

MAFFAPA

34

JANUARY
1991



Chinese Take A New Look At Pearl Buck

Reuters

Beijing
Pearl Buck, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist once reviled by the Beijing authorities for her anti-Communist views, is being rehabilitated in China nearly 20 years after her death.

Chinese literary scholars recently held a symposium to reassess the works of the "old China hand," the official New China News Agency said yesterday.

Her numerous novels, many of them set in China and criticized as imperialist by the Communists, received a more objective appraisal at a meeting late last month, the news agency said.

The conference was held in her old hometown of Zhenjiang, in southeastern China, where she was brought by her missionary parents as an infant.

Her former residence is being restored as a Sino-U.S. cultural center and will be opened next year on the 100th anniversary of her birth, the agency said.

Buck spent 36 years of her life in China and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1938 for her novel "The Good Earth." She died in 1973.

In interviews in the 1950s and '60s she frequently voiced her opposition to China's Communist government.

Experts at last month's meeting agreed that her work could not be judged as merely good or bad, the news agency report said.

Welcome to the 34th issue of MAFFAPA, Martial Arts Film Fan (and Asian Culture) APA, for January 1991. Contributions by the following people are being used.

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Ron Lim did the cover, from Blood Sword Dynasty comicbook.

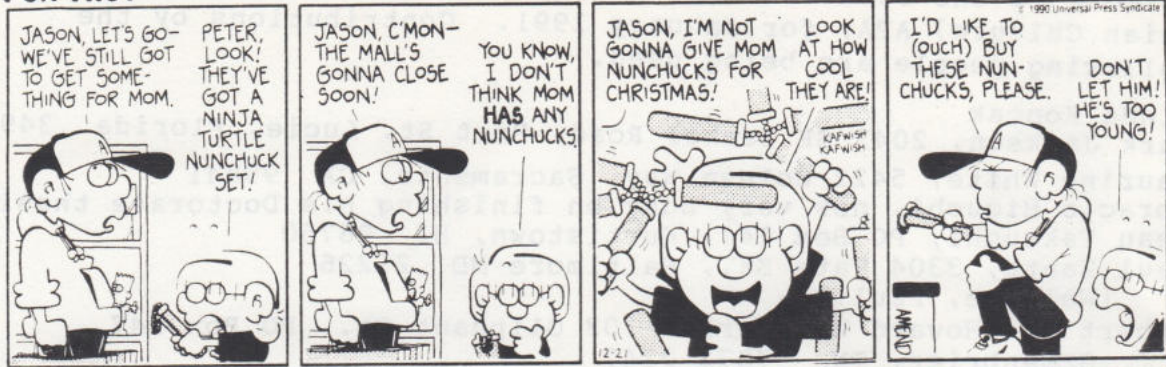
I phrased that wrong. Ron drew the cover specifically for Maffapa, using characters from Blood Sword Dynasty.

Victor Lim

The deadline for Maffapa 35 is April 30, 1991. If your name is not listed above as a contributor, you must contribute to the next issue to receive it. Your contribution, at least one page, preferably typed, must reach Laurine White by the end of April. Minimum contribution is 1 page per issue or 2 pages every other issue. The copy count is 18. Please send 18 copies of each page plus \$1.25 (or maybe more, hard to tell since I don't know how thick the issue will be) to cover return postage. If you don't send 18 copies, send your original pages plus \$1.00 per page to cover photocopy costs. I prefer checks or stamps instead of cash, which is dangerous to trust to the mail. And don't forget a 9 x 12" self-addressed envelope, so I can send Maffapa 35 to you.

Apologies for the lateness of this issue. So few contributions arrived by deadline, that I threw a couple of contributions together from what people sent me awhile ago, and waited a few more weeks for a few more contributions. Otherwise, for a cover Maffapa would have a Mitsubishi photocopy test print. It is gorgeous, and I'll use it eventually, but it isn't the same as a piece of art from a real contributor.

FOX TROT



Beetle Bailey



DOONESBURY / Garry Trudeau



ADAM



Mark Jackson/2043 SE Isabel Road/Fort St. Lucie/ Florida/ 34952
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Hello, everyone,

Obviously, we are all concerned with the war in the Persian Gulf. When our country is locked in conflict with another nation, our individual pursuits seem trivial by comparison. Yet, I believe we should find some diversion from the daily reports of scud attacks and jet sorties so I look forward to reading your various comments on how the martial arts are treated in films and television.

Today, I am going to review the 1932 film classic THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME. Based on the short story by Richard Connell, the plot has inspired epic films and books such as DIE Hard and Ninja -- Men of Iga. A world--famous hunter, portrayed by Joel McCrea, is shipwrecked on an isolated island to learn he will be hunted himself by the Russian count who has lived in self exile so he can use survivors of maritime disasters such as he as prey in the Ultimate Hunt. Gang, this is the granddaddy of all pursuit thrillers. When I discovered the story in a high school reader, I was enthralled with the concept of the hunter having to draw on his intelligence to compensate for the disproportionate resources the Mad Count has at his disposal. I was feeling its influence when I wrote MEN OF IGA and was intrigued when I learned recently that it had been filmed in 1931 by the same company that produced KING KONG (In fact, both movies were filmed at the same time with the same sets). It is in public domain so you can buy it for \$5.00 at K-Mart.

Pursuit thrillers differ in the wrap-around story that leads to the chase. The protagonist can be a big-game hunter like Cornel Wilde's character in THE NAKED PREY or a professional thief as the character Parker in the novel Slayground. One must be ingenious, hopefully, in devising the booby traps that the hero uses in balancing the scales. The tactics of the protagonist in THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME do not strain credulity and that's all I can say without giving away surprises. There are great fight scenes in this film. While the film is short, (62 minutes--a filmatic convention for films of the Thirties) the narrative is perfectly balanced with half devoted to introductory exposition and the other half the tension of the chase. The action never lets up when the fun starts and I recommend it to all who enjoyed the other works I have mentioned in this review.

As I began this contribution, A&E has started telecasting the Avengers episodes that featured Honor Blackman as Christine Gale. These episodes were live television with no exterior scenes. Every drama was shown within a TV studio with the action taking place on several stages.

Live television requires some adjusting but there are some cues to understand the significance of the show's production values. Primarily they lie in the sets. The sets for the "live" version of The Avengers are detailed and elaborate. The first episode I have seen had the cockpit, passenger section and galley for an airplane; an airport terminal with a supervisor's office, and several apartments all adequately furnished as they would be in the "real" world.

As Christine Gale, Honor Blackman is more reserved than Diana Rigg in her portrayal of Emma Peel. She is more direct with her interplay with the other actors than Diana Rigg. Her characterization is more developed than Linda Thorson's portrayal of Tara King in the last season. In the episode I have seen, her fight scene occurs in a cramped living room. She blocks a knife with her purse and tries to use a compact pistol but her opponent wrestles it away. She uses judo to imbalance him and relies on a judo chop to end the fight. While Emma had more elaborately choreographed fights, Honor Blackman's fights seem more authentic since in "real" life one tries to neutralize one's opponents as quickly as possible. Still, Honor showed a woman could credibly fight a man in hand-to-hand combat. Having a male-female team fighting crime was a revolutionary concept.

One gets a claustrophobic feeling in watching these "live" shows. The constraints of acting in a restricted studio affected Patrick MacNee's acting. He is more relaxed in the filmed shows so perhaps we should not judge too harshly and wait for A&E to rebroadcast Diana Rigg (but lets go ahead and watch Honor Blackman too).

* They simulated exterior scenes by having Patrick and Honor sit in a stationary vehicle in a darkened set with them isolated in a cone of light. With the interiors, they always keep the door prominent in shots so one is aware of the "world" outside the room.

Well the clock on the wall says its past One in the morning so I'd better sign off. Two reviews for the price of one. What can I say but ...

He is generous
to his FRIENDS.



KAMA #34 from Laurine White, 5422 Colusa Way, Sacramento, CA 95841
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This time I'm going through a pile of stuff, mostly newspaper clippings, and a few book notes I scribbled.

HEAVEN AND EARTH opened at the Kabuki Theater in San Francisco on February 8. It is "one of the most stunning samurai war epics to be seen here since Kurosawa's "Ran", was directed by Haruki Kadokawa with a budget of \$42 million. The battle scenes were shot in Alberta, Canada. "The historic struggle of two warlords to conquer and rule Japan is told with compelling force, astounding visual beauty and an exquisite musical score by Tetsuya Komuro." The poster was up at the Japanese Cultural Center 2 weeks before it opened. I asked at the Kabuki if HEAVEN AND EARTH would be playing there, and, even 2 weeks beforehand, the employees didn't know (or seem to care). The following week a clip from HEAVEN AND EARTH was shown on MTV's "The Big Picture". I phoned up the local art theater to check on the possibility of the movie playing in Sacramento; the person who answered the phone said he didn't think so. If I don't get back down to San Francisco to see the movie, it will eventually be released on video, available for rent in San Francisco, but without subtitles, at the Japanese video store there.

On the trip to San Francisco I picked up a copy of a recent novel by Eric Van Lustbader, ZERO. I haven't started reading it yet, but found a review of Lustbader's latest, ANGEL EYES, with amusing comments by the reviewer in the San Francisco Chronicle: "In such whap-'em, kick-'em, stab-'em, croak-'em bestsellers as THE NINJA, FRENCH KISS, SHAN, JIAN, THE MIKO and BLACK HEART, Eric V. Lustbader has been obsessed with portraying the Ultimate Hero. Half caucasian and half Asian, two-thirds killer, quarter zen monk and octaroon spy, the typical Lustbader hero is given many new incarnations in Lustbader's latest novel. This fat slob of a story with its many layers of cliches and gratuitous intrigue introduces three women as semi-heroes and several men as journeymen heroes before we get to the really big Hero, not a sandwich but a former astronaut whose exposure to radiation in space has caused his skin to become slick and utterly hairless. "The warrior's ideals are immutable, perfect, pure," a yakuza mobster tells Hanno, a Japanese wife-turned-killer on her own quest for blood. "Once you become one with them, they are yours for all time."

The first Creole cookbook, published in 1885, was written by Lafcadio Hearn.

Yasushi Inoue died recently at the age of 83. He was a Japanese novelist who wrote TUN-HUANG, among others. DUN HUANG was made into a movie in 1988, and is set in China a thousand years ago. If I could find the novel in English, then I could understand what is going on in the movie. It's very hard to follow with no subtitles.

Cable channel A&E is currently running a series called "Nippon: Japan since 1945" on Sunday nights. Whatever happened to CNN's excellent "This Week in Japan"? Replaced by the mediocre "East Meets West", which seems to have disappeared. The PBS station here is running something called "Asia Today", that I haven't watched yet.

Bernardo Bertolucci (whose latest movie, THE SHELTERING SKY doesn't seem to be doing well) wants to make a film about the life of Buddha. A domestic martial arts movie to be released this year is THE PERFECT WEAPON, starring no one I've heard of. Why is it that Van Damme's prevues (latest is LIONHEART) always seem to be for the same movie, in which he fights a death match somewhere, Hong Kong, Thailand, prison, etc.? Watching a Stephen Seagall prevue, I always want to see it, even if I don't actually go to the theater for it. Whereas, Van Damme... Yawn. THE CHINATOWN CONNECTION played on cable last month, with some joker named Bruce Ly playing a policeman training "Kung Fu Cops" in martial arts. It has to be one of the dumbest cop movies. Can you believe that an import/export drug smuggler (especially one moving in on a rival's business) would place his desk so that it's the first thing someone sees as the elevator door opens?? "Bruce Ly", with a badly dubbed voice and a worse haircut, moves so slowly that his fight scenes are boring. His cop partner, played by Lee Majors II, is the expert with a gun, wiping out multiple opponents with ease (and upsetting Latino community spokesmen when the baddies are from East L.A. Lee Majors II is the spitting image of his father, instantly recognizable (and he can't act either). Maybe the producers thought this would be an unusual buddy/cop movie, with the weapons user teamed with the martial artist. They actually tacked on one of those endings showing each cop on the team with a few words telling you what happened to him/her, maybe to fool you into thinking the story was based on a real event. Well, it wasn't real and no watcher will care what happens to these bozos.

A much more enjoyable cable movie last month was ALOHA SUMMER, with two blond haoles, 2 Japanese and 2 Hawaiians getting together in 1959 for a summer of surfing and fun. Robert Ito has a small role as one father. Sho Kosugi plays a Japanese who still resents losing WWII, and explodes when his son is out surfing or brawling with sailors rather than concentrating on kendo. The Japanese kid takes his friends to see a Miyamoto Musashi film starring Nakamura Kinnosuke, at a Japanese theater in Honolulu. (I saw the theater in 1974.) One of the haoles (played by Chris Makepeace) then daydreams of himself as Musashi, preparing to duel against the entire Yoshioka School. This movie should have included a "what happened to these kids" ending. Did they stay in touch? Did any of them marry the girls they met there? (I hope you got to see this one, Howard and Robert.)

TRACKER 2: GREEN LIGHTNING by Ron Stillman, published by Charter/Diamond Books, December 1990, is another book in a macho adventure series, this time with a bionic ninja, 1/4 Apache, Sioux, Norwegian, and African-American, a former hotshot pilot, and now blind. But this series is high tech. His useless eyes have been replaced by sonar and fiber optical nerves with infrared capability. Not to mention being a tae kwon do black belt. A KGB agent, Yuri, lives next door, and comes running to help, gun in hand, when Tracker's house is under seige by ninjas. The opposition in this book is the Ryoku Rai Kyookai, which steals computer codes through blackmail and murder, then uses them to syphon money out of companies worldwide, back into bank accounts in Tokyo. Tracker faces a variety of opponents, a Presidential assassin at a football, a female serial killer known as the "weiner whacker", a psycho son of a psycho Mongol, a beautiful Asian who kills with chopsticks, not to mention a horde of Uzi-carrying ninja. Oh yes, his little finger had been cut off previously by Libyan torturers, and was replaced by a replica with a transmitter inside. When he is really in trouble, he radios to a general in the Air Force who brings in the cavalry. In this type of novel, I

look for some obvious error, and this time it's a mention of "Kobi beef". Checking in the handy reference, THE WHOLE JAPAN BOOK by Boye De Mente, I find, under "Beefsteaks", that the best steaks come from beef raised in the Matsutaka area of Kobe.

While reading this mindless book, I was watching a mindless movie called TANGO AND CASH, which was followed on cable by FIST FIGHTER, a enjoyable low budget film about fist fighting, set in a South American town run by a colonel, an interesting character who regains his sense of honor after putting the hero through some hassles. The rich sleazoid American villain is played by Mike Connors.

THE PALADIN by C.J. Cherryh, published by Baen Books, July 1988. A skinny boy under a big hat travels through the village, and up the hill, where the old martial artist lives in solitude, sending all potential students away, unwanted. But the boy is different (of course) and persuades the old master (really in his early 40s) to train her in the way of the sword and bow, in her quest for vengeance against the evil warlord regent who controls the weak young emperor. The setting is an alternate China, no, really, not one of those quaint wimpy worlds with dying dragons or whatever. There's no fantasy, despite the legends that spring up about the demoness appearing from nowhere to induce the old master to don his old armor, mount his old warhorse, and descend his hill to lead the rebels against the regent's mercenaries. Half the book is spent on the hill, with the martial training, just like all those kung fu movies. Didn't you ever wonder how the old guy manages to live, to support himself, with so much free time, in those movies? In THE PALADIN, he is a former imperial warrior, retired outside a village, with the villagers providing most of his needs (he does hunt game on the hill), in return for his formidable reputation to scare away bandits.

MASTER OF KARATE by Richard Brightfield (Bantam Books, December 1990) is "choose your own adventure" #108. You belong to a high school karate club that has been invited to compete in a karate tournament. Your team wins the local contest and flies to Tokyo for the finals. You and 2 friends wander around and find a computer shop, which is suddenly attacked by hooded thugs. Do you (1) run out into the street, or (2) follow the clerk into the basement? From here on, you're in a rat maze. Make one decision and you turn to page 91. Decide otherwise and you turn to some other page. And depending on a series of decisions, you will win the tournament, be forced to work for the yakuza and lose your little finger, foil the latest attempt by UJEC to take over the world (the previous attempt, by military domination, was admittedly a mistake), become an amnesiac on a fishingboat, die in a hail of bullets, be drowned by a giant squid... This is rather fun, in a fluff-brained fashion. You (the hero) starred in two previous adventures, MASTER OF KUNG FU (set in China) and MASTER OF TAE KWON DO (set in Korea), but not in two others, SECRET OF THE NINJA and RETURN OF THE NINJA. From the artwork, you look vaguely Asian, but your ethnic background is not stated, nor your name. This is an easy read, but there's nothing deep in it. The Japanese are strictly stereotype yakuza or industrialists bent on domination of the world by use of subliminal electronics.

NIE XIAOQIAN (Nieh Hsiao-chien in Wade-Giles)
 Original story on which A Chinese Ghost Story
 is based.
 from Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio,

Herbert A. Giles's translation of
Pu Songling's Liaozhai Zhiyi (1681-1712?)
 Shanghai, Kelly & Walsh, 1908 (2nd edition)

contribution from

Horacio Higuchi

XVI. THE MAGIC SWORD

NING LAI-CH'EN was a Chekiang man, and a good-natured, honourable fellow, fond of telling people that he had only loved once. Happening to go to Chinhua, he took shelter in a temple to the north of the city; very nice as far as ornamentation went, but overgrown with grass taller than a man's head, and evidently not much frequented. On either side were the priests' apartments, the doors of which were ajar, with the exception of a small room on the south side, where the lock had a new appearance. In the east corner he espied a group of bamboos, growing over a large pool of water-lilies in flower; and, being much pleased with the quiet of the place, determined to remain; more especially as, the Grand Examiner being in the town, all lodgings had gone up in price. So he roamed about waiting till the priests should return; and in the evening a gentleman came and opened the door on the south side. Ning quickly made up to him, and with a bow informed him of his design. "There is no one here whose permission you need ask," replied the stranger; "I am only lodging here, and if you don't object to the loneliness, I shall be very pleased to have the benefit of your society." Ning was delighted, and made himself a straw bed, and put up a board for a table, as if he intended to remain some time; and that night, by the beams of the clear bright moon, they sat together in the verandah and talked. The stranger's name was Yen Ch'ih-hsia, and Ning thought he was a student up for the provincial examination, only his dialect was not that of a Chekiang man. On being asked, he said he came from Shensi; and there was an air of straightforwardness about all his remarks. By-and-by, when their conversation was exhausted, they bade each other good night and went to bed; but Ning, being in a strange place, was quite unable to sleep; and soon he heard sounds of voices from the room on the north side. Getting up, he peeped through a window, and saw, in a small courtyard the other side of a low wall, a woman of about forty with an old maid-servant in a long faded gown, humped-backed and feeble-looking. They were chatting by the light of the moon, and the mistress said, "Why doesn't

Hsiao-ch'ien come?" "She ought to be here by now," replied the other. "She isn't offended with you, is she?" asked the lady. "Not that I know of," answered the old servant; "but she seems to want to give trouble." "Such people don't deserve to be treated well," said the other; and she had hardly uttered these words when up came a young girl of seventeen or eighteen, and very nice looking. The old servant laughed, and said, "Don't talk of people behind their backs. We were just mentioning you as you came without our hearing you; but fortunately we were saying nothing bad about you. And, as far as that goes," added she, "if I were a young fellow, why, I should certainly fall in love with you." "If you don't praise me," replied the girl, "I'm sure I don't know who will;" and then the lady and the girl said something together, and Mr. Ning thinking they were the family next door, turned round to sleep without paying further attention to them. In a little while no sound was to be heard; but, as he was dropping off to sleep, he perceived that somebody was in the room. Jumping up in great haste, he found it was the young lady he had just seen; and detecting at once that she was going to attempt to bewitch him, sternly bade her begone. She then produced a lump of gold which he threw away, and told her to go after it or he would call his friend. So she had no alternative but to go, muttering something about his heart being like iron or stone. Next day, a young candidate for the examination came and lodged in the east room with his servant. He, however, was killed that very night, and his servant the night after; the corpses of both showing a small hole in the sole of the foot as if bored by an awl, and from which a little blood came. No one knew who had committed these murders, and when Mr. Yen came home, Ning asked him what he thought about it. Yen replied that it was the work of devils, but Ning was a brave fellow, and that didn't frighten him much. In the middle of the night Hsiao-ch'ien appeared to him again, and said, "I have seen many men, but none with a steel-cold heart like yours. You are an upright man, and I will not attempt to deceive you. I, Hsiao-ch'ien, whose family name is Nieh, died when only eighteen, and was buried alongside of this temple. A devil then took possession of me, and

employed me to bewitch people by my beauty, contrary to my inclination. There is now nothing left in this temple to slay, and I fear that imps will be employed to kill you." Ning was very frightened at this, and asked her what he should do. "Sleep in the same room with Mr. Yen," replied she. "What!" asked he, "cannot the spirits trouble Yen?" "He is a strange man," she answered, "and they don't like going near him." Ning then inquired how the spirits worked. "I bewitch people," said Hsiao-ch'ien, "and then they bore a hole in the foot which renders the victim senseless, and proceed to draw off the blood, which the devils drink. Another method is to tempt people by false gold, the bones of some horrid demon; and if they receive it, their hearts and livers will be torn out. Either method is used according to circumstances." Ning thanked her, and asked when he ought to be prepared; to which she replied, "To-morrow night." At parting she wept, and said, "I am about to sink into the great sea, with no friendly shore at hand. But your sense of duty is boundless, and you can save me. If you will collect my bones and bury them in some quiet spot, I shall not again be subject to these misfortunes." Ning said he would do so, and asked where she lay buried. "At the foot of the aspen-tree on which there is a bird's nest," replied she; and passing out of the door, disappeared. The next day Ning was afraid that Yen might be going away somewhere, and went over early to invite him across. Wine and food were produced towards noon; and Ning, who took care not to lose sight of Yen, then asked him to remain there for the night. Yen declined, on the ground that he liked being by himself; but Ning wouldn't hear any excuses, and carried all Yen's things to his own room, so that he had no alternative but to consent. However, he warned Ning, saying, "I know you are a gentleman and a man of honour. If you see anything you don't quite understand, I pray you not to be too inquisitive; don't pry into my boxes, or it may be the worse for both of us." Ning promised to attend to what he said, and by-and-by they both lay down to sleep; and Yen, having placed his boxes on the window-sill, was soon snoring loudly. Ning himself could not sleep; and after some time he saw a figure moving stealthily outside, at length approach-

ing the window to peep through. Its eyes flashed like lightning, and Ning in a terrible fright was just upon the point of calling Yen, when something flew out of one of the boxes like a strip of white silk, and dashing against the window-sill returned at once to the box, disappearing very much like lightning. Yen heard the noise and got up, Ning all the time pretending to be asleep in order to watch what happened. The former then opened the box, and took out something which he smelt and examined by the light of the moon. It was dazzlingly white like crystal, and about two inches in length by the width of an onion leaf in breadth. He then wrapped it up carefully and put it back in the broken box, saying, "A bold-faced devil that, to dare thus to break my box," upon which he went back to bed; but Ning, who was lost in astonishment, arose and asked him what it all meant, telling at the same time what he himself had seen. "As you and I are good friends," replied Yen, "I won't make any secret of it. The fact is I am a Taoist priest. But for the window-sill the devil would have been killed; as it is, he is badly wounded." Ning asked him what it was he had there wrapped up, and he told him it was his sword,¹ on which he had smelt the presence of the devil. At Ning's request he produced the weapon, a bright little miniature of a sword; and from that time Ning held his friend in higher esteem than ever.

Next day he found traces of blood outside the window which led round to the north of the temple; and there among a number of graves he discovered the aspen tree with the bird's nest at its summit. He then fulfilled his promise and prepared to go home, Yen giving him a farewell banquet, and presenting him with an old leather case which he said contained a sword, and would keep at a distance from him all devils and bogies. Ning then wished to learn a little of Yen's art; but the latter replied that although he might accomplish this easily enough, being as he was an upright man, yet he was well off in life, and not in a condition where it would be of any advantage to him. Ning then pretending that he had a younger sister buried here, dug up Hsiao-ch'ien's bones, and, having wrapped them up in grave-clothes,

¹ See No. X., note 8.

hired a boat, and set off on his way home. On his arrival, as his library looked towards the open country, he made a grave hard by and buried the bones there, sacrificing, and invoking Hsiao-ch'ien as follows:—"In pity for your lonely ghost, I have placed your remains near my humble cottage, where we shall be near each other, and no devil will dare annoy you. I pray you reject not my sacrifice, poor though it be." After this, he was proceeding home when he suddenly heard himself addressed from behind, the voice asking him not to hurry; and turning round he beheld Hsiao-ch'ien, who thanked him, saying, "Were I to die ten times for you I could not discharge my debt. Let me go home with you and wait upon your father and mother; you will not repent it." Looking closely at her, he observed that she had a beautiful complexion, and feet as small as bamboo shoots,² being altogether much prettier now that he came to see her by daylight. So they went together to his home, and bidding her wait awhile, Ning ran in to tell his mother, to the very great surprise of the old lady. Now Ning's wife had been ill for a long time, and his mother advised him not to say a word about it to her for fear of frightening her; in the middle of which in rushed Hsiao-ch'ien, and threw herself on the ground before them. "This is the young lady," said Ning; whereupon his mother in some alarm turned her attention to Hsiao-ch'ien, who cried out, "A lonely orphan, without brother or sister, the object of your son's kindness and compassion, begs to be allowed to give her poor services as some return for favours shown." Ning's mother, seeing that she was a nice, pleasant-looking girl, began to lose fear of her, and replied, "Madam, the preference you show for my son is highly pleasing to an old body like myself; but this is the only hope of our family, and I hardly dare agree to his taking a devil-wife." "I have but one motive in what I ask," answered Hsiao-ch'ien, "and if you have no faith in disembodied people then let me regard him as my brother, and live under your protection, serving you like a daughter." Ning's mother could not resist her straightforward manner, and Hsiao-ch'ien asked to be allowed to see Ning's wife, but this was denied on the plea that the lady was ill. Hsiao-

² Which, well cooked, are a very good substitute for asparagus.

ch'ien then went into the kitchen and got ready the dinner, running about the place as if she had lived there all her life. Ning's mother was, however, much afraid of her, and would not let her sleep in the house; so Hsiao-ch'ien went to the library, and was just entering when suddenly she fell back a few steps, and began walking hurriedly backwards and forwards in front of the door. Ning seeing this, called out and asked her what it meant; to which she replied "The presence of that sword frightens me, and that is why I could not accompany you on your way home." Ning at once understood her, and hung up the sword-case in another place; whereupon she entered, lighted a candle, and sat down. For some time she did not speak: at length asking Ning if he studied at night or not—"For," said she, "when I was little I used to repeat the *Lêngyen sutra*; but now I have forgotten more than half, and, therefore, I should like to borrow a copy, and when you are at leisure in the evening you might hear me." Ning said he would, and they sat silently there for some time, after which Hsiao-ch'ien went away and took up her quarters elsewhere. Morning and night she waited on Ning's mother, bringing water for her to wash in, occupying herself with household matters, and endeavouring to please her in every way. In the evening before she went to bed, she would always go in and repeat a little of the *sutra*, and leave as soon as she thought Ning was getting sleepy. Now the illness of Ning's wife had given his mother a great deal of extra trouble—more, in fact, than she was equal to; but ever since Hsiao-ch'ien's arrival all this was changed, and Ning's mother felt kindly disposed to the girl in consequence, gradually growing to regard her almost as her own child, and forgetting quite that she was a spirit. Accordingly, she didn't make her leave the house at night; and Hsiao-ch'ien, who being a devil had not tasted meat or drink since her arrival,³ now began at the end of six months to take a little thin gruel. Mother and son alike became very fond of her, and henceforth never mentioned what she really was; neither were strangers able to detect the fact. By-and-by, Ning's wife died, and his mother secretly wished him to espouse Hsiao-ch'ien, though she rather dreaded any unfortunate

³ See note 9 to the last story.

consequences that might arise. This Hsiao-ch'ien perceived, and seizing an opportunity said to Ning's mother, "I have been with you now more than a year, and you ought to know something of my disposition. Because I was unwilling to injure travellers I followed your son hither. There was no other motive; and, as your son has shown himself one of the best of men, I would now remain with him for three years in order that he may obtain for me some mark of Imperial approbation⁴ which will do me honour in the realms below." Ning's mother knew that she meant no evil, but hesitated to put the family hopes of a posterity into jeopardy. Hsiao-ch'ien, however, reassured her by saying that Ning would have three sons, and that the line would not be interrupted by his marrying her. On the strength of this the marriage was arranged, to the great joy of Ning, a feast prepared, and friends and relatives invited; and when in response to a call the bride herself came forth in her gay wedding-dress, the beholders took her rather for a fairy than for a devil. After this, numbers of congratulatory presents were given by the various female members of the family, who vied with one another in making her acquaintance; and these Hsiao-ch'ien returned by gifts of paintings of flowers, done by herself, in which she was very skilful, the receivers being extremely proud of such marks of her friendship. One day she was leaning at the window in a despondent mood, when suddenly she asked where the sword-case was. "Oh," replied Ning, "as you seemed afraid of it, I moved it elsewhere." "I have now been so long under the influence of surrounding life,"⁵ said Hsiao-ch'ien, "that I sha'n't be afraid of it any more. Let us hang it on the bed." "Why so?" asked Ning. "For the last three days," explained she, "I have been much agitated in mind; and I fear that the devil at the temple, angry at my escape, may come suddenly and carry me off." So Ning brought the sword-case, and Hsiao-ch'ien, after examining it closely, remarked, "This is where the magician puts people. I wonder how many were slain before it got

⁴ Such as are from time to time bestowed upon virtuous widows and wives, filial sons and daughters, and others. These consist of some laudatory scroll or tablet, and are much prized by the family of the recipient.

⁵ See note 13 to last story.

old and worn out as it is now. Even now when I look at it my flesh creeps." The case was then hung up, and next day removed to over the door. At night they sat up and watched, Hsiao-ch'ien warning Ning not to go to sleep; and suddenly something fell down flop like a bird. Hsiao-ch'ien in a fright got behind the curtain; but Ning looked at the thing, and found it was an imp of darkness, with glaring eyes and a bloody mouth, coming straight to the door. Stealthily creeping up, it made a grab at the sword-case, and seemed about to tear it in pieces, when bang!—the sword-case became as big as a wardrobe, and from it a devil protruded part of his body and dragged the imp in. Nothing more was heard, and the sword-case resumed its original size. Ning was greatly alarmed, but Hsiao-ch'ien came out rejoicing, and said, "There's an end of my troubles." In the sword-case they found only a few quarts of clear water; nothing else.

After these events Ning took his doctor's degree and Hsiao-ch'ien bore him a son. He then took a concubine, and had one more son by each, all of whom became in time distinguished men.

XVII. THE SHUI-MANG PLANT

THE *shui-mang*¹ is a poisonous herb. It is a creeper, like the bean, and has a similar red flower. Those who eat of it die, and become *shui-mang* devils, tradition asserting that such devils are unable to be born again unless they can find some one else who has also eaten of this poison to take their place.² These *shui-mang* devils abound in the province of Hunan, where, by the way, the phrase "same-year man" is applied to those born in the same year, who exchange visits and call each other brother, their children addressing the father's "brother" as uncle. This has now become a regular custom there.³

¹ Probably the *Illicium religiosum*, S. & Z., is meant.

² See No. XII., note 2.

³ The common application of the term "same-year men" is to persons who have graduated at the same time.

A young man named Chu was on his way to visit a same-year friend of his, when he was overtaken by a violent thirst. Suddenly he came upon an old woman sitting by the roadside under a shed and distributing tea gratis,⁴ and immediately walked up to her to get a drink. She invited him into the shed, and presented him with a bowl of tea in a very cordial spirit; but the smell of it did not seem like the smell of ordinary tea, and he would not drink it, rising up to go away. The old woman stopped him, and called out, "San-niang! bring some good tea." Immediately a young girl came from behind the shed, carrying in her hands a pot of tea. She was about fourteen or fifteen years old, and of very fascinating appearance, with glittering rings and bracelets on her fingers and arms. As Chu received the cup from her his reason fled; and drinking down the tea she gave him, the flavour of which was unlike any other kind, he proceeded to ask for more. Then, watching for a moment when the old woman's back was turned, he seized her wrist and drew a ring from her finger. The girl blushed and smiled; and Chu, more and more inflamed, asked her where she lived. "Come again this evening," replied she, "and you'll find me here." Chu begged for a handful of her tea, which he stowed away with the ring, and took his leave. Arriving at his destination, he felt a pain in his heart, which he at once attributed to the tea, telling his friend what had occurred. "Alas! you are undone," cried the other; "they were *shui-mang* devils. My father died in the same way, and we were unable to save him. There is no help for you." Chu was terribly frightened, and produced the handful of tea, which his friend at once pronounced to be leaves of the *shui-mang* plant. He then showed him the ring, and told him what the girl had said; whereupon his friend, after some reflection, said, "She must be San-niang, of the K'ou family." "How could you know her name?" asked Chu, hearing his friend use the same words as the old woman.

⁴ This is by no means an uncommon form of charity. During the temporary distress at Canton, in the summer of 1877, large tubs of gruel were to be seen standing at convenient points, ready for any poor person who might wish to stay his hunger. It is thus, and by similar acts of benevolence, such as building bridges, repairing roads, &c., &c., that the wealthy Chinaman strives to maintain an advantageous balance in his record of good and evil.

WU HSIA PIAN

Victor L. Lim

January 1991

I recently saw the new Sam Hui film, *DRAGON FROM RUSSIA*, co-starring Maggie Cheung, Nina Li, Yuen Te, Pai Ying, Carrie Ng and Dean Shek. The film was directed by Clarence Ford, who also directed the recent time cross-over pic, *ICEMAN COMETH*. Yuen Te is "introduced" in this film although he has appeared in several SHAW BROTHERS films, most notably his starring role in *THE MASTER*. Yuen Te plays two roles and acted as martial arts director, choreographing some visually stunning action sequences throughout the film.

The film opens with a battle between the Old Master (Yuen Te) and a Japanese mob boss, Kishudo. The Old Master is stopped by a man in a mask (PAI YING), who is one of the 800 DRAGONS, the secret organization of assassins headed by the old Master. He declares that this traitor must be found and terminated. The search for other members of the 800 DRAGONS leads to Moscow where Snooker (Dean Shek) lives with Yao Lung (Sam Hui) and May (Maggie Cheung).

The Old Master kills Snooker and kidnaps Yao Lung to train him as the latest addition to the organization. He removes Yao's memory and trains him to be the ultimate assassin, codename, Freeman. While in H.K. to kill an industrialist, Yao is seen and recognized by May.

The Old Master assigns Charmer (Nina Li) and Teddy (Yuan Te) to assist Yao to kill the witness. Yao resists killing May who tries to cure Yao's amnesia and they become fugitives. Yao is captured by Huntress (Carrie Ng) and taken to the Old Master who challenges Yao, whom he deems a traitor to a duel to the death.

The story is confusing at times and some of the characters are not clearly identified. Many scenes could have used more exposition but the action is first rate. The action is enhanced with special effects occasionally for cinematic impact but most of it is realistic. Yuan Te is very good in his dual roles, in heavy make-up as the old master and without make-up as Teddy. Sam Hui who is best known as a singer and comedy actor is also an accomplished martial artist and handles the role well. The rest of the cast turn in fine performances.

I saw this film before I read that it was adapted from a Japanese comic strip, *CRYING FREEMAN*. I looked at the two graphic novels from *VIZ COMICS* and saw several scenes from the movie which were adapted frame by frame from the comic strip. The film appears to be an unauthorized adaptation of the strip with changes in the characters' backgrounds. However, regardless of the source of the story, the film merits viewing and even fans of the strip will be pleased with it.



Paul Zantt , 3304 Tate St, Baltimore MD 21226 (301) 354-0869

Evening Magazine is a local talk show in Baltimore Which aired at 7:30 weekdays. They recently did a story on Hong Kong which was a thrill for me because I got a chance to see something very few martial arts movie fans get a chance to see an interview with Jackie Chan!!!!!!

HONG KONG'S KUNG FU KING

Evening Magazine

This town is crazy about movies there seems to be a theater on every corner. Video cassettes haven't caught on as much as they have in other parts of the world. They prefer theaters all of this has created a booming movie industry.

In the mid 70's this one studio the runrun shaw movie studio was turning out at least 200 feature films a year sometimes three of them on the same set. Even though the pace has slowed down somewhat this feature film industry is only second to hollywood. Even though not all the films are not kung fu movies the asian action adventure film is still the back bone of this industry.

And currently the biggest name in action adventure kung fu films is Jackie Chan. Jackie Chan has replaced Bruce Lee in this part of the world as certain box office. Cranking out three or four movies a year is no problem for Jackie and as amazing as it sounds these stunts are all done by Jackie himself he uses no doubles.

JACKIE CHAN

When I'm making the movie it's real. I'm 70ft high I jump down I really go down I let the audience know that I'm not kidding. The people who come to the theater and pay for the ticket it's to see me not the double.

Evening Magazine

Is what the audience like in America is different from the audience in this part of the world.

Jackie Chan

Yes in Asian people they don't believe the ET would come to Hong Kong or Taiwan only in America Australia. If we make ET this kind of movie never success.

When I see American fighting movie I think there's too slow. They always draw their fist back before they hit. When I decide the fighting it's like a rhythm. Then I stop the music and stop the action only to breathe and then start the action again.

Evening Magazine

Jackie has appeared in a number of american flicks such as Burt reynolds cannon ball run movies. And others such as battle creek brawl and the protector. And Jackies empression of holly wood is that it's to layed back.

Jackie Chan

I like Los Angelos LA but only to live there when I retire. In LA every thing appointment. To buy the socks wait on the line and pay with the credit card two days later I see the lawyer at 2:00 but appointment first. But in hong kong every thing faster we do ten things in one day. We can call the lawyer and in two minutes go see him in 5 minutes go to the theater because hong kong is very small. In LA wow big someone say come to my house only take an hour. I say an HOUR!!!!!! in one hour I could show you all of hong kong and thats why I like hong kong better.

Evening Magazine

On the set Jackie is producer, director, star and cheap cut up he likes to keep the cast lose. They dont take much time shooting a couple of scene its a few takes and on to the next scene and they dont record any sound the films are dubbed into so many different languges its just another waste of precious time. Off the set you can find Jackie zooming around in one of his 17 cars. One of them is his favorite because it can go underwater.

One thing different between Jackies films and his predecessor Bruce Lee jackie gets the girl for what its worth.

A few years ago jackie was choosen as one of hong kongs outstanding young people by the hong kong JC.S. Because he also involed in alot of charitable work as well as his film work. But he almost didnt make it to the ceromony because of all the attention he pays to his films he for got to open his invotation.

For Those of you who would like to see
This entire show, or just the interview
write me and let me know.

BECAUSE IT IS A MUST SEE FOR JACKIE CHAN
OR ANY MARTIAL ARTS MOVIE FAN, AND I GIVE IT
FIVE STARS ★★★★★

THE STORY OF THE NINJA

(PART I)

By Cecilia Suzuki

Summer in Hawaii was in full swing, when in late July, a Ninja group made an appearance on Center Stage at the Ala Moana Center, delighting both young and old alike.

It was a Ninja show displaying martial arts skills with some of the ninja in their characteristic black attire, flinging SHURIKEN darts, hurling NUNCHAKU with sharp edged sickles and fighting with swords.

The enthusiastic audience filled the adjoining area from the first to the third floor to see this show which was co-sponsored by the Koka Kaihatsu Sha and Shirokiya. There is talk of a repeat performance next year.

As Ninja Paraphernalia will soon be sold in Hawaii, the show served as a PR event. However, the real objective was to have people outside of Japan understand 'what the real Ninja is.'

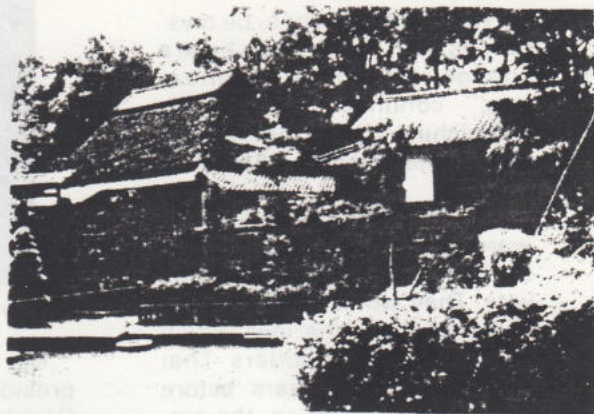
Seven years ago, Koka Ninja Village (also pronounced Koga) was established in Koka Town of Shiga Prefecture.

In four acres of land south of Lake Biwa, the Ninja Museum, Karakuri Yashiki, an herb garden, a traditional medicinal museum and such are maintained. Here, foreigners who are connected with martial arts are frequently seen.

Visitors who wish to undergo the 'Ninja experience' can try SHURIKEN dart throwing or use 'tools' for walking on water. About 500 children's Ninja apparel are available.

There are many risks involved in the pursuit of knowledge of the Ninja. It requires talent and ability and many years of study.

I asked Mr. Shin'ichiro Yunosaki, Mayor of Ninja Village, about the most important aspect of Ninja training.



▲甲賀忍術村は、かくれ里の雰囲気。

Koka Ninjutsu Village.

"First of all, it is the thought process. The kanji 'nin' of Ninja means the soul of the blade. The sword must never be used when it is not necessary, but one must always have the soul of the sword.

"Second, one must observe closely the pattern of human behavior. For instance, in descending the stairs, everyone tends to concentrate on the events below, not anticipating what may happen from above. Make the most of that point. Turn that point to one's advantage. This is called 'Nyukyo Jutsu.'

"There are various methods of concealment that a Ninja uses, many times using the behavior of animals as reference. Ninja frequently use the cunning of the racoon, the fox, or the quail, their methods of es-

cape and their hiding habits.

"Third, Ninja do not fundamentally use weapons. Even darts are not used unless absolutely necessary. Also, the opponent's sword is carried with bare hands (mu-te). Furthermore, one's usual clothing is worn rather than the black garment.

"In a word, one should not judge the Ninja at one glance," the mayor noted. "It is very important to exercise rational thinking at all times." (To be continued) (Translated by B. Kisako Hirai)

Note: Ninja paraphernalia will be sold at Shirokiya, on the first floor of King's Village Gateway Hotel, and other shops. Articles include everything from humorous Ninja art goods to full scale regalia and swords used in the martial arts.



▲忍術村のニンジャたち。 Ninja in Koka Village.

THE STORY OF THE NINJA (PART II)

By Cecilia Suzuki

"Ninja are thought to be mysterious, and in fact, they have a strange system of organization," continued Mr. Yunoki Shunichiro, the Chief of the Koka Ninja Village in Shiga Ken, Japan.

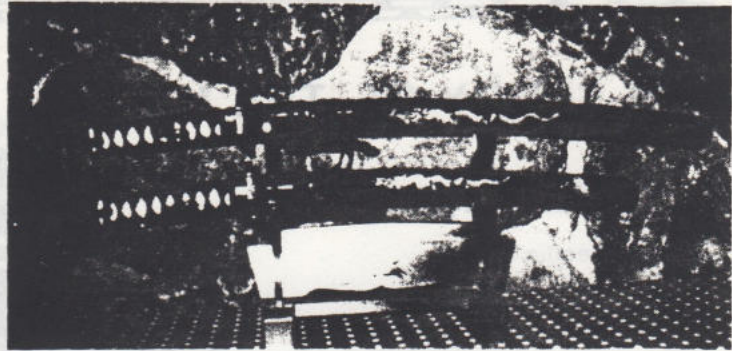
"Already from the age of the warring lords, ninja made decisions based on the majority vote. They would use straws or sticks and pick the idea which had the most supporters. That means that 100 years before the French Revolution, the ninja in Japan were voting democratically. This is an example of the rational, reasonable way of the thinking of the ninja."

"We don't know the names of the ninja. They were not allowed to leave their names. Therefore, they remain a mystery in the history of Japan."

"The ninja operated behind the scenes in history. For example, during the age of the warring provinces in Japan, it has been said that after Akechi Mitsuhide's death, his children were all murdered. However, in fact, the Koka ninja saved some of them. Even among the Shogun, there are some who were saved by the ninja."

What then, are the qualifications of a ninja? Their purpose? What about an answer which would explain this even in modern times?

"Ninja must always have a clear idea of the reason and the purpose of their actions. Moreover, they must live their lives correctly, as a human being should," said Mr. Yunoki.



▲ニンジャの店。刀剣類。 Japanese swords. Ninja Shop Koka

Mr. Yunoki's formal title is president of a Travel Industry Development Company in Koka.

Seven years have passed since ninja artifacts were displayed in the ninja village of Koka in Shiga Prefecture, about an hour away by car from Kyoto and Osaka. Nowadays, he receives mail orders from as far away as Italy and England.

There was an article on Koka Village in the Italian martial arts magazine, and Mr. Yunoki has even been on its cover.

There is also a special food that ninja used to eat. It is a single herbal pill which contains only 7 calories but gives the user a feeling of satisfaction.

Legend has it that when ninja were forced to lay low for long periods of time, they ate grass and this emergency pill.

This pill has been reproduced. Mr. Yunoki states that ninja in the past had a cheerful image.

"All the ninja that appeared in stories or plays of the Edo, Meiji, Taisho and early Showa periods were happy, cheerful people. However, that image began to change into a dark, mysterious

one.

"I'd like to introduce the happy, cheerful ninja to the people abroad. I'd like people to know the real ninja and their accurate history," concluded Mr. Yunoki.

When ninja hide, they assimilate themselves into objects of nature.

When they want to hide in the shadow of a tree, they become one with the tree.

To become one with nature... how wonderful!

Even those of us who are not ninja would like to try that. (Translated by Elizabeth Keith).

NINJA SHOP KOKA OPENS IN WAIKIKI

Ninja Shop Koka is now open on the first floor of the Waikiki Gateway Hotel with a lot of Ninja merchandise. It is located diagonally across from the Kyoya Restaurant (mauka side).

Items include fine swords, Ninja shuriken, Ninja dolls, costumes, and T-shirts. Other cute Ninja cartoon gift items such as key holders are also available.

People have come to buy Ninja hoods and masks for Halloween costumes.

祝コギク創刊16周年

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祝コギク創刊16周年

IN MEMORY OF KEYE LUKE (1904 - 1991)

By Robert Walsdorff

Although many people probably couldn't tell you his name, Keye Luke has probably been seen by more Americans than any other Oriental actor in American films. In a career spanning well over a half of a century, he made over 150 motion pictures, countless television appearances, and was also on Broadway.

He came to the USA from Canton, China. He didn't start out as an actor, but as an artist. He was the publicity art director at RKO and did publicity art work for such films as King Kong and Flying Down to Rio. The producer of the latter film liked his work so much he decided to make an actor out of him and put him in a follow-up Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers' film. The picture never was made but he did receive publicity from his former advertising bosses and from newspaper columnists like Hedda Hopper, Louella Parsons, and Jimmy Starr because he had done art work for their columns. He then got the part as Charlie Chan's number one son when the character was added to the film series.

Charlie Chan in Paris with Warner Oland in the title role was his first Chan film. It was 1935. At first the studio wasn't sure if they wanted the son to be a continuing character or not. In fact he wasn't included in the next Chan film since the former film had yet to be released when work on the next one started. When it did come out, reaction was so positive that he became a regular member of the popular series. He made Charlie Chan in Shanghai, Charlie Chan at the Circus, Charlie Chan at the Race Track, Charlie Chan at the Opera, Charlie Chan at the Olympics, Charlie Chan on Broadway, and Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo.

Keye Luke was proud of the Charlie Chan pictures. He recently said, "They spared no pains to turn out good Chan pictures. We thought we were making the best damn murder mysteries in Hollywood at the time. We were very proud of them. They were, oh, such fine entertainment. They still are." Many consider the Oland/Luke pictures as the finest ones in the long running series.

Luke only left the series because Oland died while making the uncompleted Charlie Chan at Ringside in 1937. They reworked the film into Mr. Moto's Gamble with Peter Lorre in the title role and Keye Luke even playing his Lee Chan role in the film. When the Chan series was revived in 1938 with Sidney Toler in the title role, Luke didn't return. He said that he felt no one could replace Oland. Sen Yung was then added as number two son, Jimmy.

Keye Luke then attempted to take over the title role of Mr. Wong in that series when Boris Karloff left it. He starred in Phantom of Chinatown, but the movie flopped largely because it got no promotion. The studio reasoned that no one was going to go out to see an oriental detective being played by an actual Oriental.

Luke's career though was hardly over. He had substantial roles in The Good Earth, Across the Pacific, and many other films. In 1942 he appeared as Dr. Gillespie's New Assistant and worked in the hospital with Lionel Barrymore in several additional features. He also appeared in the Green Hornet serials as Kato. He remembered, "I drove a sleek, powerful car called the Black Beauty and used a judo chop. I was the first to use the judo chop across the back of the neck to knock out an opponent."

When roles started to become hard to find, he rejoined the Chan series for the last two entries The Feathered Serpent and The Sky Dragon in 1948 and 1949. Toler had also died and Roland Winters was now in the title role. The studio was so pleased with Luke's work that he was set to make three more films, but for a number of reasons they were never made.

Luke then divided his time between motion pictures such as Sleep, My Love, Hell's Half Acre, Around the World In 80 Days, a three year stint on Broadway in Flower Drum Song, and appearances on one television show after another.

There are several television appearances that come particularly to my mind. These include a funny episode of My Little Margie where he attempts to trick Gale Storm, as Margie, into interfeering in Chinese custom and causing her father to lose a business deal. He was also in The Lucy Show where he saves Lucy's life and was now her "slave" for life.

Now much older he played one of his typical wise elderly gentlemen roles in Perry Mason, but with a twist. On the surface he seems to be a kindly father protecting his son by taking the blame for an auto accident his son was in, but it's really only to give him an alibi to cover up the fact he is the murderer. He was also the villain in Remington Steele. When he played the villain in The Gale Storm Show: Oh Susanna, Zasu Pitts remarked as she and Gale are being held captive, "We'll never watch Charlie Chan again."

Then there were appearances on Mash and Charlie's Angels and more motion pictures such as The Chairman, Nobody's Perfect, Gremlins, Just You and Me Kid, Judge Dee and the Monastery Murders, and Woody Allen's new film, Alice. He also dubbed in the voice of Master Han in Enter the Dragon since Shih Kien's English was considered too

poor.

His television series include Kung Fu where he played blind master Po. At the time he said, "For the first time, an entertainment medium is making an honest and sincere attempt to show the true Oriental culture of which I am part. It is especially gratifying to me because the episodes and the dialogue have a ring of truth to them, and the period is during the time when my own paternal grandfather came to this country. When reading the scripts, I recall the rich philosophy of Chuang Tzu."

He also was a regular in the television series Sidekicks playing Ernie Reyes Jr.'s grandfather. He rejoined Reyes in a recent episode of MacGyver.

"Hi, Pop" was the phrase that endeared him to one generation and "Yes, Grasshopper" to another. But then there are so many memorable moments this great actor gave to all of us throughout the years. He died this January of a stroke. He will be missed.



JAPANESE EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN NASHVILLE PART 2

OCTOBER 27, 1990, was a busy day. In the morning, Masanobu left Nashville to fly to New York City for a week of sight-seeing before flying home to Tokyo. Robert, Naoki, Miyuki,

Misao, Noriyuki and I in addition to Masanobu's host family arrived at the airport that morning to say "good-bye" before his flight. That afternoon was a Wado-Ryu belt examination. Noriyuki passed and was promoted to the next rank at karate school. In the evening, Martha invited

Robert and me to a Halloween Party. She also invited Naoki, Noriyuki, Misao, Miyuki, Hitomi, Miyuki, Harumi to the party. The Japanese students liked it.

November 3rd, we had a birthday party for Misao at Ichiban. Robert and I bought a birthday cake that they served after the meal & we all gave her gifts.

November 10th was the day we visited Mammoth Cave, Kentucky which is Internationally famous. We took three cars and the drivers were Martha, Naoki and Noriyuki. There was one American in each car and the rest were Japanese that included Kazumi (Noriyuki's mother), Misao, Hitomi, Harumi, Miyuki, Kaoru, Hiroe but Noriko did not go on the trip. We ate lunch at a little restaurant in the park and we went on the 2-hour Historic Tour in the cave. That evening we ate at Ichiban and Toshiyuki, a chef from Kobe Steak, joined us.

Kazumi visited Noriyuki for a week. Robert bought a camcorder and used it for the trip to the cave and at the restaurant.

November 24, Naoki, Robert, Martha and I met Noriyuki and Tomohiro at the airport arriving from their trip to New Orleans. We all ate out at Shoney's.

On December 6, Naoki and I joined Robert and his teachers and principiapl for a Christmas dinner at Fifth Quarter. On December 20th, Martha, Robert and Naoki joined me for the Taylor Hayden Karate Christmas Banquet.

On December 8th, Martha, Naoki, Robert and I saw the Bridgestone art exhibit from Tokyo, Masterworks, at the State Museum.

December 22nd, Martha, Robert and I visited Naoki at his homestay and his host family. On Christmas Day, Naoki and Noriyuki spent Christmas at our house and on December 29, Martha and Tetsuya visited us for Christmas together with ~~NORIYUKI~~ and Naoki. That evening we ate at Kobe Steak and saw Toshiyuki and then we went to the karaoke in the Mid-town Plaza.

New Year's Eve: Martha, Naoki, Robert and I decided to go to Goten, the most expensive Japanese restaurant in Nashville and we enjoyed it a great deal.

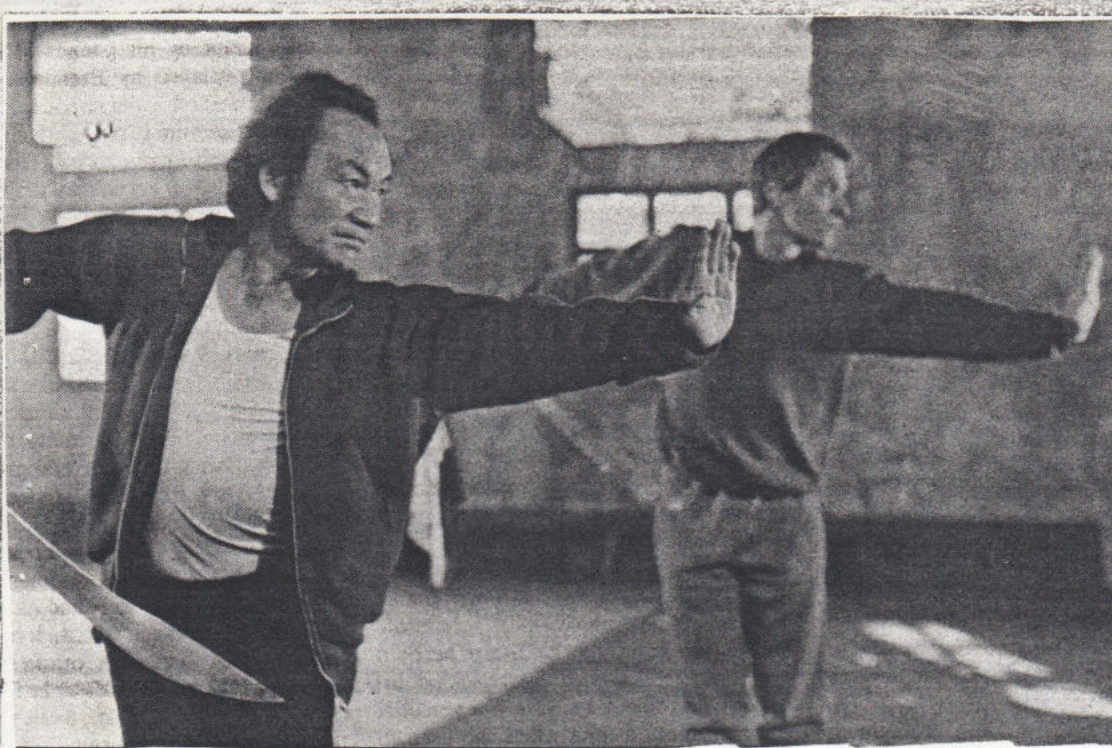
VIDEO REVIEW: HOTEL

From Kikuya, in Vanderbilt Plaza, in Nashville, I had rented a video tape of the "Hotel" special drama. Although it was not translated into English, both Japanese and English were spoken in the drama. The teleplay was based on the novel by Ishinomori Shotaro and was also a hit T.V. series in Japan.

The focal character is Ippei, a bell boy played by Takashima Masanobu, employed at the Hotel Planton. Along with other staff, they are preparing for the arrival of a famous American hotel owner whose true intentions will cause conflict. An American woman working for the famous owner, tried to persuade the hotel clerk to steal the customer list and give it to her and in return the promise of a better job. She also tried to steal other employees from the hotel. There is also a story about a Japanese woman called Keiko and her American lover that she met over 10 years ago in San Francisco when they were students. His parents objected to their marriage but now she is expecting to meet him at the hotel. Yoko Akino played Keiko and was upset when she didn't get the suite she reserved at the hotel. Keiko's story was the highlight of the t.v. feature. Okita Hiroyuki played an interesting character, the desk clerk in the hotel. Miasako Konno portrayed one of the staff employees who later confronted the guest hotel owner. By the way, Okita's command of the English language is quite good. However, Miasako Konno's English is difficult to understand. (Ms. Konno played the wife of Takeda Shingen in the NHK series).

The "Hotel" special was an interesting drama that reminded me of the "Love Boat" American T.V. series.

Takashima Masanobu's older brother, Mashiro, has been popular before Masanobu's success. Their parents, Takashima Tadao and Sumi Hanayo are established in the geinokai. Anyway, Masanobu thinks that "Hotel" is his best piece thus far. The role taught him a lot in the terms of acting and style. He got an inside view of the hotel business too that was both positive and negative. Masanobu admires Wood Allen's approach to film making. "Play It Again, Sam" he liked a great deal.



THREE FILMS, ALL SET IN CHINA, ARE DUE TO BE RELEASED SOON. ONE IS *IRON AND SILK*, DIRECTED BY SHIRLEY SUN, WHOSE NUMEROUS SCREEN CREDITS, INCLUDE BEING THE PRODUCER OF *A GREAT WALL*. *IRON AND SILK* IS BASED ON THE BOOK BY MARK SALZMAN (OF THE SAME TITLE) CHRONICLING HIS EXPERIENCES DURING A TWO-YEAR VISIT TO CHINA. THE FILM FLOWS LIKE A JOURNAL AS IT FOLLOWS SALZMAN AS HE ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE A MARTIAL ARTS MASTER, PAN QINGFUL, TO TAKE HIM ON AS AN APPRENTICE. ALONG THE WAY THERE ARE OTHER INSIGHTFUL EPISODES REVEALING OF A FOREIGNER'S EXPERIENCE OF TRYING TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE. SALZMAN AND MANY OF THE PEOPLE HE ENCOUNTERED ON THE TRIP PLAY THEMSELVES IN THE FILM. (TOP: MASTER PAN QINGFU AND STUDENT SALZMAN) THE FILM IS DISTRIBUTED BY MIRAMAX.

ASIAPHILE #29; WRITTEN & PRODUCED BY AMY HARLIB (何安美),
212 W 22ST #2N, N.Y. N.Y. 10011 (212) 989-8217

HAPPY YEAR OF THE RAM. CHINESE KUNG-FU STORY
THEATRE EXPERIENCED THE USUAL FLURRY OF NEW YEAR GIGS BUT
THEN IT ALL STOPS & IT'S BACK TO ZERO.

I SENT MY PRESS KIT TO MARK SALZMAN (SEE ABOVE ↑) HOPING HE
MIGHT WANT TO WORK WITH ME, THE RESULT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE
OF THIS PAGE, MAFFAPANS MIGHT FIND IT INTERESTING (AND DEPRESSING).
AWAITING *IRON & SILK*, THE MOVIE, I REMAIN

Amy Harlib 何安美

P.S. - ALSO A BOOK PREVIEW WHICH SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD
TO IS INCLUDED.

Jan 14 91

Dear Amy -

Many thanks for your letter and bio material - your presentations sound wonderful! I'll hold on to your stuff in case I can think of any way to help you get more exposure.

As for myself, I've pretty much had to retire from performance because of a spine injury that restricts me to tai chi. What a shame, huh? Fortunately I love tai chi, so I'm making the most of it. I especially envied your flexibility (as seen in the photos) because I can't even touch my knees anymore!

The movie should be out in February - hope you enjoy it.

with best wishes -

MSL

→

that is an approximation of:

Mark Salzman



Lucia St. Clair Robson wielding a naginata, a Japanese weapon which dates from the period of her novel, *THE TOKAIDO ROAD*. The weapon was discovered and purchased for her by her friend and companion, science fiction author Brian Daley.

On a rare afternoon of leisure during Peace Corps training in Berkeley, California, in 1964, I wandered alone into a movie theater. It was showing the new film, "Chushingura," the story of the forty-seven *ronin* with Toshiro Mifune as the leader, Oishi.

"From the opening scene of feet pounding along a dirt highway, the Tokaido Road, I was hooked.

"The movie was three and a half hours long and I sat through it twice. The first time I was overwhelmed by the elegance and pageantry and the astonishing complexity of Japanese culture. The second time I was trying to figure out the plot.

"I came out in a daze and, frankly, have never been the same since.

"That movie started me on a life-long addiction to samurai films and a quarter of a century's infatuation with Mifune-san.

Lucia St. Clair Robson

A noble family in disgrace....

A brave woman of spirit...

A fearless samurai warrior...

They All Meet Along THE TOKAIDO ROAD Lucia St. Clair Robson

would later become the best-selling author of *Ride the Wind*, *Walk In My Soul* and *Light a Distant Fire*—three powerful novels that dealt with American history, but her passion for

things Japanese would grow greater during her marriage to her college sweetheart, a captain in the United States Army. When he was sent to Vietnam for a two-year tour, she followed him as far as Japan, where she lived in a village not far from Hiroshima.

"It was really something out of Michener or *Sayonara*. I saw him only a couple of times, when he was on R&R. Mostly, I was alone.

"I spent almost a year living in the tea house in a family's garden in a town near Hiroshima. Every day I used the public bath across the street and ate in the local noodle shops.

"Surrounded by the beauty of the traditional tea house and garden, I read up on Japanese history. I visited the graves of the 47 *ronin* and their museum at Sengakuji Temple in Tokyo."

During that period, Lucia filled her time working as a volunteer English teacher, instructing some 250 Japanese a week. She also spent a good deal of time

traveling across Japan.

But it wasn't until 1987 that her love of Japan reasserted itself. While strolling along a Martha's Vineyard beach with friend and companion, science fiction author Brian Daley, Ms. Robson mentioned that, after writing her three Native American novels, she didn't know what to write about next. Aware of her fascination with the Far East, Daley suggested Japan—and that was that!

The result of her love of Japan and three years of writing and research is *THE TOKAIDO ROAD* (Ballantine, March, \$19.95), an epic saga based on the famous story of Lord Asano and the 47 *Ronin*—a true story of Japan's past.

The real-life character and events Ms. Robson originally saw in that long-ago film are transformed into compelling prose.

Her concern for historical accuracy is always paramount, and Robson, on more than one occasion, has insisted that "since I can't invent people more interesting than history provides, I use the real item wherever possible.

"The main characters and 'major' minor roles in my books are almost always people who really existed."

This is certainly the case with *THE TOKAIDO ROAD*. The publication date of this epic novel actually coincides with the 289th anniversary of the

death of Lord Asano, the father of the novel's chief protagonist, Lady Asano, Golden Plum.

In researching background for her novels, Lucia St. Clair Robson usually travels to the areas she is to be writing about. This method of working has given her what she calls "a sense of timelessness."

"On the back roads, I think it may be easier for me to understand the life my story's character has led.

"Sharing a car with their ghosts and a companionable solitude, there is time for 'remembering' events that happened over a hundred years before I was born."

For *THE TOKAIDO ROAD*, she had already done much of the research, so she took a couple of semesters of Japanese to bring back what she'd learned when she lived there.

"The one phrase I heard too often to forget was 'Ashi-ga nagai desu, ne?' " ("She has long legs, doesn't she?")

Sometimes, Lucia refers to the research as "a big Easter egg hunt," and this time the hunt lead back to Japan, where she returned three times. She followed the old Tokaido route, visited important historical sites, including the graves of Lord Asano and the forty-seven warriors who were so faithful to his

memory.

"A local train runs through the same country Hiroshige traveled when he painted his famous scenes of the road's fifty-three post stations, and I took notes as I rode.

"I had forgotten how wild and mountainous Japan's terrain really is. I visited all the really important sites, including a recreation of a barrier/checkpoint and the town of Ako, where Lord Asano's estate was located.

"Oishi's house and gardens have been re-built there."

And, as the last step for her research, she read.

"The Japanese culture is so incredibly complex. It fascinates me to read about it. I've studied over 200 books."

The story Lucia chose for her novel is a very famous one—something like our own legends of the OK Corral or Little Big Horn. For the Japanese, the tale of the 47 *ronin* illustrates their own sense of honor and duty.

"In writing *THE TOKAIDO ROAD*, I was struck by the similarities between the Japan of 1701, when the events actually took place, and the Japan of today.

"That period, known as Genroku, saw a marked rise in the influence and affluence of Japan's new merchant class. There was a flowering of visual and dramatic arts, and a new emphasis on the acquisition of material goods, which made many traditionalists mourn what they considered the loss of a sense of national and personal honor.

"That is why this story still exerts such a strong hold on Japanese society. It speaks to its relevance and timelessness as well."

Ms. Robson's commitment to historical accuracy sometimes presents a problem in terms of dramatic

license.

"I stick to reality as I know it," and she acknowledges that she had difficulty with *THE TOKAIDO ROAD*.

"I would have liked to include a fight scene using the revolving stage and other mechanical gimmicks of the Kabuki theater.

"However, the revolving stage wasn't invented until a few years after my story took place. Putting it in would have given a false impression of the time.

"It would spoil the ambience for me, even if the readers didn't catch the prolepsis."

Lucia St. Clair Robson grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida, and graduated from the University of Florida. From there, she did what many committed young people of that generation did—she joined the Peace Corps. There, she got something of an idea of what getting it from a samurai sword would really be like.

In Venezuela, she received a machete wound inflicted by a nun wearing a cowboy hat! The good sister, fondly remembered by Lucia as "the Swinging Nun," accidentally ran into her with her (almost) lethal machete.

THE TOKAIDO ROAD

A NOVEL OF
FEUDAL JAPAN

LUCIA ST. CLAIR
ROBSON

Humor aside, her travels all over the world have given this remarkable author a sense of history and culture that many would envy. It has been the perfect training for an author, and her life experiences have served this author in good stead.

Her later career as a librarian in the public system of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, led her to discover the history of Cynthia Ann Parker's life with the Comanche, which led to her writing three powerful, epic novels about Native Americans.

After *Ride the Wind* won her the Western Writers of America's Golden Spur Award, a chapter cut from that first novel became the

basis for her second, *Walk In My Soul*, the story of Sam Houston and his Cherokee/Scottish wife, Tiana Rogers.

Her third novel, *Light a Distant Fire*, tells the story of the war chief Osceola and the second Seminole War in Florida.

Noting the tragic endings of her Native American novels, Lucia St. Clair Robson says, with a smile, of *THE TOKAIDO ROAD*, "I wanted to make this book a little lighter.

"There are no happy American Indian stories, so I want to make my heroine live at the end of this book." ■

Marc A. Cerasini

Damon Foster, P.O. Box 576, Fremont, CA 945370576

Howdy' there, my fellow whatever we are!! I must say, it's great to be back in *Maffapa* again! I spent a little vacation in other magazines like *Film Threat* and a comic book called *Zetraman* or something like that. So amidst this subtle terrorism I call journalism, I somehow forgot to do my regular cloumn in this zine's previous issue. It seems that I've just gotten a little (pardon the expression) disoriented. In fact, just this morning, I got out of bed, and then I ate some toast and after that I got out some bread to put it in the toaster and....no..... hey, that can't be right!

Can't wait for the sequel to *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Rumor has it that something remotely interesting might happen in it.

Originally, my plans for this issue was to discuss Jackie Chan's appearance in San Francisco a couple years ago, but somehow, I'm just not in the mood. I've got info & materials to cover just such an article, but as yet I haven't the time nor the enthusiasm to do all the research it would require. These last few months have left me tired, crushed and empty. Somehow, the motivation just isn't there. I don't even beat off the repeats of *Ultraman* anymore. Oh, what am I whining about? I still have you, don't I? You've always been there for me, to talk, to listen, to give me a pat on the back and say "A job well done" when I needed it the most. It's great to have you there for me. I do, don't I? Hello? Is anyone listening?

But seriously, my fanzine *Oriental Cinema* (a.k.a. *Oriental Cinema and Video*) seems like it's starting to reach vague success. Who knows, within ten years, I just might break even. Maybe it's the diversity, maybe it's the unique wit, maybe it's the full color front & back covers which cost me a pretty penny to print, but whatever the case is, I'm getting new readers all the time. Surprisingly, the only Mafappans who've expressed any interest in *O.C.* are Laurine White, Jacqueline Sims, Susan Porter, and rumor has it that Aimy Harlib liked one of the older back issues. With all you fans out there, it surprises me that I haven't heard from more of you long ago. Hell, if one of you were making a fanzine even slightly similar to the subject matter covered in *Maffapa* and *O.C.*, it's a sure thing I'd express interest. Oh well, more your loss than mine.

To the right is an amusing newspaper article I discovered by accident when I was throwing my watch in the air, just trying to make time fly. I recognized the Chinese babe pictured because of her previous photos in *Cinemart*. Aside from being great material for us guys to slam the old ham, the article is

Ex-BofA Executive Jailed In Scheme to Pay Porn Starlet

By Kenneth Howe
Chronicle Staff Writer

A former Bank of America executive in Hong Kong — said to be obsessed with a soft-core porn starlet known as the "Asian Jane Russell" — was sentenced yesterday to 27 months in jail for attempting to improperly transfer

\$2.37 million to her account.

Peter K.L. Chan, 39, pleaded guilty to a charge of making a fraudulent accounting entry and was sentenced by a Hong Kong



SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

PORN STARLET AMY YIP
'Asian Jane Russell'

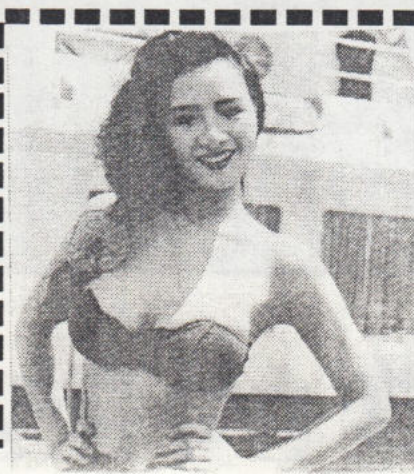
BANK SCHEME

From Page 1

district court judge. Police said that Chan had become "obsessed" with Amy Yip in 1988 when she was a budding actress for a Hong Kong television station and he was an assistant vice president at BofA's Hong Kong branch in Kowloon.

On September 20, the authorities said, Chan signed a money-transfer document that, if entered into the bank's computers, would have shifted \$2.37 million in U.S. dollars into Yip's account.

A lower-level employee spotted the transfer document, noted that it lacked a required second signature and alerted his supervisor.



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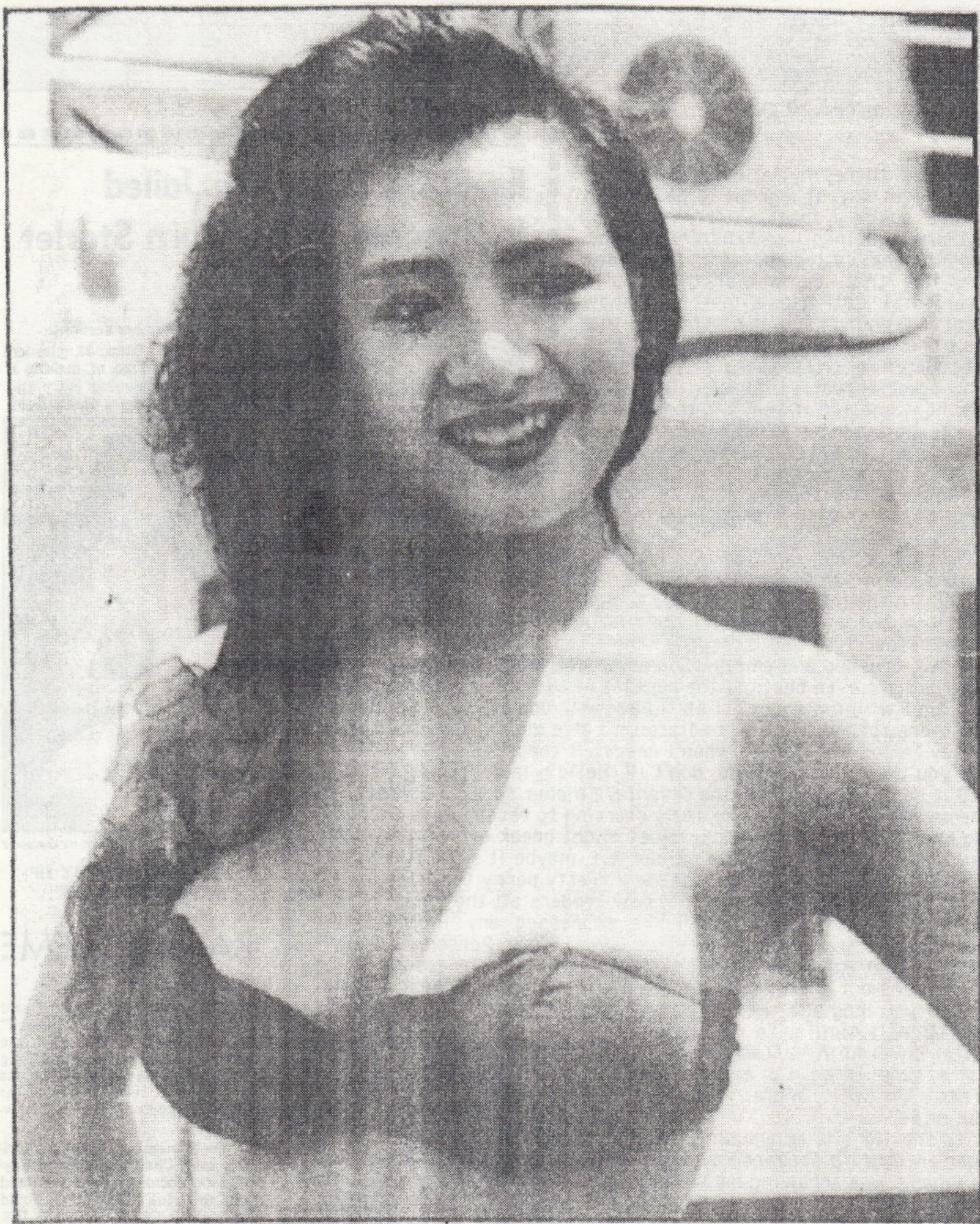
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全香港的熱門話題

interesting because it tells about a side of the Hong Kong movie scene we Americans rarely get to read about. Also, it's nice to finally what this actress's name (Amy Yip) is, since there are so few English language magazines which cover Asian films, and Chinese translators who won't



charge an arm and a leg are harder to find than an intellectual at a New Kids On The Block Concert.



Chan, who started with the bank as a messenger in 1970, was immediately placed on suspension without pay, and the matter was turned over to the police. He was fired in November, said a spokesman at BofA headquarters in San Francisco. The spokesman emphasized that no money was lost.

According to the Associated Press, Chan told investigators that Yip was his girlfriend and that her demands for money drove him to commit the offense. Yip could not be reached for comment.

Hong Kong newspapers reported that Chan, who was earning \$3,600 per month in his banking job, had sold his home and moved his mother into low-income housing so he could finance the relationship with Yip.

Yip has appeared in many spicy Cantonese-language films, among them "Erotic Ghost Story" and "Jailhouse Eros." She was involved in a controversy earlier this year over a sexually suggestive message she recorded for a pay-telephone service, according to the Associated Press.

"She's a real bombshell," said Man Lee, editor of the Chinese Times, a daily newspaper in San Francisco. He said Yip had appeared in the Chinese edition of Penthouse magazine.

"All the erotic starlets are jealous of Miss Yip because of her bust line," said Lee. "She's known as the Asian Jane Russell."

With my disillusionment preventing me from doing my usual journalism (i.e. discussing my martial arts/fantasy stage plays, the *Wacky Chan* movie, and other updates) has forced me to cut out newspaper and/or magazine articles for you. If any of you would rather I go back to writing articles, let me know. But for now, another clipping.

Below is a clipping from a magazine. There is only one English language magazine which I read regularly. That's the bible of anarchic journalism, *National Lampoon*. But that magazine's writing style hasn't had much effect on my way of writing (SARCASM!). Anyway, the below clipping is from their True section, full of authentic signs, ads, clippings, and photos, all of which are authentic, as bizarre as it may seem. The clipping below came from page 56 of the August 1989 issue. I'm also including page 73 from that same issue, featuring photos of some unintentionally funny signs.

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE REAL SHOWS ON JAPANESE television as translated in the *Japan Times*, an English-language newspaper in Tokyo. They were compiled by Susan Bigler.

Meat Information
Babbling Music Hall
Morning Wide Show
World "How Much" Show
Quiz Time Shock
Mint Time
Super TV Blood Type
Amateur Accomplishments Contest
It's Laughing
Welfare Sumo
Hello from Studio
Joyful Map Variety
Amusing Vehicles
Fishing Companions
Let's Appear on TV
High Spirit Show
It's Making!
Tuesday Special: Sumo Wrestlers vs. Baseball
Players Singing Competition

Playful Night Show
Newly Weds Weight Game
Laughter Soccer
Cocky Pop
Fanky Tomato Show
Fanky Tomato Special
Music Tomato Japan
Kitchen Patrol
Suspense News
Sports Wide Show: "Number"
Love Attack
Nice Day Morning Show
Grandma's Wisdoms
Meat Ala Carte
Quiz Hunter
Soap Bubble Presents
Salaried Men's Life: "Pubs and Bars"
Surprise World #1: "Fried Ants"
Cheap Living
Laughing Couples
Unknown World: "Toilet Seats of the World"
Wonderful Tastes
Special: "Naked Clans of the World"
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ORIENTAL MESSAGES

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Robert J. Lee



Ralph James Bova



Greg Le Duc



Shawn Kilborn



Michael Carr



Jim Winter



Bill Owens



Richard Moorhouse

JACQUELINE D. SIMS
309 16TH AVENUE NORTH
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35204-2163

In order to break the monotony of my KAGE NO GUNDAN IV synopsis this issue I will do something different.

The Ginger Tree was a four-part series shown on "Masterpiece Theatre" on Public Television. For the first three episodes it was screamingly good only to go out with a whimper in the fourth episode. It has too many "holes" in it that I believe only reading the book can fill in.

The series starts in China right after the Boxer Rebellion in British occupied Mukden Manchuria. Mary McKenzie (Samantha Bond) comes to China to marry (in an arranged ceremony) Lt. Collingsworth. He turns out to be a selfish man who thinks only of himself and she means nothing to him. He only married her for money. She meets a Japanese nobleman (Daisuke Ryu) at a social gathering and the sparks fly.

They have an affair during the time her husband is away on assignment and becomes pregnant.

Her husband comes back; finds her pregnant and throws her out of the house.

The Japanese nobleman Count Kirahama Kentaro turns spy during the time to check of Russian activities during this time.

It is easy for him to spy because of the inability (at the time) for the Europeans to tell Japanese people from Chinese people so therefore all he had to do was dress up like a Chinese laborer and they would say anything in front of him thinking he couldn't understand the language. He can't be with Mary at this time so he arranges for an agent of his to send her to Japan.

The rest of the series takes place in Japan. The Count sets her up in a house and supports her as his concubine. She only finds out from a Baroness friend of the Count that he is already married and has four children when she already on the boat to Japan. She gives birth to a baby boy whom she names Taro. The war ends and the Count is finally able to come home.

He visits Mary and plays with their son. He says that Taro looks almost Japanese and Mary says she thinks he looks entirely Japanese. This is a comment she will regret because just before the Count leaves for Korea he arranges for Taro to be spirited away from her and put up for adoption. One of her servants asks Mary if she can take Taro for a walk; this will be the last time she will see Taro. She goes to the police and the British Embassy to try to get her son back only to be told there was nothing either office could do.

The Baroness finally explains to her that as a concubine she cannot raise a nobleman's son alone and according to tradition Taro had to be put up for adoption to be raised by a suitable family. The child will be adopted by the family for life and will have no further contact with his natural parents. Mary leaves the house Kentaro bought for her to move into a hotel. She also refuses any further monetary support from him. She gets a job at a department store that carries Western clothes. Her employer asks her to design a line of Western clothes exclusively for his store. She also puts together a fashion show to display the clothes that is a smash hit with the Japanese public.

During this time she meets a young man on the trolley who tells her he wants to take English lessons from her. At first she tells him she is too busy to help him but then she thinks better of it. She enjoys their lessons as she teaches him English and he teaches her Japanese. But then one night she hears a noise outside and she grabs a heavy umbrella and goes to investigate. She finds the young man she was giving lessons to bleeding slightly from the head where she struck him with her umbrella. He confesses that he was sent by Kentaro to watch her; he proposes to her but she turns him down. Soon after the Count returns and comes to see her. Her first question to him is "Where's my son?". He asks her if he should go away. She says no and invites him inside her house. He asks her why she didn't stay in the house he bought her. She says she couldn't stay there any longer without her son. He asks her if she had forgotten him. She says she could never him. He asks her if he can see her again before he leaves for England. She tells him she needs time to think and also tells him not to have her followed again. He leaves without another word.

All this happens in the first three episodes. The series loses control in fourth episode. The fourth episode opens thirty years later. Mary has accepted the Count's decision about Taro by now and has taken up with Kentaro again. (The Count's wife has passed away. Mary refuses to marry Kentaro unless their son can be at their ceremony. He still refuses to tell her where Taro is so she refuses to marry him.) She has been very successful in the clothing business and has two stores with many employees. One of her old friends from her marriage to Lt. Collingsworth comes to visit her. She explains everything that has happened to her in the past thirty years. Her friend urges her to return to London due to World War II brewing.

Mary refuses to go preferring to stay in Japan hoping to see her son again. But then Kentaro starts telling her to leave Japan because his position is being fazed out and soon he will no longer be able to do anything for her. He decided to take matters into his own hands when she continues to refuse to leave Japan. He has officers come to her house to order her to pack two suitcases of the most necessary things she will need on her trip back to London.

She is escorted to the ship by the officers and the Count is just in time to say goodbye to her. She says to the Count that she had time to business to put her business in order before she was forced to leave. She asks him one last time about Taro before she boards the ship; he still won't tell her anything.

While the ship is underway at sea a Japanese boat comes alongside and asks if a young man can come aboard to interview her. The young man turns out to be Taro. As a last gift to her the Count arranged for her to meet with her before she got back to London. While Mary and Taro have this meeting the Count is preparing to commit hari-kiri. Taro tells Mary about his life and his wife and children. Mary asks him if he has been happy. He tells her he has had a very happy life. He kisses her hand and bows to her before he leaves. After he boards the boat he waves to her. She cries as she waves back to him.

I bought the book hoping to get more understanding. But the book and the series turned out to be two different things in many instances.

The book is written in the form of letters and diary entries. It's a major accomplishment that they were able to get a script out of it.

In the book Mary McKenzie had a daughter by Lt. Collingsworth that she lost contact with and custody of when the Lt. threw her out of the house. This daughter is mentioned in one of the newspaper clippings as belonging to Kentaro but of course the series was different.

In the book the fellow employee whom she replaced when she went to work at the Department store killed himself because he couldn't deal with being replaced by a foreigner.. In the series he was relocated to the toy department.

In the series Mary remained faithful to the Count for over thirty years. In the book she had a brief fling with an Englishman.

In the book and series the Count sends Mary back to London but her meeting with Taro is not mentioned in the book.

After experiencing both the book and the series. I have to say I prefer the series. It's worth a look if only for the first three episodes. This is only thing I have seen Daisuke Ryu act in; I think his manner and voice fit the role of Count Kirahama Kentaro perfectly. I can only hope I can see him act in other things soon. Another funny thing about the series is that by the fourth episode everyone aged (they had on the full gray wigs and aging makeup) but the actress who played Mary McKenzie. All they did was change her hairstyle with a few strands of gray hair and a few lines around the eyes. The "holes" I mention on the first page were not filled in by the the book so I guess you have to use your imagination. One hole they didn't fill in was how she forgive the Count so easily for taking her child away and how she could have continued to see him with that wall between them. Another hole was how she could have stayed with someone who did not one her he loved her. But all in all I enjoyed this series and recom hly.

ALEC'S PICK



Samantha Bond is a married Scottish woman who has an affair with a Japanese nobleman in the four-part *The Ginger Tree*, which premieres tonight on **Masterpiece Theatre (WBIQ/Channel 10, 9 p.m.)**. Aside from being a good drama, this film is noteworthy because it is the first BBC production filmed in high definition television.

9:00 **10 Masterpiece Theatre** "The Ginger Tree" Disillusioned with her marriage to an English army officer, Mary MacKenzie is attracted to a Japanese nobleman. (Part 1 of 4) (CC)

9:00 **10 Masterpiece Theatre** "The Ginger Tree" (Part 2 of 4) (CC)

Masterpiece Theatre (9 p.m. Sunday). In part 2 of *The Ginger Tree*, Mary learns that her Japanese lover is married.

9:00 **10 Masterpiece Theatre** "The Ginger Tree" Though a successful businesswoman, Mary still cannot see her son and she refuses the Count's marriage offer. (Part 3 of 4) (CC)

9:00 **10 Masterpiece Theatre** "The Ginger Tree" With the new regime in Japan making life unsafe, Kentaro arranges for Mary to return to Europe. (Part 4 of 4) (CC)

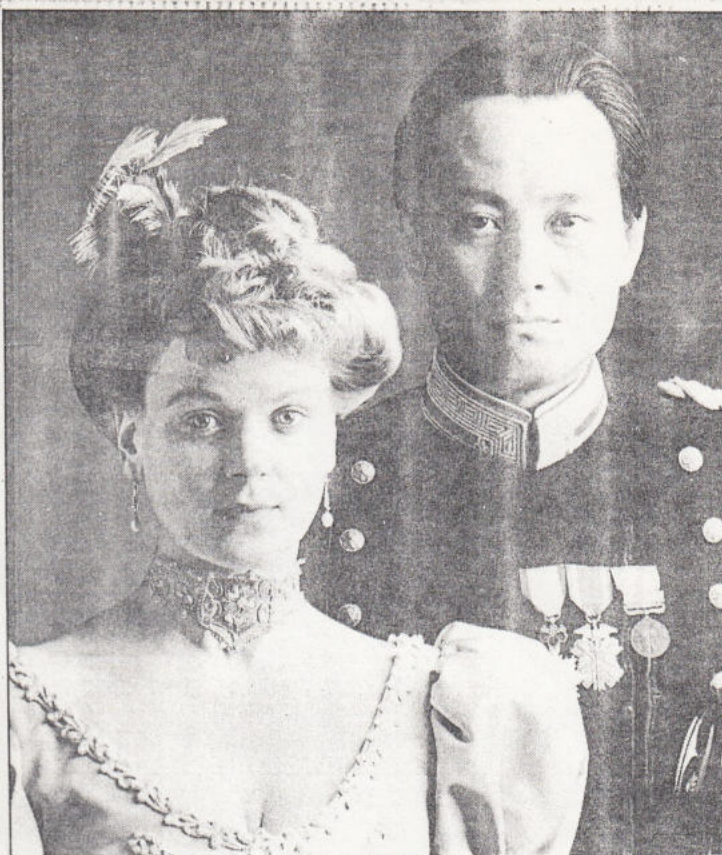
BBC's 'Ginger Tree' starts Sunday on WBIQ

By Alec Harvey
News staff writer

Although most folks don't have access yet to a high definition television, that doesn't diminish the power of *The Ginger Tree*, the first BBC production to be filmed in HDTV. That landmark series begins its run on **Masterpiece Theatre** at 9 p.m. Sunday on WBIQ/Channel 10.

The Ginger Tree tells the story of Mary MacKenzie, a young Scottish girl who has a passionate affair with a Japanese nobleman during World War I. (See the cover story on Page 15F.)

Also:



Samantha Bonds, as Mary McKenzie, is married to British army officer Adrian Rawlins but she falls in love with Daisuke Ryu.

'The Ginger Tree' clearer due to HDTV

By Alec Harvey
Staff writer

High Definition Television, or HDTV as it is becoming known: For the last couple of years, we've heard a lot about this innovation, heralded as "television of the '90s."

Thanks to the BBC and Japan's NHK Network (Sony in the United Kingdom), American audiences are about to be treated to the first HDTV drama to air in the U.S. *The Ginger Tree* will air as part of *Masterpiece Theatre* beginning at 9 p.m. Sunday on WBIQ/Channel 10 and continuing for three more Sundays.

The entire production was shot using an HDTV process, which provides better clarity by using more lines per screen than our country's standard 525-line format.

And while few viewers in this country own HDTV-compatible TV sets, viewers on other television sets will be able to see a clearer product, says Executive Producer Timothy Ironside-Wood.

Deciding to produce *The Ginger Tree* in HDTV was "an act of lunacy," Ironside-Wood said.

"We set out to make a miniseries costing a great deal of money, which we have no means of shooting it, we had no means of recording it, we had no means of editing it," he said of the equipment needed for HDTV. "And the best joke of all is, we could show it to 200 people in Japan."

While HDTV sets are on the increase in Japan, they are still relatively unknown in the United States, but Ironside-Wood believes that will change.

"It will take some time for a world standard (for HDTV), if there ever is one, and there will be a huge new business called convertibility as you switch from one system to another," Ironside-Wood said, adding that *The Ginger Tree* will be able to be converted once the time comes.

"We wanted to learn, because it will happen eventually," he added.

The Ginger Tree tells the story of a young Scottish woman (Samantha Bond) who travels to Manchuria in 1903 to marry a British army officer. She later has a passionate affair with a Japanese nobleman (Daisuke Ryu) and has a child by him. He takes the infant daughter from her and puts her up for adoption.

The script was written by Oscar-winner Christopher Hampton from a novel by Oswald Wynd.

The result is a magnificent miniseries, according to Executive Producer Marilyn Hall.

"You know, when they describe a book as 'a good read,'" she asked. "This was 'a good look.' Get your popcorn and your Dove bars and be prepared to settle in for really something that lures you on."

Ms. Hall calls *The Ginger Tree* a "survivor of development hell" that took seven years to come to television.

Ms. Hall first got the BBC interested, and was able to get Christopher Hampton to pen the script.

"We were so fortunate to get Christopher before he knew how good he was," she said of the man who won an Academy Award for his *Dangerous Liaisons*.

Then came money problems.

We set out to make a miniseries costing a great deal of money, which we have no means of shooting it, we had no means of recording it, we had no means of editing it. And the best joke of all is, we could show it to 200 people in Japan.

Timothy Ironside-Wood

"We realized we had to have another element, because the BBC couldn't handle the cost of the production alone," Ms. Hall said.

Enter NHK and HDTV.

"We did it in HDTV to learn," Ironside-Wood said. "And we did it, to be perfectly honest, because NHK and Sony ... offered to come in with extra funding and extra resources, which closed the gap for us in the end."

The process was difficult, but not nearly as difficult as people might think, Ironside-Wood said.

"It's less special than you think, but there are particular techniques that need to be understood," he said. "I would say that at the moment, it's probably more difficult for a film crew to work with it because the elec-

tronics involved are more complex, and the video-trained crews are more likely to get to grips with it, but it's not as complicated as you would think."

Ironically, one problem was making sure the clarity wasn't too clear, Ironside-Wood said.

"There are those who argue that ... the clarity that you can get potentially with high definition is even greater and perhaps sometimes too great," he said. "We used filters to try and degrade that clarity on occasions."

Although *The Ginger Tree* was a learning experience, it is a quality production, Ironside-Wood emphasized.

"There is nothing that is in the series that is not what we describe as being of broadcast standard," he said. "And the BBC, rightly or wrongly, still prides itself on having a very high broadcast standard. It's been shot to a very high standard, and there's absolutely nothing I would apologize for or be ashamed of."

Despite the educational experience, benefits will be derived from *The Ginger Tree* being filmed in HDTV.

"There is a marginal improvement on the down conversion" to conventional television, according to Ironside-Wood. "But that also gives it a shelf life that may be considerably longer than standard video, and in the case of a single film, would give it an interactive potential that standard television wouldn't have."

MARTIAL ARTS ZONE ** MARTIAL ARTS ZONE

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Once again, the well of martial arts movies on t.v. in Chicago, has run dry except for reruns or the likes of the Filipino movie that I mention below. Black Eagle was a video rental...

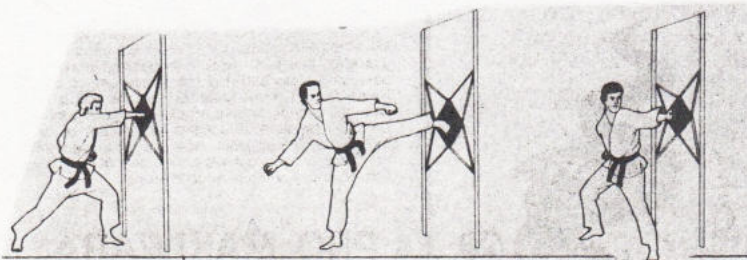
THE ONE-ARMED EXECUTIONER

In this low-key Filipino martial arts movie, Franco Guerrero stars as Ramon Ortega, a newlywed Interpol agent trying to intercept the shipment of illegal drugs coming into the country. Ortega and a few good men learn the whereabouts of a shipment that is being flown in by a Hong Kong connective. A battle ensues and two of the bad guys get away with the drugs, and a drug diary that the carrier brought with him from Hong Kong was destroyed.

Ortega and another agent pay a visit to the villain, Mr. Edwards, since the carrier from Hong Kong was one of his executives. He plays dumb, and when they leave he orders his men to make an example of Ortega "of what happens to overzealous Interpol agents" especially since "that Ortega is a smug sonofabitch" to boot. So Ortega comes home that night to an ambush, and the men have tied up his new blonde wife, and they keep asking him where the diary is, and he keeps saying he doesn't know but to leave his wife alone, and his wife is screaming, and one of the men finally stabs her and she dies, and on the way out, this same gentleman cuts off Ortega's left arm, and Ortega wakes up in the hospital, and he wages the question of the hour, "What can a one-armed agent do?" (Should we let Jimmy Wang Yu answer that?)

Ortega goes through a surge of self-pity and anger, drinking and wandering the street until an fatherly friend carts him off to his out of the way abode and trains him to start utilizing his other senses and sharpen his gun skills, loading and shooting with one arm. And then one day, the teacher-friend says, "Well, Ramon, I think you're finally ready." And Ramon blows back into town, ready for revenge.

His vendetta visit happens to coincide with Edwards' processing of a recent drug shipment at his island refinery. So Ortega and a group of his men crash the party and a shootout begins, and ends (realistically) with the top villain getting away with the drugs to ply his trade elsewhere. But Ortega exacts revenge on the man who killed his wife and handicapped him, so justice is served-somewhat.



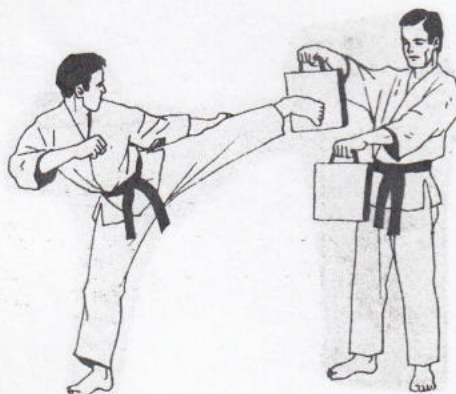
BLACK EAGLE

Attempting to be a political thriller, Black Eagle, noticeably wastes the talents of both Sho Kosugi and Jean-Claude Van Damme. The storyline revolves around a F1-11 going down somewhere in Malta with a top secret laser guidance system aboard which has to be found before other countries locate it and make off with this classified information.

There is only one man for the job, Ken Tani (Sho Kosugi), a master diver and special agent. But Ken Tani is due for a two-week vacation which is the only time he gets to see his kids (Kane and Shane Kosugi) every year. He declines to go to Malta saying his kids come first and it turns out that they have shipped his kids to Malta already. So he ends up working after all (surprise, surprise) since he has to go to Malta.

Jean-Claude Van Damme plays a bad guy, Andrei, assistant to one of the men trying to secure the laser system. He bares his muscles and gets to entertain the troops aboard his ship, by throwing darts while balancing himself on two barrels.

There is little solid martial arts action, aside from a few blocking moves and solidly delivered spin kicks when Sho and Jean-Claude meet. But there is a lot of trailing, gunfire, and betrayal, and even the kids get taken hostage, but with the help of a former agent turned priest, Ken Tani manages to subdue the enemy and spend a little time with his kids.



Until next time,

Gloria