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"The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice." One doesn't exactly leap out of bed at seven and knock over little old ladies at eight to be the first in line to see a new (in this country) Ozu film. One goes gradually, as to a chiropodist late in the afternoon, after the film's been running a while, perhaps in the second or third week. Ozu films don't tease you into seeing them. They're like Siamese cats: they pretend not to care and then demand complete attention. **"The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice,"** made in 1952, the year before **"Tokyo Story,"** is, in outline, a formula domestic comedy about a middle-class, middle-aged marriage going on the rocks, just as the husband's about to fly to Uruguay (Uruguay? yes) on business. In Ozu's care, the story becomes surprisingly heroic and sad, not because anything dreadful happens but because everyone seems to grow resigned with such self-awareness and little fuss. You have to get in sync with **"The Flavor of Green Tea."** Ozu shows us so many things in every frame that unless you're willing to look, you might as well forget it. Not great Ozu, but very good. In Japanese with English subtitles. |