

## Document Citation

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The First U.S. Retrospective of the Films of Hiroshi Shimizu is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

All films are shown through the courtesy of Kawakita Memorial Film Institute; Shochiku titles with its permission.

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The Hiroshi Shimizu retrospective presentation in the United States is coordinated by the Japan Society. After New York presentations at The Museum of Modern Art and the United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium, during the period from February to March 1991, the series is circulated to Center for Japanese Studies of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), and The Film Center of the School of the Art Institute (Chicago).

#### Introduction

Hiroshi Shimizu (1903-1966) was something of a maverick in Japanese film history. Although he turned out around 150 films between 1924 and 1959, most of this vast output is now lost; but enough remains to provide a partial portrait of a lovable personality, a formal innovator and, at his best, a great filmmaker.

Shimizu travelled the highways and byways of Japan to make his films, armed usually with a few sketches rather than a fully-formed script. Many feature children (eventually he opened a school for orphans), much open-air shooting and an anecdotal, almost plotless style which was subject to infinite variations.

Much of his action takes place on roads and the flat plains of rural Japan, with the camera often viewing the scene from a great distance in

graceful tracking movements. This kind of distanced shooting was common among many directors of the 30s and 40s, but in Shimizu's hand it became a veritable code of practice.

The beautiful outdoor imagery is marked by an acute compositional sense which makes his interior subjects equally harmonious in their placing of figures within the frame. Like many other directors of his generation, he also had a sly, dry humour which erupted in odd ways, pricking the stuffy pretensions of the adult world and celebrating the inner life of children.

There is nothing inaccessible for the Western viewer in Shimizu's world — he loved his children, his roads, his travelling camera, his gentle, episodic stories — but the apparent air of improvisation hides a film-

maker who knew exactly what he wanted. Our tragedy is that his best work has been kept from us for so long. Don't miss it now.

— John Gillett, *from the National Film Theatre (London) Hiroshi Shimizu retrospective brochure (January 1988)*



The Japan Film Center  
333 East 47th Street  
New York, NY 10017



The Japan Film Center  
in association with The Museum of Modern Art and  
The UNSRC Japanese Book Club

presents the first U.S. retrospective of the films of

# HIROSHI SHIMIZU

December 6, 1991 – February 14, 1992





# HIROSHI SHIMIZU: A RETROSPECTIVE

At The Museum of Modern Art (11 West 53rd Street, New York City)



Fri. December 6 3:00 p.m.  
**A STAR ATHLETE** (Hanagata senshu) 1937, 64 min. Produced by Shochiku Ofuna Studio. Screenplay by Tokubei Kujiraya and Masao Arata. Photography by Suketaro Inokai. Art Direction by Minoru Esaka and Teiichi Hogari. Music by Seiji Ito and Yasushi Shimada. Cast: Shuji Sano, Shinichi Himori, Yoshiaki Konoe, Chishu Ryu and Kenji Oyama.

Fri. December 6 6:00 p.m.  
**CHILDREN OF THE BEEHIVE** (Hachinosu no kodomotachi) 1948, 84 min. Produced by Shochiku Ofuna Studio. Screenplay by Hiroshi Shimizu. Photography by Saburo Furuyama. Music by Senji Ito. Cast: Shunsaku Shimamura, Masako Natsuki, Shinichiro Kubota.

Sat. December 7 2:30 p.m.  
**CHILDREN IN THE WIND** (Kaze no naka no kodomo) 1937, 88 min. Produced by Shochiku Ofuna Studio. Screenplay by Hiroshi Shimizu and Ryosuke Saito, based on a story by Joji Tsubota. Photography by Masao Saito. Cast: Reikichi Kawamura, Mitsuko Yoshikawa, Masao Hayama, Takeshi Sakamoto, Bakudan-kozo, Fumiko Okamura.

Two young brothers, fifth-grader Zenta and first-grader Sanpei, suddenly find themselves facing a summer of crisis when the police arrest their fa-

ther for a crime he did not commit. The family crisis deepens when their mother is forced to take a job and Sanpei goes to live with an uncle. Shimizu displays a fine human touch in this coming-of-age story that ends on a happy note.

Shot entirely on location, this film tells the story of a war veteran who meets a group of eight war orphans and a young repatriate girl. The unlikely group heads for Hiroshima, gradually developing a friendship among themselves as they travel through the devastated landscapes of postwar Japan. The film's gritty realism is due in large part to Shimizu's effective use of amateur actors and real war orphans.

Sat. December 7 5:00 p.m. **A STAR ATHLETE**, 1937, 64 min. (See December 6)

Sun. December 8 2:30 p.m. **CHILDREN OF THE BEEHIVE**, 1948, 84 min. (See December 6)

Sun. December 8 5:00 p.m. **CHILDREN IN THE WIND**, 1937, 88 min. (See December 7)

All the films will be shown in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2. Film tickets are included in the price of museum admission. Afternoon film tickets will be available at 11:00 a.m. and evening tickets at 1:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Titus Theater 1. After the initial distribution, any remaining tickets will be available at the Lobby Information Desk. Once a film has been sold out, a limited number of standby tickets will be distributed in the Titus Theater 1 lobby a half hour before the screening. A limited number of advance tickets will be available to all Museum of Modern Art Members one week in advance for a 50¢ service charge at the Lobby Information Desk. Please note that tickets are good only until screening time.

At The Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium, United Nations (First Avenue and 42nd Street, New York City)



Fri. December 13 6:30 p.m.  
Lecture by **Dr. Keiko I. McDonald** (University of Pittsburgh) on "The World of Shimizu"

**MR. THANK YOU** (Arigato-san) 1936, 76 min. Produced by Shochiku Kamata Studio. Screenplay by Hiroshi Shimizu, from a story by Yasunari Kawabata. Photography by Isamu Aoki. Music by Keizo Horiuchi. Cast: Ken Uehara, Michiko Kuwano, Mayumi Tsukiji, Kaoru Futaba, Reikichi Kawamura.

Tue. December 17 6:30 p.m.  
**FOUR SEASONS OF CHILDHOOD: Part I** (Kodomo no shiki: Shunka no maki) 1939, 68 min. and **Part II** (Shuto no maki) 1939, 70 min. Produced by Shochiku Ofuna Studio. Screenplay by Hiroshi Shimizu. Photography by Masao Saito and Yuharu Atsuta. Art Direction by Minoru Esaka. Music by Senji Ito. Cast: Reikichi Kawamura, Mitsuko Yoshikawa, Masao Hayama, Jun Yokoyama, Takeshi Sakamoto, Fumiko Okumura.

Fri. January 10 6:30 p.m.  
**MR. THANK YOU**, 1936, 76 min. (See Dec. 13) and  
**TALES OF JIRO** (Jiro monogatari) 1955, 99 min. Produced by Shin Toho Studio. Screenplay by Hiroshi Shimizu based on the story by Kojin Shimomura. Photography by Hiroshi Suzuki. Cast: Yuko Mochizuki, Michiyo Kogure, Ranko Hanai, Ichiro Ryuzaki, Junko Ikeuchi, Shoji Nakayama. **U.S. premiere.**

Fri. January 17 6:30 p.m.  
**MR. SHOSUKE OHARA** (Ohara Shosuke san) 1949, 91 min. Produced by Shin Toho Studio. Screenplay by Matsuo Kishi and Hiroshi Shimizu. Photography by Hiroshi Suzuki. Music by Yuji Koseki. Cast: Denjiro Okochi, Akiko Kazami, Tetsu Tsuboi, Choko Iida, Haruo Tanaka. **U.S. premiere.**

**A MOTHER'S LOVE** (Bojo) 1950, 86 min. Produced by Shin Toho Studio. Screenplay by Matsuo Kishi. Photography by Minoru Yokoyama. Cast: Nijiko Kiyokawa, Yataro Kurokawa, Kumeko Urabe, Choko Iida, Yuko Mochizuki. **U.S. premiere.**

Fri. January 24 6:30 p.m.  
**THE SHIINOMI SCHOOL** (Shiinomi gakuen) 1955, 100 min. Produced by Shin Toho Studio. Screenplay by Hiroshi Shimizu based on the story by Saburo Yamamoto. Photography by Hiroshi Suzuki. Cast: Kyoko Kagawa, Jukichi Uno, Kenzo Kawarazaki, Ranko Hanai, Ichiro Ryuzaki. **U.S. premiere.**

A moving film based on the real-life story of the parents of two handicapped children and their efforts to open a school for the physically handicapped. Shimizu succeeds in creating a powerful and inspiring film that contains a strong message about personal courage.

and  
**A STAR ATHLETE**, 1937, 64 min. (See Dec. 6)

A warm, humorous film about an eccentric young bus driver nicknamed "Mr. Thank You" because he thanks everyone he encounters, including animals. His bus becomes a meeting place for a wide variety of people with different fortunes and dreams.

A two-part sequel to *Children in the Wind*. Shimizu unfolds the further adventures of Zenta and Sanpei (played by the same child-actors) against the poetic background of the four seasons. The family fortunes decline again when the father gets ill and the children are forced to find work. Eventually, Zenta and Sanpei are taken in by their grandfather, a move that means making new friends while struggling with a different environment.

Based on Shimomura's celebrated novel, the film retells the story of a sensitive boy surrounded by unloving family members. In this moving human portrait, Shimizu recreates the lyrical, idyllic settings of early 20th-century Japan while using his superb cinematic technique to capture the boy's emotions.

Saheita, a wealthy local gentleman living near Mt. Fuji, is nicknamed "Shosuke Ohara" after a popular folk hero known for his casual attitude toward money. Shimizu's sympathetic portrayal of this lovable character who uses up his money and possessions to help others makes for a heart-warming story. Shot against a beautiful location.

With affectionate deftness, Shimizu challenges his viewers in this touching "road movie about a poor mother." The film's heroine has three children from different fathers. Desperate to start a new life, she leaves her children with relatives and foster-parents. However, her responsibilities as a mother are awakened when her bed-wetting son has to be retrieved.

Fri. January 31 6:30 p.m. **A MOTHER'S LOVE**, 1950, 86 min. (See January 17) and  
**THE SHIINOMI SCHOOL**, 1955, 100 min. (See January 24)

Fri. February 7 6:30 p.m. **TALES OF JIRO**, 1955, 99 min. (See January 10) and  
**MR. SHOSUKE OHARA**, 1949, 91 min. (See January 17)

Fri. February 14 6:30 p.m. **FOUR SEASONS OF CHILDHOOD: Part I**, 1939, 68 min. and **Part II**, 1939, 70 min. (See December 17)

The entrance to the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium is at the northeast side of First Avenue and 42nd/43rd Street. Please show the film ticket to the security guard at the gate, and then, proceed down the stairs to the easement of the library building in front of you. The auditorium is straight ahead on the right. Film tickets for December 13-February 14 screenings will be sold until 7:30 p.m. on the evening of the screening only at the Japan Society, 333 East 47th Street (between First and Second Avenues), New York City. There will be 3-minute intervals between films. All films have English subtitles and are in black and white. Programs subject to change without notice.

Japan Society membership # or Corporate membership name or UNSRC Japanese Book Club membership name or Student I.D. #, University and Department

☐ Please mail my tickets to me. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

☐ Please hold my tickets at the Japan Society Box Office. (Your tickets must be picked up at the Japan Society before going to the United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium.)

Telephone charges accepted for Japan Society members (\$1.00 service fee). No refunds or exchanges. All sales are final. General admission tickets will be sold from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on day of screening at Japan Society. Information: (212) 752-0824; Japan Society membership: (212) 832-1155.

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	No. of Tickets	Total \$
Fri. 12/13 Mr. Thank You (with lecture)		
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Four Seasons of Children Part II		
Fri. 1/10 Mr. Thank You		
Tales of Jiro		
Fri. 1/17 Mr. Shosuke Ohara		
A Mother's Love		
Fri. 1/24 The Shinomi School		
A Star Athlete		
Fri. 1/31 A Mother's Love		
The Shinomi School		
Fri. 2/7 Tales of Jiro		
Mr. Shosuke Ohara		
Fri. 2/14 Four Seasons of Children Part I		
Four Seasons of Children Part II		
Total		

Admission: General — \$6.50; Japan Society/UNSRC Japanese Book Club members, senior citizens and students