

# JFFS

## JAPANESE FANTASY FILM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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TADA0 NAGASHIMA, director of many popular animated superhero tv shows in Japan, passed away this last November. He will be remembered for such series as YUSHA RAIDEEN (BRAVE RAIDEEN), SUPER MAGNETIC ROBOT VOLTUS V, STAR OF THE GIANTS, FUTURE ROBOT DARTANIAS, FIGHTING GENERAL DIAMOS, ROSE OF VERSAILLES (Lady Oscar and Marie Antoinette's France), and many more. At the time of his death, Mr. Nagashima was working on the Japanese/French co-production of ULYSSES 31 for Tokyo Movie Shinsa.

MOVIE AND TV PREMIERES FOR SPRING VACATION--March 14 marked the beginning of the spring vacation period for Japanese children, traditionally an opportune time for SF/Fantasy projects in Japan. This vacation movie festival was kicked off by Osamu Tezuka's new animated feature UNICO which follows the adventures of a cute little unicorn. One of the characters is a little black kitter named Chao who eventually is transformed into a beautiful human girl. According to Atsuko Yokotani, the film succeeds in conveying both a beautiful and eerie atmosphere.



Chao

The MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM feature film was released March 14 by Shochiku Co. With character design by Yasuhiko Yoshikazu and mechanical designs by Okaojara Kunio, the film is basically a compilation of the first 5 episodes of the tv series of the same name. This practice of condensing tv episodes into feature films is quite common practice in Japan. GUNDAM is by far and away the hottest SF property currently in Japan. Over 5,000,000 advance tickets were sold for this film before its release! The JFFS hopes to be able to supply a short synopsis of GUNDAM in the near

future.

DORAEMON, the magical little robot cat and favorite of pre-schoolers in Japan, appeared in a brand new animated feature released March 13 entitled DORAEMON NOBITA NO UCHU KAITAKU SHI (Doraemon and Nobita's Space Frontier Days). In this film, Doraemon and Nobita go underneath their house using one of Doraemon's many gimmicks and they find a gateway into space--and the usual mass confusion follows. Doraemon and Nobita become supermen (with red and blue costumes, no less) to fight an outer space gang.

Also on the big screen in March was the Toei animated feature version of the classic fairy tale SWAN LAKE titled HAKUCHO NO MIZUMI. Among the films shown on television was ANJU & JUSHIO-MARU, an animated feature along the same lines as WANPAKU OJI NO OROCHI TAIJI (LITTLE PRINCE AND THE EIGHT-HEADED DRAGON), MONKEY MAGIC, and ADVENTURES OF SINBAD. The American teleseries SHOGUN, completely dubbed into Japanese, was shown in its entirety on tv in Japan, drawing favorable response.

Yet another new animated giant combination robot tv series from Toei titled HIYAKU JUOU GOLION (ONE HUNDREDTH KING OF BEASTS--GOLION) initially aired on

March 4. The name "GO" in Golion has a double meaning--not only is it the English command "go", it also means "five" in Japanese. Yes, Golion is a combination humanoid robot, formed by the five individual robot lions. Each lion is color-coded of course and controlled by a human pilot--#1 Kurolion (Black Lion)--Kogawa; #2 Akalion (Red Lion)--Isamu Kurogawa; #3 Midorilion (Green Lion)--Hiroshi Suzuishi; #4 Aolion (Blue Lion)--Takeshi Shirukao; #5 Kilion (Yellow Lion)--Tsuyoshi Seido.

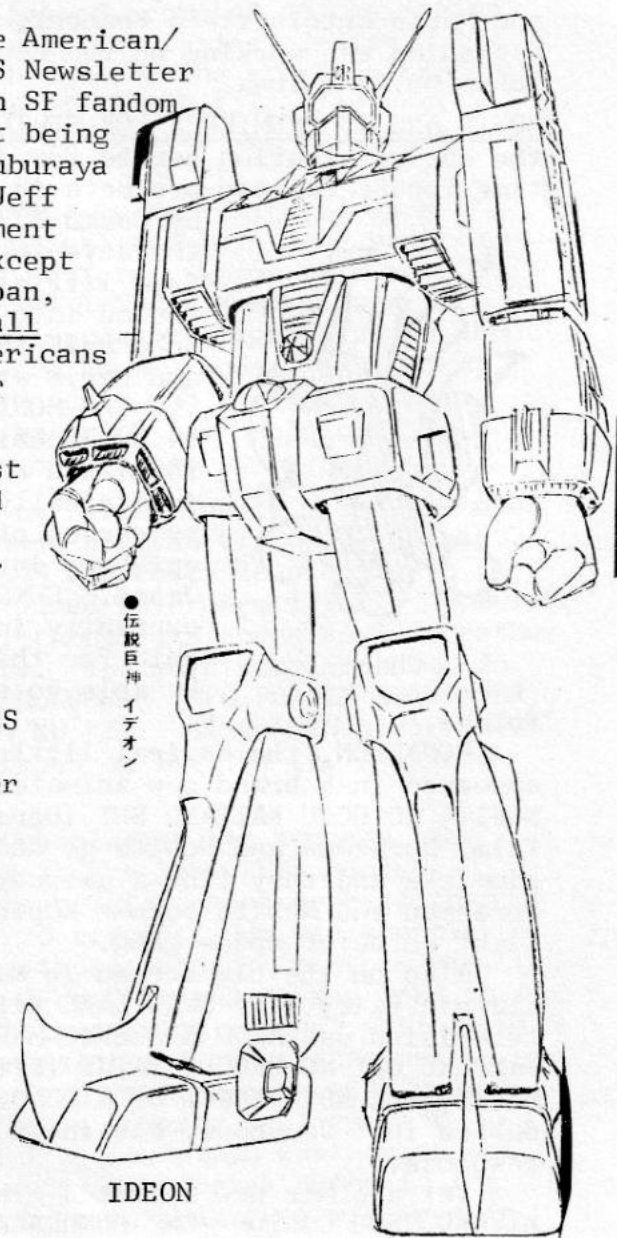
A new entry in the Time Bokan Series from Tatsunoko Productions is the show YATODETAMAN which features a phoenix, giant robot, and robot horse which all combine to form Centaur, a huge camel-shaped time machine. From its looks, the characters and villains are every bit as laughable and bungling as ever.

CORRECTIONS--Toei's new live action superhero robot reported in the last issue of the JFFS Newsletter is called SUN VULCAN, not SUN VULTAN.....In the MIGHTY ATOM series, Atom is actually kidnapped by the owner of the robot circus--he is not sold by Dr. Tenma....and on YAMATO III, the captain of the dimensional submarines is named Franken, not Flager....and his superior is General Gaidel instead of Gidon.

ULTRAMAN U.S.A.--That's the working title for the American/Japanese co-production first reported in the JFFS Newsletter Vol.2, No. 2. Don Glut, reknown amongst American SF fandom for authoring many articles and books, his latest being The Dinosaur Scrapbook, has been contacted by Tsuburaya Productions to pen a screenplay for this film. Jeff Segal (STAR WARS) had previously written a treatment which was rejected by the Japanese producers. Except for special effects which are to be filmed in Japan, Tsuburaya Productions is determined to see that all other phases of the production are handled by Americans and done in America. See the next newsletter for exclusive details about this project!

ULTRAMAN '80 RETURNS TO THE M78 NEBULA--The latest adventure series for an Ultra hero came to an end in March, but not before '80 got his chance to meet up with a few old friends/foes that his predecessors had encountered. ULTRAMAN '80 VS. ULTRA SEVEN aired on 2-11-81; the Baltan race made yet another appearance in ULTRAMAN '80 VS. BALTAAN on 2-18-81; Red King (from the original ULTRAMAN series) made a comeback in RED KING LIVES AGAIN! on 2-25-81. In March, the monsters Eleking (from ULTRA SEVEN) and U (the snow monster from the original ULTRAMAN) also got return engagements with ULTRAMAN '80. Near the conclusion of the series, the female UGM character Emi decided to leave the show in the February 4 episode. In the final episode, SAYONARA ULTRAMAN '80, the Ultra denizen Yurian (much like Zofie) comes to Earth to return Ultraman '80 to his home in the M78 Nebula.

KAMEN RIDER SUPER-1 MEETS SHOGUN?--What do these two completely different programs have in common, you ask? The female lead and romantic interest in both KAMEN RIDER SUPER-1 and the mini-series SHOGUN is none other than the beautiful Yoko Shimada!





YAMATO III CONTINUES--In episodes 15-20, the series takes a number of interesting twists.....Yamato begins the voyage to the planet Garuman at the invitation of their former nemesis Desler. Despite the protests of some crew members who have serious misgivings about Desler's true intentions, Kodai trusts Desler. After the destruction of Iscander and Gamiras (YAMATO--THE NEW VOYAGE), Desler had told Kodai that they would never meet again, yet Kodai somehow feels that Desler may be able to help in the current crisis facing Earth. Landing on Garuman, Desler personally greets Kodai and Yuki and escorts them to his magnificent palace in the capital city. In his quarters, Desler explains how he came to power on Garuman--after Iscander had been destroyed, Desler and the remainder of his fleet set out for a galaxy where it was believed that an ancestral race of Gamiras existed. Arriving at the planet Garuman, he discovered his ancestors under the ruthless slavery of the Bollar Empire. Fighting to free his bretheren, Desler rallied the Garuman people against the Bollar Empire and drove them from the planet. Desler's heroism was rewarded as the Garuman made him their emporer, and now Desler has mobilized his forces throughout the galaxy--to free others who suffer under Bollar's slavery.

This day happens to be Desler's birthday, and an impressive display of Garuman military might is put on review before Desler and Yamato's crew. Afterwards, Kodai invites Desler aboard Yamato. On the bridge, Desler pauses to kneel in silent respect to the portrait of Capt. Okita, his former foe. As Desler rises, Kodai chooses this moment to inform Desler of the imminent death of the sun and probable extermination of Earth's population, all because of the errant proton missile. Desler is shaken by the revelation and immediately orders that his finest scientist, Frausuki, devise a plan to counteract the effect of the proton missile on the sun. Science officer Sanada and his technical staff accompany Frausuki and a fleet of Garuman battleships equipped with proton missiles on their mission to Earth's solar system. As they depart, a surprise attack by Bolar warp missiles commences, knocking out much of Garuman's automatic defenses. The warp missiles pave the way for an enormous Bollar planet-destroying missile. With their heavy cruisers on the way to Earth, Garuman seems defenseless against this missile. Yamato takes off and uses the wave gun to destroy the killer missile before the killer missile can reach its destination.

The scientific expedition arrives in the asteroid belt near Mars where a great number of asteroids are gathered in by transport ships. The entire fleet warps towards the sun, arriving behind Mercury for protection from the increasing heat of the sun. Back on Garuman, Kodai and Yuki join Desler, confident of the mission's success, in watching the operation. The sun is first enveloped in a gaseous force field, and then the astroids and 4 proton missiles are sent into the sun. After anxious moments of waiting, the sun begins to calm itself! But the success is short-lived as suddenly the sun's temperature begins to climb even faster. The sun's surface erupts with renewed ferocity, blowing away the force field. Rather than face Desler with failure, Frausuki commits suicide by sending his ship into the sun. Desler is deeply shaken by this turn for the worse. He tells Kodai that the sun is now beyond hope, but he offers directions to the planet Phantom which he thinks may be able to support the human race. Before leaving for Phantom, Kodai and Yuki encounter a group of Garuman people secretly worshipping the mysterious spirit Sharuba. The spirit woman appears in the sky, pointing the way to Phantom when Garuman police arrive on the scene, the crowd dispersing before anyone can be harmed.

En route to Phantom, Yamato comes across a disabled spaceship carrying a group of Bollar and Garuman



DAISUKE DOMON

people, all followers of the spirit woman Sharuba. Yamato helps the ship to resume its voyage and protects it from an attack by Bollar forces. The constant persecution of Sharuba's people by both the Bollar and the Garuman begins to weigh heavily on Kodai's mind.

But Kodai's thoughts quickly turn to other matters as Yamato arrives at Phantom. The planet bears close resemblance to Earth--a verdant, untouched jewel, seemingly quite receptive to human life. As the crew begins to set up temporary living quarters on the planet, weird events begin to happen--the spirits of Capt. Okita, Mamoru Kodai, Queen Staasha, and many others begin to appear....and so do the images of Hero's Hill and New Tokyo! What is the mystery of planet Phantom? The answer to this question as well as the conclusion to YAMATO III will appear in the next newsletter.

YAMATO III, due to low ratings, was scheduled to be cancelled after only 26 episodes instead of running the full 52 it was originally intended to. As a result, it seems that the story line picked up considerably over recent episodes. Unfortunately, this and other improvements which seemed prompted by the series upcoming cancellation seemed to come too late to avert the series' demise. Dissatisfaction with the new team of artists and with some of the stories (probably those in the middle of the series) spelled the end of YAMATO III. The series concluded broadcasting on March 28. No new Yamato adventures are contemplated in the near future.

SF/FANTASY MAKES IT BIG AT 1981 SAPPORO ICE FESTIVAL--As was featured on NBC's TODAY SHOW on March 25, 1981, the Sapporo Ice Festival for this year boasted the usual array of huge ice sculptures by various artists. Among this year's subjects were a full-sized replica of SPACE CRUISER YAMATO. Many popular SF characters were also immortalized in ice, some in impressive figures up to about 40 feet tall! Among those characters appearing were Susumu Kodai, Yuki Mori, Ultraman '80, Mighty Atom, Doraemon, Mobile Suit Gundam, and the Moon Mask Rider (complete with his cycle). This amazing display of ice sculptures is a regular treat for the inhabitants of northern Japan each year.

JAPANESE FANTASY IN EUROPE--Jeanette Eilke gives us further news....The animated series CAPTAIN FUTURE is currently the only Japanese program airing in Germany. A French version of this series titled CAPTAIN FLAM currently is playing in Canada, but oddly enough the program has not yet aired in France itself. However, Japanese animation on French tv is quite popular, though its appearance is rather sporadic due to a scarcity of available time slots. The most popular shows in France are LA BATAILLE DES PLANETES (GATCHAMAN), GOLDORAK (UFO PLANET GRANDIZER), ALBATOR (CAPT. HARLOCK), MAZINGER, CANDY, and SAN KU KAI. GATCHAMAN also shows in Great Britain, and CAPT. HARLOCK has just surfaced on Italian tv. Jeanette promises more news next time....

As another newsletter rapidly approaches its conclusion, it appears that the prospects for obtaining the records mentioned in the last JFFS Bookshelf appear good. Response to this offer was quite encouraging, much more so than to the previous offering of stills. If you ordered records, you can shortly expect to receive a notice concerning your order--those records in stock will take approximately one month for delivery to the JFFS; the others may take up to four months to arrive. Also, many members will be receiving renewal notices with this newsletter. You will not receive any more newsletters after this unless you renew your membership--hopefully you will have been pleased enough with your membership this time around to give us another shot. However, all current members will receive a copy of the Yearbook upon its completion whether or not you renew. Despite the relentless march of inflation and postal rates in the upwards direction, we are pleased to announce that membership dues will remain at \$10 annually. That's all for this time....next time, lots of news on ULTRAMAN U.S.A.....sayonara!