

Den'en ni Shishu

(Translation unknown; UK = "Pastoral Hide-and-Seek")

Japan : 1974 : dir. Shuji Terayama : Nippon Art Theatre

: 102 min

prod: Shuji Terayama : scr: : dir.ph.:

.....
Hiroyuki Takana; Kantaro Suga; Keiko Nitaka; Kaoru Yachikusa; Masumi Harukawa;
Chigusa Takayama

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ≠ Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
2378a	1½	3	0	763	- - - - -	No	unseen

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"A fifteen-year old boy lives together with his mother in a small village at the foot of the mountain of terror. He wants to escape the suffocating environment and takes off with the girl next door, who has only just remarried. Then the film-maker intervenes, because he notices that he's falsifying his past. The director steps into his filmed past, but the memory hides itself, and all that remains is a longing for what could have been. The film mixes present, past, memory and longing in a highly striking manner. *** "

The Time Out Film Guide review:

"Terayama's second feature recapitulates some of the main themes of "THROW AWAY YOUR BOOKS" in more directly personal terms: it's a film about a film-maker's re-examination (and attempted revision) of his own childhood. His boyhood self is an unprepossessing lad who lives with his monstrous, widowed mother, fantasises about the desirable girl-next-door¹.. and finds the visiting circus a touchstone for his dreams of escape.

With passion, wit, and a genuinely engaging charm, Terayama poses the burning question: Does murdering your mother constitute a true liberation? The autobiographical stance and the circus motif have evoked countless

comparisons with Fellini, but they're very wide of the mark: the film isn't burdened with bombast or rhetoric, but is rich in (authentically Japanese) poetry, and its modernist approach is challenging in the best and most accessible sense."

19th London Film Festival (1975) programme review:

"Not, very evidently, to the taste of everyone in Cannes, Shuji Terayama's "PASTORAL HIDE-AND-SEEK" is for me one of the most appealing films to be shown in competition. Terayama is a poet, novelist and boxing critic, and his avant garde theatre group has toured much of the world. The first of his films to reach the West, in 1972, were the scandalous "EMPEROR TOMATO KETCHUP" (1970) and "THROW AWAY YOUR BOOKS, LET'S GO INTO THE STREETS" (1971).

"PASTORAL HIDE-AND-SEEK" is a surrealist revisiting of childhood. A boy of 15 lives with his terrible old mother in a crumbling house where the clock has broken and will not stop striking, even when they tie it up with rope. The boy chats with his dead father with the help of a medium, nurtures a passion for the beautiful widow next door, get himself spectacularly raped, and mingles with the strange people of the travelling circus.

Halfway through the film he is visited by his grown-up self, the author and film-maker. The child rebukes the man for distorting the past and the exploration, now modified in the light of their debate, resumes. "If we wish to free

¹ The lad is "unprepossessing", yes? But the girl next door is "desirable"? Is she so? A wee example there of Time Out sexism, for all its right-on feminist credentials?

ourselves, wipe out the history of humanity inside us and the history of society around us, we must begin by getting rid of our personal memories. But that is when our memory begins to play hide-and-seek with us and can never fully unburden itself." Terayama is a true surrealist, realising authentic visions. He also has a prodigal invention and sense of comedy."
- David Robinson, **The Times**

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. The idea of the boy-self and the man-self squabbling over the correct presentation of past events is a splendid touch, and many autobiographical film-makers could do with a similar corrective voice in their ear, I suspect. Western surrealist films (Buñuel aside) usually bemuse and mystify Western audiences, and one would expect a Japanese title to be even more bewildering, but the synopsis above does sound intriguing. Without having seen it, I would hesitate to suggest comparable titles.

See subject index under **ASIA, AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TITLES / VIDEO DIARIES** and **CIRCUS / FAIRGROUNDS**. Not too many boys get themselves "spectacularly raped" in the movies, but such as there are you will find (with the obvious caveat about rape as a violent act of theft) under **SEX & SEXUALITY**.