

Animated Film in Japan until 1919

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Western Animation and
the Beginnings of Anime

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Technical note

This book uses the modified Hepburn romanization for Japanese words, except for the names of a few cities (e.g., Tokyo), newspapers etc. where a different romanization has become common. Family name comes first in all Japanese names. I sometimes use capital letters within Japanese film titles to denote a possible break/subtitle. Japanese characters for names, titles and terms can be found in the back matter.

I am aware that the text is sometimes hard to read, not just because my English is not perfect, but also because I sometimes overload sentences. The heavy use of footnotes and references might alienate some readers, too, but it is an important part of my concept of the basics of scholarship. In references such as “[326:64]” the number before the colon leads to the entry in the bibliography, the number(s) behind, if necessary separated by a comma, stand for the page number(s). Different sources in one bracket are always separated by a semicolon and a space. References such as “[d1]” or “[v5]” refer to DVDs and films listed at the end of the bibliography.

These and other idiosyncrasies and foibles should be excused; but if you notice a factual mistake, let me know at f@litten.de.

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0 Introduction

0.1 State of research and purpose of this study

In recent years general histories of anime, or Japanese animation, have been published in several Western languages.[160; 264; 61; 206] Moreover, we have seen general histories of animation also covering, to some extent at least, the Japanese share of that history;[59; 53; 80] as well as books on anime that discuss the pre-war developments, too.[94] The latest panoramic surveys of anime history in Japanese, by contrast, date back to 2004,[272; 294] with the 1977 history of Japanese animated film by Yamaguchi Katsunori and Watanabe Yasushi[293] remaining important, even if it has to be considered out-of-date in parts. “Information” on the internet all too often turns out to be obsolete, fictitious or mistaken, regardless of language.

Until last year, however, there had not been a comprehensive study of the beginnings of (local and foreign) animated film in Japan, i.e., on roughly the first two decades of the twentieth century. (In Japanese parlance: the late Meiji and first half of the Taishō era.) While specialised, and indispensable, literature on certain aspects exists in Japanese – especially Tsugata Nobuyuki’s biography of Kitayama Seitarō,[273] Ōshiro Yoshitake’s articles on Shimokawa Ōten,[217; 218] and Matsumoto Natsuki’s account of his discovery of the oldest surviving copies of Japanese animated films and of their backgrounds[182] – these studies are not sufficient on their own, nor recent enough, to get a complete picture of animation in Japan in the 1900s and 1910s.¹

In September 2016 I therefore published a book in German aiming to cover the beginnings of Japanese animated film until 1917, as well as its foreign roots, extensively, critically and with all sources clearly stated.[173] More information has come to light since then, due to research both by Japanese colleagues and by myself, which led me to prepare this updated,

¹ Where possible I have gone back to the sources used in these and other studies. Most of the early newspaper articles (thanks mainly to the databases Kikuzo II and Yomidas) as well as many early journal articles and books referenced in this study, on the other hand, seem not to have been cited before in the secondary literature.

revised and substantially expanded English version. Notwithstanding the volume of information (and references) contained here, not all is known for certain at this stage of research – on some matters the sources available to me are silent, vague or contradictory. So, when I use words such as “apparently”, “might” or “guess” this is meant to signal different degrees of confidence or conjecture on my part. Errors and wrong assumptions in the secondary literature, including (unfortunately) the German version of this book, will be mentioned when they seem to be of some importance.

0.2 Definitions of English terms

Explicit definitions of the technical terms used are essential for proper historiography. Let us consider the word **anime** アニメ, a Japanese abbreviation of “animēshon” アニメーション, i.e., “animation”. If I define anime as “Japanese animation”, using “animation” in the sense discussed below and deliberately ignoring the problem of employing the adjective “Japanese”,² then I can call the Japanese films presented in the following chapters anime and will, in fact, be describing the beginnings of anime.

A different definition, to give only one example, is used by Matthias C. Hänselmann in his recent book on the semiotics and narratology of drawn animation:

“In this study ‘anime’ is used for a certain type of drawn animation that has been in development since the 1960s; which is usually produced in Japan; on which the production and narrative principles of commercial, serial tv drawn animation had a decisive formative influence; and which stands out due to specific aesthetic and narrative aspects as well as a typical character [Figur] treatment (standard anime character [Figur]).”[87:64f.]

A history using this definition is, of course, possible and would begin in 1963 with *Tetsuwan Atomu* (aka *Astro Boy*; Fuji TV; 1963-1966) by Tezuka

² Beginning already in the 1950s, we find Japanese animation studios producing film for foreign customers, later outsourcing work to other countries and co-producing movies and tv series with international partners. Whether, or to which degree, these products can be called “Japanese” is a matter for discussion, even if we leave aside the “Japaneseness”, or not, of content.[166]

Osamu and Mushi Production.³ In that case, however, the movies covered in this book, but also, for example, the animated movies by Tōei Dōga (Toei Animation) from 1958 until at least the mid-1960s, would not be part of the history of anime. Not just for that reason I prefer the first definition of anime as “Japanese animation”.⁴

Definitions thus do have an effect on framing a history of animated film in Japan. In this book, **animation** means the creation of an illusion of a movement which did not happen in reality in this way, through a quick succession of discrete and slightly different images. Besides as “film”, this can also be done using a flip-book or “optical toys” such as a zoetrope. Such “concrete animation”, [87:51] as it is called by Hänselmann following George Griffin – one could perhaps also call it “non-projected animation” (see below) –, did exist not just in Europe in the nineteenth century, but also in Japan; yet it is not an object of this study – without denying a priori that it might have influenced Japanese animated film. An important consequence of this definition of animation is that it excludes among other things medieval Japanese picture scrolls (“emakimono”)⁵ and later magic

³ It is interesting that Northrop Davis uses Tezuka and 1963 as the starting point for his study of the interaction of Hollywood and manga/anime. [68:10, 188ff.] As we will see, Hollywood had already influenced anime much earlier.

⁴ More on this problem can be found, for example, in [185; 72:4ff.]. I deliberately decided to keep the references to Hänselmann’s book in this edition, even though there is quite a body of literature in English trying to define animation ([85; 180; 288] are just three examples from the 2010s).

⁵ Takahata Isao, the renowned anime director, in 1999 took up a broad category of media encompassing anime (specifically defined only as those types of animation then popular in Japan, i.e., cel animation and “animated cartoons”, not “puppet anime” etc.; see below), manga (here understood mainly as story comics and four-panel comic strips, not as caricatures, for example, which had long fallen from favour by then) and much else. He defined these as telling a story over time with contour drawings, flat colours, and words added, to assert that twelfth century Japanese picture scrolls marked the beginning of an ancient Japanese tradition of “katari-e” (“narrative pictures”) [259:4f.] and that “Japanese since long ago have always loved manga-like and anime-like things and have been very good at making them”. [259:3] This, he claimed, was the “biggest reason” [259:3] why manga and anime have become so popular in Japan at the end of the twentieth century. While such statements qualify as “nihonjinron” propaganda – the idea that Japanese cultural identity has been unique and more or less immutable since time immemorial – they do not really tell us anything about the history of anime, or the

lantern shows (“utsushi-e”) from the history of anime proper (see also [87:37]), for even when the magic lantern was moved around during the show, this did not result in a quick succession of discrete images. (As we will see below this does not mean that there was no connection between magic lanterns and the early history of animated film; as was the case with graphical arts, literature and so on, all of which have been interacting with anime.) Picture slides for magic lanterns, with a few discrete images, might be regarded a borderline case, but without going into details I want to exclude them from the category of animation.

In a departure from Hänselmann’s[87:37ff.] reasoning, I define **film** in the following way for this book: film is a limited set of discrete images which, through quick succession, create the illusion of movement and are projected onto a surface or distributed as electromagnetic signals. (Film is also, of course, a physical medium.)

Like Hänselmann I see **animated film** and **live-action film** as equivalent subsets of film. They differ because live-action film reproduces recorded movements (of objects and/or the camera), whereas animated film builds up movement through individually created images (“segmenting-analytical” vs “compositing-synthetic”[87:41]). To cater to the specific phenomena of the era under discussion, I will also use the term **animated movie** specifically for the subset of animated film primarily having been produced for being shown in cinemas for entertainment purposes.⁶

A distinction within animated film can be made according to the “pre-filmic” source material[87:46]: **picture animation**⁷ uses two-dimensional representational source material (“iconic”), also when creating a three-dimensional impression, as in computer animation. **Object animation**, on the other hand, employs real, three-dimensional objects (“indexical”), which are recorded frame by frame with slightly changed form and/or position.

reason they became popular, because his “definition” of anime is much too vague, except where it already contains what he wants to “prove”. For other criticism see also [88:49ff.]

⁶ Please note: the terminology used here is not meant to be normative beyond this book.

⁷ Hänselmann uses the German term “Bildanimation”, which could also be translated as “image animation”.

An example of the latter would be Arthur Melbourne-Cooper's films with matches, such as *Matches: An appeal*, which, if they actually date back to 1899,[70:11ff,267ff.] would be some of the earliest animated films. It is, of course, possible to use puppets in object animation (e.g., "claymation"), yet "puppet film" as made, for example, by the "Augsburger Puppenkiste", a well-known German marionette troupe, belongs to live-action film, not object animation, because the puppets' movement is recorded.

Picture animation can be made with several techniques (cf. [87:52ff.]), of which **paper animation**, **chalk animation** and **cutout animation**, including **silhouette** or **shadow animation**, are relevant in the context of this study. To put it briefly, paper animation means drawing a new picture for every change; in chalk animation the pictures are drawn on a blackboard and altered where necessary. For cutout animation the characters are cut from paper or thin cardboard; parts to be moved, such as arms and legs, can be attached with joints; and the characters are put before a usually drawn background. The same happens with silhouette animation, only that the lighting comes from below, not above as in normal cutout animation.⁸ While Hänselmann treats **picture-animated film** ("Bildanimationsfilm" in German, which means film using picture animation) and **drawn-animated film** as equivalent,[87:47] I would argue that only paper animation, cel animation (which uses celluloid sheets instead of paper) and similar techniques make up drawn animated film, whereas cutout animation is a (partly) separate technique and thus a separate subset of picture-animated film.

Picture animation can, however, also be subdivided according to other criteria: **photographic** and **non-photographic** methods.[87:48ff.] The former use photographic methods to record the individual pictures; historically this encompasses most of animated film. The non-photographic methods include the concrete animation mentioned above as well as **non-photographic picture animation**.⁹ Among the latter are the earliest ex-

⁸ It is also possible to film black cutout characters in front of a light background. Since it can be difficult to tell them apart, this technique is subsumed under silhouette animation.

⁹ Hänselmann uses the term "pseudo-filmic" which I am not happy with because he, too, does not include photography as part of the definition of film.[87:37ff,49]

amples of animated film in general, according to the definitions given above: the picture strips for Charles-Émile Reynaud's "praxinoscope à projection" from 1880; ¹⁰ [174:109; 51:46] and his hand-painted picture-animated movies ("pantomimes lumineuses") such as *Pauvre Pierrot* (1892; [v26]), consisting of several hundred images and lasting up to 15 minutes, for his better known "Théâtre optique", patented in 1888 and presented between 1892 and 1900 at the Musée Grévin in Paris. [64:17; 202:8ff.] Animated film thus pre-dates the invention of "cinema" in the mid-1890s. Animation, of course, goes back at least to the development of the phenakistoscope in the early 1830s (e.g., [167]).

Direct animation, as made by Norman McLaren, for example, is another subset of non-photographic picture animation. Either the film emulsion is scratched off, or blanc film is used directly. One kind of direct animation Hänselmann does not mention is what I call **printed animation**, which we will meet in chapter 1. In this context it should be noted that **film strip** is used in this study only for very short films (less than 30 seconds).

Finally, we have to look at a vexing case: **hybrid film**. Generally speaking, this denotes film which is recognizably made up of live-action and animated film.¹¹ But should a film such as Howard Hawks' *El Dorado* (Paramount; 1966) be called hybrid, just because there is one very brief instance of effect animation when "Mississippi" fires his shotgun? And if we do so, what do we gain? (Cf. [169; 58])

Distinguishing between **special effects** ("Filmtrick" in German), such as **stop-camera** and **stop-motion**, and object animation also presents difficulties as the result might be a hybrid film or a **trick film**, with the latter being understood as a subset of live-action film. This matters for the

¹⁰ One might object that the difference between the glass slides used for the magic lantern (less than 10 images, with the slide being moved directly by hand from side to side) and the picture strips for the praxinoscope à projection (12 images, [51:83f.] spun using a crank) is not that large to exclude only the former from being animation. Yet I would argue that the praxinoscope à projection was the first invention to combine animation and projection.

¹¹ In other studies the term describes genre mixtures, such as horror comedy. One might also use it for films combining different animation techniques.

classification of early movies such as those covered in chapter 2. While I will use the term “hybrid film” in this study from time to time, I will also try to explain each case.

0.3 Explanation of Japanese terms

The term “anime” has already been defined above, yet I did not mention that it came up quite late in Japan. According to a recent publication by anime historian Tsugata Nobuyuki, who does not give examples or sources, the word appeared in some movie journals since the Shōwa 30s (1955-1964), whereas newspapers began to print it only in the Shōwa 50s (1975-1984).[277:13] The earliest example I happened upon is a journal article by film critic Mori Takuya published in December 1961¹² where he uses “anime” interchangeably with the then more common words “dōga” (“moving pictures”), “manga eiga” (“manga film”, see below) and simply “manga”,¹³ but also with “animēshon”.^[191] The latter seems to have become more broadly known in Japan at that time thanks to the proliferation not only of animated movies, but also of animated tv commercials and “experimental” (non-commercial) animated film since the late 1950s (e.g., [317; 177]). In the big Japanese newspapers the word “anime” seems to have appeared in 1969 for the first time,^[318; 48] at least in part due to Mushi Production’s adult animated movie *Sen’ya ichiya monogatari* (“Thousand and one night”; directed by Yamamoto Eiichi; Nippon Herald; 1969) which was marketed as the first “Animerama” (a portmanteau word made up from “animation”, “cinerama” and “drama”)[293:168].¹⁴

¹² In an earlier publication, Tsugata also mentions an article by Mori Takuya, but from September 1962.[275:40]

¹³ In the following I will always add a specification, such as “caricature” or “comic strip”, when “manga” refers to a printed work.

¹⁴ Sugii Gisaburō, who started his career as an animator at Tōei Dōga in 1958, claims that Tezuka Osamu coined the word “anime” to distinguish the limited animation of his *Tetsuwan Atomu* tv series from the animation style used by Walt Disney and by Tōei Dōga.[255:12] But as we have seen the word was already known, at least among Japanese film experts, before *Tetsuwan Atomu* had even been planned. Moreover, Yokoyama Ryūichi’s company Otogi Pro had used limited animation for a tv series with very short

Yet how was anime called in Japan before the word existed?¹⁵ Apparently the most wide-spread term for animated movies in the 1910s was **dekobō shingachō**, also in variants such as “dekobō no shingachō”, “dekobō gachō”,¹⁶ “chamebō gachō”, etc.¹⁷ Basically this can be translated as “Rascal’s [dekobō or chamebō] new [shin] picture album [gachō]”. (According to Matsumoto Natsuki the addition of “shin” was more a convention than actually meaning “new”. [183:16.8.2017]) Some anime historians have claimed that the character “Fantoche” in French animated movies created by Émile Cohl had been interpreted in Japan as a boy (“bō” or “bōzu”) with a protruding forehead (“deko” means protruding or convex, as the Japanese character shows: 凸), so Cohl’s movies were called “dekobō shingachō” and this spread to other animated movies. [273:57; 293:8] Yet not all of Cohl’s films were shown with this title or subtitle (see ch. 2.2), although the currently known first instance of “dekobō” appearing in a film title – in 1911 [284] – is, in fact, a hybrid film (live action and picture animation) by Cohl (see ch. 2.1).¹⁸

episodes since May 1961 (*History Calendar*); [296:115] and already in the title of his article in December 1961 Mori referred to an animated movie produced by Otogi Pro. [191:146] On the other hand, since Tezuka had been the producer, and much more, of *Sen’ya ichi’ya monogatari*, he was undoubtedly involved in popularising the word. More research on the spread of the words “anime” and “animēshon” is, however, necessary.

¹⁵ The following is meant for rough orientation; research into the details is still sparse.

¹⁶ At least one American animated movie, *Mr. Fuller Pep* by F. M. Follett, was apparently screened in early September 1916 simply under the title *Dekobō gachō*. [118:118] Of course, *Mr. Fuller Pep*, ... was a movie series, so we do not know which of the three movies originally released in May 1916 in the US [192:550] was shown in Japan.

¹⁷ The “18fps” website by Y. Kunikawa lists quite a lot of Japanese film titles beginning with “Dekobō ...”, together with their original titles. [162] It does not give sources, though.

¹⁸ Yoshiyama Kyokkō, a film critic, wrote in 1933 that “manga” produced by the French film company Gaumont, for whom Cohl had created animated movies, had been screened by Fukuhōdō (see chapters 2.1 and 3.4) since 1910 under the series title “Dekobō shingachō” and had thus been responsible for the spread of words such as “dekobō manga”. [326:63] We will see in chapter 2, however, that his dates are not always reliable. In addition, there is perhaps a slight chance that the word “dekobō” in connection with film originated from the “Bébé” (in Japanese “Bobī”) movie series by Louis Feuillade for Gaumont, starring the boy actor René Dary and being screened in

It is nonetheless much more likely that the term came from a highly popular manga (in this case, a comic strip) by Kitazawa Rakuten (see ch. 3.1), which had been published since 1902 in different periodicals and had shown at first the pranks played only by its main character “Dekobō”, later also, or only, those of his friend “Chamebō”. [107:41,68,121f.] Both characters became well-known and were marketed extensively, so their names became synonymous with rascal or prankster. [244:113] Kitazawa had apparently modelled them on the American newspaper comic strip *The Yellow Kid* by Richard F. Outcault. [244:112]



Ill. 1: A manga by Kitazawa Rakuten titled *Itazura* (“Prank”) and showing Chame (1905)

Especially in the second half of the 1910s “dekobō” appeared as part of titles and as a generic term for various kinds of picture-animated films (see ch. 2).¹⁹

Japan by Fukuhōdō since 1909(?) – the start of several foreign series with child actors becoming popular in Japan. [99:385] A book called *Bobi's diary*, published in 1912, was explicitly tied to the “Bobi” known from the movies and authored by “Dekobō”. [71]

¹⁹ However, Terasaki Kōgyō defines the term “dekobō shingachō” in 1916 as “made with [drawn] lines”, referring to “common knowledge”. He also writes that it was “five

“Chamebō ...” and variants were apparently in use mainly in 1917; perhaps it was just an attempt to market the same film with a different title (see ch. 4). Neither of these terms seems to have been common for animated film beyond the early 1920s.²⁰

Yet quite a lot of other Japanese terms for animated film seem to have been current at least in the second half of the 1910s. On a single page of film listings in the July 1917 issue of *Katsudō shashin zasshi* (“Film journal”) we find “manga”, “manga torikku” and “senga”. [134:77] *The Kinema Record*, another film journal of the time, labelled animated movies in its listings, and sometimes in its descriptions, as “to” for “torikku” (“trick”)(e.g., [260:240]). However, this presumably denoted a broader category which included not just animated film, but also “trick film” as a subset of live-action film, which was called **majutsu eiga** (“magic film”) in Japanese.²¹

In combination with “kigeki” (“comedy”), but also separately, the term **senga** (“line picture”) had been in use since 1916; [249:29f.] later it would become one of the standard terms for animated film. Besides “manga torikku” we also find “senga torikku” in 1917. [150:140; 153:26]

In 2012 Nishimura Tomohiro wrote that before World War II both the term and the concept of “animation” had been unknown in Japan. [205:171]²² Yet we find two examples in 1916 and 1917 which call this assertion into question: In 1916, Shōfūsei (see ch. 2.4) used a combination

or six years ago” that he first saw “dekobō shingachō”, but that the quality now (1916) was much better. [265:100]

²⁰ Four animated films with titles beginning with *Chamebō ...* and made or distributed by Akume Shōkai (see ch. 3.2) in the 1920s are listed in a 1930 film catalogue. [189:56] Note that the 1931 movie *Chameko no ichinichi* (“Chameko’s day”; directed by Nishikura Kiyōji; seven minutes; Kyōryoku Eigasha; [d2]) is about a girl. [293:206]

²¹ At least the author calling himself Shōfūsei was in 1916 aware of a difference between animated and trick film. [249:30] In 1927 Shōji Tamaichi devoted one chapter to manga/senga and a different one to “trick”. [250:183ff., 241ff.] On the other hand, Kaeriyama Norimasa in 1921 covered dekobō gachō a.k.a. senga as part of “stop picture” trick [111:199f.] and Ishimaki Yoshio in 1925 saw animated film as an extension of trick film. [99:31]

²² As far as the term is concerned, Nishimura was a bit more cautious in the Japanese text of his article. [205:172]

of Sino-Japanese characters (**kanji**) which would normally be read “katsudō seru senga” (“line pictures being put into motion”), but added that they should be read as “animated cartoon”. [249:28] His colleague Rakuyōsei did the same in 1917 when writing kanji that would normally be pronounced “katsudō manga” (“motion manga”),²³ while also reading them as “animated cartoon”. [222:32] And at least in 1926 Kōuchi Jun’ichi (see ch. 3.3) called his film studio in English “SK [for Sumikazu] Animated Cartoon Studio”. [v6]

Shōfūsei also used the term **manga** separately for a low-quality form of “senga kigeki”; only the context, not the kanji, shows that he is writing about film, not printed manga. [249:31] One of the two examples he gives, concerning the final part of American Universal Studio’s weekly newsreels, likely refers to cartoons on current events by Henry “Hy” Mayer, which “occasionally” concluded “Universal Animated Weekly”, one of two weekly newsreels then produced by Carl Laemmle’s Universal. [257:Appellants’ Brief 37]²⁴ Yoshiyama Kyokkō also mentions satirical “manga” about current topics at the end of Universal’s weekly newsreels for two years during the First World War, made by one “Haimēyā”, [326:63] obviously Hy Mayer. It is, however, difficult to say whether Mayer’s cartoons should, in fact, be classified as animation, or rather as hybrids [165:227] or just “lightning sketches”, as the few available works of his on the internet would indicate (e.g., [v24]). Shōfūsei’s second example, a reference to “Samuelson” (did he mean the British film producer G. B. Samuelson?), [249:31] remains unexplained. In 1927 Shōji Tamaichi looked back to Pathé news reels about ten years earlier, which concluded with very simple satirical “senga” on European and American events. [250:184]

Already in early 1915, a description of the film *Kaikēan* (“The agreeable fellow”) contains the words “jiji manga” (“current-events manga”), which usually denotes a printed manga (caricature) critical of society. According to this description, the film should have pretty originally reckoned with the

²³ An imported “katsudō manga” was screened at a Tokyo cinema in January 1917. [5]

²⁴ W. R. Hearst’s “International Film Service” also produced animated cartoons for Hearst’s weekly news reel. Leonard Maltin describes these “living comic strips” as “primitive”. [178:17]

war;[302] it just may have been one of the two “Topical War Cartoons” made by Hy Mayer in 1914,[53:41] or one of the war propaganda movies by British “lightning sketchers” such as Harry Furniss or Lancelot Speed. [67:225ff.] (See also ch. 2.3.)

The animated movie *Professor Wiseguy’s Trip to the Moon* (Joseph Cammer; Powers; 1916) was called *Dekobō shingachō Tsukisekai ryokō no maki* (“Dekobō shingachō – Journey to the world of the moon”) in Japan on its release on 9 September 1916²⁵ and described as a “manga no gachō” (“manga picture album”).[118:118] In 1917/18 “Nihon manga” (“Japanese manga”) did refer to local animated movies.[285; 41]

In the 1920s and 1930s, the terms “manga (eiga)” and “senga (eiga)” or “sen’eiga” seem to have been the most common.²⁶ At the beginning of the twentieth century **eiga** had been the Japanese word for magic lantern slides; only later was it used in the sense of “film”. For example, an advertisement for “gentō eiga” (“projection images for a magic lantern”) in the *Asahi Shimbun* (“shinbun”, pronounced “shimbun”, means “newspaper”) edition of 17 February 1904 still refers to slides,[14] whereas an article in the same paper on 9 February 1912 uses “eiga” in the modern sense of “film”. [21]²⁷ Another article in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* in September 1917 writes “eiga” with the usual kanji, but adds the reading **firumu**,[311] i.e. “film”, a word that had been used more commonly since 1908 (e.g., [18; 301]; see also [326:169]), although **katsudō shashin** (“motion picture” or “moving pictures”) had an even longer pedigree, going back to February, and more widely March, 1897²⁸. [326:8; 297; 13; 267]

²⁵ The movie originally had been released in the US on 15 June 1916, together with *Little Journeys in Scenic Japan* (Powers), “an educational travel novelty”. [195]

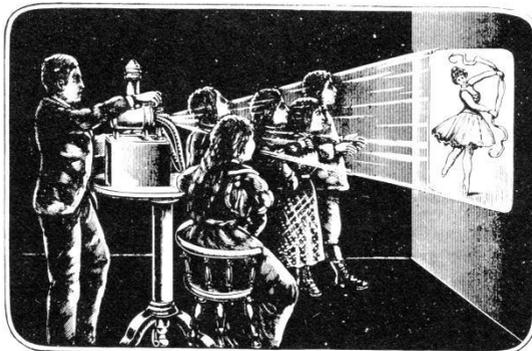
²⁶ There seems to have been a tendency to use “manga” for entertainment films and “senga” for educational and advertising films, but this still needs confirmation.

²⁷ Although that article covers film genres popular with children, it contains no term pertaining specifically to animated film.

²⁸ Film and film apparatus had only been introduced in Japan via Thomas A. Edison’s “Kinetoscope” in Kobe in November 1896 and the Lumière brothers’ “cinématographe” in Osaka in February 1897. [320:44]

Toy films (“gangu eiga” or “omocha eiga” in Japanese), at the time also called “katei firumu” (“home film”), are short films between 10m and 35m in length, therefore longer than film strips (see above), which were made, either specifically for home projectors (animated film), or cut, and sometimes assembled anew, from longer movies (animated or live-action film) after their run in cinemas. There were several producers/retailers such as “King” or “Haguruma”²⁹ (“cogwheel”), whose names and logos can usually be seen at the beginning, sometimes even on every frame as protection against copying.[220; 256:268ff.; 268:11f.; 182:127f.] All of the earliest Japanese animated movies still extant only survived as such toy films (see chapters 4 and 5).

²⁹ The accompanying company name “Y.N.& Co.” has only recently been discovered by Fukushima Kanako to come from the name of its owner Nakamura Yoshiaki.[183:9.8.2017]



Interessante
Neuheit!

Interessante
Neuheit!

Kinematograph

in Verbindung mit einer Laterna Magica.

Apparat zur
Darstellung der

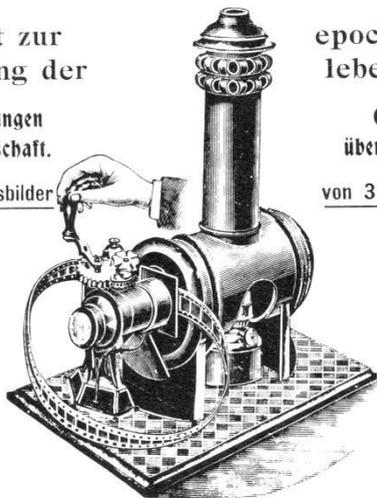
Geeignet zu Schausstellungen
in der Familie und Gesellschaft.

Als Laterna magica für Glasbilder

epochemachenden
lebenden Bilder.

Originell und von
überraschender Wirkung.

von 3 1/2 cm Breite verwendbar.



No. 8318

8318 Kinematograph incl. 8 interessanten Bilderstreifen (Films) complet per Stück fl. 5.50
Films extra, fortwährend Neuheiten > > > — .40

Ill. 2: Bing Kinematograph 1898

1 Printed animation in Germany and Japan

1.1 Early German kinematographs and printed animation

In 1866 the brothers Ignaz and Adolf Bing in Nuremberg, Bavaria, founded a wholesaler mainly for metal kitchen ware and tools.[164:4] In 1879 they established the company “Gebrüder Bing” (“Bing Brothers”, later also called “Gebr. Bing” for some time) and began producing such metal wares, as well as kitchen ware for doll’s houses, themselves.[164:5] The 1880s saw diversification into other types of metal toys – miniature trains and steam engines, for example – and into optical toys such as magic lanterns.[164:5] (Apparently Bing was also the first to copy Reynaud’s praxinoscope.[174:104])

Company growth was remarkable, from 200 employees in 1882 to more than 3,000 in 1914.[164:5,15] One of the reasons can be found in the export strategy of Bing, which, besides Europa, took in the Americas, the British colonies, and South Africa.[164:7ff.]

Likely invented already in 1897,[164:13] Bing offered in 1898 a “Kinematograph in Verbindung mit einer Laterna Magica” (“cinematograph in connection with a magic lantern”).[106:77f.] This invention was also shown at the Leipzig toy fair the same year.[54:71] Until the early 1930s this was “essentially a magic lantern with a good light source” and a “cinema-mechanism” called “Stativ”. [221:170] The main parts of such a Stativ were the mechanism for moving the film (crank, spools, Maltese cross, etc.) and a shutter to counter the flickering of the projected images.[221:170] Such a kinematograph could show 35mm celluloid film with standard (Edison) perforation, just like the one used for cinemas.³⁰

Nuremberg being at the time a world-renowned centre for toys, with companies and subcontractors clustering there, it does not come as a surprise that very soon Bing’s competitors began to produce such toy kine-

³⁰ A device such as Watson’s Motorgraph, which did not yet integrate magic lantern and film projector, may have preceded such kinematographs.[90:11] In fact, Bing’s 1898 catalogue already refers to “other shapes and systems on the market”. [106:64]

matographs. After all, they, too, had the necessary knowledge and technical abilities. Around 1900 the biggest Nuremberg companies produced more than 50,000 magic lanterns a year;[238:41] besides Bing there were, for example, the companies of Ernst Plank and of Georges Carette.³¹

Yet, as was the case with magic lanterns, these companies did not just produce the hardware, they also offered the “software” in the form of slides, and now short films or film strips. If we look at a price list/catalogue from 1902 by Ernst Plank[52:1037f.] and use the explanations contained in his grandson’s³² doctoral thesis on the Nuremberg toy industry,[221:174f.] we learn that these “children’s films” came in three types:

- “Extra-Filmsbilder – in Farben ausgeführt” (“extra film pictures – done in colours”)[52:1037]:³³ These were (very short) animated film strips, with colour images printed on blanc film by chromolithography.³⁴ I call this **printed animation**. The lithograph images were made by artists or traced from live-action film in a manner reminiscent of the later rotoscoping.[221:174; 90:11] And chromolithography was a process which the Nuremberg toy producers knew well;³⁵ especially Carette was famous for this.[56]

While Yves Rifaux’s data, as we will see, are not always reliable,³⁶ we can be certain from the entries in Plank’s price list that such colour animation films existed by 1902 at the latest and, likely, in black-and-white al-

³¹ Only Paris was a credible contender in the field of toys, especially “modern” ones, at that time.[238:41] At least one French company, Lapierre, seems to have begun producing toy kinematographs at the very end of the 1890s.[224:60; 60]

³² The grandson, born in 1898, was also called Ernst Plank.

³³ In Bing’s 1902 catalogue they were simply called “Farbige Filmsstreifen” (“coloured film strips”).[81:177]

³⁴ Chromolithography had also been used for the cardboard strips for Reynaud’s praxinoscope.[51:82]

³⁵ Whereas glass slides for high-grade magic lanterns were coloured by hand around 1900, the “cheaper lanterns” were sold with “pictures printed on glass” using the “technically highly developed Nuremberg chromolithography”. [238:40] These would likely be the “transfer slides” described by Stephen Herbert.[91:20]

³⁶ Rifaux’s 1990 booklet[224] still provides an important description of these animated films. Robinson[226] mostly followed him without correcting or adding information.

ready in 1899.[224:60]³⁷ By joining the beginning and the end of a film strip together, it could be shown “endlessly” (**loop film**), also because the first and the last frame of such a loop film usually were similar and thus allowed the action to be seamlessly repeated.³⁸ A German name for such film strips, “Endlosfilm” (“film without an end”), is mirrored in a contemporary Japanese name for them which I only recently discovered: “mushū firumu”³⁹ (“film without an end”).[84:349]

Rifaux argues that the reason printed animation was taken up by the toy manufacturers was the scarcity and high price of live-action film, especially in the beginning.[224:61] Yet, this kind of animation was also an easy way to provide moving colour images – certainly an important reason for companies marketing to children and their parents.⁴⁰

- “Extra-Films mit photographischen Aufnahmen” (“extra films with photographic recordings”)[52:1038]: these were mass reproduced (photographic) monochrome live-action films for children – “wonderfully beautiful in every respect”[52:1038] – made for/by the toy companies using a “special process” developed in or near Nuremberg.[221:174f.]
- “Original-Films – Photographische Aufnahmen in Längen von ca. 5, 7, 10, 15, 20 und 25 Meter” (“original films – photographic recordings in lengths of ca. 5, 7, 10, 15, 20 and 25 meters”)[52:1038]: these were sequences of theatrically-released movies (similar to some of the Japanese toy films mentioned above). Plank’s catalogue also points out that “all existing movies” could be procured at “original prices”, [52:1038], so the kinematographs really could be called home cinemas.

³⁷ Bing’s catalogue of 1898 and its supplements from 1899 to 1901 do not specify what kind of “interesting picture strips (films)” were enclosed with the kinematographs,[106:77,161] but printed animation would be the likeliest candidate. The English translation of the 1898 entry calls the kinematograph a “projecting apparatus of animated views”, [106:64,78] whereas the literal translation of the German description would be “apparatus for the production of living pictures”. [106:63]

³⁸ For a simulation combining several loop films of the time, see [v23].

³⁹ Normally that term would probably be read “mushū makishashin”, but the author wants “makishashin” (“reel pictures”) to be pronounced as “firumu”. [84:25]

⁴⁰ In France, too, such animated film strips seem to have been produced; see [179:249], but note that the date given for the Plank kinematograph on the same page is wrong.

According to Plank's 1902 catalogue, the 18 "Extra-Filmsbilder", i.e., the printed-animated films, had titles like *Schlittschuhläufer* ("Ice-skater"), *Cigarrenraucher* ("Cigar-smoking man") or *Turnunterricht in der Mädchenschule* ("Gymnastic lessons in a girls' school") and were sold in three sets of six films each.[52:1037] Several models of kinematograph were sold together with the film strips of series I.[52:1037] The conventionally filmed "Extra-Films" were sold or added individually; among them is one, no. 35 *Der Weintrinker* ("The wine-drinking man"), which we will encounter later.[52:1038]

Regrettably, no such early catalogue of Carette's products has been available to me.⁴¹ The Frenchman Georges Carette had begun producing toys as a sub-contractor of Bing's in 1886, but had soon become one of the big players in the Nuremberg toy industry.[92:38] A local advertisement from 1899 by Carette does not yet show a kinematograph,[234] but he should have been starting soon with its production.[93:84f.]⁴² At the latest in 1911 – and likely already in the first years of the twentieth century – Carette offered not just kinematographs, but also "Extra-Sets of coloured Films of excellent cinematographic effect", with lengths varying between 20 and more than 150 frames per film.[168:144] Among the titles listed in 1911 are *Leap Frog* and *A Cow Crossing the Road*. [168:144]

Toys made in Nuremberg, not least those by Carette who since 1904 supplied the British company Bassett-Lowke,[234] were sold, and valued, all over the world. A Japanese newspaper, for example, wrote in 1910 that Germany was the home of high-quality toys.[20] Yet the compliment was not returned: in his dissertation Plank called Japanese toys as being of the "very lowest quality".[221:40] Japanese companies could not produce high-quality optical toys made from metal, so it is not surprising to find German

⁴¹ The reprint of the 1911 English catalogue of Carette's also includes some parts of a 1905 catalogue, but nothing on optical toys.[168]

⁴² The earliest kinematographs by Carette ran the film horizontally in front of the lens, just like the earliest ones made by Bing (see p. 14) and Plank. (Cf. [69].) All three companies seem to have changed this to a vertical mechanism quite soon, so we can assume that production and technical changes among them would have been nearly in lockstep.

toy kinematographs and loop films there, even though Japan was not one of the main export markets for Nuremberg companies.⁴³

1.2 Carette in Japan

In January 2005 Matsumoto Natsuki, a Japanese collector and academic lecturer on visual culture, bought three old film projectors, eleven 35mm loop films and thirteen glass slides for magic lanterns from a second-hand dealer who had obtained all of them from one wealthy household in Kyoto that would now be called an “early adopter” of all things related to film. One of the projectors was a kinematograph manufactured by Georges Carette in Nuremberg,⁴⁴ which came in a box⁴⁵ that originally had also contained at least some of the film strips and glass slides.[182:98ff.] It seems possible to me that it had not been imported directly from Germany, but via Bassett-Lowke in Britain (see above), thus arriving in Japan after 1904.



Ill. 3: Box containing the Carette kinematograph bought by Matsumoto Natsuki in 2005

⁴³ Japan is not mentioned in studies of the Nuremberg toy producers from the 1920s.[221; 164]

⁴⁴ At first Matsumoto had identified this as a French product,[184:89] but on re-inspection in 2011 understood that it was a German product by Carette.[182:125]

⁴⁵ A well-preserved example can be seen at [69].

It should be noted here that Carette had never renounced his French citizenship and had to leave his factory in Nuremberg at the outbreak of World War I.[54:82] Since toy exports from Germany also ended at that time,[164:14] and German optical products vanished from Japan's shops,[79:36,40] we can assume quite confidently that this kinematograph and the box including the film strips and slides came to Japan no later than 1914.

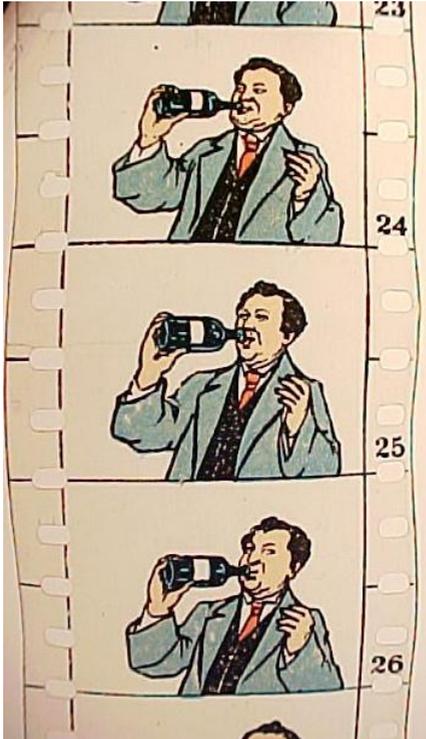
Eleven of the thirteen glass slides were colour-lithographed and presumably belonged to a set of a dozen slides accompanying the Carette kinematograph. The other two slides were hand-coloured and apparently belonged to another magic lantern.[182:100f.]

Of most interest here are, of course, the eleven 35mm film strips: seven of them were imported or Japanese live-action films (with lengths between 31 and 75 frames), three were imported coloured animated films (i.e., printed animation) and one apparently a Japanese printed-animated film.[184:92] One of the Western animated film strips (no. 10 in [184:92]) with 46 frames – also shown in a catalogue of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography – was identified by Matsumoto as *Der Weintrinker* by Ernst Plank,[184:92,103; 182:101f.] based on Rifaux' data.[224:39,49]

However, as mentioned before, *Der Weintrinker* was a live-action film strip, not an animated film. (Also, some more identifications made by Rifaux are wrong or in doubt.[172:12]) Thanks to Darren Nemeth, an American collector whose copy of this strip carries the stamped trademark “G.C.&C[^o].N.” (Georges Carette & Co. Nürnberg), it was possible to identify it as indeed a Carette product, called *A Good Drop* in the English Carette catalogue of 1911 (see next page).[168:144 no. 329/11CB] And according to Plank[221:174] these lithographs were usually owned by the toy manufacturer; it can therefore be assumed that a certain film strip was not offered by more than one company.

Another animated film strip in the box (no. 4 in [184:92]; 61 frames) matches the film strip *Magician* in the same set sold by Carette both by topic and by the number of frames.[168:144 no. 329/11CB] The third Western

animated film (no. 9 in [184:92]; 46 frames) was very likely *Gymnastic* in Carette's set no. 329/23A.[168:144]⁴⁶



Ill. 4: *A Good Drop*
by Carette

Thanks to their catalogues we know that colour animated film strips (loop films) were sold by Plank and Bing since 1902 at the latest.[52:1037; 81:177] In the case of Carette's we can only be certain that they were marketed since 1911. Yet it is extremely likely that they had already been on the market at roughly the same time as Plank's and Bing's – and that they, too, were usually enclosed with every kinematograph sold[81:174; 221:174] and thus shipped around the world – as copies in the US, France, the Netherlands, and Japan prove.

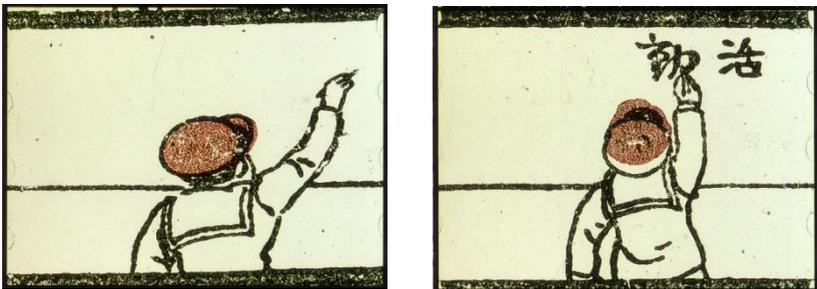
⁴⁶ Simulated animations of these three film strips can be seen in [v14; v12; v13].

1.3 *Katsudō shashin*

Like *A Good Drop* and other film strips by Carette, Bing or Plank, *Katsudō shashin*, too, was originally a 35mm loop film made of celluloid with Edison perforation – by now, however, its width has shrunk to 33,5mm. In contrast with *A Good Drop*, though, we do not know its “official” title: *Katsudō shashin* or “Matsumoto fragment” (e.g., [264:47]) are just provisional titles or descriptions. Yet one should remember that this is not a “fragment”, but a film telling a complete story and, as befits a loop film, produced with the last and first frames allowing for a seamless transition.

Its fifty frames show a boy in a sailor suit who writes on a wall the (simplified) kanji then used for “film”: “katsu dō sha shin” (活動写真). He then turns around again to the audience and raises his cap. Running at 16 frames/second, then the usual speed for projections, the film lasts about three seconds; as a loop film it would, of course, have been projected for a longer span of time.

While the outlines of the boy and of his cap, as well as the kanji, are black, his cap is red. Yet here the printer did not do his job properly because as the film progresses the colour is no longer in register with the outlines of the cap. This is one sign that the frames were not, as some people have claimed, hand-painted on celluloid (e.g., [175:584]), but printed.



Ill. 5: Frames no. 11 and no. 35 from *Katsudō shashin*

The method of printing, on the other hand, was different from the German chromolithographed film strips. *Katsudō shashin* was produced by stencil-printing, with separate stencils for the black and the red oil-based paint which was printed directly on the blanc film. The technique used was either “kappazuri” (“stencil”) or mimeography (“tōshaban”).[183:4.8.2016]

These techniques had been in use in Japan at the time for the cheap coloured glass slides for magic lanterns.[182:102,108f.] Both the technique used and the visuals strongly indicate that this was a Japanese product, not an imported one. Moreover, *Katsudō shashin* was not a one-off, but obviously produced in numbers, as cutting stencils only made sense in that case.[182:116f.]

Which leads us to the difficult question of dating *Katsudō shashin*: in the absence of a definitive reference in a catalogue or advertisement, we remain in the realm of speculation. A 1914 book by Gonda Yasunosuke, which I recently came across, mentions printed loop films;[84:349]⁴⁷ and we know that by 1912, at the very latest, German animated film strips for kinematographs were sold in Japan.[182:121] After the outbreak of the First World War and an import stop of blanc film,[203:75] the price for celluloid rose rapidly,[303] so it is unlikely that it was used for such “trifles”. Moreover, according to Gonda printed-animated loop films were already regarded as old-fashioned by the time of his writing. He notes that “today’s small children” are much more interested in seeing “real” film projected with the more expensive models and describes an “interesting fashion” among primary-school children in 1912 and 1913 of cutting frames from film that had run its course at the cinema or been damaged there and was sold by toy merchants, and rearranging and colouring them, or collecting frames from famous films.[84:350f.] It is unlikely that a simple and badly executed example such as *Katsudō shashin* would have been put on the market by then.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Even though his main interest seems to have been sociological, Gonda’s book was quite current on technology, including, for example, experiments on stereoscopic colour film by William Friese-Greene.[84:261f.]

⁴⁸ I would like to remind the reader that *Katsudō shashin* is definitely printed. Gonda also mentions hand-painted loop films for the early cheap kinematographs, presumably also commercially available.[84:349] A shift from loop films to toy films can also be ob-

So we can quite confidently consider 1912 as the *terminus ante quem*. As to the *terminus post quem* we should keep in mind that kinematographs and printed-animated loop films had been available in Europe since around 1900. Especially during the Russian-Japanese War in 1904/5 merchants and film producers such as Yoshizawa Shōten (e.g., [14; 298; 299]) and Ikeda Toraku (e.g., [17]) published advertisements in national newspapers for kinematographs (“*katsudō shashin kikai*”) and “head machines” (“*katsudō gentō kikai*”), i.e., attachments to magic lanterns (“*gentō*”) to project film.

Products of the German optical industries were imported into Japan at the time, as evidenced by an advertisement by Konishi Honten for Carl Zeiss binoculars and unspecified kinematographs in April 1905.[16] Another advertisement by Takagi Gentōho, a specialist retailer in Osaka, in the October 1910 issue of the journal *Shōnen sekai* explicitly refers to German kinematographs with films.[182:119]

Just as in Germany, the Japanese companies did not only offer hardware, but also film. Yoshizawa Shōten, for example, sold Japanese and foreign films about the war, as well as foreign entertainment films, in February 1905.[15] Its catalogue of December 1905, while still geared towards magic lantern slides, lists roughly 240 films in all (length ranging from 15m to 120m), about 100 on the Japanese-Russian war alone.[328:111ff.] The Japanese participation in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900[328:137f.] and famous sights such as Nikko in Japan or the Niagara Falls were topics, too.[328:124] Some of the films were, moreover, available in a “natural colour version”, i.e. hand-coloured, at a mark-up of 50% in price, such as George Méliès’ *Le voyage à travers l’impossible* (*Taiyō sekai ryokō*; Star Film; 1904; [v1]) (see also 2.1).[328:126f.; 156:56f.] Another advertisement in March 1906 claimed that the company had more than 350 films on offer.[300]

That Yoshizawa Shōten was, in fact, offering kinematographs and loop films can be seen in an illustrated advertisement in the journal *Sekai shūyū shashinchō* (“World tour illustrated”) of 23 December 1906 from the collec-

served in advertisements in the journal *Shōnen sekai* (“Boys’ world”) from late Meiji to early Taishō.[182:118ff.]

tion of Matsumoto Natsuki. This advertisement clearly shows a kinematograph and a loop film (see [172:14]), but we cannot be certain whether the “world travel films” on offer were animated or not. On the other hand, those “travel films” had certainly been imported, just like the kinematographs – it is therefore quite unlikely that animated film, which was usually sold together with the apparatus, had not arrived in Japan yet.

In any case, during the Russian-Japanese War a rise in interest in film could be observed,[82:164] as well as a steep fall in the price of celluloid after the end of the war.[18] So it is reasonable to assume that Japanese companies might have taken the opportunity to produce animated film strips. The technique used for *Katsudo shashin* had been known in Japan since the first Japanese-Chinese War in 1894/95 at the latest.[183:11.6.2014] Therefore 1905 might serve as a reasonable terminus post quem. Before that date kinematographs should not have been widespread enough to justify producing Japanese animated film strips.

If we accept this terminus post quem, and accept that Japan was not very inventive at the time as far as film technology is concerned, it also becomes extremely likely that *Katsudo shashin* and other such Japanese film strips⁴⁹ were inspired by German (or just possibly French) loop films. There is every reason to assume that printed animation had been imported by 1905: after all, except for costly hand-colouring,[172:6,8] this kind of colouring was a “unique selling point” regarding film of all types.⁵⁰

But when between 1905 and 1912 might Japanese printed-animated loop films have been made for the first time? Its discoverer, Matsumoto Natsuki, reasoned that it was toward the end of the Meiji era, between the

⁴⁹ Would Gonda[84:349] have referred to printed film if there had been only one example?

⁵⁰ The first widespread technique for “natural colour” live-action film, the British “Kinemacolor” by G. A. Smith and Charles Urban, had already been mentioned in a Japanese newspaper article in 1908, but was only shown in Japan in 1913.[172:2] (See also ch. 3.4.) Urban boasted in 1921 that the first time the Taishō emperor had seen “animated pictures” (meaning film in general) had been a specially arranged exhibition of Kinemacolor films in August 1913.[280:65] However, as crown prince he already had inspected Edison’s Vitascope in May 1897.[267]

late 1900s and 1912.[182:110ff.] I would rather argue for **ca.** 1907 for the following reasons:

- foreign printed-animated loop films should have been known by then in Japan;
- there should have been enough kinematographs in the country to make it worthwhile to produce Japanese content – in fact, by 1908 Yoshizawa Shōten was not just selling apparatus and film on monthly instalments, but also offering used ones, including film, on loan for a monthly usage fee[301] –;⁵¹
- *Katsudō shashin*, especially, might also have been produced for travelling show-men, whose shows it could have opened and who would likely have been early adopters of this technology;⁵²
- celluloid had become affordable by then;
- Gonda’s way of telling the story in 1914 also implies that printed animation was not a phenomenon of the very recent past.[84:347ff.]

Whether the low print quality of *Katsudō shashin* was evidence of it having been produced by a small company – as Matsumoto argues, also with reference to the technique used[182:116; 183:5.6.2014] – or perhaps a sign of it being an early and imperfect example, is difficult to decide.

More questions remain: Who, or rather, which company had produced *Katsudō shashin*? How many copies of it, and loop films similar to it, had been made? For how long was it on sale?⁵³ Yet even with all these questions surrounding such an extremely short animated film, we can still state without much reservation that this is the oldest Japanese animated film currently known, and that it was not some lone home-made curio, but a commercial product.

⁵¹ A study by Fukushima Kanako using the journal *Shōnen sekai* shows that advertisements for “katsudō shashin” rose rapidly from 1909,[79:28] but this concerned the “cheap end” of the market.

⁵² This business likely existed since the close of the nineteenth century.[182:116f.]

⁵³ Plank’s *Der Weintrinker* was still listed in its 1914 catalogue.[52:1138] And the films on the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, for example, can still be found in Yoshizawa Shōten’s 1910 catalogue.[331:56ff.]

2 Western animated movies and animation knowledge in Japan until 1917

2.1 Western animated movies in Japan until early 1912

It is highly likely that the first completely animated film to be seen in Japan was one of the German printed-animated film strips discussed in the previous chapter, projected in a private home or as part of a travelling show. But will we ever be able to prove this contention?

To answer the question of which foreign animated movie was the first to be shown in a Japanese cinema, some related problems have to be mentioned. How should one treat animation/live action hybrid movies? How should one distinguish between object animation and stop-motion, if at all? How is it possible to identify movies with a Japanese title but no description?⁵⁴

For those reasons, as well as general problems of historical research, the following survey is neither a complete one, nor able to give a final answer to the question posed above.

The movies by Georges Méliès, the best known among them certainly *Le voyage dans la lune* (Star Film; 1902; [v5]), should be classified, in my opinion, as live-action films, not as animated films. According to Koga Futoshi's research, movies by Méliès were exhibited in Japan since 1903 at the latest: *Le voyage dans la lune*, for example, seems to have been shown in today's Chiyoda City in Tokyo at the Tōkyōza⁵⁵ under the title *Gessekai ryōkō* (“Journey to the moon world”) in October⁵⁶ 1903.[156:54]

⁵⁴ Luckily, English titles were often added in Japanese film journals. Misprints in these cases have been tacitly corrected here.

⁵⁵ Most names of cinemas mentioned in this study end on the syllable “kan” (“hall”; cf. “eigakan” = “cinema”), some on “za” (“seat” or “theatre”). When presenting the names in the text I leave out the “cinema”. Unless otherwise stated all cinemas mentioned in this study were located in today's Asakusa district in Tokyo.

⁵⁶ Apparently the date given in Koga's article below illustration 20[156:54] is not correct, referring to an article described on the preceding page,[156:53] but not reprinted.

James Stewart Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (Vitagraph; 1906; [v22]) was known in Japan, too.⁵⁷ A 1910 stock list of the film company Yoshizawa Shōten (see chapters 1.3 and 3.4), found by Watanabe Yasushi, contains the description of a film titled *Fushigi no bōrudo* ("The mysterious board") which corresponds to Blackton's movie.[283:19ff.] In fact, it can already be found in a Yoshizawa stock list from November 1907.[329:52]⁵⁸

It is likely that this film was publicly exhibited, but it cannot be proved (yet?). Watanabe thinks that a movie shown on 2⁵⁹ August 1907 at the Yachioza in Tokyo⁶⁰ by a different film company, Yokota Shōkai⁶¹ (see ch. 3.4), under the title *Kimyō naru bōrudo*⁶²("The strange board") could have been Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, but cannot prove it, as he himself admits.[283:17] (Personally I do not think his hypothesis is correct.) Moreover, on 4 August 1909 a movie titled *Fushigi na bōrudo* ("The mysterious board") was shown at the Torigoe Denkikan, and this, too, could have been *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*. [284] (It should be noted that Georges Méliès' *Le chevalier mystère* (1899; Star Film; [v16]) was shown in the US as *The Mysterious Blackboard* and as *The Mysterious Knight*. [232:709])

Yet we should be aware that *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* is a hybrid of mostly live action with a bit of chalk animation and what might be called cutout animation; so it is certainly not a pure animated movie, if an animated one at all.⁶³ Blackton's movie *The Haunted Hotel* (Vitagraph; [v20]), first

⁵⁷ These days its Japanese title is *Yukaina hyakumensō*, a rough translation of the original.[294:27]

⁵⁸ The sections on "majutsu" films in the 1907 and 1910 catalogues by Yoshizawa are identical.[329:51ff.; 331:81ff.]

⁵⁹ The day is found on a list of early foreign animated movies in Japan, revised by Watanabe Yasushi in January 2013.[284] In 2001 he had written 8 August 1907.[283:22]

⁶⁰ I am not aware of a Yachioza or Yachiyokan existing in Tokyo at that time, however.

⁶¹ "Shōkai" can be translated as "company" or "& Co."

⁶² The "to" in "bōrudo" is held to be a misprint in the source used by Watanabe and should be read "do".

⁶³ This boils down to deciding when (or whether) stop-motion ceases to be a special effect and becomes animation. It is interesting that Blackton did write nothing about animation in his unpublished memoirs.[74:85]

shown in New York in March 1907, became a long-lasting international hit with many imitations.[74:87f.] We do not know whether it was released in Japan, although this would seem likely,⁶⁴ but in my opinion this is again a hybrid of cutout animation and live-action with stop-motion as special effects.

Strictly speaking, Émile Cohl's *Fantasmagorie* (Gaumont; [v19]), premiering on 17 August 1908 in Paris, is another hybrid of live action (at the beginning and close to the end) and picture animation; yet in this case one does not have to be especially forgiving to call it an animated movie. *Fantasmagorie* may be called the first photographic picture-animated movie.⁶⁵ While its source appears to be drawn with chalk on a blackboard, like Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, it was in reality shown as a negative film; thus the black lines on white paper appeared to be white on black.[67:61]

We do not know yet whether *Fantasmagorie* was released in Japan. An argument in support of this might be that two imported live-action movies were shown at the Shintomiza in today's Chūō City in Tokyo on 27 August 1908: *Napoleon and the English Sailor* (*Napoleon to Neruson*, lit. "Napoleon and Nelson"; directed by Alf Collins; British Gaumont; 1908) and *Niagara Falls in Winter* (*Tōki no Naiyagara*; Gaumont; 1908).[19] It seems quite possible that Cohl's *Fantasmagorie*, which was made shortly after these movies and likely also distributed internationally by Gaumont, would have been seen in Japan, too, as well as later animated movies by Cohl.

In fact, Watanabe Yasushi lists several movies by Cohl which were exhibited in Japan in 1911 and the first months of 1912.[284] Yet these were either live-action films (possibly with object animation) or live action/picture animation hybrids. One example would be Cohl's *Le retapeur de cervelles* (Pathé; 1911; [v3]), which was already shown on 22 May 1911 at the Sekaikan under the title *Nōzui shūzen* or *Nō no shūzen* ("Brain Repair"),[284] but

⁶⁴ A Yoshizawa stock list of French Pathé, English Urban and other films lists two *Bakemono hoteru* ("Ghost hotel") with the remark "There is nothing more mysterious in the world than this".[330:15]

⁶⁵ Cohl himself claimed, pseudonymously, in 1925 that with *Fantasmagorie* and later movies of his "le genre des dessins animés" began (from [181:27]).

which is a hybrid of live action and picture animation. One might also mention Cohl's similarly hybrid movie *La musicomanie* (Gaumont; 1910; [v25]) because, according to Watanabe Yasushi, it was shown under the title *Dekobō shingachō Ongakukyō* (“Dekobō shingachō – Music madness”) at Fukuhōdō's Fukuhōkan in today's Chūō City, Tokyo, on 26 May 1911.[284] Moreover, Watanabe lists two further “dekobō shingachō” screened in 1911/12: About *Dai go dekobō no shingachō* (“Dekobō no shingachō No. 5”) nothing seems to be known except that it premiered on 1 June 1912 at Fukuhōkan.[284]

Much more intriguing is *Dekobō no shingachō dai yon* (“Dekobō no shingachō No. 4”)⁶⁶: While Watanabe can only give the release year of 1911, he also states that its original title was *Living Blackboard*. [284] It would be highly tempting to identify this as Cohl's 1908 pure picture-animated movie *Le cauchemar du fantoche* (Gaumont; [v2]), which was released in the US under the title *The Puppet's Nightmare*, but in the UK as *Living Blackboard*. [66:346f.] Yet it seems unlikely that this would be correct: a movie called *Living Blackboard*, very likely Cohl's *Le cauchemar du fantoche*, had already been screened in Australia in late 1908, [289] which would imply that it was shown in Japan not much later (see also ch. 2.2). And a presumably different *Living Blackboard* could be seen in Australian cinemas in late 1911, [3] which fits both Watanabe's Japanese release date of 1911 and a screening of *The Living Blackboard* at the Gaiety Theatre in Yokohama on 16 March 1912. [101] However, I have not been able to find another *Living Blackboard*, made ca. 1911, so it may have been a (re-?)run of Cohl's film, after all.

Presumably in 1908 or 1909 a live action/object animation hybrid by Segundo de Chómon was released in Japan: *Le rêve des marmitons* (Pathé; 1908; [v4]). Although Japanese film critic Yoshiyama Kyokkō could not remember its title or director anymore, his description fits this film by de Chómon. Remarkably, Yoshiyama calls this film a “majutsu eiga”, but opines that one scene there, when a face seemingly draws itself on a bald head, might have been an origin of “senga”, i.e. picture-animated film. [326:62]

⁶⁶ If we accept *Dekobō shingachō Ongakukyō* as one, perhaps even no. 1, of the numbered “dekobō shingachō” of 1911/12, two would still be missing.

On the other hand, Yoshiyama clearly denotes the movie *Shabondama no ama* (“Soap bubbles”) by Pathe, which according to him was released in Japan in 1911, as one of the era’s “masterpieces” of “senga”. [326:63; 327:147f.] Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to identify this movie. [172:4] Moreover, Yoshiyama’s dates are not always reliable, as we will see now.

2.2 *Nipparu no henkei*

On 15 April 1912 the Teikokukan screened *Nipparu no henkei* (“Nipper’s transformations”), which Yoshiyama Kyokkō called the first animated movie shown in Japan but dated back to 1909 and likely misremembered as *Nippāru no henkei*. [326:62f.] Already in 2001 Watanabe Yasushi wrote that this movie had premiered only on 15 April 1912 at the Teikokukan. [283:18] But, like everyone else, Watanabe was unable to identify the original title and creator of this movie. According to Yoshiyama, “Paté” had been the producer/distributor, and he added that the audience had enjoyed this movie because it had grown tired of “majutsu eiga”. [326:62f.] In fact, in February 1912 a newspaper article also stated that, according to the film import companies, Japanese children’s formerly intense interest in foreign trick films had vanished. [21]⁶⁷

In December 2012 I finally succeeded in identifying *Nipparu no henkei* as Émile Cohl’s movie *Les exploits de feu follet*, (170:2f.; [v18]) which he had made for Charles Urban’s French production company Eclipse in late 1911⁶⁸ and which had premiered in Britain as *The Nipper’s Transformations* on 21 February 1912. [55] The contemporary description in the British film journal *The Bioscope* [55] fits Cohl’s still extant film perfectly; moreover, *The Nipper’s Transformations* was shown in Australia in April 1912, [49] nearly at the same time as *Nipparu no henkei* in Japan.

⁶⁷ Incidentally I happened upon a French “majutsu-mono” (“magic thing”, that is trick film) being shown as late as 1917: *Mabō kaban* (“The magic portmanteau”), [134:83] which may have been *Les vacances de Max* (Pathé, France; 1914) starring Max Linder.

⁶⁸ Two production dates can be found in the literature: 7 October 1911 [77:28] and 11 November 1911 [66:328].

Les exploits de feu follet is a “pure” picture-animated movie of about three and a half minutes, made with paper animation and cutout animation. A stick figure, reminiscent of Cohl’s “Fantoche”, experiences a series of transformations and adventures, for example in a balloon and in the sea. Currently it is still the first pure picture-animated movie in Japan whose exact screening date we can prove.



Ill. 6: Screenshots from *Les exploits de feu follet*

2.3 Western animated movies in Japan from 1914 to 1917

We do not know yet whether – and if so, how many – imported animated movies were screened in Japanese cinemas between summer 1912 and spring 1914. According to an article published in 1912, about 30 movies a month were imported at the time, but animation is not mentioned.[21] The next screening of a Western animated movie that we can be certain of was on 15 April 1914: Charles Armstrong’s *Isn’t It Wonderful?*, a silhouette-animated movie made in the same year and distributed by Charles Urban,[53:52] was shown at the Teikokukan under the title *Dekobō no shingachō*. [143]⁶⁹ (In a newspaper advertisement, “majutsu” was added to the Japanese film title.[27]) A couple of months later, the same cinema screened *Amusutorongu no hanmen eiga* (*Dekobō no shingachō Majutsu no maki*), [145] with the first part of the title corresponding to the English series(?) title *Arm-*

⁶⁹ This has been held by some people as the first screening of an animated movie in Japan,[263:35; 231:150] and as the first use of the term “dekobō shingachō”. [10:4; 4:84]. As we have seen in chapter 2.1, they – and as far as the second part of the argument is concerned I, too[170:5] – have been wrong.

strong's silhouettes,⁷⁰ as given in this Japanese source, and the second part presumably being the real movie title “Dekobō no shingachō – Magic”. The content is given as: “The Wonder-Johnny from Mars an Enthralling Fairy Tale in Cloudlands.”[145]⁷¹

At least five imported animated movies were shown in Japan in 1914.[263:35]⁷² The “second dekobō no shingachō” should be mentioned here: *Bottom of the Sea* (Vincent Whitman; Lubin; 1914), released in July 1914 under a title literally translated from the original, *Umi no soko*, and described as a “trick film” (“torikko shashin”) made of pretty, green cutout images.[144]⁷³ Four months later, the same movie was listed in the same journal as *Dekobō ponchi*⁷⁴ “*The bottom of the sea*”. [147:32]

More importantly, in mid-December at the latest the first animated movie from the “Colonel Heeza Liar” series (1913-1917; 1922-1924) by John Randolph Bray had its Japanese premiere: *Col. Heeza Liar's Adventures in Africa* (*Afurika tanken*, literally *African Expedition*; American Kinema Pathe; 1914).[147:29]⁷⁵ A “comedy” with this title was also shown, among other places, in autumn 1914 in New Zealand;[50] on the other hand, lists of Bray’s films do not contain such a title (e.g., [253]); it should have been

⁷⁰ The term “hanmenga”, literally “half-face-picture”, was also used in 1916 for Armstrong’s movies.[249:31] I omit “no maki” (“episode of”) in translated movie titles.

⁷¹ I have not been able to identify this film. The second animated movie by Armstrong seems to have been *Armstrong's Trick War Incidents* in 1915,[83:36] another possible contender for having been the original title of *Kaikan* in 1915 (see ch. 0.3).

⁷² Tanaka Jun’ichirō probably arrived at this number because the December 1914 edition of *The Kinema Record* added “fifth dekobō no shingachō” to a Lubin production with the Japanese title *Shitsukoi norite* (“Tenacious rider”).[146] This may have been *A Strenuous Ride* (Vincent Whitman; Lubin; 1914) which featured a “coon” chased by a bull dog and, among other things, riding a railroad engine.[194]

⁷³ An American listing describes it as “the animated cartoon sort exploiting the adventures of passengers and crew in a submarine.”[193] On colour in early Japanese animated film see [172].

⁷⁴ For “ponchi” see ch. 3.1.

⁷⁵ One month later the film was listed in the same journal as *Dekobō shingachō* (*Afurika tanken*).[148]

either *Col. Heeza Liar in Africa* (Pathe; 1913) or, more likely, *Col. Heeza Liar's African Hunt* (Pathe; 1914; [d4]; see p. 40).

At the time, Bray was just revolutionising the American animated movie by introducing cel animation and a studio system,[251:23ff.; 188] and his films with “Colonel Heeza Liar” (“Hiza taisa” in Japanese[332]), a mix of Theodore “The Colonel” “Teddy” Roosevelt and Baron Munchausen,[67:273] were now also fascinating Japanese cinema audiences (see ch. 2.4).

In 1915[263:35] and 1916 respectively about 20 animated movies were imported into Japan, in 1917 ca. 40, among them several by Paul H. Terry, Earl Hurd, or Pat Sullivan.[273:60] From England came animated movies produced/distributed by Armstrong, Neptune and Urban, from the US those by Lubin, Kalem, Essanay and Thanhouser, from France Éclair and Pathé.[263:35f.] A Japanese article published in November 1916 (discussed in ch. 2.4) mentions Bray, who is said to have recently switched from Pathe to Universal, Lubin with Vincent Whitman, Powers with F. M. Follett, Essanay with Wallace A. Carlson,⁷⁶ and Neptune with Lancelot Speed⁷⁷. [249:31]

In May 1917, for instance, one could see (at least) the following imported animated movies in Tokyo:

- *John Bull's Animated Sketchbook* (*Jon Buru manga*, i.e., “John Bull Manga”; Dudley Buxton(?); Cartoon Film Company, UK; Denkikan),[134:81]⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Apparently movies in Carlson’s “Dreamy Dud” series all received the “dekobō” prefix.[161] On Carlson and this series see [65].

⁷⁷ Bendazzi’s claim that British animation of that time was mostly “for domestic exhibition only”[53:53] does not look too credible in the light of Japanese sources.

⁷⁸ Since the number is not given, we do not know its original release date; *John Bull's Animated Sketchbook No. 1* had been released in Britain in April 1915.[83:36f.] The Japanese entry transliterates the film company’s name as “Karuton Firumu”,[134:81] not as “Kāton Firumu”, as might be expected. Another entry in this series, subtitled *The Invasion of England*, had been shown at the Denkikan on 23 April 1917 under the title *Dekobō Bakudan tōka no maki* (“Dekobō’s bomb-throwing”).[126:177] Its description somewhat fits *John Bull's Animated Sketchbook No. 1*. [83:36f.]

- *Colonel Heeza Liar and the Pirates* (*Dekobō no shingachō Senkōtei no maki*, lit. “Dekobō no shingachō – Submarine”⁷⁹; J.R. Bray; French Pathé’s American subsidiary; 1916; Operakan),[134:81]
- *Charlie Here To-day* (*Chappurin dekobō shibai no maki*;⁸⁰ John C. Terry(?); Movca, US; 1916; Teikokukan),[134:82]⁸¹
- *Charlie Has Some Wonderful Adventures in India* (also *Charlie in India*; *Dekobō shingachō Chappurin bakemono taji no maki*,⁸² i.e., “Dekobō shingachō – Chaplin’s ghost extermination”); John C. Terry, H. M. Shields; Movca; 1916; Teikokukan),[134:83]⁸³
- *Dreamy Dud: Up in the Air* (*Dekobō unchū ryokō*,⁸⁴ lit. “Dekobō’s journey in the clouds”); Wallace A. Carlson; Essanay; 1915; Kinema Kurabu),[134:82]⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Alternative titles: *Hiza taisha to kaijōkusen*, lit. “Colonel Heeza and the pirate ship”;^[151:303] *Dekobō no senkōtei* (“Dekobō’s submarine”; listed already for late April).[7:185]

⁸⁰ Alternative title: *Dekobō shingachō* (*Dekobō Chappurin no maki*) (“Dekobō shingachō (Dekobō – Chaplin)”).[126:177]

⁸¹ I have not been able to identify this movie. (The English title comes from the Japanese source.) It is certainly part of the “Charlie series” produced for Movca in 1916,[108] but its description (Charlie, an animals’ cinema and a bee) does not fit the few descriptions we have of the individual titles in that series. Also note that the title contains the term “dekobō shibai”, that is, “dekobō play”.^[134:82] In Osaka a “senga comedy” called *Totsubō to dobutsu* (“Dekobō and animals”) was shown at the Tenkatsu Kurabu and another one called *Totsubō Saikun no maki* (“Dekobō’s wife”) at the Tenkatsu-run Luna Park, both from 11 May 1917.[125:163] For some reason, both appearances of the kanji for “Dekobō” are read “Totsubō” here, whereas in the information from Kyoto they are read “Dekobō”, as usual.[125:162] No information is currently available on whether *Totsubō to dobutsu* might have been *Charlie Here To-day* or whether it was an American animated movie at all. *Totsubō Saikun no maki* is identified as a “manga” by Universal.[125:163]

⁸² Alternative title: *Dekobō shingachō* (*Bakemono bōshi no maki*) (“Dekobō shingachō (The ghost hat)”).[126:177]

⁸³ A synopsis of this movie does not seem to be available in English. The Japanese source writes: “Chaplin is in India, fools around with a magician’s tools and fails”.^[134:83]

⁸⁴ Alternative Japanese title: *Dekobō kūchū ryokō* (“Dekobō’s journey through the air”).[126:176]

- *Dreamy Dud Sees Charles Chaplin (Dekobō Chappurin kenbutsu*; Wallace A. Carlson; Essanay; 1915; Kinema Kurabu),[126:176; 65:31]
- *Joe Boko in Saved by Gasoline (Seiyō dekokobō Sagashimono*; lit. *Western dekokobō – Search*; Wallace A. Carlson; Essanay; 1915; Kinema Kurabu),[134:83]
- *How Dizzy Joe Got to Heaven (Dizji Jō wa ikani shite tenkoku ni mesaretaka*;⁸⁶ C. Allen Gilbert(?); Bray Films; 1916; Denkikan),[151:303]⁸⁷
- *Inbad the Sailor (Kage-e*, i.e., “Shadow picture”; Paramount; C. Allen Gilbert, J. R. Bray; 1916; Fujikan).[126:176]⁸⁸
- *Dekobō Piano no maki* (“Dekobō – Piano”; Paramount; Chiyodakan).[7:185]⁸⁹

While there seem to have been no very recent foreign animated movies on show that May, this was not true for live-action: *Rosie’s Rancho (Rōzu no bokuchiku*; William Beaudine; Universal), for example, was screened at the

⁸⁵ A synopsis of this movie in English does not seem to exist.[65:37] However, the July 1917 issue of *Katsudō shashin zasshi* has quite a long one in its children’s section, which I present here a bit abbreviated: On a bright day Deko-chan (written “Dekobō”, but read thus) climbs a small hill with his faithful dog John. Hearing the voice of a small bird, Deko-chan ventures further and gets lost. Suddenly John begins to bark. A face appears on the trunk of a high tree and threatens Deko-chan to return home. A branch from the tree lifts Deko-chan up to the tip of the tree and throws John into a nearby swamp. Suddenly a voice is heard: “Throw him over here”. Deko-chan gets thrown about like a juggling ball high into the air when an eagle captures him and throws him into his nest in a crevice in a steep cliff. Deko-chan throws all young eagles out of the nest, but the parent eagle gets angry and threatens him. Suddenly a lump from the cliff hits the eagle’s head and a strange anchor comes down, lifting Deko-chan up to a world beyond the blue sky. He goes exploring but a demon appears and throws him down. Deko-chan falls and falls and when he hits the ground he wonders “Into which world did I fall?” He opens his eyes – and has fallen out of his bed.[135]

⁸⁶ Also called *Kage-e “How Dizzy Joe got to heaven”*. [126:177]

⁸⁷ This was one of the “Silhouette Fantasies” produced at Bray’s studios in 1916/17, which combined “live-action silhouettes” with “animated drawings”. [188:143] The reviewer of *The Kinema Record* thought it “quite well made”. [151:303] Four film stills at the (unpaged) beginning of the July 1917 issue of *Katsudō no sekai* should be from this movie – or, less likely, from the following.

⁸⁸ With the information at hand it is not possible to say which of the entries in the “Inbad the Sailor” series was shown here.

⁸⁹ I have not been able to identify this movie.

Mikuniza only about three months after its US premiere.[134:83; 96] It should also be noted that the animated movies released that month employed various animation techniques, as was likely true for earlier months, too.

2.4 Japanese articles concerning foreign animated movies in 1916/17

In November 1916 an article with the title “Dekobō shingachō no hanashi” (“About dekobō shingachō”) was published in the journal *Katsudō no sekai* (“Film world”).[249] Its author used a pseudonym which could be read as “Shōfūsei”. The article opens with the statement that the history of “dekobō shingachō” began very early in France with the companies Pathé and Gaumont, but then mostly refers to the US, especially the “mangaka” (comic author) J. R. Bray who is said to have attained a new level with his “dekobō no shingachō” for American Pathe. His movies of the “Colonel Heeza Liar” series, screened at the Teikokukan, are said to be the main attraction of this cinema, beside the Chaplin (live-action) comedies.[249:28]⁹⁰

Shōfūsei then takes on animation and filming techniques: “Now the filming of dekobō gachō is formally extremely simple. There are, in the main, two methods ...”. The first is said to employ cutout figures being moved in front of drawn backgrounds, the other method to draw everything “from beginning to end” with small alterations; this, Shōfūsei argues, is known outside Japan as “animated cartoon”. [249:28]

The second method is held to be based on flip books (“katsudō ehon”),⁹¹ but drawn more detailed and extensive, to get the length of a film. Tens or even hundreds of copies of each individual background are made, onto which are drawn the figures with the small variations necessary to let

⁹⁰ The popularity of Bray’s animated movies is also stressed in an article in *The Kinema Record* in 1917.[332] To Shōji Tamaichi in 1927 Bray had been the first to have made animated dramas.[250:185]

⁹¹ Kitayama Seitarō mentioned flip books (“katsudō mangachō”) as predecessors of animated film in 1930 to argue that senga were older than film.[155:325]

them appear to be moving. Yet this is said to be quite a painstaking method for the artist doing the drawing and for the cameraman, as the drawings have to be exactly in register. When one moves the cutout figures of the first method in front of the backgrounds between each shot, this saves effort, therefore this is said to be the general procedure.[249:29f.]

Information on the usual movie lengths (ca. 150m to 300m) and the number of pictures shot (at least 8,000) follows. Follett, whose “manga” for Universal had recently been screened at the Teikokukan and at the Kinema Kurabu, another cinema in Asakusa district in Tokyo, is said to actually draw each image individually. Yet the quality of an animated movie also depends, according to Shōfūsei, on the filming: artist, drawings, and cameraman have to combine to get a good result.[249:30]

Shōfūsei then praises Bray: for a 300m movie he does not need 16,000 pictures,⁹² but only 4,000 to 5,000, because he uses each picture three or even five times and yet gets excellent results by taking care of all pictures, for instance with regard to perspective. All the movies of the “Colonel Heeza Liar” series are made in this way, and owing also to his assistants Bray could produce a remarkable amount of movies.[249:30f.]

Quite likely this was an original article by Shōfūsei, although based on American materials,⁹³ which also included an image from Bray’s *Col. Heeza Liar – Ghost Breaker*⁹⁴ (Pathe; 1915).[249:29] Shōfūsei does not seem to have known the cel-animation method developed by Hurd and Bray, although his amazement about Bray’s production volume can be understood: under contract to Paramount in 1916 Bray produced more than 300m of animated film a week.[251:26]

An article published in the February 1917 issue of the journal *Katsudō gabō* (“Film illustrated”), on the other hand, was clearly marked as a transla-

⁹² This number is also given in [235].

⁹³ Possibly something like [2]. On the other hand, there is no sign that Shōfūsei used an article on animated movies by Wallace Carlson in the December 1915 issue of *Movie Pictorial* (see [65:14ff.]).

⁹⁴ That movie was screened at the Teikokukan under the title *Dekobō Yūrei no maki* (“Dekobō Ghost”).[249:29] The same picture is found in an advertisement for the movie in the American journal *Motion Picture News*. [253]

tion of an article in *Scientific American*.^[222] On 14 October 1916 an article on “Animated Cartoons in the Making” had been published there, which now appeared in a slightly re-arranged and abbreviated Japanese translation. The original article used a visit to the production studio of Reuben “Rube” Goldberg, a well-known cartoonist, to propose that the “idea” was the most important element when producing an animated movie; everything else was routine, except finding ways to be more efficient, e.g., to reduce the number of drawings, or special effects. The various backgrounds are drawn only once, by contrast the figures have to be drawn individually in their phases. Usually there is a free space in the centre of the backgrounds for the moving elements, which may also be cutouts. If the figure should move “behind” the background, the latter may be a transparent cel.⁹⁵ It is the art of the cartoonist to get the phases of the movement right: “He indicates the difference between one drawing and the next, leaving the details of finishing the drawings to other members of the staff. The master artist works on an easel consisting of a slanting piece of ground glass held in a suitable frame, through which pass the rays of an electric lamp placed below it.”^[235]

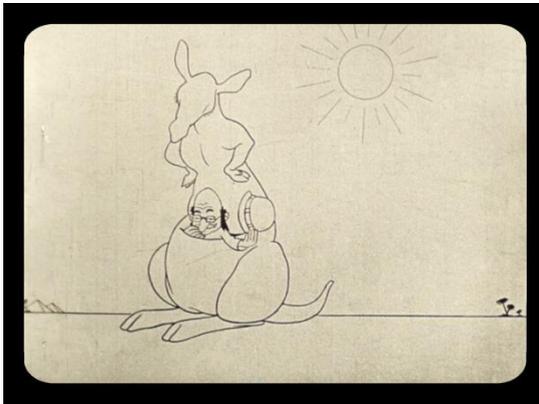
The article then mentions, among other things, speech “balloons” and stresses the need for keeping the drawings in register. While producing the drawings is laborious, “their photographing is a simple matter”: “the photographing of the drawings is accomplished by using a motion picture camera mounted on a substantial wooden frame, with its lens pointing straight downwards. A framing or registering device is placed on the table directly below the camera, while on either side are mercury vapour tubes which supply the necessary light for photographing the drawings.”^[235]

The Japanese translation conveys much the same information, yet one difference is remarkable: while the original speaks of “ground glass” in connection with the easel, the translation only says “glass”.^[222:34] This may have led to trouble for at least one of Japan’s animation pioneers (see chapters 3.1 and 4/digression 1).

⁹⁵ Apparently cels were not standard equipment in this studio, presumably because Bray held the relevant patents.^[251:25]

These articles, as well as the numerous imported animated movies shown in Tokyo's cinemas in 1916 and 1917 – and presumably sold in the form of film strips afterwards – should have covered at least the basics for the three pioneers of Japanese animated movies who will be presented in the next chapter.⁹⁶

Yet there was one more possible, highly mysterious, source of knowledge, until now overlooked: In April 1917, the Yūrakukan, managed by Nikkatsu, screened a movie called *Senga no seihō* (“How senga are made”).[6:187] Nothing else is known about this movie, which surely had been imported because, at that time, only Nikkatsu's competitor Tenkatsu had already produced animated movies in Japan. Although the likeliest country of origin of this movie is the United States, the oldest movie describing the production of animation there is held to have been the Bray Studios' *How Animated Cartoons Are Made* [v21], released in the US on 6 September 1919.[65:36] According to one source, Nikkatsu began the production of animated movies in May 1917 (see ch. 3.2).[128]



Ill. 7: Screenshot from J. R. Bray's *Col. Heeza Liar's African Hunt* (1914)

⁹⁶ Tsugata Nobuyuki argues that these articles imparted only “a rough outline” of information and did not allow the pioneers to “learn everything about animation production”. [274:14] There is, of course, a difference between reading an article about animation and producing an animated movie, yet I cannot agree with his downplaying the value of the information contained in these two Japanese articles. See also ch. 3.2.

3 The pioneers of Japanese animated movies

3.1 Shimokawa Ōten (aka Shimokawa Hekoten)

On 2 May 1892 Shimokawa Sadanori was born in Hirara (today: Miyakojima) on Miyakojima Island in Okinawa prefecture. His father had been a primary-school teacher in Hirara; after his death in 1898 Sadanori and his mother moved to her hometown Kagoshima; two years later relatives of his father in Tokyo took him in.[218:126] After finishing primary school he became a disciple of the famous cartoonist (mangaka) and founding father of manga (cartoons, comic strips), Kitazawa Rakuten (originally Kitazawa Yasuji),⁹⁷ in 1906.[218:126] Shimokawa's pen name, which can be, and often was, read "Ōten" as well as "Hekoten",⁹⁸ must be understood by way of the syllable "-ten" as a gesture of respect to his master "Rakuten".

After having dropped out of a secondary school, which led to a temporary break-up with Kitazawa, and having worked in the survey department of the Japanese Army, Shimokawa joined Rakutensha, a publisher founded by Kitazawa, in 1910.[218:126,130] In 1912 he began working for the Osaka edition of the *Asabi Shimbun*,[218:126] yet continued to draw for Kitazawa's journals *Tokyo Puck* and *Rakuten Puck*⁹⁹ respectively.[218:130] Apparently between August and October 1915, Shimokawa published the manga

⁹⁷ Shimokawa, too, argued that manga (caricature and comic strips) had originated with Kitazawa; his other candidate had been Kobayashi Kiyochika,[246:5] who is better known as a woodcut artist, although he also drew caricatures. To Shimokawa one important reason to call Kitazawa, not Kobayashi, the founding father of "manga" was his quality as a journalist.[246:5] (I mention this just for information; although I tend to agree with Shimokawa on Kitazawa's role, he is not necessarily an authoritative source on the history of manga which, in any case, may be even more dependent on exact definitions than the history of anime.) In an aside Shimokawa notes that figures such as "Chamesuke" and "Dekobō" from the "famous" manga had been invented by Kitazawa and had not been around before, as some people seem to have believed.[246:6]

⁹⁸ More information on the reading of the names of Shimokawa and Kōuchi can be found in [218:128f; 4:88ff.].

⁹⁹ The *Tokyo Puck* had a complex publication history between 1905 and the end of its fourth incarnation in 1941; the *Rakuten Puck* was published between 1912 and 1914.[245:26ff.,127]

(comic strip) *Imokawa Mukuzō* [217:67], later *Imokawa Mukuzō to Buru* (“Imokawa Mukuzō and Bull”) ¹⁰⁰, [4:96] in Kitazawa’s *Tokyo Puck*. The eponymous “hero”, or rather loser, would later be used by Shimokawa for his animated movies (see ch. 4).



Ill. 8: Shimokawa’s *Imokawa Mukuzō* (from *Tokyo Puck*, 15 August 1915): Imokawa dreams that he has been ordered to form a cabinet (original in colour)

¹⁰⁰ The bulldog “Bull” seems to have been part of the strip from the beginning and was then mentioned in the title, too.

Shimokawa's first book, *Ponchi shōzō* ("Punch portraits"), published in 1916,[218:130f.] referred to a British-inspired tradition: "ponchi", or "ponchi-e", had been caricatures named for *The Japan Punch*, a newspaper in Yokohama founded in 1862 by Charles Wirgman. (Obviously, the newspaper's title itself referred back to the British *Punch*.) In 1927 Shimokawa explained the difference between manga and "ponchi" by noting, among other things, that "ponchi" had comic and humour as their aim, whereas for manga this was the result, and that manga were art, in contrast to "ponchi" (from [107:31]).

In 1916 Shimokawa also married for the first time.[218:126] Later he would write about the influence of his wife Koiso Tamako (from [218:131]): "When I was young, nihonga [Japanese-style painting] was at its height and I repeatedly thought about giving up manga. My late wife then said: 'I have come as a bride into the house of a mangaka. If you become a nihonga painter, I will go away.'"

Very likely also in 1916, Shimokawa was hired by Tenkatsu (see ch. 3.4) and started to work on animated movies. According to his 1934 statement:

"I was then with the Tokyo Puck Company in Shitaya [a district in Tokyo] and there were talks between the advertising department of the Tokyo Puck Company and Tenkatsu (a predecessor of today's Shōchiku)¹⁰¹; the advertising department recommended me, so I had an interview with director Ōta¹⁰² of Tenkatsu, who told me that I would get 50 Yen a month and a percentage; so I entered into a contract at a certain restaurant in Asakusa."^[247]

One problem with this story is that the *Tokyo Puck* in its second incarnation existed only until the end of 1915, and the third one began only in 1919.[245:29,127] As in the case of Shimokawa's movies (see ch. 4) the unreliable information given in his 1934 article leads to problems. In fact, according to a curriculum vitae of Shimokawa it was in 1918 that he en-

¹⁰¹ There was no direct connection between Tenkatsu and Shōchiku. Talks about a merger failed with the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923.[282:48f.] Shōchiku had already been an active company before entering the movie business in 1920.[241:222]

¹⁰² This might have been Ōta Tsuguo, though he had been a cameraman.[261:239]

tered the contract with Tenkatsu, although his age given for this event would imply that it had been 1917.[218:126,131]

In any case, Shimokawa's apparently first animated movie premiered in January 1917 (see ch. 4). At some stage he hired an (unknown) assistant.[247] His regular cameraman from Tenkatsu seems to have been Oka-be Shigeyuki,[242:6,8] who was said to have been the first Japanese to have done aerial filming.[263:100] For one film, possibly in April, Shibata Katsu (also read Shibata Masaru), at the time an assistant cameraman at Tenkatsu, seems to have been responsible for the filming.[243:51; 242:8]¹⁰³ Whether Shimokawa, like his competitors (see below), worked at home is unknown; the filming would have been done at Tenkatsu's Nippori Studio ("Nippori Satsueijo") in today's Arakawa City in Tokyo.[282:2]

Shimokawa also participated in a manga (comic) exhibition in Tokyo in September 1917 which elicited a surprisingly critical letter to the *Asahi Shimbun*, accusing Kitazawa Rakuten and Okamoto Ippei of exhibiting works that were "extremely lacking in interest as manga", and Shimokawa and others of "resting on their laurels by just drawing from nature", even though they represented the "foremost mangaka in Japan".[269]

Likely near the end of 1917 Shimokawa's right eye had been damaged, possibly by looking into the light of the lamp in the animator's easel through normal, instead of ground glass (see ch. 2.4), leading to blindness on this eye.[218:131] In addition, it seems, he was hospitalised because of a "strange illness"[247] and lost his job at Tenkatsu. Thereafter, friends col-

¹⁰³ In his anime history Clements writes that Shimokawa hired Shibata as a camera assistant, then refers to Shibata's memoirs, without giving a page number, as the source that Shibata worked as "cameraman on Shimokawa's 'third' work, *Chamebō Shin Gachō: Nomi Fūfu no Shikaeshi no Maki ...*".[61:25] I am not aware of any source claiming Shimokawa "hired" Shibata. Shibata himself writes in the 1974 version of his memoirs – according to his bibliography that is the one Clements used[61:231] – that he "was told to film Mr Shimokawa Ōten's manga eiga 'Hekobō shingachō'".[243:51] (On "Hekobō shingachō" see ch. 4.) Neither here nor in the 1973 version[242:8] does Shibata claim to have been involved with a "third" movie by Shimokawa or, explicitly, with *Chamebō shingachō: Nomi fūfu no shikaeshi no maki*.

Nor does Shibata claim it had been "the first time" he worked with Shimokawa, implying there were further collaborations, as I erroneously wrote in the German version of this book.[173:59]

lected money for him, as was reported by the journal *Katsudō gabō* in 1918 (from [217:66]), and Kitazawa Rakuten and others organised an exhibition of his work to help him.[44]

In 1919 Shimokawa began drawing manga for the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, but suffered another tragedy with the death of his son at the age of about six months.[218:126] During the following years he mainly drew manga (caricatures) for various newspapers,[218:126] edited manga journals,[4:93] and published the book *Dekoboko ningen* (“Jerky People”) with caricatures and manga serials in 1925.[313]

In those years Shimokawa seems to have developed a penchant for the German satirical illustrated journal *Simplicissimus* and the painter and caricaturist George Grosz.¹⁰⁴ At an undated convention, likely in the early 1920s, Kitazawa was introduced as a representative of an “English cartoon style”, Asō Yutaka as a representative of an “American caricature style”,¹⁰⁵ and Shimokawa as a representative of a “German style”. [246:8f.] In fact, on the title page of Shimokawa’s 1925 book *Manga jinbutsu byōbō* (“How to draw manga portraits”) one could see not one of Shimokawa’s drawings, but a caricature of Henrik Ibsen by someone called “Orufu”, [246] i.e., Olaf Gulbransson of *Simplicissimus* fame. At the same time a review of *Dekoboko ningen* also noted the influence on Shimokawa of artists such as Th. Th. Heine and (the Norwegian) Edvard Munch.[313]

From a film historian’s point of view, Shimokawa’s 1922 manga (comic strip) serial *Shinbutsukibotsu Magoji monogatari* (“Stories of Magoji, the phantom”) in the newspaper *Tōkyō Maiyū Shinbun*¹⁰⁶ is of interest, as it seems to

¹⁰⁴ The *Simplicissimus* had been known in Japan since 1917; [98:9] Grosz had been introduced as a mangaka by mangaka such as Okamoto Ippai, like Shimokawa a disciple of Kitazawa. [98:6f.] However, Shimokawa’s biographer Ōshiro Yoshitake argues that Shimokawa had already encountered the *Simplicissimus* and Grosz during his time at the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* before the First World War. [218:130]

¹⁰⁵ This seems to be a reference to American newspaper comic strips, as Asō’s *Nonkina tōsan* (“Carefree Dad”), which became a multi-media hit in late 1923 (see ch. 6), had been inspired by them, especially by George McManus’ *Bringing Up Father* (jap. *Oyaji kyōiku*). [245:179ff.; 78:170]

¹⁰⁶ Shimokawa later became an employee at this newspaper and assembled there a group of young mangaka called “Keiseikai” (“Comet group”). [218:132]

refer to the early film hero “Zigomar”. [219:33,35] *Zigomar* (*Jigoma* in Japanese; in reverse: Magoji) was a 1911 French film, directed by Victorin Jasset for Éclair and based on the criminal of the same name in the stories by Léon Sazie, which had many sequels. The Japanese production and distribution company Fukuhōdō (see ch. 3.4) imported the film and put it into cinemas the same year – with tremendous success. Soon, Japanese versions were produced, children imitated the gangster, and in October 1912 the Tokyo police finally prohibited everything related to “Zigomar”. [241:xxii]

Between 1930 and 1937, Shimokawa edited the manga page of the Sunday evening edition of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. [319] Two of his manga (comic strips) from the early 1930s were filmed as live-action movies: *Otokoyamome no Imao-san* (“Iwao, the widower”; directed by Saitō Torajirō; Shōchiku; 1933) and *Gō-chan no jinsei nikkei* (“Diary of Gō’s life”; directed by Ōtani Toshio; Nikkatsu; 1934). [218:133f.]

Shimokawa’s wife died in 1940 and he married Sugahara Nami. [218:126] After the end of the war, he still drew portraits and manga, among other things political caricatures for the *Tokyo Times* in 1949/50. Soon afterwards he moved with his wife to Noda in Chiba prefecture and became interested in Buddhism and buddhistic paintings. [218:126] After the death of his second wife in 1963, an industrialist and friend, Mogi Fusagorō, let him live on his estate. [218:127] From September to October 1972 an exhibition honouring the mangaka Shimokawa was held in Ōmiya (today: Saitama in Saitama prefecture); [218:127] on 26 May 1973 Shimokawa died of tuberculosis in a nursing home for the elderly in Kōda (today part of the city of Inashiki in Ibaraki prefecture). [319]

Although Shimokawa’s work as a mangaka may have been nearly forgotten in Japan, Roman Rosenbaum is probably correct in calling him one of the “graphic superstars” of the Taishō era, along with Okamoto Ippei and Kitazawa Rakuten. [227:183] In 1917 Shimokawa seems to have produced at least seven animated movies (see ch. 4).

3.2 Kitayama Seitarō

Up to the present only two representatives of anime's first decades have been honoured by becoming the subject of biographical monographs: Masaoka Kenzō, one of the most important anime directors especially of the 1930s and 1940s,[86] and Kitayama Seitarō.[273]

Kitayama was born on 3 March 1888 in the city of Wakayama in Wakayama prefecture as the only child of a quite prosperous family.[273:274] His father died in April 1892; after finishing primary school in March 1898 Kitayama took up an apprenticeship with a kimono retailer in Osaka.[273:274] At the beginning of the twentieth century, interest in watercolour painting boomed, not the least stoked by a book by Ōshita Tojirō, who also founded the art journal *Mizue* (“Watercolour painting”) in 1905.[281:1] Kitayama went back to Wakayama in 1907, then did his military service, also as a medical orderly in Korea, at the time occupied by Japan. Even before the end of his military service, he sent in an example of his artistry to *Mizue*. [273:274]

In 1909 Kitayama returned to Osaka where, in 1911, he founded the local branch of Ōshita's “Nihon Suisai Gakai” (“Japanese Watercolour Painting Association”).[273:275] In May 1911 he travelled to Tokyo and helped out at the association and at *Mizue*; after the death of Ōshita in October 1911 he became editor of *Mizue*. [281:1] In January 1912 Ōzuka Hisa, whom he knew from Osaka, but whom he had recorded in his family registry only in May 1912, bore him his first daughter.[273:275] In February he stopped working for *Mizue* but began editing the new journal *Gendai no yōga* (“Contemporary Western painting”) for the “Nihon Yōga Kyōkai” (“Japanese Association for Western Painting”) in April.[273:275] In November 1912 Kitayama also helped Saitō Yori and others with founding the journal *Hyūzān* (“Fusain”; French for charcoal) of the short-lived avant-garde artists' group “Fyūzankai”. [281:7] After the now differently written journal *Fyūzān* had folded in June 1913, Kitayama edited a new journal called *Seikatsu* (“Life”), [273:275] whose July edition, however, was banned from sale. [25]

In those years Kitayama also was involved with organising art exhibitions and photographing the artwork for publication in his journals; it was mostly for his work as an editor, publisher and organiser, rather than for his own artistry, (cf. [273:242]) that he got the nickname “Père Kitayama”. [281:2]¹⁰⁷



Ill. 9: Landscape painting by Kitayama Seitarō (undated)

In February 1914 Kitayama’s second daughter was born, in July the last issue of *Gendai no yōga* was published, which was followed for about a year by the new journal *Gendai no bijutsu* (“Contemporary art”). [273:276] Kitayama also became secretary of the “Tatsumi Gakai”, another artists’ association with a focus on Western painting (“yōga”), for which he organised two exhibitions in 1914 and 1915 and edited the newsletter *Tatsumi*. [281:10] Perhaps in connection with his moving house – neither the first nor the last time in Kitayama’s life – to Hirakawa-chō in today’s Chiyoda City in Tokyo in September 1915, [273:276] Kitayama’s activity for the “Tatsumi Gakai” ended and he helped Kishida Ryūsei, an artist he had known and accompanied for years, to organise an independent yōga exhibition which became known as the first “Sōdoshā Exhibition”. [281:10] There would be nine “Sōdoshā Exhibitions” until 1922, but Kitayama was involved only with the first two. He also edited a new journal called *Bijutsu*

¹⁰⁷ This was a reference to Père Tanguy, an art shop owner who had supported van Gogh and other artists. [281:2]

zasshi (“Art journal”) from November 1915 to July 1916, but then apparently no longer participated in fine arts.[281:10]

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Kitayama’s coming into contact with the film company Nikkatsu (see ch. 3.4) is detailed by his biographer Tsugata Nobuyuki as follows, based primarily on Kitayama’s own recollections (see [273:61ff.,80ff.,277]):

As Kitayama himself wrote in 1930, he had to find a new way of earning his living in 1916 when he was no longer editing *Gendai no yōga*. At the time he got into viewing movies at a cinema and thus discovered “senga”. [155:321] In 1933 he was even more specific by claiming that it was summer – he does not say which year – that he became enamoured with animated movies at a “manga taikai” (i.e., an event where several animated movies were shown) at the Yūrokuza cinema, and then went to every cinema that screened them (from [273:63]).

There had been, in fact, such a “dekobōkai” at the Yūrokuza in today’s Chiyoda City in Tokyo on 15 July 1916, supplemented by one or more live-action movies starring Charlie Chaplin, who had already been highly popular in Japan at that time.[32]<sup>108</sup> Moreover, Kitayama’s acquaintance and soon-to-be assistant, Yamamoto Sanae (aka Yamamoto Zenjirō; originally Toda Zenjirō), remembers to have been invited by Kitayama to watch “dekobō gachō by Fleischer”, recently imported from the US, at a cinema on a hot day, although he dates this to “1915, I think”. [295:76f.]<sup>109</sup> A bit later in his memoirs he explains that these movies had been French, but had come to Japan via the US. [295:81f.] (Neither the Fleischer brothers’ involvement nor the French origin of the animated movies is very convincing.)

Even though he had no previous knowledge, Kitayama claims he immediately understood the basic principles of these imported animated movies

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<sup>108</sup> At least one movie is easy to identify: *Yotōshi tentaku* was the Chaplin movie *A night out* (Essanay; 1915). In total 15 movies were shown; the titles of the animated movies are not known.[304]

<sup>109</sup> Tsugata writes that Kitayama knew Yamamoto since about 1914, when the latter came to learn yōga from Kitayama.[273:153]

and had found his (new) work in this way.[155:321f.] He then studied movements and timing.[155:322]

In 1917 Kitayama thought of a friend and *yōgaka*, Saitō Ioe at Nikkatsu,[155:322] who had been working in the film industry as a background painter etc. since the times of Yoshizawa Shōten.[261:140,202] Not really being conversant with the technical details, Saitō introduced Kitayama to Masumoto Kiyoshi, the head of the script department at Nikkatsu.[155:322] Using an article in the October 1918 issue of *Katsudō no sekai*, Tsugata dates this to January 1917.[273:80f.] Masumoto recognised Kitayama’s enthusiasm, sent him on to the general affairs department, and finally Kitayama could test his drawings at Nikkatsu’s Mukōjima Studio (“Mukōjima Satsuei-jo”, in today’s Sumida City, Tokyo).[155:322]

The first results were outright failures, according to Kitayama’s later description, but after further research at the desk Kitayama made progress[155:322] and on 20 May 1917 his first animated movie saw its premiere (see ch. 4/May). According to his recollections, at the end of March 1918 the first live-action movie with intertitles made by Kitayama, *Ikeru shikabane* (“The living corpse”; directed by Tanaka Eizō; Nikkatsu), was screened.[155:323]<sup>110</sup> That it had been his idea to upgrade the usual intertitles to “artistic” ones[155:323] was confirmed by director Tanaka Eizō in an interview with Tanaka Jun’ichirō.[261:277]

This reconstruction by Tsugata can be called plausible; yet, as he himself admits, there exist statements and sources that raise problems with this reconstruction (see especially [273:88ff.]).<sup>111</sup> So let us look at some of them,

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<sup>110</sup> The Japanese Cinema Database lists the live-action movie *Nogi shōgun (Aa, Nogi taishō)* (“Shogun Nogi (Ah, General Nogi)”; directed by Oguchi Tadashi; Nikkatsu; five reels; 1 September 1918) as having had intertitles by Kitayama.[104; 261:276] According to Tanaka Jun’ichi’s recollection this film, as well as *Kuni no homare* (“Glory of the country”; directed by Oguchi Tadashi; six reels; 18 June 1918), contained animated scenes by Kitayama.[263:37f.]

<sup>111</sup> It is interesting that, in his 1930 recollection, Kitayama writes about “someone called Shimokawa Dekoten, a disciple of Mr Kitazawa Rakuten” who announced an animated movie shortly after Kitayama. “At about the same time, Mr Kōuchi Jun’ichi” announced his movie.[155:322] Not only does Kitayama – intentionally, I believe – belittle Shimokawa, for instance by putting the “deko” 凸 from “dekokō”, instead of “heko”/“ō” 凹, into his name, he also manages to claim to have been the first to make

first noting that the 50-year-history of Nikkatsu[203] does not mention Kitayama and his animated movies.

According to the history of Japanese educational film by Tanaka Jun'ichirō, Kitayama knew the managing director of Nikkatsu, Suzuki Yōzaburō, and had painted intertitles etc. for Nikkatsu's live-action movies.<sup>112</sup> At Suzuki's request Kitayama then occupied himself with animated movies.[263:36] Suzuki had been managing director ("senmu") at Nikkatsu since its foundation in 1912, from 1914 on he was the highest-ranking manager;[203:210] he retired from his post in July 1921.[203:235]

In 1930 Kitayama had linked the start of his search for a new occupation with the closing-down of *Gendai no yōga*, that is 1914, even though he wrote 1916.[155:321] Although Kitayama was still active in the art and publishing world after mid-1914, it is quite possible that he was already looking for a new source of income. At the beginning of 1915, a notice appeared in the "literature and arts" section of the *Asahi Shimbun* that Kitayama Seitarō had opened a toy store in Gensuke-chō in today's Minato City in Tokyo.[29]<sup>113</sup> Therefore it is also possible that he had come to Nikkatsu in search of work before 1917. Moreover, his new-found interest in film might have been the consequence of working at Nikkatsu; after all, Kitayama himself had written in 1933 that among his acquaintances film had not been seen as "artistic" and going to the cinema had been shunned (from [273:63]). On the other hand, his recollections in 1930 are plausible, too: he was looking for a job, but also wished to enjoy life without spending much money – going to the movies was cheap entertainment.[155:321]

Kitayama also mentioned two "artistic works" in connection with his newly discovered fancy for film in 1916: *Kureopatora* and *Shizā*,[155:321] which likely were two Italian epic films by Enrico Guazzoni for Cines – *Marcantonio e Cleopatra* (*Antonī to Kureopatora*) from 1913, first released in

a Japanese animated movie. Then he writes that "Mr Shimokawa" and "Mr Kōuchi" had both stopped their work after two or three movies.[155:322f.] At least on these points Kitayama in 1930 is not a reliable source.

<sup>112</sup> Yoshiyama Kyokkō's brief statement on Kitayama could be interpreted the same way.[326:64]

<sup>113</sup> Considering the section title we can assume that it is the "correct" Kitayama Seitarō.

Japan in March 1914,[26]<sup>114</sup> but again in March 1916 as “the world’s best cultural movie”,[31] and *Cajus Julius Caesar* (*Shizū*) from 1914, with its Japanese premiere in June 1915.[30] Kitayama’s interest in film could thus date back to 1914, but he could just as well have seen re-releases.

Yamamoto Sanae’s memoirs also imply that Kitayama’s connections to Nikkatsu predate the summer of 1916. According to Yamamoto, he already met Kitayama one day after that screening of the animated movies at Nikkatsu’s Mukōjima Studio to discuss producing their own animated movies. He was meant to get 85 Yen from Kitayama – which would have been more than Shimokawa got from Tenkatsu (see above) –, Mineda Hiroshi<sup>115</sup> and Yamakawa Kunizō<sup>116</sup>, whom Kitayama had also had invited to the screening, 100 Yen each.[295:81]<sup>117</sup> Maybe Yamamoto compressed the events too much, but it is surprising that he would have met with Kitayama at Nikkatsu when Kitayama should have come into contact with this company only half a year later. On the other hand, if Kitayama had already been working for Nikkatsu, the choice of the meeting place would have been quite logical. However, we certainly cannot dismiss Tsugata’s contention that Yamamoto got his dates completely wrong and only became Kitayama’s assistant in the summer of 1917.[273:155]

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<sup>114</sup> The Japanese advertisement can be seen at [290].

<sup>115</sup> It is not really known when Mineda, who is incorrectly written by Yamamoto,[295:77] came into contact with Kitayama, likely through yōga. He later would become known as an illustrator. Mineda’s younger brother would later work with Kitayama at the *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* and marry his oldest daughter.[273:156f.]

<sup>116</sup> He is called Yamakawa Kunio by Yamamoto Sanae.[295:77] According to Kitayama in 1930, Yamakawa had been his only assistant at the beginning of his research into animation.[273:157] According to an entry in *Mizue*, no. 77, 3 November 1911, p. 30, Yamakawa had become a new member of the Osaka branch of the “Nihon Suisai Gakai”,[187] so it is likely that he, too, came into contact with Kitayama through yōga.

<sup>117</sup> However, in an earlier publication Yamamoto had written about only 20 Yen (from [273:155]), still more than the average monthly salary of Tokyo’s municipal employees.[310] A full-fledged camera man would earn 30 to 50 Yen a month at the time, as the head of a filming department of a film company 100 Yen or more.[119:34] It is not known whether the money was meant to come from Kitayama or from Nikkatsu. Yet even if we scale down the payments to Yamamoto, Mineda and Yamakawa, the sum would have been considerable for Kitayama to advance.

There remains the question exactly how Nikkatsu and Kitayama got into animated movie production. According to an article in the October 1918 issue of *Katsudō no seikai* Nikkatsu already had a “manga department”<sup>118</sup> at its Mukōjima Studio in autumn 1915; production started in January 1917 (from [273:80], see also [273:89f.]). On the other hand, in a notice in the July 1917 issue of the same journal, the start of production was dated only to early May 1917.[128] Interestingly, this notice does not mention Kitayama, but claims that the production was taken up according to plans by “Mr. Shinkai”, [128] i.e., Shinkai Bunjirō, whom Yamaguchi and Watanabe identify as involved with planning/scriptwriting at Nikkatsu’s Mukōjima Studio at the time.[293:10] His role in taking up animation, “which truly should be called a new business in our country”, [128] at Nikkatsu is unknown, but intriguing.

A mention in the August 1917 issue of *Katsudō gabō* claims that Nikkatsu had invited the editor of art magazines and *yōgaka* “Mr Kitayama” and had now successfully filmed “dekobō mangachō”. [115]

At this stage of research, we do not know for certain how Kitayama came to Nikkatsu and how they started their animation production. My reconstruction would run as follows: Kitayama had already been interested in film for some time before he focussed on imported animated movies. This may have been as late as January 1917, when there was a showing of animated movies at the Yūrakuzo which may even have been the venue for the release (or announcement?) of Shimokawa’s first movie (see ch. 4/January). (Later, Kitayama likely confused this event with one in summer 1917 when he invited Yamamoto Sanae and others to get their help in producing more anime.) Introduced by his friend Saitō Ioe, Kitayama tried to prod Nikkatsu, Tenkatsu’s main competitor, into helping him produce animated movies – and possibly got a job there, too, but not for animation. Kitayama himself wrote that Nikkatsu proved hesitant as far as animation was concerned, [155:323] so he had to do much of his research alone or with “an assistant called Yamakawa Kunizō”. [155:322]<sup>119</sup> After Shimoka-

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<sup>118</sup> Tanaka Jun’ichirō mentions a “senga department”. [263:37]

<sup>119</sup> It would be interesting to know whether Nikkatsu paid Yamakawa, or whether Kitayama promised him a share in future earnings. Kitayama himself should not have been

wa's movies had become popular (see ch. 4/April, part two), more information on how to produce animation was available and Kitayama could show some results, Nikkatsu finally decided to enter production in early May 1917.

The exact relationship between Kitayama and Nikkatsu in 1917 and beyond is also opaque. It is somewhat surprising that Kitayama did not just his “desk research”, [155:322] but also later the drawings, at home; and had his assistants/helpers drawing there, too. [295:82; 273:144] On the other hand, Tanaka Jun'ichi claimed that Kōuchi Jun'ichi, too, had worked on animated movies such as *Namakuragatana* at his home. [263:55]

According to Yamamoto Sanae, the drawings were produced in Kitayama's home, the filming was done at Mukōjima Studio – by Takagi Taisaku and Kanai Kūichirō (originally Satō Kūichirō)<sup>120</sup> – and the completed film was only released in cinemas after negotiations between Kitayama and Nikkatsu. [295:82] But we do not know whether this was true for all of the time Kitayama and Nikkatsu produced animated movies (Yamamoto mentions *Momotarō*, *Kachikachiyama* and *Urashima Tarō*, which points to the end of 1917)<sup>121</sup> – or at all, as Yamamoto is not the most reliable witness. Yet it seems possible that Kitayama was more of a sub-contractor or even freelancer, as far as animation is concerned, with Nikkatsu providing only ac-

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able to pay an assistant unless he already received money from Nikkatsu. Note, too, that Kitayama stresses that he did his research “completely independent”, with an assistant, but complains about Shimokawa and Kōuchi apparently having been in contact, [155:322] for which I do not see any evidence regarding their work on animation.

<sup>120</sup> According to the article in the October 1918 issue of *Katsudō no sekai* Kitayama had two people helping him with the drawings and one with the filming (from [273:152].) Besides Yamamoto Sanae, Kanai is probably the most interesting former Kitayama assistant as far as film history is concerned. In 1923 or 1924 he founded his animation studio “Tōkyō Senga Firumu Seisakujo” (“Tokyo Senga Film Studio”), which produced some animated movies and films in the late 1920s and early 1930s, among them two with Yamamoto Sanae. [273:160ff.; 293:196f.; 189:46,58] (His name is written differently in the 1930 “Catalogue of educational films”. [189:furoku20] He was also active as a documentary film maker. [291]

<sup>121</sup> See chapters 4 and 5. This might also be taken as evidence for Tsugata's hypothesis that Yamamoto only became a member of Kitayama's staff in summer 1917 (see above).

cess to filming equipment and distribution of the finished product on a case-by-case basis.

Perhaps further research will settle some of these points.

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In March 1917 Kitayama's first son was born; one month later he had another daughter – by Takaoka Chiyo, with whom he was “acquainted”. [273:277] This daughter already died in August. [273:277] February 1918 saw the birth of another child with Takaoka, his wife bore a third daughter in August 1919, and in March 1920 he had a third child with Takaoka, whereupon his wife got a divorce in September 1920. [273:278]

In contrast to Shimokawa and, perhaps, Kōuchi, Kitayama made animated films also in 1918 and 1919 (see ch. 5). To be able to work for other customers, too, at least according to his own claims, [155:323f.] Kitayama opened what has been called Japan's first animation studio, the “Kitayama Film Factory” (“Kitayama Eiga Seisakujo”) in today's Sumida City near Nikkatsu's Mukōjima Studio. [273:144f.] The exact date is not known – and Kitayama himself gives various dates: 1919, though not explicitly, [155:323] and 1921 (from [273:140ff.]) –, also because we do not know how much time passed between his leaving Nikkatsu and opening his studio. We should be aware that after early August 1918 no animated film by Kitayama seems to have been released in a cinema on its own (see ch. 5), so it is possible that Kitayama left, cut off his ties with, or was cut off by, Nikkatsu already in the second half of 1919 and opened his studio in 1920. In his 1925 film history, at least, Ishimaki lists Kitayama's as one of seven film companies that were founded in 1920. [99:326] Based mainly on an entry in a 1922 directory of people associated with film, Tsugata gives autumn 1921 as the likeliest date for the establishment of Kitayama's studio. [273:143] Such a comparatively late date would also correspond to the first (known) animated film by his studio coming out in February 1922 (see below).

The reasons for the split between Nikkatsu and Kitayama are, again, opaque. He later wrote that he had found the company atmosphere unsatisfying and left (from [273:142]). Nikkatsu's financial situation improved during 1918, [99:321] but the animation business may not have turned out as expected, so maybe Nikkatsu ditched Kitayama. (Personally, I slightly

tend towards this scenario.) On the other hand, Kitayama may have perceived better chances in what Ishimaki calls “the post-war golden age”, [99:325] though this seems to have been over by 1920 already. [203:77] Moreover, Nikkatsu director Makino Shōzō, who has been called Japan’s “first film director” [320:51] and whom Kitayama apparently knew at the time (and later worked for), [273:142] had established in 1919 an educational film production company called “Mikado Shōkai”, [263:38f.] which may have been an inspiration for Kitayama. [273:142]

When other companies had work for Kitayama, however, it was in the field of animated sequences and intertitles, rather than complete animated films. [293:11] As he wrote in 1930, he could not be certain to get one or two orders by a ministry or state-owned company a year. [155:328] One might thus quibble with the claim that Kitayama had established “Japan’s first specialised animation studio” [273:140]. Its output of animated (or hybrid) film (see below) seems rather low and raises the question whether animation really was the main purpose of the studio – after all, its name does not specify animation and according to the directory entry in 1922 the purpose of the studio was “mainly titles and manga” (from [273:143]). In 1930 Kitayama wrote: “Ever since then [his art title work on *Ikeru shikabane* in 1918] I have become a ‘title maker’, manga production did not exceed being a sideline to this.” [155:323] On the other hand he also claimed that senga had become nearly commonplace as parts of advertising and educational films, [155:324] although I wonder what exactly he meant by “senga” in this case.

Yet, if Kitayama Eiga Seisakujo could be called an “animation studio”, despite being just an “art title” studio with a sideline in animation, the hitherto scarcely noticed “Nihon Firumu Kyōkai” (“Japan Film Association”) might have come even earlier. Already founded in 1903, it probably had begun its own production of educational films in the early Taishō era with Sugita Kametarō at the helm. [263:28]¹²² And it made a wide range of adver-

¹²² According to the 1930 “Catalogue of educational films” the earliest dated film produced and/or distributed by Nihon Firumu Kyōkai was from May 1913, [189:63] but I consider this a misprint. Yet at least four of its films on the military are dated 1919, [189:127] so at that stage it was certainly active.

tising and educational,[263:54] live-action (e.g., [189:8f.]) and animated films (hybrids?). Although no dates are provided for many of its films listed in the 1930 “Catalogue of educational films” of the Japanese Ministry of Culture, its earliest dated “senga”¹²³ are from March 1921, about a year before those from Kitayama’s studio, but about topics that were also taken up by Kitayama (see below). Unfortunately there seems to be no information about who did the animation for Nihon Firumu Kyōkai. Might it have been Kōuchi Jun’ichi, Ōishi Ikuo (see ch. 5/August 1918) or one of Kitayama’s former assistants? According to the 1930 “Catalogue”, the last films by Nihon Firumu Kyōkai seem to date from late 1926,[189:111] but whether this marked the end of its production activity remains open.

According to Tsugata, Kitayama’s studio is thought to have had quite a lot of staff, yet he can name only seven people: Yamamoto Sanae, Mineda Hiroshi, Yamakawa Kunizō, Hashiguchi ?,¹²⁴ Ishikawa Takahiro,¹²⁵ Takagi Taisaku¹²⁶ and Kanai Kiichirō.[273:153ff.] Tellingly, except for Yamamoto Sanae, details about when and how long they worked with/for Kitayama are hazy to non-existent; especially concerning the question whether they were employed only during the period when Kitayama’s movies were released by Nikkatsu.¹²⁷ Yamamoto, on the other hand, remembers that

¹²³ The 1930 “Catalogue of educational films”[189] uses the categories “geki” (“drama”), “jitsu” (“reality”) and “senga”. However, some mistakes seem to have been made, and “senga” certainly included live-action/animation hybrids (see below).

¹²⁴ Tsugata provides no reading of Hashiguchi’s personal name, and the character used has quite a lot of possible readings, among them Kotobuki, Toshi, Hisashi, or Makoto.

¹²⁵ He is mentioned as staff member for filming in connection with the short animated film *Son Gokū* (“Son Goku”) by “Akume Shōkai” (“Acme Company”) in 1928 (from [273:158]). This company, established in 1919,[263:54] made and/or distributed quite a lot of “senga” as well as documentaries, local and foreign, in the 1920s (e.g., [189:56,96f.]).

¹²⁶ Takagi does not seem to have been one of Kitayama’s staff members, but a cameraman for Nikkatsu.[261:359f.] He is listed as a member of the filming staff for several short animated films by Nichidō Eiga, where Yamamoto Sanae was working as a director, from 1953 to 1955.[293:154ff.; 273:159] This might explain why he does not appear in Kitayama’s writings, but in Yamamoto’s memoirs.[273:159]

¹²⁷ One of Kitayama’s daughters remembers five or six people drawing animations in Kitayama’s house at the same time,[273:165] likely when he worked for Nikkatsu.

Mineda and Yamakawa gave up the tedious work of cutout animation quite suddenly,¹²⁸ and that he was then alone with Kitayama.[295:83] In an earlier article he claimed that Kitayama did not equally share the profits with his closest assistants and behaved like a “master” (from [273:176]). Other possible employees were turned down by Kitayama and Yamamoto because they considered their work as a craft, not as art, and none of the applicants intended to stay long.[295:83] Obviously, at least Yamamoto did not want to reveal “craft secrets” to potential competitors, as can be seen in his reluctance to let even his old acquaintance Murata Yasuji see his workplace, probably in 1925.[211:60] In fact, Murata would soon be a competitor, beginning with his film *Saru kani gassen* (“The battle between monkey and crab”; [v9]) in 1927, the same story Kitayama had used for his first animated movie.

As far as animated film was concerned, Kitayama specialised in advertising and educational content.[273:147,205] He seems to have produced the following films¹²⁹ which were listed as “senga” by the Ministry of Culture in its 1930 “Catalogue”, although they may also have been hybrids:

- *Kiatsu to mizuage ponpu* (“Atmospheric pressure and hydraulic pump”; one reel; February 1922¹³⁰).[189:58; 273:147] A senga with the same title, also a one-reeler, had been produced by Nihon Firumu Kyōkai already in March 1921.[189:58]
- *Shokubutsu seiri seishoku no maki* (“Plant physiology and reproduction”; one reel; March 1922).[189:64; 273:147; 293:193] Nihon Firumu Kyōkai made a senga called *Shokubutsu hanshoku no maki* (*Plant propagation*; one reel) in March 1923.[189:64]

¹²⁸ In 1930 Kitayama mentioned Kanai, Ishikawa, Yamamoto, Hashiguchi “and others” as having been his disciples at (presumably) the time of his independent studio, but not Mineda and Yamakawa.[155:324]

¹²⁹ Yamaguchi and Watanabe mention the possibility of Kitayama having drawn for a 1923 live-action/animation hybrid educational film by Yokohama Shinema called *Yuki* (“Snow”; one reel).[293:19,193]

¹³⁰ It is listed under 1921 in [271:21; 293:193].

- *Chikyū no maki* (“The earth”; one reel ¹³¹; August 1922).[273:147; 293:193; 189:58] Another senga simply titled *Chikyū* (“Earth”; one reel) had been made by Nihon Firumu Kyōkai in March 1921.[189:58]
- *Korobanu saki no tsue* (“Look before you leap”; one reel; May 1923).[273:147; 293:193] According to the 1930 Ministry of Culture “Catalogue of educational films”, a (the?) senga with this title was produced by Nihon Firumu Kyōkai in 1923.[189:15]¹³²
- *Shokubutsu no seiri* (“Plant physiology”; August 1923).[189:64; 273:147] None of these films is marked in the 1930 “Catalogue” as having been acknowledged or recommended by the Ministry of Culture.
- *Akumabarai* (“Exorcism”; 1923); apparently commissioned by the Ministry of Communications.[293:193; 273:147] Not listed in the 1930 “Catalogue”.

Likely in 1922, Kitayama produced a film with senga for Kishi Kazuta who at the time was trying to convince Tokyo city councillors to back garbage disposal by incineration.[273:178f.]

One more film, or rather series of films, with which Kitayama was involved by drawing the senga (himself?), was *Kōkū eisei (Oral Hygiene)*, produced by “Raion Hamigaki” (“Lion Toothpaste”) in 1923, whose eight parts would have run for about two hours in all.[273:177ff.] However, it is extremely unlikely that it was completely, or even mostly, animated; and since it is a “lost film”, like most of Kitayama’s works (see chapters 4 and 5), we do not know whether (some of) the senga were perhaps just static illustrations,[273:185f.] as the images reprinted by Tsugata imply.[273:183]

After the Great Kantō Earthquake in September 1923 Kitayama had sent his family to his hometown of Wakayama, while he went to Kyoto to work at Makino Eiga, the film production company of Makino Shōzō.[273:279] Yamamoto Sanae continued at the damaged studio in Tokyo for a short time, likely completing the movie *Kyōiku otogi manga Usagi to kame*

¹³¹ Two reels according to [189:58].

¹³² A similar problem is presented by the Nihon Firumu Kyōkai senga *Tonchi bakase* (“Quick-witted doctor”; one reel; April 1925; about country life)[189:28] which is either identical, or parallel, to one with the same title, apparently made by Yamamoto Sanae in 1925.[293:194]

(“Educational folktale manga: The hare and the tortoise”; one reel; 1924; [v11]) and two other ones which should therefore be counted as his films, and then setting up his own animation business.[273:155f.] From 1924 until at least 1932 Kitayama seems to have been working for the news film department of the “Ōsaka Mainichi Shimbun-sha”, but information on his activity there (developing film, filming) is sparse.[273:218ff.] In 1929 he founded a company (“Kitayama Katsuei Shōkai”, roughly “Kitayama Film Company”) for film titles, film development etc. in Osaka[273:279] Through this company he also offered, among other things, UV lamps made by Siemens for medical purposes.[273:231] The byline to his 1930 book chapter describes him as “Dai-Mai Kinema Niyūsu gishi” (“technician at Ōsaka Mainichi Kinema News”).[155:321]

For some reason, no records seem to exist of animated films made by Kitayama between 1924 and 1929.¹³³ An advertisement by Kitayama Katsuei Shōkai in 1930 mentions several educational films on sale as 16mm films, among them *Issun bōshi* (“One-inch boy”) and *Ari to bato* (“The ant and the pigeon”), which likely were copies of the 35mm movies with the same titles from 1918 (see ch. 5);[273:206f.] the three educational animated films produced in 1922 (see above); as well as three films that, according to Tsugata, might have been made in 1924 or 1925 by Kitayama[273:204ff.,279]:

- *Jōki kikan* (“Steam engine”; one reel).
- *Kinrō no ari* (“The hard-working ant”; one reel). Tsugata argues that it might have been based on Aesop’s fable about the ant and the grasshopper.[273:205]
- *Kyōchō* (“Co-operation”; one reel). According to a 1934 description, two boys fight over hard bread when another boy arrives and teaches them the usefulness of co-operation (from [273:205]).

But we do not know to which degree these rather short films (about three-and-a-half minutes each[273:205]) were animated, and it is possible that they, too, had been made in 1922/23 while Yamamoto Sanae was still employed by Kitayama. (Tsugata’s dating has its merits, yet he does tend to

¹³³ In his 1927 chapter on manga and senga, Shōji Tamaichi only mentions Kitayama’s movies based on children’s tales “about ten years ago”, but writes that “today” there were no further works by him.[250:190]

put Kitayama in the best light possible.) According to some sources, Kitayama left animation after the Great Kantō Earthquake,[198; 230:102] which looks plausible to me. Perhaps he agreed with Unno Kōtoku's blunt comment in his 1924 book *Gakkō to katsudō shashin* ("School and film") that "educational film production in our country at this time is completely impossible", a major reason being lack of capital.[279:157] In fact, Kitayama complained in 1930 that payments for animated film in Japan were about a tenth to a twentieth of those in foreign markets. Even if he received about one yen per "shaku" (about one foot) of animated film from ministries and such, these were rather rare occasions. Moreover, in Japan such orders were always urgent and on the cheap, so it was "impossible to make great works like those in foreign countries".[155:328]¹³⁴

In 1932 the Ōsaka Mainichi Shimbun-sha offered a hybrid educational movie called *En* ("Circle"), with a length of seven minutes. This film covered basic explanations of a circle and how to calculate, for example, its area. Kitayama made the drawings ("senga") and filmed them – we do not know whether this would have counted as "animation" –, whereas Kondō Iyokichi was responsible for the script, direction and cutting.[273:209ff.] *En* is one of the rare examples of a later educational film with participation by Kitayama where we have a picture: it comes from the live-action part of *En* and shows the wheels of a car and of a bicycle (see [273:213]).

Kitayama also directed two live-action educational movies in 1932 and 1933 (photos in [273:230]), which were based on scripts from a story competition about children's experiences by the journal *Eiga kyōiku* ("Film education")[273:227]:

- *Tōge* ("Mountain pass"; 1,220 ft.; September 1932). The film, which still seems to exist, is about two young brothers, one of them limping, overcoming their estrangement on a mountain pass on the way to school (from [273:227ff.]).
- *Pocketto* ("Pocket"; 1,010 ft.; 1933).[273:228]

¹³⁴ In this context Kitayama also calls into doubt the usefulness or necessity of producing fictional animated film in Japan, even though he admired some examples from a technical point of view.[155:329]

In February 1930 Kitayama published a chapter titled *Sen'eiga no tsukurikata* (“How to make animated film”) in a book that had been the result of a summer academy on educational film in his hometown of Wakayama. This is claimed to have been the first detailed publication on animation in Japanese.[273:280]¹³⁵ While it is indeed detailed on a couple of issues and offers hints from practice, Shōji Tamaichi had covered some of the same ground already in 1927 in a chapter of his book *Katsudō shashin no chishiki* (“Film knowledge”).[250:183ff.] And Kitayama himself refers to a 1929 article by Ōfuji Noburō (see below) in the journal *Eiga kyōiku* for illustrated information on the “very difficult” depiction of animals’ movement and such things.[155:339] Whether Kitayama’s publication was much more helpful to potential practitioners than those articles from 1916 and 1917 (see ch. 2.4) is debatable.

In August 1933 Kitayama also published an article on “My manga view”, [273:281] but does no longer seem to have been active in animation – or indeed in film production. Instead he tried to develop film projectors, though without financial success.[273:234f.] He moved from Osaka to Sakai in Osaka prefecture and died from a brain tumour on 13 February 1945 in Takaishi in the same prefecture.[273:281]

Looking back, Kitayama seems to have been a middling painter/artist, though a industrious organiser and editor. How many animated films/movies he made in his career is difficult to ascertain for three reasons:

- We do not know exactly which role(s) he played for the films associated with his name. For example, *En* should not be counted as a Kitayama film, in my opinion.
- Several of his films likely were hybrids with live action and possibly still photography, but we do not know to which degree.
- Some educational and advertising films likely are still unknown, something that is probably true for all three pioneers.

¹³⁵ It has been mentioned elsewhere that “nearly all illustrations” in Kitayama’s *Sen'eiga no tsukurikata* had been lifted from E. G. Lutz’ book *Animated Cartoons*. [273:168] Actually, Kitayama slightly changed, for example, Lutz’ illustrations of a thaumatrope [155:326; 176:17] and of a car with exhaust clouds, [155:336; 176:161] and added Japanese text, e.g., [155:330; 176:203].

Tsugata claims “more than 30” animated films as Kitayama’s – plus animated sections of live-action movies. [273:253] Kitayama himself wrote in 1930 of “several tens” of animated films.[155:323] Ten animated movies seem to have been produced in 1917, eleven in 1918 and one animated film in 1919 (see chapters 4 and 5). After (formal?) independence most, if not all, of the animated films (or hybrids) seem to have been made in 1922 and 1923 with Yamamoto Sanae.

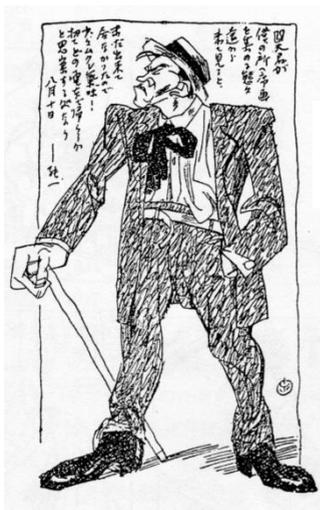
3.3 Kōuchi Jun’ichi

Among the three pioneers, Kōuchi Jun’ichi is probably the least known, and the one we know least about. According to a statement by Kōuchi he was born in September 1886,[158:235] apparently in Okayama prefecture.[293:10] Later he presumably moved with his family to Tokyo;[293:10] his father Kōuchi Hisatarō seems to have converted from Buddhism to socialism.[1:62f.] As a child, Jun’ichi had dreamed of becoming a painter, but had given up on this abruptly when he heard that as a painter he would remain poor his whole life.[158:234] Only later would a friend at school rekindle his enthusiasm for painting. In January 1905 he therefore became a disciple of Miyake Kokki to learn watercolour painting. (Miyake had, inter alia, contributed to the first three issues of Kitayama’s *Gendai no yōga*. [11]) In 1906 Kōuchi began to learn yōga, but does not seem to have been very successful. Through Miyake he received an invitation by Kitazawa Rakuten in April 1908¹³⁶ and began to learn to draw manga (caricature and comic strips) at the *Tokyo Puck*. [158:234]

Kitazawa left the *Tokyo Puck* in May 1912,[245:29] and probably for that reason Kōuchi also changed jobs and drew political manga (caricatures) for the *Tōkyō Maiyū Shinbun* until February 1917.[158:234] During that time he also seems to have drawn the title of an anarchistic journal,[1] and to have published illustrated stories in the journal *Shōjo gabō* (“Illustrated information for girls”).[270] In 1916 he wrote a preface for Shimokawa’s first book *Ponchi shōzō*;[218:130] of course, both knew each other as disciples of

¹³⁶ 1907 according to [293:10].

Kitazawa and both were members of the “Tokyo Manga Association” (“Tōkyō Mangakai”), established in 1915.[107:47,113]



Ill. 10: Portrait of Shimokawa Ōten by Kōuchi Jun'ichi (1916)

At the request of Kobayashi Kisaburō (see ch. 3.4), Kōuchi became an animation producer in February 1917.[158:234]¹³⁷ According to a report in the April 1917 issue of *Katsudō gabō*, Kobayashi had imported equipment from the US and “a certain artist” was in the midst of producing *Ushiwaka to Benkei*,[228:132] likely meant to be about the famous encounter of the noble samurai Minamoto no Yoshitsune (Ushiwaka) and the warrior monk Musashibō Benkei who became his retainer afterwards.

Kōuchi's first movie premiered in June 1917, but had a different plot (see ch. 4/June). According to Kōuchi, the design of this movie was done by him and Maekawa Senpan (from[4:98]) who, like Kōuchi, was a painter and caricaturist, had worked for the *Tokyo Puck*, and would later become well-known for his “hanga” (wood-cuts).[57]¹³⁸ It is likely that a cameraman

¹³⁷ Yamaguchi and Watanabe claim that this happened in 1916,[293:10] but this appears to be a case where we can trust one of the pioneers himself. See also ch. 3.4.

¹³⁸ In the 1930s, Maekawa published manga in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* alongside Shimokawa and Kōuchi, especially the comic strip serial *Awatemono no Kuma-san* (“Scatterbrained Mr Bear”) beginning in 1930. That the Kyoto International Manga Museum listed

from Kobayashi Shōkai did the filming at its studio in Minami-Senju in today's Arakawa City in Tokyo.[127]

Not even a year had passed and Kōuchi became unemployed because Kobayashi went bankrupt.[158:235] Beginning in February 1918, he again drew manga, this time for the *Tōkyō Mainichi Shimbun*[158:235] and for the third incarnation of the *Tōkyō Puck*.[4:97] At the time he was not married and mentions a younger brother and a younger sister besides his parents.[158:235]

Dates given by Sugimoto Gorō (see below and ch. 4/Exact date unknown) imply that Kōuchi was still making animated films at that time; although there seems to be no other evidence for such an assertion, especially not in Kōuchi's article in 1920,[158] we cannot completely deny the possibility that he might have been working for some other company, perhaps Nihon Firumu Kyōkai (see ch. 3.2). In 1922 Kōuchi published a collection of caricatures and texts called *Karateppō* ("Random musings") with Ishida Ryūzō. In the preface he calls manga "an important factor in today's life".[159:2]

The anime historian Yamaguchi Katsunori interviewed Kōuchi in the 1960s; this interview was used, among other sources, in the hitherto most extensive article on Kōuchi by Adachi Gen.[1] According to this interview Gotō Shinpei, former cabinet minister and mayor of Tokyo City, now home minister and responsible for the reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kantō Earthquake, asked Kōuchi at the end of 1923 to prepare an animated advertising film for his new book.[1:69] (This might strengthen the case that Kōuchi was still active in, or at least connected to, the film business. It is hard to believe that Gotō suddenly remembered a short animated movie shown more than six years ago – if he had seen it in the first place.)

This film was finished in February 1924 as *Ninki no shōten ni tateru Gotō Shinpei* ("Gotō Shinpei being the focal point of popularity"; one reel).[1:69;

Maekawa as a fourth pioneer of Japanese animation in a recent exhibition seems excessive – and was perhaps influenced by Maekawa having been born in Kyoto, as Ishida Shigesaburō.[163] If he is counted among the "pioneers", why not Yamamoto Sanae or Okabe Shigeyuki, Shimokawa's cameraman, too?

293:193] For this film Kōuchi also seems to have established the “Sumikazu¹³⁹ Eiga Sōsakusha” (lit., “Sumikazu Film Production Company”; Kōuchi himself called it “SK Animated Cartoon Studio”[v6]) to produce animated, hybrid, documentary and possibly live-action films:

- *Hoju no sasayaki* (“Whisper of the hoju [jewel]”; one reel; 1924). A PR film for Mutō Sanji, a businessman and political party leader.[293:193f.] Apparently an animated movie or hybrid.
- *Kokka o sukue* (“Saving the nation”; one reel; September 1925).[189:107] Another political PR film,[293:194] classified as “senga”. [189:107]
- *Sameyo yūkensha* (“Wake up, eligible voters”; one reel; September 1925).[189:108] Another political PR film,[293:194] classified as “senga”. [189:108]
- *Yosan seiji* (“Budget politics”; one reel; September 1925).[189:108] Another political PR film,[293:194] classified as “senga”. [189:108]
- *Shisei sasshin* (“Reform of city politics”; one reel; October 1925).[189:109] Another political PR film,[293:194] classified as “senga”. [189:109]
- *Hyōroku musha shugyō* (“The wandering samurai Hyōroku; one reel).[293:195] Adachi dates this film to 1926,[1:69] whereas Yamaguchi and Watanabe only write that it was made during the Taishō era (until 1926).[293:195] Sugimoto Gorō, who printed a still from the film, and others date it to 1920![256:411f.; 266; 105] The samurai Hyōroku is deceived by an old fox into becoming a monk.[293:195] An animated entertainment film.
- *Eiga enzetsu Seiji no rinrika* (“Film lecture – Ethicising politics”; three reels; January 1927[189:108]) is still extant. Most of the 32 minutes of this film are taken up by Japanese text appearing, vanishing, being moved around and highlighted.¹⁴⁰ Yet there are also cutout-animated sequences, some of which clearly show Kōuchi being a political cartoonist; there is effect animation; and a bit of live action.[v6] The film

¹³⁹ “Sumikazu” is an alternative reading of the kanji used in “Jun’ichi”.

¹⁴⁰ Shōji Tamaichi pointed out similarities between titles with “moving” letters or illustrations and manga.[250:80] Kitayama discussed such titles in his 1930 publication.[155:340]

was classified as “senga”, [189:108] which proves that this category in the 1930 “Catalogue of educational films” included hybrids.

- *Kokumin taikai* (“National assembly”; one reel; March 1927). Classified as “jitsu”. [189:93]
- *Kyōdō no chikara* (“The strength of co-operation”; one reel; September 1927). [189:107; 293:196] Classified as “senga”. [189:107]
- *Nisebotoke* (“False Buddha”; two reels; January 1928). Materials on national political education, classified, possibly wrongly, as “geki”. [189:130]
- *Kongōsan kenbutsu* (“Mt. Kongō sightseeing”; two reels; June 1928). A film about the sights of Mt. Kongō in Osaka prefecture, classified as “jitsu”. [189:76]
- *Fusen man shi Tokubetsu gikai* (“Manga history of universal suffrage: Special congress”; two reels; October 1928). [189:108] A “senga” [189:108] on the first Japanese parliamentary elections with male universal suffrage in 1928. [293:198]
- *Gotai-ten hōshuku Odawara saiten seikyō* (“Enthronement celebrations: Festival success in Odawara”; one reel; November 1928). Classified as “jitsu”, [189:90] obviously about the celebrations in Odawara in Kanagawa prefecture in connection with the enthronement of the Shōwa emperor in that year.
- *Fusen man shi Kyōteian no maki* (“Manga history of universal suffrage: Proposal”; two reels¹⁴¹; May 1929). Classified as “jitsu”. [189:108]

Surprisingly, Kōuchi’s apparently last animated movie, *Chōngire hebi* (“The beheaded snake”; 1930; one reel, 4 min. [293:203]), was very briefly described in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*: a snake, a frog, a beetle and a small bird appear in this movie. More importantly, the article claims that this had been the first time since *Namakuragatana* (in 1917) that Kōuchi had made an appearance with an animated movie. [314] His films during the 1920s do not seem to have been noticed much – or were not associated with animation by the general public. Less than two weeks later another article also claimed that Kōuchi had “only recently taken up the production of manga eiga”. [315]

¹⁴¹ One reel according to [293:201].

According to Yamaguchi and Watanabe, the “talkie” movie (i.e., a movie synchronized with a record) was screened in 1931 and the story concerned a snake which came out of a hole in spring, but had its body sliced into half. A frog emerges from the wound and is startled by the big snake. The snake orders him to pull out its tail. The frog crawls into the tail and battles with the snake; they decide the battle by throwing a ball. The frog throws the ball into the snake’s mouth, whereupon four or five other frogs emerge from its belly. The snake, in its hunger, begins to swallow its tail, thus reconnecting its body.[293:203]

Yamaguchi and Watanabe also quote Kōuchi claiming that the snake had several joints made of bamboo, but do not give the source and deny this claim.[293:24] In the second article in *Yomiuri Shimbun* Kōuchi describes standard cutout animation and does not mention the use of bamboo (see also ch. 4/June).[315]

There does not seem to be a record of Kōuchi producing any film afterwards. It should be noted, however, that Kōuchi had written at least two articles on amateur film in the journal *Kamera* (*Camera*) in 1924¹⁴² and an entry on film in a multi-volume course on photography, also by the publisher “Arusu”, in 1928.[12] (Miyake Kokki wrote the introductory chapter for that course.) In 1932 and 1933 Kōuchi drew quite a lot of manga (caricatures) for the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, likely on the instigation of his former colleague Shimokawa Ōten, who also may have been responsible for the “re-discovery” of Kōuchi. One can find several “collective works” on the “manga page” of Sunday evening editions of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, edited by Shimokawa; for example, on 13 June 1932 caricatures by Shimokawa, Kōuchi and other mangaka on “political party disputes” were collected on more than half a page of the paper.[316] Kōuchi seems to have become a staff member of the newspaper already in January 1932.[293:24]

¹⁴² This is based on metadata in the National Diet Library Digital Collections. One or more articles by Kōuchi in this journal are said to have brought Ōfuji Noburō (see below) into film-making.[293:10; 209:15,41] Unless Kōuchi also published in this journal earlier than 1924, this seems unlikely as Ōfuji had set up his own studio by June 1924 and made his first test films.[209:15,37] According to the National Film Center, he had founded his own studio already in 1921, though here, too, the date of his first films is given as 1924.[199]

Not much is known about Kōuchi after that time. In 1934 the film journal *Eiga hyōron* (“Film critique”) surveyed people active in animation, but Kōuchi’s statements are quite evasive.[76:41] (Shimokawa was also asked and said that he would like to make nonsense films, perhaps with Mussolini’s likeness appearing, and thought Yokoyama Ryūichi might be a good man for animation;[76:41] Kitayama’s name is not mentioned.) Kōuchi contributed two pieces to a manga collection on “kessen” (“decisive war”) in 1944, for the time after the war we know next to nothing about his activities.[1:71]¹⁴³ Kōuchi died on 6 October 1970 in Chōfu in Tokyo prefecture.[292]

It is difficult to say anything substantial about Kōuchi’s place in manga history. As far as animation is concerned, he likely made three animated movies in 1917 (see ch. 4), and ca. 20 films/movies in all, including hybrids and documentaries. However, like Kitayama he may have been involved in more. Ōfuji Noburō (originally Ōfuji Nobushichirō), an important animation artist, especially in cutout and silhouette animation,[229] studied with Kōuchi, though we do not really know exactly when.[209:15; 86:111]

3.4 The three film companies Nikkatsu, Tenkatsu and Kobayashi Shōkai

In 1912 Umeya Shōkichi, the founder of the Japanese film company M. Pathe (which had no relation to the French or American Pathe), set about the merger of the four biggest film companies in Japan whose competition among each other had become fierce: his M. Pathe, Yoshizawa Shōten, Yokota Shōkai, and Fukuhōdō.[203:73f.; 261:194ff.; 250:338f.] All of them were active as film importers,¹⁴⁴ producers, and distributors to their own

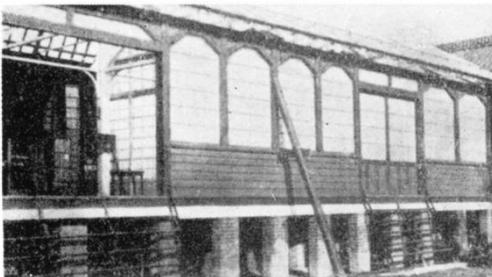
¹⁴³ Digitization is progressing in Japan, too, so even now we do get a number of hits when searching for “Kōuchi Jun’ichi”. But without being able to access the full text, it cannot be determined whether it was “our” Kōuchi who, for instance, published in *Keizai magajin* (“Economics Magazine”) at the beginning of the 1940s, and twice in 1950 in *Shōgi sekai* (“Shōgi World”; shōgi is Japanese chess).

¹⁴⁴ Yoshizawa and Fukuhōdō had representatives in London, yet they also bought from importers in Kobe and Yokohama.[203:78]

and associated cinemas. (The first cinema in Japan with chairs, the Denkikan, had been established in 1903 in Tokyo by Yoshizawa Shōten;[97:752] in 1909 there were already more than 70 cinemas in Tokyo alone.[203:73]) In February 1912 a “trust” called “Dai-Nihon Firumu Kikai Seizō KK” (“Greater Japanese Film Apparatus Production Company, Limited”) was established,[99:318; 22; 23]¹⁴⁵ which bought out the four companies – especially Fukuhōdō put up some resistance[110:24] –, then changed its name to “Nippon Katsudō Firumu KK” (“Japanese Moving Film Production Joint-stock Company”).[99:318]

After Fukuhōdō had been bought out at the end of July 1917 the merger was officially announced,[250:341; 203:74] and on 10 September 1912 the Nippon Katsudō Firumu KK held its inaugural meeting; the next day it was decided to change the name to “Nippon Katsudō Shashin KK” (“Japanese Film Joint-Stock Corporation”),[24] better known as “Nikkatsu”. Its English name at the time was “Japan Cinematograph Co Ltd” (e.g., [325]).

Only a short time after its establishment financial problems and strife among Nikkatsu’s employees led, among other things, to Umeya retiring from his creation;[203:74] he later founded the smaller film company “M. Kashī Shōkai” (“M. Kashii & Co.”).[216:80] Nevertheless, at the end of May 1913 Nikkatsu managed 19 cinemas itself and had more than 150 associated cinemas all over Japan.[203:75]



Ill. 11: Exterior of Nikkatsu’s Mukōjima Studio (1913-1923)

¹⁴⁵ A different version of Nikkatsu’s pre-history is presented by Donald Richie[223:31f.] and Jasper Sharp,[241:153] but without references, and not quite identical. Both claim that the trust called “Dai-Nihon Firumu Kikai Seizō KK” had already existed for a longer time, according to Richie[223:31] since 1910, according to Sharp[241:153] since 1909.

In October 1913 Nikkatsu opened its Mukōjima Studio, which also had a “glass stage” to use as much daylight as possible for filming.[203:74] (Yoshizawa Shōten had built its first studio, on a smaller scale, in today’s Meguro City in Tokyo in 1908.[203:73; 97:766])¹⁴⁶ By now Nikkatsu had become the most important film producer in Japan,[320:54] but would still buy foreign films in Yokohama, London, and increasingly in New York.¹⁴⁷

After mid-1919 Nikkatsu no longer seems to have been interested in anime, save for a couple of movies in the years around 1930 when it produced and distributed, inter alia, Masaoka Kenzō’s first animated movie *Nansensu monogatari, dai ippen: Sarugashima* (“Tales of Shipwreck [or Nonsense Stories], part one: Monkey Island”; 1930; [v7]).[293:24; 86:63f.] After the Second World War Nikkatsu became known for action movies;[241:181ff.] in the 1970s it was famous for its “roman poruno” (“romantic pornography”).[240:123ff.]

Nikkatsu had scarcely been established when a former high-ranking employee of Fukuhōdō, Kobayashi Kisaburō, left it – twice within a short time.[110:25] The first time, at the end of 1912, he founded “Tokiya Shōkai” (“Tokiya Company”, named after the Tokiwaza, a formerly Fukuhōdō-run cinema in Asakusa/Tokyo) with a small studio in Nippori in today’s Arakawa City,[261:205f.] presumably from Fukuhōdō times.[250:338] After negotiations with Nikkatsu, Kobayashi closed this company again in early 1913 and returned to Nikkatsu.[261:207; 203:75]

Shortly thereafter he teamed up with Yamakawa Yoshitarō (also read Yamakawa Kichitarō), another former employee of Fukuhōdō in Osaka.[282:17] Yamakawa had also left Nikkatsu and established a company called “Tōyō Shōkai” (“Eastern Company”).[261:207]¹⁴⁸ On 3 March 1914 this became “Tennenshoku Katsudō Shashin KK” (“Natural Colour Film Joint-Stock Corporation”), in short “Tenkatsu”. [203:75; 258:243]

¹⁴⁶ This is dated to July 1904 in [99:316].

¹⁴⁷ It is said that during the First World War the subsidiary of Universal in Japan imported as much film in a month as the whole Japanese film industry produced in the same time.[203:75]

¹⁴⁸ Some claim that Kobayashi and Yamakawa established Tōyō Shōkai together.[203:75; 258:246]

This name was due to Tenkatsu having the license rights for the British “Kinemacolor” system by George Albert Smith and Charles Urban, which had originally been negotiated by Fukuhōdō, but not been brought into the merger.[157:70f.]¹⁴⁹ This natural colour system had already been tested in “Tōyō Shōkai” times,[261:214ff.] but was used by Tenkatsu only briefly – twice the usual amount of film stock was necessary, so with the rise in the price of celluloid after the outbreak of the First World War it became uneconomical and was limited to special occasions.[157:75]¹⁵⁰ By producing monochrome movies instead, Tenkatsu became the main competitor of Nikkatsu,[110:25] with Kobayashi being responsible for the Kantō region (around Tokyo) – he had contributed the Nippori Studio, for example [261:207f.] – and Yamakawa for the Kansai (Osaka, Kyoto, etc.).[261:214]

Yet Kobayashi kept true to his nicknames “Bomb Man”, [261:207] “Zigomar of the Entertainment World”¹⁵¹[282:19] or simply “Monster”. [28] Within Tenkatsu he established “Kobayashi Kōgyōbu” (“Kobayashi business department”), which must have been in existence in July 1916 at the latest,¹⁵² as it claimed to manage all “rensaveki” (“chain drama”) within Tenkatsu at that time.[305] Rensaveki were highly popular dramas, parts of which were projected as film, others live on a stage with the same actors, in one performance.[157:75f.; 112:222ff.] Originating from the Kansai region, rensaveki had been introduced in Tokyo by Kobayashi, among other people.[216:80; 258:247]

¹⁴⁹ Another version says that Nikkatsu did not want to buy the expensive rights offered by Fukuhōdō.[258:269] Of course, Nikkatsu’s predecessor had already paid more than planned for the four companies – and most for Fukuhōdō.[203:74]

¹⁵⁰ In January and in March 1917 the two parts of the movie *Saiyūki* (“Journey to the west”; directed by Yoshino Jirō; five and seven reels; Tenkatsu) were shown at the Taishōkan,[131; 133] Both employed Kinemacolor for certain scenes – apparently not to good effect[157:79] –, but also “many tricks” (not animation), as Shibata Katsu, who participated in the filming, explains.[243:50]

¹⁵¹ It had been Kobayashi who had imported *Zigomar* (see ch. 3.1) for Fukuhōdō.[258:250]

¹⁵² It is quite likely that this “business department” was meant to mirror the regional division of responsibility with Yamakawa Yoshitarō.

The split between Kobayashi and Tenkatsu became formal with a newspaper notice on 13 October 1916 announcing the (renewed)¹⁵³ setup of “Kobayashi Shōkai” (“Kobayashi Company”) with new departments for import/export, education, business,¹⁵⁴ etc.[33] (Kobayashi Kōgyōbu also set up an existence “with all connections to “Tenkatsu” having been severed.[34]) As can be imagined the separation and its aftermath were hardly amicable,[307] even prompting the mayor of Tokyo, Okuda Yoshito, to openly criticise Japanese producers for quarrelling but not producing “a single work worth viewing”, [214:6] although some kind of reconciliation seems to have been reached towards the end of April 1917.[308]

There were thus three big film companies in Japan in 1917: Nikkatsu had 177 cinemas (directly managed and associated ones), Tenkatsu 80, Kobayashi Shōkai 68; other companies only four.[203:76]¹⁵⁵ And these cinemas were quite large, seating (according to a survey made in 1918) on average more than 1,000 people.[75:50] It is said that at the end of 1916 there were more than 40,000 cinema visitors each day in Asakusa alone, the majority being school children and youth.[196:142] Tenkatsu’s Kinema Kurabu and Kobayashi Shōkai’s Teikokukan seem to have attracted mainly school children, whereas Nikkatsu’s Denkikan was said to have higher-class visitors.[207:115]

Yet Kobayashi’s quite reckless attempt to gain market share[4:98] and his setting great store by *rensageki*[261:241] would prove fatal: police regulations in Tokyo in July 1917 severely hampered *rensageki* by limiting the number of performances outside cinemas.[258:248]¹⁵⁶ With Kobayashi already having financial problems[258:249] and the regulations also having an

¹⁵³ The first establishment might date from between Kobayashi’s second split with Nikkatsu and the establishment of Tenkatsu, again in parallel with Yamakawa’s “Tōyō Shōkai”.

¹⁵⁴ This “business department” was called “Kobayashi Shōkai Kōgyōbu”. An article in 1917 lists the actresses affiliated to this entity.[122:98]

¹⁵⁵ Other film companies in 1917 included Komatsu Shōkai, M Kashī Shōkai, Tōkyō Shinema Shōkai (Tokyo Cinema Co.) and Tōkyō Katsudō Shashin Satsueijo.[123:224]

¹⁵⁶ The often-read claim that *rensageki* had been completely forbidden by the Tokyo police (e.g., [173:53]), is wrong. On the regulations see also ch. 4/August.

impact on the general activity of cinemas and film producers (see ch. 4/ August), this would prove fatal.

By mid-August the transformation of Kobayashi Shōkai into a joint-stock company was proposed,[152] by September 1917 Kobayashi Shōkai was bankrupt.[258:257; 261:246]¹⁵⁷ The Japanese arm of the American film company Universal took over all movies of Kobayashi Shōkai in lieu of its debts.[154]

Kobayashi Kisaburō, though, was not to be stopped. Already at the beginning of October 1917 he put up “Kobayashi Gōshi-gaisha” (“Kobayashi Limited Partnership”), apparently as a production vehicle of movies to be distributed by Universal,[154] and scattered reports indicate that Kobayashi Kōgyōbu was still active during 1917[307; 89; 113]¹⁵⁸ and in 1918, when its studio in Nishi-Sugamo in today’s Toshima City burned down in September.[43] Perhaps it was through this vehicle that Kobayashi managed the Teikokukan where he screened imported movies also in 1918.[258:251]

In 1919 Kobayashi imported the American movie *Intolerance* (Triangle; 1916) by D. W. Griffith and charged an entrance fee more than ten times higher than usual.[261:328; 75:38] With that money, and allegedly with some help from Tokyo’s underworld,[258:244] he established “Kokusai Katsuei KK” (“International Film Joint-stock Corporation”, in short “Kokkatsu”) in December 1919, took over Tenkatsu the following month,[110:25] yet soon had to leave the company because of an accounting scandal.[258:265f.] Kokkatsu went bankrupt in 1925.[241:xxiv] Surprisingly, Kobayashi is listed between 1941 and 1947 as a member of the board of Nikkatsu.[203:217f.]

While film historian Tanaka Jun’ichirō is highly critical of Kobayashi Kisaburō (from [258:244]), Tajima Ryōichi sees him in a more positive

¹⁵⁷ A newspaper article at the end of 1923 implies that a “Kobayashi Shōkai” was again active in the film business.[45]

¹⁵⁸ It is possible that (some of?) these 1917 notices mixed-up “Kobayashi Shōkai Kōgyōbu” and “Kobayashi Kōgyōbu”. The details of Kobayashi’s companies are somewhat obscure to me; perhaps his 1967 biography (*Kobayashi Kisaburō den*) by Imamura Miyoo, which I have not seen, would provide a better picture.

light.[258] Film historian Satō Tadao emphasises the importance of Kobayashi Shōkai's movies *Tai'i no musume* ("The captain's daughter"; 1917) and *Dokusō* ("Poison grass"; 1917), both directed by Inoue Masao, for introducing in Japanese movies techniques such as cut backs and close-ups.[231:152] There is no information that Kobayashi had anything to do with animation after 1917.



下川凹天

Ill. 12: The three pioneers of Japanese animated movies:

Shimokawa Ōten



幸内純一

Kōuchi Jun'ichi



北山清太郎

Kitayama Seitarō



Ill. 13: Two frames from the restored version of Kōuchi's *Namakuragatana* (1917)

4 Japanese animated movies in 1917

January

The Japanese movie listings for January 1917 in the March 1917 issue of the film journal *Katsudō shashin zasshi* contain the following entry:¹⁵⁹

“Funny *Dekobō shingachō*, *Imosuke inoshishigari no maki* [“Dekobō shingachō: Imosuke hunting a wild boar”]¹⁶⁰ one reel (filmed by the Tokyo branch of Tenkatsu) Researching the funny senga which employ the tricks of the European-American so-called dekobō shingachō method, as the first attempt in our country is this a success? (Kinema Kurabu)”¹⁶¹[131]

The first thing to note about this entry is that it should indeed relate to January 1917 (give or take a few days on either side). The April issue of *Katsudō shashin zasshi* lists movies screened in February,[132] etc. Also, a sample of the foreign and Japanese movies listed in the March 1917 issue was, as far as could be ascertained through other sources, actually screened in January 1917.

Moreover, an article in the July 1917 issue of another film journal, *The Kinema Record*, also mentions that Tenkatsu had screened the first Japanese “cartoon comedy” or “so-called ‘dekokobō no shingachō’” “suddenly in January this year” at the Kinema Kurabu, which was directly managed by Tenkatsu. According to this article, the “numerous imported” “Colonel Heeza Liar” movies by Bray and the “nature of the Japanese who love to mimic” had led Japanese producers to also try for such things.[332] However, the article contains no specific information about this first Japanese animated movie.

¹⁵⁹ All movies in this and the next chapter, being quite brief, would have been screened together with other movies, e.g., live-action ones, in performances lasting several hours.[75:54]

¹⁶⁰ As a reminder: “... no maki” could be translated as “the chapter of ...”, but this is omitted here.

¹⁶¹ “滑稽「凸坊新畫帖、芋助猪狩の巻」一卷（天活東京派撮影）歐米の所謂凸坊新畫帖式のトリック應用滑稽線畫を研究して、我邦で最初の試みとして成功せるものか。（キネマ倶楽部）。” [131]

Another possible confirmation comes from Shimokawa Ōten's temporary cameraman Shibata Katsu (see ch. 3.1). In the later version of his memoirs the last entry for 1916 says that Shimokawa had made the drawings for a “manga dekobō shingachō”¹⁶², filmed by Okabe Shigeyuki.[242:6] Yet Shibata's memoirs are problematic. An earlier version, which seems to be closer to his original production diaries but was (re-)published later, claims that *Hekobō shingachō* had been the first animated movie by Shimokawa and Tenkatsu – in mid-April 1917.[243:51] The later version does not mention this at all. Also, the title he gives in the earlier version is somewhat strange: either it was a misprint for “dekobō shingachō” (凹 instead of 凸), which would indicate that it was again a generic term; or it was a pun on Shimokawa's penname “Hekoten”. Yet would it really have been a movie title in that case?

If we go back to the entry in *Katsudō shashin zasshi* it does not tell us that Shimokawa Ōten had been involved with *Dekobō shingachō*, *Imosuke inoshishigari no maki*; however, there is no reason to assume that it was not his work. The length of “one reel” – between 210m and 330m, according to a contemporary statement[124:205] – would imply that the movie was very roughly five minutes long, as it likely was not alone on that reel. (A length of between two and ten minutes holds for all animated movies of 1917/18,[293:192f.] unless otherwise noted.) As to the title: Imosuke is quite certainly the nickname of Imokawa Mukuzō, the protagonist of Shimokawa's manga (comic strip) in 1915 (see ch. 3.1).

So, we can state with some confidence – though not with certainty! – that *Dekobō shingachō*, *Imosuke inoshishigari no maki* was the first Japanese animated movie, made by Shimokawa Ōten for Tenkatsu, and screened in January 1917 at the Kinema Kurabu in Asakusa/Tokyo.¹⁶³ Lamentably, no image from any of Shimokawa's movies seems to exist.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Shibata uses “manga dekobō shingachō” in this case as a generic term, not as a specific movie title.

¹⁶³ It should be pointed out that the “Japanese Cinema Database”, presented by the Japanese “Agency for Cultural Affairs”, includes several, but not all, of the movies described in this chapter, but none under the category “animation”. On the other hand, the earliest dated entries under “animation” are *Tsuki no benka no majutsu* (“The magical changes of the moon”; 28 April 1900; no further information)[102] and *Fushigi no odori*

Yet one problem remains: According to an issue of *The Kinema Record*, dated 10 March 1917, at the beginning of February 1917 the Kinema Kurabu screened the “second senga trick” by Tenkatsu, under the title *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai*¹⁶⁵ (“Dekobō shingachō – Failure of a great plan”).[150:140] And for this film we have a very short summary: Mukuzō wants to catch a wild boar alive, digs a pit, and falls into it.[150:140]

Which raises the question: Was *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai* identical with *Dekobō shingachō*, *Imosuke inoshishigari no maki*? Several titles, even completely different ones, for the same movie were not unusual, as we will see. And with the same protagonist and what might be the same plot, personally I do believe that it was the same movie.¹⁶⁶ However, how should one explain that *The Kinema Record* calls this the “second senga trick”? Moreover, the same journal’s description of the next Japanese animated movie, in April 1917, calls that one “Tenkatsu’s third senga trick”. [260:240]

It is possible that the “second” (二 instead of 一) was a misprint which went unnoticed, so when the next “senga torikku” turned up, it became the “third”.¹⁶⁷ Or perhaps the author of the listings for February had been led

(“Mysterious dance”; 1 May 1904)[103]. The former one might have been George Méliès’ *La lune à un mètre* (*The Astronomer’s Dream*, Star Film; 1898),[v15] although this is just a guess. The latter is claimed to have been screened among movies on the Russian-Japanese War by the “Nihon Katsudō Shashin-kai” (“Japanese Film Association”), i.e. Yoshizawa Shōten[104] (see also [156:55] and ch. 3.4). It possibly was another imported “majutsu eiga”; there is no reason to believe that either or both of them could have been Japanese animated movies in a narrow sense.

¹⁶⁴ The image printed in [10:4] is a self portrait by Shimokawa; it does not come from one of his movies. The same is true of the image for Kōuchi Jun’ichi’s *Hanawa Hekonai Meitō no maki* (see below) in [10:5]; cf. [293:11].

¹⁶⁵ The secondary literature later called this film *Dekoboko shingachō Meian no shippai* (“Bumpy shingachō – Failure of a great plan”) (e.g., [293:192]), which was perhaps due to a misprint that spread because nobody looked up the original source.

¹⁶⁶ This was also the opinion of Watanabe Yasushi, who seems to have known about *Dekobō shingachō Imosuke inoshishigari no maki* for quite some time, but listed it as an alternative title of *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai* with a release date of early February 1917.[285; 278] Only a report of January 2017, co-authored by Watanabe, seems for the first time to have publicly given the source and the January date.[287]

¹⁶⁷ I would not rule out the possibility that there had been a movie before that third one that we know nothing about. See under April, part two.

astray by two different titles for the same movie. That *Dekobō shingachō*, *Imosuke inoshishigari no maki* should have started in January and *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai* early in February can probably be explained away – such an inconsistency can be found in other cases, too (see below). Yet, at this stage, we cannot be certain: *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai* may have been a separate movie, perhaps a sequel.

Finally, a *Dekobō*, apparently a movie title, is mentioned in a preview of the movies to be shown at the Kinema Kurabu in spring 1917,[35] yet this does not necessarily indicate a local animated movie. Advertisements by the Kinema Kurabu in early 1917 in the *Asabi Shimbun* do not mention it, nor could I find it in the listings available to me. Tenkatsu did hold a “dekobō taikai” (“dekobō festival”) at the Yūrakuzo beginning on 10 January 1917 which screened (live-action) comedies and “ponchi¹⁶⁸ katsudō dekobō no shingachō” (“Punch film dekobō no shingachō”);[306] according to the *Asabi Shimbun* these were recently imported “dekobō”. [36] Yet, perhaps Shimokawa’s first anime was also shown on this occasion?

February

If *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai* was a separate movie, it should be listed here.

April, part one

In its May 1917 issue *The Kinema Record* had a column about movies which had been shown in the preceding month. Among them was *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* (“Imokawa Mukuzō – The janitor”) which was called Tenkatsu’s third animated movie.[260:240] Until my discovery of this source in 2013,[171] and this being reported in one of Japan’s bigger newspapers, the *Maimichi Shimbun*,[278] this movie had usually been called Japan’s first animated movie and been dated to January 1917 (e.g., [294:46; 273:97; 86:22; 53:82]), although doubts about this had sometimes been expressed,

¹⁶⁸ On “ponchi” see ch. 3.1.

too (e.g., [4:94; 61:25; 293:192]). For some reason, claims that it had been the first can be found even now, for example in a special issue of the journal *Ketoru* (“Kettle”) on 100 years of anime,¹⁶⁹[142:67] even though in January 2017 an interim report by Japanese anime experts, among them Watanabe Yasushi, looking into this matter agreed that *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* had not been the first Japanese animated movie and had been released in April 1917.[287]

This is the translation of the column entry in May 1917: “Kinema Kurabu / *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* Mr. Imokawa’s Janitor (Tenkatsu) / It is the third senga trick by Tenkatsu. I am glad about such an attempt. The title is fetching. It is skilled.”[260:240]¹⁷⁰

The May 1917 issue of *The Kinema Record* provides the only known contemporary information about this movie. Moreover, it is unlikely that the reviewer saw a re-run of a film already released in January and did not recognise it as such, since in that case his comment about “such an attempt” being “skilled” would not make sense. Indeed, the claim that *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* had been Shimokawa’s first movie and had been released in January 1917 seems to have been based on a mix-up of two unrelated sources: Shimokawa’s article in 1934, where he claims this movie as his, and Japan’s, first animated movie, without providing a date;[247] and the article in the July 1917 issue of *The Kinema Record*, mentioned above, which dated the first animated movie to January 1917 without giving a title.[332]

Shimokawa’s 1934 article is, in any case, far from reliable. He claims, for instance, that there had been only one film magazine in 1916, when there had been at least three: *The Kinema Record*, *Katsudō no sekai*, and *Katsudō sha-*

¹⁶⁹ This article is not alone in giving the strong impression that *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki*, *Saru to kani no gassen*, and *Namakuragatana* had been the first three anime of 1917,[142:67; also, e.g., 86:21f.] when in fact none of them was the first, and *Namakuragatana* likely was only the eighth.

¹⁷⁰ “キネマ倶楽部 / 芋川椋三玄關番の巻 Mr. Imokawa’s Janitor (天活) / 天活第三次の線畫トリックだ。こういふ、試みは嬉しい。タイトルが馬鹿に氣に入った。巧妙である。” [260:240] Note that this source, as well as Shimokawa in 1934,[247] writes the particle “no” in the title as の, not as the somewhat old-fashioned 之 which some use for no reason (e.g., [10:4; 254:66]).

shin zasshi.¹⁷¹ More importantly, Shimokawa writes: “The first movie *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* and two further ones premiered at the Kinema Kurabu.”[247] Yet we know of at least five Tenkatsu movies that were released there (see also below). One might speculate that Shimokawa did not want to mention his first attempt(s) because they were made using an inferior technique.

Regrettably, we have no information on the contents of *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki*. Shimokawa had published a manga (comic strip) called *Genkanban Iso-kun* (“Iso, the janitor”) about a janitor who is constantly disturbed by visitors in the journal *Rakuten Puck* in 1914 (from [217:68]), but whether there was any connection remains unknown.

Interlude A: Shimokawa’s animation techniques

Without even stills from Shimokawa’s movies or detailed descriptions in the contemporary literature, we have to rely on his own 1934 article to find out anything about his animation techniques. At first, he writes, he had drawn with chalk on a blackboard, wiping out and redrawing those portions which should change from frame to frame.[247] This is reminiscent of Blackton’s method used in *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, as well as the impression made by Coh’s movies (see ch. 2.1). The filming was done using natural light, according to Shibata.[243:51; 242:8]

Shimokawa, however, did not really warm to this method, also because he could not bring it to perfection, so he hired an assistant, had about three kinds of [paper] backgrounds printed in large numbers, and began drawing humans and animals freehand on whitened-out parts of these backgrounds. For this kind of paper animation he also constructed two box-like worktables for himself and the assistant, each of which had a lamp inside and a glass plate about as large as the intended drawings as the upper surface, so he could trace the drawings. He used this worktable for about

¹⁷¹ A short notice in the February 1917 issue of *The Kinema Record* lists the following film journals for Tokyo: *Katsudō no sekai*, *Katsudō shashin zasshi*, *Kinema* and *Katsudō gabō*, plus two “newspaper-like” periodicals in Tokyo and journals in other Japanese cities.[149] In September 1917 ten film journals are said to have been published in Tokyo alone.[311]

half-a-year, until his eyes had been damaged by the light.[247] For this method, which is also described by Shibata, two lamps on either side of the camera pointing down on the table were used for the filming, which was now only done by Okabe Shigeyuki.[242:8]

Shimokawa's last film apparently was released in September 1917 (see below), so the switch from blackboard to paper animation should have been made roughly in March. This would coincide with the article about American animation techniques in *Katsudō gabō* (see ch. 3.4),[222] which was dated February 1917 and which obviously gave inspiration to Shimokawa. We do not know whether *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* was already produced using this technique, although the critic's positive comments would support this assumption.[260:240] Shimokawa's claim concerning animation techniques, that he "could not but think about everything himself",[247] is, in any case, not credible for the whole span of his career in animation, only for the very beginning in 1916.

April, part two

Even when we disregard Shimokawa's "memoirs", the situation concerning his animated movies in April 1917 remains confusing. As has already been mentioned, Shimokawa's one-time cameraman, Shibata Katsu, claimed in one version of his memoirs that Tenkatsu's, and thus Shimokawa's, first animated movie, *Hekobō shingachō*, had been produced in mid-April using the blackboard technique.[243:51]¹⁷² Yet according to the other version, Shibata first worked with Shimokawa on *Imokawa Mukuzō Chūgaeri no maki* (see below),[242:8] which premiered only in mid-May 1917.¹⁷³ This would have been unusually late for a movie produced in April;¹⁷⁴ I also

¹⁷² Shibata puts his work on *Hekobō shingachō*, without a number, between his 29th movie as assistant cameraman, filmed on location on Mt. Myōgi in Gunma prefecture and finished not before 10 April, and the first movie he could film without supervision, begun on 15 April 1917.[243:51]

¹⁷³ Shibata here uses his original name "Ōmori Katsu" (or "Ōmori Masaru").[243:45]

¹⁷⁴ According to Shibata's records movies usually seem to have been released less than a week after the end of his work. See for example the dates of his 29th and 30th movie as a camera assistant.[243:51]

think it likely that Shibata had tried to find out in *The Kinema Record* which Shimokawa movie he had worked on, had probably missed *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* like everyone else, and chose the next movie closest to April.

One is tempted to assume that Shibata had erred in dating the time he worked with Shimokawa, and that he actually meant *Dekobō shingachō, Imosuke inoshishigari no maki*. Or *Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai*, if it was a separate work. Or even an unknown work in March or early April. In the end, however, we have to accept that the two versions by Shibata, Shimokawa's memoirs, and the film listings of 1917 remain inconsistent with each other.

On 28 April 1917 another animated movie by Tenkatsu premiered at the Kinema Kurabu: *Chamebō shingachō Nomi fufu shikaeshi no maki* (“Chamebō shingachō – Revenge of the flea couple”).[126:168] The same movie¹⁷⁵ is listed for May 1917 as *Chamebō shingachō Nomi no adauchi* (“Chamebō shingachō – Revenge of the flea”) at the Kinema Kurabu in the July issue of *Kinema shashin zasshi*. [134:77] The descriptions in *Katsudō no sekai* and *Kinema shashin zasshi* coincide reasonably: A human kills a female flea whose husband then takes revenge by bothering the bridegroom at a wedding; [134:77] Chamebō hurts a flea couple which then haunts him in his sleep and throws his marriage ceremony into disarray. [126:168]

Therefore April 1917 quite certainly saw two films by Shimokawa being released: *Imokawa Mukuzō Genkanban no maki* and *Chamebō shingachō Nomi fufu shikaeshi no maki* (aka *Chamebō shingachō Nomi no adauchi*). At the least the latter should have been made as paper animation, likely both were made with this technique. I very much doubt Shibata's claims about a movie called *Hekobō shingachō* having been released in April 1917, or on any other date. But to which movie he may have referred cannot be decided.

By that time, Shimokawa's animated movies seem to have been appreciated by the public. A brief, hitherto apparently overlooked notice in the June 1917 issue of *Katsudō gabō* states that a house in the neighbourhood of Haramachi in Koishikawa (in today's Bunkyo City/Tokyo) had recently become unusually popular because of its name plate. When the (anony-

¹⁷⁵ My earlier speculations concerning this movie, e.g. [173:60], are therefore wrong.

mous) author of the notice went there to find out why, he learned that it was the house of Shimokawa Ōten, the man “responsible for the dekokobō gachō production of Tenkatsu”. While the author only describes the rather large size of the plate, not whether anything but the name was on it, he concludes that “Ōten-kun’s” work obviously was still popular.[114:146]

May, part one

In mid-May, according to *The Kinema Record*, the next movie by Shimokawa was released at the Kinema Kurabu: *Imokawa Mukuzō Chūgaeri no maki* (“Imokawa Mukuzō – Somersault”). *The Kinema Record’s* summary: Mukuzō treats himself to an air journey, but then falls down to earth. The movie is said to be quite good for a Japanese production, yet there would remain quite a lot to do, as the lines’ varying strength stands out awkwardly.[151:302] *Katsudō shashin zasshi* also lists the movie as released by Tenkatsu at the Kinema Kurabu, but as *Nihon chamebō shingachō (Imokawa Mukuzō Chūgaeri no maki)*. [134:77]

Yet in the September 1917 issue of *Katsudō shashin zasshi* we find notice of a manga/senga by Tenkatsu called *Imokawa Mukuzō Kūkiyū no maki* (or perhaps read *Imokawa Mukuzō Kūkidama no maki*) (“Imokawa Mukuzō – Balloon”) which is said to have premiered at the Taishōkan on 21 May. According to this source Imokawa boards a balloon and flies over Tokyo to finally fall down on the bronze statue of Saigō Takamori in Ueno Park.[138:204] It is highly likely that this was just an alternative title of *Imokawa Mukuzō Chūgaeri no maki*, perhaps in connection with the release at another of Tenkatsu’s cinemas.

On 20 May Kitayama Seitarō’s first animated movie for Nikkatsu, *Saru to kani no gassen* (“The battle between monkey and crab”), premiered at the Operakan with a length of ca. 90m, i.e. about five minutes.[126:168] According to other sources, it was released a bit later.¹⁷⁶ Alternative titles had

¹⁷⁶ *The Kinema Record* gives the last third of May as the release date,[61:302] *Katsudō shashin zasshi* lists it only as screened during June 1917.[137:223] In my experience, however, the premiere dates gained from listings in this journal tend to be ante quem, unless, of course, an exact date is provided there.

been *Saru kani gassen* or *Saru to kani* (“Monkey and crab”).[293:192; 273:93ff.,118; 151:302; 155:322] A notice relating to Nikkatsu dates the start of production to the beginning of May.[128] A description in the journal *Katsudō no sekai* shows that the story was based on the well-known Japanese tale about a monkey and a crab exchanging rice balls and persimmon seeds, when the crab gets killed by the monkey. The crab’s son then teams up with a bee, a mortar and a chestnut to take revenge.[126:168] *The Kinema Record* opined that the result was “good for children”.[151:302] *Katsudō no sekai*, by contrast, compared it a bit later to Kōuchi’s *Namakuragatana* (see below) and complained about “the thick and careless lines, the lack of change, and the lack of expression of crabs and monkey” of this “representative work” among Nikkatsu’s animated movies (from [293:192]). Kitayama himself later wrote that, while the movie had been praised by some, he found it “just embarrassing and painful to watch”.[155:322]



Ill. 14: Picture from *Saru to kani no gassen* (1917) by Kitayama Seitarō, perhaps printed from the film negative (see [124:93])

Interlude B: Kitayama’s animation techniques

According to two articles in the journal *Katsudō no sekai* in February and in October 1918 Kitayama first used an animation technique called “kōgashiki” (“draft picture method”), then “kirinukigashiki” (“cutout picture method”) (from [273:95f.], also [293:13f.]). Tsugata Nobuyuki identified kōgashiki as “today’s paper animation, a method where everything is drawn on one sheet of paper, from the background to people etc.”[273:95]

Kitayama's assistant Yamamoto Sanae gives a different description of the early animation technique: the character's movements were drawn on sheets made from special paper and then put above the sheets with the backgrounds for filming.[295:82] With Kitayama having had assistants, it would have made sense to divide the workload in this way. Yamamoto also mentions a worktable with lighting from below,[295:82] so we can assume that the article in *Katsudō gabō* (see ch. 2.4) had, at least indirectly, influenced Kitayama, too.

Yet back in May 1917, Kitayama seems, in fact, to have used the animation technique described by Tsugata. Kitayama's assistant Kanai Kiichirō explained in an article in 1931¹⁷⁷ that in the beginning they made several thousands of drawings and pinned them on a wall to be filmed horizontally with the camera (from [273:83]). (Each image was taken twice, so they had eight different images per second at the then usual projection speed of 16 frames/second.[263:37]) A photo in the October 1918 issue of *Katsudō no sekai* also shows this set-up (see [273:85]) – perhaps Kitayama intended to lead possible competitors astray, as he was certainly already using cutout animation by that time, which was filmed from above.¹⁷⁸

Indeed, film historian Tanaka Jun'ichi claims that Kitayama on 6 February 1917 was granted a patent for a method to film drawings with a camera from above;[263:36] roughly at the time when the translated article from the *Scientific American* was describing this method.[222:35] A Japanese author had already reported at the end of 1916 that Japanese companies fixed their trade marks vertically on a wall for filming, but at least implies that intertitles were filmed from above, just as in the Western world.[109:19] So Kitayama's "inventiveness" is open to doubt.

Nor can we be certain exactly when Kitayama switched from paper animation to cutout animation. It is highly likely, however, that this was influenced by Kōuchi Jun'ichi's movie(s) (see below). An article on Kitayama's work in the February 1918 issue of *Katsudō no sekai* mentions both

¹⁷⁷ While Tsugata in the text gives 1929 as the date of publication of this article,[273:83] in two footnotes he says 1931.[273:112,196]

¹⁷⁸ A drawing of such a set-up by Yamamoto Sanae can be found in [263:37].

“innumerable” drawings with minimal differences among each other, as well as hundreds of cutout paper characters (from [273:121]) so the switch should have been made by the end of 1917.

In 1930 Kitayama described both *kōgashiki* and “*kirinukishiki*” (cutout animation). The first could be used where division of labour was already practised, especially with the use of cels; that is, in foreign countries.[155:336] (Kitayama thus tends to confirm Yamamoto’s description.) In Japan nearly everyone used *kirinukishiki*, even though it prevented division of labour because the animator also had to do the filming so the cut-outs would be moved according to his plans. Nevertheless, it was a much more “economical” method than *kōgashiki*, also because the cutout figures could be reused.[155:337]

Kitayama would later claim about the start of his work on animation: “Research at the desk began. There were no reference books or such. There was not even a fragment of a senga film”. [155:322] It seems, however, unlikely that he could not have got hold of a toy film version of an imported animated movie. As to reference materials – unless he really began his research before autumn 1916, which I doubt – there should have been enough information available, especially in early 1917 (see ch. 2.4). Yet, as far as the principles of animation of movement were concerned,[155:322] he was probably right that he had to do the research himself, although it should not have taken him nearly a year as Tsugata’s chronology would imply.[273:276]

May, part two

At the end of May the next movie by Kitayama was shown at the (second) Yūrakukan¹⁷⁹: *Yume no jidōsha*¹⁸⁰ (“The car of his dreams”),[151:302] also called *Nikkatsu manga Yume no jidōsha*. [137:222] A boy dreams that his bed changed into a car and drives around.[151:302; 137:222] The critic of

¹⁷⁹ This was the former Tōkyōkan in today’s Asakusa/Tokyo.[136]

¹⁸⁰ Tsugata calls this *Yume no jitensha* (“The dream bicycle”), but provides no information on its content.[273:118]

The Kinema Record was not impressed by this movie and admonished the producer, inter alia, to pay more attention to the plot.[151:302] At least Kitayama had initially realised Nikkatsu's plans to produce one or two animated movies a month.[128]

June

Shimokawa's *Usagi to kame* ("The hare and the tortoise") premiered in June at the Taishōkan.[137:223; 8:182] *Katsudō shashin zasshi* lists it right besides *Saru to kani no gassen* and comments: "A dramatization of the same [kind of] folk tale using the same method as the previous entry." [137:223] For Shimokawa this seems to have been an unusual topic; perhaps he (or Tenkatsu?) had been influenced by Kitayama's movie.

On 30 June Kouchi Jun'ichi's first animated movie for Kobayashi Shōkai had its premiere at the Teikokukan¹⁸¹: *Namakuragatana*¹⁸² ("The dull sword"), also known as *Hanawa Hekonai Meitō no maki* ("Hanawa Hekonai – The famous sword") or *Hanawa Hekonai Shintō no maki* ("Hanawa Hekonai – The new sword"), as *Tameshigiri* ("Testing a sword") [293:192] and as *Noroma Dekonai* ("Noroma Dekonai") [332].¹⁸³ *Namakuragatana* likely was the title intended by Kōuchi; [182:123] Ōfuji Noburō, who had worked with Kōuchi, also used this title in an interview in 1933.[47]¹⁸⁴ The artificial

¹⁸¹ The Teikokukan was directly managed by Kobayashi and usually screened only imported movies. In their July 1917 issue the editors of the journal *Katsudō no sekai* answered a reader's question why this was the case: "Because there are no [Japanese] movies worth showing at the Teikoku cinema etc." [127:196]

¹⁸² This is the transcription recommended by Matsumoto Natsuki.[183:3.7.2016]

¹⁸³ A newspaper advertisement by the Teikokukan on the morning of 30 June 1917 does not mention *Namakuragatana* (or any of its alternative titles), but promotes a chapter from the film serial *The voice on the wire* (*Denwa no koe*; dir. Stuart Paton; Universal; 1917) with Ben F. Wilson, the drama *The gift girl* (*Tanjōbi*, lit. "Birthday", possibly from the alternative American title *Marvel's Birthday Present*; dir. Rupert Julian; Universal; 1917) starring Louise Lovely, and a documentary on Woodrow Wilson's second inauguration.[37]

¹⁸⁴ Kōuchi's family name is here given as "Terauchi". It is possible that this was a pen name of Kōuchi, as "Terauchi Jun'ichi" is also listed as representative of Sumikazu Eiga Sōsakusha (see ch. 3.3) in a 1930 source.[189:furoku18] (However, both a Kōuchi

name “Hanawa Hekonai” could be freely translated as “Flatnose” and likely was alluding to the famous actor Onoe Matsunosuke, who worked for Nikkatsu and starred in more than 1,000 movies.[320:50] Since Kobayashi Kisaburō had quarreled not just with Tenkatsu, but also with Nikkatsu,¹⁸⁵ it is quite possible that he intended to ridicule Nikkatsu’s star actor.[182:123] (A survey conducted by Gonda Yasunosuke among primary school children in Tokyo in early 1917 showed that “practically everyone knows the names of Matsunosuke and Chaplin”.[42])¹⁸⁶ The box in which Matsumoto Natsuki found the toy film in Osaka in July 2007 indeed bears the inscription *Jidaigeki manga Matsunosuke no namakuragatana* (“Historical drama manga Matsunosuke’s dull sword”).[182:97] The title *Noroma Dekonai* given by *The Kinema Record* can probably be explained, according to Matsumoto, by the reluctance of that journal to get mixed up in Kobayashi’s disputes; the pronunciation of the artificial name “Noroma Dekonai” could give rise, however, to the meaning “The lame guy isn’t coming”. [183:3.7.2016]

According to Yoshiyama Kyokkō[326:64], who attended a performance, the “benshi” (“narrator”) was Kusui Shikō,¹⁸⁷ apparently a specialist for comedy.[95:73]

The toy film version discovered by Matsumoto has been tinted yellow;¹⁸⁸ a few years ago the National Film Center in Tokyo found another part tinted blue.[197] The complete movie is now ca. 60 m long and takes

Jun’ichi and a Terauchi Jun’ichi were contributors to a course on photography published by the Arusu Company in 1928.[12] A *Dekobō shin mangachō* by Kitayama Seitarō is also mentioned in this interview, which is otherwise unknown and likely meant as a generic term similar to “dekobō shingachō”.[47]

¹⁸⁵ All three companies, for instance, had simultaneously released movie adaptations of Kikuchi Yūhō’s novel *Dokusō* (“Poison grass”) in March 1917.[121; 133]

¹⁸⁶ Gonda also gained an interesting insight from his survey on the influence of film on children: in this respect the disgraceful conduct of cinemagoers was more troubling than any message of the movies.[42]

¹⁸⁷ Yamaguchi and Watanabe claim that Somei Saburō was the benshi for *Namaku-ragatana*,[293:192] but Matsumoto Natsuki argues that Somei, famous as the benshi for *Marcantonio e Cleopatra* (see ch. 3.2 and [75:43]) and imported movies, would probably not have given the period drama performance described by Yoshiyama.[183:2.8.2017]

¹⁸⁸ More information on colour in early Japanese animation can be found in [172].

about four minutes to project; the then usual 16 frames/second would be a bit too fast.[183:12.7.2016] The original cinema version had probably been monochrome and was tinted only when sold as toy film.

The movie can be viewed on the website of the National Film Center,[197] so only a summary will be given here: A samurai, who often rolls his eyes (another reminder of “Eyeball Matsu-chan”, i.e. Matsunosuke [182:123]), buys a sword (“katana”) from a swordsmith’s clerk who obviously knows his customer is neither bright nor able to properly wield a sword. The samurai then walks on a street and a speech balloon in the shape of a heart is shown saying “Well, let’s cut something ...”. An “anma”, a blind masseur, comes along, musical notes coming out of his flute – and we see an intertitle (turned by 90 degrees clockwise): “This is the first sword test”.¹⁸⁹ The samurai cannot draw his sword and gets kicked away by the anma. (Stars are shown; see p. 76.) Now Kōuchi switches from cutout animation to silhouette animation. A courier comes along on an alley, the samurai tries to hit him, but gets hit himself, falls down, and is overrun by the courier. In a speech balloon the samurai cries “Ki... Killer”. When he tries to get up, the sword buckles. Dejected the samurai throws away the sword. At the end we see the mark of the toy film producer “Haguruma Y.N.& Co.” (see ch. 0.3).[197]



Ill. 15: The samurai cries murder.
From *Namakuragatana*

¹⁸⁹ Matsumoto argues that in the original cinema version this intertitle would have been repeated on several frames to be readable, but that for the toy film version only one frame was kept since here the projection could be stopped easily. He also seems to think that it had been turned in the original, too.[182:117f.] Personally, I wonder whether it was not spliced in by the toy film producer.

The most important detail of this movie is its introduction of cutout animation, which would be the main technique in Japanese animation for nearly two decades. Drawn animation is used, too, but sparsely, e.g., for effects like the stars seen by the samurai. In a newspaper article in 1930 Kōuchi describes his technique, which likely had not changed very much since 1917. He drew the backgrounds with “Carter’s Velvet” ink on paper, then made the non-moving things and the various parts of moving figures by cutout animation. Especially for the hands, up to one hundred such parts would be necessary. For filming he used positive film, with a camera from straight above the table with the backgrounds and the cutout figures. For speedy movements of people he filmed the image three times in succession, for normal walking four to five times. (Keeping in mind a projection speed of 16 frames/second and the apparent speed of characters in relation to their height.) Changes of images normally took five minutes, so he thought it good progress when he completed 320 frames a day.[315]

A review in the September 1917 issue of *Katsudō no sekai* praises this movie as being much more skilful than Tenkatsu’s and Nikkatsu’s offerings, and as having a truly Japanese theme. While the “senga” by Nikkatsu also had Japanese characters, their technical quality was said to be much worse than the foreign examples, especially because of the low number of frames used, which led to hard-to-watch fitful movement of characters. Inanimate things should have somewhat human expressions, too, something all Japanese animated movies were said to be still lacking. (The reviewer was also critical of the human expressions in Kōuchi’s movie.) At least the use of silhouette animation in the second half of *Namakuragatana* (here called *Tameshigiri*) was held to be “quite a good idea” (from [293:192]).

After having seen this movie, Shimokawa thought that Kōuchi was better than he himself (from [4:98]). Kitayama, too, admitted in 1930 that Kōuchi had used a “careful technique”.[155:322] Kōuchi wrote in 1936 that his *Namakuragatana* surpassed the (earlier) movies by Shimokawa and Kitayama (from [4:98]). *The Kinema Record*, on the other hand, only pointed out that *Namakuragatana* differed from the movies produced by Tenkatsu and Nikkatsu by using “senga” and silhouettes. While this critic considered it “historical” that the three companies were producing such movies, he thought that there was still much room for improvement.[332] In its film

listings *Katsudō shashin zasshi* did not comment on the technical quality of what it called *Nihon dekokobō shingachō Hanaba Hekonai shintō no maki*, but pointed out that it was the first Japanese attempt to film an “old school”¹⁹⁰ comedy using “senga”. [138:205] But it also published a brief review by Yoshiyama Kyokkō in the same issue who thought the movie inspired by “Yu-sha’s” (Universal Company) animated movies, but quite good, except for drawn out scenes such as the samurai paying the sword seller (from [197]). *Katsudō gabō* noted that, after Tenkatsu and Nikkatsu had begun production of senga kigeki (senga comedies) modelled on foreign animation, now Kobayashi Shōkai also had presented its first such work, whose title it reads as *Hanawa Totsunai Meito no maki* (written correctly, but wrongly pronounced), with a combination of senga and kage-e (silhouettes). [9:182]

July

On 4[293:192] or 7[138:205] July Kitayama’s *Neko to nezumi* (“Cat and mouse”) premiered at the Denkikan. An old mouse assembles its relatives to warn about the dangers posed by a cat: When a single mouse flees it falls into a water pitcher, has to be rescued by friends, but then gets hunted by a cat and scarcely escapes. [273:118]¹⁹¹ *Katsudō shashin zasshi* only mentions that it shows a fight between cat and mouse. [138:205] *The Kinema Record* calls this movie *Nezumi to neko* (“Mouse and cat”) and considers neither this one, nor Kitayama’s next movie, as “masterpieces”. It also takes aim at all three companies’ movies as still being much in need of improvement: “The movement of the birds and beasts, especially concerning the perspective,

¹⁹⁰ At the time fictional movies were usually defined as “old school” (“kyūha”) or “new school” (“shinpa”). The former was strongly influenced by kabuki and later developed into “jidaigeki”, that is, period drama. As its name implies, “new school” was regarded as more modern (melo)drama and developed into “gendaigeki” or “contemporary drama”. [223:22] During the 1910s Nikkatsu’s Tokyo studio, for example, specialised in “shinpa”, whereas its Kyoto branch was known for its “kyūha”. [320:54]

¹⁹¹ Content summaries in Tsugata’s Kitayama biography come from *Katsudō no sekai* and other, unspecified sources. [273:118f.] He does not link information and source here, though this is also true for premiere dates etc. in Yamaguchi’s and Watanabe’s anime history. [293]

still has major faults.¹⁹² And rather abrupt movements are often seen in Nikkatsu's productions.”[332]¹⁹³

On 14 July the Kinema Kurabu screened another Shimokawa movie: *Imokawa Mukuzō Chappurin no maki* (“Imokawa Mukuzō – Chaplin”). “In his dreams Mukuzō quarrels with Chaplin”. [138:205]¹⁹⁴

Kitayama's *Posuto no itazura*[332; 139] or *Itazura posuto*[293:192] (“Mail-box pranks”) came to the Operakan on 28[293:192] or 29[139] July and showed 24 hours in the life of a mailbox.[293:192; 139]

August

Kōuchi's and Kobayashi Shōkai's *Chamebō Kūkijū no maki* (“Chamebō – Airgun”),[293:192; 116:44] also known as *Chame no kūkijū* (“Chame's air-gun”)[293:192] or as *Chame suketchi Kūkijū no maki* (“Chame sketch – Air-gun”),[139] premiered at the Teikokukan on 11 August.[293:192; 139] Jonathan Clements' claim that Kōuchi's *Chamebō Kūkijū no maki* “would cause him so much trouble that he left the business for several years”,[61:28] lacks a source.¹⁹⁵ While he refers to an article about the connection between anime and the “Pure Film Movement” by Daisuke Miyao, Miyao neither gives a source for the claim that *Chamebō Kūkijū no maki* was “banned from public exhibition by censors” in August 1917,[185:201,203], nor argues that Kōuchi left the business because of such a ban. The source for such a “complete ban” is presumably Yamaguchi's and Watanabe's anime history,[293:10] although they, too, give no source.

¹⁹² Note that Shōfūsei had praised Bray's attention to perspective in his article in 1916 (see ch. 2.4).

¹⁹³ A partially similar criticism is quoted in [293:11], but no source is given.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. the American cartoon *Dreamy Dud sees Charles Chaplin*, screened at the Kinema Kurabu in May (see ch. 2.3).

¹⁹⁵ Clements' contention that this movie was “Kōuchi's spectacular own goal – even the title is enough to set off alarms with any parent or teacher [...]”,[61:28] seems a bit overdone: The *Yomiuri Shimbun*, for instance, ran a front-page advertisement for air guns for children in October 1917.[312]

As has already been mentioned (see ch. 3.4), new police regulations came into force in Tokyo in mid-July 1917. In the third of five main chapters, new rules were promulgated concerning a distinction between movies for “adults” and for children up to 15;[38] movies for the latter were called “otsushu” (“second-class”). Other rules in this third chapter concerned the separation of seats for men and women, and a centralised censorship system for Tokyo.[38]

Two major, and connected, problems that arose for the film companies should be mentioned in this context: overeager implementation of the rules, and a lack of *otsushu* films. Even the police itself admitted in August 1917 that it had been harsh in some cases.[39] The journal *Katsudō gabō* provided an example of censorship of an unidentified animated movie in its October 1917 issue: the “*dekobō shingachō*” was denied the “*otsushu*” classification because it showed a boy writing “*hage*” (“baldy”) on a wall, while his father secretly looked on.[117:164] With a large part, in many cases even the majority, of the customers being under 15, denial of the “*otsushu*” classification would not have been much different from banning a movie outright.

Yet producing *otsushu* movies would prove difficult: after complaining about the use of “*otsushu*” in connection with children’s films,[100:2] the well-known children’s book author Iwaya Sazanami thought that it was “probably impossible” at the time, due to lack of experience.[100:3] In a classic move an association of film producers and cinema owners in Tokyo petitioned the police in July to defer the implementation of the new regulations for a year. While the regulations were perfectly laudable, they wrote, it was hard, due to the war, to import enough *otsushu* movies; and because of the current heatwave, production in Tokyo was impossible as the film stock would melt. Unsurprisingly, the police declined.[309] On the contrary, it argued, the pressure might lead to an increase in the production of local *otsushu*” movies.[39] In 1938 the Japanese Ministry of Culture admitted in a publication that the continued lack of *otsushu* movies had been a major reason for revoking the regulations in 1920.[190:14]

Coming back to *Chamebō Kūkijū no maki*, the regulations should not have hit it without a warning. It should still have been in production when the public announcements were made; the regulations had also been predicted, for instance, in the July issue of *Katsudō shashin zasshi*,[136] so a rough

knowledge about them had been around since, at the least, June. There should have been ample time to make the necessary adjustments before *Chamebō Kūkijū no maki* was inspected and premiered; moreover, a complete prohibition of the movie very likely never would have occurred.

In fact, I have not been able to find any information about a ban of the movie, especially not after its premiere, in newspapers and film journals of the time. But I did find a surprising review of it in the October 1917 issue of *Katsudō gabō*: The reviewer praises this movie as the “pinnacle of Japanese-made trick films. Regarding the motion, it is also good.” The filming technique could have been better: overexposure had led to spots. “While short, it is a masterpiece. Worthy of an honourable mention.” And while the reviewer says nothing about the content, it had cleared the “otsushu” check and received that honourable mention.[116:44f.]¹⁹⁶

Also on 11 August 1917 the Japanese Ministry of (Post and) Communications (“Teishinshō”) presented what was apparently the first Japanese animated advertising film: *Chokin no susume* (“Promoting savings”).[40] This film should advertise postal savings accounts on a tour through Japan, alongside two other movies, one of them the Russian object-animated movie *Strekoza i muravey* (“The dragonfly and the ant”; *Ari to kōrogi*, lit. “The ant and the cricket”; Władisław Starewicz; 1911 or 1913; [v27])¹⁹⁷ which had already been shown from 1 March 1917 at the Operakan.[120] “In spite of being a manga”, the film offered “quite an elegant funny flavour”. [40] According to Tanaka Jun’ichirō its success led the ministry to order more segments which were made into a film for presentation throughout Japan (though not necessarily in commercial cinemas).[263:38] A source from 1922 explains that *Chokin no susume* had six sections, the first of which was

¹⁹⁶ The author is only called “Mr K”. I wonder whether he was somehow affiliated with Kobayashi Shōkai, perhaps even Kobayashi Kisaburō himself, as his three reviews of movies at the Teikokukan all include a “Privately speaking” at the end, which is missing from his two reviews of movies at other cinemas not managed by Kobayashi Shōkai. Kobayashi’s important support of film journals is covered in [258:262ff.].

¹⁹⁷ Not to be confused with R. Lortac’s (aka Robert Alphonse Collard) and a certain Landelle’s movie *La cigale et la fourmi* (*Ari to kōrogi*) which was made in 1922 for Pathé Baby,[v17] contrary to Sugimoto Gorō’s guess that it might have been made as early as during the First World War.[256:180ff.]

called *Chiri mo tsumoreba yama to naru* (literally, “When dust accumulates, it becomes a mountain”).[210:37]¹⁹⁸ It showed a young man who makes sandals to prepare for a journey, and puts them in a bag. There they change into Western-style clothing and savings, and enable him to start his journey to another country.

The titles and summaries of the other sections are: *Ogori wa taiteki* (“Luxury is the big enemy”): a solidly built tower cannot be blown away by a “luxury” fan; *Fuji no yōi* (“Emergency preparations”): after a fire a postal saver gets an emergency payment and immediately builds anew; *Nezumizōan* (“Multiplying like mice”): a single coin multiplies so often that it would take a horse to transport everything; *Kasegu ni oitsuku binbō nashi* (“The industrious man never gets poor”): the fortunes of an industrious and of an idle man change accordingly;¹⁹⁹ and *Yūbin chokin no kōnō* (“The result of postal savings”): a magician performs a trick with a postal savings box and the title and message of this episode appears on a wall in big characters.[210:38f.]

Kitayama wrote that the Ministry of Communications ordered this film from him via Nikkatsu;[155:323] according to Yamamoto Sanae, it was Makino Shōzō, who at the time was still working for Nikkatsu, who had the idea;[295:82] so we do not know for sure whether the ministry of itself had become interested in animated film. Kitayama acknowledges that in other countries animation had already been used outside the entertainment field,²⁰⁰ but claims, probably correctly (but see below), that in Japan this had not been the case before.[155:323] On 7 October 1917 the film, or possibly just one segment, was also screened at the Operakan.[293:192; 273:134]

¹⁹⁸ Until the German edition of this book[173:70] this was assumed to have been a separate movie by Kitayama, produced in 1917 but without known premiere date (e.g., [171:4]). Yamaguchi and Watanabe wrote that it had a length of 275 m (15 minutes) and thought that it consisted of six episodes.[293:193]

¹⁹⁹ The description of this episode corresponds to the summary of *Chokin no susume* in the December 1917 issue of *Katsudō no sekai* (from [273:134]).

²⁰⁰The first known German animated advertising movie dates from 1909: *Prosit Neujahr 1910* (“Here’s to 1910”) by Guido Seeber.[233:88; d3] Seeber later also wrote a book on “Trickfilm”. [236]

Kitayama's *Hanasaka jijū* ("The old man who let the trees bloom"),[293:192] also called *Dekobō shingachō Hanasaka jijū*,[140] came to the Operakan on 26 August.[293:192; 140] It was apparently based on a children's song, itself based on a folk-tale existing in various versions, about an honest and kind man and his jealous neighbour who, in the end, meets his deserved fate.[273:118]

September

On 9 September,[293:192; 140] or a couple of days later,[153:26] Shimokawa's presumably last animated movie was first shown at the Kinema Kurabu: *Imokawa Mukuzō Tsuru no maki* ("Imokawa Mukuzō – Fishing"), also known as *Chame bōzu Uotsuri no maki* ("Chame – Fishing"),[293:192] *Chamebō no uotsuri* ("Chame's fishing"),[140] and *Dekobō tsuri no maki* ("Dekobō – Fishing") [242:8]. Mukuzō goes fishing, fastens the line on a car – and fails.[153:26]

Years later Shimokawa wrote about the quality of his movies: "You know, everything was drawn freely by eye, so people walking around were lolloping like rabbits – nor was their way of walking how I imagined it – which made the audience applaud because it was so ridiculous and distorted; it was very childish." [247] On the other hand, Shimokawa thought that the images of his movies had been "more interesting" than those of the animated movies in the 1930s.[247] Without any examples of his work, we cannot, of course, know what he meant.

October

Kitayama's *Chokin no susume* (see above) was released at the Operakan on 7 October.

On 10 October Kitayama's (*Otogibanashi*) *Bunbuku chagama* ("(The legend of the) Bunbuku teapot") was shown at the Sanyūkan.[141] With a length of 180 m, each screening took about 10 minutes.[293:192] Once more Kitayama filmed a well-known folk-tale,[273:118] this time about a tanuki

(Japanese raccoon dog) who rewards his saviour, inter alia, by changing into a teapot. (By common belief, tanuki were able to shape-shift.)

Only a few days later, on 15 October, a further Kitayama movie arrived at the Operakan: *Shitakiri suzume* (“The sparrow whose tongue was cut off”).[293:192; 141] This movie, too, was apparently based on a folk-tale: a sparrow rewards and punishes kindness and greed respectively (see also ch. 5/April 1918).

Kitayama and Nikkatsu’s next movie, *Kachikachiyama* (“Kachi-Kachi mountain”) premiered on 20 October 1917 at the Sanyūkan. With two reels it may have been more than 10 minutes long.[293:193] Again Kitayama adapted a well-known tale about a malicious tanuki which kills an old woman and serves her as soup to her husband, and a rabbit that had been friends with the couple and takes brutal revenge.

At this stage Kitayama certainly had assistants working for him and likely used the simplified paper-animation method described by Yamamoto. He may also already have begun with cutout animation. Yet the wave of Kitayama movies in October was followed by a trough; apparently only in February 1918 would a new wave of his movies appear in cinemas (see ch. 5).

Exact date unknown

We do not seem to know anything about Kōuchi Jun’ichi’s movie *Hanawa Hekonai Kappa matsuri* (“Hanawa Hekonai – The kappa festival”) except that it was produced in 1917.[293:193] As the title points to a festival celebrating the Japanese water imp “kappa”, which in Tokyo was held in summer, and because Kobayashi Shōkai, the production company, was bankrupt by September 1917,[258:257] it is probable that this movie was made close to *Chamebō Kūkeijū no maki*.²⁰¹ Perhaps this movie did not receive the “otsushu” classification?

²⁰¹ Yoshiyama Kyokkō also mentions in 1933 that Kōuchi finished three movies for Kobayashi Shōkai.[326:64]

In the later version of his memoirs Shibata Katsu mentions two more films by Shimokawa in 1917, which cannot be found anywhere else: *Bunten no maki* (“The art exhibition of the Ministry of Culture”) and *Onabe to keuron-eko no maki* (“The pot and the black cat”).[242:8] We do not know whether these films really existed; however, one can easily imagine Tenkatsu and Shimokawa producing films/movies that simply were not listed at the time and/or some kind of advertising film for the Ministry of Culture (“Monbu-shō”).

This might also have been in connection with a request the “Japanese-French Society” (“Nichi-Futsu Kyōkai”) in Tokyo addressed to Tenkatsu and Nikkatsu to lend movies for screenings in Paris. This was reported by *Katsudō no sekai* in its January 1918 issue with the addendum that Nikkatsu had immediately selected four movies and promised a fifth one.[129]²⁰² In its next issue *Katsudō no sekai* claimed that at the beginning of December 1917 Nikkatsu had given the “dekobō manga” *Momotarō* (“Momotarō”), which had been produced at its Mukōjima studio, to the Japanese-French Society for export to France, and that Nikkatsu was hoping to deliver more of its “manga” for this purpose.[130]

So *Momotarō* seems to have been completed already in late 1917,²⁰³ even though its Japanese premiere at the Sanyūkan was only on 1 March 1918.[293:193] Whether it was actually screened in France is not known; I have not been able to find any hint in the French press of that time, nor does it seem to have been mentioned in the big Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*. Of course, there was still a war in Europe going on.

Momotarō’s plot should have been based on the famous Japanese folktale about a boy born from a peach (“momo”), who later fights demons on

²⁰² Only the promised movie *Chūshingura* could be identified with some degree of certainty as *Kanadehon Chūshingura* (“The 47 samurai”) by Makino Shōzō, which premiered on 13 October 1917.[237; 204] An internet search turned up none of the other titles.

²⁰³ Tsugata also gives these dates on two pages of his biography of Kitayama,[273:119,278] yet shifts them erroneously by one year on two other pages.[273:175,196]

an island with some animal companions. But it has to be considered a “lost film”.



Ill. 16: Frame from *Momotarō Onigashima onitaiji*

The illustration here comes from the toy film *Momotarō Onigashima onitaiji* (“Momotarō – Demon extermination on Demon Island”; Lion; 45 seconds long) from the collection of Matsumoto Natsuki. Matsumoto has thought it possible that this might be from Kitayama’s movie – and Kitayama’s grandson, Yasuda Takeo, is even quite certain that this is the case,[183:20.7.2016] although the style seems to be different from a picture purporting to come from Nikkatsu’s *Momotarō* and (re)printed by Tsugata.[273:171]

However, in one of his essays Sugimoto Gorō describes the film *Modan onigashima* (“Modern Demon Island”) which showed Momotarō driving in an open car,[256:205] as can be seen in illustration 16. Other details, such as Momotarō wearing a “helmet”, do not fit Sugimoto’s description exactly, but as the toy film contains only part of the movie, this might be explained away. Since the toy film also features an airplane and a motorcycle, as well as a “modern” residence of Momotarō, and as there does not seem to be

evidence that Kitayama “modernised” such classic tales,²⁰⁴ it seems possible to me that *Momotarō Onigashima onitaiji* was part of *Modan onigashima*, not of Kitayama’s *Momotarō*. (It should be noted that Matsumoto Natsuki does not concur.[183:20.7.2017])

Sugimoto’s assertion that *Modan onigashima* was made by Kōuchi Jun’ichi in 1925[256:205] is difficult to assess. Yamaguchi and Watanabe only list the title and a length of one reel under works from the Taishō era (1912-1926),[293:195] and in a different essay Sugimoto dates a *Momotarō* by Kōuchi to 1918.[256:277]²⁰⁵ As in other cases there is still (too) much room for speculation, especially as there seems to have been another(?) version, called *Momotarō to oni* (“Momotarō and the demons”; two reels; distributed by Iwamatsu Yōkō) and apparently made in 1926.[293:196]²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Yamaguchi and Watanabe claim that Kitayama’s *Momotarō* had been brought up-to-date, but do not give a source.[293:193]

²⁰⁵ Sugimoto[256:277] also mentions a *Momotarō* by Kimura Hakusan (also read Kimura Hakuzan) from 1928, in which Momotarō takes an airship to Demon Island and which is listed as *Oni no sumu shima* (“The island where demons live”) by Yamaguchi and Watanabe;[293:197] as well as a classic-style *Momotarō* by Yamamoto Sanae, also from 1928, which Yamaguchi and Watanabe list as *Nihon-ichi no Momotarō* (“Momotarō – Japan’s number one”; Takamasa Eigasha)[293:198; 189:46] and which still exists.[v8]

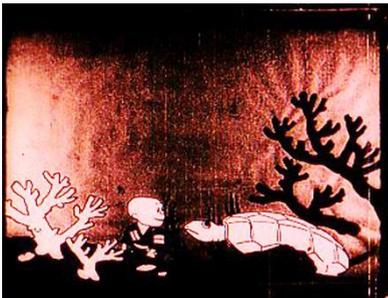
²⁰⁶ An allegedly live-action film (geki) called *Momotarō to oni* (two reels; Asahi Kinema), presenting a modernized version of the story, is listed in the 1930 “Catalogue of educational films”. [189:45]

5 Japanese animated movies/films in 1918 and 1919

February 1918

On 1 February *Urashima Tarō* (*Urashima Tarō*) premiered at the Operakan.[293:193] Like all movies from 1918 it was produced by Nikkatsu and Kitayama. The story of the fisherman Urashima Tarō is a well-known tale in Japan, somewhat similar to the American story of Rip van Winkle. Urashima saves a turtle which brings him to the dragon's palace at the bottom of the sea out of gratitude, where he is welcomed by a princess but gets homesick and returns. At home, however, he finds out that on earth much more time has passed than at the dragon's palace. When he opens a box the princess gave him, smoke billows out and he suddenly becomes an old man.[286]

In 2007 Matsumoto Natsuki found a toy film version (tinted pink) of *Urashima Tarō*, together with *Namakuragatana*. [182:96] In 2015 he also found a copy of the American live-action short movie *It's a Wild Life* (Hal Roach; 1918) starring Harold Lloyd.[183:14.3.2017]²⁰⁷ All three boxes had the same Haguruma label; more importantly, the same person seems to have written the titles on the boxes with a pen.[183:14.3.2017] Therefore we can assume that all three films had been sold at about the same time. Until recently, this toy film version of *Urashima Tarō*, [v10] though lacking a title, was thought to be part of Kitayama's movie of 1918.[173:63]



Ill. 17: Frame from *Urashima Tarō*
(toy film)

²⁰⁷ The toy film version was called *Roido-kun no banyū*, the Japanese release title was *Banyū Roido*; [183:14.3.2017] both mean “Courageous Lloyd”.

However, in 2017 manga researcher Niimi Nue came upon an illustrated description of Nikkatsu's *Urashima Tarō* in the journal *Yōnen sekai* ("Children's world") – which is quite different from the toy film both visually and in content.[321; 183:14.3.2017; 286] The description mentions, for instance, a "film [projection being shown] within the film" when Urashima is met by the princess.[321]²⁰⁸ The text in *Yōnen sekai* also asks the children to eagerly applaud whether they like the movie or not.[321]

So if we accept this illustrated description as a true depiction of the movie – and with a title card, and an end showing the Nikkatsu mark, there is not much reason not to accept it (see also below)–, where does Matsumoto's toy film version of *Urashima Tarō* come from? It should have been produced at around the same time, but we have no clue who could have made it. At some point in time in the 1920s, a one-reel *Urashima Tarō* seems to have been produced or distributed by Osaka-based Takenaka Shōkai,[189:48] about which nothing seems to be known. Interestingly, of the other six senga by Takenaka Shōkai listed in this context,[189:47f.] only two titles can be found in Yamaguchi and Watanabe's anime history – and both are listed there as having been made by Yamamoto Sanae in 1929: *Inaba no usagi* ("The rabbit from Inaba"; one reel) and *Orokana tori* ("The dumb bird"; one reel).[293:201]

The next picture-animated film of *Urashima Tarō* apparently came only in 1931 (directed by Miyashita Manzō for Nikkatsu), but as a 16mm film it was made for home projectors and as a record-talkie, i.e., the projection was synchronized with a record player.[293:206]²⁰⁹

One feature to observe about the toy film version found by Matsumoto is its use of iris shots and silhouette animation[v10] which we also find in Kōuchi Jun'ichi's *Namakuragatana*. [197] And if Sugimoto was correct that Kōuchi made a "Momotarō" version (see ch. 4/Exact date unknown),[256:205,277] why not an "Urashima Tarō", too? That we also see the "Haguruma Y.N.& Co." (see ch. 0.3) mark at the end of both toy films

²⁰⁸ This reminds me of a, certainly different, version of *Urashima Tarō* at the Toy Film Museum in Kyoto which they date to the 1930s.[v29]

²⁰⁹ This film can be found on the internet, where it is sometimes wrongly labelled as the 1918 *Urashima Tarō*. [v30]

might not be important, on the other hand there might have been a connection between cinemas (and thus production companies) and toy film companies. Yet at this stage all this is mere speculation.

Again at the Operakan on 15 February Kitayama's *Yukidaruma* ("Snowman") premiered.[293:193] This is presumed to have been an original work or at least a modern tale, but no details are known.[273:118]

The same applies to Kitayama's *Kaeru no yume* ("The frog's dream"), which was released on 28 February at Operakan.[273:118; 293:193]

March 1918

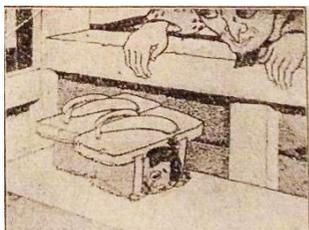
On 1 March *Momotarō* was screened at the Sanyūkan (see ch. 4/Exact date unknown).[293:193]

On 16 March *Kintarō* premiered at the Operakan.[293:193] According to the "Yōnen sekai katsudō shashin", an illustrated description of the movie in *Yōnen sekai*, the subtitle was *Ashigarayama no maki* ("Mount Ashigara").[322] Visually, Kintarō, a folk-tale hero, does indeed look similar to Urashima Tarō in the previous issue of *Yōnen sekai*. [321] The movie shows scenes from Kintarō's youth on Mount Ashigara, where he made friends with various animals and was able to best even a wild bear thanks to his strength.[322]

19 March saw *Kobutori* ("Plump") being released at the Chiyodakan.[273:193] This likely was about the Japanese folktale of two neighbours with lumps ("kobu") on their faces, one of whom at night met a group of demons and danced for them. To ensure his return the next night, the chief demon took ("tori") his lump as surety. The other neighbour heard of this and tried to do the same, but because he did not please the demons and because they thought he was the same man, they "returned" the lump to him. However, no details about the movie are known.

By contrast, an illustrated description of *Issun-bōshi* ("One-inch boy"), which could be seen from 20 March at the Sanyūkan and which had a length of 3 minutes,[293:193] was again published as a "Yōnen sekai katsudō shashin": a boy is born after a prayer at a shrine, but because he is as small as a thumb he is called Issun-bōshi, One-inch boy. He goes to the

capital to meet the prime minister and is taken in and raised by him. After several years he has not grown and goes on a journey. He succeeds in saving a princess from a giant ogre and gets his wish to become a big man fulfilled.[323]



Ill. 18: Issun-bōshi hides below the minister's "geta" (wooden clogs). From *Yōnen sekai's* illustrated retelling of Kitayama's *Issun-boshi*.

On 30 March *Tarō no banpei* ("Taro the guard") premiered at the Operakan.[293:193] Nothing is known about its content, but it apparently had a sequel (see under August 1918).

April 1918

On 1 April Nikkatsu's *Tokechigai* ("Misunderstanding"?)²¹⁰ was released at the Sanyūkan.[293:193] Nothing seems to be known about this movie.

Also on 1 April *Koshiore tsubame* ("Broken-hip swallow") premiered at the Yūrakukan.[293:193] According to a newspaper advertisement, however, this "Nihon manga" was shown on/from 6 May at the Sanyūkan.[41] Whether this was a re-release – although in that case it would be surprising that it was mentioned in an advertisement –, or whether the source used by Yamaguchi and Watanabe[293:193] as well as by Tsugata[273:119] was wrong, is not known.

The illustrated description in the June 1918 issue of *Yōnen sekai*, where it is called *Tsubame monogatari* ("Tale of the swallow"),[324] shows that it was a tale similar to the 1917 movie *Shitakiri suzume* (see ch. 4/October) – in fact, one literary version seems to involve a sparrow instead of a swallow.[248:119] Here we have two neighbours – one poor and kind, the other

²¹⁰ Tsugata translates the title as "Toke Chigai".[271:21]

rich and greedy – and a pair of young swallows, one of which falls from the nest and is treated and put back by the kind man. He gets gourd seeds from the parent swallow as a token of gratitude, and when the gourd has grown it contains gold and silver coins. His neighbour, lusting for riches, wants to imitate him, but when the swallow does not fall out of its nest he throws it down and then treats it. He also gets seeds, yet from the gourd a ghost emerges and makes him apologise to the swallow.[324]

May 1918

Possibly *Koshiore tsubame* only premiered on 6 May (see above).

July 1918

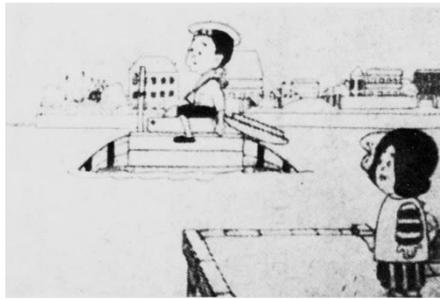
On 18 July *Ari to hato* (“The ant and the pigeon”) was screened at the Operakan; its length is given as three minutes.[293:193] It seems to have been an adaptation of the fable *Muravey i golubka* (“The ant and the pigeon”) by Lev N. Tolstoy.[273:119] A 1930 source lists it as having been produced and/or distributed by Kitayama Eiga Seisakujo,[189:47] Kitayama’s studio, although it is quite unusual to see such an early movie listed there. A still can be found in Tsugata’s Kitayama biography.[273:171]

August 1918

The last animated movie by Nikkatsu and Kitayama for which we have release information premiered on 4 August: *Tarō no heitai Senkōtei no maki* (“Tarō the soldier – The submarine”)²¹¹. [182:128; 256:205] The story, according to the illustrated description in the October 1918 issue of *Yōnen sekai* runs as follows: Young Tarō builds a submarine – using a beer barrel as the hull and a kettle as the motor – and is bid farewell by his younger sister Hanako. On the sea his submarine gets swallowed by a whale. After a while the whale surfaces again and there are lots of transport ships ahead. A

²¹¹ Parts of the literature give the title as *Tarō no banpei Senkōtei no maki* (“Tarō the guard – The submarine”).[273:119; 293:193]

German submarine turns up²¹² and fires a torpedo at the whale which gets hit and sinks into the sea. On the sea floor Tarō manages to get out of the whale with his submarine, but while drifting in the sea he collides with the German submarine, gets thrown out of the water and has to cling to a plank of his submarine. A sea bird comes along and lays a large egg on the plank. The German submarine surfaces, Tarō boards it and forces the captain into capitulation by claiming the egg were a bomb. The submarine brings him to the nearby Japanese fleet – and Tarō surprises the German captain by sucking the “bomb” dry.[325]²¹³



Ill. 19 Hanako and Tarō in Kitayama’s *Tarō no heitai Senkōtei no maki* (1918)

Both Sugimoto Gorō and Kitayama’s biographer Tsugata agree that the animation was rather basic,[114:205; 273:172] which Kitayama himself also acknowledged for all his movies.[155:323] It is interesting, though, that it apparently marked the attempt by Nikkatsu (and/or Kitayama) to establish a serial with “Tarō”.

The young Ōishi Ikuo (also Ōishi Iku), who would be an important animator in the 1930s and early 1940s,[63:597] is said to have made an ani-

²¹² During the First World War Germany and Japan were enemies.

²¹³ A toy film discovered by Sugimoto Gorō covers the first part of the movie.[183:23.7.2017] Since the toy film and the illustrations match, this strengthens the case even more that the illustrations in the March issue of *Yōnen sekai do*, in fact, come from the Nikkatsu/Kitayama anime *Urashima Tarō* and that the toy film version discovered by Matsumoto Natsuki is a different film.

mated advertisement *Usagi to kame* (“The hare and the tortoise”; cf. ch. 4/June) for Morinaga Company’s milk chocolate in August 1918.[225:30; 273:137] However, no source is given in the secondary literature, nor information about where the necessary equipment would have come from.

1919

Gatten Tokubē (“Got it’ Tokubē”) was likely completed in mid-1919 for the Ministry of Communications. The ministry had organised a script competition on the topic of encouraging postal savings, and the winning one had been filmed as a live-action movie by Tenkatsu. Because of its success, Nikkatsu was asked to film the runner-up script.[273:135f.] In 2016 I happened upon a detailed description of its content published in 1922: The film was about a peasant named Tokubē, who had the habit of replying to everything with “gatten gatten” (“got it, got it”). While hardworking, he also quickly spent his money. When he got ill one day he asked a neighbour for a loan. The neighbour was able to convince Tokubē on this occasion that it would make sense to save money. Tokubē then hid his money in his house, but it was stolen by a thief. Then he carried his money around in a pouch – this became bothersome. Finally, the neighbour was able to persuade him that a postal savings account would be both safe and convenient. When Tokubē dreamed that he had lost his savings book in a fire and a flood, his neighbour explained to him that he would not have to worry. After some time Tokubē had saved enough money to travel to the shrine at Ise; on his return he gave the children postal savings books instead of the usual souvenirs. Everyone in the village praised Tokubē and also began to save.[210:39ff.]

An article in the journal *Katsudō hyōron* (“Film critique”) in June 1919 tells us that this film was completely animated and had a length of more than 600m, running to about 30 minutes (from [273:136]). This would have made it the longest Japanese animated film to date. Seeing how much Nikkatsu and Kitayama were able to produce in the first half of 1918, this is hardly impossible; the more interesting question would be whether it was ever released commercially in a cinema, as *Chokin no susume* had been in October 1917 (see ch. 4).



Ill. 20: Screenshot from *Baguda-jō no tōzoku* (Ōfujī Noburō; 1926)

6 What remained?

In 1917 Japanese animation, or anime, was born. Such a statement can often be found in the secondary literature (e.g., [10:4; 94:60]). For a long time the film strip *Katsudō shashin* had been unknown – and even after its discovery in 2005 it was often ignored (e.g., [72; 274]), explicitly excluded from being an animated film because it had not been “filmed” and screened in a cinema,[239:39] or dismissed as a “mere curio” found among “junk”. [61:20] Recently a research committee set up by the anime industry came to the conclusion that “it would be difficult to see *Katsudō shashin* as the origin of the Japanese animation business” because it likely had no influence on later developments, and because its “commercial” character was in doubt. Only when “production, distribution, and entertainment [screening]” were “vertically integrated”, according to this research report, would the beginning of animation be possible.[287]

Of course, there are several problems with such an argument, even if it is made mostly from the point of view of an “anime industry”.²¹⁴ But I am writing a history of early Japanese animation, not just of the Japanese animation industry. And following the definition given in chapter 0.2, *Katsudō shashin* is without doubt a full-fledged animated film. It thus currently marks the beginning of Japanese animated film, i.e., anime. *Katsudō shashin* was extremely short, and it may not have had any influence on later developments, but this does not exclude it from the history of Japanese animation. And because it was quite certainly produced for commercial reasons, *Katsudō shashin* is even part of the history of commercial Japanese animation. The same is true for its German counterparts by Bing, Planck or Carette, which the German Film Institute, calling them “Litho-Films – chromo-

²¹⁴ Many Japanese animated films from the 1920s to the 1950s were never released in cinemas, not even produced for such a release but made for being screened in schools or as “experimental” films. The report also quotes Tanaka Jun’ichirō’s dismissive comments on early travelling showmen and that it would take an “industrialist” to push the Japanese film business forward, in support of its conclusion that something like *Katsudō shashin* would not count as part of the history of the anime business.[287; 261:103] The report ignores, however, similar critical remarks by Tanaka on Japanese animation before Toei Animation.[262:270f.]

lithographic loops”, matter-of-factly counts among the “earliest animated films in film history”.^[73]

It would be correct to say: in 1917 the history of Japanese animated films made for cinema (in this book’s terminology: Japanese animated movies) began. Three “animators” were active in 1917 – but to what effect?

According to Kitayama Seitarō’s biographer, Tsugata Nobuyuki, Kitayama “devised new techniques of producing animated films”: “a mass production system” which allowed him to create about ten short animated movies a year.^[276:26] “In other words, as an entrepreneur Kitayama placed priority on producing animations on a commercial basis”.^[276:26] Shimokawa Ōten and Kōuchi Jun’ichi, by contrast, “were unable to sustain the laborious task of producing animations. [...] It is reasonable to think that this was due to their huge financial problems.”^[276:26]

Here Tsugata follows Kitayama’s blatant self-promotion, when he stressed the “economy” of his methods compared to Shimokawa’s and Kōuchi’s.^[155:323] Moreover, this rhymes with Tsugata’s theory about the history of Japanese animation, which he sees as a succession of “bipolar” phenomena: in this case the contrast between the “cartoonist” and the “entrepreneur”, with the “entrepreneur” Kitayama winning.^[276:26] Watanabe Yasushi, for example, has also praised Kitayama’s contributions to the “commercialising” of “local anime” (in ^[294:48]) and Jonathan Clements calls him “the most prolific of the industrial animators”.^[61:40]

Nevertheless, Tsugata’s analysis of the beginnings of Japanese animated movies is not tenable. Shimokawa, for example, was apparently fired by Tenkatsu for having become ill, and Kōuchi, temporarily, had to stop producing animation because of the bankruptcy of Kobayashi Shōkai, which certainly was not a result of his work. (If he really stopped in 1917, which we do not know for certain.) Even leaving aside that both Shimokawa and Kōuchi had to show some business nous as popular cartoonists, Kōuchi’s animation work in the 1920s at least equals Kitayama’s; and Kōuchi was able to arrange for at least one of his movies, *Chōngire hebi*, a cinema release in 1931, something Kitayama does not seem to have managed after 1918.

Moreover, to claim that Kitayama had developed a “mass production system” is somewhat problematic. While it is correct that Kitayama pro-

duced quite a lot of animated movies between May 1917 and April 1918 – with Shimokawa at about the same level in 1917 –, at least the releases were not spread evenly and the “system” seems to have stuttered for unknown reasons.²¹⁵ Whether to see Kitayama’s “colourful activities”[273:137] alongside or outside the production of animated film since the late 1910s as positive or negative, the latter because he was forced to engage in them, I will leave to the reader. We scarcely know anything about the extent of Kitayama’s work on intertitles or animation for live-action movies; neither do we know whether Kōuchi, perhaps, did something similar in the 1920s.

When we take stock of Kitayama’s animated movies and films, Tsugata argues that there were more than 30 of them.[273:253] Yet, about two thirds would have been made in 1917 and 1918, the rest likely in the early 1920s. There certainly were bouts of “mass production” – or was it “mass release”? –, but whether there was a “system” behind this seems questionable. Even in Japan, Murata Yasuji, with some help, produced more than 50 movies between 1927 and 1936, including hybrid movies with live action.[212:47f.] And the work of all Japanese animators of the first generations pales in comparison to J. R. Bray’s about 540 animated movies between 1913 and 1927.[252]

What about concrete features of such a “mass production system” and the new techniques allegedly introduced by Kitayama? Although Tsugata claims that Shimokawa and Kōuchi had worked without staff,[273:151] in contrast to Kitayama, this is not quite correct. (Tsugata is, of course, aware that Shimokawa and Kōuchi would have had cameramen.[273:128]) As we have seen, Shimokawa had an assistant and two cameramen (see ch. 3.1), and Kōuchi, too, had help, at least in the person of Maekawa Senpan (see ch. 3.3) and likely a cameraman. Perhaps they had more help – Kōuchi later(?) certainly with Ōfuji Noburō –, but we know much less about their work conditions than we would like to believe we know about Kitayama’s. Tsugata identifies seven “assistants” of Kitayama between 1917 and

²¹⁵ Clements claims that “Kitayama certainly managed a regular output of animated films in the years that followed [1917]”[61:38] and that after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923 “Kitayama’s production of informational, educational and instructional films grew stronger than ever”. [61:36] I see no evidence for either of those assertions.

1923,[273:152ff.] but it is unlikely that they were all working at the same time.²¹⁶ Moreover, we do not know whether they were all staff members of Kitayama's, or, like Takagi Taisaku, working for Nikkatsu or its mysterious "manga department". Since so much about the relationship between Kitayama and Nikkatsu is uncertain it is equally possible that Kitayama already had something akin to an independent studio at this time or that he was simply head of Nikkatsu's manga department, with any "system" stemming more from Nikkatsu's corporate experience. For the time of Kitayama's studio in the early 1920s, at least, there is not much evidence of any "mass production system" of animated film. On the contrary, Kitayama himself argued that the cut-out animation method he employed – or had to employ, lacking such things as cels –, even though more efficient than pure paper animation, made division of labour difficult.[155:337] Thus, the more animation these "senga" may have contained, the less their production could have been called "industrial".

One should consider that for several decades Japanese animation production remained at the manufacturing stage, except for some attempts in the 1930s and early 1940s, when bigger film companies, and the military,[62] attempted to scale up production – for various reasons without lasting success.²¹⁷ It is tempting to see the Kitayama/Nikkatsu animation production in a similar way, with Nikkatsu in the driving seat.

And which new techniques would Kitayama have introduced? Cutout animation, which was more efficient than paper animation, seems to have been first used by Kōuchi – and like all three pioneers he had followed American models. Neither the worktable Kitayama built, nor the camera frame, were original inventions; both highly likely were based on the trans-

²¹⁶ Yoshiyama Kyokkō, too, argued in 1933 that Kitayama had influenced an "unusually high number".[326:64] Yamaguchi and Watanabe claim that Kitayama should be esteemed for educating "many" people – and then name Kanai Kūchirō, Yamamoto Sanae and Kimura Hakusan.[293:14] Kimura is mentioned by Kitayama as having "received guidance" from his assistant Hashiguchi.[155:324]

²¹⁷ See e.g., [293:30ff.]. Jonathan Clements contends that "[d]uring the 1920s, Japanese animation transformed from the largely artisanal, small-scale productions of its inception, to the industrialised output that characterised its move into profitability." [61:35] I do not agree with this view.

lated *Scientific American* article,[235; 222:34] or had already been in use in Japanese film production (see ch. 4/Interlude B).

In a recent lecture Tsugata added some more differences between Kitayama on the one hand and Shimokawa and Kōuchi on the other:

- The latter had been scouted, whereas Kitayama had gone to Nikkatsu on his own.[215] This, as we have seen, is not certain.
- Kitayama widened the scope of anime by producing advertising films and educational movies based on folk tales for children.[215] Of course, similar claims could be made for Shimokawa (first to turn a manga into an anime, first satirical anime) or Kōuchi (first to produce a historical drama anime, first political advertising anime in the 1920s). And Tsugata did acknowledge in his Kitayama biography that, “of course”, it had not been Kitayama opening up new fields for animation on his own initiative, but rather clients asking him to move into such fields.[273:255] More importantly, we seem to have no information at all as to whether the “pioneers” or the production companies selected the topics for the anime. Shimokawa, for instance, could have been hired specifically to turn a manga into an anime, or he could have proposed it himself.

However, it is correct that Nikkatsu’s/Kitayama’s move with animated folk-tales towards children as a specific market is notable. In connection with initiatives by the Japanese Ministry of Culture – first in 1921 a recommendation system, then in 1923 direct encouragement of animation production for the educational market[293:12f.] – this would open up a niche for Japanese anime producers to escape the pressure of American competition. Yet we should not forget that Nihon Firumu Kyōkai apparently served the educational animation market before Kitayama appeared as an independent producer.

Animated advertising was another such niche, occupied by, among others, Yamamoto Sanae[186:94] and Kōuchi Jun’ichi in the 1920s. But these moves into niches sheltered from foreign competition probably also account for much of the lack of progress and invention in Japanese anime manufacturing until the 1950s.

- Then, according to Tsugata’s lecture, Kitayama built a studio within Nikkatsu’s Mukōjima studio, thus showing “a producer’s sense”. [215] Yet, Kōuchi, too, had an animation studio in the 1920s – and apparently

for longer than Kitayama –, although his main business, according to Tsugata, remained manga.[215] (No praise here for Kōuchi for being diversified?) And, of course, many film studios were established in those years. (Fourteen in 1920 and 1921, according to one source.[99:326f.]) Moreover, I would not classify Kitayama’s studio as a “dedicated animation studio”[61:32], not even “in hindsight”.[61:35] Whether to credit Kanai Kiichirō, Ōfuji Noburō, Yamamoto Sanae or someone else with establishing the first animation studio that mainly produced animated film remains to be researched.

One difference not mentioned by Tsugata was remarked upon by some contemporaries of Kitayama: that the quality of his work was lower than that of his competitors. Kitayama’s “economy” likely resulted in his movies being rather poor to watch, as even Tsugata, who usually acts as a cheerleader for Kitayama, admits in the case of Kitayama’s presumably last movie for Nikkatsu, *Tarō no heitai Senkōtei no maki*. [273:172] Kitayama himself suggested in 1930 that this “economy”, probably evident not just in a low number of different images per second, was a deliberate, though not necessarily voluntary, part of his “business plan”. [155:323,328] He certainly was aware about the quality problem of his movies: “But when I think about it, they were just worthless pieces and there is not one of them that I would wish to have remained until today.” [155:323]²¹⁸

In this context the reader should, however, be reminded that the review of Kitayama’s first advertising movie *Chokin no susume* had been quite positive. [40] Presumably the Ministry of Communications offered better conditions than Nikkatsu. [155:328] And it certainly was not the technique of cutout animation which would have limited the quality of Kitayama’s movies. Kōuchi Jun’ichi had shown this from the start and Murata Yasuji, especially, became such a master of this technique that his later movies sometimes resemble drawn animation, e.g., his *Tsuki no miya no ojosama* (“The princess in the moon palace”; Yokohama Shinema; 1934; [v28]).

²¹⁸ This apparently excluded *Ari to hato* and *Issun-bōshi*, 16mm copies of which he tried to sell via advertisements in 1930, [273:207] unless those had been more recent remakes, which I deem unlikely.

To put it bluntly: Kitayama, Shimokawa and Kōuchi had equally failed in putting Japanese animation production on a solid basis. Yet this was certainly not only due to their own shortcomings and sheer bad luck – if any individual short of being a company boss or having very deep pockets could have done this at all. As Yamamoto Sanae writes in his memoirs, “the slow production speed was a problem”.^[295:82] Within one week, about 100m of film had to be completed; otherwise the budget went awry.^[295:82] (In 1930 Kōuchi, using cutout animation, apparently managed not even 50m in a week of seven workdays.^[315]) With the available technology – especially without cel animation which, until the 1930s, was simply too expensive in Japan to be used routinely^[155:336] – it was difficult to produce large amounts of animation at a price competitive with imported movies that had already made up their cost in their home market. Japanese animated movies, in the words of Yamamoto, were “impossible as a commercial product”.^[295:82]

Apparently, for the development of anime in 1917/18 the three general film companies Nikkatsu, Tenkatsu and Kobayashi Shōkai were at least as important as the three pioneers. (Jasper Sharp argues similarly concerning producers and directors in Japanese cinema in general.^[240:43]) We lack information about the details of Nikkatsu’s and Kitayama’s contractual relationship, so we do not know why, and how, they split up. Nor do we know why Kobayashi Kisaburō does not seem to have been interested in animation after 1917. In my opinion, these companies and people recognised that with the technical means and the people available in Japan animated movies would not be profitable as entertainment, after all.

Thus the question might arise whether the three pioneers’ effect on Japanese animation might have been similar to that of *Katsudō shashin*. That would certainly be an exaggeration. Yet they did not really contribute much to the establishment of local animated movies as a regular part of the Japanese movie industry – in contrast to niches such as advertising, education and what might be called “special effects” – to say nothing of an “anime industry”. Except that they had been the first and that they had assistants, such as Yamamoto Sanae with Kitayama and Ōfuji Noburō with Kōuchi, who were among those who helped keep alive the dream of Japanese animated movies as a viable product in the following decades, although both

perhaps tended less to an “industrial” side than, for example, Ōishi Ikuo or Seo Mitsuyo in the 1930s and 1940s.

Yamamoto Sanae, especially, is sometimes mentioned in this context (e.g., [273:256]) because a later incarnation of his animation studio was bought in 1956 by the movie company Tōei and became the “core” of Tōei Dōga (later Toei Animation) which, in fact, first realised this dream. But the ties between Kitayama and Toei Animation (see [201]) – one might say, between *Saru to kani no gassen* and *One Piece* (Toei Animation; TV series and movies since 1999) – are flimsy, at best: Kitayama never laid any foundations for an “animation industry”, so could not teach them to Yamamoto. And in more than three decades Yamamoto rarely managed for his films to be released widely in cinemas; he abhorred financial matters, as he himself wrote – in Tsugata’s dualistic scheme he was certainly an artist, not an entrepreneur –; and he agreed to the sale of his studio to Tōei only because even his friends were no longer willing to lend him money.[295:124ff.]

When we try to find out the reasons why Tōei Dōga succeeded where others had failed, we should, in my opinion, look mainly, though far from exclusively, to company president and producer Ōkawa Hiroshi, who was willing to invest heavily into the build-up of the studio and to use Tōei’s large distribution network – and to his luck of doing this at exactly the right stage of his company’s and the Japanese movie industry’s development. Yamamoto and his apprenticeship with Kitayama hardly played a role in this first decisive step towards an “anime industry”.

To recapitulate: Japanese animated film already existed before 1917, at the least in the form of *Katsudō shashin*, which very likely was inspired by German models. The first “pure” Western picture-animated movie whose release in a Japanese cinema we can verify was Émile Cohl’s *Les exploits de feu follet* aka *Nipparu no benkei* in April 1912; other kinds of foreign animated or hybrid movies were certainly shown in Japan before that, other imported picture-animated movies possibly. Since 1914 an increasing number of imported animated movies were released in Japanese cinemas, and since 1916 information on how to produce animated movies also entered the country.

The first Japanese animated movies were released in 1917, with Shimokawa Ōten’s *Dekobō shingachō*, *Imosuke inoshishigari no maki* very likely the first

in January 1917. (*Dekobō shingachō Meian no shippai* was presumably an alternative title of this movie.) At least 18 Japanese animated movies were released in 1917 – and at least ten imported animated movies screened in May 1917 alone. The local movies – made by Shimokawa for Tenkatsu, Kitayama Seitarō for Nikkatsu, and Kōuchi Jun’ichi for Kobayashi Shōkai – used various techniques which, contrary to later claims by Shimokawa and Kitayama, were mostly modelled on American examples or on literature describing the production of American animated movies. Neither of the three Japanese pioneers can in truth be called “innovative”,²¹⁹ nor were they really successful as the “boom”[263:37] already came to an end in summer 1918 after a further dozen animated movies, all by Kitayama/Nikkatsu, had been released. Yet Shimokawa, Kitayama and Kōuchi cannot alone be faulted for this; personal and general circumstances, including those concerning the production companies, certainly did not help.

If we want to characterise each pioneer’s contributions we might say that Kōuchi had introduced, to some acclaim, cutout animation and thus the main technique of Japanese animation until the 1930s; he also seems to have been active in animation for longer than the other two. Kitayama at Nikkatsu had been the most productive – mainly thanks to also being able to produce movies in 1918 – and, by chance, helped open up advertising and perhaps education (all those folk-tales) for animation. Shimokawa just was lucky in having been the first in the race between the three to put a Japanese animated movie into a cinema – or so I thought until preparing this book. Tsugata Nobuyuki hardly was alone when writing that, though Shimokawa had made the first animated movie, those few months between his work and those by Kitayama and Kōuchi should not be taken to be really meaningful.[273:254]

²¹⁹ As Okamura Shihō, the president of the “Katsudō shashin zasshi-sha” which edited the journal *Katsudō shashin zasshi*, put it in a book published in April 1917: Dekobō shingachō need “a painter well versed in the rules of the movement of bodies”. To produce them is “tedious but can be done without difficulty”. [213:107] Whether Shimokawa and Kōuchi as mangaka (or rather cartoonists) had an advantage here over Kitayama as someone trained in rather static Western painting, is difficult to say. But Kitayama himself mentioned his efforts to understand movement for animation. [155:322]

But let me briefly digress: On 1 January 1963 Tezuka Osamu and Mushi Pro's *Tetsuwan Atomu* started – the first episode of the first Japanese drawn-animated tv series with episodes of about 25 minutes, much longer than anything that went before in Japanese picture animation on tv. In the fourth quarter of 1963, four more drawn-animated tv series by other production companies began to air.[61:125] Even though it would have taken time to reassign, or find, staff for such a series, to produce the first episode, and to arrange its inclusion in the tv stations' schedules – more time, certainly, than to put a five-minute movie made by two or three people into a cinema in 1917 –, scarcely anybody would mention TCJ's *Sennin buraku* (“Hermit village”; starting on 4 September 1963), the first “late-night” anime and only the second purely drawn-animated Japanese tv series, in the same breath as Tezuka and his *Tetsuwan Atomu* when speaking about the pioneer(s) of tv anime.

As I understand it by now, Shimokawa and Tenkatsu were not in a race with Kitayama/Nikkatsu and Kōuchi/Kobayashi Shōkai. Only when the first animated movie by Shimokawa and Tenkatsu had been released, the others began to think seriously, or at all, about entering that field. At best, Kitayama's first anime was the fourth or fifth anime movie, Kōuchi's the eighth. Shimokawa/Tenkatsu did not just happen to be the first – they opened up a new field by proving that a Japanese animated movie was possible, much as Tezuka/Mushi Pro proved that an anime tv series with episodes long enough to fit the broadcasters' half-hour program slots was feasible.²²⁰ We should give Shimokawa and Tenkatsu more credit for this, the more so because Shimokawa had apparently become reasonably known to the public before Kitayama and Kōuchi had even completed their first movies (see ch. 4/April, part two).

Japanese animated film in the 1900s and 1910s strongly, but imperfectly, reflected Western influence. And for quite some time it would remain backward in comparison, not just to its American, but also, for instance, to its German counterpart. The first currently verified cinematic release of a Jap-

²²⁰ The parallel might not be perfect, though. One might argue that the time for a Japanese animated movie was ripe in 1917, whereas I am not so certain about the development of anime without Tezuka and *Tetsuwan Atomu*.

anese animated movie since August 1918 only came on 15 July 1926 at the Shōchikukan in Shinjuku/Tokyo²²¹ with Ōfuji Noburō's *Baguda-jō no tōzoku* ("The thief of Baguda Castle"; Chūō Eigasha).[293:194; 186]²²² This b/w cutout animation, using coloured "chiyogami" paper, originally had a length of 30 minutes, although the extant "digest version" only runs to fourteen minutes.[200] Practically at the same time, Lotte Reiniger's famous silhouette-animated movie *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (*The Adventures of Prince Achmed*; Comenius-Film; 1926), with a length of 66 minutes, premiered in Berlin.[233:134ff.; d1] After its cinema release in Japan in 1929 as *Akumedito oji no boken*, Ōfuji could not but write in the *Asahi Shimbun* that "there is, of course, nothing in this category of film to rival this movie".[208]

While parallels and ties can be found between phenomena in the Japanese animation worlds of the first two decades of the twentieth century and of the interwar and postwar years, this is no longer true when looking at today's anime world. Several more "beginnings", imported models and techniques, as well as local developments, have changed it into a real industry that a hundred years ago probably could not even have been imagined. Nevertheless, the dead ends and cut-off lines of those early decades also belong to anime's history.

²²¹ Strictly speaking, the movie seems to have premiered on 10 July at a public "movie night" of the "Zen Kantō Eiga Kyōkai" ("All Kantō Movie Association") at the Aoyama Kaikan in today's Minato City in Tokyo.[46]

²²² It would be surprising if, e.g., Kimura Hakusan's *Nonkina tosan Ryūgū mairi* ("Carefree Dad visits the Dragon Palace"; 1925)[10:6] had not been released in cinemas, combining the popularity of its title character (see ch. 3.1) and of the "Urashima Tarō" (see ch. 5) motive on one reel. (A frame is reprinted in [256:206].) On the other hand, even decades later animated films could end up unreleased because of problems with distributors, as was the case with Seo Mitsuyo's *Osama no shippo* ("The king's tail"; Nihon Manga Eigasha; 1949; 33 minutes) which Tōhō did not release because of political concerns, making Seo leave animation.[293:51ff.,238ff.; 63:435f.]

7 Back matter

7.1 Usage information

In all following lists long vowels and umlauts are sorted under the basic vowel, i.e. “ō” or “ö” are treated as “o”. Definite and indefinite articles are ignored for sorting. Whereas the glossary uses the modern way of writing Japanese characters, the bibliography and the indices use old-style characters where appropriate and actually found in the sources. The glossary does not present every Japanese term found in the text, but at least the “building blocks”. Explanations are kept to a minimum.

In the bibliography advertisements and articles without an author are listed under the newspaper or journal. In the case of Japanese newspaper articles and advertisements the Tokyo morning edition of the newspaper is meant, unless specified otherwise. With the exception of [12] I have seen everything in the bibliography. When a source has not been available to me and information has been quoted or paraphrased from a secondary source, this is indicated in the text as “(from [...])”. All URLs were valid on 30 August 2017.

The name index covers historical persons (but not authors of secondary literature or fictional people) under their most common name, companies, associations and cinemas. Years of birth and death are taken from various sources, including Wikipedias.

All films/movies and manga mentioned in the book can be found in the title index. However, only the title and variants in the original language are indexed, except in cases where the original title cannot be ascertained and a Japanese or English version is given.

7.2 Glossary of Japanese terms

anime アニメ: in this book defined as Japanese animation

Animerama アニメラマ: artificial word for Mushi Pro's adult anime movies

animēshon アニメーション: animation

anma 按摩: blind masseur

benshi 弁士: (movie) narrator

bō(zu) 坊(主): boy

Chame(bō) 茶目(坊), Chamesuke 茶目助: character by Kitazawa Rakuten

chiyogami 千代紙: special kind of coloured paper

-chō 帖: notebook; here used as a suffix indicating a film

Dekobō 凸坊: character by Kitazawa Rakuten

dekokobō shingachō 凸坊新画帖: old-fashioned term for animated film

dōga 動画: animated film

eiga 映画: slide; film

eigakan 映画館: cinema

emakimono 絵巻物 Japanese picture scrolls

firumu フィルム: film

gachō 画帖: picture album

geki 劇: drama; here also denoting live-action film

gendaijeki 現代劇: contemporary drama

gentō 幻灯: magic lantern

geta 下駄 Japanese wooden clogs

hage ハゲ: bald

hanga 版画: woodblock print

hanmenga 半面画: unusual term for silhouettes

jidaigeki 時代劇: period drama

Jigoma ジゴマ: Japanese version of the movie character “Zigomar”

jiji manga 時事漫画: manga about current-events

jitsu 実: reality; here used to denote documentaries and “news films”

kage-e 影絵: silhouettes

-kai 会: association, meeting

- kan 館: hall; suffix for names of cinemas
- kanji 漢字: (Sino-)Japanese characters
- kappa 河童: legendary water-imp
- kappazuri 合羽刷り: Japanese stencil print technique
- katana 刀: Japanese sword
- katari-e 語り絵: “narrative pictures”, term used by Takahata Isao
- katei firumu 家庭フィルム: “home film”, toy film
- kāton カートン: cartoon
- katsudō 活動: movement, moving
- katsudō ehon 活動絵本: flip book
- katsudō gentō kikai 活動幻灯機械: attachment to a magic lantern
- katsudō mangachō 活動漫画帖: flip book
- katsudō shashin 活動写真: old-fashioned term for film
- katsudō shashin kikai 活動写真機械: kinematograph
- kessen 決戦: “decisive war”
- kigeki 喜劇: comedy
- kirinuki(ga)shiki 切り抜き(画)式: cutout animation
- kōgashiki 稿画式: “draft picture method”; paper animation
- kyūha 旧派: “old-school”; referring to period-drama movies
- majutsu eiga 魔術映画: trick film
- majutsu-mono 魔術物: here used for trick film
- manga 漫画: used for comics, caricatures and animation
- mangaka 漫画家: manga author, cartoonist
- Meiji 明治: era from 1868 to 1912
- mushū firumu 無終巻写真: loop film
- Nihon (Nippon) 日本: Japan
- nihonga 日本画: Japanese-style painting
- nihonjinron 日本人論: theory about the uniqueness of the Japanese
- ... no maki ...の巻: “chapter of ...”; indicates one episode in a film serial
- omocha (gangu) eiga おもちゃ(玩具)映画: toy film
- otsushu 乙種: second-class
- ponchi(-e) ポンチ(絵): Punch pictures, i.e., caricatures

rekōdo tōkī レコード・トーキー: record-talkie; record-synchronized movie
rensageki 連鎖劇: “chain drama”; mixed performance of film and theatre
roman poruno ロマンポルノ: soft-core pornographic movies
sen'eiga 線映画: old-fashioned term for animated film
senga 線画: old-fashioned term for animated film
senmu 専務: managing director
shaku 尺: unit of length, ca. 30.3 cm
shibai 芝居: play, drama
shinpa 新派: “new school”; referring to “modern” melodrama
shōkai 商会: company
Shōwa 昭和: era from 1926 to 1989
taikai 大会: event, meeting
Taishō 大正: era from 1912 to 1926
tanuki 狸: Japanese racoon dog
torikku トリック: trick
tōshaban 謄写版: mimeography
ukiyo-e 浮世絵: Japanese woodprints
utsushi-e 写し絵: magic lantern show
yōga 洋画: Western-style painting
yōgaka 洋画家: Western-style painter
-za 座: seat; suffix for names of cinemas

7.3 Illustration credits

- Front cover (center): *Katsudō shashin* [collection of Matsumoto Natsuki; colour]
- Front cover (bottom): E. Cohl: *Les exploits de feu follet* [DVD Emile Cohl (2). Gaumont: Le cinéma premier 1907–1916, vol. 2, 2009]
- Ill. 1 (p. 9): Kitazawa Rakuten: *Itazura*. In: *Tokyo Puck*, 1(1), 15 April 1905 [Kitazawa Rakuten Kenshōkai 北沢楽天顕彰会 (ed.): Rakuten manga shūtaisei – Meiji hen 楽天漫画集大成 明治編. Tokyo: Gurafikku-sha グラフィック社, 1974, p. 230]
- Ill. 2 (p. 14): Bing catalogue, 1898 [106:77]
- Ill. 3 (p. 19): Cigarette box [collection of Matsumoto Natsuki; colour]
- Ill. 4 (p. 21): Cigarette: *A Good Drop* [collection of Darren Nemeth; colour]
- Ill. 5 (p. 22): *Katsudō shashin* [collection of Matsumoto Natsuki; colour]
- Ill. 6 (p. 32): E. Cohl: *Les exploits de feu follet* [DVD Emile Cohl (2). Gaumont: Le cinéma premier 1907–1916, vol. 2, 2009]
- Ill. 7 (p. 40): J. R. Bray: *Col. Heeza Liar's African Hunt* [collection of Tommy Stathes/Bray Animation Project]
- Ill. 8 (p. 42): Shimokawa Ōten: *Imokawa Mukuzō*. In: *Tokyo Puck*, 11(20), 15 August 1915. [217:67] (copyright holder: Ishikawa Chikako 石川千香子)
- Ill. 9 (p. 48): Kitayama Seitarō: landscape. [Property of Yasuda Takeo 安田彪. Photograph by Miyamoto Hisanobu 宮本久信, Wakayama Kindai Bijutsukan 和歌山近代美術館; colour]
- Ill. 10 (p. 64): Kōuchi Jun'ichi: portrait of Shimokawa Ōten [217:69] (copyright holder unknown)
- Ill. 11 (p. 70): Mukōjima Studio [203:74]
- Ill. 12 (p. 75): Portrait photographs of Shimokawa Ōten, Kōuchi Jun'ichi and Kitayama Seitarō [293:front cover inside]
- Ill. 13 (p. 76): Kōuchi Jun'ichi: *Namakeuragatana* [from the collection of Matsumoto Natsuki]
- Ill. 14 (p. 86): Kitayama Seitarō: *Saru to kani no gassen*. In: *Katsudō no sekai*, 3(10), 1918 [10:4]
- Ill. 15 (p. 91): Kōuchi Jun'ichi: *Namakeuragatana* [from the collection of Matsumoto Natsuki]

- Ill. 16 (p. 101): *Momotarō Onigashima onitaiji* [from the collection of Matsumoto Natsuki; colour]
- Ill. 17 (p. 103): *Urashima Tarō* [from the collection of Matsumoto Natsuki; colour]
- Ill. 18 (p. 106): Kitayama Seitarō: *Issun-bōshi*. In: *Yonen sekai*, 8(5), 1918 [323; colour]
- Ill. 19 (p. 108): Kitayama Seitarō: *Tarō no beitai Senkōtei no maki* [10:5]
- Ill. 20 (p. 110): Ōfuji Noburō: *Baguda-jō no tōzoku* [DVD Animēshon no senkusha – Ōfuji Noburō – kokō no tensai アニメーションの先駆者 大藤信郎 孤高の天才, 2010]
- Back cover (top): Kōuchi Jun'ichi: *Namakuragatana* [from the collection of Matsumoto Natsuki; colour]
- Back cover (bottom): J. R. Bray: *Col. Heeza Liar's African Hunt* [collection of Tommy Stathes/Bray Animation Project]

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[v10] <http://animation.filmarchives.jp/works/view/72126> [*Urashima Tarō*]

[v11] <http://animation.filmarchives.jp/en/works/view/42154> [*Usagi to kame*; Yamamoto]

[v12] http://www.toverlantaarn.eu/celluloid_32.html [*Magician*]

[v13] http://www.toverlantaarn.eu/celluloid_34.html [*Gymnastics*]

[v14] http://www.toverlantaarn.eu/celluloid_37.html [*A Good Drop*]

[v15] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8SMIiQZUcs> [*The Astronomer's Dream*]

[v16] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzKcVFjo45s> [*Le chevalier mystère*]

[v17] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heYi4C7AMUE> [*La cigale et la fourmi*]

- [v18] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwxEnVCex0M> [*Les exploits de feu follet*]
- [v19] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEAObel8yIE> [*Fantasmagorie*]
- [v20] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDRaPC4EXpo> [*The Haunted Hotel*; Blackton]
- [v21] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W2KItoS3Ww> [*How Animated Cartoons Are Made*]
- [v22] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHXzVufTX_8 [*Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*]
- [v23] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UN3jvV0GGYA> [loop films]
- [v24] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8oArgBopVY> [*The Montreal Herald Screen Magazine*, 7, 1919; part 2; Hy Mayer]
- [v25] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI4tuBj7TMY> [*La musicomanie*]
- [v26] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=426mqIB-kAY> [*Pauvre Pierrot*]
- [v27] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXgWt7s6Vuc> [*Strekoza i muravej*]
- [v28] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZC7o00tOcCQ> [*Tsuki no miya no ojosama*]
- [v29] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OFuDv6u56o> [*Urashima Tarō*; toy film 1930s]
- [v30] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLYLiFYkMsw> [*Urashima Tarō*; 1931]

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