

Live Action Films

(1) Japanese Live Action Films in US Box Office

Below is the list of Japanese live action theatrically released films in the US between 1980 and 2008. The number one movie on the list is *Godzilla 2000* which opened in 2111 theaters nationwide, riding on the success of Hollywood version by Roland Emmerich released two years prior. It was dubbed in English, edited for better pacing, and new scores and sound effects were added to make it more palatable for the US audiences. Most Japanese films, however, are distributed on a much smaller scale, as they typically open in less than 50 theaters.

[Table 1-1] List of Japanese live action films theatrically released in the US

Source: Boxofficemojo. Edited by Wowmax Media!

Movie Title	Studio	Total Gross		Opening Week		Open
		Box Office	Theaters	Box Office	Theaters	
Godzilla 2000	Sony	\$10,037,390	2,111	\$4,407,720	2,111	8/18/2000
Shall We Dance?	Mira	\$9,676,677	268	N/A	N/A	7/11/1997
Kagemusha	Fox	\$4,000,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	10/10/1980
Ran	OrionC	\$3,944,980	30	N/A	N/A	9/27/1985
Zatoichi: The Blind Swordsman	Mira	\$1,118,163	55	\$61,104	4	7/23/2004
After Life	AL	\$801,985	11	\$11,791	1	5/14/1999
Nobody Knows	IFC	\$684,118	23	\$32,393	2	2/4/2005
Twilight Samurai	Emp.	\$559,765	16	\$8,573	1	4/23/2004
Rhapsody in August	OrionC	\$516,431	12	\$26,771	7	12/19/1991
Fireworks	Mile.	\$500,000	12	\$59,508	9	3/20/1998
The Eel	NYer	\$418,480	6	\$29,879	3	8/21/1998
Ju-On: The Grudge	Vita	\$325,680	11	\$25,446	3	7/23/2004
Tony Takitani	Strand	\$129,783	5	\$1,765	1	6/24/2005
Taboo (Gohatto)	NYer	\$114,425	3	\$9,947	2	10/6/2000
Shoujyo: The Adolescent	Indic.	\$60,169	2	\$7,106	2	8/26/2005
Gozu	Path.	\$58,202	4	\$5,030	1	7/30/2004
The Hidden Blade	Tar.	\$37,090	4	\$4,466	1	6/23/2006
Kamikaze Girls	Viz	\$33,889	3	\$2,795	1	9/9/2005
Azumi	Vita	\$24,268	6	\$2,848	1	7/21/2006
Marebito	Tar.	\$13,983	3	\$3,852	2	12/9/2005
Bright Future	Palm	\$5,166	1	\$2,755	1	11/12/2004
Dolls	Palm	\$4,067	1	\$2,067	1	12/10/2004
Gengis Kahn: To the End of the Earth	Bpic	\$3,892	40	\$3,332	40	2/21/2008

(2) Japanese Live Action Films in the US Home Video Market

Compared to anime, the market for live action Japanese films in the US is significantly smaller. Between 2000 and 2008, 91% of the Japanese titles released in the US were anime; live action films only made up 8%. *Godzilla* and films created by Akira Kurosawa are the two top franchises in this category.

[Table 1-2] List of top 30 Japanese live action films on DVD sold in the US

Source: Nielsen Video Scan. Edited by Wowmax Media!

Note: the index indicates the percentage in comparison to the number 1 title.

Rank	Title	Studio	Price	Index
1	AKIRA KUROSAWA 4PK-CRITERION	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$99.99	100
2	SEVEN SAMURAI-CRITERION COLLEC	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$39.99	96
3	SEVEN SAMURAI	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$49.95	45
4	RASHOMON-CRITERION COLLECTION	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$39.95	39
5	AUDITION-UNCUT SPECIAL EDITION	LIONSGATE	\$14.98	38
6	GODZILLA FINAL WARS	SONY PICTURES HOME ENT	\$14.94	37
7	GOJIRA	GENIUS PRODUCTS INC	\$21.93	35
8	RINGU	PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT	\$19.99	35
9	GODZILLA 2000 DVD	SONY PICTURES HOME ENT	\$14.94	33
10	KAGEMUSHA-CRITERION COLLECTION	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$39.95	30
11	JU ON-GRUDGE	LIONSGATE	\$14.98	29
12	YOJIMBO-CRITERION COLLECTION	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$29.99	23
13	AKIRA KUROSAWAS DREAMS	WARNER HOME VIDEO	\$19.98	22
14	RED SHADOW	MEDIA BLASTERS	\$29.95	22
15	ZATOICHI-BLIND SWORDSMAN/SONAT	DISNEY/BUENA VISTA HOME VIDEO	\$19.99	22
16	ICHI THE KILLER-UNCUT	MEDIA BLASTERS	\$24.95	22
17	THRONE OF BLOOD-CRITERION COLL	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$39.95	22
18	HIDDEN FORTRESS-CRITERION COLL	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$29.99	21
19	IKIRU-CRITERION COLLECTION	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$39.95	21
20	GODZILLA COLLECTION	CLASSIC MEDIA	\$79.93	20
21	RAN-CRITERION COLLECTION	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$39.95	20
22	YOJIMBO/SANJURO-CRITERION 2PAK	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$79.95	20
23	REINCARNATION	LIONSGATE	\$14.98	20
24	GODZILLA-TOYKO SOS	SONY PICTURES HOME ENT	\$14.94	20
25	SAMURAI TRILOGY	IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT INC	\$69.95	19
26	KING KONG VS GODZILLA/KING KON	UNIVERSAL HOME ENTERTAINMENT	\$19.98	18
27	SHOGUN ASSASSIN	KOCH	\$19.98	18
28	RETURNER	SONY PICTURES HOME ENT	\$19.94	17
29	GODZILLA AGAINST MECHAGODZILLA	SONY PICTURES HOME ENT	\$14.94	17
30	BROTHER-2001	SONY PICTURES HOME ENT	\$24.95	16

Nielsen VideoScan Week Ending 12-07-08

(3) Remake and Adaptation of Japanese Films

In the last 12 years (1996-2008), there were 10 films released by the major Hollywood studios which were either a re-make or adaptation of Japanese films. *The Ring* (2002) produced by DreamWorks, not only spawned the “Japanese Horror” trend in Hollywood, but also drew attention to Japanese films as source materials for Hollywood style re-makes.

According to Internet Movie Data Base, the production cost for *The Ring* was approximately \$45 million. Included in this cost is approximately \$1 million paid to the Japanese rights holder for the re-make rights. *The Ring* eventually went on to gross \$129 million in the US box office sales, \$101 million in Asia and Europe’s box

office sales. Home video sales in the US alone were \$86 million with 4.9million units sold (DVD and VHS combined. Source: Video Business Year End Report 2003). To summarize, DreamWorks generated at least \$316 million in sales from a right they acquired for only \$1 million.

The Grudge, a re-make of a Japanese horror film *Juon*, was produced by Sony Pictures using the same Japanese producer and director who created the original film. The production cost was only \$10 million, but it grossed \$110 million in the US box office alone.

Japan is seen by many entertainment industry professionals as a treasure box of untapped source materials to exploit, and it is expected that many more business opportunities will be created using original materials from Japan.

[Table 1-3] US box office sales of major studio films based on Japanese films

Source: Boxofficemojo.com. Edited by Wowmax Media!

Movie Title	Original Movie Title	Studio	Total Gross	Theaters	Open
GODZILLA	"GODZILLA" series	Sony	US\$136,314,294	3310	9/20/1998
The Ring	Ringu	Dream Works	US\$129,128,133	2927	12/18/2002
The Grudge	Ju-on: The Grudge	Sony	US\$110,359,362	3348	10/22/2004
Eight Below	Antarctica	Buena Vista	US\$81,612,565	3122	2/17/2006
The Ring Two	Ringu	Dream Works	US\$76,231,249	3341	3/18/2005
Shall We Dance?	Shall We Dansu?	Miramax	US\$57,890,460	2542	10/15/2004
The Grudge 2	Ju-on: The Grudge 2	Sony	US\$39,143,839	3214	10/13/2006
Dark Water	Dark Water	Buena Vista	US\$25,473,352	2657	7/8/2005
Pulse	Kairo	Dimention	US\$18,182,451	2323	8/11/2006
Last Man Standing	Yojimbo	NewLine	US\$18,115,927	2579	9/20/1996

Japanese TV programs

(1) Japanese TV programs shown in the US

One of the most obvious markets for Japanese TV programs in the US are the Japanese speaking communities. Often times it is complicated to clear the rights to broadcast Japanese TV programs outside of Japan due to uncooperative rights holders, such as the management companies of the cast members. To get around this problem, many of the Japanese program providers operate as an extension of domestic Japanese broadcasting service. This is the reason why many of the Japanese programs cannot have English subtitles.

The two most prominent providers of Japanese TV programs in the US are *TV Japan* (subscription cable/satellite channel), and *Fuji-Sankei International* (FCI). All other Japanese language programs are broadcast by local operations (i.e. UTB of Los Angeles). These smaller Japanese language channels usually broadcast their programs in a time block purchased from local TV stations. Their main source of income comes from sales of commercial spots to local sponsors.

With anime being the exception, major nationwide channels very rarely show Japanese programs. Whenever a Japanese program is shown on TV, they are often shown as a pilot or a test series before the launch of a full US adaptation version. For example, the original Japanese version of *Iron Chef* aired on *Food Network* before they eventually produced a re-make series, *Iron Chef America*.

Another example is *Takeshi's Castle*, a hugely popular Japanese game show in the late 80s. The show was first introduced to the American audience in 1993 by TV producer Vin Di Bona. Di Bona edited clips from the show into one hour TV special called *Storm the Castle* and aired it on CBS. It did not get picked up as a regular series at the time, but it became a hit program for *Spike TV* when they brought it back in 2003 as *Most Extreme Elimination Challenge* or *MXC*, with comedic English voice over.

Fuji TV's *Toribia-no-izumi* (*Hey! Spring of Trivia*) also aired on Spike TV from November 2004 to May 2005 with English dubs. However, it is no longer on air and there are no plans to re-make or re-run at this time.

(2) Format Sales

Recently, format sales of Japanese TV programs in the US have been increasing and receiving attention. The obvious advantage of purchasing a format is the reduction of cost and time associated with developing a show from grounds up

because basic premise and structure has already been fleshed-out by the creators of the original program.

According to Fuji TV, one of the five major networks in Japan, of the 150 to 200 titles they sale annually to the foreign market, 80% are drama, and the rest is made up of variety shows, documentary, and format sales. Although only 10% of the gross sales come from the Western countries, most of those are format sales.

One of the most successful examples of format sales is *America's Funniest Home Videos*. It's an American reality TV program which has been on air for 19 years on ABC. It is based on a segment from a Japanese variety show, *Kato-chan-Ken-chan Gokigen TV* (Tokyo Broadcasting System, 1986-1992).

In September 2008, Fox Networks aired a game show called *Hole in the Wall* which is an adaptation of *Nou-kabe* (Brain Wall) which was a segment from the long running variety show *Tunnels no Minasan no Okagedeshita* (Fuji TV, 1997-current).

Ninja Warriors, an athletic game show currently being aired on G4, is an American version of *Sasuke* (Tokyo Broadcasting System, 1997 current), an athletic game show.

It has been announced that a US remake is in development for *Kinchan's Kasou Taisho* (Kinchan's Costume Grand Prix), a long time favorite in Japan which has been on air for 30 year on Nippon Television.

Spark Network, European international program distribution company, has acquired the rights from TV Tokyo for *Kakurenbo Batoru* (Hide and Seek Battle), a popular segment in a variety show in which families participate in a large scale hide and seek (for example, in a abandoned hospital).

William Morris recently announced that they will be representing multiple shows from TV Asahi. Following are some of the properties they will be representing: *Ai no Apron* (Love's Apron), a cooking contest using celebrities; *Geinojin Setsuyaku Battle* (Celebrity Economic Battle), a show in which celebrities compete on how long they can live on ten thousand yen (approximately \$100); and, *Kakuzuke Shiau Onnatachi* (Women Rate Each Other), a variety show segment in which female celebrity contestants rate each other on various topics.