

Yomiuri telecasting corporation
presents

International
HK Film Festival
香港國際電影節

THE FRIENDS

(Natsu no niwa)

A film by
SHINJI SOMAI

1994 – JAPAN – DRAMA – JAPANESE – 113'

RESTORED IN 4K IN 2024

mk2
FILMS

SYNOPSIS

During the summer holidays, three young adventurous schoolboys have fun spying on an eccentric old man who lives alone in a secluded. Gradually, they get closer and discover an extraordinary man.

"The name of Shinji Somai deserves to be rediscovered today more than ever." Hirokazu Kore-Eda

NOTE ON THE FILM'S RESTORATION

THE FRIENDS (1994), a previously unreleased film by the award-winning Japanese director of Typhoon Club, Shinji Somai, newly restored in 4K by Yomiuri Telecasting Corporation. The director's work, considered a major influence by Hirokazu Kore-eda and Ryusuke Hamaguchi, is being rediscovered by cinephiles worldwide—another of Somai's unreleased films, represented by mk2 Films, Moving, won the Best Restoration Award at the 2023 Venice Festival.

ABOUT SHINJI SOMAI

Born January 13th, 1948, in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture. After dropping out of college he joined Nikkatsu Studios as an assistant director. In 1976 he leaved Nikkatsu and started working as a freelance. Assistant director to Kazuhiko Hasegawa, Murakami Ryū and Terayama Shūji, he made his directorial debut in 1980 with the film *Tonda Couple*. He directed *Sailor Suit and Machine Gun* the following year, which became the No.1 box office hit in the Japanese film category. He directed 13 feature films and 1 documentary, stage an opera and made several short advertising films.

He actively cast unknowns and amateur child actors and produced a succession of hits with his unique directing method characterized by long takes.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2001 GASSAN
- 2000 UMBRELLA FLOWER
- 1998 WAIT AND SEE – Berlinale Panorama, FIPRESCI Prize
- 1994 THE FRIENDS
- 1993 MOVING – Cannes Un Certain Regard Official Selection
- 1990 TOKYO HEAVEN
- 1987 LUMINOUS WOMAN
- 1985 LOST CHAPTER OF SNOW: PASSION
- 1985 TYPHOON CLUB
- 1985 LOVE HOTEL
- 1983 THE CATCH
- 1983 P.P. RIDER
- 1981 SAILOR SUIT AND MACHINE GUN
- 1980 TONDA COUPLE

CAST

Kihachi Denpo	Rentaro MIKUNI
Kiyama	Naoki SAKATA
Kawabe	Taiki OH
Yamashita	Kenichi MAKINO
Shizuka	Naho TODA
undertaker	Tsurube SHOFUKUTEI
Yayoi Koko	Chikage AWASHIMA

CREW

Directed by	Shinji SOMAI
Executive Producers	Kei IJICHI, Masahiro YASUDA
Producers	Yoshihiro KATO, Hiroyuki FUJIKADO
Planning	Shuntaro YOSHINO, Tatsuya OKI
Original Story	Kazumi YUMOTO
Screenplay	Yozo TANAKA
Director of Photography	Noboru SHINODA
Lighting	Hideo KUMAGAI
Art Directors	Kyoko HEYA
Sound	Hidetoshi NONAKA
Editor	Yoshiyuki Okuhara
Music	Sergio ASSAD

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