

Village of Dreams

(original title unknown) [Eno nakano bokuno mura]

Japan : c1996 : dir. Yoichi Higashi

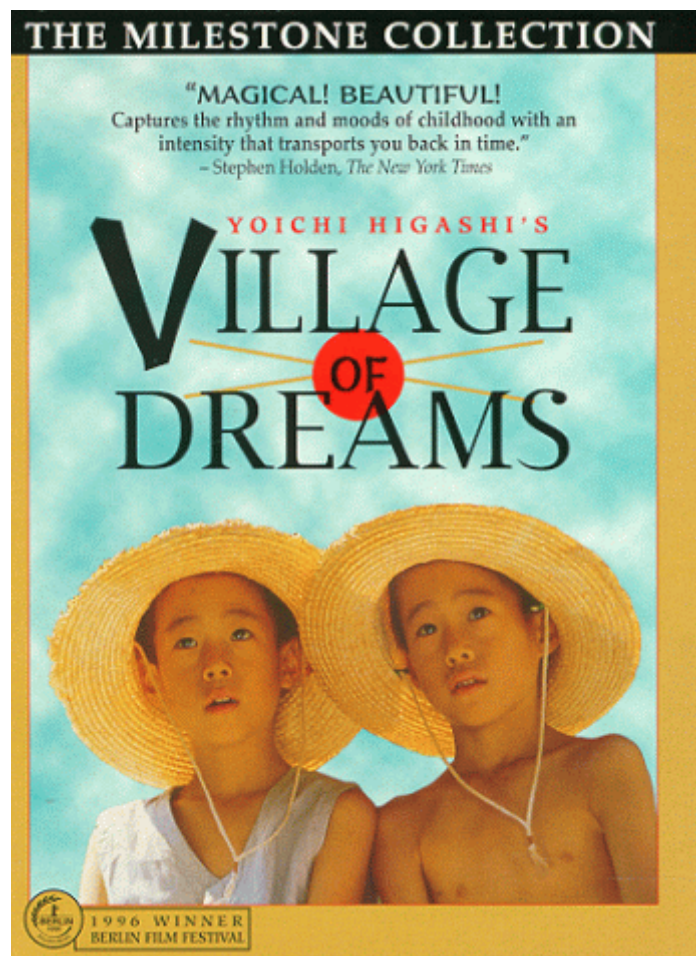
: 112 min

prod: : scr: Yoichi Higashi : dir.ph.:

[Keigo & Shogo Matsuyama](#)

Mieko Harada

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Kbytes	Ω	□	≠	Z	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5178	4½	1	26		7	3	-	-	-	No	Unseen



Source: [Amazon.com](#)

Amazon.com review:

“Visual artist Yoichi Higashi has directed and cowritten an utterly entrancing film memoir of his childhood as an identical twin in a tiny village in late 1940s Japan. Higashi was lucky enough to find two extraordinary twins, Keigo and Shogo Matsuyama, to play himself and his

brother, and the movie captures the essence of twinness: these little boys go everywhere and do everything together - paint, fish, hunt birds. They even dream parallel dreams and wet the bed in tandem. Indulging in the special mischief of twins, they delight in deliberately deceiving others as to who is who. When they fight, their frustration escalates to a hilarious

pitch; to battle with your twin is almost to battle with yourself.

Twinhood magically insulates the boys from punishment (their mother can't bear to scold them), but it also attracts dark enchantments. Now and again, a wind kicks up, and an air of the supernatural blows through the film. Three old witches visit minor ailments - tonsillitis, myopia - upon the brothers; a demon tries to drown one boy.

The film is never too precious or cloying; it creates its own reality in every little detail, one which embraces humour, sadness, mysticism, even a touch of wholesome, Japanese-style sexuality. It also evokes a sweet nostalgia for times gone by. Higashi says, "Now the village exists only in our drawings." Happily for us, it lives on in this wonderful film as well."

- Laura Mirsky

Four **Amazon.com** customer reviews - their spelling and punctuation errors intact:

" "The thunder-god will steal your penises." So says their elder sister to Seizo and Yukihiro, 8-year-old twin boys growing up in a Japanese farm village. **"VILLAGE OF DREAMS"** relates one childhood year of the twins from the perspective of one of the brothers in middle age. It has something of a Japanese **"LITTLE RASCALS"** air about it which may make it seem banal to those who've seen this sort of movie before from directors around the world. Nothing really traumatizes the boys; they only have the joys and sorrows of any child: the sexual curiosity, the friendships, the mysterious and frightening actions of adults, the illnesses, etc.

The film is beautifully photographed, and it makes for a quiet two hours. The DVD has no extras at all. The medieval European background music by the Caterina Early Music Ensemble seems like a strange choice for such a purely Japanese film. Perhaps the lutes, shawms, psalteries, and recorders sound as exotic and eerie to Japanese ears as traditional Japanese music sounds to Westerners."

- Reviewer: Flesh And Wine

"In spite of the slow pace of this movie and not so great video quality, I still found it quite enjoyable. This movie reminds me a little bit of Ozu's **"GOOD MORNING"**, although it does not have the same masterful skill and witty touch. This movie is like a cup of Japanese tea

which you do not gobble like soft drinks. By the way, the sound the other reviewer referred to is "Cicada" not "cricket" "

- Reviewer: A viewer

"Being an Oriental I am fairly familiar with films released by our geographical neighbours, although not as extensive as standard Hollywood productions. With Japanese films, whether it was made by a Kurosawa or a more obscure artisan, I can fairly adjudged them on a whole as lethargic in pace, inconspicuously lacks background music/instrumentals, and are generally pressed on celluloid films that are simply comparatively substandard.

"VILLAGE OF DREAMS", while touted as an award winner is a glaring testimony of this stunted Japanese film-making characteristic. Review it yourself. The pace alone wantonly needs tighter editing. It was the same character that can be seen even in Kurosawa's **"RAN"** - a "highly acclaimed" work that in my case, I couldn't even view for the third time, because even its DVD resolution has a quality that can only be likened to the eye-view of a person who's suffering his earliest stage of creeping glaucoma.

"VILLAGE OF DREAMS" is so "relaxed" as if the filmmaker expects people like me to have an available time that they enjoyed in 1940s Japan in an obscure countryside. At the very least, the straight narrative of this film is a consolation, but with **"RAN"**, the actions were so hard to follow, you'd be puzzled who was fighting and attacking whom.

The most unforgivable quality of this DVD transfer is the poor film stock. The picture approximates that of a "third generation" recording of a VHS copy. This means that you'll be sorely disappointed of having to get a VHS-quality copy COPIED, in turn, from another VHS copy which was copied from the original VHS "master tape". Of course, the DVD transfer is not at fault, it's simply that the Japanese despite their touted techno prowess just couldn't give us a decent film stock, that could at least preserve their comparatively well-made gems.

I bought this film despite its hefty price tag mainly because I'm a film collector. It works like this that whets my appreciation for world cinema. Unfortunately, **VILLAGE's** poor resolution takes away gratifying cinematic enjoyment, as well as negating its "collectability" factor. This should have looked more glorious if

it could approximate the celluloid quality of examples like "WHAT DREAMS MAY COME" or "DARK CITY", but of course that's asking too much from those editing-challenged

Japanese filmmakers.





I want to ask Amazon for a refund because this is not well worth its price value. I was compelled to buy it because of its cover, I thought it was at least as exotically glorious-looking as "KUNDUN", but it proved to be just a small, obscure production. Critics may raved about it, just like those Canadians did with "BLACK ROBE", but the final word is that they're just run of the mill, albeit thoughtful, films....."

- William C. Go from The Philippines

"VILLAGE OF DREAMS" is simply enchanting. It vividly captures the heat of summer in postwar Japan as two identical twin brothers explore life in and around their village, get into all sorts of trouble with adults, and interact with each other. The viewer is soon

swept into their world, a world where you are challenged in 112 minutes to listen for the crickets, smell the oppressive heat, taste their mom's cooking, and revel with them as they grow up sensing for the first time changes in themselves and their surroundings. Mieko Harada the actress who plays the twin's mother won the equivalent of an Academy Award for this portrayal. Many of us remember her as the villainess in Akira Kurosawa's "RAN", what a different part this time. This film is highly recommended as an escape to another time, our lost childhood. Sit back, relax, let your senses envelope you, and enjoy "VILLAGE OF DREAMS".

- A viewer from Gloucester, Massachusetts

[no listing in "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001"]

No further information currently available. Picaresque "slice of life" oriental childhood films are by their nature episodic and low on dramatic content, and it is perhaps true that Western critics sometimes lavish them with rapturous praise they don't quite deserve – "DORO NO KAWA" ("Muddy River") and "DONGDONG DE JIAQI" ("A Summer at Grandpa's") are two examples which spring to mind. What is more interesting in this case is not the usual repertoire of pranks and scrapes, but its musings on the nature of "twin-ness" and the special symbiotic existence which twins lead. It would be of interest too, although the above reviews give no hint of it, to see a Japanese perspective on life under the Shogun Macarthur, and how they experienced their society being purposefully remodelled by the occupying Americans in the immediate post-war years. Nothing else is known of Keigo & Shogo Matsuyama.

See a subject index under **ASIA, AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TITLES, TWINS / LOOKALIKES** and possibly **RASCALS & SCALAWAGS**.

Note: the 8 frame-grabs shown above are only a selection from of a set of 25. To see them all, refer to the stills library. The image quality of frame grabs is usually fairly poor.