



It's the final volume of *Azumanga Daioh*, and the girls are graduating and going their separate ways. No more Kamineko, Chiyo-chan, Osaka-san... Some of the girls get their wishes, while others don't, but the comedy that's been the real backbone of the series is still there despite the parting of the ways...

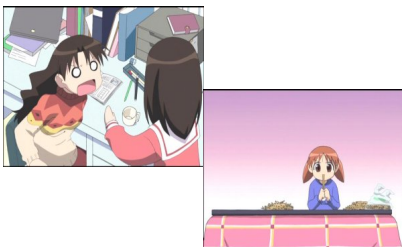
24 - Yamamayaa

Sakaki's been searching the internet for Iriomote cats, and finds a news story about one that was killed in a road accident. She thinks it was the mother of the cat she befriended during their school trip - and whaddya know, her feline friend has come to find her in its hour of need. Meanwhile, there are career path surveys to fill in ('If I do something where I can live on my own, I can keep a pet' - good thinking, Sakaki), while every cat in the neighbourhood seems to be following Kamineko's example in wanting to take a bite out of Sakaki - until Mayaa turns up to protect her...



25 - Onwards, Entrance Exams!

College entrance exams are approaching fast, and the only person who doesn't seem to be worried about them is Tomo - she's more concerned about testing Chiyo-chan and Osaka with trick questions. Osaka's decided she wants to be a teacher - it was Chiyo's idea, and Yukari-sensei isn't at all happy at the idea - surely Chiyo's not suggesting teachers are stupid? A trip to the local shrine is called for over New Year, just to make sure the omens are good for the entrance exams (but for carefree Tomo, it's bad news) before getting down to the serious business of studying...



26 - Graduation Ceremony

It's Graduation day for the girls - the last time they'll be at school together. Osaka's come prepared with her box of high-class tissues (just for her hay-fever, honest..). Once the ceremonies are out of the way, Tomo's gotten over the fact that she hasn't won any awards, and Yukari-sensei's finished torturing her students for one last time, it's time for the goodbyes to the school, and Chiyo's arranged one last outing with the gang - to the theme park, since Yomi missed it last time. All that's left is for Yomi to find out if she's passed her entrance

exam...



Azumanga Daioh Mini-Movie

It's exam results day - and as usual, Chiyo-chan's got top marks, Is there anything the child genius can't do? Well yes, there is - tongue twisters. Meanwhile, Osaka's obsessing over Chiyo's pigtails - she just can't resist the urge to pull them off - while Kaorin's obsessing over Sakaki as usual. The thing with Chiyo's pigtails is that they're detachable and seem to have a life of their own - or is that just in Osaka's daydreams..?





The mini-movie looks absolutely stunning - talk about your lavish animation. I'm glad I saved it to last, or the remaining TV episodes just wouldn't have been the same. The humour in the movie is no different, though.

Nice touches: the whole Mayaa episode, and Chiyo-chan's floods of tears at the graduation ceremony - been there, seen that (I'm a guy - I didn't do the tears myself), and it brought back some highschool memories to me. Kamineko stayed evil until the end - it wouldn't have been right if he went all soft on us.

While there's a certain whistful feel to these episodes - all the girls know that 'the end is near' in a way - they're still great fun to watch as they comic element is still there, just in a slightly different way. This was my second time through **Azumanga Daioh**, and I can safely say it didn't lose any of its appeal - there's definitely replay value here. One of the funniest recent shows - while other series have tried to catch the same feel, none of them quite have, and that makes this series highly recommended.

Azumanga Daioh #6: Graduation!

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