Tonight’s movie: Hari-Kiri, Death of a Samurai

harikiimovieposterAnother Takashi Miike film, this time from 2011. *Ichimei* , is a remake of the 1962 Kobayashi film. This isn’t really a samurai film, it is closer to *kaidan*, a ghost story.

I just finished the movie and what an experience! The cinematography is spectacular as is the story and characters. Miike does not disappoint!

Following the Battle of Sekigahara and the consolidation of the Tokugawa Shogunate at the beginning of the 17th century, there were many samurai that became masterless *ronin*. This is the story of two such *ronin*.

Hanshiro enters the courtyard of the powerful Ie clan asking to commit ritual suicide. Suspecting that this is merely a bluff, Kageyu, the head retainer of the house, tells Hanshiro of the tale of Motome, a young warrior who previously had asked the same. Calling Motome’s bluff, the House forces Motome to commit suicide with a dull wooden short blade. This is a sad story.

But Hanshiro has a secret. Hanshiro is a great samurai and is at the House of Ie to regain his honour, and the honour of his household, including his dead son in law, Motome (told you it was sad). What comes next is incredible sword fighting in a beautiful setting. The cinematography from Nobuyasu Kita is first rate, placing this film on a par with the beautiful films of Ang Lee (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) or Stanley Kubrick (*2001*). Arguably without Kazuo Miyagawa, Kurosawa’s *Roshomon* would not have been a masterpiece. Or without the brilliant Vittorio Storaro, Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* would not be the epic that is turned out to be. Miike is great, with Nobuyasu Kita, this film is brilliant!

I could go on but I’ll leave you with this: this film will haunt you, this film will disturb you, and this film will make love to your eyes.

See the trailer in HD here.

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