

General Info:

Eiichi KUDO's SAMURAI REVOLUTION TRILOGY revolutionized the samurai film by focusing on realism, long hand-held camera sequences, and large group battles. The three films, 13 ASSASSINS, THE GREAT KILLING, and ELEVEN SAMURAI are acknowledged classics of the genre. AnimEigo is proud to be a part of their first North American DVD release.

The first film, 13 ASSASSINS (aka THE THIRTEEN ASSASSINS, JŪ -SAN NIN NO SHIKAKU) was remade in 2010 by Japan's hottest director, Takashi MIIKE. THE GREAT KILLING and ELEVEN SAMURAI are also available from AnimEigo. (Scheduled release shortly after this release.)

Kinema Jyumpo (Japan's most prestigious film magazine) had below list in their issue of August 2004,

All time best of Jidaigeki (Samurai films)

- #1 Seven Samurai (1954) Dir. Akira KUROSAWA
- #2 13 Assassins (1963) Dir. Eiichi KUDO
- #3 The Tale of Zatoichi (1962) Dir. Kenji MISUMI
- #4 Miyamoto Musashi (1961-65) Dir. Tomu UCHIDA
- #5 The Ghost of Yotsuya (1959) Dir. Nobuo NAKAGAWA
- #6 Yojimbo (1961) Dir. Akira KUROSAWA
- #7 Humanity and Paper Balloons (1937) Dir. Sadao YAMANAKA
- #8 Sun in the Last Dates of the Shogunate (1957) Dir. Yuzo KAWASHIMA
- #9 Samurai Vendetta (aka Hakuoki) (1959) Dir. Kazuo MORI
- #10 The Million Ryo Pot (1935) Dir. Sadao YAMANAKA

NOTE: #2,#4, and #9 are all AnimEigo releases.

Dialogue Notes, not explained by captions in the subtitles:

"...in front of Edo Castle, outside the Babasaki gate..."

'Babasaki' is a proper name designating a castle location; it literally means 'horse-place, front,' which was located relative to the south side; on the opposite side to the north was the Babasué, which literally is 'horseplace, rear'

"Our actions are like moves in a game of Shogi."

Also known as Japanese chess, is a two-player board game in the same family as chess and is the most popular of a family of chess variants native to Japan. These games are generally considered to be variants of an ancient Indian game, Caturaṅga : चतरु ंग

Matsudaira Naritsugu

The real-life model for Matsudaira Naritsugu, the evil Lord in this film, was Matsudaira Narikoto (1825-1844). Narikoto was the 26th son of the 11th Shogun, Tokugawa Ienari, and the half-brother of the 12th Shogun, Tokugawa Iyoshi. He was adopted by the confusingly-named Matsudaira Naritsugu (1803-1868) and made the heir to the Akashi fief in preference to Naritsugu's natural-born son.

Narikoto was by most accounts a rather nasty character, and indulging his whims put great financial strain upon the Akashi fief. He died at 20 from an "illness", and Naritsugu's natural son once again became the heir.

13 ASSASSINS – LINER NOTES

One story has it that while passing through the Owari fief, Narikoto ordered the death of a small child who had inadvertently inconvenienced him. The Owari (who were connected to the Shogunate) then declared their fief off-limits to Narikoto, forcing his party to disguise themselves in order to effect passage.

Another version of the story has the father of the child, a hunter, tracking down Narikoto and shooting him to death.

Bios:

Eiichi KUDO - Director (7/17/1929 - 9/23/2000)

Best known for this trilogy and legendary TV series "Kizu darake no tenshi" (Injured Angels) and "Sure Death" (Hissatsu), Kudo directed over 30 films between 1956 and 1999. His 1982 film Yaju-Deka was nominated for the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin International Film Festival. In 2001, he won a postmortem Special Award at the Mainichi Film Concours.

Kaneo IKEGAMI - Screenplay Writer (5/16/1923 - 5/6/2007)

Ikegami was known as the father of Shudan Jidaigeki (Large Group-battle Samurai Cinema). He first pioneered the style with SEVENTEEN NINJA (1963). As opposed to the traditional story of one hero battling a large group of enemies, this story features a group that works as a team. SEVENTEEN NINJA was a hit, and spawned 13 ASSASSINS and THE GREAT KILLING. Due to the success of the SHUDAN JIDAIGEKI genre, IKEGAMI had a prolific career as a film and TV screenwriter. Furthermore, he became a novelist at his age of 69, using the pen name of Shoichiro IKEMIYA. His first book was adapted into a film in Japan which was later released by AnimEigo on DVD as "Kon Ichikawa's 47 Ronin".

Chiezo KATAOKA - Actor (March 30, 1903 – March 31, 1983)

Kataoka is regarded as one of the six big samurai film stars in the early Japanese film industry, along with Denjiro OKOUCHI, Kanjuro ARASHI (also starring in 13 Assassins), Tsumasaburo BANDO, Kazuo HASEGAWA (star of Loyal 47 Ronin and Revenge of a Kabuki Actor - AnimEigo DVD releases), and Utaemon ICHIKAWA.

Kataoka began his dramatic training as a child actor in Kabuki Theater. He later started his own Production company, Chiezo Productions, which became the longest-lasting independent, star-centered production company in Japan. Specializing in Jidaigeki (Samurai Cinema), he played the lead in various films before and during World War II. He later joined Toei Studios, where he also served on the Board of Directors & starred in various TV & film projects.

Kanjuro ARASHI - Actor (12/8/1903- 10/21/1980)

Like Chiezo KATAOKA, Arashi is regarded as one of the six big samurai film stars in early Japanese film. He appeared in over 300 films. His nickname was "Aarkan".

Koutaro SATOMI - Actor (11/28/1936 -)

Satomi is best known for his roles in the longest running Samurai TV series of all time, MITO KOMON, which lasted 42 years, 43 series, and 1227 episodes until 12/19/2011, a Guinness Book World Record. At various times, he was part of the cast in three different main roles; Suke-san, Kaku-san and finally as Mito Komon himself.

He also appeared all of three films in The Samurai Revolution Trilogy.

Ko NISHIMURA - Actor (1/25/1923 - 4/29/1997)

13 ASSASSINS – LINER NOTES

Nishimura has appeared in many supporting roles in many films, including three made by Akira KURUSAWA, but is best known for also playing a role in MITO KOMON. For fans of MITO KOMON in Japan, this film is like watching two actors who have played James Bond in the same film -- though they would argue about who is Sean Connery, and who is Daniel Craig!