

1999-nen no Natsu Yasumi

(translation unknown – UK: “Summer Vacation 1999”)

Japan : 1988 : dir. Shusuke Kaneko : New Century : 90 min

prod: Naoya Narita & Mitsuhsa Hida : scr: Michiyo Kishida : dir.ph.: Takama Kenji

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Eri Miyajima; Miyuki Nakano; Temeke Otakra; Rie Misuhara

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ≠ Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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*Schoolboy homosexuality – Japanese style (ie: all the “boys” are girls)
Source: 33rd London Film Festival programme*

33rd London Film Festival – 1989 –
programme review:

“Four boys get left behind in their boarding school over the summer vacation of 1999. They are racked by adolescent love for one another and one of them apparently commits suicide. Weeks later a boy identical in looks, but somehow different, joins them. Is it the same boy? Eventually there is another suicide - or was it murder - or did it really happen?

It is the turn of the century and a pivotal moment in the boys’ lives - that of puberty, of coming to terms with themselves and others. The dreamy effect of the film is enhanced by long takes of extraordinary photography and clever art direction - the future, merely hinted at, has rather a timeless quality - and also by

the inspired decision to have all the boys played by girls aged from 14 to 16 (a non-vulgar interpretation of the Takurazaka tradition in Japanese theatre), stressing their chaste androgeny and adding to the air of wistful uncertainty that pervades the film.”

- Mark Atkin

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

“Pubescent awakenings, hormones, homicide, and acting so inept there should be some kind of penalty to prevent it. In Japanese with English subtitles. Unrated. **Turkey**”

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. "Chaste androgyny", eh? Are all mid-adolescent schoolboys chaste androgynes, I wonder, or only the Japanese ones? Are they "androgynous", perhaps, because they exude a mysterious sexual attraction? Or because we prefer to think they have no sexuality of their own? And how do we square this with the prevailing wisdom that 14-year old boys today, who get horny for other 14-year olds, should be labelled as "juvenile perpetrators" and "sex offenders"?

Nothing too poetical in that deeply sick Western view of adolescent sexuality. Perhaps this film ought to be broadcast in the interests of mental health? It does seem odd to have cast girls as boys of the same age, implicitly reaffirming the notion that there's something "effeminate" about male homosexuality, but knowing nothing of Takurazaka tradition we must let that pass.

See subject index under **ASIA, BOARDING SCHOOL, DEATH / DYING CHILDREN, SEX & SEXUALITY, TWINS / LOOKALIKES / SWITCHED IDENTITIES** and **WOMEN AS BOYS / GIRLS AS BOYS**.