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| Phalke, Dhundiraj Govind (1870-1944) |
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| Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (30 April 1870 – 16 February 1944), better known as Dadasaheb Phalke, was an Indian film innovator, producer, director, and screenplay writer who is often referred to as the ‘father of Indian cinema.’ Despite disagreement over whether he was truly the first person to direct a feature film in India, his influence over the development of cinema in the Indian subcontinent, particularly with regard to genre, film style, and the industry, is undisputed. His first film, *Raja Harishchandra* [*King Harishchandra*] (1913), is often considered a point of departure for Indian cinema, in terms of both style and content. Phalke not only produced, but also wrote and directed this 40-minute silent film and played the lead role of King Harishchandra, a mythical figure mentioned in the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Like early Japanese films from that time, men played all female roles in the film. While continuing to work primarily within the framework of ‘mythical film’, drawing heavily on religious and mythological tales, he evolved and developed the medium by experimenting with new cinematic technologies, making silent films of various lengths and styles, and even one talkie — his swan song, *Gangavataran* (1937). |
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| Further reading:  (Vatave) |