

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Currents in Japanese cinema -- excerpt</b>
Author(s)	Tadao Sato
Source	<i>Kodansha International</i>
Date	1982
Type	book excerpt
Language	English
Pagination	231
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Akai tenshi (Red angel), Masumura, Yasuzo, 1966

Tadao Sato

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 1960s

For Masumura, sex is the very lust for life itself. In *The Red Angel* (*Akai Tenshi*, 1966), set in China during World War II, the army nurse (Ayako Wakao) is swept into sexual relations with Japanese soldiers who are on the brink of death. From its content, this fine film might be confused with pornography; however, through the fierceness of its expression, sex becomes the symbol of the will to live even in the direst circumstances. A young man who has lost both arms in battle pleads with the nurse to masturbate him, and she obliges. The field doctor, despairing at the lack of facilities, takes drugs and becomes impotent, and the nurse helps him recover by giving him her body. In the end her efforts are to no avail: the armless soldier commits suicide and the doctor has himself sent to the front to be slain by the enemy. Her zest for life is unable to save them because they are trapped within a social code that stresses glory on the battlefield and regards weakness with shame.