

Document Citation

Title	Aiki
Author(s)	Tod Booth
Source	<i>San Francisco International Film Festival</i>
Date	2003 Apr 22
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	81
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Tengan, Daisuke (1959), Tokyo, Japan
Film Subjects	Aiki, Tengan, Daisuke, 2002



Aiki

JAPAN 2002, 119 min.

In Japanese, English and French with English subtitles

SFIFF, APR. 17, 2003
p. 81

DIR Daisuke Tengan **PROD** Hisa Iino, Shunsuke Koga, Yasushi Matsuda

SCR Daisuke Tengan **CAM** Yi Yi-shu **ED** Hirohide Abe **MUS** Meina Company

CAST Haruhiko Kato, Rie Tomosaka, Ryo Ishibashi

Based on a true story, this film is about a crippled down-and-out boxer who finds redemption through the love of a good woman and the mastery of a martial art. If that sounds like a recipe for gag-inducing sentimentality and *Rocky*-inspired power ballads, then think again. Of course, since Daisuke Tengan, the writer and director of *Aiki*, is the son and collaborator of master anti-sentimentalist Shohei Imamura (*Warm Water Under a Red Bridge*, SFIFF 2002), it's only natural that he'd strip the "triumph of the human spirit" movie down to its skivvies. Taichi is a hotheaded boxer who sinks into a wallow of bitter, self-pitying drunkenness when he loses the use of his legs in a motorcycle accident. He eventually meets Samako, a slightly nutty young woman who offers him the first glimmer of respect he's had in a long time, as well as introducing him to a mild-mannered salaryman (the great Ryo Ishibashi) who, as a master of *aiki-jujutsu*, can send an opponent flying through the air with a mere twitch of his wrist. Slowly, Taichi fights his way back to join the human race. It's a boldly simple story, with a comically grungy cast of characters, told with such maudlin-free modesty that it feels like the reinvention of a genre.

—*Tod Booth*



Daisuke Tengan (b. Tokyo, Japan, 1959) Filmography: *My Sister and Izuna* (1990), *Asian Beat: I Love Nippon* (1991)

4/22 KAB 9:45 AIK122K
4/24 KAB 6:30 AIK124K