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About Love, Tokyo 9:30

Mitsuo Yanagimachi (Japan, 1992)

(*Ai ni tsuite, Tokyo*). Mitsuo Yanagimachi's portraits of modern Japan center on alienated tough guys who are actually desperate for a way back into a culture which can no longer be theirs. In *About Love, Tokyo*, he takes as his protagonist the ultimate outsider in Japan, a young Chinese, one of thousands of Asian foreigners who live a precarious existence at best. Ho Jun is a would-be college student supporting himself with a grisly job in a slaughterhouse and the ill-gotten gains of his forays to the local *parbinko* (pinball) parlor. With little Japanese, he communicates in an awkward if charming mixture of gestures and shared ideograms. An affair with a Japanese woman of Chinese descent turns rancid when Ho Jun sells her to a *yakuza*. But for Yanagimachi, the matrix of money, power, and sex is not so simple: the gangster is impotent, and Ho Jun himself becomes a prostitute. As a foreigner, he is a new geisha in a new Japan.

• Written by Yanagimachi. Photographed by Shohei Ando. With Wu Xiao Tong, Asuka Okasaka, Hiroshi Fujioka, Qian Po. (110 mins, In Japanese and Chinese with English subtitles, Color, 35mm)