



INTERNATIONAL MOTION PICTURE CO., INC.

Hattori Bldg., 2-11-4 Kyobashi Chuo-ku, Tokyo Japan

ロス・アンジェルス 系統

Cable: IANMUTSU Tokyo

TEL: 563-1341~4

Japan Screen Topics

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CITY SPORTS

74 feet 2 min. 4 sec.

1. (BUILDING, RINK) Tokyo, one of the most crowded cities in the world.

This winter, a new outdoor skating rink opened in the heart of the teeming city...in between towering office skyscrapers.

2. (SKATERS) At the Hibiya rink, almost a thousand skaters can comfortably have a good time on the ice, even during the hectic lunch hour.

If this new skating rink is any indication, there's a market for such conveniently-located sports areas.

3. (SKI GROUND) Time was that ski buffs in Tokyo had to travel pretty far to the closest slope.

That's all been changed. There's now a great place to go skiing, just outside the city.

4. (SKIERS, SLOPE, MACHINE) The snow is man-made; every day a new batch is produced by giant snow-making machines.

In just an hour, they can make 80 tons of the right kind of powder snow, the equivalent of 35 centimeters of snowfall!

The Sayama Ski Ground is totally indoors. So you can go skiing even when it's raining outside.

Tokyo skiers can come and enjoy themselves here from November to mid-February.

NOTES: The Sayama Ski ground is 350 meters long, and 10,500 meters in total area.

PIANO BY COMPUTER

83 feet 2 min. 19 sec.

1. (GRAND PIANO) A solitary grand piano, center stage.
All of a sudden, the instrument starts to play Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata", as if by magic.
By computer magic.
2. (MAN, COMPUTER) A man who loves music and computers, Yoshimitsu Takasawa. He dreamed of bridging the gap between computer language and the language of music.
And so, with just an ordinary personal computer and a piano, Mr. Takasawa had devised a programming system that actually plays music...by remote control.
3. (PIANO, HAMMERS) The piano company that helped sponsor the project doesn't want to give away just how the two keyboards are hooked up. But simply put, the piano is connected by a series of wires to the computer. The computer controls the piano keys, which create beautiful music.

4. (CONCERT, AUDIENCE) A recital was recently held to a packed hall. 800 people turned up to hear Mr. Takasawa demonstrate his original musical technique.

It took Professor Takasawa nearly six months of solitary study to produce the piano - computer hook-up.

While he modestly says he isn't a musician, his love for both science and art are driving him to create a whole repertoire of concertos-by-computer.

THE FLOATING TRAIN

51 feet 1 min. 24 sec.

1. (TRAIN UP) The Japanese National Railways testing ground... its star performer, the linear motor car. A train that actually floats, at incredible speeds.

2. (CREW BOARDING) Tests have just been completed with a 3-man crew at the controls. The linear motor car is actually levitated magnetically, and sails through the air at a height of about 100 millimeters above its magnetized roadbed. Research on the train began in 1978.

3. (COILS, CONTROL CENTER) The train begins its flight on wheels. But when it reaches a speed of 160 kilometers per hour, the wheels retract and it hurtles forward...in the air...Levitated by the repulsion force of its magnets--those on the roadbed and those aboard the train itself.

4. (TRAIN IN ACTION) Magnetized coils along the sides of the guideway keep the vehicle steady.

There are plenty of advantages to the new magnetic trains.

They're a lot quieter, more comfortable, and consume less energy than the present rail system.

And at 262 kilometers per hour, they easily beat JNR's famous superexpress Shinkansen.

GIRLS' ROWING TEAM

52 feet 1 min. 26 sec .

1. (RIVER, GIRLS IN BOAT) The Mitsubishi Eight, all young women in their early 20's is the first women's rowing team in Japan's sports history.

2. (TRAINING) Rowing as a sport has been in Japan over a hundred years, but up to now it was strictly male preserve.

Rowing calls for tremendous strength in the hands and arms. Before, Mitsubishi Bank employees who make up the team used their hands mostly to count money.

The temperature is bitingly cold out there but the intrepid team members seem to take it in stride. They practice for at least an hour every morning on this river outside Tokyo.

3. (GIRLS, COACH) The coach is a bank employee too, and a one-time member of the sculling team at Tokyo University.

The Mitsubishi Eight are out there in earnest, training even on Saturdays and Sundays.

Working for a shot at the next Olympics!

COMING OF AGE DAY

106 feet 2 min. 28 sec.

1. (KIMONOS, MEIJI SHRINE) In Japan, January 15th is Coming-of-Age Day, a national holiday.

2. (HEADGEAR, COSTUMES) At Tokyo's Meiji Shrine, an ancient rite is performed on this day...the Genpukushiki, a traditional coming-of-age ceremony.

This ceremony dates back to the 7th century. Originally, a young man would have his forehead shaved to mark the end of childhood.

As another symbol of achieving manhood, young members of the samurai class received special headgear called eboshi.

Today, while nobody who turns 20 goes and has his head shaved, the ceremony to bestow the stately eboshi lives on.

And to put the seal on the solemn occasion, sake is poured in celebration.

3. (SPEECHES, YOUNG WOMEN) In Tokyo alone, some 80,000 young people reached the 20-year milestone. Young Japanese who turned 20 years old in the course of the year get dressed up in their best.

The voting age in Japan is 20, the point at which one becomes a full-fledged citizen.

With the rights, of course, go the responsibilities, and speeches are given to discuss what these civic duties are as a new adult.

4. (FIRE DEPARTMENT) • The Tokyo Fire Department does something special on January 15th, too.

Over 200 members of the force who turned 20 last year made this formation to spell out the characters for :
"Fire and Accident Prevention".