The cinematographie of Lumière and the Vitacope & Atamatic were imported to Japan in 1897, soon after their invention. These moving pictures were well received in every district of Japan. So, our pioneer film makers tried very hard to make their own films. Konishi-Shoten imported Gaumont cameras from France and made the story films. But these pictures were simply reproductions of kabuki theatre.

In 1898, first glass-topped studios were established in Tokyo, and in 1910, Nikkatsu Film Corporation, a biggest film producers and distributor of Japan of that time opened their business but until 1919, all the story films of Japan were the reproduction of stage plays. In 1918, young but ambitious director Kurosawa made his first story film. By this experimental film,
In the beginning, various companies introduced the techniques of scenario writing and motion picture directing. Though they seemed to merely imitate the American and European way of film making.

In 1920, SEIICHIRU CINEMA CORPORATION was established by the textile magnates ORIHIRO BROS and they opened their business. In the 1920s and 1930s, these two major companies represented the whole Japanese motion picture industry.

Now, we have six major producing companies: SHOKICHI, TOHO, SHINGCHA, DAI-EI, TOEI and NIKKATSU. We call them six major film producing companies in Japan.

Thus, we have sixty years history of our film making. So, I suppose you think Japan has well organized large-scale Film Library and Film Archive. But I am very sorry to say we have no such Film Library or Film Institute like Great Britain, France, Italy, U.S.A. & U.S.S.R.

When National Museum of Modern Art was opened in Tokyo in 1952, we established our Film Library in...
This museum. It is small and scaled film library because of financial difficulties, but we tried very hard to find out good old films made since 1898, and foreign films imported since that time. Unfortunately, we Japanese have suffered two serious disasters. One of them is the big earthquake of 1923, and the other is World War. We had bronze, second, old films, but these disasters almost wholly destroyed. The members of administration tried very hard to discover screen classics throughout Japan, but it was almost fruitless.

In the film library we have twice a day regular screening of art, documentary, culture, and shorts, and twice a week screening of feature films we collected. The capacity of screening room is 100.

Among the films we already screened, there are we have...
(1) Last Days of Pompeii (Arturo Ambrosio 1913)
(2) Rojo No Reikō (Osanai-Murata - 1921)
(3) Siegfried (Fritz Lang - 1924) [feature film]
(4) Variété (E.A. Dupont 1928)
(5) Student of Prague (Henrik Galeen 1926)
(6) Faust (F.W. Murnau 1926)
(7) Tartuffe (F.W. Murnau - 1926)
(8) Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit (1929 Wilhem Pragel?)
(9) The Fall of the House, Usher, 1928 - Jean Epstein
(10) La Chute de la Maison Usher
(11) Der Kampf ums Mutterhorn (Mario Bava 1928)
(12) Turkisib (Victor Turin - 1929)
(13) A Safe Guidance into Life (Nikolai Eek - 1931)
(14) Tsoma Yo Bara No Yoni (Harusue 1937)
(15) Ninjo Kami Fusen (Yamanaka 1937)
(16) Louisiana Story (Flaherty 1948)

In our collection, we have several foreign films excluding above mentioned films.
Karl Heinz Mamin's "Vom Morgen Roman" 1920

Back: Charles Spencer Chaplin

Murnau & Marie Stessler

Griffith's

Jacques Feyder's

French Film

"Rigorar"

Japanese films (in addition to mentioned pictures

"Kantsubaki"

"Umanbekwa Mitakereda", Japanese silent film classics.

In these films, as you know, like Griffith's and

"Intolerance", French film "Rigorar" are

in too poor a condition to be often shown.

We would like to have a new copy made, but this is a very expensive process to do now. When, "Rajo no Reikou" and

"Nijo Kami Fusen", it was only through the

courtesy of Shochiku Films and Toho Pictures

who agreed to make a special exception

so that these film classics might become
again available to the Japanese public.

we have a cine-club in our film
library and regular Saturday lectures
on films. Film directors, well-known film critics
always make their lectures and usually,
at every lecture small auditorium is well filled
by its young film students.

Within limits of our budget
we can do something but as small scaled
programmes but we are now trying
very hard to establish a better
Film library and film archive in Japan.

I am very happy to come to
Dubrovnik and see wonderful friends
from the Film library and archives
from all the best different countries
of the world. I hope you will help
the Japanese Film
library just yet well organized. Thank
you.
"Nevertheless, it is good to

be directed by survival."

(Kamei)