

Document Citation

Title	The insect woman
Author(s)	Donald Richie
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	18
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Nippon konchuki (The insect woman), Imamura, Shohei, 1963

THE INSECT WOMAN

(Nippon Konchuki) 1963

A Nikkatsu Production

Directed by Shohei Imamura

Written by Keiji Hasebe and Shohei Imamura

Photographed by Masaku Himeda

Music by Toshiro Mayuzumi

With

Sachiko Hidari as Tome Matsumoto

Jitsuko Yoshimura as Nobuko, her Daughter

Shoichi Ozawa as Ken-chan

Hiroyuki Nagato as Morio Matsunami

Asao Koike as Sawakichi Matsumoto

Masumi Harukawa as Midori Tani

Seizaburo Kawazu as Karasawa

Kayoko Honoho as Miyako, a Prostitute

Daisaburo Hirata as Yoshiji Kambayashi

One of the best of the younger generation of Japanese directors, Shohei Imamura is also one of the least known in the West. Born in 1926, he graduated from Waseda University and entered Nikkatsu in 1954 after working for a time at Shochiku. The first film which drew national attention to him was *Hogs and Warships*, a 1961 film which drew a vital and fascinating picture of the more sleazy side of life at the naval port of Yokosuka. He went on to make other films such as the 1964 *Unholy Desire*, and the 1968 "epic" *Kuragejima - Legends from a Southern Island*. In 1967 he completed *A Man Vanishes* a *cinema-verite* report which with the utmost skill blended reality and artifice. Probably his finest picture, how remains, *The Pornographer*, a 1966 picture (based on the Nosaka novel) about an Osaka porno-merchant who is quite convinced that he is bringing enlightenment



and happiness into the world. That he is deep in self-deception is one of the more delightful aspects of his character.

People deceiving themselves, the problem of personal identity - this is a concern which animates most of Imamura's films. The girl in *The Insect Woman* (an odd title - the original title means merely *Japanese Insects*) is such a specimen. Imamura always seems to regard his people coldly, as though they were truly specimens (the original title of *The Pornographer* is *An Introduction to Anthropology*) but as his film progresses his warmth and genuinely humanistic concern becomes quite apparent. As in the fine series of TV documentaries he has been making since 1969, the concern is for that which is most bewildered and, perhaps therefore, most human

Note by Donald Richie

(KWAIDAN—怪談—, TOKYO STORY—東京物語—の解説は Iwanami Hall No. 43, No. 49 に既に記載されておりますので省略させていただきます。)
