

SELECTED FILMS

The following films feature thought-provoking stories taking place during and in the post-WWII era.

*List compiled by Dr. Nobuko Chikamatsu,
Professor at DePaul University*

JAPANESE WAR FILMS

Godzilla 「ゴジラ」

Directed by Ishiro Honda (1954)

Godzilla Minus One 「ゴジラ-1.0」

Directed by Takashi Yamazaki (2023)

Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms 「夕風の街 桜の国」

Directed by Kiyoshi Sasabe (2007)

Till We Meet Again on the Lily Hill 「あの花が咲く丘で、君とまた出会えたら」

Directed by Yoichi Narita (2023)

Tower of the Lilies 「ひめゆりの塔」

Directed by Tadashi Imai (1953)

Tower of the Lilies 「ひめゆりの塔」

Directed by Seiji Koyama (1995)

The Face of Jizo 「父と暮せば」

Directed by Kazuo Kuroki (2004)

Nagasaki: Memories of My Son 「母と暮せば」

Directed by Yoji Yamada (2015)

Gift of Fire 「太陽の子」

Directed by Hiroshi Kurosaki (2021)

Tomorrow 「明日」

Directed by Kazuo Kuroki (1988)

A Boy's Summer in 1945 「美しい夏キリシマ」

Directed by Kazuo Kuroki (2002)

Twenty-Four Eyes 「二十四の瞳」

Directed by Keisuke Kinoshita (1954)

Twenty-Four Eyes 「二十四の瞳」

Directed by Yoshitaka Asama (1987)

Children of Nagasaki 「この子を残して」

Directed by Keisuke Kinoshita (1983)

I Want to Be a Shellfish 「私は貝になりたい」

Directed by Yoshihiko Okamoto (1958)

I Want to Be a Shellfish 「私は貝になりたい」

Directed by Katsuo Fukuzawa (2008)

Hiroshima 「ひろしま」

Directed by Hideo Sekigawa (1953)

Organ 「あの日のオルガン」

Directed by Emiko Hiramatsu (2019)

Mother's Trees 「おかあさんの木」

Directed by Itsunichi Isomura (2015)

Caterpillar 「キャタピラー」

Directed by Koji Wakamatsu (2010)

Fires on the Plain 「野火」

Directed by Kon Ichikawa (1959)

Fires on the Plain 「野火」

Directed by Shinya Tsukamoto (2014)

In This Corner of the World 「この世界の片隅に」

Directed by Sunao Katabuchi (2016)

Barefoot Gen 「はだしのゲン」

Live-Action Adaption Directed by Tengu Yamada (1976)

Anime Adaptation Directed by Mori Masaki (1983)

Black Rain 「黒い雨」

Directed by Shohei Imamura (1998)

Rhapsody in August 「八月の狂詩曲」

Directed by Akira Kurosawa (1991)

Grave of the Fireflies 「火垂るの墓」

Directed by Isao Takahata (1988)

Fragments of the Last Will 「ラーゲリより愛を込めて」

Directed by Zeze Takahashi (2022)

The Emperor in August 「日本のいちばん長い日」

Directed by Masato Harada (2015)

Japan's Longest Day 「日本のいちばん長い日」

Directed by Kihachi Okamoto (1967)

The Eternal Zero 「永遠のゼロ」

Directed by Takashi Yamazaki (2013)

Wife of a Spy 「スパイの妻」

Directed by Kiyoshi Kurosawa (2021)

AMERICAN & OTHER FOREIGN WAR FILMS

Oppenheimer 「オッペンハイマー」

Directed by Christopher Nolan (2023)

Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence 「戦場のメリークリスマス」

Directed by Nagisa Oshima (1983) [Languages: English/Japanese]

Letters from Iwo Jima 「硫黄島からの手紙」

Directed by Clint Eastwood (2006) [Language: Japanese]

Hiroshima, Mon Amour 「十四時間の情事」

Directed by Alain Resnais (1959) [Languages: French/Japanese]

Emperor 「終戦のエンペラー」

Directed by Peter Webber (2012) [Languages: English/Japanese]

DOCUMENTARIES

White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Directed by Steven Okazaki (2007)

Twice Bombed, Twice Survived 「二重被爆」

Directed by Hideo Nakamura (2006)

The Last Kamikaze: Testimonials from WWII Suicide Pilots

Directed by Masami Takahashi (2007)

The Fog of War

Directed by Errol Morris (2003)

SELECTED BOOKS, FILMS, AND WEBSITES

For further reference, the following is a non-exhaustive selection of works about the Japanese American WWII experience.

*List compiled by Mr. Erik Matsunaga,
Japanese American History & Community Historian*

NON-FICTION

Hirahara, Naomi; Lindquist, Heather C.

Life After Manzanar (2018)

“From the editor of the award-winning *Children of Manzanar*, Heather C. Lindquist, and Edgar Award winner Naomi Hirahara comes a nuanced account of ‘Resettlement’: the relatively unexamined period when ordinary people of Japanese ancestry, having been unjustly imprisoned during World War II, were finally released from custody.”

Okubo, Mine

Citizen 13660 (1946, 1973, 1983, 2014)

“Mine Okubo was one of more than a hundred thousand people of Japanese descent—nearly two-thirds of whom were forced into ‘protected custody’ shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. *Citizen 13660*, Okubo’s illustrated memoir of life in relocation centers in California and Utah, illuminates this experience with poignant drawings and witty, candid text.”

Abe, Frank; Nimura, Tamiko

with illustrations by Ishikawa, Ross; Sasaki, Matt

WE HEREBY REFUSE: Japanese American Resistance to Wartime Incarceration (2021)

“Japanese Americans complied when evicted from their homes in World War II—but many refused to submit to imprisonment in American concentration camps without a fight. For the first time, three of their stories are woven into one epic narrative.”

Hosokawa, Bill

Nisei: The Quiet Americans (1969, 2002)

“This book recounts [the] dramatic story of adversity, challenge, and triumph: In particular it details the role of Nisei, the ‘second generation’ Japanese born with the citizenship denied their parents, and the organization they created, the Japanese American Citizens League, to help them win their full rights and thus help all of us move another step toward the achievement of the great American ideal.”

FICTION

Hirahara, Naomi

CLARK AND DIVISION (2021)

“Inspired by historical events, *Clark and Division* infuses an atmospheric and heartbreakingly real crime fiction plot with rich period details and delicately wrought personal stories Naomi Hirahara has gleaned from thirty years of research and archival work in Japanese American history.”

Hirahara, Naomi

EVERGREEN (2023)

Note: This is a sequel to *CLARK AND DIVISION*

“Los Angeles, 1946: It’s been two years since Aki Ito and her family were released from Manzanar detention center and resettled in Chicago with other Japanese Americans. Now the Itos have finally been allowed to return home to California—but nothing is as they left it. The entire Japanese American community is starting from scratch, with thousands of people living in dismal refugee camps while they struggle to find new houses and jobs in over-crowded Los Angeles.”

Okada, John

NO-NO BOY (1957, 1976, 1979, 2014)

“*No-No Boy* tells the story of Ichiro Yamada, a fictional version of the real-life ‘no-no boys.’ Yamada answered ‘no’ twice in a compulsory government questionnaire as to whether he would serve in the armed forces and swear loyalty to the United States. Unwilling to pledge himself to the country that interned him and his family, Ichiro earns two years in prison and the hostility of his family and community when he returns home to Seattle. As Ozeki writes, Ichiro’s ‘obsessive, tormented’ voice subverts Japanese postwar ‘model-minority’ stereotypes, showing a fractured community and one man’s ‘threnody of guilt, rage, and blame as he tries to negotiate his reentry into a shattered world.’”

Otsuka, Julie

When the Emperor was Divine (2002)

“Julie Otsuka’s commanding debut novel paints a portrait of the Japanese internment camps unlike any we have ever seen. With crystalline intensity and precision, Otsuka uses a single family to evoke the deracination—both physical and emotional—of a generation of Japanese Americans. In five chapters, each flawlessly executed from a different point of view—the mother receiving the order to evacuate; the daughter on the long train ride to the camp; the son in the desert encampment; the family’s return to their home; and the bitter release of the father after more than four years in captivity—she has created a small tour de force, a novel of unrelenting economy and suppressed emotion.”

FILM

Pirosh, Robert

Go For Broke! (1951)

“A tribute to the U.S. 442nd Regimental Combat Team, formed in 1943 by Presidential permission with Japanese-American volunteers. We follow the training of a platoon under the rueful command of Lt. Mike Grayson who shares common prejudices of the time. The 442nd serve in Italy, then France, distinguishing themselves in skirmishes and battles; gradually and naturally, Grayson’s prejudices evaporate with dawning realization that his men are better soldiers than he is.”

Nakamura, Robert A.; Kubo, Duane

HITO HATA: Raise the Banner (1980)

“*HITO HATA: Raise the Banner* (1980) is the first feature-length film made by and about Asian Pacific Americans. Capturing the contributions and hardships of Japanese Americans from the turn-of-the-20th century, the film centers on Oda (the late veteran actor/director Mako), a feisty issei (first generation Japanese American) and elderly single laborer living in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. Through a series of flashbacks, the story traces Oda’s life as a laborer on the transcontinental railroad to his struggle to save the home of Little Tokyo’s residents when the community is threatened with redevelopment.”

Parker, Alan

Come See the Paradise (1990)

“*Come See the Paradise* is a 1990 American historical drama film written and directed by Alan Parker, and starring Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita. Set before and during World War II, the film depicts the treatment of Japanese Americans in the United States following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the subsequent loss of civil liberties within the framework of a love story.” (Wikipedia)

Park, Eugene Sun; Street, Erika

The Orange Story (2017)

“February 1942. President Roosevelt has just signed Executive Order 9066, which authorizes the forced removal of 120,000 ethnic Japanese from their homes and into incarceration camps throughout the U.S. The short film follows Koji Oshima, proud owner of a small grocery store, as he prepares to abandon everything and report to an assembly center.”

ONLINE RESOURCES

Densho

www.densho.org

“Densho documents the testimonies of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II before their memories are extinguished. We offer these irreplaceable firsthand accounts, coupled with historical images and teacher resources, to explore principles of democracy and promote equal justice for all. Densho uses digital technology to preserve and make accessible primary source materials on the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans.”

Discover Nikkei

www.discovernikkei.org

“Discover Nikkei is an international network that celebrates cultural diversity and explores both global and local identities. The project connects generations and communities by sharing stories and perspectives of the Nikkei, people of Japanese descent who have migrated and settled throughout the world. The DiscoverNikkei.org site is a cornerstone program of the Nikkei Legacy Project, a project of the Japanese American National Museum, with major funding by the Nippon Foundation.”

Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages

www.jampilgrimages.org

“JAMP started as a passion project to heal the fractures in the Japanese American community left behind by WWII. Kimiko and Marissa found that while there were Japanese American organizations doing amazing work across the nation, there was a need for an organization to bridge the gaps between them, and offer a place to reconnect for those without a local Japanese American community.”

Visual Communications

www.vcmedia.org

“Visual Communications (VC) is the first non-profit organization in the US dedicated to the honest and accurate portrayals of the Asian Pacific American peoples, communities, and heritage through the media arts. VC was created with the understanding that media and the arts are important vehicles to organize and empower communities, build connections between peoples and generations through the development of AAPI film, video, and media. The organization has created award-winning productions, nurtured and given voice to our youth and seniors, promoted new artistic talent, presented new cinema, and preserved our visual history.”