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Die Brücke

Naoki Tani

Editor's note: "Die Brücke" is a film directed by Bernhard Wicki. Based on a novel by Manfred Gregor, it relates the story of a young man defending a bridge during wartime and the events he encounters.

When I started to watch this movie, I did not expect that the movie would have the power of pulling me so far into the film. I felt fortunate after I watched the film "Die Brücke" because there is no war in present day Japan. In this movie, the pain, sorrow, sordidness and anxiety during war were depicted. The battle lines expanded near the town, people felt anxiety about their lives, the mayor was so selfish that he bailed out from the town all by himself leaving his citizens, and a parent and child became separated because the mother was evacuated by train. All these scenes have been burnt into my memory.

The central characters are seven boys who are younger than me. They are ordinary students. For example, like other teenagers Walter has a difficult relationship with his father, and Klaus falls in love with his classmate. Although it was sad news, they felt delighted when they received their draft notices. At that time, war seemed distant and unreal to them. But they realized the misery of war on the battle field. Sigi was killed by a combat plane and his friends moaned and cried. He is craven but has a tender heart. They came to hate the enemy forces. I also

mourned over Sigi's death and thought about my friends.

As I watched the movie, I felt as if I could hear the tank's noise from the distance. I entered the trenches, and I was waiting for the tanks to come. I was in military uniform and carried anti-tank missiles. I was beside Jürgen and Klaus. The tanks came. I pulled the trigger of my machine gun. I wanted to avenge my friend Sigi's death. As the battle continued, Walter was killed, Karl was killed, and Hans was killed. I felt deepest sorrow, helplessness, and sense of emptiness.

Nobody wants to have war. There should be no war! In war, such incidents are all too common. The final commentary in the movie was especially poignant: "Dies geschah am 27. April 1945. Es war so unbedeutend, dass es in keinem Heeresbericht erwähnt wurde," which means, "This event occurred on April 27, 1945. It was so unimportant that it was never mentioned in any war communiqué." Then, the final credits appeared. I came to myself. The movie was over, but the boys' roars, sobs, and cries still resonated in my head.

Reference Cited

Wicki, B. (Director). (1959). *Die Brücke*. [Motion picture]. West Germany: Deutsche Film Hansa.

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