

Document Citation

Title	Films in the collection of the Pacific Film Archive -- excerpt
Author(s)	Audie Bock
Source	<i>Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive</i>
Date	1979
Type	book excerpt
Language	English
Pagination	128-129
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Tsuma wa kokuhaku suru (A wife confesses), Masumura, Yasuzo, 1961

妻は告白する

Tsuma wa kokuhaku suru

release title: The Wife's Confession

transl title: A Wife Confesses

Daiei (Tôkyô), 10-29-61. Sd, BW, 35mm, (Daieiscope). *Language:* Japn./ Eng. subs. 91 min. 6-17-76.

Dir: Masumura Yasuzô *Sc:* Ide Masato *Orig sty:* Maruyama Masaya *Ph:* Kobayashi Setsuo *Art Dir:* Watanabe Takesaburô *Mus:* Manabe Riichirô *Sd:* Hasegawa Mitsuo *Ltg:* Watanabe Chôji *Film Ed:* Nakashizu Tatsuji *Asst Dir:* Sakiyama Chikashi *Exec Pr:* Doi Itsuo *Tech consult:* Okamura Takashi (mountaineering)

Cast: Wakao Ayako (*Takigawa Ayako, the widow*), Kawaguchi Hiroshi (*Kôda Osamu, her lover*), Negami Jun (*Defending attorney*), Takamatsu Hideo (*Prosecuting attorney*), Ozawa Eitarô (*Takigawa Ryô*), Mabuchi Haruko (*Rie*), Natsuki Akira, Tobita Kisao, Tani Ken'ichi, Osanai Jun, Sakai Saburô, Oyama Kenji, Murata Fumiko, *et al.*

Courtroom melodrama. Based on Maruyama's novel *Sônan: aru fûfu no baai* (Disaster: One Couple's Case). Lovely young widow Takigawa Ayako goes on trial for the murder of her husband, Ryô, in a mountaineering accident. If cleared, she stands to gain five million yen from his life insurance. She claims that in the fall in which her husband nearly dragged her and his student Kôda along to their deaths she had no choice but to cut the rope. The prosecution tries to show she killed Takigawa in cold blood so that she and young Kôda could enjoy the money from the policy he had urged Professor Takigawa to buy. Accused of "deserting" her husband, she insists that she simply saw there was no way to save him, and she felt no obliga-



Tsuma wa kokuhaku suru

tion to die with him.

Flashbacks tell the story of a marriage that was a mistake. Ayako, a war orphan, had married her pharmacology professor five years earlier when she was suffering from overwork and malnutrition. She tried to love the much older man, but he drank, left her frequently to go off mountain climbing, and treated her as a maid.

When she became pregnant he made her have an abortion, saying they couldn't afford a child. She asked for a divorce and he refused. Kôda began visiting their home around this time, and Ayako began to confide in him. Takigawa imagined they were having an affair and accused her of plotting his death. Inviting his wife and student on a mountaineering trip, his plan was to do harm to them.

During her difficulties with her husband, Ayako came to realize Kôda's sympathy was the only thing between her and suicide. But during the trial she confesses to a passionate love for the young man, who is engaged to his boss's daughter, Rie. Assured that Ayako did not murder Takigawa, Kôda falls in love and promises to marry her after the trial, and to wait for her if she is found guilty. He and Rie part.

After the "not guilty" verdict, Ayako and Kôda become lovers, and she takes a luxury apartment with the insurance money. When he objects to her extravagance, she confesses she could see his face in pain when she cut her husband's rope. Enraged that her act was murder, even out of love for him, Kôda abandons her and tries to go back to Rie. Rie insists Ayako's love is too precious to throw away, but too late: Ayako has committed suicide in the entryway to Kôda's office. Rie leaves Kôda calling him a murderer. AB

Criticism: Masumura's 17th film, and third in a year he made four, though unobtrusive in style has a highly accomplished air. He explores feminine psychology with unusual objectivity, creating authentic characters and tense situations reminiscent in tone and treatment of the best film noir. The ethical issue of self-sacrifice versus self-preservation, clearly spelled out in the film, remains a problem of the wife's role in Japan. Ayako is modern in making public her instinctive grab for her own happiness, traditional in her self-destruction when she fails to attain it. Well-received in Japan and credited with launching Wakao as a star for her excellent performance, and with delving into women's feelings about sex. Good supporting performance by Kawaguchi. AB

Bib. Ref:

Nihon eiga kantoku zenshû, p.370.

Nihon eiga sakuhin zenshû, p.172.

Nanbu and Satô, *Nihon eiga hyaku sen*, p.176.

Satô, *Gendai nihon eiga: dai ni shû*, p.56

Subjects: law, ethics, loyalty, self-sacrifice, women--image of, marital relationships, adultery, murder, suicide, accidents, mountaineering, giri, ninjô.

Print: Good. Subtitles satisfactory.