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TAKESHI: CHILDHOOD DAYS

Shonen Jidai

The award-winning **Takeshi: Childhood Days** takes place in a Japanese seaside village in 1944, where young Shinji Kazama has been sent from Tokyo to stay with his aunt and uncle, to wait out the end of the war. A good student, but small, shy and afraid of ostracism, Shinji is, to his great relief, befriended by Takeshi Ohara, the class captain. Takeshi, a big, rough-hewn son of a pauper, is also the leader of a bullying gang with almost complete control of their school. Shinji's relationship with Takeshi is the core of this wonderful film—it's a complex and ineffable friendship. Takeshi terrorizes the students in public, but is quiet and personable in the privacy of Shinji's room. Shinji is both fascinated and

appalled by Takeshi. He seems to be the only one to see the pain, and struggle for dignity, behind Takeshi's actions. As the film (and the war) progresses, Takeshi's violent moodiness grows, and the students rebel against him, with Shinji caught in the middle. Director Shinoda (*Demon Pond, MacArthur's Children*) has fashioned a gently observed account of rural wartime Japan as well as a deeply felt but unsentimental look at boyhood fears, friendships and longings.

—*Tod Booth*

JAPAN, 1990 117 min.

DIRECTOR: Masahiro Shinoda **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:** Fujio Fujiko
SCREENPLAY: Taichi Yamada **CAMERA:** Tatsuo Suzuki **EDITOR:**
 Chizuko Osada **ART DIRECTION:** Takeo Kimura **CAST:** Shima Iwashita,
 Tetsuya Fujita, Yuji Horioka, Toshiyuki Hosokawa **PRINT SOURCE:** Aerial
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