



THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

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會協禪一第國美

Film Series

Sanshiro Sugata I and II

Two early (1943) films by Akira Kurosawa

Friday, February 11, 2011 7:30 – 10:15 PM

113 East 30th Street New York, NY 10016

Sanshiro Sugata I – Jujitsu and judo – alternative forms of the Japanese martial arts – came into conflict in the 1880s in Japan, when judo started to replace jujitsu. The national police force held a contest to determine the superiority of one form of fighting over the other. Judo prevailed, and the Japanese police thereafter trained in judo instead of jujitsu. The Sanshiro Sugata films are set in the late 1800s. Sanshiro Sugata is a rickshaw driver who learns judo, and goes on to become one of the foremost judo masters in the nation. His life becomes complicated when he unintentionally kills one of his opponents in a judo match. Spoken in Japanese with English sub-titles. 79 minutes.

Sanshiro Sugata II – The plot line for part II is based on a blood feud stemming from the killing which took place in Sanshiro Sugata I. The Karate master who seeks revenge vows to fight to the death. This 1943 film was partly a Japanese war propaganda film, and in it Sanshiro Sugata fights with an American sailor and an American boxing champion. The Americans are portrayed as shallow, venial, stupidly aggressive and beatable. In general, Kurosawa de-emphasizes combat and violence, and instead focuses on the spiritual and contemplative side of the martial arts. Sanshiro Sugata is unfailingly sensitive and honorable and has expert fighting abilities. Shortly before his match with the Karate master, he approaches a Buddhist priest with advice on how to proceed. The priest and he do zazen through the night, after which he goes out to face his most ferocious opponent. The final duel is brilliantly shot – dark, gripping and intense. Spoken in Japanese with English sub-titles. 82 minutes.

Admission is free.

