

Ikiru

I found many Japanese traditions in relation to many cultural aspects throughout the movie *Ikiru*. Some aspects are the clothes, food, the funeral, and the various aspects of Japanese society and its different status levels. The older men in the movie wore traditional long kimono like clothing. Some of the business men wore long tailed coats. The older women of the movie wore traditional dark kimonos with wooden sandals and short ankle socks. I noticed that on two occasions during the movie the characters ate Nabe which is a Japanese hot pot dish. There was also a mention of an Omiai (a blind date with the intention of marriage) after the main character's wife died. I also noticed that there is an altar for the main character's wife. The main character also lives in a less modern more Japanese styled home and sleeps on tatami mats. At the funeral the family is wearing black and is surrounded by the main character's colleagues. I've also noticed that at Japanese funerals the people not related to the person who died directly by blood like to sit around and drink while reminiscing about old memories. The movie also describes the different levels of statuses in Japan. For example the boss at the top of the Parks department had the nerve and confidence to put down all the hard work the main character had done in his final days.

Although the movie is shot in black and white the cinematography is very well crafted. There is a lot of light and shadows in the scenes and shown on the characters. There are a lot of flashbacks. The flash backs mostly occur towards the end of the movie about the main character Watanabe during his final months when he was trying to clean up the cesspool and create a park. Watanabe also flashes back to precious memories with his son. The camera zooms in on important things within the scene such as documents, objects or facial expressions from the various characters. For example: when Watanabe is trying to set his clock for work after finding

out that he has an ulcer (or cancer) he realizes he can't bring himself to go to work; the camera zooms in on his certificate for 25 years of dedicated service. The facial expressions of various characters showed a lot of emotion. The facial expression of Watanabe when he when one of the hospital patients was describing to him the symptoms of stomach cancer; he scooted away from the patient and moved towards where the camera was set up so the audience could see the look of pure terror on his face.. The facial expression of Watanabe's colleague when she found out why he liked to hang out with her (she made him feel more alive; he was envious of her youth); her face showed that she felt uncomfortable and burdened by him. There is also narration throughout the movie. The narration mostly talked about the main character's way of living and how he wasn't really living life. The music of the movie was very interesting. The main character visited many club scenes and there were different genres of music. The song "Life is Brief" song by the main character really suits the movie; life is short and you have to live it to its fullest.

After watching the movie *Ikiru* I thought a lot about the meaning of life. Or what does it mean "to live" and how should I live my life. Over the last couple of weeks I've been stressed and after watching this movie I realized that there is more to life than stress. I want to live my life experiencing many things. By the time I die I want to be happy with the way I've lived my life. I don't want to regret anything but I think that's inevitable. I hope that towards the end of my life that I am happy with every aspect of my life: family, friends, work, and love life. This movie has taught me that life is either really short and empty or really long and fulfilling. If my life is going to turn out to be short then I want it to have some meaning to it.

I give this movie a 5 because I think it can affect everyone who watches it. It is sad, funny, and insightful. I really enjoyed this movie and I hope that its central message will stay with me throughout my life.