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editor • creator DAMON FOSTER publisher HUGH GALLAGHER

EDITORIAL LETTERS

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HONG KONG HEROES

KAIZO NINGEN UPDATE

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TERROR YAKI

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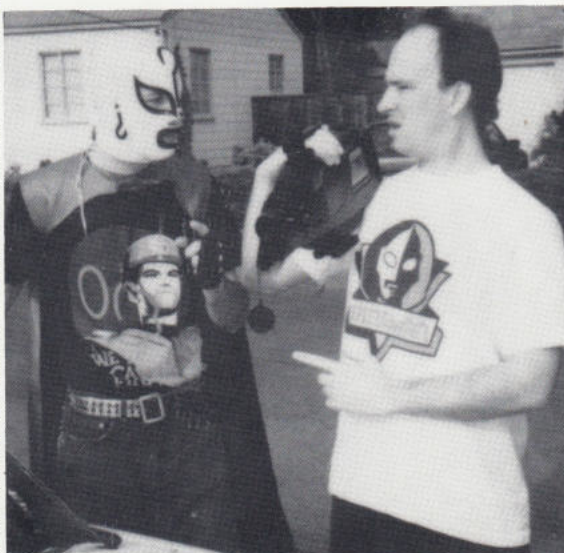
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Ah's reckons ya'll can say it was a love of Japanese sci-fi which first conjured OC into existence back around 1977 (so don't be fooled by the #4 on the cover, that was Draculina's idea). Indeed, as a little twerp in elementary school, my comparatively dull teachers failed to inspire me the way Kikaider, Godzilla, the Go Rangers and Ultraman did. So naturally, this is the main reason OC came about. But there's a darker side, not necessarily the result of any one fandom or genre, which blessed this otherwise dull world with OC, the bible you hold before you. That darker side was and is my disgust for those who reek of 'ultra normal'. It was at an early age I got sick of predictable people who wasted their vocal cords gossiping about the most pointless crap. I myself fail at small talk, i.e. the weather and sports. Sports! Ah yes, that most conservative of entertainments. 'Til this day, I shudder when I'm forced to hear people talking about Football, and I'm disgusted that I ever even find myself in a position where I so much as glance at a sporting event on TV. There's so much going on in this doomed world; with news of political & social unrest, increasing crime, ecological deterioration, changing cultures & attitudes, etc., and yet the News always manages to waste plenty of space on something as pointless & redundant as sports. Even today, at work (almost daily), I still hear unimaginative geeks, 'normal Joes' and other types of cultural retards rambling on and on about the latest baseball game; as though something in it had happened which never happened before. So these opening paragraphs have two main messages:

1. OC was created in celebration of the abnormal, in an effort to educate people about new & unique stuff.
2. Wake up and open your minds, not your mouths. There! This cynical paragraph was brought to you



Your humble editor (DF: right) directs heroic wrestler Mysterion (left) in yet another cheap action/comedy video!

courtesy of my personal frustration & opinion.

But now we switch from anarchy to apathy! Movie talk! Now's where OC becomes similar to its many new imitations, cropping up in the Japanese

hero/sci-fi fandom! So welcome to OC's long overdue Godzilla issue! Though my initial exposure to Far Eastern stuff was watching **ULTRAMAN** and **GREEN HORNET** in the 1960s, it was the Godzilla movies which later changed my life forever, for better or worse. Amazingly, I can recall the exact moment, probably in 1970, when I first became aware of Godzilla. Me and other tiny tots were playing some game where we pretended to be movie monsters. One guy played Frankenstein, another was Dracula, and I think I was either a werewolf or Creature from the Black Lagoon. One older boy, Kevin Connors, joined the game a little late, and said, "Who get's to play Godzilla?" The reaction from my fellow brats was both angry and immediate: "Nobody!" The idea was that Godzilla could easily waste any other movie monster, and none of us were about to challenge him. I was intrigued that this mysterious creature could cause such an uproar in my school playground, so I asked the school principal what Godzilla was, and from what I recall, his answer was, "A giant dinosaur-monster." Already I was hooked, having loved dinosaurs, and had seen **ONE MILLION YEAR'S B.C., WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH, THE LOST WORLD, ULTRAMAN** and **GIANT BEHEMOTH** a year or two before. So I immediately sat down to draw a series of pictures of Godzilla. Having never seen the Big G, these crude, crayoned drawings more closely resembled a duckbilled dinosaur.

My opportunity to finally see Godzilla came mere weeks later, when **MONSTER ZERO** (Toho; 1966)

made its debut on American TV. I was mesmerized by this unique film, I'd never seen anything like it. For once the monsters had personalities and were heroes, they were the most complex, interesting characters in the film. This was no case of a horny ape carrying some bitch up the Empire State Building! Months later, I saw **GODZILLA VS THE SEA MONSTER** (Toho; 1966), then maybe **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA** (Toho; 1963) or **GODZILLA VS. THE THING** (Toho; 1964). By that time, I was not just a fan, but an addict. Naturally, growing up, I was frequently offended by those who didn't understand. "Those Jap flicks are so cheap!" "Godzilla is only a man in a costume!" My reply: "So is Dracula. So is Clint Eastwood; only, it's a cowboy suit." I similarly knocked flat those assholes who stated Godzilla doesn't look realistic. My answer: "How do you know, smart ass? You ever seen a real monster? How do you feel now, dumbshit!" Hell, go to a zoo and look at an alligator. They don't look realistic, they're rubbery in appearance and have no facial expression, nor do snakes or gekos. You still dare say Godzilla doesn't look like a real reptile? If so, I'll hit you with your white cane. The point is, I've grown up accustomed to defending the King of Monsters. Hell, no film is immune to attack, none are perfect, I can just as easily trash the so-called 'classics' like **2001: A SPACE**

ODYSSEY- Some dumb ape throws a bone in the air. **STAR WARS** - '7 Samurai' in space, with quick steals from **ULTRASEVEN**, **IRON KING** and Starman films. **JURASSIC PARK**- Boring, predictable, cliché ridden crap. FX don't make a whole movie. There! Now you won't look at Godzilla movies in the same way.

In other news, I see that some of you still think I live in Hugh Gallagher's computer. Why you idiots keep calling Draculina Publishing (in Illinois) and asking for me? So let me put it plain & basic for you! Me live in California. Me no go to Centralia, Centralia in Illinois, me not. Me no sleep at office of Draculina Publishing. So all you people with the reading ability of a mollusk understand? Comprene? Wakari masu ka? Know wahm' sayin'? Address all correspondence, submissions (which I assume no responsibility for, since responsible is one thing I'm not) and compliments to me, at **DAMON FOSTER, P.O. BOX 576, FREMONT, CA 94537-0576**. If you're expecting a response, enclose a self-addressed-stamped-envelope. Negative criticism will be ignored, since I know OC really kicks ass, and I can't see me changing it!

The main problem I've encountered doing this issue is typing up other people's work. For many years, I refused to accept the submissions from others,

because I strongly dislike the overly technical plot synopses ("Then our hero blinked. He took a step toward the villain. And then another. And then another. And then another. And then another. And then another. And then another. They both bowed, and began to fight".) I kept receiving. Not only are they boring to read, but a major pain for me to type up! They're a major waste of my all too precious time, and an even bigger waste of ink and paper! Other fanzines seem content to showcase this drab, unimaginative excuse for journalism, but I've never wished it to contaminate OC. Yet now, with me feeling way too burnt out to write all the reviews anymore, I'm accepting reviews from other people. I've tried to make it clear that a plot should easily fit into a single paragraph, and that it's more interesting to read the writer's opinion of the film (or trivia, behind the scenes, info on the actors, etc.), than an endless analysis of the story, looking more detailed than the movie's script itself. Many of my writers have caught on, while a few others still tend to go all out and include every pointless detail in the story. So from now on, any of you who write for OC should know to keep them stories as basic and too the point as possible. After all, when I read endless plot reviews, it eliminates any need to watch the movie itself. Got it?! - *Damon Foster*



LETTERS

motions of an octopus's paws. Dodge 'M: Get a kick by a crazy car against the rules. Cinema 2000: Everybody can stand by a forceful screen. Tagada: You are jumped as if you are a parched sesame by a dancing, flying pan. Magic House: Look, this house overturns! What do you want to do? Air Fighter: Take an aircraft and drop your front one. Rock 'n Roll: You ride on a can, you are brandished and inverted."

But by far, my favorite example of bad English, which was not sent to this Letters section, but I included it anyway, appeared in an edition of National Lampoon, the only English language publication I ever read regularly. What follows was out of some English language manual from the Middle East, which claims to offer an example of typical English speaking in America. This conversation is titled, "At the Dentist's". "I have a hollow tooth, which is ailing me horribly." "Sit down in this chair, incline your head back, and open well your mouth. Very good sir. Let's see that hollow tooth. Is this it?" "Yes sir, is it not possible to stuff it?" "The stuffing of the teeth is only a palliative measure." "Will you extract it? But that will ail me."

"Never, sir, that is a very light operation. A little courage suffices. Let me take away the cotton that I have put in the hollow of the tooth. Crack; here is your tooth."

The phrase book also features this conversation, called "At the Hairdresser":

"You are late today."

"Please excuse me, but it has not been possible to come sooner. Make fast and sharpen the razor after soaping my visage."

"Alright, sir."

"You have let the brush go into my mouth."

"Because you have spoken when I did not expect it".

"You have cut my visage, it is bleeding".

"No, I have not cut your visage, there was only a pimple and I have taken it away."

"Lay, if you please on my hair, a little perfumed oil".

But enough of this foolery, and on into what every Letter's Section needs: Letters. Fortunately, there really haven't been a whole lot of complaints regarding OC's crude humor and vulgarities. I'd thought that once OC hit stores, the whole thing would have to be drastically toned down. Luckily, most of the people who go into book stores have a sense of humor,

and very few boast of being politically correct. The majority of the letters I receive are still pretty generic, basically just "That's a cool movie", "Did you see that episode of", "I've always loved those films", etc. Regardless, the following letters weren't chosen for any particular reason, they were just within arm's grasp when I typed this up.

Dear Damon,

What I really wanted to let you know was, because of your feature on the Monkey King in OC#15, I sought out and found a copy of Wu Chen-En's classic novel, translated by Arthur Waley. I have just one thing to say about this book: It is fucking awesome! I can't get enough of the exploits of the "Great Sage, Equal of Heaven". His irreverent attitude is hilarious, and his magical powers & exciting fights are entertaining as hell. Thanks for bringing this aspect of Chinese culture to my attention. Jeff Carpenter - Victoria, Canada

Damon,
I've gotta' give you credit, man. Everywhere you look (catalogues, fanzines), you see listings for all sorts of unusual films. But rarely do you ever see anyone advertise or promote these films. I'm speaking specifically about Japanese films. I've heard of films like **GUNHED**, **LADY BATTLECOP**, **DRIFTING CLASS-**

Last issue's Letter Section had not only a funny letter from Jonathon Smock, but an even funnier quote from a supposed 'English' language driver's manual from some foreign country. The hilarity of this caused Allen Retsoff to send in another, which said:

An amusement park in Kobe, Japan, had this to say in its English tourist guide, when describing its 'riding machines': "Double Loop's Coaster: Two somersaults from 28 meters high. Can you stand this fear?" Viking: Your boat is rolled as if it's a leaf in a stormy sea, weightless feeling attacks you! Swing Around: Your body jumps up high and high by repeated space walk. Polyp: You will be in a state of stupor by unique

IN GODZILLA WE TRUST

Them mens who made Godzilla always did a nice job at designing the rubber masks. But with each Godzilla ('Gojira' in Japanese, but you already knew that, unless you've got the i.q. of a viewer of MTV game shows) mask slightly different, Eiji & the boys gave each one a separate nickname, used only behind the scenes. The costume in **GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS** (1954) was called both Shodai and Shogoji, there were actually two different suits made. The first weighed over 200 pounds and was unusable. Since the Japanese title for **GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER** was **GOJIRA NO GYAKUSHU**, that particular head was called Gyakushugoji! As the films went on, there were names like Kingoji, Mosugoji, Biogoji, etc. The Godzilla character also went through numerous changes in design before Toho president Tomoyuki Tanaka decided on a prototype. In the drawing stage, he was 4-legged, long necked, had a very lizard-like head, and varying sizes of back plates. The drawing was much like a demon from European folklore. At that point, sculptor Teizo Toshimitsu was called upon to sculpt a prototype. This is the Gojira seen in some release posters. The design is based on a T-Rex head (loosely), sometimes had tiny protruding ears, the body of

an Iguanodon, and the Stegosaurus back plates. Three versions were made, mainly differing in skin detail. Gojira's skin is based on the alligator. This model is the basis of the hand puppet used in the first film. Sculptor Teizo Toshimitsu also made the full sized suits for all the films up until 1984! On the Shogoji suit, he was asked to make the head smaller, and the back plates are different. In the second Gojira film, Gyakushugoji has baggy knees and saggy arms. This is because of the early suite making process. The process that came to be used until 1984 was perfected on 1964's Mosugoji (from **GOJIRA TAI MOSURA**, obviously, aka **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**). All the following suits are a variation on Mosugoji! On the new Gojiras, the outer skin is from the molds made for **GODZILLA 1985** and **GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE**, but the bodies are still carved from foam, in the old style.

No Godzilla issue would be complete without a look at the great director Inoshiro Honda! Forget Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard, Akira Kurosawa and John Woo! Inoshiro Honda was one of the most bestest directors around, before his passing away a couple years back. He, along with special effects generalissimo Eiji Tsuburaya, are the most well

known of the 'kaiju eiga' (monster movie) filmmakers, and is world famous. Honda began as a documentary filmmaker, and second unit for bigshot Akira Kurosawa! For that reason, he was tapped for the first Godzilla film (to add a documentary-like realism!). He treated this material as if it was really happening; combining his first unit, creating a documentary-ish story combined with Tsuburaya's FX mastery (not to mention Akira Ifukube's appropriate score), to make a film with a powerful feeling, and some realism.

GODZILLA KING OF THE MONSTERS was the inspiration of Toho president Tomoyuki Tanaka, as a reaction to nuclear attack. In the first draft story, the anti-nuke message really is spelled out in the ending, and this draft is quite different than that used in the film. A few points: Much more time is devoted to Odo Island, with more characters involved, Godzilla was to originally attack there three times. A comet was suppose to appear as a sign of his coming. Emiko & Ogata are engaged, and Serizawa is secretly in love with her. Serizawa is a huge man, with a horribly scarred face (he was attacked by

a wolf on a fossil hunt with Dr. Yamani in China). Godzilla also attacks Tokyo three times, after ravaging coastal

shipping and off-shore islands. Godzilla's appearance was somewhat different too. He had a long, retractable neck, like a turtle, elephant-like ears, no major back spines, and his whole body glowed while he spat his fire. Also worthy of mention are the classic stars who appeared in so many of the earlier movies. None of the actors in the newer (1980s & 1990s) movies left much of an impression on me (except for Anna Kakagawa, she's a babe, I'd like to do some 'horizontal exercises' with her), so in my opinion, the best Godzilla actors are old-timers like:

Akihiko Hirata: He's best known as Dr. Serizawa in the first Godzilla movie, and became typecast in that type of role. He appeared in many genres of film in Japan, and surprisingly, he was a good comedian. He was originally cast as Ogata in **GODZILLA KING OF MONSTERS**, but Honda reversed his and Akira Takarada's parts after their screen tests. He passed away some time in the late 1970s, but made memorable appearances in **SON OF GODZILLA**, **THE H-MAN**,



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GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER, GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA, RAINBOWMAN, ULTRAMAN, and TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA, to name just a few. Listing all his appearances would be impossible, as this talented star was in more films than there are bullets in an LA high school.

Takeshi Shimura: He was a world class, world famous actor, known for his roles in early Kurosawa films like **SEVEN SAMURAI**. In the kaiju eiga (which still means monster movie), he played scholars, scientists and kindly old man types of roles. Best known as Dr. Yamani in **GODZILLA**, but was also in **GHIDRAH THE 3 HEADED MONSTER**. He died and met his Buddha in the early 1980s.

Akira Takarada: Ogata in **GODZILLA**, he's mainly known for playing young, energetic roles, or teens in young adult films. But he also starred in **MONSTER ZERO**, and **GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER**, where he proved to be a good comic performer too. When I was a little kid, he was one of my all time idols, and one of the first actors (Japanese or otherwise) who's name I could remember!

Momoko Kuchi: Known mainly as Emiko in **GODZILLA**, she also ap-

peared in **THE MYSTERIANS**, a film I thought really sucked. She was Toho's 1953 "Fresh Face" actress.

Kenji Sahara: He often played a young urban dweller, and in **GODZILLA VS. THE THING** went against typecasting and played a nasty villain managing Happy Enterprises. He also appeared in **RODAN**, **ULTRA Q**, **ULTRASEVEN**, and **YOG MONSTER FROM SPACE**, to name exactly four.

Yoshio Tsuchiya: He played space aliens and youthful roles (back when he was youthful, of course). He was a UFO enthusiast, and really liked SF films. He's best known as the leader of Planet X in **MONSTER ZERO** (though unrecognizable under pre-Devo, futuristic sunglasses!), and as Dr. Otani in **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS**. He was also in **GIGANTIS, SON OF GODZILLA**, and **THE HUMAN VAPOR**.

Kumi Mizuno: She appeared mostly as a sultry, sexy woman in the kaiju eiga. She's a fan favorite. It's been suspected that her lack of interest in Nick Adams' romantic feelings is allegedly the cause of that actor's suicide. She was in **MONSTER ZERO**, **ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE**, **GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER**, **WAR OF THE**

GARGANTUAS, and even **WHAT'S UP TIGER LILY**, doing a shower scene (unfortunately, there's no nudity).

The Peanuts: No, not the Charlie Brown cartoons! These two were the first 'singing fairies' in the original **MOTHR**. They're really internationally famous (they were then, anyway) twin sisters, Emi & Yumi Ito, with a number of hit songs worldwide. They once appeared on **THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW**! They were in **MOTHR**, **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**, and **GHIDRAH THE THREE HEADED MONSTER**. Two other actresses replaced them in **GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER**.

Haruo Nakajima: Godzilla unmasked! Overflowing with stamina, patience and willpower, he suffered under grueling conditions, wearing thick, heavy, excruciatingly hot monster costumes in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Not only did he play Godzilla in most of the films, but was Rodan, probably Varan, and numerous Ultra monsters! Along with Teru Kawai & others, these guys are the unsung heroes of Japanese monsterdom!

'technically superior, godlike example of Japanese cinematic expertise', the original **GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS** (Toho; 1954) is (and always has been) too damn old ever to impress me as being something other than another crude Japanese film! B&W, bad editing and talky boredom abounds. So it wasn't until recently that I finally sat through its original Japanese version, since it now has English subtitles, thanks to Hiroshi Higuchi and something called 'Zontarian International', whatever the hell that is. But it was nice to see the authentic film, with no Raymond Burr, no English dubbing. With Burr out of the way, young Toho actors like Akira Takarada & Akihiko Hirata take the full spotlight. The Japanese version is definitely more logically & coherently written; much more is explained, no questions are left unanswered. The climax, missing from the inferior English dub, has Dr. Yamani (Takashi Shimura of **SEVEN SAMURAI**) predicting there may actually be more Godzillas lurking about! So already, Toho was readying its audience for numerous sequels, proving the writer, Shigeru Kayama was way ahead of his time!

So this 1954 tale of a radio active

Now that we've examined a little of the behind the scenes of the Godzilla movies, let's explore into the characters & films themselves. For example, I'm not the world's biggest (or even tallest) fans of the first movie. Despite its supposed status as a 'masterpiece', 'classic', and a



dinosaur (FX courtesy of the late great Eiji Tsuburaya) stalking Tokyo may not be my personal favorite, but it got the ball rolling. Godzilla was definitely the king of the monsters in the 1950s! America's **BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS** or Britain's **GIANT BEHEMOTH & GORGON** would have their gonads bitten off if they'd tried to take away Godzilla's crown! The next few Godzilla flicks (**GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER**, **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA** and **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**) proved Dr. Yamani was correct, there was indeed another Godzilla (or more? You notice his costume looked different in each film!?), who'd evaded Serizawa's Oxygen Destroyer! This younger Godzilla (s), called Gigantis at first, did his share of destruction (it's a right of passage for all young Godzillas to destroy parts of Japan!), but in these thrilling films, he also found time to battle other monsters, like porcupine/armadillo Angilas, Mothra, one of the King Kongs (a much bigger Kong than the little guy who carried Fay Wray up onto the Empire State Building), and eventually Rodan (who, like Mothra, had his own film).

By this time, Toho realized the Godzillas would be dull if they kept breaking buildings & army tanks, so they made a few changes (much to the regret of old time fans, geeks & couch potatoes who want all films to be exactly like **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**). So Godzilla eventually united

with former rivals, Rodan & Mothra, to tackle that notorious hydra from outer space, King Ghidrah! So while Godzilla & Rodan (who both had a change of heart, realizing Japanese people aren't so appetizing after all) kicked Ghidrah's ass (or asses, it's hard to tell, I mean, he's got three heads and two tails!) in these films (**GHIDRAH THE 3 HEADED MONSTER**, **MONSTER ZERO**, and **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS**), there were two evil creatures loosely related to Godzilla, who were still up to no good. Gomes and Kira were definitely related to Godzilla, there's a striking resemblance, despite additional claws & scales. Gomes battled the bird monster Ritoria in episode #1 of **ULTRA Q** (TBS; 1965), while Kira ('Jiras' in the Japanese dub) met a gruesome death at the hands of Ultraman (in episode #10 of 1966's **ULTRAMAN**). Of course, there are technogeeks who are correct when they argue that Gomes & Kira aren't really supposed to be related to Godzilla, and that Eiji Tsuburaya had to borrow Toho's Godzilla costume for these 'original', 'independent' TV shows, due to budgetary restraints (hell, if I had to make monster costumes on a weekly basis, I'd do it too!). Okay, so I admit it, Godzilla isn't actually related to Kira or Gomes, certainly not in the traditional sense. But isn't it fun to fantasize about the family tree of Japanese sci-fi and how all these creatures actually knew each other

(hell, in some dimension, Ultraman even met Kamen Rider many years later!). If you insist my wishful theory is wrong, you're right, and you can go shove your pencil box up your sphincter.

But Ultraman's wasting Godzilla's cousin Kira proves how forgiving Godzilla really is, since it didn't prevent him from befriending a couple Ultraman-like heroes (Zone

Fighter and Jet Jaguar) later on. Speaking of heroes, Godzilla & his son Minya (aka Minira & Minilla) sort



The Godzilla Tower from **GODZILLA VS. GIGIN**.



All photo's © Toho.

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of became superheroes themselves. Smashing buildings had become passe, unfashionable and out-of-style (much like many Godzilla fans) in Monsterdom, so in the late 1960s, Godzilla became a full-time superhero. Gabara, Hedorah, Gigan, Jurah, Megalon, Zandora, Mechagodzilla and Titanosaurus were no match for the Big G, and nor were the aliens or assorted giant mantises, tarantulas, condors, & lobsters who foolishly crossed his path. Godzilla couldn't always defeat these villains alone, and needed help from high tech superheroes mentioned at the beginning of this brilliant paragraph, like Jet Jaguar (**GODZILLA VS. MEGALON**) and Zone Fighter (**RYUSEI NINGEN ZONE**), and fel-

low monsters like Mothra, Gorosaurus, Varan, Manda, Minya, King Seesar, and even Angilas, who'd apparently forgiven Godzilla for killing him in **GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER**.

Another member of Godzilla's immediate family, also called Godzilla (can you imagine having an entire family where everyone had the same name?!), went on his own series of adventures in the 1970s, in Marvel Comics' **GODZILLA** comic book. Among other things, he took on Devil Dinosaur and the Fantastic Four! Like his twin on Saturday morning kiddie cartoons (**GODZILLA POWER HOUR**; Hanna Barbera), he and his terrible new nephew Godzooki went on all sorts of wacky, childish adventures. Likewise on the American Godzilla



record album (Godzilla takes on Donald Duck-sounding aliens trying to steal the Earth's atmosphere), which had the same cover as the first edition of Marvels so-called **GODZILLA** comic. But I don't like comics, American cartoons or bastardized remakes which exist in alternate dimensions of Godzilladom, especially when they're written by people who know as much about Godzilla as a Bushman knows about plankton.

Regardless, things just seemed to get too exciting and tiresome for old man Godzilla in the 1970s. In one form or another, he'd dealt with anyone from King Ghidrah, to Ultraman, to the Fantastic Four, to King Kong, to John Belushi (who played Godzilla on **SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE**, and hosted NBC's butchered **GODZILLA VS. MEGALON** in 1977, the only time Godzilla was on a major

network and battled the Nielsen Ratings. While the Godzilla costume worn by the late Belushi wasn't bad, the humor was the typically negative bullshit Godzilla has always gotten from narrow-minded, lame-ass critics). So in 1975, having defeated both **Titanosaurus** and **Mechagodzilla**, an injured Godzilla wandered back into the ocean for one last time, for his apparent retirement. The movie was **TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA**, but the real terror was yet to come.

The next ten years were a long decade for Godzilla fans. Having suffered defeat from bombs (all at the box office), the old war horse of monster battles never showed his face. There were plenty of rumors, nonexistent films like **SPACE GODZILLA** (though **GODZILLA VS. SPACE**

GODZILLA is finally being made, but I don't know if it's the same "Space Godzilla" story we heard about in 1978), **MINYA'S REVENGE**, **GODZILLA VS. THE DEVIL**, and there stupid animated

parodies like **BAMBI MEETS GODZILLA**, and of course, that crap from Marvel and Hanna Barbera, but no new, live action battles for Godzilla. By the late 1970s or early 1980s, nearly all the American Japantasy fanzines (except OC!) had died along with Godzilla.

So when **GODZILLA**

1985 finally came out, it seemed as though the big guy was back in action, ready to take on newer monsters like **Battra** & **Biollante**, and old rivals like **Ghidrah**, **Mechagodzilla**, **Mothra** and **Rodan**. I'm afraid this is one time I can't link this Godzilla with the others. **GODZILLA 1985**, **GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE**, **GODZILLA VS. KING GHIDRAH**, **GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA** and the more recent **GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA** are as faithful to the original series as the dreck which came from Marvel & Hanna Barbera in the 1970s! I'm not the world's biggest fan of this 'new age' of Godzilladom, I wish these movies could link up with **TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA**. But they're being shameless bastardizations doesn't make them bad films. Many old timers who hated the 1970s films absolutely drool over this new stuff, because of the way the flicks try to preserve the atmosphere of the 1960s

and sports crap with Charles Barkley.

What adventures lay ahead for the Big G? Well, at the time of this writing, Toho is finishing up Godzilla's 40th anniversary movie, **GODZILLA VS. SPACE GODZILLA**, where Godzilla and his son will take on Space Godzilla, some sort of new mutant Godzilla who fires crystal missiles. They're supposedly fighting over critical cosmic rays that energize the Earth. It's boasting 'dazzling computer graphics', which could be both a blessing and a curse; that makes it a blurse. It'll probably be out in December of 1994. Meanwhile, as you've all heard (over, and over, and over, and over), there will eventually be an American Godzilla movie. It'll be directed by somebody called Jan De Bont, who supposedly directed some hit I've never heard of called **SPEED**. We all hear it will have epic computer FX, much like in **JURASSIC PARK**, an overrated piece of crap I



GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER ©American International

films. Naturally, this successful series of New Age Godzilladom is inspiring the birth and return of more Japantasy-type fanzines, so once again, OC is not alone.

If you can ignore the fact that these new movies show no respect for the original movies, these new movies can be lots of fun. We get to see another new Godzilla, battling monsters, and communicating with some girl with ESP. Being new, the special effects are considerably more advanced than in the old days. Hell, the days of Godzilla looking like a man in a rubber costume are long gone, Godzilla's new flicks are seriously high tech! And yet, can you believe it?! American film critics still continue to label these movies as cheap & cheesy. My god, won't these dumb shits ever be satisfied?! Hell, no matter what them lame critics say, Godzilla proved to be successful enough to appear in commercials, endorsing Dr. Pepper

thought stunk like stale milk. I'm not looking forward to the American Godzilla, but any Godzilla movie is better than no Godzilla movie at all.



©Aurora, Monogram and Toho. The Godzilla model kit, based on **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA**.



DESTROY ALL MONSTERS

[KAIJU SOUSHIN GEKI] Toho; 1968, Dir. of Photography: Taichi Kankura, Screenplay by Kaoru Mabuchi & Inoshiro Honda, Art Dir.: Takeo Kita, Music: Akira Ifukube, FX: Eiji Tsuburaya and Sanemasa Arikawa, Executive Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Director: Inoshiro Honda, Sound Recording: Shoichi Yoshizawa, Cast: Akira Kubo, Yukiko Kobayashi, Kyoko Ai, Jun Tazaki, Hisaya Ito, Andrew Hughes, Reviewed by Edward Holland.

Although produced in the 1960s, and set in 1999, the film attempted to deal with futuristic concepts like undersea farming, to prevent worldwide famine, and the cross breeding of monsters. These plot devices were dropped, because of an excruciatingly tight budget. Of some note are the fashions, which were changed slightly, to appear more futuristic. This is evident in the Kilaak costumes and the subtle adaptations of the police uniforms, which featured no lapels. Other elements of a future society is a woman viewing a Sony Watchman-type television on a subway train. The film's style has more than one period of resurgence, and is destined for more. This film is considered one of the best in the genre, not necessarily for its storyline, or characterization, but for the amount of monsters is stuffed into one package. **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS**'s significance is relative to the time period in which

many saw it on TV. During the 1970s, **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS** was the highlight of Monster Week, a programming gimmick that insured TV ratings, for at least a week. Years later, I still enjoy watching Godzilla & crew beating the bloody hell out of Ghidorah and the Kilaak invaders.

Big news in 1968 was the ill-fated Viet Nam War. The Tokyo Giants were Japan's baseball champions, and the group sounds of the Tigers were sizzling the music charts. But nothing was bigger than the threat of the earth's destruction by Toho's largest collection of Monsters in **KAIJU SOUSHIN GEKI** ("All Monsters Attack"). **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS** was the atomic icing on a nuclear cake for many longtime Kaiju fans. To others it was a disappointing juvenile revue with a host of Toho titans. The monster cast included: Godzilla, Mothra, Rodan, Manda, Gorosaurus, Angilas, Minira (aka Minya), Spiga (aka Kumonga), Varan, Baragon, and King Ghidorah. Gorosaurus (from **KING KONG ESCAPES**) is misnamed Baragon. Later, we see Baragon, but only briefly. Don't blink while watching this film or you'll miss not only Baragon, but Varan as well. The monsters appear at various famous landmarks around the world. They smash them, and then are called back to Ogasawara Island, home of Kaiju Land. This film marks Godzilla's first and only appearance in the states, where he destroys the United Nations

building. The monster costumes look like they were dusted off and cleaned for this epic battle, some were redesigned, and others like King Ghidorah, look like they're in need of repair. The kaiju on Ogasawara are controlled by means of poison gas and force fields. The Kilaak Seijin, which take control of the monsters claim that the saucer, that bursts into flames in the beginning of the movie is also a monster from their own world. In the end of the picture they attempt one last time to destroy the earth with their Fire Dragon, which is a flying saucer as well.

The Kilaak aliens originate from outerspace, somewhere between Mars and Jupiter. They come to the earth to destroy it, like all aliens do, and are led by their beautiful silver queen, played by Kyoko Ai. Their mission is to control the scientists of Ogasawara Island, through mind control, by planting transceivers in the necks of individuals like Dr. Otani, and in the earrings of Dr. Otani's assistant, Kyoko Manabe. The Kilaak control the monsters through transmitters all over the world, and their main transmitter is located on the moon. Astronaut Katsuo Yamabe and crew destroy the transmitter and the Kilaak moonbase. This destruction causes the Kilaak to become snake-like, and they slink back into their rocks from whence they came. This is a strange cinematic device, which reminds one of those putrid black snake fireworks. The

possessed kaiju are converted to attack the Kilaak underground base in the Izu area of Japan. The Kilaak order King Ghidorah to come down from his fireball in the sky, and get his golden ass whipped by Monster Land's finest. Ghidorah is defeated and the underground Kilaak base is destroyed. Everyone at UNSC and on Ogasawara Island are happy and carefree, except for the maintenance crew at Monster Land, who have to work with poisonous gases, force field systems, and the ever present problem of cleaning up after Godzilla. ***** - Edward Holland

GHIDRAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER

{Japanese title: "Sandai Kaiju No Kessen", which means "The Greatest Monster Battle on Earth", alternate English title on video: "Godzilla vs. Ghidorah"} Produced by Toho in 1964, Released to America in 1965, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir.: Inoshiro Honda, Screenplay: Shinichi Sekizawa, English Dialogue: Joe Bellucci, Dir. of Photography: Kajime Koizumi, Art Dir.: Takeo Kita, Set Decoration: Akira Watanabe, Sound Recordist: Fumio Yanoguchi, Sound



© Toho



Technician: Osamu Chiku, Lighting Supervisor: Shoshichi Kojima, Lighting: Kuichiro Kishida, Music: Akira Ifukube, Song "Call of Happiness" words by Tokiko Iwatani & Music by Hisashi Shimogana, Special Effects by Eiji Tsuburaya, Running time: 92 min., Starring: Yosuke Natsuke, Yuriko Hoshi, Hiroshi Koizumi, Takashi Shimura, Emi & Yumi Ito (The Peanuts), Akiko Wakabayashi, Hisaya Ito, Akihiko Hirata, Kenji Sahara, Haruo

very weak, as Godzilla, Rodan & Ghidrah are destroying Japan but not one tank is in sight! The fight between Godzilla and Rodan turns silly in the last third of the film and the silliness increases during the battle royale with Ghidrah. While these monster antics are harmless & amusing, the climactic battle would have had greater impact if played seriously and not for laughs. However, the film's main flaw is the subplot, which deals with a cat-and-

survives due to a voice warning her of danger. Soon after, the princess appears in Japan, claiming to be a Martian and predicting imminent doom. Of course, no one believes her, except for a Japanese reporter named Junko (Yuriko Hoshi). The assassins soon arrive in Japan to track down the princess but are thwarted at every turn, by detective Shindo (Yosuke Natsuki), Junko's brother. The princess's predictions are fulfilled, as

monsters. With Japan being torn apart by Ghidrah, Godzilla & Rodan, the Japanese government appeals to the Twin Fairies of Infant Island (who are visiting Japan) to ask Mothra for help. Seeing the impossibility of... {Sorry Robert, but I asked for a review, not a fucking encyclopedia! I don't like to condense other people's work, but I'm the one typing all this, and I've got many other things to do! To make a long story short, Ghidrah suffers defeat by the combined forces of Godzilla, Mothra & Rodan, as the detective has a shoot out with the remaining terrorists, and then Princess Selina regains her memory. -DF} King Ghidrah would return to appear in four more films, the most recent being GODZILLA VS. GHIDRAH (1991). **** - Robert Biondi

GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER

Toho; 1955, aka GODZILLA RAIDS AGAIN & GOJIRA NO GYAKUSHU, Presented by Paul Scheibman, Original Story: Shigeru Kayama, Photography: Saiichi Endo, Screenplay: Takeo Murata & Sigeaki Hidaka, Art Dir.: Takeo Kita, Asst. Art Dir.: Teruaki Abe, Sound: Masanobu Miyazaki, Lighting: Masayoshi Onume, FX: Eiji Tsuburaya & His staff: Akira Watanabe, Hiroshi Mukoyama & Masao Shirota, Produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka, and Directed by Motoyoshi Odo, Cast: Hiroshi Koizumi as Tsushioaka, Statsuko Wakayama as Hidemi, Mindru Chiaki as Kobayashi, Takashi Shimura as Yamani, American Version Produced by Paul Scheibman, Assoc. Prod.: Edmund Goldman, Dir. & Film Editor:



© Toho

Nakajima, Reviewed by Robert Biondi.

GHIDRAH, THE 3 HEADED MONSTER is a landmark in the Godzilla saga. Made during a busy year for Toho (1964 also saw the release of GODZILLA VS. THE THING and DAGORA THE SPACE MONSTER), GHIDRAH expands on the popular idea of crossing-over monsters from previous movies, and showcases Toho's 'Giant Monster Trio': Godzilla, Rodan & Mothra. GHIDRAH also set the tone for the rest of the series up to TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA (1975). The Godzilla films became humorous, fast-paced, monster-packed and portrayed Godzilla, Rodan, Mothra & other Earth creatures as defenders against evil alien invaders and their monsters. This idea reached an all-time peak in DESTROY ALL MONSTERS (1968). Finally, GHIDRAH saw the debut of the most powerful monster in the universe and Godzilla's archenemy: King Ghidrah (also spelled Gidora & Ghidora), as the triple headed demon is known in Japan.

GHIDRAH is a marvelous film. Ishiro Honda's direction, Akira Ifukube's musical scoring and Eiji Tsuburaya's special effects all combine to create an exciting and extravagant movie. Some of the special effects, particularly the fiery creation of King Ghidrah, hold up well even by today's standards. However, GHIDRAH does contain a few flaws. The military presence in the film is

mouse game between assassins and a detective with a princess's life at stake. Although the acting is polished and the story unfolds steadily, the human plot has scant connection to the monster plot, and the result is almost like watching two different movies. These faults aside, GHIDRAH is colorful, entertaining and is definitely one of the best films in the

Godzilla and Rodan appear from hibernation and battle it out in Japan. Meanwhile, the princess is put under hypnosis and explains that Mars once had a highly advanced civilization until destroyed by the demon of the universe: King Ghidrah. The princess relates that some Martians had escaped to the Himalayas and eventually lost their Martian abilities, which



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Godzilla series.

A huge meteor crashed in a Japanese valley. As a team of geologists investigates the meteor, a Himalayan (Akiko Wakabayashi) is targeted for termination by her late father's rival. While the princess is enroute to Japan on a diplomatic trip, assassins blow up the plane. However, the princess

included the power of prophecy (apparently, the explosion on the plane triggered the princess's dormant Martian ancestry). The princess further warns that King Ghidrah has landed on Earth and threatens to destroy the planet. True enough, the meteor hatches and from a hellish ball of fire appears King Ghidrah, monster of

Al Sarno, Sound by Ryder Sound Service Inc., Reviewed by Rajar Shy.

Following the financial return of Godzilla's 1st feature, Toho Studios rushed out a sequel for more profit through the production mill & thus Godzilla's 2nd feature & last film in B&W came to be! Having killed off their main star in the first film, the



dinosaur that has been resurrected by radioactivity in this follow-up, we are told, is a dinosaur of the same breed or maybe even a close relative. Released as **GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER** in the U.S. by Warner Bros., maybe one of you 'know-it-all's out there in magazine-reading-land can tell me in the next issue of OC's letters why American International didn't release this film also? Was someone at A.I.P. asleep? Didn't AIP wanna' cash-in on a sequel like Toho did back in Japan? Well, since American International Pictures owned the copyright to the name **Godzilla**, the Brothers at Warner re-named our fire breathing friend "Gigantis". However, I feel that this only led to confusion to whether this was a **Godzilla** film or not, to the casual non-hardcore **Godzilla** fan because, to the best of my knowledge, this film was rarely shown on TV.

Sure, this film had a healthy run here in the USA back in 1959. But some of us reading this weren't even born yet at that time. In the 1970s magazines like "The Monster Times" July 1974 issue #35 mentions that **Gigantis** stars in **GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER**, so many a reader was still not informed that this was indeed a **Godzilla** film. "Famous Monsters of Filmland", May 1975 issue #114 however, did help inform us by listing **GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER** along with its other title, "Godzilla Raids Again"! However, it wasn't until 1989 when "Video Treasures" made this rarely seen film domestically available on the home video market. So finally being able to view this previously elusive film was quite an enjoyable experience in spite of the fact that **Godzilla's** name is now **Gigantis** in the American dub & that the American releasers took out the original Japanese music score & replaced it with a **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** type of American music score so that **Godzilla** & **Angilas** seem to share the same sounding roar & that some nit-picking dweeb once complained that he thought that **Godzilla's** teeth in this film looked like the bristles of a tooth brush.....yes even in spite of all this, I found this to be quite an enjoyable little flick for its time! Even though **GIGANTIS** may be crude compared to today's movie making standards, it's still a good sequel to the original **GODZILLA** film & Toho's first monster vs. monster epic.

The same voice actors who did **RODAN** (Toho; 1957) must have done this film as well. Although some critics have deemed that their voices sound too cartoonish, I for one find the Asian accents they give the characters in the film to be very effective & not as

laughable as the mid-west-white-bread-Caucasian accents that other voice dub actors have done in movies like **PRINCE OF SPACE** (Toei; 1959), **INVASION OF THE NEPTUNE MEN** (Toei; 1959) and all the "Starman" movies (Shin Toho; 1956-'59).

Godzilla & **Angilas** are discovered battling on a remote island off the coast of Japan by two pilots. The two prehistoric beasts fall off a cliff & continue their struggle underwater. The two pilots are shocked & fly back to Japan to report what they've seen. Along with authorities they sit & watch stock footage of various dinosaur movies & the 1st **Godzilla** feature & say "Yes" they remember a giant radioactive dino like him destroying Tokyo last year! Meanwhile, **Godzilla** and **Angilas** take their fight over to Japan as well as stomp a few buildings & people in the process. They smash Osaka Castle & **Godzilla** knocks out **Angilas** & throws him into the sea. **Godzilla** then also returns to the ocean & the Japanese army lose track of him. Later **Godzilla** is rediscovered on an island of ice & snow. The army sends a squad of jets & **Godzilla** is buried in an avalanche & is neatly packed in ice for the next seven years until he's thawed out to duke it out with his next wrestling partner, **King Kong**, in the 1962 sequel **KING KONG VS. GODZILLA!** All in all, **GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER** didn't break any new ground in the history of giant Japanese monster movies, but then again, it didn't lose any. *** - Rajar Shy

GODZILLA, KING OF MONSTERS

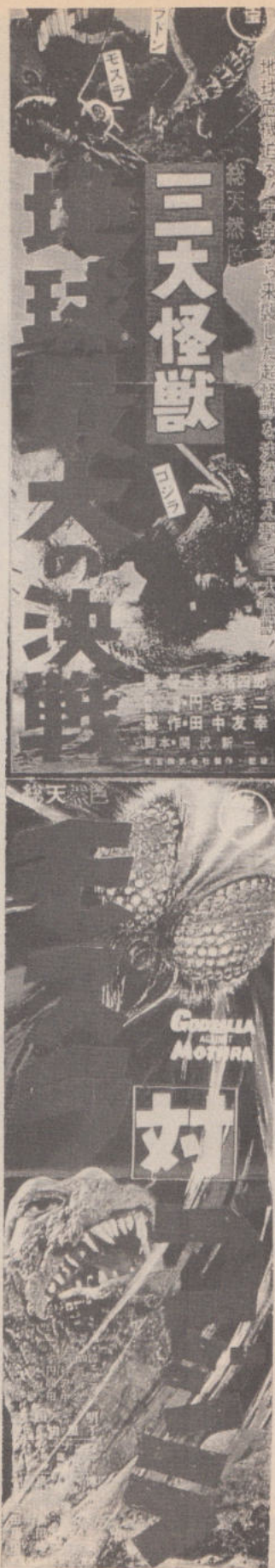
(aka **GOJIRA**) Produced by Toho in 1954, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir.: Ishiro Honda, Screenplay: Ishiro Honda & Takeo Murata, Music: Akira Ifukube, Cast: Raymond Burr, Akira Takarada, Momoko Kuchi, Takashi Shimura, S. Sakai, Akihiko Hirata, Haruo Nakajima, Reviewed by Dan Reed.

GODZILLA KING OF THE MONSTERS is an excellent example of Hollywood star making at its very best. Granted the original Toho product was a classic and probably one of the two best films ever made in Japan, but let's face it, without Raymond Burr (and the production skills of Joseph E. Levine, Terry Morse, and cinematographer Guy Roe among others) it's unlikely that 19 more (and counting) **Godzilla** movies would have ever been made, and the big G himself would have ended up about as famous as **Varan the Unremarkable**. Oh sure, they probably would have shot a sequel but the third film would have happened without the golden Holly-

wood touch given this production. By far the most solemn of the giant monster on the loose films that were made following RKO's re-release of **KING KONG** in 1952, due primarily to its Japanese origins, the first 'American' **Godzilla** is totally without comic relief. The closest thing to a joke in this movie is when Raymond Burr says the line "Tomo, we make him mad?" during his character's first visit to Odo Island. This lack of humor alone sets it apart for the threat of atomic destruction from the folks who understood this threat best, the world's only victims of atomic warfare. While many aspects of the Japanese original were lost in this attempt to bring the film to a western audience, the basic power of the story remained intact. Very early on in the film a young girl is checked for radiation poisoning by a doctor in an emergency relief center, who shakes his head sadly, while Raymond Burr intones, "and for some there would be no tomorrow." No friend to children, this **Godzilla** was a monster whose only agenda was destruction. Eiji Tsuburaya's effects are quite amazing, with some scenes retaining their impact to this day (**Godzilla** attacking the radio tower full of reporters, for example). That all of **Godzilla's** best scenes take place at night was no accident. Looking best in the long shots, **Godzilla** the suit beats the hell out of **Godzilla** the puppet. One of the film's greatest hold overs from the original was the better part of Akira Ifukube's masterful score, something that would be missed in most of the later outings. Despite the fact that Raymond Burr's scenes were reportedly all shot in a single day by Guy Roe under the direction of Terry Morse, they actually work remarkably well in creating a Western (and distinctly American) perspective on the events of the original film. It's amazing how much Japanese dialogue remains in this Japanese film. That combined with the occasionally grainy texture of the remastered prints work in the film's favor, giving it a documentary look and tone. The scenes that match up the characters from the original film with Raymond Burr are very well done, especially the telephone conversation he has with Serizawa. Burr's performance while occasionally a bit bland, is generally very effective in lending dramatic first person impact to the story. While purists are likely to remain devoted to the original (as long as subtitles are provided for them to read what's going on), the non otaku among us can always rely on this version to provide a dramatic alternative to some of the revamped Jun Fukuda **Godzillas** of the 1970s.

Reporter Steve Martin (Raymond Burr) of the United World News service awakes one morning to find himself in the blasted ruins of the city of Tokyo. Flashing back he recalls being aboard a Pan Am flight enroute to Japan only a few days before, for a brief visit with his old college chum Dr. Serizawa (Akihiko Hirata), before heading on to Cairo for his next assignment. However, fate intervenes when 10,000 feet below his flight path a small Japanese steamship is suddenly engulfed in a blinding light and sinks into a sea of fire. Arriving in Japan, Martin is questioned by Security Officer Tomo Iwanaga (Frank Iwanaga), who is looking for clues to the cause of the ship's mysterious destruction. Identifying himself as a reporter, Martin is able to tag along with Iwanaga as the mystery deepens following the destruction of more ships in the same area. At a special session of the Japanese diet, Dr. Yamane (Takashi Shimura) suggests an investigation of an island located in the area where the ships are being destroyed. Accompanying a team of officials to Odo Island, Steve Martin hears one native insist that the destruction is a result of a living creature. That night after Steve and Tomo attend an ancient ceremony concerning a legendary monster called Godzilla that the natives used to sacrifice virgins to, the island is visited by a monsoon rain. While Steve and Tomo cling to a tree (and each other), something really big and very alive stomps through the village under the cover of the storm. The next day after hearing the native's testimony about a giant monster, Dr. Yamane, his daughter Emiko (Momoko Kuchi), her fiancée Ogata (Akira Takarada), Steve Martin, and a team of scientific investigators travel to the island. Dr. Yamane finds evidence of giant footprints, radioactivity and supposedly extinct trilobites. An alarm is sounded and while heading for higher ground the group gets its first glimpse of Godzilla. As quickly as it appeared, the monster disappears back into the ocean. Back in Tokyo, Yamane reveals his discoveries to the Council and blames the recent H-bomb testing in the south pacific for re-awakening and irradiating this obviously prehistoric monster. The military decides to try and destroy the creature by dropping depth charges on it since it spends most of the time in the water. Meanwhile, Emiko Yamane decides to visit her friend Dr. Serizawa, who, thanks to an arrangement made by her parents when she was a child, she had once agreed to marry. She is about to tell him about her relationship with Ogata, when Serizawa in-

© Toho



terrupts in order to show her a substance he's invented called an Oxygen Destroyer. The destructive potential of this innovation..... {Sorry Dan, but this ultra-technical, in-depth look at every minute detail of a story we all know by heart is pointless! I know, I'm the one asking these guys to contribute to OC, and should be tolerant of their different writing styles. I'm very grateful to Dan and everybody else for helping out, obviously putting a lot of time and effort into these articles. But ink isn't free, and trees have died for this page! I must again move this plot along! Godzilla destroys part of Tokyo, so self-destructive Dr. Serizawa uses his Oxygen Destroyer to kill Godzilla and himself. -DF} Godzilla surfaces for one final roar before being dissolved by Serizawa's invention. The menace was gone, but so was a great man, and the whole world could wake up and live again. **** - Dan Reed

GODZILLA 1985

Produced by Toho Movie Co. as GOJIRA in 1984, American Video distributor: New World Video, Film Editors: Yoshitami Kuroiwa, Michael Spence, Dir. of Photography: Kazutani Hora & Steven Dubin, FX: Teruyoshi Nakano, Music: Keiji Koroku, Screenplay: Shuichi Nakahara, Story: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Producers: Tomoyuki Tanaka & Anthony Kandel, Dir.: Koji Hashimoto & KJ Kizer, Starring: Raymond Burr, Keiju Kobayashi, Ken Tanaka, Yasuko Sawaguchi, Shin Takuma, Tetsuya Takeda, Yasuke Natsuki, Warren Kemmerling, James Hess, Travis Swords, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

The years 1976-1984 were a long period for Godzilla fans, even longer than a sperm whale's cock. For that semi-decade offered no new Godzilla movies, the last being 1975's TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA, a landmark film, the series's conclusion, representing the end of an era. So when the 'new' movie, GOJIRA (Toho; 1984) came out in Tokyo, and came to America a year later, as GODZILLA 1985, its being both a sequel & remake of 1954's GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS, many older fans were impressed at Godzilla's return to the so-called 'good old days'. Naturally, with technology on the rise, the FX for this one blow away that of the earlier films. But in my opinion, FX, no matter how expensive & flawless, don't make a movie. I dislike remakes, which explains my negative attitude toward this one. I also happen to dislike boredom, so all the more reason to trash GODZILLA 1985. Though not the worst movie in existence, it accomplishes very little, artistically. It's not very imaginative,

its only claim to fame being that it brought to life a 'new & improved' Godzilla, igniting a whole new (though unfaithful) series of adventures. I'd rather watch an older film, with Godzilla teaming up with other monsters, in those good old, over-the-top, violent fantasies of the 1970s. Those days are gone, fortunately for the rest of you, but not for me.

Raymond Burr, spliced into his second & final Godzilla movie, once more plays 'Mr. Martin', though called Steve Martin in the 1954 flick! Obviously, usage of Steve Martin would provoke laughs from the audience, because of that formerly 'wild & crazy guy' of the same name. In this case, the unconvincing edits of Burr and some army guys watching Godzilla on a TV monitor amount to little more than a couple plugs for Dr. Pepper (that gross tasting beverage sponsored this film's release, which explains them Godzilla/Dr. Pepper commercials a few years back). Anyway, these Americans are watching Godzilla's rampage in Japan. Speaking of Japan, that's where most of the dullness is; boring characters and an uninteresting subplot about a reporter's quest for the truth. One weird scene has him on a ship supposedly attacked by Godzilla (yet the ship is in perfect condition). He slips in some unidentified white liquid! What happened? Some sailor jerk off to a pin up of Mel Gibson? And that giant bug (it screams like Ebira) that attacks the reporter?! What the hell is it? It's never explained! I assume it's a big parasite; one of Godzilla's flees. All but one of the crewmen have turned into either dried-out burn victims or mummified corpses. What happened is never explained, at least not in the English version. One kid in Japan, who saw the film, was quoted as saying: "Why man turn into doll?" Pretty pathetic, considering these stiffers are suppose to look scary. But the movie becomes semi-watchable, once Godzilla goes on a rampage in an incredibly realistic miniature set of the Shinjuku District in Tokyo. Ironically, that's where I lived when I was in Japan. Toho's scale model of my old neighborhood looks just as I remembered it, I kept expecting to see Godzilla smash my apartment. But occasionally, we cut away from Godzilla & boring Japanese actors, back to the Americans. At least they state "Godzilla first appeared in 1956", thereby acknowledging existence of the other movies! Regardless, Russians & Americans debate about nuclear warfare, Godzilla is nearly killed (but he gets better) by a futuristic air vehicle called the Super X, and then he falls into a volcano. * - DF

GODZILLA'S REVENGE

Produced by Toho in 1969, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Writer: Shinichi Sekizawa, Photography: Kunio Miyauchi, Starring Machiko Naka, Kenji Sahara (cameo), Isei Amamoto, Hideyo Amemoto, Reviewed by John Emma.

Well, where do I start? How about this: **GODZILLA'S REVENGE** is a late '60s kid's movie from Japan. But you know that already, right? I mean these are for real young kids, so we gotta' remember that. Now basically, this is a cute film, but I've got one complaint, that obnoxious little kid, and Minya, Godzilla's kid. Oops, that's two complaints. You all gotta' know this too: Japanese kids are really this obnoxious! But if you're a kid, it's a pretty cool story.

Now I gotta' give this about 3 stars {DF here, for the record, I only gave it one and a half stars in OC#14, proving 'one man's trash is another man's treasure'. I agree that the kiddies are annoying as hell, but the monster battles are nice. Unfortunately, Godzilla's only 'new' battle is with Gabara, as his duels with insects & other animals are stock footage from **GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER** and **SON OF GODZILLA** - DF}. It's got Godzilla, and the bad guys get it in the end. So it's good for the little ones. But it could have been a 5-star job with a few minor variations. One, those jackass thieves take that bastard kid and cut off his head immediately! So we don't have to listen to him. And two, Godzilla and Gabara both knock the stuffing out of that wimp Minya, and then Godzilla toast him like a big faggot marshmallow. Now that would have been ART. But enjoy the movie anyway.

Two of the most inept assholes to ever steal anything abduct this little whiny, bastard brat (like I said, really stupid). Now this kid also gets bullied at school (understandably), so he daydreams about Godzilla's kid, who's also a wimp. The big G's kid, Minya, is always getting pounded by this cool looking guy called Gabara, a monster covered in green tennis balls, and anyone else that comes along. Until daddy teaches him to be tough. (And beats the crap out of Gabara too.) Now the little human jizzbag decides he's gonna' grow some balls too, and he really fucks with those too limp dick thieves until they beg to be captured by the law. And that's about it. *** - John Emma

GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE

Toho Eiga Production, 1989, Exec. Prod.: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir. of Special Effects: Koichi Kawakita, Screenplay

& Dir.: Kazuki Omori, Cast: Kunihiro Mitamura, Yoshiko Tanaka, Masanobu Takashima, Megumi Odaka, Yasuko Sawaguchi, Toshiyuki Nagashima, Yoshiko Kuga, Toru Minegishi, Ryunosuke Kaneda, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

I bet this follow-up to **GODZILLA 1985** made 'traditional' Godzilla fans drool like fat kids in a candy store, as it's a direct sequel to its predecessor, and echoes its serious, high tech approach (as do those movies which came afterwards). However, I kinda' like it too, it is an intriguing, witty little flick. Like that scene where the ESP endowed kids demonstrate their predictions via drawings, that Godzilla will return. The scene is highlighted by Ifukube's classic Godzilla theme song. Even when Godzilla and that overgrown Venus-flytrap Biollante aren't battling it out, the movie maintains interest; the characters, like ESP chick Yuki Sagusa are remotely interesting. The pacing is watchable (especially the neatly 'trimmed' English dubbing I saw), there are even a couple shootouts and fights between human characters.

The English version I saw has at least one whole sequence cut, involving a terrorist's bomb which releases Godzilla from the volcanic Mt. Mihara. While the scene made the film drag, it helped to add power to the climax of **GODZILLA 1985**! In the cut English version of **BIOLLANTE**, Godzilla just suddenly seems to escape from the volcano all by his lonesome, making the scientists in the previous film seem like idiots for putting him in the now 'easily escapable' volcano! But the Japanese version, though more complete, isn't great either. Those Middle Easterners & villains who spoke English sounded terrible ("She's not a bad sight!") "This isn't a beauty contest!". The American version isn't as annoying, as they're all dubbed by the "but still" people. They still sometimes call our hero 'Godziller', though.

Nearly five years before that dull **JURASSIC PARK** thing, came this tale of giant reptiles, cloned & mutated! Some scientist combined cells from Godzilla, a human (his dead daughter, but only after he was done mourning her death, of course), and a plant or two. Interference from violent agents & foreign countries didn't matter to Biollante, the huge hungry offspring of that wacky professor's (Yosuke Natsuki of **GHIDRAH THE 3-HEADED MONSTER**, **WARRING CLANS**, **DAGORA THE SPACE MONSTER**, **WHAT'S UP TIGER LILY**, etc.) experiment! Biollante and Godzilla seem to take an immediate disliking to each other, despite genetic roots. Godzilla wins the first



goopy battle, but while Biollante recuperates, Godzilla takes on Japan & the army again! I was particularly impressed by Godzilla's duel with jets and/or the new Super X vehicle, set in waist deep (Godzilla's waist, that is) water. Also, Godzilla takes on the same types of lasers which nearly destroyed the Green Gargantua many years before. Let's not forget the miniature buildings Godzilla destroys too, though the set isn't as magnificent as that in **GODZILLA 1985**. But after more human conflict, Biollante and Godzilla finally have that rematch. It's a little gory at one point, but pretty stupid too. The ending makes no sense to me-Godzilla stumbles off into the water and Biollante evaporates into a field of energy, and just floats off into space! After a semi-watchable movie which had potential, I'd expected a more climactic climax! Something which makes you say: "What a cool film!", instead of "What the bloody hell just happened?!"

** - Damon Foster

GODZILLA VS. GIGAN

{aka **GOJIRA TAI GIGAN** and **GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND**} Toho, 1972, Exec. Prod.: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Screenplay by Shinichi Sekizawa, Director of Photography: Kiyoshi Hasegawa, Music: Akira Ifukube, Director: Jun Fukuda, FX: Teruyoshi Nakano, Cast: Hiroshi Ishikawa, Minoru Takashima, Kunio Murai, Tomoko Umeda, Reviewed by Damon Foster again.

"They want peace", "we want peace", say the film's characters. I must say, the only peace I wanted was a piece of the lead heroine's ass! The character was also supposedly a black belt in karate. Of course, the Japanese films of 1972 & before weren't known for their martial arts (the only movie makers who knew anything about martial arts in 1972 were the Chinese), so the two 'karate' fights are little better than Don Knott's work in **THE GHOST AND MR. CHICKEN**. Of course, **GODZILLA VS. GIGAN** is not a karate film, but its other human characters are pretty stupid too. Attempts at comedy which fall flat on their faces. But still, the story is somewhat interesting, and it's nice to finally hear the lead character say "You're a hard bitch!" This was censored from the version I saw as a kid in the 1970s, at some matinee. The English dubbing, unlike your taste in reading material, isn't great, like when they refer to a place called 'Yamanoshi', I don't think there's really such a place. It's actually a district called Yamano C, so the dubbing is a translation error (C is pronounced 'shi' by them Japanese over in Japan). But if you can find it, get the English tape re-

leased by New World Video. It's uncut, unlike the cut version, **GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND** (an early re-titling). New World Video's only real flaw is putting two priestesses on the box cover! They're actually the same girl, Barbara Lynn, in two different kimonos, as she appears in 1974's **GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA/COSMIC MONSTER**, not **GODZILLA VS. GIGAN!**

Yet my minor gripes and petty complaints die like nicotine addicts, when the stunning image of Godzilla appears on the screen. Sure, some serious geeks complained that Godzilla's 1970s adventures are kiddie films, but I don't think **GIGAN** is all that childish. It's an average sci-fi thriller. This 1972 Godzilla, and sidekick Angilas have more heart and personality than the creatures in more recent, stale, generic Godzilla movies (anything after **TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA**). It's the film's human characters who seem stupid, while Godzilla & Angilas know what they're doing; stealing the film. Godzilla and Angilas are well matched, more so than Godzilla's later team-ups with Jet Jaguar and King Seesar. It's rather odd to see our two reptilian heroes speak English though (in the Japanese version, their conversation is translated by word bubbles, like in comic books). The main problem is Ghidrah, he moves too slow, and his miniature (flying model) is completely still (not to mention drastically out of scale with the costume, just look at how small he and Gigan suddenly get when they fly around the Godzilla Tower!). Then when it cuts to stock footage of Ghidrah in his 1960s films, he's suddenly moving quickly. The stock footage throughout **GIGAN** gets pretty annoying, scenes from **GHIDRAH THE 3 HEADED MONSTER**, **GODZILLA VS. SMOG MONSTER**, **WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS** and **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS** are easily recognizable.

The story swipes much from **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS**; again, alien invaders control giant monsters in order to conquer Japan (and while they're at it, maybe the rest of the world too). Only this time, they're mutant cockroaches from a part of outerspace called Nebula M-Spacehunter. Anyone who saw **THE DAY AFTER** knows only cockroaches

other futuristic structures, there's a central headquarters called the Godzilla Tower, which resembles Mattel's Godzilla Shogun Warrior from the 1970s. Their action signal tape contains a type of sonar signal, summoning destructive monsters who will do their dirty work. But these two humongous aliens, Ghidrah and Gigan (his debut) are confronted by

disguised cockroaches, all four monsters eventually clash. This is normally the high point of a Godzilla movie, but in this case, the monster battles are dull! The whole thing is slow-paced, a little too dark, and it drags. Regardless, there are a couple scenes of squirting blood (again cut from the G Rated print I saw as a twerp), and the efforts of Godzilla & Angilas are

touching. All the FX, be it explosive pyros or super-imposed lasers are impressive. The aliens die in a fiery explosion devised by the human heroes, and Godzilla & Angilas drive Ghidrah & Gigan back into space. The fights aren't great, but I can see why the 1970s Godzilla was considered a superhero. I don't mean that in a negative way; he's a hero and a damn good one. Even now, I get all teary-eyed (tears of joy) as Godzilla and Angilas swim off into the sunset, accompanied by a charismatic ballad. **GODZILLA VS. GIGAN** is the Godzilla equivalent of a spaghetti western. *** - DF

GODZILLA VS. KING GHIDRAH

Produced by Toho Eiga Co. in 1991, Written & Directed by Kazuki Omori, Music: Akira Ifukube, Featuring: Isao Toyohara, Megumi Odaka, Yoshio Tsuchiya, Anna Kakagawa, Shoji Kobayashi, Katsuhiko Sasaki, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Remember all the negative press for this one, a few years ago, because of the film's alleged 'anti-American stance'? This flick made headlines in the U.S., while the films before & after it were virtually ignored! If they're gonna put Godzilla in the news, it should be more frequent, and not just for petty, self-centered reasons like this. But indeed, Caucasians are treated as evil in **GODZILLA VS. KING GHIDRAH** (i.e. the flashbacks to WWII),

though that's nothing new for Asian flicks. The evil whities, this time are invaders from the future. However, they're accompanied by a futuristic Japanese (Anna Kakagawa), who, of course becomes a hero. Speaking as



can live through pollution and nuclear devastation. So these super smart roaches, whose planet was destroyed by humanoid oppressors, are taking it out on us Earthlings! Disguised as Japanese people, they're on Earth, creating a high-tech army base disguised as an amusement park. Among

reptilian earthlings Godzilla and Angilas! Their swim from Monster Island to Japan could have been better if Toho's only waterproof Godzilla suit hadn't looked so much different than the one used in the rest of the film. After more mumbo jumbo, like comic artist Geingo investigating the

a Caucasian, I regret this stereotype of us being so nasty. Excuse me while I go stick needles in my neighbor's condoms.

But once I got done pushing a boy scout out in a busy street to his grisly death, I came to realize that, despite its unjust prejudice, **GODZILLA VS. KING GHIDRAH** is utterly outstanding, easily my favorite of Godzilla's 1980s & 1990s films! The plot is intriguing & interesting; though both words mean basically the same thing, yet spelled differently. The FX are outstandingly excellent, they've really improved on costumes, explosions and Ghidrah's electrical formation & materialization. There are guest cameos and familiar faces through out, and futuristic heroine Emi (Anna Kagawa) is a serious babe! This thrilling movie made me so happy that I celebrated by doing what we whites do best: I killed a few fleeing people and then switched a dentist's 'saliva vacuum' into reverse! I'd say his next patient is in for a mouthfull! His mouth will never be dry again!

This magnificent adventure deals with time travel, and as such, is open to debate, rationalizing and conflicting hypothesis. You know, questions which start out like: "Wait! But if that happened, wouldn't that mean..." , "I'm confused, why didn't they just..." Anyway, people from the futuristic future have come to our time period, since altering our world will improve theirs. They also go even further back, to a small island (Lagos Island) where the original (pre-radiation) Godzilla was seen during World War 2. This non-mutant Godzilla looks more like a regular allosaurus, but roars like Gamera (an in joke, I hope!). This 'Godzillasaurus' wipes out an army of badly acted American soldiers, before the invaders abduct him and drop him off in the ocean. The idea is that by doing so, he'll be far enough from the imminent nuclear bomb which turned him (will turn him?) into a huge mutant! Also, they drop off some cute, bat-like gremlins (fake-looking, but tolerable) on the island too, knowing the imminent radiation will alter them drastically. Sure enough, by the early 1990s, these nuclear creatures have mutated into a huge 3-headed dragon, the new Ghidrah! As Ghidrah goes on an excellent, FX-filled rampage, Godzilla returns! Over the years, his confinement underwater didn't prevent the dinosaur from becoming the Godzilla we know & love! I don't know what changed him, maybe nuclear fall out or water pollution. So Godzilla single-handedly wastes Ghidrah; the first

time he did it without help from Angilas or Rodan! With them out of the way, Godzilla finally tears Ghidrah to shreds, even decapitating him! Ghidrah suffers a brutal death! But wait, there's even more! Godzilla causes all sorts of big budget havoc before the reincarnated, new & improved Ghidrah returns! The future people revived him, rebuilt him and made him better than he was.... Better, stronger, faster. The duel between Godzilla & Mechagodzilla ends up a tie, with both falling in the water. But again, Ghidrah is dead; it's Godzilla

who survives, more pissed off than ever.

After watching this magnificent epic, I think I'll work it off by, in Caucasian fashion, doing some gay bash. I'll knock out some guy and tattoo a 'W' on each buttock, so that when he bends over, it spells, 'Wow!' ***** - Damon Foster.

GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA

Produced by Toho Movie Co. in 1993, Released on Video in 1994, Directed by Takao Okawara, Photography: Yoshinori Sekiguchi, Special Effects: Kenichi Eguchi, Music: Akira Ifukube, Starring: Masahiro Takeshima,

Megumi Odaka, Ryoko Sano, Leo Mengetti, Kenji Sahara, Tadao Takeshima, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

This, like his other '90s films, has Godzilla as sort of a hero; fighting monsters. Yet they always throw in Godzilla's obligatory battles with the army & buildings, so as not to disappoint the old people, and make sure Godzilla's films don't bomb again (that's what happened in the

1970s when Godzilla became

little kids about bullies, so he's no Minya (from **SON OF GODZILLA & GODZILLA'S REVENGE**). I hate to say it, but he's cute, in a positive sort of way.

On the whole, I really enjoyed the hell out of this new rematch between Godzilla and Mechagodzilla (absent since 1975's **TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA**). I dare say this is one of my favorites of Godzilla's 1990s movies. As muttered earlier, the FX are astounding, which I say because I've never used that word (astounding) before. The monsters play off each other well, even Godzilla's new son is cute & addictive, I almost shed a tear or two over his antics (he's no teddy bear, he's semi-realistic, as far as his actions). But this new Mechagodzilla isn't as pointy or lethal-looking as the 1970s original, and looks more like a silver poodle. The new Rodan is even less convincing; not only fake-looking, but looks like a regular pteranodon. Otherwise, the FX have no major flaws. In general, the monsters, miniatures, superimpositions, matte split screens, and pyrotechnics deserve a round of applause.

If there's really a story, I missed it- partially because the print I saw was all dubbed in Chinese, but also because there's so much monster footage that the plot for the human characters (uncompelling & dull, as always) seemed irrelevant. I say they eliminate humans from the films altogether! The script has the military salvaging parts from the long dead Mechaghidrah, to make the newest Mechagodzilla (no relation to the 1970s Mechagodzilla, created by Black Hole gorillas). This huge vehicle (controlled by Science Patrol-like pilots inside it) was designed to destroy nuisances like

Godzilla, and 'new' monster Rodan. If that's not enough, scientists have befriended Godzilla's son, just recently hatched from a billion year old egg from some cave. So with four whole monsters, fun abounds! Godzilla vs. Rodan! Rodan vs. Mechagodzilla! Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla! Strangely, Rodan now seems to have the same high tech powers as Godzilla, for the first time (though Rodan did spit some kind of mist in 1956's **RODAN**). Mechagodzilla badly injures Rodan, who somehow donates his remaining powers to Godzilla, energizing him (he too got nearly wasted by



© Toho

too good). So Godzilla is neither hero nor villain, or perhaps he's both; I dunno'. Regardless, when Godzilla is smashing tanks, jets, Tokyo, Mechagodzilla or Rodan, the special effects are outstanding! Almost everything is done well, the only problem is Godzilla's facial movements look too mechanical (same problem in all his 1990s films to date).

Godzilla's new son made fans gasp in disgust when we first saw all the advance photos of this '1990s Minya'. Fortunately, this new son is far less irritating on film than he appears in photos, and doesn't talk to

Mechagodzilla's explosive weaponry). Now Godzilla, replenished and vengeful as hell, totally abolishes his silver imposter. I believe this is the first time Godzilla emerges victorious over human good guys. There really seem to be no villains. The touching climax has Godzilla & his tiny son wading out into the ocean, as the ending credits role. **** - Damon Foster

GODZILLA VS. MEGALON

Toho; 1973, Produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka, Directed by Jun Fukuda, Screenplay by Shinichi Sekizawa, FX by Noboru Tsuburaya, Music by Richira Minabe, Starring: Yutaka Hayashi, Katsuhiko Sasaki, Hiroyuki Kawase, Robert Dunham, Kotaro Tomita, Reviewed by John Grace.

When we are kids, we each see a movie that converts us to a particular film genre or changes the way we look at films. For some, it was **STAR WARS**, for others, it was **APOCALYPSE NOW** or the "Godfather" movies. For me, it was **GODZILLA VS. MEGALON**.

I still have vivid memories of seeing this movie in 1976, when I was a bratty five-year-old, at a New Orleans multicomplex. This movie made such an impression on me that it transformed me into a lifetime fan of Japanese movies (and, indirectly, to Chinese action flicks). You gotta' understand, this was before **STAR WARS**. Sci-fi movies (of the American variety) were generally dull and Ray Harryhausen's movies were rarely seen on television.

Years later, I watched it on one of those lousy public domain/budget label tapes, in a murky, cropped and cut version. It barely resembled the movie I saw at the theater that launched my obsession with Asian cinema.

Recently, I bought a copy of the Japanese laser disc version. Those quality obsessed Nips have released a beautiful, widescreen version with vibrant color (I haven't noticed that Megalon's wings were yellow-spotted since 1976!). It also contains scenes that were cut in the G-rated U.S. version. The nude pinups behind the truckers are clearly visible, the brawls between the human actors are lengthy, and it does not contain the editing mistake where the actors are pausing for the director to say "Action!"

For many dumb reasons, this film is hated by serious Godzilla fans, who treat the film with a contempt usually reserved for a NAMBLA training film. Ignore the geeks, this is fun, colorful, action-packed and exciting childish entertainment. The use of stock footage isn't nearly as excessive as in **GODZILLA VS. GIGAN** or

GODZILLA'S REVENGE and the monster costumes are well designed and Jet Jaguar (the heroic robot) is a dynamite creation (aside from those silly ski boots he wears).

The plot: Seatopians are pissed off at mankind's nuclear testing, so they send their mutant cockroach cyborg Megalon to stomp on Japan. Standing in his way is the robot Jet Jaguar, his inventor Goro Ibuki (Katsuhiko Sasaki), his annoying little brother (Hiroyuki Kawase), and their friend (Yutaka Hayashi). Seatopian agents, under the command of Robert Dunham (dressed like a gay dentist), reprogram Jet Jaguar to help Megalon, but the agents get deep sixed and the Jag reverts to the righteous path and battles Megalon until Gigan pops up. Both proceed to kick the hell out of the robot, but Godzilla arrives to even the odds. Strangely, Godzilla is afraid of fire in this movie. Beware of the foot-stomping banjo funk music in the finale. ***1/2 - John Grace

GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA

Produced by Toho Eiga Co. in 1993, Written by Kazuki Omori, Dir.: Takao Ogawara, FX: Koichi Kawakita & Tadaaki Watanabe, Executive Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Photography: Kinichi Eguchi, Cast: Tetsuya Bessho, Satomi Kobayashi, Takehiro Murata, Megumi Odaka, Shiori Yonezawa, Makoto Otake, Shoji Kobayashi, Akira Takarada, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Just the other day, I was having a conversation with a friend about **GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA**. He said: "It's half fantasy, and half remake of **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**." Then a dog came by, and sat down near us, as I said: "Yes, that's exactly what this film is; a fantastic remake. Like **THING**, it too has Godzilla, Mothra's worm and moth forms, those two tiny fairies (not Prince and Little Richard), greedy businessmen wishing to exploit the two mini-gals and Mothra's egg, a journey to Infant Island, Godzilla's confrontations with buildings & military, and a climax where two bugs send Godzilla back into the sea. Yet the new & improved FX are plentiful enough to give it a fantasy aspect." By this time, the dog who'd been eaves-dropping on our conversation began licking his balls. As he licked, I said, "That new monster, Battra looks like Megalon. Akira Takarada doesn't look like Megalon, but not much better. He's so old now, I almost didn't recognize him! But on the whole, because of its superb FX, this is a nice movie." But my friend wasn't listening, he was too busy watching that dog licking his gonads. My friend said: "I wish I could do

that!" I said: "You'd better pet him first."

Those two midget girls, called Peanuts & Aliens in the 1960s, are played by better-looking actresses (Keiko Imamura & Sayaka Osawa) now, and are called 'Cosmos' this week. Seems they're from outerspace, descended from an ancient race that worships Mothra. I never really liked them, in any film; they were always a stupid, awkward premise which made no sense to me. Judging by how they gaze (gays?) deeply into each other's eyes while singing, not to mention their holding hands & sleeping so closely together, makes me suspect they're lesbians. I've known equally attractive lesbians, to one of which I said: "I'm a lesbian too! Though trapped in a man's body! What do you say we..." Never mind, she didn't fall for it.

According to a newspaper article I read somewhere, **GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA** was the year's highest-grossing Japanese film, with receipts of \$22.4 million.

Stunning visuals & excellent superimpositions add punch to this tale of a Japanese adventurer/thief called Takuya Fujito (Tetsuya Bessho). On one of his quests, he, along with his former ex-wife (semi-current divorcee?) encounter singing leprechauns and monsters on Infant Island! One monster is Mothra (who now can fire beams & electricity!), the new one is a 'black mothra' called Battra! This slick creature was created by the Earth, to stop mankind's foolishness, and to protect the environment. Takuya's brief adventures on Infant Island offer some semi-suspenseful jungle adventure, like people trying to cross one of them unstable rope bridges. But corporate ass kisser Andoh (Takehiro Murata) captures the two midget singers, which pisses Mothra off. Meanwhile, Godzilla goes on his obligatory destruction binge. Eventually, all three monsters end up in the same part of Japan, but for different reasons: 1. Mothra is there to retrieve the little babes. 2. Godzilla is there because he still has a beef with the Japanese military. 3. Battra is there because this is a Japanese movie. Reluctantly, Mothra & Battra (former rivals) must unite to defeat Godzilla, who, one-on-one, kicked both of their asses. They both carry Godzilla off into the ocean. They drop him, but not before Godzilla gives Battra a fatal bite. *** - DF

GODZILLA VS. THE COSMIC MONSTER

{aka **GOJIRA TAI MEKAGOJIRA**, **GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA**, **GODZILLA VS. THE BIONIC**

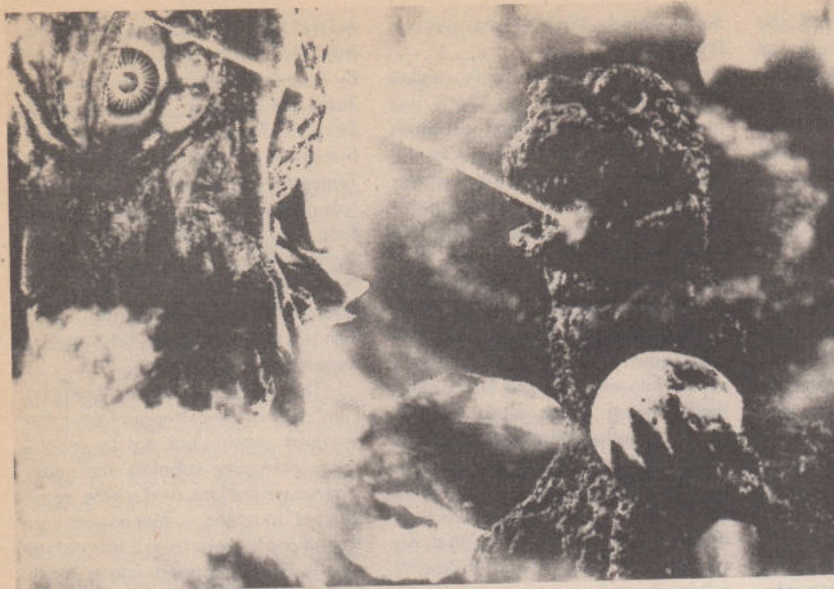
MONSTER, **GODZILLA CONTRE MECANIK MONSTER**, etc.} Produced by Toho in 1974, Executive Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Original Story: Shinichi Sekizawa and Masafumi Fukushima, Special Effects by Teruyoshi Nakano, Directors: Hiroyasu Satsuya & Jun Fukuda, Music by Masaru Sato, Cast: Kazuya Aoyama, Masaaki Daimon, Reiko Tajima, Barbara Lynn, Hiromi Matsushita, Akihiko Hirata, Hiroshi Koizumi, Goro Mutsu, Shin Kishida, Daigo Kusano, Reviewed by August Ragone.

This "20th Anniversary Godzilla Film" was an improvement over the previous outing, but not by much—some interesting subplots and characters save the film, as does the magnificent machine: Mechagodzilla. Picanthropic aliens from a star system that is being dragged into a black hole, target the Earth as their new home. Before these runaways from **LANCELOT LINK** can make good their plans, they must prevent an ancient Okinawan guardian-diet (King Seesar) from awakening, and more importantly, kill the king of monsters.

Jun Fukuda springboards his script (co-written with Hiroyasu Satsuya) from an idea by Toho great Shinichi Sekizawa, and much like **GIGAN** and **MEGALON**, it falls short on the concept, but still crams in more entertainment than a dramatic reading of "Rocket Man" by William Shatner, with secret agents (Interpole) shadowing the aliens, and a race to bring King Seesar to the fore. Director Fukuda throws quite a number of action scenes, both mortal and monstrous, into the last of his Godzilla 'opus'. The veteran actors (Hirata, Koizumi and Kishida) are no stranger to genre productions, and give credible performances, in a film that they save with their presence.

Teruyoshi Nakano's SPFX are, well, not up to Tsuburaya snuff—his miniature photography lacks low-angle shots, for hand-held and straight-on shots (well, at least they're different) which leaves most of the realism out the door—although his pyrotechnics are spectacular. The monster, well that's another story. Godzilla's suit gets a facelift from **MEGALON**, and he looks a bit meaner. King Seesar: I like him, but everyone else hates him... (I didn't say I LOVED him!) Oh, well. Obviously, Mechagodzilla is the star of the show, and is spectacular. Masaru Sato's score adds to the "exotic" setting in Okinawa, even throwing in a track from **SANJURO** (1962) when Masaaki Daimon fights an alien over the statue of King Seesar.

Of course, there is a happy ending (not for the aliens)—and look out



GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER ©Toho

for lead villain Goro Mutsu (aka Mutsui) who was an SAF member in the teleseries **FIREMAN** (Tsuburaya; 1972), was the main baddie in **CYBERCOP** (Toho; 1988), and also appeared in Tsuburaya's **MIGHTY JACK** series. Fans with eagle eyes will spot the hero of **RYUSEI NINGEN ZONE** (Toho; 1973), Kazuya Aoyama, playing Daimon's younger brother. **** - August Ragone

GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER

{aka **NANICHI DAIKETTO**, which means "Great Duel in the South Seas"} Produced by Toho in 1966, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir.: Jun Fukuda, Music: Masaru Sato, FX: Eiji Tsuburaya, Cast: Akira Takarada, Kimu Mizuno, Akihiko Hirata, Haruo Nakajima, Reviewed by Robert Mallory.

This entry in the Godzilla films is surprisingly story heavy, and is for the most part, played straight. If not as serious as **GODZILLA KING OF THE MONSTERS**, it still is nowhere near as goofy as the embarrassing **GHIDRAH THE 3 HEADED MONSTER**, wherein a flying reptile, a giant caterpillar and Godzilla are able to converse in 'monster talk' (with Godzilla supposedly cursing). It's almost like the movies from **GHIDRAH** 'til this one never happened. Here Godzilla is not necessarily a good guy (just ask Mothra!), but does some good by circumstance. One of the best films in the series, though the costume used for Godzilla here is not one of the better ones.

A teenager whose brother is missing at sea and two friends sneak aboard a boat where a bank robber is already stowed away. Taking the boat out to sea they enter the waters

of an island where the Red Bamboo terrorists have a nuclear plant and armed base. "Their" boat is sunk by Ebirah, a giant lobster that is the sea monster in the title. Ebirah is controlled by a liquid made by natives the Red Bamboo kidnapped from the island of Mothra, here in one of his all too rare Moth phases (as opposed to his dorky caterpillar phase). One of the native girls manages to escape and encounters the four from the boat, who made it to the island alive thanks to the storm at the time. It storms a lot on this island! The five of them escape the guards and hide in a cave; the bottom of which sleeps Godzilla. By aid of an improvised lightning rod they awaken the Big G and the fun begins!

Godzilla beats off Ebirah and tries to resume his rudely interrupted hibernation but is attacked by a giant bird, a Rodan wannabe. Next he fights off jets while people on the nearby island finally wake Mothra. These giant monsters sure love their naps! A self-destruct timer is put into action by the Red Bamboo who then try to escape in their ship, but unfortunately for them, their captives deliberately left an important ingredient out of the special liquid and Ebirah decides to partake on them as seafood. Godzilla dismembers the lobster in an initially silly fracas that gets interesting in the underwater scenes which remind us that Godzilla is a 'sea monster' himself! The people on the island make a net, so Mothra can carry them off the island. Interesting enough, since they last acted as allies, Godzilla attacks Mothra! But the big bug escapes with his 'net profit' intact. Godzilla leaves the island just before it's blown to bits by the time bomb, but

could even a nuclear explosion do in an atomic monster? Oh, the missing brother was on Mothra's island. *** - Robert Mallory

GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER [GOJIRA TAI HEDORAH]

Produced by Toho in 1971, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir.: Yoshimitsu Banno, Art Director: Taioko Inoue, Photography: Yoichi Manoda, FX: Shohei Nakano, Editor: Yoshitami Kuroiwa, Music: Richira Minabe, Starring: Hiroyuki Kawase, Akira

Yamauchi, Tshie Kimura, Keiko Mari, Toshio Shibaki, Haruo Nakajima, Kengo Nakayama, Reviewed by Frank Strom.

SMOG MONSTER is the first Godzilla film of the 1970s, a period that's regarded as the low end of the series (though this 1990s series isn't much better). In addition, **SMOG MONSTER** is the first in the series not to feature Eiji Tsuburaya's special effects. But unlike the films to follow it, **SMOG MONSTER** is an explosively exciting, imaginative movie. It's filled with psychedelic images, acid-rock, and symbolic animation, which make this a unique entry in the series. The new monster Hedorah, with vertical red eyes and a head shaped like a brain, seems to have stepped out of someone's LSD-induced nightmare!

Hedorah, a creature composed of sludge, appears in the polluted sea of Japan. After destroying some seafaring vessels, it transforms into a four-legged land animal, and feeds off factory smokestacks.. Godzilla shows up out of nowhere to drive it off. Later Hedorah returns as a flying saucer creature, spewing poison gas. Godzilla fends it off again. Oddly, in both these battles in the city, this pair of 400-ft. tall behemoths seem to **SNEAK** into the city, since no one notices them until they're already there! Anyways, a bipedal Hedorah terrorizes some teenagers on Mt. Fuji. A scientist sets up an electrical device to dehydrate the monster. Unfortunately, the equipment is faulty. Godzilla arrives to save the day and defeat Hedorah once and for all. There's a sequence during this fight where (and this drives some anal-retentive idiots crazy) Godzilla actually flies, propelled by his own atomic breath!

The special FX (by Shohei Nakano) are disappointing for a Toho product. Godzilla's suit is loose & flabby, and the miniature cities look like building blocks, more like the crummy ones more typical of a Gammera movie. The traditional Godzilla theme music is dropped in favor of a goofy lumbering tune. The rest of the soundtrack, though, is weird and entertaining, especially the campy classic "Save the Earth" (how come this hasn't been covered by a punk rock band yet?). While this is otherwise a fairly serious film, Godzilla himself is played for comedy, stumbling around like Muhamed Ali on a drunken binge. **SMOG MONSTER** is fun and fast-paced, never getting boring... **GIGAN**, **MEGALON** and the other 1970s efforts should have taken their cue from this, but didn't. In it's way, **SMOG MONSTER** is a classic, every bit as much as the accepted classics from the 50s and early 60s. During its original American release in 1972, I sat through it five times. It was THAT good. I've rewatched it countless times since, and I'm still enthralled by it. **** - Frank Strom

GODZILLA VS. THE THING

Produced in 1964 by Toho, aka **GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA** and **MOSURA TAI GOJIRA**, Screenplay: Shinichi Sekizawa, FX: Eiji Tsuburaya, Photography: Hajime Koizumi, Art Dir.: Takeo Kita, Dir.: Ishiro Honda, Starring: Akira Takarada and Kenji Sahara, Reviewed by DF.

Now that I'm even older than I was before, I can finally look at this classic through the eyes of an adult and give it the praise it's worthy of. When I was about 12 (about the time I first started doing this kind of journalism), I was not especially fond of **GODZILLA VS. THE THING**, and preferred Godzilla's later works, especially the childish efforts of the 1970s. To me, **GODZILLA VS. THE THING** was dull, and I thought it was overrated. Indeed, fans of Japanese sci-fi have praised this one excessively, relentlessly. Always the radical rebel, I felt the need to disagree with the conformists. So this masterpiece was considered one of my least favorites until my late teens. Now I'm an old fart, and although I'll never completely conform, I have a slightly more traditional viewpoint. Like all those other trendies, I too now am a fan of this superior movie. Everybody knew I'd see the light sooner or later. Let's face it, **GODZILLA VS. THE THING** is an all around great movie with nearly flawless production values; it's a no-nonsense (or very little nonsense) movie.

In a science fiction movie, naturally the most important element is its FX. For starters, the Godzilla costume is outstanding, despite an oversized lip that continually wobbles. Otherwise, the costume's dimensions are perfect; not too thin, not too bulky, and nearly realistic yet monstrous at the same time. Godzilla's costume looks a little different in each movie, and although I like every one of them, this variation is one of the better costumes. The mechanical model of Mothra is also marvelous, the giant bug looks even better in



© Toho

this movie than in its appearance in MOTHRA (Toho; 1962). During its battle with Godzilla, the mechanical Mothra puppet/model moves its legs and head more, and better than before. The two caterpillars are okay as well, but not very convincing. I guess I personally have never liked these two little maggots. The super-impositions are among the best I've seen; Godzilla's radio-active fire and light-up dorsal spines have never looked better, nor has the military's electricity (when the army tries to zap Godzilla). Miniatures and city sets have always looked good in Japanese movies, so saying that the ones in this flick are better than average (except for some ships at the beginning) is saying a lot, and they are better than average.

Other production values (music, acting, dubbing, etc.) also add to the film's appeal. Akira Ifukube's music is excellent, though not necessarily his best work.

Do I really have to tell you the story? Don't you all know this flick by heart? If you do, then obviously, you know the twin midgets (Emi & Yumi Ito; The Peanuts) wish to return Mothra's egg to their primitive island, after a hurricane sent it to Japan. But there are obstacles: Greedy businessmen at Happy Enterprises (who eventually kill each other over money) want the egg and the two mini-babes as tourist attractions! Another ob-

stacle is that Godzilla pops up out of the ground in order to destroy buildings, armies and anything else in his way. Reporter Sakai (Akira Takarada) and friends voyage to Mothra's island to beg the natives to allow their god

Mothra (moth form) to go get killed by Godzilla, which is exactly what happens. But it's Mothra and the humans who have the last laugh when two stupid-looking worms hatch from the egg and spit cocoon shit all over Godzilla and he falls into the sea. As a kid, I must confess this disappointing ending came as a real pie-in-the-face to me and other tiny tots who saw it for the first time. All through the film, we're rooting for Godzilla, and were anticipating what we considered a happy ending: Godzilla tearing the two Mothra larvae to pieces. Our mouths opened wide with dumbfoundedness at the climax, and we felt (and still feel) thoroughly insulted. **** - DF

KING KONG VS. GODZILLA

Produced by Toho in 1963, Presented in America by John Beck, FX: Eiji Tsuburaya, Dir.: Inoshiro Honda, English Version by Paul Mason & Bruce Howard, Starring: Michael Kieth, Harry Holcomb, James Yagi, Tadao Takashima, Kenji Sahara, Ichiro Arishima, Akiko Wakabayashi, Mei Hama, Reviewed by John Auker.

Outside of GODZILLA KING OF THE MONSTERS, KING KONG VS GODZILLA is the most well-known of the series. I'll admit that when Damon asked me to write this review I was less than enthusiastic. I would have much rather reviewed SON OF GODZILLA, and climbed on my soapbox to rant about that abomination. But I got KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, a film I like despite the major flaw of a gorilla that looks like my ratty, mildewed basement rug.

Fortunately, everything else in this

movie is top notch; from the opening quote from HAMLET to the climactic battle of the giants, the English language version has a credible story (if you don't pay too much attention), and few characters that actually engage your interest. My advice is to ignore the humans, they simply get in the way of a slam-bang slug fest. Anyone interested in the plot developments of the humans in this film is a turnip. Ignore everything but the monsters and you'll be a better person. The music is from CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. Although I have never been impressed by Japanese special effects, the miniatures are adequate. The story moves along at a brisk pace with frequent glimpses of King Kong and Godzilla until their final, stupendous battle. A very good film in the Godzilla series.

Earthquakes in Chile do something to the ice flows in the Bering sea. The powerful U.N (HA, HA) send an American sub to investigate... Scratch one sub and Godzilla heads for Japan. Meanwhile, a Japanese chemical company sends an expedition to Faro Island to find some Soma, a non-addictive narcotic made from the red berries that grow only there. After some erotic dancing by some Japanese made up to look like blacks, King Kong shows up, beats off a giant octopus, and as a reward, drinks the red berry juice, which immediately renders him

unconscious and ready to be taken to Japan. They load Kong on a raft and drag him behind a ship, but he wakes up and scents his ancient enemy Godzilla and heads for the coast. King Kong & Godzilla meet for a brief battle in which Godzilla kicks Kong's mange-ridden butt. King Kong takes off and Godzilla continues on to Tokyo,

wrecking a train along the way. The government is reluctant to use the atomic bomb (they would much rather let Kong and Godzilla reduce Japan

to a pile of rubble), so they build the stupidest trap you ever saw. A pit filled with dynamite and rivers of gasoline fails to slow Godzilla one bit. Back in Tokyo, Kong smashes some buildings, eats electricity to get stronger, wrecks a train, grabs a girl, climbs a one story building and through a rocket filled with Soma and some guy beating out the same drum track from Faro Island, Kong once again sleeps, with the vision of the native girl with the big coconuts dancing on his head. They hook him up to some giant balloons (filled with helium) and float him to Mt. Fuji to fight Godzilla. Godzilla and Kong fight for the last ten minutes of the film with Kong winning only because a lightning storm re-energizes him. With lightning bolts shooting from his finger tips, Kong beats Godzilla to the sea where they fall in. Only Kong surfaces and swims home to the girl on Faro Island with the sultry dance and large bazooms. ***1/2 - John Auker

SON OF GODZILLA

Produced by Toho in 1967, Dir.: Jun Fukuda, Screenplay: Shinishi Sekizawa & Kazuo Shiba, Starring: Akira Kubo as Goro, Beverly Maeda as Riko, and also Tadao Takashima, Akira Kubo, Akihiko Hirata, Kenji Sahara, and that guy who played Dr. Otani in DESTROY ALL MONSTERS, Reviewed by Damon Foster.



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While Godzilla's behavior with his son may be a little too humanlike, and some scenes (i.e. Godzilla teaching him how to spit radio-active fire, which was re-enacted even worse in GODZILLA'S RE-VENGE) are downright embarrassing, SON OF GODZILLA

is even more fun than beating the crap out of an annoying, persistent telemarketer! Yesiree, this adventure/fantasy is definitely above average, despite an over abundance of

naive cuteness (bordering on ultra-stupid), every time Minya shows his pug-faced mug.

For starters, the music is more lighthearted, flavorful & original than that in all those 1990s flicks I just watched & reviewed for you (don't you just love me?!). But it's the monstrous insects which really highlight SON! The giant mantis's ('Gimantis', aka 'Gamakera') attack on the scientist's camp is first rate monster-on-the-loose entertainment! It blows away the 1950s American film DEADLY MANTIS, just as Spiga (aka Kumonga, the giant tarantula) puts to shame the likes of TARANTULA, EARTH VS. THE SPIDER and GIANT SPIDER INVASION. So the big bugs are more effective than the reptiles. We all agree Minya (though never given any name is this film) is too cute & sappy; a prelude to H.R. PUFF & STUFF and BARNEY. But am I the only one to notice that the baby dinosaur [who hatched in the TV series DINOSAURS] looks almost exactly like Minya! What gives here?! Come on people, did nobody else see this blatant rip-off (not that I ever made it a point to watch that show, I saw it by accident). Also, when I saw E.T. THE EXTRA TESTICLE (or whatever it's called) with my family many years ago, my own mother yelled out loud in the theater, "It's Minya!" when E.T. showed his ugly mug. But unfortunately, Minya's look also influenced the look of Godzilla in SON. His mask is given a frog-like, elevated-eye look. This was intended to create a family resemblance, but instead ended up making Godzilla look sleepier than somebody watching a double-bill of ISHTAR and WARNING FROM SPACE while drinking Niquil.

The Japanese version starts out with Susumu Kurobe making a cameo as an airplane pilot who sees Godzilla. Most of that is cut from the English version of this tale of U.N. scientists playing God on Solgel Island. They're experimenting with the weather, despite the presence of giant monsters. For example, a prehistoric egg, buried underground since the Jurassic Age, finally hatches, and the little reptile (who looks like a Thanksgiving turkey at first) gets adopted by Godzilla. Meanwhile, an annoying, determined reporter Goro (Akira Ifukube) befriends a native-like girl Riko (Beverly Maeda), raised on the island, allowing for some irritating antics, like frolicking and her singing & humming, which soothes the not-so-savage-Minya. There's some amusing dialogue though, like when she says to Akira Kubo, "Maybe you're a girl." He replies: "The name is

Goro!" But scientist Furukawa goes crazy because of tropical heat, and besides, that giant tarantula is hungry for Nip tidbits. So they create a huge snow storm to slow down the monsters, and all the humans (nobody dies) escape on a submarine. The teary-eyed ending had Godzilla & Minya (having defeated all the insects) cuddling up to hibernate. *** - DF

MONSTER ZERO

{aka GODZILLA VS. MONSTER ZERO, and KAIJU DAISENSO in

criteria: to be any good at all it's gotta' be crazy. And this flick lives up to that standard and oh, so much more.

My true reason for loving this flick is that it contains one of the most bizarre performances on film: That of Nick Adams as Astronaut Glen. Adams' lackluster career had seen him through two short-lived TV shows (THE REBEL and SAINTS AND SINNERS) and a number of supporting roles in feature films (NO TIME FOR SERGEANTS, THE INTERNS, HELL

this campaign for an Oscar, Nick Adams cast himself as a bastion of Hollywood establishment, "A nomination for me means that 'Twilight of Honor' will bring in another million dollars and supply more funds for Hollywood pictures. Next, it means that I, as a Hollywood star, can make more films in Hollywood and stop this runaway production which is killing Hollywood." I will never make a picture abroad. On the night of the awards ceremony, April 13, 1964, Nick Adams and his wife Carol Nugent were the first stars to arrive at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. They arrived fully one and a half hours before the show and practiced walking, skipping, and trotting down the aisle to the stage. But an Oscar was not in the cards for Nick Adams that night. Patty Duke presented the Best Supporting Actor Oscar to Melvyn Douglas for HUD. Columnist Sidney Skolski was watching loser Nick Adams, however. She wrote, "I was watching the face of Nick Adams. Nick looked like 'Instant Murder'. I never believed I'd want to give Nick a prize, but really, he should be given an Oscar for Portrait of a Loser. I'll say this for him: His face and emotions were honest."

Humiliated by his peers, Nick did go overseas to make flicks. His first was DIE MONSTER DIE, with Boris Karloff in Great Britain in 1965. The next two were FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD and MONSTER ZERO in Japan, also in 1965. Nick Adams' estrangement from Hollywood was only one of his problems, however. In February of 1965 he went on the LES CRANE SHOW and publicly announced that he was divorcing his wife. Oddly, he had not informed her of this decision prior to the broadcast, and she learned of his intentions along with the rest of America, watching the show. "That's Nick for you", she commented to a newsman the next day. Throughout 1965 and 1966, Nick & Carol repeatedly battled openly in the press, and also in private. They divorced and reconciled twice during these two years. The strain on Nick's fragile psyche is easily discerned by watching his motion picture and TV output during these two years (almost as terrible as his performance in MONSTER ZERO is an episode of WILD, WILD WEST, entitled "Night of the Two-Legged Buffalo", in which he plays a Samoan prince! {Oh that's nothing! Chuck Connors played a blue-eyed Geronimo in one film. But get on with it, Brown, this is suppose to be about MONSTER ZERO, not Nick Adams, and by the way, I don't think his performance is



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Japan}, Produced by Toho in 1966, Released to America in 1970 by Henry G. Saperstein, Executive Producers: Henry G. Saperstein & Reuben Bercovich, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Movie Script: Shinichi Sekizawa, Photography: Hajime Koizumi, Sound Mixing: Hiroshi Mukoyama, Directed by Inoshiro Honda, Special Effects by Eiji Tsuburaya, Starring: Akira Takarada, Nick Adams, Kumi Mizuno, Akira Kubo, Reviewed by Robert L. Brown.

I'll start right off the bat by proclaiming that this truly ridiculous flick is right up there at the top of my ten favorite flicks of all time. For me, a Godzilla flick must satisfy at least one

IS FOR HEROES). But his ambition was to be a star. He tried everything in his power to get top billing, but the sad truth was that he just wasn't a leading man. He concocted an elaborate publicity campaign in 1963 to get on Oscar nomination for the film TWILIGHT OF HONOR. One Hollywood columnist, amused by Adams' photographs in his campaign publicity, commented that they ranged in quality from "Upset Stomach to Godzilla to Stopped-up Sinuses to Atilla the Hun to Ex-Lax". Also during

bad at all. - DF} During this period he co-produced his only starring vehicle, **YOUNG DILLINGER**, perhaps the low point in his sorry career). Watch for him in **MONSTER ZERO**, he constantly grabs at his belt buckle, his neck, his shirt-tail, etc.

But, on the plus side of Nick Adams' performance, one must admit that the guy had only one speed-FULL TILT, BABY! He didn't do anything halfway. If he was going to give a half-assed performance, it was ALL THE WAY. Nick Adams was a method actor and to that end he had to actually fall in love with his leading lady to effect the right emotion in his performance. And Nick's scenes with beautiful Kumi Mizuno (Namikawa) are masterpieces of cinematic art. In particular, the scene wherein he learns of Namikawa's allegiance to Planet X ranks up there with Bogart and Bergman's tragic finale in **CASABLANCA**. Nick Adams was never more in control than in that scene {That does it! This is the last time I'll accept a review from anyone named Robert. I'll spend the rest of my life typing this thing unless I cut it short here. Robert Brown went on to speculate about the possible relationship between Nick Adams & Kumi Mizuno, and mentioned that Adams committed suicide in Hollywood on Feb. 6, 1968. - DF}

Shot in widescreen (Toho-scope), this flick features many, many outstanding, if not downright breathtaking visuals. Some instances of this are the tremendous scenes on Planet X (with Jupiter looming gloriously in the background) and the shots of Godzilla and Rodan being carried into outer space by electric space bubbles. The musical score by Akira Ifukube is downright upright, containing some of his most profound musical expressions. And that ridiculous plot... **SUB-LIME**.

Planet Earth sends two astronauts to a new planet which has hitherto gone unnoticed by Earth telescopes (because it's behind Jupiter, I think). They get there and next thing ya' know they get to meet the controller of Planet X. And while all these pleasant-ries are being exchanged, who turns up on the surface of the planet? None other than good ol' King Ghidrah, whom the inhabitants of Planet X call Monster Zero. The men of Planet X want Earth monsters, Godzilla & Rodan to come destroy Ghidrah, and in trade, they'll give us the recipe on how to make a miracle drug which can cure all diseases. Though Godzilla & Rodan defeat Ghidrah, the Planet X guys decide they like their two new monsters so much they want to keep them. When the Earthmen astronauts

get back here to our own planet (Earth), they play the tape recording which the Planter X guys gave 'em, supposedly spelling out how to combat all of Earth's diseases. But then guess what happens? It's not really a tape recording about fighting diseases, it's an ultimatum from Planet X saying that now that they have all of the Earth monsters plus Ghidrah, they're taking over! I hope I've accurately described the treachery and betrayal of this, the most critical scene in the flick. As American astronaut Glen (Nick Adams) exclaims, "Double crossin' finks!" {My god, here we go again; endless quotes of dialogue from Nick Adams followed, but no mention of prominent performances by Akira Takarada or Akira Kubo! I gotta' move this shit along! Glen's girlfriend Namikawa explains how the X men's powers can be thwarted before her death, helping the scientists to defeat the villains with sound waves; allowing the monsters to be themselves. Godzilla and Rodan take on Ghidrah once more. - DF}

For the second time in the flick Godzilla and Rodan kick ass!!! In perhaps the final irony, Astronauts Glen and Fuji get appointed to be the new ambassadors of Planet X. Ain't that a kick? **** - Robert L. Brown

TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA

{**MEKAGOJIRA NO GYAKUSHU**} Toho; 1975, Produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir.: Inoshiro Honda, Screenplay: Yukiko Takayama, FX: Teruyoshi Nakano, Music: Akira Ifukube, Cast: Katsuhiko Sasaki, Akihiko Hirata, Tomoko Ai, Katsumasa Uchi, Tomo Mari, Kenji Sahara, Teru Kawai, Kazunori Mori, Reviewed by John Marshall.

I gotta' admit, **TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA** is my favorite '70s Godzilla film. I know that it gets lots of lip service because Honda came back to direct it and Ifukube came back to score it. I know you're sick to death of hearing how its no-nonsense storyline and outstanding photography elevate it to the level of Toho's best '60s work. The problem with all the hype is, it's all true!

Oh, it has its problems. **TERROR** suffers from a lower budget and rushed look that most '70s Tohos have. But from the moment Titanosaurus rises up from the sea, backlit by the sun, it'll have you hooked. It even features Toho stalwart Akihiko Hirata, who co-starred in the very first Godzilla epic and popped up in most Toho sci-fi films through the late '60s. Damn it, this film is just that good! And it was certainly the best finale the original Godzilla series could have had.

Damon insisted I go over the plot in the 3rd paragraph, so here it is. Desperate aliens need to conquer Earth. They revive Mechagodzilla and acquire the help of misanthropic scientist Dr. Mafune, by saving his daughter's life. Daughter Katsura is now a cyborg, thanks to her mechanical heart. She controls both Mechagodzilla and Titanosaurus but can still feel love. Her human emotions help turn the tide at the film's end, although she must sacrifice herself (at least I think she does, Paramount Home Video edited that scene pretty badly). My rating: Outstanding, five stars, ten out of ten, a fully-engorged penis, or whatever the damn ratings system is in this furshlugginer magazine. ***** - John Marshall

ULTRAMAN #10

Produced by Tsuburaya Co., first broadcast on TBS on 9/18/66, FX: Eiji Tsuburaya, Music by Kunio Miyauchi, Cast: Susumu Kurobe as Hayata, Mitao Dokumamoshi as Arashi, Godzilla as Kira, and Shoji Kobayashi as Capt. Mura, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

The tenth episode of **ULTRAMAN**, like other episodes, has that promilitant, anti-ecological prejudice I find so naive. Hell, if there was really a giant, mutant Godzilla living in a lake, I'm sure scientists and animal lovers would do what they could to keep it protected. Otherwise, this episode is okay, my only real complaint being that my copy was censored; the scene where the scaley, colorful frill is torn from Godzilla's (I mean Kira's) neck has been cut out, either by the TV station that showed it here in the 1970s (can you believe I still have this tape?!), or the releasers (United Artists) themselves.

As for quality of this episode, in comparison to other **ULTRAMAN** episodes, it's about average. My personal favorite episodes are the ones with Zorab (#18) and the Da Da invaders (#28), and my least favorite being the ones with that oil-drinking bat Pesta (#13) and pearl eater Gamakujira (#14). So I'd say this one falls somewhere in-between. The pacing is okay, but there's a stupid, pointless plot twist at the end (a scientist pulls off his wig to reveal he's someone else), and the Science Patrol's submarine looks about the size of a pencil (okay, to be fair, a large pencil). The only other really flawed effect is, once again, the futile disguising of the Godzilla costume (they put lots of yellow chock on his head, which had me fooled at first. Then, after I figured everything else a few days later, said, "Hey, wait a minute! Wasn't that a costume I'd seen before?! That's right, it's a

Camera costume!").

Obviously, the only reason they used this Godzilla suit was because they were too cheap to make a whole monster costume that week, and simply added the extra wing-like scales to the costume's neck, and called him Kira ('Jiras' in the Japanese version, since there's already a monster called 'Kira' in episode 38). But it seems they knew everyone would recognize Godzilla, so there are apparent jokes. In one scene, a deranged scientist, when talking about a very Godzilla-like dinosaur, calls it the "King of monsters"! Kira's movements and fire spitting are identical to Godzilla's, and even has a rather similar roar. Kira is as playful as Godzilla, right down to the throwing of large rocks, something Godzilla is known for, and Ultraman's other opponents generally are not. So I guess they knew they could never put Godzilla in contact with Ultraman, but with these creative gimmicks, they came damn close!

Excessive fish at Lake Kitiyama prompts the Science Patrol to investigate. But once Ito, Arashi & Hayata arrives, reports of a Loch Ness-like monster and the mad scientist who created it makes them forget all about the fish. Strangely, the over abundance of fish is never explained, it's just a way to get our heroes to the lake. Also on hand are some reporters from Boys' Graphic Magazine (no, not a NAMBLA periodical), who arrive in the coolest car I've ever seen! There they meet the deranged Dr. Nakano, who, in his macabre cave/laboratory (decorated with dinosaur murals and stuffed animals), has created a huge monster he calls Kira. Kira wasn't suppose to come out in the daylight, because people might see him, but he does, and Arashi (no doubt a member of the NRA: National Raygun Association) fires his raygun. Kira is understandably annoyed, so he gets ugly. Hayata becomes Ultraman, and for once, it's Ultraman who seems to be a pacifist. It looks like he'd rather not harm Kira at first, and instead they test each others' precision by seeing who's better at blasting thrown rocks. It's a tie, which aggravates the poor, misunderstood monster all the more, so he attacks Ultraman, who eventually tears off part of the beast's neck. Without the rubber add-on, Kira now looks exactly like Godzilla, but dies soon afterwards. It ends tragically, with the scientist dying too. Try to hold back your tears. *** - DF

ULTRA Q #1

Broadcast on TBS (Tokyo Broadcasting Service) on 1/2/65, Special Effects by Eiji Tsuburaya, Consisting of 28 B&W episodes, Produced by the Tsuburaya



GODZILLA
trading cards
from Korea! All
characters
©Toho,
Cards ©Sadary.

Co., Starring Kenji Sahara, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

This is the pilot episode of this Japanese science fiction series which predated ULTRAMAN (in fact, ULTRAMAN is sort of a sequel to it, kinda' sorta'), and was intended as a series of half hour monster tales of the classic Toho tradition, except that they're 30 minutes long, not feature length, and, of course, not shown in theaters. In this way, I consider this rather dull B&W series to look more like it's the fine line between DR. WHO and THE OUTER LIMITS.

The over all story has Kenji Sahara as some reporter and/or writer who goes around trying to answer the 'Ultra Questions', whatever that's suppose to mean. It seems to mean he investigates reports of giant monsters attacking cities, and is helped by his two friends, one of which is played by the same actress who'd later play Fuji in ULTRAMAN. ULTRA Q itself seems to be an okay series, a definite must for fans of RODAN, MOTHRA, ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE, YOG-MONSTER FROM SPACE, THE H MAN, ATRAGON, etc. I've only seen a few other episodes, one of which, episode #3, which I've seen dubbed in English!! Does this mean they dubbed the whole show? And if so, why haven't we seen it on TV? While the episode itself was only okay (something to do with giant slugs), it's being in English is the source of much confusion and speculation. If anybody has other English episodes, please notify me!

In this particular episode (#1), they unsuccessfully disguised the Godzilla costume as Gomes, a subterranean monster determined to wreck havoc at a mining site. Despite

the additional fangs, horn & other rubber glu-ons, it still looks like Godzilla going out trick or treating. At the same time that a miner is traumatized because Gomes startled him so badly, another excavation unit unearths a large round ball. There's a lot of talking at this point, but the only one who seems to have any answers is some geeky kid. Unfortunately, his answers (not to mention the questions) are in Japanese. But some old Shinto priest explains that the ball is actually the egg of a savior bird called Ritora, which can fly despite its being part chicken and part peacock. Meanwhile, Kenji Sahara and his female assistant are being chased underground by Gomes, who follows them outside. Once Gomes finally appears in the light, this episode actually becomes entertaining. The miniature set is a magnificent replica of the actual mining site where the actors were before they evacuated it. Way to go, Eiji Tsuburaya! Gomes causes a little typical Godzillian destruction, but unlike his illegitimate cousin, Gomes is quite clumsy; in one scene he literally falls on his ass! But the ancient prophecy is fulfilled, because that cheap-looking bird Ritora (who makes "The Giant Claw" look very realistic) hatches and attacks Gomes. As such, the battle reminds me of the one between Godzilla and Dai Condor in GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER, but there's a switch: This time it's the little bird who fires the ray from his mouth! This beam kills Gomes, but then, for some reason, the birdie falls dead too. **1/2 - DF

Which brings us down to letter Z, and only one entree, the series ZONE FIGHTER!





RYUSEI NINGEN ZONE

[aka "Zone, The Meteor Man", "Human Comet Zone", Meteor Man Zone", and unofficially, "Zone Fighter"] Produced in 1973 by Toho Eizo Co., Broadcast on Nihon TV, consisting of 26 episodes, lasting from 4/2/73 to 9/24/73, Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Writer: Shozo Uehara, Directors: Ishiro Honda, Jun Fukuda & Shohei Nakano, Music: Go Nizawa, Planning: Hiro Domon, Photography: Mototaka Tomioka & Takeshi Yamamoto, Lighting: Ryohei Ikeda, Art Dir.: Kazuo Rsuzaki & Gen Kobayashi, Wire Work: Koji Matsumoto, Pyrotechnics: Mamoru Kume, Fight Choreographer: Haruhiko Hoshimoto, FX: Teruyoshi Nakano & Koichi Kawakita, Starring Kazuya Aoyama as Hikari, Shoji Nakayama as their father, Hideaki Ohara as Takeru, Teru Kawai as Godzilla, Reviewed by Damon Foster, with Special Research by and thanks to August Ragone.

With or without cameos by Godzilla, king of monsters, this is one great show. Definitely inspired by the likes of ULTRAMAN, MIRRORMAN and other Tsuburaya programs, it too tells the story of a giant, android-like

superhero who flies, fires beams, and of course, battles giant monsters. The post-Tsuburaya FX are all here: Monster costumes, super imposed laser beams, pyrotechnics, visuals, spaceships, and naturally, miniatures. All these special effects range in quality from superb to laughable, to words which don't exist yet. Toho spent a lot of money on FX, maybe that's why GODZILLA VS. MEGALON (a semi-ripoff of this series) was so cheap, it came out only a few months later. The costumes & sets are what most Americans might consider cheap or cheesy only because it's Japanese (they would be less likely to criticize if it were American, no matter how it looked). Hell, they say that about new stuff (i.e. POWER RANGERS) too, shows which are high-tech by my [apparently] low standards. But I don't see ZONE's costumes & miniatures as cheap, all these props suffice, never detracting from the program's excitement.

Though I personally think it stands out from the other post-ULTRAMAN programs, it's more-or-less gone down in history as yet another ULTRAMAN-wannabe. But who's saying this?! Certainly not superhero

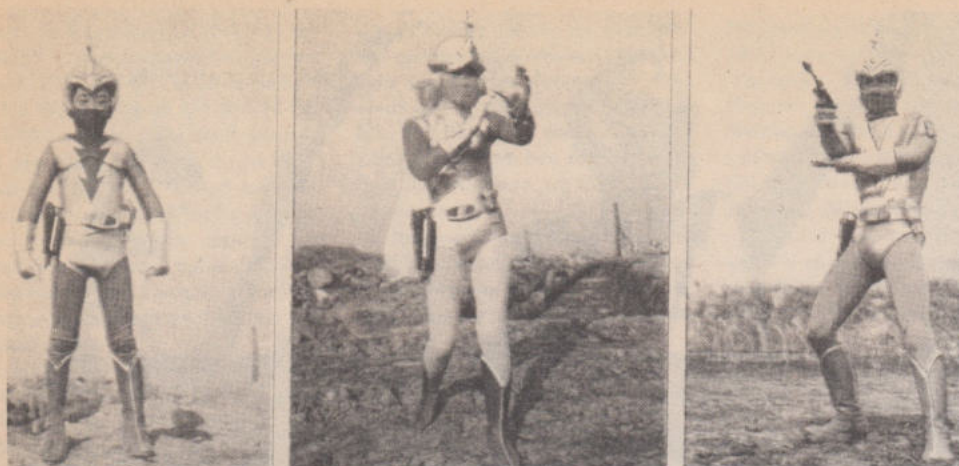
experts like myself. The program also has a human-sized team of superheroes who occasionally use martial arts to take on numerous henchmen who normally outnumber them at least two to one! These fights, acrobatics and shootouts are way ahead of Toei's Sentai genre! I suspect this program helped inspire the likes of GO RANGERS, which eventually had that mutant offspring POWER RANGERS, twenty years later. But the karate duels in RYUSEI NINGEN ZONE aren't as clean & polished as the generic duels of later hero teams. In this show, even the heroes fall down and get dirty, since the villains (Garoga invaders) are quite acrobatic themselves, and capable of throwing punches. Sometimes, a single Garoga is almost a match for any one of our heroes. These invaders have personalities, or rather, invaderalities; they're not the weakling caricatures of later programs who stand in the background until they're needed to have their asses easily whipped.

My only problem with the fights is that lead hero Kazuya Aoyama (GODZILLA VS. THE COSMIC MONSTER) is not a great martial

artist. He's athletic and isn't afraid to go all out, but he's obviously not from Chiba's J.A.C.! The kicks & punches lack form (actors can't distinguish between side kicks, spinning back kicks, roundhouses, forward snaps, etc.) or specific striking points. Our human-sized hero's kicks don't really look all that graceful or effective, but the stuntman in Zone Fighter's giant form more than makes up for it. But the little kid Akira (aka Zone Junior) runs under the bad guys' legs too much.

After gradual deteriorations in Japanese superheroism which lowered our standards enough to enjoy new crap like KAKU RANGER, it's major fun to see this series, which came out ten years before censorship ruined Japanese TV. ZONE is superheroism at its best, this is where it's at! It's even got a cool theme song, none of this 1980s-'90s bubble gum pop crap as heard in later themes. Incidental background music is sometimes powered by electric guitars of the semi-heavy metal variety.

But RYUSEI NINGEN ZONE, being something that exists, is not perfect; perfect is a myth. The show



I to r: Zone
Fighter,
Zone Angel,
Zone Junior.
Right: The
Sakimori
family
before they
become
Zone
Figthers.



has plenty of talky scenes in the family's living room, ala' **THE BRADY BUNCH**. The theme song occasionally drowns out all the sound FX during the fights. As a superhero series, it's infantile and definitely considered a kiddie show. But exactly what makes a kiddie show? I mean, plenty of kiddies watch shit like **BEVERLYHILLS 90210**. If **ZONE** is a kiddie show, that's irrelevant; what's important is that it's got fights and FX, that's what matters. If 'grown up TV' means Football and **CHEERS**, I'll stick to 'kiddie' TV.

One of the reasons **Godzilla**, **Gigan** & **Ghidrah**'s costumes were dusted off and put in this show was because the **Godzilla** movies had begun bombing at the box office, yet the superhero programs were going strong. It was a chance for the monster makers to get some superhero profits, and to put **Godzilla** into a different genre. **Godzilla**'s appearance in this series is a brilliant idea, I wish there'd been more team-ups like this. If only **Toho** got along better with other companies, **Godzilla** might have teamed up with **Ultraman** or **Kamen Rider**-the true classic heroes of Japanese TV. But his team up with the

generally obscure, forgotten **Zone Fighter** will have to do. The **Godzilla** episodes (#4, #11, #15, #21, & #25) were popular enough to inspire similarly goofy antics in 1973's **GODZILLA VS. MEGALON**. **Godzilla**'s ray, in one episode was done with smoke or some sort of firehose-type effect; never done in a **Godzilla** movie. It looks pretty effective.

Fights, FX, gunplay and car chases punctuate this tale of righteous heroes the Sakimori family, who came from a planet called **Peaceland**. There seems to be a father (played by Shoji Nakayama, who also played Capt. Kiriya in **ULTRASEVEN**), mother and grandfather, but it's the three youngsters who're the heroic **Zone Fighter** trio. Among their weapons, like a flying car called **Mighty Liner**, and a spaceship called **Smokey** (don't laugh! It resides hidden in a cloud of smoke until needed, okay?!), they've got these little flare-like rockets they throw in the air, which have built in tape recorders and act as life-saving messengers in each episode. They've also got guns, and **Zone Angel** (aka **Hiromi**), being female, has that special feminine intuition. Don't laugh,

it's true! Girls do have a certain intuition or sixth sense. I realized this a while back when I was on a date with a young lady. As she sat there on the couch next to me, and we both pretended to be interested on whatever was playing on the TV that night, it dawned on me that she did indeed know something I did not: Whether or not I was getting laid that night. Anyway, as for **Zone Angel**, I wouldn't necessarily visualize her face while slamming the old ham, but almost any female bodd looks good in a tight, space-age leotard, not to mention her black hot pants & leather mini-skirt, barely larger than a belt. The other two heroes are male, like an irritating, cute little kid called **Akira** (**Zone Jr.**), and the main hero, **Hikaru**, who can grow giant. In his spare time, **Hikaru** manages to be a race car driver, depending on when Japan is being attacked by alien space-monsters called **Garoga-Baran**. Their leader is called **Gold Garoga**. These nasty aliens destroyed the **Zone Family**'s home planet **Peaceland**, and are now bullying the Earth. They've got the usual futuristic weapons & vehicles, and can also grow giant to form assorted giant monsters called



© Toho

'Terro Beasts'. Some look cool, some look stupid. Hell, they also have monster capsule/missiles, which become destructive **Terro Beasts** too! Naturally, the planet isn't big enough for the heroes and villains, so conflicts are bound to arise. **Zone Fighter**'s giant form seems to like doing hand-springs which result in double footed dropkicks which send the rubber monsters plummeting.

What follows is a complete episode guide. Each episode review includes its number, title, broadcast date, and I've even isolated the very first shot from each episode (don't you just love me!?), for easy identification, in case you ever decide to watch an episode.

#1: "DESTROY THE TERRO-BEAST MISSILE!" [4/2/73]

FIRST SHOT: View from the driver's seat, from a car driving on a desolate street.

They don't waste time in this exciting pilot! Our hero, **Hikari Sakimori** is attacked (within the first minute), and the **Zone Family** gets kidnapped by **Garogas** disguised as gun-toting



mobsters. So for the first time, our heroes must reveal their outerspace forms on Earth, and fight their way out of a dark warehouse. Then Zone Fighter grows giant and battles big monsters Red Spark and a magnetic cyborg called Jikiro. Written & Directed by Jun Fukuda. ***1/2

#2: "BEAT DESTRO-KING!" [4/9/73] {"Yatsukero! Destro King"}

FIRST SHOT: Title, and villain's fist pounding down onto a table.

Young Hiroyuki Kawase appears in a tale of a photographer who accidentally stumbles across some Garogas planning fiendish plots: 1. Trying to kill Hikari with a time-bomb (but that backfires). 2. Impersonating surgeons, thereby sneaking into a hospital. But after a comparatively talky episode, Zone Fighter battles a mecha-hydra called Destro King. Written & Dir.: Jun Fukuda. ***



#3: DEFEAT GAROGA'S SUBTERRANEAN BASE! [4/16/73]

F.S.: Toy train.

Some kid's father (a scientist, of course) gets kidnapped by Garogas and held captive in what appears to be a weird dimension. So Zone Fighter rescues him right before his appointment to destroy a two-headed, reptilian hunchback called Dorola. Dir.: Ishiro Honda. **

#4: ONSLAUGHT! THE GAROGA ARMY; ENTER GODZILLA [4/23/73]

F.S.: Space, then the Zone Angel star gazing.

Zone Angel falls for Sachio (apparently an old boyfriend from Peaceland), now a toy freak. But he's really a Garoga spy, and all this toys attack people! He also becomes the monster Spylar, who teams up with Warugilgar against Zone Fighter. But suddenly, abruptly, Godzilla just pops in out of nowhere, for an amusing tag-team match. Dir.: Ishiro Honda,

Written by Jun Fukuda. ***1/2

#5: BLAST KING GHIDORAH AT POINT BLANK! [4/30]

F.S.: Garoga space station.

Even before Zone Fighter's climactic fight with Ghidrah, this immensely entertaining episode has the Zone Family & Garogas fighting over a magic crystal. Written by Juro Shimamoto, Directed by Jun Fukuda. Part 1 of 2. *****

#6: KING GHIDORAH STRIKES BACK! [5/7/73]

FS: Sign on a laboratory building.

King Ghidrah is still at large (pun intended), so Zone Fighter has a few more battles with him, one on a moon-



like planet (ala MONSTER ZERO)! Another gripping scene has our hero fighting to save his kin from Garogas who've tied them up near rapidly advancing saw blades! Will Zone Fighter make it in time? Is the Pope Catholic? Writer: Juro Shimamoto, Dr.: Jun Fukuda. *****

#7: ZONE FAMILY'S CRITICAL MOMENT! [5/14/73]

FS: Explosive fire.

I lost count of all the fights in this one! After Zone Fighter defeats the Dragon King (no, the one from the Monkey King stories), Zone Angel is kidnapped and impersonated. Clearing this mess involves plenty of action, including the destruction of Gilmaras. *****

#8: SMASH THE

TERRIFYING INVADER! [5/21/73]

FS: Toy train's point of view, leaving a tunnel.

That weird little guy who played a native translator in KING KONG VS. GODZILLA cameos as a fisherman, and then Takeru and Akira get kidnapped by Garogas, resulting in another tension-filled escape from a saw blade. Episodic monster: Geldderah, a sea creature. Written & Dir.: Jun Fukuda. **1/2

#9: SEARCH FOR THE SECRET OF RED-SPIDER! [5/28/73] {"Wa ne! Redo Spaida no"}

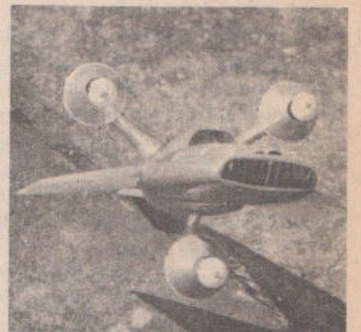
F.S.: Landscape near the shore. This exciting edition seems to be

to be stock footage from LATITUDE ZERO. **

#11: BY A THREAD; THE ROAR OF GODZILLA! [6/11/73]

FS: Car on a road.

Sosaki, a jealous racer helps the



Above 3 photos:

- 1: Zone Family backed by Godzilla, battle the Garogas!
- 2: Godzilla battles the Junahs to help the Zone Fighters.
- 3: Spaceship - "Smokey".

All photo's ©Toho.



Garogas to trap our hero in a car about to be demolished, so it's Godzilla to the rescue! The giant villain is none other than Gigan, who gets beaten up by Godzilla, then again by Zone Fighter. Dir.: Jun Fukuda. ***

**#12: TERROBEAST HQ-
INVADE THE EARTH! [6/18/
73]**

FS: Star lands, becomes a monster.

Zone Angel and another pretty girl are kidnapped by Garogas, who're also using chickens to breed their almighty chicken monster, Barakidon. Tons a' fun! Dir.: Ishiro Honda. ****

**#13: ABSOLUTE TERROR!
BIRTHDAY OF HORROR!!
[6/25/73]**

FS: Interior of a bakery.

An exploding birthday cake, hypnotized baker and electric giant Garaborg are among the instruments of destruction the Garogas use against the Zone Family in this superb episode. Dir.: Ishiro Honda, Written by Jun Fukuda. ****

**#14: INSANE WITH
ANGER! THE GAROGA
BOYS SQUAD [7/2/73]**

FS: Garoga space station (in space).

In one of my least favorites, another obligatory scene of a kid bullied at school. So Garogas give him a secret power formula for revenge. The liquid is also tested on a small bird, allowing for more on screen cruelty to animals. But the formula turns kids into Garogas, before Zone Fighter finally takes on Deadragon. *

**#15: SUBMERSION!
GODZILLA SAVE TOKYO
[7/9/73]**

FS: Buildings crumbling.

Here's a weird, but watchable episode, featuring a community sponsored foot-race, a funny scene where a Garoga blatantly marches in a traditional Japanese parade, a mysterious man in black played by Japan born Turkish actor Johnny Yusef, aka Osman Yusef (also in *LAST DAYS OF PLANET EARTH*, *GORATH*, *MOTHRA*, and scores of monster movies and superhero TV shows), a kid & his Godzilla doll, and even Godzilla himself. After the subterranean earthquake monster Zandora tries burying Zone Fighter alive (it was an impressive underground duel), it's Godzilla to the rescue. This was also the first episode with a different opening credits sequence. ***

**#16: COUNTERSTRIKE OF
TERROR! GAROGA-ROBOT
[7/16/73]**

FS: Falling star.

Despite a lengthy duel between Moguranda and Zone Fighter, this slow-paced tale of a crashed meteor and a possessed family is as exciting as watching paint dry_ in slow motion. Written by Susumu Takeuchi. *

**#17: GO! FIGHTER
EMERGENCY TAKE-OFF [7/
23/73]**

FS: Car & house, as viewed by Garogas, on their control panel (within their space station).

Garogas seems to want all the Zone Family's vehicles, the spaceship Smokey was stolen and stored on some desolate planet, and they also tried (unsuccessfully) to get Zone Fighter's Mighty Liner (flying car). Strangely, after Zone Fighter kills Barugus to get the Smokey back, a cross & angel halo materializes in place of the monster! You just gotta' be fluent in Japanese to figure out this episode. Dir.: Jun Fukuda. *

#18: DIRECTIVE: "DESTROY



Godzilla and Zone Fighter (©Toho).

**THE JAPANESE
LABORATORY" [7/30/73]**

FS: People racing down a hill, waving flags.

An unusual episode, featuring a brief glimpse of Hiromi in a bikini and a cameo by Daita Oiwa (Yellow Ranger from *GO RANGERS*). Monstrous Gandargilas swallowed a powerful new bomb, so Zone Fighter is reluctant to fight him at first, it could explode. Their alternatives to fighting are pretty silly. Part one of two. Written by Koji Amemiya. ***

**#19: ORDER: "CRUSH THE
EARTH WITH COMET K" [8/
6/73]**

FS: Flashback about Gandargilas, the monster with the bomb in his stomach.

Part 2 is one bizarre episode! There's a nice fight and Hiromi, being female, again looks good in a bikini. But before Zone Fighter's rematch

with that bomb-swallowing monster, they play a game of horse-shoes! Then suddenly, unprovoked, Zone Fighter tears out his new playmate's eyes! Talk about sore winners! I don't know what to make of this one; while the two giants played their little game, there's some meteor coming toward Earth. Written by Koji Amemiya. **1/2

**#20: DESPERATE
STRUGGLE! CAN YOU HEAR
FIGHTER'S SONG [8/12/73]**

FS: Some dumb kid's face pressed up against a window.

Kidnapped kids facing sure death at the guillotine are bait to lure Zone Fighter into a battle with two-headed giant Goramu. It turns out the kids are locked in one of the monster's heads! ***

**#21: INVINCIBLE!
GODZILLA'S VIOLENT
CHARGE [8/20/73] FS:
Godzilla!**

Our heroes get one of the Garogas' precious monster capsules, the Garogas retaliate by kidnapping Akira. So there's an exchange; heroes get Akira back, and the Garogas activate their giant jellyfish Jurah. When Godzilla tears one of its tentacles off, it becomes a whole new Jurah! So again Godzilla & Zone Fighter team up for another tag-team match, against the two blobs! Not only that, but Zone Fighter & Godzilla playfully spar at the beginning, and later, the villains shoot several construction workers to death with machine guns! Slick episode. ****

**#22: COUNTERATTACK!
STRIKE DOWN SUPER-
JIKIRO [8/27/73]**

FS: Akira running down the stairs.

Shortly after Zone Fighter's first sea duel with giant robo-monster Super Jikiro, Hikari gets in an auto wreck; yet forgives the other driver because she looks good in a bathing

suit! But their little frolic at the beach is short-lived because they're attacked by speargun-toting scuba divers! Later, our heroes throw scalpels into the eyes of murderous surgeons (even more Garoga agents)! All this plus romance, a ship hijack, and innocent bystanders killed by machine-gun fire! ****

**#23: SECRET OF
BAKUGON--THE GIANT
TERRO-BEAST [9/3/73]**

FS: A car driving on the road.

Whether it be a duel of laser firing cars, or a stupendous fist fight in a field near a pond, this is a nifty tale of a female Garoga who uses illusion to convince kiddies that an old junkyard is the Garden of Eden. Episodic giant monster: Bakugon, a fire spitting cross between a dinosaur and an aardvark. Dir.: Ishiro Honda. ***

**#24: SMASH THE PIN-
SPITTING NEEDLAR! [9/10/
73]**

FS: Raindrops in the forest, and two guys hiking.

An eerie corpse found in a secluded house leads to an investigation which results in: 1. Discovery of giant monster Needlar. 2. A Garoga arsenal is controlling local villagers, much like Morlocks and Iloy from *THE TIME MACHINE*. 3. Good honest hatred involving guns and kicks! When Needlar takes on Zone Fighter, that weird villain suffers the goriest decapitation I've ever seen in a superhero series! Dir.: Ishiro Honda, Writer: Koji Amemiya. ***

**#25: BLOOD BATH! ZONE
& GODZILLA VS. THE
UNITED TERRO; BEAST
ARMY [9/17/73]**

FS: Capsules flying in the sky.

Zone Fighter's new girlfriend got injured so they nurse her back to health while Garogas plant their monster capsules all around a residential neighborhood. Zone Fighter manages to destroy most of the newly hatched monsters, but when Garo Borg and Spider Uros team up against Zone Fighter, Godzilla just suddenly appears in the city, and saves the day. ***1/2

**#26: PULVERIZE
"OPERATION: GAROGA
GAMMA-X"! [9/24/73]**

FS: An international group of scientists.

A bright eyed agent from an elite task force of Garogan "X-Agents" (not as in former, but they wear X's on their stomachs) blinds some kid and unleashes a giant called "Grote Gauros". So begins the final confrontation between the Zone Family and the Garogas. **

HONG KONG HEROES

Used to be OC's "Kaizo Ningen Update" column which paid the printing bills. But that genre's fandom became overshadowed by the current plague, HK film fans. The trendy HK fandom is to the 1990s, what the Japanese animation fandom was in the 1980s. I'm so sick of seeing John Woo, **HARDBOILED**, **HARDTARGET**, or **HARDCONTACT** (I'm getting them all mixed up now!) in not only all the new Asian zines, but in common sleaze rags put out by bootleggers. Hell, I hear John Woo showed up as a guest at some Fangoria convention, only to discover that every low life in the place was selling bootlegs of his films! Woo was understandably furious, and I wouldn't blame him for never going to a slimy convention again. So as you can see, the bootleggers & sleazewads are still doing the HK genre more harm than good. While the rest of you still seem to drool over any film out of Hong Kong (provided it's similar to that of Tsui Hark or John Woo, of course), I've grown tired of the genre. I for one didn't recently 'discover' HK films at a trendy art house

or pretentious film festival; I've grown up on the stuff. So naturally, after so many years in this fandom, I'm getting a little sick of it. I rarely waste my money in Chinatown theaters & video stores (I waste it on other useless things). So instead, I'm currently relying on TV to get my weekly (and weakly) intake of HK cinema. It's free, and very diverse; I end up seeing a wide variety of films I'd never have seen otherwise.

One 1980s film, broadcast on a Chinese language TV station recently, was **THE THIRTY MILLION RUSH**, a farce so bad, it doesn't deserve a full review. A Cinema City film (in association with Golden Princess Amusement Co.), with Eric Tsang working in one of those places where they destroy and/or recycle old money. He and some friends steal a few bags of used money, with help from Karl Maka (aka Carl Mac), a thief who recently got out of jail. But they're pursued by a greedy nun (Lin Ching Hsia), an equally greedy police inspector (Wong Ching), and a conman played by Liu Chia Liang (a non-martial arts role).

The course of this lame comedy has all these characters deceiving each other to keep the cash. No major laughs, but lots of dialogue. The only good thing was an upitty, flavorful score by Samuel Hui. Equally horrid was **EQUALS AGAINST DEVILS**, a gambler romp from around 1978. I saw it dubbed in English, on "Kung Fu Theatre" (still hosted by Tat Mau Wong) at 1:00 a.m. It was stupidly misplaced on this chop socky show, yet a kung fu film is the one thing **EQUALS AGAINST DEVILS** is not! It's a comedy drama about pool playing and gangsters, and is almost saved by an abundance of bikini-clad girls and a guest appearance by Chen Sing. Its English dubbing is pretty bad, as is everything else in this terrible comedy, of the "Plan Nine" level.

OC dares to go where no (or very few) fanzine has gone before; while the other rags continue to drool over the latest gangster or wire & pulley flick, OC seeks out the old, the rare, the obscure. After all, endless reviews of **SWORDSMAN** & **Tsui Hark** amount to the journalistic equivalent of in-

breeding. This stagnation does little to enlighten the reader to HK movies as a whole. There's more to HK cinema than what the video pirates are using to rip people off. So although this column, "HK Heroes" has a section on 1990s movies, let's not forget the equally entertaining movies of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. —As always, I'm starting out with the 1960s section. Since last issue's stunning photo of 1960s starlet Diana Chang, a number of my heterosexual male readers have requested more babes from the 1960s. So OC has got 'em! Before going into the 1960s section, which includes an article on 1960s actresses, I should make an important correction! Last issue's review of **THE WARLORD AND THE ACTRESS** had me thinking the name of the lead starlet was Chin Han (a guy's name!). Her real name is actually Jong Yeh Feih, aka Yeh Feng. But the credits on **THE WARLORD AND THE ACTRESS** were hard to read, so anything is possible.

昔日的風采 今天的

1960s:

SPECIAL
OF DAYS

These are both admirable and beautiful woman, worthy of our remembrance and our respect. The great stars of yesteryear really deserve tribute. They had morals, a sense of style, charisma, character,

RETROSPECTIVE;
GONE BY, TODAY

class, & elegance, plus they were adored and revered by their fans.

When I think of today's so-called 'stars' (sigh), dressed so skimpily, so eager to drop their clothes and expose themselves, some even act in Category

NOSTALGIA

WE REMINISCE

3 (soft-porn) films and think it's something to be proud of, or go out with rich playboys in search of 'pleasure', their salaries increase dramatically and they become flavor of the month, this year's model. Recently, in Taiwan and HK

THE
AND

GLORY
REMEMBER

there have been a yearning for the good old days, reminiscing about the past. Because today's idols of the young generation are many and commonplace, ordinary, & plain, the streets are full of them.



胡燕妮 Hu Yen Ni



方盈 Fang Yin



秦萍 Chin Ping



邢慧 Hsing Hui



井莉 Jing Li

葉蒂 Tue Ti



林翠 Lin Tsui



葉楓 Yeh Feng (aka Julie Yeh Feng) (THE WARLORD AND THE ACTRESS, POISON ROSE)



夷光 Yi Guang



葛蘭 Ge Lan



凌波 Long Po



aka Ivy Ling Po (films: THE TWIN SWORDS, THE SWORD AND THE LUTE, and PERFUMED ARROW, reviewed this issue)

Only 'old antiques' (i.e. old movie stars) are rare and therefore precious, and worthy of our reminiscence.

Producers, film industry executives, moguls, studio heads, etc. have finally woken up and smelled the coffee. They too are capitalizing on this retro craze and bringing out the old-time movie and showcasing these 'old-timers'. The Oscars regularly pay tribute to old movie stars, after learning the ceremonial aspects of the Academy Awards, we too should follow suit & pay tribute, and honor our old movie stars.

Therefore, to this end, here are a few photography of famous and popular actresses from a

bygone era. We put them on display here so as to reminisce and honor their greatness. We have omitted a few stars because we were unable to find a picture of them. But all these great stars of yesteryear will live on in our hearts, our minds, and our memories.

{William Chang translated the previous article from that bible of HK movies, CINEMART #8, from August of 1993. Please understand that the opinion expressed is that of whoever wrote the article in HK, and is not necessarily the way William or myself feel! While I respect the 1960s actresses, and enjoy their work, I also enjoy the sleazier new starlets. -DF}

尤敏 You Min



(aka Lin Tai) starred in LAST WOMAN OF SHANG, reviewed in this issue.



何莉莉 He Li Li (aka Lily Ho)



李菁 Lee Ching



林黛 Lin Dai

已姐 LAST WOMAN OF SHANG

Produced by Run Run Shaw in 1962, Dir.: Yueh Feng, Music by Akira Ifukube, Starring: Lin Dai (aka Lin Tai), Tien Feng, Pat Ting Hung (?), Shin Yung Kyoan, Hao Li, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

This review of LAST WOMAN OF SHANG welcomes you to yet another history lesson, as we again examine HK cinema in the pre-action phase. This timid soap opera could possibly be considered a 'masterpiece' and/or 'classic' to lovers of soap operas, and to historians. It's certainly a well made movie, full of epic, lavish sets & costumes. I imagine it was a big hit during its time. It appears to be a fictionalized account of the fall of the Shang Dynasty, no doubt glorified and romanticized to make it somewhat interesting. By early 1960s HK

standards, it could be considered a blockbuster (and maybe still is). My only real complaints are that the performances seem too opera-like; the women act way too graceful! Nobody can really walk and occasionally fall down that elegantly & delicately! So with this artificial, stage-like performing, it comes off as over acting on film. But in this way, it preserves a long-gone phase in HK film history; the industry's evolution out of singing operas.

I should point out some interesting facts about this movie. First of all, I was wrong in OC#17 when I called it a musical with Li Li Hua. She's not in this film, though lead actress Lin Dai resembles her (hence my confusion). Though there are two or three songs and dance numbers, there's really not enough to qualify it as an all-out musical. Speaking of music, other than old traditional Chinese folk opera crap, it's all by Japan's Akira Ifukube! Does he know about

this? The Godzillian tunes are constantly present, familiar music we've heard in so many Japanese sci-fi flicks! Regardless, Akira's ever present tunes are eerily, majestically appropriate, whether it be for a monster destroying Tokyo, or armies of Shang Dynasty troops on the march, using shields, Bow & arrow, and chariots.

As a fan of later HK films, I was studying what little action LAST WOMAN OF SHANG had to offer. The sword-action films as we know them didn't really start to evolve until around 1966, so this melodrama (and I mean mellow) is very crude. The two incredibly brief sword fights involve no martial arts at all, and are choreographed as slowly & badly as in many Italian gladiator films, European knight films, etc. There are, however, a few thrown weapons like knives and swords which reach their intended targets. There are two amusing decapitations, but blood on screen is used sparingly. Other stabbings oc-

cur outside of line of sight; we see the facial expression of the stabber, accompanied by a sound effect of the penetration, and then cut to a shot of the victim dying. So much of the violence, as scant as it is, is implied, not seen (by us, anyway).

Excluding the old B&W dramas Bruce Lee did as a child, this is the oldest Chinese movie I've seen. And yet, even then, Tien Feng looked old! Even in 1962, he looked as though he could keel over at any time! How did he survive to appear in ONE ARMED SWORDSMAN, FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH, FIST OF FURY, SNAKEFIST FIGHTER, MR. CANTON AND LADY ROSE, and A BETTER TOMORROW?! The guy has been around forever, and has put his mark on every important HK genre there is. Another familiar face to cameo in LAST WOMAN OF SHANG is Hao Li, also in last issue's SUMMONS TO DEATH, and he told Bruce Lee to visit his sister's grave in ENTER THE DRAGON.

Evil King Chou is one hell of a tyrant. He imposes heavy taxes and treats the people like slaves. I assume he's a fact-based character, since the same villain was main heavy in another movie, **THE STORY OF CHINESE GODS** (a cartoon). Both movies seem to be fictionalized accounts of the fall of the Shang Dynasty. Anyway, King Chou killed the father (Tien Feng) of Chi Fai, much like he kills many people he suspects of being disloyal. King Chou stabs many people, and even orders a loyal minister (who had doubts of the king's ethics) to cut out his heart. So lovely Chi Fai (Lin Dai/Tai) pretends to like King Chou, who, coincidentally, has the hots for her. The course of the story has her as the new empress, living with the king, as they have all these lavish banquets. But eventually, she helps a rebel to escape from the king's torture chamber, and he leads an army of peasants and soldiers to raid the king's castle. The destruction guarantees the death of both the king

and our heroine. ** -DF

女秀才

THE PERFUMED ARROW

A Shaw Bros. Film, Producer: Run Me Shaw, Songs & Lyrics: Chin Chien, Film Editing: Chiang Hsing Loong, Art Dir.: Wang Yung Hua, Make Up: Fong Yuen, Composer: Wang Foo Ling, Music: Wang Chu-Jen, Asst. Dir.: Min Ming, Action Scenes Directed by Sui Jang Hung, Dir.: Kao Li, Starring: Ivy Ling Po, Chin Fen, Ho Fan, Chin Fei, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

While not as blatantly bad as John Woo's **PRINCESS CHANG PING** (see OC#14), this early (if not ancient) 1960s flick is not to my taste. I'm no fan of musicals, and at least half this movie is singing! So my reaction is basically negative, but consider the source. Fans of musicals may consider this traditional opera to be a masterpiece. Being a Shaw Bros. movie, the costumes & sets are as nice

as always, but with the endless songs (typical Chinese opera, and lots of it), it's tempting to obscure these sets with scan lines. But to be fair, this is before the sword actioners of Chang Cheh & Wang Yu, so the ballads outnumbered the sword fights significantly. If you cut out all the songs, this costume drama would only be about 30 minutes long.

The main heroine is played by a beautiful younger looking Ivy Ling Po, years before her role as the Scarlet Maid in more action-oriented tales (1965's **TEMPLE OF RED LOTUS**, 1966's **SWORD AND THE LUTE**, and **TWIN SWORDS**) of the mid-1960s. In this drama/comedy (that makes it a dramedy) it's another stupid salute to androgyny with a female character playing a man, and fooling many men in the film. How many times have they done this in HK flicks?! I'm so sick of this. Normally, it's only a subplot, but in this one, it's the main story, about how she struggles to hide her gender, all through the film. Her

two male companions are oblivious to her femininity, despite her petite, fragile mannerisms, entirely feminine voice and more makeup than a gothic Tammie Faye Baker! What does it is the attire, especially that hat. Oh yes, I could see a nude Christy Canyon, but so long as she wore one of those stupid hats, I'd think she was a guy. She impersonates a male because women were treated too badly back then, she had ambitions to be an army general or adventurer (she's skilled at swordplay and archery, hence the title). Another subplot has her father framed for a crime, and later she thwarts a kidnapping by a gang of rapist/bandits (a sequence with swordplay, a little blood & nudity; definitely out of place in this movie), and the female victim she rescued falls in love with her/him. But the movie finally ends after her true sex is admitted. Some matchmakers marry her and the rescued girl to the two male colleagues she grew up with. * -DF

謝賢 年齡之謎難解

1953年入行，從影近四十年

The Age of Tse Yin in an Unknown, Unsolved Riddle and Mystery. He Started his Career in 1953, and has been Active for Nearly 40 Years

Age is generally considered a secret for women, but similarly, it's also Tse Yin's secret. Look at old records of Tse Yin, he said he was 28 in 1967. By calculating, he had to be born in 1939. However, by examining other materials carefully, there are some problems which have been found; they're quite interesting.

In 1953, Tse Yin was accepted by Di Hua Film Company, which later became Ling Kuang Film Company. He was trained for about a year, and started with Ka Ling in **THE CASE OF THE THREE WIVES**. If we count years from 1939, Tse Yin should be 15 years old by the time he made **THE CASE OF THE THREE WIVES**. However, if we take a look at old photos of this film, Tse Yin had already been an elegant young man; he expressed emotions appropriately when he was filming opposite Ka Ling. By just looking at his face, he definitely didn't look like a 15-year old; besides, old time movies would never use a 15 year-old as a leading man!

It's suspected Tse Yin had reported he's at least five years younger than his real age; of course, this is just guessing, maybe he just looked more mature,

and he was really 15 years old; or maybe he just wanted to joke with his fans, and reported 5 years, 6, 7, less than his real age so that his fans would keep guessing, or maybe he didn't know his age himself, so he just made it up, who knows the real person behind this? This age game is quite interesting, so is his remuneration. (And the reason behind this interest in enumeration never changes.)

Tse Yin was shot to fame in 1955 with the movie **999 MURDER CASE**, and became the top leading man for old Cantonese movies.

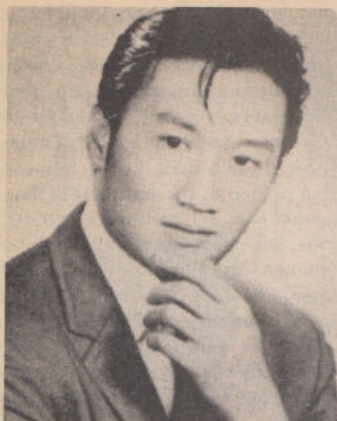
When the river rises the boat goes up, so was his remuneration as he became more famous. It may shock you when we take a look at his old records.

In 1955, he earned more than HK\$820,000 just

from making movies. In 1959, only 4



Tse Yin



years later, he made over a million, a total of HK\$1,400,000, earned his first million. For the many years after, he made either near or over a million each year. From 1955 to 1967, he had made more than HK\$9,630,000 in 13 years. He became the highest paid actor at that time. Tse Yin had over 9 million HK dollars more than 20 years ago, just by making movies. He was quite a rich man.

Tse Yin's original name is Tse Ka Yuk, he's the fourth child in the family, most of the people in the movie business like to call him "Brother Four", some even call him "Master Four". (of course, nobody dared to offend him, just like today's master Steven Chow Sing Chi).

Comparing Tse Yin's career, his road to success was not as rough as that of some other actors. In fact, it was quite smooth. His debut movie was *THE FAUCET DOWNSTAIRS*. He joined Di Hua Film Co. in 1953, and made *THE CASE OF THE THREE WIVES*. It didn't get any attention though. However, when he joined Kuang Yi Film Company in 1955, things changed dramatically for him. As mentioned before, 999 *MURDER CASE* helped Tse Yin become a famous star, and he skyrocketed since then, established his place in Southern China movie industry, becoming the top leading actor.

In addition to his physical appearance, his tallness and handsomeness (and his own distinct smile), which made him a favorite, his acting was the ultimate factor that made him successful. He played a wide range of characterizations in many films; he could play modern and costume roles, he could be cold, arrogant, witty, passionate, humorous, melancholic, flirtatious, unruly, ..., if we continue, it would definitely take up a lot of space.

However, there seemed to have been a missed title - villain. In the early years, Tse Yin had tried to play such roles, some movie critics even praised his acting to be flawless in capturing the mind of a villain; but he couldn't pass the barriers of his fans. It turned

out that his loyal fans didn't want to see the ugly side of their idol, so among hundreds of his movies, it's difficult to find an evil Tse Yin. With the enthusiastic support of his fans, he didn't dare to take a wrong turn.

Tse Yin was in his best in '50s & '60s; even when he built his own company Tse Brothers Film Co. in 1966. The company's movies like *BRAVE MAN* (which starred his best movie partner Ka Ling) and *WINTER LOVE* were all box office hits.

He'd always been good at acting, so he made the next step: Directing. In 1972 he started directing his first movie *NARROW LADDER*, which officially became his career as a director. In the 1970s, things began to change, Cantonese movies declined, Tse Yin changed to film Mandarin movies. He went to Taiwan and made *THE STORY OF TI YING*. He met his ex-wife Jen Jen when he was in Taiwan. Jen Jen was famous too at that time, maybe because of this similarity, they married in 1974. Although people thought they were good together, this marriage ended in divorce after four years, with no children.

Well, a lose turned out to be a gain. A year after his divorce, Tse Yin fell in love with TVB actress Paula Dik. Rumor had it that Paula Dik was Tse Yin's tenant before they got involved. In 1979, Tse Yin and Paula Dik got married. By learning mistakes from his previous marriage, the second marriage is more happy than the first. They have a son and a daughter. Four of them often show up together, they're a happy family picture.

After he came back to Hong Kong from Taiwan, Tse Yin continued making numerous movies. This time, he played a middle age man instead of younger man. Even though he grew older, Tse Yin's mature and steady figure once again captured viewers' attention. In 1979, he was invited by TVB, to make TV shows. His first TV series was *OVER THE RAINBOW*, co-starring Lisa Wang, TVB's number 1 actress. Later he made the TV show *IN SEARCH, THE SHELL GAME'S 1 & 2, BLOODLINE, THE 11TH CHILD OF CIAO FAMILY AND BEYOND THE ROSE GARDEN*.

Aside from his outstanding acting skills, Tse Yin was also a good business man. Some years ago, he stopped making TV programs. The whole family emigrated to Canada, and he engaged in real estate business. Because there was a time the market wasn't good, economy dropped; rumor had it that Tse Yin had gone bankrupt in Canada. But Tse Yin would never accept losing, after several attempts, his bank is full of money again. So as said, no matter if it's acting or doing business, nothing can be too difficult for Tse Yin.

謝賢簡介

Tse Yin (謝賢) profile

Original Name: Tse Ka Yuk (謝家鉅)

Stage Name: Tse Yin (謝賢)

Native Origin: Canton

Debut: "The Faucet Downstairs (樓下開水喉)" (1954)

Important Awards:

1957-59 and 1961-62 Top Ten Stars, 5 times.

1965-66 Best Welcomed Cantonese Movie Male Star, 2 times.

Marriage:

Married Taiwanese star Jen Jen (甄珍) in 1974, divorced in 1978, no children.

Married TVB actress Paula Dik (狄波拉) in 1979, with a son and a daughter.

Filmography:

- 1955: *The Case of Three Wives* (三妻奇案)
- 1956: *999 Murder Case* (九九九命案)
- Wrong Expression* (表錯情)
- Posthumous Child* (遺腹子)
- The Seventh Heaven* (七重天)
- Brotherly Love* (手足情深)
- 1957: *999 Beach Murder Case* (九九九海灘命案)
- Bloodshed Valley* (血染相思谷)
- 1958: *Seize Love Using Knife* (橫刀奪愛)
- Love Thief* (情賊)
- The Story of A Child Prodigy Capturing A Thief* (神童捉賊記)
- 1959: *Lakeside Grass* (湖畔草)
- Family Tear* (天倫情淚)
- Orchid Under Storm* (風雨幽蘭)
- Destined Lover* (歡喜冤家)
- 1960: *Loving Mother and Her Son* (慈母嬌兒)
- Broken Leaves By the Autumn Wind* (秋風殘葉)
- Connected Twig* (連理枝)
- 1961: *999 24-Hour Mysterious Case* (九九九廿四小時奇案)
- Ghost at Night* (夜半幽靈)
- Wife Chasing Story* (追妻記)
- 1962: *Rouge Thief* (胭脂賊)
- True Love Under Distress* (患難真情)
- The God of Love Thieves* (I, II) (神偷情賊 (上, 下))
- 1963: *Spring On Earth* (春到人間)
- A Rose with Tears* (含淚的玫瑰)
- A Weird Swordsman Named Flying Swallow* (怪俠燕子飛)
- 1964: *Playboy* (花花公子)
- The Night of Death Corner* (死亡角之夜)
- 1965: *The Husband of A Young Lady* (小姐的丈夫)
- Black Rose* (黑玫瑰)
- 海棠紅* (Red Crabapple Flower)
- A Spy Called Black Spider* (特務黑蜘蛛)
- 1966: *Radio Prince* (播音王子)
- A Million Dollar Inheritance* (遺產一百萬)
- Wicked Beauty* (賊美人)
- 1967: *A Couple In Danger* (虎口驚魂)
- Brave Man* (鐵膽恩仇)
- Blue Club* (藍色夜總會)
- Golden Sea Gull* (金鷗)
- 1968: *Winter Love* (冬戀)
- Window* (窗)
- A Loafer and A Beautiful Lady* (浪子佳人)
- 1969: *Clever Thief* (妙賊)
- A Loafer* (浪子)
- Good Looking Yet Evil* (玉面煞星)
- 1970: *A Noble Sword* (君子劍)
- The Story of Ti Ying* (緹縈)
- 1971: *Eight Heaven Generals* (天龍八將)
- The Talk of Cheating* (騙術奇談)
- Ghost Meteor* (鬼流星)
- 1972: *Black Whirlwind* (黑旋風)
- Narrow Ladder* (窄梯) (Also Directing)
- 1973: *Trip For Tomorrow* (明日天涯) (Also Directing)
- 1974: *Obsessed Child* (迷幻嬌娃)
- Goodbye, My Family* (別了親人) (Also Directing)
- The Place Where Sea Gulls Live* (海鷗飛處)
- A Bitter Dream* (一簾幽夢)
- 1975: *Call Girl* (酒吧女郎)
- 1976: *Rich Family* (大富人家) (Also Directing)
- Changed Color Sun* (變色的太陽) (Also Directing)
- 1977: *Revoking A Licence* (出冊)
- Love in Hawaii* (愛在夏威夷) (Also Directing)
- 1978: *A Gentleman and A Lady* (紳士爺千金小姐)
- 1980: *Ghost Guest* (魔鬼情客)
- 1981: *Struggle Between Gamblers* (千王鬥千霸)
- 1982: *The Re-Born Man* (再生人)
- The King of Thieves* (賊王之王)



1970s: THE IRON MAN

Supervisor: C.Y. Yang, Martial Arts Dir.: Leung Sun Chung, Cameraman: Chen Yue Pai, Art Dir.: Senkung Yun Chung, Production Manager: Chow Kam En, Music: Chow Leung, Film Editor: Yang Pak Wing, Producer: Pan Se Wai, Distributed by Chan Yet Wu, Starring: Jimmy Wang Yu, Lung Fai, Chong Chi Min, Sit Hong, Chow Chung Lin, Han Kong, Don Fon Mei Fung, Li Sui Hin, Win Yat Fung, Kim En Fun, Reviewed by DF.

I like **THE IRON MAN** for three reasons: 1. I'm a Wang Yu enthusiast. 2. It's not likely to appear at some trendy film festival, nor will it be repeatedly drooled over in predictable sleazebags put out by bootleggers. 3. The fights are exciting; they're well choreographed and fast-paced. As always, Wang Yu doesn't let his limited command of kung fu hold him back, the battles are pretty fun.

However, the whole thing is painfully predictable, all stuff Wang Yu has done in other films.... The modern setting is the only major change in what's otherwise the same story as **WANG YU, KING OF BOXING** (aka **SCREAMING TIGER**). His hand is chopped off at the beginning, but I needn't tell you what Wang Yu flicks that came from! So on the whole, it's all pretty traditional and cliché ridden, and "But still" is dubbed four times.

Despite its being exactly the same as so many other 1970s chop sockey romps, and its being so low budget, it's fun. Wang Yu lacks matinee idol looks (he looks more like one of them boat people), and facial expressions, but he commands considerable respect as a sly, cunning hero. His acting in **THE IRON MAN** isn't great, but he was born with a certain charisma. As for his fights, he seems fast enough, but there's not sufficient form. His forward snap kicks & roundhouse kicks don't seem to fully extend (knee still bent), and he'd probably fall on his ass if he attempted a spinning back kick. But still, exciting, innovative, sometimes brutal choreography saves it. Also, there's a little gunplay, and a scene where he yanks a guy off a speeding motorcycle!

The opening scenes of Japanese villainy in WWII Shanghai are in B&W, adding a sense of realism. Our hero's parents were brutally killed by them corrupt rapists, the Japanese, and the kid's hand is removed via samurai sword. But color appears in time for the opening credits, as our hero grows up to learn kung fu. He wears a glove to cover his new false hand, while prowling Osaka to kill those evil sol-

diers, who are now yakuza. I don't think most of these scenes were really shot in Japan, but Wang Yu defends a family from the yakuza (who want the daughter, admittedly a babe & a half). During Wang's quest, there's the mandatory gambling scene where our boy stops the villain's cheating with trick dice- carrying it a step further; he shoves a knife through the guy's hand! Not a bad effect! Wang's helper, an alcoholic gambler doesn't survive the climactic series of fights. The girl was kidnapped earlier in the film, but gets rescued by her blind mother (or sister), while Wang kicks the rest of the villains in the litchi nuts. ***

FIGHTING DUEL OF DEATH (?)

{Title uncertain, no credits} Reviewed By Damon Foster.

My tape of this one, which I probably recorded around 1:00 a.m. over ten years ago, lacks any credits or title, so the recording must start about five minutes into the film. My only clue that it's really called **FIGHTING DUEL OF DEATH** is what I wrote on the tape's label, so very long ago. So if any of you have this stupid film on tape, and can confirm as to whether or not I got the title right, please let me know.

Technically, I believe this flick probably came out in the early 1980s, because there's music stolen from the Human League ("Love Action", off their 1981 Dare album) and David Bowie ("Putting out the Fire with Gasoline", from the 1983 soundtrack for **CAT PEOPLE**). Were it not for these two swiped songs, this movie would look like a 1970s cheapie. In fact, it probably is, it's always possible it was produced in the 1970s and later re-released with the stolen music (as well as a quick steal from the old **TWILIGHT ZONE** theme). Other than the two brief 1980s tunes, this looks like typically cheap, 1970s crap out of Singapore or HK. **FIGHTING DUEL OF DEATH** is badly written, badly filmed, and badly everything.

The martial arts are good, but scant. One character is a good martial artist, but he only gets in a couple fights, and there are many non martial arts characters. It's more of a soap opera about betrayal, trust and human temptation, than a martial arts film. I suppose the format and story is rather unique, but the poor production values ruin everything.

The setting is some modern, urban city, about some martial artist called Charlie Ho. It's a talky, completely useless drama, what's the point of this crap? Charlie's longtime childhood friend is a mobster who got

some bitch (not a bad looker, mind you) obsessed with gambling. Our heroic Charlie feels indebted to her too, because her late husband (who died in a pointless car crash) happened to be another of Charlie's friends. Charlie himself pledged allegiance to one of his many friends by putting some tattoo on his hand, and in a gut wrenching scene which made me cringe, he has a change of heart and literally cuts the tattoo off his hand! Anyway, the gambling bitch's debts have ruined her life, so she sets out to get revenge against the mobsters who got her into gambling. She uses whatever method is available; knives, hornets and even a bow & arrow. Charlie tries unsuccessfully to keep the peace between both groups, but eventually aids in the murder of his former childhood chum (the mobster who runs the casino). 1/2

AVENGING BOXER

Presented by Jimmy Shaw, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Not bad for a bullshit movie, but where was this goofy, typical farce when I made the Jackie Chan issue?! This predictable JC rip-off is, like all predictable JC rip-offs, virtually identical to the rest; with or without Jackie. Writing this review will seem as repetitious as these types of movies themselves, so I'll try and keep it short. So okay, this late 1970s comedy offers a couple chuckles, but otherwise, the only good thing about it are its acro-

batic fights. Like in an actual Chan flick, there are some truly superb stunts, thanks to a limber, agile, incredibly energetic imitator who's probably as skillful as Jackie himself (he was then, anyway).

Watching this guy (whoever he is) in action makes me wonder why he, unlike Jackie, never made it big. Why didn't he or other Jackie wannabe's keep following Jackie's footsteps into the 1980s, why were there no **PROJECT Bs**, **POLICE SAGAS**, **WINNERS ON MEALS**, **MY LUCKY CONDORS**, or **MR. BEIJING AND LADY DAISY**? Strangely, the incredibly talented hero of **AVENGING BOXER**, like other clones, couldn't keep up with Jackie himself, the imitators have faded into obscurity.

But aside from the flips & fights, this stupid movie is just too average to take seriously. It's yet another story of a young martial artist (Hsiao Lung) who undergoes gruelling, tedious kung fu training to avenge his father's death. I gather they're fighting over some gold plate. Before he and his girlfriend (also a kung fu expert) eventually defeat the villain in a barn (the bad guy dies painfully, as always), there's plenty of fooling around and bad dubbing. In one scene, Hsiao chases a marketplace pickpocket, and in another, evades a violent tug while trying to keep his master's jug of wine from being damaged. *1/2 - DF

{To end HK **HEROES**'s 1970s section, an article on *The Wynners*, translated into English by Darren Wheeling & Kam Lee, from **CINEMART** #280, May, 1993. Though some of the band members are still active in show business today, it was in the 1970s that *The Wynners* were HK's answer to the Bay City Rollers. For example, there's Anthony Chan, also known as Chen Yao, Chen Fen and Chen Su Chu. Movie fans will remember him from **PAPER MARRIAGE**, **HEART OF THE DRAGON**, **LUCKY STARS GO PLACES** and **MR. VAMPIRE** 1&4. -DF}

溫拿樂隊20周年紀念

五月十五日起在香港開演唱會

鄧詠麟、鍾鎮濤、陳友、彭健新、葉德嫻
20年後再度演唱，是香港樂壇一大盛事。

THE WYNNERS 20TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT TO BE HELD MAY 15, 1994! THE MEMBERS ARE ALAN TAM, KENNY BEE, ANTHONY CHAN, PENG KEN SUN & YIP TSI KENG

The 20th anniversary of the Wynners is a big event in HK. On March 18th, a press conference was held at the Japan Airline Hotel. They've called the reunion concert tour 'Happy Happy Concert'. Over the past 20 years, they've separated many times, but always kept in touch like brothers. They made a promise to have a concert every five years. When they started, they were all teenagers. They all liked music; it was

their common bond. They can't believe it's lasted this long... 20 years. Even though they have matured & have had success on their own, when they get together, their friendship has never diminished. They have a lot of fun, like young brothers. Because the group has lasted so long they decided to meet all their fans on stage to say "Thank you". They just sent a letter to the people at Guinness Book of World Records because of

the group's unusual longevity.

May 15-24, 1994 had them performing a total of 12 shows in HK. Then they went to Mainland China & East Asia, then maybe Canada and the U.S. of they can adjust their schedules. They are releasing a special concert album & a comedy movie called "The Legendary Tigers of Canton", all to celebrate the reunion. Alan hopes to do it again in another five years, if the fans want it. They don't see each other that much. Four years ago, something unhappy happened between Kenny Bee and Anthony Wong, but their relationship survived.

Among the five, Alan Tam seems to be the leader; even though he seems to be the most opinionated. They can always find a compromise, so it's not too difficult to work together. Their

biggest problem when together is that they all like different foods. They share equally the profits from the group. Alan is so successful that he doesn't have to work anymore. You might recall a scene in Jackie Chan's ARMOR OF GOD (1986) where Jackie played in a '70s disco-rock group with Alan Tam & Rosamund Kwan called "The Losers", this of course was a 'take off' on Alan's real life group

The Wynners. In the same film, he later sung his solo hit, "Midnight Rider". Kenny, who's also been in films (i.e. Samo Hung's TO ERR IS HUMANE) suggested that each of them bring their wives & children to the show. Anthony Chan says it might be embarrassing for him because his son is taller than him. When they started in 1974, bell bottom pants and elevator shoes were all the rage. Now everything has changed except for their friendship... it survives unchanged.



THE WYNNERS

1980's:

大福星 MY LUCKY STARS

Produced by Golden Harvest in 1985, Producers: Raymond Chow & Leonard K.C. Ho, Dir.: Samo Hung, Executive Producer: Eric Tsang, Screenplay by Barrie Wong, Original Story: Barrie Wong, Lo Kin, Szeto Cheukhon, Music: Michael Lai, Cast: Samo Hung, Sybelle Hu, Richard Ng, Jackie Chan, Eric Tsang, Charlie Ching, Fiong Shu Fan, Yuen Biao, Lau Kar Wing, Paul Chan, Michiko Nishiwaki, Ti Wei, Lam Ching Ying, Wu Ma, James Tien, Tso Tat Wah, Reviewed by Frank Strom.

Here's the middle film in Samo Hung's trilogy of "Bowery Boys" type comedies. Seems to me that a lot of Chinese kung fu fans don't have a goddamn sense of humor (or at best a predictable, boring one) and don't understand why movies like this have jokes and sight-gags in them. Here's the deal, guys; it's because it's a COMEDY. Now that you're privy to that piece of valuable information, you can probably enjoy this as well as many other Jackie Chan and Samo Hung flicks. As has been noted in previous issues of OC, the "Lucky Stars" films (WINNERS AND SINNERS, MY LUCKY STARS, TWINKLE TWINKLE LUCKY STARS) and all the other HK action comedies owe much to Karl Maka's underrated ACES GO PLACES films, which laid the groundwork for Chinese modern action comedies. But with Samo Hung as the major mover & shaker behind LUCKY STARS, the emphasis is on kung fu and stunts - and lots of 'em! LUCKY STARS is loaded with comics (Richard Ng, Eric Tsang, Charlie Ching) and martial arts stars (Jackie, Samo, Yuen Biao, Lam Ching Ying, Sybelle Hu,

Michiko Nishiwaki).

One of the most notable things about MY LUCKY STARS is that it sticks to its main plot without wandering off too much, unlike so many HK films. The other notable thing about this film is its cast -- Samo Hung, Jackie Chan, Yuen Biao, Sybelle Hu, Richard Ng, Eric Tsang, Lam Ching Ying, Michiko Nishiwaki, etc. What a line up! Even now, almost ten years later, you can't seem to rent a popular HK video that DOESN'T feature one or more of this great cast! While I've got almost nothing but praise for this movie, for the sake of objectiveness I have to point out that WINNERS &



Michiko Nishiwaki in action! Not only did she battle Sibelle Hu in MY LUCKY STARS, but battled superheroes in Japan's SPIELVAN (later mutated into America's V.R. TROOPERS).

SINNERS is funnier, and TWINKLE TWINKLE LUCKY STARS is more action packed. But then, that's in my own SUBJECTIVE objectiveness. Maybe this whole review is just a waste of your time and mine. Maybe you should just go decide for yourself and leave me out of it.

Jackie Chan & Yuen Biao are HK cops after diamond thief Lam Ching Ying, who hot-tails it to Tokyo, where he's taken in by a 'Ninja Gang'. The cops catch up with Ying at an amuse-

ment park, but are jumped by ninjas. After a fierce battle, the bad guys escape with Biao as a hostage. The HK police recruit Chan's old friends from the orphanage (Samo Hung & four comics) as cop Sybelle Hu, who has to endure sexual shenanigans aplenty (all of which are funny and ridiculous, but get tiresome eventually). Much comedy ensues until the heroes smoke out the bad guys by pretending to be criminals in need of



protection. From here on it is a sensational multi-part battle, starting with Jackie, disguised as a cartoon character ("Arale" from the then-popular DR. SLUMP show), infiltrating the villains' hideout in the amusement park's haunted house ride. The comics take a back seat as all the kung fu stars stage several duels -- Including Sybelle Hu & Samo Hung's memorable battle with Japanese bodybuilder babe Michiko Nishiwaki.

***1/2 - Frank Strom

FIGURES FROM EARTH

Directed by Gin Luang in 1988, Cast: Feng Chui-Fan, Wan Xin-Liang & He Mei-Wei, Reviewed by DF.

Typical 1980s comedy/fantasy/drama, but not likely to impress those who've seen A CHINESE GHOST STORY or MR. VAMPIRE. Mostly just comedic antics, but throw in some horror, fantasy and occasional babes and you've got this somewhat watchable, nearly average, remotely adequate movie. I've seen worse films, but this disappointing romp has more than enough room for improvement. I saw it for free on TV, so should you (I myself wouldn't pay more than a buck to rent the tape).

The story starts off 500 years ago, in another typical tale of female demons in the forest. This family of vampiric witches also lures unsuspecting male travelers to their far-from-humble abode. After teasing & seducing their victims, the lead witch bears her fangs, allowing for some effectively eerie scenes. Two law enforcers try to thwart her bloodsucking binges, but accidentally misuse their magic pills and go into hibernation for 500 years. They awaken in 1980s HK, where that evil witch continues to suck blood (and probably other human body-emitting liquids) via fatal blow-jobs, from foolish victims. But the two bumbling heroes are too confused by modern appliances & customs, and are lost. They fail to defeat the fanged witch, so her kind sister (also a magical witch) does it for them. A couple good FX don't relieve the remainder of the flick, heavy on dullness and silliness. *1/2 - DF

1990's:

LOOK OUT, OFFICER!

Produced by Cosmopolitan Film



Amy Yip (left & middle) of **LOOK OUT OFFICER**.

age to get your rocks off.

Tung Pui plays a cop shot [dead] in the line of duty, when he snuck into a drug lab. So he returns as a ghost, to help a young rookie cop (right out of the police training school) go after mobster Teng Li-yang, who shot Tung Pui's character shortly after the opening credits. The young cop (Steve Chow) helps ghost Tung, and eventually, a police sergeant played by Fiong Shu Fan (of the **LUCKY STARS** films) gets in on it. But Chow has a crush on the guy's gorgeous daughter Yu,

Productions Co. Ltd. in 1990, Starring: Steven Chow Sing Chi, Fiong Shu Fan, Bill Tung Pui, Amy Yip Chi Mei, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

A little fantasy, a little gunplay, and a little (very little) martial arts in what's otherwise your (though not your personal property) typical Steve Chow comedy. His gags are always hit or miss, I'd say in this film, the good & bad comedy are about even. A few jokes honestly had me laughing out loud, while the rest of the comedy is absolutely nothing; not funny, not stupid, just nothing. It just sort of sits there, provoking no type of reaction. The better humor involves stretchy arms (like that guy from *Fantastic Four*), a cow and stereotypical homosexuality. There is, however, a little too much bathroom humor in the last half hour, and it gets too raunchy, even for me.

Though watchable, I'd say it's average for a Chow movie. While the humor is only funny some of the time, that's better than in some of his films which I thought really bombed. Its minor elements of fantasy, action and T&A add to the fun, and help make up for the frequent (at least) boredom and tiresome slapstick. My only major complaint is that Amy Yip only makes a tiny cameo, lasting a mere two minutes. But in that time, she manages to show off enough cleav-

allowing for conflicts and war games between Chow & Fiong Shu Fan. Fiong also happens to be a magical Taoist, which proves handy, as that evil villain (Teng Li-yang) has hired a wizard too! So the good guys (young cop, ghost & magic sergeant) confront the bad guys (mobster Teng, the evil wizard, and a couple gun-wielding hench-mobsters) to rescue kidnapped Yu, and the bad guys fail to win. ** - DF

破壞之王

LOVE ON DELIVERY

Distributed by Scholar Films Co. Ltd., Produced by Cosmopolitan Productions Co. in 1994, In Association with HK Gold Coast Marina, Dir.: Lee Lik Che, Starring Steven Chow & Ng Man Tat, Cameo by Jackie Cheung (as himself), Reviewed by Damon Foster.

I never thought I could like a movie called **LOVE ON DELIVERY**, and certainly never thought I'd give it five stars. My star system is based on my opinion, how much a movie entertained or amused me. I'm sure other people who see this film might think it's stupid, pointless and talky. Perhaps they're right, but I think in this case,

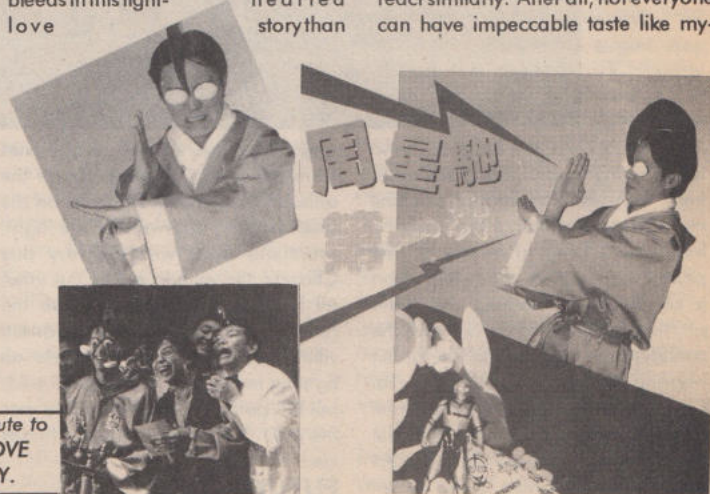
these elements play well off each other. As the title indicates, it's a love story, but it tends to concentrate on the outrageous lengths heroic Chau Sing Chi will go through to impress the girl he loves, and not so much on the actual romance itself. One funny sequence has him trying to get tickets for a Jackie Cheung concert. One guy in line yells out that he prefers Leon Lai (one of HK's other top singers), so everyone beats him up. Another in-joke occurs later on, when Steve Chow is singing (karaoke) Faye Wong's "An Easily Hurt Woman" (see article on Wong & her hit song, elsewhere in this 1990s section). The other outlandish gimmicks

in most actual action flicks!

While other Steven Chau Sing Chi movies had me yawning, rolling my eyes and feeling ripped off, this wacky satire of anything & everything is well worth every penny. It's definitely my favorite Steven Chau (aka Stephen Chow, etc. The guy has more aliases than a spy) movie, even better than his other masterpiece, **GOD OF GAMBLERS 3**. The humorous gags scattered throughout this wacky comedy include, among other things, a salute to Japanese superheroes! Steven & longtime co-star Ng Man Tat (or "Wu Mo Ei", as I incorrectly tried translating his name in OC14!) put halves of hardboiled eggs on their eyes to make Ultraman costumes! Unfortunately, these characters are referred to as "Masked Supermen" and "V3 Lightning Fighter". They're obviously confusing the Ultra Brothers with Kamen Riders. In another scene, a Japanese villain says: "I grew up in Japan, my idol is Masked Supermen". While saying this, he holds up numerous masks, including one of Fire, from **WINSPECTOR**. But these superhero satires are brief, despite the abundance of available photos & publicity material (rather misleading).

Again, my love of over-the-top comedy (ala Zucker Brothers), superheroes and action is why I loved **LOVE**. I'm sure many will be put off by the tiny, fast (don't blink or you'll miss five lines!) subtitles, and excessive dialogue. It's one of my favorite comedies, but I'm not saying everyone will react similarly. After all, not everyone can have impeccable taste like my-

through- are quite hilarious, out and many of these wild, zany skits had me laughing to the point of near suffocation. But what's with all these bloody noses? There are more nose-bleeds in this light- love hearted story than



Steve Chow's salute to Ultraman in **LOVE ON DELIVERY**.

self. So if you liked **GOD OF GAMBLERS 3**, and were remotely amused by **LOOKOUT OFFICER** or **ALL FOR THE WINNER**, give **LOVE ON DELIVERY** a shot. If you like it, send me a nice thank you note. If you didn't like it, please don't contact me. But I can safely say that if you're only into action extravaganzas, not only are you closed-minded, but you may dislike this motionful picture. My following synopsis mentions there's a little karate, kung fu and judo in **LOVE ON DELIVERY**. While all the fights are quite good, this is not a martial arts adventure. The battles are entertaining & well-done, but incredibly short and spread well apart.

The script has a down on his luck delivery boy, Ho Kam An (Steve Chow) trying to impress a girl called Lily, who works out at the Universal Fitness Center. Unfortunately, some big ugly Judo instructor also has the hots for her. So Steve gets bogus kung fu training from Ng

Man Tat. At first, the old scam artist is just trying to get money from our hero, while teaching him all this bullshit martial arts. But later, it's revealed he truly was a kung fu master at one point, but a leg injury made him resort to con artistry. If nothing else, these silly training scenes gave our hero the confidence to fight the Judo bully, but wearing an outlandish costume: Tai Chi Uniform and a Garfield mask (the comic character is referred to as the 'Gar Fei Cat!'), to conceal his identity! Using ingenuity & hilarity, the myste-

rious Garfield defeats the Judo guy. But now there's a new enemy, a karate expert from Japan who took credit as the heroic Gar Fei Cat. Lily falls for this lying poser, so Steve Chow challenges him to the wildest fight I've ever seen. In the ring, the announcer runs out of things to say, so quotes from **JOURNEY TO THE WEST**, substituting the Delivery Boy for the Monkey King. Those familiar with the novel should find this dia-

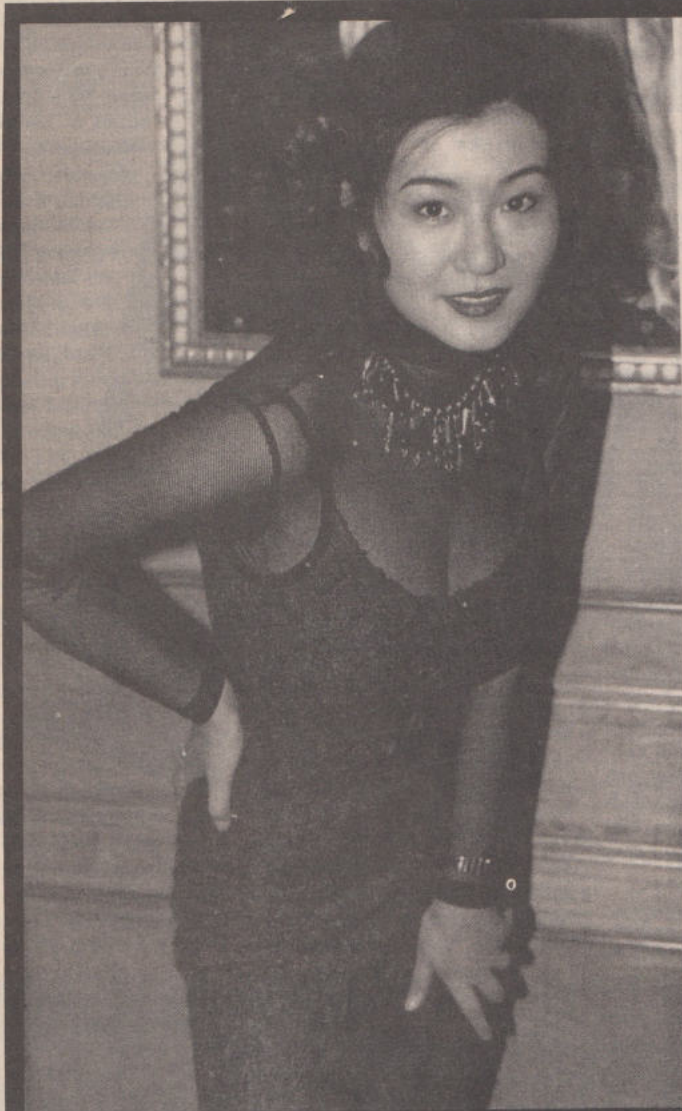
Produced by Fantasy Productions in 1993, in Association with Wong Jing's Workshop, Ltd., Producer: John Higgins, Directed by Wong Jing, Starring: Jackie Cheung, Andy Lau, Chingny Yau, Simon Yam, Dicky Cheung, Richard Ng, Aaron Kwok, Johnny Lo, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

An over-the-top comedy this persistently stupid should only get one star, if any. But it's got a couple shots of Chingny Yau in semi-tight clothing,

This is where our flamboyant heroes (Jackie Cheung, Simon Yam, Richard Ng, Andy Lau & Chingny Yau) show off their high-tech, magical powers. But the hearty middle introduces too many unnecessary characters, all played by unfamiliar actors destined to stay that way. So if you rent **FUTURE COPS**, watch the beginning, then press 'Stop', and 'Fast Forward'. This is the only way to skip the tedious, endless slapstick about

stupid hijinks on a college campus. Again, press 'Stop' & 'Fast Forward', not to be confused with 'Scan'! Believe me, this never-ending pointless "comedy" could only be performed effectively by Steve Chow (who's NOT in this movie, amazingly).

Am I the only one who prefers good, old-fashioned martial arts over all these airborne feats of suspension wires? Though I tolerated **FUTURE COPS** (it's comic setting makes such gimmicks acceptable), I



A NEW FACE (AMONG OTHER THINGS) TO DROOL OVER!



CANTONESE NAME: WONG WAI
MANDARIN NAME: HWONG WAI

As yet, little is known of this up & coming starlet. She is an actress for ATV (Asia TV). She's not a leading actress at this point, and hasn't really done much of note. Only TV so far, no films. According to the HK tabloids, she's happily married and doesn't seem real 'serious' about her career.

logue hilarious, as well as the lines from the erotic, romantic book the announcer quotes from (also on the loud speaker) afterwards. The 'fight' eventually ends with Delivery Boy Chow as the winner, but by this time, all hell has broken loose, with the referee, reporters, judges, Japanese villain, and audience members all fighting in the ring! It's all quite wild, but the point is, the delivery boy gets the girl. It ends when they finally kiss. *****

FUTURE COPS

and a few good special effects. I gather this silly farce to be heavily inspired by video-games, like Mario Super Brothers and Fight Street, or whatever they're called (my love of video games equals my love of pan-handlers). Any superhero flick from the Far East is worth checking out, but you can do a lot better than choosing this ridiculous movie!

The only worthwhile things are the first five minutes and the last 20 minutes; that's when **FUTURE COPS** borders on being somewhat exciting.

scoffed at films like **SWORDSMAN** & **ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA** (I've seen 'em all, but don't like them enough to review them), yet every other rag is intent on praising them. I'm beginning to suspect that maybe it's people who've never actually studied REAL martial arts who can suspend their disbelief enough to accept films of this nature.

The story, as though it matters, has a team of futuristic superheroes (Future Cops) coming back to our time period, in pursuit of equally pow-



FUTURE COPS



erful villains. The Future Cops look weird, rather cyber-punky (though Jackie Ceung's spiked hair makes him look more like the Bride of Frankenstein). Their powers include laser beams & rays, long stretchy arms & legs, some flight capability, super human strength and the ability to do impossibly farfetched acrobatics. These wacky, unrealistic gymnastics are accomplished, of course, with wires and pulleys. While such antics are unacceptable in supposedly fact-based 'Wong Fei Hung' flicks, they seem moronically appropriate for a comical caper like **FUTURE COPS**. But before we see these gravity defying antics, we must sit through a whole hour of lame gags about college students. I ignored all this, and only paid attention when the good guys finally confronted the bad guys. These high flying combinations of explosions, 'air scooters' (reminding me of those in Dick Tracy cartoons or comics I saw as a kiddie), laser zapping, twirling in the air (obvious dummies, no human could spin that fast and not lose his or her last meal), and maybe one or two kung fu-like kicks. The Future Cops emerge victorious.

** - DF

都市煞星 POINT OF NO RETURN

F.C. Lai Film Production Co. Ltd., Executive Producer: Fon Wai Ping, Produced & Directed by Guy Y.C. Lai, Starring: Jacky Cheung, Joey Wang, Patrick Tam, Cherrie Tsoi, Kenneth Tsang, Loy Hui, Reviewed by Damon

Foster.

No, this isn't to be confused with the American rip-off (also called **POINT OF NO RETURN**) of **NIKITA**, though I imagine it's similar. The Hong Kongese **POINT OF NO RETURN** is a typical gangster film, no better or worse than average. It's action scenes are okay, and the drama (and there's lots of it) is equally okay. I saw it on TV, so it was censored for my protection (like it's really made me a better person). Even the foul language in the subtitles was blacked out, and I suspect the same lines which have vulgarities also had important plot points! So some of the story was unclear to me. So in the final analysis, if you get a chance to see it, and you're absolutely dying to

see every 1990s HK crime drama in

existence, what the hell, go for it. It's not necessarily disappointing, but don't bother renting it unless you get a two-for-one deal, or if you're rich enough to rent anything & everything.

Jacky Cheung plays a hitman who always wets his hair in slow motion, before a hit. His friend also hopes to make a living as an assassin, and on his first solo assignment, kills Mr. Kao, who happens to be the father of Jacky Cheung's girlfriend (Joey Wang). Meanwhile, a couple bodybuilders (also assassins) are after Jackie Cheung because of some guy he killed after the opening credits.

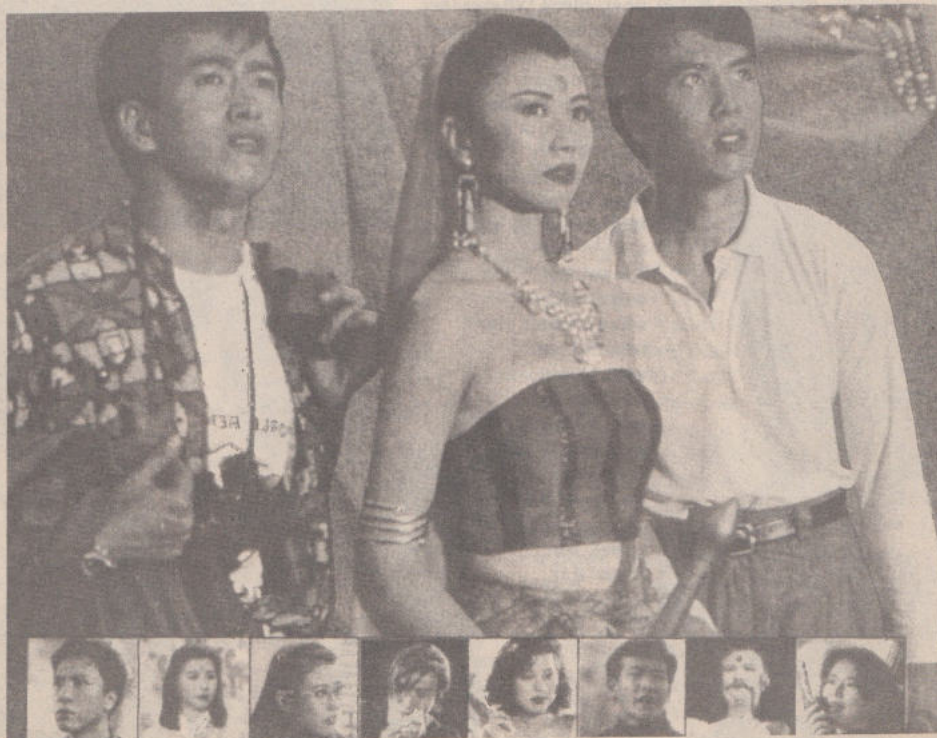
There are additional characters, like a mob leader, and many end up dead when the final battle (75% gunplay, 20% martial arts, 5% stabbings) finally happens. The heroes are all still alive, thanks to a pistol hidden in one guy's fake leg. But none are really in perfect condition, and end up in jail. It ends with 'where are they now' type bios on the characters, but it's all written in Chinese. **1/2

魔唇劫 HOLY VIRGIN VERSUS THE EVIL DEAD

Produced by T&M International Co. Ltd. in 1990, Directed by Yam Wu Wong, Released on Video by Quali-Vision, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Sex! Violence!

Sexy Violence! Violent sex! Here's a sleazy adventure, but an exciting one! An action fantasy, fun for all, especially for heterosexual males! Guys who never get laid will enjoy **HOLY VIRGIN VS. THE EVIL DEAD**, but I like it too! A thrilling exploitation adventure about some demonic dude called the Moon Monster! He was conjured out of legends and magics of a religious cult in Cambodia, and he makes his way to Hong Kong, where Sybelle Hu again cameos as a cop. Anyway, the Moon Monster kills nude women and eats their flesh, all set in a weird environment where,



The cast of **HOLY VIRGIN VS. EVIL DEAD**.

during sexual intercourse, only females do it naked! Men can do it with their pants on. Any of you guys tried it this way? Regardless, a group of heroic Hong Kongese heroes are hot

on his trail! Kung fights! Stunts! Gunplay! Action galore! But wait, there's more! A magical priestess uses her super powers to battle the Moon Monster! FX! Explosions!

Swordplay! This ultra enjoyable 'fantasleaze' has it all! Unfortunately, I'm in the process of moving, so all my reference material is packed away! So I can't dig up much info on this guns-nudity-gore-martial

arts epic! The heroic "holy virgin" looks like a young Sally Yeh (but it's not), and the main male hero MIGHT be called Donnie Yuen, Donnie Yen or something completely different. Regardless, check out this horror-fantasy-jerk off-actioner! *** - DF

王靖雯，她來自北京！

She is from Beijing

FAYE WONG IS SKYROCKETING THIS YEAR!

Best known for Her Title Song "An Easily Hurt Woman"

Because of "An Easily Hurt Woman", Faye Wong is known everywhere in Hong Kong. She has made a remarkable achievement in the music industry last year. Recently, she was invited by TVB to star in the TV series YUEN JEN HAP, becoming both a singer and an actress. Most of the people think she's the best singer next to Sally Yip and Sandy Lam.

Faye Wong moved to HK from Beijing five years ago. Some record company found her because she was learning singing from Dai Si-Chung, Leon Lai Ming's teacher. After that, she has four new albums and two special albums out in three years. In 1989, she won the third prize for Popular New Comer. Shirley Kwan Suk Yee won the first prize. Last year, Faye's album, "An

王靖雯

Easily Hurt Woman" became popular for Karaoke, and she was invited as a special guest singing at Leon Lai's concert held in Beijing. By the end of last year, she won three more music awards, including "Best Song", "Third Prize for Professional Singer Award", which was selected by Mainland DJs, and "Top Ten Solid Gold Award". "An Easily Hurt Woman" is one of the Top Ten Songs. Because "An Easily Hurt Woman" is used as a theme song for TVB TV series "Big Time" and is reported to be excellent, TVB asked her to star in the new TV series YUEN JEN HAP. Her role is a spy named Hoi Tang (Crabapple Flower), who is a bodyguard of a prince of some country. She is looking for the missing prince when she meets Yuen Jen Hap played by Leon Lai Ming. She shows her weak side when she falls in love with Yuen Jen Hap, in spite of her cruel old self. Faye Wong has some intimate scenes, bare shoulder, with Leon Lai Ming. Both from Beijing, they feel cordial when filming together.





The superhero and/or Kaizo Ningen fandom can be basically split into two categories: Cartoons and the Real Thing (in translating this into geek-talk, the two categories are: Japanese anime and live action). But what these two types of heroes have in common are the elements of science fiction or fantasy. Programs of this nature include KAKU RANGER, and BLUE SWAT, both reviewed in this here edition of Kaizo Ningen Update. But golly-gosh-darn-heck-fuck, there's a 3rd type of Japanese superhero TV series which little is known about; Samurai programs.

While many remember old samu-

rai movies by Hiroshi Inagaki & Akira Kurosawa, little is said of the exciting TV programs of Japan's period adventures. When I was a little kid, I absolutely loved samurai stories, whether it be on TV, or the latest Zato Ichi flick. Back then, samurai movies were commonly covered by the American mainstream, in much the way the HK films are well-known today. So I never had any interest in putting a lot of samurai material in OC. However, OC has, in back issues, introduced people to programs like EDO NO GEKITO, TOYAMA NO KINSAN, ABARENBO SHOGUN, NHKTAIGA DRAMA, MITO KOMON, and of

course, Toshiro Mifune's superb HAWK OF JUSTICE series. With this edition of Kaizo Ningen Update, we bring you two more worthwhile samurai shows: OEDO SOSAMO and the appropriately titled THE SAMURAI.

Trying to keep you up-to-date on the current state of Japanese superheroes in America is more difficult than finding an intelligent guest on THE RICHARD BEY SHOW. Each time I tell you of recent name changes, or what's being repeated, by the time the issue comes out, all that has changed yet again! In a back issue, I told you GRIDMAN (Tsuburaya; 1992) would be drastically altered

(for the better, I'm sure) for American release, as POWERBOY. Now I hear its new re-titling this week is SUPER HUMAN SAMURAI CYBER SQUAD! Whatever the hell it's called, it's airing now, alongside VR TROOPERS and the second season of POWER RANGERS. Speaking of POWER RANGERS:

As you know, I consider POWER RANGERS a symbol of racism, they cut out all the Japanese actors (except Machiko Soga, who I accidentally spelled "Machiko Soba" more than once!) and spliced in footage of American airheads. This is old rehashing of mine, see my POWER RANGERS review in OC#16. But later POWER RANGERS episodes gradually fizzled out most of the Japanese stock footage, once the Americans finally caught on! I must say, the American filmed fights in the later episodes are as good, if not better than the original ZYU RANGERS series from 1992! Austin St. John (Red), Walter Jones (Black), and Jason Frank (Green) are definitely getting the hang of it! This type of superb martial arts is new to American TV, complete with Wushu/kung fu stances and acrobats! They don't have a lot of this on Japanese TV anymore, because Japanese audiences have been jaded & brainwashed over the years, as the quality of the



The Japanese originally called them ZYU RANGER. When Americans finally caught on, they became POWER RANGERS. Now them Tiwanese are calling them SUPER RANGERS! What's next?



Sentai programs gradually declined. So although I have mixed reactions to the success of **POWER RANGERS** in the U.S., I'd say that **POWER RANGERS** is the successor to Japan's **ZYU RANGER**. Among other things, the new American fights are taking ideas from HK action films, incorporating full contact hits and that thrilling 'powder puff' effect, something once utilized so heavily by Jackie Chan!

I hear the theatrical **POWER RANGERS** movie was directed by Steve Wang (**THE GUYVER**, **KUNG FU RASCALS**, **THE JITTERS**, etc.). At least this way, someone familiar with the original Japanese genre is in control, unlike in Saban Entertainment's past decisions. Amazingly, one of the costumed actors is Hiroshi Watari, making his American debut (Japanese audiences know him as **SPACE SHERIFF SHARIVAN** and **DIMENSIONAL WARRIOR SPIELVAN**, and for his appearances in **GAVAN & METALDER**). Them **POWER RANGERS** are conquering the whole world. Hell, I drove by some crude Mexican food store (in a neighborhood I'd never travel on foot) full of pinatas; not just of bulls & matadors, but **POWER RANGER** pinatas too! So **POWER RANGERS** merchandising has gotten out of hand, as Rajar Shy proved, when he cursed me with the following information:

In other **POWER RANGERS** news, poor kids in ethnic ghettos who can't afford the overpriced **POWER RANGERS** dolls at Toys R Us are being treated to bootleg toys from Taiwan or Hong Kong! Old **GOGGLE V** (Toei; 1982) dolls have been slightly

altered & smuggled in as **MIGHTY RANGERS** and sometimes **MEGA RANGERS**. Also out there at latino swap meets & ninety-nine cents stores are dolls called **GLOBE GUARD SUPER RANGERS**, which are actually the heroes from **FIVEMAN** (Toei; 1990), with part of the logo on the box cover actually being a swipe from **CHANGEMAN** (Toei; 1985). I believe they're 5" figures like the die-cast ones Bandai came out with, except they're plastic and come with a motorcycle. The box art features photos & logos from the show **FIVEMAN** itself! 1993's **DAI RANGER**'s toys were re-issued (illegally, I assume) as **5 STAR COMMANDO**, while **KAKU RANGER** (Toei; 1994) have become **SUPER AVENGERS** (cheap figures, 4" tall, and perfect for the top of a birthday cake!). But the list goes on. . . **SUPER ROBOTIC RANGERS** are actually re-modeled toys of **Solbraver**, one of the heroes in **SOLBRAIN**. They've really spread this guy out thin, into team of separate heroes: Blue (as he actually appeared in the show), Night Fire is now the Black 'Robotic Ranger', and Green, Pink, & Yellow (all three exist in doll-form only) are all the same hero! **Solbraver** also got mutated into a 10" doll called **MEGA MURPHEEN TURBO RANGER**! On the package it says, "GREAT POWERFUL MEGA MURPHEEN, THE TURBO RANGER, THEY ARE PROTECTING THE SPACE CITY AND FIGHT WITH THE ATTACKER." That's how they wrote & spelled it. Even the actual 'Zords' from **POWER RANGERS** themselves

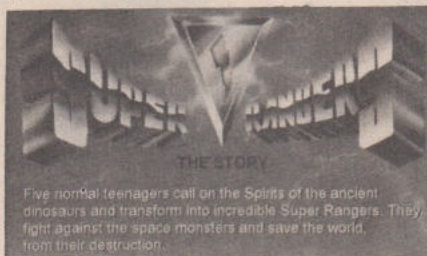
have been reincarnated to form **BIG BEAST GUARDIANSHIP**, the box art has actual photos from the show! If nothing else, these illegitimate dolls are a novelty which makes toy collectors drool, but certainly no worse than the dolls which ripped off **ROBOCOP** ("Robert Cop!"), **BATMAN** ("Batfighter!"), and **NINJA TURTLES** ("Super Turtles!") years before.

ブルー SWAT

BLUE SWAT

Produced by Toei in 1994, Broadcast on TV Asahi, Script writer: Kyoko Torijima, Music: Sho Masaka, Dir.: Takeshi Ogasawara, Action Dir.: Junji Yamaoka from JAC & Toei Academy, CAST: Mr. Masaki as Sho, Yuka Shiratori as Sara, Mr. Doman as Sig, Reviewed by DF.

Not bad for an inbred, bastard stepchild of OC#17's Robo Hero genre; an unconventional offshoot. So though it replaced last issue's **JAN PERSON** (same time slot, I believe), the genre is finally evolving away from its Robocop wannabe roots. For one thing, the three heroes are now all real people, not robots. Though they too are heavily into the gunplay, almost every episode makes room for a punch or kick, sometimes both. So I think the former rescue mission/Robo-Hero genre is making its way back to the karate chopping good old days! But don't celebrate just yet, put that champagne away, save the party favors for another day, and for you Satanists, don't sacrifice that virgin



It seems there are two different designs for **SUPER RANGERS**! Left: Slightly altered **POWER RANGERS** dolls! Below: Renamed **FIVEMAN**, but with a logo from **CHANGEMAN**! Confused yet?





BLUE SWAT's three heroes.

just yet, put down the sacred knife. They still have quite a ways to go (BLUE SWAT is still pathetic when compared to classics like DENZIN ZABOGA or IRON KING), as BLUE SWAT has its share of boredom, talking and needless technicalities in abundance.

But its overly serious approach makes it good, suspenseful science fiction. Very little camp or cheesiness, but plenty of cool FX. The monster costumes are not only excellent, but creepy and realistic. The explosive gunplay isn't half bad either. There's a variety of neat effects, and unintentionally funny ones: When parasitical monsters take possession of someone, it's done by shoving long objects into their mouths, which looks sexually suggestive.

The first thing you see when watching an episode of BLUE SWAT is, of course, the opening credits sequence. Though it features the worst theme song used for the opening of a live action hero series from Japan, it is interesting to actually see our three heroes jump out of a plane (stuntman sky-divers in Blue Swat gear, hope-

fully not interfering with their parachutes!! After that comes that particular episode's subtitle, always in English (written in Katakana). In fact, the lead

heroine is a former LA Police Officer. But she, like everyone else, speaks Japanese. The course of the series has her and two other high tech cops battling invading creatures from space. Basically a 'space mafia', they're called, appropriately, Alien. These eerie invaders have noticed wars, chaos & skirmishes among the humans, giving the invaders a chance to attack. Back to our heroes; Sho, Sig & Sara, the three of them are believed to have died, but that was a cover up (like in ISLAND ON FIRE), they've got secret identities as the futuristic, gun-toting trio of superheroes called Blue Swat. Their high-tech weapons include a large gun called a "Pugloader", missile launcher, regular handguns, a tank called Striker, and a motorcycle called the Multi Road Bike. Each episode ends with "To Be Continued", in English! ** - DF

おえとそきの^(スリ)3

OEDO SOSAMO 3

Produced by G for Fuji TV, Subtitles: Nippon Golden Network, Cast.... Hashizume Jun: Naojiro Hayato, Kyomoto Masaki: Akikusa Senjuro, Nakamura Azusa: Nagaraboshi Ocho, Reviewed by Henry Gandaler.

OEDO SOSAMO 3 is a samurai/adventure TV series which aired in Hawaii,

it's the 3rd season (the first season, which I don't remember well, starred Hiroki Matsukata of MAGIC SERPENT) on NGN; a Japanese entertainment channel. Also broadcasting for the first time in my area are

Sharif and Yoshinaga Sayuri.

As for the 3rd series, actor Hashizume Jun is now the main agent, called an 'Omitsudoshi', which means either ninja or secret agent. Basically, all these series mimic each other, featuring a team of highly skilled ninjas who are under Lord Matsudaira's command to protect Edo (now Tokyo). Other actors, like Kyomoto Masaki, plays a ronin who's way rougher-looking than Ken Matsudaira's Tokuda Shinosuke character, femme fatale Nakamura Azusa is a geisha who could rip your nuts off! There are two additional characters, Yaguryuma Osen (fish monger), and Todo Matsudaira (their leader).

Story wise, OEDO SOSAMO is a samurai sentai following the same story each season. Long ago Lord Matsudaira bands together a group of secret agents, lead by Naojiro Hayato (a restaurant cook). Each agent has a secret identity, allowing them to move about the town-folk, whom they're sworn to protect. Other members are Ocho, Senjuro and Osen, who keep watch for evil doers plaguing Edo; namely scum-sucking daimyos, yakuza, thieves, corrupt government officials, and all the same types of nasties featured in ABARENBO SHOGUN (see OC#15) and TOYAMA NO KINSAN.

In each episode, the secret agents spy on whoever is doing nasty things, trying to get the dirt on the crooks, something similar to that of Kozue & Saizo of ABARENBO SHOGUN, when they hide in the rafters, eavesdropping on evil schemes the villains make. After some spying and investigating leads, plus your obligatory pre-fight



A collection of scenes from Senkosh Productions THE SAMURAI.

sword skirmish and getting the goods on the bad guys, Naojiro, Senjuro, Ocho & Osen change into new kimonos to confront the episodic villains. While this is going on, a long sequence runs educating the viewer on the agents code which is called 'Shishitei Scabane Hiromononash', Assuming that's its correct spelling, what it means is, 'If you're a secret agent you get no proper burial and get thrown in a ditch.' The ditch thing is said about three times, by then our heroes are at the villains' hide out, all ready to execute their brand of justice. What comes next is your grand finale, also similar to ABARENBO SHOGUN, with the usual 30 bad

AGAIN, SHINTARO BATTLES TO VICTORY WITH THE 'BLACK NINJA'.
Watch THE SAMURAI on your local TV station
Collect all 72 cards and place backs together to make a giant pin-up picture of Shintaro
SCANLEN'S SAMURAI CARD GUM

MITO KOMON, EDO NIKKI, and KENKA YA UKON, all are samurai adventure shows for adults. Getting back to Hiroki Matsukata, I found out he's been in TOYAMA NO KINSAN, and an action movie called TENGOKU NO DAIZAI, with Omar

guys ending up dead. *** - Henry Gandalaria

ザ サムライ

おんみつけん

THE SAMURAI

{Original Japanese title: **ONMITSU KENSHI**} Produced by Senkosha Productions in 1962, Consisting of 128 episodes, lasting from 7/10/62 to 28/3/65, Producers: Shun-ichi Nishimura & Toshio Kobayashi, Dir. of Photography: Takeshi Nakamachi, Art Dir.: Saburo Abe, Lighting: Ryoji Kurematsu, Sound Recording: Sanya Yamamoto, Hair Dresser: Yoshihiro Kawaguchi, Wardrobe: Hiroshi Mano, Teleplay: Masaru Igami, Music: Hirooka Ogawa, Directed by Sadao Funatoko & Toru Toyama, Asst. Dir.: Takashi Komata, Editor: Michiko Kakeri, Prod. Manager: Shoji Najiri,

Sword Fight Instructor: Takehisa Matsuyama, English Version Produced by K. Fujita Associates Inc. (Tokyo), Dir.: George M. Reid, Voice Dubbers: William Ross, Tom Kordeniowski, Jean Leroy, Burr Hoyle, Leonard Leoncavallo, Starring Koichi

Ose, Bin Amatsu, Shunsuke Omori, Fuyukichi Maki, Kazuo Kitajima, Shin Mizushima, Yusaku Nishimura, Ken Nakamura, Yoshio Yoshida, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Self-centered narrowmindedness in America is as widespread as HIV germs in a San Franciscan bathhouse. It never ceases to annoy me at how one-dimensional the average American TV viewer is. Yet as far back as the early 1960s, Australian audiences have shown more curiosity & acceptance than us, as is proven by this classic TV show, **THE SAMURAI**! This nostalgic pop icon is as well-known in Australia as are vegamite and Paul Hogan! Can you believe they got to see this B&W program on a weekly bases, dubbed in English?! My god, the only time we damn yankees got to see Japanese TV in English was if it was a cartoon or sci-fi show! Yet them blokes down under had the pleasure of growing up on this 100% Japanese, traditional series about samurais, history, ninjas, swordplay and the Shogun! Not only was it dubbed decently into English, but it was done faithfully & accurately. But then, that's to be expected; it's not likely there'd be any 1780s samurais called George or Phil.

Despite its huge success (numerous 'sequel', 'remake' & 'spin-off' programs in Tokyo), driving Australia into 'ninja fever' in the mid-1960s (while we watched **BEWITCHED**), it didn't get heavy repeating in the 1970s, especially when VCR's had finally become accessible. Therefore, preserved episodes on tape are more scarce than an intelligent audience on **THE RICHARD BEY SHOW**. There were a few 'Nostalgia Festivals' ('Where are they Now' stuff), or whatever, broadcasted which may have showed an episode or two, plus at least two pre-records (from Hollywood House in Sidney) which came out in the 1980s (I believe both tapes have three episodes each, though awkwardly edited), and I hear four episodes might have been shown theatrically in recent years. So it seems

I believe some are off one of the pre-records, but there are glitchy snippets from commercials and Aussie TV stations. This bizarre, mish-mash compilation tape is the basis for these reviews...

LIVING DEATH- The Death Ninja, an eerie villain who apparently lost to Shintaro before, disguises himself as an old woodcutter and poisons Tonbei (Fuyukichi Maki). Shintaro (Koichi Ose) discovers three of his friends (Kishi Ninjas) were also killed by the Death Ninja, so a cool sword fight with Shintaro turns the Death Ninja into the Dead Ninja.

SPIDER- Bin Amatsu again plays a villain; a ninja called The Spider. He gets a female ninja called Chikage to gain Shintaro's trust and lure him & Shusaku into a ninja house of traps. Shintaro seems to be dubbed in a

Toei superhero programs. Anyway, the story has that cunning Kongo (Bin Amatsu) tricking one ninja clan into attacking another.

THE POISON DART- A complex episode, but an action-oriented one. Let's see if I can figure this story out. Evil samurai Kongo (Amatsu Bin) forces Kirimaru to attack Shintaro by kidnapping Kirimaru's sister, but it's not really his sister... she's another ninja who wants to kill Shintaro to avenge her father's death... awe, forget it! Just watch it for the sword fights.

REVENGE- Direct continuation of **THE POISON DART**. As Shintaro recovers from a poison dart, Tonbei attempts to fool the villains into thinking Shintaro really is dead. Meanwhile, Kirimaru tries to rescue his kidnapped sister (for real, this time) from Kongo. By now, Shintaro is all better, resulting in a series of quick battles at a waterfall. But longtime Shintaro enemy Kongo escapes mysteriously.

The 'Interview'- Toward the end of the tape comes this disappointing, almost depressing interview (taped in the late 1980s) with the

now older Koichi Ose. This is off one of the rental tapes, but is cheaply shot, and looks entirely too amateurish for a real pre-record! The Aussie wit who interviews Ose is a real moron, incapable of pronouncing the simplest Japanese words, and has never heard of **GEKKO KAMEN**! Sadly, Ose is even less impressive in his old age, he's not proud of **THE SAMURAI**, and says it was "Just a job"! He now owns a chain of Ramen restaurants, which explains why he's so dull now. If nothing else, this piece shows footage of Ose's tour of Australia (in the 1960s) during the heart of their 'SAMURAI craze'. He toured as part of a huge publicity campaign, and performed a stage show to his many Caucasian fans. In one clip, he's escorted by bodyguards & mobbed by little kids (as fanatical as today's **POWER RANGERS** generation), one of which chases his cab down the street!

PIRATE TREASURE (aka **THE MAGIC BELL**)- This episode is actually from **THE NEW SAMURAI**, which I thought was made in 1973! But it's in B&W, and every bit as crude, dull & outdated as the original show! Perhaps it was dubbed in 1973. But I



Scenes from **THE SAMURAI** with Fuyukichi Maki and Koichi Ose.

there may still be a few episodes floating around out there. There are 8 or 9 believed to have been rediscovered & salvaged. Hopefully, one day, via video collectors & preservers in Australia & the Philippines, we'll be able to see this whole show one day. But so far, all I've found is are two tapes, and one is chaotically edited!

It doesn't help when just about the only episodes I've seen are off a multi-gen, fan copied tape, and with haphazard editing! What happened, just which moron re-released these episodes with screwed up titles? There are now two completely different, unrelated episodes, both called **THE CONTEST OF DEATH**, and one episode which has two titles: **NINJA TERROR** and **LIVING DEATH**! I'd say somebody was sniffing Super Glue in the editing room, and I hope they have [sulfuric] acid flashbacks! Hell, the series itself was badly organized to begin with! Something was definitely lost in the translation, there's a lot which makes no sense. I guess you gotta' be lucky, like them arseholes & bloody sods in Australia, who got to view each 30 min. episode coherently, weekly, in chronological order.

Regardless, here are brief summaries of what few episodes I've seen.

different voice this time, and an opening narrator mentions that the ninjas know not only hypnotism & weapons usage, but judo & karate. However, none of these martial arts are used, and there are only a couple sword fights (though Shintaro's duel with Chikage offers some acrobatics).

THE CONTEST OF DEATH- This one deals with the downtrodden Ainu Tribe, at a pistol firing contest. Bigoted samurais frame an Ainu for murder, so it's Shintaro to the rescue. The whole episode is like a western, with quick draws at high noon, and even a scene where sharpshooter Shintaro shoots a rope to thwart a hanging! Ainus even dress kind of like American Indians, and are treated just as badly (like with Cowboys & Indians), like most indigenous natives, once colonists arrive & take over. The 'Contest of Death' is a skeet shooting match between Ainus and samurais.

THE PHANTOM NINJA (aka **THE MASTER NINJA** [?])- Opening credits say **MASTER NINJA**, so some video editor must have mismatched this episode with the wrong credits! The credits say it was directed by Toru Toyama, who'd later work on several

wasn't impressed; it's a different cast, and I'd finally come to identify with the cast & characters from Koichi Ose's series. All these new characters & situations just confused me. The only guy I recognized was Fuyukichi Maki, who again plays trustee Tonbei of the Iga Ninjas. This episode is pretty far-fetched and stupid; aside from impossible antics on a 'ninja kite', and another involving quicksand, one samurai uses 'magic bells'?! The bells act as transmitters, so heroes can listen in on the villains; like an electronic homing bug! Medieval microphones? The story deals with lead hero Shinosuke (actor Shin-Ichiro Hayashi) faking his own death and making sure the nasty Black Tide Ninjas don't get the highly sought after Korona Sword (the pirate's secret treasure, as mentioned in one of the titles), not to be confused with the beer of the same name (though spelled differently).

I gather **THE SAMURAI** was bought & dubbed in Japan, by William Ross. Seems he hired any Americans there (businessmen, exchange students, smugglers, whatever) to supply the English voices. Now the characters speak American, not the Queen's English, and certainly not Australian English! There's no "G'day mate", "Aya goin'?", or "Oid loik some vegamite". Shintaro, Tonbei & the other sword wielding heroes speak in a manner which was definitely meant for American viewers! It's success in Australia & the Philippines paved the way for English adaptations of **NINJA BUTAI GEKKO** (Toei; 1964), which became **PHANTOM AGENTS** in Australia. For more on **NINJA BUTAI GEKKO**'s Japanese version, see OCs #11 & 16, but no English dubbings have ever resurfaced, unfortunately. I hate to say it, but I suspect the TV station recorded over all their tapes!

To me, the sheer novelty of a samurai program being in English (rare, to say the least) is enough to warrant three whole stars. Almost every episode has a sword fight, and the characters are remotely interesting. But the abundant dialogue can get pretty dull in any language. It's all pretty cheap & lackluster, and it's being in B&W doesn't help matters much. Another problem is that I've not seen enough episodes, making my comments uneven & prejudiced. Seems earlier episodes dealt with samurais and sometimes Ainu, an indigenous tribe who were in Japan before the Japanese (also see the movie **ZIPANG**, reviewed in OC#15) settlers from China. It was later that

ninjutsu became trendy, so it's probably later episodes (and a later season, like 1973's **THE NEW SAMURAI**) which are more fun, for their ninja action. But in the final analysis, the show is worth checking out if you can find it.

The story starts in 1789 and is about heroic samurai Shintaro Akikusa (Koichi Ose), elder half brother of Shogun Ienari. Shintaro has no political power (only half his blood is royalty-his mother was a porcupine. That is, I mean, concubine!), but works as a traveling law enforcer. He's a master of Yagyu Ninja sword technique. He's played by Koichi Ose (born Oct. 27, 1937 in Yokohama), who was in a number of other movies & TV shows, most notably the title hero of **GEKKO KAMEN**! As the Samurai Shintaro, he rights wrongs all over Japan, with his trusty, though sometimes careless sidekick Tonbei (Fuyukichi Maki, born Nov. 28, 1937 in Odate City, and was in **KAIKETSU HARIMAO** & **WATARI THE NINJA BOY**). I suspect Tonbei to be the character's real name in the Japanese version, but was dubbed "Tombei" in the English version, it's easier for us to pronounce. I don't think Japanese have a symbol for 'M', but they do have their 'N'. Tonbei (aka Tombei?) got his sword & shuriken training from his days with the Iga Ninjas (the series deals with all Ninja clans:

Iga, Yagyu, Shinobi, Fuma, etc. Fortunately, no turtles!). The course of the show has this righteous duo fighting evil wherever they find it, and there are occasional guest heroes like Kirimaru and Shusaku, in some episodes. *** - Damon Foster

KAKU RANGER

Toei; 1994, full

title: **NINJA SENTAI KAKU RANGER**, Broadcast on TV Asahi, Producers: Takiyuki Suzuki & Suzuki Yoshikawa, Created by Saburo



Yasude,

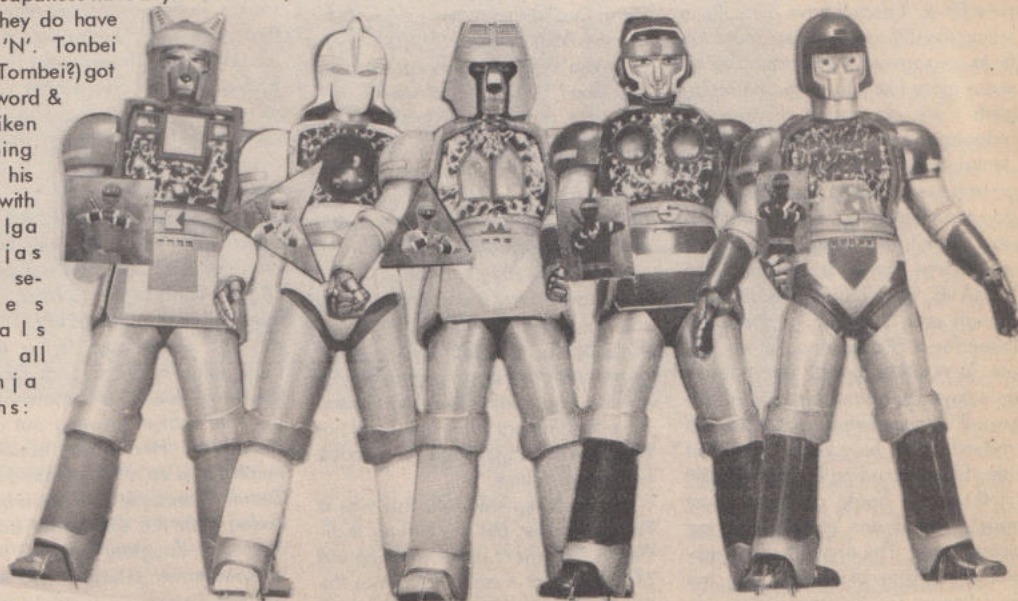
Written by Rei (?) Osumura,

Music: Eiji Kawamura, Theme song singer: Teu Chi Chan, Stunts by Toei Academy & JAC, Action Dir.: Takeda Dohiro (?), Dir.: Mr. Kobayashi, CAST..... Koji Ogawa as Ninja White/Satsuke, Jinmi Hirose as Ninja Blue/Tsurushime, Dai Doda as Ninja Yellow/Saizo, Hide Kawai as Ninja Red/Seikai, Kane Kosugi as Ninja Black/Jiraiya, Akira Sakamoto as their mentor (San Dayu?), Reviewed by DF

For years I've been whining at how each year's Sentai is exactly the same as the last, I haven't really liked one since **BIOMAN** (Toei; 1984). But now there's a change. This new series is just too ridiculous to watch! The

ultimate in tacky camp, cheesy schlock, etc. Wacky, over-the-top, and comical is an understatement. The Sentai genre was always a youth-oriented genre, but this infantile stinker is for twerps exclusively. One irritant is they've got some 'host' now, some stupid old man in a kimono who introduces and narrates the episodes. He looks like a reject from **SHOTEN** (a Japanese game show from the 1970s). Amid the endless clowning around, there's really no time for any solid fights. There are probably only a couple kicks per episode, but lots of explosions, blinding FX and some sword swinging. Had the Sentai genre died after **CHANGEMAN** (Toei; 1985), the genre might have retained some nostalgic cult appeal. But it's been spread out pretty thin (**KAKU RANGER** marks its 15th anniversary), been saturated and gone stagnant. It's just a children's Info-Mercial now, though one with a script (sort of).

Nobody else seems amazed that Sho Kosugi's Japanese/American son, Kane Kosugi stars in this Japanese language series. He's grown up now, so he look different than he did in American movies like **NINE DEATHS OF THE NINJA**, **PRAY FOR DEATH** and **REVENGE OF THE NINJA**. He plays a Japanese American and speaks a couple lines of English in the first few episodes. Even when he speaks Japanese, his American accent is thick. As an American character, they got him wearing cowboy duds! Yesiree, they shertell it like it is over here in Americkey! Yeehaw! Oh well, people in places like Memphis, Texas, Carolina & Kentucky probably still talk with hick-moron Southern accents, so anything is possible. Even more ridiculous is that Kane's character is a Black Ninja called Jiraiya! (continued on page 48)



Top photo: **KAKU RANGER**.
Right: The robots and heroes of **KAKU RANGER**.

ASIAN ODDITIES

Here we go with the start of yet another new column in OC. OC has already introduced you to the films of Korea, the Philippines and India. But making an 'all Korean column' or an 'all Filipino column' for each and every issue would make as much sense as the so-called Pro-'Lifers' who're against birth control and abortion. But the point is, nobody, not even Filipinos can stomach too many Filipino movies all at once. So this column is basically just odds & ends, films which don't fit in OC's other sections. It will also include random films from China & Japan, ones which, for whatever reasons, don't belong in OC's other sections on Chinese & Japanese films. The biggest challenge here was sitting through **RED SORGHUM**. From now on, I hope to avoid movies like this, **GIRL FROM HUNAN, THE LAST EMPEROR** or **A TAXING WOMAN**. However, people who're willing to watch serious dramas like this is more than welcomed to write for OC. With this new column, OC is officially open to literally all genres out of the Far East, anything goes. But of course, any column which uses the word "oddy" is in definite need of films from Indonesia

Indonesian films, such as **ZUMA 2**, reviewed in this column, are often confused (by me, anyway) with Filipino films. I myself have difficulty in telling the difference except that Indo flicks are somewhat entertaining, and seem more likely to be found in English. My occasional glimpses of Indonesian movies are always accidental, I never actually set out to find an Indonesian movie, they just kind of pop out of nowhere. The first Indonesian actor I ever came to recognize was Barry Prima, from **FEARLESS FEMALE FREEDOM FIGHTERS**, though even that film is often mistaken for a Filipino one. Barry was also in **WARRIOR AND THE NINJA**, an enjoyable Indonesian martial arts period film, reviewed in OC#16. As I understand it, he's been in a lot of other films (according to **ASIAN TRASH CINEMA** the book, see review last issue), and is one of Jakarta's top action stars. The only other Indonesian actor I know of is Billy Chong, but he's known for his appearances in

many HK films, using his Jackie Chan-style kung fu. If he had a career in Indonesian films, it's well hidden. Regardless, already I'm beginning to identify certain traits for films made in and around Jakarta. Indonesian films, like their Filipino cousins, are rather cheap, but because of Chinese influence, some are exciting and well made.

Indonesian films tend to echo their folklore rich country. Urban crime dramas aren't as common as twisted fantasies & horror films set in jungles. Be prepared for some truly tasteless gimmicks, like on-screen, actual deaths of animals (common in some HK flicks too). I'd say them Indos are in definite need of ecologists and a Humane Society! But real or not, bloodshed seems common in these films. Never watch one if you're ill and may throw up. On the other hand, Indo films just might clean out your system of unwanted vomit. However, I don't claim to be an expert on this country or its films. If any of you have any connections or leads into this country's film industry, let me know. If Jakarta-based films are your thing, you can add to this column; I can't be expected to do everything.

From Indonesia:

HELL SERPENT (ZUMA II)

Aka "Raksasa Ular-Zuma 2", Directed by Ben Yalung, Starring: Max Laurel, Dang Cecilio, Jenny Lyn, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Who's the sicko that came up with this idea? Whoever he or she is, I hope for more sick scripts like this! **HELL SERPENT** is one of the most unbelievable, ridiculous movies I've ever seen. The whole thing has to be based on some old legend created well before anybody knew about science or movie scripts. **HELL SERPENT** is unconventional & unpredictable, to say the least! I enjoyed it a lot, partially for unintentional humor, partially for its bizarre approach. I'll give it a good rating, but that's based on entertainment value only; and not based on its budget, logic, or moral & ecological values.

I was originally told this was a Filipino movie, but the filming techniques look more like something out of Thailand or even India. Since the movie making characteristics of all

these little places seem to be linked by those in Indonesia, I'll assume that's where this strange thriller comes from, until somebody proves me wrong. It's low budget, not unlike things I've seen from Bangkok, but not as bad as a lot of the Filipino stuff. Its cheapness can be overlooked by its ambitiousness; they managed to come up with some interesting gimmicks & costumes regardless. But damn it, my print is cut! The censors kindly decided to protect me from images of nudity & excessive blood. This censorship is much needed, because if ever I saw fake gore and a woman's bare breast, I'd be traumatized for life.

My main grudge, and I'm getting tired of saying this, is the complete disregard for animals. This world definitely needs an 'Amnesty International' for snakes. It's amazing how thoughtlessly these insensitive bastards kill, burn and mutilate cobras for the sake of this stupid movie. Of course, these people normally eat snakes (and possibly anything else that moves), so there's no accounting for taste. I've always loved animals, and as a child, remember playing with snakes twice my size; they're the most peaceful of creatures. But then, I've never had to live in a cobra-infested village.

The story is a direct sequel to some movie I've never seen. But fortunately, **HELL SERPENT** is dubbed in English, enabling me to catch up and follow along. **HELL SERPENT** starts off with some guys trying to dig Galema out of the ground. Galema, I assume, is a 75% human woman, but with snakes growing out of her shoulders! Her father, buried beneath her, is the mighty snake demon, Zuma! I assume the previous film ended with the evil father and his righteous daughter battling it out, and somehow getting buried underground. So anyway, Galema and her



Sanjay Dutt from **KHAL NAYAK**

two reptilian appendages are free, and marry some guy, a normal, entirely non-reptilian human. These two snakes (which look like the kind which normally pop out of cans of peanuts, available at 'prankshops') never seem to get in the way of their happy, suburban marriage, nobody gives her a second look! Nor is anybody surprised when she gives birth to twins: A normal, human baby, and a normal white snake! All four of them live together like one big happy family. NOTE: This movie is not a comedy, it's played entirely serious! Meanwhile, Galema's green skinned father, who also has a rubber, two-headed snake wrapped around his neck, has escaped from his subterranean prison, thanks to the magic of his great devil, Kukulaken. Not only does Zuma control all local snakes, and tell them to attack anyone & everyone, but goes on a little rampage of his own. When he's not pulling out the sacrificial hearts of virgins, he's raping some bikini-clad babe, so a monstrous offspring can burst out of her stomach, in the tradition of **HUMANOID FROM THE DEEP!** This hybrid is half human, and half Nessie! He calls this mutant serpent Dino, pronounced 'Deano', like in **THE FLINTSTONES**. Dino is captured and put in the zoo, where he falls in love with a female reporter called Jean De Castro. Meanwhile, Azuma hypnotizes the white snake (Galema's son) to attack its parents! The father suffers from a fatal bite, so Galema's built-in snakes kill the white one, their son. Confused yet? The

reporter convinces that weird dinosaur Dino to attack Azuma, who kills Dino. So Galema follows her father Azuma to his cave, where she meets more demons, men in store bought masks (one in a Quasimodo mask). Eventually, Azuma is chased back out of the cave, and is finally defeated by the army. Or so it seems. It has a 'trick' ending which actually caught me off guard for once. ***

From the Philippines:

BLIND RAGE

Presented by Transworld Corp in 1978, Asst. Dir.: Jose Torres, Prod. Manager: Efrén Dominguez, Unit Manager: Alex Bolado Jr., Filmed on Location in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Mexico, Tokyo, Hong Kong & Manila, Screenplay: Jerry O. Tirazona & Leo Fong, Music: Tito Sotto, Starring: Tony Ferrer, Leila Hermosa, Leo Fong, Charlie Davao, Fred Williamson, Carlos Padilla Jr., D'urville Martin, Dick Adair, Darnell Garcia, Golay, Reviewed by DF.

Part of the problem with Filipino films like this one is that they're normally not available with any translation. But **BLIND RAGE** has been dubbed in English (I saw it on local syndication, late one dull night), and it still stinks like the fart of a dead skunk who'd eaten beans on his last few meals! **BLIND RAGE** is horribly acted, horribly dubbed and horribly written. It's also paced slower than Mr. Rogers on a date.

The credits boast of its being filmed on location, all over the world. Well, its mere seconds in HK look like the worst of Bruce Li's cheap sockeye films, its scenes in LA look like reject footage from some awful blaxploitation flick, and the scenes in Manila are the usual boring Filipino crap (though the exploding plane at an airport isn't half bad).

This unintentional comedy (but not a very funny one) is about how a group of blind men are hired & trained by villains to rob a bank. Despite a shoot out and maybe a short kung fu fight or two, it's overly talky, long & drawn out, and basically just a poorly made time filler. Eventually, the blind men die in an explosive car crash, and the guy who hired them has escaped to LA. Fred Williamson isn't dubbed in his scenes (he's only in the last 15 minutes), like the lame climactic fight. It was filmed in English, with Williamson as a detective suddenly hired to beat up the bad guy. Williamson defeats the baddie by jumping on him, much like Bruce Lee did to Bob Wall in **ENTER THE DRAGON**.

From India:

KHAL NAYAK

{ "The Villain" } Starring Sanjay Dutt,

Directed by Mubhash Ghai, Music by Lamikan Pyarelad, Reviewed by Massimo Lavagnini.

A delinquent, who ended up in jail, suffers every kind of violence, by a rough inspector. But having escaped from the prison, the Nayak gets together with his old gang, without knowing that an undercover female cop is a new member of the clan. Head over heels in love with the

association with Life Productions, Released on 9/5/91, Starring: Wong Ho, Kim San Eh, Kim San Ho, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

I really hate to write so many negative, scathing reviews; first **BLIND RAGE**, and now Korea's **TELEPATHIC JOURNEY**. After all, anyone who completes a movie on a limited budget deserves an A+ for effort. I'm sure its makers are nice people, and



TELEPATHIC JOURNEY

girl, our hero will find his redemption, delivering himself into the hands of the law. The beginning of **KHAL KAYAK** is outstanding; the house music of Laxmikan Pyarelad accompanies the brutal sequence shot into the jail. Unfortunately, the movie slowly declines into the usual, monotonous musical action. It's a pity. *1/2 - Massimo Lavagnini

From Korea:

TELEPATHIC JOURNEY

{ "Te Le Pa Shi Yo Hang" } Producer: I Song Min, A Living Video Release, in

that maybe one or two of them are actually proud of it (though I personally couldn't imagine why). Perhaps **TELEPATHIC JOURNEY** has its legions of fans (Koreans under ten years old), though I'm personally not part of those legions - to say the least!

The language barrier is part of the problem, but my real gripe is that it's all too damn dark to see what's going on. The first half of this film is about kids; I'd say about 10-14 years old. It's a Korean **MEATBALLS**, with these irritating adolescents frolicking

& dancing for what feels like forever. When the monsters finally appear in the middle of the flick (one of the worst Korean ones I've seen to date), it's nighttime, with insufficient (if any) lighting. The remainder has enough action, but is too hard to actually see. All the carrots in the world wouldn't make my eyesight good enough to see what's going on. So though I'm trying to end my evil ways and give every filmmaker, even no budget ones a chance, I gotta' be honest! I felt this movie was terrible, I'll give it no star. I try to be fair, so anyone who thinks my opinion is the only opinion has the brains of a common tennis ball.

The story is about a Tae Kwon Do class on a field trip, at some secluded island. The occasional fights had potential (nice spinning-back kicks), but they're short, infrequent and lack proper sound effects. But then a cute little alien appears from out of nowhere, allowing for another rip-off of E.T. His mask is from a store; either an ET mask, Ninja Turtle mask or a frog mask! Whatever it is, it's painfully fake, and I remember Trick or Treaters wearing them on Halloween. Hell, his magic is demonstrated when he gets a coke can to dance! You can get these novelty items (twisting cans which appear to dance) at any mall, I fail to see why the kiddies in the movie are so impressed. When the cutesy ET mockery is done, it's time to rip-off, of all things, **PLAN NINE FOR OUTERSPACE** (which I'm beginning to suspect represents the standard for Korean filmmaking, the movie they all must live up to)! An older alien lands on the island to find his young ET-like son. Fearing the little guy has been abducted by humans (now there's a switch), he uses space magic to wake the dead. The zombies all wear more rubber masks from K Mart's discount aisle. One is a hopping Chinese vampire, another appears to be the ghost of a Japanese soldier who died in WWII, and there's also a fast-buck mummy. They all perform martial arts & a little acrobatics, as they chase the kiddies around for what seems like an eternity. But eventually, the little ET is returned to his father (same cheap frog-turtle mask), and they fly off into space. So did I, I mean my mind wandered. - DF

From the Philippines:

DARNA ANG PAGBALIK

Produced by William C. Leary in 1994, Dir. of Photography: Marissa Florentendo, Dir.: Peque Gallaca & Lore Reyes, Executive Prod.: Vic Del Rosio Jr., Supervising Producer: Eric M. Cuatico, Special FX Cameraman: Ely Cruz, Additional Photography: Totoy Jacinto, George Tutanés, Starring: Anjanette Abayari, Edu

Manzano, Rustom Padilla, Bong Alvarez, Pilita Corales, Cherie Gil, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

A few issues ago, I told you about a Filipino classic, **DUGU NG PANDAY** (1993), and now comes another great movie, **DARNA ANG PAGBALIK!** The Filipino movie industry is slowly improving, and I'm starting to suspect that at some point in the future, they'll reach their 'Golden Years', and some films may enjoy the same international success as films of HK or Japan. This new **DARNA** movie (the second one I've seen, the first was in OC#15) is an excellent movie. It lacks the excessive stupidity & camp of the 1991 **DARNA** (which had Nanette Medved in the title role), and in its place is a serious story; coherently written and with logical, well defined characters. Many of the dramatic situations are interesting, and all its production values, such as editing, photography and cinematography are way better than average for a Filipino movie.

I dare say the special effects are equal to the average HK or Japanese film! Them Filipinos are improving rapidly! The only flawed effect was a little rubber monster; some sort of aging snake-demon creature/mutation. While well sculpted and with a cool, monstrously eerie design, it's a little too obvious it's a hand-puppet. But the remainder of the FX are damn good! There are monster/makeup appliances, nearly flawless scenes of our heroine flying (great mattes, super-impositions, and the wires are never visible), and even a couple computerized 'morphing' effects, done just as good as in any American film!

However, the stunning FX described above are minute compared to the endless dialogue scenes. Though the never-ending scenes of romance and dull talking are well written and important to give the plot credibility, the fact of the matter is that I don't speak Tagalog or any Filipino languages. So yes, I had to use my scan button more than once. Hopefully, one day they'll realize that su-

perhero movies simply don't need soap opera scripts, and that there should be a hell of a lot more FX and action, I mean, isn't that what superhero movies are all about? Sadly, there are huge portions throughout the middle of the film, which look like some badly lit love story, with endless conversations and romantic interludes in the jungles and Filipino ghettos. Scenes like this are likely to turn off any non-Filipino viewers, who'd therefore miss the exciting action at the film's beginning and end.

Edu Manzano (1991's **DARNA**, **DUGU NG PANDAY**) has a guest

forced to read the wrong name outloud. Gretchen Barretto was also on hand to show her dismay. In the end, Manzano got his award, and I believe Gabby Concepcion, his agent and Ruffa Gutierrez are in serious trouble; not only were there movies temporarily banned, but they face criminal charges. Once the culprits were exposed, true winner Manzano got his trophy and was interviewed on **A CURRENT AFFAIR**. It was brief, but he spoke good English.

Last issue I told you I'd try to ease off the sexist comments in OC. But when I watch a flick like **DARNA ANG**

worry! I won't say something like that! Yet the fact remains that, although the heroine (Nanette Medved) from 1991's **DARNA** was good looking too, the fact remains that the curvaceous Anjanette Abayari is attractive from the neck up, and very very very attractive from the neck down! Not only is she great to look and beat off to, but is very talented as well. Her acting in **DARNA ANG PAGBALIK** required a wide range of emotions ranging from happy, sad, to completely idiotic & incoherent. She also seems to do all her own stunts (simple though they are).

Though there only a couple fights, her martial arts are surprisingly good, since she's not really proportioned to jump around to much. Her punches and kicks are decent, though I think the photography, editing and step-by-step choreography helped a great deal.

Based on some old Filipino comic book, the wonder woman of the Philippines continues to battle for truth, justice and the Filipino way, like at the beginning where Darna (voluptuous Anjanette Abayari) takes on a group of soldiers in a forest. Shortly thereafter, she's knocked out by a cult member who steals her magic ball (some sort of pill she swallows to change, and she regurgitates it to

change back again). Because of the nasty blow to the head, she develops amnesia, while all around her, there's chaos in the Philippines, as volcanos and floods make a mess out of all the villages. The population's only salvation comes from this weird, rich fashion model called Valentina, actually a snake-witch, much like Medusa (this villain also appeared in the 1991 movie, so I guess it's a main villain in Mars Ravallo's original comic too). Valentina and her two equally demonic sisters (all have snakes in their hair) are using their magical mind-control technique to take possession of the masses, seemingly turning all



DARNA in action!

appearance in this tale as a detective who, near the end, turns both bad & into a fanged monster-demon thing. Did any of you see him on the July 26, 1994 episode of **A CURRENT AFFAIR**? Seems he almost lost at the Manila Film Festival (their Academy Awards) when some deceitful actress called Ruffa Gutierrez allegedly (caught on video!) tampered or hid the proper envelope at the box on the podium! The whole scam was done to give the award to some guy called Gabby Concepcion, instead of rightful winner Edu Manzano. Ironically, Nanette Medved (1991's Darna!) was remotely involved, claiming she was

PAGBALIK and see a voluptuous babe like Anjanette Abayari (also from the comedy **OBED DA BAKOD-THE MOVIE**) in skimpy clothing, running toward the camera in slow motion, looking like there are two dribbling basketball players in her chest, it's hard not to admit the truth: I'm a heterosexual male. Dare I say something like, "I bet her feet don't get wet when it rains", or "If I spent the night with her, I'd guarantee her three screaming orgasms in that evening alone! But of course, I don't know what she'd be doing at that point!"? But all you whinny, politically correct and uptight conservatives alike, don't



the Philippines into one huge religious cult! They need to keep Darna's pill-thing because its energy keeps them young & beautiful; without it they mutate into fanged zombies. So for nearly half the film, the incoherent fool Narda (Darna in mild-mannered form) just sort of wanders around in a stupor, in some building turned into a refugee camp for the famine victims, while her mother becomes hypnotized and obsessed by Valentina's chants broadcast on TV. Eventually, Narda gets her little non-dissolvable pill back (thanks to her obnoxious little brother, a Filipino Dennis the menace! He uses his slingshot against the snake-vampires to retrieve Darna's pill!) and becomes Darna, but even then, it's kinda' dull. But the climax, a brief confrontation as Darna takes on three gruesome monsters (the Medusas change form) is quite good; even the mutant demon things can do spinning back kicks! Her climactic duel with Valentina takes places on top of a building, in the sky and even underwater! *** - DF

From India:

THANEDAAR

1990, Starring: Jeetendra, Sanjay Dutt, Jaya Prada, Directed by Raj Sippy, Reviewed by Massimo Lavagnini.

Fight without quarter between two brothers (one's the cop of the title) and a criminal skilled in the deadly kung fu technique of the "steel claw". Incredibly, some of the ballets are more interesting than the plot. Keep away! - Massimo Lavagnini

From Mainland China:

RED SORGHUM

1987, Dir.: Zhang Yimou, Cinematography: Gu Changwei, Art Dir.: Yang Gang, Music: Zhao Jiping, Conductor: Liu Dadong, Production Manager: Li Changqing, Cast: Gong Li, Jiang Wen, Teng Ru-Jun, Liu Ji, Subtitles: Li Jie Xu & Chris Berry, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Me, Damon Foster, reviewing a Mainland China art film like this?!

This review makes as much sense as the low-life sleaze rags which reviewed & trashed me and my production AGE OF DEMONS! By that I mean, you gotta' understand a movie (and be a fan of its genre) to review it fairly and properly. When I review a kung fu movie or superhero series, I'm in a position to judge. But RED SORGHUM is a drama about humans, certainly not my cup of tea (actually, maybe it is my cup of tea, since I dislike tea). I thought it was slower paced than Mr. Rogers on a date, it's confusing and oh so dull! The artistic (I assume) style of filming annoys me. I prefer movies more to the point, you know, coherent ones with a beginning, middle and end. Though it's fairly talky, I'd wished they'd talk a little more to say what the hell is going on. No doubt a number of art types will look down at me for panning this critically acclaimed (TV Guide gave it three stars, same as INFRAMAN!) film. From now on, I welcome others to critique films of this nature in OC, to give them a fair shot.

Its good points are its production values and rather realistic approach. Parts of it were interesting to watch, but only once. So I'll be incredibly generous and give it two whole stars. But fans of historicals should see it regardless. It gets remotely intriguing at times, and might even be based on fact. However, if you're mainly just a fan of OC's flashier, more exciting genres, ignore this one. RED SORGHUM is probably more of an educational film, it taught me not to watch it again. By far the best thing about it are its video-generated subtitles. They're infinitely more legible than the ones in HK films, where the subtitles were intended for theatrical viewing. If only more Chinese/HK flicks had this type of clean, clear, accurate translation.

The story, for what it's worth, is about some girl who inherits a wine factory, in the middle of a 'Red Sorghum' (a type of bamboo-like plant) crop. They make wine out of this sorghum stuff. Set in the 1930s, it shows them harvesting the plants, and making wine. They also have a slight scuffle with a rival industry, who I believe are beef makers. At one point, the main character (Gong Li) has sex with some guy and they have a kid who grows up and his son reminisces & narrates this film. But along comes WWII, and those invading Japanese. To make a road, the sorghum is trampled down and many Chinese are tortured & killed. It's here that the film gets gory & gruesome. In the end, only the kid (referred to as 'Grandfather' by the narrator) and his father (a former sedan carrier-turned-farmer) survive. It ends with

the kid singing (which is done a couple other times in this otherwise non-musical). If there's a point to this, I missed it. The point seems to be, "The world was a wonderful place until the Japs came and slaughtered everyone". ** - DF

From India:

KHATRON KE KHILADI

{ "Dancer of Danger" } Directed by T. Rama Rao, Starring: Dharmendra, Sanjay Butti, Chunky Panday, Madhuri, Reviewed by Massimo Lavagnini.

Now India has its Dark Knight as well. He's a bearded wild man, who takes revenge on the criminals, ridding them with a cumbersome machine-gun, and then drops on the warm bodies a pack of leaflets with the symbol of the blind justice. The superhero will get the help of two brothers free with their fists (one's Sanjay Dutt, of course) to fight against two clownish gangsters (one has a foot of metal, the other has an arm "stainless"). Sublime shit, the movie reaches its climax in the wonderful sequence in which the Khatron cures his wife's insanity... with a pathetic song. Better than Julio Iglesias, anyway. - Massimo Lavagnini.

From the Philippines, unfortunately:

SUPERMOUSE AND THE ROBO-RATS

Presented by Mother Studio & Regal Films in 1989, Production Designer: Melchor Defensor, Executive Producer: Lily Monteverde, Cinematography: Ely Accion, Story & Screenplay: Joey De Leon & Tony Y. Reyes, Starring: Joey De Leon, Rene Requiestas, Manilyn Reynes, Carminal Villaroel, Smokey Manaloto, Jun Encarnacion, Trashed by Damon Foster.

I've figured out the deal with all these satirical superhero fiascos from Tony Reyes and Joey De Leon. They must be financed by the VCR Repairman's Guild, knowing we'll need to have our VCRs' scanning heads and Fast Forward buttons replaced after trying (unsuccessfully) to sit through these godawful spoofs! It's a conspiracy, I tell you! A conspiracy! But you ask, if Joey De Leon's many satire-heroes are so incredibly bad, why do I always review them in OC occasionally? Indeed, this isn't the first time I've reviewed the cheap comic capers of the Philippines. I guess I still check them out because of the novelty of it; there's something about a live action, Asian film that involves names like 'Supermouse' and 'Robo Rats' which intrigues the superhero fan in me.

Granted, when our heroic Joey De Leon finally becomes Supermouse, it's mildly amusing. The makeup appliance (which includes buck teeth,

whiskers and mouse ears), though only briefly shown, isn't bad, and his yellow leotard (typical comic book inspired stuff; cape, boots, emblem, gloves, etc.) is a direct salute to countless American heroes, of which I've never really liked. His flying scenes are surprisingly effective for such an incredibly low, low budget farce. But there are certain things most superheroes should have, like fighting capability, charisma, and possibly good looks, which I doubt Joey De Leon has. So despite the incredibly misleading title, this is a lame comedy, full of dialogue, stupid skits and never-ending shenanigans in a traveling circus. Our heroic mouse doesn't show his face until after the middle of the film, and he doesn't meet the Robo Rats until the very end of this worthless movie.

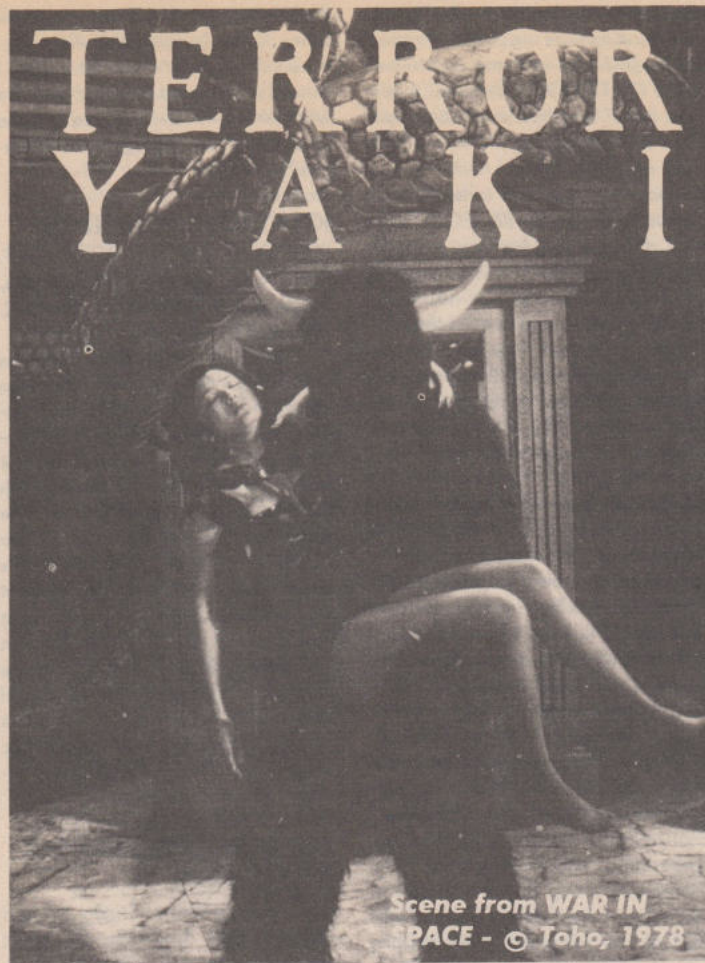
Alien invaders called Robo Rats seem to have difficulty in pronouncing 'Robo Rat'. Throughout the film, their usage of 'rat' is inexplicably bleeped out, perhaps someone has an exclusive copyright on the word 'Robo Rats' (whatever for), or maybe it's a dirty word in one of the many Filipino dialects. Oh well, it didn't stop the word from being written on the box, and in the film's title. Anyway, it seems one of these invading rodents raped a Filipino lady so she gives birth to Joey De Leon's character, who grows up in the circus, hanging around with a goofy assortment of circus freaks, midgets and transvestites. These lame gags and musical ballads take up most of the film. One musical number has him singing with cartoon mice; a salute to old Disney movies (BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS or maybe MARY POPPINS) which also featured real actors superimposed with cartoon characters, for musical duets. But Joey only shows his rodent half when in trouble, like in a fight with gangsters. That's when he finally becomes the rodent equivalent of Superman: Supermouse. Meanwhile, the Robo-Rats are flying to earth in a decent enough spaceship (it must be a Japanese toy they bought), though the space flight scenes look like something out of an amateur film. On Earth, the Robo-Rats dress rather like Darth Vader, with big black helmets. That's because they only had one actual rat mask, those things can cost over ten dollars! Regardless, Supermouse eventually confronts these alien rodents in their spaceship, resulting in the shortest, and possibly the worst fight ever to waste film. Seems the Robo Rats just wanted some pendant Supermouse was wearing, for whatever reason. He gives it to them, and they fly away, much like my attention. - DF

Despite this being the Godzilla issue, there's more to Japantasy than the Big G. So here we go with yet another edition of "Terror Yaki". The Japanese sci-fi scene seems to be on the rise again, with Godzilla movies being released every year, and movies like ZEIRAM, AKIRA and TETSUO THE IRON MAN slowly making appearances at phlegm festivals. I'm sorry, I mean film festivals. I, however, do not have the time nor the patience to watch a lot of recent Japanese movies. I wasn't exactly impressed by GUNDAM, AKIRA, ULTRA Q: THE MOVIE or SAYONARA JUPITER, and am in no major hurry (to say the least) to view more of this crap.

So I'll stick to older films, but will accept reviews from readers interested in critiquing this newer stuff. Please include some credits, maybe a photo or two from the film, and make the whole thing about three or four paragraphs long. Keep in mind my star rating system (five stars is outstanding, no stars means the movie is as fun as spending a week with your face up Claude Akins' ass crack), use it. And above all, don't go overboard on the plot synopsis! Readers want to hear ABOUT the film, your opinion, behind-the-scenes, commentary, and trivia. Not in-depth, step by step analysis of every minute detail in the script, just the basics! That's boring & pointless, since people can see the film to get all that.

Among other things, this edition has Patricia Gonzales's review of THE H-MAN. I myself have never reviewed this film, yet have always been aware of it (I watched it on TV frequently when I was a kid). For the most part, I agree with Patricia's comments on this enjoyable movie. But she failed to mention that it stars a young Makoto Sato as a villain. For those who don't know, he'd later appear in more action oriented roles, like in THE KILLING MACHINE, LOST WORLD OF SINBAD, WAR-RING CLANS, WHIRLWIND, and even a brief cameo at the beginning of WHAT'S UP TIGER LILY. I disagree quite strongly about Masaru Sato's score being mediocre! The film's theme song is incredibly catchy! Also in this edition of "Terror Yaki" is VAMPIRE HUNTER D, by Henry Gandalaria. While I thank Henry for the review, I most know, is it just me, or is Henry's

Right: The Goke Midoro Vampire from Hell (and outspace too).



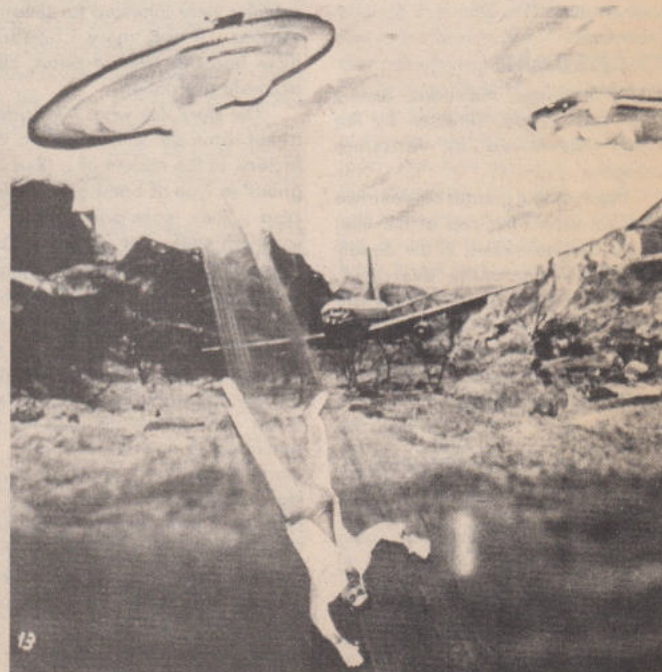
writing style hard to figure out? I tried not to adjust his grammar or sentence structure too much, so it's generally left as he originally wrote it.

吸血鬼ゴケミドロ
BODYSNATCHER FROM HELL
{aka GOKE, BODYSNATCHER

FROM HELL and "KYUKETSUKI GOKEMIDORO", which means "Vampire Gokemidoro" } Japanese release date: Aug. 14, 1968, Released to America by Pacemaker Films, Produced by Shochiku Motion Picture Company, Directed by Hajime Sato, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Forget John Woo, Akira Kurosawa, Ringo Lam and Hiroshi Inagaki. BODYSNATCHER FROM HELL confirms what GOLDEN BAT (see OC#18) and TERROR BENEATH THE SEA (see OC#10) had me suspecting: Hajime Sato is one Hell of a director! BODYSNATCHER FROM HELL is an effective, thrilling movie! Other adjectives to describe it include moody, eerie, classy, depressing, provocative, and of course, enjoyable and entertaining- which basically mean the same thing, though spelled differently. So needless to say, I think this, like much of Hajime Sato's other work, is an excellent film. This slick doomsday thriller has at least two messages: 1. The evils of mankind are punished by Goke Madiro, vampires from space. 2. The only people you should ever trust are those who work on airplanes.

The two main qualities in its favor are its characterizations and special effects. The negative interactions and constant bickering among the human characters (each representing his or her own stereotype) is fascinating, intelligently written, which, when combined with the ominous invasion of the Goke spacemen, results in a highly atmospheric sci-fi shocker! Speaking of the villains, the FX are pretty good. It's variable, some FX are quite effective.



tive, bordering on being gory. Speaking of Gory, the flying saucer is the same model later used in **SPECTREMAN**, though lit up better in **BODYSNATCHER FROM HELL**. The only really laughable effect was the miniature airplane, which looks like a free give-away from a box of Lucky Charms. But my main complaint against this film is that the English version lacks credits! So it's impossible to know which Japanese company made it.

It's basically just another tale of pissed off aliens again wiping out mankind for being such meanies (our wars, unrest, greed, lust and all that stuff are what's annoying them Goke vampires; and the fact that Michael Bolton, Fabio and George Michaels are part of the human race certainly doesn't help matters much), but with an emphasis on human conflicts, frailties, weaknesses, obsessions, petty gripes, etc. You gothcher' greedy businessman, corrupt politician, sleazy slut, an assassin, foolish teenager and all those others which make me oh so proud to call myself a member of the human race. Only the pilot and stewardess offer any redeeming positive qualities (and they're the only ones to survive the full running length), but my favorite character is a wacky psychiatrist; the guy needs a psychiatrist! Another character is an American, Mrs. Nielsen, who's hubby died in the Vietnam war (an excuse for more useful anti-war messages). But never mind, they almost all die! Their plane crashes and the aliens turn a couple passengers into vampires (not traditional types: no capes, no fear of sunlight, no hopping, no bats, etc.) by splitting their foreheads open and letting some weird blob drip upward into their heads! The course of this creepy tale has the passengers stranded in a desert and stalked by that sinister vampire guy! Chills! Arguments! Suicidal crows predict the end of the world! Rockslides! Betrayals! "But still"s! And then it turns out we've been destroyed. The human race was wiped out, ending downbeat as a fleet of flying saucers approach what was our world. This is where the movie should have started! Oh well, a great film regardless. ****

- DF

怪竜大決戦

MAGIC SERPENT

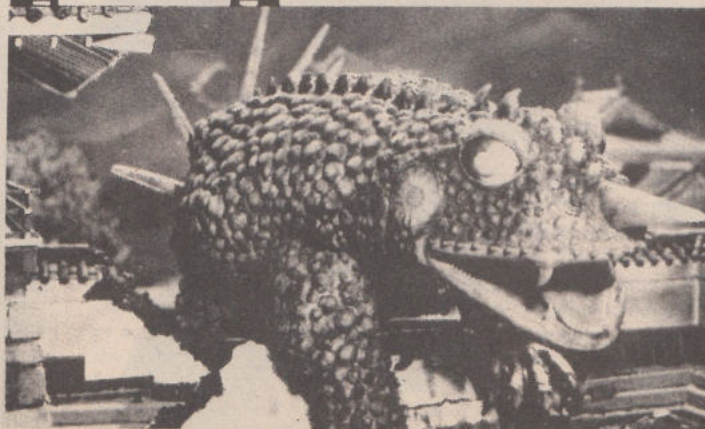
[KAIRYU DAIKESSEN] Produced by Toei in 1966, released to the U.S. by American International TV, Producer: Shigeru Okada, Dir.: Tetsuya Yamauchi, American version: Titan Productions, Dir.: Bret Morrison, Starring: Hiroki Matsukata, Tomoko Ogawa, Nobuo Kaneko, Ryutaro



Top: Hiroki Matsukata romances Tomoko Ogawa in **MAGIC SERPENT**.

Above: Hiroki Matsukata loses his head to impress a ninja!

Right and below: Monsters from **MAGIC SERPENT**. © Toei, 1966



Otomo, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

This early Japanese fantasy was suppose to be part of OC #16's ninja article (but was excluded to save space, and merely mentioned in that issue), since it was one of America's first glimpses of a ninja. Hell, even though dubbed in English, ninja is pronounced correctly for once: "Neen-jaw" (though people in New York, who all have speech impediments, pronounce 'jaw' differently than Californians like myself). But they say the word only twice, and **MAGIC SERPENT** is not just a ninja movie. It's a chanbara, jidai-geki, in other words, a samurai adventure. To me, because it had so much influence on me as a child, it's a classic, just as good as any of Akira Kurosawa's work. But **MAGIC SERPENT** is more than just a samurai film, it was also influenced by Toho's giant monster movies; in fact, Toei bought the rights for Toho's sound FX, and used them in this film (resulting in a dragon with an outrageously recognizable roar). So because of the monsters, ninja magic and swordplay, I consider **MAGIC SERPENT** to be the greatest thing since the death of Ayatollah Komeini.

The story begins with the death of Lord Ogata, killed by a rival warlord, Yuki Daijo, and magical helper Oraki Maru ('Maru', means knight). One of his powers is he can change into a huge dragon which sounds like Godzilla. Fortunately, the young prince is rescued from the burning castle, by a huge bird that sounds like Mothra (I don't know how Toei got away with all this!). So for about 20 years, the two cruel dictators have been in charge of the province. Meanwhile, Prince Ishizuki Maru ('Maru' still means knight) is learning magic, ninja tricks and other impossible feats from some old wizard. Interlude: By the way, as a little tyke, I'd watched this movie on Saturday afternoons and after school, and the scene where our hero's head comes off had been cut. Imagine my surprise, when I was a little older, and stayed up until 3 am to watch a late night showing! A whole ninja duel near the beginning which was new to me! The flying head is one of the better scenes. Anyway, it's the same old magician who taught the villain the same skills many years before. Of course, the evil Orake Maru returns to kill his teacher, giving our hero yet another vendetta. During Ikazuki's travels, he befriends a number of people, including Tsumate, the confused daughter of the villain. Just before Ikazuki attacks the enemy castle, geishas perform on stage at a banquet. Why aren't they dancing to proper, old-fashioned Japanese music of the setting's period! Even as a

little boy, I thought this scene was silly, medieval geishas dancing to cha cha music. Regardless, our hero attacks, using swordplay, magic and his new helper: A giant, fire-breathing frog with horns! He roars like Rodan, and the same costume was used in the series *KAMEN NO NINJA AKA KAGE* (see OC#16, The Ninja Issue), but most of the spikes were removed. The frog battles the dragon with a little help from a giant spider summoned by Tsumate. This huge arachnid was a full year ahead of Toho's Spiga ('Kumonga' in Japanese), but not as well designed. Where as Spiga (*SON OF GODZILLA, DESTROY ALL MONSTERS*) looked realistic and had moving legs, this one looks like an inflatable puppet. Its only moving parts are when its rubbery legs wobble. Oh well, after the monster battle, both opponents return to their samurai forms, for the climactic beach duel. Though not exactly 'Miyamoto vs. Kojiro Sasaki', it's okay. The good guy wins, unlike the bad guy, who doesn't. *** - DF

VAMPIRE HUNTER-D

Executive Producers: Shigeo Maruyama & Yutaka Takahashi, Producers: Hiroshi Kato, Mitsuhsa Koeda, Yukio Nagasaki, Script Writer: Yasushi Hirano, Art Dir.: Toyoo Ashida, Music Dir.: Noriyoshi Matsuura, Character Designer: Yoshitaka Amano, Animation/ Cartoon Productions Co. Inc., Dir.: Toyoo Ashida, Copyright: 1985 Epic Sony Inc. Movie Co., CBS Sony Group Inc., English Version Executive Producers: Carl Macek, Distributed by Streamline Pictures, Reviewed by Henry Gandaler.

Here's a Japanese cartoon with a different way of interpreting the classic Dracula story. I'm a long time fan of the blood sucker genre, if you like any type of horror films you'll like it. One night, TBS aired it and saved me the trouble of having to find it.

The anime zombies at the local video shop blocked the cartoon section, at the time I was carrying two videos- *ZEIRAM* and *PRINCE OF THE SUN*. I got cold sores from the flock of anime people, so I slowly backed off walking to the check out aisle. Anyway, thanks to Turner Networks I got to see it for free, since it's on regular TV I'll take a wild guess some scenes are missing. Never the less, I managed to stay awake, and to my surprise found it entertaining. The monster designs are drawn well, even the characters too are sufficient. This cartoon would make a good live action movie, of course trying to duplicate this cartoon's SPX would be expensive.

What I like about this film is the

simple plot, very easy to follow and doesn't get confusing. Way into the future, vampires, demons, mutants and strange things dominate the Earth. The humans try to live in this Dark Age of Magic and Technology. Our heroine Doris and Dan Lang (I don't know their Japanese names) have a farm and sheep. One dark night Doris is chasing after some beast, after a short chase she blows it with a rifle. Outta' nowhere a werewolf jumps Doris, knocks her cross off and sets up Count Magnus for a neck suck. Getting bit by Count Magnus fucks up her life, the town folk hates her and refuses to sell supplies to her even. On top of that, a shithead called Greko (Mayo's son?) tries to get some toon poon. Luckily for Doris, Vampire Hunter D, aka D The Vampire shows up. He's part human, part undead, who hunts his own kind. Armed with special powers and a huge sword he wages battles against Count Magnus and his minions. V. Hunter D dukes it out with enormous monsters and all sorts of demonish creatures. While dueling with the Count's daughter Lameka and a henchman Raganzi he gets roughed up. After recuperating from his wounds, he finds out Count Magnus captured Doris. Thus setting the stage for a showdown at the count's castle. V. Hunter D wastes more monsters and Raganzi who chopped off D's hand, that can actually talk! The count finally gets it in the gut, even breaking V. Hunter D's

sword. Count Magnus gets stuck to the castle wall as his blood runs down, definitely the most bloody scene. Lameka blames her father's lust for human females for their demise. He tells her that she is also part human and not a full blooded vamp. She chooses to die even after V. Hunter D vows not to kill her. Instead she chooses death as the Count's castle sinks back into the Earth. With good prevailing over evil, the sun rises and plants grow back (seen this before). V. Hunter D rides off over a prairie as Doris and Dan wave good-bye. What a tear jerker! *** - Henry Gandaler.

惑星大戦争

THE WAR IN SPACE

Produced by Toho in 1977, Exec. Prod.: Tomoyuki Tanaka & Fumio Tanaka, Screenplay: Ryuzo Nakanishi & Hideki Nagahara, based on the idea by Hachiro Jinguji, Photography: Jo Aizawa, Art Dir.: Kazuo Satsuya, Sound Recording: Tashiya Ban, Lighting: Shinji Kojima, Music: Toshiaki Tsushima, Special Effects: Teruyoshi Nakano, Dir.: Jun Fukuda, Starring: Kensaku Morita, Yuko Asano, Ryo Ikebe, Masaya Oki, Hiroshi Miyauchi, Shuji Otaki, Katsuhiko Atarashi, Akihiko Hirata, Goro Mutsu, Isao Hoshimoto, Shoji Nakayama, David Perin, William Ross, Reviewed by Damon Foster.

Them rip-off artists at Toho must be quicker than Bill Clinton on a date, seeing as this *STAR WARS* ripoff came out the same year as

STAR WARS itself! Hell, Toei didn't complete their imitation (*MESSAGE FROM SPACE*) until 1978! The spaceship dogfights in *WAR IN SPACE* have their similarities to those in *STAR WARS*, and there's even a horned wookiee! It's Chewbacca as a Viking, and wielding a fancy battle axe! How did Toho, themselves overly concerned with copyright stuff, get away with this?! Were it a satire or comedy, this would be forgivable, but *THE WAR IN SPACE* lacks any intentional humor, everything is dead serious throughout, therefor on the boredom border.

Otherwise, *WAR IN SPACE* is more like older Toho space flicks (*MYSTERIANS, BATTLE FROM OUTERSPACE, GORATH, and SAYONARA JUPITER*), none of which do I like much. The scenes of the blue-silver aliens being unmasked remind me too much of that old UFO TV show from Britain. Otherwise, *WAR IN SPACE* has a colorful 1970s look about it, making it watchable; the sets are fancy, and the special effects are pretty nice. A few times, I could see the strings on the spaceships, and a few miniatures look like miniatures. But the remainder, like laser battles and explosions are all worth checking out if this movie is playing on a rainy day and your VCR isn't working and there are no Romeo Void videos to jerk off to and no annoying sports fans wanting you to change the channel to something they can scream at since they live for that crap and have little else to talk about.

The cast is okay, but nobody, especially the Caucasians like William Ross knows how to act worth a damn. Ryo Ikebe (*BATTLE IN OUTERSPACE, THE EXECUTIONER*) plays the token scientist-who's-daugh-

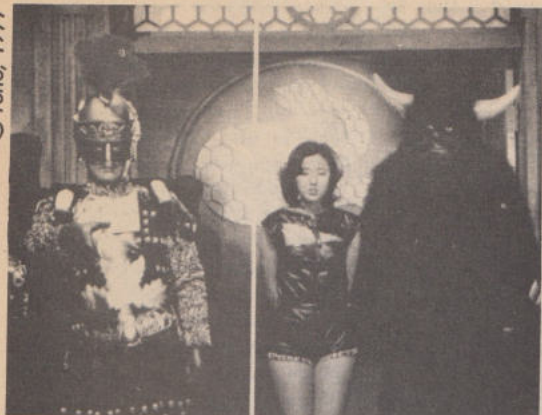
WAR IN SPACE STARS:
Yuko Asano and
Kensaku Morita.



Asano Yuko



© Toho, 1977



Above: Yuko Asano is captured by aliens.

Middle: Yuko's 1979 album "Summer Champion".

ter-was-kidnapped-because-villains-want-his-invention-so-he-sacrifices-himself-at-the-end-of-the-film, and also appearing is that guy who played Captain Kiriama in *ULTRASEVEN*, not to mention a main character in *RYUSEI NINGEN ZONE*. Hiroshi Miyauchi, superhero megastar from *KAMEN RIDER V3* and *KAI KETSU ZUBAT* is sadly neglected in favor of some actor called Kensaku Morita, who I've never heard of. Miyauchi doesn't do much, and dies near the end.

We also don't see enough of Yuko Asano (just 17 when she appeared in this flick). This model/singer/actress would later be voted No. 1 Idol girl by Clarion, a car stereo maker. The poll made her face & bodd the hottest thing (next to the weather) in Tokyo, during the summer of 1979, modeling for some cosmetics company called Kanebo. They're also the ones who released her 1979 album, "Summer Champion", consisting mainly of jingles she sung for Kanebo's commercials! Last I heard about this babe & a half was in 1980, when the then 19 year old released some song called "Stop the Conversation", which she performed at some Shinjuku disco called "Radio City".

The story is set in that highly futuristic year known as 1988! My god, what a year that was! That was when the U.N. Space Bureau (Japan Branch) figured out the Earth was under attack again (when a space station like Tera is destroyed by a ship, you know something's up!), this time by some blue-skinned gladiator called Hell, leading the Empire of Galaxies. This naively written tale also includes a dumb, predictable romantic subplot which makes the eyes role and the mouth say "Scan button!" But the destruction scenes (including some stock film from other Toho movies) are good, as the alien spaceships tear up Japan. Sadly, the human action isn't as exciting, like a lame confrontation between an alien

agent (William Ross) and the good guys, set in Professor Takegawa's (Ryo Ikebe) front room. Seems Takegawa knows how to make some mighty spaceship called Gotten. It's called Gotten because they've 'gotten' it pronounced wrong, in Japanese, it's Gouten. The whole idea about Gotten/Gouten reminds me too much about *ATRAGON*, except that it's about a spaceship, not a submarine.

Among the crewmen who've gotten in Gotten are not only characters played by Hiroshi Miyauchi and

Asano Yuko, but another bad acting American, David Perin. when he's told his whole family was murdered by the invaders, he's suppose to cry, but looks more like he's dozing off (probably from reading the script, which can provoke both tears and yawns). But the professor's daughter Jun Takegawa (Asano Yuko) does what scientist's daughters [in Japanese films] do best; getting kidnapped by spacemen! So our heroes rescue her, allowing for raygun shootouts, spaceship dogfights and explosions. Somewhat entertaining. *DF*

美女と液体人間

THE H-MAN

Produced by Toho in 1958, Associate Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Dir.: Inoshiro Honda, Photography: Hajime

© Toho, 1977

Koizumi, Photography: Hajime Koizumi, Art Dir.: Takeo Kita, Dir. of FX: Eiji Tsuburaya, Screenplay: Takeshi Kimura, Original Story: Hideo Kaijo, Music: Masaru Sato, Starring: Yumi Shirakawa as Chitako, Kenji Sahara as Chief Detective Tomanaga, Yoshifumi Tajima as Detective Sakata, Hisaya Ito as Misaki, Reviewed by Patricia Gonzales.

This film is one of Toho's finest non-kaiju science fiction efforts, boasting some of Eiji Tsuburaya's most original special effects. *THE H-MAN* proves that you don't need maser tanks, mass destruction and aliens to have a great Toho film. The only thing that prevents this movie from having that classic Toho "feel" is Masaru Sato's mediocre score (Akira Ifukube's work is severely missed in this movie).

I'm sorry that I couldn't see this one on the big screen, as the people melting effects were quite gory, particularly the one of

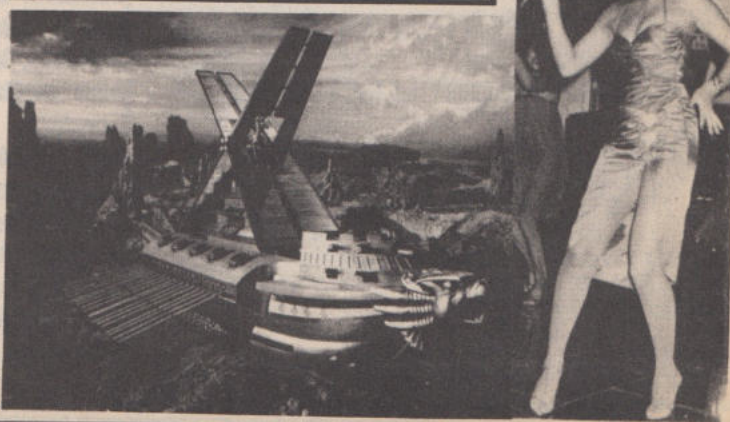


Sakata with every orifice (on his face, that is) oozing green goop! The actual H-Man is very well done and looks like a crude 1950s equivalent of a morphing creature (ala T-2). When the H-Man is in "slime-mode" however, it resembled the creature in the

American film, *THE BLOB*, only a bit more translucent. There are a few comedic elements that served as gentle reminders that you were definitely watching a Toho film. One was the hooligan that ruffed up Chitako. With his hat and trench coat he looked like a bad Japanese impersonation of a 1940's American gangster. The other was Chitako lip syncing to American songs at the club which was about the funniest part of the movie. It is Chitako's character that gets the most abuse throughout this film by the police and the gangsters. However, none of those things take away from the enjoyment of this under appreciated sci-fi classic.

The film begins with Misaki literally disappearing during a robbery. While Yushida waits for him in the getaway car, Misaki tries to load a sack full of narcotics stolen from a rented post office locker into the trunk. Before he can do so, he screams in pain as something grabs his foot. {Remember earlier when I said not to go excessively in-depth into the scripts? Well, Patricia's synopsis is a classic example of what not to do. Articles like this really piss me off, I'll spend the rest of my life typing this stupid thing. - DF} He shoots at whatever it is, dropping the loot and startling Yushida who drives off. As Misaki tries to get away, he is mowed down by another vehicle. Back at police headquarters, Detective Sakata is trying to figure out how Misaki could have gotten away after being hit as all that was found of him were his clothes. Chief Tomanaga has Mr. Chin who rented the locker in the post office containing the drugs brought in for questioning. Chin points out Misaki, who sold him the drugs from a police mugbook. The police go to Misaki's apartment and find his wife Chitako, a nightclub singer (hal) who claims not to have seen her husband for a long time. Later, Professor Masada is

Two of the best things about *WAR IN SPACE*: Alien spaceship and starlet Yuko Asano!



brought in by police as he was caught in Chitako's nightclub dressing room passing her a note. At the station the professor tells the chief about his research on the physical effects of H-Bomb fallout on humans. He feels that Misaki dissolved in radioactive rain or that maybe he might have been at an H-Bomb blast at some time. The chief dismisses his theories and warns him not to interfere with their investigation. Later, Chitako is attacked in her apartment by a gangster looking for Misaki. He leaves after slapping her around a bit, only to be dissolved by an unknown force outside the building. Masada then

KAIZO NINGEN...

Toei has the shortest memory in the world, there was already a super ninja called Jiraiya in JIRAIYA (Toei; 1988)! In the case of KAKU RANGER, four of the five heroes, including Jiraiya, are based on actual ninjas from old times. Kane Kosugi has some nice martial arts skills (he's allowed to use karate, boxing, & kendo in episode #7), but his talents are wasted in this show. Hopefully, he did better in ULTRAMAN: THE ULTIMATE HERO, his Japanese super-

takes Tomanaga and Sakata to the hospital to meet two injured crewmen from a fishing ship, who claim to have seen their fellow crewmen dissolve after being attacked by green ghosts while onboard a seemingly deserted ship. The chief is still not convinced, even after he witnesses Masada transform a poor frog into green bubbling slime in his lab after zapping it with radiation. Masada pleads with Tomanaga to warn the public about these creatures as after they attack, the victim in turn becomes one of them. Chitako then agrees to help the police by pointing out the gang members that hang out at the club. The

entire gang is arrested except for Yushida, Misaki's partner in crime who barely survives an attack by the creature in which a waiter and a dancing girl were killed. Poor Sakata also meets his maker in a rather gory fashion after trying to take on the H-Man himself. After all this carnage, and actually seeing the creature get away, the police finally realize they have a problem. As they make plans to destroy the creatures, Yushida kidnaps Chitako, taking her to the city sewer where he had hidden some heroin behind a loose brick. The military is mobilizing its forces to flood the sewers with gasoline and set them

ablaze to kill the creature. Masada goes into the sewer to rescue Chitako shortly after Yushida gets what's coming to him at the hands of the H-Man. With the creature on their heels, Masada and Chitako make it to Tomanaga who then orders flame throwers to be used to finish off the creatures. We now see the silhouettes of several "H-Men" as well as a close-up of two of the creatures being burned to a crisp. Everyone climbs out of the sewers just as the gasoline spreads throughout the tunnels engulfing all the monsters. ***1/2 - Patricia Gonzales

hero debut, which I've yet to see. But I think Kosugi's appearance in KAKU RANGERS is part of Toei's opening up to the American audience, via the POWER RANGERS. Other examples of Americanization in KAKU RANGER are the super-imposed words (in English!) written during the fights. Just as BATMAN (1966) had "Bam" and "Pow", KAKU RANGER has "Bakooo", "Shpack", and "Shyu"! As with BLUE SWAT, some episodes have English names like E.T. BABY and PRETTY

GIRL.

Script? Well, there are these five cybernetic ninjas protecting Japan from more evil monsters. Our five young heroes (red, black, blue, yellow & white) have not only swords & shurikens, but the usual laser beams & other explosive powers, not to mention some martial arts skills they don't always need. The villains are based on old Japanese mythology, but flashed up a lot, by excessive special effects. These evil monsters are just

plain stupid, even worse than many from previous programs. They all look like Sid & Marty Kroft rejects. Naturally, after their rushed duels with human-sized monsters, the Kaku Rangers unleash their giant robots. This time, each Ranger has a robot, and all are magnificently designed. But no matter how excellent these robots & heroes are, we all know it's just a pathetic (yet successful) gimmick to sell millions of over-priced toys, and to promote mindless materialism.

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LETTERS...

ROOM and many others, yet people don't seem to want to write about this kind of stuff. There are many good magazines out about Hong Kong films. This in itself isn't bad, but why does everyone want to review the same stuff? {Because the HK stuff sells. As soon as OC's other genres start becoming profitable to critique, you'd better believe everybody and their brother will start reviewing that stuff too. By then, OC will have discovered something else to write about.-DF}

How many reviews of **HARDBOILED** do I have to read? Personally, I'm sick of all these 'flying sword' movies. My current interests have moved to Japanese horror, sci-fi and superhero shows. The strength of your mag is that you cover HK, Japan, Korea and the Philippines. People need to get more exposure to other countries and their films. HK is great, but you get a little burned out after a while. OC is the best mag out. Keep up the good work!

Tony Robinson - Tacoma, WA
Dear Damon,

Just bought yesterday the new edition of **ORIENTAL CINEMA**, would you believe that it's available in comic shops of Italy? This issue is an improvement, and I'm glad to read something different than the usual John Woo reviews or technical reviews of *Godzilla's* latest film (they can say what they want, but I think the best *Godzilla* movies are those from **GHIDRAH THE 3 HEADED MONSTER** to **TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA**). The French title of *GODZILLA VS. MEGALON* (one of my all time faves) is *GODZILLA 1980*, and *BEYOND THE BORDERS OF REALITY* is just the English translation of the Italian *AI CONFINI DELLA REALTA'*.

Loved the article on Korean movies, I would really like to see some of those, but apparently, nobody except you collects them. A Korean movie I would really like to see it titled **FORCE FIVE**, stars replicas of the Mutant Ninja Turtles (poor actors with bad masks) who control two giant robots!

The article on **GAVAN** is interesting & useful with its episode list, I would like to see something similar in every issue of OC about different old serials. The *Robo Hero* article looked a little rushed up. Who gives a fuck about USA movies? You could have included more oriental stuff. {The brief looks at American films were included as part of a cross-culture comparison. As for your question, I don't know who gives a fuck about them, certainly not myself. -DF} I've a copy of **ROBO VAMPIRE** in English

language. The director is Joe Livingston, and produced by Tomas Tang. The movie is released by Filmmark, a company specializing in crap films and, believe it or not, it got a sequel titled **ROBOCOP VS. VAMPIRE**, or something very similar. Probably these movies aren't from HK, but Taiwan, and of course, Joe Livingston is just a bad pseudonym.

I've seen clips of **ULTRAMAN POWERED** and it sucks hard. I hated **ULTRAMAN: TOWARDS THE FUTURE**, but this seems on the same line except for the two nice girls. Got the first episodes of the new serials **NINJA SENTAI KAKU RANGER** and **BLUE SWAT**, but they don't seem very good. I'm very annoyed by all this 'new' **ULTRA** fans and **POWER RANGERS** freaks. Luckily, here in Italy everybody seemed to hate **POWER RANGERS**, from kids to adult people. **SHIN KAMEN RIDER JOSHOO** (or **PRO-ROGUE**, as you prefer) doesn't mean "NEW" **KAMEN RIDER**, but "REAL" **KAMEN RIDER**.

Keep out the anime from OC, especially when you give wrong infos (**UROTSUKIDOJI** is the correct title, not **UROTOTSUKIDOJI** and the translation is "Wandering Kid", not "Super Spider Kids"). You don't care for anime, nor do most of your readers, me included.

Max Della Mora - Milano, Italy
Dear Max,

Okay, I won't write about anime. However, I will occasionally write about cartoons. I'm trying to make OC as diverse as possible.-DF
Damon,

I just picked up the new OC and have to say that I enjoyed it. Although I did notice one mistake. In your review for **DRUNKEN MASTER 2**, you say Jackie fights Ho Sun Pak, but he actually fights Johnny Lo Hwei Hong, who was also in **POLICE STORY 3**, **CITY HUNTER**, and **CRIME STORY**. He is also Jackie's bodyguard. Some Jackie-less movies he has in have been **NAKED KILLER**, **FUTURE COPS**, and **BOYS ARE EASY** (no, this is not a N.A.M.B.L.A. movie).

Garò Nigoghossian - Cambridge, MA
Hi Damon,

As far as your want list goes, I, unfortunately don't have any of them except for **GIRL WITH THE THUNDERBOLT KICK**. But, as you've probably been told, this is really **GOLDEN SWALLOW** retitled! And since you reviewed **GOLDEN SWALLOW** a couple issues ago, I assume you have it.

Jeff Goodhartz - Pennsuaken, NJ
Dear Damon Foster,

I am intrigued by the wonderful pictures & informative articles in **ORIENTAL CINEMA**. However, one thing

stops people like me from actually buying it. To put it mildly, the language in the articles is.....um....way too creatively colorful for my taste!

I know that some of the shows you write about are very bad and need to be criticized, ... but really! Would you please tone it down so that all sci-fi fans may enjoy it properly? There are many, many types of readers in one audience. We'd like to feel welcome. (See? I just criticized you without using a single @#*%\$^+ word!) Made my point?

Signed, Trish - no address - (hell, the mailman didn't even stamp it!)

P.S. As you can see, I love offbeat humor also as long as it's in reasonably good taste! The coolest article you ever wrote was in **ZETRAMAN #11** I'd enjoy seeing more written in that style!

Dear Trish,

Ironically, I am indeed gradually toning down the vulgarities from OC, but not necessarily because of your letter. The main reason is because the obscene humor is attracting too much of the 'bad' element. Since OC first started using dirty words & crude humor, I've noticed an increase of interest from the exploitation/trash/bootlegging people, many of which have turned out to be back stabbing hypocrites. I have no desire to affiliate myself with such disgusting sleazewads, but unfortunately, they're eager to buy & read any fanzine with 'an attitude'.

So as OC cleans its act & struggles to free itself from the gross, tasteless horror/porn rag scene, there will be changes and compromises. But be forewarned, it'll be a gradual change. An occasional 'bad word' will probably always appear in OC. For example, some TV shows, like **KAMEN RIDER** are so incredibly outstanding that it's hard to praise them without usage of obscene words. For example, in describing the series, I might say something like: "KAMEN RIDER is fucking excellent, no ifs, ands or buts. It kicks ass, and only fags & shitheads wouldn't like it." Oh yes, one more thing; the **ZETRAMAN** article was slightly censored. I wrote 'animated crap' and they changed it to 'animated stuff'. -DF

Dear Damon,

I first picked up OC when you started being published by Dracula. Needless to say, I was very impressed and thankful to read your articles and reviews. Growing up in Hawaii, I experienced the great Japanese hero TV shows on a daily basis, but never knew too much about their background. When I saw **RAINBOWMAN** in OC#17, I was really excited. **RAINBOWMAN** was one of my fa-

vorite shows, along with **KIKAIDA** and **KAMEN RIDER V3**. I spent a year studying abroad in Tokyo and went to nearly every video shop I could find, so I could get a number of **KAMEN RIDER V3** tapes.

The first issue of OC that I really sat down & read from front to back was OC#17, The Robo-Hero issue. You really turned me on to the HK actions. I ventured into Chinatown and rented some movies and was very impressed. However, I noticed you review a lot of movies that didn't live up to your standards. As a new fan to HK film I guess I'd like more reviews about what you consider 'top of the line', 'can't miss' movies so I'd know what to rent. I get the feeling you've probably already done so in earlier issues, but since the HK Heroes column seemed like an intro to the genre, I figure there are lots of new fans who are just getting into it like me.

Yours truly,

Chris Wong - Hawaii

Dear Chris,

Like you, I too studied a broad. But she threatened legal action, unless I left her alone. But seriously, just because a movie doesn't live up to my expectations, doesn't make it a terrible movie. I hope you'll all decide for yourselves. I review & describe films based on my personal preference, and from there, readers can decide whether or not they'd like it. I try to at least mention a few good points, even if the rest of the movie sucked. So don't necessarily avoid a movie because I happened to hate it. For example, many people enjoyed **PEKING OPERA BLUES**, **A BETTER TOMORROW 3**, **CITY ON FIRE** and **SWORDSMAN**, all three of which I found as appetizing as flossing my teeth using Abe Vigoda's earwax. But since you're curious, a few of my favorite HK films are: **DRAGONS FOREVER**, **BULLET IN THE HEAD**, **DRAGON FROM RUSSIA**, **POLICE STORY 2**, **THE 7TH CURSE**, **A BETTER TOMORROW** part 1, and older classics like **KID WITH THE GOLDEN ARMS**, **MONKEY WAR**, **FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH** and **INFRAMAN**. -DF

Damon:

I suppose I'm one of the 'trendy art types' who gush over HK cinema and help overexpose all the Asian wackiness so it's not underground anymore. Never the less, I really enjoyed OC#16. It's funny and way too informative.

Keep up the personal ramblings and attitude. It's what keeps OC from turning into a slanty-eye STARLOG. And for Satan's sake, keep printing those photos of Asian girls-on-film for all us Hentai Gaijin who don't get out

enough. Remember, there's nothing wrong with being 'opinionated'. Love, Rick Hall - New York Damon,

Ah yes! Those highly entertaining '3 Supermen' movies. There's also a **THREE SUPERMEN IN THE WEST**, which ties in with the Spaghetti westerns. Plus, there was a ripoff series of films featuring different actors. The films were **THREE SUPER GUYS**, **THREE SUPER GUYS STRIKE BACK**, and **THREE SUPER GUYS IN THE SNOW!** There was also a film with three costumed heroes, set in ancient Rome. As to other superhero films: **SUPER DIABOLIK** (a super criminal, actually), **CUATRO BUDDAHS DEL KRIMINAL**, **EL MASCARADO DEL KRIMINAL**, **ARGO MAN**, **PHENOMONAL**, **AVENGER X**, **GOLD FACED SUPERMAN**, and **FANTABULOUS**.

Craig Ledbetter - Kingwood TX
Dear Craig,

Mucho thanks! To think I only wanted to see **SUPERMEN AGAINST THE ORIENT** (reviewed last issue) because of Lo Lieh's appearance! Now I'm discovering a whole new (to me) genre of superhero flicks! To think all these years I've only watched oriental movies, I've really been missing out. Unfortunately, most of these Euro hero flicks are impossible to find. -DF
Damon:

Glad you were able to see those fun "Supermen" films with Brad Harris and Tony Kendall. **THE THREE FANTASTIC SUPERMEN** was directed by Spaghetti Western veteran Frank Kramer (real name: Gianfranco Parolini), who also directed '60s spy film icons Tony Kendall and Brad Harris in the seven **COMMISSAR X** movies (the first in the series is **KISS KISS, KILL KILL**). Euro spy films are loads of fun too. Try **OSS 117: MURDER FOR SALE** (you should be able to find and rent it), **SECRET AGENT 00** (aka **OPERATION KID BROTHER**), or **CODE NAME JAGUAR** (with Ray Danton) and see what you think.

If you like Italian superhero movies like **SUPER ARGO**, you might want to pick up Bava's **DANGER: DIABOLIK** or rent stuff like Deodato's **PHENOMONAL AND THE TREASURE OF TUTANKHAMEN**, or Vivarelli's **AVENGER X**. The Bava film, especially, is most entertaining. All are from the 1960s, which should give you a clue.

Bob Sargent - Alexandria, VA
Dear Bob,

My god, here we go again. I'll have to do some serious searching & trading to track this stuff down! I'm more into superheroes than spies, but I did enjoy Euro spy flicks when I was a little kid. Recently, those idiots at

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATRE 2000 showed one. It looked like an entertaining movie, but, as always, the hecklers (some guy and a couple vacuum cleaners) ruined it! So this show is what the geeks are laughing at?! -DF

Dear Mr. Foster,

I just started reading OC, I find it a very informative and enjoyable magazine to read. I like your writing style, telling it like it is. Too many other magazines are too nice to people and afraid of offending people.

I found the enclosed article (below) in our local newspaper. I don't know if it's of interest to you or not. Ken Corey - Oregon City, OR

EX-STAGE, SCREEN STAR
HELEN LEE MEI DIES - The former featured star of a Singapore-based film industry giant, she earned top billing in all of her 37 feature movies.

Helen Lee Mei, a leading star of stage & screen in HK during the 1950s and 1960s, died of cancer and pulmonary diseases Thursday in a Portland hospital. She was 63.

Born July 27, 1930, she became the featured star of the Singapore-based Motion Picture and General Investment Corp., whose HK film

studios ranked with the giant Shaw Brothers organization as the leading movie makers in East Asia. She earned top billing in all of her 37 feature films, and, in 1960, she was the first foreign actress to star in a play at Tokyo's famed a l l women Taka-razuka Theatre.

Miss Lee founded or was involved in several manufacturing and service industries in HK, including the colony's huge City Hall Restaurant. She left HK in 1967 to marry Robert F. Ruan, whom she met in Taiwan while he was stationed as an officer in the Central Intelligence Agency. Ruan grew up in Portland and held degrees from the universities of Oregon and Washington. Although they divorced in 1982, they had planned to remarry in June.

Miss Lee first visited the United States in the late 1950s as one of a group of international film stars organized by Portland's Jantzen Knitting Mills. The group helped celebrate the inaugural flight in New York City of Pan American World Airway's first Boeing 707 jet-liner.

Survivors include her son from an earlier marriage, Paul S.P. Wu of Portland; and two grandsons. A private memorial service is planned.

{The preceding newspaper article appeared in the May 15, 1994 edition of The Sunday Oregonian. Thanks to Ken Corey for sending it in. -DF}



Helen Lee Mei 1930-1994



Baragon airborne in **FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD** (© Toho, 1965)



Above: Gabora Below: Nelonga



GODMAN

Not only did Godzilla appear in **ULTRA Q**, **ULTRAMAN** and **ZONE FIGHTER**, but other Toho costumes appeared in superhero programs too. The Baragon suit was given new heads to portray Ultraman's enemies Nelonga and Gabora, and Gorosaurus and the Gargantua would later suffer defeat at the hands of **GODMAN!** By then, both monster costumes were falling apart.

PHOTO'S FOR THOUGHT - DID YOU KNOW? CORRECTIONS:

Regarding OC's Jackie Chan issue, I'm not so concerned with minor typos, like those on page 5 ("Kieth Partridge Hairdo" spelled "Kieth Partridge Harido", Lo Wei accidentally called Lo Lei, etc.,). What really gets to me are errors which aren't my doing, and ones which are completely ridiculous; i.e. Hugh Gallagher's computer's tendency to alter the word 'actioner'. Okay, so actioner isn't a real word, but is a useful, one word description of a type of movie. So ignore the many times (especially on page 6) that actioner is spelled auctioner! I swear, this is not my doing, I would never type auctioner or auctioneer! Also, a big thanks to Lana Zukowski for pointing out my inappropriate usage of 'illusive'. The word I wanted was 'elusive', which I've attempted to use for years, though spelling it illusive, a word I've never used in its proper context.

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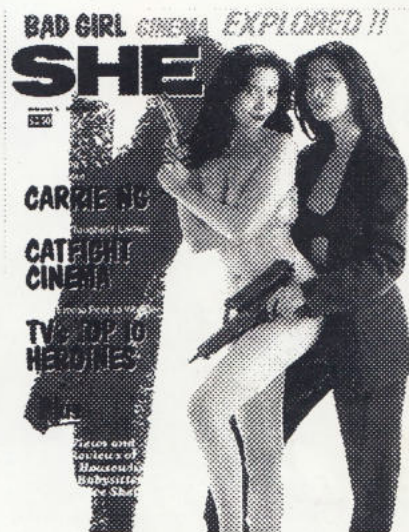
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