

**HIROSHI SHIMIZU, PART II: THE POSTWAR AND INDEPENDENT YEARS**  
**AT JAPAN SOCIETY**

**FILM DESCRIPTIONS**

*All films are listed alphabetically.*

***Children of the Beehive***

『蜂の巣の子供たち』 (Hachi no su no kodomotachi)

**Thursday, May 16 at 7:00 PM; Screening followed by Opening Night Reception.**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1948, 86 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles. With Shunsaku Shimamura, Masako Natsuki, Shinichiro Kubota.*

Introduced by **Jo Osawa**, Curator / Head of Film Collections at the National Film Archive of Japan.

**Imported 35mm Print.** The most celebrated of Hiroshi Shimizu's postwar output, *Children of the Beehive* is a momentous work depicting the shattered state of Reconstruction-era Japan. A nameless soldier repatriated to his occupied country undertakes a cross-country odyssey as he brings a ragtag band of orphans to the Introspection Tower, the reformatory school of his youth (and namesake of Shimizu's earlier 1941 feature). Coursing a wayward path through the backwaters of Japan, along coastlines, railways and mountain roads, Shimizu captures wanderers in the midst of a nation in ruin, resilient in their desire to live and rebuild a future together. Self-produced by Shimizu after his departure from Shochiku and casting children raised at the orphanage he founded, Shimizu's first postwar feature is a heart-wrenching study of the cataclysmic effects of war at home.

***Children of the Beehive: What Happened Next***

『その後の蜂の巣の子供たち』 (Sono ato no hachi no su no kodomotachi)

**Friday, May 31 at 7:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1951, 94 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with live English subtitles. With Yutaka Iwamoto, Shinichiro Kubota, Yoshikatsu Chiba.*

**Imported 35mm Print.** In the sequel to *Children of the Beehive*, a journalist arrives in the secluded foothills of Shimizu's cherished Izu in search of a hidden commune to ask, "What happened to the children of the Beehive?" Three years have passed and her question situates itself not only in the realm of Shimizu's craft, but that of reality: What *became* of the war orphans Shimizu raised? Rewriting the past, Shimizu even renders one of the original's most heartbreaking sequences into a work of fiction. Invoking meta-narrative elements, Shimizu reshapes the orphans' narrative, which is quite well-known to visitors of the commune thanks to the popularity of the first Beehive film. A fascinating work of docudrama that treads between the realm of fact and fiction, *Children of the Beehive: What Happened Next* breathes the fresh air of Shimizu's loose and reflexive approach, anticipating the works of Kiarostami.

***Children of the Great Buddha***

『大仏さまと子供たち』 (Daibutsu sama to kodomotachi)

**Saturday, June 1 at 8:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1952, 102 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with live English subtitles. With Yutaka Iwamoto, Yoshio Hazama, Yukiko Himori.*

**Imported 35mm Print.** The final film in the Beehive trilogy, *Children of the Great Buddha* chronicles war orphans living among the looming statues and temples of Japan's ancient capital of Nara. Acting as tour guides as a means of survival, Ko and Genji live a threadbare existence—their constant companionship being the only sure thing. With their days spent in the expanse of a natural world populated by holy objects, the orphans exist under the watchful eye of the divine and sacred. Spending over a year studying Buddhist imagery, Shimizu would take an uncharacteristic hands-on approach to the film's cinematography, opting not to frame in his typical eye-level compositions, remarking, "It's different in a film whose stars are Buddhist images." Poignant and stirring, Shimizu's spiritual conclusion to his orphan saga is a compassionate work in clear reverence to the children and orphans he spent his entire career depicting.

### ***Dancing Girl***

『踊子』 (Odoriko)

**Saturday, May 18 at 5:00 PM; Saturday, June 1 at 3:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1957, 96 min., DCP, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles. With Chikage Awashima, Machiko Kyo, Eiji Funakoshi. Based on a novel by Kafu Nagai.*

May 18th screening introduced by **Akinaru Rokkaku** of the Japan Foundation, NY. The surprise arrival of dancer Hanae's effervescent sister Chiyomi (Machiko Kyo) from provincial Kanazawa to her sister's impoverished *shitamachi* (downtown Tokyo) apartment sparks new vitality in her home as the raucous country girl stirs up trouble, delighting in the new wonders of city life as well as its vices. Chiyo's sensual charm and beauty seduce the men around her as her insatiable thirst for life draws in even Hanae's quiet husband Yamano—sparking discord within the household. Adapted from Kafu Nagai's novel-of-the-same-name by legendary scenarist Sumie Tanaka, known for collaborations with Mikio Naruse and Kinuyo Tanaka, Shimizu's *Dancing Girl* features some of the director's most stunning cinematography as he captures the everyday streets, drinking holes and alleyways of Asakusa with breathtaking lateral tracking shots. Machiko Kyo, in turn, charmingly portrays the devilish Chiyo, whose carefree ways set everything into disarray.

### ***Image of a Mother***

『母のおもかげ』 (Haha no Omokage)

**Friday, May 31 at 9:30 PM; Saturday, June 1 at 5:30 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1959, 89 min., DCP, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles. With Jun Negami, Chikage Awashima, Bontaro Miake.*

**New English Subtitles by Japan Society.** The final film in the thirty-plus year career of Hiroshi Shimizu, *Image of a Mother* returns to the familiar subject matter of child and parent, a favorite preoccupation of the master filmmaker. Young Michio, the son of a recently-widowed water bus driver, clings to the memory of his late mother, treasuring a passenger pigeon she gifted him shortly before passing. His well-meaning father Sadao, under pressure to remarry, finds a suitable partner in the gentle Sonoko (Chikage Awashima) who has a young daughter of her

own. As his new stepmother enters his life, Michio's discomfort arises from the pressures around him to forget his dead mother and call his new stepparent "Mom." Despite its weepy leanings, *Image of a Mother* is expertly handled in Shimizu's hands, saturated in the boy's inner turmoil which culminates in a crushing boiling point. A rare scope feature from Shimizu filled with his gliding camerawork, his final feature forms a fitting farewell to a career so devoted to the lives of the misunderstood.

### ***A Mother's Love***

『母情』 (Bojo)

#### **Friday, May 17 at 9:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1950, 83 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with live English subtitles. With Nijiko Kiyokawa, Yataro Kurokawa, Musei Tokugawa.*

Introduced by **Jo Osawa**, Curator / Head of Film Collections at the National Film Archive of Japan.

**Imported 35mm Print.** Toshiko, a poor Tokyo mother hoping to remarry, takes her three children, each from different fathers—a little girl born *après guerre* (as her uncle puts it), middle child Kaneo and the eldest, Fusao—on a countryside excursion. Hoping to offload them onto relatives, Toshiko briskly separates her children as if they were not even her own, but she can't seem to rid herself of bedwetting crybaby Fusao. Starring Nijiko Kiyokawa as the seemingly heartless mother, Shimizu's approach to the popular postwar *hahamono* (mother film) is still replete with his signature lyricism, shot against the backdrop of the Izu Peninsula (a contemporaneous critic would, rather humorously, dismiss it as Shimizu's "eighteenth Izu sketchbook"). An emotional journey leading to a reawakening of maternal instincts, Manohla Dargis would marvel at the film's "ability to inject a mundane gesture with breathtaking possibility."

### ***Mr. Shosuke Ohara***

『小原庄助さん』 (Ohara Shosuke-san)

#### **Thursday, May 30 at 7:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1949, 97 min., 16mm, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles. With Denjiro Okochi, Akiko Kazami, Reiko Miyagawa.*

**Imported 16mm Print.** Set in a quaint, rural village on the foothills of Mount Fuji—one still governed by traditions of respectability and family standing—Hiroshi Shimizu's 1949 fable centers around the life of wealthy, good-natured Saheita Sugimoto, better known among the villagers as Shosuke Ohara-san. While the nickname pertains to a figure from a popular folk song who brings about his own ruin by squandering his fortune on drink and leisure, Shimizu's picture has Sugimoto surrounded by townsfolk insatiably clamoring for his assistance—uniforms for the local baseball team, sewing machines for local women—and as he cannot say no, his generous support for their endeavors only brings him closer to poverty. As Sugimoto's impending downfall becomes a loss foretold, Shimizu touches upon the encroaching presence of modernization, as well as the changing times and values of the postwar era. Leaving behind the traditions of the past, *Mr. Shosuke Ohara*—a favorite film of director Shinji Somai—looks towards a new Japan built upon the hard work of its people and not the fortunes of others.

### ***The Sentimental Idiot***

『人情馬鹿』 (Ninjo Baka)

**Saturday, May 18 at 3:00 PM; Thursday, May 23 at 9:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1956, 71 min., DCP, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles. With Rieko Sumi, Kenji Sugawara, Hisako Takihana. Based on a novel by Matsutaro Kawaguchi.*

**New Remaster.** Performing to a nightly assemblage of male suitors, cabaret singer Yuri (Rieko Sumi) catches the eye of motorbike salesman Yoshio, who becomes helplessly enraptured with the hard-to-get songbird. Desperate to win her favor, Yoshio swindles his own clients to support Yuri's glamorous lifestyle—and finds himself arrested for embezzlement. Veering off-course from its initial setup of cautionary siren song, Shimizu's first Daiei production transforms midway through into a moral drama of selfless sacrifice as the chanteuse finds herself moved by the pleas of Yoshio's mother. Taking it as penitence for a selfish life, Yuri attempts to make amends with Tsugawa's victims in a bid to save him from being charged—not for his sake, but out of her own desire to do good. Featuring an early musical performance by Peggy Hayama.

### ***The Shiinomi School***

『しいのみ学園』 (Shiinomi gakuen)

**Saturday, May 18 at 7:30 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1955, 100 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with live English subtitles. With Kyoko Kagawa, Yukiko Shimazaki, Ranko Hanai.*

Introduced by **Jo Osawa**, Curator / Head of Film Collections at the National Film Archive of Japan.

**Imported 35mm Print.** After the conclusion of his orphan saga, Shimizu returned to the subject of outcast children with his 1955 socially conscious melodrama *The Shiinomi School*. Shifting his gaze to another marginalized group, Shimizu's popular hit documented the plight of disabled children, notably those afflicted by the polio epidemic. Starring actress Kyoko Kagawa (*Tokyo Story*, *Sansho the Bailiff*) as a teacher who joins two parents in opening a school for youth with disabilities, the film was inspired by the writings of Saburo Shochi who founded and self-funded a school for disabled children in 1954. A touching and sentimental piece, Shimizu's subtle approach and tender treatment of his marginalized subjects is informed by an early declaration within the film: "There's a limit to science but not for love."

### ***Sound in the Mist***

『霧の音』 (Kiri no Oto)

**Thursday, May 23 at 7:00 PM; Thursday, May 30 at 9:15 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1956, 84 min., DCP, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles. With Ken Uehara, Michiyo Kogure, Keizo Kawasaki.*

**New English Subtitles by Japan Society.**

An unconsummated love affair in the mist-laden Japanese Alps outlines the quietly torturous yearnings of married botany professor Kazuhiko (Ken Uehara, *Mr. Thank You, Repast*) and his assistant Tsuruko (Michiyo Kogure), who unexpectedly leaves him one day. Divided into four chapters, each taking place on the same day spread across years, the film follows the professor

as he returns every autumn equinox to the mountain cabin he once shared with Tsuruko. Under the harvest moon, chance and fate lead the pair to cross paths, if only for a moment. Dominated by natural landscapes and silent emotions, Shimizu's late-period melodrama is an undiscovered triumph.

***Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather***

『明日は日本晴れ』 (Asu wa nipponbare)

**Friday, May 17 at 7:00 PM**

*Dir. Hiroshi Shimizu, 1948, 65 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with live English subtitles. With Michitaro Mizushima, Sachiko Mitani, Wakako Kunitomo, Shinichi Himori.*

Introduced by **Jo Osawa**, Curator / Head of Film Collections at the National Film Archive of Japan.

**International Premiere; Imported 35mm Print.** Lost for over 70 years, *Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather* was rediscovered in 2022 by the National Film Archive of Japan—marking the first time it had screened since 1948. Shimizu's second postwar film, released the same year as *Children of the Beehive*, recalls his earlier *Mr. Thank You* (1936) as he frames the narrative in a familiar setting, tracking an autumnal bus ride through a mountain pass. As the jaunty bus, packed with passengers from all walks of life—from a well-known actress to a conductor in love with her driver—makes its way through the winding roads, it unceremoniously breaks down. Waiting for a pickup, casual conversation erupts among the colorful cast of travelers—one that elicits a bittersweet sadness when old faces emerge from the past. Amid homecomings and unexpected reunions, it becomes increasingly clear that the scars run so very deep; nothing can be what it was before the war. Originally titled “Autumn,” the humorous and deeply melancholic *Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather* forms an indelible portrait of a fractured society, drawn through the mere exchange of words. Shimizu's lost film is a welcome rediscovery that richly adds to the filmmaker's vast legacy.

**SCREENING DATES**

**THURSDAY, MAY 16**

7 PM            *Children of the Beehive with Opening Night Reception*

**FRIDAY, MAY 17**

7 PM            *Tomorrow There Will Be Fine Weather*

9 PM            *A Mother's Love*

**SATURDAY, MAY 18**

3 PM            *The Sentimental Idiot*

5 PM            *Dancing Girl*

7:30 PM        *The Shiinomi School*

**THURSDAY, MAY 23**

7 PM            Sound in the Mist  
9 PM            The Sentimental Idiot

**THURSDAY, MAY 30**

7 PM            Mr. Shosuke Ohara  
9:15 PM        Sound in the Mist

**FRIDAY, MAY 31**

7 PM            Children of the Beehive: What Happened Next  
9:30 PM        Image of a Mother

**SATURDAY, JUNE 1**

3 PM            Dancing Girl  
5:30 PM        Image of a Mother  
8 PM            Children of the Great Buddha