

MAFFADA

41

OCTOBER '92



Welcome to the 41st issue of MAFFAPA, Martial Arts Film Fan (and Asian Culture) APA, for October 1992. Contributions were sent by the following people:

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Sorry to raise postage, but it has been costing me more to mail this than I have been charging you. I can't afford the 40¢ more per copy any longer.

The deadline for Maffapa 42 is January 31, 1992. 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 readable, must reach Laurine White by the end of January. 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 \$1.50 to cover return postage. If you don't send 18 copies, send your original pages plus \$1 per page to cover copy 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 42 to you.

THE FAR SIDE



As suddenly as it started, Joe's gagging is alleviated when a small ninja sword is dislodged from his throat

ASIAPHILE #36: WRITTEN & PRODUCED BY AMY HARLIB, 10/1/92

NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR MY 'HEROIC SPIRIT OF CHINA' SHOWS! A NEW PERFORMANCE PIECE, 'THE ANCIENT ART OF CHINESE SOFT-BONE SKILL', A DANCE OF YOGA CONTORTIONS SET TO THE THEME MUSIC FROM 'ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA' PARTS I & II (4 MANY OTHER FILMS) PREMIERED AT A LOCAL NY TRI-STATE MULTI-MEDIA/COMICS CONVENTION ALONG WITH MY SWORD DEMO (SEPT 12 & 13). PROMOTED AS THE CHINESE VERSION OF BATMAN, SUPERMAN & OTHER HEROES YOU KNOW & LOVE, MY PRESENTATION WERE SUCH A SUCCESS, THE CONVENTION PRODUCER WANTS ME BACK IN FEB. AT HIS NEXT EVENT, THAT WOULD BE MORE GRATIFYING IF MY CAREER WASN'T SO SPARSE AND NEAR NON-EXISTENT IN BETWEEN BUT THAT SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED DESPITE CONTINUING HEROIC EFFORTS. I REFUSE TO GIVE UP," SHE SAID HEROICALLY.

'HOT DOGS ON THE RUN'- DAMON FOSTER'S VIDEO PRODUCTION IS A HILARIOUS SPOOF OF EVERY MARTIAL ART MOVIE CHARACTER ARCHETYPE AND PLOT CLICHE YOU EVER SAW. IT'S RUDE, WITTY, CLEVER, FUN AND I URGE EVERYONE OF YOU MAFFAPANS TO ORDER A COPY FROM DAMON AND SUPPORT ONE OF OUR OWN!! TECHNICAL GLITCH- DUE TO PRIMITIVE SPFX TECHNOLOGY, EVERYTIME A FIGHT SCENE IS SPEEDED UP, THE TRACKING ON THE VCR & THE SOUND GETS DISTORTED, DON'T LET THAT STOP YOU FROM GETTING AND ENJOYING THIS. DAMON & FRIENDS ARE VERY TALENTED AND MUCH OF THEIR MOVEMENT IS AS GOOD AS MOST PROS I'VE SEEN AND I'VE SEEN PLENTY. BESIDES, THE BOX IS PAINTSTAKINGLY DECORATED (LIKE ORIENTAL CINEMA COVERS) WITH PHOTO MONTAGES OF SCENES FROM HOT DOGS, A PLOT SUMMARY & COMPLETE CREDITS AND IT'S A REAL WORK OF ART & THE PLOT & CHARACTER NAMES ARE RIDICULOUS ENOUGH TO LET YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN FOR LOTS OF LAUGHS. MY COPY HAS BEHIND-THE-SCENES SHOTS & BLOOPERS JUST AS GOOD IF NOT BETTER THAN HOT DOGS ITSELF.

RECENT VIDEO RELEASES

(From ASIAN CINEVISION NEWSLETTER)

The following titles have been released on video within the last several months. These videos can usually be found in the large rental chains such as Blockbuster.

* JU DOU *

Directed by Zhang Yimou and nominated for an Oscar, this drama of adulterous passion features the beauty of its actress, Gong Li, and exquisite cinematography.

* IRON AND SILK *

Shirley Sun directs this film based on Mark Salzman's book about his attempt during a 2-year visit to China to convince a martial arts master to take him on as a student.

* REINCARNATION OF GOLDEN LOTUS *

An erotic tale of seduction based on the literary character Golden Lotus. Directed by Clara Law.

'Dragon' will fire up action fans

By PHANTOM OF THE MOVIES

★★★

DRAGON INN. Maggie Cheung, Tony Leung. Directed by Raymond Lee. At the Sun Sing Theater. Running time: 107 mins. Unrated (SEASONAL) 1992

PRODUCER TSUI HARK'S "Dragon Inn" marks the latest Chinese historical martial-arts epic to hit these shores.

Set during the Ming Dynasty, the pic pits underhanded agents of the evil eunuch Yin (Donnie Yen) against the warrior couple Chow and Mo (Tony Leung and Brigitte Lin) and their cohorts. All are temporarily stranded at the storm-swept, desert-set title site, a boisterous establishment run by the beautiful, fierce and cunning Jade (Maggie Cheung).

Cheung, recently seen in Jackie Chan's "Supercop," easily steals the film as the many-faced, multi-faceted inn owner who seduces Chow and seeks to work both warring factions to her advantage.

As is typically the case, the historical intrigues and romance share screen time with several spectacular kung-fu fights. "Dragon Inn's" most impressive set-to is a climactic battle between our heroes and Yin who, in one memorable moment, sees his limbs skinned to the bone via a few swift sword swipes.

Yin's expert archers lend another vi-



DAY OF THE 'DRAGON': BRIGITTE LIN is ready to battle for truth, justice and the Chinese way.

lently exotic note by employing an array of vicious designer arrows bearing names like "Dog's Teeth," "Plum Blossom" and the heat-seeking "Phoenix Tail."

"Dragon Inn's" only major drawback isn't the fault of the film makers but the translators. While they don't impede the all-important action sequences, the sub-

titles here are more mutilated than most, routinely dropping prepositions, reversing words and mixing tenses to the point where the "Inn" set intrigues become unnecessarily difficult to follow.

Action fans who can live with that confusion should enjoy this entertaining entry.

← THIS WAS TERRIFIC! A REMAKE OF KING HU'S 1968 CLASSIC, 'DRAGON GATE INN' THIS VERSION HAS THE FLUID CINEMATOGRAPHY & LIGHTNING & PACING THAT APPEALS TO TODAY'S AUDIENCES & RETAINS THE QUIRKY CHARACTERS & COMPLEX PLOT OF THE ORIGINAL. THERE'S ALSO MORE GRAPHIC ACTION THAN IN 1968. I LOVED THIS ONE, I LOVED KING HU'S ORIGINAL. THEY ARE BOTH WORTHWHILE. THE PERIOD DETAIL WAS EQUAL, IF NOT BETTER THAN KING HU'S GROUNDBREAKING HIGH STANDARDS. THE MUSIC'S BEAUTIFUL TOO!

A TOWER FOR THE SUMMER HEAT

By Li Yu.
Translated by Patrick Hanan.
249 pp. New York:
Available Press/
Ballantine Books. Paper, \$9.

By Pamela Kyle Crossley

"OLD Man With No Son Willing to Sell Himself as Father. Asking Price Only Ten Taels. Same-Day Closing. Lifelong Commitment."

On this placard dangling from the neck of a man seeking to adopt an heir hangs "Nativity Room," the last tale in this collection of the works of the 17th-century Chinese satirist Li Yu. The wealthy old man, Yin, years after his only child (a worthy lad distinguished by his single testicle) disappears, decides to find a suitable replacement by disguising himself as a decrepit mendicant searching for an honest young man willing to buy him as a father.

The reader has already guessed the end of the story. But the too-obvious plot, which leaves readers tripping over their own banal expectations, is only one of the ruses used by Li Yu to divert, subvert and, some would say, pervert his readers.

The Manchus' conquest of China in the middle 17th century was one of the world's great social and cultural turnabouts. The Manchus, who had been regarded as vassals of the previous dynasty, even as barbarians, became masters of the state. In many of the conquered, including Li Yu, the calamity induced both a taste for irony and an appreciation for the fine art of thievery. Li was a mature man when the conquest occurred and supported himself later in his life by directing a theatrical troupe and writing sonnets and plays. He also exploited the evolving market for erotic literature and sold his sprightly fictions — "silent operas," as he called them — at a rate that, combined with his patronage, would have secured the old age of a less profligate man.

Serious minds have neglected Li Yu's fiction for a few centuries. It would have amused him to know that the grim academic labors now unearthing, bone by bone, China's early popular literature have thrown his own corpus up into the light of day.

Pamela Kyle Crossley teaches Chinese and Central Asian history at Dartmouth College. She is the author of "Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World."

But Patrick Hanan, a professor of Chinese literature at Harvard University, has an unfashionable approach: he thinks Li Yu is funny. Mr. Hanan's appreciation of the author's playfulness, social and psychological insight, and linguistic athleticism is evident. Having translated Li Yu's "Carnal Prayer Mat" in 1990, he now offers "A Tower for the Summer Heat."

For Li Yu, absurd plots are a staple, as is the piling on of narrative personas who complement one another while taunting the reader. One of the best pranks is a plot ("Homing Crane Lodge") built on a palindromic love letter. Such acrobatic feats are more than many translators can keep up with. But Mr. Hanan copies Li Yu's fancy steps as precisely as anyone could hope.

TRICKSTERISM and thievery are Li Yu's delights. He approves of those who posture in defense of the weak, old and orphaned. He cheers on those who intimidate their social superiors with fictitious powers, and he applauds men who scheme unceasingly to take limitless advantage of women. Li is no sentimentalist; he regards altruism as a vanity and heartily endorses the clear-eyed pursuit of self-interest. His prototypes are often those heroes of Chinese legend and literature who cheerfully turned to banditry and fraud to survive tyrannical times. Indeed, in the story "Return-to-Right Hall" Li Yu adds to the pantheon a repentant con man who takes the Taoist vows, but cannot resist one last spectacular scam to finance his monastery.

Li Yu himself is a slippery presence, and only by indirection does he point to the greater thefts in his society — the moral extortion exercised by the powerful on the weak, the corrupt on the innocent, the ugly on the beautiful. "Homing Crane Lodge," for instance, features a man who appears to be the inverse of his other protagonists, a man obsessed with a fear of taking more than his share, hoping to avoid the wrath of the divine. On its surface the story is a satire on Buddhist values, but its rather unsympathetic protagonist, who inadvertently achieves all his luckless friend's earthly desires, is perhaps Li's most finished ironic creation.

For all his frivolity, Li Yu had a sure hand with tragedy too. In the long story "House of Gathered Refinements," an idyllic marriage of three homosexual men is disrupted when a local martinet lusts after the youngest partner. The author unflinchingly watches the two senior lovers attempt to use their wits to save the young spouse, who despite their efforts is castrated and lost forever to the world of eunuchs. It is, like Li Yu's other tales, a study in monstrous theft, a battle in the *inexhaustible* war of wits that admits few victims and little enlightenment.

Long-Distance Eyes

Jiren . . . paid the money and took the telescope home with him. It's not only for looking at distant scenery, he thought, it can also make people in the distance look clearer than if they were close at hand. It's not a telescope; it's a pair of long-distance eyes! . . . I hope to choose an outstanding beauty as my wife, but officials' daughters aren't allowed to meet their suitors and marriage to a commoner would hardly be appropriate for me. Recently the matchmakers have mentioned a number of girls, all from gentry families living within a mile or two of here, and now that I have these long-distance eyes, why don't I find some vantage point from which to view them? The houses of great families aren't likely to open onto brick walls and blind alleys; they'll be full of pavilions and terraces with doors and windows you can see into.

From "A Tower for the Summer Heat."



CAROLYN FISHER

← HAVEN'T READ THIS ONE YET BUT I PLAN TO SINCE I ENJOYED THE OTHER TRANSLATION OF LI YU'S WORK INTO ENGLISH — "THE CARNAL PRAYER MAT!"

I CONSIDER "CHINA MOUNTAIN ZHANG" A MUST READ. IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST SF BOOKS I READ THIS YEAR. BESIDES THIS GLOWING NY TIMES REVIEW, IT GOT RAVES IN MANY SF REVIEW ZINES. I ALSO CAN'T PRAISE IT TOO HIGHLY.

3/15/92
It is hard to believe that **CHINA MOUNTAIN ZHANG** (Tom Doherty/Tor, \$19) by Maureen F. McHugh is a first novel. The author, who has spent several years teaching in China, has imagined a 22d century unlike any other I have read about. It is full of believable details and surprises. What makes it so fresh is that it feels so ordinary. There is no trick to inventing an exotic future; what is difficult is to make the exotic sound familiar — so that the people of the future inhabit a world that, however different from the reader's, appears every bit as real.

Ms. McHugh's 22d century is dominated by China; the United States, after undergoing a social-ist revolution, has apparently settled down with only minor grumbling to play its assigned role as a secondary power. The main character, who lends his name to the book, is an "ABC" — American-born Chinese — which places him far above all non-Asians on the social ladder but far below the Chinese-born, who get all the good jobs even though everyone is theoretically equal. Zhang is smart, nonpolitical, good company and a good friend. He also has two secrets that he wisely keeps from the authorities: his mother is Hispanic (not good for his social standing) and he is gay (even worse).

Let me quickly add that "China Mountain Zhang" is not a book about racism or homosexuality. These facts of life are simply built into the world that Ms. McHugh unfolds for us, along with the triumph of a highly pragmatic socialism and the manned kites that race, for money and fame, in the dark night sky above a much altered New York City. The plot takes Zhang, who is 26 years old when the book begins, from New York to the Arctic Circle to China and back to New York. Each setting is beautifully realized; and the futuristic touches, while sparing, are entirely convincing. Besides the kite races, I especially liked the computer-assisted design technique called "daoist engineering" and the fact that no one in Zhang's New York ever worries about getting mugged on the subway. There is also a beautifully realized subplot about settlers on Mars, a woman alone and a man with a small daughter, who unexpectedly find that they are good for each other.

However, the focus never strays far from Zhang, even when other narrators take over; everything that happens touches his life in oblique but consequential ways. Ms. McHugh has chosen her protagonist well: Zhang is just enough of an insider to get beneath the skin of his society and just enough of an outsider to question what he finds there. A first novel this good gives every reader a chance to share in the pleasure of discovery; to my mind, Ms. McHugh's achievement recalls the best works of Samuel R. Delany and Kim Stanley Robinson, without being in the least derivative.

Mark Jackson/ 2043 SE Isabell Road/ Port St. Lucie, Florida, 34952/
407-337-2303/

Hello, Everyone, hello,

Well, we're off to another MAFFAPA. The hurricane season has come and gone and we're still standing. Nothing new to report except I have a new friend and my VCR is still on the critical list.

First, my friend. This year, we joined an organization called Friendship Force. It is an international group which sponsors trips overseas with hosts guiding their international guests through a prearranged itinerary. The most recent expedition came from Ireland and our guest was a caterer from Dublin named Gerry. Since I attended Trinity College for independent study in 1981, we had many fruitful discussions concerning the progress of Irish media in the intervening years. Gerry and his two brothers were all writing plays until Gerry decided to start his catering firm. One brother is now involved with a stage production in Houston, Texas. The other directed the films MY LEFT FOOT and THE FIELD. The various forms of the media are flourishing and I am writing some publishers for guidelines.

Gerry is an engaging conversationalist with an intriguing variety of interests. I enjoyed the bounce of topics we pursued and look forward to seeing him soon. Friendship Force gives its members an excellent means for expanding contacts through the global village.

We had a JVC VCR for eight years until the heads finally wore out and all we could record was snow. We bought a Magnavox and it was less than ninety days before we were down to recording snow. PROGRESS! We now have an RCA as a loaner and the colors have a dark tinge and tend to "bleed." The VCR PLUS does not record on cue so the taping is kept to a minimum. Oh! We drove down to pick up the Magnavox when we got the call it was repaired. We waited for thirty minutes before they brought it out and the flap where you insert the tape was off one of the hinges. We are keeping the loaner for an extended visit.

In my travails with the VCR, I have come to appreciate the revolutionary impact of the VCR. Before the recorder, we all depended on the whims of a local tv programmer to see a movie out of theatrical release. If a tv show was telecast at an inconvenient time, we had to wait for the summer rerun for a second chance at viewing. Now we have the discretion of a tv station that is a network affiliate. The advantage of being an affiliate is that the station receives "feeds" for the program library. Reports on personalities and events which the news director can use at his/her volition. All the engineers have to do is crank up the old tape machine and preserve the images for posterity (provided they have better luck than I do).

What hath the VCR wrought! Today we can watch programming on our own schedules. The only drawback is we have to take away time from other activities to watch what we've taped. Who controls whom?

At any rate, when it works the VCR enhances the entertainment value of our tv. One misses it when it is not there. Or when it is not hale and hearty.

At any rate, while my programming options have been limited, I did notice a promising show while channelflipping one recent Sunday afternoon. It is called "Lightning Force" and it dramatizes the exploits of a rescue team with apparently global jurisdiction. Should danger erupt at, say, an Arctic experimental station, the "Force" arrives with "Lightning" speed (hence the title). In the episode I watched, the staffers at the said Arctic station are being systematically eliminated so the "Force" drops in for a friendly chat. To the producer's credit, the "Lightning Force" identifies the killer, determines the motive and establishes a logically consistent plot all within an allotted time of thirty minutes. The episode I saw was copyrighted "1990" and I saw it on a local independent station so, if you get a chance to see it, it may be at a local programmer's whim.

"Lightning Force" carries on the tradition of the thirty minute action oriented television series which have become a staple of tv since the 1950's. From "Peter Gunn" to "Lightning Force," they have become the video version of pulp fiction short stories. Whether a lone private investigator or a specialized team, the protagonist(s) face a threat which they resolve through head-on confrontation. Whether on tv or in print, it is refreshing to see that the pulp tradition carries on.

Now, since it is almost midnight of November 7, I must carry on. Good luck to all and to all a good night.



INMENT

Gangsters not all that funny

By MARK SCHILLING

Because they tend to take themselves with such awful seriousness, gangsters would seem to be natural subjects for comedy. (Mack Sennet once made the same observations about cops.)

Making funny gangster movies can be tricky, though. Turn yakuza into clowns and nobody will believe in them as

MOVIES

gangsters. Make them behave like real gangsters (pummeling underlings, knifing rivals, etc.) and they suddenly aren't funny any more.

Kazuki Omori's "Keisho Sakazuki (Succession Ceremony)" tries to resolve this dilemma in several ways. First, the story about the arrangements for a gang succession ceremony lends itself to comedy; a screwed-up gangland social event, especially one staged by fanatically perfectionist thugs, is potentially funnier than, say, a screwed-up gang-land execution.

Second, the hero is believably funny. A college grad and former stockbroker, Shōichi Yoshinari (Hiroyuki Sanada) is an unlikely yakuza to begin with, and Sanada, who appeared in "Byōin e Iko" and "Tsugumi," plays him with an over-the-top eagerness that feels amusingly right, not irritatingly wrong.

Perhaps it's his gift for physical comedy (he's got an entertainingly desperate way of running). Perhaps it's his blend of boyish charm and roguish calculation. Or perhaps it's his actor's skill to get inside his character's skin. In short, he reminded me of Michael J. Fox in some of his better, funnier roles. But taller.

When an elderly boss of bosses decides to step aside in favor of a middle-aged underling, Yoshinari is given the toughest job of his short career: persuade the oyabun of an affiliate gang to serve as the *baishakunin* — a kind of MC — at the succession cere-



HIROYUKI SANADA is an unlikely yakuza whose struggles to organize an important ceremony are made harder by drunken oyabun Ken Ogata in Kazuki Omori's "Keisho Sakazuki."

mony. His job is a tough one because he is asking the oyabun to be a fill in; the first choice for the post has fallen suddenly ill. Being considered second-best is, we are given to understand, a severe blow to yakuza pride.

When, after several mishaps, Yoshinari arrives at the country home of the oyabun (Ken Ogata), he finds him to be a pleasant, agreeable fellow. He also learns that the stunner he tried to pick up on the way over is the oyabun's wife (Yuko Kotegawa).

His troubles, however, don't really begin until this pair arrives in Tokyo. The geezer who was the first choice makes a miraculous recovery and Yoshinari has to tell the oyabun that his services are no longer required. Now the oyabun is really insulted. He gets roaring drunk, crashes a funeral, and, confusing the *ososhiki* altar with that of the *keishoshiki*, starts a one-man riot.

Soon after this incident, the geezer collapses again and the oyabun gets another chance. By now Yoshinari knows that the oyabun is an

alcoholic, and that he will need a miracle of his own if he is to shepherd his charge successfully through the ceremony.

The script, by veteran screenwriter Hiroo Matsuda, has promise, but the film doesn't realize it. The beginning, with its wild race through the countryside (Yoshinari and his frantic superior are late for an appointment with the oyabun), points the film in the direction of farce, but Omori, whose credits include two Godzilla films, turns it back toward straight, almost soapish, drama.

The oyabun, it so happens, is not a W.C. Fields drunk, but a Ray Milland ("Lost Weekend") drunk; his bouts go out of control and become painful to watch. His wife, understandably, is fed up. A former OL, she once embezzled ¥70 million for him — and spent three years in the slammer as a result. Now look how he is paying her back!

This veering between the silly and the serious keeps "Keisho" from truly taking off; despite fine performances by the principals, we

cringe at the confessions and keep waiting for laughs that never quite arrive.

The key scene, however, is the ceremony itself, and Ogata brings it off splendidly. We may have sat, paralyzed with boredom, through too many Japanese weddings to work up much enthusiasm for yet another over-priced, over-prepared ceremony. Ogata, however, gives us a glimpse of the spirit behind the mummery. Though his hands may tremble with the DTs, he somehow manages to *gaman* through, calling on his last reserves and his yakuza pride. Throughout the film we have seen the gangsters' buffoonish side, but now we get a different, deeper, view of their world.

I was reminded of sportswriter Bill Murray's observation about a Hell's Angel: "Planted on the back of his hog, this oaf acquired instant grace." So does Ogata's oyabun, but his medium of transformation expresses not only an individual will, but group continuity and solidarity. For one moment in a less-than-inspiring movie, we share in that transformation.

REPORT by Howard Walsdorff

あぶない刑事

ABUNAI DEKA

The ABUNAI DEKA series of films are available on video cassettes. The dramas are about supercops policing Yokohoma Bay District. Emphasis is on action. Shibata Kyohei plays Yuji and Tachi Hiroshi portrays Taka. This pair of lawmen talk about women even on the way to a murder case. One time they were paying so much attention to an attractive woman crossing the street that they were unaware at first that a man was trying to shoot them!

Nakamura Toru plays Machida Toru, a rookie cop, who helps the blundering pair with unorthodox methods to apprehend criminals.

If you have the chance to see any of these ABUNAI DEKA films, by all means, please do watch them.

SHIBATA KYOHEI played Detective Oshita in ABUNAI DEKA. Shibata was born in Shizuoka-ken, August 18, 1951. He is married to Yamaguchi Kana, a former fashion model and is the father of three children. Shibata played Yoshima in PRO HUNTER; a police officer in SANGA MOYU; an illicit lover in NIJI IRO GENERATION; an alluring husband in MIO TSUKUSHI; an illustrator in SHINGEN MINATO; the antagonist in NHK's TAKEDA SHINGEN; a hoodlum in CHINPIRA; etc. Shibata can also sing and would like to do musicals.

NAKAMURA TORU's role in BE BOP HIGH SCHOOL in 1985 made him a success equivalent to Henry Winkler in HAPPY DAYS or John Travolta in WELCOME BACK, KOTTER rise to stardom. Nakamura Toru acted opposite the lovely Nakayama Miho who is now the girlfriend of superstar, Tahara Toshihiko. This success led Toru to a major role in ABUNAI DEKA sharing top billing with superstars. Other major films followed.

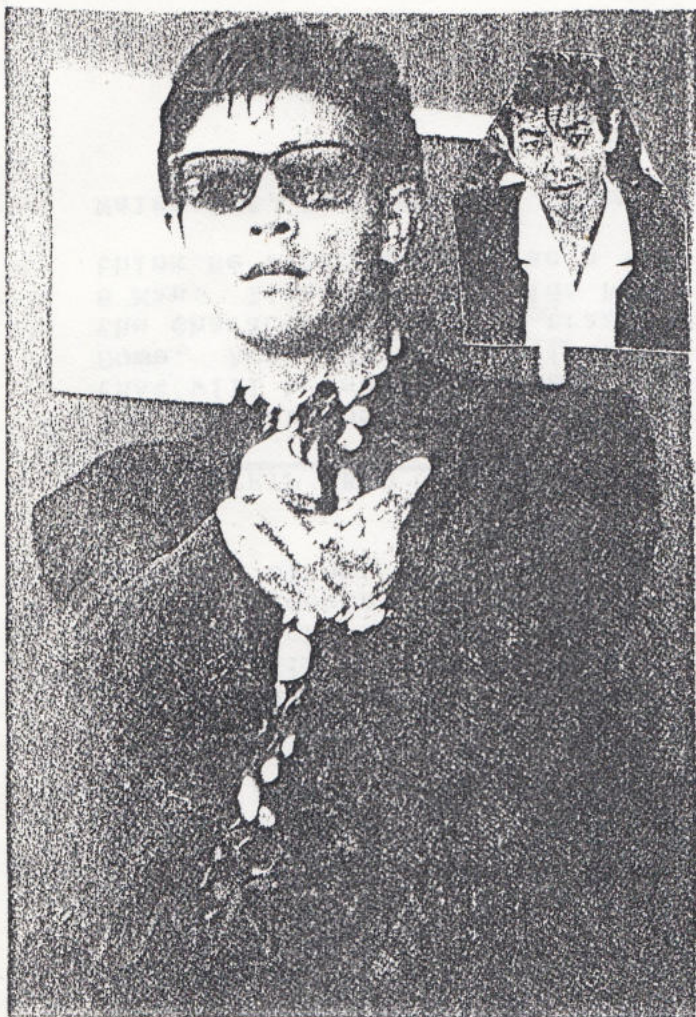
TACHI HIROSHI was born March 31, 1950, in Nagoya. ABUNAI DEKA is his biggest claim to fame after he-man roles in productions prior to his success. Tachi was determined to go his own way, the once dutiful son letting his parents down by choosing successively in favor of teen gangs, leather jackets, bikes, rock music, and finally the acting profession.

COMIC STRIP HERO GOES TO THE MOVIES.

The popular comic strip character 8 MAN will be a movie that will be shown December 1 and 2, 1992, at the Tokyo Dome. Actor Shishido Kai will portray 8 Man and Azuma Hachiro the character before he transforms into the cyborg hero, 8 Man. I've seen Shishido Kai act in other shows and I think he will be great as a super hero.

Walsdorff, P.O. Box 247, Greenbrier, TN 37073-0247

Howard



SHIBATA KYOHEI 柴田恭平



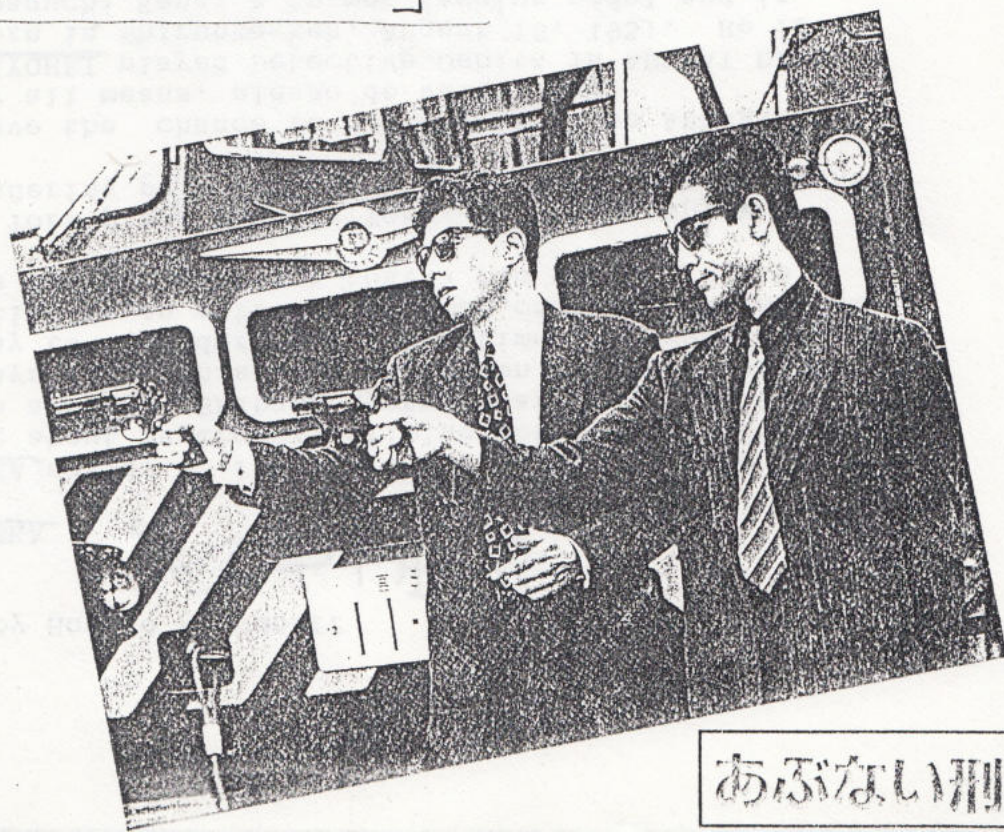
NAKAMURA TORU

仲村トオル

「ABANAI DEKA」

館ひろし

TACHI HIROSHI



あぶない刑事

NEWS FLASH - I'M IN MY 2ND MUSIC VIDEO!! NOV. 1 I WAS A PRINCIPAL CONTORTIONIST. IN THE VIDEO FOR A NEW MALE POP DUO! CHARLES & EDDIE FOR THEIR SONG, "NEW YORK CITY." I DO MY SOFT-BONE YOGA THING TO THEIR MUSIC. THE END PROD- UCTION COMP- ANY FILM! IT.

WARRIOR WOMAN

The Films of Hsu Feng

August 31 - September 8



The Film Society is proud to welcome actress/producer Hsu Feng to the Walter Reade Theater on the occasion of this all-too-brief tribute to her work. Hsu Feng quite literally burst onto the big screen with her first major role in *Dragon Gate Inn* (1968), directed by King Hu. That film - an enormous commercial and critical success - not only helped to establish Hong Kong cinema internationally; it also signalled the beginning of a partnership between Hsu Feng and King Hu that would result in films such as *The Fate of Lee Khan*, *Raining in the Mountains*, and perhaps most notably, *A Touch of Zen*.

Watching Hsu Feng in these works today, one is struck by her beauty and physical grace, as well as the haunting, elusive quality she brings to each of her roles. Characters are rarely what they appear to be in King Hu's films, but one can count this a rule of thumb with the women played by Hsu Feng: from the moment she enters a room, or even raises her eyebrows, one knows immediately to expect the unexpected. The extraordinary power of her on-screen presence makes her more than a match for any of the male protagonists, a fact she proves with a vengeance in her many amazing scenes of martial arts combat. Although best known for her work with King Hu, Hsu Feng has starred in many other kinds of films for other directors, earning in 1981 the Taiwanese "Golden Horse" Award for Best Actress in Richard Chen's *The Pioneers*, a story of early Chinese immigrants to Taiwan.

In 1984, Mme. Hsu founded Tomson (HK) Films Company, which has since become one of the leading producers of the new generation of Chinese filmmakers. Included in this tribute are three recent films produced by Hsu Feng: Ann Hui's *Starry is the Night*, Yim Ho's *Red Dust*, and Yeh Hungwei's *Five Girls and a Rope* (featured in the 1992 *New Directors/New Films* series). Currently, Mme. Hsu is producing the new film by mainland director Chen Kaige, *Farewell to My Concubine*, starring Gong Li.

Mme. Hsu Feng will appear at the Walter Reade Theater on August 31 and September 1.

Lee Khan
Monday, August 31:
2 and 6:30 pm

Tuesday, September 1:
4:30 and 9:15 pm

Pioneers
Monday, August 31:
4:15 and 9 pm

Tuesday, September 1:
2 and 6:30 pm

A Touch of Zen
Wednesday, September 2:
2, 5:15, and 8:30 pm

Saturday, September 5:
6 pm

Sunday, September 6:
2, 5:15, and 8:30 pm



A Touch of Zen

Starry is the Night
Thursday, September 3:
2, 4, and 6 pm

THE FATE OF LEE KHAN < I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO SEE THIS ONE - THE LAST KING HU FILM I HADN'T SEEN.

(King Hu, Hong Kong, 1973; 105 minutes) King Hu has always been the master of the martial arts genre, imbuing it with comic book vitality and visual punch. His movies are replete with Zen mysticism, stylized kung fu metamorphosing into a deadly and beautiful ballet before one's very eyes, and a serenely lyrical appreciation of natural landscapes. The plot of *The Fate of Lee Khan* is as convoluted and ultimately irrelevant as any other King Hu extravaganza, but suffice it to say that the story concerns a revolution against Mongolian rule, with warrior women Wendy, Lilac, Peach, Chili, and Peony waging the good fight to the death against Lee Khan, baron of Honan, "a cunning and formidable fighter," and his eerily malevolent sister Wan-Erh (Hsu Feng). As in so many of Hu's films, the action centers on a lonely inn, which fills with a host of highly idiosyncratic characters, all playing an increasingly tense, life-and-death game of wits. **MAO YING HAS A TERRIFIC MASOR RULE THOUGH THE FINAL FIGHT SCENE THIS ONE IS UP THERE, ANGELA**

THE PIONEERS IS NOT AS GOOD AS HU'S LATER WORK.

(Richard Y. Chen, Taiwan, 1979; 127 minutes) A magnificent production that recounts the legendary tale of a man who immigrates to Taiwan in the 18th century to devote the rest of his life to digging an oil well for his village - the first of its kind in Taiwan. His obsessive, nearly superhuman task costs him his life, but he achieves immortality in myth. The experiences and environment of early Chinese immigrants in Taiwan are imbued with rich authenticity by director Chen. Featuring Hsu Feng, and John Philip Law.



A TOUCH OF ZEN - WONDERFUL! A TRUE CLASSIC.

(King Hu, Hong Kong, 1969-75; 180 minutes) "It is unlike any other kung-fu film I have seen. It raises the generally debased genre, referred to with a certain justice as 'chop-socky' in *Variety*, to the level of art. The kung fu fights still predominate, but this time it is the difference between a street brawl and a royal ballet. The movie is closer in spirit and look to the great Japanese epics such as *Rashomon*. It folds its violent story into a landscape where the camera takes as much esthetic pleasure in the quiver of a birch branch as King Hu does in bringing the Zen philosophy of mind-over-matter to bear on the physical encounters between a group of Buddhist priests and the Ming Dynasty's secret police. There are night scenes of unbelievably thrilling combat, lit by the moon or torches, clanging with the sound of blades and whistling with hailstorms of steel spears; you never get a chance to see from which direction death comes, so that it appears a bizarre continuum of the action, rather than the end result. *A Touch of Zen* lasts three hours, but feels like only one." - Alexander Walker, *Evening Standard* (London)

STARRY IS THE NIGHT

(Ann Hui, Hong Kong, 1987; 98 minutes)

When a social worker falls in love with a delinquent boy, she compares - in memory - the positive qualities she admires in her youthful suitor with the character of her first lover, a political and emotional coward, though a respectable, married university professor. As the lives of these representatives of three different generations and philosophies come to passionately intersect, director Ann Hui (*Story of Woo Viet and Boat People*) courageously explores the good and bad legacies of the past as well as the future's promises of change, and finds in a lopsided - agewise - love affair cutting-edge commentary on contemporary social and political issues. (Produced by Hsu Feng / Tomson)

Woman Warrior: The Films of Hsu Feng was organized by the Film Society of Lincoln Center in collaboration with Tomson (HK) Film Company and the Chinese Information and Culture Center of the Coordination Council for North American Affairs, New York Office. Special thanks also to Norman Wang, Sophie Gluck, Jade Hsu, Julia Chan, Charles Ou, and Mme. Hsu Feng.

Red Dust
Friday, September 4:
 2, 6:15 and 10:15 pm

Saturday, September 5:
 4:15 and 9 pm

RED DUST

(Yim Ho, Hong Kong, 1990; 94 minutes)

I feel helpless coming face to face with the history of China....I don't have the ability to make an irony of what happened over half a century ago....History has its own meaning and implications and in looking back, one can easily realise the irony history has made of itself. - Kim Ho

A woman's history and an enduring love affair played out during a decade marked by the violent upheavals of war and revolution in pre- and post-WWII China. In the early 40s, a young woman is imprisoned and driven to a suicide attempt by her old-fashioned father when she falls in love with a boy he disapproves of. After her father's death, as an independent woman and respected novelist, Zhao-hwa again chooses the wrong lover, a man considered a collaborator as an employee of the occupying Japanese government. Their passionate commitment to each other survives personal betrayal and the chaos of the Civil War that makes China a Communist state. A rich, epic melodrama that measures the enormous impact of radical cultural evolution in individual human experience. (Produced by Hsu Feng / Tomson)



RAINING IN THE MOUNTAIN - BEAUTIFUL - ESPECIALLY THE BLEND OF FANTASY & REALITY.

Red Dust

Raining in the Mountain
Friday, September 4:
 4 and 8 pm

Saturday, September 5:
 2 pm

An aging abbot in a 16th-century Buddhist monastery seeks a successor, setting off an incredibly complex dance of deceit and ever-shifting alliances. Power, mundane or metaphysical, is the prize. The abbot checkmates two secular aspirants - hungry only for the priceless scroll held in the monastery library - by choosing as his unlikely heir a criminal doing time on holy ground. Tony Rayns notes that *Raining's* "intrigues maintain a scrupulous balance between spiritual strength and physical struggle....there are moments of great beauty, spectacle, humour, and suspense, as well as occasional eruptions of stylized violence." As usual, Hu demonstrates soul transcending earthly gravity in superhuman acrobatics powered by Zen mysticism.



THE VALIANT ONES

(King Hu, Hong Kong, 1975; 102 minutes)

A 16th-century Ming emperor orders his Prime Minister to find a final solution to the centuries-old alliance between Japanese pirates and Chinese bandits that has devastated the Chinese coast. After a small band of heroes headed by a legendary strategist infiltrates the raiders' ranks, the film's narrative strands are interwoven - the battles of "the valiant ones" against the evildoers are contrasted with the subtler action of the corrupt patterns of betrayal that characterize the emperor's whole administration. Yet another breathtaking exploration of the nature and origins of power, and though the story is set in the distant past, the relevance of Hu's vision is always up front, very much here and now. - ALSO EXCELLENT-WATCH FOR



Raining in the Mountain

The Valiant Ones
Monday, September 7:
 2 and 6:45 pm

Tuesday, September 8:
 4:30 and 9 pm

Raining in the Mountain

SAMO HUN IN HIS EARLY CAREER AS A SAMURAI(!) VILLAIN!

FIVE GIRLS AND A ROPE

(Yeh Hung-Wei, Hong Kong, 1991; 123 minutes)

The story of five young women growing up in a rural village in China during a time and in a society that count females as worthless. After each girl experiences a painful object lesson in the dreadful expendability of her sex, the five conclude that their lives are destined for equally tragic fates. On September 9th, during the Immortal Festival, they decide to seek refuge in a "Heavenly Garden" (by hanging themselves) where happiness and freedom will be their lot forever. Director Yeh Yung-Wei notes that though times have changed, there are still many traces of old attitudes toward women: "My film is made to examine the question of why this is so. My only regret is that my accusations may appear weak when they are compared to the age-long history of the plight of Chinese women." (Produced by Hsu Feng / Tomson)

Five Girls and a Rope
Monday, September 7:
 4:30 and 9 pm

Tuesday, September 8:
 2 and 6:45 pm



Five Girls and a Rope

MAFFAPA contribution by Jeffrey C.F. Wong, somewhere in Hawaii

(letter excerpt) Carol "Do Do" Cheng's (Cantonese name is Cheng Yu Ling) ONCE A BLACK SHEEP - Cheng is probably Hong Kong's most versatile actress, fully competent in the comedy and drama department. She has played everything from stuck up Maoist cadre caught in a stranger in a strange land situation in Hong Kong, to oversea Chinese/Canadian tomboy in Toronto Chinatown. She played weathered but experienced dancehall girl in Hong Kong's redlight district, totally emptyheaded career beauty contestant (in WONDER WOMEN, a hard and cynical look at the beauty pageants, attacking the dark and hypocrisies of the beauty pageants in Hong Kong), divorced mother with teenage daughter (not unlike Cher's MERMAIDS, but it was an '86 or '87 movie, and she played a sexually withdrawn mother devoted to her daughter), to even believable female psychiatrist. She is also very active in television. Personally, I think of her as the female counterpart to Chow Yun Fat in terms of versatility. In whatever role she tackled, light or heavy, comedic or dramatic, gorgeous high class socialsetter or sexless Maoist, educated elite or typical bimbo, her character usually is very strong in a feminine way, if not at the beginning, then is revealed or grew to be strong by the end of the picture. While the veteran Taiwanese (native)/Hong Kong (adopted; learned and speaks Cantonese like a native; rare for a Taiwanese actress) actress/director (and very successful) Sylvia Chang, and the new heavyhitter from the mainland, Gong Li, are often thought of first in the heavy drama department, female audience in Hong Kong has an incredible following for Carol Cheng. Her strong independent character on or off screen is much admired by the female cut of the Hong Kong audience. In this movie I mentioned here, though not her best, is well subtitled (as well as it gets anyway. Lots and lots of untranslatable colloquial Cantonese throughout), and is one of her few action oriented pictures. Otherwise, it's your typical gun-wielding violent mayhem.



Circa 300 B.C.: The first barbarian invader reaches the Great Wall of China.

KAMA #41, Laurine White, 5422 Colusa Way, Sacramento, CA 95841-2304
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Found in the New York Times: "Mr. Kaufman (of Troma Films) has high hopes for his next superhero, the protagonist of "Sergeant Kabukiman, N.Y.P.D. The film, a response to the rivalry between the United States and Japan, follows the adventures of a Bronx policeman, who, while trying to solve the murder of a Kabuki actor, becomes possessed by the spirit of a medieval hero in Kabuki garb. Endowed with superhuman powers, he wields an arsenal that includes sushi projectiles, chopstick darts and lethal flying sandals. A morning cartoon program is already in the works." And "Mark Freedman, the marketing impresario who oversaw the Teen-Age Mutant Ninja Turtles transformation from obscure characters in a black-and-white comic book into one of the most popular child icons in memory, is now licensing a line of Zen Intergalactic Ninja figures. Zen, a good guy, leads a band of recycled heroes including Can-it, made from recycled cans, in a battle to "defend the earth" against bad-dies like Lord Contaminous, Garbage Man and Smogger. The Zen Figures are manufactured by Just Toys Inc. in New York. It is a bit early for a cereal deal, Mr. Freedman said, but a television show and a movie are in the works."

As an example how anything can be made relevant to Asian culture and used in Maffapa, I take the following from a New York Times review of a book on a spicy fruit, PEPPERS: A Story of Hot Pursuits, written by Amal Naj, published by Alfred A. Knopf - Peppers "probably originated somewhere in South or Central America; there is archeological evidence of humankind's attachment to them going back some 8,000 years, and that they did not find their way to India, China or Japan until after Columbus's discovery of the West Indies. In the 17th Century, Mr. Naj explains, Kikaku, one of the ten disciples of the great Japanese poet Basho, composed a haiku:

Take a pair of wings
From a dragonfly, you would
Make a pepper-pod.

Basho told Kikaku: "That's not a haiku. You kill the dragonfly." Kikaku recomposed the lines:

Add a pair of wings
To a pepper-pod, you would
Make a dragonfly."

RISING SUN, the movie based on Michael Crichton's best-selling novel, will be released next summer. Sean Connery stars. Some of the San Francisco Taiko Dojo took their 1,000-pound taiko drum down to L.A. to perform in the movie. The drum is so large, a hole had to be cut to make the door large enough to get the drum onto the set. A giraffe hide was used to make the drum, which was presented by a taiko store in Japan to the S.F. Taiko Dojo at the International Taiko Festival in 1990.

Wesley Snipes will co-star in RISING SUN. His new action picture ~~PASSENGER~~ 57, looks like DIEHARD set on an airplane. The prevues show him using some martial arts.

The guys at work enjoyed Stephen Seagal's UNDER SIEGE. But several things about it bothere me. As Karey (former Maffapan) said,

there was no villain nearly equal in martial skill to present a challenge to him. The knife fight vs Tommy Lee Jones was a joke; Seagal vs Stuntman. A fight between Seagal and Gary Busey would have been so much more climactic. The movie was obviously edited; too many little pieces are missing, disrupting continuity. (For good continuity, watch DIEHARD again.) What was the previous connection between Jones and Seagal? Something to do with Panama, obviously, but the reference should have been left in. The bad guys say Seagal took care of 2 people in the engine room, but we didn't see it. Bernie Casey is at the birthday party, then is not seen again. Bernie knows martial arts. One of the media martial arts zines once had an article on him.

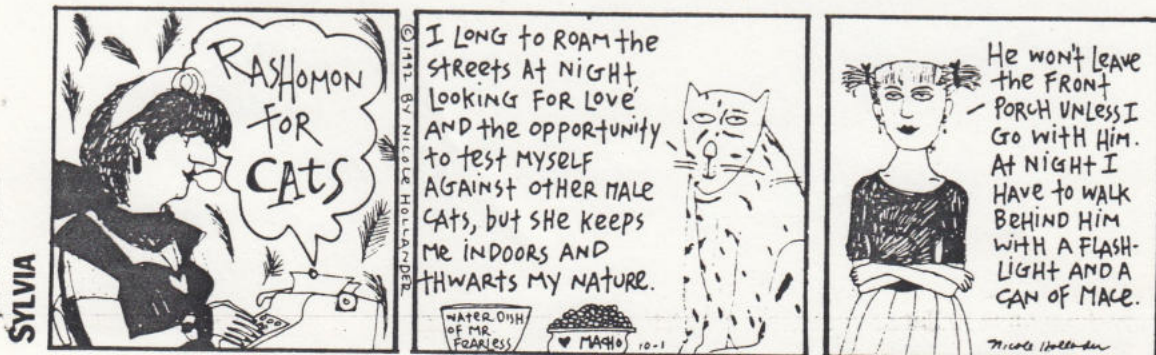
Remember when I used to write about comicbooks with weird titles like Zatoichi Walrus? (Yes, that one actually ran for 2 issues.) Looking at the new list of comics, I found some recent m/a titles. But, not having much money after vacation, roommate's wedding, and car insurance bill, I haven't seen them all, and am not likely to. Archie Comics publishes a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles comic for kids (as opposed to the Ninja Turtles comic for adults, published by Mirage Press). Despite having Zen Intergalactic Ninja on my comics saver for years, I only received one issue published by its independent publisher. Now it's published by Archie Comics. Zen is an alien in a ninja-type outfit who comes to earth to help us with our problems. Like Captain Planet, he's here to save the environment. Calibur/Gauntlet publishes Samurai Seven - I know nothing about this one. Eros publishes Karate Girl - ditto, but being from Eros, it's gotta be "for mature readers".

LETHAL INTERFACE by Mel Odom, published by Roc, May 1992, is set in Dallas sometime in a cyberpunk future, after the collapse of the American economy. Japanese corporations relocated to America after a devastating earthquake hit their homeland. They enjoy all the privileges of the European settlements in late 19th century China. Several women connected to the Nagamuchi Corporation have been brutally murdered by someone who uses a computer program to "morph" his image in the security cameras. (This development sounds suspiciously like something in Michael Crichton's RISING SUN.) Two cops investigating the murders are stonewalled by Nagamuchi. One is an alcoholic. The other, Mick Traven, has been transferred from Vice for being too efficient in tracking drug dealers. Mick is the target of assassination attempts and interference from his father, who runs an ad agency for Nagamuchi. Why does one druglord now have ties with yakuza, while ninjas are hijacking drug shipments of his Columbian rival? Mick finds the indirect connection between the murders and the drug trade in some dramatic confrontations with the criminals. For me, this was a compulsive page-turner. Fortunately, I read it on a Saturday morning, and not in the car pool on the way to work.

KISAENG, Zebra, September 1992, is the latest novel by Marc Olden, and is less satisfying to me than his previous books. There is no reincarnation, no fantasy element, but that's not the reason. In previous stories he's used ruthless Japanese executives and Chinese triads as the villains. Here the nasties are Korean military strongmen and their goon squads. There is not one single Korean who is a sympathetic character in the whole novel. Every character in KISAENG

is dirty, except for the New York cop hero, his female partner, his girlfriend, his ex-girlfriend and her husband and their daughter. Manny Decker, the cop, has (of course) a martial arts background. Just before the fall of South Vietnam, as a sergeant, he lost some friends and American currency plates to Park Song, a Korean thug who has been using the plates for counterfeiting ever since, with the tacit approval of his superiors and the American government, which needs the support of the corrupt Korean government. Manny is assigned to find a leak in NYPD responsible for the murders of several undercover cops checking out drug traffickers. On the side, he's trying to find out what happened to his ex-girlfriend's missing daughter. KISAENG is published by Zebra, which packages it to appear sleazier than it really is: "Exquisite beauties, they live to serve his every whim and die to give him pleasure!" Someone looking for sex slave scenes won't find them. The daughter is kidnapped to be the next toy of Park Song, who has connections with a trans-Atlantic sex slave ring, linked to the New York drug traffickers and a supply source for stolen currency paper to be used with the stolen plates from the Vietnam War. The climax is a martial arts fight to the death between Manny and Park Song for the plates and the girl. Too many villains, not enough decent people, and way too many coincidences for credibility.

SAMURAI INC. by David Klass, Fawcett, June 1992: The story is much better than the silly cover blurb - "What he didn't know about the Japanese could get him killed..." The hero, Jack Graham, is an FBI agent with a real hang-up about his once-physically abusive father. He reluctantly visits his father, now an aging L.A. cop investigating the "suicide" of a Caucasian woman who once taught English in Japan. When his father also "suicides" with their conflict unresolved, Jack, like his father, can't let go of the case. He travels to a Japanese city where the woman's husband has fallen from some cliffs. A ninja nearly kills him; a yakuza gang helps him; a police woman seduces him, and a paramilitary group kidnaps him. Despite being underestimated by enemies and new allies, only Jack can avenge his father's death and rescue a mysterious young heir to a Japanese corporation. Jack's ambivalent feelings about his father are the most realistic aspect of SAMURAI INC. The rest is action entertainment, with a little sex added. The audience for this is mostly male, but it isn't overtly packaged that way.



Jacqueline D. Sims
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This is a guide to episodes twenty-one through twenty-five of the Miyamoto Musashi television series.

EPISODE 21: THE ROBBERY

In order to flush out Jotaro Musashi allows himself to be put on public display knowing that he is bound to show up to see him fight.

Jotaro does come but he runs away back to Naraiya's place as soon as Tanzaemon spots him. Gonnosuke returns just in time to try to catch Jotaro as he is running away. Jotaro refuses to come out and they finally leave after inviting Jotaro to please come visit them before they leave Chichibu.

Oko and Toji talk Shishido Baiken into robbing the temple of it's monetary donations. Baiken, who after the loss of his wife and baby to illness, has nothing more to lose so he agrees.

Toji, Oko and Baiken bury the gold coins they stole in the woods; at this point they planned to kill Baiken but Toji is not skilled enough and he gets killed instead of Baiken. He dies calling Oko's name. Musashi hears a woman screaming and comes to help.

Musashi and Baiken fight. Baiken is killed. Guards at the temple discover the robbery and run around searching for the thief. They come upon Musashi just after he killed Baiken. Oko turns Musashi in as the thief. The guards believe her. They arrest and take Musashi away. Left alone Oko begins to dig up the treasure. Naraiya Daizo and Jotaro come upon her. Naraiya Daizo kills Oko after Jotaro hesitates to do so. Oko smears his face with her blood before she dies. Jotaro and Daizo take the temple money and also the comb Oko dropped and leave.

Otsu and Hyogonosuke finally make it to his ailing grandfather's side. They both try to talk to Sekishusai but they get no response. But the sound of Otsu's flute playing does wake him up. With his last ounce of strength he entrusts Hyogo with the Yagyu Shinkage Muto-dori sword style. Then he dies.

Musashi is tied up and tortured in jail to try to make him confess where the temple money is.

Not knowing what else to do Iori goes to Yagyu Munenori for help to try to get Musashi out of jail.

Iori and Monk Takuan pass Daizo and his men on the road. Daizo sends Jotaro to give Takuan a donation. Jotaro tells Takuan that Matahachi will try to kill the Shogun. He also

leaves Takuan Oko's comb to give to Musashi. Musashi can not believe Matahachi's stupidity when he hears this news.

EPISODE 22: THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

Matahachi gets a job with the well-diggers to get close enough to attempt to kill the Shogun. He uses a rifle to shoot at the Shogun. He shoots but misses when Musashi moves his arms. His accomplices are quickly discovered and killed. Matahachi goes into hysterical laughter and shock. All Musashi can do is hold him and tell him it's all a dream. The well-diggers are put out of business. Osugi gives the well-digger supervisor the money Matahachi sent to her to make up for it.

Someone must tell Akemi who is now expecting Matahachi's baby that he won't be coming back because he is in jail. Musashi lies and tells her Matahachi is on an extended herb buying trip.

Naraiya Daizo and his men discuss plans to put Edo in flames at their headquarters. They hear a knock on the door. The person knocking on the door is Yagyu retainer Kimura Sukekuro. He and the other Yagyu men storm the building and kill Naraiya Daizo's henchmen. Daizo is killed by Musashi. Akemi discovers the truth about her mother's death and Matahachi after following Musashi to the Daizo headquarters. She believes she is cursed by the dead soldiers whose bodies she robbed at the Sekigahara wars.

Omitsu visits Kojiro mansion to give her answer to his proposal. Upon his honor as the instructor for the Hosakawa clan he promises Omitsu to make the Obata School more properous and also to be advisor to Omitsu's brother Yogoro. She accepts his proposal and they embrace.

Matahachi's punishment for trying to kill the Shogun is a public flogging of 100 lashings and expulsion from Edo. Matahachi allows Monk Takuan to shave his head and he leaves Akemi to go to a Zen temple in Kamakura. She tries to follow him but he asks her to go back.

EPISODE 23: JOB OFFER FROM THE TOKUGAWAS

Jotaro finally gets to become a samurai when he and Aoki Tanzaemon are accepted back into the Ikeda clan because of their help in exposing the Naraiya conspiracy.

Yagyu Hyogo who first admires Otsu, then likes her, eventually grows to love her. He asks Otsu to marry him. She politely refuses and asks him not to mention it again. Hyogo has to walk away from her to collect his thoughts. This was Otsu's third big mistake; here was someone she liked and could have made her happy that she turned down.

Omitsu and Kojiro prepare to leave for the Bizen area of the Hosakawa territory. As Kojiro is saying his goodbyes a stranger attacks him.

Kojiro kills the person with his "swallow flip" technique. The person turns out to be Omitsu's brother Yogoro.

Kojiro has to drag Omitsu away from Yogoro's dead body.

Munenori suggests to Musashi that he serve the Tokugawas as a retainer. Musashi agrees due to the fact that lately he had been having second thoughts about continuing his training journey.

A letter arrives at the Yagyu mansion to let Otsu know that Musashi is staying at Munenori's mansion and also that she has a seventeen-year-old brother named Iori. After seeing the way Otsu's face lights up at the mention of Musashi's name Hyogo encourages Otsu to go see him even though it must surely hurt him to do so. He asks her to play the flute for him one last time before she leaves. She complies with his request. Hyogo gives Otsu his grandfather's favorite cane as a farewell gift. He also wishes her happiness in life.

EPISODE 24: MUSASHI VISITS HIS SISTER

Musashi does not get the instructor position thanks to Osugi's meddling. She sent a letter of complaint to all the Elders regarding Musashi's conduct; the fact that he killed thirteen-year-old Mibu Genjiro hurts his chances the most. Lord Sakai asks Musashi to leave a sample of his artwork for the Shogun. Musashi leaves a picture of a red setting sun and a landscape on a folding screen.

Musashi leaves alone to continue his training journey. He leaves a letter to ask Lord Sado to hire Iori as a page and to ask Gonnosuke to continue training on his own. Otsu and Iori finally meet. Together they play their flutes in perfect harmony. (Their flutes are named Ginryu and Kinryu).

Musashi finds himself heading toward his home village. He cannot shake the emptiness he feels. When he returns to his home village he finds out the Osugi has also returned home and that her family is penniless now. He also finds out his sister is finally getting married. After making inquiries about the man Ogin is about to marry Musashi is satisfied it will be a good match but he cannot bring himself to talk to Ogin for fear of ruining her chances of getting married. After Ogin leaves Musashi requests that their childhood home be given to Osugi in spite of everything she tried to do to him. Then he leaves again to try to find the energy and spirit he somehow lost along the way in his training journey.

EPISODE 25: THE FIVE RINGS

Musashi meets Matahachi (who is still studying to be a monk) and Priest Gudo in his travels. Musashi asks the Priest how to shake the emptiness inside him. The priest simply ignores him and walks away. Musashi is persistent so Gudo draws a circle around him and tells him not to come out until he is enlightened and understands. As Musashi contemplates what Priest Gudo said it begins to rain. Sasaki Kojiro's image appears before him. He remembers everything Kojiro ever said to him especially when he said only one man can stand at the top of a mountain. Strangely enough it is the images of Kojiro and his father that gives Musashi the drive to fight again.

Musashi notices a monk following him. The monk turns out to be Seijuro who is now a full-fledged monk. He holds no grudge against Musashi; he is trying to prevent a duel between Musashi and Kojiro.

Musashi visits Kojiro's mansion to speak to Omitsu. He leaves a message with her that he will return in April to get the date and time on a posted sign when he and Kojiro's duel will be held. Omitsu helps Musashi escape by holding Kojiro's student attention with a plum blossom branch long enough for him to escape. (She may have done this to thank him for helping her brother and Hojo her former fiancée out in their earlier fight with Kojiro).

Musashi and Kojiro meet again in Edo. Seijuro begs Kojiro to stop the duel. Kojiro listens politely before he tells Seijuro to get lost and knocks him down. Since they can't promise a duel in front of a monk they meet in front of a roaring fire to make the promise of a duel. Kojiro tells Musashi that the cheap tricks he used on the Yoshiokas won't work on him. Musashi makes Kojiro one last promise before he leaves. The promise is he will definitely defeat him.

Musashi finally makes up his mind to see Otsu. But he misses her by one day. Otsu received a message that Ogin (Musashi's sister) is dying so Otsu goes to be with her.

1623 Webster's
San Francisco, Cal.
94115-3221
^{Sept.}
~~August~~ 1992

Dear Minnasan,

No Mailing Comments for this trib.

Hope you will like the article I found in
Inside Kung-Fu.

I saw few episodes of Raven. It wasn't too bad.

~~The~~ The series will start Sept. 26. It's from the same
creator as A-Team.

That's ~~about~~ all for today.

Sincerely,
Kotaro Kimobuchi

Fist of Iron, Eyes of Steel

Master Pan Qing Fu has spent the past 40 years perfecting an "iron fist" technique that many believe is second to none.

By Lloyd Fridenburg

Dong! Dong! Dong! The sound of a pile driver? Maybe a nearby church bell? No, it is master Pan Qing Fu beginning this day as he has every day for the past 40 years: with iron fist training. It is a ritual that began as a young boy living on the island of Tsing Tao in Northern China. It is difficult to catch a moment with master Pan these days. With his "disciples," special students, seminars, and work on his new movie, Talons of the Eagle, master Pan is a busy man indeed. Master Pan is the leading actor and chief martial arts choreographer for this Canadian-produced movie. However, gracious and open as ever, he was more than willing to make time to speak about his most noticeable and identifiable training technique—the "iron fist". To say Pan Qing Fu is a perfectionist would be to take this man too lightly. Kung-fu is his life. He eats, drinks, breaths and is kung-fu. Everything he touches must be perfect. Everything from streetfighting as an undercover agent to winning the most elite wushu tournaments in China.

A case of survival

Post-war China was in a general state of turmoil and upheaval. Survival was basically every man for himself. Growing up under these conditions, especially without parents, would test the strongest of children. You could either submit to the anarchy of the region or you could defend yourself and stand your ground.

As some children will punch each other in the shoulder to settle the age-old dispute over who is tougher, children in Tsing Tao would

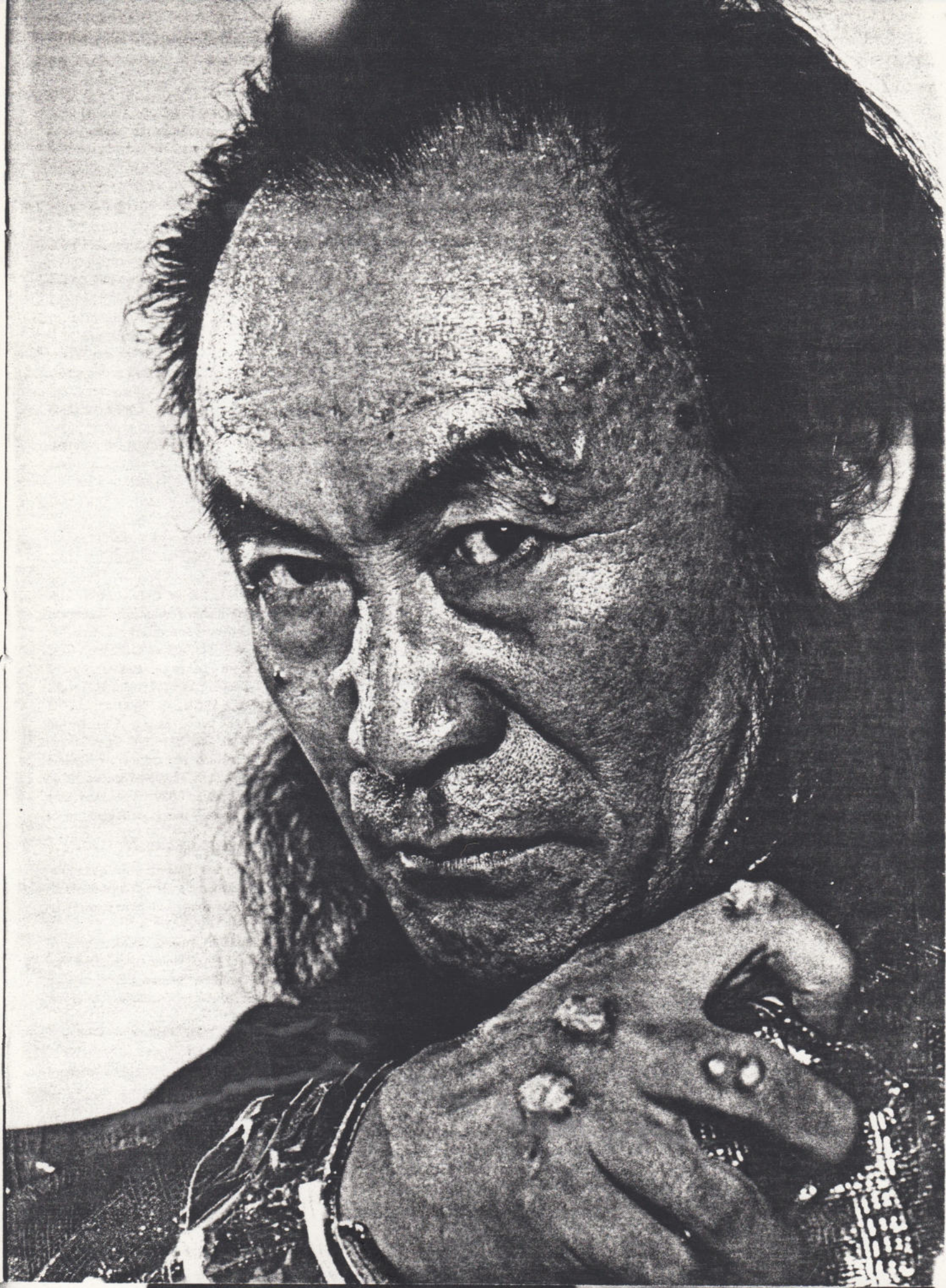
punch each other's fist. Try it! You will find how intensely painful it is for both winner and loser. It was these Chinese rights of manhood that inspired the long journey of master Pan Qing Fu toward his place as one of the greatest martial artists in the world. It was also the start of training that would develop the most devastating punch many have ever seen.

Willpower is master Pan's trademark. Even at this young age Pan was determined not to lose. And so the ritual began. Slowly and softly

at first. Walking close to walls he began to punch. Determined to develop a punch of steel, the mind of this young Chinese boy reasoned, "If you want to have a punch of steel you must punch steel."

Punch of steel

Unknowningly at the time, steel was the best choice of many substances Pan could have chosen. According to master Pan, punching



steel strengthens and conditions the bone as well as the surrounding tissue. Because steel is so dense, the force of the punch resonates back into the fist instead of being absorbed as would be the case with other softer materials. It is this resonant effect that increases the strength and density of the bone.

Master Pan is quick to add, "This is my own method of iron fist training. I know there are many other forms of iron fist training (e.g., a heavy bag filled with iron pellets and punching several thicknesses of paper fastened to a wall) and I respect their methods. However, it is my opinion that the way steel transmits force back into the fist makes it different from any other style, and gives me the result I desire. The physical ability of an individual will also dictate if another method may be more appropriate for them."

What is the true secret behind iron fist training? "Dedication and patience," Pan insisted. Many try for a short time, with some limited results, but the true iron fist practitioner must train continuously.

Master Pan punches a large plate of steel fastened to the wall, as seen in the movie, *Iron and Silk*, more than 1,000 times per day, every day. This type of training improves your overall punching technique, including stance and rotational movements, as well as training the fist. A smaller piece of steel is used (60 pounds) while stretching. A "portable" (six-pound piece of steel) accompanies master Pan wherever he goes.

Training techniques

Iron fist does not refer to having a hard fist, but rather involves a training technique which consists of three key elements:

- Developing a hard fist.
- Developing the proper technique that uses the whole body to deliver the blow.
- Using your eyes. Many confrontations can be avoided by showing your determination and conviction with your eyes.

The fist

(Note: Train only under the direction of a qualified master of iron fist. If done incorrectly, serious damage to the joints of the hand can result.)

Master Pan suggests you begin with a softer material such as wood or smooth concrete, basically whatever is comfortable and convenient. "The density of the material is not as important in the beginning," master Pan explains.

Remember, you want to condition your knuckles, not break your fist or damage the

joints. At first repetition is the key, not power. It takes a long time to achieve the desired results. "Once you have made the decision to begin iron fist training you must force yourself to overcome all obstacles and continue to train, no matter what," says master Pan. "Many give up after a short period of time. They want the end results, but are not willing to endure the trials of training on a daily basis. Even if your fist hurts or bleeds, you must continue to train."

When training becomes effortless, it is time to change to a harder material. Use your own judgment for this. If you are already punching



Here, master Pan punches several thicknesses of steel. This is part of his daily training routine. He punches steel many thousands of times every day.

steel, it is time to slightly increase the power of your strikes. Gradually switching to denser material and increasing the power of your strikes over a long period of time will give the best results. "In time, everything feels soft after punching steel," master Pan says with a smile.

Master Pan uses his third and fourth knuckles to deliver his punch. Many of us in the martial arts are taught to use our second and third knuckles.

Master Pan notes, "Extend your fist and notice the natural alignment of your fist and wrist when you would strike an object. To strike with the first two knuckles you must turn your fist outward putting unnecessary strain on the wrist. If the third and fourth knuckles are used the natural alignment of the fist and forearm is maintained." Again master Pan is quick to add, "This is my opinion, I know other people have different methods, but this method has served

me well in practical situations for my entire life. To me, everything must be natural and serve a practical purpose or I'm not interested in learning."

Regular training is the key. Training must take place daily at a minimum. Master Pan is never far from his steel. He strikes the steel not only daily, but continuously.

Punching technique

"The hand and arm should be as one," notes master Pan. "The hand and arm should be as rigid as a steel bar when it makes contact with the target."

It is technique that differentiates between someone with a hard fist and someone who can deliver a devastating punch. If you see master Pan deliver a punch you will notice his entire body is a momentary blur of motion. There is not a muscle in his body that is not in motion until the instant the blow is delivered. All motion culminates at the end of his two heavily calloused knuckles. This is probably the most difficult aspect of iron fist training.

No easy way

There is no easy way to develop this technique. Only years of training under a qualified master will deliver the necessary results.

It is technique that benefits most from punching a stationary piece of steel in a standing position. You can concentrate, not only on striking the steel, but on the way you strike the steel. The feet, legs, waist, shoulders, and arm are involved in this type of training. You can see, if this is repeated 1,000 times per day, how necessary it is to be taught proper technique by a master of the art.

This kind of repetition can build a devastating punch, but poor technique can just as quickly be absorbed into your memory. "Once the technique is learned wrong it will be next to impossible to correct," cautions master Pan.

You should use the same techniques to punch the steel as you would to spar. Use high strikes, low strikes, forward punch, reverse punch, backfist. Change positions often as you would against an opponent.

Eyes of steel

"Attack your opponent with your eyes," maintains master Pan, his warm smile and kind eyes turning to "ice". Master Pan adds, "Eyes reflect the spirit of kung-fu; eyes are the window of the soul."

Even before the match you can determine the winner by looking in his eyes. The determination, willpower, intensity; it's all there in one

glance. Watch the next time you are at a tournament. Whether it's forms or sparring, look in the eyes of the winner and you will know why he is No. 1.

Learning to properly use the eyes will aid as much in your martial arts training as any other technique. Train by looking in the mirror. Develop the one look that will strike fear in the heart of your opponent. Be able to turn it on and off at will. In a true self-defense situation eyes of steel can quickly discourage many lesser opponents. In sparring or forms it may be just that extra edge you need to be champion. After all, isn't martial arts meant to develop the best while preparing for the worst?

True meaning

Try relating the force generated by master Pan's punch as follows: Imagine watching a ball of steel weighing 11 pounds being dropped from the top of a tall building and knowing it is going to hit your head. This would closely parallel a punch delivered, at full force, by master Pan. Although master Pan does not like to submit to any form of electronic analysis (he feels this is too boastful and defeats the essence of kung-fu), it is reasonably accurate to assume that because of his physical size and years of training, he most likely would be able to accelerate his punch to about 120 mph over a two-foot distance.

Taking acceleration time into consideration, it means that it would take about 1/30th of a second for the fist to reach its target. The human eye generally has difficulty perceiving anything faster than 1/10th of a second. So you literally would not see the punch that just laid you on your back.

When the speed and force of the punch is combined with the hardness of his fist, it is easy to see why the right fist of master Pan is his foremost martial arts weapon.

Because of the dramatic force generated by this punch, a good rule of iron fist training is established. "Training the fist without training the entire body to deliver the blow results only in developing a hard fist." This is basically useless.

Training the body to develop a devastating punch without developing the fist will result in broken bones in your hand or a reduction of the force of the punch to avoid damage to the hand and wrist. This is good effective training, but why develop a potentially devastating punch if your wrist and hand cannot withstand the force of the blow?

Master Pan likes to tell a story of when he was asked to teach self-defense to the elite paratroop corps of the Red Army. It seems one of the high-ranking guards took exception to being taught by this small 150-pound man. After all, he thought, we are elite troops. How can the officials bring in an outsider to teach us what we already know? The guard taunted and cajoled master Pan. "Punch me in the stomach.

Prove you really have a fist of iron."

Master Pan, concerned with "loosing face" with the other soldiers, finally capitulated to his request. Jokingly, the soldier donned a bullet-proof vest. Master Pan smiled. It was a smile that said, "You just reached the point of no return." Leaving the room for a minute, master Pan returned with six more vests and asked the guard to hold them over the first.

The guard, still taunting but becoming a bit more concerned, stood in a strong forward stance and looked into the eyes that now had turned as "cold as steel".

Master Pan asked, "Are you ready?"

"Yes," the man replied.

Pan waited a second for the guard to steady himself, and then faster than you could blink an eye the guard dropped the vests and ran around the gym howling in pain. Most people in the room did not see the punch being delivered. But the "iron fist" once again hit its target with convincing power and speed.

About the Author: Lloyd Fridenburg is a Canadian-based martial artist and freelance writer.



Master Pan's intense eyes give the "competitive" a sense of dread and add significantly to his reputation, whether bare-handed or with weapons, in tournaments or in real situations.

SHOOTFIGHTER

A Synopsis

Hong Kong—1962: Two young boys engage in a strange and brutal martial arts battle under the watchful eyes of a master teacher. As they grow to adulthood, their battles continue. At times, Shingo (Bolo Yeung) wins. At times, Teng (James Pax). But, though equal in skill, the two mature into very different men.

Teng uses his abilities to gain wealth and power as the head of a multibillion dollar underworld. There, jaded businessmen and their bejeweled women pay massive amounts of money to watch modern gladiators battle each other in the bruising art of "shootfighting"—a mixture of the traditional Asian martial arts with Western boxing and wrestling. However, in Teng's shootfighting arena there is only one rule—to win. And, for a chosen few, the final battle is to the death.

Shingo, now in the U.S., is an honored martial arts teacher who combines technique with the spiritual side of the true warrior.

Among Shingo's talented black belt students, the most skillful, though perhaps not the most spiritual, is Ruben (Billy Zabka). With girlfriend Cheryl (Maryam D'Abo), Ruben owns a debt-ridden karate school.

Nick (Michael Bernardo), Cheryl's brother and Ruben's old friend, appears after several years. A skillful martial artist in his own right, Nick's troubled past keeps him unsure as to what to do with his future.

Ruben later persuades Nick to join in an open tournament. There, both win their individual matches, though Ruben's work with Shingo helps him best Nick when the two face off. Shingo watches with approval. On the sidelines, another pair of trained eyes also watch.

Mr. C. (Edward Albert) introduces himself and offers Nick and Ruben several thousand dollars to join in Teng's shootfighting tournament in Tijuana. They've never heard of shootfighting and don't like Mr. C's looks. However, he leaves them his card, a videotape of shootfighting and an offer of double the money if they change their minds.

That night, Cheryl invites her friend Jill (Sigal Diamant) to join them for dinner. Though Nick and Jill like one another, both guys are mesmerized by the shootfighting tape. Ruben goads Nick into joining him for the tournament.

Later, Mr. C shows Teng a picture of Ruben and Nick with Shingo at a tournament. Recognizing his old opponent, Teng devises a plan to use the boys to lure Shingo into shootfighting once again.

Nick and Ruben arrive at the arena and Teng tells them that this is only the preliminary tournament. If they win, they can come back for the "finals" several months hence and earn hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Nick and Ruben fight in turn, with each battle becoming more and more brutal. Nick is soon disgusted with the whole business even as he wins match after match. But, Ruben is strangely excited by the blood, the money and the screams of the crowd. He talks Nick into staying for the entire week of the tournament. Everyday the battles become more and more savage, the crowd more and more wild and Ruben more and more enmeshed.

Finally, the boys return to L.A. Ruben shows Cheryl the money he's earned, but she is angry and upset about what he has done. Nick is confused by what is happening to Ruben and unsure of what he should do next in his life. Jill suggests he train with Shingo for the martial arts nationals. Shingo agrees, providing there is no more shootfighting.

Ruben storms in, feeling everyone is against him. When Nick and Shingo try to talk him out of shootfighting again, he promises to show them by winning the championship and the big money.

Over the next several months, while Nicks gains self-discipline and inner strength under Shingo's tutelage, Ruben haunts the streets looking for battles on which to take out his rage.

At the "finals," Teng tells Ruben that now the fights are to the death. Ruben is so far gone that he accepts the information with a steely glare. The arena and the crowd are now transformed into an upscale evening with the onlookers in formal evening wear. Teng, Mr. C. and the current champion enter and Teng sits with the other warlords on regal chairs.

As the evening progresses, winners are celebrated and losers' bodies are dragged off. By the time Ruben is brought in, he has worked himself up into an explosive fury—transcended to another level of pure animalistic power. His opponent never has a chance.

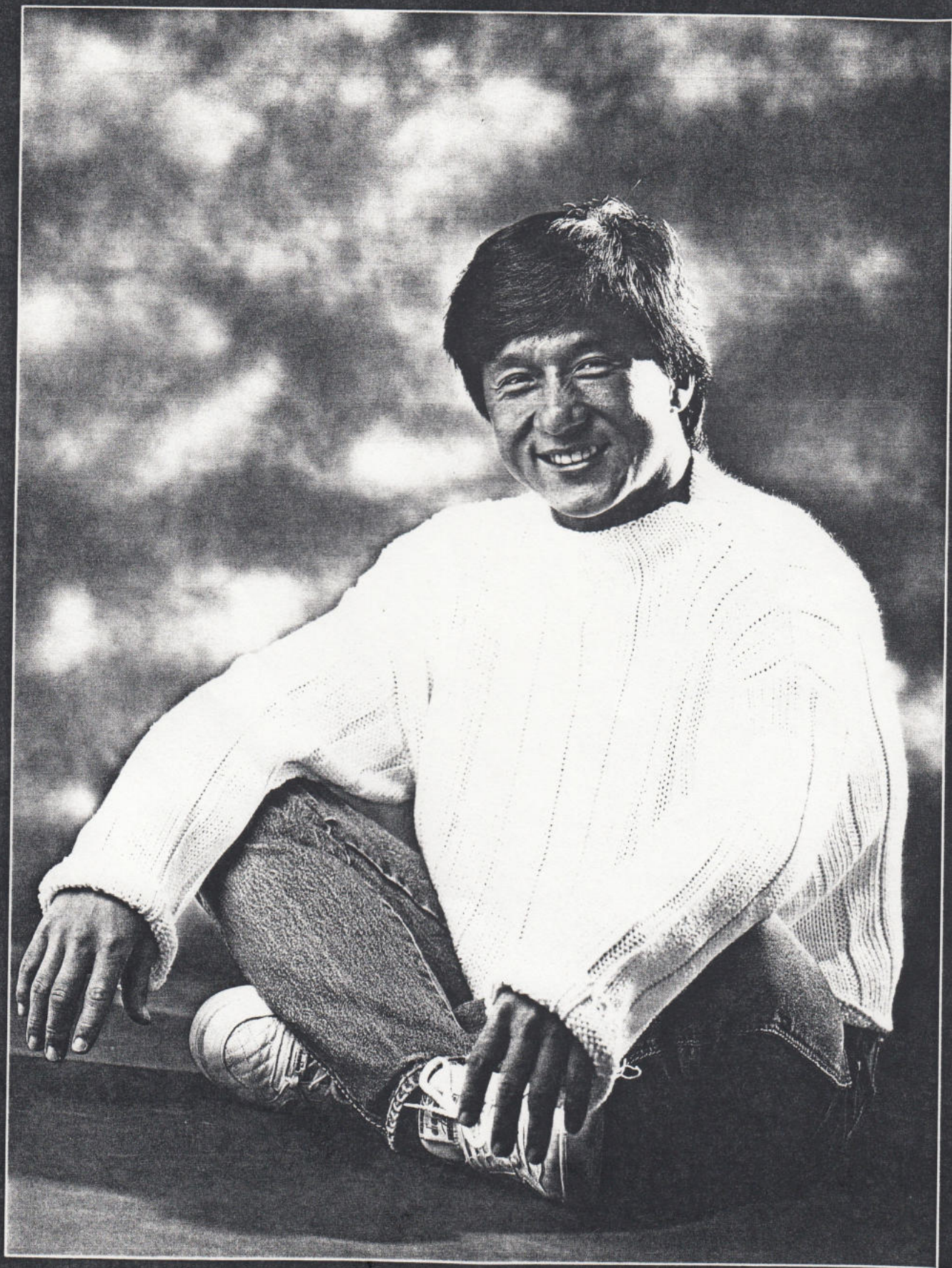
Nick arrives to stop Ruben. Teng is pleased that he now has both men in his net and phones Shingo with the news that they can only be saved if Shingo will fight for them. Shingo realizes that he will finally have to face his past and Teng.

Shingo's arrival is announced by the body of one of Teng's thugs



flying through the air into the stands. As the bodyguards converge on the ring, Nick and Ruben quickly stand beside their teacher. Bodies fly and faces are smashed as the trio makes quick work of the thugs.

Shingo confronts Teng and the two warriors join in timeless, classic battle.



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Hello, Maffapans! In my former job I came across a medical journal from Pakistan with items of interest. The Pakistani interest in alchemy is reflected in many of the other articles as well — not the sort of thing usually found in Western Medical Journals.

THE CHINESE CULT OF LONGEVITY AND THE MAKING OF ALCHEMY

S. MAHDIHASSAN

Cult of longevity

In ancient times life was very unhygienic with high death rate and short life-span. Even at present M. Allen (1987) could observe in Bangladesh that, "50 percent are under 18 years of age and one in four dies before 5 years of age". There are tribes in the Philippines among whom the oldest are only 50 years of age and then not more than 1 in 100. We can now realize how even in ancient Rome the average life-expectancy was only 40 years. We can then appreciate how in ancient China there arose a cult of longevity trying to see that human life is reasonably long.

Jade as drug of longevity

Then in order to prolong life, among other means, they tried to consume substances as drugs of longevity. They believed in the theory that, like makes like. Jade was weather proof so that it could make man tough to resist many a diseases. They powdered jade and took it orally. Due to such belief in the importance of jade a piece was placed in the mouth of the dead to expedite resurrection. This would confirm the idea that jade is a sort of life-donor.

Gold granules as drug

Later the Chinese ascetics discovered particles of gold in river beds. Gold as metal proved to be even fire-proof while jade was merely weather-proof. Then gold granules were taken orally just as was done with jade before. Human body now would be as everlasting as gold is as metal. Nevertheless the virtues of gold would result in making the body as tough as possible. What was further required was an agency that would be directly responsible to prolong human life. It is only soul which, as a large quantum, can make life long. Here came the theory first propounded by the hunter, that, blood is soul and redness its active principle. It then meant that only when gold becomes red-gold that it can function as the substitute of soul and directly increase

human life. In red-gold, gold can make the body tough while redness would increase the soul-content and prolong life.

Red colloidal gold, Chin-I or Kim-Iya

Further progress depended upon producing red colloidal gold. There were meanwhile several plants and plant products believed to confer longevity. Among them was Har, *Terminalia chebula*. It is rich in tannins which have reducing properties. Then granules of gold were rubbed with the decoction of Har when after several weeks of such treatment there finally resulted a brick-red powder of gold. According to its make-up it was gold-plus-plant juice. These two words in Chinese would be, Chin-I. In Ningpo dialect Chin-I is pronounced Kim-Iya. Pre-Islamic Arabs trading in silk visited Ningpo which was the centre of silk production in China. Thus Kim-Iya of Ningpo dialect with the suffix Al, the definite article in Arabic, became Al-Kimiya the golden drug of longevity. Later the art of making such drugs of longevity was also called Al-Kimiya whence arose the term Alchemy. The Arabs trading in silk transferred alchemy from China to West where it developed further in Alexandria.

Kim-Iya misinterpreted as Khim-eia

Later on when alchemy was pursued in Alexandria, they forgot the real origin of the art and assumed it resulted as impact of Greek philosophy on Egyptian technique.

In Egyptian, their country is called Khem meaning black fertile soil. The suffix "eia" is Greek signifying "belonging to". Khemeia then merely meant "Egyptian art" or "black-art". This is mentioned to indicate that this etymology was coined to make alchemy a Western art while in reality it was Chinese.

Cinnabar-gold

It has been mentioned that Chin-I or colloidal gold was only a brick-red powder. If it were to incorporate a quantum of soul it should have been blood-red. Then looking out for such substances in nature the Chinese found cinnabar alone is as red as blood. Then if cinnabar was soul incorporate there should also be gold to make the body tough and proper vehicle of a soul that would make human life reasonably long. There was left no choice than to combine cinnabar and gold.

Cinnabar a compound of mercury and sulphur

Taking cinnabar ore and purifying it by sublimation they came to discover that cinnabar is made up of mercury and sulphur. When

these substances were taken by themselves and sublimated they did obtain cinnabar so that its constitution was fully confirmed.

Cinnabar-gold

Then what was left was to incorporate gold in cinnabar. This suggested taking mercury and gold as amalgam and adding sulphur when all three were subjected to sublimation the resultant product became cinnabar with traces of gold. Gold sublimes in traces when accompanied by mercury. The alchemist now realized he had produced the ideal substance he could conceive. There was a blood-red substance as soul-incorporate and there was gold be it in traces but would make the body tough and strong. It is best known in India as Makaradhwaja. It is supposed to be a panacea, curing even chronic and otherwise incurable diseases above all sexual disability. A special article is required to deal with the benefits of Makaradhwaja as drug. Then by now we can say alchemy began with red-colloidal gold, Chin-I, and reached its climax with cinnabar-gold or Makaradhwaja. This completes the natural history of alchemy as art. The ideal product is a panacea which is as good as any drug of longevity.

Absence of the idea of an element and of the difference between a compound and a mixture

Once cinnabar was synthesized they looked upon gold as its yellow form. Gold was heavy because of its mercury and it was yellow because of its sulphur. It only required taking mercury and sulphur in correct proportions and subjecting them to heat of the required temperature. Under certain conditions the resultant would be cinnabar but when properly abided it would be gold. Here undue importance was attached to gold being heavy like mercury and yellow like sulphur. It is possible that at a certain stage a sort of yellow amalgam of sulphur did actually appear and was mistaken for gold. It would have been a mixture of sulphur and gold. Otherwise it is difficult to accept so many claims of alchemists succeeding in making gold. All these reports refer to small quantities as produced in a crucible. There is no record of gold having been formed by the pound. At any rate there existed no idea of gold being a pure element which then could not be synthesized while on the contrary it was accepted to be constituted of mercury and sulphur. It thus appears possible that such a mixture did appear like gold and was mistaken as such. This seems the probable explanation of reports on the synthesis of gold.

SUMMARY

Ancient life being unhygienic death rate was high and life-span short. Then arose the idea of drug which could make the body tough

and immune to diseases and independently prolong the life-span. On the theory that like makes like, gold as an everlasting substance would constitute drug of longevity. Then blood was soul and redness its active principle. Accordingly red-gold would be the proper drug of longevity. Red gold was prepared by incorporating a plant juice rubbed into granules of gold. According to its make-up it was gold-plus-plant juice. In Chinese this would be Chin-I. In Ningpo dialect it would be Kim-Iya. Pre-Islamic Arabs appeared in Ningpo as it was the centre of silk-production. Kim-Iya entered Arabic as Al-Kimiya and became the drug of longevity. However, it was only brick-red. On the contrary blood as soul is bright-red. Then looking out for such a substance the Chinese found cinnabar to be as red as blood. This however would represent a soul which prolongs life. It then ignores the body. Then if cinnabar was to incorporate gold, this would make the body tough and immune to diseases while redness as soul would independently prolong life. Cinnabar gold was prepared by taking mercury, sulphur and gold and subjecting all three to sublimation. The product was cinnabar with traces of gold. It is made in India and is called Makaradhwaja. It is a panacea curing chronic and incurable diseases particularly sexual disability. Then a panacea is as good as any drug of longevity.

While cinnabar was synthesized and there was no idea of gold being an element, it appeared that gold was only a yellow form of cinnabar. At a certain stage something like an "amalgam of sulphur" was formed and was mistaken for gold. This explains the many reports of alchemists succeeding in synthesizing gold. There is no record of gold having been prepared by the pound. Then what was seen as gold in a crucible could only be what can be called an "amalgam of sulphur". This explains the many reports in the literature of successfully synthesizing gold. Thus while colloidal gold and cinnabar gold are real products what appears to be an "amalgam of sulphur" is what merely appears as gold. While it was explained where alchemy did succeed it had to be shown where it produced a false appearance of gold.

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CREATION WITH THREE STAGES ATTRIBUTED TO IT

S. MAHDHASSAN

In Chinese creation has been conceived as having existed in three stages. These were designated as *Thai-Chi*, meaning the absolute entity, next came *Chhi*, or subtle form of matter charged with creative energy, briefly matter-cum-energy. Thirdly came five cosmic elements Wood, Fire, Water, Earth and Metal. This has been discussed by me previously in 1985. It is proposed to reconsider this in relatively more rational terms. It may be stated at the very outset that they are creative-energy. Matter as atoms of elements, and matter as compounds which have continued to exist upto the present. What is really new in the present consideration is the temperature of the earth during these three stages.

Then in the beginning there was creative energy, and the temperature of the earth was approaching that of the sun. As heat disappeared in space, energy expanding produced expansion and this resulted in the condensation of some energy which meant matter. Since matter was formed in the midst of energy, the surrounding energy produced impact upon matter and as the amount of energy was high, matter was bombarded. As a result there arose energy contaminated with matter. There was already some matter impregnated with energy to a lesser degree. Hence there was energy contaminated with matter and matter with impact energy. As a result there arose matter as atoms of elements. The temperature was still high and if compounds were formed they were reduced to their respective atoms. The presence of matter as atoms of elements marked the second stage of creation. When the temperature decreased further atoms of different elements could combine with one another. Hydrogen being very reactive totally combined with oxygen and produced water as vapours. Chlorine and sodium each is very reactive when sodium chloride was formed in immense quantity. With further decrease in temperature water vapours cooled down to water which swept over the surface of earth dissolving all sodium chloride and forming oceans with salt water. Thus arose water covering more than half the surface of the earth. Atoms of other elements also produced compounds as the many inorganic substances that are found in earth. These were no cosmic elements or matter limited as such. These were atoms of

elements and later their compounds. Such would be a more rational picture of the stages of creation.

To appreciate the above three stages of creation it may be worthwhile to criticize the Chinese account of creation particularly its five cosmic elements. These are given in one column with their interpretation in another. There are no cosmic qualities in Chinese cosmology but only cosmic elements as follows:

Wood:	1. Air as its content
Fire:	2. Heat + 3 Light
Water:	4. Water + 5 Cold
Earth:	6. Earth + 7 Moisture
Metal:	8. Dryness, incorporate

When creation was completed and earth was fully formed there was still no plant life so that wood never existed at that stage. Even otherwise wood cannot be looked upon as a constituent of the earth. Likewise metal as ore is contained in earth and is not extensive enough to appear as a factor in the make up of earth. Fire as such is nowhere seen on earth. In fact it symbolizes two forms of energy, heat and light. The Chinese recognize wood as the container of air. Then preferring wood and ignoring air as cosmic element seems strange. Fire would be as much heat as light. Light is completely ignored while it illuminates the earth all the twenty-four hours. Altogether the above five Chinese cosmic elements can be replaced by the eight entities in the opposite column.

SUMMARY

Creation started with Creative Energy and temperature approaching that of the sun. This corresponds with "*Thai-Chi*", meaning the absolute entity of Chinese cosmology. As the temperature decreased and energy expanded, expansion brought about condensation of energy which appeared as matter. It took the form of atoms of elements. The temperature was still so high that compounds could not exist. With later decrease of temperature atoms combined to produce compounds. Among them were water as vapour and sodium chloride. With further decrease in temperature water as liquid appeared on the surface of earth and washed the sodium chloride from the dry land and formed oceans with salt water. Other compounds of elements were also formed. All this occurred even before there was any plant life.

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Great issue 401 I've got a lot to say so I'll get right into it.

YOSHITSUNE - TALK OF A SAMURAI PRINCE - Last month I attended a rather unique performance by one of Japan's most popular stars, Yoro: This is a seven year old Japanese message monkey. He is the lead character in a samurashi play in which all the lead characters are played by monkeys and most of the servants played by humans. This contained play was one of the most enjoyable shows I have ever attended. The monkeys performed acrobatics and interacted with their human cast members with the help of trainers. At times the play was funny, and at other times tragic. The troupe is touring the U.S. It they're stopping in your town, please go see it. I'm looking forward to seeing it.

ON THE ANIME FRONT

AND OTHER STUFF

BY PATRICIA GONZALEZ

I had the pleasure of attending the Japanese National Puppet Theater of Japan which I reviewed in the last Natsya. These puppets are life size and are manipulated by one puppeteer (Yoshitsune). As opposed to a single long play, this performance consists of five individual pieces which were performed in the background. Kabuki actor Tawaraka Nakamura appeared in the Temple Dance at Kikyo where he gave a Buddhist priest who encounters the spirit of a dead woman who was his lover. This was my personal favorite. The woman's name is an image I'll not soon forget. As an unexpected bonus, I got to meet Mr. Ford in person after the show and got his autograph as well. He was very charming and waited up to the crowd waiting to meet him. He was polite to everyone. All in all a fantastic evening. As part of my trip, I've included the program I was given on the night of the show.

THE PHANTOM OF THE MOVIES - The Phantom of the Movies, a New York daily news movie critic reviews mostly genre related films. He has recently written some interesting articles which I have also included in my trip. In two of them, he mentioned some Japanese animation as well as martial arts. I think it's great that someone in the media takes the time out to appreciate movies that are a little out of the ordinary. I think you'll all enjoy these articles on some truly great films.

ANIMECO JAPANESE EXHIBIT - Bubblegum Crisis: The Japanese animated cyborg classic series will soon be released on laserdisc. I've included a product summary of all of Animeco's current and future Japanese animation releases.

Back in April of this year I had the pleasure of meeting Jackie/Slim when she visited New York. Even though her visit was not as nice as she would have liked, I tried to spend some time with her. As she mentioned in the last issue of Natsya, she really enjoyed the places I took her. I don't know how many of you travel to New York, but if you plan to stay in Manhattan in your future, please let me know and I'll be more than happy to give you the same mini-tour I gave Jackie. Just write to me ahead of time.

Hi everyone!

Great issue 40! I've got a lot to say so I'll get right into it.

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HIROSHI HORI JAPANESE PUPPETRY AND DANCE - On June 12th of this year I had the honor of attending a performance by Hiroshi Hori, one of Japan's most talented and internationally known puppeteers. Unlike the Bunraku National Puppet Theater of Japan which I reviewed in the last Maffapa these puppets are life size and are manipulated by one puppeteer (Hiroshi Hori). As opposed to a single long play, this performance consists of five individual pieces while musicians perform in the background. Kabuki actor Tomotaro Nakamura appears in The Temple Dance at Kishu where he plays a Buddhist priest who encounters the spirit of a mad woman who was turned into a snake. This one was my personal favorite. The woman/snake attacking the priest is an image I'll not soon forget. As an unexpected bonus, I got to meet Mr. Hori in person after the show and get his autograph as well. He was very charming and warmed up to the crowd waiting to meet him. He was polite to everyone. All an all a fantastic evening. As part of my 'trib, I've included the program I was given on the night of the show.

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BANG THE

GONGS LOUDLY

Asian-movie buffs find new joy in flying fists, feet & furious action

BY PHANTOM OF THE MOVIES

In 1982, Gotham bijous and film centers have served as the site of a veritable Asian invasion.

After action auteur extraordinaire John Woo's hyperkinetic crime caper "The Killer" enjoyed a successful East Village theatrical run, Manhattan's Eighth Street Playhouse presented the first of several metro-area tributes to the New Hong Kong Cinema, "Cinema of Blazing Passions: Hong Kong Films in the Eighties," spotlighting works by the likes of Woo, Wong ("God of Gamblers") Jing and Tsui ("Shanghai Blues") Hark.

Earlier this summer, Hark's "Once Upon a Time in China" played to a capacity house at the Film Forum.

Hong Kong hasn't been the only exporter of exhilarating genre fare. Japanese sci-fi and fantasy-oriented animated features like "Akira" and "The Castle of Cagliostro," as well as such live-action items as "Tetsuo: The Iron Man" and "World Apartment Horror," have, likewise, attracted a sizable cult following — not only in theaters but on video cassettes issued by busy specialty labels like California's Streamline Pictures and NYC's Central Park Media.

Mail-order vid companies like JARS Video Collectibles and Merlin's Samurai Video cater almost exclusively to a martial-arts market.

The Asian influence has already affected Hollywood.

Homegrown action stars like Steven Seagal, Jeff ("Perfect Weapon") Speakman and, most recently, Brandon (son of Bruce) Lee in "Rapid Fire" continue to incorporate Oriental elements — from more balletic action scenes to arcane fighting styles — into their films.

And when Jackie Chan's latest stuntfest, "Supercop: Police Story III" opened Friday at Chinatown's Sun Sing Theater (75 East Broadway), the event, which at one time would have largely been limited to local interest, worked as a cross-cultural magnet for both metro movie critics and Chan fans of every ethnic affiliation.

What separates the current Asian Invasion from traditional foreign-film trends is the primary audience that attends these films.

Whether unspooling at tony venues such as Lincoln Center or funky bijous like the Sun Sing, the Asian titles are attracting not only the "filmers" into theaters, but popular audiences drawn to the movies' high levels of energy, invention and sheer entertainment value.

"Akira," "The Killer" and "Supercop" all offer welcome relief from the often artificial, soulless and predictable mainstream Hollywood genre product.

The latest Asian icon to receive her overdue official recognition Stalcside is one-time martial arts star (and current producer) Hsu Feng.



OFF-SCREEN: Actress-turned-producer Hsu Feng

No less prestigious a forum than the Film Society of Lincoln Center hosts "Warrior Woman," a nine-day, eight-film Feng fest that kicks off tomorrow with screenings of 1973's "The Fate of Lee Khan" and 1979's "The Pioneers."

Painstakingly crafted by King Hu, a noted historian and inventor as well as a director, "The Fate of Lee Khan" pairs the coolly beautiful Feng with the feisty erstwhile "female Bruce Lee," Angela Mao, as revolutionaries who take up arms (to say nothing of fists and feet) against the titular tyrant and his Mongolian hordes.

Feng's acting ability is every bit the equal of her fighting skills, a contention borne out in 1981 when

she won the "Golden Horse" (the Taiwanese equivalent of the Oscar) for Best Actress in the immigrant drama "The Pioneers," co-starring American thesp John Philip Law.

Both "The Fate of Lee Khan" and "The Pioneers" screen tomorrow and Tuesday.

It took the perfectionist King Hu three years to complete the elaborate "Lee Khan" and twice that long to finish the three-hour kung fu epic "A Touch of Zen" (showing on Wednesday, Saturday and next Sunday).

Set during the Ming Dynasty, "A Touch of Zen" chronicles the violent struggles that erupt between rebellious Buddhist priests and government secret police.

Hu contrasts Zen philosophy and the natural tranquility of China's rural landscape with violent, precision-choreographed clashes that find the participants — Feng prominent among them — employing fists, feet, swords and spears in a series of furious encounters.

Director Hu and star Hsu re-team for the 16th-century set martial-arts extravaganza "Raining in the Mountain" (Friday and Saturday) and 1975's "The Valiant Ones" (on Sept. 7 and 8), where Feng and friends take on Japanese pirates and Chinese bandits.

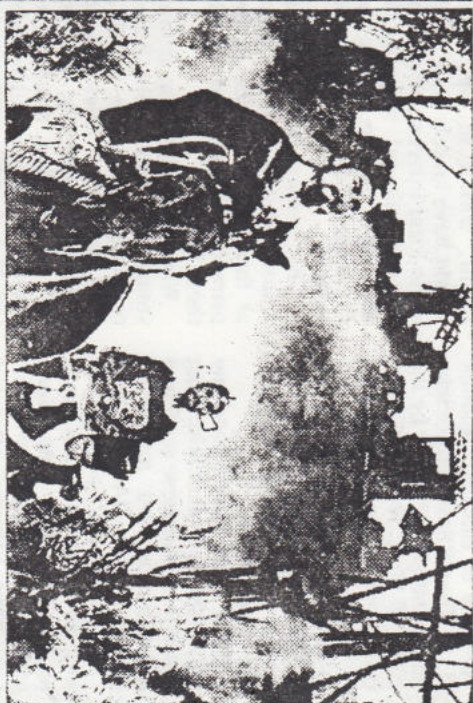
Though Feng, seen on screen since 1968, hung up her weapons in the early '80s, she didn't exit the Hong Kong film industry. Instead, she turned to producing.

Over the last few years, producer Feng has leaned

more heavily on dramas than combat epics. "Woman Warrior" offers three of Feng's most acclaimed productions — Ann Hui's 1987 class-conscious drama "Starry Is the Night" (Thursday), Yim Ho's 1990 historical romance "Red Dust" (Friday and Saturday), set during and immediately after World War II, and Yeh Hung-Wei's "Five Girls and a Rope" (Sept. 7 and 8), a story that carries a feminist message.

Hsu Feng is scheduled to appear in person at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater (165 W. 65th St.) tomorrow and Tuesday. For screening times and ticket information, call the Walter Reade box office at (212) 875-5600.

(The Phantom writes regularly on B movies for The News.)



WARRIOR WOMAN: Hsu Feng (l.) in a scene from "A Touch of Zen" (below), one of the films in the Film Society of Lincoln Center's eight film festival beginning tomorrow.



FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1992

TALL IN THE SADDLE: Brandon Lee is riding high and ready for action in martial-arts flick "Rapid Fire."

NY DAILY NEWS

THE SON ALSO RACES

Bruce Lee's karate kid, Brandon, scores in 'Rapid Fire'

By PHANTOM OF THE MOVIES

★★★

RAPID FIRE. Brandon Lee, Powers Boothe, Nick Mancuso. Directed by Dwight H. Little. At area theaters. Running time: 95 mins. Rated R.

AFTER APPEARING IN such unworthy items as "Laser Mission" and the Dolph Lundgren loser "Showdown in Little Tokyo," Brandon (son of Bruce) Lee locates a far sturdier vehicle in director Dwight Little's "Rapid Fire."

Lee toplines as college student Jake Lo, a combo sketch artist and kung-fu wiz unwittingly embroiled in a four-way war involving Chinese smack suppliers, Chicago Mafiosi, corrupt FBI agents and

Windy City cops headed by Powers Boothe and Lee's eventual screen squeeze Kate ("She Wolf of London") Hodge. While the peripatetic plot's not exactly a paradigm of logic — straying from Tien-anmen Square to Thailand, L.A. and some of Chicago's meaner streets — "Rapid Fire" amply delivers in the all-important mindless-action department.

The flick features three major shootouts, a high body count on both sides of the law and several stunning kung-fu set-to's, wherein director Little even works in a few John ("The Killer") Woo-type moves, particularly during a spectacular stickfight/third-rail ballet atop a Chicago El track.

Living up to its title, "Rapid Fire" proceeds at a sufficiently swift pace to leave larger-budgeted actioners like the Lundgren/Van Damme crunchfest "Universal Soldier" in the dust. Director Little is so determined to keep viewers awake that he even interrupts Hodge and Lee's requisite slo-mo love scene with bursts of story-advancing violence.

While his looks may be a tad too delicately handsome to fit some fans' idea of a rugged action icon, Lee handles his role with impressive aplomb, giving and taking some hard hits while displaying a strong knack for droll humor.

Among the supporting play-

ers, Nick Mancuso, supplies much scenery-chomping fun as the gleefully scurvy Mafia mogul, snarling lines like, "I'm an American, and we know how to take things."

Tzi Ma lends an air of villainous dignity to his Chinese heroin honcho role, Hodge is effective as a two-fisted Rene ("Lethal Weapon 3") Russo-styled fem and Boothe scores as the tunnel-visioned top cop who, in a winking homage to Brandon's progenitor Bruce Lee, advises our hero to "take those 'fists of fury' outside."

"Rapid Fire" never strains the viewer's brain. But it offers an action eyeful that should set action addicts' pulses racing.

Lavish epic delivers a Sho of force

A REALLY BIG SHO: IT'S 1992. Do you know where Sho Kosugi is? Your Phantom, for one, had spent months pondering that very query. After toplining in a spate of American '80s actioners, ranging from winning capers like *Pray for Death* to such bottom-of-the-barrel scrapers as *9 Deaths of the Ninja* and *Rage of Honor*, the veteran ninja star put in only one '90s appearance, a silent combat cameo in the Rutger Hauer sightless-swordsman adventure *Blind Fury*. Seems Sho had been keeping busy producing, co-writing and starring in his most lavish vehicle to date, the ambitious historical epic *Journey of Honor* (MCA, \$89.95). Sort of Sho's version of Akira Kurosawa's *Ran*, crossed with James Clavell's *Shogun*, *Journey of Honor* is set in 1602 Japan. It opens with a sweeping battle scene pitting Sho's sword-wielding "West Army" against the musket-armed East forces.

When local lord Toshiro Mifune sees the necessity for improved firepower, he dispatches his teenage son (played by Sho's real-life offspring Kane Kosugi) and protector Sho to Spain to buy 5,000 rifles. There, Sho and Kane encounter Christopher Lee as King Philip, treacherous priest Norman Lloyd, John Rhys-Davies as a Moroccan potentate, golden-tressed damsel Polly (Patriot Games) Walker and, worst of all, Polly's fiancé, Don Pedro (David Essex), an evil nobleman who's out to shaft Sho.

Screened at last fall's American Film Market under the title *Shogun Mayeda* but ultimately released direct-to-homevid, *Journey of Honor* boasts impressive scope. Unfortunately, Sho's saga comes up short on most other counts.

At times, *Journey of Honor* plays so much like a '50s B swashbuckler that your Phantom expected a turbaned Jeff Chandler to swoop down from the nearest yardarm and save the day.

VAMPIRE HUNTER D: Still on an Asian Invasion Pick, we next checked out Vampire Hunter D, Toyoo Ashi-

da's animated "horror film for adults," which has its NYC preem next week (Sept. 10-12) as part of Film Forum 2's summer horror, sci-fi & fantasy fest.

Set in A.D. 12,000, our story concerns buxom beast-battling beauty Doris, who hires the titular hero "D," a part-human, part-vampire Clint Eastwood-styled hybrid dedicated to ridding the world of parasitic blood-suckers.

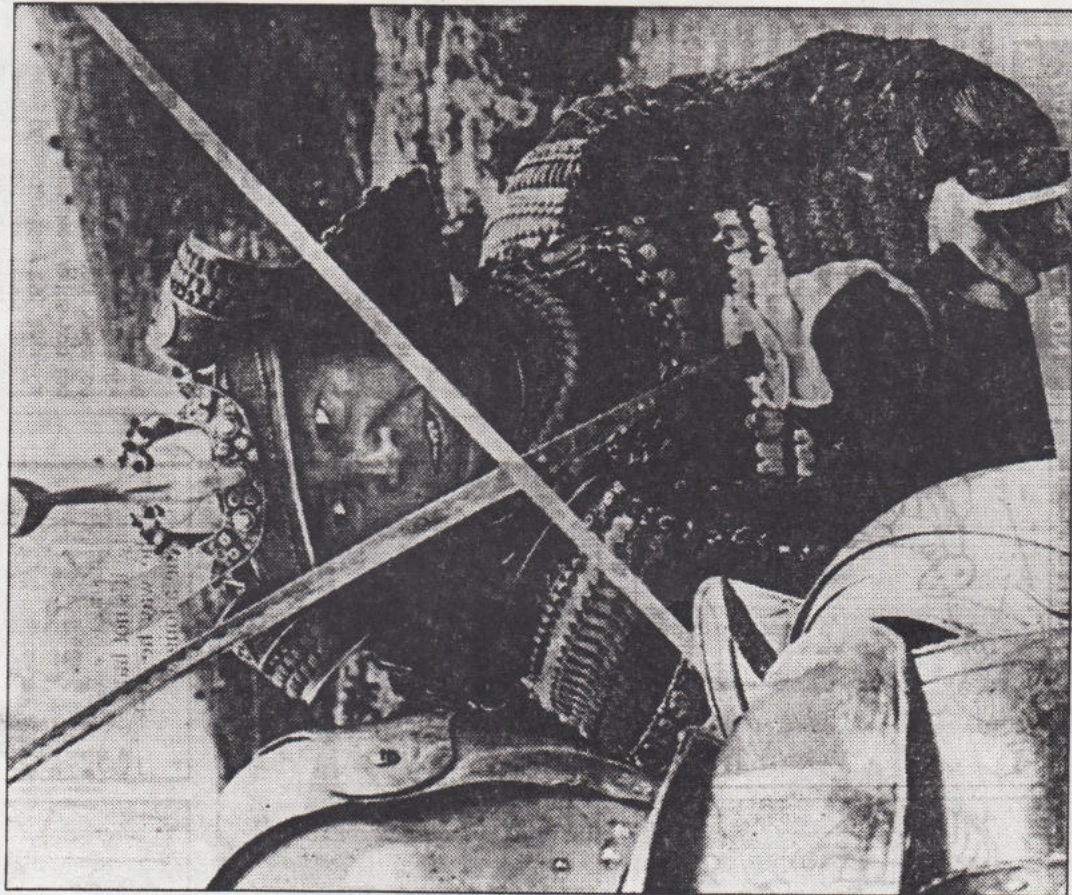
D meets a formidable foe in 10,000-year-old Count Magnus Lee, a faintly Lugosi-accented aristocratic vampire who periodically terrorizes Doris' vil-



lage and relishes his encounter with D. As Lee puts it, "For the first time in 100 years, I haven't been bored once for an entire evening!"

Along the way, D fights an imaginative menagerie of menacing mutants, monsters and assorted misshapen things, like the dread Snake Women of Midwich.

In short, "anime" buffs should enjoy.



CROSSED SWORDS: Sho Kosugi battles his foe in "Journey of Honor."