

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST: American and Chinese Influences on Early Indonesian Action Cinema

The List of Filmography of Early Indonesian Action Movies (1926-1941)

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The beginning of Indonesian Cinema has elicited debates ever since politics named the first day of Usmar Ismail's *Darah dan Doa* (*The Long March*) shooting (30th of March 1950) as the official "birthdate" of its movie industry. There have been films before. Dozens of them. They might have been Dutch or Chinese productions, but all of them contributed to Indonesia's unique cinema history especially in the action genre. Action movies are closely related to Indonesian cinema history since the first ever long feature *Loeteong Kasaroeng* (*Enchanted Monkey*) produced in 1926 was an action-orientated fantasy spectacle. It was followed by many martial arts movies during the late 1920s and 1930s and every drama had at least one fighting sequence to entertain the audience. This paper will take a closer look at the different foreign influences in the Indonesian cinema of the 1920s – 1940s and which contributed to one of the most popular genres in the contemporary Indonesian film industry. A list of filmography is attached to complement this article.

Keywords: Early Indonesian films, genre studies, action movies

Around ten years ago, I started to explore Indonesian cinema. In the last six years that I did an intensive study, while making a documentary on the history of Indonesian action movies, I found many interesting things related to Indonesia's early action and exploitation movies as well as early movie genres. Most of the films I found were overlooked and abandoned until recently, since most historians, scholars, and critics did not consider pre-*Darah dan Doa* (*The Long March*; Ismail, 1950) as important and significant to investigate. As a documentary filmmaker, I looked at the archival documents and searched the early films—most of them considered as lost films, some with limited duration of footages, and very bad quality. In this paper, I will map out the genres and movies from the unexplored historical years and make a list of filmography of those early action movies (1926-1945). I will start with my first interaction with Indonesian films.

It has been almost a decade since I got interested in Indonesian movies for the very first time—ever since I discovered Nia Dinata's *Berbagi Suami* (*Love for Share*; Sumarjono, Sahdianto, Tji, & Dinata, 2006) in the Cannes Film market. Before that, I must admit I knew close to nothing about Indonesian cinema, but watching this omnibus movie about the sensitive topic of polygamy made by a female director truly fascinated me. It encouraged me to do a lot of research, spending several weeks in Jakarta to meet directors and professionals to a better understand their cinematography.

I was lucky enough to link my research results to my festival activities. I primarily focused on (still existing few) classic art-house movies and independent productions, and organized two retrospectives, first, in Geneva's Black Movie Film Festival back in 2011 with a focus on Indonesia's "renewal" from 1998-2010, and second—the biggest retrospective ever done on Indonesian Cinema—in Vesoul's FICA Film Festival in 2012 where 22 movies from 1954 up to 2012 were shown.

One thing which amazed me while asking Indonesians about their favorite all-time movie was the recurrent mention of Imam Tantowi's 1981 action flick *Jaka Sembung* (*The Warrior*; Gautama & Tantowi, 1981) among works of other prestigious names, such as Usmar Ismail, Teguh Karya, Slamet Rahardjo, or Eros Djarot. After doing some more research, I stumbled upon a true world of madness: the golden age of 1970s and 1980s action movies.

I already had a profound knowledge of the crazy exploitation movies from Japan, Philippines, Hong Kong, or Thailand, but the Indonesian exploitation movies from that time are quite different: cheap movies done with very limited technology but done with heart and passion and a lot of imagination. Digging even deeper into the topic, I soon found out that the very first features ever been done in the 1920s and 1930s in Indonesia were actually fantasy legends or martial arts movies—a fact not even most Indonesians were conscious about. I was so fascinated that I decided to make a documentary, *Garuda Power—The Spirit Within* (Thialon & Meiresonne, 2014) was released by the end of 2014.

Preparing this documentary took a lot of time, since only half of the over 400 action movies produced since 1926 are left—and most of them are in a very poor state. Not much has been written about the topic and translating all press clips published since the 1920s took a long time; nor were there many specialists or historians who could teach me more about the topic; most of them do not even consider exploitation movies as worth mentioning, since they are generally considered as low budget movies, and are therefore apparently after financial gain by “exploiting” a current trend or a niche genre or a base desire for lurid subject matters.

In The Beginning Was the World...

In 2011, the action movie *The Raid*'s (Sagantoro & Evans, 2011) international success drew anew worldwide attention to the Indonesian film industry. Never ever had any other Indonesian movie gathered more than US\$ 9 million years in international box office before.¹ Its success was confirmed by *The Raid 2*'s (Sagantoro, Bolotin, Tertzakian, & Evans, 2013) record-breaking 954 US theater release in 2014² and US\$ 6 million income with some major international markets still to open.³

Reviews were raving about the movie's unique quality, but also pointed out its many foreign influences, from Martin Scorsese and other US productions to the Hong Kong movies from the 1970s and 1980s. During the 2012 Austin SXSW annual music, film, and interactive festival, director Gareth Evans (2012) himself admitted: ⁴

The films that I love are films from the golden age of Hong Kong cinema in the 1980s and early 1990s—the films of Jackie Chan, Jet Li and Donnie Yen. And also John Woo, with *Hard Boiled* and *The Killer* and Sam Peckinpah with *The Wild Bunch*[...]

I don't think I feel like I did anything new with *The Raid*, I just felt I was riffing off stuff that was old fashioned that I grew up watching and loving. And to this day I still watch them, I still play them back over and over again. (p. 1)

As impressive as those movies' box office results seem, this is not Indonesia's first success story in the action genre. As Ekky Imanjaya (2009) pointed out in his research study,

Indonesian exploitation films from the 1980s (and a few from late 1970s and early 1990s) have been distributed internationally and attracted a huge number of fans from around the world with “distribution covering The Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France and many more

countries.” And if cinema is generally defined by international critics by art-house and quality drama titles, one should not oversee the huge impact of more genre-orientated, wide-audiences gathering titles as it has been the case of Indonesian Cinema. (p. 144)

Actually, action titles have existed since the very first Indonesian long feature, fantasy spectacle *Loetoeng Kasaroeng* (*The Enchanted Monkey*; Heuvelcorp) made in 1926 and foreign influences made up a huge part of the nation’s film industry building.

There has been a long ongoing debate between scholars and critics, the actual date of which could be called the beginning of Indonesian Cinema (Barker, 2010; Charlotte & Barker, 2010). The Indonesian film community began celebrating the first day of Usmar Ismail’s *Darah dan Doa* (*The Long March*)’s shooting, 30 March, as National Film Day in 1950, not considering the more than 100 long features produced before. Since then 30 March 1950 has been officially acknowledged first in 1962 by the National Film Board of Indonesia and later in 1999 by President B. J. Habibie (Imanjaya, 2009).

According to the Indonesian film historian Misbach Jusa Biran (2009), “the films released between 1926 and 1949 could not be called Indonesian films, for there was no sense of national identity” (p. 45). Film critic Nova Chairil stated likewise, considering the film to be the first to be “...directed by a native Indonesian, produced by an Indonesian production house, and filmed in Indonesia.” (Setijadi-Dunn & Barker 2011, pp. 25).

Film scholars Thomas Barker and Charlotte Setijadi-Dunn (2010), however, argue that ethnic Chinese producers, “not only pioneered feature filmmaking in Indonesia, but also constructed the first images of Indonesian landscapes, peoples, and cultures on screen,” yet giving an Indonesian identity to their movies. (p.28) .

I argue that not only were foreign influences primordial to Indonesian’s local film industry construction, but also largely contributed to its worldwide recognition up to these days. The success of *The Raid* (Sagantoro & Evans, 2011) could not have been possible without the long-standing Indonesian cinema heritage right.

Birth of A(n) (Imagi)-Nation

Cinema appeared during the early years of the twentieth century in Dutch East Indies (the ancient name of Indonesia at the time). As recounted by Susan Abeyasekere (1989) in *Jakarta: A History*, one of the reasons was the town being one of the main Asian ports for the rest of the world and one that connected Dutch occupant with their home country. If maritime freight permitted export of Indonesian products, it also brought in all new inventions and technological advances from afar, cinema among them—and not only foreign movie reels but all materials necessary for screening and filming (Biran, 2009).

The first movie screenings took place as early as the 1900s. The first ever cinema in Indonesia was built in December 1900 in Central Jakarta (named Batavia at that time) by Dutch owner Talbot in the form of a hall with walls made from plaited bamboo and zinc for roof; other venues were rudimentary open-air fields. Soon screenings were insured all over the country by travelling theater and circus troupes as they moved from city to city with mobile cinemas. They showed mainly French and American shorts, such as *Fantomas* (Bosetti & Feuillade, 1913), *Zigomar* (Jourjon & Jasset, 1910), *Tom Mix* (Selig & Duncan, 1910) or *Edi Polo* (Laemmle & Jaccard, 1915), as well as films starring Charlie Chaplin, Max Linder, and other silver screen stars of the golden era of silent movies. Venues were regulated by Dutch policies, which distinguished (upper-class) European from Chinese, Indonesian natives, and even Islam audiences with different services and ticket prices. (Tirtokusumo, 2012).

As for filmmaking itself, Indonesia's beautiful scenery and exotic stories soon attracted many foreign reporters from far and near. The Dutch did some news reels focused on agriculture, urban features, and the native population for audiences back in the Netherlands, whereas George Méliès brother Gaston did some of the very first shots in Semarang, Java, and Batavia during his world trip in 1912 and 1913 (Tirtokusumo, 2012).

The first ever domestically produced long feature was 1926's adaptation of the Sudanese folktale *Loetoeng Kasaroeng* by Dutch producer and director L. Heuveldorp. The movie recounts the story of a magical *lutung* (a type of black monkey) helping a beautiful princess when her older sister attempts to rob her of her status as crown princess. The theme, similar to the European folktale *Beauty and the Beast*, was adapted from an old Sudanese quatrain⁵. Little is known about this now lost film, but the few press articles of the era mention the "...poor technical quality compared to imported films" (Biran, 2009, p.69). Its success remained moderate, but Dutch-owned JAVA FILM CO decided to produce a second movie, *Eulis Atjih* (1927). The novel adaptation of a young wife and her child falling in poverty after her husband's departure was quite a success, especially amidst ethnic Chinese community and local audiences for its depiction of native Indonesian rites such as funerals and marriages.

Made in China

The ethnic Chinese community in Indonesia was very strong at that time and owned most of the theaters in the big cities all over the country (Tirtokusumo, 2012). This was mainly due to China's flourishing movie industry in the second half of the 1920s and its efficient distribution network to Chinese communities all over Asia.

If China was very dependent upon foreign movie imports and foreign-owned production in its film history that began in 1896, the situation started to change during the second half of 1910. Local producers started to invest in the market to build up the future domestic film industry and many

technicians went to study abroad and/or were trained by American forces in Shanghai. The early 1920s saw the first important local successes, such as the family drama *Orphan Rescues Grandfather* (Producer & Director, 1923) or the fantasy spectacle *White Snake* (Producer & Director, 1926). The latter was a big hit and it started the exportation to the many Chinese communities based in the whole Southeastern Asia (Geiselman, 2006)

At the sametime, Chinese exporters started settling down in Jakarta and Bandung to show their movies in new-acquired theaters and/or owned by fellow expatriates. They targeted Chinese communities and native audiences who were used to Chinese literature and mythology. Moviegoers were also very keen about martial arts movies, which were close to the popular US action-loaded westerns, but with an Eastern touch closer to their own origins. Also popular during the period were the better-known Eastern stories compared to the lesser-known Western culture. Chinese-produced movies dealt with more popular topics that targeted the so-called “lower classes” and sold cheaper ticket prices. By 1926, with the release of Indonesia’s first long feature 80% of Indonesian cinema audiences were either Chinese or natives (Tirtokusumo, 2012).

Meanwhile, the Dutch occupants failed to impose their own productions upon a large audience. Restricting their movies to higher price-tagged “upper-class” venues with limited access for natives, they never managed to reach the elite classes. All Dutch productions, such as *Stem des Bloeds* (*Voice of Blood*; Carli, 1930), *Huwen op Bevel* (*Terpaksa Menikah, Forced to Marry*; Krugers, Koen Yauw & Krugers, 1931) or *Zuster Theresia* (*Sister Theresia*; Bersaudara & Schilling, 1932) became major failures, Chinese expats became the most influential producers and distributors, contributing a great deal to the building of the future Indonesian cinema industry (Tirtokusumo, 2012,).

Wong Brother’s *Lily van Java* (*Lily of Java*, Goan Lian, Tjoen Lian & Wong, 1928) was the very first of a long series of ethnic Chinese-produced films in the country. Initially meant to be directed by an American director, Wong Brother’s Halimoen Film took over troubled production. They completed shooting with ethnic Chinese female stars Lie Lian Bauw Kie and Lie Bo tan, both daughters of legendary gangster boss Lie Bauw Kie. Well-trained silat fighters, they actually weren’t given any opportunity to prove their martial skills in this old-fashioned romance drama about a young woman forced to marry someone she does not love. (Encyclopedia of Jakarta, 2012).

The movie’s failure did not discourage fellow colleague Tan Khoen Kan to launch production of the ambitious two-part drama *Nyai Dasima* (*Madame Dasima*; Yauw & Swie) in 1929. The plot about a rich mistress at the hands of a greedy driver went on to become a huge success and spawned a more action-oriented second episode *Nancy Bikin Pembalasan* (*Nancy Takes Revenge*, Yauw & Swie, 1930) in which Dasima’s daughter Nancy takes revenge upon the assassins of her mother 20 years later. The important

success of both movies spanned two remakes, *Nyai Dasima* in 1932 and *Dasima* in 1940. (Biran, 2009).

The Chinese producers finally started their winning streak, with ups and downs and largely contributed to the beginnings of the Indonesian (action) cinema.

Serial Killers

In as much as the first Indonesian-Chinese producers relied upon their culture to target their own communities, they also relied upon other success formulas to entice the largest possible audience—and as it happened in most parts of the world, US productions were among the most successful releases back in Indonesia at the time.

The United States was the first nation to create a film “industry” vaster than any other country. By 1915, the United States had gained complete control of its own market. Half of worldwide theaters were American-based and the 700 feature films produced a year in the 1920s were more than ten times the number created by any other nation. They took advantage of the weakened European cinema production and exportation during World War I to increase their worldwide presence and continued to expand their exportation until the mid-1920s by selling their film rights to foreign distribution firms or export agents.

As the first recorded captions, news reels, and one-reelers show, serials were some of the earliest forms of film during the silent era up to the 1950s. Usually 12-15 parts long, they lasted between 15 and 20 minutes per episode. The segments were presented in weekly chapters before the showing of a feature film or scheduled along with other two-reelers. Most serials were westerns, but also covered many other genres, such as crime, comic adaptations, science-fiction, or jungle adventures. Mostly filmed with low budgets, serials were action-packed stories that usually involved a hero battling an evil villain through a series of seemingly inescapable deathtraps to rescue a damsel in distress. These serials started in 1910, in European leading countries (France, Italy, UK) and appeared in the USA in 1914 with *The Perils of Pauline* (20 episodes; McManus & Gasnier, MacKenzie) and *The Hazards of Helen* (119 episodes; Kleine, Long, Marion & McGowan, Davis).

Shown all over the world, serials were also very popular in Indonesia. Their short length permitted mobile cinema troupes to screen reels more easily to wide audiences all over the country. Their popularity and particular narrative structure inspired Chinese local investors to try and copy the formula success with long features. Although almost no copies of the mentioned titles seem to exist any longer, the films’ storyline, reviews, and promotional materials clearly reveal the serials’ inspiration.

Resia Boroboedoer (*Secret of Borobudur*; Nancing Film Corp, 1928) shows typical US *serial*-inspiration: Young Pei Fen goes to Java to look for a mythical jar containing Buddha’s ashes. Upon her arrival in an underground

maze, she has to fight deadly traps and the temple guardians' black magic spells. Despite erotic icon Olive Young's presence in bikini, the movie was a huge failure, mainly for its many narrative contradictions, such as the mandarin-speaking heroin talking to Javanese people and the clearly visible low budget. (Biran 2009, p. 90-92)

Si Tjonat (Wong, Eng Sek & Wong, 1929) was the screen adaptation of F.D.J. Pangemanann's *The Story of Si Tjonat*, very popular among Chinese communities and Indonesians alike for its many lenong stage adaptations by Betawi troupes. The story was first published as a series in *Perniagaan* newspaper in 1903. The robber film was clearly thought to become a long-lasting series, counting the tale of Sudanese villain Tjonat, who kills and robs people for his personal wealth. When he kidnaps young Chinese farmer girl Lie A Tjip, he has to deal with her *silat*-trained (martial arts) boyfriend. The now-lost movie seemed to include a lot of action, since newspaper articles of the time praised main actor Herman Shim's unique martial arts skills. Still, the movie's success remained moderate, same as lesser-known *Rampok Preanger* (*Robber from Preanger*; Wong, Eng Sek & Wong, 1929) despite popular keroncong singer Ining Resmini's presence (Biran, 2009).

After their successful collaboration on *Nyai Dasima*, director Lie Tek Swie and producer Tan Khoen Yauw teamed up again in 1929 for *Si Ronda* (*The Watchman*). The movie was another adaptation of a popular stageplay loaded with martial arts, but the story of the *silat*-skilled Betawi warrior, *Si Ronda* didn't attract audiences and would soon be forgotten before the late (loose) remake by Fritz G. Schadt in 1978.

Si Pitoeng (Wong brothers, 1931) was a loose adaptation of Indonesia's true-to-life Indonesian "Robin Hood" of the nineteenth century of the same name. He was said to have stolen from the rich (collaborators of Dutch occupants) to give the loot to the poor, before he was eventually ambushed and killed by police forces. While this version was not very successful, Nawi Ismail's and Dicky Zulkarnaen's 1970 remake *Si Pitung* became an instant action cult classic and spawned no less than three sequels over the next two decades.⁶

The first foray of Chinese-produced movies into the action genre wasn't all that successful. Chinese thought of attracting a local audience by adapting well-known stage adaptations blended with the typical American serial narrative structure. It was a failure. Several press clips back at that time claim titles weren't very successful, production companies went bankrupt after the movies' release and none of those movies proved to be a major success. No real reasons were given for the movies' failures in press clips of that time, but ferocious competition against US and Chinese better-produced and better-distributed products at the same period might have played an important role.

Si Pitoeng (Wong brothers) was the last serial-alike kind of its genre in 1931. Troubled times were ahead in the still quite fragile Indonesian film

industry: The Great Depression hit Indonesia hard and had a huge impact upon its cinematography. In 1932, only three feature movies were released, two being Dutch-funded.

Enchanted

In 1930, two main events hit Indonesia's cinema production hard. First was the American Depression. Higher taxes, advertisers asking for more money, and cinemas selling tickets at lower prices made the profit margins for local films dwindle like snow melting in the sun. All local investors withdrew from the still fragile film industry except Chinese producer The Teng Chun. He decided to target new audiences, such as the *peranakan* (crossbred) Chinese. Chinese Indonesians (or *Tionghoa*) are Indonesians descended from various Chinese ethnic groups, particularly Han, which were unable to understand neither Mandarin, nor Cantonese imports from China, but wished to see films based on Chinese mythology. Chun decided to produce one of the most famous love legends, the Chinese *Romeo and Juliet*, *Sam Pek Eng Tay* (*Butterfly Murders*; The Teng Chun, 1931). He wanted not only to target Chinese and ethnic Chinese communities, but also natives, who were familiar with the story through the many musical stage adaptations made over the years. Chun did well. People flocked into theaters to watch the screen adaptation, starting a trend for mythological adaptations with many martial arts sequences and making The Teng Chun the main dominant film producer of Indonesia in the 1930s. (Biran, 2009).

Among other successful Chinese-adapted legends with the same formula were *Pat Bie To* (*Eight Beautiful Women*; The Teng Chun, 1932) *Pat Kiam Hiap* (*Eight Swordsmen*; The Teng Chun, 1933), *Ouw Peh Tjoah* (also known as *Doea Siloeman Oleler Poeti en Item, White and Black Snakes*; The Teng Chun, 1934) and its sequel *Anaknja Siloeman Oeler Poeti* (*Son of White Snake Ghost*; The Teng Chun, 1936), *Tie Pat Kai Kawin* (*The Marriage of Tie Pat Kai*, The Teng Chun, 1935), or *Lima Siloeman Tikoes* (*The Five Enchanted Mice*, The Teng Chun, 1936).

One surprising fact was most of those successes came after China's own martial arts and fantasy success, since there has been an important change of politics in Chinese filmmaking beginning in the 1930s. Threatened by the thriving leftwing film industry, the Nationalist Party became more conservative. They set up the Central Film Censorship Committee in 1934 in order to tighten control over film production. This meant strengthening restrictions upon films with the subjects of martial arts and fantasy, because of the consideration that too much violence in films might incite resistance and rebellion among the public. After several years of severe restraints imposed by the FCC, once-flourishing films of martial arts and fantasy had been virtually discouraged and nearly faded out in main cities. If in the latter part of the 1920s, domestic films in China had greatly increased and exceeded 100 films a year, the average annual production of national films declined by about one third during the first half of the 1930s, because of the fall in the

number of martial arts and fantasy features. This might have some impact on Indonesian Chinese-driven production, where fantasy and martial arts productions never proved as popular as during the second half of the 1930s for sole producer The Teng Chun—but another cinematographic milestone would have had a huge impact on Indonesia's film industry (Yingjin 1998)⁷.

Of all the above-mentioned titles, only 43 minutes of *The Marriage of Tie Pat Kai* (The Teng Chun, 1935) are viewable in Indonesia's Sinematek Indonesia—but in a very bad shape. Taken from the popular *See Yoe* series, the movie tells the story of the greedy pig demon Pat Kai which succeeds in marrying a human girl, before being chased by two monks who were able to transform into a monkey king and a snake demon. The still existing (talking) bits are full of slapstick actions with Pat Kai teasing his father-in-law by confronting him with a big stick before vanishing into thin air. The many special effects are quite poor compared to other productions of that time referring to ancient Meliès effects of the beginning of the century: shots are being stopped to replace people and items and scratches on the celluloid give (a bad) illusion of lightning. Nevertheless, one might consider its highly entertaining role for young and old audiences of that time.

True Life, True Love

Terang Boelan (*Full Moon*; Balink, 1937) is a true milestone in Indonesian movie history. The movie was directed by Dutch-Indonesian journalist Albert Balink, whose previous *Pareh* (*Rice*; Balink, 1935) made a splash by carrying a budget 20 times more important than the average movie production of that time. Both films opened a new trend for modern stories. While the common plot used the never-worn-out scheme of a beautiful young woman eluding a forced wedding, getting kidnapped, before finally getting delivered by *silat*-skilled lover, *Terang Boelan* (Balink, 1937) used beautiful (Malacca) settings, included keroncong music, and cast famous *toneel* (theater) players. Actors, such as Rd Mochtar, Roekiah, or Kartolo gained instant fame and paved the way for an Indonesian star system, while the movie was also screened in other countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia, marking the beginning of exportations of several Indonesian movies. (Biran, 2009, 171).

Producer The Teng Chung learned a lot out of the movie's success: first, that it was possible to attract huge numbers of native audiences with a more modern setting compared to his usual historical fantasy productions. If the main plot remained pretty common, it was important to integrate popular styles from local cultural practices, such as music, setting, and famous (theater) actors. He instantly copied *Terang Boelan*'s success formula to release *Gadis jang Terdjoel* (*The Sold Girl*; 1937) and *Oh Iboe* (*Oh Mother*; 1938), but it was his fellow producer Tan Khoen Yauw who repeated the phenomenal success with his *Fatima* (1938), earning 200.000 gulden for a 7.000 gulden investment.⁸

But The Teng Chun never ran out of ideas for profit-making. Imagining how he might combine the old *serial*-inspired movies with the actual *Full Moon* trend, he came up with the idea of *Alang Alang* (*High Grass*; The Teng Chun, 1939) as gleaned from an undated 1950s audio record available in Sinematek Indonesia:

At that time, I observed audience's fascination for jungle movies, such as *Tarzan*. This inspired me to write *Alang-Alang's* story, but I didn't know where to get the wild animals. I thought about buying a monkey when I heard a Chinese circus was in town. They agreed upon lending me some animals for 350 gulden per day. We went to shoot at Telok Gong River, where the landscape reminds vaguely a jungle. I recruited people on spot as technicians and we finished shooting in one day. So I sat down and wrote another script that night for next day's shooting. We just changed main actor Rd Mochtar's pants and released this second movie as *Rentjong Aceh* (*Machete of Aceh*).

He did well, since *Alang-Alang* (The Teng Chun, 1939) is now considered as the third success after *Terang Boelan* (Balink, 1937) and *Fatima* Yauw & Wong, Wong, 1938) that led to Indonesian cinema's first golden age. It also started a long series of Jungle movies with interchangeable plots, including *Rentjong Atjeh* (The Teng Chun, 1940) and *Poetri Rimba* (*Jungle Princess*; The Teng Chun & Perbatasari, 1941).

Tengkorak Hidoep (*The Living Skull*; The Teng Chun & Hock, 1941) is a more interesting mix of older serial-inspired movies and occidental Tarzan and Dracula influences. Some critics say it to be Indonesia's very first horror movie where a young couple awaken two-thousand-year-old evil spirit Maha Dahu on a remote island where, consequently, they have to battle supernatural beings. Luckily, a Tarzan-like jungle man swings into frame to save the day.

Some parts of the *Tengkorak Hidoep* (The Teng Chun & Hock, 1941) have been preserved until today in Jakarta's Sinematek Indonesia and we had the chance to watch it. Once again, fighting scenes in the movie seem largely improvised and special effects are way behind what has been done in other parts of the world at that time; but one cannot deny the beauty of the landscapes and the perfectly entertaining blend of action, romance, mystery, comedy, and songs.

After *Tarzan* (Thalberg & Van Dyke, 1932), another US rip-off success of that time was *Zorro* (Fairbanks & Niblo, 1920), which inspired several producers to imagine some masked-hero adventure. *Zorro* did not only become popular through US movies, but it also inspired travelling theater troupes since the beginnings of the 1930s. First one of its kind was *Gagak Item* (*The Black Raven*; Yauw & Wong, 1939), directed by Joshua and Othniel

Wong, the script by Saeroen (*Terang Boelan, Fatima*), and starred in by Rd Mochtar and Roekiah. The story about a masked man helping an abandoned damsel in distress was set in nowadays Bogor and mixed keroncong songs, action, beautiful landscapes, and physical comedy for the whole family's entertainment.

At about the same time, The Teng Chun also released *Roesia Si Pengkor* (*Secret of the clubfoot*; The Teng Chun, 1939). The movie is about a man who is wrongly accused of some crimes he did not commit, so that a baddie can woo his friend's wife. Luckily, masked hero Si Pengkor (in fact the woman's father) watches over the girl. This movie showed clearly The Teng Chun's intentions to attract also native audiences with his all-Indonesian cast and many advertisements featuring the word "Indonesian" to appeal to a more nationalistic feeling (Biran, 2009).

Kedok Ketawa (*The Laughing Mask*; Liem, Tjoen & Djan, 1940) is another story with a masked hero helping a young couple annoyed by some thugs, but it clearly targeted the upper-class audiences with the presence of well-educated nobles Fatimah and Basoeki in the cast. This story became yet another success. Movie magazine *Pemandangan* (August 7, 1940) compared the production to imported Hollywood films or the *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad*,⁹ praising its cinematography and acting and counting the movie as one of the best local productions of the time.¹⁰

Film historian Misbach Yusa Biran (2009) ponders if "maybe the topic of an oppressed youth who is able to control his destiny by becoming a masked vigilante, allowed viewers to identify themselves and thus take revenge against those who had wronged them" (p. 274), such as the overstaying Dutch occupants or the new Japanese invaders. *Srigala Item* (*The Black Wolf*, The Teng Chun & Hock, 1941) is certainly the most obvious example of this type, with evil Djoekri taking control of young Mochtar's father's plantation. After his father's sudden disappearance, Mochtar is badly threatened and regularly beaten up. When Djoekri starts to seduce Mochtar's girlfriend, a mysterious masked hero, Srigala Item, appears to seek justice. No need to tell you who's hiding behind the mask.

Only about 30 minutes of the original movie stored in Sinematek Indonesia in Jakarta is viewable. Resemblances with Zorro are sparse, but one cannot deny the vintage charm of the (bad) fighting sequences of the high-jumping and fast-running masked hero. Main cast was composed by celebrity couple Hadidjah and Mohamad Mochtar, who competed with the glamorous Raden Mochtar and Roekiah to attract audiences. The movie was another tremendous success in 1941, when movie production reached an all-time peak with 30 movies produced that year.¹¹

But troubled times were ahead and movie production came to a halt under WWII Japanese invasion with less than ten movies released between 1942 and 1945, most of which were propaganda movies.

Time for Magic

Still pondering how to modernize classic stories after his many Chinese mythology adaptations, The Teng Chun was once more inspired by the Americans. He copied *Thief of Baghdad's* (Fairbanks & Walsh, 1924) success in 1940 by updating the collection of South and West Asian folktales *1001 Nights* (a collection of West and South Asian stories and folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age). He chose to adapt *Ratna Moetoe Manikam*, a famous *stamboel* stage performance under the name of *Djoela Djoeli Bintang Tiga* (Dance of Three Stars) to attract Chinese and native audiences. The movie tells the story of three goddess sisters, fighting over their love for a human being. Shooting was interrupted by Japanese invasion, but eventually resumed in order to be released a few months later.

Since the movie world is small, The Teng Chun's attempt wasn't kept secret for long and new competitor Populair Films adapted yet another *1001 Nights* story, *Moestika dari Djemar* (The Magic Jewel of Jemar; Tjan & Djan, 1941). Shooting was also interrupted by the Japanese invasion, but the movie was soon released in several Indonesian cities beginning 1942.¹²

Koeda Sembrani (*The Flying Horse*, Yauw & Wong, 1941) was Tan Koew Yauw's contribution to the many *1001 Nights* adaptations. Employing thousands of extras for a colossal result, the movie became famous for being the last movie together of star couple Djoemala and Roekiah, before her premature death in 1945. The movie has been one of the last to be released under the Japanese occupation in 1943 (Pembangoen 1943,)

Tan was less lucky with his other *1001 Nights* adaptation, *Aladin dengan Lampoe Wasiat* (*Aladin and the Magic Lamp*, Yauw & Wong, 1941). Started in 1941, production was stopped under Japanese occupation and only resumed in the 1950s. This movie also closed the first golden age of Indonesian cinema.

These legend and fantasy titles became the basis of the few attempts to resurrect action titles during Indonesia's cinema renewal of the early 1950s, where more action-orientated titles remained sparse until the new golden age of action movies in the late 1960s.

Conclusion

In this paper, we attempted to reevaluate Indonesia's cinema beginnings through the most important multicultural influences (mostly American and Chinese) and through the important contributions of lesser-recognized action and exploitation movies.

More than half of the 74 long features produced between 1926 and 1949 are action-oriented movies and can't be overseen during that period of time.

If all movies produced in Indonesia have been influenced by other worldwide cultures, most of the time they are a blend of several cultures and Indonesia's very own culture. Right from the beginning, Chinese producers

relied on their own culture, as much as American success formulas and more indigenous cultural devices, such as local actors, music trends, and local customs.

There has been a huge evolution over the years, tending from more serial-inspired actioners to fantasy legends to jungle adventure movies up to *1001 Nights* adaptations. All genre-oriented titles, close to the public taste of the time, were made for the sole preoccupation of gaining the biggest possible audiences.

America had a great influence, but not as much as other countries at that time. Because of its extraordinary capacity to reign over the world's cinema, America's influence could not be overlooked, but seeing the (rare still existing) final results, its influence was more of a mere inspiration at that time as, let's say, today's Hollywood-conformed products. Even worldwide famous characters such as Dracula or Tarzan have been mainly readapted to fit Indonesian's audience taste and culture and cannot be called simple copies.

All those influences contributed to the very beginnings of the Indonesian film history, which would cross many other steps in its very own evolution, such as the Japanese influence during its World War II's occupation, the more nationalistic cinema of the 1950s, the Bollywood influences of the 1960s up to the Hong Kong influence of the 1970s and 1980s—especially on action cinema.

If action cinema has had more or less importance through the following decades, it has always been part of Indonesian film history up until the latest success of *The Raid 1* and *2*. It might be seen by some as sole entertainment, but it is nevertheless part of the whole film industry with several titles among the biggest box office hits of all times.

Lastly, I want to emphasize the difficulties of accessing those early films. Most Indonesian institutions pay little attention to archives and historical documents. Because of this, it is almost to access complete credits, since most movies no longer exist and for some the only proof of existence is through archival research of advertisements, news, and reviews in old newspapers and magazines. Therefore, the list I compiled below is partial and still in progress. Hopefully, there are more scholars in the near future to complete the list and the data.

An important source is Sinematek Indonesia, a film archive and library in Jakarta, founded by Misbach Yusa Biran in 1975. But insufficient revenues and lack of organization made it a mere huge storage room for all collected information and movie reels for decades. When I started my research about Indonesian cinema five years ago, the thousands of still existing movie stills and posters were randomly stored away (but have luckily been classified in alphabetical order). Also worth mentioning here is J.B. Kristanto, who collected the data and wrote a book titled *Katalog Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Catalog, 2007) as well as the online version of

the catalog at www.filmindonesia.or.id.

The information above is only due to the patient and passionate research work of film historians Misbach Yusa Biran (1933-2012) and J.B. Kristanto. Without their lifelong dedication, Indonesian cinema culture would certainly have long faded away .

Filmography : Action Movies, 1926-1943

The following action movie titles have all been regular releases in (limited) theatrical circuit. Information is sparse due to the age of the films and limited resources at that time. Information has been collected from filmindonesia.or.id.

The images were taken from *Poster Film Indonesia: Masa sebelum Kemerdekaan* (the first of a film poster book series published by Indonesia's National Library) and collections of Sinematek Indonesia.

Abbreviations used:

| | |
|----|--------------------|
| P | Production Company |
| PR | Producer |
| D | Director |
| ST | Story |
| SP | Screenplay |
| A | Actor(s) |
| PD | Production Design |
| C | Cinematography |
| E | Editor |
| M | Music |
| S | Sound |



Une photographie tirée de l'ouvrage film "Loetoeng Kasaroeng" tirée dans le livre "L'Indonésie" édité par "L'Asiatique" à Paris.

Loetoeng Kasaroeng

(The Enchanted Monkey, 1926)

P: Java Film Co
PR: L. Heuveloord
D: L. Heuveloord
 A: Martoana, Oemar
C: G Krugers

Although foreign-produced, this was the first feature film in Indonesia to present an original Indonesian story, based on a well-known legend in West Java, which concerns the wisdom of not judging a book by its cover. Purbasari is scorned for having a monkey as her boyfriend. Meanwhile Purbararang, her sister, is proud to have Indrajaya, a man, as her lover. The monkey is really a handsome prince, Guru Minda, the reincarnation of the Goddess Sunan Ambu, and he is much more handsome than Indrajaya.

Resia Boroboedoe

(Secret of Borobudur, 1928)

P: Nancing Film Corp
A: Olive Young

Young Pei Fen departs from China to Borobudur, after reading his father's will that tells of a secret book on the legendary Borobudur Temple in Central Java. His mission is to attain the urn containing the cremated ash of Siddharta Gautama. At the site, Gandha Soewastie tries to stop him. When Pei Fen is about to grab the urn, he falls unconscious due to poisonous gas. Then

Gandha helps him since he owes Pei Fen's father his life. Finally, Pei Fen realizes his error and decides to become a priest guarding the temple.

Njai Dasima

(Madame Dasima, 1929)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Khoen Yauw
D: Lie Tek Swie
A: N Noerhani, Anah, Wim Lender, Momo
C: A Loepias

This film tells the story of a nyai (mistress) who becomes famous after the publication of a book in 1896, and then popularized through theater and the traditional performance of lenong. Dasima, a girl who is originally from Kuripan, Bogor, is married to an Englishman named Edward William. From Tangerang, she later moves to Batavia (Jakarta). She becomes well known for her beauty and wealth. One of her suitors is Samiun who is married to Hayati. Dasima is persuaded by Mak Buyung to leave her "master". But when she becomes Samiun's second wife, she is neglected.

Si Tjonat

(Tjonat, 1929)

P: Batavia Motion Picture
PR: Nelson Wong, Jo Eng Sek
D: Nelson Wong
SP: FDJ Pangemanan
A: Lie A Tjip, Ku Fung May, Herman Sim

Delinquent since he was a little boy, Tjonat runs away to Batavia (Jakarta) after murdering his friend. In the city, he becomes a servant working for a Dutch family. But all he does is swindle the mistress' wealth. Then he turns into a robber and falls in love with Lie Gouw Nio. When she rejects him, Tjonat tries to kidnap her. But the attempt is stopped by the brave and handsome Thio Sing Sang.

Nancy Bikin Pembalesan

(Revenge of Nancy, 1930)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Khoen Yauw
D: Lie Tek Swie
C: A Loepias

Edward William returns to the Dutch Indies after his stay in Europe to manage a plantation in the Banten area. He is accompanied by his daughter Nancy by Dasima. Upon his arrival in Batavia, she receives news that Samiun (Dasima's murderer) has served his sentence and is coming back.

Nancy dreams of meeting Dasima who asks her to take revenge on Samiun and his wife, Hayati. Eventually, Samiun falls over a cliff and Hayati is stabbed by her own knife.

Njai Dasima 2

(Madame Dasima 2, 1930)

P: Tan's Film

PR: Tan Koen Yauw

D: Lie Tek Swie

A: Nurhani, Anah, Wim Lender, Momo

C: A Loepias

Dasima's remorse worsens after she leaves her husband and her eight-year-old daughter, Nancy. Samiun's first wife, Hayati, who is a heavy gambler, squanders all of Dasima's wealth. Dasima plans to tell her former master about the ill-treatment that she has been receiving from her current husband, Samiun. Samiun panics. He asks Bang Puasa to kill Dasima. Based on a witness's account, Bang Puasa and Samiun are arrested. The killer goes to prison while Samiun is sentenced with banishment.

Si Ronda

(The Watchman, 1930)

P: Tan's Film

PR: Tan Koen Yauw

D: Lie Tek Swie

A: Bachtiar Effendi, Momo

C: A Loepias

A story of a hero from Betawi (local utterance of Batavia, now known as Jakarta), not unlike other stories, such as Si Jampang and Si Pitung.

Sam Pek Eng Tay

(Butterfly Murders, 1931)

P: Cino Motion Pictures

PR: The Teng Chun

D: The Teng Chun

C: The Teng Chun

S: The Teng Chun

This fatal love story is about a girl, Giok Eng Tay and a young man, Nio Sam Pek. Eng Tay's father, Giok Kong Wan, is an official whose position has led him to marry his daughter to Ma Bun Cai, the son of a rich regent. The romantic tie between Sam Pek and Eng Tay is severed. Then Sam Pek is abused by Kong Wan's men, and dies. On their way to Bun Cai's house, the bride's entourage makes a stopover at Sam Pek's grave. The grave suddenly opens, and Eng Tay jumps into Sam Pek's grave.

Si Pitoeng

(Pitung, 1931)

P: Halimoen Film

PR: Wong brothers

D: Wong brothers

A: Herman Sim, Ining Resmini, Zorro

Pitoeng is the original Batavian champion whose popularity draws from lenong folk performances. People believe that the Rawabelong champion has the ability to "disappear" because he always manages to escape the pursuit of Dutch police. He is perceived as the local version of Robin Hood who only robs the rich to give his loot to the poor.

Njai Dasima

(Madame Dasima, 1932)

P: Tan's Film

PR: Tan Koen Yauw

D: Bachtiar Effendi

SP: Bachtiar Effendi

A: Momo, Oesman

C: G Krugers

S: G Krugers

Remake of **NJAI DASIMA 1 & 2**

Pat Bie To

(Eight Beautiful Women, 1933)

P: Cino Motion Pictures

PR: The Teng Chun

D: The Teng Chun

C: The Teng Chun

Film title according to Nio Joe Lan. Production year is an assumption based on the memory of The Teng Chun.

Pat Kiam Hap

(Eight Swordsmen, 1933)

PR: The Teng Chun

D: The Teng Chun

A martial arts story.

Ouw Peh Tjoa

(White and Black Snakes, 1934)

P: Cino Motion Pictures

PR: The Teng Chun

D: The Teng Chun

C: The Teng Chun

S: The Teng Chun

The white snake demon transforms into a beautiful woman when she is attracted to a man named Khouw Han Boen. The two marry. Later, Han Boen finds out that his wife is the white snake

demon in disguise. Since the secret is revealed by the great master, Hoat Hae Sian Soe, the white snake demon is scared and runs away. The great master hunts her down, but the Goddess Kwan Im prevents him from killing her, revealing that the spirit is pregnant. After she gives birth, the white snake repents and asks Han Boen to take good care of their child.



Pan Sie Tong (1935)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun

Poei Sie Giok Pa Loei Tay (1935)

P: Batavia Film Industrie
PR: Jo Kim Tjan

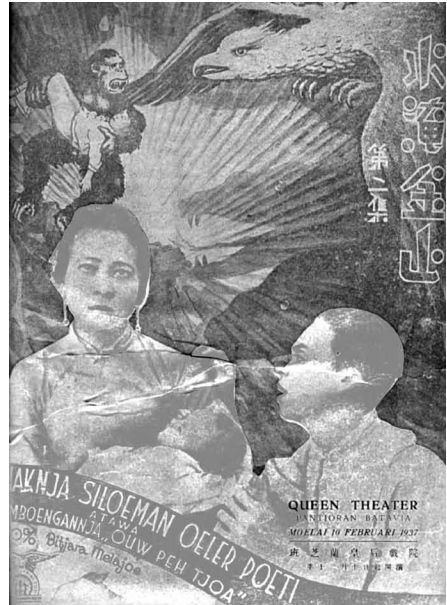
Inspiring teenagers to learn martial arts, the story shows Poei Sie Giok who is trained in martial arts by his mother, Tjoei Hoa (a prominent figure in a branch of the Shaolin school). With his mastery, Poei Sie Giok defeats Loei Lo Ho's students. After Loei Lo Ho is killed, his wife Lie Siow Hoan makes an appearance to take vengeance.

Tie Pat Kai Kawin

(The Marriage of Tiet Pat Kai, 1935)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun

Pat Kai (the swine demon) comes down from the mountain and goes to the city. He manages to wed a human, Tjoei Lan, the daughter of a wealthy man Kho Tay Kong. But when their child has the face of a pig, Kho Tay Kong throws out his son-in-law. Pat Kai runs away with his wife. Kho Tay Kong asks Tong Sam Tjong and his student, Kha See Thian for help in finding his daughter. After his disguise as Tjoei Lan fails, Tong Sam Tjong transforms himself into a monkey ghost. Then Kha See Thian changes into a snake demon to strangle the demon pig. Pat Kai finally surrenders and returns Tjoei Lan to her father.



Anaknja Siloeman Oeler Poeti

(Son of White Snake Ghost, 1936)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun

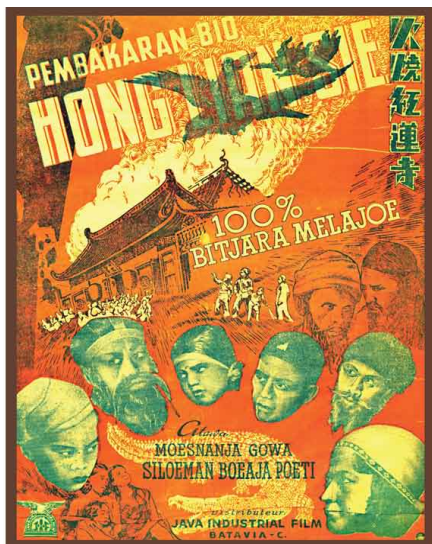
The child feels as if he lives in a dream. He does not know who his human father is as his mother is the white snake ghost. He is often verbally and physically abused. In desperation, he runs away to seek his mother at the place where she is repenting. In his escape, he gets lost in the forest and falls into the hands of a giant monkey.

Lima Siloeman Tikoes

(The Five Enchanted Mice, 1936)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun

A wife is confused after her husband turns into two indistinguishable persons. Which one is the real husband? One of her husbands is actually the manifestation of the rat demon. Luckily, the God Djie Lay steps in by sending a magic cat in the size of a tiger to wipe off all of the five rat demons.



Pembakaran Bio "Hong Lian Sie"

(The Burning of Hong Lian Sie Temple, 1936)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
P: The Teng Chun

The burning of the Hong Lian Sie temple triggers a big fight between the Kuen Luen Pai clan and Oen Kung Pa clan. The temple is filled with secret weapons and led by evildoers who are fond of abusing the weak. The story is a classic battle of good versus evil.

Gadis jang Terdjoel

(The Sold Girl, 1937)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun

Han Nio is in love with Oey Koen Beng. But her money-hungry mother pairs her off with a young wealthy man, Lim Goan Tek, to finance her gambling debt. Han Nio and Goan Tek's marriage is not a happy one, despite having a daughter, Lin Nio. Han Nio is even kicked out after Goan Tek loses his money even though it is actually Eng Swan, Han Nio's brother, who commits the theft. Koen Beng meets Han Nio again after he tries to

help Lin Nio. But Han Nio is already ill, and soon dies. Koen Beng takes revenge for his lover's death by paying Goan Tek a visit. But Eng Swan, who also wants to take revenge for Han Nio's death, gets there first and kills Goan Tek.



Terang Boelan

(Full Moon, 1937)

P: ANIF
D: Albert Balink
ST: Saeroen
A: Kartolo, Muhin, Tjitjih, ET Effendi, Rd Mochtar, Roekiah
PD: Othniel Wong
C: Othniel Wong & Joshua Wong
S: Othniel Wong & Joshua Wong

Kasim and Rohaya promise to love and stay loyal to each other. But Rohaya's father, the reverend, pairs her off with Musa, a smuggler. Before the wedding takes place, Rohaya runs away with Kasim from her island, Sawoba, to Malacca (Malaysia). There they meet Dullah. But their happiness only lasts for a while since Musa, who disguises as an Arab under the name of Syekh Ba' Abul to smuggle opium, manages to locate them. Then Rohaya's father comes to pick her up. Kasim joins Rohaya again in Sawoba, followed by Dullah who comes to help. Kasim finally defeats Musa during a violent fight.

Fatima

(Fatima, 1938)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Koen Yauw
D: Joshua Wong, Othniel Wong
ST: Saeroen
A: Kartolo, Sapri, Habibah, Moesa, ET Effendi, Rd Mochtar, Roekiah
C: Othniel Wong & Joshua Wong
M: Lief Java

The people of Motaro live in prosperity. The beauty of the island, Fatima, is romantically involved with Idris, a fisherman's son. This ideal relationship is disrupted when Ali, who always boasts about his wealth, steps in. When Ali gives Fatima a ring, she forwards it to Idris instead. It is the same ring that leads the police to come to the island to capture Ali who is actually heading a gang of criminals.

Alang-Alang

(High Grass, 1939)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun
ST: The Teng Chun
A: Hadidjah, Mohamad Mochtar, Bissu, Lena, Moesa
E: The Teng Liong
M: Mas Sardi

Travelling through his coconut plantation, Suhayat, the prodigal son of a wealthy man, runs into Suyati who is being harassed by Rainan. When he helps Surati, he also inflames the jealousy of Rasmina, the widow, who is attracted to him, even though she is courted by Karta. Heartbroken, she gets Rainan to abduct Surati. But she escapes inside the woods and manages to befriend the animals. These animals are the ones who save her when Rainan's men raid the woods to take her back. Finally Suhayat rescues Suyati. Rasmina regrets her evil deeds and returns to her former husband, Karta.

Gagak Item

(The Black Raven, 1939)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Koen Yauw
C: Joshua Wong, Othniel Wong
ST: Saeroen
A: Kartolo, Roekiah, Rd Mochtar
C: Wong Brothers
S: Wong Brothers

The story is about a masked man known only as "Gagak Item" ("Black Raven")

Roesia si Pengkor

(Secret of the Clubfoot, 1939)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun
A: Da'ing, Bissu, Hadidjah
C: The Teng Liong
S: The Teng Hui

Haji Saleh is going on a pilgrimage to the sacred mountain. Meanwhile, his wife and daughter, Suti, stay behind in Tangerang. As the beauty of the village, Suti attracts a lot of young men. But Saari is the one she is interested in. Yet, Saari faces competition from Usin. In the end, Saari emerges victorious. Later, it is revealed that the one who has been keeping Suti out of danger is none other than Pengkor, who is her own father Haji Saleh.



Dasima

(Dasima, 1940)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Tan Tjoei Hock
A: S Soekarti, Mohamad Mochtar, M Sani, S Talib
PD: HB Angin
C: WT Wei

Remake of *Njai Dasima* 1 & 2. Winata's preoccupation with his business causes a lot of conflict with his wife, Dasima. Eventually they end their marriage. Then Dasima becomes Samiun's wife, who only wants Dasima's wealth. When Samiun's behavior gets worse, Dasima asks for a

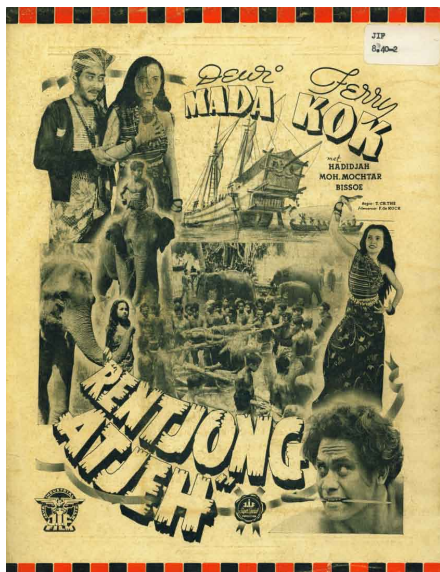
divorce. She demands for the return of her jewelry, all of which are already gambled away by Samiun. Samiun makes a deal with Bang Puasa to get rid of Dasima. When Dasima is cornered by Samiun and Puasa, she jumps off a bridge and dies. Later, the police arrest Samiun and Puasa.

Kedok Ketawa

(The Laughing Mask, 1940)

P: Union Film Coy
D: Jo An Djan
A: Oedjang, RS Fatimah, Eddy Kock, Zonder

Influenced by the film *Dracula*, *The Laughing Mask* is a love story between a felon cum seducer and a hero. The film is set within the beautifully photographed scenery of Cibodas.



Rentjong Atjeh

(Machete of Aceh, 1940)

P: Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: The Teng Chun
ST: Ferry Kock
A: Dewi Mada, Ferry Kock, Mohamad Mochtar, Hadidjah
C: TH The
E: TL The
M: Mas Sardi

Bintara is a pirate captain who sails the Malacca Straits. He plunders ships and murders its crews. Two children survive one of the attacks. They are Rusna and Daud. Years later, the two meet the

courageous Panglima Ali. Together, they stop Bintara's bloody career.

Aladin dengan Lampoe Wasiat

(Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, 1941)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Koen Yauw
D: Wong brothers
A: Elly Joenara, Benny, Wolly Sutinah

Aladdin, the son of a poor widow, continues living modestly although he owns the magic lamp. The lamp is only used on special occasions, such as when the Wazir commands him to. Finally, when he is threatened, Aladin uses the magic lamp to defeat the evil Wazir and inherits the kingdom.

Elang Darat

(Eagle Land, 1941)

P: Jacatra Picture
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Inoe Perbatasari
ST: Inoe Perbatasari
SP: Inoe Perbatasari
A: Astaman, Ali Yugo, Rohana, Salam
C: Tan Kim An
E: The Teng Liong

Elang Darat, who leads a gang of robbers, continuously harasses the village of Kresek. To overcome the security threat, the head of the village calls for assistance from a detective R. Parlan. During a raid, Parlan is injured, and is nursed by Rukmini, the village head's daughter. Their closeness prompts jealousy in Gunawi, the adopted son of the village head. Later, it is revealed that Gunawi is the son of R. Bardan, Parlan's father. Parlan then must face Gunawi because he is actually the one that people call Elang Darat.

Ikan Doejoeng

(Mermaid, 1941)

P: Standard Film
PR: Touw Ting lem
D: Lie Tek Swie
A: Asmanah, Soerjono, A Thys, Poniman

Asmara is already in love with Sanusi. But her father, Rasyid, accepts Sumantri's proposal to marry Asmara with his son, Harun. Enraged by this match, Asmara says that she wants to be a mermaid and she runs away with Sanusi.

Koeda Sembrani

(The Flying Horse, 1941)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Koen Yauw

D: Wong brothers
A: Roekiah, Rd Djoemala, Wolly Sutinah, Kartolo

Adaptation of *1001 Nights*.



Poesaka Terpendam
(Hidden Heirlooms, 1941)

P: Tan's Film
PR: Tan Koen Yauw
A: Roekiah, Rd Djoemala, Titing, Kartolo

This film tells the story of a hidden treasure. The hunt for the treasure becomes the source of conflict between the heirs as well as a bunch of crooks, who decide to join in. Featuring adventure, fighting scenes, songs, and comedy, the film also featured the beautiful landscape of Serang and West Java.

Poetri Rimba
(Jungle Princess, 1941)

P: Jakarta Film Coy
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Inoe Perbatasari
SP: Sutan Usman Karim
A: Aisjah, Loedi, Ali Yugo, Bissu, Soetiati

Achmadi is separated from his group during a trip to an island and is captured. Later, it turns out that Achmadi had once saved Bidasari, the daughter of a warlord who is holding him hostage. Then love grows between Achmadi and Bidasari. Unfortunately, Bidasari is already engaged to

Perbada. Perbada's men capture Bidasari and her father but Achmadi succeeds in rescuing them.

Ratna Moetoe Manikam
(Dance of the Three Stars, 1941)

P: New Java Industrial Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Sutan Usman Karim
SP: Sutan Usman Karim
A: Ratna Asmara, Astaman, Ali Yugo, Inoe Perbatasari
PD: HB Angin

Three sisters, Ratna, Laila, and Kumala, live above the cloud. Ratna and Kumala are in dispute after they fall in love with the same man, Sultan Darsyah Alam. Kumala is turned down by Darsyah and in anger, she orders the destruction of his kingdom. Laila overhears this scheme and informs Ratna about it. Ratna then asks Bathara Guru for advice and is told that this is a trial for Darsyah who is destined to be for her. Darsyah owns a powerful ring that is also named Ratna hence this disaster can be averted.



Si Gomar
(Gomar, 1941)

P: Action Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Tan Tjoei Hock
ST: TH Tan
A: Tan Tjeng Bok, Hadidjah, Mohamad Mochtar, Bissu

PD: HB Angin
C: KA Tan
M: Mas Sardi
 TS The

After a pirate attack, a family is separated. Soebardja is with his father while Mariani stays with the mother. Due to their long separation and different foster parents, Mariani and Soebardja almost get married to each other. But Ismail, their cousin, is the one who prevents the mistake from happening.



Singa Laoet
 (Sea Lion, 1941)

P: Action Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Tan Tjoei Hock
ST: Tan Tjoei Hock
SP: Tan Tjoei Hock
A: Tan Tjeng Bok, Hadidjah, Bissu, Mohamad Mochtar
C: Tan Tjoei Hock

Ibrahim is killed during a fight and Robin is accused as the killer. Twenty years later, Mahmud (Ibrahim's son) wants to know who actually killed his father. His search brings him to Sampajo Island. This is where Robin lives as a pirate captain dubbed as the "Singa Laoet" (The Sea Lion). Mahmud falls in love with Miryam. But Hasan desires her so he kidnaps Miryam. During a fight, Mahmud kills Hasan. It is at this moment that Ibrahim's actual killer is discovered. It is none other than Hasan

who works for Robin.

Siti Noerbaja

(Siti Noerbaja, 1941)

P: Standard Film
PR: Touw Ting lem
D: Lie Tek Swie
SP: Marah Roesli
A: Asmanah, Momo, Soerjono, A.Thys

Classic story of a girl who is married against her will to a wealthy man.



Srigala Item
 (The Black Wolf, 1941)

P: Action Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Tan Tjoei Hock
ST: TH Tan
A: Tan Tjeng Bok, Hadidjah, Mohamad Mochtar, Aisah
PD: HB Angin
C: TG The
M: Mas Sardi
S: TS The

Mardjoeki goes missing after his wealth is taken by his brother, Djoekri. His son, Mochtar, is left behind and is treated like a slave by Djoekri. Later, The Black Jackal, a man in a mask, thwarts Djeokri's cruelty. In a chase scene between Djoekri

and *The Black Jackal*, it turns out that Mardjoeki is still alive, and he is the man behind the mask all this time.



P: Star Film
PR: Yo Eng Sek
D: Yo Eng Sek
ST: MA Salamoen
SP: Rd Ariffien
A: R Sukran, Elly Joenara, AB Djoenaedi, M Arief

C: Chok Chin Hsien
Tjioeng Wanara is the man who crushes the evil king of Galuh. The revolt succeeds with the help of the people who have suffered enough.

1001 Malam
(1001 Nights, 1942)

P: Star Film
PR: Yo Eng Sek
D: Wu Tsun
A: Chok Chin Hsien

Adaptation of *1001 Nights*

Tengkorak Hidoep
(The Living Skull, 1941)

P: Action Film
PR: The Teng Chun
D: Tan Tjoei Hock
ST: Tan Tjoei Hock
SP: Tan Tjoei Hock
A: Tan Tjeng Bok, Mohamad Mochtar, Misnahati, Bissu
C: Tan Tjoei Hock
S: Tan Tjoei Hock

Raden Darmadji and his friends visit Mustika Island. Ten years ago, a ship sunk near the island, and his brother was one of the passengers. The island is also where Maha Daru was buried 2000 years ago after he was defeated in combat by Dewi Gumba. When the group explores the cave, the grave is suddenly split open. Outside, Darmadji is chased by savages. Meanwhile, Maha Daru helps his daughter, Rumiati, who he believes to be the reincarnation of Dewi Gumba. Maha Daru has his own evil intention towards Rumiati. Luckily, a young man who lives in the forest comes to help her. The young man and Rumiati fall in love with each other.

Tjioeng Wanara
(Tjioeng Wanara, 1941)

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Notes

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