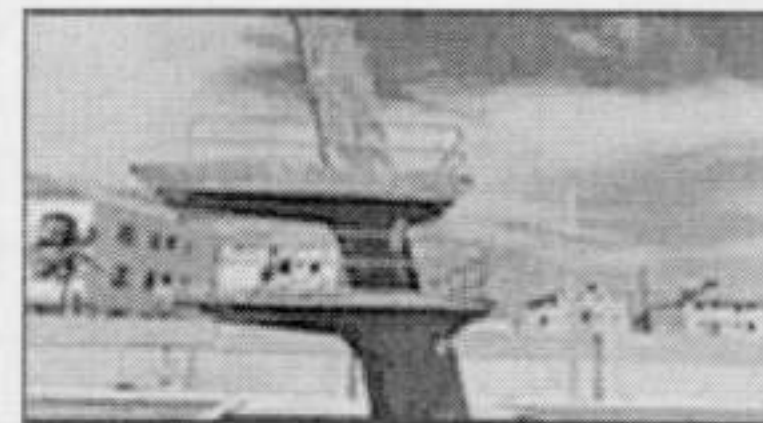


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Aiki



Taichi (Kato Haruhiko, from *Pulse*) is a high-school drop-out just starting out as a pro boxer when a traffic accident leaves him paralyzed from the waist down. During a long stay in hospital and an even longer convalescence, he goes from contemplating suicide to a range of aggressive and self-destructive behaviors. Things begin to look up when he's mistaken for the attempted rescuer of a rape victim: he's offered a job, he meets a phenomenal young woman (Tomosaka Rie) and he's accepted as a pupil by a master of *aiki-jujutsu* (Ishibashi Ryo, from *Audition*), the martial art which channels aggression back to the aggressor, who takes him on because he's intrigued by the challenge of teaching someone confined to a wheelchair.

It's hard to pinpoint the qualities which take *Aiki* so high above "uplift" movies. Partly it's the film's abrasive honesty about matters medical, physical and psychological. Partly it's the director's idiosyncratic vision of human interaction in all its strangeness and absurdity. (Tengan Daisuke happens to be the son of veteran director Imamura Shohei and the scriptwriter of *Audition*; we showed his bizarre debut *My Sister and Izuna* back in 1991.) Partly it's the wonder of *aiki-jujutsu* itself, a real see-it-to-believe-it spectacle. And a large part of it is the performance of Ishibashi (also in this year's *Suicide Club*), an ex-rock singer who is fast maturing into one of Japan's finest screen actors.
- Tony Rayns

Japan, 2002, 119 min

Japanese

Director Tengan Daisuke

Producers Iino Hisa, Matsuda Yasushi, Koga Shunsuke

Screenwriter Tengan Daisuke

Cinematographer Yi Yi-Shu

Editor Abe Hirohide

Music Meina Co

Cast Kato Haruhiko, Tomosaka Rie, Ishibashi Ryo, Taguchi Tomoro

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Sun Sep 29, 9:15pm
Granville 7 Cinema 7
\$8.50

Sat Oct 5, 1:00pm
Granville 7 Cinema 7
\$6.50

Selected Filmography

My Sister and Izuna (90), The Asian Beat: I Love Nippon (91)

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