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# A Drifting Life

*Chuen hua mon lu*

**TAIWAN** 1996, 123 min.

**DIR** Lin Cheng-sheng

**PROD** Hsu Li-kong **SCR** Lin, Ko Su-ching **CAM** Tsai Cheng-tai **ED** Chen Po-wen  
**CAST** Lee Kang-sheng, Vicky Wei, Grace Chen, Chen Shi-huang, Wang Yu-wen,  
 Lang Jing **PRINT SOURCE** Central Motion Picture Corp.

## SKYY PRIZE NOMINEE

When Kun-cheng's young wife dies while giving birth to their second child, he knows that he has to get out of the house. It's partly that he can't face a future turning into a mirror image of his father, and partly that he needs to get away from his mother, who never had a kind word for her daughter-in-law. He sets off for the nearest small town and starts taking casual jobs in haulage and construction. Before long he's in a sexual relationship with Ah Yun, a girl as rootless as he wants to be. But he brings home money every so often, and tries to be a good father to his two children. And then his mother has a stroke. Lin Cheng-sheng's superb debut feature focuses on one rural family, but poses questions with the widest possible relevance: about the ways parents influence their children, about the ways children resist their parents, about cutting ties and mending ties. Lee Kang-sheng—star of Tsai Ming-liang's *Rebels of the Neon God* (SFIFF 1993), *Vive L'Amour* (SFIFF 1995) and *The River* (SFIFF 1997, see p. 71)—was an unlikely but brilliant choice to play Kun-cheng. His reactions in the scene in which he finally realizes what made his mother the difficult woman she is bring all the film's questions into focus—and make **A Drifting Life** the most intensely moving film of the year.

*Tony Rayns, Vancouver Film Festival*

Lin Cheng-sheng (b. Taitung, Taiwan, 1959)