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A Page of Madness: Cinema and Modernity in 1920s Japan (excerpt)

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A Page of Madness
Cinema and Modernity in 1920s Japan

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Ann Arbor, 2008

Chapter 1

What Is This Film?

Kinugasa Teinosuke's *A Page of Madness* (*Kurutta ichipeiji* in Japanese)¹ has appeared to most non-Japanese to be a remarkable masterwork of cinema, an experimental, modernist, avant-garde film produced in the mid-1920s in Japan that, in the words of Vlada Petric, "matches the best avant-garde films of the era."² Such an appraisal already existed, in fact, when the film was originally released in 1926 in Japan. One critic called it "a work that has advanced a step ahead of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Perhaps, as far as we know, this is a new trend in cinema surfacing in the world for the first time."³ Another, claiming that Abel Gance's *La Roue* (1923) or F. W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (*Der Letzte Mann*, 1924) did not depart from the form of existing films, found courage in *A Page of Madness*.

Here film is not simply moved by a story. It is cinema for the sake of cinema. It has musical rhythm, not just a novelistic narrative, one that need only evoke a mood. This is an object of devotion conceived out of the theories of pure and absolute film, a true and precious thing pushing toward artistic instinct and artistic supremacy, something unthinkable to the film producers of today, who are consumed by nothing but money and the business mentality.⁴

At a roundtable discussion, Kinugasa himself said that neither he nor his screenwriter, the novelist Kawabata Yasunari, "wanted to pursue a

1. Most English-language discussions have used the romanization *ippeiji*, even though contemporary advertisements (see fig. 7) and programs provide the transliteration *ichipeiji* as the correct reading for the last two ideographs of the title. The reading *Kurutta ichipeiji* is also provided for the title of the script published in Kawabata Yasunari's complete works: *Kawabata Yasunari zenshū* (Complete Works of Kawabata Yasunari) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1982).
2. Vlada Petric, "A Page of Madness: A Neglected Masterpiece of the Silent Cinema," *Film Criticism* 8.1 (fall 1983): 87.
3. Tonoshima Sōjin, "Kurutta ichipeiji sonota" (*A Page of Madness*, etcetera), *Chūkyō kinema* (Nagoya Cinema) 2.8 (August 1926): 60. Unless noted, all translations from the Japanese are my own.
4. Shin, "Kurutta ichipeiji o miru" (Viewing *A Page of Madness*), *Chūkyō kinema* 2.8 (1926): 54–55.

story."⁵ To one newspaper reviewer, this was to be the beginning of a new age in film: "The director has parted from the old notion in cinema of trying to film 'things' and has become conscious of the attempt to take in 'light.' The play of light, the melody of light, the speed of light—this is the way films will be made."⁶

Yet at the same time this discussion was taking place there was another discourse about *A Page of Madness* that seemed to describe a completely different cinematic experience. For this film, which purportedly places little emphasis on story, a newspaper offered the following partial summary a week and a half before its release, one of many published as a means of advertising the film.

This is the grim interior of a mental hospital, resounding with dancing, shrieking, howling, and yelling. Here a pitiful and tragic tale is born, the drama of a sailor who had mistreated his wife, forgot his daughter, and eventually drove his wife insane. After a few years, the sailor, tired of life, returned to his hometown and learned that his wife had been saved at a mental hospital. He became a custodian there to gain access. His daughter has grown up beautifully and is about to marry a young man, but she worries about her insane mother. The father's pain, his uneasy fear, is that his insane wife will destroy their daughter's happiness. In this way, events proceed darkly in relation to the crazy wife.⁷

There is no indication here that this is an avant-garde, experimental film. It is described just like any other narrative motion picture, one featuring a melodramatic plot not at all different from the stories of many contemporary Japanese *gendai geki* based on *shinpa* theater.⁸ One may dismiss this text as a mistaken effort to commercialize a noncommercial film, but much of it

5. See the roundtable discussion "Kurutta ichipeiji gappyōkai sokkiroku" (Transcript of the Group Evaluation of *A Page of Madness*), *Eiga jidai* (The Film Age) 1.2 (August 1926): 59–63.

Most of the participants accepted the categorization of *A Page of Madness* as a "storyless" film.

6. Tanaka Jun'ichirō, "Hyōgen shugi no eiga" (An Expressionist Film), *Hōchi shinbun*, 23 June 1926, 4. A full English translation is included in appendix A.

7. "Shin eiga" (New Films), *Yomiuri shinbun*, 13 September 1926, 9. Most newspapers and film-related magazines published plot summaries of new films that were provided by the distributor. Many, such as the long summary of *A Page of Madness* the *Yomiuri shinbun* printed on 28 June, even included a description of the ending.

8. *Gendai geki* are films set in the modern (post-1868) period and are differentiated from *jidaiki* or period films. *Shinpa* is the "new school" of Japanese theater that introduced modern stories into the theatrical repertoire in the late 1800s. These plays were often conventionally melodramatic, focusing on the sufferings of women who, due to fate or social circumstance, could not fulfill their romantic desires. *Shinpa* theater had a profound influence on early *gendai geki* films.

is identical, word for word, to the summary in the program of the Tokyo-kan theater that audiences would have read when they attended a showing.⁹ It also differs little storywise from the supposed script of the film that Kawabata published in July of that year.¹⁰

Far from considering *A Page of Madness* radically experimental, not a few commentators offered opinions about its narrative normalcy from different perspectives. The screenwriter Kisaragi Bin, aware of contemporary European productions, dismissed the notion that the film was revolutionary, writing, "This degree of technique is neither very new nor difficult. This number of stylish elements is by no means rare in a single film these days."¹¹ Another critic, while praising the film in general, called the story "traditional and as dull as a cow."¹² Many commentators derided the melodramatic story of the daughter and her fiancé, and at least one complained of the thoroughly *shinpa* quality of the acting.¹³ In retrospect, the film historian Satō Tadao, in arguing the film's differences from Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, 1920), has defended its *shinpa* narrative.

This film brings out the painfulness of the familial love between husband and wife and parents and children. . . . Here are the splendid feelings and emotions of Japan. Such Japanese feelings were the specialty of Kinugasa Teinosuke, a veteran of *shinpa*, . . . and even this "Western" avant-garde film of his younger days was naturally permeated with it.¹⁴

Satō, like some of his predecessors, rejects the notion that Kinugasa's film was radically a-narrative.

What, then, is *A Page of Madness*? Is it an avant-garde work that undermines the very processes of narrative in a quest for a pure and absolute

9. "Kurutta ichipeiji" (A Page of Madness), *Tokyokan shūhō* (Tokyokan Weekly), 24 September 1926.

10. Kawabata Yasunari, "Kurutta ichipeiji" (A Page of Madness), *Eiga jidai* 1.1 (July 1926): 122–31. While one can say that the scenario is colder and less melodramatic than the published plot summaries, it does clarify many of the story points. An English translation was published in D. A. Rajakaruna, *Kinugasa Teinosuke's A Crazy Page and Crossroads* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Kandy Offset, 1998).

11. Kisaragi Shinju, "Twayuru Shinkankakuha eiga" (The So-called Shinkankaku School Film), *Chūgai shōgyō shinpō*, 28 June 1926, 7. "Shinju" was Kisaragi's pen name as a critic.

12. Okuya Yoshiyuki, "Kurutta ichipeiji kan" (Views on *A Page of Madness*), *Chūkyō kinema* 2.9 (September 1926): 27. A full English translation is included in appendix A.

13. See Satō Yukio's comments about Inoue Masao in "Kurutta ichipeiji gappyōkai sokkiroku," 62.

14. Satō Tadao, *Nihon eiga no kyōshōtachi* (Masters of Japanese Cinema) (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1979), 37.

cinema or is it a conventional narrative expression of traditional melodramatic emotionality? The question may strike those outside of Japan as odd given how difficult the film is to understand on a first or even second viewing. If one defines avant-garde cinema as the conscious attempt to lead the field in combating, undermining, or finding new alternatives to dominant, usually commercial codes of film, the most important of which is narrative, then surely *A Page of Madness* is nothing but avant-garde? The degree to which even professional film critics and historians have erred in relating basic plot points must attest to how hard it is to access the version of the story available through the screenplay. Yet when scholars have used this very real experience to argue, for instance, as James Peterson has done, that "this experimental style is Kinugasa's war or utter rebellion against film language,"¹⁵ they risk mistaking their reading, or that of an ideal reader, for the reading of historical viewers, obfuscating the different ways the film was read and even the general struggles over the meaning of such a cinema if not its modernity at the time.¹⁶ They also risk reifying a film text that, while it certainly looks experimental, is probably not the same work that was shown to audiences in 1926 since significant portions appear to be missing from the version we see today. As Jonathan E. Abel warns us, *A Page of Madness* may have been the "site for imagining a radically different kind of film, not a radically different kind of film itself."¹⁷

It is because our reading of the film is so troubled that we must take care in using our experience to pass judgment on the text's status. First, as we shall see, there are many narratives hovering about *A Page of Madness* that persist less because they are accurate—and some are not—than because

15. James Peterson, "A War of Utter Rebellion: Kinugasa's *Page of Madness* and the Japanese Avant-Garde of the 1920s," *Cinema Journal* 29.1 (fall 1989): 51.

16. In *The Flash of Capital*, Eric Cazdyn offers a compelling argument for allegorical readings. In his view, "alternative" interpretations connecting seemingly disparate elements can "exercise" the mind and "cultivate the skills to narrate (and intervene with) more satisfyingly the present world system." His claim, for instance, that "By cracking open (in terms of film art and the Japanese film industry) new possibilities in the face of impossibility, *Page of Madness* rehearses in an aesthetic register a solution to the historical problem of colonialism" can provide a possibly powerful template for interpreting the film, but it must be evaluated through thoroughly historicizing the text and its history. Cazdyn generally uses a standard account of the film's style, one that unfortunately pays insufficient attention to inconsistencies in the style, conflicts over its interpretation, and the multifaceted history of this text. I hope to show how closely analyzing the film and its complex history provides a richer and more significant history of the very problems of modernity Kinugasa rightly raises. See Eric Cazdyn, *The Flash of Capital: Film and Geopolitics in Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 204–15.

17. Jonathan E. Abel, "Different from Difference: Revisiting *Kurutta ichipeiji*," *Asian Cinema* 12.2 (fall–winter 2001): 72–96.

they fulfill various desires. The story of a masterpiece emerging out of nowhere, in a marginal nation far from the center of modernism, is such a narrative, one that has been appropriated by those desiring a stronger national cinema (finding, for instance, that Japanese film became the independent equal of European film in the 1920s, long before Kurosawa Akira's *Rashomon* [1950]) or a history of origins (some see *A Page of Madness* as the beginning of a Japanese experimental film tradition that is otherwise thought to have begun in the 1950s) or even a text allegorizing the complications of Japanese modernity in the capitalist world system. We must be careful of how our desires shape our vision of this film, for they can commit a violence against the text, one that suppresses its alterity and the history of how and why it was constructed as an avant-garde work. *A Page of Madness* can thus stand as a lesson in the problems of reading a film from a different time and culture.

Reception studies in general has warned us about equating our readings with those of all viewers.¹⁸ Studies of spectator readings of films remind us that a film text is not simply the images projected on a screen but also the meanings historical audiences took from them, frequently by using texts (criticism, advertisements, or other films) separate from and not available within the film itself. In this light, it would be grossly premature to call *A Page of Madness* avant-garde without even looking at these other texts and analyzing how contemporary viewers used them. For instance, *benshi* (lecturers) were employed by the theaters to explain the film.¹⁹ They used scripts provided by the distributor to explicate or narrate the film and make sure that the narrative details, if not the melodramatic tone, were transmitted to the audience. With no evidence that any of the film's *benshi* radically experimented in their narrations, it seems fairly certain that in this way contemporary theater viewers would have encountered a decidedly narrative experience, one that in certain respects varied little from conventional movie fare. We must take *benshi* narration, plot summaries, and critical discourse into account when analyzing *A Page of Madness* precisely because it is a work whose very relationship with such texts became the subject of debate, the occasion for arguing over how film should create meaning and what role spectatorship had to play in modern Japan. That should not preclude us from closely analyzing the text itself because it always stood at the center of

18. For a useful overview of the issue of reception studies in film scholarship, see Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

19. Kinugasa's comment to Georges Sadoul that the film escaped *benshi* narration by playing at foreign film theaters is either Kinugasa's or the translator's mistake (Kinugasa Teinosuke, "Le cinéma japonais vers 1920" (Japanese Cinema around 1920), *Cahiers du cinéma* (Notebooks on Cinema) 166–67 [mai-juin 1965]: 46). All foreign film theaters had *benshi*, and *benshi* did narrate *A Page of Madness*.

considerations of how cinematic works should operate, albeit without, I will argue, offering a univocal stance on the kind of cinema it was proposing. *A Page of Madness* underlines the maddening qualities of textuality itself—our inability to pin down a single text or reading, or fix the borders of a solitary work—in part by narratively foregrounding the violation of borders, the influence of perception (reading) on meaning, and the multiplicity of textual modes.

In stressing the multivalence of *A Page of Madness*—its unconventionality and its conventionality—my aim is not to engage in a hermeneutic debunking of the myths or to read the text against the grain but to argue that this dual nature is both the mark of the film's historicity and one of the reasons why it fascinates us. Kinugasa's work reveals these two faces because it was created and received at a time defined by divisions over the definition of cinematic meaning, the form the movies should take, and their place in modern existence. *A Page of Madness* was itself an intervention in these debates, one that explored various cinematic potentials, but, as we shall see, in an often contradictory way. As such, it can speak not only of the contemporary conflicts over Japanese modernity but also of the contradictory position in which Japanese film artists were placed in a cinematic world geography dominated by Hollywood film and European modernism.

In this book, I will begin by delineating the often conflicting, if not contradictory, array of contextual factors behind the film, showing how they pushed and pulled it in different directions as it was planned, written, shot, edited, and exhibited. After detailing, in generally chronological order, how the film was made and shown, I will describe the sometimes radically different ways it was read at the time and conclude by examining how the film we can see now foregrounds, perhaps self-consciously, the maddening problems of interpretation, especially in relation to the issue of defining cinema in 1920s Japan.

Chapter 8

Editing and the Print

Production was under a strict deadline because of Inoue's scheduled stage appearance on 1 June. After filming wrapped up on 31 May,¹ editing proceeded at a brisk pace and was completed in only about a week. Considering the number of shots in the film, the intricacy of the editing, and the fact Kinugasa was working directly with the negative, it is amazing that the enormous task of putting together this complicated film was completed in such a short time.² Kinugasa relates in his autobiography how, working in the days before *Moviolas* yet wanting to check the rhythm of his editing, he rigged his Parvo camera so that by opening the back he could view the scenes he had spliced together through the lens. The quickness of the editing process is proof of how important the shooting notes were. With the notes constituting a form of preliminary decoupage, editing could proceed apace because it had been planned on the set prior to postproduction.

For an illustration of this, consider the lottery scene and how it was rendered first in Sawada's script, then in the notes, and finally in the film.

The script:

SCENE 106

The lottery. The chest of drawers is in the center. The label "First Prize." Three young women in the *momoware* hairstyle. Three or four are sitting, handing over prizes to four or five people. All of them return having only won trifling prizes.

The custodian stands there holding a few items he bought. Round candy in a box. The custodian sticks his hand inside and draws one out.

He hands it to the lottery girl. The girl's hands open the wrapping. She opens the paper inside.

1. According to the shooting notes, the last scene shot—that of the marching band announcing the lottery—was filmed on 31 May. Curiously, though, on the thirtieth the *Yomiuri shinbun* reported that the film was completely finished. See "Shinkankakuha Renmei no dai-ikkai sakuhin kansei" (First Film of the New Impressionist League Completed), *Yomiuri shinbun*, 30 May 1926, 5.

2. It is possible that Kinugasa started editing the film during shooting, especially in the last week of May when the shooting schedule appears to have been less onerous.

She flashes a smile, as if surprised.

"First prize! First prize!" Everyone at the lottery gathers around in a commotion.

Faces of the crowd full of envy. (They express considerable emotion.)

The lottery girl rings the bell. More people gather round. The men at the lottery all cooperate to lower the chest. One girl turns and removes a label that reads "Extra First Prize" from a dancing dress. She hands the clothes to the custodian.

The face of the custodian, laughing over and over.

A lottery girl puts the extra prizes into the chest of drawers.

The custodian lifts the chest on his back and starts to walk. A large crowd follows him.

The happy face of the daughter pointing to the chest. The custodian happily shows his daughter the dancing dress and other prizes.

The shooting notes (15 May)

THE BIG SALE (NIGHT SHOOTING)

- 1) Full shot of the lottery (the band, [indecipherable word]. One of the lottery clerks rings a bell to attract customers)—dissolve³
- 2) The music band playing heartily (MCU)—dissolve
- 3) Hands of people exchanging lottery tickets (CU)—dissolve
- 4) The first prize (chest of drawers) (CU)—dissolve
- 5) Sundry prizes (of different levels) (CU)—dissolve
- 6) Group of people receiving their prizes (LS from behind)
- 7) Group of people receiving their prizes (FS from the front)—dissolve
- 8) The custodian exchanges his lottery ticket (CU)—dissolve
- 9) The custodian opens up the paper—First prize! (CU)—dissolve
- 10) The custodian hands it to a lottery clerk—dissolve
- 11) A bell ringing—dissolve
- 12) The camera moves to find the first prize among the various prizes (FS)—dissolve
- 13) The custodian is overjoyed at having won the first prize (CU)—dissolve

3. There is no record of how all the film's dissolves and double exposures were achieved. The notes sometimes specify these visual effects, but as a decoupage they might just indicate what should be done in postproduction. Some of the multiple exposures are too long and complicated to have been done in camera, but the speed of the editing process and the notations in the shooting notes suggest that some might have been done in that fashion.

- 14) They take down all the prizes on top of the chest (MCU)—dissolve
- 15) They put the chest on the old man's back (LS)
- 16) The custodian happy with the chest on his back (CU)

THE STREET

- 1) People on the street stand around the custodian making a fuss (high-angle camera movement)
- 2) Camera movement of the chest and lanterns
- 3) The custodian approaches and meets his daughter
- 4) Close up of the happy daughter and happy father.⁴

The film

- 1) Dissolve to "Big Lottery" sign flashing on and off
- 2) Dissolve to pan left of banners emblazoned with "Big Lottery"
- 3) Dissolve to high-angle pan left of the band drummers and women preparing balls
- 4) Dissolve to same speed medium shot pan left of a drummer, slight fade out
- 5) Fade in of baskets with balls, people exchanging tickets and picking lots; double exposure in of the first-prize chest
- 6) Dissolve to pan left of other prizes: pots, etc.
- 7) High-angle full shot of the lottery stage
- 8) Dissolve to high-angle medium shot of the custodian making his way laterally through the crowd
- 9) Dissolve to high-angle medium close-up of his hand picking a ball
- 10) Dissolve to high-angle, over-the-shoulder close-up of him opening the piece of paper reading "First Prize"
- 11) Dissolve to frontal close-up of him laughing happily
- 12) Close-up of bell ringing
- 13) Medium long shot of people preparing to take out the prize
- 14) High-angle extreme long shot of them taking out the chest
- 15) Close-up of the custodian happy as the chest is tied to his back
- 16) Dissolve to an extreme-high-angle-track right of the custodian in long shot walking with the chest through the crowd
- 17) Dissolve to a track behind the chest with a close-up of the First Prize sign
- 18) High angle long shot of fair, lights; the custodian walks toward the camera with the chest
- 19) Medium shot of the custodian with his daughter. He turns around and shows her the chest and the dress.

4. The notes for the scenes at the lottery and on the street were written by different people and thus exhibit different styles. Whoever wrote the notes for the lottery scene was the most precise of all the note takers, recording the camera distance for almost every shot. The second individual was much less exact.

As we can see, the notes clearly reveal a process of decoupage progressing from the script. The filming maintains the general narrative order, but analytically divides it into visual segments that establish the scene, identify the goal (the prize), and then efficiently renders the narrative of the custodian's good luck by visual means. This is partially a process of condensation, as the shots actually taken were fewer than those suggested by the original script. The scene in the extant film further condenses the action, as certain shots seem not to have been used. Excess information, such as extra emphasis on the prize after the bell rings or additional reaction shots, has been trimmed out.

What is evident here is a decoupage that does not presume the repeated use of the same camera position. This can represent a mode of production that sometimes shoots in order, as well as one that refrains from narrating space through back-and-forth cuts between a small number of camera positions, suturing the spectator in the diegetic space. It is relatively classical in that it analyzes space for narrative purposes but does not take advantage of the economy of shooting together different shots from the same camera framing, foregoing the efficiencies of Fordist models for the sake of spatial variation and experimentation. This is also decoupage conceived more on the set than in editing, evincing few of the discoveries on the editing table that thrilled Lev Kuleshov and his Soviet associates, leading them to theories of the power of montage. That is another reason why, especially with the decoupage notes, the film could be edited so quickly.

That does not mean that the editing process lacked creativity. Just as shooting on the set involved a variety of production modes, so editing was pursued in different ways. If the lottery scene was shot in order and featured no repeated camera positions, other scenes were shot out of order, leaving it up to the editor to construct the narrative episode. For instance, many of the shots of the dancing girl in her cell at the beginning (scenes 16, 18, 20, 22, 25, and 27 in the Sawada script) were filmed together on one day and then combined in quite complicated ways with the shots of rain, lightning, and instruments photographed on another (scenes 17, 19, 21, and 26). Much of the opening sequence, then, was a tour de force created on the editing table, albeit one based on ideas laid out in the script. While such editing resembles the rhythmic cutting of French Impressionism more than the dialectic clash of opposites of Soviet montage, it evinces more than other scenes in the film an awakening to the power of editing in postproduction.

A question that remains about the editing process, and one that raises fundamental issues about the print we see today, is whether any of the scenes shot were entirely cut from the film. In acknowledging the differences between Kawabata's script and the film, Kinugasa in his autobiogra-

phy explains that some scenes were excised on the editing table.⁵ Not only Kawabata's but also Sawada's script and the shooting notes describe shots and entire scenes that are not in the extant film, especially many that center on the relationship between the daughter and her fiancé, including a particularly long and melodramatic one in which the daughter overhears a friend of the fiancé revealing to him that her mother is insane (the shooting notes for this scene are included in appendix B). We can currently get only two glimpses the fiancé: in a short scene about halfway through the film that shows the two cavorting happily (fig. 5) and in another brief shot of him looking unhappy that is used when the daughter visits her father to visually communicate the break in their relations. Were the other scenes cut out?

There is evidence that scenes are missing from the current film. Mariann Lewinsky has found a partial *benshi* script that describes scenes missing from our print.⁶ Two copies of the *ken'etsu daihon* (censorship script) were



Figure 5. The daughter and her fiancé.

5. Kinugasa Teinosuke, *Waga eiga no seishun* (My Youth in Film) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1977), 72.

6. See Mariann Lewinsky, *Eine verrückte Seite: Stummfilm und filmische Avantgarde in Japan* (A Page of Madness: Silent Film and the Cinematic Avant-Garde in Japan) (Zurich: Chronos, 1997) or her interview with Jasper Sharp, "A Page of Madness," *Midnight Eye*, http://www.midnighteye.com/features/silentfilm_pt1.shtml.

found among Kinugasa's papers, and these similarly describe scenes not visible in the current film.⁷ Beginning in 1925, when the Home Ministry took over censorship from local agencies, producers were obliged to submit their films to censors accompanied by a script. This script had to be an accurate representation of the content of the film, and a copy was kept in theaters showing the movie so that police inspectors could refer to it and make sure the theater had not tampered with the print. With each page stamped by the authorities, unauthorized modification of the censorship script was forbidden. The legal requirement that the censorship script match the film provides strong proof that the absent scenes described in the *A Page of Madness* censorship script were shown in theaters. The final evidence that scenes were cut after the film was released is the fact that the existing print is over 500 meters shorter than it was when it was submitted for censorship in 1926, having been reduced from 2,142 to 1,617 meters.⁸ At silent speed, that is about twenty-five minutes of screen time or about one-fourth of the original length of the film. We must ask why there is this drastic change.

With many old Japanese films, reduced length was due to wear and tear, the loss of certain reels of the film, and sometimes abridged versions. Given the vast number of prewar films that have been lost forever, we can consider ourselves fortunate to see even an incomplete version of some productions. Thus, it was nothing short of a miracle when a print of *A Page of Madness* was found in 1971. Kinugasa always assumed the print of the film had remained in the Shōchiku vaults and thus went up in flames in a fire at the studio. It was to his surprise that, in searching through his old house, he found a negative and positive print of the film in some rice cans—cans he says are visible in the lottery scene. He relates checking the entire print and finding “the same clear scenes as when it was new” implying that nothing was missing.⁹ Adding a soundtrack, he showed it at several European festivals before reopening it in Japan on 10 October 1975 at Iwanami Hall.

7. Neither copy is the official censorship script stamped with Home Ministry seals. One is a handwritten copy, which Inuzuka says he first wrote (Inuzuka Minoru, *Eiga wa kagerō no gotoku* (Film Is Like a Mirage) (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2002), 98), although it is stamped with Kinugasa's seal; the other, a printed copy produced by the Honjō Film Distribution Company, the film's distributor in the Kantō region, is identical to the handwritten version. It is likely that a copy of the latter was submitted for censorship.

8. There were three prints made of *A Page of Madness*, and each was submitted to censors in accordance with their regulations. They differ slightly in length and cleared censorship on different dates: the first on 22 June (2,142 meters), the second on 14 September (2,128 meters), and the third on 21 September (2,135 meters). The slight difference in lengths is probably due to different leader lengths. A copy of the current print, housed in the National Film Center, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, is only 1,617 meters.

9. Kinugasa, *Waga eiga seishun*, 81.

This print shows none of the signs of incompleteness evident in other Japanese masterpieces, such as *Diary of Chūji's Travels* (*Chūji tabi nikki*, 1927, dir. Itō Daisuke), that were found with scenes or reels missing. While it is a disjunctive film at times, narratively *A Page of Madness* does not appear to bear the signs of randomly missing reels (the lack of speculation in the recent literature about missing scenes testifies to this). The most likely scenario is that the film was cut deliberately at some point after its initial release. Since there is no record of the film being re-released or even screened between 1928 and 1971,¹⁰ this may have been done by those preparing the film for the 1970s re-release or by Kinugasa himself. Given his previous prevarications, there is the possibility that upon finding the film he reedited it and excised the more melodramatic scenes, which were criticized at the time and did not quite fit the film's established image as an avant-garde masterpiece. There is little way to prove this charge, but such doubts reinforce the impression that *A Page of Madness*, if only on the level of the film print, is not one but many texts.

10. After 1925, it was not the films that were censored as much as prints. Every one was viewed by censors and received a stamp on the celluloid itself. By law, any changes in a print necessitated resubmitting it for censorship, and I have found no record of an alternate version in prewar censorship records. I have also not encountered any written account of a screening of the film in the postwar before 1971.