

BIOGRAPHY

Yukio Mishima

Hiraoaka Kimitakę, Mishima's real name, was born on January 14th, 1925, in the Yotsuya district of Tokyo. His father, Hiraoka Azusa, was a government official and Mishima's grandfather was a former Governor General of Karafuto in the Southern Sakhalin. Shizuō, Mishima's mother, was a descendant of a long line of Confucian scholars, who served the *daimyo* of Kaga. Because of those backgrounds, Mishima could enter *Gakushūin*, a Peers school for the rich and aristocracy family in 1931. Since 1935 Mishima lived with his grandparents because his parents moved. In 1937 he began to enter middle school and wrote for *Hojinkai Zasshi*, the school magazine. Because of the recommendation of his teacher of Japanese literature, Shimizu Fumio, Mishima's story, *Hanazakari no Mori* (The Forest in Full Bloom), published periodically in *Bungei Bunka* and for the first time he used the pen-name Yukio Mishima in 1941.

Mishima was a clever student so he could graduate from the upper division of the Peers School with the highest honors and received a silver watch from the Emperor and continued his study to the Law School of Tokyo University. He became a member of the literary club and published a study of the *Kokinshu* (tenth century anthology) and started a magazine, *Akai* (Red Picture), *Hanazakari no mori*. During his study in university, he published his first collection of stories, *The Forest in Full Bloom*, *Tabako* to a magazine editor, the novel *Misaki nite no Monogatari* (A Tale of the Cape). After he graduated from the Law School of Tokyo University then he worked as a Ministry of Finance. He released his job as a Ministry of Finance and seriously involved in his novels. After *Kamen no kokuhaku* (Confessions of a Mask) established his reputation increased, then he also published *Tozoku* (Thieves), *Ai no kawaki* (A Thirst for Love), *Ao no Jidai* (The Blue Period), his long novel *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Color), and *Monatsu no Shi* (Death in Midsummer). He also released his novels, short stories, and plays in the Collected Works in six volumes, a play, *Yoru no Himawari* (Sunflowers at night), *Shiosai* (The Sound of Waves) became a best

seller of Mishima; Furthermore, *Kinkaku* was serialized in the magazine *Shinchō* and the book was published in 1956. His most successful play, *Rokumeikan*, was performed for the first time in Tokyo and his novel, The Sound of Waves, was published in New York. In 1957 Mishima was invited by Knopf (US Publisher) and Michigan University to travel to United States and determined him to learn English, he also published *Kindai Nogakusha* (Five Modern No Plays). In June 1958, Mishima married to "Yōko, the daughter of the distinguished painter Sugimoto Yasushi. August on the same year, the Film *Enjō* (Conflagration), which based on The Temple of the Golden Pavilion, was shown and his novel, Confessions of a Mask was published in New York. In 1959, he completed *Kyōke no ie* (Kyōko's House), while his 'dialogue' with Tennessee Williams was published in the magazine *Gejutsu Shinchō* and Knopf published an English translation of The Temple of the Golden Pavilion. In 1960, he took a part in a Japanese *yakuza* (Japanese gangster) movie, while *Utage no ato* (After the Banquet) was serialized in a monthly magazine, he also had a 'dialogue' with Edward Albee in New York and met Jean Cocteau in Paris. *Kemono no tawamure* (The Sport of Beasts), *Utsukushii hoshi* (Beautiful Star), *Ken* (Sword) and *Gogo no Eikō* (The Sailor who fell from Grace with the Sea) were published and his son Ichirō was born in 1962. In 1964, Mishima got a job as a reporter on the Tokyo Olympic Games for the Japanese press and as an editor for the Collected Works of Shintaro Ishihara, a younger Japanese novelist. Again in 1965, he received an invitation to England, met Margot Fonteyn, Edna O'Brien, and Angus Wilson, and finished The Sea of Fertility and *Sado Kōshaku Fujin* (Madame de Sade) and he also visited Cambodia and Western Europe. In 1966, the Ministry of Education awarded him a prize for *Sado Kōshaku Fujin*. In the same year, he submitted an application for permission to train in army camps and released his short film, *Yukoku*, *Eirei no Koe* (The Voice of the Hero Spirits) and *Haru no Yuki* (Spring Snow). A year later, he produced *Suzaku-ke no Metsubō* (The Fall of the House of Suzaku) and also went to military training at various bases of the Japan Self-Defence Force. He founded *Tate no Kai* (Shield Society)- a small private army with avowed purpose of defending the Emperor and it had forty-five members.

He acted to produce some works, such as: *Homba* (Runaway Horse), *Waga tomo Hittora* (My Friend Hitler), and *Bunka Bōei Ron* (In Defence of Culture).

In May 1969 he engaged the *Zengakuren* 'National Federation of Students' Self-Government Associations of Tokyo University in a debate, which published in the following month. In March 1970 *Esquire Magazine*, the only honoured Japanese, chose him as one of hundred men of world importance. Then, on 11-17 November 1970 at the Tobu department store in Tokyo, he staged a "Mishima Yukio Exhibition" and chronicled his entire career; Moreover, on 25 November in the same year, Mishima and three members of the *Tate no Kai* entered the office of the Commandant of the Eastern Region Self-Defence Force, compelled the Commandant to allow Mishima to address the assembled troops, who jeered his remark, and then he committed *seppuku* (ritual disembowelment or *Harakiri*) along with the student leader of the *Tate no Kai*.

Source:

Campbell, David. (1994). "Chronology". The Temple of the Golden Pavilion.
London: David Campbell Publishers Ltd.

SYNOPSIS

The Temple of the Golden Pavilion

Mizoguchi is a stutter and ugly person. He receives many insult and underestimate from people around him. He also becomes a joke when he tries to speak and he is laughed for his aspiration to be a priest. Since he was born, his uncle in suburbs of north-east Maizuru, Japan raises Mizoguchi. Although he never sees the Golden Temple by his own eyes, but he believes and agrees that the Golden Temple is a beautiful temple through the history that he reads from literature and portraits, that he sees. Moreover, his father also tells him that “there is nothing on this earth so beautiful as the Golden Temple” (Mishima, 1994, p. 3-4 & 20). One day, his father, who is very ill, comes to ask and pick him up to go with him to the Golden Temple and introduces him to the Superior. This is the first time for Mizoguchi to see the beauty of the Golden Temple by his own sight. Indeed, the Golden Temple is really a beautiful temple that makes him falls in love to the Golden Temple. The Superior of the Golden Temple, Father Tayama Dosen, is an old friend of his father when they were still acolytes, and he welcomes them. Father Dosen serves them a Japanese tea and eats a dry western cake that they never taste before.

After Mizoguchi’s father died and as his wish before he died, Mizoguchi is sent to the Golden Temple. He begins his new life in the Golden Temple as an acolyte. Father Dosen takes care of all his expenses, including tuition fees. Then, as a grant, Mizoguchi does the houseworks. By staying and living inside the Golden Temple, Mizoguchi thinks that he can reveal the secrets of the Golden Temple and its beauty. Inside the Golden Temple, he has a good friend, namely Tsurukawa, who comes from a prosperous family with a good speech and manner. Their relationships become far away since Mizoguchi makes friends with Kashiwagi. Tsurukawa warns him not to have a close relationship because he thinks that Kashiwagi is not a good person but the friendship between Kashiwagi and Mizoguchi are getting closer until Tsurukawa’s sudden death. Nevertheless, when Tsurukawa goes back to his home, he is drunk and hit by a truck and dies.

When Mizoguchi talks to Kashiwagi years later after Tsurukawa's death, Kashiwagi shows him the correspondences between them before Tsurukawa's death. The letters reveal that Tsurukawa has an unhappy life, where he hides it from everyone. The letters about Tsurukawa's miserable life reveal that actually he did suicide because he was unable to bear his life anymore. As a result, Mizoguchi comes to the opinion that "beauty is his deadly enemies" and as the deadly enemies, he should vanished it. Moreover, people and he himself agree that the Golden Temple is a beautiful temple. Thus, the Golden Temple should be vanished.

Mizoguchi's point of view is also influenced by his impression to the Golden Temple. His impressions are changed few times whether it is beautiful or not until finally he comes to the point of view that beauty is only an illusion. Moreover, by knowing the attitudes of father Dosen, who disobeys the Buddhism regulations, such as: eating cakes, receiving many expensive gifts or parcels, having relationships with a geisha and prostitutes, etc., also influences Mizoguchi's respect toward Father Dosen. His opinion about the Golden Temple and its beauty is contaminated by father Dosen as the Superior of the Golden Temple. At the end of the story, Mizoguchi does his plan to burn the Golden Temple into ashes. He like "a man who settles down for a smoke after finishing a job of work" (p. 247).



Yukio Mishima
(1925-1970)



Wide view of the lower pond. Notice how the placement of the islands adds depth to the scene.



The Golden Pavilion



East face of the Golden Pavilion



Detail of the roof and upper storey, designed in the Zen style with cusped windows.



The temple is an amalgam of styles. The 1st storey is the Shinden style, the 2nd is the Samurai house style, the 3rd is the Zen style.



The vicinity of the Golden Pavilion



The Sosei kiosk, a tiny pavilion that breaks the symmetry of the temple. Note the boat floating underneath it and the lantern on the distant shore.