Shikari

Shikari, 1963
Director: Mohammad Hussain
Music: G.S. Kohli
Lyrics: Farooq Kaiser, Qamar Jalalabadi
Playback: Lata, Asha, Usha, Rafi
Choreography: P.L. Raj, Hiralal
Cast: Ajit, Ragini, Helen, K.N. Singh, Madan Puri, Randhir, Bir Sakhuja

The 1963 film Shikari is an Indian version of **King Kong**, with elements of Joseph Conrad's **Heart Of Darkness** (after which the 1979 film **Apocalypse Now** is also modeled) thrown in for good measure. Unfortunately, special effects took a giant step backwards after the 1933 version of **King Kong**, with our giant gorilla being a man in a monkey suit destroying miniature villages, rather than having the outstanding stop-motion giant gorilla effects of the earlier film. No matter, as the story is a good one, and there's still time for some good dancing, what with Ragini, Helen, and Madhumati being in the film.

The Video

Like the previous release of **Wahan Ke Log** with subtitles, the source for this one is also a VCD. But there's a new element with **Shikari**, that it's in color. Early Indian color films are often problematic, and this one's no different. I think because they're not properly cared for, particularly in regards to keeping them cool, very strange things begin to happen to the color as time

goes by. It fades or it changes, but not uniformly, The colors on the left side might be different from those of the right side. Or certain colors change more while others stay pretty much the same. Here the lighter skin tones and whites and clouds often turned pinkish, but the rest of the video didn't. So, if you try to pull out the red, to return the skin or whites or clouds to a more natural appearance, this has a tendency to give everything else a blue-green appearance. Although I did the best I could with what I had to work with, it's beyond my poor skills to restore this thing to anywhere close to the way it appeared almost 50 years ago. You can see some of the problem in the first picture, where Ragini's face is way too pink, even after being 'color-corrected'. The situation improved by the second half of the movie, from which the picture above is taken. The problem is at its worst in the ice show sequence near the beginning of the film, but can be seen off and on throughout the film.

Like **Wahan Ke Log**, the **Shikari** VCD also had a logo, this time one courtesy of Shemaroo. When you see the blur in the upper left of the picture, that's what's left after removing it.

The Subtitles

Once again I've been fortunate to have the translation provided by Raja. Without his outstanding work there wouldn't be any of these newly subtitled VCDs-converted-to-DVD, and we that don't understand Hindi wouldn't be able to enjoy these films to the fullest. Thanks so much, Raja, and I hope you're not burned out from all the work, because there are other projects in the pipeline.

Just as before, there's no subtitle menu and the subs play by default. If you don't want or need them, turn them off using the DVD player's remote control after the movie starts. If you do that, though, you'll miss out on the results of Raja's hard work. If you do speak the language, but often watch a movie on DVD with the subs just so you can laugh at the lame translation, well, there's nothing to laugh at here. Unless, in my sometime attempts to shorten sentences to fit them in the space allotted, I've changed the meanings. Any mistakes like that are mine.

Links

Below you'll find a variety of links. Anyone wishing to discuss video encoding can PM me as 'manono' at one of the video sites listed below. Be sure to read the reviews of this film at both the memsaabstory blog and the Die Danger Die Die Kill blog.

Reviews Of Shikari

memsaabstory Part 1
memsaabstory Part 2
Die Danger Die Die Kill

Blogs I read

Richard's Dances On The Footpath
memsaabstory blog
Dusted Off

Video Encoding Sites

Doom9
Videohelp.com

The DVDs

Shikari
Wahan Ke Log
Albela
The Minoo Mumtaz Compilation DVD
The Johnny Walker DVD
The Bela Bose DVD