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WOMAN OF TOKYO (Tokyo no onna), 1933, silent, 47 minutes

Screenplay: Kogo Noda and Tadao Ikeda, from a story by Ernst Schwartz.

Photography: Hideo Shigehara. Editing: Kazuo Ishihara. Art Direction: Takashi Kanasu.

Cast: Yoshiko Okada (Chikako), Ureo Egawa (Ryoichi, her younger brother), Kinuyo Tanaka (Harue, Ryoichi's girlfriend), Shinyo Nara (Kinoshita, Harue's brother).

Chikako is working at two jobs to support herself and her brother Ryoichi and to put Ryoichi through college. Ryoichi is in love with Harue, whose protective elder brother, a police officer, has learned that his department suspects that Chikako is working not as a translator, as Ryoichi thinks, but as a prostitute. He warns Harue that she should therefore not associate with Ryoichi. Distraught, Harue goes to Ryoichi to confront him with this information. He is devastated by the news and angrily berates Chikako when she finally returns home that night. She defends herself: she has worked only for his sake, sacrificing herself for his future. He storms out of their apartment into the night. The next morning he is found dead. Chikako weeps over his body: "You innocent boy, to die for such a small thing! You cowardly boy!"

Ozu's theme here is reminiscent of the "social realist" films Kenji Mizoguchi began making at about this time, such as Taki no Shiraito, The Water Magician (1933), The Downfall of Osen (1934), and Osaka Elegy (1936)--all of which deal with women who sacrifice themselves totally for the betterment of young men they love. One brief diversion from his sad story--and Ozu was always fond of diversions--has Ryoichi and Harue off to the movies (of course) to see If I Had a Million, a 1932 omnibus film; the part we see is the segment directed by Ozu's favorite, Ernst Lubitsch, and featuring Charles Laughton.