



INTERNATIONAL MOTION PICTURE CO., INC.

Tokyo, Japan.

Cable: IANMUTSU Tokyo

TEL: 563-1341~4

Japan Screen Topics

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BAMBOO CRAFTSMAN

168 feet 4 min. 43 sec

1. (BAMBOO FOREST) Bamboo has long been an integral part of Japanese life and the people use the wood for a number of everyday and household objects. The saying that Japanese culture is built on bamboo, paper, and wood demonstrates the extent to which the country has depended on and used bamboo.
2. (LIGHT BULB) American inventor Thomas Edison used a filament made of Japanese bamboo in one of his first light bulbs. He said of all the bamboo in the world, Japan produced the best.
3. (SHOP EXTERIOR) In the western part of Tokyo is a bamboo products shop called Chikuseido, where bamboo handicrafts have been made and sold for nearly a century. It's still a popular spot today. The shop combines a workshop with a display and sales area, where customers enjoy browsing among the products.
4. (YOUNG CRAFTSMAN) Kenichi Tanaka is a third-generation bamboo craftsman. He cuts the bamboo into long, thin strips which are needed for the weaving of baskets. Craftsmen who work with bamboo say it's easy to cut the wood into the straight, thin strips and still have them retain their strength. That could be the origin of the Japanese accolade that a person of honesty and integrity is "a man with a character like a strip of cut bamboo."

5. (KNIFE BLADES) After cutting the bamboo, the craftsman uses knives to trim the edges of the strips to a uniform width. It's a precision art that requires a steady hand.
6. (WEAVING BAMBOO STRIPS) A measure of the skill of a senior bamboo craftsman is the speed with which he can weave new strips under and over the ones already in place. He must concentrate on the spacing of each strip and retain in his mind a picture of what the finished product will look like.
7. (FATHER & SON) Kenichi's father has long been retired from bamboo weaving, but he's often available to supervise his son's work and give occasional advise and instruction. Kenichi decided to follow in his father's footsteps as a bamboo craftsman because he thought that working with bamboo, more than with any other material, best allowed him to express with eloquence the traditional feelings of the Japanese.
8. (WEAVING) The cutting and weaving of bamboo is painstaking work. As one of the finishing touches on a basket, the craftsman must closely inspect it to see that the openings between the bamboo strips are correctly arranged and exactly proportioned. For some pieces, the natural color is left untouched, enhancing the finished product in an understated way.
9. (BLACK BOX) A replica of an old-fashioned bamboo box is painted black.
10. (SMALL CART) This is a small, ornamental rickshaw.
11. (VASES) And flower vases.

12. (CU OF WOVEN STRIPS) Some of the finished bamboo products have intricate designs. The design of bamboo handicrafts is becoming increasingly modernized to keep up with changing times and fashions and fit into today's households.

PRESERVING JAPAN'S PAST

101 feet 2 min. 48 sec

1. (SKYSCRAPERS) The increasing modernization of Japan has meant old, traditional structures give way to skyscrapers and office buildings.

2. (OLD LOCOMOTIVE) But in Aichi Prefecture, in central Japan, the old buildings have found a new home. The location is Meiji-mura, or Meiji Village, named for the Meiji period in Japanese history, which lasted from 1868 until 1912. A steam locomotive from that era runs around the perimeter of the village. The train was built in Britain and originally ran between Tokyo and Yokohama.

3. (WHITE BLDG. IN DISTANCE) Meiji-mura was built in 1965 to preserve buildings erected in the era that marked Japan's transition from feudal times to the modern age. The village covers one million square meters, the size of an 18-hole golf course.

4. (SPRAWLING WHITE BLDG.) The buildings preserved in Meiji-mura have great architectural and historical value. Among them is what was once the prefectural office of Mie Prefecture, a blend of Japanese and Western architecture built in 1879. It is still a handsome structure and a magnet for visitors to the village.

5. (A RICKSHAW) An added attraction of Meiji-mura is a rickshaw, the type of vehicle which was Japan's main means of public transportation in pre-automotive days.

6. (POLICEMAN) A "policeman" in a uniform of the Meiji era stands guard at an old-fashioned police box.
7. (WHITE BLDG./GREY ROOF) This is the physics laboratory of a high school built in Kanazawa in 1890.
8. (DARK BROWN BLDG.) Also from Kanazawa is the lofty guard tower from a penitentiary built in 1907.
9. (CORNER OF BLDG.) The former residence of a European family who lived in Kobe blends Japanese and European architecture.
10. (CHURCH) The Roman Catholic church of Saint Xavier was built in Kyoto in 1890. The stained glass windows inside the Gothic-style church are a special feature. As modern architecture encroaches on cities throughout Japan, more and more old buildings of historical significance are brought to Meiji-mura to be preserved.

DRIVE-IN ZOO

91 feet 2 min. 32 sec.

1. (MT. FUJI) Mount Fuji is Japan's best-known landmark, revered by the Japanese ...
2. (GATE TO PARK) And at the foot of the nation's highest mountain is a newcomer, the Fuji Safari Park, which opened April 23rd after eight years of planning and construction.

(PAUSE) The purpose of the park is to let visitors enjoy wild animals in a more natural habitat. The usual zoo forces spectators to view animals through bars and most can provide only small space for their livestock.

The Fuji Safari Park gives lions and other animals room to roam, while still providing close-up looks for spectators in cars or buses.

3. (OSTRICHES) The close-ups work both ways, of course. Ostriches have a special way to get the visitor's attention... And so do llamas! Visitors to the park are warned that these are wild animals, not pets, despite their occasional playfulness. Cars must be enclosed -- no convertibles here. Windows must be rolled up, driver and passengers must stay in the car or bus and no pets are allowed. Different species of animals are restricted to different areas. Two rangers patrol each area in jeeps to make sure no harm comes to either humans or animals.

The safari park covers 122,000 square meters. Inside are 300 animals, representing 45 species; many more will be added in the future. The children of Japan rarely have the chance for a personal look at animals from other countries. Zoos are extremely crowded. The owners of the safari park want Japanese children to develop an appreciation for all animals and to be able to see lions, tigers, ostriches, rhinos and the rest in an environment as close to the natural one as possible.

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