It emphasized respect for individuality and humanity in the Confucian way, rather than the Western emphasis on ‘individualism’. Most intellectuals in Japan, including Kurosawa, were educated in Confucian philosophy. While some of them were more influenced by Western knowledge, everyone in Japan encountered Confucianism as a popular and fundamental philosophy at that time. The intellectuals, especially the writers of Shirakaba, were influenced by Chinese Confucianism and were more respectful of classic Confucianism. Their attitudes were described as ‘Morality Mysophobia’ (道德潔癖者) in Japan. It meant that they controlled themselves rigorously and avoided the immoral (Chen 2005). The characteristic of ‘Morality Mysophobia’ was also manifested in Kurosawa’s characters in his films, which is explored in Chapter Three.

Kurosawa (1982) explained that he was influenced by Noh theatre and Japanese prints. These art forms have been infused with ideas from the entire Japanese cultural heritage, including Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto. Kurosawa said ‘I like Japanese ceramics, Japanese painting, but I like the Noh best of all… I like it because it is the real heart, the core of all Japanese drama. Its degree of compression is extreme, and it is full of symbols, full of subtlety. It is as though the actors and audiences are
engaged in a kind of contest and as though this contest involves the entire Japanese cultural heritage’ (Richie 1998, p. 117). Kurosawa was proud of his own cultural heritage and happy to show it through his films. He said that ‘I decided upon the techniques of Noh, because in Noh, style and story are one. I wanted to use the way Noh actors have of moving their bodies, the way they have of walking, and the general composition which the Noh stage provides’ (Richie 1998, p. 117). Confucianism influenced many art forms, including Noh theatre and Japanese prints, through the symbolic and expressive aesthetic concept, which is explained in detail in Chapter Four.

2.4 Humanist Values and Their Manifestation in Kurosawa’s Films

From the 1950s to the 21st century, film critics have continued to focus upon Kurosawa’s films. They pursue wide-ranging approaches through various film theories, including auteurism, national cinema and cross-cultural identity. Textual criticism of Kurosawa’s films reveals the humanist concerns of both the director and his samurai characters. For example, Richie (1960) identifies humanism as a characteristic of Kurosawa in his books The Japanese Film: Art and Industry, first published in 1960, and The Films of Akira Kurosawa, first published in 1965. Under Ritchie’s interpretation, bushido is regarded as the unity of traditional values in Kurosawa’s films, which could also be considered as “international values”. Richie also simply assumed that bushido had much
to do with spiritual enlightenment and was of an innate practicality. He
even regards Kurosawa as the
last of the *samurai* and
highlights that all Kurosawa’s
film are about the same thing
(Richie 1998). However, he
does not scrutinize how
Kurosawa carefully satirized
the bad side of *bushido* in his
films, including *Kagemusha*
(also called *The shadow
warrior*, 影武者, 1980)
(Figure 2.13), *Ran* (亂, 1985)
(Figure 2.14), and *Dreams*
(夢, 1990) (Figure 2.15),
which is explored in detail in
Chapter Three. Through the
acting of his main characters
in these films, Kurosawa
challenged the authoritative
dctrine of *bushido*. Richie
(1998) also points out that the
heroes in Kurosawa’s films
must learn that to know and
to act are one and the same. According to his critique of *Dersu Uzala* (德
蘇烏扎拉, 1975) (Figure 2.16), Richie considers that Kurosawa has
created a man who exemplifies the pure way of life in harmony with self 
and nature. In this film, Kurosawa discovered the balance between the self 
and the demands of the environment. However, Richie fails to distinguish 
the various sources of Kurosawa’s humanist concern. For instance, the 
philosophy that unified knowledge and action (知行合一) was drawn from 
the Neo-Confucian branch - the School of Mind; the teaching of innate 
knowing was advocated by the classical Confucianism of Mencius; and 
the philosophy of the harmonious relationship between self and nature was 
manifested by the Neo-Confucian branch- the School of Li. The humanist 
concerns in Kurosawa’s films manifested Chinese Confucian philosophy, 
Buddhism and traditional Japanese Shinto, rather than Japanese bushido. 
Richie is the first important critic who introduced the films of Kurosawa to 
international commentary. However, due to his limited understanding of 
bushido in his critique on Kurosawa’s work, the other philosophies 
manifested in the films were ignored. The issue of the influence of bushido 
and its manifestation in narrative elements is like an epidemic that has led 
many other film critics, including Dresser (1983) and Prince (1991) to 
narrow interpretation of the humanist concerns and aesthetic concepts in 
Kurosawa’s films.

Dresser (1983) compares Kurosawa’s samurai films to the genre of 
westerns, and traces the intercultural dynamics between West and East, 
specifically the influence of heroism within American popular formulas. 
He points out how Kurosawa used ‘the code of bushido’ to create his 
heroic character, but cautions about the extent to which the samurai films 
are indebted to the western. He explains that under the Tokugawa, there
was as much a code of the bureaucrat as of the soldier, and Kurosawa’s films were built upon *bushido*, while also using a great deal of the aesthetics of *Zen* to build up a firmly humanistic base. Also stressing the influence of *bushido* and *Zen*, Prince (1991) focuses on the comparison between Kurosawa’s narratives and characters and the mode of enlightenment posited by *Zen* Buddhism. He tries to understand some of the ways that Kurosawa’s works resonate with Japanese culture and heritage, but he narrows the interpretation of the humanist concerns and aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films. There are many film critiques on Kurosawa that pay attention to genre study to describe the generic characteristics in his films, including the genres of the western, epic and gangster movies. For instance, Jan (1989) uses the genre approach and focuses on the study of Buddhism, using ‘The Four Noble Truths’ (四正道) and the *karma* (業) of Buddhism to explore the humanism in Kurosawa’s major
films, including *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1950) (Figure 2.17), *Ikiru* (also called *To Live*, 生之慾, 1952) (Figure 2.18), *Seven Samurai* (七武士, 1954) (Figure 2.19) and *Ran* (亂, 1985). Mostafa (1991) concentrates on the study of the genre of epic films and emphasizes that Zen, with its message of universal mercy, is a particularly strong influence on all aspects of Japanese culture, including Kurosawa’s films.

Russell (2002) examined how the characteristics of American heroes in westerns and gangster movies were manifested in *samurai* characters in the films of Kurosawa. He defines the hero as the figure who embodies humanity, influenced by western heroism. Russell disregards the delicate exploration of Kurosawa’s films as different manifestations of varied philosophies in other art forms, including *jidaigeki* (時代劇, historic uniformed costume drama).

The film critiques that explore the influence of western genre on Kurosawa’s films especially consider the influence of the mise-en-scene of John Ford and the dramas of William Shakespeare. They use the term *bushido* to represent the most important Japanese “traditional values” and *Zen* for all aspects of Japanese culture, including the aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films. According to their interpretations, Kurosawa drew from the western genre as the path to be an international director, merged with the traditional humanist concerns of *bushido* and *Zen*, to achieve “international values”. However, these film critiques are unclear about the relationship between philosophical and aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films. They neither deeply define the essence of Kurosawa’s humanist
concerns with different “traditional values” in his films in different periods, nor distinguish between the essence of Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, Zen and bushido, and their inter-relationships. They also omit the manifestation and representation of Confucian philosophy in the aesthetic concepts of Kurosawa’s films.

“Individualism” or “individual” is another ambiguous term used in film critiques, as characteristic of the main characters in Kurosawa’s films, which are seen as expressing a Western influence in opposition to Japanese “traditional values”. For example, Mellen (1975) considers how Kurosawa raised the samurai films to an art form, and notes Kurosawa’s emphasis on moral commitment, showing how his heroes always acted as “individuals” while sacrificing themselves for others. Mellen (1976) argues that a characteristic of heroes in Kurosawa’s films is the ability to act as an “individual”, to challenge the Japanese “traditional social order”. Erens (1979) also notices that the nature of evil in Kurosawa’s films can be “individual” acts, a corrupt group within a society, or the human predicament itself, with its incumbent miseries. She devotes considerable attention to exploring the nature of good and evil in his work. Erens (1979, p. 13) said that ‘In one form or another, this question arises in all of his films’. She emphasized that Kurosawa commented on the universal evil and the potential of all men for criminal action, but certainly Kurosawa also revealed man’s capacity for good, as well as for evil. She also pointed out that the heroes in Kurosawa’s films clearly posit men’s responsibility to society and to other men. However, she claimed that this emphasis on sacrifice and suffering constitutes one aspect of Kurosawa’s work, which
has prompted critics to call his films Dostoyevskian.

On the other hand, Malpezzi and Clements argue that *Kagemusha* challenged the traditional Western use of the double. They said ‘the mutable, ephemeral “individual” must subordinate himself to the larger social group. When selflessness was the ruling ethic in the Takeda clan, the clan, like the ruler, possessed the endurance of the immovable mountain. When selfishness, through Katsuyori, took hold, the mountain crumbled to dust’ (Goodwin 1994b, pp. 199-200). Malpezzi and Clements highlight that ‘the film’s major theme lies in a conflict between “individual” will and social responsibility. This film contrasts a Western narrative pattern of personality formation and individual identity with the characteristic Japanese ethic of self-sacrifice’ (Goodwin 1994b, p. 18).

These film critiques use the term “individual” to explain the characteristics of Kurosawa’s characters; however, they fail to distinguish between the essence of the individual in Western “individualism” and Eastern Confucianism. The virtues of *Jun Zi* (君子, a person of noble character in the Confucian tradition) includes wisdom, benevolence, and courage to resist evil people and situations by his individual actions. The manifestation of the virtues of *Jun Zi* as reflected in many of Kurosawa’s films will be discussed in Chapter Three. The humanist concern in Kurosawa’s films is neither an expression of individualism nor liberalism. As Kurosawa said: ‘After the Pacific War a great deal of noise began to be made about freedom of speech, and almost immediately abuses and loss of self-control ensued…I felt that this new tendency had to be stamped out
before it could spread’ (Kurosawa 1982, p. 177). Kurosawa also said that ‘I suppose all my films have a common theme. If I think about it though, the only theme I can think of is really a question: why can’t people be happier together?’ (cited in Richie and Mellen 1998, p. 243).

Since Benedict (1972) used an anthropological approach to understand Japanese culture in her book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* in 1946, Western interest arose in Japanese culture as exotic and alien. However, when we consider the political situation between America and Japan after World War Two, especially while the Japanese were under American occupation from 1945 to 1952 (Hirano 1988), we can understand why most Western critics have analyzed Japanese culture with a sense of Western superiority, as Benedict states in her book.

After *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1951) (Figure 2.20) journalists and film critics showed interest in Kurosawa’s films. However, the critiques at that time focus on Japanese customs of an exotic and alien culture. Even though film research has existed at university level since the 1950s, it has been influenced by social issues, political purposes and attempts at film marketing. 1950s criticism of Kurosawa’s films exhibited little theoretical or critical sophistication and, generally, showed no sense of the decisive
influence of Japanese cultural forms (Yoshimoto 2000).

In contrast to auteurism and genre study, the field of national cinema and cross-cultural identity focuses on and emphasizes the interpretation of Japanese culture and traditional culture. For example, Schrader (1972) uses cross-cultural analysis to argue that the values in Kurosawa’s films were fundamentally influenced by Japanese culture and traditions and shared by his collaborators and contemporaries. He noted that the transcendental style in Kurosawa’s films is not determined by Kurosawa’s personality, but by definition is a cross-cultural aspect informed by Japanese culture, politics, economics and morality. Tucher (1973) asserts that the major part of Kurosawa’s works puts forward an intensely humanist view of the world. He points out that this humanism is of Japanese origin, stimulated by Japanese society and communicated to the world by Kurosawa, who looked to his own samurai ancestry and the classical arts of Japan for his cultural roots. Burch (1979), who reinvigorated an academic study of Japanese cinema in the late 1970s, claimed that the unique aesthetic traits of Japanese cinema are directly traceable to the cultural achievements of the Heian period (平安朝, AD.794-1185). He concludes that ‘only Japan has developed modes of filmic representation that are wholly and specially her own’ (Burch 1979, p. 26). Yet Burch also claimed that ‘after Kinugasa, Kurosawa was only the second film maker in the history of Japanese film who, after thoroughly assimilating the Western mode of representation, went on to build upon it’ (Burch 1979, p. 291). Staiger claims that the meaning of the “international values” founded by history was transcended in the works of
great film makers. The idea of the universality of shared humanity was imperative for great film makers to transcend the history and cultural context (Staiger and Gerstner 2003).

Auteurism, genre study, national cinema and cross-cultural identity have all been used as a way to approach Kurosawa’s films; however, no matter what approach is taken, it only focuses on the interpretation of national ideology under the banner of different film theories. They ignore a concern with the cultural heritage of Kurosawa and its manifestation in his films. Given the importance of Confucianism in Kurosawa’s films, it will be useful to describe those key features that are influential. It is also important to relate such influences as bushido back to its Confucian source. While many western film critiques recognize an influence from bushido as the only example of “traditional values” in Kurosawa’s films, they appear oblivious to the satiric treatment of bushido in Kurosawa’s films. The key is Confucianism not bushido.

Beside my two documentaries, there are only two other documentaries that have been made about Kurosawa and his films. First is Message from Akira Kurosawa: the Beautiful Movies (1998) produced by Kurosawa’s son Hisao Kurosawa (黒澤久雄) and daughter Kazuko Kurosawa (黒澤和子). The second is Kurosawa (2000) directed by Adam Low.

The first documentary was made just after Kurosawa’s death in 1998. It has the function of expressing the gratitude of Kurosawa’s family to his fans. It provides a biography of Kurosawa through a chronology of his
family background, which emphasizes his *samurai* clan. The second documentary follows the first documentary’s approach of a chronology of Kurosawa’s career. It provides a more contemplative appreciation of Kurosawa’s life and works, including interviews with his family and colleagues in *Rashomon*. It is the only Western documentary about Kurosawa. It is honorable tribute from the West to Kurosawa’s achievement in the film field. Especially significant are the interviews with Western directors influenced by Kurosawa’s films, who display their respect for Kurosawa. This documentary tends to use a biographical methodology, looking at Kurosawa’s *samurai* heritage, the *bushido* identification from the background of his family and his contemporary political and social situation. It focuses on the main characters in Kurosawa’s *samurai* films, especially, the characters acted by *Toshiro Mifune* (三船敏郎) (Figure 2.21, 2.22, 2.23)
to explain the characteristics of his films (Russell 2002).

However, these two documentaries fail to recognize how the characters convey Kurosawa’s humanist concerns and their philosophical manifestation. They also lack exploration of Kurosawa’s philosophical and aesthetic concepts and expression to unify Kurosawa’s art forms within his oeuvre, which will be addressed in my two documentaries and complementary text.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: the Tao of Arts, a Transformation of Artists via the Principle of Honesty

In the Confucian way, physical expression in the arts must have a corresponding moral expression. The real beauty of the arts from a Confucian perspective is to invoke the only real truth, the Tao. The Tao (\textit{dao}, 道, the true way) of humanity has to achieve a harmonious relationship between heaven (\textit{ten}, \textit{tian}, \textit{t’ien}, 天, refers to the symbol of the cosmos), earth (\textit{chi}, \textit{di}, 地, refers to the symbol of nature, including beings and non-beings) and humankind (\textit{jin}, \textit{ren}, 人). It can be attained through creative works including art, literature, drama and film. It is a way for humans to achieve peace in the world. Many arts in East Asia, including Zeami’s \textit{Noh} and Kurosawa’s films, continue to convey and develop the Confucian way, with the principles of ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ as the tradition of humanist values.

In order to bridge the gap in film theory and to explore the cultural
heritage, which has influenced people in East Asia, including Kurosawa, this research seeks to examine how Confucian philosophy still plays a significant role in film. It investigates how the *Tao* of Confucianism permeates Kurosawa’s films, including the manifestation of Confucian philosophy and Confucian aesthetic concepts. It is a way of informing contemporary culture, which gestures to the past and can help us move into the future. Confucianism believes that humans have to embark on the *Tao* via their works. The efficient way for humans to embark on the *Tao* is shown in the principle of honesty in Chapter 23 of *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸), the significant classical book of Confucianism. The concept of co-existence is difficult to describe in a linear sense. An attempt to model this is given in Figure 2.24. It provides a process including many stages for humans to follow: ‘Honesty produces form; form produces manifestation; manifestation produces enlightenment; enlightenment produces motion; motion produces change; change produces transformation. Only the world’s utmost honesty can bring about transformation’ (Legge 1960, p. 417). The process of these stages is a Confucian way for humans to achieve ‘self-cultivation’ which not only transforms the self, but also helps others to achieve the same state. It is a way for artists to embark on the *Tao* through their art works, including films. Embarking on the *Tao* is defined as the significant process of transformation for individuals to attain a perfect state of enlightenment, to assume the lower role of sage. The sage in Confucianism is one who is sincere and truthful in their humanity. Only through transformation can humans become perfected as beings they must have completed their self-realization in the world through their works.
Figure 2.24 The model of the principle of honesty

Honesty (also understood as sincerity or an honest mind, cheng, 誠) produces form (xing, 形)

Confucianism believes that humans have their own nature, including innate knowledge and innate ability, defined as the human potential to know the Tao. The Tao is a primordial situation, born before heaven and earth, inaudible, invisible, and indistinct (Clart 2000). “Honesty” in Confucianism is a basic and significant principle by which humans can...
awaken their innate knowledge and ability to embark on the Tao. “Form” is the first step on the way of humanity. “Honesty produces form”, which means that people only have to live with an honest mind to enable them to achieve the state of humanity and advance to the Tao. This Chapter explains the essence of the “Tao” and “honesty” in Confucianism and their historical influence on Japanese culture and Kurosawa. Documentary One and Chapter Three explore the deep meaning of “honesty” manifested in Kurosawa’s films.

**Form produces manifestation (zhu, 著)**

Manifestation (zhu, 著) describes the maturing of the Tao. This maturing depends on the conveyance of vital energy and substance (Clart 2000). These can change, and transformation depends on forceful cultivation of virtues through art works, including literature, drama and film. Artists’ forms show their state of advancing the Tao, leading to the manifestation of virtues in their works to embark on the Tao. Documentary One and Chapter Three focus on the manifestation of the main constant virtues of Confucianism in Kurosawa’s films and its relationship with the Tao.

**Manifestation produces enlightenment (also understood as bright understanding, ming, 明)**

The manifestation of virtues in works helps people to achieve “bright” understanding in the Tao. With bright understanding, people can see through subtle Tao and distinguish between good and evil. It is a state
where one is not confused. Documentary One and Chapter Three discuss the essence of good and evil in Kurosawa’s films and compare his approach with that of other famous Japanese directors.

**Enlightenment produces motion (dong, 動)**

When people achieve a state of enlightenment, it leads them not only to pay attention to stillness, but also to the motion of the Tao. The Tao is constantly shifting, changing and moving in nature. This stillness and motion are also understood as *yin and yang* (陰陽), which integrate into a state of harmony, *taiji* (also called *tai chi*, 太極, Supreme Ultimate, the ideal of existence). Documentary One, Documentary Two and Chapter Four explore the stillness and the motion in Kurosawa’s films, which create dramatic tension and profound aesthetics that are regarded as pioneering in film.

**Motion produces change (bain, 變)**

Before a state of *taiji*, Tao is constantly moving and changing. Motion brings change and change brings further motion. When people (including artists) understand the constant motion and change of the Tao, they also change their form (including art forms) to become part of it. From observing many changes in the world, people (including artists) can understand that change (including the change of art forms) is illusion, but necessary. Chapter Two provides the historical background of different philosophies that have influenced Japanese culture and Kurosawa. Chapter
Three investigates these different philosophies in Kurosawa’s films and their inter-relationships in different periods. Documentary Two and Chapter Four explore how the range of film aesthetics in Kurosawa’s work draws on these changing philosophical concepts.

**Change produces transformation (hua, 化)**

Through constantly changing, people can achieve a state of transformation and attain the perfect state to embark on the **Tao** to achieve harmony between heaven (*ten, tian, t’ien*, 天, refers to the symbol of the cosmos), earth (*chi, di*, 地, refers to the symbol of nature, including beings and non-beings) and humankind (*jin, ren*, 人). Finally, the transformation is a return to the **Tao**. Then people can realize the subtle **Tao** is an unchanged truth. Chapter Six provides the conclusion to explain the essence of the **Tao** of Confucianism in Kurosawa’s films and its meaning within film theory and cultural heritage in East Asia.

This set of principles and values for humans to embark on the **Tao** has been passed from generation to generation through a range of cultural forms (He 1998). Its adherents, including Kurosawa and other artists in East Asia in different eras, aim to achieve a perfect state through intellectual and cultural endeavor. Kurosawa’s films are therefore seen as a journey to attain a perfect state of embarking on the **Tao** through the stages in *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸). This is not an unusual process for artists of East Asia to engage in. After all, the production of art is intended not just to affect others, but to affect the artist also.
Perhaps the final word for this chapter is best expressed by Mellen (1975, p. 42) who wrote, ‘Kurosawa is one of the few artists to achieve international communication while at the same remaining true to his own highly distinctive and insular national culture.’ If “national culture” could be understood as the essence of the philosophy drawn from cultural heritage included Confucian philosophy, the aims of this research will have been achieved.
Chapter 3
Manifestation of Confucian Philosophy in the Films of Akira Kurosawa

3.1 Introduction

The films of Kurosawa have not only entertained audiences they have also enlightened the consciousness of countless fans through the humanism embodied in their main characters. These include filmmakers Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, as well as critics all over the world. After *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1950) (Figure 3.1) won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice International Film Festival in 1951, *Ikiru* (also called *To Live*, 生之欲, 1952) (Figure 3.2) received the Silver Bear Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1954, *Seven Samurai* (七武士, 1954) attained the Silver Lion Award at the Venice International Film Festival in 1954. *Dersu Uzala* (德蘇烏扎拉, 1974) was also critically acclaimed.
1975) was given the Best Foreign Language Film Award at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (also called Academy Award or Oscar) in 1975, while *Kagemusha* (also called *The Shadow Warrior*, 影武者, 1980) received the Palme d’Or of the Best Film Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1980. No other Japanese director has received such international acclaim (Galbraith 2002).

Many of Akira Kurosawa’s films have been recognized as classic works in the history of world cinema. The humanist concerns in his films have been regarded as embodying “international values”. However, it is contended here that the interpretations of humanism offered by film critics, including Kurosawa’s purported “internationalism”, may be misplaced. They offer a distinctly Western cultural perspective and overlook the complexity of Kurosawa’s Asian cultural roots. In particular, this research explores the powerful influence of Confucianism. While the benevolence (*jen, ren*, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity) of Confucianism, the compassion of Buddhism, and the *makoto* (*cheng*, 誠, also understood as honesty, sincerity, love and fulfilled promise, 信, *shin*) of *bushido*, are all manifestations of human virtue, each of them is essentially different (Chen 2005). This chapter focuses on Confucian philosophy and distinguishes the different meaning of each of these philosophical concepts.

This chapter consists of four sections that focus upon the interpretation of the notion of ‘self-cultivation’ in the films of Kurosawa, an expression of significant Confucian values and principles. The first is the process of ‘self-cultivation’ with the principles of ‘The Eight Articles’ (*八條目*, also
called the theory of guwu zhizhi, 格物致知), and the Confucian constant values. The second is the learning and teaching of the Tao (dao, 道, the true way) and ‘The Five Human Relationships’ (also understood as the Five Substantial Relationships, 五倫). The third is the principle of honesty (cheng, 誠, also understood as sincerity or honest mind), the concept of human nature drawn from Neo-Confucianism which was regarded as the linkage between Confucianism and Taoism to fight against the tendencies of Buddhism. Finally, the conclusion highlights the philosophical concept of the Tao in Kurosawa’s films, as the manifestation of Confucian philosophy. It explains the method Kurosawa used to communicate to international audiences his assimilation of traditional values, to encourage a harmonious relationship between self, family, society, nations and all humankind to facilitate peace in the world.

3.2 The Process of ‘Self-cultivation’

Before 1943 when Kurosawa directed his first film, he lived through a period of militaristic government, when the power of the Emperor was increasing. During that period, people were limited by the system and were almost unable to breathe under the power of conservatism. The following period was a chaotic era caused by the death of so many people in World War II, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the social economic and political turmoil that eventually led to Japan’s unconditional surrender at the end of the war (Chen 2005).
Kurosawa lived through a series of chaotic times that created a sense of the contemporary era as a background to the narrative of most of his films. As an intellectual, Kurosawa constructed the social and political situation in his works and used visual design to place his characters in thematic and moral relationships with each other. He started to direct his films during World War II and he continued to direct films for the following 50 years. In his earlier films before 1975, he manifested the Confucian philosophy of ‘self-cultivation’ with the principles of ‘The Eight Articles’. He tried to influence audiences to live with others enthusiastically and to find a way of ‘self-cultivation’ in a tumultuous era.

‘The Eight Articles’ was a process to guide people to achieve ‘self-cultivation’. This was not only to cultivate themselves, but also to benefit others, including family, the nation and the world. It was developed by Zhu Xi in the 13th century in his *Commentary with Sentence Division on The Great Learning* (大學章句) with his famous theory of ‘The Three Programs’ (三綱領) and ‘The Eight Articles’. Zhu Xi not only concluded that *The Great Learning* (大學) was one of the curricula in ancient senior schools in China, but also positioned it as the most important doctrine of Confucianism. It provides a methodology for people to develop ‘self-cultivation’ with morality, and a doctrine instructing people on how to practice important values in their society, politics and other fields, including the arts. ‘The Eight Articles’ are: to study the phenomena of nature, to acquire knowledge, to correct one’s attitude, to develop one’s sincerity (or an honest mind), to cultivate oneself, to put one’s family in order, to rule the country with virtue, and to bring peace to
the world. ‘The Eight Articles’ are the principles of *The Great Learning* (大學) which outweighs *The Analects of Confucius* (論語) and *The Book of Mencius* (孟子) in its importance (He 1998).

It is not easy to understand the philosophy of ‘The Eight Articles’ in Kurosawa’s films, but we can easily discover the individual principles in some of his films. For example, how characters or groups behave at a time of conflict, and how they strive for justice or make moral choices, was always a crucial focus in Kurosawa’s films. The warriors in *Seven Samurai* (七武士, 1954) (Figure 3.3), have to engage in the process of ‘self-cultivation’ in order to realize a perfect state of embarking on the *Tao*. It resonates with the principle in ‘The Eight Articles’: ‘to cultivate oneself’. In *Ikiru* (生之欲, 1952) (Figure 3.4), the manner in which families deal with their problems resonates with the principle: ‘to put one’s family in order’. In *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Figure 3.5), how a group or individuals face a chaotic era and endeavour to find peace, resonates with the principle: ‘to bring peace to the world’ (Chen 2005).
In chapter 20 of *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸), Confucius said that:

In devoting to learning, you approach wisdom (*chih, zhi*, 智, also understood as intellect and knowledge); in your effort to practice, you approach benevolence (*jen, ren*, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity); in understanding shame, you approach courage (*yong*, 勇, also understood as bravery). If you understand these three virtues, you know how to cultivate yourself; knowing how to cultivate yourself, you know how to administer to others; knowing how to administer to others, you know how to govern a state or a clan (Zhu 2003, p. 39).

According to the Confucian philosophy of ‘self-cultivation’, not all warriors can automatically approach a perfect state, even if they have superlative skills. Through the processing of ‘self-cultivation’ by the main characters in *Seven Samurai* (七武士, 1954), Kurosawa emphasizes that a true and good *samurai* has to achieve ‘self-cultivation’ with virtue and to administer to others to help them to achieve ‘self-cultivation’ also. It is a process to learn and practice the Confucian virtues, including wisdom, benevolence and courage, rather than accepting the social rules as *giri* (義理, the duties in the Japanese feudal period) or *bushido* (武士道, the way of the *samurai*). The sequences in this film focus on the process of teaching and learning ‘self-cultivation’. Kikuchiyo (菊千代), acted by Toshiro Mifune (三船敏郎), represents the role of an imposter who is nonetheless a good *samurai*, in contrast to Kambei, the leader of the
samurai acted by Takashi Shimura (志村喬) (Figure 3.6) who takes the part of an authentic and good samurai. Kikuchiyo wants to be admired as a real samurai, as Kambei, and joins the group who are planning to protect a village of farmers. In the beginning, Kikuchiyo pretends to be a real samurai by using a stolen samurai genealogical chart. He is very brave in resisting enemies, and is fierce and unrelenting. This is why Kambei, who is the leader of the group, teaches him that to be a true and good samurai is not only to kill enemies with courage as a warrior, but also to cultivate oneself with wisdom and benevolence as Jun Zi (君子).

Kurosawa emphasized that good and true Samurai must unify their actions and knowledge with the principle of ‘honesty’ (cheng, 誠, also understood as sincerity or honest mind) to learn and practice wisdom, benevolence and courage as Confucian teaching, rather than to display their fighting skills or to follow their loyal duty as bushido teaching. Seven Samurai (七武士, 1954) reveals the ‘self-cultivation’ of Kikuchiyo and some farmers in the village, through their efforts to learn and practise wisdom, benevolence and courage with honesty, to resist and fight the evil samurai who rob the farmers. In one scene, Kurosawa set the camera position directly facing Kikuchiyo. When Kikuchiyo displays justice with honest mind for the farmers, he verbally attacks the other samurai with an accusation. Kurosawa put his audiences in the position of samurai. Due to
the camera position and mise-en-scene, Kurosawa not only complained about the *samurai* who disturbed the peaceful life of farmers in this film, but also satirized the officials who disturbed the peaceful life in his contemporary era.

Wisdom, benevolence and courage are virtues of *Jun Zi* (君子) as taught by Chinese Confucianism which had been historically used by the Japanese government since the *Kamakura shogunate* (鎌倉幕府, AD1192-1333) to educate their *samurai* to achieve ‘self-cultivation’. However, these values came to be ignored, in favour of concern with the notion of *giri* drawn from the *Shinto* (神道, Japanese traditional beliefs from the ancient period), especially after the Meiji Restoration (明治維新, AD1866~1869). Since the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese had started to devote themselves to modernization and Westernization through industrialization. In 1885, Yukichi Fukuzawa (福澤諭吉, 1835-1901) wrote an article ‘*Datu-a Ron*’ (*On saying good-bye to Asia*, Document 2) urging his fellow countrymen to cast away the shackles of East Asian traditions. After the victory over China in 1895, Japan began a process of establishing a colonial empire (Lu 1997). After the Meiji period, Confucianism had been ignored by the Japanese, as Inoue Tetsujiro (井上哲次郎, 1855-1944, a famous Japanese philosopher) said ‘Since the Meiji Restoration, traditional morality and belief have been destroyed. Many people are confused to distinguish between evil and good and do not know how to do. It causes lot of social problems and public morality and rites are worse’ (Liu 2005, p. 38).
Kurosawa devoted himself to reminding audiences in his contemporary society about Confucian virtues through the process of ‘self-cultivation’ of the main characters in his films. Kurosawa said ‘I was revealing there the worst side of the samurai class. Some ambitious samurai were naturally intent on only advancing their own careers and did not pay any attention to the weak and the needy…The seven samurai were the real samurai who responded to need. They were the truly good samurai’ (Kurosawa cited in Mellen 1975, p. 56). As well as Kambei regarded as the true and good samurai, who taught Kikuchiyo ‘self-cultivation’ in Seven Samurai (七武士, 1954), his film contains many other idealised characters of true and good samurai, as teachers of ‘self-cultivation’ with Confucian virtues. For example, the main characters, Benkei in They Who Step on the Tiger’s Tail (踏虎尾的男人, 1945) (Figure 3.7) and General Rokurota in The Hidden Fortress (戦國英豪, 1958) (Courtesy of Toho Films Co, Ltd.)
1958) (Figure 3.8), both display courage, wisdom and justice to lead their followers and save their lord. Other examples are the main characters in *Yojimbo* (用心棒, 1961) (Figure 3.9) and *Sanjuro* (椿三十郎, 1962) who, although they are *ronins* (浪人, a warrior without a host), voluntarily help people to fight against evil authorities.

Through these main characters who teach their followers in his films, Kurosawa encouraged his audiences not only to practice inner ‘self-cultivation’ with wisdom, benevolence and courage, but also to outwardly practice these qualities with an honest mind, to influence others in the teaching of Confucianism.

### 3.3 Learning and Teaching of the *Tao*

Under the influence of Confucianism, the Japanese have been concerned with seeking a perfect state of embarking on the *Tao* as their basic attitude of life. In Japanese society there are skilled practitioners (職人 or 匠人) who attain the perfect state of embarking on the *Tao* in various fields. *Kado* (花道, the *Tao* of flowers), *shodo* (書道, the *Tao* of calligraphy), *kendo* (剣道, the *Tao* of traditional skill in swordsmanship) and *chado* (茶道, sado, the *Tao* of tea) are skills, processes and ceremonies with philosophical concerns that constitute the Japanese way of life. The *Tao* has provided the methodology, which is discussed in Chapter Two, for the Japanese people to cultivate morality through various fields. The perfect state of embarking on the *Tao* is not only to advance martial art or craft
skills, but also to combine philosophy with life (Hung 2005).

How can the common people approach the perfect state? How does a teacher or a leader influence his students or followers, to help them seek the perfect state? How do students or followers learn good virtues and practise them? These issues are thematic elements in many of Kurosawa’s films.

The master – pupil relationship is given a clear statement in a number of Kurosawa’s films. It has been discussed by many scholars, including Tucker (1973), Mellen (1975) and Goodwin (1994a). Tucker points out that ‘The master – pupil situation, one in which values of humanist tendencies are slowly absorbed by the pupil through observation of the master, is central to each of the films, culminating in what is probably Kurosawa’s greatest film, Red Beard’ (Tucker 1973, p. 83).

In Sanshiro Sugata (姿三四郎, 1943), the judo (柔道, the Tao of a martial art in Japan) master trains his students in the martial art, and also in good relationships with others. The main character, Sanshiro, acted by Susumu Fujita, suffering from the rivalry between judo and jujitsu (柔術, a martial art which is older than judo), finally cultivates himself by helping his enemy to recover from injury and gives up the desire for revenge upon him. In another
subsequent film *The Quiet Duel* (靜靜的決鬥, 1949) (Figure 3.10), the main character, Dr. Kyoji Fujisaki, acted by Toshiro Mifune, is infected with syphilis when he operates on a soldier during World War II. He strictly controls himself to suppress his desire, in order not to infect the woman he loves who has waited for him and taken care of him for six years. In response, one of the nurses working with him is inspired by the doctor and determines to become serious about her nursing and her life. In *Red Beard* (紅鬍子, 1965) (Figure 3.11), Dr. Kyojio Akahige Niide (means red beard), acted by Toshiro Mifune, who has a red beard, not only establishes many strict rules for patients and younger doctors, but also teaches them to resist disease and social ills. Through saving his patients’ bodies and enlightening their minds, the doctor makes himself an example, which is far better than just applying strict discipline. He inspires a younger doctor who never considered working in a public hospital and suffered under his strict rules. Finally, the younger doctor gives up his desires and devotes himself to follow into service in the public hospital.

These are examples of Kurosawa’s films which not only show us the relationships between students and teachers, but also reveal the virtue of benevolence in treating others. ‘Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you’. ‘In order to cultivate ourselves, we must help...
others to cultivate themselves; in order to embark on the Tao, we must help others to embark on the Tao’ (Zhang 2003, p. 128). These principles provide the essential explanation of benevolence, that Confucius taught, which is the golden principle to reach the state of embarking on the Tao. The word benevolence in Chinese script is 仁. Its Chinese etymology means two people. It emphasizes that the relationship between two people depends on the constant and inherent virtue of benevolence.

The relationship between student and teacher known as ‘the Tao of teaching’ (師道) is significant for Confucianism to pass the Tao from generation to generation. The teaching of Confucianism points out that pupils have to respect their teachers as their own parents; teachers have to teach their pupils in a strict way, but treat them with kindness as their own children. Besides the Tao of teaching, the Confucian philosophy is also concerned with various types of human relationships. Confucius said:

Depending on ‘The Five Human Relationships’, people can reach the perfect state of embarking on the Tao (the true way). There are three virtues for carrying out the relationships. ‘The Five Human Relationships include moral relations between monarch and courtiers, father and sons, husband and wife, between siblings, and between friends. The three virtues are wisdom, benevolence and courage, but they are practiced in unison with honesty (cheng, 誠, also understood as sincerity or an honest mind). Some people are born knowing these; some people know these by learning and some people have to struggle to know these. Nonetheless, all kinds of knowing are the same (Zhang 2003, p. 39).

Many of Kurosawa’s films are imbued with the humanist concerns of benevolence, wisdom, and courage via the sequences of deeply learning
and teaching the Confucian philosophy. Many teachers in his films take
the responsibility to teach their followers as Confucius did. They all
follow the mission of Confucian teaching to pass the constant virtues to
following generations.

China and Japan are countries that have been influenced by Confucianism.
However, there are differences between Chinese Confucianism and
Japanese Confucianism. Japanese Confucianism was combined with
Shinto (神道, Japanese traditional beliefs from the ancient period) beliefs.
The Japanese imperial family contend that their succession is based on a
blood relationship, which is traced back to Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess of
Shinto beliefs, 天照大神) (Figure 3.12). Each generation of Japanese
emperors is
blood related
and succession
is passed from
father to son.
The Japanese
common people are told that they are the sons of the emperor and they are
all part of a large Japanese family. The Chinese on the other hand do not
pay attention to blood relationships outside of their family and do not
strongly emphasize the Emperor’s blood relationships. However,
according to the traditional belief of Shinto, Japanese society and its
values are impacted by this fundamental concept. For the Japanese, Shinto
was the essence of their system, whereas Confucianism was more a
practical set of ideals. The Japanese have thought in this way since
Confucianism first spread to Japan (Chen 2005). It is why Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy tends to appear in Japanese literature and other art forms, including Kurosawa’s films, as the domain of philosophy. Confucian philosophy emerges in Tokugawa literature as a highly charged metaphor for a complex set of identifications that include Confucian philosophy as opposed to the *samurai* notion of *giri* (義理, the duties of Japanese feudal ethics), and the Confucian moral behavior as opposed to Japanese *ninjo* (人情, the feeling of heart, as contrasting with *giri*) (Nosco 1997).

*Bushido* focuses on the virtues of honor and loyalty, although they are also found in Confucianism. However, these virtues are combined in the virtue of *mokoto* (誠, also understood as honesty, sincerity, love and fulfilled promise, 信, shin) (Figure 3.13) in the Japanese way. The Japanese character *mokoto* could be translated into many Chinese characters including 誠 (cheng, sincerity or honesty) and 愛 (ai, love) as outlined in the notes by Chen (2005). It also can be the illustration of “truth” as explained by Ellwood and Pilgrim (1985, p. 105): ‘A pure heart and deep sincerity characterize what *Shinto* refers to as truth (*mokoto*). ‘Truth’, here, is distinctly not some right or wrong view about the nature of things; it is a state of the mind/heart. Truth is as truth is lived in purity and emotional sensitivity’. This characteristic emphasizes the requirement that *samurai* and others treat their emperor and those under them with honesty, including loyalty to their emperor and justice to others within
their society. The duty of the *samurai* is to be loyal at any cost and to observe and act with justice in order to achieve honor.

For example, in the final scene of battle in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Figure 3.14), even though the generals of the troops of Wind (*風軍*, cavalry), Fire (*火軍*, military equipment) and Forest (*林軍*, infantry) knew that the battle would be the end of their clan, they still march forward courageously under the order of their Lord Shingen’s son, Takeda Katsuyori (武田勝賴 1546 – 1582). The three generals say goodbye to one another and make a wish to meet again where their great Lord Shingen is. In *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980), Kurosawa distinguishes between the loyalty of *bushido* and the ‘*Tao of monarchy*’ (王道) of Confucianism. He sympathizes with the loyalty of *bushido*, with its unrelenting demands, through the impressive spectacle of the battle scene and also satirizes the ferocity, severity and violence of war.

Mencius said ‘If a ruler regards his officials as his hands and feet, they will regard him as their belly and heart. If the ruler regards them as his dogs and horses, they will regard him as a stranger. If he regards them as clay and grass, they will regard him as an enemy’ (Xunzuo 1998, p. 281). According to Mencius’s ‘*Tao of monarchy*’ which is discussed in Chapter Two of this text, people could overthrow their rulers legitimately if the
rulers did not treat them with benevolence. The result was called a revolution with justice. Revolution was integral in Chinese history. However, the Japanese did not allow revolution to change their Imperial family; otherwise they would lose the succession process and bloodlines of their Imperial family (Hung 2005).

However, the philosophy of the ‘Tao of monarchy’ was manifested in the relationships between many characters in Kurosawa’s films. For example, in *The Hidden Fortress* (戦国英豪, 1958) (Figure 3.15). Princess Yukihime treats her people with justice and benevolence, including criticizing her general Rokurota, acted by Toshiro Mifune, as inhumane, because he had substituted his own sister to die in place of Princess Yukihime. The princess also redeems a woman from a trader selling people into slavery from clans who have lost in war, even as she is on her journey into exile. To repay Princess Yukihime, the woman tries to pretend to be her to sacrifice herself and to save the princess’s life. It contrasts with the two greedy farmers who are compelled to be subordinates during the war and who try to betray the princess for money. Princess Yukihime, General Rokurota and the woman treat each other with justice and righteousness during their journey of escape. Their behavior resonates with the principles in ‘The Five Human relationships’: The monarch and subordinates have to treat each other with righteousness (君臣有義)
This behavior also resonates with the principles in ‘The Five Constant Virtues’: benevolence and justice, rather than sacrifice as in the teaching of bushido.

In *The Hidden Fortress* (戦国英豪, 1958) (Figure 3.16), General Rokurota treats General Hyoe, acted by Susumu Fujita, as a friend in battle. After General Rokurota wins, rather than kill General Hyoe, he treats him with ritual (*li*, 礼, also understood as propriety and courtesy) and honesty (*cheng*, 誠, also understood as sincerity or honest mind).

General Hyoe is impressed by the relationships between Princess Yukihime, General Rokurota and the woman. Finally, General Hyoe makes a decision for righteous revolution and saves Princess Yukihime, General Rokurota and the woman. When he responds to the princess’s suggestion and decides to follow her, he apologizes to his subordinates for having betrayed his lord, who did not treat him with benevolence. In return his lord punishes him by scarring his face, due to his failure in battle, and by ritual suicide by *seppuku* (切腹, stomach-cutting or belly slicing is a form of Japanese ritual suicide) as in the teaching of bushido.

The behavior of General Rokurota and Princess Yukihime in this film also resonates with the essential principle in *The Analects of Confucius*: ‘Lead through policies, discipline through punishments, people may be
restrained by developing a sense of good and evil. Lead through virtues, discipline through rites (li, 礼, also understood as propriety and courtesy), so that people will live with a sense of good and evil and improve conscientiously’ (Zhang 2003, p. 69).

Through arranging main characters to distinguish between the accepted order of bushido and Confucian virtues, Kurosawa satirizes the narrow nationalism and militarism of bushido. He teaches his audiences how to learn and practise the virtues. He also encourages them to differentiate between the constant virtues passed from generation to generation, and the accepted social order existing only during a period of political authority.

### 3.4 Human Nature

During his early period, Kurosawa directed his films, paying attention to plot trajectories like other young directors. He emphasizes that human beings have to experience ups and downs to take responsibility for themselves (Tsang 2005). People not only fight for their inner ‘self-cultivation’, but also their outward practice in society. According to Neo-Confucianism, after their life experience, people become more mature and focus on deeper things that are more important than superfluous action. The philosophy of Kurosawa’s films in the later period changed from a life of taking risk for social responsibility, to a life of resigning power and dwelling in seclusion. In the later period, Kurosawa’s films appeal to people to discover their inherent human nature. His films
suggest that through this people can be purified and get rid of their ideological pollution. People can fully understand the *li* (理, principles), to find the inherent ability in themselves, and their own nature, as well as seek for the harmonious relationships between self, society, nations, all humankind, nature, the earth and the cosmos. This philosophy is derived from Neo-Confucianism, and is regarded as one that moves between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. This philosophy is used within Japanese *Shinto* to enhance belief in relationships with ancient spirits and deities. However, the essence of Neo-Confucianism is different from Taoism, Buddhism and *Shinto*.

The lotus (Figure 3.17) - whether shown as a developing bud or in full bloom, with or without a stem, is one of the most complex and prominent Buddhist symbols of purity and enlightenment. According to Buddhism, the lotus grows from the swampy depths into an exquisite and fragrant flower. Likewise, people can depart from greed, anger, and ignorance, to become pure, and blossom into enlightenment (Fo Guang Shan Nan Tien Temple Publishing Team 2000). It means that human beings have to purify their mind and transcend their social ideology, in order to recover their original natural state. However, in *Sanshiro Sugata* (姿三四郎, 1943) (Courtesy of Toho Films Co, Ltd.)
郎, 1943) (Figure 3.18), Kurosawa only loosely used the lotus as a symbol of enlightenment, in the teaching of the judo master, rather than as a symbol of purification in the philosophy of Buddhism. It is like the training method of Judo, which uses the idea from Zen Buddhism to control the fear of facing an opponent, rather than follow the teaching of Zen to recover the ‘nature of emptiness’ (空性) of Buddhism. According to Buddhism, a seeker of enlightenment must move from concern for external society to introspection, based on their ‘six consciousnesses’ (六根, including eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and control their ‘five poisons’ (五毒, including greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance and aversion) (Burtt 1955). However, in this film, the main character, Sanshiro, does not change from being socialized and fighting for social power to become introspective about the ‘nature of emptiness’ as in the teaching of Buddhism. The main character only manifests the virtue of benevolence of Confucianism to impress his enemy and to get rid of revenge and achieve his ‘self-cultivation’. The virtue of benevolence of Confucianism is different from the ‘nature of emptiness’, which is also called Buddha-nature (佛性).

In Dersu Uzala (德蘇烏扎拉, 1975) (Figure 3.19), Kurosawa created the main character of Dersu who is a hunter on the Siberian tundra, as able to think directly in response to a situation and judge by his own experience. This character is used in contrast to the captain’s character,
whose life depends on modern technology. Dersu uses the way known as ‘intuition’ (直觀), a method through which individuals discover their true human nature, enabling them to observe social situations and natural phenomena. It is a way of unifying knowledge and action (知行合一) which is accumulated from living in nature for a long period. Dersu is able to save the captain and his soldiers by his traditional and simple way that is in harmony with nature. The thinking way of ‘intuition’ has been discussed in Confucianism and was used by Chinese Chan Buddhism (禪宗) to be combined with the original Buddhism from India, which in turn influenced Japanese Zen Buddhism to be integrated into Japanese culture. It also was used by the Chinese Neo-Confucian School of Mind to discover their inherent nature and attain knowledge to be unified with action. In Dersu Uzala (德蘇烏扎拉, 1975), Kurosawa merged ‘intuition’, as the teaching of The School of Mind, and knowledge, as the teaching of The School of Li. He paid attention to experience accumulated over a long period and to inherent ability, as in the teaching of Neo-Confucianism. He also portrayed the simple lifestyle in tune with nature, as in Taoism. When Dersu says that the sun is a great man, the moon is a great man, and also the wind, river and fire, Dersu’s experience obviously displays an animism related to Shinto. The traditional East Asian values in this film include cultural assimilation of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, as well as traditional Japanese Shinto beliefs. The Eastern humanity in Kurosawa’s films stimulates audiences to engage with the principle of heaven-earth-human (ten-chi-jin, 天地人), which highlights the harmonious relationships between heaven (ten, tian, t’ien, 天, refers to the symbol of the cosmos), earth (chi, di, 地, refers to the symbol of nature,
including beings and non-beings) and humankind (*jin, ren, 人*).

During his later period, Kurosawa’s films were more diverse and had less of the spirit of *bushido* and Confucianism (Chen 2005). The external world, with which Confucianism is concerned and its connection to outward practice, was less important for Kurosawa. He began to reveal his engagement with inherent human nature as Chinese Neo-Confucianism, The School of Mind, in his films. In particular *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) and *Ran* (亂, 1985) embodies this change of focus.

In *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Figure 3.20), Kurosawa presented the notion that every person is only a character in the world. A person sometimes has to act the part of another person, and has to perform another person’s behavior intentionally. An individual may even have to think by the philosophy of somebody else in performing his character, as in the case of the shadow warrior in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980). Throughout this film, audiences will find the truth that human beings cannot be what they want to be in the beginning, as in the main character of the shadow warrior. Human beings often lose their original human nature when they face different social and political situations and cannot be themselves. This kind of philosophy was created and strongly promoted by Kurosawa in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Tsang 2005).
In the opening sequence, Shingen Takeda, the Lord of Kai, sits on a raised platform under a symbol of his clan. Two other men are dressed exactly like Shingen and sit beside him. We understand the situation from the dialogue that one is Shingen’s brother, General Nobukado, who has been functioning as the double, the shadow warrior, for Shingen in battle. The alternate shadow warrior is a thief called Kagemusha, who has been chosen from an execution ground by General Nobukado as a replacement for both of them. It is not only the sequence for introducing the main characters, but it also uses the meticulous mise en-scene for a dialectic depiction of the contradiction in human nature between an honest mind and loyalty. Kagemusha is a thief presented as the character with an honest mind; Shingen is a Lord in the person of authority, who has lost his true human nature and killed thousands of people to seek for his “peace”; Nobukado is a general who in acting as a double, the shadow warrior for Shingen, suffers in life because of loyalty. In the contrast to the opening sequence in *Ikiru* (also called *To Live*, 生之欲, 1952), Kurosawa shows us the outside appearance of the main characters first in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980). Through wearing exactly the same clothing, Kurosawa outlines that people can only distinguish human nature via their internal mind, instead of their external appearance and authority. Through the experience of Kagemusha in this film, Kurosawa raises some questions for audiences to think deeply about: Who am I? What am I? What is human nature? Do we really follow human nature with our honest mind? Do we really follow human nature to treat others with an honest mind? These are the main inquiries of the relationships between self, humankind and nature in
Neo-Confucianism -- to know one's self, to know one's true nature; to realize who and what we all are, to recognize the innate human nature, to embark on the *Tao* with the constant virtues, and to attain the harmonious relationships between heaven, earth and humankind. It is not to seek our superficial and momentary condition in contemporary society.

Kurosawa shows us that human beings can easily lose their true human nature under external authority and socialization. It is more important for people to treat others with an honest mind than to treat their lord with loyalty. People such as Kagemusha and General Nobukado usually fail to differentiate between honesty and loyalty. In the ending sequence, Kagemusha and General Nobukado die in battle under the order of their bellicose new Lord, Shingen’s son. However, they have been dying since losing their innate nature to become the shadow warrior of Shingen.

Through this film, Kurosawa challenged the meaning of loyalty in the *bushido* way, which is transformed from Confucianism, but its meaning has been changed to emphasise nationalism. Kurosawa cautiously pondered the meaning of ‘誠’ (*cheng* in Chinese or *mokoto* in Japanese means sincerity or honest mind), which should be to discover people’s innate human nature with their honest mind, to treat others in the Confucian way, rather than blindly obey their lord with loyalty, as in the teaching of *bushido*. The Japanese used the same script of ‘誠’ as Chinese Confucianism, to present the significant virtue for *bushido*, however, they changed its meaning from honesty to become loyalty and honor.
In the battle scenes in *Kagemusha* ( 影武者, 1980) (Figure 3.21) and *Ran* ( 亂, 1985) (Figure 3.22), numerous silent shots represent sacrificial soldiers, caught between two military forces, encouraging audiences to distinguish between honesty and loyalty. For example, in the battle scene in *Ran* ( 亂, 1985) when the camera pans to the corpses, the silent objects, the flying flags in the air, the sad music and unsynchronized sound allow us to feel the stillness. The war images in *Ran* ( 亂, 1985) are not intended to inspire audiences to feel that they are involved in the fighting (Tsang 2005). Instead, they provide time for audiences to develop insight into the vicissitudes of human life, which are as unchanging as natural phenomena. Thus, the silent objects and vision that is disconnected from sound in this film may perform the function of meditation, and serve to clarify the audiences’ mind at that moment. It provides the opportunity for audiences to distinguish what truth is, according to the sense of compassion in their own human nature, rather than the *giri* of *bushido*. This battle scene might inspire audiences to discover their innate good nature and engage with their humanity, rather than the accepted social order. Maybe Kurosawa’s intention is to help audiences to identify the distinction between justice, which has the premise of benevolence, and loyalty, which only depends
upon narrow nationalism. It is a way to satirize authoritarianism in the contemporary era and a way for audiences to feel introspective at the same time. Through this introspection, when audiences view the brutal battle scene in *Ran* (亂, 1985), they might be encouraged to give up their ideological position and attain the courage to react against the accepted social order. It is a common metaphor in Confucian works which is drawn on in Kurosawa’s films.

When the main characters in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) and *Ran* (亂, 1985) have to divest themselves of the power they have within society and face a new situation, they often find they must create a new philosophy to deal with their new situation. If they have religious belief, they might pursue the truth of their faith. *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) and *Ran* (亂, 1985) strongly reflect the philosophy of Neo-Confucianism influenced by Taoism, which emphasized that people often cannot do what they want to do in their lives, because of the influence of destiny. According to Taoism, people could live better if they were not disturbed from above, by government. This contrasts with the assertion of Confucianism, which claims that government has to educate their people with morality. According to Taoism, human beings live in the world with all beings and non-beings, including all things in nature. Human beings have to go back to the earth in the end. Human beings do not need to live as classical Confucian followers, who have taken too much effort to change society. Taoism asserts that the less governments do, the more people gain. People have to live in harmonious relationships between self, nature and humankind, without too many moral principles and social rules. This kind
of philosophy is manifested in the Neo-Confucian School of Mind and explored in Kurosawa’s films.

The mise-en-scene of battle and war in Kurosawa’s films conveys an inherent mission to encourage viewers’ introspection as a meditative process. It might be a way in which Kurosawa intends to make audiences become calm and peaceful in their mind also. However, is the function of meditation in Kurosawa’s films a way to purify the sense of human beings in a Zen way? Is it a method used by Taoism to let the mind rest at peace? Or is it a principle of Neo-Confucianism to remind us of the goodness in human nature? According to many film critiques, as explored in Chapter Two, we understand that Zen has been regarded as an important influence on all aspects in Kurosawa’s films. However, before answering the question we have to more deeply understand the different essence of Buddhism, Taoism and Neo-Confucianism.

In the sixteenth chapter of the Tao Te Ching (道德經) Lao Tzu (老子, ca. BC 570-BC 470) states:

Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind rest at peace. The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their return. They grow and flourish and then return to the source. Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature. The way of nature is unchanging. Knowing constancy is insight. Not knowing constancy leads to disaster. Knowing constancy, the mind is open. With the open mind, you will be openhearted. Being openhearted, you will act royally. Being royal, you will attain the divine. Being divine, you will be at one with the Tao. Being at one with Tao is eternal. And though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away (Lao Tzu 1973).
Taoism has been described as the practice of emptiness, a way for people to be at one with the Tao. However, according to Buddhism, the understanding of emptiness is a way to reach the Ultimate Nirvana. (涅槃).

The Heart of Prajina Paramita Sutra (心經, a well-known Mahāyāna Buddhist sutra) explains that:

Form does not differ from the Void, and the Void does not differ from form. Form is the Void and the Void is form. The same is true for feelings, conceptions, impulses or consciousness. O Sariputra, the characteristics of the Voidness of all Dharmas are not arising and not ceasing, not defiled, not pure, not increasing, not decreasing…There is no wisdom, and there is no attainment whatsoever. Because there is nothing to be attained, a Bodhisattva relying on Prajina-Paramita has no obstruction in his mind. Because there is no obstruction he has no fear, and he passes far beyond all confused imagination and reaches Ultimate Nirvana (Hwang 2005).

According to the Heart Sutra people can see ‘the five skandhas’ (五蘊, also called Five Aggregates, which include matter (色, body, form), sensation (受, feeling), perception (想), mental formation (行, Karma, will), consciousness (識)) which are emptiness and human beings have to overcome. There is no ageing and death. There is no ending of ageing and death. According to Buddhism, the ‘nature of emptiness’ (空性) is the original nature of human beings before they experience society, before they are socialized and establish an ego, and before they are educated. People have everything inside their original nature, even if they don’t have education and the knowledge they gain as a member of society. Everyone can recover their original nature, the ‘nature of emptiness’, thus, they can
be enlightened to become a Buddha. The practice of deep thinking to find the original ‘nature of emptiness’, was usually called *Chan* (禪) in Chinese, *Zen* (禪) in Japanese or meditation by the Western accounts. However, film critiques on Kurosawa’s films do not explain that the emptiness was not only considered by *Zen* Buddhism, but also by Taoism before Buddhism spread to China, as well as by Neo-Confucianism.

The Chinese Neo-Confucian branch, The School of *Li*, was regarded as the adaptation of some ideas from the philosophy of Taoism and Buddhism, to develop its principle of the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind. However, Zhu Xi argued that these ideas derived solely from concepts in *The Book of Changes* (易經, yi jing, the Book of I ). The School of *Li* explained that all things are brought into being by two universal elements: *qi* (氣, vital energy or physical force), and *li* (理, principle, the relational truth of nature). The source and sum of *li* is *taiji* (also called *tai chi*, 太極, Supreme Ultimate, the ideal of existence).

According to The School of *Li*, *taiji* causes *qi* to move and change in the physical world, resulting in the division of the world into the two energy modes, *yin* and *yang*, and *The Five Elements* (五行) including metal, wood, water, fire, and earth (Tu 1979). Zhu Xi discussed the difference between the *taiji* of Neo-Confucianism and the *Tao* of Taoism. He explained that where *taiji* is a differentiating principle that results in the emergence of something new, the *Tao* is something that is still and silent and operates to reduce all things to be equal and indistinguishable. He also separated his idea from Buddhism, which outlined the concept that the five skandhas were empty. Zhu Xi argued that there is a central harmony that is
not static or empty, but dynamic, and the supreme ultimate taiji is in constant movement. He outlined that human beings not only live individually, but also in society and in nature. He did not hold a traditional idea of heaven (T’ien, Tian, 天), although he practised some forms of ancestor worship. He disagreed that the souls of ancestors informed Shinto, believing instead that ancestor worship is a form of remembrance and gratitude. He practiced daily a form of meditation that was similar to, but not the same as Buddhism dhyana, Chan Buddhism or Zen Buddhism. His practice was characterized by quiet introspection that helped to balance various aspects of personality and allowed for focused thought and concentration (Gardener 1990). It required understanding of Confucianism, in the sense that it is concerned with morality and attempts to reason and be in harmony with the universe. It is a way that brought humanity closer together in harmony, which is clearly suffused within Kurosawa’s later films, including Dersu Uzala (德蘇烏扎拉, 1975), which has been discussed. It also manifested in Dreams (夢, 1990) which will be considered here in detail for us to understand the philosophical roots of the aesthetic concept of yugen (幽玄, means refined elegance, a profound, mysterious sense of the beauty of the universe, and eventually also of the sad beauty of human suffering) in Kurosawa’s films, which is discussed in Chapter Four of this research.
The eighth episode of *Dreams (夢, 1990)*, *The Village of Waterwheels* (Figure 3.23, 3.24, 3.25), is a striking evocation of aspects of the story, *Record of the Fountainhead with Peach Flowers (桃花源記)*, one of Tao Yuanming's (陶淵明, 365-427) masterpieces. The story narrated the experience of a fisherman who accidentally intrudes upon a natural spring full of peach flowers. The village in *Record of The Fountainhead with Peach flowers* was regarded as an ideal Taoist society, a harmonious traditional society as depicted in *The Village of Waterwheels* in Kurosawa’s *Dreams (夢, 1990)*. The ancients who appear in this magical place are emigrants who have escaped from the tyrannical government of Qin Shi Huang (秦始皇, BCE260-BCE210, the first emperor in China) who burned the classical books and buried Confucian scholars alive. Tao Yuanming used the prose of *Record of the Fountainhead with Peach Flowers* to satirize the society of his own time. The prose also manifests Tao Yuanming’s experience of living in a rural area after withdrawing from his official position. This
prose presents his simple life and his experience of creating a peaceful mind. The place of *Record of the Fountainhead with Peach Flowers* was represented as the image of utopia and the manifestation of the aesthetic concept of *yugen* by many other poets and painters in China and Japan. In the later period of Kurosawa’s life his films strongly evoke the philosophy of Tao Yuanming.

Kurosawa sought and received funding from a range of sources during his film making career. *Dersu Uzala* (德蘇烏扎拉, 1975) had financing from Russia, *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) had funding from America, *Ran* (亂, 1985) had money from France, *Dreams* (夢, 1990) was once again funded through the assistance of George Lucas, Francis Ford Coppola and Steven Spielberg, who all thought of themselves as Kurosawa’s students (Richie 1998). Kurosawa spent five years on average for each film in his later period, and most of the time was spent looking for finance. During the waiting time, Kurosawa wrote and developed the scripts with his scriptwriters and drank wine with them for inspiration, as in the life style of traditional poets who were usually influenced by Confucianism and Taoism in the Tang dynasty in China. He also made hundreds of detailed drawings, planning the look of every shot and in the process, designing all the sets and costumes. His experience was similar to that of Tao Yuanming. Kurosawa also lived a simple life and had the experience of creating his work with a peaceful mind during his later period. Kurosawa and his scriptwriters also focused on the works, providing images of utopia in order to inspire people to re-connect to their position in nature and in the world. The characteristics of this kind of art and life style manifested the
philosophical concept, which assimilated cultural heritage, including Taoism and Confucianism, and emphasized the harmonious relationships between nature and humankind.

In the episode *The Village of Waterwheels of Dreams* (夢, 1990), people live in the simple and traditional way in a harmonious state of original nature, in the same way as the people in the village of *Record of the Fountainhead with Peach Flowers*. The character of the old man in this episode is concerned with the effect of industrialization and modernization on the natural world and its eco-systems. Through the old man, Kurosawa showed how people should retire and dwell in seclusion for a life of meditation. He suggests that as real intellectuals, they may discover the truth and become concerned with the relationships between human civilization and nature; science and eco-systems; modern life and pollution. Through this deep thinking, people might overcome the ideology of modernization, with its underlying Western paradigms, and discover the true human position within nature, the earth and the cosmos. Thus, people will attain a true peace and become one with it - the “true”, original and natural state of human beings. According to Neo-Confucianism, the fundamental nature of human beings is a morally good nature. This is derived from the teaching of Mencius (孟子, BC 372-289) who emphasized that all human beings have a predisposition to goodness. This is not the same as the Buddhist concept that all human beings have the ability to be a Buddha, to reach enlightenment (Barry 1969). Neo-Confucianism developed this concept of inherent goodness and teaches that people should learn to judge good and evil in the manner of
the old man in *Dreams* (夢, 1990). To learn about the supreme regulatory principle means to choose the best way to live within the earth and the cosmos, and to build up harmonious relationships between self, family, society, nations, humanity, nature and the cosmos. It is the responsibility of human beings, according to the way of Neo-Confucianism, to engage in a ceaseless, unending process of creative self-transformation. The efforts to discover this principle should be a communal act and a dialogical response to the cosmos. The full humanist concern of Neo-Confucianism is anthropocosmic rather than anthropocentric (Tu 1998).

### 3.5 Conclusion: the Philosophical Concept of the Tao in the Films of Akira Kurosawa

Kurosawa's characters cultivate themselves via traditional philosophical virtues rather than the rules of the accepted order to discover their individual reward for human dignity. This displays a cultural heritage from East Asia, which was influenced by Confucianism. This cultural attitude was noted by Hajime Nakamura, who said that ‘The people to whom a human nexus is important, place great moral emphasis upon complete and willing dedication of the self to others, in a specific human collective. This attitude, though it may be a basic moral requirement among all peoples, occupies a dominant position in Japanese social life’ (Nakamura 1964, p. 414). Kurosawa inherited Confucian philosophy and manifested the principle of honesty, and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ were manifested in his films. All the best qualities of the warrior caste were represented in his
samurai films, including Seven Samurai (七武士, 1954), The Hidden Fortress (戦国英豪, 1958), Yojimbo (用心棒, 1961), and Sanjuro (椿三十郎, 1962). The heroes in these films are not only advanced in their martial art skills, but also combine Confucian philosophy with their life, as a means of approaching a perfect state of embarking on the Tao. Specifically, Kurosawa revealed the samurai concepts of humanity, especially ‘justice’ (義) and ‘benevolence’ (仁) that are infused by the Confucian philosophy of acknowledgement that all people are responsible for one another. Kurosawa emphasized that a warrior would not be considered a true samurai without having demonstrated the virtues of wisdom (智), benevolence (仁), courage (勇), justice(義) and honesty(信).

However, the characters and themes in Kurosawa’s films present not only mono geki (時裝劇, contemporary costume drama) but also jidai-geki. All interact with his contemporary environment and all are concerned with the constant issues about human nature. Through these films Kurosawa chose to confront the violence of war and chaos in society, especially as experienced by Japan after World War Two. Confucian philosophy is clearly manifested in his films, especially the samurai films during his earlier period, while the introspection of Neo-Confucian philosophy satirizing the bad side of bushido, is clearer in his films during his late period. Kurosawa’s films embody specific Confucian and Neo-Confucian values, including the cultural assimilation of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in East Asia. Due to the influence of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, Kurosawa’s films focus on the “truth” of the motif. It is a way in Confucian philosophy for audiences to experience
philosophical introspection while enjoying the works. People’s physiology, psychology and philosophy are changed in the transition from childhood to adulthood. After childhood, our socialization develops and people establish many thoughts and an ego, which reflect the values of specific ideologies of the society within which they are raised. Through his films, Kurosawa encourages his audiences to think deeply to discover the true human nature, and for people to communicate with each other with an honest mind.

During the Meiji period of modernization and westernization, Japanese people tried to repudiate the influence of Confucian philosophy. After the 1960s, the Japanese reconstructed their economy quickly from their defeat and economic failure after World War II, but they did not recover their traditional values at the same time. This is why Japanese society was filled with nihilism in the late 20th century. Teenagers did not have dreams or they had broken dreams after the impact of modernization and westernization. Facing the social problems of his time, Kurosawa imbued his films with the traditional values which he had received in his education. These traditional Japanese values derived from Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, which he and his team of scriptwriters, including Hideo Koguani (小國英雄) used to distinguish between good and evil.

Kurosawa’s humanist concerns are best and most clearly manifested in his films on the heroism of samurai characters. Although critics regard the samurai in Kurosawa’s films as heroes in the mould of cowboy characters, Kurosawa used them to demonstrate the significance of Confucian philosophy. His samurai characters play the role of teachers, instructing
his audiences on how to approach their ‘self-cultivation’ in the 20th
century and in the future.

Kurosawa’s films strongly manifest ‘The Five Human Relationships’ and
‘Confucian constant virtues’, to encourage people to challenge negative
aspects of the accepted order in his contemporary society and politics.
These significant Confucian virtues include not only wisdom, benevolence
and courage, but also justice, ritual and honesty, regarded as ‘The Five
Constant Virtues’ (五常). His films teach us that even though people many
live in a chaotic era, it is still important for them to treat each other with
an honest mind, to learn and practise these constant virtues. Through his
films, and through cultivating his audience to seek the Tao, Kurosawa also
achieves his ‘Tao of Arts’. Confucius said ‘Aspire to the Tao, align with
virtues, abide by benevolence and immerse yourself in the arts’ (Zhang
2003, p. 131).
Chapter 4
The Aesthetic Concept of Yugen (幽玄) and the Philosophical Concept of the Tao (道) in the Films of Akira Kurosawa

4.1 Introduction

Kurosawa claimed that ‘I like Japanese ceramics, Japanese painting, but I like the Noh best of all… I like it because it is the real heart, the core of all Japanese drama. Its degree of compression is extreme, and it is full of symbols, full of subtlety. It is as though the actors and audiences are engaged in a kind of contest and as though this contest involves the entire Japanese cultural heritage’ (cited in Richie 1998, p. 117). It may be in response to this statement that many film critics have discussed Kurosawa’s use of the aesthetic elements drawn from Noh theatre. However, most of them only focus on the technique and adaptation of these elements, rather than their deep aesthetic meaning, yugen (幽玄, means that refined elegance, a profound, mysterious sense of the beauty of the universe, and eventually also of the sad beauty of human suffering) and its philosophical meaning in the Japanese cultural heritage.

Yugen is the most significant aesthetic concept in Chinese poetry and painting (shanshui hua, 山水畫, also called scrolls, 卷軸畫, which includes landscape painting in black ink and colored ink), and Japanese
poetry (haiku, 日本三行俳句詩, one style of Japanese poetry with a three sentence structure), painting and Noh theatre. Film critiques do not provide an explanation of the aesthetic concept of yugen in their analysis of Kurosawa’s films. To bridge the gap in the existing literature, this chapter explores the aesthetic elements drawn from Chinese painting and Noh theatre in Kurosawa’s films. It investigates the aesthetic concept of yugen and its philosophical meaning in cultural heritage. This chapter focuses upon the deep philosophical meaning related to ‘The Five Elements’ (五行, these are metal, wood, water, fire, and earth used in ancient Chinese cosmology. It has been developed by Confucianism and Taoism and later in herbal medicine and as symbolic elements in literature, drama and other arts). It can tell us a great deal about many East Asian aesthetic concepts that rely on similar philosophical principles. The Tao of Arts is the Confucian way to share with others, through art works, the truth of philosophical concepts and the beauty of aesthetic concepts.

This chapter consists of four sections. These explore the aesthetic concept of yugen in Kurosawa’s films and its philosophical meaning in the cultural heritage. The first reviews the related film critiques to classify the important aesthetic elements drawn from Noh theatre and Chinese painting in Kurosawa’s films. The second traces the roots of yugen in the treatises of Motokiyo Zeami (世阿彌, AD 1363-1443, a Japanese aesthetcian, actor, playwright and theorizer of Noh theatre, regarded as the most significant Noh master) and the theory of ‘The Five Elements’. It explains the philosophical meaning of yugen, which is related to the Tao (dao, 道, the true way). The third analyzes the aesthetic concept of yugen in
Kurosawa’s films, including *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1951), *Ikiru* (also called *To Live*, 生之欲, 1952), *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980), *Ran* (亂, 1985), and *Dreams* (夢, 1990). It examines the incorporation of the structure of *jo-ha-kyu*. (序，破，急, opening- middle-ending, which means beginning, breaking and rapid, and also introduction, contrast and capitulation). It also explores the incorporation of spirit characters, weather and seasons, color and mise-en-scene, which are drawn from Chinese painting and *Noh* theatre in Kurosawa’s films. It investigates how Kurosawa based his work on traditional aesthetic elements to create new aesthetic techniques in his films. This is related to the theory of ‘Illusion and Reality’ by Lao Tzu (老子, ca. BC 570 - 470).

Finally, the conclusion discusses how Kurosawa uses the aesthetic elements drawn from *Noh* theatre and Chinese painting, not only in their own right, but as an introduction to and explanation of the cultural heritage of East Asia, in a broad aesthetic concept as well as its philosophical manifestation.

### 4.2 Film Critiques about Aesthetic Elements

**Drawn from Noh Theatre and Chinese Painting**

‘Kurosawa said “I feel that among Japanese today I must be the most Japanese”’ (Cited in Parker 1997). Kurosawa insists that his borrowings have always been drawn from the aesthetic elements of traditional Japanese thought. Despite this, many critics (Abate 2004; Capello 1999;
Collick 1989; Davies 1988; Jorgens 1977; Manvell 1971; Mike 2004; Simmons 1994; Simons 2005) pay more attention to the original power of Shakespeare’s drama, rather than aesthetics in Kurosawa’s films. Lai (1993), Asaumi (1997) and Fogerty (2004) analyze Shakespearean drama, interpreting psychoanalytic and filmic linguistics in terms of feminist theory, and examine the female characters in Kurosawa’s films. However, their interpretations of Kurosawa’s female characters are used to criticize Kurosawa’s punitive ignorance of women in contemporary society. Yoshimoto (2000) questions critiques using a comparative approach to study the relationship between Shakespeare’s drama and Kurosawa’s films, claiming that these critiques show the danger of value judgment. “The discourse of adaptation employed in the critical writing about Throne of Blood ensures the hegemony of Eurocentrism by asserting the values of Shakespearean essence as cultural capital, whose uniqueness can only perpetuate the reproduction of itself” (Yoshimoto 2000, p. 261) (Figure 4.1,4.2,4.3).
However, Shakespeare’s drama is not the only original work used by Kurosawa. Richie (1965) states that *The Men Who Step on the Tiger’s Tail* (踏虎尾的男人, 1945) (Figure 4.4) is the adaptation of *Kanijicho*, a highly regarded Kabuki play and, more distantly, of the Noh play *Ataka*. Both works dramatize a famous historical story in Japan about the heroic character general Benkei (弁慶) who helps his lord, Minamoto Yoshitsune, to cross a barrier manned by guards to avoid being captured and executed by his brother, Yoritomo. Price (1991) notes that the story implies powerful symbolic values of Japanese glory, namely the codes of *giri* and *bushido* in *The Hidden Fortress* (戦國英豪, 1958) (Figure 4.5). Klein (2002) describes *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1951) (Figure 4.6) as a film based on two short stories, *In a Grove* (竹藪中) and *Rashomon* (羅生門), written by the famous author, Ryunosuke Akutagawa (芥川龍之介, 1892-1927). He observes that ‘It is a tribute to *Rashomon*’s lasting power that, after fifty years, it continues to stimulate fresh, lively debate. It is also a tribute that it has spawned so many imitators’ (Klein 2002, p. 244). Although their discourse adaptation does not assert their
value as cultural capital, these critics lack discourse on the aesthetic concepts in Kurosawa’s films which are drawn from original literary works.

Many critiques about Kurosawa’s borrowing of *Noh* theatre focus on the interpretation of aesthetic elements, including *Noh* masks and characters, structure and flash-back, weather and seasons, and colors and symbols. However, they pay more attention to techniques in *Noh* and Kurosawa’s films, rather than to their deeper philosophical meaning.

**Noh Mask and Characters**

*Noh* masks are regarded by many critics as references for the character’s category, make-up and performance in many of Kurosawa’s films. For example, Sato Tadao reports that Kurosawa showed Mifune (Figure 4.7) who plays the role of Washizu as Macbeth in *Throne of Blood* (1957) the mask, *heida* (a warrior mask in *Noh* theatre).

Kurosawa also showed Yamada Isuzu (who plays the role of Lady Asaji (Figure 4.8, 4.9) as Lady Macbeth) the mask *shakumi* (a woman’s

**Figure 4.7**
Washizu as Macbeth in *Throne of Blood* (1957) (Courtesy of Toho Films Co, Ltd.)

**Figure 4.8**
Lady Asaji as Lady Macbeth in *Throne of Blood* (1957) (Courtesy of Toho Films Co, Ltd.)

**Figure 4.9**
Lady Asaji as Lady Macbeth in *Throne of Blood* (1957) (Courtesy of Toho Films Co, Ltd.)
mask in *Noh* theatre), a face of a beautiful middle-aged woman on the verge of madness (Cited in Manvell 1971). McDonald states that the witch (the spider spirit as the character of the witch in *Macbeth*) (Figure 4.10, 4.11) in the woods first looks like the mask called *yaseonna* (an old woman’s mask in *Noh* theatre) and later appears with the face of a mountain witch *yamauba* (a demon mask as the mountain demon in *Noh* theatre), which is an important piece of information. He claims that *Noh* conventions influence the acting of Lady Asaji and says ‘She does not create her own movement voluntarily. Instead, she follows the formalistic practice of a “prescribed pattern of bodily movement”. She walks like a *Noh* performer’ (McDonald 1994, p. 133). Yoshimoto gives us the historical relationships of *Noh*, *Kabuki* and Japanese film, and claims that masks, makeup, body movement and symbolic conventions of *Noh* are fully incorporated in Kurosawa’s films. He points out that the incorporation of the symbolic conventions of *Noh* in the films was perceived as an important and unique Japanese style, which was responded to by the emerging international film culture (Yoshimoto 2000).

These critics focus on identifying the name of *Noh* masks and their use for...
Kurosawa’s characters, including make-up and performance, rather than the symbolic meaning of Noh masks and characters’ categories drawn on in Kurosawa’s films. They do not explore the constructional function of characters’ categories, especially spirit characters, in Noh plays and Kurosawa’s films. The category of spirit characters is the significant aesthetics element to construct phantasmal Noh (夢幻能, mugen Noh, Noh of dreams and apparitions), which influenced the structure in Kurosawa’s films to create the aesthetic concept of yugen.

**Structure and Flash-back**

Kurosawa’s use of narrative structure drawn from Noh has been noticed by Desser (1983), Serper (2001a) and Reider (2005). Desser points out that Throne of Blood (蜘蛛巢城, 1957) opens on an image of a gravestone with a ruined castle in the background. It relates to the chorus of voice chants in Noh style. He states that Noh theatre tries to remove the concrete from its presentation through a variety of formal means. The characters are abstracted by the wearing of symbolic masks. He finds that Kurosawa tries to use the concrete nature of the cinema in similarly abstract ways, and attempts to duplicate the symbology of the Noh theatre through a substitution of nature for humanity. Desser stresses that Zen is the fundamental aesthetic influence upon many aspects of Kurosawa’s films (Desser 1983). Serper explores the relationship to Noh, including the structure and characters in Throne of Blood (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), Ran (亂, 1985), and Dreams (夢, 1990) (Serper 2000a, b, 2001a, b). He claims that Dreams (夢, 1990) especially, is the most Japanese of all Kurosawa’s films,
which conveys its deep philosophy through the important aesthetic
structure of Noh, jo-ha-kyu. Serper applies the principle of jo-ha-kyu to the
three main entities of the Noh cycle - gods, demons, and mortals (alive and
dead). He points out that ‘Its three layer structure may also reflect the
Chinese cosmological concept of Three Powers (san sai) - heaven, earth,
and human (ten-chi-jin)’ (Serper 2001a, p. 84). Reider also focuses on the
principles of jo-ha-kyu and the roles of shite (仕手, the protagonist, the
major role in Noh) and waki (脇, the secondary role in a Noh play) in
Dreams (夢, 1990), which reflected Kurosawa’s indebtedness to the
Japanese performing art, Noh.

The structure jo-ha-kyu is an important element to create the aesthetic
concept of yugen. However, Desser, Serper and Reider omit to answer
many questions. How does Kurosawa incorporate the structure jo-ha-kyu
and his characters to achieve the aesthetics concept of yugen in his films?
What is the symbol of the aesthetic elements relating to ‘The Five
Elements’? What is the philosophy behind the aesthetic concept of yugen
in his cultural heritage? They also ignore the discourse on the function of
the flash-back structure and its relationship to the characters in
Kurosawa’s films, including Rashomon (羅生門, 1951) and Ikiru (生之欲,
1952). These strongly display the characteristics of phantasmal Noh and
their philosophical meaning related to samsara (輪迴, transmigration of
the soul in the religion of Mahayana Buddhism), and its symbol of ‘The
Five Elements’.
Colors and Symbol

For Parker, the aesthetic element of color is an essential part of the imagery of *Ran* (亂, 1985), as in *Noh* drama. He notes that Kurosawa painted more than one hundred color sketches (Figure 4.12, 4.14) to design many kimonos and armour used in *Ran* (亂, 1985) (Figure 4.13, 4.15). The color element is used as a notation for immediate symbolic effect (Parker 1986). Galbraith states that the way Kurosawa used color-coded banners for the respective troops of the three brothers and Lords Fujimaki and Ayable in his haunting and in the battle scenes in *Ran* (亂, 1985) is a remarkable achievement. He describes how the sea of yellow, red, and blue flags lends the film a horrifying splendor. The extremely long lenses capture the charges of the infantry and cavalry in a
brightly hued blur of supreme violence (Galbraith 2002).

Parker and Galbraith reveal the characteristics of color elements in Kurosawa’s films and their symbolic relationship to traditional culture. However, they neglect the deep philosophical meaning of colors and their relationship to the symbols of ‘The Five Elements’. They fail to discover the innovation in mise-en-scene in Kurosawa’s films, including the battle scenes in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) and *Ran* (亂, 1985) which is based on borrowing the symbolic use of color from *The Art of War* written by Sun Tzu (孫子 BCE544-496).

**Weather and Seasons**

The ways in which weather and seasons are regarded as aesthetic elements in Kurosawa’s films has been discussed by film critics. Prince notes that the weather and seasons are passionate indices of human character in Kurosawa’s works. He explains that ‘where each of the seasons had its own affective properties, where the performance of particular Noh plays was correlated with appropriate seasons, and where one of the rules of good haiku composition..."
was that it contain a seasonal reference’ (Prince 1991, p. 17). Parker observes that weather is used to reflect the human mood which is presented as both a contrast and a parallel. There are shots of clouds (Figure 4.16) when Hidetora (the role of King Lear) (Figure 4.17) decides to split his kingdom, gathering thunderheads after banishing his youngest son, Saburo (the role of King Lear’s youngest daughter), and Tango (the role of the Kent-figure). He states that there is ‘an unearthly pale green sky with scudding shreds of cloud when Hidetora awakened from his “grave” and thinks himself in Paradise. At the peak of his mad insight, however, the sky is vivid blue - Noh symbolism for purity- with other colors standing out vividly against it’ (Parker 1991, p. 87).

For Russell (2002), the weather elements in Kurosawa’s films, including the rain in Seven Samurai (七武士, 1954) (Figure 4.18) and the heat in Stray Dog (野良犬, 1949), go beyond visual effects to the creation of a sensuous environment. She says that ‘The extreme weather conditions that appear in virtually every film give tangible form to the characters’ various trials and tribulations’ (Russell 2002, Vol. 3, p. 21).

However, why are the weather and seasons usually used as aesthetic elements in Kurosawa’s films and many traditional art forms in East Asia, including Chinese poetry and painting, and Japanese haiku, painting and Noh? What is the underling philosophical meaning of using weather and
seasons in cultural heritage? We cannot find the answers in existing film criticism, which leads to the issues that will be addressed in this chapter.

**Chinese Painting and Mise-en-scene**

In comparison with the critiques about elements drawn from *Noh* in Kurosawa’s films, there are fewer critiques about Chinese painting. Parker (1986) observes that Kurosawa often puts a shot of clouds between the major sections or uses the continued line of a gesture as a bridge across frames in *Ran* (亂, 1985). These are techniques Kurosawa may have learned from thirteenth century Japanese scroll painting. Parker notes that the style of Kurosawa’s *samurai* films is much influenced by Japanese paintings, especially the scrolls of the Heian and Kamakura periods. He explains that Kurosawa, who began his career as an artist, has made a special study of these scrolls. In *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957) (Figure 4.19, 4.20, 4.21), the art of scroll painting is represented by the starkness of the film’s dark mountains, trees and heavy
fortress architecture and the black, volcanic soil of the lava slopes of Mount Fuji, where most of it was shot. Parker explains that ‘the large area of blank in scroll painting is represented in the film by the blanketing grey fogs and swirls of sulphur fume and obscuring rain that block out parts of many of the frames’ (Parker 1997, p. 3). Russell notes Kurosawa’s wipe-out in many films, as a signature, representing the breath that animates the void. It is what marks his indebtedness to the aesthetics of silent film and the principles of montage established by the early Russian film maker, Eisenstein, which are both influenced by Chinese scrolls (Russell 2002).

However, these critics provide an important historical background. It indicates that Japanese scroll painting in the Kamakura period (鎌倉幕府, AD 1192-1333) was influenced by the style of Chinese painting in the Tang Dynasty. They omit that Chinese painting and Chinese poetry were the significant art forms which influenced the samurai, the main administrators in the Kamakura period. For Zeami, the aesthetic concept, yugen, in Chinese painting and poetry is the key reason to draw from haiku in his Noh plays, especially his phantasmal Noh (Nosco 1997). For Kurosawa, the aesthetic elements drawn from Noh theatre are the mode to create yugen in his films, also.
4.3 The Roots of *Yugen* and their Symbols in the *Tao*

The exploration of the aesthetic concept of *yugen* and its philosophical meaning in Kurosawa’s films is significant but complex. Because the manifestation of cultural heritage in Kurosawa’s films is through cross-media (Chinese painting, *Noh* theatre, and Kurosawa’s film), cross-history (from the *Tao* in ancient China, to *Noh* theatre in 14th century Japan, then to Kurosawa’s films in the 20th century in the global era) and cross-culture (from Chinese to Japanese), this study includes difficult cross-translations (from Chinese to Japanese, and then to English). Technical terminology and its accurate translation can be a frustrating obstacle to analysis and understanding of the philosophical concepts and aesthetic concepts in the films of Kurosawa. The reasons are varied. Zeami (cited in Hare 1986, p. 247) says “Secrecy itself provides the flower”, meaning that an air of secrecy surrounding performance techniques adds a kind of aesthetic mystique. Some of the obscurity of *Noh* terminology may be part of the actor’s secret in his contemporary era. The simple linguistics of related philosophical and aesthetic concepts that change over the course of hundreds or thousands of years, the need for a professional language (whether secret or not), the enormous gap between ancient philosophies, medieval aesthetics and our contemporary mentality, have all played a part in making the technical language of this research difficult to understand. Maybe it is why film critiques fail to interpret the aesthetic concept of *yugen* and its philosophical meaning in Kurosawa’s films.
The only one who uses yugen to describe the manifestation of humanism in Kurosawa’s films is Richie (1965). However, he regards yugen as the characteristics of mystery and incomprehensibility and ignores the underling philosophical meaning in cultural heritage. Tucher (1973), Burch (1979), Desser (1983) and Prince (1991) all assert that Shinto and Zen are the fundamental aesthetic influences upon all aspects of Japanese culture, including films. Noh and Kabuki were described by Jan (1989) and Brown (1994) as the Japanese traditional cultural forms that embody the principles and values of Bushido and Zen most completely and that are also intrinsic to Kurosawa’s films. However in differentiating between Buddhism and nihilism and phenomenology in Kurosawa’s films, these authors position Zen as the prime influence on all aspects of his aesthetics, his narratives, and philosophy and on the use of traditional Noh and Kabuki theatre. Apart from this research, nobody has indicated the relationship between the aesthetic concept of yugen and its philosophical meaning in relation to Shinto, Confucianism and Zen, or its influence on Noh and Kurosawa’s films in depth.

The aesthetics of Noh theatre reached a peak in Japanese history with the achievements of Motokiyo Zeami (世阿彌). Ueda (1991) points out that Zeami absorbed many heterogeneous elements from outside, such as Chinese operatic drama and Japanese folk dance, Shinto rituals and Buddhist ceremonies, and popular mimetic shows and aristocratic court music. He eventually integrated them into a single, harmoniously unified art. Zeami identified yugen as the primary aesthetic
aim of Noh theatre, a term which means an elegant, romantic, feminine, and visual beauty. Yugen came to occupy a central position in Zeami’s treatises as an especially important tool for actors of Noh.

Hare states that ‘yugen is an aesthetic ideal originating in Buddhist metaphysics, designating the mysterious and dark, a profundity not apparent on the surface. In the Japanese poetics, yugen means “mystery and depth”, and indicates a kind of veiled, deep, melancholy beauty, full of unstated overtones and richness’ (Hare 1986, p. 300). However, Hare does not point out that Buddhist metaphysics is Chinese Chan Buddhist metaphysics, which is drawn from the metaphysics of the Tao, and from Taoist and Confucian philosophy. It emphasizes the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind (ten-chi-jin, 天地人) which is given direct expression in the structure, jo-ha-kyu, of Noh.

In Komparu’s description, ‘Noh is often called “the art of yugen”, but the term yugen (profound sublimity) is not used exclusively in reference to Noh drama’ (Komparu 1980, p. 12). The term yugen, 幽玄 (you xuan) (Figure 4.22), originally found in Chinese philosophical texts, includes two words in etymological meaning: yu (幽, you) which means dim, deep or difficult to see, and gen (玄, xuan) originally describing the dark, profound, tranquil color of the universe, which refers to the Taoist concept of truth and the mysterious (Ueda 1991). The aesthetic concept of
yugen influenced the scholars of Confucianism and the monks of Chinese Buddhism to create their verse, poems and landscape painting, especially in the Tang Dynasty (唐朝, AD 618-907) and the Song Dynasty (宋朝, AD 960-1279). This in turn deeply influenced Japanese art forms, including Japanese architectural style, poetics, literature and Noh theatre (Tsukui 1967). The aesthetic concept, yugen, as manifested in Chinese poetry and Japanese poetry, represented the suffering of human beings in seeking a method of relief from their struggle against wars, as discussed in Chapter Three. The wars caused by tyrannical government and bad social order, were led by the poison of human beings, including greed, anger, ignorance, ambition, arrogance, and aversion. Kurosawa uses film to intervene progressively in the dark era caused by war, and uses those negative human emotions to create the evil qualities of characters who cause wars in his films, including the Lady Asaji (Figure 4.23) and Washizu in Throne of Blood (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), and Lady Kaede (Figure 4.24), Hidetora (Figure 4.25).
4.25) and his elder and second sons in *Ran* (亂, 1985). Kurosawa not only manifests the aesthetic concept of *yugen* in his films, but also satirizes people who have caused the wars.

The aesthetic concept of *yugen* in Chinese is 雅玄 (*you xuan, yugen*). It is used in Japanese as the same script, 雅玄, but is translated in Japanese pronunciation as *yugen*, with a different English meaning. *Yugen* is not the aesthetic concept founded by Japanese *Zen* or *Noh* theatre, but a common aesthetic concept drawn from Chinese poetry and painting. It manifests the *Tao* of Arts, which is the philosophical concept that has existed in Taoism and Confucianism for thousands of years. *Dong Zhong Shu* (董仲舒 ca. BC195–ca. 115) (Figure 4.26) was the most famous Confucian scholar who asserted the *Tao* of Arts and emphasized the concept of harmony between heaven, earth and humankind (*ten-chi-jin*, 天地人). He is also associated with the promotion of Confucianism as the official ideology of the Chinese imperial state in the Han Dynasty (漢朝, BC206-AD220). His thought integrated *yin yang* cosmology into a Confucian ethical framework. He drew from the symbols of ‘The Five Elements’ and said that ‘Human beings have the emotions of happiness, anger, joy and sadness. It is similar in nature to spring, autumn, summer and winter. Happiness is the response to spring; anger is the response to autumn; joy is the response to summer; sadness is the response to winter’ (cited in Lee
and Lou 2004, p. 566). He emphasized that the emotion of human beings in response to the changes of heaven (天, 天 refers to cosmos) is the same as the symbols of ‘The Five Elements’.

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<tr>
<td>Root Organs</td>
<td>eyes (sight)</td>
<td>tongue (speech)</td>
<td>mouth (taste)</td>
<td>nose (smell)</td>
<td>ears (hearing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td>joy</td>
<td>desire</td>
<td>sorrow</td>
<td>fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colors</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes (Keys)</td>
<td>sōjō (G)</td>
<td>ōshiki (A)</td>
<td>ichikotsu (D)</td>
<td>hyōjō (E)</td>
<td>banshiki (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tones (Intervals)</td>
<td>kakū (fourth)</td>
<td>chi (fifth)</td>
<td>kyu (tonic)</td>
<td>shō (second)</td>
<td>u (sixth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowels</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>o</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1 Correspondences of ‘The Five Elements’ Theory (Courtesy of Kunio Komparu).**

‘The Five Elements’ is an ancient Chinese cosmology that includes many symbols as shown in Table 4.1, demonstrating some of the correspondences proposed by the principles. The Tao of Arts in Confucian philosophy emphasizes the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind (ten-chi-jin, 天地人) which is given direct expression in many Japanese art forms, including the basic pattern of shodo (書道 the Tao of...
calligraphy) (Figure 4.27), the shin-gyo-so style of *kado* (花道 the Tao of flowers), (Figure 4.28) and the structure *jo-ha-kyu* of *Noh* (Komparu 1980).

Figure 4.27 The shin-gyo-so style of *shodo* (書道). An old character for “village” written in block, semi-cursive, and cursive styles (Courtesy of Kunio Komparu).

When we look at Zeami’s theoretical treatises, we find that he conceived many elements of *Noh* in conjunction with the principles of ‘The Five Elements’, for example, the five categories according to their main characters. There are gods, men, women, lunatics, or demons and the five
dans (section or units) which plot five plays on five subjects during one day. In 1423, Zeam explained in his book, Sando (The Three Ways), that the standard Noh play is to be constructed from five dans. The first is the beginning, jo. The second, third and fourth are the development, ha. The fifth is the conclusion, kyu. In the typical Noh play the first dan contains the waki’s (waki 脇, the secondary role in a Noh play) self-introduction, the second the appearance of the shite (仕手, the protagonist, the major role in Noh), the third a conversation between the two, the fourth a narrative by the shite, and the fifth a dance or mimetic performance by the shite (Hare 1986). In Noh theatre, Jo means beginning which refers to position and thus is a spatial element. Ha means break or ruin suggesting destruction of an existing state, and thus is a disordering element. Kyu means fast which refers to speed and thus is a temporal element. We might say that it allows us to apprehend the spatial balance of heaven, earth and humankind within time, seeing position in space and speed in time as one. Komparu diagrams two frameworks, the conceptual (the degree of yugen in the jo-ha-kyu system) and the structural (category and position in the program) and makes a pyramid in which a third category, whose level is that of developmental ha, is at the apex (Table 4.2).
The subject of woman provides the artistic high point of a Noh performance. The measure of a Noh play is always the degree of yugen innate in it. The jo-ha-kyu of a day of Noh plays means that the god is a gentle being in the morning; the warrior’s flashing sword reflects the blazing noonday sun; the climax of yugen comes at midday, when our energy is at its height; the depths of madness parallel the sun’s decline; and the demon is the personification of the growing darkness (Komparu 1980).

The structure of a jo-ha-kyu conveys the aesthetic concept of yugen and the philosophical concept of ten-chi-jin (天地人) which emphasizes the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind. The principle of jo-ha kyu was applied to many art forms of traditional music, dance, and drama,
including Kabuki, the puppet theatre (Bunraku), Japanese dance (Buyo), and the music of the shamisen, the koto, and shakuhachi flute (Komparu 1980). The symbol of jo-ha-kyu in different art forms is related to the same theory of ‘The Five elements’. Although the significance of the relationship of the cycle to the time of day is weakening in the films of Kurosawa, the principle related to the theory of ‘The Five elements’ still influenced the structure, categories of characters, colors and mise-en-scene in his works, including Rashomon (羅生門, 1951), Ikiru (生之慾, 1952), Throne of Blood (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), Kagemusha (影武者, 1980), Ran (亂, 1985), and Dreams (夢, 1990).

4.4 The Aesthetic Concept of Yugen in the Films of Akira Kurosawa

The Structure of Jo-ha-kyu

Kurosawa transformed the structure of jo-ha-kyu to create different kinds of flash-back in many films. For example, in Rashomon (羅生門, 1951) Kurosawa adapted two stories, In a Grove (竹藪中) and Rashomon (羅生門) written by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, and combined them with the structure of jo-ha-kyu to create the aesthetic concept, yugen. However, Kurosawa reveals the same theme as Ryunosuke Akutagawa, to discriminate between “truth” (誠, honesty) and “reality” through repeated differing perspectives on a single event.
*In a Grove* (竹藪中) is a story about a crime that has taken place in a forest, about a noblewoman who has been raped by a bandit and her *samurai* husband is murdered. It is narrated by six characters including a woodcutter, a Buddhist monk, a bandit, a policeman who captured the bandit, a noblewoman, her mother, and a medium who presents her *samurai* husband in court.

*Rashomon* (羅生門) (Figure 4.29, 4.30, 4.31) is a story about a man sheltering from a downpour under the gate known as Rashomon. While worrying about life without his job, the man sees an old woman who is pulling hair from corpses of people who died in wars, earthquakes, crime and murders. In the beginning he is angry with the old woman, and with his honest mind, he blames her behavior as lacking morality. However, in the end he loses his moral judgment of the old woman and takes all the clothes from her to sell to relieve the suffering and hungry, leaving the old woman sobbing in the dark night.

If we analyze the structure of Kurosawa’s film, *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1951)
by jo-ha kyu, we can find that the opening, as jo, is a story about a
woodcutter and a Buddhist monk sheltering from a downpour and
discussing the story with a stranger under the gate called Rashomon (羅生門). The time is after the event of a murder in the woods, while returning
from the court hearing. The place is the gate, Rashomon (羅生門)
combined with three different Chinese scripts 羅 (luo, translated as Ra
referred to 阿修羅, shura, sometimes written as ashura), 生 (sheng,
translated as sho, means born or reborn) and 門 (men, translated as mon,
means gate). The etymology of Rashomon (羅生門) means the gate for
shura to pass to a different world and state of being. In Buddhist theories
of transmigration, samsara (輪迴, transmigration of the soul in the
religion of Mahayana Buddhism), the shura represented one of ‘six
general realms of existence’ (六界, In Buddhist cosmology the six realms
includes devas, shura, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings)
through which the souls of living beings must pass. In Noh theatre, the
term was applied to plays dealing with the spirits of dead warriors who
relive their suffering in the realm of the shura (Rimer and Yamazaki
1984)). In the film, the gate, Rashomon (羅生門), is a ruined gate of a
Buddhist temple, which symbolizes a dark era without deity in the world.
The downpour is symbolic in relating to ‘The Five Elements’ as sad
emotion in response to heaven (ten, tian, t’ien, 天, it refers to the symbol
of the cosmos) that is crying for the suffering of human beings caused by
wars, earthquakes, crimes and murders. Kurosawa introduced the
background of the film that is in a dark era, through the dialogue of
characters and the symbolic setting in this scene. He represents the
philosophical concepts of Confucianism and Buddhism through the
symbols of the setting, such as the gate Rashomon (羅生門), and the natural elements such as the layout downpour.

The middle, as ha, includes three layouts of flash-back. The first layout of flash-back narrated by the woodcutter is about what he finds in the woods. The second layout of flash-back is what he hears from interrogations taking place in a sunny courtyard where a judge is positioned without movement. However, we can’t be sure we are hearing anything real from these six narrators, including three main characters in the event (the bandit (Figure 4.32), the noblewoman (Figure 4.33) and her samurai husband (Figure 4.34) who is presented by a medium) and three main witnesses (the woodcutter, the Buddhist monk and a policeman who captured the bandit). The third layout of flash-back is the action that takes place in the woods, the event itself. We are not seeing what really happened; we are seeing what the narrators report.

The bandit, the noblewoman and her samurai husband who is murdered,
are the three main characters in the event, and seem to take on the role of

*shite*, the leading characters who are the protagonists in *Noh*. The woodcutter (Figure 4.35) and the medium (Figure 4.36), who presented the spirit of the *samurai*, can be regarded as taking the role of *waki*, the subordinate character.

In *Noh* plays, the Buddhist monk usually performs the subordinate role and introduces the lead character in the play. The spirit usually appears first in his dream.

For this reason, the play is categorized as phantasmal *Noh*. The lead character appears in the dream of the Buddhist monk and narrates a recollection of a profound love story of his/her previous life. The spirit explains why he/she can’t enter the realm of Buddha after passing away and why his/her spirit still wanders and suffers in the world. The spirit narrates the torments of the story or feeling of his/her previous life, before disappearing in the dream of the Buddhist monk. This kind of narration is a special characteristic of the structure of phantasmal *Noh* (Lin, 2005).

Even though Kurosawa did not arrange the lead character to appear in a dream, or the subordinate to sleep and wake up, the three layouts of flash-back in *ha* of this film strongly represent the characteristics of the structure of phantasmal *Noh* and their philosophical meaning related to *samsara*. 
The ending, as kyu, is a return to the gate, Rashomon (羅生門). The story is about the woodcutter who blames the three main characters who are dishonest in their interrogations. The stranger who takes the baby’s clothes blames the woodcutter, who also does not tell the truth. After the woodcutter decides to raise the baby, the priest rediscovers his confidence in humanity. He gazes at the woodcutter with the baby, leaving from the gate, under the sunlight shining through the clouds.

After viewing the four versions, we find that the four narrators, including the three main characters and the woodcutter, have not told the truth of reality. Kurosawa implied that the truth of reality does not exist independent of human consciousness, identity, and perception, but the truth of morality is never lost even in the dark era. It is why the woodcutter, who has lied, still passes through the gate, Rashomon (羅生門) (Figure 4.37), to a different world and state of being. Kurosawa emphasized that benevolence is the truth of morality which is inherent in human beings. Only by rediscovering the inherent morality with an honest mind, can human beings pass from the dark era. It is the truth that Kurosawa highlighted in this film through repeated differing perspectives on a single event.

Kurosawa transformed the structure of jo- ha- kyu to create different kinds
of flash-back in many films. In *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1951) the flash-back is narrated about a single event by three witnesses and three main characters, with multiple and contradictory points of view. In *Ikiru* (生之慾, 1952) (Figure 4.38) the flash-back is narrated by many witnesses from multiple but harmonious points of view, to provide information about the main character’s activities before death. In *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957) the flash-back is narrated by chanting in the opening and at the ending, to form a cycle. In *Dreams* (夢, 1990) (Figure 4.39) the flash-back is through the subtitles by the narrator. The ‘I’ character plays the role as *waki*, who in eight dreams meets a different *shite* performing his/her own story. The theme of eight episodes is related to Kurosawa’s experience in his own life.

Many critics, including Tucher (1973), Burch (1979), Desser (1983) and Prince (1991), point out that the structure of *jo, ha, kyu* in *Noh* and Kurosawa’s films is influenced by *Zen* Buddhism. However, they fail to recognize that *Zen* Buddhism is only one of a number of forms of Buddhism in Japan. Other sects of Buddhism in Japan, including The Pure
Land and Nichiren, emphasize the certainty of salvation and also its potential availability to all (Kitagawa 1966). These sects identify the transcendent concept as the reason for people to raising their vision above the level of this material world, described as the transformation from “this shore” to the “other shore” (McMullin 1984, p. 280). The Buddha-nature (佛性) (Figure 4.40) is regarded as the foundation of people’s own being (Dumoulin 1963). It is inherent in all things. Zen Buddhism is influenced by Chan Buddhism and gained in popularity during the Kamakura and Ashikaga period. In contrast to the older Tendai and Shingon sects, Zen Buddhism emphasizes that it is awakened in meditation, but is ultimately demonstrated in all areas of life, including artistic creativity (Ellwood and Pilgrim 1985). The latter includes Zeami’s Noh and Kurosawa’s films.

Kurosawa’s narration not only creates the complicated structure of flash-backs but also injects them with dramatic power. Kurosawa positions characters in new spaces for flash-backs to unfold. The flash-backs in Rashomon (羅生門, 1951) are used to reveal the lies or the distortion of reality created by the selfishness of the various characters. The structure of flash-backs in Ikiru (生之慾, 1952) reveals the sense of destiny, which led the character to go on to accept his death in a positive way. It presents the struggle of the character’s life, and how he continued to resist the official bureaucracy from the moment of his enlightenment to the very end. The
important thing that Kurosawa seems to try to convey in his different kinds of flash-back is similar to Zeami’s phantasmal Noh. In dealing with human experience from the perspective of death, the majority of ghosts or spirits, and supernatural characters are not these to illuminate the other world; instead, they are to enrich and deepen our understanding of our life and the importance of living with others with an honest mind. Kurosawa presented the structure of flash-backs to become the philosophical concept in the Confucian way and created the feeling of yugen inside his films. This not only displays the suffering of human beings, but also encourages people to live with benevolent virtue and an honest mind in a positive way. It is also the way for people to pass from “this shore” to reach “the other shore”.

**Spirit Characters**

In Kurosawa’s films there are many spirit characters. These come from the concept of Noh, Kabuki or the animism of Shinto. The concept of the spirit character in Noh or Kabuki is different to the concept of a ghost in Chinese and western culture. The Chinese concept of ghosts involves absolute division into either human beings or spirits. The characters of “Fox” (Figure 4.41), “God and goddess of heaven” (Figure 4.42).
of heaven” (Figure 4.42) and “Snow Woman” in *Dreams* (夢, 1990) and the “Spider Spirit” (Figure 4.43) in *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), could not be classified as good or evil ghosts. We have to look back to Japanese traditional culture, which respected, revered and was close to nature, and the relationship between human beings and nature in ancient times. The spirit is regarded as the incarnation of the forest. The spirit characters in Kurosawa’s films are often used to address this (Lin 2005).

In the Japanese tradition there are different categories of gods and human beings, including spirits. Kunio Yanagita, a famous folklorist in Japan, has distinguished between ghosts that can appear to anyone and spirits that must appear to a certain person in his *YoKai Dangi*. This distinction is appropriate for a study of folklore but not necessary for *Noh*. Komparu classifies the different types of ghosts and spirits of *Noh* shown in Table 4.3 ranging from godly at the top to demonic at the bottom (Komparu 1980).
The spirits in Kurosawa’s films are like the spirit characters in *Noh* who are not the one-eyed, long-necked spooks of popular ghost tales, but rather apparitions of the dead or transfigurations of non-human beings into human form. They always come with some purpose. For example, the style of make-up of the foxes in the episode, *Sunshine Through The Rain, of Dreams* (夢, 1990) (Figure 4.44), reminds audiences of fox characters in *Kyogen* (狂言). *Noh* are tragic plays and *Kyogen* are comic plays, which are performed along with *Noh* plays during the intermission. Fox characters are common in *Kyogen*. The performance of foxes in this episode was transformed from the format of...
modern dance. However, the concept of the body movement, the motif and the mise-en-scene, were transformed from the elements of Noh and Kyogen. Song and dance in this episode, including the movement of characters, were emphasized as important skills of Noh (Lin 2005). The symbol of the fox characters is applied in many forms of Japanese literature and drama, including Noh plays and Kurosawa’s films; however, it refers to many different meanings within the cultural heritage of East Asia. In the animism of Shinto, fox characters are regarded as the incarnation of the forest, as noble spirits with supernatural power. In this traditional Japanese belief, human beings should respect them otherwise they will be punished and led to misfortune, as in the dialogue of the episode, Sunshine Through The Rain. In Chinese folklore, which influenced Japanese belief and literature, the fox characters are regarded as the evil spirits of living people who are malevolent, as in the dialogue in Ran (亂, 1985). When the general tries to admonish his lord in Ran (亂, 1985) (Figure 4.45), he uses a metaphor drawn from the Chinese folklore, and regards Lady Kaede as the evil fox. He says ‘There are many foxes hereabouts. It is said they take human form. Take care, my lord. They often impersonate women. In central Asia, a fox seduced King Pan Tsu and made him kill one thousand people. In China, he married the emperor of Yin (殷紂, the last emperor of the Yin Dynasty, whose name stands for tyranny) and ravaged the land. In Japan, as Princess Tamamo, he caused great havoc at court. He became a white
fox with nine tails. Then they lost trace of him. Some people say he settled
down here. So beware, my lord, beware’. The fox characters in
Kurosawa’s films present a contradictory symbolism. On one side, they
mean deification which is sacred, inviolable, holy and sacrosanct. On the
other side, they mean an evil spirit as a demon.

The scene of the tunnel in the
fourth episode *Tunnel in Dreams*
(夢, 1990) (Figure 4.46, 4.47,
4.48) seems to apply to the
symbol of the bridge in *Noh*
theatre, which is an important
element in the structure of the
*Noh* stage. The bridge of the *Noh*
stage is situated to the west of the
main stage, which reflects the
concept of the Western Paradise
in Pure Land Buddhism. It is
adjoining the main stage and the
mirror room, the rest room for
actors behind the curtain. In this
representation, the bridge is a
path which connects the *nether*
world (冥界, the world of spirits) and the real world. The five-colored
curtain between the bridge and the mirror room acts as a symbol of
unbounded nature (earth, water, fire, wind, and air) separating the two
worlds in accordance with ‘The Five Elements’ (Komparu 1980). Through the bridge the spirit could come to the real world from the nether world. The monk or certain special people could meet the spirit. Crossing the space was an important characteristic of Noh, which was designed to represent the communication between spirits and human beings. The concept of the tunnel in *Dreams* (夢, 1990) is the representation of the bridge in Noh, which connected our world and the world of spirits. The spirit character is the extending medium between life and death or the real world and the nether world. All the tension of the story was built up within the spirit characters. The tunnel is designed to be the medium for the spirit to cross between the two spaces. The tension and conflict of the story is built up around the conflict between life and death, or this world and the other world, or the field of war and the home country. The representation of the tunnel and the spirit characters in *Dreams* (夢, 1990), not only display Kurosawa’s narrative style of art expressly drawn from the aesthetic elements of Noh, but also has taken a further step, to criticize the cruelty of war (Lin 2005).

**Weather and Seasons**

Weather and seasons are usually used as the aesthetic elements in Kurosawa’s films, as in many traditional art forms in East Asia. They include Chinese landscape painting and poetry. They influenced Japanese painting, *waka* (和歌, Classical Japanese poetic form of 31 syllables arranged 5-7-5-7-7. The text of *waka* is used in Noh plays as *waka shodan*, which consists of a waka or part of one), *haiku* (日本三行俳句詩, one
kind of Japanese poetry with a three sentence structure), scroll painting and Noh. The function of the aesthetic element of weather and seasons in Kurosawa’s films is the same as the function in these art forms.

Chinese poetry composition includes dividing the poem into sections, by omitting some bridging words. Its construction is different to western poetry. The omitted words in poetry encourage audiences to enter meditation while they are viewing the art works. It is the same function as that of the empty space in Chinese painting and the fog in the forest scenes in *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957) (Figure 4.49) and *Dreams* (夢, 1990) (Figure 4.50) and the smog in the war scenes in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Figure 4.51) and *Ran* (亂, 1985) (Figure 4.52). They all create the same function for audiences.

Their representation and symbolism are related to the theory of ‘Illusion and Reality’ written by Lao Tzu (老 子, ca. BC 570- 470). Chen explains that the concept of illusionism is to
filter out the “trace of meaning”. There are two parts to understand this process. The first is to filter out the outside construction of the work, including the techniques and theories of art. The second is to filter out inherent values within images, including the subjective point of view of the artist. In a foggy scene, audiences must be active in creating the meaning of an image using their imagination (Chen 2005). This is the function of meditation, which allows audiences to be involved in the process of creating the meaning of art works while they are viewing them. The concept of the aesthetic element of weather and seasons is not only a representation of nature, but also an expression of human emotion (including the artist and the audience) in response to nature. It is a sign of spiritual force and became the consistent signature of Kurosawa’s films. The meditation is applied to manifest the *yugen* quality, which accuses human beings of suffering caused by wars and criminal acts.

Kurosawa used the theory of ‘Illusion and Reality’ to create a dynamic inner tension. It can be seen in many climactic scenes of battles, including the confrontation between Sanshiro acted by Susumu Fujita, and Higaki in *Sanshiro Sugata* (姿三四郎, 1943) (Figure 4.53). Sanshiro moves himself according to the teaching of Zeami in his work *On the art of the Noh drama*. Zeami said ‘He moves himself about in a powerful way, he must stamp his foot in a gentle way. And when he stamps his feet strongly, he must hold the upper part of his body quiet’
(Rimer and Yamazaki 1984, p. 58). He also noted that ‘when an actor opens his hands quickly, he should finish the gesture by closing them in a slow and heavy fashion; when he extends his hands gravely, however, he should then finish by withdrawing them quickly’ (Rimer and Yamazaki 1984, p. 191).

The aesthetic element of weather and seasons used in Kurosawa’s films shows not only an indebtedness to traditional art forms, but also the incorporation of new film techniques created by Kurosawa. For example, the fog is an important tonal element in *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), because the story began in the past. The fog allows the transformation of time and space. The fog and rain accompanied by thunder in the forest in which the characters were lost creates the symbolic atmosphere of the scene. Galbraith (2002) points out that Kurosawa’s use of fog to dissolve scenes in the beginning and the end of *Throne of Blood* (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), when we see a stone marker and the foundation stones of Cobweb Castle, place us suddenly in medieval Japan. He states that ‘As the story shifts back and forth in time, it is the mist that serves as transition, and throughout the pictures it is within the murky fog where time and space shift, enhancing its nightmare-like imagery’ (Galbraith 2002, p. 233). Liao claimed that ‘Kurosawa controlled all these elements with greater skill than other directors. It was not only the transforming of time and space, but also the matching of the feeling’ (Liao 2005). The most difficult aspect in editing the montage of Kurosawa’s films was to match the feeling of weather among the shots in each mise-en-scene. For example in *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1951) (Figure 4.54, 4.55, 4.56, 4.57), the woodcutter is
walking and going off happily to work in the woods. The music conveys his pleasure in going to put in a good day’s work. The music presents his mood and builds the underlying drama that will soon emerge. The music, which is similar to *Ravel’s Bolero*, the striding woodcutter and the glint of sunlight through the trees, all create the striking atmosphere of the passing scenes. Most of his mise-en-scene are focused on the characters or the personality of characters, but this scene has surpassed it. The important part in this scene is the creation of atmosphere. The mise-en-scene has become the real symbolic character. Kurosawa uses multiple cameras to shoot this scene and repeated some shots in the film from different angles, but it’s difficult to find them (Liao 2005). Lin, a senior cinematographer, states that ‘The shots which I admire in *Rashomon* (羅生門)’
門, 1951) are the shots of sun in the forest. As the woodcutter is moving through the forest, the camera pans to follow him. The crew set up a long track in the forest and shot many times from different angles. It shows us the passing trees overhead and the glint of sunlight through the branches of the trees. It looked like an easy way to shoot, but it was a difficult technique at that time’ (Lin 2005).

Wong claims that ‘Kurosawa created a series of significant aesthetics which transformed traditional Japanese arts to become modern film form. For example, the forest in Rashomon (羅生門, 1951) (Figure 4.58, 4.59), photographed by Kazuo Miyagawa (宮川一夫), presented beautiful images of light/shadow and the poetic atmosphere of the wilderness’ (Wong 2005). Wong observes that the composition of the shot in which the actress tried to kill the bandit, looks like a Japanese print. It is composed using the collar shape of the costume, and make-up in the style of the Tang Dynasty in China, and the action of the short knife which is held by the actress. Every position of the actors and actresses was carefully formulated for accuracy. The composition of Kurosawa’s shots was strictly controlled by the principle of the golden ratio of cinematography (Wang 2005).
Kurosawa transformed concepts from *The Art of War* written by Sun Tzu (孫子 BCE544-496), an ancient Chinese military strategist, to create the huge spectacle of a war scene in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Figure 4.60) and *Ran* (亂, 1985). The concept in chapter seven of *The Art of War* stated that ‘Let your rapidity be that of the wind, your compactness that of the forest. In raiding and plundering be like fire, in immovability be like a mountain’ (故其疾如風，其徐如林，侵略如火，不動如山) (Wang 2002, p. 573) (Figure 4.61, 4.62). Kurosawa applied the concept visually to the military flags in *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980). The words in this concept - ‘wind’ (風), ‘forest’ (林), ‘fire’ (火) and ‘mountain’ (山) - were used to symbolise different troops in different colors, including ‘wind’ as the cavalry in black, ‘forest’ as the infantry in green, ‘fire’ as the artillery in red and ‘mountain’ as the generals in purple. The statement in the text ‘in immovability be like a mountain’ means that the commander must not waver, as he has...
confidence in the battle. The commander has to remain as steadfast as a mountain, otherwise he would not give orders accurately and would lose the confidence of his army. The mise-en-scene and narrative structure of the battle scenes in Kurosawa’s *Kagemusha* ( 影武者 影武者 影武者 影武者, 1980) (Figure 4.63) and *Ran* (亂, 1985) (Figure 4.64) includes many high angle shots to show the battle formation. It sets up the direction of battle and the colors of different armed forces as the prominent elements for audiences. Relying on the colors of flags and costumes of the armed forces, audiences can recognize different armed forces and follow the conduct of battle.

Deborah (1997) and Pletch (2005) point out that Van Gogh (梵谷, 1853-1890), the Dutch artist, influenced Kurosawa; however, they neglect to acknowledge that a lot of painters in Europe were influenced by Japanese prints, including Van Gogh (Figure 4.65, 4.66). In fact, during his days in Paris, he was...
enamored of Japanese prints, especially Hokusai’s work (Reider 2005). Japanese prints are influenced by Chinese painting, but there are differences between Japanese prints and Chinese landscape painting. Especially after the Song Dynasty (宋朝, AD 960-1279) and the Ming Dynasty (明朝, AD 1368-1644), Chinese painting was transformed more by literature, but presented less of applied arts. Japanese arts were more influenced by the Chinese arts of the Tang Dynasty (唐朝) and presented the powerful characteristic of the applied arts. The emblems of Japanese clans, including the flags, were influenced by and transformed from the Tang Dynasty. The applied arts in Japan were more powerful than those in China. For example, in Ran (亂, 1985), the hunting scene (Figure 4.67, 4.68) represented the great competition of hunting. The colors of the costumes included blue, green, sapphire blue and black, like the

Figure 4.67
Ran 亂, 1985
(Courtesy of Greenway Film Production, Hearald Ace Int, and Nippon Herald Films, Inc.)

Figure 4.68
Ran 亂, 1985
(Courtesy of Greenway Film Production, Hearald Ace Int, and Nippon Herald Films, Inc.)

Figure 4.69
Ran 亂, 1985
(Courtesy of Greenway Film Production, Hearald Ace Int, and Nippon Herald Films, Inc.)
colors in Japanese prints. The colors of the patterns in the costume of the court jester presented a powerful design as well. The red costume balanced the yellow emblem of the moon in the background. The different colors of the costumes of the three brothers represented their different personalities. Wong states that ‘In *Ran* (亂, 1985) (Figure 4.69, 4.70, 4.71), Kurosawa designed the robes (織錦, Noh costume, similar to the Japanese kimono), with red and sapphire blue. It is a risk for directors to deploy colors like that, but he balanced them with other colors. He used colors that had a strong impact, but were not excessive. It is an admirable skill of Kurosawa. He knew how to deploy the colors of objects within the background of the scene. Kurosawa was a leader of the representation of color’ (Wang 2005).

The symbolic colors of ‘The Five Elements’ theory in China are shown in the Figure 4.72. Metal was represented by platinum as white, wood as blue, water as black, fire as red, and earth as yellow. Chen claims that Kurosawa transformed the traditional colors from ‘The Five Elements’ theory to
create his composition and deploy colors in his films. On the basis of the concept of traditional aesthetics, Kurosawa deploys costumes among characters, at the same time considering the costumes within the setting of the scenes, and the chemical effects of developing the film footage, which he had tested himself. Wong reveals that Kurosawa creates the “color of Kurosawa”. He made paintings and drawings with wax pencils or oil colors before shooting, to experiment with effects for his films. Wong says that ‘Kurosawa was a genuinely creative film-maker and was also an artist who changed the aesthetics of film. He followed his inclinations to create colors, complementary colors and colors in contrast, without fixed rules’ (Wang 2005). Kurosawa created a new style by transforming the traditional Japanese style, to modern visual design in his films.

4.5 Conclusion: Truth and Beauty in the Way of East Asian Culture

Many arts in East Asia have followed a similar philosophy drawn from the Tao, but created different forms within their cultural milieu, in their ways of expression and communication. As Ueda states, ‘many Japanese arts are composite arts, and in some cases they are uniquely Japanese. Literature and painting are united in the pictorial novel; painting and music are at one in calligraphy; poetry, drama, dance and sculpture are fused in the Noh’ (Ueda 1991, p. 226). It may explain Noh, Chinese painting and other traditional art forms have influenced Kurosawa’s films.
The meaning of *yugen* in *Noh* theatre is the beauty, not merely of appearance, but of spirit, to reflect the *Tao* in Confucian philosophy through the symbols of ‘The Five Elements’. Zeami used the transformation from the structure of ‘The Five Elements’ to symbolise the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind via the process of *samsara*. *Noh* is deeply influenced by the process of *samsara* of Buddhism in the aspects of narration, but the concepts of value and philosophy are manifested in the Confucian way. During the Edo period (江戸時期, about 17th century), *Noh* became the ‘official property’ of the Tokugawa shogunate (德川幕府) for the *samurai*. The *samurai* characters were important roles which Kurosawa liked to create in his films. *Noh* belonged to the *samurai* and was under the control of the shogunate at that time. Similar plots could be seen in many films or other arts formats that reflect the Edo period, including *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980) (Figure 4.73, 4.74, 4.75).

*Samurai* usually performed *Noh* when they had to make an important decision. It means that *Noh* was the important art form and method for the
Samurai to control their spirit and body to achieve harmony. Zeami’s idea of yugen seems to combine its conventional meaning of elegant beauty with its original meaning of the profound, mysterious truth of the universe. Zeami emphasized that yugen is the beauty of the innermost nature of things, whereas beauty is the color of truth. The color of truth manifests the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind.

Kurosawa borrowed aesthetic elements drawn from Noh theatre and Chinese painting in his films, including Rashomon (羅生門, 1951), Ikiru (生之慾, 1952), Throne of Blood (蜘蛛巢城, 1957), Kagemusha (影武者, 1980), Ran (亂, 1985) and Dreams (夢, 1990). Kurosawa incorporated the structure jo-ha-kyu and characters, especially spirit characters, drawn from Noh theatre to strongly display the characteristics of phantasmal Noh. This strongly represents the philosophical meaning related to samsara, which was presented from the beginning to the end, and retribution when we see the experience of good and evil characters. There are a lot of concepts and values drawn from the philosophy of Buddhism and Confucianism in his films. The aesthetic elements of weather and seasons, drawn from Chinese painting in Kurosawa’s films, are regarded as the narrative elements used to create the mood and emotion for characters and audiences during shifting time and space. Its representation and symbolism are related to the theory of ‘Illusion and Reality’ written by Lao Tzu (老子, ca. BC 570 - 470). The colors of setting and costume used in Kurosawa’s films, especially the battle scenes in Kagemusha (影武者, 1980) and Ran (亂, 1985) which are based on the symbolic colors from The art of War written by Sun Tzu (孫子), are not only related to the symbols of ‘The Five
Elements’, but are also used to create his composition of mise-en-scene in film.

Kurosawa not only borrows the aesthetic elements from traditional cultural forms, but also develops them into modern filmic aesthetics. These aesthetic elements drawn from Noh and Chinese painting, in relation to the symbols of ‘The Five Elements’, not only achieve the aesthetic concept, yugen, in his films, but also imply the harmony between heaven, earth and humankind. It is the Tao of Arts in East Asian culture that emphasize that the beauty of arts should manifest the truth in the concept of philosophy. Kurosawa’s borrowing of aesthetic elements from traditional aesthetics is not only in their own right, but as an introduction to the cultural heritage of East Asia, in a broad aesthetic concept and its philosophical manifestation.

Audiences, including film critics, may not fully understand if they are unaware of the philosophical or aesthetic meaning, especially when the culture is markedly different from their own. This is because many artists in Japan neglect verbal explanation about their works. Even when they wrote about their art works, they kept it as secret as Zeami. Zeami made Noh a more subtle form of drama. His association with Nijo Yoshimoto (1320-88), the third Shogun’s cultural advisor, who was an aristocratic, highly intelligent and sophisticated poet, contributed to Zeami’s subsequent achievement in refining Noh. Zeami wrote many treatises covering a wide range of subjects, including the history of Noh theatre and its meaning. These treatises emphasized concepts that culminate in
discussion of the creation of the most delicate hana (flower), the maximum beauty, and contain long discussions of yugen. These treatises had been treated as secret from the 13th century until 1906 (Poorter 1986). Many artists in Japan prefer to share human feelings sincerely through their works, rather than to analyze what they have done. Kurosawa said that ‘Film should be more related to human feelings, more candidly’ (cited in Hirano 1986, p. 24). He stated that ‘I believed that you should say everything you have to say in the movies and keep quiet afterward’ (cited in William 1980, p. 91).
Chapter 5  Conclusion

Through Kurosawa’s films, this research seeks to address the failure of film criticism to encompass East Asian philosophical and aesthetic concepts. It draws heavily upon Confucian philosophy and examines its manifestation within Kurosawa’s work. It does so through this text and its accompanying documentaries.

This research explores the truth of the constant virtues and the beauty of yugen in Kurosawa’s films. It examines how Kurosawa drew upon traditional arts, including Noh theatre and Chinese painting, to shape the narrative elements in his films. In exploring the manifestation of Confucian philosophy in Kurosawa’s films, it focuses particularly upon the deep essence of ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’. Confucianism claims that art works should not only seek to achieve perfect technique to surprise audiences with originality, but should also provide philosophical enlightenment, to awaken the human spirit in terms of benevolence, justice and other constant virtues.

This study may be useful in three ways. First, it may help readers to gain a deeper understanding of Confucian philosophy, and the cultural heritage of East Asia. By understanding the philosophical and aesthetic concepts underpinning Kurosawa’s films, readers may come to know the aims and methods with which people produced arts in the Confucian way. Those
who carefully explore the Confucian philosophy of arts may also be rewarded with a glimpse into their own creative processes. Second, an exploration of Kurosawa’s methods and concept of film aesthetics may contribute to contemporary film theory, which has barely engaged with East Asian cultural values. Third, the research has an applied visual outcome in the form of DVDs - the two documentaries. These may provide a resource for film education in film institutes and universities. They also furnish a resource for study of Kurosawa’s films and hopefully advance the quality of professional film education through the dissemination of knowledge about the Confucian cultural heritage and Kurosawa’s masterly use of it.

The main limitation of this research is that, by using a Confucian theoretical framework, it has involved extensive cross-cultural reading, and therefore terminological interpretation. Some terms used have been translated in various ways in the existing literature, because of the different sources drawn from Japanese and Chinese texts. The English translations depend upon different interpretations across Japanese, simple Chinese and traditional Chinese. This may confuse readers. In order to reduce possible confusion, the researcher has included the source of translation in the original literature. For this reason, a glossary is included as an appendix, with an explanation of meaning, as well as a phonetic and traditional Chinese transcription.

Technical terminology can be a frustrating obstacle to analysis and
understanding of the philosophical and aesthetic concepts in the films of
Kurosawa. The reasons are varied. Zeami (cited in Hare 1986, p. 247) said
“Secrecy itself provides the flower”, meaning that an air of secrecy
surrounding performance techniques adds a kind of aesthetic mystique.
Some of the obscurity of Noh terminology must be part of the actor’s
secret in his contemporary era. The basic linguistics of related
philosophical and aesthetic concepts in this research, which have changed
over the course of hundreds or thousands of years, the need for a
professional jargon (whether secret or not), the enormous gap between
ancient philosophies, medieval aesthetics and our contemporary mentality,
have all played a part in making the technical language of this research
difficult. It is hoped that the explanation in the glossary will help readers
to clear the muddy water and assist other researchers to undertake further
study.

This research includes not only the written text but also documentaries.
Due to the constraints of both formats, unfortunately but inevitably, some
omissions had to be made in the choice of Kurosawa’s thirty films. It is
also regrettable that this research does not cover music and sound. This is
due to the researcher’s limited knowledge and the fact that they have
already been examined in detail by Nishimuwa, in his book, The sound
with the vision of Akira Kurosawa (1990).

In the middle of the 1940s, Japan lost World War Two. The films of
Kurosawa can be seen as an attempt to use the traditional philosophy
through art to encourage people to move forward progressively in this
dark historical period. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Japanese built up from the ruins and recovered their economy, reaching an economic peak in the 1970s. It was an important era for artists, including Kurosawa, to trace their cultural roots in order to create new works. It was not only film-makers, but also artists of drama, music and fine arts, who showed their interest in exploring the origins of Japanese arts. They reviewed their traditional arts to search for new cultural energy. It was a way to re-establish their cultural identity, in relation to the atmosphere and background of that era. Kurosawa searched in Noh and Chinese painting in this way and reflected on the manifestation of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism.

It is hoped that this research might challenge the hegemonic discourse which emphasizes that westernization is identical to modernization. Facing the era of globalization, this research highlights the values of Confucianism, which can continually provide people with a way of inner ‘self-cultivation’ and outer practice. This research also provides a model to inspire people to approach their own self-realization through their films. It encourages people to communicate with others who are from a different cultural background, to seek mutual respect, peace and harmony in the world, through their works.

Through the exploration of this research, people can more deeply comprehend Kurosawa’s Tao of Arts, a perfect state within the field of film. It might influence people to achieve their own Tao of Arts. It is the way that has been practiced by different schools of Confucianism in
different periods, and has been passed from generation to generation. This research might be the foundation for further research into the Confucian philosophical and aesthetic concepts for film study.

When Kurosawa won a Career Achievement Award of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences in 1990, he explained his aims and intentions:

Films through the medium of the screen perform the special function of allowing people from around the world to share both the pain and joy of the characters on the screen, allowing us to understand one another. I think that is the most wonderful part of films…I believe that through the beauty of film, we all need to experience this mutual understanding. This concept of beauty, you see is the same for everyone. And from that beauty if we can all understand one another, this is where hearts and minds connect. These are the things I would like to make and I will continue toward this goal (Kurosawa 1990).

Kurosawa devoted his life to filmmaking to communicate with international audiences and to assist people to understand one another with an honest mind. Kurosawa created beauty in films that reflected the Confucian philosophy. He reached his own inner ‘self-cultivation’ and outer practice through his profound film works. If the two documentaries and text of this research can increase people’s understanding of the Tao of Arts of Kurosawa, then my work is worthwhile.
Appendix
1. Project Report on the Two Documentaries

Introduction

A “documentary” is defined by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a film where the emphasis is placed on factual content and not on fiction. However, many theorists, including Vertov (Vertov and Michelson 1995), Grierson (1996), Nichols (1998), Plantinga (1997), and Bruzzi (2000) have debated diverse issues in the field of non-fiction films. These issues concern the relationship of neutral and unmediated “reality” versus the creative interpretation of “reality”. The analysis considers the relationship between cinematic image and the material world. Some of the other dominant issues include staging, objectivity, ethics, the evidentiary status of images, and the cinematic apparatus itself.

In interpreting the “reality” of this study, this project report focuses on the production strategy and production process of the two documentaries. It is intended to provide an overview of the conceptual, craft and collaborative skills required in the phases of development, pre-production, production and post-production.
The Production Strategy

Description

Considering the subject of *Confucian philosophy in the films of Akira Kurosawa* with its profound visual and audio characteristics, this doctoral research has chosen the documentary film as the format. Furthermore, concerning its involvement in wide-ranging issues of philosophical and aesthetic concepts, it was decided to use a qualitative method, with semi-structured interviews to address all the material. The two 90 minute DVD documentaries, which are the outcome of the research incorporate critical analysis of interviews with twelve senior filmmakers and scholars of Confucian philosophy, Japanese history, arts theory, *Noh* theatre and films. By incorporating views from experts with selected excerpts from Kurosawa’s films, the two documentaries and their supporting text, seek to advance film research by illustrating and documenting this Confucian interpretation. It explores Confucian concepts of truth and the beauty in the films of Akira Kurosawa to address film theory, which neglects the cultural heritage of East Asia.

The Method and Approach: a Qualitative Method with Semi-structured Interviews

The design of the documentary film is as important as that of the thesis. It was necessary to select an appropriate method and approach to transform
the structure into a cinematic language. The qualitative method with semi-structured interviews was a complex process, similar as that of grounded theory, which was used to construct the two documentaries.

Through the literature review as a step in the development process, the research structure was designed with both descriptive dimensions and analytic dimensions as shown in Table 5.1. The items in Table 5.1 aim to bridge the gap in the existing literature. Through the research design, they were developed to become interview questions, to raise generative issues and to help guide the interviewees to provide more details, but were not intended to be either static or confining. As the researcher began to record interviews in this step of production, the core theoretical concepts were gained through the tentative linkages developed between these concepts and generative questions during interviewing and analyzing the interview contents. This early phase of the structure tended to be very open. Later on the process of the interviews became more engaged in verification and summary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Dimensions</th>
<th>Narrative elements of philosophy</th>
<th>Narrative construction: narrative plot</th>
<th>Narrative construction: narrative character</th>
<th>Philosophical issues: narrative pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confucian aspect</strong></td>
<td>The Five Human Relationships, The Five Constant Virtues, Gewu Zhizhi</td>
<td>The way of self-cultivation</td>
<td>Influences between teacher and student / father and son</td>
<td>First, the exquisite debate of ‘the Five Human Relationships’ and the satire of counterfeit <em>Samurai</em> and Confucianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bushido aspect</strong></td>
<td>Seven virtues</td>
<td>The way of cultivating Tao</td>
<td>Violence: good and evil / good or evil</td>
<td>Second, the fulfilment of ‘Makoto’ and the introspection of ‘loyalty’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buddhist aspect</strong></td>
<td>The nature of Buddhism</td>
<td>The way of realizing Zen</td>
<td>Introspection: real wits and stupid heroes</td>
<td>Third, the challenge of realism and the pursuit of the truth, ‘Buddha-nature’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noh aspect</strong></td>
<td>Illusionary Noh</td>
<td>The communication of immaterial spirit</td>
<td>Illusion: human beings and demons</td>
<td>Forth, the construction of ‘The Illusionary Noh’ and the changeable narrative points of view, space and time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The structure was designed with both descriptive dimensions and analytic dimensions
There are several key analytic strategies in this project:

1. The items in Table 1 were used as coding in a process for both classifying interview content and for describing the implications and details of these categories. Initially, open coding was carried out, considering the interview content in detail, while at the same time developing some initial categories. Later, there was a move to more selective coding, where systematic coding was carried out with respect to the core concepts in the structure of the two documentaries.

2. It was important to write notes when recording the thoughts and ideas of the interviewees and researcher as they evolved throughout the production stage. At first these notes tended to be very open, while later they tended to increasingly focus on the core concepts.

3. Integrative diagrams were used to pull all of the details together, to help make sense of the interview content with respect to the structure of the two documentaries as research design. The diagrams include many forms of graphics that can inform and illustrate the issues of the two documentaries. This integrative work was done through group sessions with supervisors, where different members were able to interact and share ideas to increase insight. The core concepts or categories were identified and fleshed out in detail during the post-production stage.

The effort of these strategies evolved towards identifying core issues in
The Structure and Related Aspects

The first documentary, *An Exploration of Truth in the Films of Akira Kurosawa*, has three sections: *The Way of Self-Cultivation*, *The Way of Cultivating Tao* and *The Way of Cultivating Buddhism*. This documentary focuses on the historical and philosophical exploration of the interrelationship between *Shinto*, Confucianism, Zen Buddhism and *bushido* in Kurosawa’s films during different periods. It considers the relationship between film, historical background, cultural heritage, philosophical concepts and film narrative elements. It seeks to explain how Confucian philosophy influenced Japanese culture and Kurosawa’s films. It analyzes Kurosawa’s films to illustrate the manifestation of ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘The Five Constant Virtues’ (五常) of Confucian philosophy, which gives rise to profound dramatic tension and quality of characters.

The second documentary, *The Origin and Renovation of Traditional Arts and Theatre in the Films of Akira Kurosawa*, has three sections: *Structure and Mise-En-Scene from Noh and Kabuki*, *Representation and Symbolism from Noh Masks and Chinese Painting* and *Color and Mise-En-Scene from ‘The Five Elements’ Theory and Japanese Prints*. The second documentary explores the deeply symbolic aspects of the aesthetics in Kurosawa’s films by tracing the roots of his cultural heritage. These include *Noh* theatre, *Kabuki* (歌舞伎, a form of traditional Japanese
theatre for more than four hundred years), Chinese painting and Japanese prints. It also illustrates his use and incorporation of those traditional arts and theatre into his aesthetic concepts and narrative elements, including structure (flash-back, crossing the structure of comedy and tragedy, multiple view points of narrative using multiple cameras), performance (music, dance and theatre) and his spirit characters.

The Process of Making the Two Documentaries

Overview

The process of making the two documentaries includes four steps, development, pre-production, production and post-production as shown in the following Figure 1.
Development

In the development stage of producing a documentary film, the ideas of the researcher have to be developed into a deliberate proposal and treatment to obtain funding from a relevant organization or institute. To write a good proposal and treatment, the development of this project began with the steps of the literature view and research design.

The literature review of this project started with analysis and criticism of literature, including books, articles and documentaries, which are related to the films of Kurosawa and Confucian philosophy. It also included viewing and analysis of the 30 films directed by Akira Kurosawa, to find the gap in the existing literature and clarify the research question of the chosen subject. The research design selected the method and approach, which is introduced in the above section. After the research design step, an original proposal was made, including a statement of background, approach, form and style, schedule, and budget, which formally declared a working title *Confucian philosophy in the films of Akira Kurosawa*. The original proposal was used to apply for a scholarship, supported by The Ministry of Education in Taiwan. Finally a scholarship was successfully gained, which encourages outstanding and senior lecturers in universities in Taiwan, to promote their careers with a PhD degree. The scholarship has been important as funding for making the two documentaries.

Modification of the original proposal and treatment, as the foundation of the production process, was achieved through successive in-depth
conversations in which the researcher and supervisors were fully interactive. Beside the general elements in the original proposal, the modified proposal and treatment of this project also included an introduction of the interviewees, an agreement and contract for application of ethics approval. All the interviewees are senior filmmakers or scholars of Confucian philosophy, Japanese history, arts theory, Noh theatre and films. They are introduced in Figure 2.

1. Scholar in Japanese philosophy, Japanese Confucianism, and humanities, Dr. Chen, Wei-fen (陳瑋芬) is a researcher in Academia Sinica. Academia Sinica was founded in 1928, which is the most prominent academic institution in the Republic of China and affiliated directly to the Presidential Office of R.O.C.
   Dr. Chen has published 6 books about Japanese Confucianism. She is a doctor of the Graduate School of Humanities, Kyushu University in Japan.

2. Scholar in Japanese politics and Asian-Pacific international relations
   Professor Ho, Sze-Shen (何思慎), is the chairman of the Japanese Department, Fu-Jen University.
   Dr. Ho is a researcher who focuses on the topic of Japan's diplomacy, especially international relations between Japan, Taiwan, America and Mainland China. He is a doctor of the Graduate Institute of East Asian Studies, National Chengchi University in Taiwan. He has researched in Japan for a long period.
3. Director and scholar in film and Buddhism, Associate Professor Tsang, Roy (曾壯祥) is the chairman of the Dept. of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of Arts which is a famous and significant film educational institute in Taiwan, which has educated a lot of outstanding filmmakers, including the noted director Ang Lee and Hou Hsiao-Hsien.

Tsang directed 3 films including *The Cap of Little Girl, Chi* (小琪的那頂帽子, 1983) an episode in *The Sandwichman* (兒子的大玩偶, 1983) which is the film noted for starting the New Wave of Taiwanese films and won an award in the Pusan International Film Festival in 2002.

4. Scholar in drama, film and literature, Professor Chang, Chang-Yen (張昌彥), is the chairman of the Commentator Group in the Golden Horse Film Festival (2006).

He is a professor and the former chairman of the Department of Drama, Chinese Culture University. He is a famous critic in Japanese and Taiwanese films. He graduated from the Graduate School of Film and Arts in Waseda University in Japan (日本早稻田大學).

5. Scholar in film and TV, Associate Professor Tseng, Lien-Jung (曾連榮) is a former chairman of the Dept. of Radio and Television, National Taiwan University of Arts.

He is a film critic of Japanese and Taiwanese films and the Chinese translator of Kurosawa’s scripts including *Red Beard* and *Kagemusha* in 1985. He was graduated from the Graduate School of Film and Arts in Waseda University in Japan (日本早稻田大學).
6. Scholar in Japanese film and planner of international film festivals, Hung, Ya-wen (洪雅文) is a lecturer in the Dept. of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of Arts. She is a film critic and researcher for the National Film Library and has planned for a lot of film activities to exhibit Japanese films in Taiwan. She was graduated from the Graduate School of Film and Arts in Waseda University in Japan (日本早稻田大學).

7. Scholar in drama and literature, Associate Professor Lin, Yu Pin (林于竝) is the chairman of the Department of Theatre, Taipei National University of Arts. Dr. Lin is a researcher for the National Science Council in Taiwan on the topic of Japanese Theatre After the World War II (2003) and Japanese Traditional Theatre (2002).

8. Scholar in film and drama, Wong, Zdmond (黃建業) is a professor in the Graduate School of MFA program, Taipei National University of Arts. He is a famous film critic in Taiwan and has published many books, including the Searching Humanist in Films (1990).

9. Scholar in Arts, Associate Professor, Dr. Chen, Meiho (陳美合) is an associate professor in the Department of Communication of Arts, Chaoyang University of Technology. She is a doctor of the University of Paris VIII whose focus is on the research of art theory, cultural heritage and artist restoration of traditional painting.
10. Art director and director, Wong, Toon (王童) is the former chairman of the Central Motion Picture Corporation from 1997 to 2005. He is an art director of 29 films and director of 14 films, including Monkey King (2005) which won the Best Film Award in the Asian Film Festival, Hill Of Return (1992) which won the Best Film Award in the Golden Film Festival in Taipei and Shanghai Film Festival, and Strew Man (1987) which won the Best Film in the Golden Horse Film Festival and Asian Film Festival.

11. Senior cinematographer, Lin, Tsan-Ting (林贊庭) has worked in 128 films, and won 5 awards in different years for the Best Cinematographer in the Golden Horse Films Festival in Taiwan. He was educated in Japanese film studios, including Toho Films Co, Ltd. (東宝株式会社) and Nikkatsu Corporation (日本日活株式会社).

12. Senior editor and director Liao, Ching Song (廖慶松) is director of 3 films, scriptwriter of 2 films, producer of 6 films and editor of 68 films, including the films directed by noted directors, Edward Yang and Hou Hsiao- Hsien. For example, A City of Sadness (1989) won the Golden Lion Award in the Venice International Film Festival.

Figure 2 Introduction of the interviewees

The interviewees were asked about the films of Kurosawa in a number of areas—from the ontological status of film to its aesthetic status and the mind of the film viewer.
Pre-production

Audiences can rarely watch a documentary film if it does not have digital format. This is why the researcher chose to complete the two documentaries in DVD format. Deciding to shoot the interviews on digital video tape and edit them with selected excerpts from Kurosawa’s films and other materials on a non-linear editing system, was the reality that made technical and economic sense for the researcher in the step of pre-production. After choosing digital format, considerable technical planning, as needed, comprised of selecting and booking equipment and arranging crew.

Owing to the location of interviewees in Taiwan and the good relationship between the researcher and Chaoyang University of Technology, it was decided to use the equipment and crew from this university, in which the researcher has been working for ten years. The equipment of the two documentaries is shown in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Equipment Items</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-production</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>PC Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Digital Camera</td>
<td>Sony DV300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microphones</td>
<td>Sennheuser shotgun &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mini microphone X 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lights</td>
<td>Lowel 1k X3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-production</td>
<td>Digital non-linear editing system</td>
<td>Sony Vegas 6.0 and EZ Producer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Equipment of the two documentaries

Due to the limited budget of this project, the role and responsibilities of the researcher had to cover the producer, director, writer, production manager and editor. The researcher had to carry out all aspects of producing the two documentaries, except for the photography, lighting and sound recording during the production step, which were undertaken by the researcher’s students from the Department of Communication of Arts, Chaoyang University of Technology. It is a professional film work, which has challenged traditional forms of documentary production and involved experimentation with the approach to the form. In the step of pre-production, the technical crew was organized after a couple of conversations with the candidates. Depending on their characteristics and attitudes, which included enthusiasm and respect for the project, as well as
technical proficiency and basic skills needed for their duties, three people were chosen for the technical crew, shown in Table 3. They were all serious about their vocation and able to bring equipment they were familiar with to the production process. Obtaining a list of the equipment and copies of operating manuals for the technical crew enabled them to have some hands-on experience before they went on the interview locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction of Technical Crew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cameraman</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recordist</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Introduction of the technical crew

After gaining clearance of the ethics approval, the researcher started to contact interviewees by phone, e-mail and letters to explain the whole project to them and ask for their signatures in the letters of agreement and contract. This process was important in making the shooting schedule and using interview material fairly. Laying out the shooting schedule was dependent on a convenient time for the interviewees and finding shooting locations where the research could use lights and record the interviews by tape with synchronized sound. Laying out the shooting schedule made the production move efficiently from one interview to the next.
Production

In each interview location there were four tasks to complete before the technical crew arrived to set up camera, lights and sound equipment. The first was to explain to the interviewee and the owner of the location that the interviews would be recorded by tape with synchronized sound, so that they understood the sound-recording situations that would be encountered. The second was to make sure that the interviewee was comfortable with a lapel mini microphone during the interview. The third was to confirm with the owner of the location that he or she was happy about any changes the crew must make, such as temporarily moving furniture or office equipment around for technical planning and framing good images. Finally, it was important to check electricity on the location, to confirm that the crew could use three 1K lights, because they needed two–prong adapters for the electrical leads.

While people in the crew were learning about the location, the researcher needed to discuss the camera position and the types of shots with the technical crew, in relation to camera setting, lighting and sound equipment. It was the time to determine the look of the interviews before the cameraman rolled the tape. All the people in the crew had to know what kind of images the researcher was trying to achieve and what techniques would be used to create them. It usually took one to one and a half hours to set up the camera, lights and sound equipment. During this time, the researcher invited the interviewee to sit down in front of the camera and
made sure the interviewee was comfortable with the position of lighting and equipment. Furthermore, the researcher discussed the interview questions with the interviewee and inquired if he or she had other materials related to the interview content.

The recording tapes were made of in-depth interviews in which the researcher and the interviewees are fully interactive. The researcher only prompted the interviewees by asking “Could you give me more detail on that point or would you like me to repeat the question?” If the interview recording was disrupted due to stage fright by interviewees or distraction from outside, including the sound of traffic, a telephone or rain. Even the quietest location could become noisier when the crew wanted to record sounds in that spot.

Analysis began once the conversation had started. This analysis guided decisions relating to further supplementary questions. The meanings attached to the recorded tapes are expressed within the phenomenological philosophy. The outcome of the analysis was a theoretical statement responding to the research questions. This was validated through editing the recorded tapes and incorporating direct quotes from the interviewees.
Post-production

Post-production was a combination of working with time and patience, as well as pleasure and pain. The post-production stage of the two documentaries consisted of a number of complex and overlapping phases, including setting up a digital editing system, materials review and construction, editing and DVD formatting. Details of the post-production process are shown in the following items:

1. Setting up a digital editing system: selecting and purchasing editing software, which included Sony Vegas 6.0 and 8 units of 200Giga external hard disc to set up with a PC computer.
2. Viewing all materials, including twenty 60 minute rolls of DV tape, recording 12 interviews.
3. Re-organizing the structure of the two documentaries into six sections, to fix the format into two 90 minute DVDs.
4. Selecting the valuable clips to include from the 30 Kurosawa films and the 20 rolls of DV tapes of the interviews.
5. Capturing the selected film clips and interview tapes into the coding of the digital editing system.
6. Completing the rough editing: assembling the two documentaries to fix the issues of the six sections.
7. Viewing the results of the rough editing and discussion with supervisors to get comments for trimming editing.
8. Drawing on the comments of supervisors to re-construct the two
9. Trimming editing: includes sound effects, special visual effects, music, sound track mixing and final master tapes of the two documentaries.

10. Adding English subtitles to the two documentaries.

11. Completing the two documentaries in the format of two 90 minute DVDs.

During the post-production stage, the images and sounds were combined in their final form. This involved cutting pictures and sound, executing special effects, adding music or extra dialogue, and adding titles. Finally, the two documentaries mixed archival footage, interviews and material related to Kurosawa and his films.

**Conclusion**

This project began in 2005 and it has taken almost three years to complete the process of making the two documentaries, which is comprised of development, pre-production, production and post-production.

The reality of the qualitative research for this project involved perceptions that were different for each interviewee and what we know has meaning only within a given situation or context. It provided a process through which a phenomenon outside of accepted views could be examined. The reasoning process was concerned with perceptually putting pieces together to make the whole, within the structure of the two documentaries. From this process meaning was produced to form the six sections. However,
because perception varies with the individual, many different meanings were possible.

This project report of the two documentaries, with both a concept of film structure and knowledge of film techniques, provides for readers of three sorts. First is the general reader who may watch the two documentaries and would like to know more about them. Second is the student in a documentary production course, for whom this project report may function as a reference. Third is the more advanced student of film, who may find here a convenient outline of the principal issues and concepts in film and cultural studies to be explored through producing documentary film.
2. Glossary

Chapter 1

*Noh.* also called *No*, 能劇, a form of Japanese traditional theatre for more than six hundred years.

*Chinese painting.* *shanshui hua*, 山水畫, also called scroll painting, 卷軸畫, landscape painting in black ink and colored ink.

*Self-cultivation.* 修身, the core principle of Confucianism, to cultivate one’s moral character and practise moral culture.

*The Five Constant Virtues.* 五常, the significant virtues of Confucianism which include benevolence (*jen, ren*, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity), justice (*i, yi*, 義, also understood as righteousness), ritual (*li, 禮*, also understood as propriety and courtesy), wisdom (*chih, zhi*, 智, also understood as intellect and knowledge) and honesty (*sin, xin*, 信, also understood as trust, fidelity and honest mind).

*Honesty.*  *cheng*, 誠, also understood as sincerity, sincerity of intention or honest mind.
**Tao.** dao, 道, the true way.

**Yugen.** 幽玄, is a significant aesthetic concept of Japanese arts, which means ‘a profound mysterious sense of the beauty of the universe, and … the sad beauty of human suffering.

**The principle of heaven-earth-human.** ten-chi-jin, , it highlights the harmonious relationships between heaven (ten, tian, t’ien, 天, it refers to the symbol of the cosmos), earth (chi, di, 地, refers to the symbol of nature, including beings and non-beings) and humankind (jin, ren, 人).

**Samurai.** 武士, the Japanese warrior in feudal society.

**Wisdom.** chih, zhi, 智, also understood as intellect and knowledge.

**Benevolence.** jen, ren, 仁, also understood as goodness and humanity.

**Courage.** yong, 勇, bravery.

**The Three Virtues.** 三達德, the important virtues of Confucianism, including wisdom, benevolence and courage, can lead people to cultivate their perfect character and attain a perfected state of human beings.

**Jun Zi.** Chun-Tzu, 君子, in the Chinese etymology, the term means
“sons of a monarch or noble”, and refers to gentlemen or perfected people who cultivate themselves with Confucian virtues and act as moral guides to the rest of society.

**Bushido.** 武士道, the way of samurai.

**Shinto.** 神道, Japanese traditional beliefs from the ancient period.

**Chan.** Ch’an, 禪, is the Chinese pronunciation of dhyana, commonly translated by the English word “meditation”. It also is known as Zen in Japanese pronunciation, a way to focus our attention on the truth of our own life. It directly focuses on our true nature. Each of us is born, lives and dies, and yet we may go an entire lifetime without ever realizing that there's more to ourselves than we think. In order to focus on this true nature we practice Chan meditation.

**Zen Buddhism.** 禪宗, is a redeveloped form of Chinese Chan Buddhism that arrived in Japan as early as the 7th century, but did not develop significantly there until the 12th century. Zen has since been an important force in Japan. It has had considerable influence on Japanese culture, reaching far beyond the temple and entering into cultural and social areas of all kinds, including gardening, ink painting, calligraphy, the tea ceremony, and even military strategies. Zen priests played an important role in the political unrest of 16th century Japan, both serving as
diplomats and administrators and preserving Japanese cultural life

*Chan Buddhism.* 禪宗, is an esoteric sect of Mahayana Buddhism, in which the experience of enlightenment is transmitted directly from master to disciple, through the practice of seated meditation. Buddha taught that through meditative practice one may discover how the habituated mind can affect the way we perceive things. The Chan sect was brought to China by a saint, Bodhidharma, in the mid-sixth century to establish the sect in China. It was developed as a form of Buddhism following Taoist thought in China.

*Jidai-geki.* 時代劇, historical uniformed costume drama. It is a genre of film, television, and theatre in Japan. The name means "period drama," and the period is usually the Edo period (1600-1868) of Japanese history. Some, however, are set much earlier during the late Heian period, and the early Meiji era is also a popular setting. *Jidaigeki* show the lives of the *samurai*, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants of this time. *Jidaigeki* films are sometimes referred to as *chambara* movies, a word meaning "sword fight", though *chambara* is really a sub group. They have a set of dramatic conventions including the use of makeup, language, catchphrases, and plotlines.

*Kabuki.* 歌舞伎, a traditional Japanese theatre for more than four hundred years.
The Eight Articles. 八條目, also called the theory of guwu zhizhi, 格物致知, the extension of knowledge through the investigation of things. It emphasizes that to study the phenomena of nature leads to the acquisition of knowledge. It includes many steps: to study the phenomena of nature, to acquire knowledge, to correct one’s attitude, to make one’s will honest (also understood as to make one’s will sincere, or with an honest mind), to cultivate oneself, to put one’s family in order, to rule the country with virtues, and to bring peace to the world.

The Great Learning. 大學, a significant and classical Confucian book.

The Doctrine of Mean. 中庸, a significant and classical Confucian book.

Loyalty. zhong, 忠, also understood as faithfulness.

Filial piety. xiao, 孝, dutiful as children in the light of Confucianism.

The Five Human Relationships. wulun, 五倫, also understood as the Five Substantial Relationships, the traditional cardinal human relations of Confucianism, including moral relation between monarch and courtiers; between father and sons; between husband and wife, between siblings, and between friends.
The Five Elements. 五行, include metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, used in ancient Chinese cosmology. It has been developed by Confucianism and Taoism and later in herbal medicine and as symbolic elements in literature, drama and other arts.

Zeami Motokiyo. 世阿彌, AD 1363-1443, a Japanese aesthetician, actor, playwright and theorizer of Noh theatre, regarded as the most significant Noh master

The theory of ‘Illusion and Reality’. 虛實理論, is an important aesthetic theory in China based on the philosophical concept of Tao, a teaching of Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu emphasized that Tao is a cosmic unity underlying all phenomena. Artists in the Tang Dynasty in China developed an aesthetic concept based on this philosophical concept and asserted that artists have to unify the illusion of art forms and the reality of human life to embark on the Tao. To seek the principle of the Tao is important for artists who can display the beauty of the cosmos in their works. The theory includes three levels- “reality”, “illusion” and “illusion as a metaphor to reflect reality”(以虛喻實). “Reality” refers to the aesthetic concept which concerns the real life of human beings. “Illusion” refers to the aesthetic concept, which concerns the illusion of art forms. “Illusion as a metaphor to reflect reality” refers to the aesthetic concept which concerns the illusion of art forms as a metaphor that still can reflect the reality of the life of human beings.
Lao Tzu. 老子, ca. BC 570-470, is a Chinese philosopher regarded as the founder of Taoism. He reputedly transmitted his teachings to a border guard who subsequently compiled the Lao Tzu, also titled the Tao-te ching, (also called Classic of the Way and Virtue). Its parables and verse, are written in incantatory language and advocate passive and intuitive behavior in natural harmony with the Tao, a cosmic unity underlying all phenomena. It emphasizes the value of wu-wei, “nonstriving” or “non-purposeful action,” by which one returns to a primitive state closer to the Tao, a stage of creative possibility symbolized by the child or an uncarved block. It also promotes a laissez-faire approach to government (Mair 2005).
Chapter 2

The code of bushido. included gi (義, justice, also understood as righteousness), yu (勇, courage, also understood as bravery), jin, (仁, benevolence, also understood as humanity), rei (禮, ritual, also understood as proprieties or etiquette), makoto (cheng, 誠, also understood as honesty, sincerity, love and fulfilled promise, 信, shin) which were manifested in Confucian principles and constant values.

Confucius. 孔子, BC 551-479, was a thinker, political figure, and educator in China, whose teachings and philosophy have deeply influenced Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese thought and life. His teachings, preserved in The Analects of Confucius (論語), form the foundation of much of subsequent Chinese speculation on the education and conduct of the ideal man, how such an individual should live his live and interact with others, and the forms of society and government in which he should participate.

The Six Classics. 六經, including The Classic of Rites (Lǐ Jīng, 禮記), The Classic of History (Shū Jīng, 書經), The Classic of Poetry (also called The Book of Odes, Shī Jīng, 詩經), The Classic of Changes (also called ‘I Ching’, Yī Jīng, 易經), The Spring and Autumn Annals (Chūn Qiū, 春秋, also known as Lín Jīng, 麟經) and The Classic of Music (Yue, 樂).
Burning of the books and burial of the scholars. is a policy and a sequence of events in the Qin Dynasty of China, between the period of 213 BC and 206 BC. To silence criticism of a centralized and bureaucratic state under imperial rule, the First Emperor Qin Shi Huang banished or buried many Confucian scholars and confiscated and burned many classical Confucian books.

Qin Dynasty. was founded by the First Emperor Qin Shi Huang (or Shih Hwang-Tih, 秦始皇) and marked the beginning of Imperial China. The Great Wall was built in BC 215 when the First Emperor was told by a magician that barbarians from the north would be able to attack his empire.

The Five Classics. including The Classic of Rites (Lǐ Jì, 禮記), The Classic of History (Shù Jìng, 書經), The Classic of Poetry (also called The Book of Odes, Shī Jìng, 詩經), The Classic of Changes (also called 'I Ching', Yì Jīng, 易經), and The Spring and Autumn Annals (Chūn Qiū, 春秋, also known as Lín Jīng, 麟經).

The Han Dynasty. includes Western Han Dynasty (西漢, BC206-AD24) and Eastern Han Dynasty(東漢, AD25-AD220). During the Han Dynasty, Confucianism was regarded as the only orthodox form of education in China. During that period, agriculture, handicrafts and commerce flourished. The reign of the Han Dynasty, lasting over 400 years, is commonly considered within China to
be one of the greatest eras in the entire history of China. To this day, the ethnic majority of China still refer to themselves as "People of the Han."

Meanwhile, the empire extended its political and cultural influence over Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, Japan, and Central Asia.

The Sui Dynasty. 隋朝, AD581-619, founded by Emperor Wen, or Yang Jian (楊堅), was marked by the reunification of the Southern and Northern Dynasty in China and the construction of the Grand Canal, including the reconstruction of the Great Wall. During the Sui Dynasty, Buddhism gained prominence and created a unifying cultural force that lifted the people out of war. When central political control was limited, Buddhism was responsible for the rebirth of culture in China under the Sui Dynasty.

The Three Kingdoms period. 三國時期, AD 220-280, The three kingdoms were the Kingdom of Wei (魏), the Kingdom of Shu (蜀), and the Kingdom of Wu (吳). This historical period is one of the bloodiest in Chinese history. However, it has been greatly romanticized in the cultures of East Asia. It has been celebrated and popularized in operas, folk stories, novels and in more recent times, films, television serials, and video games.

The Jin Dynasty. 晉朝, AD 265-420, followed the Three Kingdoms period and preceded the Southern and Northern Dynasties in China.

The Southern and Northern Dynasty. 南北朝, AD 420-589,
followed the Sixteen Kingdoms and preceded the Sui Dynasty in China. It was an age of civil war and political disunity. However it was also a time of flourishing arts and culture, advancement in technology, and the spread of foreign Mahayana Buddhism and native Taoism. Distinctive Chinese Buddhism also matured during this time and was shaped by the Northern and Southern Dynasties alike.

**The Qing Dynasty.** 清朝, AD 1644-1911, During this period, Great Britain was interested in trading with China for silk and tea. However, the British did not have anything that was easy to import to China until they began importing opium. This was devastating to Chinese traditional philosophy. Finally, in 1839 A.D. the opium trade was abolished. This set off a war with Great Britain that came to be known as the Opium Wars, and in 1842 A.D., China was forced to sign a treaty in which Great Britain received Hong Kong, and ports were opened to European trade.

**The Tang Dynasty.** 唐朝, AD 618-907, is regarded by historians as a high point in Chinese civilization - equal to or surpassing that of the Han Dynasty - as well as a golden age of cosmopolitan culture. Chinese culture flourished and matured further during the Tang era and it is also considered the greatest age for Chinese poetry. A government system, supported by a large class of Confucian intellectuals selected through civil service examinations, was perfected under Tang rule. This competitive procedure was designed to draw the best talents into government.

**The Song Dynasty.** 宋朝, AD 960-1279, was a time of consolidation
for Chinese culture. The traditional state of civil administration fully
developed and introduced Neo-Confucianism, a revival of Confucian
thought, with many scholars commenting on the traditional books, but also
developing a more metaphysical worldview of the rather state-oriented
classical Confucianism. The Song time is often called a "Chinese
Renaissance" because - similar to the European renaissance - progress in
technology and inventions, and upcoming of new philosophical
interpretations of the old texts meant a renewal of the old and the creation
of new trends. This period is marked by a revival of old Confucian
traditions after the Tang age of Buddhism.

**The School of Li.** 理學派, the first branch of Neo-Confucianism
established in the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279) in China which
culminated in the great thought of Zhu Xi (AD 1130-1200). It emphasized
that the world consisted of two realms: the realm of *principle* (*li* which we
might call "laws") and the realm of *material force* (*ch'i*). Principle
governs material force and material force makes manifest principle; the
ultimate origin of principle is in a single principle, called the **Great
Ultimate** (*taiji*), which emanates from Heaven. The School of Principle
believed that there was an immaterial and immutable principle or law that
inheres in all things, giving them form, motion, and change. The scholars
of the School of Principle believed in empirical investigation, for they
believed that to find the principle of any material process was to find the
principle inherent in all material and intellectual processes.

**Zhu Xi.** 朱熹, also called Chu His, AD 1130-1200, was one of the
greatest Chinese scholars and philosophers who helped develop Neo-Confucianism. He is regarded as the spokesman, who represents a summary of doctrines of his predecessors as well as original ideas of his own. He not only wrote about Confucianism, but also combined other works with his and reorganized the beliefs. He selected, from the ancient writings on Confucianism, *The Four Books* and also synthesized the writings of previous philosophers who had been active earlier during the Song Dynasty. An important part of Neo-Confucianism is the attempt to "repossess the Way." Pursuit of the Way through disciplined self-cultivation formed a person's character. This was important because it encouraged the nobles to live up to the Confucian ideals by being less selfish.

**Zhou Dun Yi.** 周敦頤, AD 1017-1073. *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* appears in chapter 1 of the *Ten Diagrams*; it became the cornerstone of Neo-Confucian metaphysics.

**Cheng Hao.** 程顥, AD 1032-1085, was a famous Neo-Confucian scholar.

**Cheng Yi.** 程頤, AD 1033-1107, was a famous Neo-Confucian scholar. He was the young brother of Cheng Hao. The Cheng brothers were responsible for the introduction of the concept *li*, "principle," which became the pivot point of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, psychology, and ascetical doctrine.
Li. 理, identified with the Way and principle. Li, according to Zhu Xi is "without birth and indestructible" and it is "the intrinsic nature of all things." In its actualization in existent things, li is combined with ch'i, the material force, a concept advanced by Chang Tsai. With regard to the relation between li and ch'i, Zhu Xi said: "Before creation, there is li. When there is li there is the world. If there were no li there would be no world." But also, "When there is no condensation of ch'i, li will have no place to inhere." Hence the principle element and the material element are mutually dependent in the phenomenal world, but in the realm "above shape," li is prior and can subsist without ch'i.

The Ming Dynasty. 明朝, AD 1368-1644, During this period, the Confucian view was that being a merchant was an inferior occupation. A great cultural development of this period was that of the novel and painting. These novels developed from the writings of Chinese story tellers. They were written in the everyday language, not the language of the nobility. Chinese painting developed greatly from the achievements in painted art during the earlier Song Dynasty and Yuan Dynasty. The painting techniques which were invented and developed before the Ming Dynasty became kinds of classical forms during this period. More colours were used in painting during the Ming Dynasty. Seal brown became much more widely used and even over used during this period. Many new painting techniques were created and developed and calligraphy was much more closely and perfectly combined with painting. Chinese painting reached another climax in the mid to late Ming Dynasty. The painting was derived on a broad scale, more new schools were born, and many
outstanding masters appeared.

**Wang Yang Ming.** 王陽明, AD 1472-1529, is best known for his theory of the unity of knowledge and action. A capable and principled administrator and military official, he was exiled from 1507 to 1510 for his protest against political corruption. His thought can be best understood as an attempt to propose personal morality as the main way to social well-being. His legacy in Neo-Confucian tradition and Confucian philosophy as a whole, is his claim that the fundamental root of social problems lies in the fact that one fails to gain a genuine understanding of one’s self and one’s relation to the world, and thus fails to live up to what one could be.

**The School of Mind.** 心學派, also called ‘The School of Intuition’, is the second branch of Neo-Confucianism established in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) in China founded by Cheng Hao (1032-1085), whose greatest thinker was Wang Yang Ming (AD 1472-1529). The School of Mind emphasized that the human mind is completely unified and reflects perfectly in itself the principle of the universe. Since the human mind is perfectly identical with the Universal Mind or the Ultimate Principle, the duty of any philosopher is to investigate the nature of the human mind to the exclusion of all other investigations.

**Mencius.** 孟子, BC 372-289, Chinese philosopher, who is important in classical Confucianism. He is most famous for his theory of human
nature, according to which all human beings share an innate goodness that
either can be cultivated through education and self-discipline or
squandered through neglect and negative influences, but never lost
altogether. Today contemporary philosophical interest in evolutionary
psychology and socio-biology has inspired fresh appraisals of Mencius,
while recent philological studies question the coherence and authenticity
of the text that bears his name. Mencius remains a perennially attractive
figure for those intrigued by moral psychology, of which he was the
foremost practitioner in early China.

Zhìshèngxiānshī. 至聖先師, is the most popular posthumous name
of Confucius, meaning ‘The Former Teacher who Arrived at Sagehood’.

The Analects of Confucius. 論語, is a record of the words and acts
of Confucius and his disciples, as well as the discussions they held. It is
the closest primary source we have for Confucius’s thoughts, and relates
his sayings and discussions with rulers and disciples in short passages. It is
the representative work of Confucianism and continues to have a
tremendous influence on Chinese and East Asian thought and values
today.

Tao of monarchy. 王道, the true way of monarchy, a political
administration drawn from the Tao of heaven, meant monarchs must rule
their people under the virtue of benevolence.

The Four Books. 四書, includes The Analects of Confucius (論語).
The Book of Mencius (孟子), The Great Learning (大學), and The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸).

Unified knowledge and action. 知行合一. Wang Yang Ming believed that only through simultaneous action could one gain knowledge, and denied all other ways of gaining it. To him, there was no way to use knowledge after gaining it because he believed that knowledge and action were unified as one. Any knowledge that had been gained then put into action was considered delusion or false.

The cultural region of Confucianism. 儒教文化圈. In East Asian commentary, the phrase of “the cultural region of Confucianism” is used interchangeably with “the Chinese cultural sphere” or “the Chinese character cultural sphere”. It denotes a grouping of countries, regions, and people with Confucian cultural legacies. It includes the countries that have extensive Chinese cultural heritage or are with significant Chinese populations in modern times, including Korea (North and South), Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and Vietnam.

Paekche. 百濟. BC 18- AD 660, also called Baekje was a kingdom in the southwest of the Korean Peninsula. It was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, together with Goguryeo (also called Koguryo, 高句麗) and Silla(新羅).
**Tendai.** 天台宗, is a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism, a descendant of the Chinese Tiantai or Lotus Sutra school. The Tiantai teaching was first brought to Japan by the Chinese monk Jianzhen (鑑真) in the middle of the 8th century. In 805, the Japanese monk Saicho (最澄, also called Dengyō Daishi 傳教大師) returned from China with new Tiantai texts and made the temple that he had built on Mt. Hiei (比叡山), Enryakuji (延暦寺), a center for the study and practice of what became Japanese Tendai. Philosophically, the Tendai school did not deviate substantially from the beliefs that had been created by the Tiantai school in China. However, what Saicho transmitted from China was not exclusively Tiantai, but also included Zen (禪, trad. 禪), esoteric Mikkyō (密教), and Vinaya School (戒律) elements.

**Shingon.** 眞言宗, also called kongōjō 金剛乗, is a major school of Japanese Buddhism often called "Japanese Esoteric Buddhism". The word *shingon* is the Japanese reading of the kanji for the Chinese word *zhenyan*, literally meaning "true words". Shingon Buddhism arose in Japan's Heian period (平安朝 794-1185) when the monk Kūkai went to China in 804 and studied tantric practices and returned with many texts and art works. In time, he developed his own synthesis of esoteric practice and doctrine, centered on the universal Buddha Vairocana (or, more accurately, Mahavairocana Tathagata). In time, he established a monastery on Mount Koya, which became the head of the Shingon sect of Buddhism.
Tantric Buddhism. 金剛乘, also called Vajrayāna Buddhism, Tantrayana, Mantrayana, Mantranaya, Esoteric Buddhism and Diamond Vehicle. It is an extension of Mahayana Buddhism consisting of differences in the adoption of additional techniques (upaya, or 'skillful means') rather than in philosophy.

Mandalas. 曼陀羅, in the various spiritual traditions, the mandala is frequently used as an object for focusing attention and as an aid to meditation. Its symbolic nature can help one "to access progressively deeper levels of the unconscious, ultimately assisting the meditator to experience a mystical sense of oneness with the ultimate unity from which the cosmos in all its manifold forms arises.

Buddhas. 佛, in Buddhism, a Buddha is any being who has become fully awakened (enlightened), and has experienced Nirvana.

Bodhisattvas. 菩薩, in Buddhism, a bodhisattva is a being who is dedicated to attaining enlightenment. Bodhisattva literally means "enlightenment ('bodhi') being ('sattva')" in Sanskrit; it also refers to the Buddha himself in his previous lives.

Shogunate. also understand as bakufu. 幕府, the political administration was organized by a general.

Tato. 田堵, farmer.
Myosyu. 名主, farm owner.

The School of Zhu Xi. 朱子學派, Also called Shushigaku, the most influential of the Neo-Confucian schools that developed in Japan during the Tokugawa period (1603–1867). It was based on the Chinese school of the philosopher Zhu Xi, and became the cornerstone of education, teaching cardinal virtues filial piety, loyalty, obedience, and a sense of indebtedness to one’s superiors. This philosophy profoundly influenced the thought and behaviour of the educated class. The tradition, introduced into Japan from China by Zen Buddhists in the medieval period, provided a heavenly sanction for the existing social order.

Fujiwara Seika. 藤原惺窩, 1561-1615, the first Japanese scholar who was known for a close study of Confucius and the Confucian commentators. He is a leader in The School of Zhu Xi of the early Tokugawa Period in Japan.

Hayashi Razan. 林羅山, 1583-1657, was a Japanese Neo-Confucian philosopher, serving as an advisor to the first three shoguns of the Tokugawa bakufu.

The School of Ancient Learning. 古學派, also called Kogaku, was one of three schools of Neo-Confucian studies that developed in Japan during the Tokugawa period (1603–1867). It refers to a school and to a scholarly approach that criticized the doctrines of Zhu Xi and Wang Yang
Ming for straying from the original spirit of Confucianism, which appeared as one logical method for overcoming Zhu Xi Neo-Confucian metaphysics. It asserted that scholars should return to the classical texts of Confucianism and inherit directly the ancient meanings of Confucius and Mencius

Yamaga Soko. 山鹿素行, 1622-1685. His original name is Yamaga Takasuke, also called Jingozaemon a military strategist and Confucian philosopher who set forth the first systematic exposition of the missions and obligations of the samurai class and who made major contributions to Japanese military science. Yamaga’s thought became the central core of what later came to be known as Bushido.

Ito Jinsai. 伊藤仁齋, 1627-1705, Japanese, philosopher, and educator of the Tokugawa period (1603–1867), who founded the Kogigaku school of thought, which subsequently became part of the larger Kogaku school (The School of Ancient Learning). Ito came to oppose the official Neo-Confucianism of Tokugawa.

Ito Togai. 伊藤東崖, 1670-1736. the elder son of Ito Jinsai, a Japanese philosopher, and educator of the Tokugawa period (1603–1867). He and his father founded the Kogigaku school of thought.

Ogyu Sorai. 萩生徂徠, 1666-1728, one of the foremost Japanese scholars of Chinese culture and a leading Confucianist. Ogyu stressed the pragmatic application of Confucianism to promote social and political
reforms by means of uniform, rational laws. He is also noted for his appreciative commentary on the revered shogunate ruler and administrative reformer Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616)

_Nomin._ peasants, who provided the bushels of rice, that is, the income of the _samurai_.

_Kojin._ artisans, who made swords and other weapons, the vital companions of the military class.

_Shomin._ merchants.

_Shido._ the way of the _samurai_.

_Bukyo._ the warrior’s creed.

_Giri._ duties in the Japanese feudal period.

_Chu._ unswerving loyalty.

_Meiyo._ honor and glory.

_The School of Wong Yang Ming._ 陽明學派, also called J. Yomeigaku or Ōyōmei-gaku in Japanese founded by Tōju Nakae (中江藤樹, 1608-1648). In Japan, many scholars and politicians (named in Japanese as: 陽明学者) came from the School of Wang Yang Ming.
(Ōyōmei-gaku) in history, including Kumazawa Banzan (熊沢蕃山), Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛), Takasugi Shinsaku (高杉晋作) and Toju Nakae (中江藤樹) who were characterised by introspection and activism, and exercised a profound influence on Japanese revisions of Confucian political and moral theory in Japan during the Edo Period.

**Tōju Nakae.** 中江藤樹, 1608-1648, is regarded as the founder of The School of Wong Yang Ming, Japanese Ōyōmei-gaku.

**Banzan Kumazawa.** 熊沢蕃山, 1619–1691, a disciple of the Chinese Neo-Confucianist Wang Yangming. As chief minister of Okayama from 1647, he tried to put into practice the Confucian teachings on governance.

**Kokugaku.** 國學, one of the major cultural movements of the Tokugawa was the institution of a branch of scholarship. It means "Native Studies," or "Nativism". "Japanese Studies," which is the common translation of the word, really does not convey the sense of the spirit of kokugaku.

**Motoori Norinaga.** 本居宣長, AD1730-1801, concentrated on linguistic studies; the particular branch of kokugaku that he made his own was the recovery of the Japanese language. He derived his most famous concept, one that would greatly define Japanese culture in later centuries: *mono no aware*, "the sensitivity to things." Motoori wanted to show that the unique character of Japanese culture (he considered Japanese culture to
be the "head" of the world; other nations were the "body") was the capacity to experience the objective world in a direct and unmediated fashion, to understand sympathetically the objects and the natural world around one without resorting to language or other mediators. The Japanese could understand the world directly in identifying themselves with that world; the Japanese could use language to directly express that connection to the world. This, for Motoori, is the aesthetic which lies behind the poetry of the Manyoshu; this certainly was the aesthetic that lay behind the haiku (17 syllable poems) revival of the Tokugawa period. The poetic and historical texts present the "whole of life," which has meaning because all of nature and life is animated by the "intentions" of the gods. People experienced this wholeness of life by encountering things (mono); these encounters "moved" or "touched" them—hence the unique Japanese character: "sensitivity to things" (mono no awar).

Yukichi Fukuzawa. 福澤諭吉, 1835-1901, founder of Keio University and one of the first experts on the West in modern Japan, is generally looked on positively as having played an important role in the modernization of late 19th-century Japan.

An Encouragement of Learning. 勸學, which outlined the importance of understanding how knowledge is acquired, including the principles of equality of opportunity, and that study is the key to greatness. It is like a textbook for teaching people ‘self-cultivation’.
Shigeki Nishimura. 西村茂樹, 1828-1902, was an educator and leader of the Meiji Enlightenment in the Meiji period Japan. Born to the family of the samurai chief administrator, he was originally a Confucian scholar. He supported the Tokugawa bakufu against the Meiji Restoration, but was so highly regarded that the new Meiji government recruited him to assist in the movement to educate the Japanese public on western civilization. He established his own intellectual society in 1876 to stress moral values. This became the Nihon Kodoka (Japan Society for Expansion of the Way), which promoted the belief that a reassertion of Japan's traditional moral values was necessary to strengthen Japan in the modern world.

The Five Doctrines. These consist of ‘self-cultivation’, ‘to keep one’s family in order’, ‘to treat the clan, village and town with kindness’, ‘to rule the country with benevolence’ and ‘to establish friendships with the people of other nations’.

Kendo. 剣道, the Tao of traditional skill with swords. It is the martial art of Japanese fencing. Kendo developed from traditional techniques of Japanese swordsmanship known as kenjutsu. It is a way to discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the sword. The purpose of practicing Kendo is ‘to mold the mind and body’, ‘to cultivate a vigorous spirit’, ‘And through correct and rigid training’, ‘To strive for improvement in the art of Kendo’, ‘to hold in esteem human courtesy and honor’, ‘to associate with others with
sincerity’, and ‘to forever pursue the cultivation of oneself’. ‘This will make one be able to love his/her country and society, to contribute to the development of culture and to promote peace and prosperity among all peoples’.

Shodo.  書道, the Tao of calligraphy, also called Shu Fa. 書法 in Chinese. Japanese calligraphy has been heavily influenced by Chinese calligraphy. For a long time, the most esteemed calligrapher in Japan was Wang Xizhi, (王羲之 AD 303 - 361) a Chinese calligrapher in the 4th century. After the invention of Hiragana (平仮名) and Katakana (片仮名), the Japanese unique syllabaries, calligraphers developed intrinsic styles to Japan.

Shirakaba. 白樺, an early 20th century literary journal, also called The White Birch.

Saneatsu Mushanokoji. 武者小路実篤, 1885-1976, who was not only a famous artist, novelist and writer, but also a famous philosopher.


The School of Shirakaba. 白樺派, also called 'The White Birch Group', was a literary and art group which was founded by the members of *Shirakaba Journal*. *Shirakaba Journal* began publication in 1910 against the background of the idealistic, humanitarian, and individualistic work which was being produced in Japan.

Moral Mysophobia. 道德潔癖者, meant that they controlled themselves rigorously and never did anything that was immoral.
The Four Noble Truths. 四正道, are one of the most fundamental Buddhist teachings. This first Noble Truth reflects on the nature of suffering. The word "Dukkha" is usually translated as "suffering" in English. A common simplification of this truth is "Life is suffering." The second Noble Truth reflects on the sources of suffering (Dukkha.) It states that suffering results from expectations linked to our desires, and our attachment to those desires themselves. The third Noble Truth reflects on the belief that suffering can be eliminated. It asserts that it can be done, and that it has been done. The fourth Noble Truth lays the groundwork for the cessation of suffering (Dukkha) through the Noble Eightfold Path.

Karma. 業, is the concept of "action" or "deed" in Dharmic religions, understood as denoting the entire cycle of cause and effect described in Buddhist philosophies.


Hisao Kurosawa. 黒澤久雄, Kurosawa’s son. He is an actor, co-producer, executive producer and producer. He is the producer in

**Kazuko Kurosawa.** 黑澤和子, Kurosawa’s daughter. She is a costume designer, who also works in costuming and wardrobe and as a producer. She is the costume designer in Kurosawa’s *Rhapsody in August* (八月狂想曲, 1991) and *Madadayo* (一代鮮師, 1993), and worked in wardrobe in Kurosawa’s *Dreams* (夢, 1990). She has also made one documentary about her father, *A Message from Akira Kurosawa: for Beautiful Movies* (黑澤明之信息- 美好的電影, 2000).

**Toshiro Mifune.** 三船敏郎 1920 -1997, was a Japanese actor who appeared in almost 170 feature films. His imposing bearing, acting range, facility with foreign languages and lengthy partnership with Akira Kurosawa made him the most famous Japanese actor of his time, and easily the best known to Western audiences. He often portrayed a *samurai* or *ronin*, who was usually coarse and gruff, inverting the popular stereotype of the genteel, clean-cut samurai. In such films as *Seven Samurai* (七武士, 1954) and *Yojimbo* (用心棒, 1961), he played characters who were often comically lacking in manners, but replete with practical wisdom and experience, understated nobility, and, in the case of *Yojimbo* (用心棒, 1961), unmatched fighting prowess. *Sanjuro* (樁三十郎, 1962) in particular contrasts this earthy warrior spirit with the useless, sheltered propriety of the court samurai. Kurosawa highly valued Mifune for his effortless portrayal of unvarnished emotion, once commenting that
he could convey in only three feet of film an emotion that would require
the average Japanese actor ten feet.

*Taiji.* also called the Supreme Pole, Supreme Ultimate, *tai chi*, 太極,
the ideal of existence, it is the infinite, or the principle that embodies all
potential things, including all possible time and space. When
Confucianism came to the fore again during the Song Dynasty as
Neo-Confucianism, it was regarded as the synthesized aspects of Chinese
Buddhism and Taoism, drawn them together using threads that traced back
to the metaphysical discussions in the *Book of Changes* (also called *I
Ching*, 易經) which said “Therefore in the *Yi* there is the Supreme Pole,
which generates the Two Exemplars. The Two Exemplars generate the
Four Models, the Four Models generate the Eight Trigrams, the Eight
Trigrams fix the auspicious and the baleful” (易曰易有太極是生兩儀，兩
儀生四象，四象生八卦，八卦定吉凶).

*Yin and yang.* 陰陽, the concept of *yin* and *yang* originates in ancient
Chinese philosophy and metaphysics. *Yin* and *yang* are two opposing but
complementary forces found in all things in the universe. *Yin*, the darker
element, is passive, dark, feminine, downward-seeking, and corresponds
to the night; *yang*, the brighter element, is active, light, masculine,
upward-seeking and corresponds to the day. Heaven was created by the
concentration of *yang*, the force of light, earth was created by the
concentration of *yin*, the force of darkness. *Yang* stands for peace and
serenity; *yin* stands for confusion and turmoil. *Yang* stands for destruction;
*Yin* stands for conservation. *Yang* brings about disintegration; *yin* gives shape to things.
Chapter 3

Makoto.  
*cheng*, 誠, also understood as honesty, sincerity, love and fulfilled promise, 信, shin.

The Three Programs.  
三綱領, to illustrate illustrious virtues; to restore the people; and to rest in the highest excellence (明明德、親民、止於至善).

Takashi Shimura.  
志村喬, 1905-1982, was one of the great Japanese actors of the last century who acted Kambei in *Seven Samurai* (七武士, 1954), the leader of the samurai who takes the part of a real and good samurai. He also acted in many of Kurosawa’s films. For example, the woodcutter in *Rashomon* (羅生門, 1950), the main character in *Ikiru* (also called *To Live*, 生之慾, 1952), a veteran detective in *Stray Dog* (野良犬, 1949) and the doctor in *Drunken Angel* (酩酊天使, 1948). After Toshiro Mifune, Shimura was probably the next most closely associated actor with Akira Kurosawa. In fact, Kurosawa's collaboration with Shimura started earlier and lasted longer than his work with Mifune. Shimura appeared in the director's debut film, *Sanshiro Sugata* (姿三四郎, 1943), and the last movie of Kurosawa's in which he acted was *Kagemusha* (影武者, 1980), where Kurosawa specifically wrote a part just for Shimura. However, the scene was cut from the western release, and so many do not know that he was even in the film.
Datu-a Ron. an article written by Yukichi Fukuzawa (福澤諭吉, 1835-1901) in 1885. The name of the work means “On saying good-bye to Asia, Document 2”. This article urged his fellow countrymen to cast away the shackles of East Asian traditions.

Inoue Tetsujirō. 井上哲次郎, 1855-1944, was a Japanese philosopher who condemned Christianity as incompatible with Japanese culture and considered its followers "inherently disloyal" to Japan. He compiled A Dictionary of Philosophy (哲學字彙, Tetsugaku jii), which was first published in 1881.

Skilled practitioners. 職人 or 匠人, who attain the perfect state of embarked on the Tao in various fields, including Kado (花道, the Tao of flowers), shodo (書道, the Tao of calligraphy), kendo (剣道, the Tao of traditional skill in swordsmanship) and chado (茶道, sado, the Tao of tea), which are skills, steps and ceremonies with the philosophical concern that constitute the Japanese way of life.

Kado. 花道, the Tao of flowers, also known as Ikebana, is the Japanese art of flower arrangement, the way of flowers.

Chado. 茶道, sado, the Tao of tea, the way of tea, the Japanese tea ceremony is a traditional ritual influenced by Zen Buddhism in which powdered green tea, or matcha (抹茶), is ceremonially prepared by a skilled practitioner.
**Judo.** 柔道, the Tao of a martial art. It is a Japanese martial art and combat sport, which is inseparable from its founder, Japanese polymath and educator Kano Jigoro (嘉納治五郎, 1860–1938) in the late nineteenth century. Kano Jigoro’s story was adapted by Kurosawa in his film, *Sanshiro Sugata* (姿三四郎, 1943).

**Jujitsu.** 柔術, a martial art which is older than *Judo*. Its central ethos is to yield to the force provided by an opponent’s attack in order to apply counter techniques.

**The Tao of teaching.** 師道. The way between students and teachers regarded as significant for Confucianism to pass on the *Tao* through generations. The teaching of Confucianism points out that pupils have to respect their teachers as their own parents; teachers have to teach their pupils by a strict way, but treat them with kindness as their own children.

**Amaterasu.** the Sun Goddess of *Shinto* beliefs, 天照大神, also called Amaterasu-ōmikami (天照大御神) or Ōhiru-menomuchi-no-kami (大日雲貴神) is in Japanese mythology a sun goddess and perhaps the most important Shinto deity, *kami* (神). Her name, *Amaterasu*, means “illuminates Heaven”.

**Ninjo.** 人情, the feeling of heart, as contrasting with *giri*.
**Seppuku.** 切腹, stomach-cutting or belly slicing is a form of Japanese ritual suicide.

**Nature of emptiness.** 空性 According to Buddhism, the nature of emptiness is the original nature of human beings before they experience society, before they are socialized and establish an ego, and before they are educated. People have everything inside their original nature, even if they don’t have education and the knowledge they gain as a member of society. Everyone can recover their original nature, ‘the nature of emptiness’, thus, they can be enlightened to become a Buddha.

**Six consciousnesses.** 六根, includes eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

**Five poisons.** 五毒, the five main negative emotional addictions that drive the cycle of samsara: delusion, hate, greed, pride, and envy (also include anger, ignorance, arrogance and aversion).

**Buddha-nature.** 佛性, the union of wisdom and emptiness is the essence of Buddha-hood or what is called Buddha-nature (Skt. tathagatagarba) because it contains the very seed, the potential of Buddha-hood.

**Intuition.** 直観, a method through which individuals discover their human nature, enabling them to observe social situations and natural phenomenon.
Ultimate Nirvana. 涅槃. The Heart of Prajna Paramita Sutra say
‘There is no wisdom, and there is no attainment whatsoever. Because there is nothing to be attained, a Bodhisattva relying on Prajina-Paramita has no obstruction in his mind. Because there is no obstruction he has no fear, and he passes far beyond all confused imagination and reaches Ultimate Nirvana. (涅槃) (Hwang 2005).

The Five Skandhas. 五蘊, also called Five Aggregates, include matter (色, body, form), sensation (受, feeling), perception (想), mental formation (行, Karma, will), consciousness (識). (1) Matter: We sometimes tend to identify ourselves with our bodies. When analyzed, we know that our body changes all the time. Medical reports actually show that our body cells are totally renewed in every 7 years. As analyzed, our body is not permanent, but changes all the time. (2) Sensation: This includes all our feelings, pleasant (樂 受), unpleasant (苦 受) and neutral (捨 受). Our feelings change from moment to moment. It is less stable that our body. (3) Perception: Our perceptions are produced through the contact of our six senses (also called Six Consciousnesses, 六根) with the external world. Since we perceive differently from time to time, how can we consider perception to constitute "self." (4) Mental formation; Karma: This group includes all volitional activities both good and bad, It is the desire, the will to live, to exist, to re-exist, to become, to grow, to accumulate more and more. We tend to consider our "will" to be part of ourselves. (5) Consciousness: It is a response that has one of the six senses
as its basis, and one of the six corresponding eternal phenomena as its object.

**Qi.** 氣, vital energy or physical force. It is believed to be part of every living thing that exists, as a kind of “life force” or “spiritual energy.” It is frequently translated as “energy flow,” or literally as “air” or “breath.”

**The Five Elements.** 五行, include metal, wood, water, fire, and earth used in ancient Chinese cosmology. It has been developed by Confucianism, Taoism and later in herbal medicine and symbol in literature, drama and other arts.

**Qin Shi Huang.** 秦始皇, BCE260-BCE210, the first emperor in China. He outlawed Confucianism and buried many of its scholars alive, banning and burning all books other than those officially decreed. He also mobilized more than 300,000 people over a period of a dozen years to build the Great Wall, which stretches for 5,000 km in northern China.

**Mono geki.** 時裝劇, contemporary costume drama.
Chapter 4

_Haiku._ 日本三行俳句詩, one style of Japanese poetry with a three sentence structure.

_**jo-ha-kyu.**_ 序破急, terms borrowed from _gagaku_ (also called elegant music,雅樂, a kind of ceremonial music from China), which they apply to specific movement in a given piece. In _Noh jo, ha, and kyu_ take on a more comprehensive meaning and indicate the full process of a play. _Jo_, literally “preface”, means the opening of a process, and it is generally characterized as smooth and even. _Ha_ means “break” and indicates a change in tone from the _jo_ as well as the main body of development of the play’s theme. _Kyu_ means “fast” and is taken as “fast finale”, the climax of a play. Zeami came to see _jo-ha kyu_ as a universal organization principle for all things existing in time, and he applied the term not only to the play as a whole, but to _shodan_ (a term that means small section to designate the individual songs and spoken passages of which a _Noh_ play is composed) and even individual syllables of a text (Hare 1986, p. 294).

_Heida._ a warrior mask in _Noh_ theatre.

_Shakeumi._ a woman’s mask in _Noh_ theatre.

_Yaseonna._ an old woman’s mask in _Noh_ theatre.
**Yamauba.** a demon mask as the mountain demon in *Noh* theatre.

**Phantasmal Noh.** 夢幻能, *mugen Noh, Noh* of dreams and apparitions. Plays in which the *shite* (仕手, the protagonist, the major role in *Noh*) is a being from another dimension (界) of existence, either a god, demon, faerie, or plant spirit or the ghost of a human being. In many *mugen* plays the *waki* (脇, the secondary role in *Noh* play) is explicitly said to have gone to sleep, and the second act is a presentation of his dream, thus the “dreams and apparitions” in the world. This thematic element had such influence on the structure of *mugen Noh*, however, that *Noh*, takings a certain formal configuration, may be said to be *mugen Noh*, even if no explicit mention of dreams and apparitions is made. The majority of Zeami’s plays are *mugen Noh* (Hare 1986, p. 297).

**Three Powers.** *San sai*, refers to the theory of heaven, earth, and human (ten-chi-jin’).

**Shite.** 仕手, the protagonist, the major role in *Noh*.

**Waki.** 脇, the secondary role in a *Noh* play.

**Samsara.** 輪廻, transmigration of the soul in the religion of Mahayana Buddhism. It also refers to the cycle of reincarnation or rebirth.

**Sun Tzu.** 孫子 BCE544-496, was the author of *The Art of War*, an immensely influential ancient Chinese book on military strategy.
Yu. 阴, you, means dim, deep or difficult to see.

Gen. 玄, xuan, originally describing the dark, profound, tranquil color of the universe, refers to the Taoist concept of truth and the mysterious (Ueda 1991).

Dong Zhong Shu. 董仲舒 ca. BC195–ca. 115, was the most famous Confucian scholar who asserted the Tao of Arts and emphasized the concept of harmony between heaven, earth and humankind (ten-chi-jin, 天地人).

Dan. 幕, act or sections. Zeami states that the standard play is to be constructed from five dan. The first is the beginning (also called jo). The second, third and fourth are the development (also called ha). The fifth is the conclusion (also called kyu). In a typical Noh play the first dan contains the waki's (waki, 脇, the secondary role in a Noh play) self-introduction, the second the appearance of the shite (仕手, the protagonist, the major role in a Noh play), the third a conversation between the two, the fourth a narrative by the shite, and the fifth a dance or mimetic performance by the shite (Hare 1986, p. 292).

Six general realms of existence. 六界, In Buddhist cosmology the six realms includes devas, shura, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings.
The emperor of Yin.  殷簡紂王, the last emperor of the Yin Dynasty, whose name stands for tyranny.

The nether world. 冥界, the world of spirits.

Waka. 和歌, Classical Japanese poetic form of 31 syllables arranged 5-7-5-7-7. The text of waka is used in Noh plays as waka shodan, which consists of a waka or part of one (Hare 1986, p. 300).

Hana. 花, “flower”. One of Zeami’s favorite metaphors. “The flower” is what lies behind a successful performance, the actor’s power to charm and emotionally move his audience. In Fushikaden (風姿花傳) several different types of “flower” are identified: the transient flower of simple novelty, the eternal flower of long training and deep understanding, the flower of secrecy, etc. In Zeami’s early theory, when the metaphor is used most often, it seems to have particularly strong visual associations (Hare 1986, p. 293).
## 3. Filmography of Akira Kurosawa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No/ The released date</th>
<th>Title in English/ Japanese/ 《Traditional Chinese》</th>
<th>Poster in Japan</th>
<th>Company/ running time</th>
<th>Main production crew</th>
<th>Main Cast</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 25.03.1943</td>
<td>Judo Story (Sanshiro Sugata)/《姿三四郎》</td>
<td>東宝映画 Toho 79 mins</td>
<td>Writer Akira Kurosawa Director of Photography Akira Mimura Production Designer Masao Tozuka Music Selichi Suzuki Assistant Director Jin Usami, Toshio Sugie</td>
<td>Susumu Fujita (Sanshiro Sugata), Denjirou Oukouchi (Shogoro Yano), Ryunosuke Tsukigata (Gennosuke Higaki), Takashi Shimura (Hansuke Murai)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>Runtime</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>Director of Photography</td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>The most beautiful/一番美しく/《美的尋求》 (最美)</td>
<td>Toho</td>
<td>85 mins</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Kenji Obara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>Runtime</td>
<td>Writer</td>
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<td>03.05.1945</td>
<td>Judo Story II (Sanshiro Sugata, Part II)</td>
<td>Toho</td>
<td>82 mins</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Takeo Ito</td>
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<td>24.04.1952</td>
<td>They Who Tread on the Tiger’s Tail</td>
<td>Toho</td>
<td>58 mins</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Takeo Ito</td>
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<td>(made in 1945)</td>
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<td>No Regrets for Our Youth/《我於青春無悔》</td>
<td>Tadashi Hattori</td>
<td>Masayuki Mori (Kamei), Takashi Shimura (Kataoka)</td>
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<td>Writer 東宝</td>
<td>Eijiroh Kusaka</td>
<td>Setsuko Hara, Denjirou Oukouchi, Susumu Fujita</td>
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<td>Chouichi Nakai</td>
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<td>Assistant Horikawa, Akitoshi Maeda</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>One wonderful Sunday/</td>
<td>東宝 Toho</td>
<td>Writer</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>《那個輝煌的星期天》</td>
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<td>Tadashi Hattori</td>
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<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Isao Yumazaki, Chieko Nakakita</td>
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| 7 | Drunken Angel/ | 東宝 Toho | Writer | Keinosuke Uekusa, Akira Kurosawa |
|   | 醉いどれ天使/ | 98 mins | Director of Photography | Takeo Ito |
|   | 《酩酊天使》 | | Production Designer | Takashi Shimura (Sanada), Toshiro Mifune (Matsunaga) |
|   | | | Music | Takashi Matsuyama |
| 8 | 13.03.1949 | The Quiet Duel/ 静かなる決闘/ 《靜靜的決鬥》 | 大映東京 Daiei 95mins | Writer | Akira Kurosawa, Senkichi Taniguchi  
Director of Photography | Souichi Aihara  
Production Designer | Kouichi Imai  
Music | Akira Ifukube  
Assistant Director | Takumi Nakamura, Fumiki Saijyou | Toshiro Mifune (Kyoji Fujisaki), Takashi Shimura, Miki Sanjyo |
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<th>Actor 2</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Stray Dog/野良犬/《野犬》</td>
<td>17.10.1949</td>
<td>Shintoho</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa, Ryuzo Kikujima</td>
<td>Inoshiro Honda, Yoshimi Imaizumi</td>
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<td>Akira Kurosawa, Ryuzo Kikushima</td>
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<td>23.05.1951</td>
<td><em>The Idiot</em> / 白痴 / 《白痴》</td>
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<td>166 mins</td>
<td>Eijiro Kusaka, Akira Kurosawa</td>
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<td>Toho</td>
<td>166 mins</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa, Shinobu Hashimoto, Hideo Koguni</td>
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<td><strong>Type</strong></td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td><strong>Based on</strong></td>
<td>Murakami's novel</td>
<td><strong>Starring</strong></td>
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<td>Design</td>
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<td>Hideo Koguni, Shinobu Hashimoto, Ryuzo Kikushima, Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Choichi Nakai</td>
<td>Yoshiro Muraki</td>
<td>Masaru Sato</td>
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<td>17/17.09.1957</td>
<td>The Lower Depths/どんどん底底底</td>
<td>Toho</td>
<td>125 mins</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa, Hideo Koguni</td>
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- Toshiro Mifune (General Washizu), Isuzu Yamada (Lady Asaji), Minoru Chiaki, Takashi Shimura
- Toshiro Mifune (Sutekichi), Isuzu Yamada (Osugi), Kyoko Kagawa (Kayo), Minoru Chiaki (tono-sama)
<table>
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<th>18</th>
<th>The Hidden Fortress/隠し砦の三悪人/《隱砦三惡》(戦国英豪) (戦国群盗伝)</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Ryuzo Kikushima, Hideo Koguni, Shinobu Hashimoto, Akira Kurosawa Kurosawa Misa Uehara (Princess) Toshiro Mifune (Rokurota Makabe), Minoru Chiaki Kamatari Fujiwara (Matashichi), Takashi Shimura (Izumi Nagakura)</th>
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<th>The Bad Sleep Well/悪い奴ほどよく眠る/《懶夫睡漢》(悪人能睡)</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Hideo Koguni, Eijiro Kusaka, Akira Kurosawa, Ryuzo Kikushima Shinobu</th>
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<td>The Bodyguard</td>
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<td>Yuzuru Aizawa</td>
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<td>Ryuzo Kikushima, Akira Kurosawa</td>
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<td>Sanjuro/椿三十郎 / 《大劍客》(椿十三郎)</td>
<td>01.01.1962</td>
<td>Toho East / Kurosawa Film Production</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>High and Low/天国と地獄 / 《天國與地獄》</td>
<td>01.03.1963</td>
<td>Toho East / Kurosawa Film Production</td>
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</tbody>
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**Sanjuro**
- Written by: Ryuzo Kikushima, Hideo Koguni, Akira Kurosawa
- Directed by: Akira Kurosawa
- Photography by: Fukuo Koizumi, Takao Saito
- Production Designer: Yoshiro Muraki
- Music: Masaru Sato

**High and Low**
- Written by: Hideo Koguni, Ryuzo Kikushima, Eijiro Kusaka, Akira Kurosawa
- Directed by: Akira Kurosawa
- Photography by: Choichi Nakai, Takao Saito
- Production Designer: Yoshiro Muraki
- Music: Masaru Sato
<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>Red Beard/ 赤ひげ / 《紅鬍子》</td>
<td>Masato Ide, Hideo Koguni, Ryuzo Kikushima, Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Toho Kurosawa Film Production</td>
<td>185 mins</td>
<td>Masaru Saito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Dodeskaden (Clickety-C lack) / どですかでどですかで どですかでどですかでん / 《電車狂》 (沒有季節的小墟)</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa, Hideo Oguni, Shinobu Hashimoto</td>
<td>Toho Yoki-no-kai Production</td>
<td>140 mins</td>
<td>Masaru Saito</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Director of Photography**: Choichi Nakai, Takao Saito, Yasumichi Fukuzawa
- **Production Designer**: Yoshiro Muraki
- **Music**: Masaru Saito
- **Actors**: Toshiro Mifune, Yuzo Kayama, Kyoko Kagawa, Terumi Niki
- **Actors**: Akahige Niide, Yoko Kaizaki, Kyoko Kagawa, Terumi Niki
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Production Company</th>
<th>Film Length</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Dersu Uzala</td>
<td>Hiroshi</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa, Yuri Nagibin</td>
<td>Toho</td>
<td>141 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Dersu Uzala)</td>
<td>Murata</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(影武者/《影武者》)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Kagemusha (Shadow</td>
<td>Hiroshi</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa, Masato Ide</td>
<td>Toho</td>
<td>179 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warrior) / 影武者/</td>
<td>Murata</td>
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<td>《影武者》</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Production Designer</td>
<td>Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Yoshiro Muraki</td>
<td>Shinichiro Ikebe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hideo Oguni</td>
<td>Shinobu Muraki</td>
<td>Tetsu Takemitsu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masato Ide</td>
<td>Nippon Herald</td>
<td>Tatsuya Nakadai</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ran (Chaos)/亂**

- **Production**: Greenway Film Production, Hearald Ace Int, and Nippon Herald
- **Director of Photography**: Takao Saito, Shouji Ueda (support: Asakazu Nakai)
- **Production Designer**: Yoshiro Muraki, Shinobu Muraki
- **Music**: Tetsu Takemitsu

- **Date**: 01.06.1985
- **Language**: Japanese

Kazuo Miyagawa, Choichi Nakai

(Katsuyori Takeda), Jinpachi Nezu (Souhachiro Tsuchiya), Tsutomu Yamazaki (Nobukane Takeda)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Director(s)</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Director of Photography</th>
<th>Photography</th>
<th>Production Designer</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Dreams/夢/《夢》</td>
<td>荒木弘</td>
<td>二宮隆行</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Takao Saito, Shouji Ueda</td>
<td>Yoshiro Muraki, Akira Sakuragi</td>
<td>Shinichiro Ikebe</td>
<td>Akira Terao, Hisashi Ikawa, Chishu Ryu, Mieko Harada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Films, Inc. 162 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Phapsody In August/八月狂想曲/《八月狂想曲》</td>
<td>荒木弘</td>
<td>二宮隆行</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
<td>Takao Saito, Shouji Ueda</td>
<td>Yoshiro Muraki</td>
<td>Sachiko Murase (grandmother), Hisashi Ikawa (Tadao), Hidetaka Yoshioka (Tateo), Richard Gere (Clark)</td>
<td>Sachiko Murase (grandmother), Hisashi Ikawa (Tadao), Hidetaka Yoshioka (Tateo), Richard Gere (Clark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.04.1993</td>
<td>Madaayo (No, Not Yet) / まあだだよ / 《一代鮮師》 (不，還不行)</td>
<td>大映 Daiei = 電通 Dentsu = 黒澤プロ Kurosawa Film Production 134 mins</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>Akira Kurosawa</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Director of Photography</td>
<td>Takao Saito, Shouji Ueda</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Designer</td>
<td>Yoshiro Muraki</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Music</td>
<td>Shinichiro Ikebe</td>
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<td>Tatsuo Matsumura, Kyoko Kagawa, Hisashi Ikawa, Jorge Tokoro, Hidetaka Yoshioka</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Interview with Chen, W-F Member of Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy (84) Academia Sinica, 3rd. August 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Hung, Y-W A Lecturer of the Dept. of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of Art, 4 August 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Liao, C-S A Senior Editor and Director in Taiwan, 4th. August 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Lin, T-T 林 A Senior Cinematographer in Taiwan, 29th. July 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Lin, Y-P Scholar in drama and literature, Associate Professor in the department of Theatre, Taipei National University of Arts, 21st. July 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Tsang, R Chairman of Dept. of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of art, 20 July 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Tseng, L J Associate Professor of Dept. of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of art, 26 July 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Wong, T A Senior Director and Art Director in Taiwan, 20th. July, Taipei.

Interview with Wong, Z Scholar in Film and drama, Associate Professor in the department of Theatre, Taipei National University of Arts, 29th.
July 2005, Taipei.

Interview with Tsang, R Chairman of Dept. of Motion Pictures, National Taiwan University of Art, 20 July 2005, Taipei.


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