

ASIA
and
RUSSIA

ASIA OVERVIEW

We have included Russia in this section, mainly because Russia has more similarities and is more closely associated with Asia than it is with Europe.

As the cinema was first being developed and the battle began between the United States and Europe for film domination, Asia was exposed to the film industry about the same time as the rest of the world. There are some MAJOR differences, however, that should be considered before taking a closer look at the film industries of the individual countries.

While the United States and Europe lead the world in industrialization, and Latin America and Africa were far behind, Asia was in the middle. Only a few major areas of Latin America and Africa had been strong enough to maintain a fairly small but stable film industry.

Asia had long been introduced to industrialization, primarily because of England. The British East India Company had introduced Asia to international trading and lifestyles back in the mid 1700's, setting up extensive and heavily utilized world trade routes. This colonized India, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and several other smaller British colonies.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, England led the world in trade with London, the largest and most advanced city in the world. As the French, British and American cameramen raced around the world trying establish new markets, the film industry in Asian countries was rapidly accepted. However, cultural differences turned these new markets in different directions than expected. The European and U.S. film industries targeted an international market, while Asian film industries turned to an isolated local market instead.

As World War I devastated the European film industry, the larger, undamaged American film industry not only continued to develop from a technical stand point, BUT also developed larger international marketing systems to encompass and absorb other industries.

Right after World War I, England attempted to eliminate international marketing and turn to an isolated local market. The British film industry basically abandoned international marketing because they were so damaged that they couldn't keep up with the American development. They instead turned to localized production as a quick fix that backfired. They tried to utilize their colonies as extensions of their local markets. This direction severely damaged their film industry.

One of the major reasons for the British disaster was that there were no cultural differences, so the American film industry overwhelmed the British industry. The Asian film industry CHOSE not to follow the same paths as the other industrialized nations. Instead, they proceeded more with local and regional film distribution. European countries did this when sound was introduced, but the individual countries' markets were not large enough to sustain their individual industries. Therefore, the American industry filled the void and dominated.

A different consideration is that major Asian countries were quite industrialized, but chose to proceed more with local and regional film distribution. European countries did this when sound was introduced, but the individual countries' markets were not large enough to sustain their individual industries. Therefore, the American industry filled the void and dominated.

Here is the difference: Asia, WITHOUT Russia, consists of about 1/2 of the world's population. China and India are the only two countries with a population over 1 BILLION people EACH. India has the largest film industry in the world, with film production averaging over 800 feature length films per year and 1100 documentaries. The film industries of the major Asian countries are doing just fine WITHOUT the help from the western world.

Some of the distribution between Asian countries can be demonstrated by taking a look at an early entrepreneur named Runme Shaw, who was in the import-export business in Shanghai in the 1920's. Runme was the third of six children. His brother Runje was a theater director in Shanghai. Anxious to take advantage of this expanding film industry, Runme and Runje formed the Unique Film Production Company (in Chinese, known as Tian Yi Film Company) in 1923. Soon, their other brother, Run Run, joined the company as sales manager. In 1924, Runme also established a distribution company (Hai Seng Co) in Singapore, which became their home base. By 1939, the Shaws operated a chain of 139 cinemas across Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Indochina, which they supplied with imports and their own films. In 1957, Run Run Shaw built the largest privately owned film production studio in the world in Hong Kong.

Although the Asian film industry has remained isolated from western film distribution, there have been occasions where Asians films have had an impact on the world film market. The martial arts films of the 1970's and the Japanimation craze of the 1990's are examples of these impacts.

As the internet, mass marketing and world film distribution become more established - LOOK OUT! The Asian film industry is beginning to awaken to the benefits of world exposure and international marketing instead of just local marketing.

Since World War II, the smaller Japanese film industry has taken advantage of world marketing starting with Godzilla, a lineup of Japanese monsters, Japanimation and more recently moving into the horror genre.

In the collectibles market, posters from Japan are rapidly gaining favor, followed by Hong Kong, India, Korea and even China.

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Hong Kong

History of Film Industry

Most records of the early film history of Hong Kong have been lost. In 1899, a member of British Parliament, Sir Ernest Hatch, and a cameraman made a world tour and made at least 20 films in China. Since Hong Kong was a British colony, it is most probably that this was his port of entry into China. These films of China made by Sir Hatch were advertised in a trade press by the distributor Harrison & Co. in 1900.

There is also a record of Lumiere cameraman, Gabriel Veyre, making a trip to Japan and China in 1899. Since Hong Kong was the English speaking entrance to China, he must have traveled through Hong Kong to make his presentations.

In 1909, Benjamin Brodsky, who owned a nickelodeon business in San Francisco, Portland and Seattle, took films and equipment to China and gained exclusive film distribution rights in a portion of China. That same year, Brodsky produced a film in Hong Kong called *Stealing a Roast Duck* and founded the Asia Film Co., China's first production studio.

In 1913, Brodsky produced a film called *Zhuangzi shi qi* (*Zhuangzi Tests His Wife* or *Chuang Tze Tests His Wife*), directed by Lai Man-Wai. The picture on the right shows Man-Wai (from the film *Zhuangzi Tests His Wife* in which he also played the wife) who is called the Father of Hong Kong Cinema. Brodsky sent *Zhuangzi Tests His Wife* back to San Francisco making it the first Hong Kong film shown in the United States.



Brodsky established some 80 theaters in major cities in China and is credited with starting their film industry. Brodsky formed a studio in San Francisco called Sunrise Film Mfg. Co. to export films to China and Oriental Film Co. to distribute films from China in the United States. In 1917, Brodsky sent and distributed the 10 reel film, *A Trip Through China* in the U.S. Brodsky moved his business out of Hong Kong and into mainland China.



In 1924, Run Run Shaw and his brother Runme Shaw formed a new distribution company called the Shaw Organization. The Shaws were a family of brothers who in 1930 expanded into film production by opening their own film studio called South Sea Film. The name was later changed to the Shaw Brothers Studio. The Shaw Brothers produced the first "talkie" in Hong Kong, *Baijin Long (Platinum Dragon)* in 1934.



Run Run Shaw



Runme Shaw



Shaw Brothers Logo

Sound brought unusual circumstances to Hong Kong. With numerous dialects hindering the film industry in China, the Chinese government tried to unify the language used in films, choosing Mandarin. They also tried to ban some of the hard core martial arts in films, citing that it caused too much violence. This moved all Cantonese and martial arts films to Hong Kong, making it the dominant film genre in Hong Kong through to the 1960's.

The most dominant studio to come out of this era was the Shaw Brothers, who produced over 800 films. Other major production studios at the time were: Cathay Films; Minghua; Grandview and Yulin.

Even though marital arts films were the dominant genre, there were still a tremendous amount of comedies and dramas. Some of the odd blending of Eastern and Western cultures would sometimes create unusual films, such as the 1959 film *Wang Xiansheng Zhuo Cuo Laopo Qun (Mr. Wong in His Wife's Dress By Mistake)* poster on the right.



In 1970, two top executives from the Shaw Brothers studio, Raymond Chow and Leonard Cheung, left Shaw to form their own studio, Golden Harvest.

In 1971, Golden Harvest signed a young Bruce Lee, and in 1973, negotiated a co-production with Warner Brothers of *Lung-Cheng-Hu Tou (Enter the Dragon)* (left) which catapulted them to the dominant studio in Hong Kong. This dominance lasted into the 1990's. Golden Harvest also released all the Asian films by Jackie Chan and Jet Li.

Other popular films in that era were Michael Hui with his comedies, Kung fu, police, and ghost stories.

During the 1990's, the Hong Kong film industry underwent a significant decline, caused by the Asian economic crisis which dried up traditional sources of film finance. Revenues generated by the Hong Kong motion picture industry halved during this period. Some of the decline was also caused by Hollywood in the United States signing popular movie figures such as John Woo, Jackie Chan and Chow Yun-Fat to make movies directly for the U.S. domestic market.



John Woo



Jackie Chan



Chow Yun-Fat

In an effort to halt the decline of the local industry, in April 2003, the Hong Kong Government introduced a Film Guarantee Fund as an incentive to local banks to become involved in the motion picture industry again. The guarantee operated to secure a percentage of monies loaned by banks to film production companies.

The Fund has received a mixed reception from industry participants, and less than enthusiastic reception from financial institutions who perceive investment in local films as high risk ventures with little collateral.

Some positive results have recently produced hits such as Stephen Chow's *Shao lin zu qiu* (*Shaolin Soccer*) (right), which broke new ground in the use of special effects.



Hong Kong First in Film

- * The first presentation of film in Hong Kong was an undocumented presentation by Sir Ernest Hatch of his world tour.
- * The first film produced in was *Stealing a Roast Duck* in 1909 by the Asia Film Co.

Hong Kong Movie Posters

Hong Kong movie posters feature beautiful artwork. Unfortunately, movie posters from the early decades are extremely rare and are hard to find in the collector's market. There are greater numbers of film posters from the 1970's through the present.

Here are samples of Hong Kong film posters:



Yin deng mo ying - 1951
(Phantom in Limelight)



Zhanguo Jiaren - 1959
Beauty in Time of War

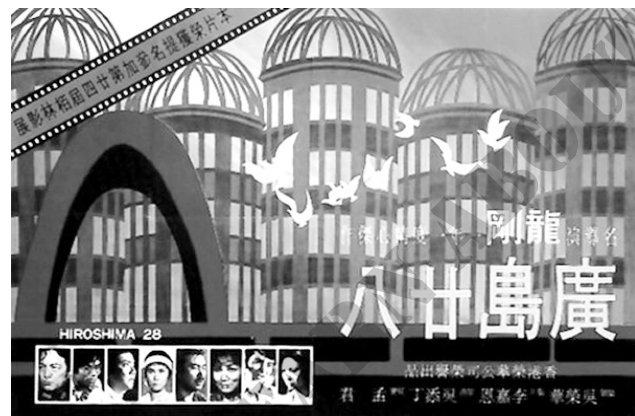


Yang kwei fei - 1962
Magnificent Concubine

Hong Kong posters can be either vertical or horizontal. The following are two samples of horizontal posters.



Hua mu lan - 1964 (Lady General
Hua Mu Lan)



Hiroshima 28 - 1974

POSTER SIZES (Approximately)

38x59 cm (15x23") - small size poster

53x79 cm (21x31") - the standard size for earlier posters varying an inch or so.

69x97 cm (27x38") - recent poster size

69x193 cm (27x76") - 2 sheet size - rare

Other sizes are fairly common such as 59x86 cm (23x34") and 64x102 cm (25x40")

Older lobby cards normally measure about 26x59 cm (10x15") while newer lobby cards normally measure about 20x28 cm (8x11")



Collector Inspector

First, be sure to read "How to Read Your Poster" section at the beginning of this book.

Getting the original issue posters is extremely difficult, especially in martial arts films. They have been re-distributed a massive number of times under a wide variety of names.

Video issues are also a major problem since most of the films distributed outside of Hong Kong have been through video distributors.

On newer films that have been released since 1999, sometimes the distributor's website is shown on the poster. The website domain extension that identifies Hong Kong is .hk.

NOTE: For more information about Hong Kong and its film industry and posters visit <http://www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com>.



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INDIA

History of Film Industry

The first presentation of film in India was on July 7, 1896 at the Watson's Hotel in Bombay. It was presented by Marius Sestier, a Lumiere Brothers cameraman. Suddenly there was an influx of magicians and showmen making presentations all over India.

Harischandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar alias Save Dada, who had attended the show, imported a cine-camera from London and filmed the first Indian documentary, a wrestling match at the Hanging Gardens, in Bombay in 1897.

The British East India Company had started settlement in India in the early 1600's, slowly taking over the entire region. By the mid 1800's, India had become a major British colony.

Because of this colonization, the major cities of India had more access to British industrialization than most other Asian countries. The cities flourished while the rural areas remained very backward and uneducated.

One of the earliest Indian filmmakers was Hiralal Sen (right), a Bengali photographer. In 1898, Sen viewed a short film by Professor Stevenson. Borrowing Stevenson's camera, Sen made his first film, *A Dancing Scene*, from the opera *The Flower of Persia*.



With assistance from his brother, Motilal Sen, he bought an Urban Bioscope from Charles Urban's Warwick Trading Company in London. In the following year, with his brother, he formed the Royal Bioscope company.

The first feature film made in India was a narrative named *Pundalik*, by N.G. Chitre and R.G. Torney. (See playbill on next page)

The first full-length Indian feature film over an hour was *Raja Harishchandra* (almost 3 times the length of *Pundalik*), made in 1913 and released commercially in May that year by Dadasaheb Phalke. (See playbill on next page)



Indian film director Mehboob Khan (left), a legendary figure in Indian cinema from the 1930's until his death in 1964, was instrumental in the development and expansion of Indian film. In 1957, he created his masterpiece, *Mother India*, a milestone film. It was appropriately referred to as the *Gone With the Wind* of Indian cinema (the poster is our chapter divider). This was a creative awakening that inspired numerous filmmakers in India. Production doubled in the next decade. This massive growth led to different sections that specialized in different areas.

Here are the main sections:

1. Bhojpuri (Purvanchal) film industry - Bhojpuri dialects are also spoken in various parts of the world, including Brazil, Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.
2. Bengali (Bangla) film industry - mainly the region around Calcutta
3. Hindi film industry (Bollywood) - the largest branch of Indian cinema with the largest amount of viewers
4. Kannada film industry - referred to as Sandalwood which encompasses movies made in the Indian state of Karnataka.
5. Malayalam film industry - film industry based in Kerala and known for lower budgeted films
6. Marathi film industry - the oldest film industries in India originated in Nasik, and developed in Kolhapur and Pune. In recent years, it has moved mostly to Mumbai (Bombay)
7. Tamil film industry (Kollywood) - is based in the Kodambakkam area of Chennai. Tamil films have enjoyed consistent popularity among Tamil speakers in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia and Mauritius.
8. Telugu film industry (Tollywood) - based in Andhra Pradesh's capital city, Hyderabad. The state also has what is claimed to be the largest film studio in the world, Ramoji Film City.

By 1970, there were 3,566 permanent theaters in India and about 1,440 touring cinemas. With the divisions and growth of the different types of films, there was massive expansion during the 1970's. By 1981, there were 10,000 permanent and touring cinemas with an estimated weekly attendance of 65 million. Production in 1981 was 714 films in 16 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.

Records for 1992 show that the Indian film industry continued to blossom and had increased to 12,985 theaters and touring cinemas with film production up to 836 feature films.

Even though it is divided, the combination of the different sections of the film industry of India represents the largest in the world in terms of ticket sales and number of films produced annually. Each year, there is an average of over 800 feature films and 1100 shorts produced in India.

India accounts for 73% of movie admissions in the Asia-Pacific region. Note, however, that India is second only to China in population and is the only other country that has over ONE BILLION people.



India First in Film

The first presentation of film in India was made on July 7, 1896 at the Watson Hotel in Bombay. A Lumiere camera and films were used.

The first film produced in India was *Cocoanut Fair* in 1897.

The first feature film over 1 hour was *Raja Harischandra* in 1913.

The first "talkie" in was *Jamai Sasthi* in 1931.

The first color film was *Kisan Kanya* in 1937. (See image below)

Indian Movie Posters

The earliest posters that still exist are from the 1920's, and there are very few of those. The high humidity and lack of interest in preserving the posters have created an environment that has all but eliminated the vintage Indian posters.

Most of the earlier posters were hand painted for the individual theaters, and quite often, then painted over. Some areas of India still utilize hand painted posters that were done for the individual theaters. Some hand painting is still available and hand painted versions are available for purchase.

Here are some samples of Indian film posters for the period 1930's to 1950's:



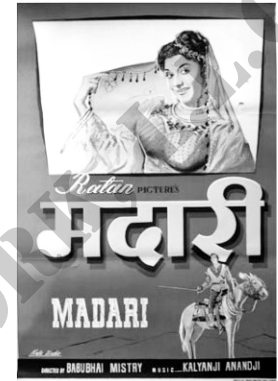
Alam Ara - 1931



Kisan Kanya - 1937



Shaheed - 1948



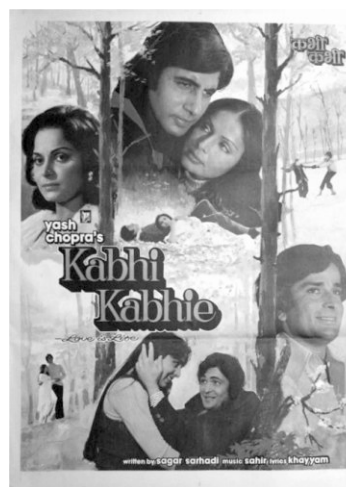
Madari - 1959

As part of a newer mass production, some posters were released in two batches. First posters were released to music shops a month or so before the release of the film to promote the music of the film. Then, just before the film release, posters were plastered all over walls in the cities. In 1976, major cities passed laws against plastering the posters on public walls (Bengal Act 21).

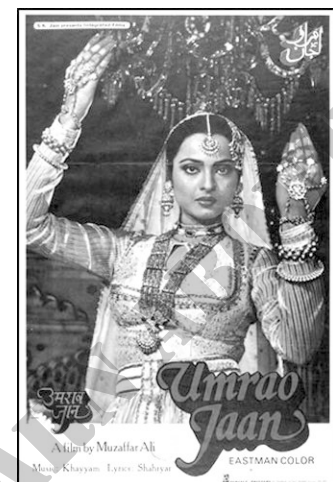
Here are samples of India movie posters from the 1960's through the 1980's:



Kajal - 1963



Kabhi Kabhie - 1976



Umrao Jaan - 1981

There are a few shops that have sold posters for a couple of decades, mainly to people who were somehow associated to the film industry who wanted to build their own collection. Fortunately for collectors, this led to the preservation of many of these vintage posters.

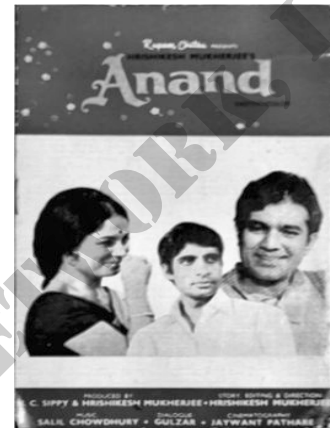
Only in the past decade has some real interest been shown in preserving their film heritage and posters. Now there are numerous places that are beginning to bring Indian posters into the world collectors market.

Poster Sizes (Approximate)

The main pieces issued are the one sheet poster (quite often at least two different styles), lobby cards and what are called "movie booklets," similar to a pressbook.

The movie booklets contain information, song lyrics, photos and stills of the film. The sizes of the booklets vary, but the most common size seems to be around 15x23 cm (6x9").

On the right is a sample of the movie booklet for the film *Anand*.



Here are the most common sizes:

36x50 cm (14x20") - smaller size poster

50x76 cm (20x30") - half sheet size poster

68x94 cm (27x37") - This common size varies an inch or so each way.

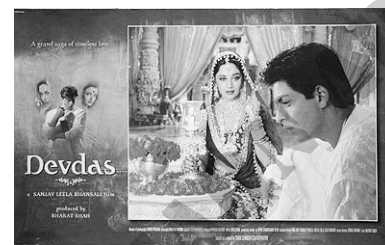
76x102 cm (30x40") - the common size for older posters

Lobby Cards normally measure 25x31 cm (10x12"), 36x41 cm (14x16") or 33x53 cm (13x21") and come in sets that normally range from 3 to 8 per set. (See samples below)

Larger material was primarily hand painted in most regions.



Lobby card from 1951 film *Bahar*. It measures 25x31 cm



Lobby card from 2002 film *Devdas*. It measures 33x53 cm



Collector Inspector

First, be sure to read “How to Read Your Poster” section at the beginning of this book.

In the past decade, since people are becoming aware that the film posters are worth something, there has been a boom with dealers and collectors, making the few older posters that have survived a lot more rare.

Check the paper, reprints are now cropping up with an expectation for this to drastically increase over the next few years.

Most older posters have the printer tag in the bottom border which helps date the poster.

On newer films that have been released since 1999, sometimes the distributor’s website is shown on the poster. The website domain extension that identifies India is .in

NOTE: For more information about India and its film industry and posters visit <http://www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com>.

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JAPAN

History of Film Industry

Japan was introduced to the film industry from two different directions which became a battleground for the new rival camera producers. Here are three men credited with starting the film industry in Japan:

Inabata Katsutarō (right) - From 1877 to 1885, Inabata attended the La Martinière technical school in Lyon on a scholarship for studying muslin weaving and spinning. He became friends with a young Auguste Lumière, who was attending the same school. Inabata went back to Japan and established a good business for himself (which is still in existence, Inabata & Co.). In 1896, Inabata made a business trip back to France and met his friend Auguste who had a new invention. When Inabata returned, Auguste sent François-Constant Girel, a Lumière Cinématographe, and fifty reels of film. On February 15, 1897, with Girel as operator, Inabata gave Japan its first projected film program at the Nanchi Theatre in Osaka.



Arai Saburo (left) - Arai was a young Japanese businessman who had been working in the United States and bringing fresh ideas back to Japan. He had visited San Francisco in 1884, and had designed the traditional Japanese house and garden set at the 1893 Chicago World Fair. In 1896, Arai traveled to West Orange, New Jersey where he purchased two Edison Vitascope and a stock of films for 3,000 Yen (\$1,500). Daniel Grimm Krouse traveled with him as an operator. Arai first exhibited in Osaka at the Shinmachi Theatre on February 22, 1897, one week after Inabata Katsutarō had opened in the same city with the Lumière Cinématographe.

Yokota Einosuke (right) - Yokota was a flamboyant showman and owner of Kobe import-export business. He had gained a lot of experience in the United States, where he had done everything from washing dishes to selling door-to-door, Yokota returned to Japan with an X-ray machine. He toured Japan putting on shows in a hut he called "The Hall of Mysteries."



Inabata, with cameraman Girel, had given the first presentation in Japan, but Girel was not very experienced and had almost caused an explosion at the presentation. This was not the kind of business for Inabata, so he went to his friend Yokota and turned the business over to him.

Meanwhile, Arai and cameraman Krouse had put on an excellent show and quickly headed for Tokyo. The arrival of Arai with the Vitascope was heralded by musicians on barges proceeding down the Sanjiken canal, while leaflets were handed out to all. Arai opened on March 6, 1897 at the Kinkikan theatre. Yokota headed for Tokyo with Girel and arrived two days later, opening on March 8, 1897 at the Kawakami theatre. Both shows were fierce rivals and both were extremely popular. Then they each went in different directions.

Arai, being a more conservative businessman, enlisted Komada Koyo, a lecturer from the theater, or benshi, a major feature within Japanese theater. He wanted his films to be seen by high society, eventually succeeding in exhibiting at the prestigious Kabuki theatre, where the Crown Prince of Japan came to see the show.

Yokota chose to take the films to the people. He involved his family and divided them into ten teams that toured Japan with a large tent he called "Cinematographe Hall," making sure to stress the European credentials of his machine, as opposed to his American rival. In 1901, he set up the company Yokota Brothers & Co., but his brother left the company the following year and the name was changed to Yokota & Co.

By 1899, the Yoshizawa Company began making projectors. By the following year, Japanese cameramen brought back films of the Boxer Rebellion in China that became extremely popular. This helped convert many live theater houses, appropriately called Kinki-kan, to become film houses. Then in 1903, Yoshizawa built the first theater built specifically for film called the Asakusa Denki-kan (right).



Another film company was started in 1905 by Umeya Shokichi as an independent. Shokichi formed M. Pathe, without any association with Pathe or Yokota.

Once the shock of film was over, the Japanese film industry went the direction of the Japanese theater, which was a little different than the European and American film industry. In Japanese theater, everything faced the audience. An elaborate painted screen was the backdrop to show the setting of the scene, and the actors wore traditional costumes and makeup. A benshi (narrator or storyteller) would stand behind a lectern and tell the story, making comments on what was going on and even making sound effects.

Unlike the American and European cinema that went to music with narration and conversation written on cards, these benshi became more popular than the actors themselves, and began having a major influence on the films being produced. They dominated the Japanese film industry well into the late 1930's.

In 1907, Yokota hired a young theater director from the Senbon-za Theatre, Makino Shozo (immediate right), who made several films starring Onoe Matunosuke (far right).



Matunosuke's growing popularity created the Japanese star system.

In 1909, the Yoshizawa Company opened the first major film studio in Tokyo called the Yoshizawa & Co.'s Meguro Studio Tokyo.

Yokota shot his films on location until he opened his first studio (the second studio in the country) just outside the Nijo Castle in Kyoto, called the Nijo Castle Studio in 1910. This studio only stayed open for two years until he built another studio just outside of Kyoto, in 1912, known as "Yokota & Co. Hokke-do Studio". Yokota also became the major importer of raw film stock.

Later in 1912, at the beginning of the Taisho era, the four film companies in Japan, Yoshizawa & Co, M-Pathe (an independent and not part of Pathe), Hukuhou-do (which was a newly formed production company by the Fukuhodo theater chain) and Yokota & Co. merged, to form Nihon Katsudo Film, Inc., which was known as Nikkatsu. Yokota soon took control of the company. His Hokke-do Studio in Kyoto became known as Nikkatsu Kansai Studio and produced over 400 Matunosuke films over the next six years before the studio closed down. It is reported that Matunosuke made over 1000 films in his career.



In Japanese theater, men played all the roles, including the female roles. The first female Japanese performer to appear in a film professionally was the dancer/actress Tokuko Nagai Takagi (left), who appeared in four shorts for the American-based Thanhouser Company between 1911 and 1914.

By 1916, there were approximately 300 film theaters in the country. Although the Japanese audiences occasionally saw films from America or Europe, their own style of films remained more popular.

Shochiku was a well established Kabuki production company that had been around since 1895. In 1921, Shochiku moved into film production and established the Shochiku Kinema Co. With experience, theaters, directors and financing, Shochiku quickly became a major film studio with a quest to modernize the Japanese film industry. They sent an executive to see Cecil B. Demille who recommended cameraman Henry Kotani. Shochiku hired Kontani as head of their Technical Department to train their personnel. Shochiku introduced the standard use of actresses, promoted the star system and were crucial in the implementation of sound in Japan. Shochiku is still in production and distribution to this day.

From 1925 to 1935, the star system continued to gain in popularity and slowly began to erode the benshi's power. A new trend arose in the 1920's for major stars to form their own production companies, such as Bando Tsumasaburo in 1925; Kataoka Chiezo in 1926; Ichikawa Utaemon in 1927; and Arashi Kanjuro in 1928.

The coming of sound didn't have the impact on the Japanese theaters that it did in Europe. With the popularity of the benshi, silent films were made into the late 1930's. Shochiku lead the way with Japan's first "talkie" in 1931, *Madamu to nyobo* (*The Neighbor's Wife and Mine* aka *The Lady Next Door and My Wife*).

In 1932, the Hankyu Railway started putting small theaters along their railway, called the Tokyo-Takarazuka Theater Company, to take advantage of the rapid growth in popularity. By 1935, there were 1586 theaters operating nationwide, and the popularity of films continued to grow. In 1937, Hankyu Railway created a studio to supply their theaters called the Toho Film Co. to give their audiences pure entertainment.

As the beginning of World War II heated up in Asia, Japanese movie patrons streamed to the theaters. By 1940, there were 2,363 theaters in operation. The war brought many changes in the industry. During the war, Akira Kurosawa made his feature film debut with *Sugata sanshiro* in 1943 (poster on right). It was after World War II that the Japanese film industry began turning more to the western style of film making.



The occupation of Japan from 1946 to 1952 brought about tremendous changes. The MPEA, Motion Picture Export Association, which regulated the films in the occupied countries such as Germany and Italy, brought major American films for release to the public and constantly presented them.



By 1950, when Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (left) introduced legendary Japanese film star Toshiro Mifune, it marked the entrance of Japanese cinema onto the world stage. Japanese cinema grew by leaps and bounds.

In 1954, two of the most world's most influential films were released. Kurosawa's epic *Shichinin no samurai* (*Seven Samurai*), which was remade in the United States as the *Magnificent Seven*, started a whole new western genre. Ishiro Honda's anti-nuclear horror film *Gojira* released by Toho, became known as *Godzilla*, and shook the world.

Susumu Hani and Shohei Imamura emerged as major filmmakers during this time period. But by the late 1960's, television was taking its toll and theater attendance was declining rapidly.

By 1970, as yakuza and horror films were becoming popular, there were 3,719 theaters in operation. That year, the Japanese film industry produced 479 films and exported 255 of them. This year also marked the first year that an erotic animated cartoon feature film was released to the general public *Senya ichiya monogatari* (*A Thousand and One Nights*).

A new generation of filmmakers for television was producing a new rage in cartooning called anime. Hayao Miyazaki adapted his manga *Kaze no tani no nausicaa* (*Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind*) into a feature film in 1984. Katsuhiro Otomo followed with *Akira* in 1988. The craze for Japanese animation was born.



Senya ichiya monogatari




Kaze no tani no nausicaa



Akira

In the 1990s, due to strict fire laws and high cost of commercial space, there was an odd craze with an influx of drive-in theaters.



Japan First in Film

- * The first presentation of film in Japan was made in June of 1897 by Katsutarō Inabata at Osaka. A Lumiere camera and films were used.
- * The first film produced in Japan was street scenes in Tokyo in 1897.
- * The first feature film over one hour was *Shiobara tasuke icidaiki* (*Life Story of Tasuke Shiobara*) in 1912.
- * The first “talkie” in was *Tai no Musume* in 1929.
- * The first feature film “talkie” was *Madamu to nyobo* (*The Neighbor's Wife and Mine*) in 1931.
- * The first color film was *Karumen Kokyo ni Kaeru* in 1951.

Censorship

Japan, under its Constitution, enjoys almost full freedom of speech and expression after the second World War. However, there have been interventions by the police and the customs office as relates to obscenity concerns. Their activities are justified in accordance with the criminal law and the customs tariff law.

Before and during the War, a strict censorship by the government existed in Japan. For a certain period after the War, there was the censorship by the allied occupation forces. In 1946, the new Japanese Constitution was enacted, and the occupation forces advised the representatives of the motion picture industry to establish a self-regulation organization, similar to the MPAA Code Administration Office (so-called Hays office).

An early Censorship Board was formed in 1949, but it was criticized for lack of fairness, partly because the members came from the Japanese film industry and got funds from them. In 1956, the board was reorganized, inviting professors, lawyers and teachers from outside as members of the commission. The organization is called EIRIN.

Eirin is the abbreviated name for the Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee in Japan, which serves the same purpose there as the MPAA does in America and the BBFC does in the United Kingdom: to classify films depending on their suitability to minors, depending on whether they contain sexual or violent material.

Japanese Movie Posters

Japanese film posters are known for their beautiful artwork. In addition to collecting posters for Japanese-made films, many collectors seek out Japanese versions of posters for films made outside of Japan. Here are a few samples:



Breakfast at Tiffany's - 1964 - United States



Thunderball - 1965 - United Kingdom



A Belle Dents - 1966 - France



Django - 1966 - Italy

Poster Sizes (Approximate)

Japanese posters are issued in these primary sizes:

B0 - measures 102x147 cm (40x 58") consisting of 2 B1 sheets.

B1 - measures 74x102 cm (29x40"). Most often this is a double size version of the B2 which would make it vertical, but sometimes it is presented horizontal with different artwork.

B2 - measures 50x74 cm (20x 29") and is the base size for most Japanese posters.

B3 - Nakazuri - (which means "hanging inside") measures 36x50 cm (14x 20"), about half the B2; used inside bus and train stations. Very similar to a mini sheet

B4 - measures 25x74 cm (10x29") which is half the size vertically of the B2 poster and half BOTH ways of the STB. This size is sometimes called a Japanese insert or "speed" poster.

B5 - Chirashi - a small promo poster similar to a herald or a flyer. Their measurements vary but the majority is about 18x 25 cm (7x 10"). These are quite often printed with information on the back.

STB - measures 50x147 cm (20x 58") which consists of 2 sheets of B2 posters over and under. These are sometimes called "Tatekan" posters

Poster Markings

In 1962, it became mandatory that all films released in Japan had to have a seal from EIRIN. According to experts in Japanese posters, the seal appears on the posters starting in 1964.

On the right is a sample of the bottom of a theater poster showing the ratings with the EIRIN mark being the circle on the far right:



It is mandatory that the studio gets the approval from the EIRIN board before they show the film in the theaters, so the theater posters normally carry the EIRIN mark to show that approval. Some advance posters or posters from some small independent studios don't put the seal on the poster.

The majority of the time, it will distinguish the video poster from the theater poster, although we have had reports of some video posters also having the mark. It seems to be cases where some video posters only print a video sticker over the regular theater poster, and consequently do not remove the EIRIN mark.

We have also had reports from collectors that the B-5 posters, called chirashi, do not have the EIRIN marks. These are used like advances and released well in advance of the theater release.

Marking the Year

To understand the markings on the EIRIN mark, you must know how to read the Japanese year.

The calendar system most widely used in the United States and Europe is known as the Gregorian Calendar. This sets year 1 as the year in which Christ was born (even though they miscalculated when setting up the original system). The year 2000 is a direct result of setting that date.

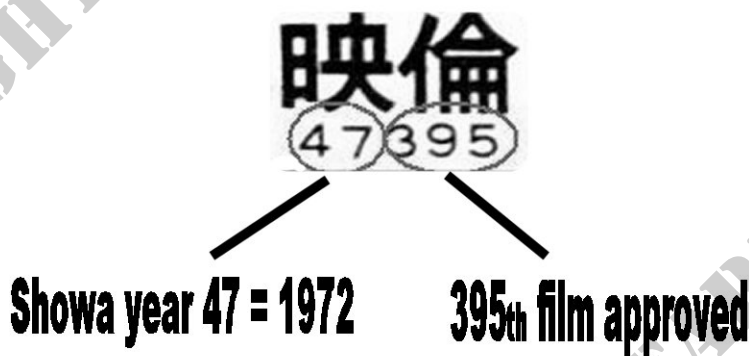
In Japan, people counted years according to the reign of an emperor. This custom of reckoning years by eras was adopted in Japan in the seventh century.

From that time until the nineteenth century, the reigning emperor decided when one era ended and another began. Under the current system, adopted following the ascension of Emperor Meiji in 1868, the era begins on the day an emperor ascends the throne and continues until his death. Thus the Meiji era began in 1868 and lasted until 1912.

Here are the eras:

NAME	START DATE	END DATE
Meiji	September 8, 1868	July 30, 1912
Taisho	July 30, 1912	December 25, 1926
Showa	December 25, 1926	January 7, 1989
Heisei	January 7, 1989	Present

EIRIN marks are shown in a variety of ways, here is an example:



The majority of posters have the Showa dating. The easiest way to calculate the date is to add 25 to the first 2 digits. Using the sample above, it would be $47 + 25$ which would be 72 (or 1972).

Here are some samples:



Heisei mark



EIRIN mark using a western dating

Different companies in Japan use different systems. Daiel, Nikkatsu, and Shochiku studios normally use the Japanese system while Toho and Toei use the western system.

Top Selling Japanese Posters

These are the prices from auction houses from around the world that we have on record.

PRICE	TITLE	YEAR	SIZE	COND.	DATE	AUCTION
21,850	Gojira (Godzilla) - Style A - Jap-B2	1954	20x29	VF	7/05	Heritage
11,950	Gojira (Godzilla) - Style A - Jap-B2	1954	20x29	VF	8/08	Heritage
9,250	Gojira (Godzilla) - Jap-B2	1954	20x29		3/05	Christies
8,625	Gojira (Godzilla) - Style B - Jap-B2	1954	20x29	VF+	11/05	Heritage
6,325	Casablanca - Jap-B2	1947	20x29	VF	7/05	Heritage
5,078	Philadelphia Story - Japanese	1946	14x20	F	3/07	Heritage



Gojira - Style A



Gojira - Style B



Casablanca



Collector Inspector

First, be sure to read “How to Read Your Poster” section at the beginning of this book.

Reissues are quite common and are difficult to distinguish. Sometimes there is new artwork for the reissue and sometimes there's not. You have to look at various marks such as distributors, studio logos, different artists, printers, etc. to verify a particular release. Make sure that you are dealing with a reputable movie poster dealer.

There are a tremendous amount of Japanese oddities, mainly because until the late 1960's, cinems in the smaller villages had to produce their own materials, called chihoban (local version).

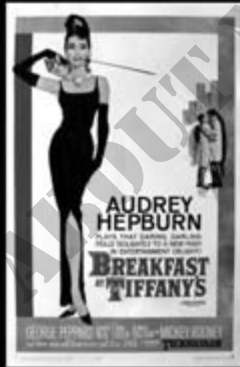
One of the major ways to tell theater posters from video posters is called the EIRIN mark which is usually placed on all Japanese regular theater posters (not on a lot of advance issues).

Reproductions are also becoming more common on major titles.

On newer films that have been released since 1999, sometimes the distributor's website is shown on the poster. The website domain extension that identifies Japan is .jp

NOTE: For more information about Japan and its film industry and posters visit <http://www.JapaneseFilmPosters.com>, part of the website <http://www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com>.

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by AKIBA GOLBURT,
ALEXSEI KAPLER,
ALEXANDER XENOFONTOV

Direction
by GENNADY KAZANSKY,
VLADIMIR CHEBOTAREV

Photography by
EDUARD RAZOVSKY
Lenfilm USSR

Russia

History of Film Industry

Francis Doubler and Charles Moisson, employees of the Lumiere Bros., made the first presentation of film in Russia on May 4, 1896 at the Aquarium Theatre in St. Petersburg. Doubler and Moisson also filmed the coronation of Tsar Nikolas II on May 14, 1896 and the presentation of the Tsar to his people two days later, when a stand collapsed and thousands were trampled to death. The films of this tragedy were confiscated. After Doubler made a brief return to France, he spent the next two years touring and filming scenes in Russia.

In 1896, the race to make film presentations in Russia continued with:

Robert Paul from the United Kingdom making his presentations on his equipment, the Animatographe, on May 26, 1896;

A presentation of the Edison Kinetoscope by the end of May 1896;

Aleksej Samarskij filing for a patent on his Russian made equipment he called the Sterokino; and,

Ivan Akimov filing for patents on HIS Russian made equipment that he called the Strobographe.

In 1897, the Tsar of Russia awarded Boleslaw Matuszewski, a Lumiere employee, the title of court cinematographer. Matuszewski saw some of the potential of film, especially in the field of science and medicine, and wrote some of the first books on film theory. In 1898 he proposed that the establishment of a world film archive was needed.

Between 1904 and 1905, while other countries were still dealing with factuals and early fiction films, the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905 created interest in documentaries and news. Russia's military was considered one of the most powerful in the world, and the Japan military was so small that it did not pose any threat at all. Japan shocked the world by out maneuvering and totally embarrassing the Russian military.

The embarrassment of the Russian military's performance in the war caused the Russian government to clamp on tight restrictions on all films shown concerning the war. This secrecy of facts only caused the public to be more curious. A French company, Royal Vio, claimed to have filmed the war from both sides, but was reported to have only filmed a

recreation from French studios. The government initiated censors to make sure that nothing except "approved" scenes were available.



In 1907 A. O. (Aleksandr) Drankov (left), a famous Russian photographer, opened his own film studio called Drankov and Co.

In 1908, Drankov released the first consistently distributed Russian newsreel. He produced the first Russian narrative film, *Stenka Razin* (poster on the right), based on events told in a popular folk song and directed by Vladimir Romashkov



In 1908, Aleksandr Khanzhonkov (left) opened his studio to go into competition with Drankov. Pathe opened a studio in Russia the same year, and Gaumont opened one the following year. Other major film companies, such as the Cines from Italy and the Nordisk Film Co from Denmark, also established studios in Russia.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 stimulated a significant amount of growth in film production, with most of the Russian film industry located in Moscow and St. Petersburg. During the war, the Skobelev Committee was appointed by the Tsar to film and distribute a weekly newsreel called *Zerkalo voiny* (*Mirror of War*).

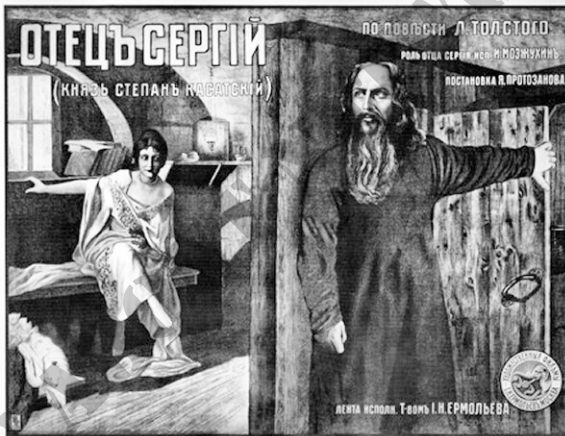
Also during the war, the Russian army in Poland sent a lot of the Polish actors and directors back to Russia, including animator Wladislaw Starewicz (see Polish Film History).

By 1916, St. Petersburg housed nine production companies and 18 distribution companies. There were 144 permanent cinemas and over 25 film production studios in Russia. All of this came to an abrupt halt in February 1917, when the Tsar was overthrown. The Skobelev Committee immediately changed and issued a new weekly newsreel called *Svobodnaia Rossiia* (*Free Russia*).

In the period from 1911 to 1918, Yakov Protazanov directed some 80 features, including *Pikovaya dama* (*The Queen of Spades*) (1916) and *Otets Sergiy* (*Father Sergius*) (1917), which have been acclaimed as his masterpieces. He was head of production at the I. Ermol'ev Co (which was the old Pathe Russia studio). Protazanov had gone into exile during the revolution, but in 1923 was coaxed back to head production at the new Soviet studio Mezhrabpom-Rus.



The following year, he produced *Aelita*, arguably the first Soviet movie and the first film on space travel.



Otets Sergiy (Father Sergiy) - 1917



Aelita - 1929

The film industry was immediately controlled and utilized to spread the propaganda of the new government. The Moscow Cinema Committee took control and began producing THE weekly newsreel called *Kinonedelya (Cine-Week)*, which ran each week from 1918-1919.

Over the next few years, major upheavals and problems arose as the state took control of everything. The state control of film production in the Soviet Union dictated the content of films. Filmmakers were essentially limited to one basic story-line: the triumph of the people over oppression. Films telling this story also had to be understood by a largely illiterate peasant audience.

In 1917, a government controlled studio opened in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) called Kinosev, which eventually consolidated most of the other studios in the area. The name changed numerous times over the years until 1934, when the name was finally changed to Lenfilm, which it is to this day.

By 1922, the revolutionary government was in place and Russia changed to the Soviet Union. This time period saw the rise of four of the most influential Soviet filmmakers: Sergei Eisenstein, Alexander Dovzhenko, Yuli Raizman, and Vsevolod Pudovkin.

Sergei Eisenstein's (left) films include such greats as *Stachka (Strike)* (1924), *Bronenosets Potyomkin (Battleship Potemkin)* (1925), *Oktyabr (October)* (1927) and *Generalnaya liniya (The General Line)* (1928). His style of montage was hailed by the government until after *Generalnaya liniya* in 1928.

Eisenstein was so engrossed in meshing his montage style with sound that he ignored the "selling" of the revolution, and fell out of favor with Stalin.



Eisenstein left the Soviet Union to travel to the United States and Mexico, returning to the Soviet Union a decade later. He completed two other major films: *Aleksandr Nevskiy* (*Alexander Nevsky*) (1938) and *Ivan Groznyy II: Boyarsky zagovor* (*Ivan the Terrible*) (1942-46).



Bronenosets Potyomkin (Battleship Potemkin) - 1925



Aleksandr Nevskiy (Alexander Nevsky) - 1938



Ukrainian Alexander Dovzhenko began his career in film in 1926. He produced his second-ever screenplay, *Vasya the Reformer* (which he also co-directed). In 1928, he gained success with *Zvenigora*, the first film in his silent "Ukraine Trilogy" (which also included *Arsenal*, and *Zemlya (Earth)*). Along with his sound film, *Ivan*, these films are his most well-known work in the West.

Dovzhenko was part of the Soviet cinema's heroic period, which saw montage as the highest potential of film.



Zvenigora



Zemlya (Earth)

Moscow-born Yuli Raizman began his career at age 21, working as a literary consultant for the German-backed film production and distribution company Mezhrabprom-Russ following studies in literature at Moscow University. In 1925, Raizman acted in Pudovkin's *Shakhmatnaya goryachka* (*Chess Fever*). He trained to be a director by working as an assistant director under Konstantin Eggert and the great silent filmmaker Yakov Protazanov, making his own directorial debut with *Krug* (*The Circle*) in 1927.

Raizman's next film was *Katorga* (*Penal Servitude*) in 1928. His third silent film was a semi-documentary account of Komsomol youths attempting to provide remote irrigation to a village named *Zemlya zhazhdet* (*The Earth Thirsts*) in 1930. A soundtrack of music and special effects was added the following year, making it the Soviet Union's first official sound film.

The first recognized "talking" film was director Nikolai Ekk's 1931 film *Putyovka v zhizn* (*The Road to Life*, aka *Voucher to Life*) (poster on the right).



Vsevolod Pudovkin (left) was one of the earliest Russian's directors credited with creating the montage-style of Russian film making. After World War I, he joined the world of cinema, first as a screenwriter, actor and art director, and then as an assistant director to Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov. In 1926, utilizing his montage style, he directed the film that would be considered one of Russia's masterpieces: *Mat* (*Mother*). His first feature was followed by *Konets Sankt-Peterburga* (*The End of St. Petersburg*) and *Potomok Chingis-Khana* (*Storm Over Asia*) (also known as *The Heir of Genghis Khan*).



Mat (*Mother*) - 1926

In 1928, with the advent of talkies, Pudovkin, Eisenstein and Alejandro signed the Manifest of Sound, in which the possibilities of sound are debated, and always understood as a complement to image.

World War II brought massive destruction in the Soviet Union. It is calculated that 1/3 of all the deaths during World War II were from the Soviet Union. After the destruction of the war, the film industry struggled for the next decade.

The death of Stalin in 1953 caused major changes in the industry. The drastic change in government attitude gave filmmakers the margin of comfort they needed to move away from the narrow formula stories that were dominant during Stalin's era and allowed a wider range of entertaining and artistic Soviet films.

This new found freedom caused excitement and the industry flourished. The 1960's would include the first set of world-famous Russian filmmakers to emerge since the 1920s: Andrei Tarkovsky and Andrei Konchalovsky. Even though the cinema had more flexibility, by the late 1960's, the film industry went back into a slump.

The 1970's saw a change in direction toward a more international film market, with films such as Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972).

The late 1980's saw Soviet filmmaking re-emerge with the advent of glasnost (transparency in government activities) and perestroika (economic restructuring). A genre known as "chernukha" (from the Russian word for "black"), including films such as *Malenkaya Vera* (*Little Vera*), portrayed the harsh realities of Soviet life.



Solaris (1972)



Malenkaya Vera (*Little Vera*)
- 1988



Russia First in Film

- * The first presentation of film in Russia was made in May 4, 1896 by Francis Doublier at Aquarium Theatre in St. Petersburg. A Lumiere camera and films were used.
- * The first film produced in Russia was Cossack Trick Riders in 1896.
- * The first feature film over an hour was *Signal* in 1918.
- * The first "sound" film was *Zemlya Zhazhdyotz (The Earth Thirsts)* in 1930.
- * The first "talkie" was *Putyovka v zhizn* in 1931.
- * The first color film was *(Grunya Kornakova (Nightingale, Little Nightingale)* in 1936.

Russia Movie Posters

In general, Russian film posters reflect both the artistic styles and the political climate of the day. Earlier Bolshevik influence gave way to the avant-garde style movie posters that reflect what many consider to be the golden age of Russian film posters, those produced by artists such as Mikhail Dlugach, Nikolai Prusakov, Alexander Rodchenko, Yakov Ruklevsky and Georgii and Vladimir Stenberg. Montage elements, close-ups and color transposition were all an integral part of the Russian poster design.



Bella Donna - 1926
Artist: Duglach



Decembrists - 1925
Artist: Stenberg



Maksim Maksimych - 1928
Artist: Prusakov

POSTER SIZES (Approximate)

Russian poster sizes are issued in a very wide variety of sizes, and are released in a horizontal or vertical format.

41x56 cm (16x22") - this is the most common smaller size and varies an inch or so each way. Other small sizes include 33x48 cm (13x19"), 46x66 cm (18x26") and 53x66 cm (21x26").

56x86 cm (22x34") - this is a common size and used as the one sheet. There are also variations, some slightly smaller 50x79 cm (20x31") & 50x81 cm (20x32").

64x102 cm (25x40") - this is also a very common size with great variations. Widths vary from 61-71 cm (24-28") and height from 94-104 cm (37-41").

Traveling theaters are still quite common through the countryside in the various regions of Russia. For many years, these traveling theaters have used (and still use) hand drawn banners to advertise the films being shown. Here are some samples:



20 First Dates - 2004



Freaky Friday - 2003



Scooby Doo - 2002



Shallow Hal - 2001



Collector Inspector

First, be sure to read “How to Read Your Poster” section at the beginning of this book.

The internet is opening up more opportunities for worldwide collectors to obtain Russian posters. However, we are hearing from collectors inside Russia that reproductions are a major problem. There are a tremendous amount of reproductions being released, but we have not found a way to identify them yet. This will probably continue until the Russian posters are better documented. There is a LOT of work and documentation that is needed in this area.

On newer films that have been released since 1999, sometimes the distributor’s website is shown on the poster. The website domain extension that identifies Russia is .ru

NOTE: For more information about Russia and its film industry and posters visit <http://www.LearnAboutMoviePosters.com>.



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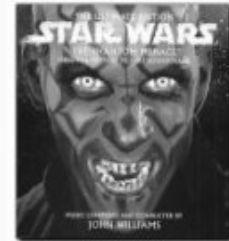
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