Mitsuko Yoshikawa remembers a full nonconsecutive twenty-four hours spent on a single shot in **A Mother Should Be Loved.** *She was supposed to turn away from tea-making; the tempo of turning had to be precise, and her glance was not to move ahead of her face.*

"Why," she finally cried after some hours of this, "do I have to do it this way?"

"Because," Ozu explained, "you are not a skillful actress and you must be directed." [1]

The Change In Seasons

Seasons change gradually, but there is always that day where the weather hits your body to really announce its arrival. My face doesn't flush, but sometimes the back of my neck tingles, especially when I revisit a memory I forgot was there. I saw my first Ozu film, *Late Spring* (1949), in a Japanese post-war cinema class during my undergrad. Our professor was an old European man whom I could understand only half the time through his thick accent. He wore a fedora and walked with a cane. I admired his traditional air—he really did speak poetically—and every idea that came out of his mouth was imbued with wisdom and love for the subject to which he had dedicated his life. It was through Japanese cinema and through Ozu that I learned how to look at the world.

Miso Soup Universe



Vater und Son/Father and Son/父与子 (Dir. Casey Wei, 2014)

When I think of Ozu, I think of a miso soup universe expanding and contracting with each motion of the bowl to and from a mouth. I think about time traveling, about stopwatches and trains, and about Hélène Cixous's essay on painting:

"The one who knows that he will not find, because he knows that if he found, he would have nothing else to do except continue to search for the new mystery. The one who knows he must continue to search."[2]

My love for Ozu extends to include much postwar and New Wave Japanese cinema. The post-Meiji boom of Western technology produced a film industry that grew quickly and expertly, first through study and mimicry of its Western origins, then towards a classicist framing of Japanese history through period dramas and genre films (the *jidaigekis* and *gendaigekis*), and onwards in the 60s to a sprawling and idiosyncratic era of experimentation. There is so much to look back on in wonder from this period; the freshness of the work, both masterful and nascent, inspires so much. But this youthful irreverence and free, hedonistic approach would not last. As Seijun Suzuki explained in a 1997 interview with Film Forum, "After *Branded to Kill*, I was fired. Their reasoning was: I make movies that make no sense and no money."[3] Another great director, Kon Ichikawa, recalled why his wife, Natto Wada, a scenarist who collaborated with him on his most successful films (the two met on set) quit after years of working together, feeling that by the mid 60s, "humanity [had] gone from contemporary cinema."[4] She was in part commenting on the New Wave style, but also on the studio pressures that demanded productivity over experimentation as Japanese cinema gained traction in the international market. Again, Suzuki's words echo here.