

# Cinema as Epic: An Essay on *Living on the Aga* directed by Makoto Sato

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The theme of the film *Living on the Aga* is Niigata Minamata disease. This film, however, does not explicitly depict the manifestations of this disease. Instead, the film documents several figures living beside the Aga river, for example, farmers, shipwrights, and rice-cake dealers. Many scenes in this film gloriously capture the lives of the working people whose roots are in the earth of Aga. These people are all undesignated victims of Niigata Minamata disease. Through such a depiction, this film poetically presents various questions: “How and why could a pollution-triggered disease occur in Japan?”, “What is the most important and beautiful thing in our lives?” By analyzing this film, we will consider how we are able to live our lives through poetry.