



Unforgiven

(Yurusarezaru Mono)

**Autumn
Season
2014**

Release: 2013

Cert (UK): 15

Runtime: 135 mins

Director: Lee Sang-il

Writers: David Webb Peoples, Sang-il Lee

Cinematographer: Norimichi Kasamatsu

Cast: Ken Watanabe, Jun Kunimura, Shiori Kutsuna |



Westerns have traditionally borrowed from Japanese legend ('The Magnificent Seven' reworking 'Seven Samurai' etc) so now it's time to repay the compliment with this handsome translation of Clint Eastwood's Oscar-winner from Korean-Japanese film-maker Lee Sang-il. Set on the northernmost island of Japan

at the dawn of the Meiji era (the time period matches that of the original), the narrative unfolds as before; a bounty offered on the heads of two men who assaulted and scarred a young woman draws vigilantes from afar.

While Eastwood's original has the philosophical edge (screenwriter David Webb Peoples's musings on death and damnation are pure poetry), Lee's version offers enough grand spectacle and historical intrigue to carve its own space in the international multiplexes. Ken Watanabe (who starred in Eastwood's 'Letters from Iwo Jima') is terrific as the haggard assassin with the weight of the world on his shoulders, unable to escape his past, en route to hell. Expansive widescreen vistas add wow-factor, with director of photography Norimichi Kasamatsu making the most of the breathtaking scenery - stunning natural vistas captured during the shoot, which took place on the Northeastern-most island in Japan. The cinematography lovingly reflects these sumptuous locations, whether the snowy mountains or the low plains below, crafting Japanese period imagery in a way that is almost impossible to differentiate from its Western counterpart.

'Stunningly shot and never less than entertaining' Jay Weissberg, Variety