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Haha o kowazuya

A Mother Should Be Loved

Shochiku Kamata studio. Story: Syutaro Komiya, adapted by Kogo Noda. Script: Tadao Ikeda. Cinematography: Isamu Aoki. Cast: Iwata Yukichi (Mr Kajiwara), Mitsuko Yoshikawa (*Chieko*), Den Ohikata (*Sadao*), Seiichi Kato (*Sadao as child*), Hideo Mitsui (*Kosaku*), Shusei Nomura (*Kosaku as child*), Okazaki (*Shinyo Nara*), Kyoko Mitsukawa (*Kazuko*), Chishu Ryu (*Hattori*), Yumeko Aizome (*Mitsuko*), Choko Iida (*a maid*). 9 reels, 2,559 meters. Surviving prints: 71 min. Released 11 May 1934. Script in existence; no negative known to exist; surviving prints lack reels 1 and 9.

At breakfast the Kajiwara family plans an outing, but while the two boys are in school, the father collapses and dies at his office. Eight years later, the college student Sadao learns that he is actually the son of his father's first wife. He refuses to be consoled by his stepmother Chieko's assurance that she has kept him ignorant of his origins in order to make him feel a part of the family. Chieko is reluctant to discipline Sadao as severely as she does her natural son Kosaku, which causes Kosaku to feel resentful and Sadao to feel privileged. Sadao takes refuge in a Yokohama brothel with Mitsuko, but he quarrels with her. He returns home and provokes a fight in order to bring Chieko and Kosaku closer together. Chieko reveals the secret of Sadao's parentage to Kosaku, who now feels guilty for having misunderstood his brother. Chieko leaves the brothel and he rebuffs her, but the maid reproaches Sadao for his selfishness: 'A mother should be loved.' Sadao returns home and asks his father's forgiveness. All are reconciled. Three years later the family moves to a new suburban house.

The loss of the first and last reels of *A Mother Should Be Loved* damages it in many ways. For the sake of causal continuity we need to see the Kajiwara family at breakfast, presided over by the kindly father, so as to sense his loss more fully. We also require a stronger sense of the functions of Sadao's rowing and the fate of the prostitute Mitsuko. It would be good to know why the plot, uniquely in Ozu's work, inserts a three-year time gap into the dialogue. At the level of motifs, the boys' playing in the family car after their father's death would take on full meaning only if we recognized that their father had done the same thing before he drove to his office and his death. Similarly, we would have concluded on the mother unpacking in her new house, the father's picture; this would have climaxed the photograph motif that runs through the central section. Still, even with the additional reels, it probably not have been one of Ozu's most accomplished works. Ozu's few attempts to give Sadao complex and conflicting impulses, such as his somewhat monotonous scenes. (It thereby