

Doc Monday Series:

Nuclear Radiation and Hibakusha

Co-sponsored by The Japan Committee of the Center for East Asian Studies, South Asia Language and Area Center, the Norman Wait Harris Fund of the Center for International Studies, and Human Rights Program

*All screening will start from 7PM

January 3:

Dr. Strangelove, 1964, Stanley Kubrick, 93m

Two years after the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kubrick's icy black comedy lampoons the insanity of nuclear deterrence theory. In the middle of the cold war, an eccentric general arbitrarily sends the nuclear bombers to Moscow to destroy the USSR. While the president of the U.S. finds that the USSR is equipped with "Doomsday Device" which will be automatically operated upon the nuclear attack, the bomber is approaching the target. Peter Sellers plays three roles: British group Captain, U.S. president, and former Nazi scientist, Dr. Strangelove.

January 10:

Hibakusha at the End of the World, 2003, Hitomi Kamanaka, 116m

In Japanese the word "hibakusha" usually refers to the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But the director of this film, Hitomi Kamanaka goes back to its literal meaning, "victim of radiation." The film documents the lives of radiation victims around the world: Iraqi children irradiated by depleted uranium, American farmers living near the Hanford plutonium factory, and survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is a journey that brings together a group of people separated by time and space, showing how everyone living in the contemporary world may find him or herself a hibakusha with no prior warning. This will be the film's first theatrical release in the U.S. Music by Christophe Heeman.

January 17:

Lost Generation, 1982, Yuten Tachibana, 20m

This rare documentary is one of the "10 Foot Movement" films. This movement, organized by the Japan Peace Museum, mobilized Japanese citizen activists to buy back small segments of film footage of the effects of the atomic bomb from the U.S. National Archives. Narrated by Jane Fonda, this film uses that footage, the first ever shot after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I Live in Fear, 1955, Akira Kurosawa, 103m

In 1954, 100 miles off Bikini Atoll, a Japanese fishing boat was showered with fallout from a U.S. hydrogen bomb test and eleven crew members died from radiation sickness. Terrified by this event, Akira Kurosawa made this film about an energetic factory founder who becomes obsessed by fear of nuclear radiation. Those around him treat him as insane, but the audience is led to sympathize with his reactions to a threat that seems to be both everywhere and nowhere.

January 24:

War and Peace –Jang Aur Aman, 2001, Anand Patwardhan, 148m

In 1998 India had five nuclear tests, followed a few weeks later by Pakistan's six. This escalation raised the tension between the two countries and fed the flames of nationalism. Indian director Anand Patwardhan explores anti-nuclear movements and their connection to Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence in both India and Pakistan. Based on three years of interviews, the film covers Indian nuclear testing sites, uranium mines, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and even the Smithsonian. This film can be seen as part of an effort on the part of many South Asians, including Arundhati Roy, to counteract the rise of violent nationalism.

January 31

Prophecy, 1982, Susumu Hani, 43m

This is another film to come out of the "10 Foot Movement," edited by well-known director/activist Susumu Hani. The film portrays the sorrow of atomic bomb survivors in the cold war period. Music by Toru Takemitsu.

When the Wind Blows, 1986, Jimmy T. Murakami, 80m

This is an animated feature based on the Raymond Briggs' book by the same title. Jim and Hilda are an elderly couple living in English country-side. One day there is a radio broadcast announcing the outbreak of war, and they, in the midst of governmental guidance, start to prepare for an approaching nuclear attack. The contrast between heartwarming touches of Briggs drawings, also on display in his other books such as "Father Christmas" and "Snowman," and the misery of the story create an emotionally powerful message. The title comes from a line in a nursery rhyme, which is followed by the line "the cradle will fall."

February 7:

Chernobyl Heart, 2003, Maryann DeLeo, 39m

In 1986, one of the nuclear reactors at the Chernobyl power plant exploded, spreading radioactive fallout across the northern hemisphere over the following months. This Oscar-winning short documentary looks at the children who grew up close to Chernobyl, and who suffer from radiation sickness, congenital heart defects, and thyroid cancer.

Nadya's Village, 1997, Seiichi Motohashi, 118m

Dudichi is a Belarusian village located about 100 miles from Chernobyl. Due to high levels of radiation, what used to be a village has now been cordoned off as a "zone." Fifteen people, however, refused to evacuate and still remain in Dudich. By shooting their lives, director/photographer Seiichi Motohashi has managed to find hope amidst great sorrow.

February 14:

Black Rain, 1989, Shohei Imamura, 123m

A young graduate travels in the back of a truck, thinking of her family, on her way to pick up her grandmother's silk wedding gown (which she may soon wear). It seems like any other morning, but the country is Japan and the day stamped at the outset of the film is August 6, 1945. Following the tribulations of a woman who barely escapes direct exposure in Hiroshima, 'Black Rain' explores the continuing prejudice faced by survivors of the atomic bombings in Japan. Based on the novel by Masuji Ibuse, Shohei Imamura's film is not only about the creeping physical effects of radiation, but also the long term social effects upon people who survived the bomb. Music by Toru Takemitsu.

February 21:

Trinity and Beyond, 1995, Peter Kuran, 92m

Trinity, the first atomic bomb in history, was successfully detonated in Alamogordo New Mexico on July 16, 1945. It was the dawn of the nuclear age: 3 weeks later Little Boy was dropped on Hiroshima, and then Fat Man on Nagasaki. Produced at the 50th anniversary of the bombing, this unsettling and visually compelling documentary looks at nuclear weapon development and testing between 1945 to 1963. Narrated by William Shatner and with an original score performed by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, 'Trinity and Beyond' includes formerly classified governmental footage of these devastatingly awesome weapons.

February 28:

Godzilla, 1954, Ishiro Honda, 98m

One of the most famous monster films of all time was inspired by “the Lucky Dragon Incident,” the same accident that inspired Kurosawa’s *Record of Living Being*. Recurring h-bomb tests awaken a Jurassic creature under the sea and mutate it into a radioactive monster, Godzilla. Although this film has long been a camp classic, the historical background can provide a way to understand this film as trying to portray something truly monstrous and terrifying unleashed upon the modern world. While produced in 1954, Eiji Tsuburaya’s special effects remain astonishingly real.

March 7:

China Syndrome, 1979, James Bridges, 122m

A reporter (Jane Fonda) and cameraman (Michael Douglas) witness an near-meltdown at a nuclear power plant. Not surprisingly, the power company and their own television management dastardly pressure them not to report the incident. The evidence of danger and corruption gathered by the reporters supports the concerns of a plant worker (Jack Lemon), who is planning to blow the whistle on his employer. The film explores the moments when the money-making urge of capitalism undermines the safety of nuclear power plants, and by extension public safety in general. Well-acted and well-scripted, the film's real power comes from its frightening reality: Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island power plant accident occurred only shortly after the film's release.

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