

## Document Citation

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Author(s)	Audie Bock
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*Floating Clouds*

This story of repatriates whose postwar life is as aimless as the floating clouds has been Naruse's most widely acclaimed film. Although Yukiko's story has all the tragic elements of *La Dame aux camellias*, with the solitary death after being rejoined with her lover at long last, it is much more a chronicle of obsession than a star-crossed lovers' tale. Tomioka never responds equally to Yukiko's passion, and the flashbacks to wartime Dalat become a fantasy that sustains her through the sleazy amorality of postwar Japan. Her irrational attachment for this worthless man, fueled only by the memory of a happy affair, gives Yukiko a reason to live in a world that keeps telling her she is worthless. And Tomioka does have his moment of redemption at the end, a beautiful cinematic gesture of putting lipstick on Yukiko's pale face so that he too can recall Dalat. But he is as always too late, for she is already dead. One of Takamine's best performances, and a departure into the darkest human emotions for Naruse. — Audie Bock

## 1955

### FLOATING CLOUDS

(UKIGUMO), 1955, 123 min., b/w.

**Production:** Toho Company **Screenplay:** Yoko Mizuki, based on a novel by Fumiko Hayashi **Cinematography:** Masao Tamai **Art Direction:** Satoshi Chuko **Music:** Ichiro Saito

**Cast:** Hideko Takamine, Masayuki Mori, Mariko Okada, Isao Yamagata, Chieko Nakakita, Daisuke Kato, Mayuri Mokusho, Noriko Sengoku, Toju Murakami, Heihachiro Okawa, Nobuo Kaneko, Roy H. James, Akira Sera, Sadako Kimura et al.

In 1946 Yukiko Koda (Takamine) is repatriated to Japan from Southeast Asia. Instead of going home, she looks for the Forestry Service official, Tomioka (Mori), who had promised to divorce his wife and marry her when they were together in Vietnam. But it is the wife (Nakakita) who comes to the door of the Tomioka home in Tokyo. Tomioka takes Yukiko to a cheap hotel, makes love to her and explains that everything is different now that they are back in Japan. He refuses to divorce his wife. Yukiko cries and rails at him, but goes on to make her own way. She borrows bedding her ex-brother-in-law (Yamagata) had

stored in Tokyo, fends off his advances, but finally gives up looking for a secretarial job because she doesn't know English. She writes Tomioka for money, but he responds too late: she has already taken up with an American G.I. (James) who provides for her. Tomioka fails repeatedly at setting up a business, and he comes to visit Yukiko in despair. They go to a hot spring resort where they meet another Southeast Asia veteran (Kato) and his young wife, Osei (Okada). Yukiko soon realizes Tomioka has fallen in love with Osei, so she leaves him. But later she finds she is pregnant, so she searches out Tomioka again, only to find him living with Osei. She has an abortion, and while recovering sees a newspaper item about her jealous husband having murdered Osei. Yukiko again visits the grieving Tomioka, and catches him flirting with a girl from a nearby bar (Mokusho). Yukiko decides to let her ex-brother-in-law, who is now running a fake religious sect with an old Army buddy, take care of her. She robs the church to run away with Tomioka after his wife dies and he is penniless. But Tomioka is at last going back to forestry, on an isolated island in far southern Japan. Reluctantly, he takes Yukiko with him, but she dies shortly after their arrival, while he is on a field trip in the mountains.