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acting and in the slow, sinuous movement of the camera itself. Later, at the end of the film, the wife, fearful of disclosure, impulsively pushes the student under a train. Here, as in the final motorboat crash in *Crazed Fruit*, Nakahira uses a convincing impressionistic technique, creating his action through a number of extremely short shots: closeups of the two faces, of the wife's hand, the student's foot slipping, his body turning as he falls, the train above them. Finally, we see the train overshooting the station and then the track: a very long-held shot of the student, dead, just head and shoulders at one side of the frame and at the other, at an impossible angle, his foot.

Nakahira, at one time one of the most talented of young directors, was also under contract to one of the most inflexible of the five major film companies (the same company that allowed the brilliant young Kazuo Kawabe to make one film, *Juvenile Delinquents* [Hiko Shonen, 1964], a beautiful near-documentary feature, and then never permitted him to make another). Put to work on one ephemeral entertainment picture after another, and unable or unwilling to escape into an independence where he might be more creative if less secure, he was then sent to Taipei to direct equally undistinguished Chinese entertainment films. Eventually he was able to escape into independent production, with *The Demons of Darkness* (Yami no Naka no Chimimoryo, 1971).

Those directors who left their original companies, or those who were never affiliated with any single company, have done much better. Among them, the one most

independent, and the one best known abroad is Susumu Hani.

Son of a very famous liberal, born into a family known for its efforts for progressive education, the young Hani created a fine series of shorts—*Children in the Classroom*, *Children Who Draw*, *Horiyuji*, *Twin Sisters*—before making his first feature, the excellent *Bad Boys* (Furyo Shonen, 1960). In this picture about reform school life he chose his cast from those boys who had already served their time, took them back into the school, and had them reconstruct their life for him. Starting with no story at all, he gradually built up a series of situations—fighting official opposition all the way—and in the end created a film both perceptive and honest about a section of the population about which Japanese society, as do most, finds it expedient to be uninformed.

While the boys were sometimes told what such-and-such a situation was, the dialogue was their own, as was the "acting." Hani discovered that eventually the camera was ignored and that the various scenes naturally disclosed themselves before him. They were "disclosed" and the nonactors were indeed "acting," however, because one of the stipulations of the governmental authorities was that no actual prisoners could be used.

The boys fell back into their old reform school ways at once, Hani has said, but with a difference. This difference was that they were reliving their own lives. This gave the film a deliberate quality. It made the boys thoughtful. While they did not consider their actions, they seemed to be considering the consequences which,

naturally, they already knew. This attractive ambivalence led to the final scene of the film—that startling, honest, yet mysterious scene where the leading boy, finally to be released, stands in the hall of the prison and thanks it.

Hani's next feature, *A Full Life* (Mitasareta Seikatsu, 1962), used actors, but he continued to direct them as though they were amateurs, and in this way drew from the popular screen heroine Ineko Arima a performance she has yet to better. She plays a typical, rootless city girl who goes from one man to the other, yet always keeps her self-respect. This is not enough for the full life she imagines for herself, however. Eventually she finds herself through devotion to a man older than herself. She finally allows herself to be completely female, completely herself, and the fine final shot, a very long closeup, finds her happy in behaving the way that all Japanese housewives behave, but with the difference of knowing it and accepting it.

She and He (Kanajo to Kare, 1963) used the same theme, a woman's discovering herself, but now there was no solution. The wife (Sachiko Hidari, whom Hani had married shortly before) is happy with her husband (Eiji Okada) but this is somehow not enough. Again there is a long final closeup at the end as she lies in bed, gazes into the darkness, half-afraid, half-hopeful. This theme again appears in *Bride of the Andes* (Andes no Hanayome, 1966) in which a mail-order bride straight from Japan (Sachiko Hidari again) sees that she must somehow find herself in the wilds of Peru. She succeeds admirably

through a combination of toughness, trust, and trying again and again.

Hani's women, perfectly understood and beautifully presented, are seemingly far from those of Mizoguchi or Yoshimura, yet there are similarities of attitude among the directors. All of them would agree that the Japanese woman is the perfect symbol for a problem which is presented to all of us: how to learn to become yourself. Mizoguchi's women largely fail; Hani's women largely triumph, but the problem—one of philosophical dimensions and one peculiarly of our time—is the same.

It is Hani's single theme and a most important one. When he strays from it—*Slave of Love* (Aido, 1969), *Grand Adventure of Love* (Koi no Daiboken, 1970)—he strays completely. When he illustrates it, his films succeed admirably. *Children Hand in Hand* (Te o Tsunagu Kora, 1962), a remake of a 1948 Hiroshi Inagaki film based on an earlier Mansaku Itami script, is about a group of children in a small provincial capital. One of them, a slow and backward child, eventually comes to realize his limitations and, hence, his possibilities. This beautifully detailed picture contains some of Hani's most evocative pictures of childhood. One of them—the children playing some mysterious and almost sinister game of their own devising, in the growing dusk of a house at sunset—particularly illustrates Hani's lifelong love and admiration for the films of Jean Vigo.

The hero of *The Song of Bwana Toshi* (Buana Toshi no Uta, 1965) is a perfectly ordinary Japanese in extraordinary circumstances in the heart of Central Africa.

More even than the German, the Japanese carries his own culture and his own prejudices around with him. A Japanese bereft of both, as Toshi eventually is, is no Japanese at all. He is, as Hani shows, a human being, like all others, and the moral of the film—if it can be said to have one—is that one, after all, learns to be human. That the film is not plotted is one of its strengths. It purposely rambles and among its casual disclosures are some very fine and Hani-like scenes: Toshi and his native friend up a tree baying for hippopotami; the excitement and awe of the natives turning on an electric light for the first time; and the singing and dancing finale with Toshi pleased, embarrassed, sad, happy, and very human.

In some ways Hani's best and in all ways his most typical film is *The Inferno of First Love* (*Hatsukoi Jigokukhen*, 1968)—shown in Europe complete and in America much butchered under the title *Nanami*. An adolescent boy and girl meet and agree to sleep together. She has had some experience, he has had none. Before this can occur, however, he is killed. This is the fable which Hani has cast in the form of a contemporary fairy tale, making certain however that the realism of the picture all but hides its mythical overtones. The boy lives in Ueno, that old-fashioned section of modern Tokyo over which still hovers the aura of old Edo. She, on the other hand, lives and works (as a nude model) in glittering, glamorous Shinjuku, one of the great night towns of the world. Hani brings both people and both worlds together in a very skillful reverse reading of one of the oldest of fairy tale patterns (it occurs in the Sleeping

Beauty story, for example) to illuminate a touching and delicate parable of innocence and experience.

This theme is central to all of the best Hani picture because it is this voyage—one we all suffer—from innocence to experience which is traced by almost all of the characters in his films on their way to self-realization. In *The Inferno of First Love*, the theme finds its central statement in the desperate sincerity of the young people (consummately directed nonprofessionals) and the wide range of human experience (for the picture contains everything from masturbation to prostitution, from harmless madness to the most explicit sadism) which threatens to engulf both them and their immature but precious ideas about themselves. At the same time Hani sidesteps an equally threatening sentimentality by the harshness of his photography, by a nervous, prying camera, by refusing any but actual locations, and by the tact and grace with which he directs his young people. As a major statement of a major theme (though a cunningly dissembled one), this film quite deserved the enormous critical and popular acclaim it received in Japan.

It was largely the West that acclaimed *Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no Onna*, 1964), the work of Hiroshi Teshigahara, a younger director who had made his feature-film debut shortly before with *Pitfall* (*Otoshiana*, 1962). *Woman in the Dunes*, scripted as are all of Teshigahara's films by the novelist Kobo Abe, was to prove his most successful. Also a parable—perhaps even an allegory—it is about a school teacher on an outing imprisoned by the local folk in a large sand pit with