IMAMURA, Taihei (August 21, 1911- February 26, 1986)

Imamura Taihei was one of Japan’s most influential film critics and theorists. His work is far-reaching and encompasses critical theories of documentary film, war cinema, art cinema, film theory, Japanese national cinema, and a groundbreaking theory of animation. While the zenith of his career was reached during the Pacific War (1941-45), Imamura remained exceptionally prolific even after the war and published monographs not only on Japanese film but also on literature, most notably on Japanese novelist Shiga Naoya (1883-1971), and other national cinemas, such as the cinema of Italy. In addition, he continued to publish articles on various topics, and even served as an editor of several journals. Although he was a member of the Japanese Communist Party even before the war, he was forced to leave after a series of debates with several other party members led by another film critic, Iwasaki Akira. The most heated of these debates was over the idea of realism in film. Imamura, perhaps not unlike French film theorist, André Bazin, expressed much faith in the true value of recorded moving images. He believed in the camera’s capability to capture glimpses of life as it is, and its powerful effect on viewers.

References and Further reading:

Gerow, A. (ed.) (2010), “Decentering Theory: Reconsidering the History of Japanese Film Theory.” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 22, Saitama-ken Sakado-shi, Japan: Josai University.

Rea Amit

Yale University