

The Early Development
of the *Gendaigeki* Screenplay:
Kurihara Tōmas, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō,
and Taikatsu's "Americanism"

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Kobayashi Kisaburō was the first to challenge Nikkatsu's monopoly of the domestic market when he formed the Tenkatsu Company in 1914. He eventually left Tenkatsu, but for six years it continued to be the only major production company to share the market with Nikkatsu. This situation changed abruptly when Kobayashi became the motivating force behind the establishment of the Kokkatsu Company in December, 1919, buying out his former company, Tenkatsu, in the process. According to Mori Iwao, the goals of this new company not only were to set new standards for the domestic industry but also to gain some sort of foothold in the market overseas. In Mori's words, it proposed to "rely on the vast universal appeal of film to build a foundation of goodwill between Japan and the United States," in addition to contributing to "the education and entertainment of the masses."¹ The appearance of Kokkatsu did indeed signal a new era of change for the contemporary drama genre. Within six months three new film companies were organized in quick succession, and at least two of these encouraged important developments in the modernization of the contemporary film.

The Shōchiku Cinema Company (Shōchiku Kinema Gōmeigaisha), a branch of the powerful Shōchiku theater company that managed a chain of theaters and several Kabuki and Shimpa acting troupes, was the first of the three companies established, early in 1920. It was followed by Taikatsu (Taishō Katsudō Shashin Kabushiki Kaisha, the Taishō Moving Picture Company, later Taishō Katsuei or the Taishō Film Company) in April, and Teikine (Teikoku Kinema Engei Kabushiki Kaisha, The Imperial Cinema and Dramatic Art Company) in May. Formed when the head of Tenkatsu's Osaka branch refused to merge with Kokkatsu, Teikine specialized in filmed versions of stage plays. These films were made by stage actors and directors who came to the studio in their spare time between performances, and the scripts were nearly identical to those used for stage productions.² In contrast, both the

Shōchiku Cinema and Taikatsu companies set out from the very start to produce “artistic” films completely free from stage conventions.

In February, 1920 announcements in Tokyo and Osaka newspapers confirmed the rumors that the Shōchiku theater monopoly was embarking on a new venture in film production. According to these articles, the new studio would produce “moving picture films” for both the domestic and foreign market. These would include historical dramas that could be understood by foreign audiences as well as films that would depict contemporary Japanese life in “as humorous a light as possible.” In addition, the company would hire a director from America who specialized in comedies and could supervise the production of such innovative contemporary films. He would also be responsible for coaching amateur actors and actresses in film acting technique. In exchange for pictures introducing Japanese culture to audiences abroad, Shōchiku would in turn import the latest foreign movies for Japanese viewers. In brief, not only would the new studio use the most modern production techniques to rival the widespread popularity of the *shimpageki*, but it would also contribute to “international harmony” by making exportable films that “truthfully” portrayed Japanese culture.³

These were bold promises at the time, and they reveal Shōchiku’s timely awareness of the growing demand for a reformation of the domestic industry that would include the importation of foreign technique and the creation of a foreign market for Japanese films. Shōchiku’s objectives also reflect the overwhelming popularity of American films at the time. The European pictures trickling in from overseas were generally regarded as artistically superior to the American imports, but they were no match for them at the box office.⁴

The same month that Shōchiku announced the establishment of its new film company, a former Hollywood actor and novice director, Kurihara Tōmas, returned to Japan after an unsuccessful attempt to market several of his films in the United States. These films, including a five-reel comedy called *Narikin* (The Nouveau Riche/Goto Sanji/The Upstart) starring an actor (Iwajiro Nakajima) billed as the “Japanese Charlie Chaplin,” had been Kurihara’s bid to bring a glimpse of contemporary Japan to foreign audiences.⁵ His failure brought Kurihara and his partner’s small import and part-time production company, Tōyō Film (“The Sunrise Film Manufacturing Company” in the United States) to a standstill, but within two months of Shōchiku’s announcement the company had a new owner, Asano Yoshizō, a wealthy businessman who was an acquaintance of Kurihara’s and had invested heavily in the company, and a new name. In June this new company, the Taishō Moving Picture Company (commonly called Taikatsu) announced its plans for the full scale production of a new type of Japanese film in addition to the distribution of

recent foreign films.

In general, Taikatsu's announcement in the June issue of *Katsudō Kurabu* echoed Shōchiku's earlier proclamation: the company proposed to import the newest foreign films, modernize the domestic product (with an emphasis on "action comedy" for the contemporary genre), and, if all went well, subsequently export this product. The announcement also stated that Kurihara would be in charge of training amateurs in "Western-style" film-acting technique. Taikatsu's prospectus, however, was more specific in stating the studio's determination to avoid subject matter favored by *shimpageki* filmmakers. Along with a reference to the current trend to bring famous authors into Hollywood studios and an explanation of the importance of the screenplay, it included the startling claim that the well-known author Tanizaki Jun'ichirō would supervise the choice of material as Taikatsu's "literary consultant."⁶

In view of their contract requesting his presence at the studio only once a month, the Taikatsu executives did not seem to expect a great deal from Tanizaki. They were apparently more interested in using his name to endorse the studio: Taikatsu's rival, Shōchiku, had already commissioned Osanai Kaoru, a prominent playwright and one of the leading figures of the Shingeki movement, to head its new school for film actors. Both Tanizaki and Osanai had publicly expressed an interest in moving pictures prior to their direct involvement in the industry, but Tanizaki was clearly more committed to the modernization of the Japanese film. An avid fan of foreign films, he was already writing about the new medium's artistic potential and the need for a reformation of the domestic industry as early as 1917—only two months after the publication of Kaeriyama's *The Production and Photography of Moving Picture Drama*. At Taikatsu, he developed a personal screenwriting style which made a significant contribution to the Japanese screenplay, and, no doubt, pleasantly surprised the studio's management.

Kurihara and Tanizaki managed to produce "artistic" films at Taikatsu for roughly one year, until the increasingly unstable financial climate that followed World War I, coupled with Kurihara's bad health, forced the company executives to abandon their commitment to the reformation of the domestic film in favor of the more lucrative production of *shimpageki*. During their short period of collaboration, however, Kurihara and Tanizaki brought the "pure film" movement one step further with the 1920 *Amachua Kurabu* (Amateur Club), a comedy modeled after the seaside comedies of Mack Sennett and the furthest removed from the theater of all the early "pure film" attempts, and *Jasei no In* (The Lust of the White Serpent/The Lasciviousness of the Viper), the first film adaptation of classical Japanese literature.

With such works, Kurihara and Tanizaki created new genres for the Japanese film and encouraged the development of naturalistic film acting technique. Furthermore,

they set a precedent for the director-writer collaboration at a time when the two fundamental disciplines of writer and director were still unrecognized by the general audience, and only minimally understood by the more discerning intellectuals and pioneer film critics. This was an essential factor for both the development of the screenplay and the acknowledgement of its importance in the production process. Both men recognized that this development and implementation of a more detailed continuity screenplay was critical to the modernization of the Japanese film, and Tanizaki's efforts to perfect such a form were greatly aided by the expertise Kurihara contributed based on his experience in Hollywood.

Kurihara's contributions to the reformation of story content, acting, screenwriting, camerawork, and editing technique, together with his belief in the concept of the director as the central figure in the production process, represent the beginning of a brief but important interval in the development of Japanese film. During this period, American production technique was transmitted directly into the Japanese industry by a handful of Hollywood-trained professionals. This period of transmission ended abruptly when the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 destroyed the Tokyo studios, causing a major reorganization of the industry, but the advancements made during these few years had a lasting effect on the industry, and on the contemporary genre in particular.

Kurihara Tōmas, Hollywood, and the Ince Legacy

Kurihara, like many of the Japanese who emigrated to the United States at the turn of the century, was looking for temporary, profitable employment in order to ease financial problems back home when he arrived in Seattle in 1902.⁷ He was seventeen years old when he left his homeland, and he intended to earn enough money in the United States to salvage his father's wholesale lumber business and buy back the family property. After a brief stay in Seattle, he moved to San Francisco, where he worked as a farm hand, a houseboy, and a dishwasher during the day and attended school at night.⁸

He succeeded in repaying his family's debts, but a bicycle accident while traveling to one of his numerous obligations left him with a severe chest injury and chronic pleurisy, an illness from which he never fully recovered. He moved on to Los Angeles in search of a milder, more comfortable climate just as the independent New York and Chicago film companies started to migrate west. The movie studios being built along the southern California coast, particularly in the small Los Angeles suburb of Hollywood, offered new opportunities for work, and in the spring of 1912 Kurihara entered a training course in film acting.⁹

The following year, after working as a part time extra at the Kalem, Selig

Polyscope, and Universal studios, Kurihara was hired as a regular staff member by the director Thomas H. Ince.¹⁰ Kurihara (whose first name "Tōmas," or Thomas, is said to have been suggested by Ince himself) continued to work with the director until he and his crew moved to Paramount in 1917. Although Kurihara was to work with many directors before returning to Japan, Ince, as Kurihara's first teacher and mentor, exerted the greatest influence on his namesake, and Kurihara's experience working under him played a significant role in determining the nature of his own directing career.

Ince also had entered the industry as an actor (only about two years before Kurihara), but by the time he arrived in California in 1911 he already had experience in all the essential skills involved in film production. Born into a theatrical family, his movie career began with a few casual appearances for Edison and Vitagraph when stage work was unavailable. It became increasingly difficult to find work in the theater, and in 1910 he joined Biograph, quitting the stage altogether. The next year he moved to IMP (Independent Motion Pictures Company), where he continued to act as well as direct, write, and edit one film a week, and before the end of the year he signed with the independent New York Motion Picture Company to head their West Coast branch, Bison Films.

For the most part, Ince continued to work in a similar fashion at Bison, doing most of the production work there by himself, but within a year both the studio and production demand had grown to the extent that he found it expedient to organize a second unit. In order to maintain control over this production unit, and to ensure that each of the films produced under his supervision bore his unmistakable imprint in spite of being the work of another director, Ince relied on a tightly written, detailed continuity script.¹¹

It is generally agreed that although Ince did not invent the continuity form, he did refine it: in addition to adding more technical, emotional, and aesthetic detail, Ince's particular method of breaking up separate scenes lent a conscious rhythm to his scripts.¹² He also gave the screenplay such an important function within his production system that the craft of screenwriting reached new heights of recognition and development, and his scenario department produced at least one major writer of the silent period, Charles Gardner Sullivan, whose prolific writing career bridged the transition into sound and lasted until 1940.¹³

Ince discovered that a more detailed continuity script, with a clear indication of characters, props, and scene locations, was a boon to preproduction planning. In addition to facilitating an economic and efficient shooting schedule, it also encouraged well-balanced films with clearer, more developed narratives. At Ince's studio in the Santa Ynez Canyon, which quickly developed into the sprawling complex known as

Inceville, he continued to perfect an organized system of production based on a division of labor: writing, directing, and editing were established as separate disciplines, with himself, as studio head, maintaining control over the entire process through the use of continuity scripts. The efficiency of his organizational production method was so evident that it became a model for the entire industry, where it was to prevail for over thirty years.¹⁴

Familiarity with the tightly written screenplays that Ince demanded of his writers—and he himself wrote—later encouraged Kurihara to write continuity scripts at Taikatsu that were considerably more detailed than those of Kaeriyama. In Japan, however, Kurihara's scripts were not put to the same degree of organizational use as their counterparts in Ince's more sophisticated production system. The very different nature of the Japanese industry in the teens, with its focus on the *benshi*, prevented the same patterns of technical development and rapid industrial growth that had taken place in Hollywood by 1920. Production at Taikatsu remained on a small scale throughout the studio's abbreviated existence, and Kurihara's authority as a director was severely limited by budget restrictions as well as problems with company management and changes in production policy. The fact that Kurihara himself wrote continuity scripts based on Tanizaki's original stories, however, does suggest that he regarded them as an important element of the production process, and in spite of Tanizaki's interest in screenwriting before entering the studio, his enthusiasm was sustained significantly by his fascination with the director's screenwriting expertise.¹⁵

Dedication to realistic detail and a penchant for tapping unusual sources of talent were other Ince trademarks that later resurfaced in Kurihara's own directing style, most notably, as we shall later see, in the 1920 *Amachua Kurabu*. The New York Motion Picture Company had commissioned Ince to make Westerns at Bison, and one of his first attempts to add new life to the genre was to hire a local Indian tribe to replace Caucasian actors in make up, as well as an entire circus that provided him with authentic cowboys and a wide variety of trained animals. According to Mori Iwao, who included a section on Japanese in Hollywood in his *A Survey of the Moving Pictures*, Ince initially hired Kurihara to do odd jobs about the studio, but before long he was casting him as a Mexican in his Westerns. It was in this role, playing opposite Ince's most popular cowboy star, William S. Hart, that Kurihara was known to audiences in Japan long before he returned to that country.¹⁶

Ince by no means limited himself to Westerns. By 1913 he had a significant number of Japanese employees at his disposal, and he began to supervise special "Oriental productions" featuring these members of his company. Several of these films, including the first venture, *The Vigil*, a two-reeler starring Sessue Hayakawa's wife, Aoki Tsuruko, as a poor fisherman's daughter, responded to a popular surge of

interest and curiosity in the exotic East.¹⁷ Other productions, however, seemed more directly related to an outbreak of anti-Japanese sentiment caused by the sudden increase in Japanese emigration. The nature of such films, and the anti-Japanese mentality they conveyed, were an important influence on Kurihara and the goals he set for his work at Taikatsu.

The first of Ince's "Oriental productions" to win critical acclaim, *The Wrath of the Gods*/*The Destruction of Sakura Jima*, opened in 1914. A relatively benign story of a heathen's conversion to Christianity, it was inspired by the actual volcanic eruption in Japan earlier that year, and Kurihara played the part of a diviner opposite Sessue Hayakawa, Aoki Tsuruko, Henry Kotani, and Abe Yutaka. Ince immediately followed this up with *The Typhoon*, a courtroom drama about a colony of Japanese in Paris who stop at nothing for the sake of their country. Hayakawa played the part of Dr. Takemora [sic], a spy entrusted with compiling an important and highly confidential military report. His French girlfriend, who resents his fanatical commitment to his work, goads him into an argument in which he loses his temper and kills her. A Japanese student, Kironari (Kotani), who understands the importance of Takemora's work, stands in for him and is executed in his place, but in the end, Takemora himself dies from guilt and a broken heart.

The director was not alone in his fascination with the East, and the next year Hayakawa and Kotani appeared in Cecil B. De Mille's *The Cheat*. In this film Hayakawa played a Japanese money lender who brands his would-be lover (Fannie Ward) when she refuses to repay her debt in the agreed upon manner. The sight of the Japanese actor ripping the clothes of his Caucasian co-star and searing her shoulder with a branding iron aggravated the already tense atmosphere of anti-Japanese resentment, and enraged audiences shouted anti-Japanese slogans at the screen in theaters throughout the country. When news of this reaction reached Japan, Hayakawa was accused of being a traitor, and at home his reputation among fellow members of the Japanese community was severely damaged.¹⁸ The first California Alien Land Law forbidding Japanese to own land had just been passed in 1913, and the mysterious, diabolical Japanese characters in such films as *The Typhoon* and *The Cheat* no doubt reflected the racist tension underlying the campaign against "the yellow peril."

Kurihara himself did not appear in all of these films, but the sinister portrayal of Japanese in such pictures deeply disturbed him: after returning to Japan he was determined to make exportable films that would more realistically portray his people and their culture for the benefit of misinformed audiences abroad.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, although Ince's Westerns were in great demand in Japan, his "Oriental productions" were not. *The Wrath of the Gods* was banned for its primitive depiction of Japanese

shortly after it opened there in 1918. *The Typhoon* was not shown in Japan until 1920, and De Mille's *The Cheat* was never shown at all.²⁰

While continuing to act under Ince, Kurihara worked as an extra at several other studios, gaining first hand experience with the internal workings of the young, rapidly growing industry. Throughout the decade, the small network of studios continued to spread out under the clear California skies. The first companies to move to the West in the early teens, independent companies like the New York Motion Picture Company, did so primarily in an attempt to escape the patent restrictions being enforced by the "Film Trust," the powerful Motion Picture Patent's Company formed in 1909 by a coalition of major production companies. In addition to providing a safe haven for the fugitive companies, however, the West Coast, particularly Southern California, offered other, ultimately more significant benefits: a climate that allowed favorable shooting conditions in all seasons of the year, for example, and cheap land and labor.

Not long after Kurihara started working at Ince's studio, anti-trust laws rendered the Motion Picture Patents Company ineffectual, and its once prominent members back east were going out of business. In contrast, the independents, assisted by the favorable working conditions as well as innovative production policies, were swiftly growing into the major studios that would come to dominate the industry. It was the beginning of a new era as the industry perfected a highly efficient system of mass production that would allow it to conquer the world market within the next few years.

In 1915 Ince joined with D.W. Griffith and Mack Sennett to form the Triangle Film Corporation. The company brought together the visions of three giants of the American silent screen, making Kurihara a member of one of the most dynamic and influential institutions in the industry. In 1917, however, both Griffith and Sennett withdrew from the company, and Ince moved to Paramount. Kurihara struck out on his own, working as an extra for the Essanay, Lasky, Fox, and Hart studios until returning to Japan in April, 1918.²¹

Kurihara spent the next two years traveling between the United States and Japan, until confirmation of the plans for Taikatsu required him to return permanently to Japan in the spring of 1920.²² By then, not only had he acquired a great deal of practical knowledge on the sets of the most popular directors in Hollywood, but he had been fortunate enough to work with these directors during their most productive periods. Ironically, while the close of the decade found Kurihara planning one of the first Japanese studios to be organized strictly for the production of artistic films, the work of the artistically creative pioneers of Hollywood—Ince and Griffith, for example—was already being undermined by the increasing control of large financial organizations.

Kurihara's Tōyō Films and the Founding of Taikatsu

When Kurihara returned to Japan to survey the state of the industry in the spring of 1918, Kaeriyama had just begun his pioneer efforts at "pure film" production at Tenkatsu. *Sei no Kagayaki*, completed a few months after Kurihara's return, would not open for more than a year, however, and the movement, never formally organized or well-defined, was even at this point no more than a kind of spiritual atmosphere created and sustained by concerned viewers.²³ Backstage the domestic industry was dominated by the *benshi*, and at the box office the choice was limited to *rensageki* (chain dramas), *shimpageki*, and Onoe Matsunosuke. American films ranked at the top of foreign imports, but with the notable exception of Chaplin's comedies and the idyllic Bluebird romances, the majority of these films were serial pictures. Serious fans could keep up with developments abroad by reading about them in the growing number of domestic and imported film magazines, but much of the groundbreaking work of Hollywood's masters—Griffith's *Intolerance*, for example—had yet to reach Japan. As a result, the general audience was still largely uninterested in the artistic potential of the new medium.

Kurihara might have been discouraged by the condition of his native industry had he not returned to Japan with a specific purpose in mind. Before leaving Ince's company, he had established a small business with Benjamin Brodsky, an assistant to Reginald Barker. Barker had been instrumental in diverting Ince's attention to the East, and had directed both *The Wrath of the Gods* and *The Typhoon*. The origins and nature of Kurihara and Brodsky's company are unclear, although according to Kurihara himself it was organized for the purpose of improving Japanese-American relations. The enterprise was, at any rate, short-lived, but soon after Kurihara left Ince's studio, he and his colleague formed another small production company, The Sunrise Film Manufacturing Company, later called Tōyō Film in Japan. Kurihara's primary objective in establishing this company was to make dramatic films that would introduce Japan and Japanese culture to foreign audiences, and he had returned to Japan hoping to secure financial support for this project from prominent Japanese businessmen.²⁴

In May, 1918 Kurihara obtained the backing of Asano Yoshizō, the wealthy second son of Asano Sōichirō, the founder of the Asano Cement conglomerate. Like Kurihara, Asano had lived in the United States (he had been educated at Harvard) and he might have been drawn to the idea of supporting Kurihara's fledgling company based on this common experience. It has also been pointed out that his interest in the film world coincided with the tendency of prominent American businessmen, including his friend and former classmate Joseph P. Kennedy, to publicly lend their support to the American film industry; perhaps he wanted to play

a similar role in the development of the industry in Japan.²⁵

In addition to these possibilities, Asano clearly had more pragmatic reasons for sharing Kurihara's desire to increase foreign awareness of Japan and promote culture exchange, particularly between Japan and the United States. One of Asano's subsidiary companies, the *Toyo* Steamship Company, had been the first Japanese shipping company to begin passage across the Pacific, a market previously dominated by the Union Pacific Railway. It was also a member of a coalition of shipping, trading, hotel, and railroad companies, which under the sponsorship of the Japanese Foreign Ministry and the Tourist Bureau had been trying to increase the rate of tourism to Japan since the end of World War I.²⁶

After receiving Asano's pledge of support, Kurihara returned to the United States in November to study editing and art titles.²⁷ The following spring he went back to Japan to produce "dramatic promotional films,"²⁸ such as the previously mentioned *Narikin*, and *Toyo no Yume* (A Dream of the Orient). He had hoped his films would bring a more authentic depiction of Japan to American audiences, but he was unable to market them when he took them to the United States that December.

Asano, who had invested generously in Kurihara and Brodsky's company, inherited full ownership after Kurihara returned to Japan two months later. Although Asano's name did not actually appear on the list of executive directors for his newly adopted enterprise, now called Taikatsu, he supplied the necessary capital, marking the first foray of the *zaibatsu* (big business conglomerates) into the moving picture entertainment world.²⁹ Asano's initial investment was a mere 200,000 yen (99,000 dollars), and although an additional 1,500,000 yen (740,000 dollars) was added when the name of the company was changed to Taishō Katsuei, the total increased amount of capital was still considerably less than the amount of money behind Taikatsu's competitors: the four companies that merged to form Nikkatsu in 1912, for example, had brought to it a combined total of 2,500,000 yen (1,200,000 dollars; in April, 1920 it added 6,000,000 yen, equivalent to 3,000,000 dollars at the time, to meet the increase in competition), Kokkatsu was backed by 10,000,000 yen (5,000,000 dollars), and Teikine and Shochiku each by 5,000,000 yen (2,500,000 dollars). Even the pioneer of Nikkatsu's rivals, Tenkatsu, had started in 1914 with a capital of 550,000 yen (270,000 dollars)—nearly three times the amount of Taikatsu's original capital.³⁰ In hindsight, Taikatsu's meagre capital helps explain its brief existence, but it also makes the studio's considerable contributions to the development of the Japanese film all the more impressive.

The various motives of the two key figures involved in Taikatsu's organization, Asano and Kurihara, reflect much of the flavor of the contemporary intellectual concern for the reformation of Japanese film. Fresh from his long sojourn abroad,

Kurihara was preoccupied with introducing more progressive production methods to the domestic industry in order to make a product that would be acceptable to foreign audiences. Ideally, this would also enable him to achieve his vision of bringing Japanese culture to the rest of the world through film. Asano, while sympathetic to Kurihara's interests, was also keen on the prospect of introducing quality films to the Japanese entertainment world.

Initially, Taikatsu set out as an importer of first-rate foreign films, allowing Japanese audiences the additional privilege of being able to enjoy these films just as they were opening to their local audiences. When Asano took over ownership of Kurihara's company, foreign passengers aboard *Toyō* Steamship's three trans-Pacific liners were already enjoying screenings of the latest films from New York, and he was only one short step away from bringing these films ashore to eager Japanese audiences.³¹ As a start, contracts were made with First National, Goldwyn, and Metro in order to import popular American pictures within days of their New York openings. Difficulties in enforcing exclusive distribution rights, however, made the prospect of production seem increasingly attractive, and Kurihara was enlisted to supervise the production of modern films at the small Yokohama studio that formerly had belonged to *Toyō* Film.³² Given his expertise and experience, the company's management was confident that he would turn out films that could rival the sophisticated imports.

At its inception, then, the company's dual nature was an intentional answer to the call of intellectuals like Mori Iwao, educated viewers of foreign films who supported a reformation of Japanese film that would take into account the technological and artistic advancements being made abroad. A closer look at the content of Taikatsu's prospectus in the June, 1920 issue of *Katsudō Kurabu* reveals a remarkable concurrence between the goals of Taikatsu's founding fathers and the steps toward liberating Japanese film from theatrical conventions that Mori describes in *A Survey of the Moving Pictures*:

The Establishment of the Taishō Moving Picture Company

I. Statement of Purpose

At present in Japan there has been a phenomenal improvement in the audience's ability to appreciate moving pictures, yet this has not been reciprocated by a reformation of the film industry. Imported films are more than four or five years old, and the domestic industry has continued to produce the same type of *serifugeki* that they have offered us up until now. In view of these

faults, this company proposes the following goals in hopes of fully satisfying all of these avid film fans.

II . Goals

1. We will import and distribute only the newest and best films from Europe and the United States. This will enable us to introduce the changes that have taken place in the technique of screen acting in the West over the past five years.

2. Our company will produce and export Western style films, using the natural beauty and picturesque landscape of our land as background. In this way we will widely promote the distinctive characteristics of Japan and the Japanese to the world.

3. In the domestic entertainment market, we will do away with those films, resembling moving picture weeklies, that deal with current topics of interest, as well as the *serifugeki* that have been common up until now. Instead we will produce comedies and historical dramas that rely primarily on action.

III . Company Organization

In carrying out the above goals, a group of idealists in this field will work most earnestly and assiduously toward the realization of their ideals with the backing of businessmen influential in the financial world, bearing no resemblance to those speculative companies and manufacturers that are common these days.

IV . Execution

1. At present in the Western film world, the days when audiences could be captivated by stars alone are over, and the latest trend is to emphasize the importance of the content of screenplays. Accordingly, individual companies are laboring over the production of screenplays, and they compete to enlist the talents of famous authors. Using one of the companies with which we have a special contract, Goldwyn, as an example, we will begin by importing this year's films, timing their opening in Japan to coincide with their opening in New York in order to introduce all

these new tendencies in the moving picture world.

2. Domestic films must also improve in order to keep up with the progressive Japanese audience described above. Accordingly, our company will produce superior films by building upon the ideas of the famous author Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, assembling a group of up-and-coming young actors and actresses under the guidance of Tōmas Kurihara, and employing the most advanced camera technique. These films will be made in our Yokohama studio, where already all the necessary equipment has been installed.

In addition to the actors mentioned above, we will accept applications for admission to a separate training school from educated men and women who wish to act. They will receive comprehensive instruction from Director Kurihara on Western screen acting. The most outstanding students in this group will be chosen for employment on a gradual basis.³³

In *A Survey of the Moving Pictures*, Mori stated three basic requirements for the improvement of the domestic industry: increased capital, the study of Western technique, and a dedicated, serious approach by all those concerned with the state of Japanese film. The founders of Taikatsu unfortunately neglected to fulfill Mori's financial requirement, an oversight that later became a decisive factor in the company's demise. They clearly met his demand for "passionate resolve," however, both by their own account, as "earnest" and "assiduous" idealists, and by the enthusiasm and sense of purpose that comes through to us in the wording of the company's prospectus, a blueprint for nothing short of a fundamental overhaul of the industry. Finally, in line with Mori's demand for the study of Western technique, a necessary step in eradicating the theatrical conventions that he believed hindered the development of Japanese film (an idea that goes back to Kaeriyama's advice, "observe to learn"), the prospectus states that Taikatsu would promote the importation of the most progressive films from the West in order to learn about the developments being made abroad, and then would apply these innovations to the production of a new kind of Japanese film.

According to Taikatsu's prospectus, paying tribute to the importance of the screenplay was one current Western trend that Japan would do well to follow. From the refutation of the *serifugeki* in the company's "Statement of Purpose"—reiterated under "Goals"—to the declaration of the need to "emphasize the importance and content of screenplays," it is clear that Taikatsu's founders shared Mori's conviction

that the reformation of Japanese films would not be possible without first addressing the inadequacies of their screenplays.

There were several problems to attend to. To begin with, as early as 1910 the native screenplay had been criticized for a tendency toward verbosity: even this early it was apparent, at least to some, that although literary flourishes might be acceptable for the stage, they were redundant in writing for the screen. Commenting on the sorry state of amateur Japanese screenwriters at the time, Sato Kōroku stressed the need to make a distinction between the stage play and the script for a moving picture, a belief that was shared by Kaeriyama and his colleagues several years later.³⁴

Kaeriyama's opinions on this matter were influenced by his familiarity with the writings of early Western film critics. Regardless of their differences on other aspects of the blossoming young art form, these critics unanimously agreed that in order to realize the full potential of the medium it was essential to distinguish the "photoplay" from the stage drama. Working in Hollywood just as this first outpouring of criticism appeared, Kurihara was no doubt aware of the need for this distinction; when he returned to Japan, he worked hard to promote an understanding of the particular demands of writing for the screen. He also shared Mori's belief that without such an understanding, Japanese filmmakers would be unable to produce exportable films. And, like Mori, he felt that unless the domestic industry could create a foreign market, not only for the sake of cultural exchange but also as a source of desperately needed revenue, the Japanese film would be doomed to languish in the shadow of the more popular foreign imports. Two months after the publication of Taikatsu's prospectus, in an article announcing plans to open an acting school at the company's studio, he wrote:

Needless to say, film drama and stage drama are, fundamentally, two completely different things.

In spite of this fact, film productions in this country have yet to rise above the level of *serifugeki*. They are of a nature which contradicts the true essence of film drama and as such they represent a step backwards in film development. I believe that as long as this situation continues, sending Japanese films to the Western market is an eternally hopeless impossibility.

In view of this deficiency and the new direction of advancements in the West, this company proposes to completely do away with *serifugeki* of the kind that have been made up until now, dedicate itself to the funding of comedies and historical films

that rely chiefly on action, and advertise the distinctive characteristics of Japan and the Japanese people worldwide by producing Japanese "pure films" for export. We are organizing this training school to enable us to effectively realize these goals.³⁵

In *A Survey of the Moving Pictures*, Mori pointed out that content was another aspect of the typical *serifugeki* script, and the films that were made from them, that needed drastic improvement. Filmmakers working in the contemporary genre still lacked a suitable alternative to the implausible plots and stereotyped characters of the melodramatic *shimpageki*. At Kokkatsu, Kaeriyama was doing his best to challenge the popularity of stage bound contemporary dramas by experimenting with Western-inspired techniques, but he had not yet found a solution to the problem of imitation. Meanwhile, a rising new class of critics clamored for contemporary realism.

One way to work toward this in the contemporary genre was to improve the quality of the acting, another weak point that had been keeping foreign film aficionados away from the domestic product for some time. A decade earlier, for example, in his remarkably far sighted assessment of the domestic screenwriting situation, Satō Kōroku also included a comment on the acting technique (or lack thereof) of Japanese screen actors: frank and to the point, he dismissed the "poor level" of Japanese acting as "deplorable." Several years later, Murata Minoru and his troupe won the critics' sympathy for bravely trying to improve this situation in *Sei no Kagayaki*, but they were criticized just the same for their awkward gestures, unnatural posturing, and obvious lack of training.

Kaeriyama set a precedent for bringing to the screen amateurs and actors that had not been trained on the traditional stage, but he himself admitted that the acting in imported foreign films had been his only guide to acting technique. As a result, his actors relied on a repertory of imitative gestures that crippled his attempts at a more naturalistic portrayal in films like *Sei no Kagayaki* and *Miyama no Otome*. Even *Gen'ei no Onna*, his most successful film, was hailed as the first contemporary genre film to compare favorably with foreign films in all respects but acting. Although critics conceded that it was better than that of his previous films, they felt it still left much to be desired.

Acknowledging the fact that the quality of Japanese screen acting was sadly inferior to its Western counterpart, Taikatsu emphasized the importance of training film actors in its prospectus. Had an acting school been organized on the studio grounds as promised in the Taikatsu prospectus, it would have been the first of its kind. In 1909 Satō Kōroku helped organize an acting school at the Yoshizawa studio (also the home of the first screenwriting department), but the Yoshizawa school did

not accept actresses.³⁶

According to a former Taikatsu actress, Benisawa Yōko, the elaborately planned acting school, with proposed courses on makeup, costumes, movement, Western dance, Japanese dance and singing, never actually materialized. Instead, Kurihara's actors—a group of amateurs that included three women, a former *benshi*, and a student—learned their craft from the experienced actor as they worked on his set.³⁷ We do know that aspiring applicants received screen tests which were judged by both Kurihara and Tanizaki,³⁸ and that the lucky ones were well paid—the women, surprisingly enough, receiving higher salaries than the men.³⁹ Screen tests were without precedent in 1920, as were high salaries, the latter indicative of a new trend to risk paying extra for individuals with certain skills—or the willingness to learn such skills—essential to the new medium.

The generous wages were well deserved. The critics praised the acting in Taikatsu films such as *Amachua Kurabu* and *Jasei no In*. They applauded the actors for the unaffected, naturalistic style that had continued to elude Kaeriyama's actors, and they admired Kurihara's directing skills. Even Kaeriyama's own colleagues lamented that in comparison Kurihara was clearly the superior director.⁴⁰

By all accounts, Kurihara's praise was well earned too. A demanding director, he ordered his actors to push themselves to honestly "feel" the emotions he wanted them to express. Often he repeatedly demonstrated a gesture or a line until they achieved the effect he was after. He was known to have reduced young actresses to tears,⁴¹ and in true Hollywood style he ordered one retake after another until he was completely satisfied with a scene.⁴² His perfectionism on the set impressed Tanizaki, and it was common knowledge that he often became so involved in his work that he laughed and cried along with the actors. One visitor on the set went so far as to say that he was more entertained by Kurihara's expressions as they shifted with each subtle change of mood than he was by the actors themselves.⁴³ Never blessed with good health, he kept himself going with injections of heart stimulants on the set,⁴⁴ but with such tireless direction he succeeded in bringing the contemporary drama beyond the realm of the ponderous *Sei no Kagayaki*.

Script readings and rehearsals prior to shooting were not common practice at Taikatsu, and Kurihara still prompted the actors from his place beside the camera, but he improved on the directing methods then in vogue by coaching the actors and indicating the beginning and end of each scene. Admittedly, Kaeriyama had been the first Japanese director to attempt such a progressive approach. But Kurihara's actors were familiar with their lines before they went before the camera, and considering what we know of his directing style from the recollections of his staff, it is doubtful he would have tolerated the silent mimickry Kaeriyama allowed. According to

Benisawa, she and her colleagues were expected to deliver their lines at the appropriate times, although they might not have always recited them exactly as they were written.⁴⁵

The more naturalistic acting style Kurihara developed at Taikatsu gave the contemporary genre a degree of realism that Kaeriyama's films failed to achieve, but it was only a partial solution to the problem of reforming the genre. According to Taikatsu's prospectus, the company's founders were aware that improvements in acting technique would have to be accompanied with a more serious attitude toward screenplay production in order to produce more realistic films. In order for the contemporary "pure film" to successfully compete with the more popular foreign imports and the domestic *shimpageki*, they would have to provide the general audience with something that neither of these two competitors could offer.

Satō Kōroku had identified this essential ingredient for reformation ten years earlier, in his appeal to Japanese screenwriters to "advocate a Japanese lifestyle for Japanese people." By 1920, it had become increasingly common to link the development of this contemporary realism with the desire to market Japanese films abroad; as we have seen, the urge to export played a prominent role in the establishment of Taikatsu and Shōchiku that year, and the necessity to build a foreign market for Japanese films was a major theme of Mori's *A Survey of the Moving Pictures*. In order to understand the extent to which this tendency influenced the development of the contemporary genre screenplay at both the Taikatsu and Shōchiku studios, we need to consider the various factors, toward the end of the teens, which encouraged the industry to look beyond national borders as the reformation movement gained momentum.

Challenging Borders

Rensageki and *shimpageki* were enjoying unprecedented popularity when Kaeriyama began production at Tenkatsu, and a proposal to make films for export helped in persuading the company to allow him to bypass the conventions of these standard box office attractions. It is doubtful his films were ever seen by foreign audiences,⁴⁶ but under the pretext of making films for export he did succeed in producing the first contemporary genre films to reject stage conventions, films that had a considerable influence on the growing number of viewers concerned with developing the artistic potential of the domestic film. By drawing attention to the possibility of exporting Japanese films and highlighting the relationship between export and reform, Kaeriyama's films marked the beginning of a period during which the challenge of creating a foreign audience for Japanese films forced filmmakers to reevaluate the shortcomings—and potential—of the domestic product. This debate

would continue throughout the twenties, bringing the more progressive filmmakers ever closer to a definition of the contemporary genre film.

It is not clear just how interested Kaeriyama was in actually exporting his work, but even after completing his first two films he found that the premise continued to help justify his attempts to experiment with new techniques in film production. It proved to be remarkably effective, for example, in obtaining permission to photograph locales that otherwise would have been forbidden to a film intended merely for domestic consumption. When he made *Shiragiku Monogatari* (The Tale of the White Chrysanthemum, 1920), a romantic sword fight film set in the middle ages, the monks at Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto repeatedly refused his requests for permission to shoot at the temple. They had decided they had all they wanted with moving pictures after Onoe Matsunosuke knocked some tiles off a roof during one of his acrobatic routines. They eventually did grant Kaeriyama permission to use the temple, however, when they learned that the film had been commissioned by an Italian company and was slated for export, having been persuaded by the director's argument that his film was for the purpose of introducing Japanese culture abroad.⁴⁷ By now even the critics had become preoccupied with the idea of sending films overseas, as we can see from this review of Kaeriyama's *Gen'ei no Onna*, a contemporary drama that opened one month before *Shiragiku Monogatari* in June, 1920:

At last the technique and expressions are not, as in [Kaeriyama's] previous films, imitations of foreign acting style, or inappropriate for Japanese people. Nevertheless, the suspicious man's action of gripping the pistol and raising it with both hands when he gets angry is more Western than Japanese..... If you want to introduce the true character of the Japanese to audiences abroad, you should not use such gestures. Even if the Japanese are not very expressive, there must be certain expressions and gestures that are characteristically Japanese. The skillful use of them would serve to introduce the true nature of the Japanese abroad in a meaningful way.⁴⁸

We have already seen how, toward the end of the decade, young critics like Mori supported the idea of building a foreign market for Japanese films in order to generate revenue; ideally, this revenue would be pumped back into the industry, which in turn would promote the qualities necessary to keep Japanese films competitive on an international scale. These young men closely followed the

developments in the foreign film industry, particularly the American industry, and they were impressed with the films they saw pouring in from abroad; it was only natural for them to rally for a similar buildup of the Japanese industry, and for domestic films that could compare favorably, both technically and artistically, to the imported foreign films. These financial, technical, and artistic considerations were mostly the concern of critics and reformists; by 1920, however, members of the industry and the general public were joining these intellectuals in a genuine desire to use the moving pictures to introduce Japanese culture abroad.

The emergence of such sentiment was in itself a positive step toward the recognition of Japanese film as something more than an extension of traditional entertainment. It represented an effort to understand the inherent qualities of the medium, and a willingness to acknowledge its potential as an art form with a unique, universal appeal. To a large degree this new consciousness was awakened by imported foreign films that attempted to portray Japan, and the Japanese, on screen. Sessue Hayakawa's films, which Japan began importing in 1918, were perhaps the most conspicuous examples, but in fact Japanese audiences had been aware of these often fantastical, often alarmingly misinformed cinematic interpretations of their country from at least as early as 1913.

In *A Survey of the Moving Pictures*, Mori included a section, "Foreign Countries and Japan," in which he offered his observations on foreign screen portrayals of Japan and the aspects of his country that he thought most attracted foreigners' interest and curiosity. In all, he listed eighteen foreign films (including *The Wrath of the Gods*) about Japan or stories inspired by Japan that opened in Japan between 1913 and 1921. He also listed the titles and synopses of at least fourteen dramatic films (including *The Vigil* and *The Cheat*) and several non-fiction films (*The Land of the Rising Sun*, made by the "American-Japan Film Company," and several shorts grouped under the heading "Paramount Holmes Travel Pictures") that had not been bought for distribution in Japan.⁴⁹

Mori's comments on these films are both detailed and thoughtful; they obviously provoked him to reflect to a considerable degree on Western perceptions of Japan, and inspired him to reconsider the domestic industry's potential for rectifying some of these strange foreign notions with films that hopefully, as native expressions of Japanese cultural identity, would offer foreign viewers a more accurate picture of Japan.

Forever the observant and ardent admirer, Mori praised the technical virtues of several of these foreign films, even noting a few that would be ideal models for a reformation of the domestic contemporary genre (for example, E. Mason Hopper's *Her American Husband*, a five-reel 1918 film starring Kurihara and "Jack" Abe (Abe

Yutaka), and George Fitzmorris's *A Japanese Nightingale*).⁵⁰ Nevertheless, his comments throughout this chapter also reveal that he was offended by the simplistic depiction of the Japanese as a semi-barbaric race with a propensity toward self-sacrifice—the most extreme expression of which was ritual suicide, a key ingredient in nearly all of these plots. His disappointment is also evident, particularly in his criticism of a Bluebird film by Rupert Julian, *The Door Between*. Here he sadly noted that the appearance of Japanese actors in such an outlandish portrait of Japan and the Japanese people was “a national disgrace.”⁵¹ Rupert Julian was a favorite director of many early members of the reform movement, and we can only imagine how disillusioned his Japanese admirers must have been to realize that even this particular director was, after all, in a land that, in this respect, seemed very distant indeed.

Nearly all of these foreign films about Japan were stories of honor, revenge, self-sacrifice, and unrequited love, the latter usually in some variation or another of the Madame Butterfly theme. A number of them were found to be so offensive that they were withdrawn from distribution soon after they opened to the public. This was the case, for example, with the first film on Mori's list, an Italian film entitled *Ōshoku Jin* (Yellow Man, which opened in 1913) and the first Hayakawa import, *The Wrath of the Gods*. But Mori noted that as strange as these films were, there was still something to be learned from them not only in the area of technical expertise, but in understanding just what it was about Japan that would attract foreigners to make films about a country and culture with which they were totally unfamiliar. Reflecting on the “curiosity and admiration of foreigners for Japan,” he wrote:

All over the world, since the days of Columbus and Marco Polo, many attractive aspects of our country have been related through the countless tales of tourists and the diaries of travelers, and for this reason Japan is believed to be some sort of paradise.

It is as if the entire country were buried in cherry blossoms, with young Japanese maidens and ‘geisha girls’ strolling through them dressed in gorgeous kimonos. When night falls crimson lanterns of all sizes beautifully adorn the darkened cities, and in the morning graceful Mount Fuji rises up, Hiroshige's deep blue sea stretches out, and white sails glide gently by. It is unbelievable the extent to which a great number of foreigners strive to envision Japan as a land of dreams and visions, a land of poetry, and a land of beauty.

This tendency encourages those whose hearts cherish all

things Japanese, who say that their esteem for Japanese works of art and such is beyond imagination. It shows that they believe Japan to be a paradise cradled in the midst of natural beauty, and will thus like anything provided it is Japanese.

On the other hand, this country of ours, a minor power that has been neither noticed nor esteemed by other nations, is suddenly attracting attention after the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese campaigns. "The magnificent Mikado commands an army of unparalleled valor. Sons of samurai, they surpass even the Spartans in their respect for bushido, and once disgraced, they will commit ritual suicide after revenging themselves on all involved." This is how they see us, and from this point of view our way of thinking seems quite extraordinary. Thus they have a tremendous desire to learn about the way we think and how we feel.

In short, because the curiosity of foreigners concerns "beauty and bushido," it seems to have an intensity even greater than that of our own curiosity to learn about the West.⁵²

Mori realized that although these films were bizarre and incoherent renditions of Japan, their sheer volume suggested that foreigners were indeed very curious about both the nation and the people, and in fact had "strong feelings of affection" for Japan.⁵³ He did not doubt that viewers abroad would be interested in Japanese films, provided they were on a par with foreign films both artistically and technically. The problem, therefore, was not whether or not there would be an audience for Japanese films, but perfecting a marketable product.

For advocates of reform like Mori, however, as long as timeworn theatrical conventions dominated the domestic film world filmmakers would not be free to develop a native cinematic form of expression. And until the Japanese filmmakers succeeded in developing such expression, the world would continue to accept the exotic fantasies offered in foreign films as the real Japan. It was a frustrating situation for young idealists like Mori who emphasized the need for both a reformation of the domestic product that would draw upon the innovations of the West (without lapsing into slavish imitation) and the establishment of a foreign market. For them, these two goals were inseparable.

When Mori wrote his commentary on "Foreign Countries and Japan" the emergence of new companies like Taikatsu and Shochiku offered the promise of change and innovation. Notwithstanding this glimmer of hope, the *shimpageki*, *oyama*, and powerful *benshi* still dominated the industry, just as popular, enduring,

and inexportable as ever. Mori ended his commentary on "Foreign Countries and Japan" with a touch of regret and resignation, writing, "What anguish to think that had we been exporting Japanese films all this time, [foreign filmmakers] would not have been able to make pictures like this, full of misunderstandings and insults to our national pride."⁵⁴

Mori was not far wrong in his assessment of foreign audiences. Only one year after *The Wrath of the Gods* and *The Typhoon* opened, Vachel Lindsay noted in *The Art of the Moving Picture* that "it would be a noble thing if American experts in the Japanese principles of decoration...should tell stories of old Japan with the assistance of such men as Sessue Hayakawa. Such things go further than peace treaties."⁵⁵ Lindsay believed that if American filmmakers insisted on filming tales of the Orient, they should at least attempt "stories of Iyeyasu and Hideyoshi, written from the ground up for the photoplay theater," or "the story of the Forty-seven Ronin, not a Japanese stage version, but a work from the source-material."⁵⁶ By making good use of Hayakawa's typically Japanese "atmosphere of pictorial romance," he observed, such films would have more appeal than ones like *The Typhoon*, in which "very little of the landscape of the nation is shown," and "the one impression of the play is that Japanese patriotism is a peculiar and fearful thing."⁵⁷

In its 1920 prospectus, Taikatsu, like Shōchiku before it, acknowledged the necessity to make exportable films and announced plans to make both historical dramas and contemporary comedies that would "use the natural beauty and picturesque landscape" of Japan to "widely promote the distinctive characteristics of Japan and the Japanese to the world." Appearing alongside this prospectus was an article by Kurihara, "Katsudō shashin to boku," in which the author gave a short resume of his accomplishments (focussing on his work in the United States) and what he hoped to achieve at Taikatsu, closing with the sincere hope that Japanese audiences would receive his films favorably, as "an important contribution to the nation." For Kurihara, just back from the United States, where anti-Japanese incidents had been steadily increasing over the last few years (a second Alien Land Law forbidding Japanese to own or rent land was passed in 1920), this "contribution to the nation" would be films that could communicate the beauty of his country to audiences abroad, and he clarified his vision of the goodwill mission he planned to carry out at Taikatsu in the article's opening paragraph:

While living for many years in the United States, I was able to observe all the different aspects of anti-Japanese sentiment on the part of a certain class of Americans. I realized that this feeling is largely due to the fact that Japan and the Japanese are not

understood, and I took it upon myself to research the various possibilities for enlightening their ignorance. As a result, I decided the moving pictures would be most useful for this purpose. Depictions of cultured and educated Japanese, time-honored Japanese morals, bushido, and the spirit of Yamato can all be arranged into film dramas against the beautiful scenery of our country as a background..... We have come to the conclusion that this would be most effective. In embarking on this project, which we are undertaking with great determination and aspiration, we feel it is necessary to have, first of all, a complete understanding of the task at hand.⁵⁸

Kurihara was aware that there had been earlier attempts to export Japanese films abroad. According to *A Survey of Moving Pictures*, these were mostly Nikkatsu *shimpageki* or short promotional films like *Tōkyō Kōgai no Sakura* (Cherry Blossoms of the Tokyo Suburbs); a version of the story of the Loyal Forty-seven Ronin starring Onoe Matsunosuke had been shown to a select audience in New York, but they were not impressed with Matsunosuke's theatrical antics. As Mori pointed out, no one had really taken the possibility of export seriously, spending as little money as possible to send only one print abroad for special screenings.⁵⁹ Kurihara was determined to take a different approach, believing, as he later wrote, that "Filming Mount Fuji, Nikkō, and cherry blossoms with the intention of introducing Japan abroad is akin to our being shown films of Niagara Falls and the Alps: both are equally useless means for learning anything about native customs and manners."⁶⁰

Kurihara's mission at Taikatsu was contingent upon a complete reformation of the Japanese film. He understood that in order to bring the domestic product to the level of foreign films, it would be necessary to begin with drastic changes in the production system. In the United States, Samuel Goldwyn had decided to make writers the new stars of Hollywood—he vainly hoped they might be less temperamental—and within his company he had just formed a group of writers, Eminent Authors, Inc., to work at his studio. Following Goldwyn's example, and responding to the demand for "a burial of those dropouts from literary circles and playwrights past their prime who call themselves screen authors" from supporters of reform like Mori, Kurihara and his co-founders at Taikatsu proposed to the popular author Tanizaki Jun'ichirō that he join their ranks.

Note: This paper is part of a study of the development of the *gendaigeki* screenplay in Japan. Except for names that commonly appear in the Western order, such as Sessue Hayakawa, all Japanese names appear in the Japanese order of family name first.

NOTES

1. Mori Iwao and Tomonari Yōzō, *Nihon katsudō shashinkai no kenkyū*, vol. 2 of *Katsudō shashin taikan*, four volume supplement to *Nihon eigashi sōkō*, ed. Okabe Ryū (Tokyo: Film Library Council, 1976–1978), pp. 29–30.

2. Tanaka Jun'ichirō, *Katsudō shashin no jidai*, vol. 1 of *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, 5 vol. (Tokyo: Chuō Kōronsha, 1975), pp. 284–285.

3. *Tōkyō Asahi Shimbun*, February 24, 1920; the *Ōsaka Mainichi*, February 17, 1920, evening edition.

4. Satō Tadao, "Eizō hyōgen no kakuritsu," in *Musei eiga no Kansei*, vol. 2 of *Kōza: Nihon eiga*, 8 vol., ed. Imamura Shōhei, Satō Tadao, Shindō Kaneto, Tsurumi Shunsuke, and Yamada Yōji (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1986), p. 5.

5. Okabe Ryū, editor's note in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Tōmas Kurihara no gyōseki*, *Nihon eiga shi sōkō* no. 8 (Tokyo: Film Library Council, 1973), p. 110; Anon., "Jinbutsu gettan: Tamas Kurihara Kisaburō [sic]" *Kinema Junpō*, May 1922, in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Tōmas Kurihara no gyōseki*, pp. 101–102.

The first twenty-two minutes of this film, subtitled "the story of a Japanese Enoch Arden," was discovered in the United States, and donated to the Film Center of the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Co-directed by Harry Williams, it is the only work by Kurihara known to survive. Together with *Tōyō no Yume* (A Dream of the Orient), it is believed to have been made sometime between 1918 and 1919. Kurihara was in Japan from April to November, 1918 (when he left again for the United States), and he could have made these films at that time. Kurihara has written, however, that his trip to the United States in November, 1918 was for the purpose of studying the New York market, editing, and art titles, and it seems reasonable to believe he made these films when

he returned to Japan in April, 1919 (the surviving segment of *Narikin*, for example, features illustrated art titles), then brought them to the United States that December. For Kurihara's account of his trips back and forth between the United States and Japan during this period, see "Katsudō shashin to boku," in *Katsudō Kurabu*, June 1920, in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Tōmas Kurihara no gyōseki*, p. 69.

6. Quoted from the company's prospectus, which appeared in *Katsudō Kurabu*, June 1920, and is quoted in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Tōmas Kurihara no gyōseki*, pp. 60–61.

7. For background on this period, during which several future influential members of the Japanese film world emigrated to the United States, see Tsurutani Hisashi, *America Bound: The Japanese and the Opening of the American West*, trans. Betsey Scheiner with the assistance of Yamamura Mariko (Tokyo: The Japan Times, 1989), pp. 173–175. According to Tsurutani, the increase in the number of Japanese in America from 1880 to around 1908 reflects an increase in the number of Japanese who (like Kurihara) left home in search of temporary employment. This flow of emigrants reached its peak in 1905–1908, and was finally stemmed by increasing anti-Japanese sentiment and the conclusion of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1908. This was a restriction enforced by the Japanese government itself, limiting direct Japanese emigration to the American mainland and marking the end of a period of free immigration that had begun in the late 1860's.

8. Sato Tadao, "Hollywood no Nihonjin-tachi," in *Nihon eiga no tanjō*, vol. 1 of *Kōza: Nihon eiga* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1985), p. 261.

9. Ibid.

10. Kurihara Tōmas, "Katsudō shashin to boku," p. 69.

11. For reference to Ince's use of the continuity script to supervise and control production, see Edward Azlant, "The Theory, History, and Practice of Screenwriting, 1897–1920," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1980, pp. 160–175; and Tom Stempel, *Framework: A History of Screenwriting in the American Film* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1988), pp. 41–48. Azlant and Stempel discuss the volume and nature of Ince's notations on surviving scripts; both authors also mention the legendary rubber stamp, "shoot as written," or "produce exactly as written," which Ince is said to have used to approve a script. No

evidence has been found of this stamp, however, on any of the extant screenplays from Ince's studio.

12. Azlant, "The Theory, History, and Practice of Screenwriting," p. 169.

13. Ibid., pp. 162–164. Azlant points out that the organizational use of the screenplay existed in rudimentary form at Biograph as early as 1898 (with the work of Roy McCardell), and to an extent had been employed even earlier by Georges Méliès and Edwin S. Porter.

For C. Gardner Sullivan, see also pp. 172–175 (Azlant also discusses in detail Sullivan's *Keys of the Righteous*), and Stempel, *Framework*, pp. 42–43.

14. Stempel, *Framework*, pp. 47–48.

15. For Tanizaki's own descriptions of his desire to master the craft and his indebtedness to Kurihara for his patient instruction and guidance see in particular his articles: "Katsudō shashin no genzai to shōrai" (*Shinshōsetsu*, September 1917), pp. 91–98; "Sono yorokobi wo kansha sezarū o enai" (*Katsudō Kurabu*, December 1920) in *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō zenshū*, 30 vol. (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1957–1959) vol. 14, pp. 185–187; "Ko Kurihara Tōmas tsuito: Kurihara Tōmas kun no koto," *Eiga Jidai* (November 1926) in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tōmas no gyōseki*, pp. 103–104; and "Eiga no koto nado" (*Shinchō*, April 1955), pp. 345–347. Although Tanizaki's relations with Kurihara were eventually strained by the director's failing health and worsening financial conditions at Taikatsu after the completion of *Jasei no In*, Tanizaki continued to praise Kurihara's expertise and dedication to his work long after he himself left the studio.

16. Mori, *Katsudō shashin taikan*, vol. 2, p. 22.

17. Ibid., pp. 18–22. According to Mori, although this film (*Omichi-san* in Japanese) was not successful, it did prove that "Japanese can act, too," a realization that encouraged Ince's staff to continue with vehicles for Aoki, Hayakawa, and their Japanese colleagues.

18. Ibid., p. 18; Sato, "Hollywood no Nihonjin-tachi," pp. 265–266. When Hayakawa returned to Japan in 1922 he received a much warmer welcome than might have been expected. Sato attributes this to respect for Hayakawa both for the success he had achieved abroad as well as his ability to "make Yankee girls swoon." According

to Tanaka Jun'ichirō, however, Hayakawa was forgiven with the explanation that because of the "mechanical nature" of the American production system, the actor actually had no idea of the content of the films in which he appeared (see Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, vol. 1, pp. 324–325).

19. Kurihara, "Katsudō shashin to boku," p. 69.

20. Satō, "Hollywood no Nihonjin-tachi," pp. 264–265; Mori, *Katsudō shashin taikan*, vol. 2, p. 18. According to Tanaka Jun'ichirō, *The Wrath of the Gods* closed in Tokyo one week after it opened (Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, vol. 1, p. 325).

21. Kurihara, "Katsudō shashin to boku," p. 69.

22. Ibid.

23. Iijima Tadashi, "Nihon eiga no reimei: Jun'eigageki no shūhen," in *Nihon eiga no tanjō*, p. 121. Iijima, a teenager at the time, recalls that the often critical reactions to the individual films were eclipsed by the general excitement that the films collectively inspired. Elsewhere he reminds us that this excitement, generated by the promise of radical changes in the industry, was stimulated by the circulation of the free programs that were distributed by individual movie theaters throughout the country. These pamphlets varied from theater to theater, but were generally about four pages long and the size of a small handbill. They differed from the programs available in Japanese movie theaters today in that they were smaller and were distributed for free. Also, although they carried a short synopsis of the film being featured, their main attraction was the copious contributions by movie fans (*katsuguru*) like Iijima, who wrote freely of their opinions of the new media and the state of the domestic industry. These programs, or "pro," as they were affectionately called, were collected and traded, ensuring the dissemination of such opinions throughout the country. According to Iijima, readers often contributed comments on articles featured in earlier programs, making these small pamphlets a "battleground for debate by film fans throughout Japan." See Iijima, *Boku no Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa* (Tokyo: Seiabō, 1991), pp. 34–35.

24. Kurihara, "Katsudō shashin to boku," p. 69.

25. Kanasashi Eiichi, "Taikatsu zenshi: Toyō Kisen to Taishō Katsuei," *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tomas no gyōseki*, p. 60.

26. Ibid.

27. Kurihara, "Katsudō shashin to boku," p. 69.

Kristin Thompson notes that Triangle was one of the first companies in Hollywood to introduce art titles (illustrated title cards); the studio even had a separate department for painting these cards. See Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985), p. 187. Art titles appear in the Tōyō Film Production *Narikin*, but there are no indications for art titles in the script for the comedy, *Amachua Kurabu*; Tanizaki used them sparingly in the script for the 1921 *Jasei no In*, the only extant Taikatsu script in which they appear.

28. Kanasashi, "Taikatsu zenshi," p. 61.

29. Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, vol. 1, pp. 296–297.

30. The dollar equivalents given are approximate figures. The yen-dollar rate for these years was as follows: the dollar was worth 2.019 yen in 1912; 2.032 yen in 1914; 1.973 yen in 1919; and 2.014 yen in 1920. See *Nihon ginkō no hyakunen shi*.

31. Kanasashi, "Taikatsu zenshi," pp. 60–61.

32. Ibid., p. 61.

33. *Katsudō Kurabu*, June 1920 (see note 6 above). For a description of Mori's *A Survey of Moving Pictures*, see my earlier article, "Reformation in Transition: An Overview, 1917–1923," *Journal of the College of General Education*, Ibaraki University, no. 23 (1991), pp. 133–138.

34. Satō Koroku, *Katsudō Shashinkai*, no. 4 (1910), quoted by Kishi Matsuo in "Kaisetsu: Shinario tanjō izen," *Nihon eiga shinario taikai*, vol. 1–6, ed. Nihon Eiga Shinario Kyōkai (Tokyo: Eijinsha, 1973), vol. 1, p. 794.

35. Kurihara Tōmas, "Taishō Katsudō Shashin danjō haiyū yōseijo no sōritsu," *Katsudō Kurabu*, August 1920, in *Nihon no haiyū gakkō*, ed. Okabe Ryū, *Nihon eiga shi sōkō* no. 7 (Tokyo: Film Library Council, 1972), p. 32.

36. See *Nihon no haiyū gakkō* (note 35 above) for a history of screen acting in Japan, including the development of studio sponsored acting schools.
37. Benisawa Yōko, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō to Taishō Katsuei," interview in *Kikigaki: Kinema no seishun*, ed. Iwamoto Kenji and Saiki Tomonori (Tokyo: Libroport, 1988), p. 83; id., "Omoide: Modan na sakuhin," *Nihon eiga shinario koten zenshū*, 6 vol. (Tokyo: Kinema Junpō, 1966), supplementary volume, p. 46.
38. Tokita Eitarō, "Taikatsu juken kiroku," in *Eiga engeki hen*, supplementary volume to *Tanizaki sensei chosho sō mokuroku*, ed. Tachibana Hiroichirō, quoted in *Nihon no haiyū gakkō*, pp. 33–34. Asked to pretend he was a robber breaking into a mansion, Tokita, a complete novice to screen acting, passed the test by reenacting his own experience having run away from home with a substantial amount of his parent's money two months earlier. (The credits for *Amachua Kurabu* list Hanabusa Takeshi, presumably Tokita's stage name at the time, as the robber in the film. Tokita later wrote the 1924 screen version of Tanizaki's play, *Honmoku Yawa*, directed by Suzuki Kensaku.) Benisawa recalls her screen test, which consisted of changing her expression and acting out various situations according to the instructions that Kurihara called out from his director's chair, as being easy enough "for anyone to pass." See Benisawa, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō to Taishō Katsuei," p. 83.
39. Benisawa Yōko, "Taikatsu no omoide ni sasaerarete," *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tōmas no gyōseki*, p. 98.
40. Anon., "Jinbutsu gettan," p. 101.
41. Anon., "Ryūboku to Kisen Hōshi no satsuei," *Katsudō Kurabu*, June 1921, in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tōmas no gyōseki*, p. 88.
42. Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, vol. 1, p. 302. Tanaka describes an incident which occurred during the filming of *Katsushika Sunago*. His description of Kurihara's directing technique calls to mind that of another perfectionist, Mizoguchi Kenji. (Kurihara gave his own account of this particular incident in *Katsudō Kurabu* (September 1921), in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tōmas no gyōseki*, p. 93.
43. Anon., "Jinbutsu gettan," p. 101.
44. Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*, vol. 1, p. 302.

45. Benisawa, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō to Taishō Katsuei," pp. 84–86, 90–91.
46. Ōmori Masaru, "Sosoki no kameraman," interview in *Nihon eiga no tanjō*, p. 232.
47. Ibid., p. 235.
48. Anon., "Gen'ei no Onna no shikisha o miru," *Katsudō Zasshi*, June 1920, in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tōmas no gyōseki*, p. 25.
49. Mori, "Gaikoku to Nihon," *Katsudō shashin taikan*, vol. 2, pp. 1–24.
50. Ibid., pp. 12–13.
51. Ibid., 11–12.
52. Ibid., p. 6.
53. Ibid., p. 10.
54. Ibid., p. 20.
55. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916), pp. 36–37.
56. Ibid., p. 53.
57. Ibid., p. 36, 51–52.
58. See note 10 above.
59. Mori, *Katsudō shashin taikan*, vol. 2, pp. 38–39.
60. Kurihara, "Nihon wo sekai ni shōkai suru ni wa," *Katsudō Zasshi*, October 1920, in *Kaeriyama Norimasa to Kurihara Tōmas no gyōseki*, p. 70.