



MURAYAMA Mitsuo (MU Shijie) 村山三男 (穆時傑)

(1920–1979)

Director

Born in Kashiwazaki, Niigata Prefecture, Murayama joined the Tamagawa Studio of Nikkatsu Corporation as an assistant director in 1940. He once worked with director Kiyose Eijirō, but was soon drafted to army service. In 1946, he started working again at the Tokyo Studio of Daiei Motion Picture Company, as an assistant to Usihara Kiyohiko, Watanabe Kunio and Hisamatsu Seiji. He was also the assistant director to Mizoguchi Kenji for the first Hong Kong-Japan production, *Princess Yang Kwei Fei* (1955). He was promoted to director in 1956, with the directorial debut *A Map of Crime in Tokyo*. Murayama showcased his talent as a director for war films three years later with *Ah! Edashima* (1959), which inspired other war films such as *Zero Fighters* (1965), *Gateway to Glory* (1969) and *The Falcon Fighters* (1969). Apart from war features, Murayama was renowned for his crime and suspense action titles. His other works include *The Invisible Human and the Fly Man* (1957), *Mum's not a Murderer* (1958), *The Police Detective who was Wiped Out* (1958), *The Day Invaders* (1958), *League of Pistols* (1960), *Criminal Ground No. 6* (1960), *Song of the Mountain Boy* (1962), *God of Wind, God of Thunder* (1962), *The Black Challenger* (1964), *Clamouring Canines* (1964), *The Big Dragnet* (1965), *The Students' Battle for Humanity* (1965), *Medal from the Devil* (1967) and *Jet F-104's Great Escape* (1968).

Murayama adopted the Chinese pseudonym Mu Shijie in 1969 and directed *Dark Rendezvous* (1969), *A Cause to Kill* (1970) and *Hellgate* (1970) for Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd; the three films belong to the psychological crime and violence action genre, which he was competent in. Murayama was especially fond of the non-sequential nature of film shooting—for better prioritisation and efficiency. He had even actualised the vision of completing three films in just three months' time. In December 1971, Daiei went bankrupt and Murayama switched to work in the television industry. He directed his last film *Summer 1945 in Karafuto—The Gate of Ice and Snow* in 1974.