

COBRA — HARMAGEDDON — GORATH — TATSUNOKO PRO.

the
**JAPANESE FANTASY
FILM JOURNAL**

NUMBER 15

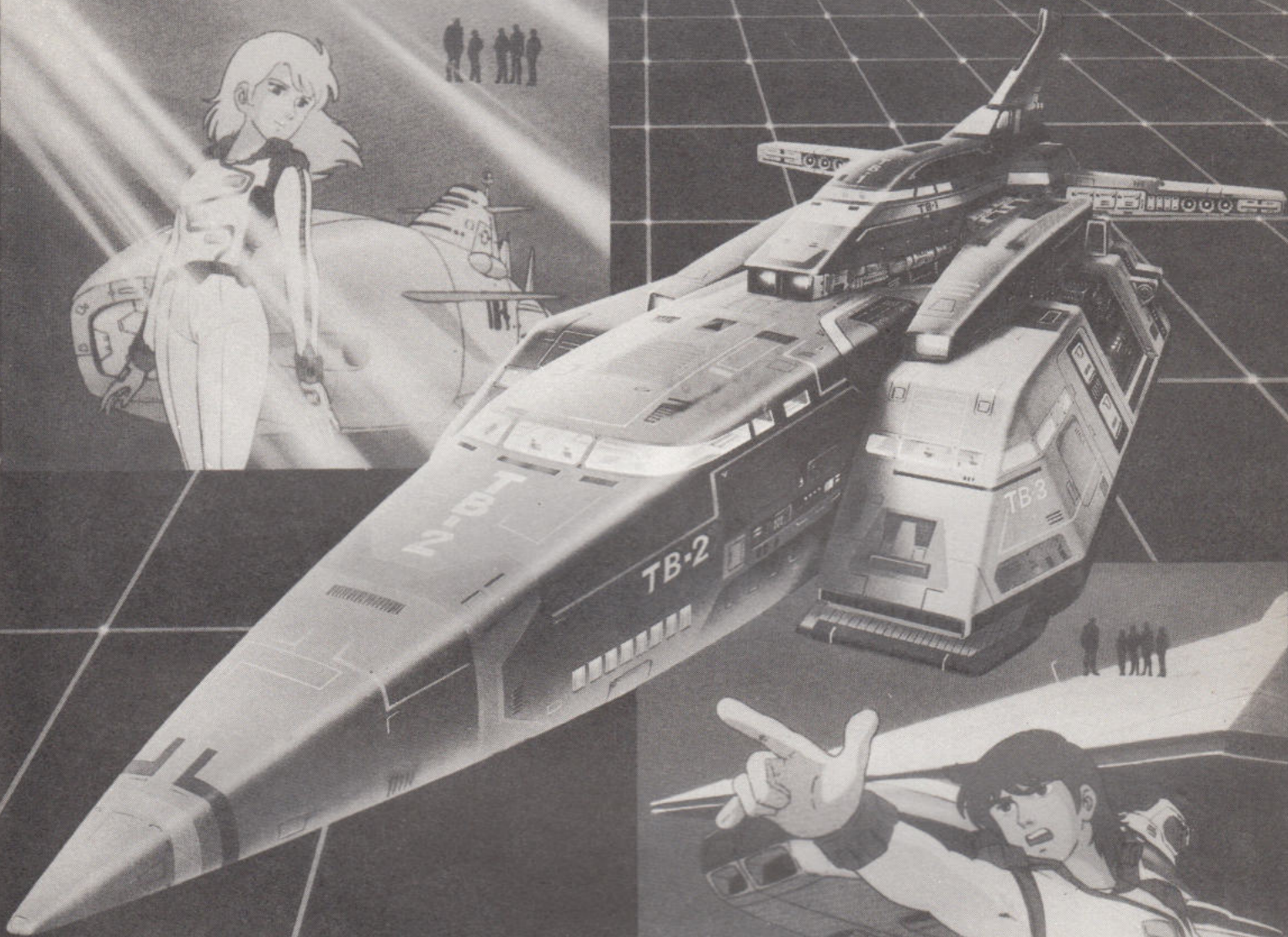
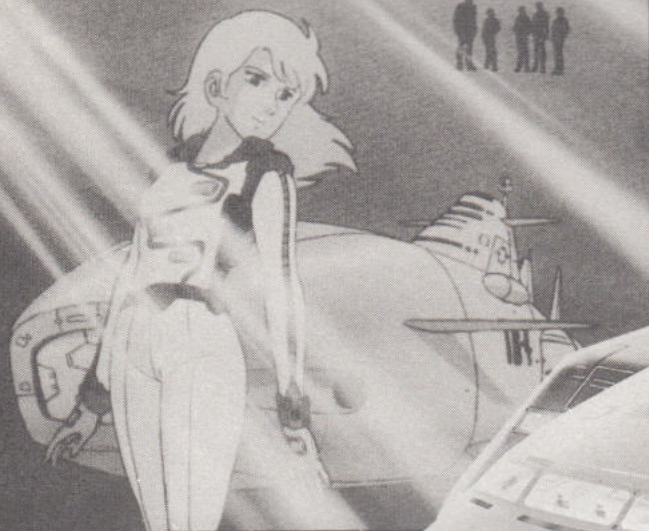
3 DOLLARS



**GODZILLAS,
CATASTROPHES,
VAMPIRES &
MORE IN THE
TOHO LEGACY
1970-1979**

THUNDERBIRDS

2086



DAZZLING SPACE-AGE ANIMATED
ADVENTURES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY



FROM

ENTERTAINMENT

an ACC COMPANY



CONTENTS

THE JAPANESE FANTASY FILM JOURNAL

I beg your indulgence while I rattle off a few thoughts before getting to the point of this column.

First: This issue reduces to zero on-hand stock of professionally published Japanese fantasy film related articles, this previously published material having been run to fill the void created by a dearth of fan contributions. It is one thing to put together a fanzine based upon submissions and quite another to be responsible for most of the text and layouts, pasteups, and camera work. This is not meant to slight the appreciated but few fan contributions printed here, but a content problem has existed nonetheless.

Second: Japanese studios, to whose fantasy output this book has been dedicated for fifteen years, have become unwilling to provide material for publication. It has always been difficult for me to work with the film companies, but with two exceptions none of the other numerous firms I solicited following the publication of issue fourteen responded to my inquiries.

Third: Production costs have skyrocketed. Simply put, more money is going out than coming in.

Fourth: The Japanese fantasy film market has radically been altered by animation. It has become the dominant film medium representing the sf, fantasy, and horror film genre in Japan, live-action movies having all but disappeared. *JFF*, born and nurtured amid live-action releases, has been unable to negotiate the shift in studio production and fan interest. My files are linked to the past, while I stumble about blindly due to lack of exposure to the animated efforts.

Conclusion: The compounding of the points listed above has forced me to make a reluctant decision. *JFF* and I are going to take a rest from publishing. The magazine may or may not be revived, but if it is, it will be the result of rethinking direction, format, and financing. Regardless, I am proud of my publishing accomplishments since 1968, and my life is richer because of this mag. Through *JFF* I have met a number of incredible people, several becoming very good friends, and I have learned much about Japanese sf, fantasy, and horror movies and TV. I can only hope you too have shared this pleasure. Take care.

Greg Shoemaker
Editor



PAGE 10



PAGE 20



PAGE 18



PAGE 30



PAGE 33

RETROSPECTIVE: GORATH 10

A look back at Toho's 1962 space epic, a serious, downbeat endeavor which survived the clumsy tampering for its American release, and includes discussion of the missing giant walrus scenes. *Article by Hideyo Tsuburaya.*

THE TOHO LEGACY 20

The final chapter, covering 1970 through 1979, and the final decade of Toho's dominance of Japan's fantasy films. *Article by Greg Shoemaker.*

CLOSEUP 4

News of recent and current films, shorts, TV. *Compiled by August Ragone.*

TATSUNOKO PRO. 18

Part two of a filmography of the studio's TV animation. *By Fred Patten.*

THE LAST WAR 29

Anti-war sentiment by its producer issued upon the picture's release.

ALTERNATE TOWA FUTURES 30

COBRA and HARMAGEDDON'S differing viewpoints of possible future worlds.

DORAEMON 33

Garfield, Heathcliff, Tom, Bill—and now an "atomic cat" from Shinsei Org.

REVIEWS 34

Four most unusual genre entries of recent vintage from Japanese studios.

TRIVIA 37 LETTERS 38 FUNNIES 39

COVER: Shin Kishida as the vampire in Toho's LAKE OF DRACULA (1971); Mechagodzilla, shown inset.

安彦良和第一回監督作品

CRUSH **ジョー**

原作・脚本 高子穂通 監督・脚本・作画 安彦良和

製作 岸本吉功・伊藤昌典 / 美術 中村光毅 / 撮影 三原啓治 / 音楽 藤野貞義 / 原案 沢村勉 / 監修 島典夫 / 音楽 前田憲男 / プロデューサー 吉井孝幸
声優 ジョウ=竹村 拓 アルフィン=佐々木るん / 企画 日本サンライズ / 配給 富士映画



最先鋭コスプレック・アクション

宇宙が熱い!

FAR EAST REPORT

CLOSEUP

Compiled by
August Ragone

Shinsei Org.

MONSTER KID (KAIBUTSU KUN; aka LI'L MONSTER) The first of several animated theatrical features starring the title character created by Fujiko Fujiko. No footage from the Monster Kid's TV series appeared in this all-new 75 minute film distributed by Toho in 1981.

21 EMON The adventures of a young teen who works as a bellhop in a sleazy international hotel. Set in the future, the animated film saw release in 1981 by Toho.

DORAEMON FESTIVAL Fourth animated feature in the *Doraemon* series about a cat from the future who is transported into our present time. This latest adventure which he shares with his human friend Nobita was distributed by Toho. Release date is unknown.

DORAEMON—NOBITA NO KAITEI/NINJA HATTORI-KUN/PAAMAN HADOMAN GA YAT-TEKITA (trans., DORAEMON—NOBITA'S UNDERSEA TOWER OF DEMONS/HATTORI THE NINJA/PAAMAN—HAADOMAN HAS COME) A triple-bill of short ani-features released May 12, 1983. Toho handled the distribution.

NOBITA'S EVIL WORLD ADVENTURE A new *Doraemon* feature co-starring Paaman and Hattori the ninja. The film is set for a March, 1984 release.

Tezuka Pro.

UNICO ON WITCH ISLAND Announced last issue as Osamu Tezuka's UNICO 2, it was not released theatrically until July 16, 1983. The cartoon feature was animated by Sanrio, not Tezuka Pro., and was distributed by Toei.

PRIME ROSE Made-for-TV animated feature which was broadcast Aug. 21, 1983.

Shochiku

SUPERMAN LOCKE (THOJIN LOKU) Set for a March, 1984 release, this animated feature is based on the famous, complex, and very adult Japanese comic series.

AI Planning Center

RAINBOWMAN, WARRIOR OF LOVE Animated TV series remake of the early seventies live-action TV series with major changes including the transformation of all 7 color/element heroes into a Gundam-type robot. Series premiered Oct. 10, 1982.

Sanrio

BUTTON NOSE 26 half hour episode, animated video series about faeries geared to juveniles. In production.

FLORENCE For release in 1985, an animated feature about faeries designed for a more adult audience.

LEGEND OF SYRIUS This 1981 animated feature (see *JFF* #14) was broadcast on U.S. cable television in 1983 as SEA PRINCE AND FIRE CHILD.

Cinema Placet/Panorama Films

HOLLYWOOD—THE FANTASTIC COMEDY A live-action fantasy/musical feature released June 5, 1982. It was directed and scripted by Takafumi

CRUSHER JOE (1983), the title of Toei Doga's animated feature and a group of outer space soldiers-of-fortune promoted in poster art, left. **Tsuburaya Pro.** resurrects its *Ultra* series in that series most recent television entry, **ULTRAMAN 80 (1980)**, shown above. One year earlier, Tsuburaya Pro. sought out an animation firm for its cartoon series **THE ULTRAMAN (1979)**, right.



Nagamine with stop-motion sequences animated by Chiyoimi Watanabe. Running time is 85 minutes.

Haruki Kadokawa Office

GIRL WHO LEAPS OVER TIME (TOKI O KAKERU SHYOYO) Published photos of this live-action feature suggest its story, and especially its soft photography, may have been influenced by the U.S. time travel film *SOMEWHERE IN TIME*. Released July 16, 1983, the film was directed by Nobuhiko Ohbayashi (*HOUSE, LEGEND OF THE ELEGANT CAT'S GHOST*).

SWORD OF KAMUI A new version of the story of real-life ninja Kamui to be directed by Taro Rin. This animated feature is set for a release some time in 1984.

HARMAGEDDON (GENMATAISEN; aka EVIL PHANTOM CONFLICT) Ani-feature produced by Haruki Kadokawa and Shotaro Ishimori, and directed by Taro Rin (*GALAXY EXPRESS 999*). An evil existence, representing entropy, comes to Earth and slowly, calculatingly, begins corrupting it, as it has done so many times before to other planets. An equal and opposite existence awakes the psi-powers in a cyborg warrior from planet Vega, a Japanese youth, a princess from Transylvania, a young African-American, a Chinese girl, a Hindu guru, and an Arab to battle this evil force. Released March 12, 1983, the Toho-Towa distributed feature was scored by Nozumi Aoki with songs by Keith Emerson. (See article elsewhere in this issue.)

ATG/Isoda Office

THE LIVING KOHEJI (KAIIDAN—IKITEIRU KOHEJI; trans., KOHEJI WHO IS LIVING THE GHOST STORY) A 78 minute live-action feature which premiered Sept. 4, 1982 and was double-billed with a reissue of the 1959 horror film from Shintoho (now ATG, or Art Theatre Guild of Japan), *THE GHOST OF YOTSUYA*. Directed by Nobuo Nakagawa, the aged director who also handled a similar chore on the *YOTSUYA* movie, *THE LIVING KOHEJI* is based on a psychological mystery play written by Senzaburo Suzuki and published in 1924. The three featured characters, played by Fumihiko Fujima, Shoji Ishibashi, and Junko Miyashita, are involved in a love triangle in which a single man is enamored of his friend's wife. Appalled by his friend's blunt announcement and continued expressions of love, the husband tries to drown his wife's suitor and fails, but in a vicious fight at the picture's conclusion, the suitor is killed. Husband and wife flee to escape prosecution, yet their flight is fraught with the constant worry of the death of their friend. Still, the two continue their journey, but close on their trail lurks a shadow figure...

Shogakukan

SASUGA NO SARUTOBI A fantasy-comedy ani-series featuring the adventures of the descendants of a famous ninja-clan family. The show premiered Nov., 1982 and stars Nikia ("Beefy") Sarutobi, although in animated form.

Nippon Animation

ALICE IN WONDERLAND (FUSHIGI NO KOKU NO ALICE) An animated and serialized adaptation of the classic. The program began Oct., 1983.

MIYUKI An animated video series which began airing May, 1983. It is a situation comedy with quite a bit of fantasy thrown into its stories.

PEYUA ISLAND An animated fantasy-comedy TV show featuring a pink sea serpent, talking animals, mermaids, and other sundry weirdness. Premiered June, 1983.

Mushi Pro.

GREEN STAR LAND (MIDORI NO KUNISEI) Heading for a 1984 release is this fantasy film about Chibe, a girl-cat. To be released by Nippon Herald.

In production is **MONSTER GANG** from Tsuburaya Productions. Several of the characters to be incorporated into the TV series are shown right. **MONSTER GANG** will be animated which is an unusual direction for Tsuburaya Pro., which has only one other anime series to its videography. Left, three photos from Toei's live-action teleseries **GOGGLE 5** (aka **GOGURU 5**; 1981-82), the name of the giant robot shown left center, on right, Goguru-Black, near right, is a Goggle 5 member, while far left are two of the show's nasties, the Medusa-like Tabu and Death-Guiler.

Miyazaki Pro.

NAUSICAA (NAUSHICA) To be released theatrically in March, 1984, this feature details a story about the title character, a young, warrior woman who lives on another planet. Over 1500 storyboards have been created for this one hour and fifty minute long film based on artist/ animator Hiroyo Miyazaki's illustrated story which appeared in *Animage* magazine from 1982-1983. Takashi Takamura, who has worked on **GOLDFIGHTAN**, **URASHIMAN**, **HARMAGEDDON**, and other animated efforts, will be a key animator on this project for which Miyazaki formed his own company.

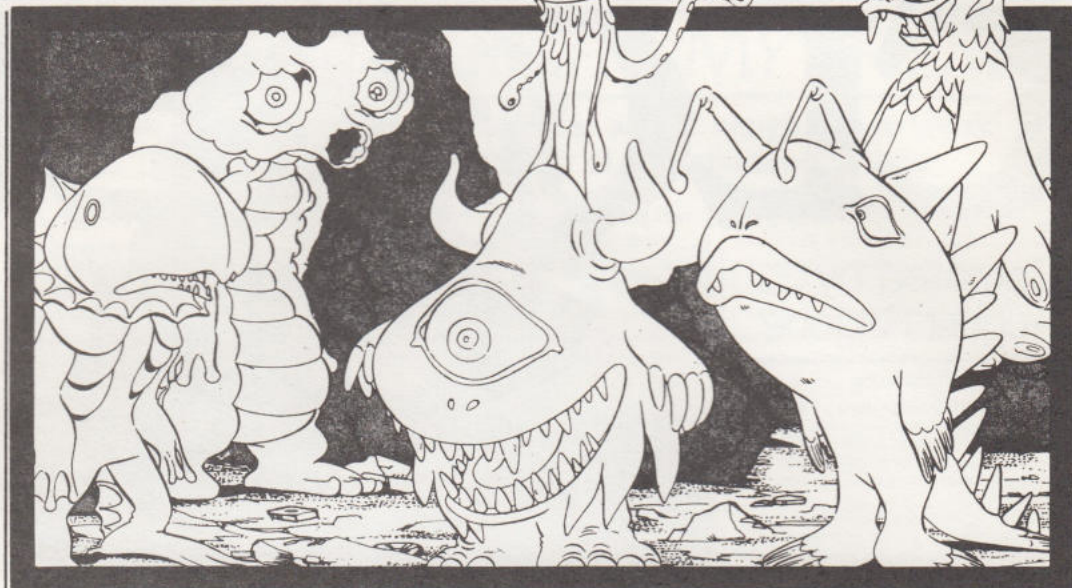
Tokyo Movie Shinsha

GOLGO 13 The popular, long-running comic strip in *Big Comic* magazine comes to life again (the first film, a live-action feature bearing the same title and produced by Toei, is largely ignored by fans of the comic), this time as an animated picture using the *Compix* technique, read *computer animation*. **Golgo 13** is an assassin, the best in the world—cool, cunning, nihilistic, as ruthless as the world he lives in—ours. Akio Sugino directed the film which is based on the title character created by Takao Saito. Toho distributed. The feature premiered May 28, 1983.

6-GOD UNION—GOD MARS Akio Sugino is credited as director for this anime feature released Dec. 18, 1982 and distributed by Toho-Towa. New footage which included new characters and sequences was added to footage from the **GOD MARS** television show to create this film. The TV series ran 52 episodes.

COBRA—SPACE ADVENTURE An animated sf feature distributed by Toho-Towa in July, 1982. Similarly titled TV program, consisting of 52 half hour episodes, premiered Oct., 1982 and more faithfully followed the original comic book series. Both were directed by the busy Akio Sugino. (See article elsewhere in this issue.)

HYPER SPACE CENTURY ORGUSS An animated TV show which premiered July 3, 1983. In 2040 an enormous multi-national spaceport tower is seized by Communist forces. The Free World Nations and the Freedom Space Corps join in a plan to recapture or, if necessary, destroy the structure with an arsenal of A, B, C, & D weapons: "atomic, biological, chemical, and dimensional." The dimensional element, untested, goes wild and obliterates the Earth. A young soldier, caught up in the dimensional warp created by the explosion, is sent to another planet along with the *Valkerie* jet he is flying, and there he is conscripted into a war between a race of farmers and militaristic oppressors. Created by Haruhiko Mikimoto (MACROSS).



CAT'S EYE Based on a *Charlie's Angels*-influenced comic which appeared in *Shonen Jump* comics, the TV series concerns three super female agents and their fantastic exploits set in contemporary times. The cartoon program, which premiered July 11, 1983, was directed by Hiroyo Miyazaki and Yasuo Otsuka, a team responsible for a large outpouring of animated material including **LITTLE NORSE PRINCE VALIANT** and **LUPIN III—CAGLIOSTRO'S CASTLE**.

LUPIN III Another animated video series on this rogue is planned to begin April, 1984. And what happened to **LUPIN VIII**? When the estate of the creator of Arsene Lupin, Maurice LeBec, took to court Lupin III creator Monkey Punch and Tokyo Movie Shinsha, production house for Lupin III films and TV, due to their illegal use of the Lupin name and character for this new film, the French backers of **LUPIN VIII** dropped out. TMS and Monkey Punch are able to use the Lupin III character and can feature him in brand new animated adventures. The latest series is being directed by Hiroyo Miyazaki and Yasuo Otsuka who were teamed for the now classic original **LUPIN III** television series (1971-1972) and the feature **LUPIN III—CAGLIOSTRO'S CASTLE**, as well as many superb episodes from the second cartoon series. Yuji Ohno, of *You and the Explosion Band*, has agreed to score the series, having also composed the music for both Lupin III features and the second television series.

SHERLOCK HOUND Announced last issue, this animated funny animal TV series version of Sherlock Holmes adventures from Hiroyo Miyazaki and Yasuo Otsuka premiered on the HBO cable network in the U.S. in Nov., 1983.

WINSOR MCKAY'S NEMO Budgeted at \$15 million, this animated fantasy feature, initially announced as **LITTLE NEMO**, will be co-produced by Gary Kurtz' Hollywood-based Kinetographics, Kurtz having produced **STAR WARS**, **THE EMPIRE STRIKES**

BACK, and **THE DARK CRYSTAL**. TMS acquired the rights to the project from the family of Winsor McKay, the turn-of-the-century American artist and animator whose highly successful *Little Nemo In Slumberland* comic strip ran for 11 years in the *New York Herald*, beginning Oct. 15, 1905. Ray Bradbury is working with Kinetographics on the script which will be co-directed by Andy Gaskill, a 32-year-old former Disney animator; a Japanese co-director is being sought. John Williams has been hired to compose the score.

Toho

Toho is distributor of several animated short films which were produced by independent animation houses: **THE SPARROW'S OVERTHROW OF THE DEMON** (19 mins.), **THE BIG DIPPER** (13 mins.), and **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD** (19 mins.).

KABA-MARU The animated adventures of ninja Kaba-Maru who originally appeared in *Margaret Comics*. The television series premiered on NTV October, 1983.

TOKIMEKI TONIGHT Animated TV series, a love-romance comedy with vampires which premiered Oct. 7, 1982.

SAYONARA JUPITER A live-action sf feature based on Sakyo Komatsu's novel and set for a March, 1984 release. *Executive producer*, Tomoyuki Tanaka; *directors*, Koji Hashimoto and Sakyo Komatsu; *special effects director*, Koichi Kawakita; *starring*, Tomokazu Miura (as hero Eiji Honda), Diane Dangel (as heroine Maria), Miyuki Ono, Rachel Huggett, Marc Pinsonnat, Hisaya Morishige; *music*, Kentaro Haneda; *songs*, Yumi Mathutoya and Jiro Sugita; *producer*, *screenplay*, Sakyo Komatsu. In the 22nd Century a black hole forms near our solar system, so Earth scientists declare a 10-year project—"The Jupiter Into Sun Project"—which will cause Jupiter to become an artificial sun to be thrown into the black hole and hopefully destroy it.

PLAWRES SANSHIRO Animated sf/fantasy/humor TV series featuring wrestling robots which premiered June 5, 1983. (PLA is short for play model or model kit; WRES, for wrestler.)

Okay, okay, so we were wrong when we announced in each of our last three issues that a new Godzilla film was in the works. We don't learn from our mistakes, and in fact are announcing not one but two new films starring the big lizard. According to numerous sources Toho is going ahead with a film to celebrate G's 30th anniversary in 1984. No further information is available as we go to press. Another Godzilla entry, which will be made without any assistance from Toho, will be an all-American production which is to be directed by Steve Miner (**FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH—PART 3**, in 3-D). In pre-production, the picture will be shot in 3-D and will use stop-motion animation for Godzilla rather than the man-in-suit method used by Toho. A big budget is to be made available for the filming.

Tsuburaya Pro.

In addition to preparing a new, adult, animated television series, tentatively titled **MONSTER GANG**, Tsuburaya Productions is planning to get involved in publishing. Over the years the company has developed more than 1,000 characters for its television releases and feels these could be the basis for a potential 1,000 book titles, possibly in the form of short illustrated stories. Tsuburaya is also planning to make a computer animated feature. Unlike Disney's **TRON** which cost an estimated \$20 million, the Japanese company plans a substantially lower budgeted feature. The equipment for computerized animation is available locally, but what's lacking is the know-how to use it to best advantage. Tsuburaya is therefore aiming to obtain experts from U.S. universities to assist the production team. If the film is a success, a spinoff TV series will likely follow.

ULTRAMAN—HERO FROM THE STARS To have been directed by Akio Jissoji, scripted by Mamoru Sasaki, and co-financed by ATG, the film has been shelved.

ANDROS MELOS A live-action *Ultraman*-like TV series which premiered March, 1983 on TBS, Monday through Friday. The program consists of 45 ten minute episodes which are broadcast between shows ending at 5:45 and beginning at 6 p.m.

LEGEND OF THE ELEGANT CAT'S GHOST (REIBYO DENSETSU) A live-action horror picture made for television. The film was broadcast Aug. 30, 1983 and was directed by Nobuhiko Ohbayashi (HOUSE).

West Cape Corp.

FINAL YAMATO (UCHUSENKAN YAMATO KAN-KETHUHEN) The last animated of *Yamato* feature which premiered March 19, 1983. Toei distributed. The film was reissued in Nov., 1983 in a 70mm format less 20 minutes from the original print.

KING DESSLER The tentative title of a 70mm

Photos: © 1981 Toei Co., Ltd.



Art: © Tsuburaya Pro.

EAST REPORT

feature film in 4 channel Dolby stereo. To be released in 1984, the animated motion picture stars the premiere villain from *Yamato*, Dessler, ruler of Gamiens, though the *Yamato* itself will not appear in the film. A TV series may follow.

NAC

CYBOT ROBOCHI Animated TV series which premiered Oct. 7, 1982. This situation comedy with robots was co-produced with Lental Planning and Dynamic Productions.

PSYCHOARMOR GOBARIAN A robot adventure with invaders from another dimension: the Radain Star Empire versus Earth paranormalists. The animated TV series premiered July 6, 1983.

Nippon Sunrise

THE IDEON—A CONTACT/THE IDEON—BE INVOKED Two animated feature films released as a 3½ hour double bill on July 10, 1982. Footage from the TV series *SPACE RUNAWAY IEDON* was edited into the two features, although *BE INVOKED* has a considerable amount of new animation in it, particularly the entire ending sequence. Created and directed by Yoshiyuki Tomino, the double bill was not well received by Japanese fandom for a solid story structure (beginning, middle, end) was missing from the two features. Mr. Tomino's reputation was in question after the release of these two movies, but the fears were allayed by his work on *BATTLE MECHA XABUNGLE* and *AURA BATTLER DUNBINE*.

CRUSHER JOE Ani-feature directed by Yoshikazu Yasuhiko (*GUNDAM*) who is also credited with character design. The film is based on the popular Japanese sf novel series about the adventures of a space bounty hunter/soldier-of-fortune squad called the *Crusher Team*, a sort of outer space A-TEAM. Haruka Takaiho scripted the screenplay. Premiering March 12, 1983, *CRUSHER JOE* was distributed by Shochiku.

GIANT GORG (KYOJIN GOHGU) Animated sf giant robot television series set in the Mystery Zone of Austral Island. Director Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's show has been temporarily shelved.

AURA BATTLER DUNBINE (SEI SENSHI DUNBINE) Animated television show produced by Yoshiyuki Tomino and Hajime Yatate and based on characters designed by Tomonori Kogawa (*IDEON*, *XABUNGLE*). The series, which premiered Feb. 5, 1983 on TV Asahi, begins on the planet Byston Wale (Baisutone Ueru) to which people from Earth, including hero Shiyō Zama, are summoned to become mercenaries. The chief weapon of the group is the *power suit* called *Aura Battler*. The aliens of this world dwell beneath the surface of the sea where a great power struggle takes place between Lord Drake and the other kingdoms, where technology is organically based, where battles occur between armies of insect-like robots which run on *Aura* power, and where unicorns and faeries also live.

VOTOMS (SOUKOU KIHEI BOTOMUZU), aka *ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS* Animated TV series similar to *DOUGRAM* and which premiered April 1, 1983 on TV Tokyo. These robot adventures are set on the planet Melkie and revolve around a war against the Asteroid Projects. The program resembles Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* in design using concepts rejected for *MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM*, such as the armored troopers' *scope dogs* which are 4 meters high.

XABUNGLE GRAFFITI Initially an animated TV series, *BATTLE MECHA XABUNGLE*, this cartoon

feature includes footage from the series as well as new material. Directed by Yoshiyuki Tomino with character design by Tomonori Kogawa and *mecha* design by Kunio Okawara and Yutaka Izubuchi. Yasuno Bakano composed the score. Shochiku distributed *GRAFFITI* which premiered July 9, 1983 and was double-billed with . . .

DOCUMENT OF SOLAR FANG DOUGRAM Another animated feature with new footage and material culled from the 75 episode TV series *SOLAR FANG DOUGRAM*. The film is a documentary of the program and was directed by Ryosuke Takahashi, scored by Toru Fuyuki. Character design is by Norio Shioyama and Soji Yoshikawa with *mecha* design by Kunio Okawa. Released July 9, 1983 and distributed by Shochiku.

MOBILE BATTLER ELGAIM Animated sf robot TV program now in production and fashioned after *AURA BATTLER DUNBINE*.

GALACTIC COMET VIFAM (GINGA HYORYU VIFAM) Animated super-robot TV series with *mecha* designs by Okaojara Kunio (*GUNDAM*). The program premiered Oct., 1983.

Studio Peiaru

HAZUNDE KURIEMAMI Animated TV series about a little witch from the creators of *NOISY PEOPLE FROM SPACE*. Program began July 1, 1983.

DALOS Animated sf robot television series, reportedly produced for videotape release beginning in Dec., 1983.

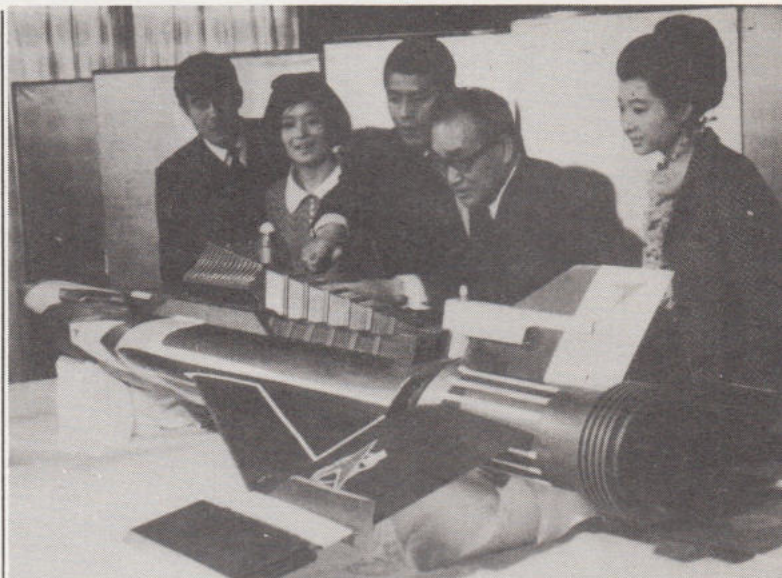
Tatsunoko Pro.

DESTINY SQUAD This animated TV series, announced in pre-production last issue, has been shelved due to an inability to sell the concept to anyone. Reported objections are the show's high intellectual level and the lack of items which can be turned into popular toys.

SUPERBOOK and THE FLYING HOUSE Both animated programs, which were broadcast in the U.S. on the Christian Broadcasting Network, a cable TV channel, are based on stories from the *Bible* and have been dubbed into English by Gil Mack, Ray Owens, Billie Lou Watts, Hal Studer, and Sonia Owens, the original cast voices of *ASTRO BOY* and *KIMBA*. The shows premiered the first week of October, 1982 on CBN and a *SUPERBOOK* Christmas special aired on regular U.S. network television. Echo Productions, Inc. of the U.S. handled the *Americanization*.

SUPER DIMENSION FORTRESS MACROSS (CHOJI SORA YOSAI MACROSS) Animated television series premiering Oct. 3, 1982 with a special one hour first episode; all remaining episodes are a half hour in length. Character design is by Haruhiko Mikimoto, and *mecha* design is by Studio Nue. (Mikimoto began work in the business in the Studio Nue animation group) in the first episode a huge space craft named *Macross* crash lands on Earth. It takes 10 years for an Earth crew to complete repairs on the ship, just in time to fire the *Macross* cannon against the invading *Zentrady* space fleet, dragging the people of Earth into a great space war. Seventeen-year-old Hikaru Ichijoe, pilot of *Valkyrie VF-1j*, is the hero of the series. Heroine Lin Minmei, a fifteen year old, becomes a singer in later episodes. Title of the TV special: *IMA START!! UWASA NO BIG ANIME CHO IKUYOUSAI MACROSS*. ("IMA" means "NOW") A *MACROSS* movie is being prepared for an August, 1984 release.

FUTURE POLICEMAN URASHIMAN (MIRAI KEISATSU URASHIMAN) Although Toho's *TECHNO-*



POLICE 21C didn't fare too well in Japan, and since *BLADE RUNNER* did, *Tatsunoko* combines the best of both in this story of a Tokyo street punk whisked out of his time and into 2050 AD by the Neo Tokyo Police which is in need of tough sorts.

IPATSUMAN Number six in the *Time Bokan* series, this animated television show premiered Feb. 6, 1982. In one of its episodes all of the previous *Time Bokan* characters appear together.

CHIN SAIYUKI OSHIYAKAMAN Seventh and final animated TV show in the *Time Bokan* series. Premiering April 9, 1983 in the 7:30 time slot rather than the usual *Time Bokan* series slot of 6:30 p.m., the show parodies the famous *Monkey King* tale of the *New Chronicles of the Road to the West* from China. The program underwent a title change to *ITADAKIMAN* prior to broadcast. The final episode, #20, was shown Oct. 1, 1983.

GENESIS CLIMBER MOSPEADA (KIKO SOSEIKI MOSPEADA) Animated TV series which began Oct. 2, 1983 at 9:30 a.m. The show is about robot *power suits*.

Kitty Enterprises

LUM, THE INVADER GIRL (URUSEI YATSURA—ONLY YOU), trans., *NOISY PEOPLE FROM SPACE—ONLY YOU!* All new animated theatrical feature based on characters from the TV series. Lum is visited by an old friend, Elle, who has a score to settle with her for all the practical jokes they played on each other over the years. Elle plans to pull off the best practical joke of all—by setting her sights on Ataru, knowing full well about Lum's attraction for this boy. Toho distributed the 80 minute film.

Movie International Co.

SPECIAL ARMORED TROOPER DORVACK (TOKUSOKIHEI DORVACK) Another ani-series about a combination robot protecting Earth, though set 100 years in the future. Premiered Oct. 1983.

At a press conference for *Tsuburaya Pro.*'s video-series *MIGHTY JACK* (1968), above, personnel gather to marvel at the battleship miniature *Mighty Jack*. From left: Masanari Nihei, Wakako Ikeda, Hiroshi Minami, the late Eiji Tsuburaya (effects director), and Naoko Kubo. Below are scenes from the ani-series *MACROSS* (1982), produced by *Tatsunoko Pro.* Right, hero Hikaru's VF-1j fighter is under attack by the 10 meter tall *Zentrady* forces. Center, hero and heroine, Hikaru Ichijoe and Lynn Minmay. Left, the VF-1j fighter, capable of changing into 3 kinds of machines, is shown here in its low-flying design, called *Gawalk*, being chased by *Regard*. The robot design of the fighter is named *Battloid*.

NANAKO SOS A comedy-fantasy ani-series with a young super-boy hero as its central character. The program, designed by Hideo Azuma, began its run April, 1983 over Fuji TV.

SUPER FORMULA VOLGA Animated series set to begin its air time in early 1984. The program concerns the robot team "Circus" against the elitist "Shadow" organization in the 23rd Century.

991 GALAXY WHIRLWIND BAXINGER Animated TV series sequel to *GALAXY CYCLONE BRYGER*. Was broadcast July 6, 1982 to March 29, 1983 in 39 episodes. Character designer was Kazuo Komatsubara (character design/direction for *HARLOCK*, *GALAXY EXPRESS* TV series & movies, *BRYGER*, *SSX*, etc.). 991's characters are based on the powerful *Shinsei-gumi* samurai clan, so this futuristic series has a taste of the old thrown in. Thus, the music score was composed with the use of the *shamisen*, a traditional stringed instrument, in mind. The main characters all have two names (in order of rank): Don Condor (Diego Kondo), Moroka No Shutekken (Shutekken Radcliff), Billy the Shot (Shiro Mahoroba), Kattobi No Sama (Doody Samanosuke), and Fushirao No Lila (Lila

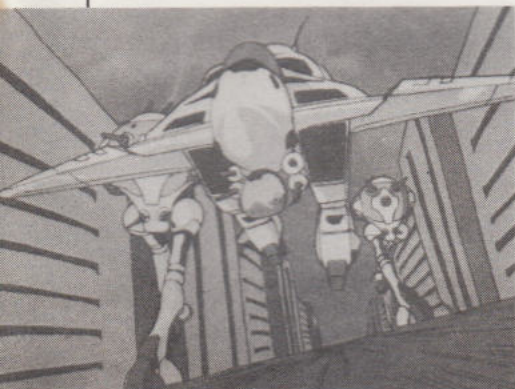
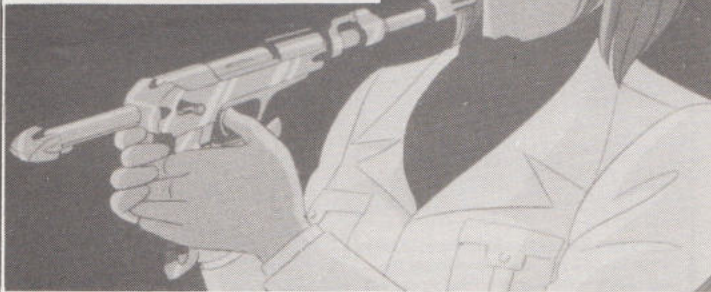


Photo: © 1968 Tsuburaya Pro.

Photos: © 1982 Tatsunoko Pro.



Photos: © 1983 West Cape Corp.



Mineri). In the final three episodes all five main leaders are killed in battle.

J9III GALAXY TORNADO SASRYGER Animated TV series which began April 5, 1983. One of the staff members of the J9 series commented: "As BRYGER was like 77 SUNSET STRIP and BAXINGER was like BONANZA, SASRYGER will be like a space version of CONVOY." From the story line it appears the program has elements of AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS as well. The characters have been given the same cool attitude that was apparent with those in BRYGER. Their names: "Rock" An' Rock, "Beat" Mackenzie, "Birdie" Shaw, D.D. Richman, and I.C. Blues. Mr. Yamamoto, composer of the music for the J9 shows, used a rock score for BRYGER, a more traditional one for BAXINGER, and for SASRYGER? Blues. Surveys showed the largest percentage of fans for BRYGER was women, and for BAXINGER, young men. An attempt with SASRYGER was made to appeal to both genders. Kazuo Komatsubara is credited with character design. A J9 movie is planned for the future.

HIGH SPEED ADVENTURE MAD MACHINE Produced in association with Dynamic Productions, this animated TV series is set in the year 1999. A task force, comprised of a group of individuals who bear allegiance to no nation, man powerful super machines (cars, battletrucks, jeeps, motorcycles, etc. in the MAD MAX and ROAD WARRIOR style) in their struggle against an all-female organization, the Black Shadow.

MISSION OUTER SPACE SRUNGLE Animated TV series which premiered Jan. 21, 1983 on TV Asahi. The series, which boasts computer graphics and animation, was written by fan-turned-pro Saki Hijiri. In this space version of MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE, a 6-man professional guerilla squad, a galactic police combat team with GUNDAM/XABUNGE-type walker robots and machines, battle against Dog Mandy and his minions.

NHK

ESTEBAN, THE SUN-KISSED BOY (TAIYO NO KO ESUTEBAN; trans., ESTEBAN, CHILD OF THE SUN) Animated cartoon series which premiered June 29, 1982 in the 7:30-8:00 time slot on NHK. Set somewhere in the distant future, it is about the adventures of Esteban and his two companions amid a culture living in the same type of environment and architecture as the Aztecs and Mayans and yet who have an advanced technology similarly styled.

Toei Doga

DR. SLUMP—LITTLE ARALE (DR. SURANPU—ARARECHAN) Animated TV series which premiered Aug., 1981. A TV special was also broadcast on Japanese television. The fantasy-comedy program presents an inventor who has created a super-

android little girl named Arale, an obnoxious brat who runs around yelling "Why! Why!" She enjoys dressing up in costumes—anything from a Science Patrol uniform (from ULTRAMAN) to R2-D2 to a cat to Godzilla... Created by Akira Toriyama, the series is set on an island called Penguin Village (a nod to Python fans) and is awash with characters of popular culture and at the same time parodies them and the films. TV shows, books, and comics in which they appear. One episode, "Quest for the Supermarket" took a jab at *Lord of the Rings*, while another was a musical sendup of *Cinderella* with Dr. Slump in the starring role.

DR. SLUMP Animated feature containing all new footage based on the popular comic strip and successful TV series. Released July, 1982.

DR. SLUMP—HOYO-YO GREAT RACE Animated

FINAL YAMATO (1983), the last film in the *Yamato* saga, was reissued in 70mm after its initial run. From this feature, Yuki Mori, left, fiancée of hero Susumu Kodai, is preparing to commit suicide due to the prognosis regarding Kodai's health after he was bathed in radioactivity during a military operation. Yuki, inset, comforts Kodai when he suffers an injury in battle. An animated feature was crafted using footage taken from Tokyo Movie Shinsha's **GODMARS** (1982). In the scene below from the film, hero Takeru Myojin is confronted by the evil Zulu emperor.

theatrical feature with footage culled from several DR. SLUMP TV episodes. It parodies THE GREAT RACE, TRON, and EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, and contains the usual looniness associated with the series. Also includes a parody of Nessie—a brother named Lassie. Toho distributed for a March 12, 1983 release.

ATTACK! SPACE-KEN Animated robot drama TV series which combines elements of MACROSS and rolincan (faerie-like little girls). Coming soon. **DOKUTORU MANBOU VS. MAGICIAN ZIVAGO** Animated TV special broadcast Sept. 12, 1983.

This outrageous show was produced by the crew of DR. SLUMP and bears their brand of weirdness. **TOMB OF DRACULA** (YAMI NO TEIO: KYUKETSUKI DORAKYURA; trans., VAMPIRE DRACULA, EMPEROR OF DARKNESS) Animated made-for-TV feature produced by Yoshifumi Hatano and broadcast Aug. 19, 1980, 7-9 p.m. on NET. The film is a faithful adaptation of Marvel's *Tomb of Dracula* comic written by Marv Wolfman, yet major differences do exist. Subplots with Blade the Vampire Slayer, Hannibal King the vampire private eye, and the comedy relief of Harold H. Harold the hack writer have been excised. The story which remains focuses upon Dracula's marriage to Domine, the birth of their son Janus, Dracula's battle with the black magic cult, Janus' transformation into a divine vampire hunter, and, of course, the running battle between Dracula and Frank Drake/Quincy Harker/Van Helsing.

TECHNOVOYAGERS Japanese title for the animated TV series listed last issue as THUNDERBIRDS 2086. THUNDERBIRDS 2086 is the promotional title used outside of Japan and is the banner for a series of features compiled from episodes of the TV series which began airing on U.S. pay cable in

1983. Compilation titles: COMPUTER MADNESS; FIREFALL; THUNDERBOLT; and more to come. **QUEEN OF A THOUSAND YEARS** A 43 episode, animated TV series created by Leiji Matsumoto. The program takes place hundreds of years in the future when Earth faces an apocalypse. A new queen is about to awaken from her ancient slumber to save the planet, but evil forces from outer space attempt to prevent the queen's being revived. This TV series and its feature film of new footage, **QUEEN MILLENIA**, are being dubbed into English, along with the Captain Harlock film **MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA** and its related follow-up series **SSX—MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA**, for broadcast on a Japanese television station in New York City. **FIGHTING GENERAL DAIMOS** A 1978 animated TV series syndicated to U.S. cable beginning in 1983 as a feature compilation called **STARBIRDS**. The character *Daimos* had his name changed to *Dynamo* in the U.S. version.

ETERNAL ORBIT SSX—MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA Animated TV series which picks up where the feature left off, continuing the battle of Captain Harlock against the Imeldus Empire in 22 episodes. Supervising director and author of original story was Leiji Matsumoto. Broadcast Oct., 1982 through April, 1983.

STOPI! HIBARI-KUN New, humorous animated TV series based on the popular comic strip which includes parodies of MAJIN, EIGHTH MAN, ULTRA Q, and others. Premiered May 20, 1983.

BEM BEM HUNTER TEN-MARU Animated TV series of the adventures of Japanese demi-god Ten-Mar, Monster Mauler-Demon Demolisher, from the popular comic strip in *Comic Bon-Bon* magazine.

QUEEN EMERALDUS Animated feature set for a 1984 release with a series to follow. Another of Leiji Matsumoto's sf pirate characters gets to be a star.

OUR PATARILLO (BOKU PATALILLO) Second animated TV series of Patarillo adventures which introduces new characters and carries on its own brand of craziness. Premiered Oct. 19, 1982.

PATARILLO: OPERATION STARDUST A 45 minute long animated theatrical movie of new footage about the bizarre adventures of Patarillo which takes him where *no man has gone before*. Premiered in Japan July 10, 1983.



Photo: © 1982 Tokyo Movie Shinsha

EAST REPORT

Toei

IGA NIMPOH-CHO A live-action horror story about the magic of the Iga ninja clan. "Nimpoh" translates as ninja magic (technique). Released Dec. 18, 1982, the film stars Hiroyuki Sanada and Shinichi "Sonny" Chiba.

TOEI MANGA MATHURI A Toei program for theatres consisting of an animated feature and several live-action and animated shorts which premiered May 13, 1983. The ani-feature, from Toei Doga, is taken from one of Aesop's Fables and is titled **MANGA ISOPPU MONOGATARI. KAGAKU SENTAI DAINAMAN** (SCIENCE FIGHTING TEAM DYNAMAN), with effects directed by Nobuo Yajima, is an episode from the live-action TV series produced by Toei. Similarly, an episode from the live-action Toei TV series **BATTEN ROBO MARU**, created by Shotaro Ishimori, was incorporated into Toei's program, as was an episode from the animated program produced by Toei Doga, **DR. SLUMP—ARARECHAN**.

SUN VULCAN A live-action theatrical feature was created by compiling several episodes from Toei's giant robot TV series. Released March, 1982.

SPACE SHERIFF GAVAN (UCHU KEIJI GIYABAN) English title for the live-action TV series listed last issue as **SPACE POLICEMAN GYARIBA**.

NEW SPACE SHERIFF SHARIVAN (SHIN UCHU KEIJI SHIYARIVAN) Live-action TV series which premiered Feb., 1983. Sharivan comes to Earth to replace Gavan in battling the evil forces threatening the planet. Created by Saburo Yasude.

SCIENCE FIGHTING TEAM DYNAMAN (KAGAKU SENTAI DAINAMAN) Live-action TV series which premiered Feb., 1983. Created by Saburo Yasude, DYNAMAN continues the tradition of five suited heroes battling monsters by using fantastic vehicles and machinery.

LIGHT SPEED GOD—ALVEGAS (KOSOKU DEN—JIN ARUBEGASU; aka ALBEGAS) Animated TV series which premiered March 3, 1983. The arrival of 1993 brings with it the advanced computer technology which makes it possible to build giant electronic battle robots. Three are constructed, Alpha, Beta, and Gamma, and they are capable of combining to form a larger, more powerful, robot, one at a time. The three main formations are called Marine-Dimension, Magma Dimension, and Denjin-Dimension or Alvegas. The sub-formations are titled Space-Dimension, Sky-Dimension, and Guard-Dimension. The three young pilots also have battle crafts, Alpha-Jet (piloted by Daisaku Enjiji), Beta-Jet (piloted by Tetsuya Jin), and Gamma-Jet (piloted by Hotaru Mizuki-17), which combine to form the Super-Alvegas. All of

this paraphernalia is pitted against the forces of the Dellinger Space Army (insect-like humanoids with a bony exoskeleton) led by Emperor Deran who sends Generalissimo Azas, Prime Minister Daim, Commander Mirrorzero, General Daston, Commander Catastrola, their creature foot soldiers, and an army of giant cyborg mecha-fighters to conquer Earth in their giant space fortress. Created by Saburo Yasude who also wrote the original story. Kozo Morishita is credited as director of the series; Chumei Watanabe, composer of the music.

RED SHADOW Live-action TV series set in the middle of the 16th Century Japan, a Japan wracked by civil wars. **RED SHADOW** is the story of three young ninjas, Red Shadow, Blue Shadow, and White Shadow, who act as spies for Lord Oda, an ambitious leader who dreams of re-uniting Japan, and their conflicts with myriad monsters of all sizes and shapes. Broadcast April 5, 1967 through March 27, 1968 in 52 episodes of four 13 part adventures.

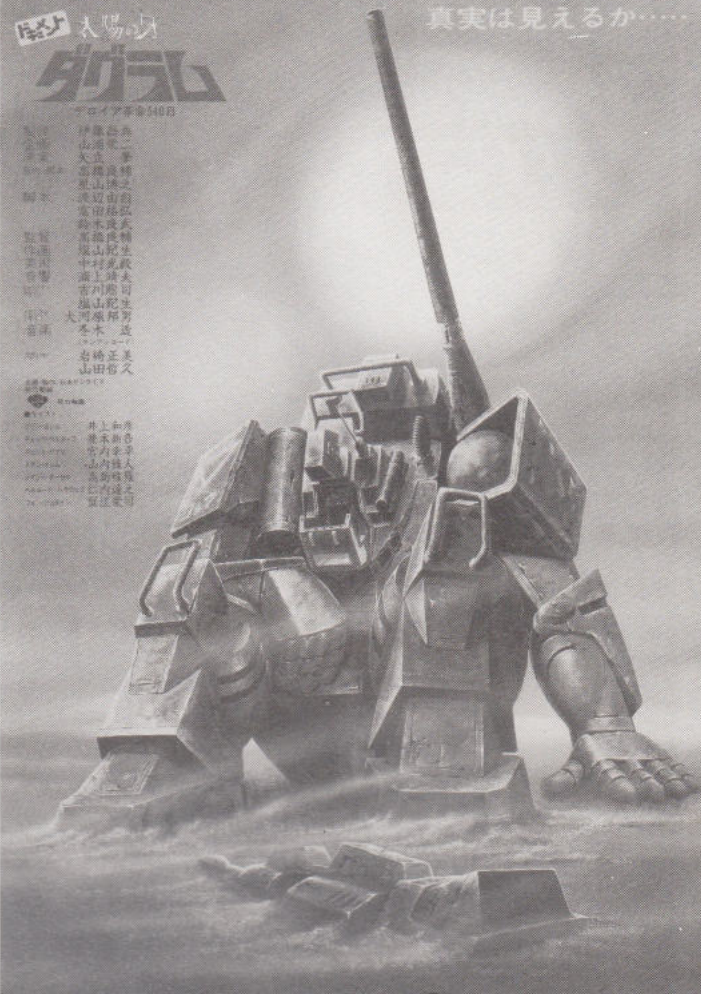
THE MAGIC CLASS 41 episode, live-action TV series. Five youths help an old lady who turns out to be a witch who uses a broom to jet about. The witch leaves a strange suitcase full of curious objects which the lads must figure out how to use. One item, when the kids recite the spell given to them by the witch, turns into a flying saucer. Broadcast April, 1977 through March, 1978.

SAMURAI REINCARNATION (MAKAI TENSUO; aka OTHERWORLDLY EVIL) This live-action film produced by Haruki Kadokawa is set in 17th Century Japan at a time when the government was taking extreme action against Japanese Christians. Leader of the revolt, Shiro Amakusa, is beheaded, but his ghost calls together all the heroes from Japanese history who had, like him, revolted against authority. Together these illustrious ghosts form a band which seeks to undermine the authority of the Tokugawas. Released June, 1981, this 122 minute film stars Shinichi "Sonny" Chiba, Kenji Sawada, and Akiko Kana.

SWORDS OF THE SPACE ARK English-language feature compilation of several episodes of Toei's live-action TV series follow-up to **MESSAGE FROM SPACE**. The film was broadcast on the Christian Broadcasting Network in 1983.

Behind the Scenes

Ryosaku Takayama Designer and construction artist of suits for Majin, Gamera (and the monsters in the films), and the giants in assorted TV shows like **SILVER MASK, IRON KING**, and the *Ultra* series. Mr. Takayama passed away July 28, 1982 at 8:55 p.m.



Nippon Sunrise's **DOCUMENT OF SOLAR FANG DOUGRAM** (1983), an animated picture compiled from TV footage, is advertised in poster art, above, which features in combat armor the *power suit* Dougram, a creation of Norio Shiyoma. Tsuburaya Pro.'s TV series **ANDRO MELOS** (1983), its starring suited heroes shown in the photo below, contains effects directed by Koichi Takano and Kazuo Sagawa. The show is remarkable in that its episodes are only 10 minutes long.

Sadamasa Arikawa Once effect director and director at Toho and freelance director of visual effects upon his separation from Toho, Mr. Arikawa is reported to be working at a driver's license school somewhere in Japan.

Akira Ifukube Mr. Ifukube conducted a concert in Tokyo on August 5, 1983 for a very enthusiastic audience. It was a momentous occasion because of his music and because of his age. May there be more such occasions.



STILLS

TOHO PRODUCTION PHOTOS

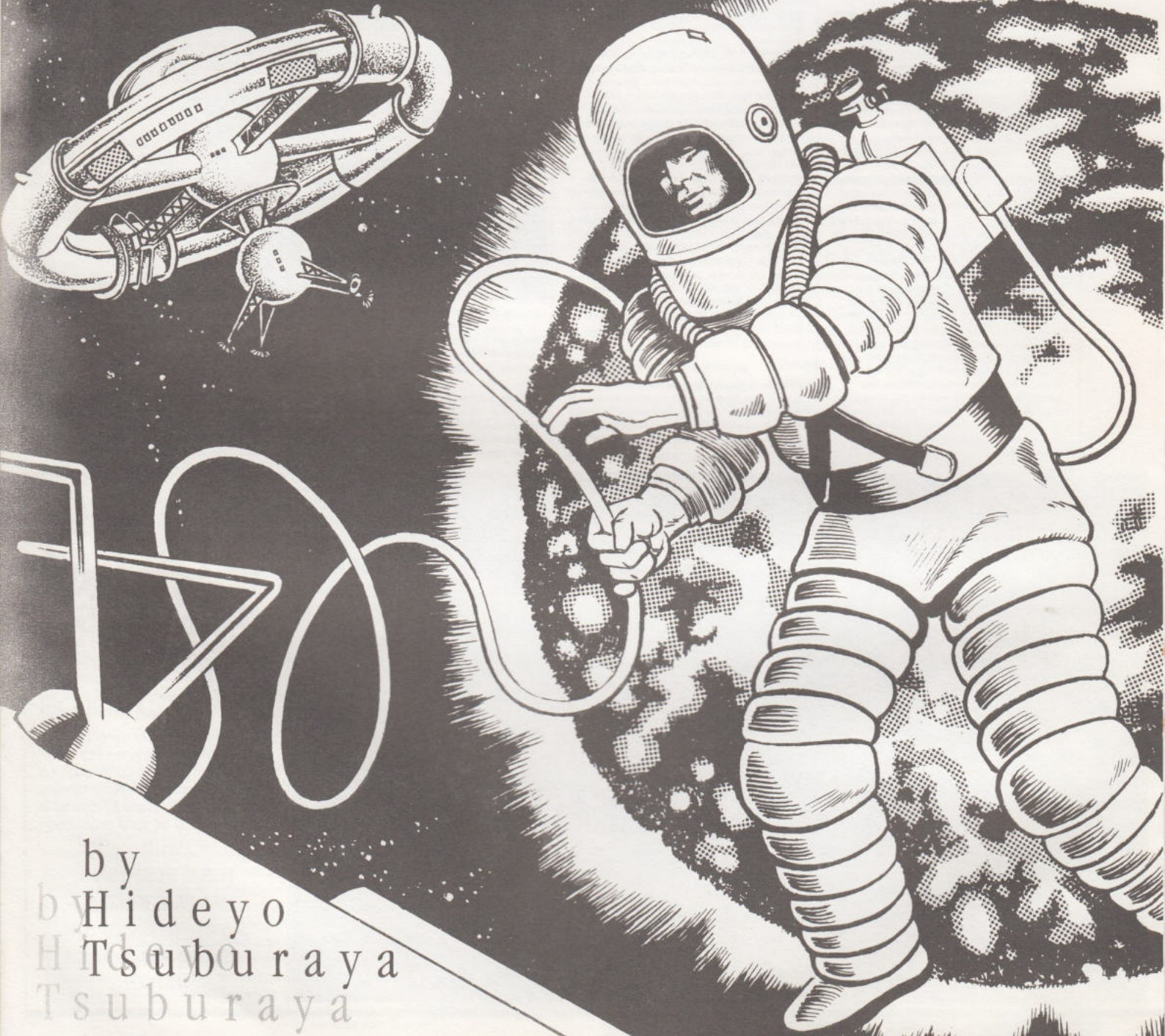
☐ 8 × 10" ☐ COLOR

Choose from over 90 super photos, each behind-the-scenes still a collector's item and a valuable addition to your collection of Toho sf/fantasy film memorabilia. Send \$2 to receive our catalogue of rare production photos. Contact us . . . now!

H.R.I. PLANNING
HAJIME ISHIDA
3-6-58 KIREHIGASHI
HIRANO-KU, OSAKA
JAPAN

GORATH

— R E T R O S P E C T I V E —

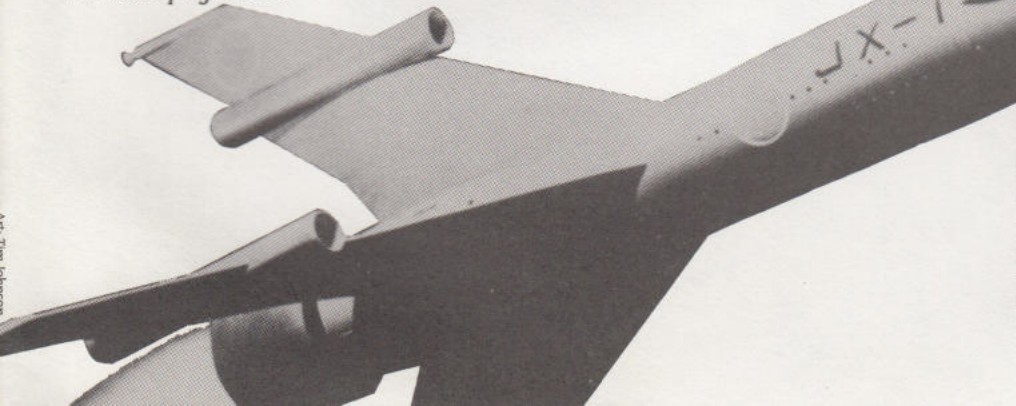
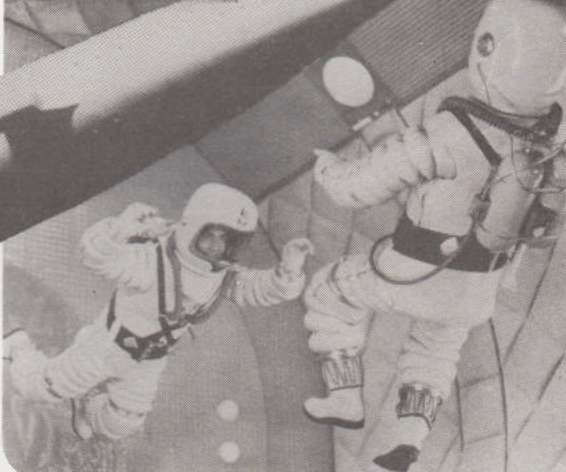
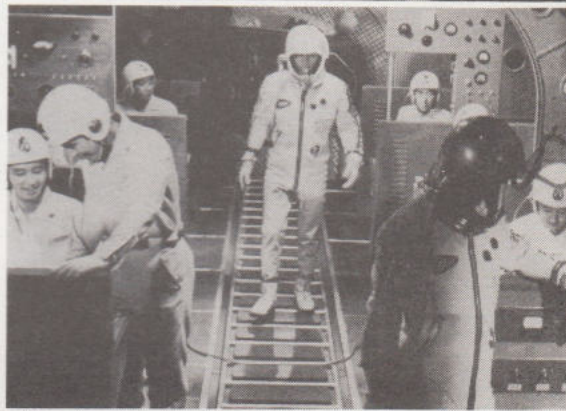
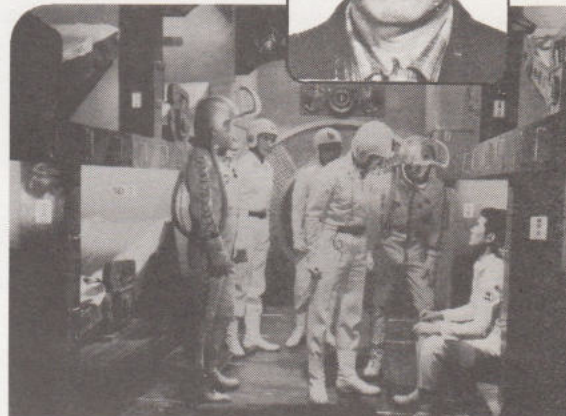


by
Hideyo
Tsuburaya
Tsuburaya

It is the year 1980. A heavenly body hurtling through space has been discovered by Earth orbiters and deep probes. The ion drive-propelled J-X Hawk, commanded by Chief Astronaut Sonoda and sent to analyze the phenomenon, approaches too close and is sucked into the fiery object, but not before relaying important data back to Earth. A second manned ship, the J-X Eagle, survives intact a similar reconnaissance mission, except for one of its crew, Cadet Astronaut Katsuo Kanai, almost lost on an EVA maneuver and suffering amnesic shock because of the orb's hypnotic fury. With the information obtained from both space observations, scientists determine the meteor, code-named Gorath and measuring 6,000 times the mass of Earth, is bound on a collision course with the planet. A U.N. appointed commission promptly announces two courses of action: Attempt either a shift of Earth from its orbit or destruction of Gorath in its flight. The former plan is selected, and soon a large scale operation at the South Pole is underway with construction of massive hydrogen gas jets required for the move. But as the meteor plummets earthward, its gravitational pull violently shreds celestial bodies in the vicinity of its path and incites calamities of nature around the Earth, seriously hampering the South Pole progress. Pressure for completion mounts when it is determined only 100 days remain until impact. Scientists, technologists, and operations director Dr. Tazawa are near the breaking point as zero hour approaches; the sight of the threatening red meteor in the daytime sky jolts Katsuo Kanai out of his delirium. At the crucial moment, with the gas jets at full throttle, the Earth slowly moves out of orbit, and Gorath flames on into space in search of other prey. The people of a once-doomed planet are rejoicing, praying—and united. Still, another monumental chore awaits: Moving planet Earth back to its original trajectory. Mankind has attained the impossible once; the second time is just as conceivable.

The plot of Toho International's GORATH (1962) smacks of a Japanese WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE (U.S., 1951), but beyond the basic premise of an imminent planetary collision, the two films bear little resemblance. Perhaps a more bonafide comparison can be made with Daiei's color production, WARNING FROM SPACE (1956), which attempted to portray a similar saga, but, suprisingly, visitors from space advise us of the method to save the Earth. GORATH's screenplay, however, is based upon one of several short stories penned by a former Japanese Air Force pilot, Jojiro Okami, whose writing laid the groundwork for three other Toho SF pictures, THE MYSTERIANS, BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE, and DOGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER. That stock science fiction plot elements exist in GORATH cannot be disputed, but unlike its U.S. counterparts from the Fifties and Sixties, the script links the distinguished scientist, heroic rocket crew, crusty military general, and romantic interest, amid their common goal of survival, in a most logical fashion, albeit one decidedly Japanese. This Japanese temperament is the type of thing which American audiences tend to misunderstand and generally disparage due to difficulties in translation and determined Western prejudices.

Ishiro Honda, director of GORATH, right. Below, bulky space craft interiors, a zero gravity simulator, and the J-X Hawk model, all designs of the times.



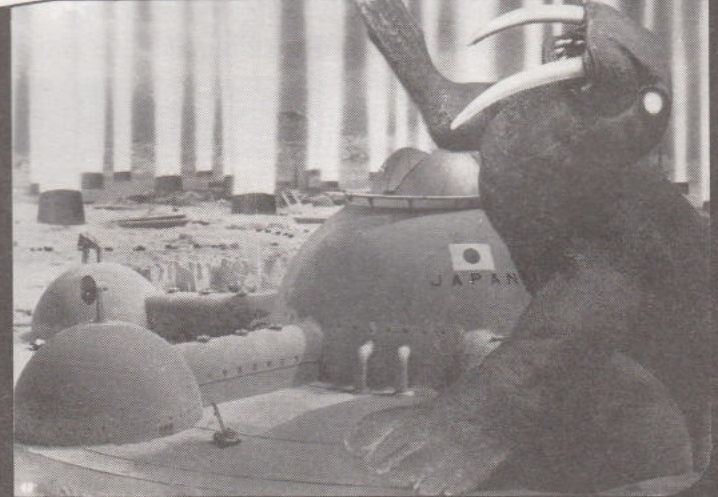
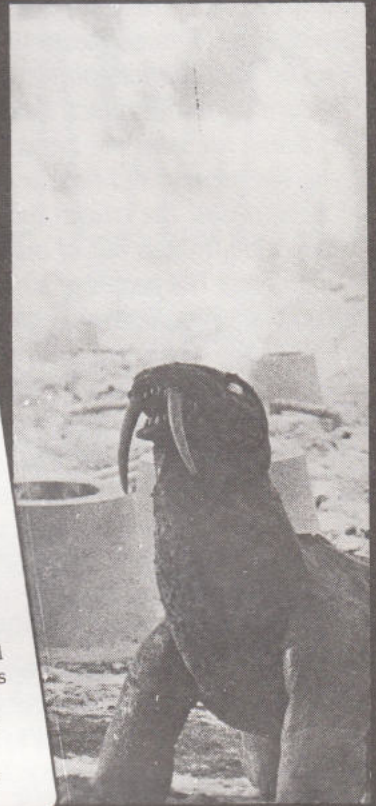
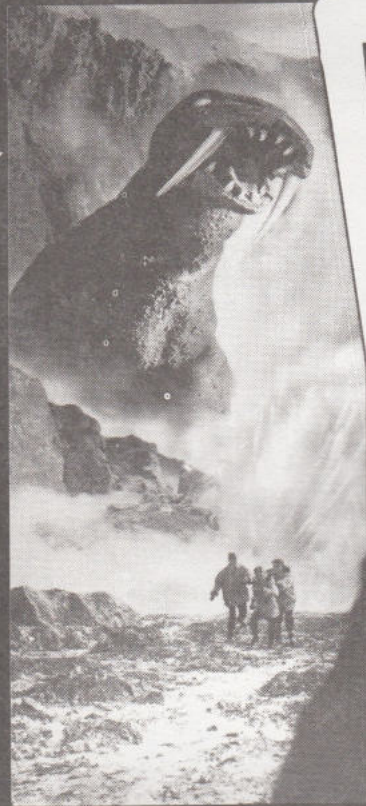


WHAT WALRUS?

Perhaps the most controversial aspect regarding GORATH in this country is the much discussed but rarely seen segment containing Toho's omnipresent giant monster, in this case an over-sized walrus, played by Haruo Nakajima, the same gentleman in the Godzilla suit for the monster's first appearance in 1954. Although it would certainly seem to be a colorful element to the overall film, the grizzly character is nowhere to be found within the U.S. release *Americanized* and distributed by the now defunct Brenco Pictures Corp. Light can be shed at last upon the mystery.

Magma was the walrus' title in the Orient, although it went unnamed in the picture. As the accompanying stills illustrate, the monster was clearly walrus-like and conformed to the standard towering proportions common among Toho giants. Its skin was smooth and gray in color, and the eyes glowed like powerful search beacons. More peculiar was the walrus' occasional upright stance allowing the beast the use of its mighty flippers to strike out at the man-made obstructions violating its Antarctic habitat. *Magma's* cry, however, described as an anemic high-pitched squeal, failed to do his massive proportions justice.

The appearance of the walrus in GORATH totaled approximately three minutes in duration, and roughly the sequence went as follows. Due to tremendous heat generated by the land-jets at the South Polar installation, some of the frozen masses there begin to melt away. This releases *Magma* from a long and icy imprisonment, presenting serious peril to the entire Antarctic operation. As two men enter one of the sub-stations for an inspection, a great vibration begins and the top of the structure collapses. This is when *Magma* makes his entrance, and if the viewer of the U.S. version is aware of this, he can discern a huge flipper coming through the roof. In a long shot the walrus removes his flipper from the



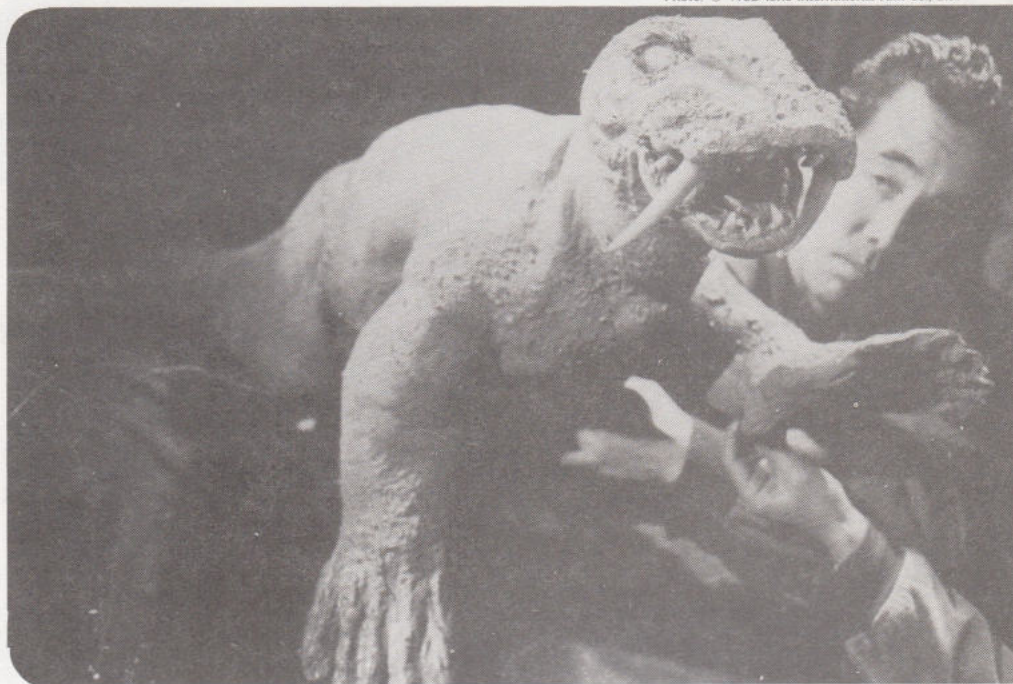
dome, and the film cuts to a matte shot of the awe-struck guards looking at Magma who is framed by the hole in the shattered roof. Another long shot has the monster rearing up and moving away from the wreckage. After several live-action inserts, Magma is next seen poking its head out from a valley filled with an icy mist. Actors Ryo Ikebe and Takashi Shimura, having been quickly summoned to the scene of the emergency by Ken Uehara, observe the destruction from a jet-powered hovercraft. Finding Magma at the bottom of the deep glacial ravine, the three men immediately take advantage of the situation and proceed to blast at the receding slopes with the aircraft's laser weapon. Searing rays create a massive avalanche which cascades onto the giant beast, covering it with tons of ice, snow, and rock. Thinking the walrus dead, the men land and search for the body, but Magma breaks free from the rubble, and in a matte shot the monster's head is shown limning the edge of the escarpment as the men scamper back to their ship in hasty retreat. Once in the air, the men again let loose the laser, this time scoring a direct hit which kills the behemoth. The plane then passes over the walrus' dead and bleeding carcass. This final scene is in the U.S. print and can be seen upon careful inspection.

The giant walrus episode certainly seemed harmless enough, following a tradition set by monstrous menaces in previous Toho films. The people at Brenco Pictures, who had affectionately nicknamed the beast *Wally the Walrus*, thought differently, a result of the creature's design, lack of surface texturing, and inaccurate animal movement.

Initially, it was the intention of Brenco to retain the sequence intact. Realizing the problem it was up against, however, Brenco attempted to doctor the footage in several ways with the hope of minimizing the inherent humor of the walrus. One method involved disguising Magma behind a fog created artificially in an optical printer. Also, the monster's harmless shrieks were removed to be substituted by Rodan's cackling. All in all, everything short of censure bars across the walrus' eyes was used to diminish the comical tone of the beast's appearance.

Several release prints were subsequently struck to test audience reaction with the walrus scenes retained, though in their retouched state. It was at this point that Brenco backed off on plans to keep the sequence as it was found to draw more chuckles than gasps. Last-minute editing removed all shots of Magma from the negative, and the script was revised to delete any reference to the monster in the dialogue. When the official release finally materialized, all that remained of the segment was a puzzling effort on the part of three scientists to shoot a laser into a dark ravine with nary a walrus in sight, almost.

Heritage Enterprises, presently distributor of the film to U.S. television stations, is aware of the plight of Magma, but indicated it was not prepared to tackle the job of re-establishing the creature's place in the film.



A mechanized miniature of the walrus was intercut with a man-in-suit creation. Note wires to the left.

THE SCORE

Kan Ishii's score for GORATH is low-key when compared to Akira Ifukube's compositions for Toho's sf films THE MYSTERIANS and BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE, both predecessors of GORATH. It is then puzzling why Toho chose GORATH, from all pictures in this period, to produce with the added dimension of their stereophonic *Perspecta-Sound* process. A score with greater emphasis and style could certainly have made better use of the technical benefits offered in a multi-channel presentation.

Owing to the subdued mixing of the music within the balance of the soundtrack, it is difficult for the listener to readily identify or isolate the motifs (musical themes that carry the bulk of the movie's action). Composer Ishii was fortunate, however, in that his orchestration did not allow these themes to be cluttered among counter-pointing harmonies involving special accompaniments. Rather, by utilizing a heavy brass section combined directly with a lower string section, the melodic arrangement sustained itself through its own effort. One of the few themes that does reach the listener as a result of this technique is shown in the artwork on this page.

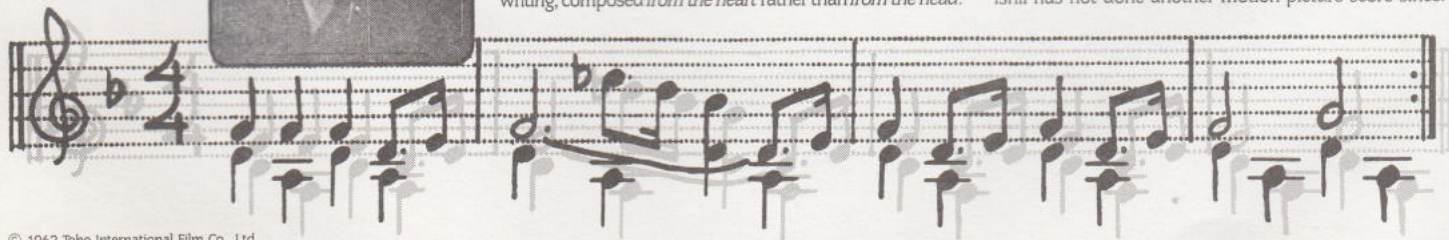
As with most other Japanese composers who have been heavily influenced by Western musical trends, the works of Kan Ishii are well-romanticized in the Old World tradition. It is not unusual, then, that romantic composers such as Ishii and Ifukube have criticized the modern avant-garde intellectual approach in preference to their own folk-based writing, composed *from the heart* rather than *from the head*.

The GORATH score shows evidence of this in the occasional use of the solo viola, a low-stringed violin normally used to create a sad and melancholy background. The absence of most percussive and woodwind instruments in the orchestra also serves to take the bite out of the musical edge, leaving a slightly mellowed flavor even during the more tense moments of the picture. In comparison with its peers, the work is a slightly ill-suited one, assertive without the pompous cacophony of Ifukube, melodramatic without the continental spices of Sato, and contemporary without the brashness of Miyauchi or Kikuchi. The problem with the GORATH score, then, is that it does not comply with the demands of the visual component. The low-key melancholic orchestrations are the last thing for which the film is remembered.

Born in Tokyo in 1921, Ishii received his musical exposure through his father, Baku Ishii, himself a master in contemporary choreography and likewise heavily influenced by Western trends. After receiving formal training under Tomojiro Ikeuchi at the Mushashino Academy of Music, Ishii left for Germany in 1952 to study composing and conducting under Karl Wolfe. Since his return to Japan in 1954, he has been active in both conducting and composing and is currently professor of music composition at the Toho Gakuen University. His many works, including *Song of a Withered Tree and the Sun*, *Birth of a Human Being*, *Sinfonia Ainu*, and *Kaori*, have drawn acclaim from his countrymen as well as from circles abroad. In 1962 Ishii's work was to culminate in a collaboration with the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre, giving the world his monumental *Marimo* ballet suite.

One can only speculate why Kan Ishii was chosen to write for GORATH. Perhaps it was a result of the international fervor generated by *Marimo* which led to his contract with Toho. What does bear weight in the final analysis is that Ishii has not done another motion picture score since.

Scenes of a giant walrus, left, were excised from U.S. release. Kan Ishii, composer of GORATH's score, right, and an example of his arrangements sustained by its own effort, below.



Ken Uehara

Takashi Shimura

Yumi Shirakawa

Akihiko Hirata

Ryo Ikebe

George Farness

Kumi Mizuno

Akira Kubo

Jun Takagi

Kenji Sahara

CAST & CREDITS

GORATH (alternates: **GORATH, THE MYSTERIOUS STAR** and **ASTRONAUT 1980**; Japanese title: **YOHSEI GORASU**). A production of Toho International Co., Ltd. *Producer*, Tomoyuki Tanaka. *Director*, Ishiro Honda. *Production manager*, Yasuaki Sakamoto. *Assistant directors*, Koji Kajita, Masashi Matsumoto, Katsumune Ishida, and Shoji Kuroda. *Art directors*, Takeo Kita and Teruaki Abe. *Director of photography*, Hajime Koizumi. *Sound recording*, Toshiya Ban. *Sound supervisor*, Hisashi Shimonaga. *Lighting*, Toshio Takashima. *Editor*, Reiko Kaneko. *Music*, Kan Ishii. *Still photographer*, Issei Tanaka. *Original story*, Jojiro Okami. *Screenplay*, Takeshi Kimura. Filmed in Tohoscope, Eastmancolor and Perspecta-Sound. *Developing*, Tokyo Laboratory, Ltd. 89 minutes (2413 meters; 7 reels). Released March 21, 1962.

Special visual effects Director, Eiji Tsuburaya. *Directors of photography*, Sadamasa Arikawa and Motoyoshi Tomioka. *Art director*, Akira Wantanabe. *Lighting*, Kuichiro Kishida. *Mattes*, Hiroshi Mukoyama. *Optical effects*, Taka Yuki and Yukio Manoda. *Unit manager*, Kan Narita.

American release Presented / released by Brenco Pictures Corp. *Distribution*, Allied Artists. *Executive producer*, Edward L. Alperson. *Production supervisor*, Stanley D. Meyer. *Production coordinator (for Toho)*, Sanezumi Fujimoto. *Sound recording*, Ryder Sound Services, Inc. *Editor*, Kenneth Wannberg. *Story*, John Meredyth Lucas. *Voices*, Paul Frees, William Eadleson, and Virginia Craig. *Opticals*, Pathe. Filmed in Eastmancolor and widescreen. 85 minutes (4½ reels). Released May, 1964. Re-released 1968. *Television distribution*, Heritage Enterprises, Inc.

Cast (names and titles in parentheses pertain to American release) *Dr. Tazawa*, Ryo Ikebe. *Tomoko Sonoda (Kyo)*, Yumi Shirakawa. *Takiko Sonoda (Ari)*, Kumi Mizuno. *Kensuke Sonoda*, Takashi Shimura. *Dr. Konno*, Ken Uehara. *Sumio Sonoda*, Fumio Sakamoto. *Gibson*, Ross Benette. *Huerman*,

George Farness. *Physician*, Sachio Sakai. *Newspaper reporter*, Shinpei Mitsui. *Taxi driver*, Iki Sawamura. *Drunkard*, Hideyo Amamoto. *Magma, the giant walrus*, Haruo Nakajima. *Spaceship Hayabusa (J-X Hawk) crew*: *Capt. Sonoda (Doctor)*, Jun Takagi; *Dr. Manabe (Doctor)*, Hiroo Kirino; *Pilot*, Koji Suzuki; *Radio operator*, Kazuo Imai; *Mathematician*, Wataru Ohmae; *Navigator*, Yasuo Araki; *Chief engineer*, Akira Yamada; *Fuel checkout*, Tomoo Suzuki. *Spaceship Otori (J-X Eagle) crew*: *Capt. Endo (Captain)*, Akihiko Hirata; *First Officer Saiki*, Kenji Sahara; *Tatsuo Kanae*, Akira Kubo; *Astronaut Wakabayashi*, Hiroshi Tachikawa; *Astronaut Ito*, Masanori Ijiet; *Pilot*, Koichi Sato; *Radio operator*, Yasuhiko Saijo; *Navigator*, Toshihiko Furuta; *Chief engineer*, Rinsaku Ogata; *Mathematician*, Tadashi Okabe; *Fuel checkout*, Kozo Nomura; *Engineer Shinda*, Ko Mishima. *The Parliament*: *Prime Minister Seki*, Takamaru Sasaki; *Kinami*, Minister of Justice, Eitaro Ozawa; *Tada*, Minister of Commerce, Seizaburo Kawazu; *Murata*, Secretary of the Space Agency, Akira Nishimura; *Murata's secretary*, Keiko Sata. *Also starring*: Yasushi Matsubara, Junichiro Mukai, Masayoshi Kawabe, Yoshiyuki Uemura, Koji Uno, Kenichi Maruyama, Yukihiro Gondo, Katsumi Tezuka, Takuya Yuki, Hiroshi Takaki, Ichiro Shioji, Koji Ishikawa, Jiryo Kumagai, Osran Yuri.

Though few actors from GORATH are present in the photo below, the still is of interest in that it illustrates a tradition at Toho of producing a "Memorial Photo" upon completion of filming a picture. The key to the still of the more important personnel is as follows: 1. Masashi Matsumoto, assistant director, holding clipboard 2. Yasuaki Sakamoto, production manager 3. Shoshin Ishida, assistant director 4. Koh Mishima ("Shinda") 5. Ross Benette ("Gibson") 6. Ryo Ikebe ("Dr. Tazawa") 7. Ishiro Honda, director 8. George Farness ("Huerman") 9. Toshio Takashima, lighting 10. Teruaki Abe, art director 11. Toshiya Ban, sound recording 12. Hajime Koizumi, director of photography 13. Shoji Kuroda, assistant director.



INTO ENGLISH

Americanization of a foreign import can amount to an experience nothing short of a nightmare, as many U.S. production supervisors will testify, and GORATH proved no exception.

The altered version of GORATH which eventually found its way into theatres on this side of the Pacific was tied up well over one year in post-production work here, specifically from late 1962 when it was purchased until completion in mid-1964. This rather lengthy period of time included a number of pre-release test screenings for both public and media-only audiences that served to determine the film's final cut. Regardless of these cautious and time-consuming maneuvers, the picture as released failed to attain its potential.

The English-language dubbing, directed by Ryder Sound Services, is from a John Lucas script, a name familiar to STAR TREK followers. Though the dubbed dialogue is reasonably credible and an adequate degree of lip-sync is maintained, sometimes quite precariously due to the de-emphasized lip movement common to Japanese acting, it becomes apparent that the new voices for the Japanese actors sound alike: Only four Americans were used to breathe life into the muted Japanese lips. There also appears to have been little conscious effort to have the dubbers use Oriental accents. Add a defect in the Lucas script which rarely bestows names upon any of the screen characters, and the sum is a series of people with a dismal lack of definition.

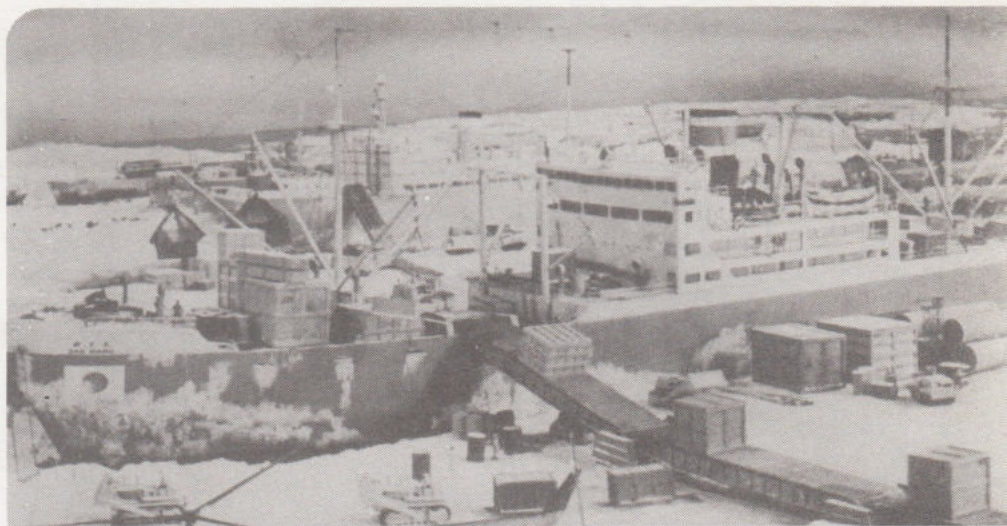
Surprisingly, all the non-Japanese actors speak English in the original film and are subtitled whenever they say their lines. For some reason, the voices were dubbed for the U.S. version.

Americanization meant a lot more than language transplanting. The revised U.S. script called for considerable editing, incorporating several scene deletions and additions. Besides the excised "giant walrus" sequence already discussed, much other footage was judged unsuitable for American audiences and thus was omitted. In a few instances, celluloid surgery was unavoidable. Case in point: A sequence wherein the astronaut cadets of the *J-X Hawk* bid adieu to their departing comrades was originally followed by a military song, given vocal credence by the now airborne cadets. The lyrics gave testimony to the young astronauts' patriotic allegiance to their homeland and undying courage in the face of various interplanetary calamities. There can be little doubt why this interlude was removed. Also omitted with little regard for the personnel who sweated over the filming was the entire bulk of the Japanese production credits and cast listing, replaced by a simple five line title card.

The Japanese film opens with its credits and fairly nice theme music, both missing in the U.S. print. The story begins as two women are driving along a highway and stop just outside a tunnel. Both are suddenly startled, not by a thunderstorm as in Brenco's release, but by the nearby blast-off of the *J-X Hawk* spaceship. Just before the *Hawk* is destroyed in the first reel, the crew all let out a "Banzai!" which is not in the English print.

Most of the scenes specifically shot for American viewing can be discovered during the first reel where introductory narration, illustrated by several dissolves through star

Right: The detailed miniature work which makes believable the incredible events occurring in Toho's 1962 sf picture, GORATH. U.S. distributor Brenco Pictures Corp., feeling the effects subpar, optically superimposed a layer of drifting fog over much of effects director Tsuburaya's footage.



'Japanese sci fi film with exploitation possibilities for general market.'

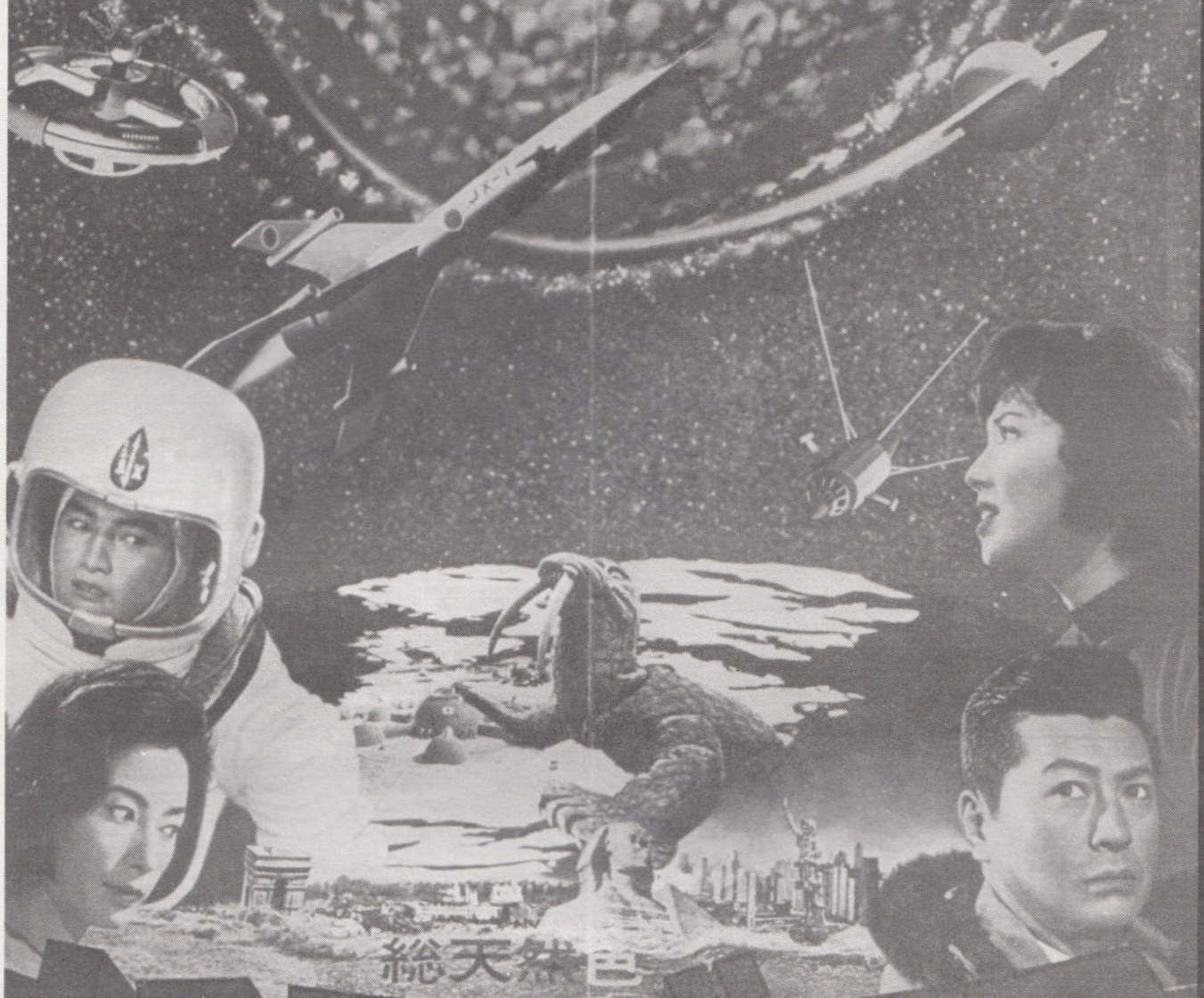
Exploitation potential of this Japanese-made sci fi is considerable, pegged on pic's subject of a giant celestial body hurtling toward Earth and certain destruction of our own planet. Japanese producers in the past have displayed great ingenuity along this line of scientific speculation, and GORATH, name of the on-rushing flaming object, lends certain credence. Special effects are particularly interesting, but the story itself is possibly too scientific for popular reception and onlooker is left in constant state of wonderment except for overall premise.

Its short length makes it a handy entry in most theatres, but there is need of sharp editing, particularly in its opening, which for seven minutes concentrates on shots of the various constellations and a lecture, no less, on astronomy and movement of the heavens.

Names of Japanese thespians are unknown in this country, but turn in very creditable performances, particularly Ryo Ikebe, the scientist most responsible for saving the Earth. Particular credit goes to Eiji Tsuburaya for his spectacular special effects, and Inoshiro Honda's direction catches the spirit of the Takeshi Kimura screenplay. Color photography by Hajime Koizumi is another strong asset, as is Kan Ishii's mood music.

Reprinted from Variety, May 20, 1964.

怪星激突の危機迫る / 地球の軌道脱出なるが



総天然色

GORATH

池部良 佐原健二 白川昭彦 平田昭彦 佐原健二 ロス・ベネツト ジョージ・フラット 二瓶正典 太刀川寛 志村喬 田崎潤 小沢栄太郎 佐々木孝丸 西村寿一 河津清三郎 上原謙

監修 本多猪四郎
 監督 内谷友二
 製作 中友幸

原案 小丘美枝
 脚本 北条誠
 音楽 高岩繁
 美術 泉村文一
 撮影 小島正徳
 録音 利根川信
 編集 高岩繁
 効果 高岩繁
 現像 高岩繁
 配給 高岩繁



charts, foretells of the impending cosmic disasters. Though not in the Japanese version, the material does succeed as part of the whole.

However, an unforgivable travesty was committed on a number of special effects scenes appearing in the destruction episode at the movie's climax. Brenco had little respect for the miniature work so it attempted to disguise the "blemishes" *ex post facto*. Through dint of the all-purpose optical printer, a dense layer of drifting fog was superimposed over the footage, and the light intensity was diminished. The resulting effect renders a good portion of the highly detailed miniatures as vague set pieces.

Brenco made several additional modifications to GORATH which are worth mentioning. The meteor does not make any noise as it travels through space in Toho's original, but for the U.S. market a shrill noise was added. Also, the destruction of the moon at the beginning of Gorath's advance on Earth originally occurred at the conclusion of the film, while Brenco scheduled the destruction just prior to Earth's escape from the collision with the planetary body.

Although GORATH's Japanese version featured a process called *Perspecta-Sound* which utilized a pseudo-stereo technique, the U.S. version was issued with a monaural track, in spite of the claim to one in stereo contained in some advertising material. Writers in Brenco's publicity department were either guilty of stretching the truth or confused by the concept of stereo, which in that period was still somewhat in its infancy. Further misrepresentation may be noted on advertising for an earlier Brenco release, Toho's THE HUMAN VAPOR.

The persons behind the tampering were the late Edward L. Alpers, Sr. (producer of INVADERS FROM MARS) and Stanley D. Meyer, directors of Brenco Pictures Corporation of Los Angeles. Fortunately, these gentlemen took sufficient interest in the Toho product to purchase three of their films for release in America, the third project being THE LAST

Special visual effects director, the late Eiji Tsuburaya, right. Eiji, above, at work, at play, and in what appears to be a moment of contemplation for GORATH's harried effects man.

WAR, forming their own small film company in the process. The odds are against success for newly-formed firms in the film industry, and such was Brenco's fate. It closed its doors in 1969.

Reportedly, most of the company's distribution deals were directed in a haphazard manner. A contract was drawn up with one south of the border picture outlet, but even that unceremoniously bit the dust. The result was that GORATH, along with the remainder of the Brenco distributed films, was seen at only a scant few theatrical bookings in the southern and western United States, making the titles generally unknown elsewhere. A possible explanation for the fumbling can be traced back to a rift that was developing between the Alpers-Meyer partnership which left corporate control in a sorely misguided state. Even a re-release of GORATH in 1968, paired with THE HUMAN VAPOR, failed to stir up enough interest to bring the company back to its feet.

Finally, the firm was dismantled after the death of Alpers on July 3, 1969, with Meyer taking all of the Brenco film properties with him. Needless to say, a profit was never turned on Brenco's original investment, leaving former employees with bitter memories of the entire fiasco.

After a few years, GORATH and other Brenco releases were picked up by Heritage Enterprises for distribution to tele-

vision in the U.S. With the conversion from Toho's anamorphic format to the comparably miniscule television tube, much of GORATH's original scope is lost, but apparently more viewers are seeing the motion picture now on TV than through the earlier theatrical releases, which may be the only encouraging news ever offered for this film in America.

The author wishes to extend his gratitude to the following for their generous assistance and cooperation:

Osamu Tanaka, Maiji Kimura, and S. Obata of Toho International Film Co., Ltd.; Andrew F. Besch and David A. Hilton of Heritage Enterprises, Inc.; Kenneth Wannberg of Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation; John Meredith Lucas of Paulist Productions; Alberto Giles of Crown-International Pictures; Vernon Alves of Consolidated Film Industries; Pamela Wintle of The American Film Institute; Steven Rasper of The Cinema Attic. Also, Nettie Cohen, Gregory Feret, Ed Godziszewski, Michael Hogan, Hajime Ishida, Akihiro Kitajima, Mrs. Stanley D. Meyer, Thomas Murdock, Hideki Murata, Kanji Ohtsuka, Toshiyuki Shigeta, and Alex Wald.

Below are the publications used in researching the film: Ackerman, Forrest J., ed. *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. No. 30, September, 1964. Warren Publishing Co. Ackerman, Forrest J., ed. *Spacemen*. Vol. 2, No. 2, January, 1963. Warren Publishing Co.

Ishida, Hajime, ed. *Japanese Monster Films*. No. 1. Lee, Walt, ed. *Reference Guide to Fantastic Films*. Vol. 2. 1973. Chelsea-Lee Books. Schlockoff, Alain, ed. *L'Ecran Fantastique*. Vol. 2, No. 1. December, 1970. Svensson, Arne, ed. *Screen Series Japan*. 1971. A. S. Barnes and Co.

Tsuburaya, Hajime. *The Films of Eiji Tsuburaya*. 1974. Shogakukan, Inc. ■

TATSUNOKO P



TELEVISION ANIMATION

This article continues the Tatsunoko filmography initiated last issue. If the reader remembers, six superhero/robot programs were synopsized, making evident the programming Tatsunoko created to appease the voracious Japanese appetite for that portion of the genre. The series presented herein are as varied as the last group was not—and are most representative of Tatsunoko's catalog.

PAUL'S MIRACULOUS ADVENTURE

When his friend Nina is kidnapped by Beltoran, the demonic ruler of another world, Paul undertakes a risky expedition to rescue his playmate. The young boy is aided by Pakkun, a plush doll with magic powers. Together they plunge into Beltoran's dimension of living toys where both are beset by difficulties as well as a variety of delightful wonders. (50 thirty minute episodes; October 3, 1976-September 11, 1977)

THE GENIE FAMILY

Three Arabian genies reside in an old jar. A sneeze will bring forth Hasshoo; a yawn summons Ya-ahn; a hiccup calls out Eppah. Once out of their domicile, they must grant wishes to whomever released them, until an inadvertent sneeze, yawn, or hiccup sends them back. Discovery of the jar in a modern residential neighborhood proves to be a mixed blessing to the new owner. Hasshoo's clumsy attempts to obey his master's wishes result in disaster, and mischievous Ya-ahn twists the wishes in ways her master would never have dreamed. (104 fifteen minute episodes; October 5, 1969-September 27, 1970). HAKUSHAN, the Japanese title of the series, and the father genie's original name, is supposed to be the phonetic spelling of a sneeze.

HYPPO AND THOMAS

Thomas, a cunning bird, sponges off a good-natured hippopotamus named Hyppo. Though Thomas shares a symbiotic relationship with Hyppo, living in the beast's mouth, he always tries to out-smart and lord it over his host. Their friendship and cooperation endures despite the frequent quarrels. (300 three minute episodes; January 1, 1971-September 30, 1972)

TAMAGON THE COUNSELOR

Tamagon, a lovable monster, acts as advisor to those in trouble, asking only eggs in payment; he goes to work after devouring his fee. Despite his schemes, Tamagon's service usually ends in total failure whereupon he winds up being chased by his irate clients. (195 three minute episodes; October 5, 1972-September 28, 1973)

TEMPLE THE BALLOONIST

A little girl named Temple, who is deeply fond of music, happens to board a balloon one day. She is excited by her aerial journey until the lighter-than-air craft begins drifting away from her parents and home. Eventually, Temple encounters a drum-

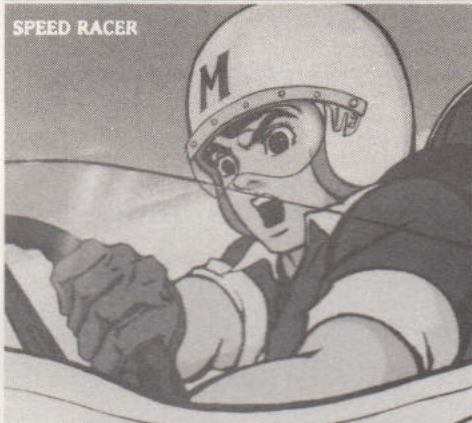


HUTCH THE HONEYBEE

DEMETAN CROAKER



SPEED RACER



BELFY AND LILLIBIT



mer boy and his animal friends, musicians all, who play their music to keep up the girl's spirits. The entourage then sets out with Temple to help her find her way home. (26 thirty minute episodes; October 1, 1977-March 25, 1978)

THE ADVENTURES OF HUTCH THE HONEYBEE

Hutch, a young honeybee, becomes a solitary wanderer after his hive home is destroyed by invading wasps. He ventures into the world to search for his mother whom he has never seen. During his travels, he experiences much bitterness and sorrow, yet gradually he also learns of love, friendship, courage, and other virtues which make life worthwhile. (First series: 91 thirty minute episodes; April 7, 1970-December 28, 1971/Second series: 26 thirty minute episodes; April 5, 1974-September 27, 1974). Original title: HUTCH (or HACHI) THE HONEYBEE.

JUDO BOY

When a youth, endowed with impressive athletic ability, is left alone upon his father's sudden death, he faces many hardships in his quest to find a new life for himself. Eventually, the boy is successful thanks to a determination and willingness to work hard. (26 thirty minute episodes; April 2, 1969-September 24, 1969)

BELFY AND LILLIBIT

In a Lilliputian society hidden within a forest lives Belfy, a witty, rompsish girl who lost her parents in infancy. She resides with an uncle, the only doctor in the woods, whose habit of drunkenness bothers the little sprite, so Belfy doesn't mince words in trying to keep the man under control. Belfy has a friend in Lillibit, a boy with a large streak of curiosity, and the two share adventures with some of the animals of the forest. The tales of the miniature community are lessons in human relationships and a respect for nature. (26 thirty minute episodes; January 7, 1980-June 30, 1980)

THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

Pinocchio, the wooden marionette of Collodi's classic, is given new life by the Blue Fairy, yet as a living toy he is faced with alienation and abuse rather than acceptance by humans. Despite his frustrating intrigues, Pinocchio is constantly encouraged by the love of the Blue Fairy and the faith of old Gepetto, the wood-carver who made him, as he persists in his efforts of becoming a human boy. (52 thirty minute episodes; January 4, 1972-December 26, 1972). Original title: MOCK, THE OAK PUPPET. Two episodes from the series were released theatrically in Japan by Toho: KASHINOKI MOKKU, scripted by Fuyumi Toriumi, in March 21, 1975, and KASHINOKI MOKKU—BOKU WA NAKANAI, scripted by Kiyoshi Sakai, in July 22, 1972. Both 25 minute shorts were directed by Ippei Mori and produced by Kenji Yoshida.

DEMETAN CROAKER, THE FROG BOY

Though Demetan's family is so poor it is unable to send him to school in his woodland pond community,

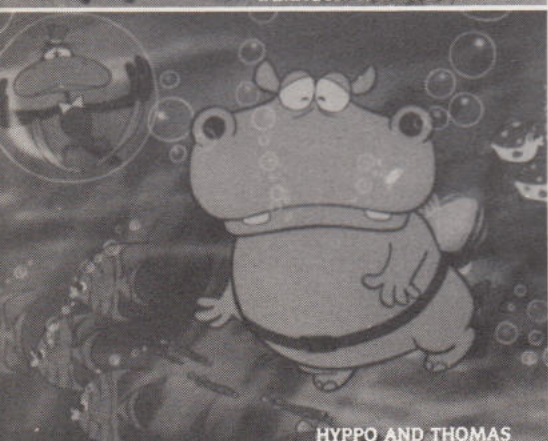
PRODUCTIONS

by Fred Patten

N FROM THE SEAHORSE



TAMAGON THE COUNSELOR



HYPO AND THOMAS



TEMPLE THE BALLOONIST



PINOCCHIO

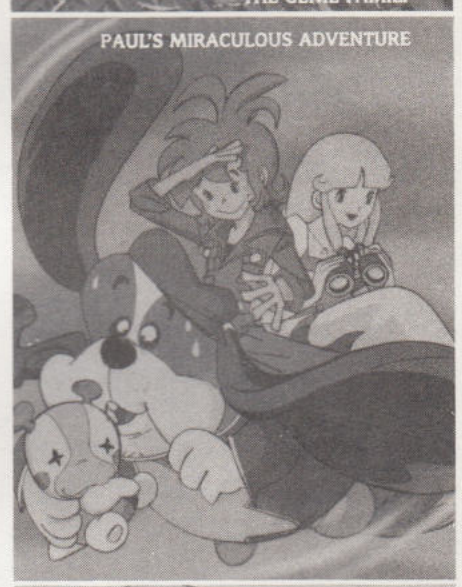
he has a friend in Ranatan, the daughter of the pond's rich ruler, a man incensed by this relationship which he seeks to break up. Nevertheless, the young frogs continue to love with courage and confidence, and also guide the heartless leopard frog to an understanding of justice and generosity. Gradually, the community responds to the couple's sincerity and joins them in a goal for a brighter future. (39 thirty minute episodes; January 2, 1973-September 25, 1973)

SPEED RACER

Only in his teens, Speed Racer drives a very special automobile, the *Mach 5*, in races throughout the world. Designed by his father, a retired professional racer, the car is equipped with features which enable Speed to drive over difficult terrain and through all manner of obstacles. The youth uses the devices frequently since he is often in competition with unscrupulous drivers backed by international criminals. Speed and his pit crew, girlfriend Trixie, kid brother Spridle, and Spridle's pet chimp Chim-chim, brave fast-paced escapades in exotic settings around the globe, proving that quick wits and fair play are always sure winners. (52 thirty minute episodes; April 2, 1967-March 31, 1968). Original title: *MACH, GO! GO! GO!* The words *GO! GO! GO!* are used both in the American sense of cheering on a favorite and in the Japanese sense of the word *five*, hence Speed's *Mach Five* racer.



THE GENIE FAMILY



PAUL'S MIRACULOUS ADVENTURE

Tatsunoko Productions is in a unique situation in that the studio apparently owns three time slots on Japanese TV. When a series is concluded a new one begins in the same time slot the next week to keep it filled. Tatsunoko's *GATCHAMAN II* was followed immediately by *GATCHAMAN-F* which was directly followed by *MUTEKING* (Sunday, 6:00-6:30 p.m.). *GORDIAN* was succeeded by *GOLDLIGHTAN* (Thursday; this changed from an original time slot of 7:30-8:00 a.m. to 6:30-7:00 p.m.). The *Time Bokan* shows have followed one another consecutively (Saturday, 6:30-7:00 p.m.).

The original *TIME BOKAN* program was such a success that when Tatsunoko felt the concept had run its course, a new show was created using lookalike characters with new names, costumes, and a slightly different time travel gimmick. Merchandising opportunities were probably also a consideration.

An explanation of the *Time Bokan* name may be found in the translation of the Japanese word *bokan*, which is a sound effect for an explosion, like "wham" or "boom!" *Time Bokan* could therefore be considered a humorous play on *Time Bomb*, especially since all entries involve travelling through time. The action centers on two groups which travel to different periods of the past, the teenage boy and girl heroes and the sexy villainess and her two klutzy stooges. What they do in the past depends upon the premise of the programs: observe the past, try to change the past, attempt to steal treasures from the past, and so on.

The shows in the series so far are: *TIME BOKAN* (December 4, 1975-December 25, 1976), *YATTAMAN* (January 1, 1977-January 27, 1979), *ZENDAMAN* (February 3, 1979-January 26, 1980), *OTASUKEMAN* (February 2, 1980-January 31, 1981), *YATODETAMAN* (February 7, 1981-February 6, 1982), *IPPATSUMAN* (February 13, 1982-?). Next in the series will be *ITADAKIMAN*. ■



JUDO BOY

the toho legacy

IN THE FINAL CHAPTER OF MYTH, MONSTERS, AND MYOPIA THE TOHO FANTASY IMAGE FADES TO BLAH.

Under scrutiny in this final installment of *JFFJ*'s multi-section, chronological film history of Toho International is the period from 1970 through 1979. The preservation of the studio as leader of the genre is at stake.

Allocating most of its resources to fantasy, sf, and horror in the first half of the Seventies, Toho earmarked a large percentage of those resources for giant monster fare, the studio issuing a new title each of the decade's first six years, five of which premiered consecutive releases starring Godzilla. The reptile's most-favored status soured, and the veteran was forced to retire in 1975, in spite of mutterings from studio executives to the contrary. It was reassuring to note Ishiro Honda's return in the final Godzilla color feature some 21 years after the director's *GOJIRA* first attacked the screen in black and white.

Not all of Toho's money was invested in monster stock. The studio resurrected the European myth of vampire and werewolf with some artistic and financial

success. There was also a nod toward the *disaster* category of movies and even a genuflection to *STAR WARS*, but Toho's space opera failed dismally to emulate the impact of its progenitor while the studio's first epic *disaster* release went on to become an unmitigated winner aesthetically surpassing the later American works.

Genre movie activity at Toho waned as the decade elapsed. Escalating production budgets due to inflated special effects prices and increased studio time were taking their toll. And Toho, never a firm to diverge far from its methodical approach to filmmaking, failed to realize that audiences were weary of the repetitive stories and atrophied effects techniques. As a result, their pictures were becoming too expensive to produce for a selected foreign and domestic market which was diminishing. The result: The final decade of Toho's domination of the Japanese fantasy, sf, and horror film scene appeared to be at hand.

Article by Greg Shoemaker



Shin Kishida as *The Man Who Resembles A Shadow* in scenes taken from the finale of *THE BLOOD-THIRSTY EYES* (1971), retitled *LAKE OF DRACULA* for export and the second of three Michio Yamamoto directed vampire films. The grisly disintegration of Toho's villain was snipped from the picture when sold to UPA for a U.S. TV release. The Japanese folkloric basis for the vampire's makeup belies the Western approach of the films.

the Thriller

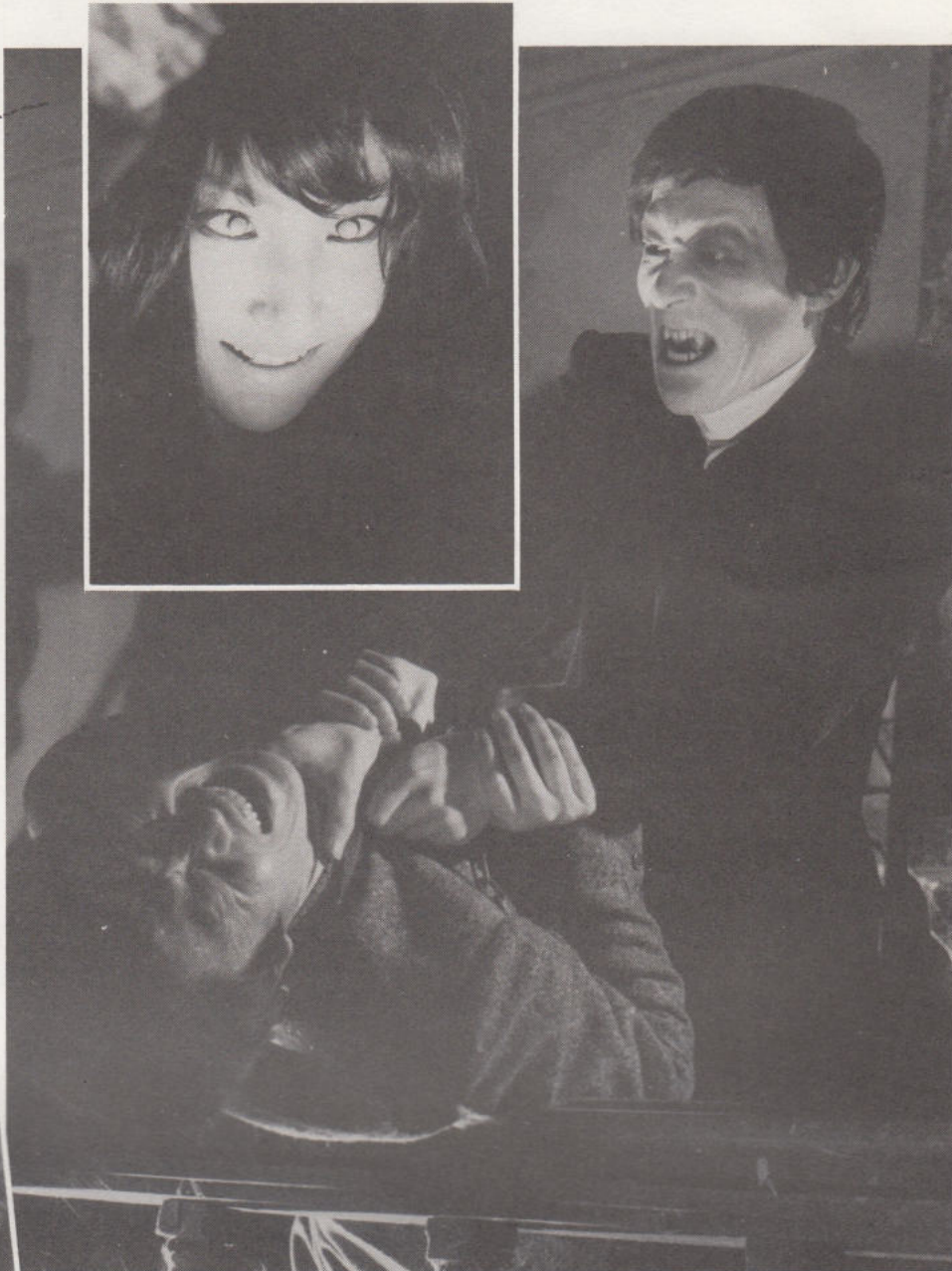
It was in 1970 when the Japanese horror film surfaced in modern dress through the eyes of director Michio Yamamoto. His brand of suspense was unfortunately ingrained on only four pictures, the first of which, *TERROR IN THE STREETS*, was a tense and briskly-paced thriller sprinkled with a number of psychological shocks.

TERROR's screenplay spotlights a woman who finds herself totally disoriented when everyone she knows—relatives, boyfriend, friends—claims never to have seen her before. The resolution reveals the deception as a plan to drive the woman insane.

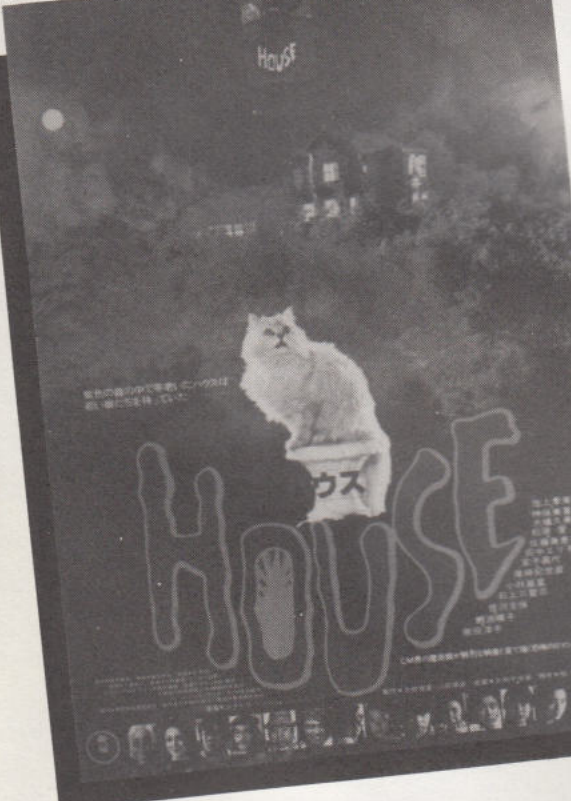
The success of his first movie enabled Yamamoto to make *THE BLOODTHIRSTY DOLL* (1970), which was succeeded by *THE BLOODTHIRSTY EYES* (1971) and *THE BLOODTHIRSTY ROSE* (1974), a trio of vampire movies. The few American reviewers of these horror entries were quick to praise the director's economic approach to storytelling, "the master's economy," said Howard Thompson of the *New York Times* in a comparison he made to the late Alfred Hitchcock.

THE BLOODTHIRSTY DOLL, listed in English promotional material from Toho as *THE VAMPIRE DOLL*, involves a missing male, his dead lover, and the man's sister who decides to visit the dead woman's home. The meeting commences an unleashing of strange and startling events when the living encounter the undead.

Reviewer Thompson made what could be considered a continuance of his earlier Yamamoto/Hitchcock analogy in his review for *VAMPIRE DOLL*: "(Yamamoto) tells his grisly



Art. © 1977 Toho International Co., Ltd.



Poster art, above, for *HOUSE*, an offbeat horror entry in which the furnishings of the mansion chow down on its guests. Shin Kishida, portraying a vampire, above right, attacks Choei Takahashi who is attempting a rescue of a woman in the clutches of the monster, from *LAKE OF DRACULA*. Yukiko Kobayashi, inset, as a vampiress with a predilection for doll collecting in *THE VAMPIRE DOLL*. Right, in *HORROR OF THE WOLF* the lead character, pictured far right, is a wolf capable of changing into human form.

story with a cool, taciturn detachment. Don't be fooled by what seems a conventional staging. There is plenty lurking around the bend, some of it hair-raising."

The struggle between illusion and reality, a recurring theme in the Japanese director's repertoire, is examined in the best horror films. According to David Bartholomew in *Cinefantastique*, THE BLOODTHIRSTY EYES, also known as LAKE OF DRACULA and released in 1980 to American television by UPA, deals earnestly with this interplay in which a young girl, saved by an old man's intervention from an attack by a vampire, finds the event treated as a dream by her friends. Some 18 years later, Akiko, still insisting the near-fatal meeting occurred, is obsessed by a dreadful golden eye which haunts even her paintings. Eventually the experience is proven real, the woman, ironically, wishing it indeed were all a dream. The denouement has Akiko's lover, a doctor, using hypnosis to expose the vampiric threat, itself defined by the physician as a "hypnotic phenomenon."

In this review of LAKE OF DRACULA, in *JFF*, Horacio Higuchi credits Yamamoto with investing the story of the vampire with new life and focus, a statement easily applied as well to the other pictures in the trilogy. LAKE's scenario, for example, deliberately ignores the good/evil dichotomy, and sexual overtones are confusing (the vampire indifferently bites either sex). The imaginative use of mythic elements is evident in the reference to the property of non-reflection, from the sequence in which the viewer witnesses Akiko, sequestered in a closet for protection, being fooled by a blank mirror into leaving the sanctuary, only to be pounced upon by the waiting vampire.

The vampire character, appearing in the second and third film of the series, is portrayed in pasty-white makeup, conjuring up a Japanese folkloric origin, and wearing gold-color contact lenses, the vampiress of THE BLOODTHIRSTY DOLL and THE BLOODTHIRSTY ROSE his female counterpart in appearance. Apart from the makeup, the Yamamoto films are virtually not Japanese at all, offering instead a markedly Western influence in their approach, characters, and the characters' personal relationships.

Actor Shin Kishida essays the vampire role, but the name *Dracula* is used only for the movies' international promotion. The embodiment of evil that Kishida portrays is called *Kage no Yona Otoko*, or *The Man Who Resembles A Shadow*, an obscure reference to the elusiveness of the beast.

Elusiveness applies as well to the bloodsucker's survival in motion pictures, as was proven by Universal and Hammer. Thus the *Shadow Man* is offered a reprieve from an assumed demise in THE BLOODTHIRSTY EYES to insinuate his pestilence three years later in THE BLOODTHIRSTY ROSE, titled *EVIL OF DRACULA* for sales overseas. Here, a vampire and vampiress open a girls' school to partake of the students as a source of nourishment. The fate of the antagonists is determined by a psychology professor employed at the school. He stabs a red-hot poker through their hearts, laying to rest once and for all Toho's vampires and Michio Yamamoto's fantasy career.

That same year, 1974, saw the release of another convention of the horror cinema, the werewolf, in *HORROR (MARK) OF THE WOLF*. The film, indebted it would seem to American-International's motion pictures from the Fifties which were set among a society of teenagers, featured a shape-shifter who was wolf first, human second. Pity the paranoid Larry Talbot who thought his lupine form was the aberration, when all along it might have been the other way around!

In Toho's movie, a hood-like, lone-wolf disciplinary case befriends a young female instructor at his school. Threatened by violent factions at this institution, both develop a strange relationship, the teacher becoming aware of the youth's *were-ness* when he comes to her aid during a series of attacks by local goons. The boy mauls to death the gang leaders and eventually is forced to run with a pack of real wolves.

Three years later in 1977 *HOUSE* was released, a variation on Agatha Christie's novel *And Then There Were None* by Nobuhiko Ohbayashi. For it he donned the hats of producer and director of both the live-action and the visual effects. Formerly a director of television commercials, Ohbayashi, in his first feature assignment, led seven young women on

a summer holiday to a mansion where the guests disappear one by one via living, devouring, home furnishings.

Many points of the production are striking: an actress with a slow, exaggerated stride, her hair and scarf blown about by a breeze which affects no one near her; mass-produced food names used as nicknames for several of the victims; the coordination of color between the costumes of the players and the definitely unnatural pastel-tinted environment. In viewing those moments and others, *Bail*, in *Variety* offers the possibility that *HOUSE* might be Ohbayashi's indictment of the excesses of Japanese commercialization. The director's tack is to draw attention to his cleverness, but is he kidding? Is the dialogue banal purposely like so much ad copy? Is the intrusive music performed by the pop rock group Godiego calculated or accidental? Ohbayashi's debut is a puzzling one, to which *Bail*, adds: "Ohbayashi is either a brilliant conscious satirist or a brilliant unconscious satirist!"

Discussion of Toho's horror, and fantasy would not be complete without inclusion of the murder mystery thriller, a type of film, introduced in 1976, which received an enthusiastic response from the Japanese movie-going public. The movies generally featured murders in the present occurring in settings of suggested supernatural evil linked with the past, with the real murderer and a proper explanation for the bizarre proceedings disclosed in the final act. Several studios toyed with the formula after Toho's initial entry turned into gold at the box office, but Toho by far produced the largest number of films. By 1980, however, the love affair with these titillating works would turn cold.

The film behind all the furor was *THE INUGAMI'S*, director Kon Ichikawa's stylish retelling of strange murders based on the best-selling novel by the famous Japanese mystery author Seishi Yokomizo, whose many works were selected to follow the successful lead of *THE INUGAMI'S*. Intent to continue this propitious arrangement, director Ichikawa was teamed with the writings of Yokomizo for four additional productions: *ISLAND OF TERROR* and *DEVIL'S NURSERY SONG*, both from 1977, *QUEEN BEE* in 1978, and *HOUSE OF HANGING* in 1979. Yokomizo's stories narrated the exploits of a dandruff-ridden detective garbed in gear from Japan's past, an intended ruffled appearance of the eccentric, not unlike Peter Falk's fabulous *Columbo* character.

Director Susumu Kuroda's *MURDER IN THE DOLL HOUSE*, released in 1979, approximates the popular Ichikawa/Yokomizo efforts in style and content. A 300-year vendetta acts as a background to a tale in which a doll, possibly motivated by a curse, may be the actual murderer.

Not unlike the preceding mystery titles, a masquerade plays an important role in Toho's 1979 film *HAUNTED GOLD* in which criminals, to keep intruders from locating their buried gold, create the deception that the swamp in which the booty is stashed is haunted by a female ghost. It requires samurai detective Itami Henzo, played by Katsu Shintaro of *Zatoichi* fame, to foil the gambit.

The invasion by an alien life form of the body of an industrial spy, right, played by Kenji Sahara in *YOG—MONSTER FROM SPACE*, forces him to set a fire in a cave to kill off the bats inhabiting it, for their high pitched squeal strangely affects the giant monsters also controlled by the space life. Effect achieved by cel animation.

monster menace

A menace is a pain in the butt, a nuisance, and it can be a threat to the survival of its own kind. The latter precisely describes most of the decade's creature features, especially the first, *SPACE AMOEBAS*, which inaugurated the Seventies and was issued amid an atmosphere of peace, love, and rock 'n' roll, an era admonishing social responsibility and of films which reflected this attitude. *YOG—MONSTER FROM SPACE*, as the film was issued in the U.S., was an anachronism to a time 25 years gone in its tale of space spores attached to a space ship returning to Earth and the giant monsters generated from the infestation of a turtle, a crab, and a squid by the hitchhikers.

An industrial spy, also inhabited by the spores, acts in concert with the giants/aliens to make easy their access to world domination. After wiping out some island's beach front property, terrorizing the locals, and engaging in the ritualistic monster versus monster combat, the creatures, and thus the space threat, meet their end when a volcano finishes off the last of the beasts as well as the spy, who realizes the damage his schizophrenia has caused and has jumped into the fiery bowels of Earth.

YOG's visual effects were under the command of Sadamasa Arikawa, debuting as replacement for the late Eiji Tsuburaya. His past credited effects assignments included co-director with Eiji on such productions as *SON OF GODZILLA*, *DESTROY ALL MONSTERS*, and *GODZILLA'S REVENGE*. Following *YOG*, Arikawa departed to freelance (e.g., the 1979 Taiwanese production, *THE PHOENIX*, for Eastern Media; see *JFF* # 12). The unevenness of the visuals in *YOG* may have hastened his leaving.

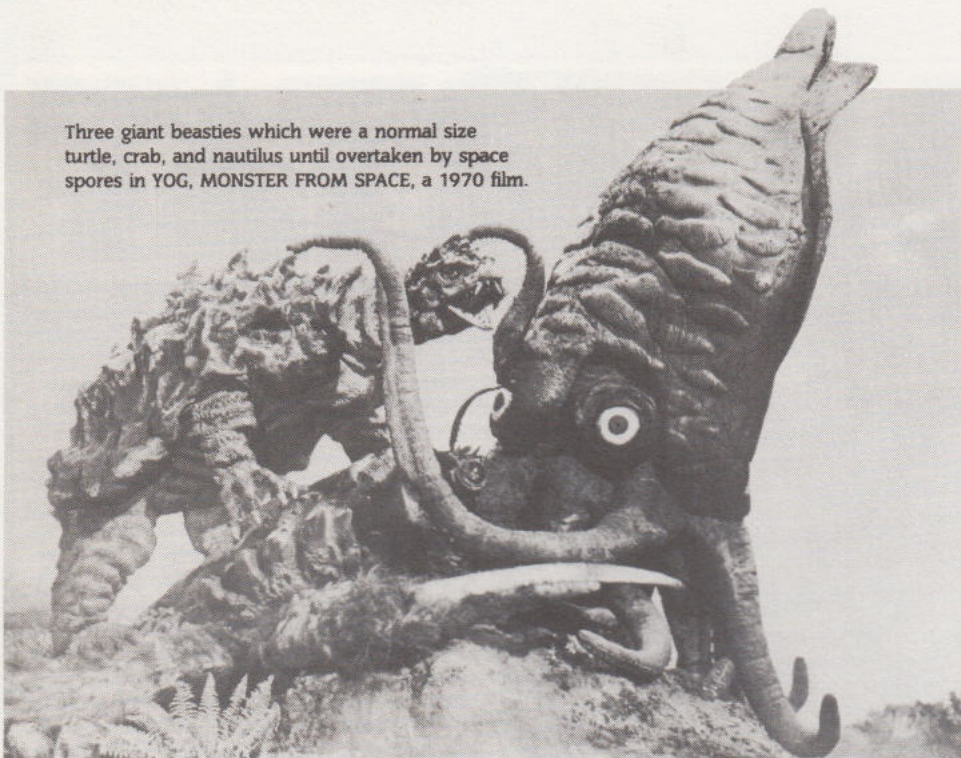
The design of the film's monsters has them dissimilar to the smaller animal life from which they were to have evolved, while the intent to disguise humans as beasts proves laughable here, especially the thrashing limbs not occupied by a human arm or leg. Optical effects, however, are a plus. Matte lines are rarely in evidence and density fluctuations between matted elements are just as scarce. Nicely done are the supered animation sequences: of the great squid's tentacle which, having wrapped itself around a native of the island, lifts him skyward; of a spear bouncing off a hell-bent-for-leather monster; of a bat swarm, though closeup miniatures of the winged varmints are unrealistic.

Relevancy in Toho's fantasy titles has played an important, if fluctuating, role. Not all films, *YOG* an example, have examined the splitting of the atom and its abuse, pollution, bureaucracy, and so on. The several Toho pictures which



Photo: © 1970 Toho International Co., Ltd.

Three giant beasts which were a normal size turtle, crab, and nautilus until overtaken by space spores in YOG, MONSTER FROM SPACE, a 1970 film.



have are stronger dramas for it. GODZILLA VS. HEDORA is such an endeavor.

Hedora, a tadpole-like thing raised in the industrial waste choking a river in Japan, transmogrifies into a giant, ravenous, living pile of filth feeding off the wastes it locates everywhere. Civilization's helplessness is averted by the timely arrival of Godzilla who, assisted by a scientific device using electricity to dehydrate the pest, sends Hedora to smog monster heaven.

While GODZILLA VS. THE THING only hinted at it, threats to the eco-system are showcased in 1971's GODZILLA VS. HEDORA, retitled GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER by American International for the U.S. The movie takes itself and its subject seriously, a kind of ecological CHINA SYNDROME with Godzilla as Jane Fonda. The film presents its case via effective intercutting of the main storyline with pollution footage (smoke-belching factories, waste-jammed harbors) and satiric editorial cartoon comments.

The weakest element of GODZILLA VS. HEDORA, slickly directed by Yoshimitsu Banno, is a youngster as one of the leads, at the time a device used with alarming regularity in Japanese fantasy product. The fact that a child has such a large role is not the dilemma, but the kind of precocious child he is. The young lad, son of a scientist and who is also scientifically inclined, wiles away his time in a Godzilla-inspired never-never land, confident the giant will assist the world in its predicament. Of course, it comes to be, and in the finale the boy, who has cheered Godzilla from afar, waves bye-bye to the receding reptile, not unlike the tyke in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS who befriends the extraterrestrials.

Toho's child is a hyperactive, whiney-voiced, imposition. Spielberg's youth is a quiet, inquisitive, endearing character. All of Toho's children, in the forefront of the action or not, are similar to Ken in HEDORA and are not very likable.

Teruyoshi Nakano, in his first assignment as effects director, has achieved a caliber of output associated with Eiji Tsuburaya, although miniature work on the Mt. Fuji set, where the final monster confrontation occurs, is devoid of vegetation and detailed geological formation. The barrenness draws the eye to it and detracts from believability.

Composer Riichiro Manabe's fine score occasionally fights the tension of the film with a strident, squawk-like fanfare for Godzilla which suggests a waddling duck is the hero. The repetition of the theme becomes irritating.

Godzilla treats the audience to a new aspect of his powers heretofore undisclosed in any previous entry. He flies! Crouching into a ball and directing his radioactive breath earthward, the monster becomes a reptilian version of the English Harrier jet. The capability adds a new dimension to the character as it enables Godzilla to outwit Hedora, but the endowment is more amusing than awesome, to see this hulk pick itself up and cruise.

HEDORA features many sequences transpiring at night, adding to the gloom and doom of the unsettling images. The gaudy day-glo colors and effects in the four Godzilla titles to come create the atmosphere of a carnival, appropo to their approximation of a midway funhouse ride. GODZILLA VS. HEDORA is a fluke of the Seventies.

GODZILLA VS. GIGAN, which followed in 1971, was picked up in the U.S. as GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND by

Cinema Shares International. The firm also purchased for distribution the two succeeding Godzilla releases, GODZILLA VS. MEGALON, produced in 1973, and, from 1974, GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA.

In GODZILLA VS. GIGAN a woman fears for the safety of her brother, a computer whiz kidnapped by invaders from Space M in the Hunter Nebula. She and two men are thrown together in an attempt to disenfranchise the aliens who occupy the bodies of recently-deceased humans and who are planning an invasion of Earth from their base in Godzilla Tower, an enormous structure shaped like the monster and situated amid an amusement park. Godzilla and Angilas are suckered off Monster Island by the aliens who play a recording of a particular signal to draw the monsters to the park, allowing the invaders to set up a kill of the beasts at close range. King Ghidorah and Gigan are likewise summoned, but from space, to help lead the two friendly monsters to their doom. When one of the heroes blows up the tower and the aliens, gone is the controlling tape, releasing Godzilla and Angilas to defeat the two space creatures.

Japanese genre films generally provide backgrounds on their alien attackers, and GIGAN is no exception. The audience is whisked away on a voyage to the aggressors' planet Earth look-a-like home which is populated by a humanoid species shown driving Japanese automobiles. This race polluted its world to the point of killing off its own kind. However, the invaders of GIGAN are a mutated species from the planet which survived to migrate to Earth and there set up shop in the bodies of deceased Terrans. When asked to divulge just what kind of beings they are, a light is thrown on one of the psuedo-humans, and on the wall is cast the shadow of a huge cockroach.

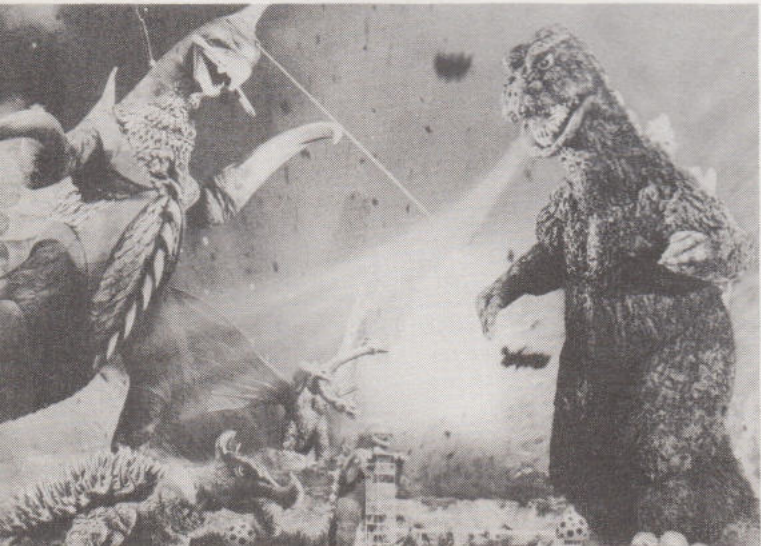
No longer the aeronaut, Godzilla vocalizes in GIGAN, so too Angilas, in guttural intonations, distorted to a point of near-unintelligibility by synthesizer. It would have been better if no monster-speak was uttered at all. After GIGAN, there wouldn't be.

In a money-saving measure, footage from WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS was incorporated into GIGAN of the maser cannon fire which is to seemingly repel an Angilas attack, the first monster skirmish some 40 minutes into the film. Rainy destruction footage from GHIDRAH appears when the King is loosed upon Earth.

GIGAN's cat and mouse game played between heroes and villains, a 90-minute serial of captures and escapes, was directed and co-scripted by Jun Fukuda, who has single-handedly been responsible for near-mortally wounding the monster film genre on several occasions. He would carry the same credits into the production of GODZILLA VS. MEGALON which retained the name through its American release.

A review of past-published criticism surprisingly indicates that MEGALON struck a favorable chord with reviewers. Even the staid Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* appears to have been smitten with the movie. In his critique he notes Godzilla's transformation from villain to savior: "The dragon has become St. George."

Gigan returns to assist the insect-like Megalon who is



Photos © 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975 Toho International Co., Ltd.

protector of the lost race of Seatopia, an ancient civilization below the surface, in *GODZILLA VS. MEGALON*. Underground nuclear testing is rocking the very foundation of the city, so it sends the beetle to make war on the surface people. A robot, Jet Jaguar, stolen by agents from below, grows to enormous size but turns instead to fight alongside Godzilla whom he has summoned from Monster Island. The four-way earthshaking battle levels countryside and city, but Godzilla and the robot are victorious. Godzilla heads back home, and Jet Jaguar reverts to normal size and returns to his human creators.

Bird-like Gigan, a mixture of flesh and machine who appears in both *GIGAN* and *MEGALON*, has stubby bat wings, a built-in opaque windshield for eyes, two useless claws, and a Black & Decker circular saw running from chest to abdomen. And Gigan can fire a lethal stream of energy from a point centered on its forehead. Megalon, in its only feature, is a huge, flying insect with power drills in place of hands, and is capable of shooting various rays from a mandible-encased mouth and mace-like antenna. Jet Jaguar, also from *MEGALON*, is a nifty flying robot resembling Ultra Seven from the Tsuburaya television series. Dressed in a grey latex suit trimmed in red, blue, and yellow, the automaton, normally standing the average human height, can balloon to the skyscraper scale of any monster in sight. No matter how nifty the robot is, it and the other new creatures are pure nonsense. For good or bad that is the direction the Godzilla films were being led, and the characters fit the niche.

Special effects director Teruyoshi Nakano, involved with *GIGAN*, *MEGALON*, and the final Godzilla titles, is at his best when required to deliver cartoon animated rays and force fields and spectacular pyrotechnics. With few exceptions, he's at his worst when asked to produce miniatures, latex creatures, and visual effects photography. This area of weakness, unfortunately, is the heart of the product. After Nakano's fine start with *GODZILLA VS. HEDORA*, his output turns erratic and is generally a detrimental aspect to these films.

There also is a problem with all the new faces prominently displayed in the monster films of the Seventies. Unlike the Toho entries in the Fifties and Sixties, the third decade sets a new policy of casting different unknowns, unknown at least to the genre, in each new production, though occasionally Toho would break the pattern by using actor Akihiko Hirata in two key roles in *GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA* and *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA* and Akira Kubo, Yoshio Ysuchiya, and Kenji Sahara in *YOG*. The new personnel, however, appear lacking in the depth of their acting ability, amateurish, if you will. But the blame may be shared with the scripts for seldom is the viewer allowed to explore the characters on the screen, since the players deliver little except to expound plot action and court disaster.

The final two Godzilla entries star a remarkable machine monster called Mechagodzilla. It is a metallic twin of the superstar from Monster Island, a veritable tank on two legs, with the capability of flight and of discharging rockets from its fingers and lethal rays from riveting red eyes. Spinning its head at incredible revolutions per minute, Mechagodzilla



is able to whip up an impenetrable protective force field.

Constructed of Space Titanium, the dynamic machine, in his first film outing, *GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA*, is under the control of space invaders and has been programmed to become a Godzilla double in the film's initial sequences. Its destructive ferocity is displayed with a design toward disgracing the good image of the flesh and blood version. The robot malfunctions in a match with the real Godzilla, and its exterior abruptly transforms from a scaly hide to one of glistening metal before seeking repair in an Okinawan cave, secret base of the aliens. Mechagodzilla is serviced with the aid of a kidnapped professor portrayed by Akihiko Hirata, the only recognizable talent of the cast and creator of the oxygen destroyer in *GOJIRA*, and off the robot goes in search of his quarry. Meanwhile, an Okinawan legend, prophecying the return of a lion-monster when the island's residents are beset by danger, is fulfilled by the emergence of King Seesar who joins Godzilla in battle and in victory as a team. The aliens are routed and revealed to be ape creatures beneath a human exterior.

King Seesar is no lion-monster and falls far short of the picture painted by the legend. It is more a refugee from a Japanese superhero TV series and less a lion because of its bat face and poodle hair cut. Seesar is an amphetamine-driven scrounger in combat, and its antics remind one of Bert Lahr's excitable lion in the *WIZARD OF OZ*.

Titled for U.S. release initially as *GODZILLA VS. BIONIC MONSTER*, the film became *GODZILLA VS. COSMIC MONSTER*, possibly a result of pressure from the producers of *6 MILLION DOLLAR MAN* who claimed copyright infringement of the word *bionic*. The film contained footage swiped from *HEDORA* and *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN*.

The 1975 production *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA*, a sequel of sorts to the 1974 picture, brings with it a class absent from the other Seventies Toho Godzilla films with the possible exception of *GODZILLA VS. HEDORA*. Director Ishiro Honda's return, he who molded the genre, positively affects a change. *TERROR* returns character complexity and production polish in spite of the chiched trappings of the story. Monster photography often is shot at ground level, and actors have things to do to develop their persona. Praise can be steeped too high, but considering the quality of monster material levelled at the viewer since the beginning of the Seventies, *TERROR* is a faint light in an otherwise dull night sky.

Akihiko Hirata, once again an eminent man of science, appears as the aged Dr. Mafune, a man once shunned by academic society due to a proclamation in which he admitted the possibility of controlling a beast he discovered in the sea. Presently assumed deceased, the doctor lives a secluded life with his daughter and has completed work on a means to control the monster which has been named



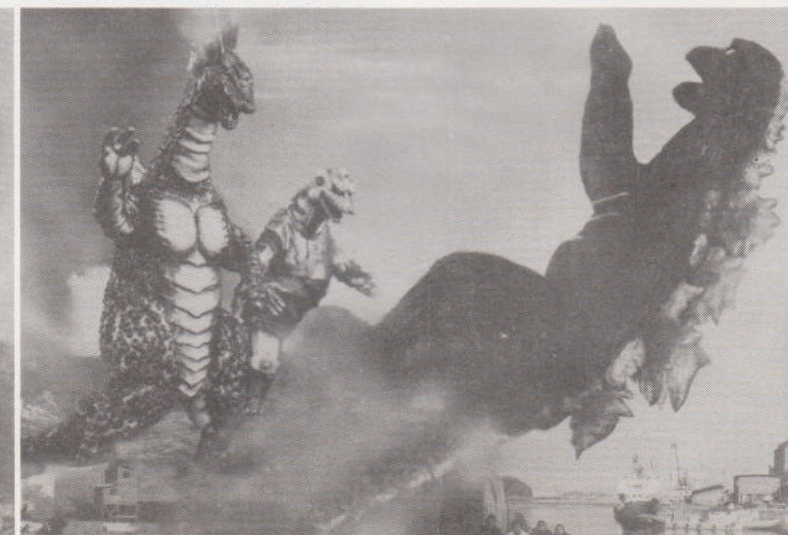
Above left, the flying stage of monster Hedorah, and above, the first time audiences learn Godzilla is capable of flight, from *GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER*. Bottom, left to right: *GODZILLA VS. GIGAN*, also starring Angilas and Ghidrah; *GODZILLA VS. MEGALON*, also featuring robot Jet Jaguar and a return of Gigan; *GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA*, including King Seesar and a brief Angilas appearance; *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA*, also employing Titanosaurus.

Titanosaurus. Mafune is assisted by aliens from the Third Planet in the Black Hole of Space who use the device also to resurrect Mechagodzilla. Mafune's daughter, killed in her effort to destroy the device because of its misuse, is miraculously reconstructed as a cyborg by the aliens who have installed the control unit in her body. Another control mechanism fabricated by the film's heroes is able to interrupt the invaders' message and substitute its own signal and thus stop Titanosaurus. Godzilla, ever the good guy, takes on Mechagodzilla—and wins. Mafune, his daughter, and the outer space infiltrators are destroyed by an Interpol agent.

Titanosaurus, an interesting prehistoric-styled behemoth, is never allowed to unleash its strength, if indeed it has much. A mere pushover for the Japanese technologists, the creature is a useless facet of the screenplay.

Though the monster wars in *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA* are familiar, the film fortunately co-stars a sympathetic character in Dr. Mafune, whose decay is presented through an effective succession of dramatic stills. The re-animation of his daughter creates even more headaches for the doctor, and she too acquires a depth due to her inability to clear up her inner conflicts.

Issued to U.S. theatres as *TERROR OF GODZILLA* and to American television retitled *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA*, the picture was a return to the past, albeit not a perfect one, and delivered hope for the next in the series—which was not to be.



flights of fancy

This chapter begins with one of the best genre films ever to be developed by Toho: *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN*. It could be categorized as a *disaster* film, for it indeed is that, though its release antedated that class of U.S. film, but it is much more. The picture is "one of the genuine epics of science fiction," to quote Bill Warren from his review in *Cinefantastique*. The film so impressed the Japanese that a *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN* television series was spawned by TBS.

Based on the extremely popular Sakyo Komatsu novel, the 1973 film, running almost 2½ hours, slowly weaves a dramatic tale of an impending natural cataclysm as viewed by a number of players literally and figuratively imprisoned by it—a step-by-step presentation of ever-worsening events, explained by scientific fact in the picture, which eventually leads to the sinking of the archipelago known as Japan. It almost seems that the nation itself is the real star, for *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN* offers an incisive look at aspects of national personality which the Japanese value the most, and the sum is the people's love for their island nation. That their country should cease to exist would be the ultimate tragedy.

For *TIDAL WAVE*, the American version of the picture, Roger Corman's New World castrated over an hour's worth of the central characters' reactions to the developments leading to the doom of Japan. What remains is only a disaster film—a poor man's *EARTHQUAKE*—an ineptly dubbed glimpse of people in panic amid Teruyoshi Nakano's sequences of destruction effects which, though daring in concept, are not that accomplished—not what the film is about at all.

The bastardized print includes newly-filmed English language footage which does not match the material surrounding it and acts as a sort of buffer zone to deaden the mounting tension. The American scenes star Lorne Greene as a U.S. ambassador whose help is sought to relocate the people of Japan before the islands sink beneath the waves. The logistics and obstacles of re-settlement take on a new light when considering the problems faced by the refugees



SUBMERSION OF JAPAN: A city in flame; Hiroshi Fujioka and Ayumi Ishida, inset, two of the performers.

migrating to American shores from the Caribbean and Southeast Asia.

New World's ad campaign for print and broadcast media prominently features both the aquatic phenomenon of its new title and Mr. Greene, but Greene's screen time is brief, as is the tidal wave's, of which the latter is only one of several calamities tearing apart Japan. Is it any wonder that American audiences hold little regard for films from the Orient.

A second Komatsu novel, *Esupai*, forms the basis of *ESPY*, a 1974 sf-action thriller filled with colorful villains and heroes, the latter possessors of extra-sensory powers and who are members of *ESPY*, an Interpol-like outfit peopled with agents of various supra-normal abilities. Their powerful enemy is Counter-*ESPY*, another group of paranormalists, but these are fanatics bent on global domination through kidnap and assassination of world leaders.

ESPY is fantastic fiction, unlike *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN*'s scientifically convincing drama. Effects sequences, as witnessed by Mizu. in *Variety*, are "spectacular," especially

"an aurora incident over Alaska and an earthquake scene," the earthquake sequence revealed by the heroes, victorious in the end, obviously, to be a hallucination suggested by the leader of the revolutionaries.

A book by Ben Goto which details the prophecies of Nostradamus becoming actualities is the foundation for Toho's 1974 big budget successor to *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN*. The movie is *CATASTROPHE 1999*, released to American television in 1981 by UPA as *THE FINAL DAYS OF PLANET EARTH*. It examines the events which could spell the death of the Earth, presenting a near-future plagued by all manner of pollution, of catastrophes the pollution precipitates, and of the occasionally incredible effects the changes play upon a civilization becoming anarchic.

A scientist, realized by actor Tetsuro Tanba, who also essayed the role of the Japanese Prime Minister in *SUBMERSION OF JAPAN*, constantly warns the nation's top leaders to take heed of environmental trends. They might think him a bit too fanatical in his position, but they are

An environment gone berserk in *CATASTROPHE 1999*. Tetsuro Tanba, left, centered below large bat, plays a scientist who warns of the effects of pollution.



Photos © 1973, 1974 Toho International Co., Ltd.

just as worried about having to tell the populace the path down which the country is headed, for the politicians have contributed to the eroding eco-system in their politically expedient decision making. With a part-electronic score composed by Isao Tomita, the melodrama climaxes with a flash-forward which lets the viewer survey a possible future world invaded by a humankind reduced to degenerate acromegalic mutants.

With nature the antagonist in Toho's earlier film, beginning with tectonic movement, CATASTROPHE 1999 makes man's corruption of the environment the causality, forcing man in his increasing madness to survive by means of violence. Just as Toho's THE LAST WAR from 1961 was a warning to cease belligerent threats backed by nuclear arsenals, never more appropo than today, so is this film a warning, one of unavoidable disaster unless people work together to cease the fouling. The plea is warranted and just, but the picture fails to inject a compelling human drama which could have made the impact that much more agonizingly real.

Mystery and intrigue in feudal Japan is an area often sought for documentation in that country's films. The 1974 movie DEMON SPIES takes that as its background to unravel the exploits of five demons raised by demon parents in hidden recesses of the Japanese mountains. The Force Five become members of the Shogunate's entourage to quell a plot to overthrow him, but when their task is completed, only two remain in support of their lord.

Toho's \$2 million entry into the box office war set off by the U.S. success of STAR WARS was rushed into completion to premiere in Japan before George Lucas' film opened there. That THE WAR IN SPACE, issued in 1977, was to emulate SW's blend of entertainment, action, and spectacle was a point conceded by Tomoyuki Tanaka, executive producer at Toho. He argued the changing nature of Japanese movie making with emphasis placed on large-scale effects movies, hopefully co-financed with foreign dollars. An example in 1977 was the announced Toho/Hammer/Euan Lloyd co-production of NESSIE, a picture about the Loch Ness monster, for which Toho would shoot the effects at its studio near Tokyo. What Tanaka and his firm failed to realize about STAR WARS which excited moviegoers everywhere were the 1977 state-of-the-art visuals, competent thespian talent, a rousing score, impressive live-action photography and set design, and a clever, fast-paced script filled with memorable characters. Toho's picture had none of this.

If plagiarism is at the heart of the matter, at least do it well and preferably better than the original from which it would be fashioned. Yet, THE WAR IN SPACE looks like an old Toho sf picture with Japanese 1954 state-of-the-art effects, mediocre acting and score, unconvincing sets and a story right out of BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE. What's interesting is that WAKUSEI DAISENSO, the 1977 film's Japanese title, can be translated the same as that for the 1959 film.

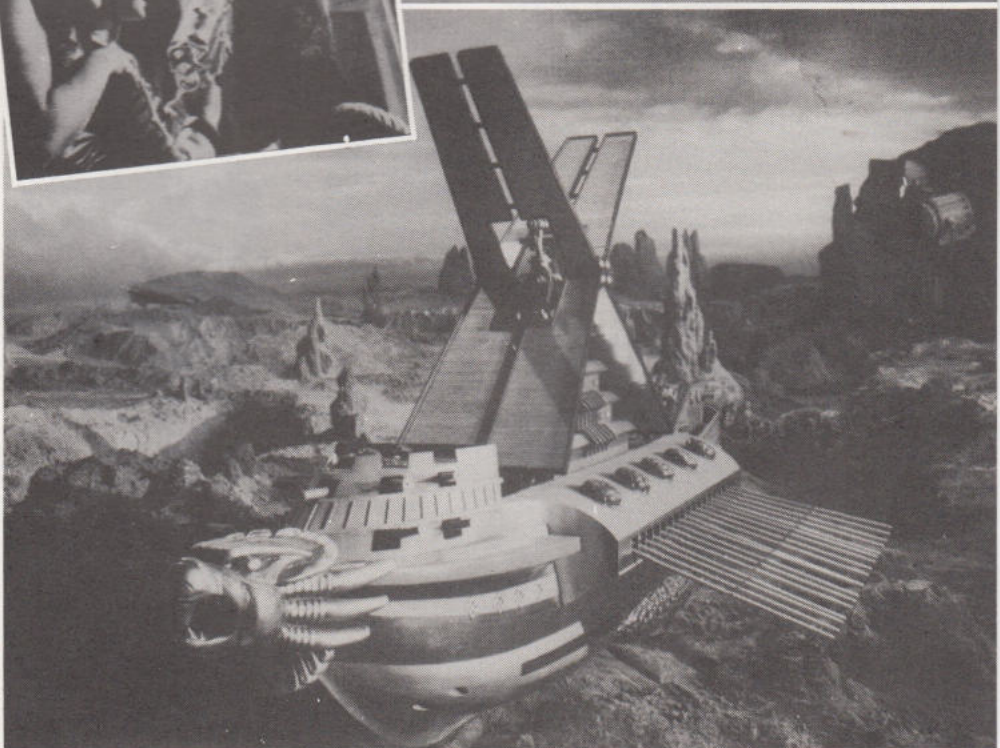
THE WAR IN SPACE concerns an attack on Earth to gain a much needed energy source by green aliens based on Venus. The Earthlings, having just put the finishing touches on a super rocket, tangle with the invaders and their battle-cruiser in a space war near Venus. The speed and strength of the Earth ship turns the tide in favor of the Terrans. Fortunately, Lucas had the foresight to set his stage "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away."

The Earthcraft *Gohten* of the film appears suspiciously like a cross between *Atoragon* and *LATITUDE ZERO'S Alpha* and can in fact burrow through rock because of its pro-portioned drill. The evil *Daimakan* is a refurbished 17th Century Portugese galleon equipped with X-shaped solar cells, a Chinese dragon figurehead, and a series of anachronistic row-like appendages which power the ship through the ether. Hardware has always been a staple of Toho's genre films, and they were generally criticised because of it. It took STAR WARS to make it legitimate, at the same time rendering Japanese model construction and photography obsolete.

THE WAR IN SPACE failed to match Tanaka's expectations. Japanese audiences stayed away in droves. NESSIE was shelved. So much for Tomoyuki Tanaka's prediction on the changing nature of Japanese motion pictures. The space opera was eventually picked up for distribution to American television in 1981 where it became evident that Toho resorted to cannibalizing destruction footage from its SUB-



Top, from *ESPY*, Tomisaburo Wakayama as the villain, far left, and paranormalists Kaoru Yumi and Masao Kusakari, kneeling, and Hiroshi Fujioka. Center, Earth battle-cruiser *Gohten*, and bottom, alien ship *Daimakan*, in *THE WAR IN SPACE*. The space opera's wookiee-like creature, inset.





Photos © 1978 Toho International Co., Ltd.

MERSION OF JAPAN and CATASTROPHE 1999 to speed up the film's release in Japan.

1978's **BLOOD TYPE: BLUE**, titled in pre-release as **UFO: BLUE CHRISTMAS**, details an investigation by a NHK reporter, portrayed by the excellent actor Tatsuya Nakadai, which leads to the discovery that the blood of certain individuals has become blue in color. A possible explanation between exposure to UFO's and the transformation is proffered, but government paranoia and human suspicion inhibit temperate investigation. Official discrimination against those with the abnormal blood soon has sway over the populace. The heavy-handed delivery of the allegory makes the film's long 137 minute running time appear much, much longer.

HINOTORI, Toho's 1978 production entitled **THE PHOENIX** in most promotional copy, is director Kon Ichikawa's sendup of every samurai film ever released, here spiced with snippets of cartoon animation (directed by sf author and illustrator Osamu Tezuka), slow motion, stop-action, and miniature effects in the form of a volcano and an earthquake. The message of **HINOTORI**, that being mortal one should live life to the fullest, is the simple lesson of Tezuka's tale which symbolizes humanity's origin, not just Japanese history.

The immortality of the title's character is the running device Osamu Tezuka used to envision his eight volume

HINOTORI left & right, a 1977 film based on volume one of Osamu Tezuka's eight volume comic linked by the Phoenix. Center, Tezuka art from his book.

comic series he began in 1954 to represent the history of the human race as observed by the mystical bird. Each volume is a complete story situated in different eras of the past, present, and future. **HINOTORI** depicts volume one.

Ultimately, the focus of the picture is upon the mythic phoenix and two warring clans' attempt to capture the bird to drink its eternal life-giving blood. What detracts from the struggle is the phoenix itself which, as indicated by Herb, in *Variety*, in animation "emerges as a combo Woody Woodpecker-Big Bird." Though killed at the climax, the Fire Bird is consumed in flame, enabling another to emerge and soar into the sky.

Faring poorly in its Japanese release, the film's problem is its insistence on remaining faithful to the original story's comic book format by using outlandish makeup on the actors to recreate the comic-art characters. Too, the excessive people/animal carnage, decapitation of an entire

platoon of horses, for example, dulls the senses early in a screening of the movie. "Even with this comic book approach, the tale is too unwieldy to succeed because of its length," Herb continues. "Any severe cutting would make the story incomprehensible. As a Saturday matinee serial, **HINOTORI** could run for months." Rumor has it that director Ichikawa offered his apology for the film to Tezuka even before it was released, though Tezuka himself has to share some of the blame for his cartoony animation, including a guest appearance by his **Mighty Atom**.

The sweeping popularity in the Seventies of animation in Japanese television and features found an indifference at Toho. The studio continued to ply its trade in the live-action medium, losing a larger share of the audience with each new release from Toei Doga, Academy Ltd., and other emerging cartoon outfits. Animation enabled its producers to be as wild and creative as their imaginations would let them. The process lent itself to the extraordinary. And animation was cheaper. Toho eventually would take notice of the phenomenon, but not until the Eighties. Could the success of the early Toho sf, fantasy, and horror pictures be revived? Maybe through animation the opportunity would be offered. ■

TOHO FILMOGRAPHY ADDENDA

The borderline fantasy **HURRY! KURAMA!**, from 1956, about a priest who uses hypnotism to make his enemies powerless; **ONIBI**, another 1956 production and borderline fantasy-horror film in which a man sees an unearthly light flickering over the corpses of a dead husband and wife; A fantasy tale about a super-strong potion in **KNOCKOUT DROPS**, a 1957 picture directed by Motoyoshi Oda (**INVISIBLE AVENGER**; **GIGANTIS**); 1957's **SECRET SCROLLS**, set in feudal Japan with each portion of feature length and directed by Hiroshi

Inagaki (**THE THREE TREASURES**; **THE YOUTH AND HIS AMULET**); Director Kozo Saeki's (**ISHIMATSU TRAVELS WITH GHOSTS**; **MY FRIEND DEATH**) 1958 color fairy tale **THE BADGER PALACE**, concerning badgers who save a princess from an evil spider queen; A woman who blasts villains with a weapon concealed behind her eye patch in **THE AGE OF ASSASSINS**, a fantasy-comedy directed by Kihachi Okamoto (**BLOOD TYPE: BLUE**; **THE SPOOK COTTAGE**), from 1967; **THE KILLING BOTTLE**, a 1967 sf-spy film starring Nick Adams which introduces a new weapon to espionage, a bottled substance whose release enables it to expand thousands of times, suffocating its victims; From 1968, **KUSO TENGOKU** (trans.,

FANCY PARADISE), a nonsense sf-comedy directed by Ken Matsumori, in which a gentle frog-like alien, gifted with telepathic and time-altering powers, comes from planet Kabara to Earth to have fun; Released Dec. 20, 1969, and double-billed with **GODZILLA'S REVENGE** in Japan, **KONTO-GOGO-GO UCHU DAIBOKEN** (trans., **GREAT SPACE ADVENTURE**), director Jun Fukuda's sf-comedy starring the comedy team Konto Gogo-Go, rivals of the Crazy Cats, and featuring the rocketship from **INVASION OF ASTRO-MONSTER**, most likely in stock footage; Announced in 1969, but never filmed, **STAR OF ADAM** (**OTOKO TO ONNA NO SHIWA**), a science fiction movie about the survivors of WWII who travel to another world, to have been directed by Hideo Onchi.



Above, Gamara from Kabara. Comedy troupe Konto Gogo-Go, right.



the toho legacy

Photo © 1969 Toho International Co., Ltd.

THE LAST WAR

**A Statement By M. Shimizu,
President, Toho Co., Ltd.***

The time has come for us to make this picture... Newspapers, radio commentators, scholars, common men—all speak of a dread hovering ominously over the entire world every second of every day. If—we repeat—if this dread should descend upon us, it will result in the destruction of mankind and, perhaps, life itself.

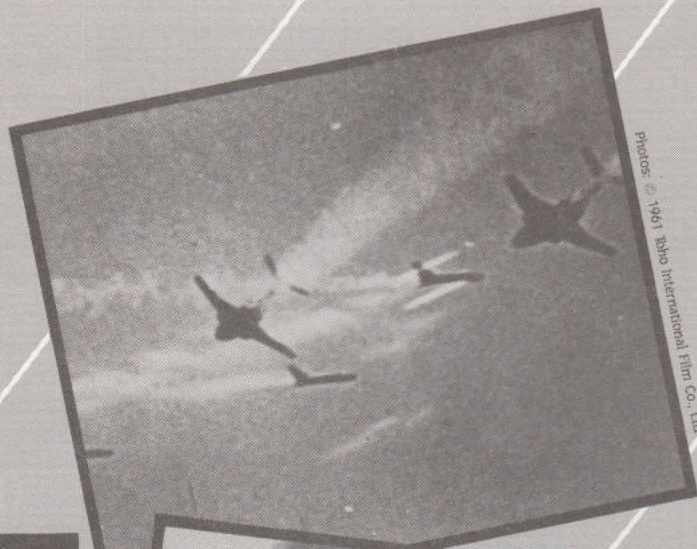
Men of intelligence are taking great pains to avert it. This is indeed commendable; there can never be too much effort exercised toward this end. But still we live in fear that a great war, the Last War, may come.

We, the Japanese, are in a better position than people of any other nation to make a film such as this. We side with no one; we are inimical to no one. THE LAST WAR is presented as our appeal to the world.

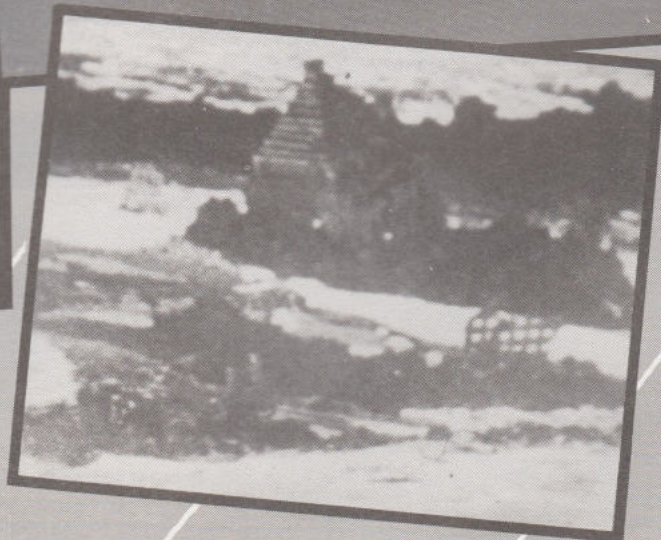
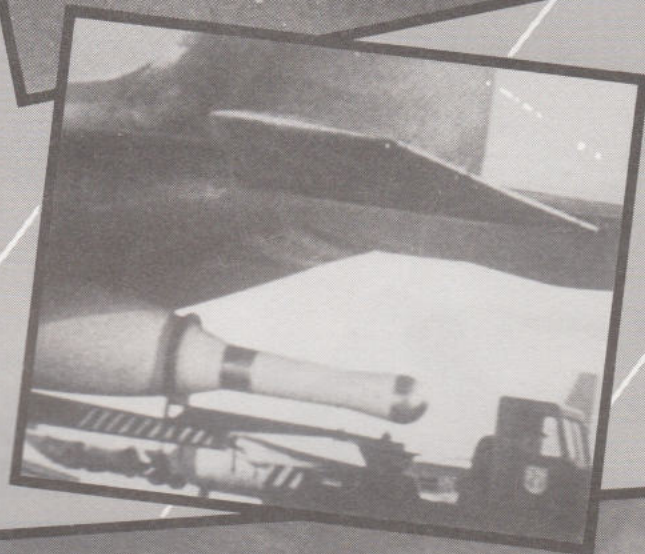
We of the Toho Company are employing every vestige of our technical skill to represent as realistically and appealingly as possible exactly what will happen if this colossal horror befalls us.

It is our sincere hope that by producing and exhibiting this film we can serve the cause of peace.

*Issued upon release of THE LAST WAR in 1961.



Photos © 1961 Toho International Film Co. Ltd.





**ALTERNATE
FUTURES FROM**

TOWA

From distributor Toho-Towa emerged two imaginative animation films leading viewers into worlds unknown.

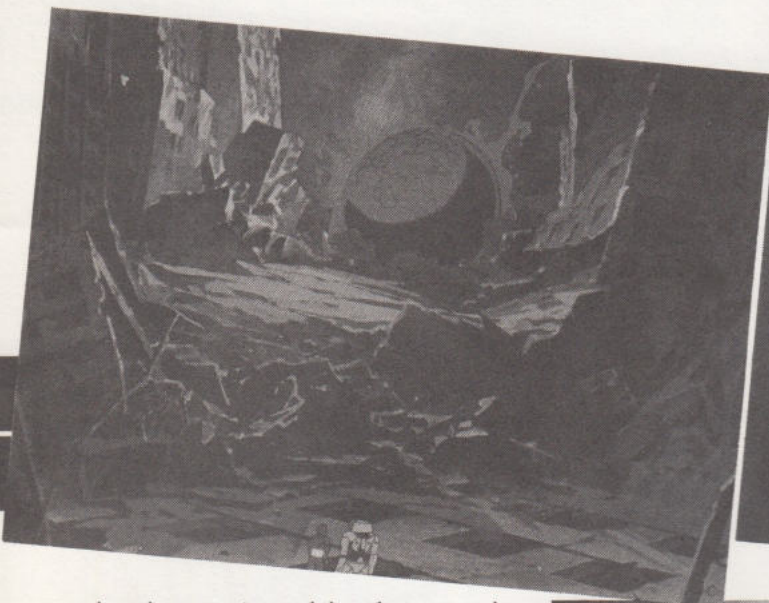
The appeal of the future lies with our hopes for a better tomorrow and the possibilities of the effect technology will impose upon that tomorrow. That's news? Not really. The news, old hat to Japanese animation devotees, is the outpouring of animated films and television series by the film studios in Japan, both majors and independents alike, which deal with those possibilities as viewed with the studios' unbridled passion for fantasy. Toho-Towa, a leading film distributor in Japan for the independents, has released two very successful independently-produced animated features which take a fantastic look at what lies down the road.

SPACE ADVENTURE—COBRA

Based on a popular *manga* by Buichi Terasawa which was serialized in *Shonen Janpu*, COBRA is a wild sf/comedy/adventure released July 3, 1982 and billed as being in 3-D, though the 3-D effects are nothing more than

bits of computer animation. The picture succeeds an animated television series with the same moniker, both film and series a product of the Tokyo Movie Shinsha animation facilities. Surprisingly, all three—the *manga*, the movie, and the series—display typical American stereotyping in their use of a handsome hero who is rough,

SPACE ADVENTURE—COBRA/Featured players from the 1982 animated motion picture are shown left, beginning at top: Lady, Cobra's armoroid (armored android) partner; the lusty, space pirate Cobra and his psychic energy weapon, the "Psycho-Gun," is attached to his left arm; Jane, a bounty hunter after Cobra's hide, but only for his help in preventing a takeover of the universe by the evil Crystal Boy.



tough, and a womanizer, and the voluptuous, under-dressed females he meets.

Cobra, a space pirate by trade, is best described in his own words: "I would only think of living in a world full of danger . . . Guess 'tis my nature. Hell, hopeless fools like me can be cured only by passing away . . ." With this philosophical bent, the lusty rogue faces the battlefields of space with bad temper and cynicism.

Actually, at the beginning of COBRA, the hero, unaware of his true identity as the space pirate, is a down-and-out nebbish named Johnson. Cobra, thought killed in a bomb blast, hid from his antagonists by having his memory erased and face altered, taking on the new identity, yet still grafted to his left arm is a powerful psychic energy weapon called the "Psycho-Gun." Johnson's adventures resurrects the remembrance of his previous incarnation, and aided by Jane, a bounty hunter, Lady, Cobra's armoroid (armored android) partner, and Turtle, his hi-tech spaceship, Cobra takes on Guild, the evil overlord who threatens to conquer the universe, and his master, Crystal Boy, a cyborg who plans to send the star Mirus into our sun with the ultimate goal of destroying the solar system.

What Jane wants from Cobra is not his head for the reward, but his help in saving the solar system, the first step in this goal being to find her triplet sisters Catherine and Dominique. When Jane is killed in a battle her spirit is transferred into Catherine, and she and Cobra fly to Mirus where Crystal Boy, his men, and Dominique, on Crystal Boy's side, lay in ambush for them.

Buichi Terasawa's original story was co-adapted by Haruyawa Yamazaki who previously penned for the screen STAR OF THE GIANTS, a baseball tale, and LUPIN THE THIRD—CAGLIOSTRO'S CASTLE.

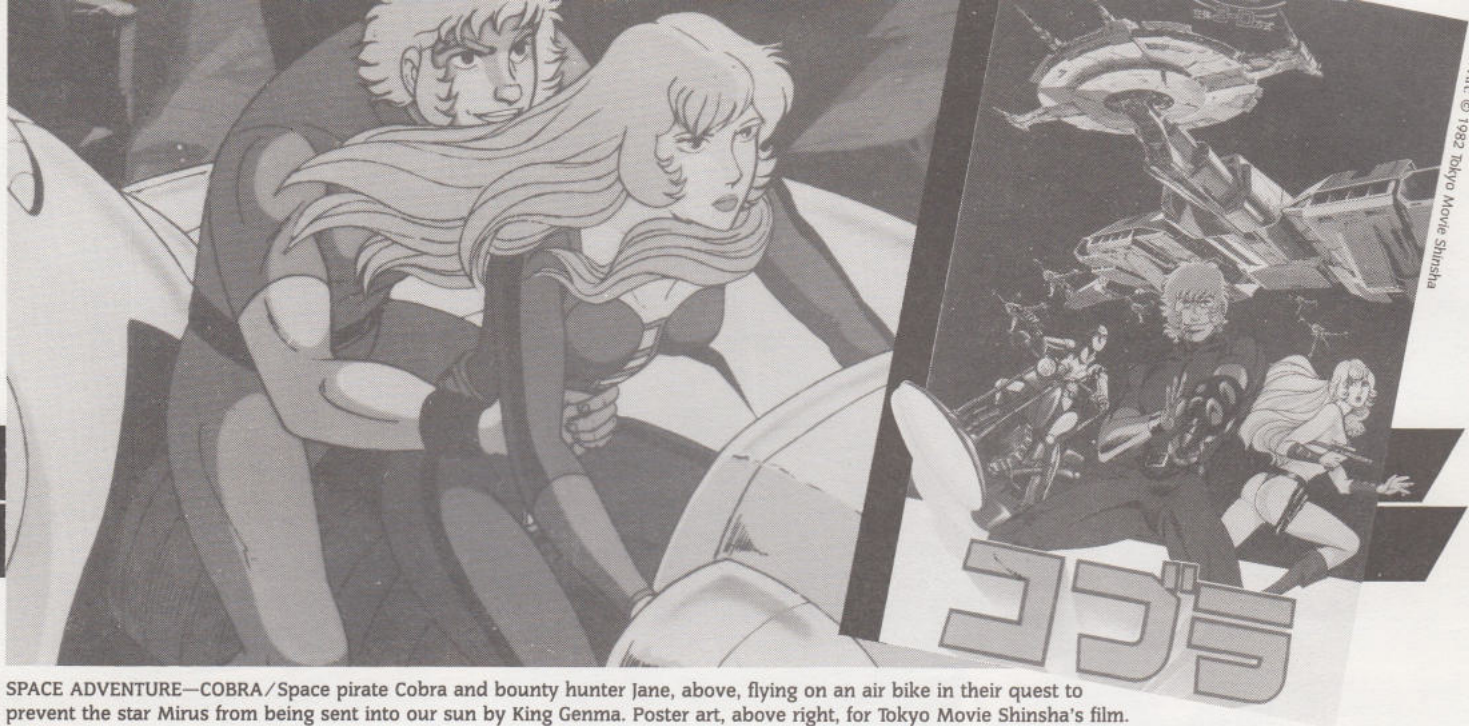
Author Terasawa contributed to teenage girl magazines early in his career and later, under the guidance of Osamu Tezuka, began "Cobra" in *Shonen Janpu* in 1978.

COBRA's director, Osamu Dezaki, started in the film business directing episodes of ASTRO BOY and the live-action TV show BIG X. His theatrically-released animation directorial efforts include the boxing film TOMORROW'S JOE and its sequel.

Animation director for COBRA, Akio Sugino has worked on several television series including LEO THE WHITE LION and directed as his first animated film SABU TO ICHI TORI MONOHIKAE. He teamed with director Dezaki on ESU WO NERAE and TOMORROW'S JOE II.

HARMAGEDDON/The wrecking (energy) ball of the Evil Entity and its destructive capabilities are shown above left, a result of the Evil Entity's bid to take over the Earth. In the final sequence of the picture, above right, all of the Psionic Warriors concentrate on focusing their minds in their attempt to thwart that plan. Left, promotional art from the 1983 animated motion picture.





Photo/Art. © 1982 Tokyo Movie Shinsha

SPACE ADVENTURE—COBRA/Space pirate Cobra and bounty hunter Jane, above, flying on an air bike in their quest to prevent the star Mirus from being sent into our sun by King Genma. Poster art, above right, for Tokyo Movie Shinsha's film.

HARMAGEDDON

The manga "Genma Taisen" ("War Against Evil" or "Armageddon"), a collaboration between sf author Kazumasa Hirai and artist Shotaro Ishimori, is the foundation for the animated film HARMAGEDDON, distributed in Japan by Toho-Towa. "Genma Taisen," first published in *Shonen Magazine* and thought impossible to translate to film due to the complexity of the beast, the beast in this case being the 18-volume, still-in-progress saga by Hirai and Ishimori, in the hands of producer Haruki Kadokawa (VIRUS) became Kadokawa Films' first cartoon feature. Having premiered March 12, 1983, HARMAGEDDON eschews the James Bond approach of COBRA in this animated vision of "What if . . ."

En route to the United States on a mission of goodwill, Princess Luna, the first queen of Transylvania, is hurt in a plane crash and suddenly finds herself projected to a galaxy 3,800,000 light-years away. There she hears the voice of Floy, Keeper of the Cosmic Energy: "The lethal hand of King Genma (Evil Entity) the Destructor stretches over the universe!" She teams with Vega, a cyborg warrior sent by Floy to gather companions on Earth who are endowed with superpowers. Meanwhile in Japan, young Jo Azuma suddenly feels inside him a mysterious power beyond his comprehension. As this and other telepathic messages being sent all over Earth by Princess Luna reach more receptors, including a black youth named Sonny, the Evil Entity unleashes a deluge which submerges New York city, turns Tokyo into a desert, and reactivates the once-dormant Mt. Fuji. In retribution, the superpowered Psionic Warriors join forces against King Genma.

"Genma Taisen," apparently based on the "Book of Revelations," details the escalation of the corruption of our civilization as personified by the Evil Entity; Jo Azuma is the counterforce—it is a battle between Light and Darkness. In between the antagonists the Earth remains the setting for Armageddon.

The Evil Entity materializes in human form to tempt the flesh and spirit. Spiritual values are, then, completely subjugated by materialistic interests, and Mankind wanders without direction. This anxious feeling is the driving force which stimulated Kazumasa Hirai to write "Genma Taisen." His message is that love, kindness, and mercy are qualities to be found not in the materialistic world, but in the heart. Jo Azuma iterates this in passages in the series, but then Azuma is Hirai's alter ego. His commitment to this message can be measured in Hirai's own thoughts: "I don't care whoever writes or publishes it, provided it's written and published somehow."

Hirai also has written other material for comics including the serial "Wolf Guy" which began in 1967 and which like "Genma Taisen" is still being produced. His collaborator, Shotaro Ishimori, has had a remarkable career in his own right in publications, but appears to have found his niche in live-action and animated films and TV shows as author/creator/supervisor on such productions as CYBORG 009—LEGEND OF SUPER GALAXY and the MASKED RIDER television series.

HARMAGEDDON director Taro Rin has had a successful career in television and the cinema as well, directing episodes of the animated series ASTRO BOY and LEO THE WHITE LION and many features including CAPTAIN HARLOCK, GALAXY EXPRESS 999 and its sequel.

Takamura Mukuo, art director for HARMAGEDDON, designed backgrounds for ASTRO BOY and acted as art director for MARCO, both GALAXY EXPRESS 999 pictures, and the CAPTAIN HARLOCK film, among others.

Animation director for Kadokawa's film, Takuo Noda worked on TV's GETTER ROBOT G, GAIKING, and the features CAPTAIN FUTURE and SWAN LAKE. He also produced layouts for ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS 999.

Yoshinori Kanada, credited for special animation on HARMAGEDDON, worked on the series GAIKING, ZAMBOT 3, and DAITAN 3, and the motion pictures TOWARD THE TERRA, both GALAXY EXPRESS 999 films, and CYBORG 009. Kanada also created the opening title sequences for TV's GALAXY CYCLONE BRYGAR. ■

HARMAGEDDON/Warrior Vega, a cyborg, right, appears before Jo Azuma in a test of his ESP abilities. Below, Princess Luna and Vega fly over Tokyo as Luna telepathically transmits a message to Jo Azuma so that he may join her in her battle with King Genma, also known as the Evil Entity, in this motion picture from Kadokawa Films based on an 18-volume Japanese manga.



Our grateful appreciation goes to Horacio Higuchi who translated the reference material upon which this article was based. We also wish to credit Jane E. McGuire for additional material.

Credits

SPACE ADVENTURE—COBRA. (SUPESU ADOBENCHAKOBUA). A Tokyo Movie Shinsha Production. Distributed by Toho-Towa. *Executive producers*, Yutaka Fujioka, Tetsuo Katayama. *Producer*, Tatsuo Ikeuchi. *Director*, Osamu Dezaki. *Animation director*, Akio Sugino. *Original story*, Buichi Terasawa. *Screenplay*, Buichi Terasawa, Haruya Yamazaki. Produced in collaboration with Kowa International. Released July 3, 1982. Color. Dolby stereo. 91 minutes.

HARMAGEDDON. (GENMA TAISEN). A Kadokawa Films Production. Distributed by Toho-Towa. *Executive producer*, Haruki Kadokawa. *Producer*, Susumu Aketagawa. *Director*, Taro Rin. Based on "Genma Taisen" by Kazumasa Hirai and Shotaro Ishimori. *Screenplay*, Makoto Naito, Chiho Katsura, Mamoru Masaki. *Supervisor*, Masao Maruyama. *Director of photography*, Iwao Yamaki. *Animation director*, Takuo Noda. *Special animation*, Yoshinori Kanada. *Assistant director*, Susumu Ishizaki. *Art director*, Takamura Mukuo. *Character designer*, Katsuhiko Ootomo. Released March 12, 1983. Color.

Photos © 1983 Kadokawa Films

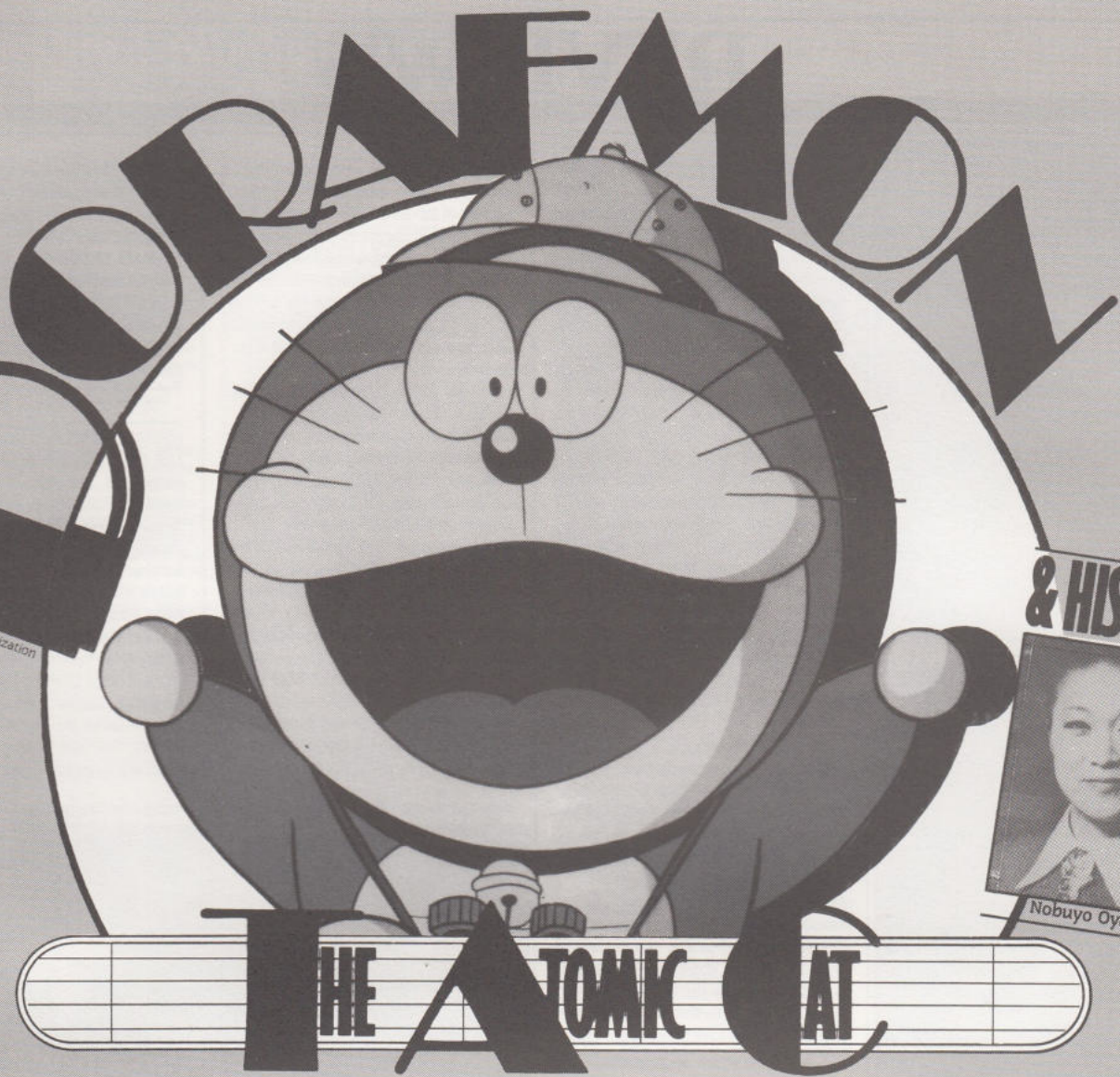


Photo: ©1982 Shinsei Organization

move over garfield, here comes your competition from japan

The importance of comic books to filmmakers is perhaps best exemplified by the case of a character named Doraemon, two of whose feature-length animated adventures, *DORAEMON—NOBITA NO KYORYU* and *DORAEMON—NOBITA NO UCHU KAITAKUSHI*, were Toho's third and second biggest money-making releases in, respectively, 1980 and 1981. (Toho acted as distributor, although Shinsei Organization actually produced the films.)

Doraemon is a robot cat from the 23rd century who lives in the present with a little boy named Nobita and his family. Whenever Nobita finds himself in trouble, his futuristic feline friend reaches into a special "four dimensional pocket" and withdraws secret weapons—a bamboo copter for making quick escapes or a special lipstick that forces the person to whose mouth it is applied to tell the truth.

Doraemon debuted in the pages of a comic magazine, *Gakunen Zasshi*, in 1970. Its creator is Fujio Fujiko, a pseudonym for two cartoonists, one named Fujimoto, the other Abiko (hence, Fujiko), both also responsible for the popular "Oba Q" strip about a likable ghost.

Shogakukan, publisher of *Gakunen Zasshi*, reports that fan letters addressed to Doraemon or Fujiko number about 100,000 a month. Further, paperback collections of Doraemon's exploits—18 titles in all—have sold over 30 million copies, a figure the publisher says is equalled only

by the combined sales of its 38 paperback collections of yet another cartoon character, baseball star Doka Ben.

In addition to his Toho features (the cat starred in a third and fourth feature in 1982, *DORAEMON—NOBITA NO DAIMAHO* and *DORAEMON FESTIVAL*), Doraemon has also appeared in a campaign organized by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and has been the star of TV commercials for confections, frozen foods, toys, soft drinks and tea. For children wondering what to do with their allowance money, there are an estimated 300 different kinds of Doraemon-related products to choose from, including badges, dolls, stationery and savings banks.

A major factor in Doraemon's impact on the Japanese is, not unexpectedly, television. Premiering on TV Asahi in April of '79, the adventures of the blue-hued feline were broadcast Monday through Friday from 6:30-7:00 p.m., regularly garnering ratings in excess of 20%. Now (as of May, 1982) *DORAEMON* is shown only on Fridays from 7:00-7:30 p.m., but still cops impressive ratings. Indeed, during any given week, the program will make it into the Top Thirty Programs chart compiled by the Tokyo-based ratings firm, Video Research.

Putting words into Doraemon's mouth is Nobuyo Oyama, a 20-year veteran dubber whose past voices include those of a goby, a cricket and the leg of a desk. ("That one was

easy," she avers, "since no one has any idea what a desk leg talks like.") Oyama is noted for her hoarsely unique vocalizations and is in constant demand, especially when the character to be dubbed is an animal or exceptionally naughty. Nonetheless, she refuses to take more than one dubbing assignment during any given TV season, although she is not averse to appearing in TV series and is currently (as of May 12, 1982) a regular on two TBS offerings, one on TV Asahi and one on Nagoya TV.

Oyama, whose fame is beginning to eclipse that of her well-known husband, actor Keisuke Tsunagawa, has her own theory about the surge in Doraemon's popularity: "It's all a matter of good timing," she says. "Five or six years ago, not all that many people read science fiction stories. But times have changed and now even kindergartner's know about time machines. Doraemon, being an SF creation and cute besides, is a natural!"

No shrinking violet, Oyama is positive that no one else can do the cat's voice, and Doraemon's creators agree, saying the cats image and voice are "perfectly matched." About the only complaint Oyama has about the job is that the pressure she must put on her stomach to produce Doraemon's voice makes her hungry and, consequently, she feels she's now beginning to look like the roly-poly cat. ■

Reprinted from *Variety*, May 12, 1982.



REVIEWS



Poster for Daiei's HAUNTED CASTLE.

HAUNTED CASTLE

The director has built a gripping film out of cliché.

In 1726, Lord Nabeshima (Koichi Uenoyama) of Saga takes a fancy to a blind monk's sister, Saya (Mitsuya Kamei). Monk Matashichiro (Akihisa Toda) lives on a small "sympathy allowance" of 3000 *koku* (rice-tax) of land, though once his clan dominated the region. Still, he refuses to bow to Lord Nabeshima's lecherous interest in

Sayo. During his regular game of go (an Asian variety of chess), Matashichiro detects the Lord and his chamberlain (Mutsuhiro Taura) trying to cheat at the game. The chamberlain denies having removed a piece from the gameboard. In the ensuing argument, the Lord and chamberlain kill the monk, whose dying words are "It's unforgivable!" At that moment, in the temple, Sayo sees a string break on the blind man's lute. The chamberlain has the body dumped in a well and the well filled with sand.

Tama, the black cat which earlier tried to keep the monk from leaving the temple in the first place, brings a bloodied bit of cloth to Sayo, which she recognizes as part of her brother's clothing. Ordered to leave Saga the next morning, she chooses suicide over banishment, cutting open her stomach, asking the cat Tama to lap her blood as she dies. In this way the cat gains supernatural powers and can haunt the castle.

Komori (Kojiro Hongo), a sympathetic vassal, tries both to resolve the mystery of the monk's death (not knowing his own master is the culprit) and to divest the castle of the murderous ghost-cat. The cat first possesses the body of a lady-in-waiting, who becomes a grotesque female spirit killing innocent women in the castle. Vassal Hanzan Komori manages to slay the possessed woman, but the spirit merely takes over Lord Nabeshima's wife, Toyo (Naomi Kobayashi). Thus the Lord grows ill from making love to his own wife.

A weird exorcism ends in the death of several priests. Vassal Komori elicits the aid of the temple's abbot, who creates a shirt inscribed with protective sutras which he will wear while battling the ghost-woman, a similar kind of device being used in the story of Hoichi the Earless in *KWAIDAN*, directed by Masako Kobayashi.

The scenes when the cat-ghost-woman is leaping and skirting along the roof, with two spears hanging from her flesh, are spectacularly horrific. At the cost of many lives, Komori finally succeeds in killing the spirit, and the dead body of the cat Tama travels as a lightning bolt to the well where the blind monk was buried. Lord Nabeshima gives up his sexual excesses as a result of the terrifying consequences, reinstates the dead monk's family, and sends Komori off to find the heirs of Sayo and Matashichiro.

The elements of *HAUNTED CASTLE* are very much typical of the genre. The blind victim, supernatural cats, and frighteningly grotesque ghosts who float around murdering with their supernatural strength, are all basic themes. Though riddled with cliché, *HAUNTED CASTLE* is superb-of-kind, director Tokuzo Tanaka having an ability to take stock elements and create films

which are gripping from beginning to end, as he has done with numerous genres of Japanese film. The film alters the standard theme of revenge by not having the villainous lord simply killed, making him penitent instead. The hero of the piece must balance his feelings of real justice against his responsibility to a lord whose actions started the grief. This dilemma is genuinely resolved, rather than avoided by the easier ending of having everybody killed off. A reasonable script, excellent widescreen cinematography, and competent direction lends *HAUNTED CASTLE* a feeling of actual legend, rather than of exploitation cinema.

Other fantasy films by Tanaka include the perfectly dreadful *SASABUE OMON* (*THE GIRL WITH BAMBOO LEAVES*, Daiei, 1969) about an acrobatic woman who can use bamboo leaves as though they were steel darts, killing people left and right; *THE WHALE GOD* (*KUJIRA-GAMI*, Daiei, 1962) about a demonic killer whale which terrorizes a fishing village; *THE SNOW WOMAN* (*KAIDAN: YUKI JORO*, Daiei, 1968),

which is also the subject of an episode of Kobayashi's classic *KWAIDAN*. One of Tanaka's earliest films has the evocative title *OGRE OF MOUNT OE* (*OYAMA SHUTENDOJI*, Daiei, 1960), but I've not been able to ascertain whether or not it is really about an ogre, though a subtitled print does exist in America. All of his supernatural films have medieval settings.

By Jessica Amanda Salmonson.

HIROKU KAIBYODEN (aka *MYSTERY OF THE CAT-WOMAN*). A Daiei Motion Picture Co., Ltd. film. Released December 20, 1969. Director, Tokuzo Tanaka. Screenplay, Shozaburo Asai. Photography, Hiroshi Imai. Art director, Seiichi Ota. Editor, Hiroshi Yamada. Music, Hiroshi Mima. Assistant director, Rikio Endo. Filmed in Fujicolor and DaieiScope. Cast, Kojiro Hongo, Naomi Kobayashi, Mitsuya Kamei, Mutsuhiro Taura, Koichi Uenoyama, Akane Kawasaki, Natsuko Oka, Ikuko Mori, Akihisa Toda, Yasuke Terajima, Shozo Nanbu, Shintaro Nanjo, Kazue Tamaki, Shosaku Sugiyama, Seishiro Hara.

Mitsuyo Kamei as the evil spirit about to enter the body of Naomi Kobayashi.



Photo: © 1969 Daiei Motion Picture Co., Ltd.

REVIEWS

VILLAGE OF 8 GRAVESTONES

In spite of length the film displays an intriguing style and content.

A young man discovers he is heir to a large estate in *VILLAGE OF EIGHT GRAVESTONES*, but the moment he comes in contact with his heritage, villagers begin to die under agonizing situations. The victims are descendants of villagers who conspired four hundred years earlier to drug and murder eight samurai who had tried to become farmers in the area. The village's history has been marked by periodic mass murders, shown in vivid and frightening flashbacks. Since the young heir's father was himself a mass murderer, the villagers are certain that the man orphaned in childhood and only now reinstated with the village is responsible for the new series of murders. For a while the viewer wonders, too.

In gruesome, arty flashbacks to the 15th Century, we witness what was the source of the curse of the eight gravestones. The leader of the eight samurai was last to fall, refusing to die until he could put the curse on the village. He is truly a great screen

monster as his strangely echoing voice promises doom to the conspirators and all their descendants! When he is finally beheaded, his expression remains animated by gleeful certainty that his curse will come true.

The film is for a long while ambiguous about the possibility of a supernatural explanation for the murders. We're led to believe that a woman new to the village is using the people's superstitious nature in order to murder all who stand in the way of her taking over the land.

Kiyoshi Atsumi—star of more than two dozen "Tora-san" comedies—plays an amiable detective who begins an exhaustive search of records and events, trying to solve the mystery. He travels around Japan tracing the original eight samurai to their birthplaces, checking family records and their descendants, until the trail leads right back to the village of eight gravestones. He proves to his satisfaction

that both the young man heir to the property and the widow new to the village are descended from the leader of the samurai who cursed the village. Together they are the catalyst that spells doom for the descendants of those who committed a crime four centuries before.

It takes an unwieldy length of time for the film, based on a bestselling novel by Seishi Yokomizo, to place all these complications of plot out where the viewer can see them. Thirty minutes of this lengthy thriller could have been trimmed without injury to the story, improving the pace. However, slow as it moves, it's an exceedingly intriguing film both in style and content. Scenes deep underground in a truly eerie world are particularly overlong, but the sets and locations are so powerful it's perhaps understandable that the director, Yoshitaro Nomura, could not tear the camera away.

The pay-off for the long wait is spectacular. The murderess becomes possessed of the ghost of the samurai, turning into a cat-eyed monster pursuing the heir through subterranean passages, until his own latent power triggers a deadly earthquake. The sound and visual effects are riveting, the music (by Yasushi Akutagawa) appropriately melodramatic. The epilog, with the detective explaining everything, is unfortunately necessary, since key bits of information were left out before the climax, and things need to be tied up neatly with a closing lecture. It's too bad the film couldn't have ended on the phenomenal climax without the postscript to explain how the curse worked. Still, even with the flaws which better planning and editing could have cured, *VILLAGE OF EIGHT GRAVESTONES* remains a superior tale of the supernatural, one which deserves wider circulation than it has so far received.

As the film ends, we are given a final overwhelming image: the ghosts of the eight samurai standing on a hillside gazing down into the ravaged village, laughing. Pretty spooky!

By Jessica Amanda Salmonson.

YATSUHAKA MURA. A Shochiku Co., Ltd. film. Color and Panavision. 151 minutes. Released October 29, 1977. Director, Yoshitaro Nomura. Original story, Seishi Yokomizo. Screenplay, Shinobu Hashimoto. Director of photography, Takashi Kawamata. Music, Yasushi Akutagawa. Art director, Kyohei Morita. Cast, Kiyoshi Atsumi, Kenichi Hagiwara, Mayumi Ogawa, Ryoko Nakano.



Armor worn by all the ninja in their final assault on Shogun Ieyasu.

Photo: © 1979 Toei Co., Ltd.

DEATH OF THE SHOGUN

A superb if often incredible adventure.

Kinnosuke Yorozuya plays Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu in *DEATH OF THE SHOGUN*, a camp adventure more reminiscent of the best Chinese sword epics than a samurai film. Realistic sword battles are interposed with supernatural and improbable feats. History comingles with outright fantasy. Ieyasu's claim that an insulting inscription has been molded into a memorial bell is historical. The use of drugs to induce cinematically captivating hallucinations among Ieyasu's armies is, of course, pure fiction. This sort of mixture works surprisingly well.

Hiroki Matsukata plays Yukimura Sanada, a fanatic out to destroy the Shogun by any means. The theme to some degree parallels that of the *Mist Saizo*, *Last of the Ninja* series from the 1960's, but the ultimate conclusion of this new version is very different. Sanada's most important ally is the super-ninja spy called Monkey. Monkey's introductory scene depicts a Songoku-like anthropomorphic monkey leaping through the carnage, breaking swords with his bare hands. (Songoku was the wise monkey who accompanied Priest Sanzo from China to India collecting Buddhist relics, in the Japanese version of a Chinese religious folk tale. They are the subject of many Chinese dramas, and the subject of a Japanese television series, available in a dubbed version but shown only in Great Britain. In the television series, Priest Sanzo was played by an actress rather than an actor.) This introduction of the ninja Monkey is so cleverly filmed and edited that many a viewer is left uncertain that they really saw a monkey fighting. The illusion is never repeated, but the ape-like appearance of Monkey is subtly maintained



Photo: © 1977 Shochiku Co., Ltd.

REVIEWS

throughout his portrayal in DEATH OF THE SHOGUN.

Sanada and the ninja group make half a dozen graphically filmed attempts on the aging Shogun's life, some of them straightforward swordplay with excellent staging and choreography, some of them spectacular special effects sequences. In one special effects-oriented sequence, a hurricane lifts the combatants into the air, resulting in a sky-battle.

The final encounter, with Sanada's assassins all dressed in brilliant red armor and attacking Ieyasu's guards one by one (each introducing himself as Sanada), is gorgeous melodrama and a fine celebration of martial arts. The ending, with the Shogun grovelling for survival in the wilds, eating grass to stay alive, and pursued by the real Sanada to a surprising conclusion, is very unsettling but perfectly satisfying. The viewer is left with the feeling that this has been a superb, if often unrealistic, adventure.

An epilog shows us the only survivor

among the assassins, Monkey, performing ninjutsu finger exercises on a mountain top, against a changing cosmos. There is a strong suggestion in this that Monkey was indeed a supernatural agent, whose coming into the world was heralded by a great meteor, and who can in some way influence even the position of the heavens, not unlike the monkey-deity Songoku.

Many a viewer may think they prefer the intense realism of directors such as Akira Kurosawa, but Sadao Nakajima is, in his own way, as grand an artist. He is the George Lucas of Japanese adventure fantasy.

*By Jessica Amanda Salmonson.
Revised from a version published
in Martial Arts Movies magazine.*

SANADA YUKIMURA NO BORYAKU (aka THE SHOGUN ASSASSINS). A Toei Co., Ltd. film. Released in 1979. Director, Sadao Nakajima. Cast, Kinnosuke Yorozuya, Hiroki Matsukata, Hiroyuki Sanada, Tetsuro Tanba.

ALRIGHT, MY FRIEND

Peter Fonda as an E.T. caught up in weak sci-fi allegory of the Japanese society.

Peter Fonda plays a superstrong man from outer space who falls to Earth where he is chased by evil-doers called the Doors who want to clone him and build a master race. Sheltering him from harm are three Japanese who, even though they speak Japanese, have no trouble understanding this English-speaking alien. At any rate, Fonda the extra-terrestrial, by film's end, is able to say "Flown home."

You get the feeling that this film came about when Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland turned to a group of their peers and said, "Hey, kids, let's put on an allegory!" The Doors, with their somber suits and ties and short haircuts, are, it seems, meant to represent conservative, male-dominated Japanese society: Upon capturing Reona Hirota, they dress her in a kimono and set her to arranging flowers. They apparently lobotomize Hiroyuki Watanabe so that he performs his assigned job with uncomplaining, robotic efficiency.

The main failing of this supposedly trenchant social criticism is that the libertarian alternative to the Doors is symbolized by three unattractive simps with the studiously "cute" nicknames Mimimi, Monika (who is male), and Hachi. They are played by, respectively, Reona Hirota, Yoshiyuki Noo, and Hiroyuki Watanabe. Hirota is reasonably pleasant and has a rather nice figure; Noo isn't and doesn't. Watanabe is . . . becoming another Victor Mature.

The scientist and director is Ryu Murakami, a winner of Japan's most prestigious literary prize whose well-known love of films is evidenced by several cinematic references: Jinpachi Nezu's Doctor, with his Mandarin manners and Mao-style grey tunic, is a virtual copy of "Dr. No;" Hirota and Noo, and in a throwaway scene recalling BLOW-UP, play tennis without rackets or balls; and, of course, the film's central premise—alien comes to Earth—is composed of parts of E.T., THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH, and SUPERMAN. That Fonda's strength is sapped by ordinary, garden variety tomatoes suggests that Murakami is even familiar with the cornball SFER, ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES. Good for him.

A Variety, May 25, 1983 reprint.

DAIJOBU, MAI FURENDO. A Kitty film. Distributed by Toho International. Color. 119 mins. Released May, 1983.

Producer, Hidenori Taga. Director, Ryu Murakami. Screenplay, Ryu Murakami, based on his original story. Director of photography, Kozo Okazaki. Assistant to director, Loichi Nakajima. Art director, Osamu Yamaguchi. Sound, Hideo Nishizaki. Lighting, Kazuo Shimomura. Editor, Sachiko Yamaji. Music director, Kazuhiko Katoh. Cast, Peter Fonda, Jinpachi Nezu, Reona Hirota, Hiroyuki Watanabe, Yoshiyuki Noo, and Kumi Aichi.

THE JAPANESE FANTASY FILM JOURNAL
#13
MAKING OF GODZILLA • JAPAN'S MASTERS

JFFJ #13

JFFJ #12

the japanese fantasy film journal

**J F F J
B A C K
I S S U E S**

Have you missed any of these fantastic issues? #12/GODZILLA and Post-War Japan; Eiji Tsuburaya; Ghidrah on Film; and much more. #13/The Making of GODZILLA; The Toho Legacy 1960-1965; and more. Each can be yours for only \$3 per copy. Send your order today to Greg Shoemaker, 3235 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo, OH 43610, U.S.A.

JAPANESE GIANTS Number 7

This issue features an in-depth look at the Toho classic ATRAGON plus film news, the latest in Japanese animation and more. Send \$3.50 to Ed Godziszewski 5847 N. Markham Chicago, Il. 60646 coming soon...

TRIVIA

Not so much craziness this time, I'm afraid. Mislaidd some suggestions sent to me by the faithful out there. Your support is gratefully appreciated, to be sure. Were my own memory so supportive!

What say we tackle television first. From that vast wasteland, via *Square Pegs*, comes the following dialogue. It ensues when a female student comments upon a rumor she heard, that someone was supposedly creating a giant monster. "Oh,



Fanzine Plugs

Midnight Marquee #30. 36 wraparound, offset printed pages. Now all typeset—and with the addition of color covers! For only \$3 absorb the likes of an analysis of *BURN WITCH, BURN*; a survey of the comedy-horror pictures of Abbott and Costello; a look at the music of Bernard Herrmann for *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* television series; a comparative examination of *HALLOWEEN* and *HALLOWEEN II*; a retrospective of *THE VAMPIRE*, including interviews with its director, star, and screenwriter; and much more—illustrated by a fine assortment of rare photos. The editor says *MidMar* is going to stay with us for a while due to increased circulation—forever, we hope. Order the annually-published magazine from Gary Sveha, 4000 Glenarm Ave., Baltimore, MD 21206.

Fear of Darkness #4. 40 page mimeo zine on the "bizarre and unusual cinema today." Initially an extension of the gore cinema's recent rise to popularity, the mag has evolved to include low budget exploitation films in its coverage. Contents: an article spotlighting quality performances in horror films; film reviews; "Bombastic Bikers, Hairy Hippies and Cinematic Sleaze," a rundown on current newsletters featuring *FOD's* subject matter; "Forgotten Giant of Sleaze: Ernie Brooks;" more. \$1.50 from Tim Mayer, P.O. Box 02252, Columbus, OH 43202.

CinemaScore #10. Subtitled "the film music journal!" Expanded from a digest format to magazine size, the new issue boasts a hefty count of 36 wraparound, offset printed pages with a selection of meaty subjects. \$2 will let you score with: a look at new film music; interview with Basil Poledoris and review of his *CONAN* score; interview with James Horner and review of his music for *STAR TREK II*; interview with composer Ernest Gold; reviews of *MARCO POLO's* and *HALLOWEEN II's* music; European fantasy film scores on record; and more. CS #10, a well-produced fanzine, is to film music what *Cinefex* is to the arena of special visual effects. Send to Randall Larson, P.O. Box 70868, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.

The Jade Screen #3. *Martial Arts Movies*, alas, is gone, but this magazine returns, better 'an ever! There are 86 pages worth of superb artwork, photos, and great, written material. This fanzine is a pleasure to read. Some of the contents: career retrospective of Angela Mao Ying; reviews/analyses of *TOWER OF DEATH*, *HINOTORI*, *MASTER WITH CRACK FINGERS*, *AN EYE FOR AN EYE*, *THE TREASURE HUNTERS*, and many more; interviews with Fu Sheng and Carter Huang; part 1 of a comic story version of the life of Bruce Lee; more. Send \$4.50 for your copy to Karen Shaub, 9783 52 Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL 33708.

you mean like Rodan. Oh, no, that would have to have been Mr. and Mrs. Rodan. How about *Mothra*?," remarks friend Johnny. He immediately segues into the *Mothra* chant. The girl, in desperation, demands, "We need help!" Johnny replies, "Hey, how about Johnny Sokko's flying robot!" Far out, man. And thanks, Mark Rainey, for this gem.

From the print media emerges a most humorous analysis of monster movies by Dave Barry, whose material for Feature Associates is syndicated to newspapers throughout the U.S. Mr. Barry is hilarious, and this excerpt taken from his article "Horror at the Movies" is a fine example:

"The best movies, as you might expect, were made by the Japanese, who exported them in huge batches to the United States in the 1950's. These movies generally feature large reptiles or insects that come out of the ocean and kill large quantities of Japanese. These movies are artistically balanced. On the one hand, you get the thrill of watching a large reptile or insect wreak havoc; on the other hand, you feel secure in the knowledge that it is wreaking havoc on people who don't even speak English."

An avid fan of heavy metal music, I chanced upon *Metal on Metal* by Anvil (Atic, LAT 1130) which offers a supercharged tune entitled "Mothra," a variation on the *Mothra* tale which focuses on the allegorical nature of the Toho film. You might wish to check it out.

Finally, Joe Saine, entrepreneur of King's Comics in Toledo, Ohio, and dealer of fine magazines, this one for instance, advised us of a set of cards issued by an art supply company in Melbourne, Australia. Each "Texta Monster Swap Card" was a bonus with the purchase of a Texta nylorite pen.

Cover art for DC Comics' third issue of *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew!* whose story is about a certain giant named "Frogzilla." Submitted by Stephen J. Krauss through the courtesy of DC Comics' Mike Flynn.

The set consists of a total of 36 cards, measuring 1 1/8" x 2 1/4", printed in ghoulish colors (hand-tinted black and white scenes). But what makes the set so unusual is the fact that the great majority of the cards, 35 to be exact, display Japanese monsters and two giant live-action robots, *Goldar* and *Ultraman*. The oddball card is a tight shot of Lon Chaney's wolfman.

I can only guess that the cards were distributed in 1966 or 1967 since the Japanese films and TV shows from which the scenes were culled were

A sample of the 36 "Texta Monster Swap Cards" from Australia. What a collector's item!



released in Japan at that time. However, I had long thought Japanese monster fare was off-limits in Australia, and that it wasn't until the seventies that the films were allowed to be imported. No copyright date exists on the cards, so one can only surmise a date of issuance.

Wish to thank Bob Johnson and Sean McDonald for their unpublished contributions.

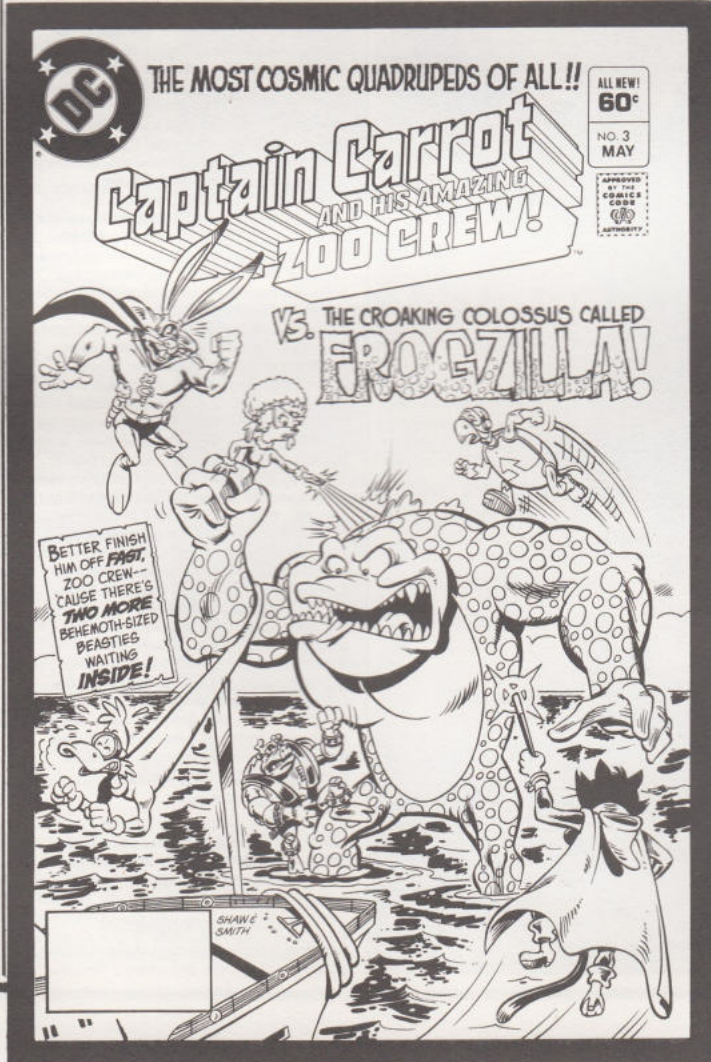
All for now. Til Marshall McLuhan stops spinning in his grave...



Classifieds

FOR SALE American Cinematographer magazine on the making of movies, \$5 each: *THE SHINING*; *SUPERMAN*; *THE BLACK HOLE*; *KING KONG* (remake); *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*; *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*. Japanese soundtrack records: *THE INUGAMI'S* (mystery thriller / 2 bands from LP / stereo 45rpm), \$4; *CATASTROPHE 1999* (2 bands from LP / stereo 45rpm), \$4. U.S. press-book (12 pages plus 9 page "Ad Pad") for 1970 reissue of Disney's *IN SEAP* "I OF THE CASTAWAYS", \$5. U.S. pressbook (16 pages plus 8 page "Ad Pad") for first release of Disney's *ESCAPE FROM WITCH MOUNTAIN*, \$5. Japanese handbills (color poster art b/w photos and info from film; approx. 7 1/4" x 10 1/4"), \$1.50 each: *SUPERMAN*; *DAWN OF THE DEAD*; *ALIEN*; *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*; *GALAXY EXPRESS 999*; *MESSAGE FROM SPACE*; *BE FOREVER YAMATO*; *THE WAR IN SPACE*; *COBRA / MEGAFORCE* double bill. 4 page Japanese brochure (sepia tone; 5 1/2" x 8 1/2") for *WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH*, \$1. *MASTER OF THE WORLD* monaural soundtrack album on the Veejay label (very good condition), \$7.50. Belgian posters (approx. 13" x 18"), \$3 each: *THE GREEN SLIME*; *RODAN*; *GODZILLA*. 4 different German color lobby cards from Shaw Bros': *MIGHTY PEKING MAN* (only 1 shows monster), \$2.50 set. German 2 color poster (11 1/2" x 18 1/2") for *GODZILLA VS. GIGAN*, \$1. German full size color poster, \$5, for South Korea's *YONGARY, MONSTER FROM THE DEEP*. Japanese full size color posters, \$5 each: *THE WAR IN SPACE*; *THE VAMPIRE ROSES* (aka *EVIL OF DRACULA*). Japanese full size color posters, \$2.50 each: *A SCREAM FROM NOWHERE* (mystery thriller); *"JUMP HIGH"* HIROMI (animated feature about a young female tennis player); *TOMORROW'S JOE* (anti-feature concerning a young male boxer, 2 different). Japanese full size color posters, \$10 each: *GODZILLA VS. MEGALON*; *GODZILLA* (1976 reissue). JFF T-shirt, \$9 each, men's large (just 2) and extra large (just 1). 4 different 16mm color 30 second TV trailers for *CLASH OF THE TITANS*, \$10 set. Order from Greg Shoemaker, 3235 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo, OH 43610, USA. Prices include U.S./Canadian postage. Add \$1 (surface) or \$2 (air) to each item for delivery outside the U.S. and Canada. All items are subject to prior sale and are one of a kind unless indicated, so please include a SASE with order.

JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI #4 is an amateur newsletter that focuses on the films and TV shows of Japan. Featured are reviews of *MESSAGE FROM SPACE*, *GATCHAMAN*, and more. Each issue costs \$1.50. Make checks payable to Damon Foster, at 26986 Grandview Ave., Hayward, CA 94542.



LETTERS

#14 in Overview

All the reprints from other sources tend to give JFFF #14 a feel that is something less than original, a problem #13 did not have. At least articles on TIME SLIP and WATER CYBORG are definitely informative and present us with views that, had you not run them, the readers probably would never have seen. Now, the LEGEND OF SYRIUS piece, if nothing else, is stunning visually. Lawrence Wharton's article is okay, another bit of insight into the philosophical rationale behind our favorite films, a type of thing that I feel is getting to be overdone. Keep them to a minimum, I suggest.

"The Toho Legacy" is my favorite article, (but) I think your comments about WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS being a sequel to FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD are rather inaccurate. The regenerating cell theory is the only direct tie to the earlier film, the pre-production title notwithstanding. This explanation about the gargantuas coming from Frankenstein's regenerating cells is completely plausible and provides an excellent framework for their existence, but it is not clearly brought out in the film. Dr. Stewart tells about their finding the young brown gargantua and how the green one may have reproduced from the brown one's cells, but the origin of Sanda is never explained. This is, at least, in the American version; perhaps in the original Japanese version the link is made clear. However, as all of Toho's monsters belong to a basically self-contained universe, I doubt that WAR is a direct sequel any more than KING KONG ESCAPES is one to KING KONG VS. GODZILLA.

(In FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD) the devilfish (was to have) appeared originally after

Frankenstein threw Baragon into the sea, and then (the monster) apparently kills Frankenstein. As this (sequence) was thrown in more or less as an afterthought, it is well that it was deleted from the final (Japanese) print.

"THE MIGHTY PEKING MAN" made for good reading. Horacio Higuchi is one of JFFF's finest writers. He usually has something a little unexpected for us. "Letters" and "Plugs" were most welcome.

Ah, the return of Murad Gumen. I wondered if he still existed. And exest he does! The "Hideyo Tsuburaya" comic is a work of underground genius, rivalling Kyle Smith's "Kumayama Komix" (in Japanese Giants) which use every inside joke from Japanese fandom that exists. I hope you get more of these.

Mark Rainey
1023 Indian Trail
Martinsville, VA 24112

Reader Ed Godziszewski, editor of Japanese Giants, has advised us that in the Japanese print of WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS the monsters are constantly referred to as Frankenstein when their origins are discussed, but you are right about the suppression in the U.S. version—ED.

Re: "Toho Legacy"

On page 30 (of #14) you mention the film WHIRLWIND which you were assuming was a fantasy film. There is no fantasy element to it, but there is some nice miniature work showing the burning and destruction of Osaka castle. It's a pretty straightforward samurai adventure.

I was surprised to see that still of THE ADVENTURES OF TAKLA MAKAN on page 22, and your brief synopsis with the article on "The Toho Legacy." I'm confused because I saw a film by

Keiko Kishi and Tatsuya Nakadai in KWAIDAN's "Woman of the Snow" sequence.

this title which had no fantasy in it, and I wonder if there were two films in an aborted series, one fantasy and one historical. The film I saw was about a naive monk looking for the remains of a Buddha to take back to Japan and found a new Buddhist sect, helped across the Chinese frontier by a wild and strong Toshiro Mifune. Their many adventures together don't include any sorcery or magic of any kind in this film. It's possible that the film I saw was simply shown under the wrong title. Most annoying.

Your short discussion of the "In a Cup of Tea" segment of KWAIDAN calls it "the least of the stories." I found it exceedingly well done myself, and the most subtle. Kobayashi actually filmed it in a way that shows the slow breakdown of an imperturbable samurai—unruffled by anything, no matter how bizarre—into a crazed hysteric who just can't cope any longer. It plays off traditional stereotypes of the samurai who is brave in any situation, and wrinkles the cliché.

I thought the least of the four tales was "The Black Hair," which you synopsized somewhat inaccurately. The samurai who returns to his wife only to find, in the morning, he has slept with a corpse, is then set upon by the woman's hair, which has become a living, snakey lifeform intent on exacting revenge. It's good, but slight.

Also, in your discussion of Toyoda's ILLUSION OF BLOOD, you don't mention, and I suppose didn't realize, that this is the most commonly filmed ghost story in Japan. The earliest version I know of is Daisuke Ito's silent film YOTSUYA GHOST STORY NEW EDITION (SHINPAN YOTSUYA KAIDAN, Nikkatsu, 1928). The syllable *shin* in the title usually implies *remake*. So it may already have been a hoary film in 1928. Keisuke Kinoshita made a two-film version (YOTSUYA KAIDAN, Shochiku, 1949), but he decided to make the ghost a mental projection of the samurai's guilt, not a literal haunting, so this one doesn't qualify as fantasy. All other versions are supernatural shockers, often exceedingly gory: Issei Mori's CURSE OF THE GHOST (YOTSUYA KAIDAN QIWA NO BOREI, Daiei, 1969); Kenji Misumi's YOTSUYA GHOST STORY (YOTSUYA KAIDAN, Daiei, 1959); Nobuo Nakagawa's TOKAIDO YOTSUYA GHOST STORY (TOKAIDO YOTSUYA KAIDAN, Shintoho, 1959), reported to be the best of all versions, and probably the most bloody; the Shiro Toyoda version you mentioned from 1965. All of these directors happen to be extremely competent period film and ghost film directors.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
P.O. Box 20610
Seattle, WA 98102

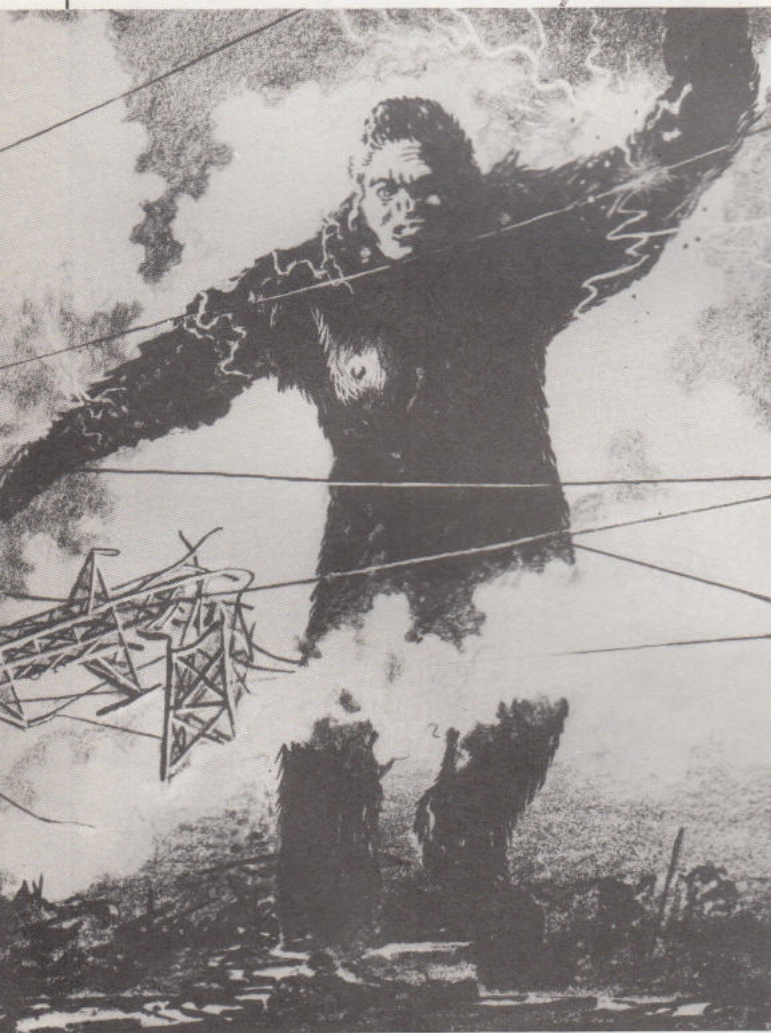
Add to your YOTSUYA GHOST STORY list Masaki Mori's 1956 film YOTSUYA KAIDAN for Shintoho.—ED.

Another Perspective

Enjoyed the new issue, particularly your latest installment of the Toho film history ("The Toho



Photo © 1965 Toho International Film Co., Ltd.



Art: Tim Johnson

Legacy," 1965-1969). Your analyses are always interesting to read, although I think the Godzilla films of the 1964-68 time period deserve a bit more credit for creativity than you gave them. EBIRAH, for example, is unprecedented in its storyline and serves up such a variety of different elements, situations, and action at a relentless pace that, with the exception of a few slow spots, it's hard to become bored as the adventure unfolds. Godzilla does not play as much a principal role in this picture as he would in later films, and the focus is on the humans and their eventual thwarting of the terrorists' plans. Once again, the monsters and their actions have a direct effect on the humans (the result of using an island as the backdrop for the adventure, as well as for economic reasons), and so the screenplay becomes highly integrated, interweaving one episode after another in a series of cause-and-effect situations, culminating in a very suspenseful ending. Technically, the film did have weak spots, but the creativity and imagination in it and its contemporaries (SON OF GODZILLA, MONSTER ZERO, GHIDRAH) cannot be denied.

GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA was a top-notch film in every respect, but had the same plotline and ideas been used in every subsequent film the series would quickly have gone stale. This, I think, was the saving factor in the films throughout the Sixties.

The rift between human and monster element, for the most part, was no greater than in the films of the previous decade. Rather, the major change came at the beginning of the Seventies when the "alien attack" plotlines began to be used repeatedly, and a great portion of the films were devoted to monster battles, taking place after all the human relationships and dilemmas had been resolved.

I guess it comes down to the fact that I admire the imagination of the 50's-60's films most of all—the melding of the fantastic in a way that had never been done quite so uniquely.

David Schinkel
7826 Castle Rock Dr.
Warren, OH 44844

Correction

On MIGHTY PEKING MAN: Li Hsiu-Hsien did not star in BRUCE LEE AND I, and furthermore, BRUCE LEE AND I was not a biopic, pseudo or otherwise. BRUCE LEE AND I starred Bruce's childhood friend Unicorn Chan, and the story was in no way related to Bruce's life. The film (Horacio Higuchi) is thinking of is I LOVE YOU, BRUCE LEE, also released as BRUCE LEE—HIS LAST DAYS, HIS LAST NIGHTS. It starred Li Hsiu-Hsien as Bruce and Betty Ting Pei as herself.

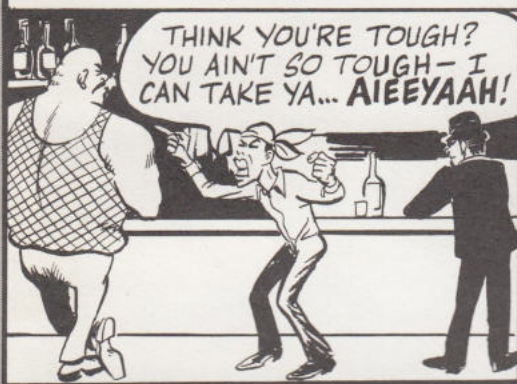
Karen Shaub, editor
The Jade Screen
9783 52nd Street
St. Petersburg, FL 33708

FUNNIES

THE MAN WHO PLAYED GODZILLA

BOY M•U•R•A•D G•O•M•E•N

EVEN AS EARLY AS 1956, SOME SAID HARUO NAKAJIMA IDENTIFIED TOO CLOSELY WITH THE ROLE OF **GOJIRA**.



ONE DAY, WHEN THE AMERICAN FILM VERSION WAS SCREENED AT THE STUDIO, HE EXPLODED!

AIEENGAH! RAYMOND BURR UPSTAGES ME, **GOJIRA!** I DEMAND ALL PRINTS BE RE-CALLED AND HIS SCENES CUT!



THEN THERE IS ONLY ONE HONORABLE THING TO DO...





GORATH