

## ODORU DAISOSASEN (aka WANGAN POLICE STATION): OVERVIEW

*Odoru Dai Sosa Sen* (The Big Dancing Criminal Investigation Line) TV series is sometimes called *Dancing Detective*, sometimes *Rhythm & Police*, but it's mainly called *Wangan Police Station* among North American anime otaku. If you're a *Patlabor* fan, you will absolutely love this TV series which started in January 1997 and became a super hit in Japan! Up 'till now, there are eleven TV episodes, three TV Special "movies", and a theatrical release (*Bayside Shakedown The Movie*, which was shown at the Montréal World Film Festival '99 — see PA#59, pg. 15). In fact, the TV series was so popular that, according to news reports, over 3000 fans waited in line all night to be able to see the premiere of the movie and to meet the director & the actors at the Nichigeki Toho Theatre in the fashionable district of Yuraku-cho in Tokyo. We heard that it has also become very popular among Japanese anime otaku and that, at the Comic Market, many fans dressed like Detective sergeant Aoshima, the main character of this show! *Odoru Dai Sosa Sen* surely became a big phenomenon! The TV series and TV Specials are already available on videos (in Japanese) by Pony Canyon, and we do hope that a North American releaser will pick this title up some day to bring this very interesting human story to English-speaking fans.

"Wangan" means Bayside. It's the name of the police station, located near Tokyo Bay. In fact, this show's world is quite real! We viewers know that it's fiction, with lots of fictitious small details, to reflect today's Japan and its youth culture. In one episode, we see a character named Noguchi who's an anime otaku (he loves the *Sailor Moon*-like character Pink Sapphire!) and a stalker! And there this place called "The Image Club" where customers go and can meet girls who wear anime & TV characters' costumes, etc. We all know it's a fictitious TV show and yet, this Wangan world is very real, as if we're part of the show. If we enter Wangan's world, we all know these things exist!

The main character, Sunsaku Aoshima, is played by none other than Yuji Oda, who's quite charming and all viewers would feel empathy and love his honesty. Aoshima-kun is a Police Sergeant. He always introduces himself to the people he meets saying "I'm Police Sergeant Aoshima, the same name as Tokyo prefectural governor!" The reason why we begin to like Aoshima-kun immediately is that he's NOT an ordinary cop. He used to be a salesman in a computer company, but he was bored, so he quit his job and became a cop! He's just like any of us: he wants excitement in his life and he wants justice! But of course, our lives don't always go the way we want and life is full of disappointments! Just like many of us, he wants to be a "COOL" cop, and yet, he faces many hardships and disappointments. This is why many people become fans of this show, I think!

*Wangan Police Station* saga was created by Director Katsuyuki Motohiro (who's in his 30's and you'd definitely feel the fresh air of youth while you're watching this show!) and screenplay writer Ryoichi Kimizuka, and lots of enthusiastic crew members. The more we watch this show, one episode to the next, we start feeling tremendous empathy toward all its characters. American TV shows like *ER*, *Chicago Hope*, etc., are great in their own way, but it is rare to see a show like WPS which can offer full range of joy, anger, sadness, and enjoyment, captivating us by the strenght of its story and its refreshing new views of society. The way each character speaks reminds us of who they are and that they are part of a vertically-structured society (which is probably similar in the American police forces & military). Also, WPS world's criminals are really psycho & weirdos (an anime otaku psycho, an insurance salesman murderer, a gigolo drug dealer, an intelligent psycho bomber, etc.) who also reflect our own times. Interestingly, computer and the internet are often part of the story...

After viewing, you'll feel like clapping your hands with its theme song "Love Somebody". Highly Recommended!!

**Video:** *Odoru Dai Sosa Sen Part I* (Eps. 1-3, PCVC-30608, 164 min., ¥9800), *Part II* (Eps. 4-6, PCVC-30609, 141 min., ¥9800), *Part III* (Eps. 7-9, PCVC-30610, 141 min., ¥9800), *Part IV* (Eps. 10-11, PCVC-30611, 119 min., ¥9800), *The End Of The Year Police Special* (PCVC-30684, 120 min., ¥12,000), *The Female Cop Side Story* (PCVC-30726, 95 min., ¥12,000), *Autumn Crime Eradication Special* (PCVC-30782, ¥12,000), and *The Three Amigos Special* (PCVC-10846, ¥2,800). All are available from Pony Canyon. [Can be ordered from [www.cdjapan.co.jp](http://www.cdjapan.co.jp) or [www.ponycanyon.co.jp](http://www.ponycanyon.co.jp)]

**Official webpage:** <http://www.odoru.com>.

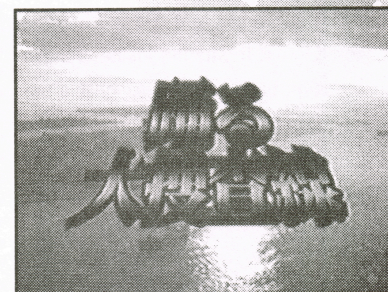
**Reference:** *Kinema Junpo* #1269 (11-98): 26-63.



Fans waiting in line the night before the movie premiere



Staff & crew at the movie premiere

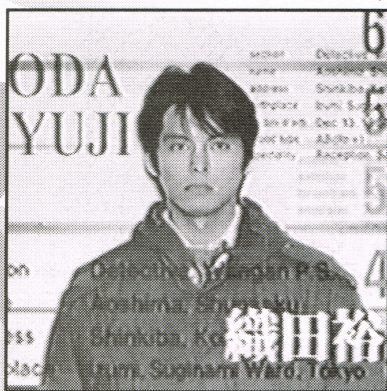


The Rainbow Bridge (above) & the WPS (below)





## ODORU DAISOSASEN (aka WANGAN POLICE STATION): CHARACTERS

**Sunsaku AOSHIMA**

Wangan Police Station Criminal Case department police sergeant. He is the main character of this story. He used to be a sales-person in a computer company but, due to boredom & disputes among private companies, he quit & became a police sergeant. He began to feel sadness & great frustration inside Wangan Police Station because of unreasonable bureaucracy, but he's very optimistic and began to change people around him. He's basically "an eternal kid" himself, who loves children, and he is very sincere. Actor: Yuji Oda.

**Sumire ONDA**

Wangan Police Station theft department police sergeant. Until she met Aoshima-kun, she used to be like an office lady of Wangan Police Station. She was attacked by a psycho-criminal in the past and has a deep scar in her heart. She looks cold outwardly, but inside she's naïve & gentle. She never forgives a criminal who abuses women. Actress: Eri Fukatsu.

**Heihachiro WAKU**

Wangan Police Station detective Leading officer. He is like Japan's Morgan Freeman! He's a role-model for Aoshima-kun who looks up to him at all times. Six years ago, his young detective partner officer was murdered. When he met Aoshima, he decided to dedicate his life to catching criminals. A man of justice with very philosophical words. Actor Chôsuke Ikariya is absolutely perfect for this role.

**Shinji MUROI**

The Metropolitan Police Board Criminal Councilor. He's the elite of Japan's National Government officer. When he met Aoshima-kun, his policy changed, to be more caring, and he tries to be flexible to deal things case by case. He doesn't talk very much, but has the courage of his convictions and is very brave. He knits his brows a lot (frowning makes wrinkles appear between his eyes, which characterize him). He's originally from Akita Prefecture of Northern Japan. When he meets people from his prefecture, he starts talking with his thick dialect. Because of that, other city officers who graduated Tokyo University look down on him. He is elite, but very human. Actor: Toshiro Yanagiba.

**Yukino KASHIWAGI**

Wangan Police Station traffic department lady officer. She was the daughter of a murdered victim, and couldn't talk for a while due to her great emotional shock. Aoshima-kun helps her to get back to social life and she becomes a criminal case officer sergeant. Actress: Miki Mizuno.

**Masayoshi MASHITA**

Wangan Police Station Detective. He's the son of an elite officer of the Metropolitan Police Board and he wants to go "up" as a professional officer. He is cheerful, full of wit and loved by every one. Actor: Yusuke Santa Maria.

**The Three Amigos**

Wangan Police Station chief detectives. They are called "The Three Amigos" due to the fact that they are always together and that they constantly flatter top officers to secure their salary. Actors: Soichiro Kitamura, Akira Saito, Takehiko Ono.





## ODORU DAISOSASEN (aka WANGAN POLICE STATION): SYNOPSES

### 1. Salary-man Police Officer & His First Difficult Case

Aoshima-kun, a 29 year-old police sergeant arrives for his first assignment at the Wangan Police Station with enthusiasm, but Sergeant Sumire Onda totally ignores him. When he arrives at his first murder scene, he is treated as a nuisance. He meets the elite officer Muroi, but Detective Waku takes him away. In his office, all members act separately and they don't even look like serious officers. Aoshima-kun is disappointed. The first job he gets is to be a driver for Councilor Muroi, to bring him to the General Hospital to see a daughter of the murder victim. She can't talk due to her emotional shock, but Aoshima approaches her gently. He also has to investigate a suspicious insurance salesman named Tanaka. He finds some comfort talking with Tanaka, but later discovers that Tanaka, bored by his routine job, is the murderer they were looking for! Aoshima is shocked, "That man could have been me..."

### 2. The delivered goods of love & revenge

Detective Waku is targeted by a police-killer named Yamabe. In the past, Waku-san has hit him during an inquiry, and that's why Yamabe killed another police officer in revenge, Councilor Muroi thinks. Meanwhile, a fancy chair is delivered to Wangan Police Station for Waku-san, who thinks it is a gift from someone in the Police station that took pity of his old age & badly aching back. He sits... then, something is very wrong! There is a bomb under the chair and he can't get up. Aoshima-kun tries to help, but, accidentally, touches a wire and he can't move at all either! During the ordeal, every member of Wangan Station offers their opinion. Finally, the Special Force arrives and both of them are saved on time. Muroi-san having behaved as a "gentleman", the criminal Yamabe says to him, "I won't take my revenge on you" before being taken away.

### 3. The erased report and her incident

Sergeant Sumire-chan is investigating a theft case, but the criminal is the son of a high government official named Tetsuya, and Sumire is ordered to stop investigating the case! She becomes angry and brings Keiko & Aoshima to a jail cell and stays there to protest the decision. Councilor Muroi arrives at Wangan station to talk to her, letting her know that she can investigate as long as she doesn't bring the case to the media. Aoshima gets angry also, and shouts at Councilor Muroi, "The police station is not like private sector company, right?!" Meanwhile the thief Tetsuya shows no remorse and Aoshima gets even angrier! Aoshima is scolded by Tetsuya's lawyer, but Councilor Muroi protects him. Muroi says, "I shall become a top officer!" Aoshima smiles at him.

### 4. A girl's tears and the pride of police officer

Councilor Muroi is beginning to like Aoshima-kun very much, and wants him to be his subordinate. Muroi gives to Aoshima a chance to arrest the criminal Ooki, who's a serial robber. Aoshima arrives at the night club to arrest him, but he sees a girl who is attacked by a violent man. Instead of arresting Ooki, Aoshima chooses to help the girl who is being abused. Councilor Muroi is extremely upset by this failure.

However, Detective Waku & the other Wangan Police Station members, who were listening on the radio, go out to find and arrest Ooki, and bring him to Muroi.

### 5. Can't hear her screaming voice!

Sergeant Sumire Onda is attacked on the way home. The criminal, Noguchi, is obsessed by her and has previously attacked her! Fortunately, Sumire-chan isn't injured much, but Noguchi sends her a videotape of her apartment! He confuses Sergeant Sumire with the anime character Pink Sapphire, and since she rejected him, he's planning to take a revenge on her. He's a terrible stalker! About the same time, two other crimes are committed in the same way, and Detective Mashita retraces Noguchi through the Internet! Sumire agreed to become a decoy. In a parking lot, Aoshima loses sight of Sumire, and she's again attacked by Noguchi, but, fortunately, Muroi arrives on time to save her and arrest the psycho-criminal Noguchi.

### 6. A Waiting Detective & her love and truth

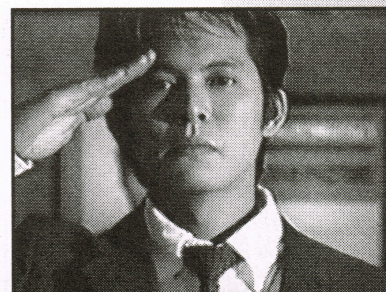
Wangan police station is full of joy with the presence of a young girl entertainer, but Aoshima & Waku-san are on a stakeout to catch a drug dealer. Aoshima is shocked to find out that Ms. Yukino, the victim's daughter in the first episode, is involved! Councilor Muroi doesn't even remember her and when she receives a package with drugs, she's arrested. She was a gal-pal of the drug dealer Iwase when she was a student in Los Angeles, but knew nothing of his drug dealings. Aoshima purposely make her angry & hit him, so he can arrest her and keep her from being brought to the headquarters. Aoshima has now 48 hours to find and arrest the drug dealer Iwase.

### 7. 48 hours time limit

Waku-san brings Aoshima to meet his informant, Tatsumura (nicknamed the "mole"), to get a lead on Iwase. They succeeded to get the list of Iwase's former gal pals. Meanwhile, Ms. Yukino tells Aoshima about a gal named Ayako Sumida. The very next day, Aoshima succeeds to sneak in the company where Sumida's gal works to get more information on her. While Detective Mashita & Sergeant Sumire are trying to kill the time and keep Ms. Yukino longer in Wangan station, finally, Detective Waku & Aoshima, who followed Ms. Sumida, arrive at the station with the drug dealer Iwase for Muroi to arrest him publicly. Waku says to Aoshima, "Go to the top, if you want to do the right thing!"

### 8. Farewell our beloved detective

The HQ hires "The Profiling Team," three young nerd detectives who think they can solve any crimes just at looking at all the data on their computer! Detective Waku is furious for being ignored and leaves to investigate by his own old-fashioned way. Meanwhile, Sumire-chan is taking care of a little girl, Ai, who was alone in her parents' house when it was visited by a thief. Councilor Muroi also feels great "doubt" for this trendy scientific crime-solving method and those brainy kids from the university. The Profiling Team thinks the criminal they are looking for is a man named Shibuya. Detective Waku rather suspects a man named Kubota. Muroi orders to check both suspects







## ODORU DAISOSASEN (aka WANGAN POLICE STATION): SYNOPSES (Cont.)



and it turns out that Kubota is the thief whom Sumire was looking for. Shibuya was indeed the criminal as the team said, but they realize how difficult it is to confront a criminal! Aoshima is the one who succeed to make Shibuya confess.

### 9. Wangan Police Station Big Panic! Danger to Sergeant Aoshima.

An unemployed student tries to commit suicide and Detective Waku & Aoshima succeeds in stopping him. Councilor Muroi asks them to protect the mistress of a suspect murderer. She is very selfish, saying that, "I never asked him to murder anyone!" Aoshima & the other station members can't stand her. Meanwhile, Aoshima finds a suspicious man looking around the station and relay the information to Muroi by fax, but receives no reply. The mistress is released for lack of evidence, and, on her way out, an elder brother of the victim (the suspect spotted by Aoshima) attacks her. Aoshima tried to stop him, but gets stabbed! Thanks to the lucky-charm he always carries, Aoshima survives, but he gets angry at Muroi for not helping him earlier. Muroi feels great responsibility. "This was my fault," and he promises to do more...

### 10. The Deadly Bullet: Detective's tears were erased by the rain.

Tatsumura (the "mole") gives Detective Waku information about an old murder case where the victim was a police officer. This case is important to Waku-san, but he will retire in a week, so he decides to do things his own way. Aoshima asks Muroi for help, but without success (bureaucracy!). Waku finally arrests a man named Toshi, who bragged of being a cop killer, but admits he was just doing like his buddy Anzai, who just came back from the Philippines. Anzai is an illegal gun dealer with a big scar on the face. At the same time, Ms. Yukino is coming back from her police entry exam and Mashita offers to walk her home. On their way, Mashita stops a man acting suspiciously. The man, who has a scar on the face, shoots Mashita! Yukino screams! Later, all Wangan members are distributed weapons and they are looking for evidences under the heavy rain...

### 11. Farewell Sergeant Aoshima

Detective Mashita is in the hospital, heavily injured. Wangan station members find out information about Anzai on Detective Mashita's internet homepage! Aoshima & Sumire go to see a man named Shiraishi, and they accidentally meet Anzai in the "Image Club" — a place where men buy prostitutes wearing anime costumes! Anzai starts shooting at Aoshima, so he had no choice but to shoot back. Instead of helping each other, the top elite bureaucrats are worried about the appearances. Councilor Muroi gets furious, and runs from the office. Aoshima & Muroi finally find the bar where Anzai is, after asking Yamabe about the location. Finally, they can arrest Anzai. Detective Waku says he wants Aoshima to continue his work after his retirement. He leaves Wangan Station saying, "I'm leaving, but Wangan Station doesn't die as long as you have Aoshima." A week later, Councilor Muroi & Aoshima receive their punishment for not obeying orders, but Aoshima is happy, saying to Muroi, "You,

you stay on top for me!" Both smile at each other. Several days later, Aoshima starts his new assignment as an officer in a neighborhood Police Box. On the street, he encounters an old lady, Mrs. Yoshida, who gave him his precious lucky charm!

### The End of the year Police Special

The year '97 is almost over. With help of Councilor Muroi, Aoshima can come back to the Wangan Police Station after a long (longer than planned!) absence, but no one wants him in any department! He ends up in the Traffic Department with Ms. Yukino, but gets involved with an injury case at an elementary school. Then, he is sent to Life Safety Department and then to another Department, and another! During all this time, he is still investigating the elementary school incident and finally arrests a young drug addict named "Kagami." Kagami somehow sneaks out while the station's staff is distracted and takes one of the Three Amigos hostage with a gun! It turns out that Kagami is also a murderer wanted by the Metropolitan Police HQ! The elite officer Shinjo says, "For his crime he deserves death" and tries to shoot Kagami, but at the right moment Councilor Muroi calls the Special Force, S.A.T., and Kagami is finally arrested!

### Wangan Side Story: The female cop story

Ms. Natsumi Shinohara arrives at the Wangan Police Station after graduating from the Police Academy to be a Police Lady in the Traffic Department. She shows the newcomers' enthusiasm, but her hopes are destroyed when she is put under the responsibility of Ms. Kuwano, a "natural-born old maid" & very inflexible female cop. Natsumi finally gets tired of being pushed around! She screams after going through so many unpleasant incidents, "If you're right, I'm quitting!" Later, Natsumi gets accidentally involved with a criminal whom the police HQ had been looking for. She is asked to chase the criminal's car, and Kuwano is assisting her through the radio. Natsumi succeeds in hitting the criminal's car and arrests him. After the incident, Kuwano is transferred and Natsumi shows her respect by saluting, "We're all police officers".

### The Autumn Crime Eradication Special

Aoshima-kun comes back to Wangan station after a month of investigation under cover. After an arson incident, the criminal and the woman who ordered him to commit the crime are arrested and Aoshima is asked to pick them up. Somehow, the woman escapes. Aoshima and Sumire are punished for letting her escape, especially Sumire who seems sympathetic to the woman who had been abused by her boyfriend. Councilor Muroi wants Aoshima to follow Sumire and report her activities. He is also tapping the telephone wire of Wangan station to investigate both Aoshima & Sumire! Aoshima accuses him of betrayal & treachery. The woman is arrested by Shinjo, but Aoshima also insists to investigate the victim (the woman's boyfriend and abuser) equally. Sumire is furious for finding out that she was tapped. Even after the arrest, all members feel betrayed and this incident had deepened the emotional split among Wangan members.





## JAPANESE MOVIES AT THE 1999 MWFF (Continued)

### ODORU DAI SOSA SEN: THE MOVIE (BAYSIDE SHAKEDOWN) ★★★★★

This very original Police show will totally charm you! *Bayside Shakedown* was the English language title at the 1999 Montreal World Film Festival, but the original title is *Odoru Dai Sosa Sen The Movie: Wangansho Shijo Saiaku No 3-kakan*, which means "The Dancing Large Criminal Investigation Line Movie: The Worst 3 Days In Wangan Police Station History" (gee, too long, eh?). It is also known by fans as *Rhythm & Police* or *Wangan Police Station*. Actually, it was a super popular hit TV show in Japan (it started in January 1997 and there were eleven 45-min. episodes, followed by four TV Specials — we will cover this series in a future issue of the magazine), so it is no surprise that they brought those characters back in a movie! Both the series and the movie have very comical scenes, that make you laugh, as well as some serious ones (like exposing the ugly politics among Japanese bureaucrats), that make you think. In any case, it's captivating and you can't take your eyes off the screen!

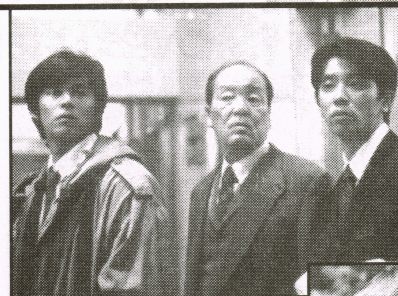
It tells the everyday life story of Wangan (Bayside) Precinct Police Station in Tokyo: murder cases, petty thefts, kidnapping cases, etc. In a way, it's like many other cop shows, but the storytelling is very original and those characters are charming. The leading character is Detective Aoshima-kun (played by Yuji Oda) who's young and idealistic. He used to be an office worker in a computer company, but he was bored to death and longed for being a cool police detective. So, he quit the job to join Wangan Police Station. However, he is quickly disillusioned. He thought that being a detective would mean arresting criminals and doing murder investigations, but finds his work paralysed by police stations' territorial disputes spawned from the Japanese vertically-structured society and bureaucracy. Maybe that job is just as bad as in the private sector? The local cops are always pushed around by the Headquarter's officers and warned to keep their noses out of the investigations despite the fact that Wangan people know the area better. Being so helpless makes Aoshima feel despaired, but, having befriended Inspector Muroi, from Headquarter, he convinces him to try helping citizens instead of just being an elite bureaucrat.

Another great character is Detective Waku ( nicknamed "The Japanese Morgan Freeman"! ), an old and extremely philosophical cop who plays the role of a mentor for Aoshima. As a guest appearance, we can also see Ms. Kyoko Koizumi (a former Japanese idol singer nicknamed "Kyon Kyon") who plays a psycho! This female character, a nurse who became unemployed, is like a child living in her own world and she kills people who want to die. She's a really scary character. Well, actually in *Bayside Shakedown The Movie*, all criminals are "psychos" who can't grow up and remain children psychologically. A bunch of teenagers kidnap a company's president and they think that's a game! Time has really changed. Now, with the Internet, where psychos and criminals can communicate and exchange ideas, the nature of crime itself has changed.

The director, Mr. Katsuyuki Motohiro, is very young. Born in 1965, his background is in TV, where he directed several variety shows and dramas. The movie still has this "TV show" feel, but Director Motohiro also gives an incredible tempo to the storytelling by using dynamic film angles, slow-motion, fast paced shots, etc. It is really like dancing! We must add that Mr. Ryoichi Kimizuka did a fantastic job with this very entertaining script. We can feel a real empathy towards those police characters! The balance is very good between action & reflection, humor & drama. Finally, all this is very well supported by an excellent soundtrack by Akihiko Matsumoto. The music makes a great difference and gives more punch to the story!

After seeing this film, I really felt good and I wanted to see more (luckily, we were able to find the TV series). We highly recommend this movie. You won't be disappointed! Hopefully, some North American releaser will eventually release both the TV series and the movie in English.

**Odoru Dai Sosa Sen The Movie.** Japan, 1998, 119 min. Dir.: Kasuyuki Motohiro; Script: Ryoichi Kimizuka; Phot.: Osamu Fujishi; Mus.: Akihiko Matsumono; Prod.: Fuji TV/Pony Canyon; Cast: Yuji Oda, Toshiro Yanagiba, Eri Fukasu, Miki Mizuno, Kyoko Koizumi, Chosuke Ikariya, Takehiko Ono, Soichiro Kitamura, Akira Saito, Masayoshi Mashita, Yusuke Santa Maria, Kenta Sadoi, Toshio Kakei. Available in Japan in VHS as an original release (PCVC-30867, ¥16,800) and a 130-min. priced-down reissue (PCVC-10946, ¥3,990). Web page: [www.odoru.com](http://www.odoru.com).



Above: Aoshima-kun, Waku-san (Chôsuke Ikariya) and Mashita-kun (Yûsuke Santa Maria)

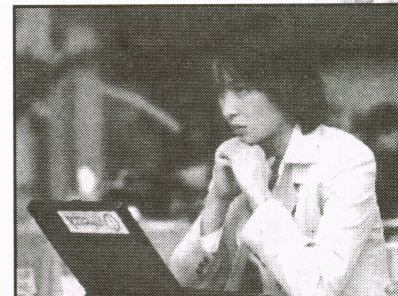
Right: Director Katsuyuki Motohiro



Syunsaku Aoshima (Yuji Oda)



Sumire Onda (Eri Fukatsu)



Above: Yukino Kashiwagi (Miki Mizuno)  
Below: Shinji Muroi (Toshiro Yanagiba)

