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Den'en Ni Shisu
(Pastoral Hide and Seek)
(JAPANESE-COLOR)

5-14-75 *Variety*
Cannes, May 13.

Terayama Productions-Nippon Art Theatre Guild release and production. Features entire cast. Written and directed by Shuji Terayama. Camera (Eastman-color), Tatsuo Suzuki; editor, Sachiko Yamaji; music, J.A. Seazer; art director, Kiyoshi Awazu; produced by Hiroko Govaers, Eiko Kuno. Reviewed at Cannes Film Fest. (Competing), May 12, '75. Running time, 102 MINS.

Author Kantaro Sugo
Boy Hiroyuki Takano
Mother Chigusa Takayama
Unwed Mother Keiko Niitaka
Balloon Woman Masumi Harukama
Neighbor Kaoru Yachigusa

Shuji Terayama, poet and theatre man, shows rich visual inventiveness in his second feature. A sort of surrealist search by a filmmaker into his childhood, to exorcise aspects of himself, film is arresting, probing and avoids exploiting this vein of introspection through insight and intensity.

Terayama has adapted theatrical backdrops to film effectively as they fall away to reveal a city street or rooms open out to fields and new vistas. The first part is about a 15-year-old boy in a small town, longing to run away and leave his overdemanding widowed mother who suffocates him.

There is a circus where he sees a fat lady whose skin has to be blown up with an air pump, and married to a midget, and imagines this world to be a center of all sorts of licentiousness. He is also enamored of a lovely woman married to a local well-to-do man who asks him to run away with her to the city.

But then the film stops as the author is seen and he discusses this pic about his childhood with them. Going home he meets himself as the young boy who chides him for having falsified his memories. Then both go back to his childhood as the older man wants to kill his mother.

It shows the woman did not run off with him but a man and also his deflowering by a local prostie. Film may be compared to Federico Fellini's memory pix, or his tale of a film director's plight in creation, but this does not have that self-indulgent sentimentality and its surreal treatment is more probing and revealing though less accessible.

Expert lensing, nice ensemble playing also keep this cohesive. A worthy competer and a film that should find its way in university showings and also specialized circuits, as more selective auds grow, on its fine balance of emotional insight that blends with its surrealistic use of dreams, objects in new contexts and its reflection of the troubled past of an artist.

—Mosk.