

45 OCT 1993

MAFFAPA



Welcome to the 45th issue of MAFFAPA, Martial Arts Film Fan (and Asian Culture) APA, for October 1993. Contributions were sent by the following people:

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The deadline for Maffapa 46 is January 31, 1994. 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, must reach Laurine White by the end of January. Minimum contribution is one page per issue, or 2 pages every other issue. Please send 16 copies of each page plus \$1.50 to cover return postage. If you don't send 16 copies, send your original pages, plus \$1 per page to cover copy costs. I prefer checks or stamps (\$1.50 minimum) in stamps) instead of cash, which is dangerous to send through the mail. Don't forget a 9x12" self addressed envelope, so I can send Maffapa 46 to you.



The above comicstrip reminds me to mention the new live action kiddy show, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, now the most popular of Fox Network daytime shows. Power Rangers started out as a live action Japanese show, Ju Ranger, that was bought up by Saban, re-cut, and re-edited with lots of new scenes added. What's left isn't too recognizable as Ju Ranger.

A KWONOSCOPE SPECIAL - CLONE-O-SCOPE!

by Robert Mallory

Hi-yuh! What is so special about this installment of Kwoonoscope? I'm glad you asked! Not only will this appear in Maffapa (Kwoonoscope's home), but this is also appearing in Damon Foster's wonderful fanzine, ORIENTAL CINEMA AND VIDEO.

With all the fuss generated by the 90% fictitious film DRAGON: The Bruce Lee Story, I've noticed that a lot of the earlier "clone" movies have reappeared on the video racks. Only sometimes the wrong credits and/or picture appears on the video box, sometimes this happens in the movie itself! Some of these films are known by a few different titles. Going through sources too numerous (a special thanks to Rocco Fattorusso and Nick Kalogeras) and too time-consuming to tell, I have compiled the most accurate listing to date.

Naturally we start off with "the original copy" (misnomers anyone?), Ho Tsung Tao, better known to film fans as Bruce Li. This guy was so prevalent, some Lee imitators became Li imitators! But more on that later. What's important to note is that by the end of 1978, "Li" stopped doing exploitation films. By that time he had fulfilled his contractual obligations that forced him to imitate Lee in the first place. He also had improved both as an actor and a martial artist and went on to star in some of the best Kung Fu films of all! So let's examine his prodigious output, albeit not in order. By the way, a small number of these were not exploitation films at all.

Bruce Li - (real name Ho Tsung Tao) alias Ho Cheung Tao, Ho Tsun Tao, Lee Roy Lung, Le Hsiao Lung and Shiao Lung. From Taiwan.
CONSPIRACY - 1972. Ho's first starring role.. a non exploitation film!
THE DRAGON DIES HARD aka SUPERDRAGON. Some versions have Yang Sze footage spliced in. Others have footage from KARADO THE HONG KONG CAT (Chang Li)
LEGEND OF BRUCE LEE aka THE IMAGE OF BRUCE LEE aka CHINESE CHREH KUNG FU
BRUCE LEE - SUPERDRAGON
GOODBYE BRUCE LEE, HIS LAST GAME OF DEATH aka NEW GAME OF DEATH (not to be confused with Le film)
SUPER DRAGON AGAINST SUPERMAN aka CALL ME DRAGON (not to be confused with Liang film)
ENTER THE PANTHER
BRUCE LEE, A DRAGON'S STORY
BRUCE LEE, WE MISS YOU
BRUCE LEE AGAINST THE DOUBLE CROSS aka THE DOUBLE CROSS (Angela Mao and Paul "Bluto" Smith)
SILENT KILLER FROM ETERNITY (Paul "Bluto" Smith and Angela Mao)
STORMING ATTACKS
EXIT THE DRAGON, ENTER THE TIGER (Paul "Bluto" Smith)
THE RETURN OF THE TIGER aka BRUCE LEE AGAINST THE DOUBLE CROSS (costarring Angela Mao)
THE DRAGON LIVES aka KING OF KUNG FU (not to be confused with Le's film), BEHIND BRUCE LEE, and BRUCE COMES ALONG
THE FIST OF BRUCE LEE
BLIND FIST OF BRUCE
BRUCE LEE THE INVINCIBLE aka BRUCE LEE THE INVINCIBLE aka GAME OF THE THE DRAGON aka SHAOLIN KUNG FU AND BRUCE LEE
BRUCE LEE'S DEADLY KUNG FU

THE REAL BRUCE LEE - clips of Bruce Li, footage from Lee's Kung Fu films and a Dragon Lee film at the end!

BRUCE AND THE IRON FINGER aka THE IRON FINGER (costarring Bruce Liang. For the first time two clones star in the same movie and neither imitates Lee in it!)

GOLDEN SUN

DUEL IN THE TIGER'S DEN (Li plays a Japanese in a small role)

BRUCE LEE'S SECRET KUNG FU aka BRUCE LEE'S SECRET

CHINESE CONNECTION II aka FIST OF FURY PART II (Lo Lieh is the heavy)

FIST OF FURY II aka A FISTFUL OF THE DRAGON aka JEET KUNE, THE CLAW

AND THE SUPREME KUNG FU (Chen Sing is the bad guy, not seen til near the end of the film)

THE IRON DRAGON STRIKES BACK

THE THREE AVENGERS aka LAMA AVENGER

BRUCE LI IN NEW GUINEA aka BRUCE LEE IN NEW GUINEA aka LAST FIST OF FURY

THE DEADLY STRIKE (Not Le! I don't care what the box says!)

BRUCE LEE - THE MAN AND THE MYTH aka BRUCE LEE - TRUE STORY (was one of the "Top 50 Grossing Films" according to VARIETY in 1977)

KUNG FU AVENGERS aka SOUL BROTHERS OF KUNG FU aka THE LAST STRIKE

EDGE OF FURY (Li's first film to make a million dollars in Hong Kong)

DYNAMO

REVENGE OF THE PATRIOTS aka THE MING PATRIOTS aka THE DRAGON

REINCARNATES (Bruce Chen in here too)

HE'S A LEGEND, HE'S A HERO

THE CHINESE STUNTMAN - Video box says film runs 83 minutes, but it really runs 90 minutes. Dan Inosanto is one of the bad guys. Alternate cut of this film is COUNTERATTACK, which Video Box claims runs 105 minutes, but really runs only 85 minutes! More fights in THE CHINESE STUNTMAN. COUNTERATTACK has less fights and edits some of the fights it does have. It has Harold Sakata tacked on to the story line, playing himself with an Oddjob hat that not only works but magically returns to him! This we did not see in GOLD FINGER. A slightly better dubbing job.

MACHOMAN (small part as a villain)

THE SHADOW OF THE NINJA

POWERFORCE aka DRAGON FORCE. Bruce Baron stars til Li finally appears and steals the movie away from him. Possibly Li's last film despite announcements for Li to do two more films after this. "But still", forty films are nothing to sneeze at! And that's not counting his pre-acting days as a stuntman!

The only contender as far as sheer number of films, if not in quality, is Bruce Le. His personal style is a combination of Eagle, Tiger and Snake form he learned in Burma, but you'll see little of it in his Lee roles. A pity that. If Le was permitted to do what he personally excelled at, his fight scenes would be much improved. As it is, he remains my least favorite of the big three "Clones", Li, Le, and Dragon Lee.

Bruce Le - (real name Huang Kin Lung). From Burma

HONG KONG 73 (a non-exploitation movie)

ENTER THE GAME OF DEATH aka NEW GAME OF DEATH (not to be confused with Li movie) aka KING OF KUNG FU

BRUCE, KING OF KUNG FU (He used "Drunken Snake" here)

THE CLONES OF BRUCE LEE (mainly stars Dragon Lee, also Bruce Lai and Bruce Thai (this last one not a Clone)
BRUCE'S FINGERS aka THE YOUNG DRAGON
BRUCE AND THE SHAOLIN KUNG FU (Part I)
BRUCE AND THE SHAOLIN KUNG FU Part II
THE YOUNG BRUCE LEE
RETURN OF BRUCE
MY NAME CALLED BRUCE
THE RETURN OF THE RED TIGER (non-exploitation film)
TREASURE OF BRUCE LE aka TREASURE OF BRUCE LEE
THE DRAGON RETURNS
BRUCE AND DRAGON FIST
BRUCE VS BILL (The "Bill" is William Louie)
GYMKATA KILLER (The last part of this film rips off RETURN OF THE DRAGON, which explains why Huang Cheng Li is listed in the credits as "Chick Norris")
THE NINJA STRIKES BACK (Harold Sakata)
BRUCE, THE SUPERHERO (has Bruce Pak pictured on the box. More on this later)
RE-ENTER THE DRAGON
FISTS OF THE DRAGON
SUPER GANG
BRUCE'LE'S REVENGE aka BRUCE LEE'S GREATEST REVENGE
THE BIG BOXX PART II (not to be confused with similarly titled Dragon Lee movie)
LITTLE BIG MASTERS (I wish they'd make up their minds!)
~~THE REAL BRUCE LEE~~
FIVE DRAGONS FIGHT AGAINST THE TIGER
SALT, PEPPER AND SOY SAUCE (doesn't appear til last third of movie)
BRUCE LE STRIKES BACK
RETURN OF FIST OF FURY
SEVEN MEN OF KUNG FU
TIGER BOXER
NINJA VS BRUCE LEE
BRUCE AND SHAOLIN BRONZEMEN
FISTS OF VENGEANCE
REVENGE OF THE KICKFIGHTER (costars with Richard Norton) aka BLACK SUN
FUTURE HUNTER (small role. Here Le is listed in the credits as Bruce Li!) Hmmm... "only" thirty four films for Bruce Le!
Next in line is the muscular Dragon Lee, also known as Bruce Lei. Who the heck is this guy really? Studied Hapkido and Animal Forms in addition to his Taekwando.
Dragon Lee - aka Bruce Lei (real name unknown). From Korea. Funny how none of the top three Clones are from Hong Kong
THE REAL BRUCE LEE - clips of Bruce Lee's pre-Kung Fu films, followed by clips of Bruce Li fights, then followed by Dragon Lee in a Korean made ripoff of THE CHINESE CONNECTION
THE CLONES OF BRUCE LEE - Bruce Le plays second fiddle to Dragon here. Bruce Lai and Bruce Thai also clutter up the works.
THE DRAGON, THE HERO - really stars John Liu. Dragon has a bit part. Originally was called DRAGON ON FIRE til name was later applied to another Dragon Lee film
DRAGON ON FIRE - retitling of the awful ENTER THREE DRAGONS, which includes Bruce Lea, Jackie Chin and someone called Bruce Li (but that's not Ho Tsung Tao)
ENTER THE DEADLY DRAGON

Bruce Lee's Revenge A.K.A. Bruce Lee's Greatest Revenge!

The Big Boss Part II (Not to be confused with similarly titled Dragon Lee movie)

Little Big Masters (I wish they'd make up their minds!)

Two Dragons Fight Against The Tiger

Salt, Pepper And Soy Sauce (Doesn't appear till last third of movie)

Bruce Lee Strikes Back

Return Of Fist Of Fury

Seven Men Of Kung Fu

Tiger Boxer

Ninja VS Bruce Lee

Bruce And Shaolin Bruzzenken

Fists Of Vengeance

Revenge Of The Kick Fighter (Co-stars with Richard Norton) A.K.A. Black Sun

Future Hunter (Small Role. Here Lee is listed in the credits as Bruce Li!)

Hmmm... "Only" thirty four films for Bruce Lee!

Next in line is the muscular Dragon Lee, also known as Bruce Lee. Who the heck is this guy really? Studied Hapkido and Animal Forms in addition to his Taekwondo.

Dragon Lee A.K.A. Bruce Lee (Real name unknown). From Korea. Funny how none of the top three clones are from Hong Kong!

The Real Bruce Lee - Clips of Bruce Lee's pre-KungFu films, followed by clips of Bruce Li fights, then followed by Dragon Lee in a Korean made ripoff of "The Chinese Connection"

The Clones Of Bruce Lee - Bruce Lee plays second fiddle to Dragon here. Bruce Lai and Bruce Thai also clutter up the works

The Dragon, The Hero - Really stars John Lin. Dragon has a bit part. Originally was called "Dragon On Fire" till name was later applied to another Dragon Lee film

Dragon On Fire - Retitling of the awful Enter Three Dragons which includes Bruce Lee, Jackie Chin and someone called Bruce Li but this isn't Ho Tung Tao.

Enter The Deadly Dragon

Kung Fu Fever - Ron Van Clief as a bad guy! One of Dragon's best

Dragon Claws - Another of his best.

Marital Monks Of Shaolin A.K.A. Martial Monks Of The Shaolin Temple

Justice Of The Dragon (No weddings performed here!)

The Secret Ninja

Pig Boss II - Not to be confused with similarly titled Bruce Le film.

Dragon Lee vs. Five Brothers

The Dragon's Showdown

Dragon Lee Fights Again (This is news?)

Rage of The Dragon

Super Fist

Bruce Lee's Ways of Kung Fu

Gold Dragon / Silver Snake

Champ vs. Champ

The Magnificent Duo

Next to Bruce Li, the best "clone". Wish they did a film together!

One of the most confusing films of the clones is Cobra. When Harmony put it out on video the box had a drawing of Bruce Le and stated he was the star. The films credits instead lists Bruce Lei (Dragon Lee) but the actual guy was neither one! When Best Film and Video put this film out later they still credited it to Bruce Le on the cover and the credit in the film still said Bruce Lei. However, on the box cover was the photo of the real star... Bruce Pak! Pak had gotten himself pictured on the box of Bruce, The Superhero which is a Bruce Le film. Often Bruce Li's picture and/or name has been confused with Bruce Le's on video boxes.

One film called "Bruce Le In The Furious" stars instead some unknown (the right credits appear on the back of the box). This of course, is not to be confused with the confusing Furious starring Simon Rhee. Another film called Spirits of Bruce Li has no lto to lve. Instead it stars Michael Chan. The Fierce Boxer And Bruce A.K.A. The Fierce Boxer has somehow been tagged a Bruce Le film on video. Bruce, Kung Fu Girl is not an imitator film. More confusion to follow. Di-tto Bruce Tu's Seven Promises (with Yuch Hua)

Bruce Liang A.K.A. Bruce Leung (Real name Lung Sai Lung) Apparently from Hong Kong. At last!

The Fighting Dragon

Tigers of Shaolin

Bruce Hong Kong Master

The Fists, The Kicks, The Evils

My Kung Fu Twelve Kicks A.K.A. Twelve Kung Fu Kicks

Incredible Master Beggers

God Father Sq. wad

Call Me Dragon (Not to be confused with Li version)

Showdown At The Square

Fighting Dragon Vs. Deadly Tiger

The Master Of Death

Bruce, D-Day At Macao

Bruce And The Iron Finger A.K.A. Iron Finger (With Bruce Li. Neither imitates Lee here.)

Eric Lee Not really a clone as he was born with this name!

Death Machines - Small Role

Weapons Of Death

Killer Elite

Amercathon - Small Role

A Force Of One - Small Role

Last Adventure - Small Role

Tommy Lee

The Rebels Reign

Fists Of Vengeance

The Hot, The Cool, The Vicious

Fatal Needles Vs. Fatal Fists (Obviously one of the fatalistic films)

Conan Lee

Gymkata - Small Role

Armed Response

The Eliminators

Ninja In The Dragon's Den - With Sanada (Not to be confused with "Ninja In The Deadly Trap")

Jet Lee Real name: Li Lin Jai. From Mainland China!

Shaolin Temple

Shaolin Temple II: Kids From Shaolin (not to be confused with another "Kids From Shaolin" movie out there)

Shaolin Temple III: Martial Arts Of Shaolin (ditto. A.K.A. Arahan)

Born To Defend (Not a typo but British spelling)

Dragon Fight

Bruce Chen

Thou Shalt Not Kill But Once

Revenge Of The Patriots (With Bruce Li)

Bruce Ly

A.K.A. Myron Bruce Lee (Real name Myron Lee). From Hawaii. Looks a little like Raymond King of "Firecracker" fame.

The Chinatown Connection (With Lee Majors II)

The Kill Factor A.K.A. The Black Executioner A.K.A. Death Dimension A.K.A. The Freeze Bomb A.K.A. The Black Terminator. Whew! Was that a record? Anyway, this is mainly a Jim Kelly film. George Lazenby here too.

Jimbo Lee

Real name Nguyen Ly, From Vietnam.

The Revenge Of The Dragon

Dragon From The East

Bruce Lea

Real name Jun Chong. From Korea

Bruce Lee Fights Back From The Grave (A few unrelated moments to live up to the title, the rest a non exploitation film)

Bruce Cheung

Deadly Shaolin Long Fist

Lee Bruce

Bruce Is Loose

Lee Le Le

Okay, okay! Could this be Li-Li-Li of Street Gangs Of Hong Kong Fame?

Samarrai-Death Bells

Bruce Chan

Rivals Of The Dragon

Martial Lee

Snake Fist Of A Buddhist Dragon

Chen Lee

The Dragon Strikes Back

Hwang Chan Lee

Hell's Wind Staff

Law Lee Sure that isn't "Lowly"?

Kung-Fu Halloween

Bruce Liu

Shaolin Deadly Hands

Brute Lee

The Dragon From Shaolin

Young Lee What happens when this guy gets older?

Peking Connection

Bruce Lie

Bruce Takes Dragon Town

Bruce Leong

Dragon Lives Again

Him Tai Chung

Did the main doubling in Game Of Death and Game Of Death II

Bruce Lai

The Magnificent

Clones Of Bruce Lee

Sean Lee

Street Fighters II (No relation to the video game or the Sonny Chiba classes)

Sonny Bruce Not to be confused with Sonny Singi

The Real Dragon

Bruce Lung

Four Bad Dudes

Branson Lee Really Tadashi Yamashita, who has done many films. The dubbing and re-titling of Karate (I) turned this into an exploitation film. This was Japan's first real Karate film though it didn't get released here till years later. At least one sequel was made but never shown here.

Branson Lee, Champion

Jimmy Lee

Four Hands Of Death

Big Boss Of Shanghai

Ronny Lee

The Blazing Ninja (co-stars "Sonny" Tanaka)

Albert Lee

Devil's Assignment

Steve Lee

Steel Fisted Dragon

Joey Lee

Death Mask Of The Ninja

Marty Lee

Hammer Fist

Jacky Lee

Hands Of Lightning

Rocky Lee

Dragon Devils Die

Also there is a movie called Rocky Lee

There are numerous movies that are Bruce Lee rip-offs only in name. Bruce Ali (Plat like a butterfly, sting like a dragon?), Mean Man Lee, Lee Kicks Back, The Bruce Lee Connection (Johnny Chung and Lo Lieh in this one), Revolt Of Kung Fu Lee, Bruce Dragon, And Lee, Dragon's Twin Brother, and the

in Sammy Bruce Lee And I. Also known as Fist Force Of Bruce Lee, the movie's original title was Fist Of The Unicorn. It stars Bruce Lee's childhood friend, "Little Unicorn." Lee helped his old buddy choreograph this film as Little Unicorn was badly outmatched by the villains. The title changes (and behind the scenes look at Bruce helping out) were added after Lee's death.

Some films were less obvious and patterned their titles after Lee's movies and/or the characters therein. Bolo The Bruke was not the character from "Enter The Dragon", but it was played by Yung See (now known as Bolo Young See). Enter The Fat Dragon with Sumo Hung was a takeoff on Lee's movie characters, and "The Fistful Of Yen" segment of Kentucky Fried Movie starred Bran Kim as the Lee character, and Bong So Han as ~~bad~~ guy from Enter The Dragon in a most memorable spoof. Revenge Of The First Of Fury used no characters or plot from the Lee film.

Other films were sequels to Lee's films. The Black Dragon VS. The Yellow Tiger was not a Ron Van Clief vehicle but instead starred a "Tong Lung" who was playing the brother to the Tung Lung character of "Return Of The Dragon." New Fist Of Fury was Jackie (then "Jacky") Chan's sequel to "The Chinese Connection." Remember the Chinese title to it was "The Fist Of Fury" and Lee's earlier film "The Big Boss" was called "Fists Of Fury" over here. Everyone confused now?

A proposed film called Enter Another Dragon was supposed to star John Saxon, Bruce Lee and Ron Van Clief.

According to a personal reply from John Saxon, he was never in such a movie. Harry Hope was to produce it and also something called Enter The Three Dragons (as opposed to "Enter Three Dragons") that was supposed to star Bruce Li, Dragon Lee and Ron Van Clief. Neither project materialized.

Lee's life was ripped off in many a film, including the notorious Bruce Lee - His Last Days, His Last Nights starring Litsaulturey and Betty Ting Pei. This nonsense was also titled I Love You, Bruce Lee. Probably Linda Lee Caldwell's least favorite ripoff movie! Of course, Bruce's death was also fair game. The Death Of Bruce Lee also known as "The Black Dragon's Revenge" had Ron Van Clief go to Hong Kong in an attempt to find Lee's killer. Fist Of Fear, Touch Of Death, also known now as The Dragon And The Cobra supposedly had a tournament in N.Y. to find Lee's successor. Guess they're still looking.

Li is the Chinese spelling for Lee, so the "Dragon Li" listed on movie posters could be our weightlifting friend Dragon Lee. Years ago in a

T.V. ad (played during a re-run of the Kung Fu show. Talk about targeting an audience!)
a Bruce Li movie was advertised and his name pronounced Lie instead of Lee, so
one can take nothing for granted. Especially with all the cloning around that is
done in the occasionally wonderful world of Bruce Lee exploitation films. Bye-yeah!

MAFFAPA CONTRIBUTION FROM LAURINE WHITE, 5422 COLUSA WAY,
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Only one novel I've read lately has had any relation to Asian culture, since I haven't found any new Asian political thrillers or vampire novels. (There's a great vampire story called BLOOD BROTHERS by Brian Lumley published in pb recently, but none of it pertains to Asia or martial arts.) The novel is CHIMERA by Mary Rosenblum, new in pb from Del Rey, science fiction dealing with what's hot now, virtual reality, set a few years in the future. "David Chen was determined to become a great virtual reality artist." But there are problems along the way, like his lover, who undertakes freelance (and highly illegal) assignments in the virtual reality net. Now someone is trying to eliminate him as a witness, and is striking at David, to bring his lover out of hiding. The only thing Asian-culture-related is David's relation with his Chinese family. He has 3 sisters, but his father was determined to pass the family business on through David, for which he is unsuited and unwilling. David left his father bitter, forced to hand the business over to a daughter (who had the ability for it). When David is so severely beaten by his lover's enemies, his father is the only one with the money to pay for his rehab, the broken bones and brain damage. His father may not think much of David's chosen profession, but at least they reconcile.

For another view of a father's expectations of a son unable to meet them, see THE WEDDING BANQUET. It's a comedy produced by a Taiwanese, about an only son who is gay in New York, and his parents in Taiwan who want him to marry a good Chinese girl and give them a grandson. His lover suggests that he fake a marriage to one of his employees, from the Chinese Mainland, who wants to be a painter but lacks a green card. This one is good. There are several movies in circulation now dealing with China or Chinese Americans. I didn't see M BUTTERFLY (can't say I really wanted to), but other good ones are out. See THE JOY LUCK CLUB and bring along a box of kleenex. THE STORY OF QIU JU is directed by Zhang Yimou (RAISE THE RED LANTERN, JU DOU), stars Gong Li (ditto), and I'm happy to say that it's a low key comedy, not horribly depressing like JU DOU. A young wife wants the village leader to apologize, after he kicked her husband in the crotch for an insult. She goes all the way to the top of the bureaucracy, from town to city, to appeal to higher and higher officials. But she's also getting more and more pregnant, and travel with her sister-in-law via cart and truck and bus isn't easy. And the poor sister-in-law has to carry the suitcases. The same theater is showing prevues for FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE, about 2 boys studying for the Chinese opera, which also looks very good.

A few weeks ago Fox Network ran GHOST MOM, a new tv movie with Jean Stapleton and that guy from FOREVER KNIGHT. (Vampire fans, don't despair! New episodes of FOREVER KNIGHT are supposed to resume in February on CBS, against SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE.) A Japanese sword is found by Feds, who bring it to an archaeologist, who identifies it as the priceless 6th century A.D. mythical Sword of Ise given to Yamato-San. (A 6th century sword made of tempered steel and it looks just like a samurai sword made a thousand years

later??) Japanese gangsters had pried out the Stone of Ise from the handle, but one of them swallowed it when shot by rivals. The FOREVER KNIGHT guy is a doctor who operates on the wounded gangster, and removes the Stone, which is taken by his mother for a lucky piece. Some luck. She dies, but comes back due to unfinished business. (Ghost Mom, remember.) She'd never told her son that his father is still alive and (Amazing Coincidence! Wow!) happens to be the archaeologist who identified the Sword of Ise. So everyone gets chased and shot at by Japanese gangsters (played by Chinese-Americans) trying to recover the stone. Too silly.

Chuck Norris is suing some video company over their using his picture on the box, to sell the video version of a 20-year old kung fu flick (latest title: KARATE HERO). Chuck says he was only in the movie for 18 minutes, and he didn't give permission for his picture to be used. I'm sure this is the movie called YELLOW FACED TIGER in Verina Glaessner's book, and released to American theaters in '81 or '82 as MASSACRE IN SAN FRANCISCO (or something like that). Not to mention that the mayor of San Francisco took offense; all copies released in Northern California had a more innocuous title. Chuck also took offense at the publicity back then, at the use of his name and picture in the movie ads. He was the main villain; Don Wong Tao, as a San Francisco cop, wiped him out in the final battle.

Someone in Toronto sent a martial arts movie filmed up there, TALONS OF THE EAGLE, about 2 cops infiltrating James Hong's drug gang. (Yes, once more James Hong does his hokey villain routine. Doesn't sound like a bad job, being paid to cackle, ham it up, and embrace lovely people of the opposite sex.) The saving grace of TALONS OF THE EAGLE (aside from a pretty end-credit song) is the appearance of Pan Qing-Fu as the martial arts trainer who puts the two cops through hell, training them in eagle claw, so they'll give a good performance in James Hong's martial arts tournament. You'll remember Pan Qing-Fu, playing himself, the martial arts master, in IRON AND SILK, who, at the end of that movie, went to Toronto (so he could appear in movies like TALONS OF THE EAGLE). He has a weapons duel with Eric Lee (playing James Hong's bodyguard). Does anyone want this tape? Or else I may tape over it.

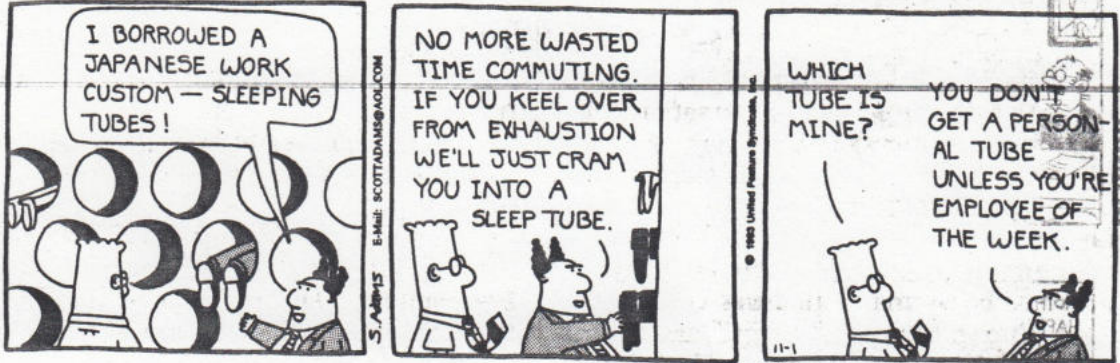
Here's something you may want to check out if you like Chinese movie soundtracks, *Once Upon A Time in China: The Best of Chinese Film Music, Vol. 1*, from Varese Sarabande Records Inc., 13006 Saticoy St., North Hollywood, CA 91605.

It's a CD, should be about \$13-\$14. If you can't find it in your record store (in the soundtrack section), write to the company about availability. The CD includes 22 selections from 8 Chinese movies, including ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA, POLICE STORY 3 (Jackie Chan), THE EAST IS RED and WICKED CITY, along with 4 other movies that sound like romances or dramas. WICKED CITY is a live action, unlicensed Hong Kong version of the Japanese animated feature, YOUJUU TOSHI. (A dubbed version of the anime is being theatrically distributed by Streamline, under the title, WICKED CITY.) Tsui Hark produced the Hong Kong WICKED CITY, and it's the first of his movies that I've seen, that's been a major disappointment. Nothing new in it, no martial arts, just guns and monsters.

FOX TROT



DILBERT



BROOM HILDA



"Anyhow, here it is, with apologies to Ashman and Menken:
Conventional Days
(Sung to the tune of "Arabian Nights")
Oh, I come to a land filled with heroes in
tights -
And they call it the Wonder-Con -
Where they'll show you some books
That'll fill you with frights:
It's barbaric, but, hey - it's Spawn.

When the pros from the East meet the
fans from the West
And a band named Seduction plays,
Then- there's no time to spare; hop
aboard US Air
'Cause it's time for conventional days.

Conventional days! At conventional
noons
Fans are snubbing Dave Sim as they
swarm to Ron Lim
And watch foreign cartoons.

Conventional days gave me trembling
and fear.
I'll watch panels until I am ready to kill.
But I'll come back next year."
Yer a sick man, Seidman.
(Peter David, writer of stuff, might be
wearing a crucifix at this moment. One
never knows.)

Show Business News From Japan

by Robert Walsdorff

Hiroyuki Sanada recently starred in a twelve part mini-series entitled Koko Kyoshi. He played a high school teacher in an all girls private school. A young student falls in love with him. When she discovers that he is engaged, she goes to extreme measures to break the couple up. Lots of things are happening among the faculty and students and between the faculty and students, just about everything but studying in this popular trendy drama.

Tahara Toshihiko starred in the much publicized motion picture Kacho Shima Kosaku. The Japanese press called it "the most inspiring piece of casting since Dustin Hoffman got picked to do The Graduate." He plays what is considered to be the kind of Japanese businessman that most aspire to be. It is quite a contrast from Rising Sun. Still it also shows the negative side of Japanese business very strongly while maintaining Toshi quite clearly as the hero. It is an untypically restrained performance by Toshi, but one he handles wonderfully.

Afro-Japanese star **P.J.** has been steadily gaining popularity promoting reggae music in Japan. He performs in both English and Japanese. Now 23, he has been performing since he was 15.

Peter Falk recently starred in a special Japanese television movie where he played an American detective who comes to Japan to investigate the death of an American man. The young man was visiting his Japanese mother, who had hid the fact that she had a child. His mother was an up and coming fashion designer that felt that if people found out about her son her career would be ruined. Falk has also been seen in recent Japanese commercials.

Many Japanese rock groups are becoming more international as far as the members are concerned. One example is the group **Psychedelix**, consisting of 4 members from 4 different countries. The common language between the artists is English.

Popular Japanese singer **Ozaki Yutaka**, best known for his dramatic interpretations of pop songs, recently died of alcohol overdose while still in his twenties. Several of his albums and singles have recently appeared on the charts as his popularity has seemed to have increased with his death.

Tokito Saburo won the Japanese equivalent of the Academy Award. He recently returned to singing and concerts.

Show Business News From Japan - Part Two

Matsuda Seiko has been in the news a great deal lately concerning an alleged affair with actor Jeff Nichols while she was living in New York. Photos show them kissing in a New York restaurant and Nichols leaving her hotel early in the morning. Seiko, married to actor Kanda Masaki (after she jilted Go Hiromi) held a press conference to deny the stories are true.

Also making the news was **Nishikiori Kasukiyo** of the group **Shonen Tai**. He has been involved romantically with actress Okada Nama, who is six years older.

Actor **Katsu Shintaro** is attempting a comeback. His career had been marred recently when he was involved in a scandal with the police for possession of drugs. His plans include a guest appearance in a movie, concerts, appearances on television talk shows, and an autobiography.

Actress **Sakurada Junko** recently got married in Seoul by the infamous Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

Yakusho Koji, perhaps best known by MAFFAPA readers as the lead in NHK's drama Miyamoto Musashi, has been playing a number of famous Japanese historical characters recently, including Oda Nobunaga and Takeda Shingen. Still he tries to return to the stage at least once a year because it is what he loves best.

The popular western play Miss Saigon has recently been performed successfully on the Japanese stage with a Japanese cast.

Famous Japanese director, **Itami Juzo**, noted for such movies as Tanpopo, was attacked by four men in a parking lot. He was knifed and rushed to the hospital where he was operated on and put into intensive care.

Robert Walsdoff

NAOKI AND HIS FRIENDS VISIT TENNESSEE

Over the Labor Day Weekend of 1993, Naoki Nagashima and 3 of his friends visited us in Tennessee. When Robert and I met our guests at the Nashville International Airport, they did not have any luggage. We knew something was wrong since our guests came from Japan without luggage. Before arriving in Nashville, they were sight-seeing in Key West and Miami. Theives in Miami had stolen their luggage from Naoki's rental car. Our guests were 2 women: Yoko and Satoyo and 2 men: Naoki and Yoshinori. We decided to go shopping for clothing and necessities even before checking in at the motel. We spent most of the day shopping together. A friend, Martha joined us for dinner that evening at Shintomi, a Japanese restaurant in Green Hills. The next day we got up early and ate breakfast at Shoney's. I went with our friends to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. Robert did not go and stayed at home to prepare for the evening. However, Sunday afternoon, Robert accompanied our friends while I stayed at home to prepare for the evening. Robert took the video camera when they went horse-back riding in Nashville and visited the conservatory at the Opryland Hotel. In the evening, our guests in addition to our friend, Noriyuki, who is a student at Belmont in Nashville and a brown-belt at Taylor Hayden's Karate Center, came to our house. My mother cooked dinner and Robert and I did the serving for our guests. We watched videos of Robert's recent trip to Orlando and Tampa, Florida. The rest of the evening, our friends sang Japanese songs along with our karaoke machine. They had such a good time that they were reluctant to go home. Monday, we took Yoko to the airport since she had to return home. I joined the rest of our guests for shopping in a huge outlet in Kentucky. Later we stopped in Clarksville to visit Mr. and Mrs. Collins at their home. Mrs. Collins was born in Tokyo & is a friend of Naoki's mother. That evening our guests met 2 of our American friends and we ate together at Goten, a Japanese restaurant in Nashville. Tuesday, businesses reopened and we replaced Yoshinori's traveler's checks. We spent the rest of the day shopping at various malls in Nashville, "the city of shopping malls". At the end of the day, Noriyuki joined us at Kobe Steak in Nashville. The next morning, our guests flew back home to Japan.

COMMENTS ABOUT THE PREVIOUS A.P.A.

Jacqueline D. Sims: I enjoyed your essay regarding your eventful month of April 1993.

Patricia Gonzalez: I liked reading KANZAKI SCHOOL OF JIUTA MAI & THE SPIRIT THE SPIRIT OF KENDO.

Continued

HOWARD WALSDORFF

COMMENTS/Continued

MARK JACKSON: Your opinions of the actors who portrayed Bruce Lee in various dramas (DRAGON: NO RETREAT, NO SURRENDER; etc.) were interesting to me. Thank you. I agree with you that Jason Scott Lee doesn't resemble the late Bruce Lee, but Scott was convincing in the role of Lee.

LAURINE WHITE: You were so lucky to be able to see a Taiko performance 'live'. I hope that I may see a Taiko group perform "live" someday.

VIDEO REVIEW: HISSATSU SHIKAKENIN

The series, HISSATSU SHIKAKENIN, is based on the feature film, ASSASSIN'S QUARY.

The cast includes Ogata Ken as "Doctor" Baian Fujuki; Yamamura Soh as Boss Otowaya; Nakamura Tamao as his wife, Okura; Hayashi Yoichi as Sanai Nishimura, a fencing instructor with a wife and son; and Tsusaka Masaki as Senzo who works for Otowaya. The Otowaya run an employment agency, but secretly they also hire assassins when Boss Otowaya approves. The assassins are Baian, Sanai and Otowaya. However, the people they assassinate are always villains.

An episode entitled, A WOMAN'S REVENGE, is a good example of the series. Kameya Risuke, a merchant, goes to Boss Otowaya to hire hire assassins to avenge his daughter. She was raped by young men of wealthy merchants and she was in shock as the result of being raped. Their fathers paid off the judge, Oi Yodayui, so they got away with their crime. Boss Otowaya agreed that they should be punished for hurting Keameya's daughter and the other young girls that they raped.

The sub-plot is about Okura and Oi Yodayu who is blackmailing her by threatening to reveal her past of being a pickpocket when she was a youth. She is afraid to tell her husband about it. When a tinsmith in the neighborhood is thrown into jail, the tinsmith's family is in trouble without him to support them. Okura sells her ornamental hair-pin to pay for his bail.

Sanai, the fencing-instructor has a wife and son. He likes having a family and believes in sharing the good and the bad together as a family.

HOWARD WALSDORFF

VIDEO REVIEW CONTINUED....

The viewer learns that Sanai is a man of honor. After Sanai defeats Oi in a duel, Senzo tries to steal Oi's money purse, but Sanai stops him saying that he would be less of a samurai if he stole from a dead man. Hayashi Yoichi is very convincing as an honorable samuari even if he is secretly an assassin.

Yamaura Soh is excellent in the role of Boss Otawaya, and gives a strong and convincing performance. In this episode from the series, he shows how to handle a blackmailer.

Ogata Ken is a great actor and portrays the doctor/assassin very well that the character becomes almost real to the viewer. His performance is memorable.



Mark Jackson/ 2043 Isabell Road/ Port St. Lucie, Florida/ 34952/
305/337-2303.

Hello, Everyone,

I must begin with exciting news. I have had radial keratotomy in my left eye and, where I was previously 20/400, I am now 20/20. Before the operation, I could not even see the big "E" the doctor projects on the wall when he places the "mask" on your head and adjusts the strength of the lenses for each eye as he projects the letters in progressively decreasing size (my right eye was my "good" eye since I could use it to see the ghost of the "E"). I shall have the operation on my right eye on December 2 and I look forward to seeing 1994.

For some time, I have been aware of a program on the "Comedy Central" cable channel called MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000. The premise of the show is that, at some point in the future, a man named Joel is drafted for duty on a spaceship where his only companions are robots programmed to act like humans. To keep him entertained, the scientists back at the base broadcast "cheesy" movies. Movies which are so bad that they easily lend themselves to ridicule as Joel and the two robots make wisecracks while watching the films. While I was intrigued with this premise, I had never watched this show until their target was the Joe Don Baker epic Mitchell.

The movie in question features Joe Don Baker as an incorruptable cop named "Mitchell" (hence the title). In this film he --

Well, okay, friend, if you insist.

Before I detail the plot, my friend the Ninja wants me to describe the film's "romantic interlude." He'll have a fit if I don't.

Taking a rest from his pursuit of evildoers, in San Diego, California, the romantic interlude begins in Mitchell's apartment with him sitting on his living room couch reading a copy of Playboy magazine (with his .38 Special resting on the adjacent cushion). There is a knock at the door and he grabs his pistol before he answers it. Opening the door he finds an attractive blond named Greta (played by Linda Evans) in a floor length fur coat. Despite the obvious fact she has been sent as a bribe by the crooks he is chasing, he invites her inside and she removes her fur coat to reveal a designer dress and black leather boots. She accepts his offer of a beer and Joe Don gets to do his Cary Grant bit by pouring the beer in a glass before handing it to her. Then his hand shakes and he spills the beer down her black leather boots. Which leads to ...

THE CLASSIC SHLOCK B MOVIE LINE OF ALL TIME!

Ready, friend?

Drumroll

Cymbal Crash!

Let's hear it.

THE BEER



60T EXCITED!

Eventually, they extend their relationship in another part of his apartment (however, Mitchell continues his relentless pursuit).

The target of his pursuit is a mobster portrayed by Martin Balsam (who also portrayed the detective who had the unfortunate run-in at the top of the stairs in Psycho). Eventually, he and his bodyguard, portrayed by Merlin Olsen (MERLIN OLSON?), board a cruiser and manage to sail within a few miles of Mexican territorial waters when Mitchell arrives in a helicopter -- which is running out of fuel! Since Balsam and Olsen (sounds like a law firm) are both in one of those makeshift towers which boaters can set on the roof of a cabin, and Olsen is shooting at the helicopter with an M16, Mitchell has the helicopter crew tie a rope to a CO2 tank so it hangs suspended under the helicopter. Then, they fly over the cruiser with the tank crashing through the tower. Before the impact, Olsen drops the M16 and the two evildoers retreat inside the cabin.

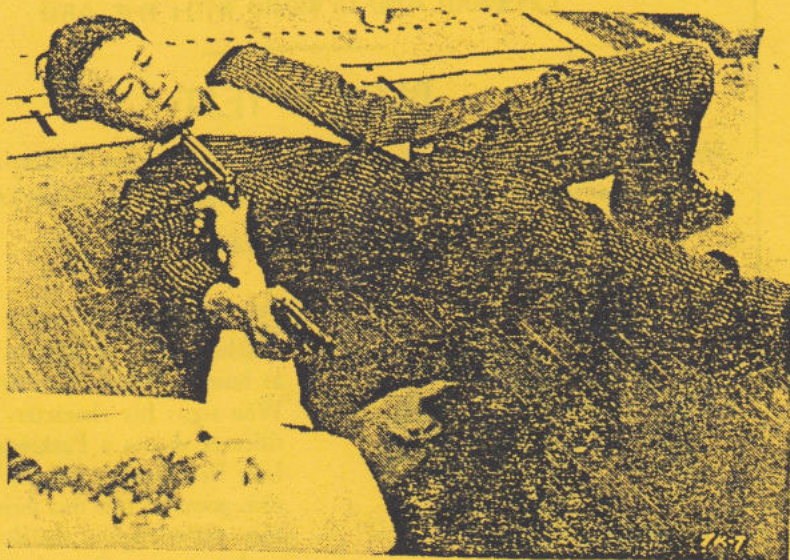
Mitchell climbs down from the helicopter to drop on the cabin roof and Merlin Olsen leaves the cabin and steps on the deck to do battle. Mitchell beans him with a plank of wood from the debris left by the tower and tries to move in but all he can get in is an elbow smash before Olsen picks him up in an airplane spin and dumps him on the deck. Olsen then tries to climb up to the cabin roof to retrieve the M16 but Mitchell manages to grab a rope and tries to strangle Olsen before he reaches the roof. Then, Olsen retaliates with his elbow smash and proceeds to beat Mitchell bad (ever hear of getting beat good?). Finally, he throws Mitchell back to the deck but the M16 has also wound up back on the lower level as well. Then, Mitchell sees a small harpoon, the size of a man's arm, mounted on the inner side of the boat as Olsen descends the ladder. He reaches for the harpoon just as Olsen reaches for the M16. Both armed, they turn toward each other and ...

Well, you gotta see the film to know (ain't he mean?). The MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000 presentation is an excellent showcase with screamingly funny comments from Joel and the gang (e.g. the film is set during Christmas so when we see Mitchell sprawled over his bed with fifteen empty beer cans and an empty bottle of scotch scattered around the bedroom they say "Look, a Joe Don Baker Christmas.") If you missed it when it was broadcast on October 23, watch the listings and see the rerun.

I was late with this MAFFAPA due to my operation so I shall exit stage left and wish you all the best. SEE YOU SOON!

Tales of the Little Lotus Girl 2

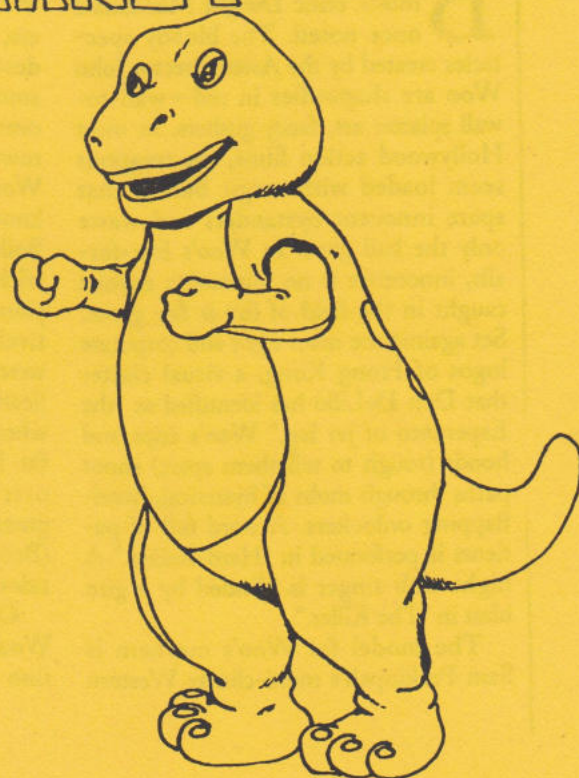
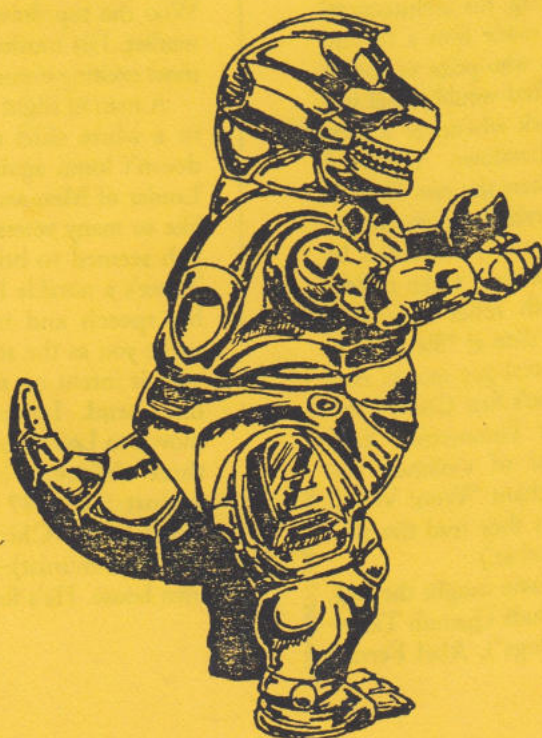
Hi fellow Asian film fans. It's been a busy summer for us here in Moon. Since last Issue I caught a Jackie Chan Double feature (Dragons Forever and Police Story II) the Cleveland Arts Building. I also saw Hard Target, which I've seen three times. Great film if you haven't seen it. I also picked up the directors cut of "The Killer" on Laser Disk which I hope to review for next issue. Speaking of the Killer has anyone seen Undeclared War starring Danny Lee? Last but not least there's a Jackie Chan and John Woo film fest playing this weekend in Pittsburgh. (The closest city to where I live) I'll let you all know more about that next issue to. Well that's about it except for a interview with John Woo from the August issue of The New Yorker.



THE KILLER

As a master of kinetic filmmaking, John Woo embodies the greatest strengths of the contemporary Hong Kong movie industry that spawned him: wit, action, speed, unpretentiousness. But Woo's crime films, war movies and comedies—most starring Hong Kong matinee idol Chow Yun-Fat—are more than just expert genre pieces; they're also stirring accounts of honor, loyalty, brotherhood and heroism in the face of violence, betrayal and corruption. With Woo's latest film HARD BOILED just entering national release, and his first American film scheduled for release this fall, the time seems right to screen four of his previous movies in a concentrated, explosive, action-packed weekend. Three of them are Cleveland premieres.

BARNEY vs MECHABARNEY



BLOOD TEST

His hyper-violent vision made director John Woo a legend in Hong Kong and in American art houses—but now he's playing by Hollywood's rules.

BY JAMES WOLCOTT



Woo: Like Peckinpah, with a sense of black humor.

BLOOD does make a nice red," the movie critic Dwight Macdonald once noted. The bloody spectacles created by the Asian director John Woo are rhapsodies in red—wall-to-wall splatter art, fancy gushers. In most Hollywood action films, the weapons seem loaded with magic bullets that spare innocent bystanders and waste only the bad guys. In Woo's free-for-alls, innocence is no immunity; anyone caught in the field of fire is fair game. Set against the neon signs and corporate logos of Hong Kong, a visual clatter that Don DeLillo has identified as "the Esperanto of jet lag," Woo's cops and hoods (tough to tell them apart) shoot paths through mobs of hysterical, hand-flapping onlookers. A ward full of patients is perforated in "Hard-Boiled." A night-club singer is blinded by a gun blast in "The Killer."

The model for Woo's mayhem is Sam Peckinpah's multi-climax Western

"The Wild Bunch," where the robbers clutched little old ladies to their chests as human shields. Certainly the way Woo signs his characters' death certificates shows a Peckinpah flourish. Like Peckinpah's targets, Woo's take such powerful hits that their deaths become balletic spins, the blood spurting in slow motion from their bodies like lopsided bubbles. What makes Woo more than a Peckinpah impersonator is the goofy black humor he employs. In "The Killer," blinded lovers crawl right past each other. "Hard-Boiled," his homage to Peckinpah's "The Killer Elite," features an absurdly epic firefight in a hospital, with bodies launched from morgue trays like torpedoes, SWAT teams spidering the walls, and, to cap it all, Woo's hero—the smooth-moving Chow Yun-fat—quieting a squalling infant with an improvised rap song. He cradles the infant with one hand, keeping his gun hand free. "Hey! X-rated action!" he tells the kid as he blows an abdominal hole through his next victim.

The irresponsible, anarchic rush of Woo's power pulp—his sweeping camera, his razor cutting, his architectural destruction—has made him a legend among movie nuts who prize sensation over sensibility. Word would travel up-town in New York whenever a new Woo arrived in Chinatown. A writer I know said that when she saw "Hard-Boiled" during its recent run in Greenwich Village she was surrounded by young men who seemed to be collectively sighing with relief that they weren't stuck on a date at "Sleepless in Seattle." At last, a real guy movie. And when I caught Woo's first Chow Yun-fat hit, "A Better Tomorrow," each over-the-top burst of violence was greeted with the chant "Woo! Woo!" (Between the bursts they read the subtitles aloud to each other.)

Other directors have caught the bug. Woo's admirers include Quentin Tarantino ("Reservoir Dogs"), Abel Ferrara

("Bad Lieutenant"), and Sam Raimi ("The Evil Dead"). With "The Killer" being released on laser disk (an American remake is also planned), "Hard-Boiled" a hit in art houses, and his first American film, "Hard Target," about to open, John Woo has become the most exciting cult-icon director from overseas since Sergio Leone put Clint Eastwood in a poncho.

So how does it feel to be the next big wave?

"I'm very discouraged," John Woo says over dinner in Los Angeles. "I'm very depressed."

Oh.

Born in 1946, in Canton, Woo moved to Hong Kong, with his family, at the age of four. He began fooling with cameras as a schoolboy, shooting little films of his own in 16mm. and Super 8. While still in his early twenties, he became a script supervisor at Hong Kong's Cathay Film Company, apprenticing under the martial-arts-film master Chang Cheh. On the soundstages, everybody was kung-fu fighting. After switching to Golden Harvest Studio, in 1973, Woo began directing his own features, coordinating the grunts and grimaces in such quickies as "The Young Dragons" and "Countdown in Kung Fu." He didn't emerge from the pack until "A Better Tomorrow," a lavish 1986 homicide spree starring Chow Yun-fat which inflated gangster rivalries into a species of holy war. The critical and financial success of "A Better Tomorrow," which spawned a pair of sequels and a slew of imitations, made Woo the top draw in the Asian action market. His movies became the region's most exciting export since Bruce Lee.

A man of slight build, usually dressed in a white shirt and light slacks, he doesn't loom against the horizon as a Leader of Men and a law unto himself, like so many veteran directors. (Peckinpah seemed to bring his own clouds.) There's a notable lack of ego muscle in his speech and manner. He doesn't strike you as the sort of genius-at-work who is intent on making those around him bend. Indeed, Woo, who has moved to Los Angeles with his wife and three children—in part as a protest against the 1997 reversion of Hong Kong to the Chinese (he's a staunch anti-Communist)—can't smoke in his own house. He's forced to smoke in the

back yard. "My children used to put little notes in my cigarette packs—'Please don't smoke, Daddy,' and 'We want you with us a long time.'" When we dine at Joss, a Chinese restaurant on Sunset Boulevard, where Woo is greeted with bows, the Marlboros remain in his pocket until the end of the meal. It's July, the month before the ordinance that bans smoking in all Los Angeles restaurants goes into effect, but he isn't taking any chances—a curious caution for the king of overkill.

With Woo is his assistant and interpreter, Jule Gilfillan, a U.S.C. film-school graduate, whose short "My Glorious Paradise" recently played New York's Asian-American festival. Woo speaks English with initial pauses, becoming more at ease after the first few sentences. He consults with Gilfillan only when a particular phrase has him stumped. The soothing atmosphere of the restaurant fosters civilized chat. It's not the kind of raucous joint that Chow Yun-fat would shoot his way out of, or into, blowing busboys through the swinging doors. Again, Woo says, without self-pity, as a simple fact, "I'm depressed."

The source of his heartburn is the sour time the ratings board has given him over "Hard Target"—a hunt for human game starring Jean-Claude Van Damme, Yancy Butler, Lance Henriksen, and Mr. Warm Oatmeal himself, Wilford Brimley, who steals the show bouncing on a horse. Boy, can he bounce! The board keeps branding "Hard Target" (it's slated to open this week) with an NC-17 rating—the kiss of death for a major studio release. Universal Pictures didn't sign Van Damme to a three-picture deal to have him playing at the art houses at midnight. (There have also been rumors that Van Damme himself leaned on the film in order to get maximum audience attention.) For Woo, the frustration with the ratings board comes from his not being able to pinpoint what needs to be fixed to secure the necessary R. "In Hong Kong, I can do what I want. If there is a problem with government censors, they will tell me, 'We don't like this, this is too much,' and I can work with that. But here it's not specific. I'm not cutting entire scenes, just frames from scenes. But I have to guess at what they want toned down." With each set of excisions (it

took seven tries before "Hard Target" earned an R), the film's rhythms have developed more of a twitch.

The audience testing of the film also took him down a peg. In Hong Kong, his films were never subjected to this kind of polling. According to one source, the early edits of "Hard Target" reflected the American movies of the seventies on which Woo cut his chops—the dazzling tours de force of directors such as Martin Scorsese, Brian De Palma, Francis Ford Coppola, and Walter Hill. What Woo discovered, to his dismay, was that audiences have dumbed down since then. Despite their steady diet of rock-video collages, the members of the MTV generation are baffled by flashbacks, parallel construction, split-screen images. If a story doesn't follow a straight line, it draws a big "Huh?" from Beavis and Butt-Head. So some of Woo's fancier tropes had to be snipped, along with the gorier bits. Although much of what remains is fairly gross. The movie bogs down whenever a fat sleaze who promotes a New Orleans phone-sex line is subjected to verbal harangue and torture. Such one-sided beatings—pummellings of people who can't protect themselves—have always been a major weakness in Woo's work, turning the camera itself into a bully.

Despite this blind spot, Woo recognizes that the national mood has curdled on screen violence. With TV chiefs volunteering to label violent programming, a conference on TV violence being shown live on CNN, and movie critics such as Michael Medved taking a paternal tack, he acknowledges that in the future he may have to dole out the ketchup in dribs and drabs. He set a water glass in front of Jule Gilfillan. "For example, if I was going to shoot someone sitting where Jule is sitting, I would want to show the bullet shattering the glass before it hits the body—all in a straight line. But now I might have to have a closeup of the glass shattering, then cut to the body slumped in the chair." Gilfillan obligingly snapped her head back as if she'd been shot. For a wild card like Woo, used to going "balls out" (to use Gilfillan's phrase), being forced to muffle his approach closes him off from his crazier impulses.

Which show themselves not only onscreen but on the set. For a quiet, unassuming sort, Woo entertains quite an

imp of the perverse. While making "Hard-Boiled," he was bothered by the lag time of the explosions at Chow Yun-fat's back as the actor hustled through the hospital with a fake infant tucked under his arm like a football. When the assistant director balked at rushing the explosions, not wishing to shorten the margin for error, Woo insisted on detonating the charges himself. Study "Hard-Boiled" closely, and you'll catch a flinch of surprise on Yun-fat's face as a fireball nearly blows him into the next continuum. Yun-fat managed to emerge mostly unscathed. "His hair just burn a little," Woo says. If he sounds blithe about the incident now (especially given

the fact that stuntmen and actors have died in movie-set accidents), it's not because he's callous. From his tone, it's clear that he values Yun-fat as an actor and as a friend. But Woo has a particular fury in getting the shot right, no matter what—to the point where it may warp his judgment.

Woo pushes himself as hard as he does the rest of the unit. On one film, he was frustrated by an actor's reluctance to pound his head into a meatloaf-shaped slab of earth. "I'll injure myself," the actor complained. "I told him, 'I'll show you how simple it is,'" Woo recalls. "And I slammed my head into the slab. About twenty times. 'See? I feel

from Jackie Sims

This time I will do my contribution on animation. In general I prefer Japanese animation over American animation (with the exception of Conan the Adventurer and Batman-the animated series).

Most American animation has so many restrictions that it is hardly worth watching. Characters don't die and they always make a full recovery after they are injured. Characters are always none the worse for wear after injury and there are no scars, limps or really bad bruise marks.

About the only restriction I can find in Japanimation is the fact that the pubic area is not shown clearly and in the adult-themed ones I have seen they show nudity but they don't show penetration in the sex scenes. Since they show that much nudity they may as well show it all in my opinion.

A lot of the men I have seen in Japanimation are far prettier than the women. The Vampire Hunter D and Windaria movies are a good example of this fact.

Sometimes women are treated like objects of lust in some of these movies. Sometimes there is a lot of unnecessary nudity. If the nudity does not help move the storyline along it can be left out in my opinion.

But these are minor grievances I have with Japanimation. At least they don't insult your intelligence by offering shows the Smurfs, Denver the last Dinosaur and Widget like American animation does. (smile)

I also feel that although Japanimation has a lot of violence, gore and nudity it is still more like the real world than the watered down perfect world stuff they show here.

There is hope now. I watched the Fox network show "Power Rangers". It looks like America is finally discovering at least some of what we have been watching and enjoying for years.

Recently there was a big controversy over whether the local station where I live should keep showing the show "NYPD BLUE". I watched this show to see what all the fuss was about. I thought that there was more violence and nudity than this in the "HOKUTO NO KEN" animated television series and yet they allowed that show to stay on the air for over 150 episodes. (smile)

Sorry to be so long out of touch. Don't underestimate how much time a baby takes from your life!
What follows is the text of several magazine articles (I hope) of interest!

Beijing Fling

**(Chinese producer Hsu Feng's new film
'Farewell to My Concubine')**

Veronica Chambers

...The film explores the complexities of an illicit love affair in the opera world in Beijing, China. Its director is Chen Kaige who swears Hsu gave him utmost freedom to use his own ideas in translating the screenplay into film. Hsu's previous films have won top awards in Taiwan.

Full Text COPYRIGHT K-III Magazine Corporation 1993

They call her the woman warrior, though she looks more like the cover-girl actress she once was. In the nine years since Madame Hsu Feng founded her Hong Kong-based production company, she has produced 24 films. Among the most recent: the acclaimed *Five Girls and a Rope* and *Red Dust*, which won seven Golden Horse Awards, the Oscars of Taiwan.

Her latest, *Farewell to My Concubine*, tracing a Beijing opera-world love triangle, recently bowed at the Cannes Film Festival. According to tradition in Beijing, men play the female leads, so when the concubine falls in love with his married male costar, their lives take on truly operatic overtones.

"Many directors wanted to make it," says Hsu, "but nobody would finance it" because of the provocative subject matter.

Unafraid of controversy, Hsu put up the cash and entrusted director Chen Kaige with the project. "As a producer, Madame Hsu Feng never bothered me," he says. "She read the screenplay, but there's a distance between a screenplay and a film, and she let me travel it alone." ♦



As a gift for the Chinese new year—which begins on January 23rd—Credit Lyonnais this week unveiled the feng shui men's prediction for 1993, the year of the cockerel. A shaky first quarter is to be followed by a good mid-year, a bad tumble in October and a record high at year-end. The market will be more stable than in 1992, the year of the monkey, when the monkey was

thrashing turbulently in deep water; the cockerel will be happily splashing in a shallow stream.

The Hong Kong head of Credit Lyonnais Securities took extreme pains to point out that neither the firm nor its institutional investors base any of their decisions on the feng shui advice. He did not explain why not. ◇

Absent Friends

(At The Hong Kong Film Festival)

Full Text COPYRIGHT Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. 1992

...Relatively few films from the Chinese mainland were shown at Hong Kong's 16th annual film festival. The best film at the 1992 event is a Taiwanese feature, 'A Bright Summer Day,' an epic four-hour film built around a stabbing event.

Now in its 16th year, the Hong Kong film festival reaches 21 in 1997, the year China repossesses the Crown colony. Willy nilly, it has become the litmus paper for political as well as artistic trends throughout the region. What is shown in Hong Kong and, more important, what is not is a pointer each year to the way the wind is blowing.

The most conspicuous feature of the 1992 festival has been the dearth of pictures from China. In the mid-1980s one could count on at least half a dozen movies every year by bright, talented young film makers fresh out of film school in Beijing. Several of these, including *Yellow Earth* and *Red Sorghum*, became instant classics. This year there was one, co-produced with Hong Kong and directed by a 75-year-old veteran who has been making films since the communists overran China in 1949. The breath of

fresh air that blew through Chinese cinema in the 1980s is nowhere to be seen in Hong Kong this year. It was not for want of trying by the festival selectors. They asked for and were promised a documentary on China today which would have shown, among other things, the aftermath of the events in Tiananmen Square in mid-1989. Awfully sorry, said the Beijing authorities when it was too late to line up a replacement, but the copyright is owned by television and we are just the film bureau.

Hong Kong also asked again for two films it was denied last year—*Bloody Morning*, an adaptation of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and another documentary, this time about China's treatment of the handicapped. Nothing doing. It tried, too, for a reputedly excellent and politically uncontroversial film called *The True-Hearted*, about a retired opera singer living alone in Canton and his first meeting with a

grandson he had not seen since birth. Love to oblige came the reply, but we are thinking of sending it to a bigger, competitive festival. And that, doubtless, will be the last that is heard of it. These days China does not seem to want anyone, even its own people, to see its best films (unless they are co-productions, in which case the overseas financier retains foreign distribution rights).

China's present cinematic caution—a product of unease about future political developments—has left others to pick up the artistic standard. Taiwan contributed a movie that outclassed every other film in the festival. *A Brighter Summer Day* is not quite new. London saw a three-hour version at its own festival last November. Since then the director, Edward Yang, has added another hour and the gain in breadth, depth and understanding is as striking as when Kevin Costner bumped out his three-hour Oscar winner *Dances with Wolves* to four hours for a special edition.

A Brighter Summer Day is an epic work. Around a simple, apparently meaningless incident which happens right at the end (the stabbing of a young girl by her boyfriend), Mr Yang constructs a family saga that seems to embrace every aspect of Taiwanese society circa 1960—from teenage gang warfare, through the legacy of Japanese occupation and the workings of the secret police to the progressive encroachment of American culture, the impact of Christianity and aspirations for a better life.

If the film seems pessimistic, that is an illusion. The message that audiences are meant to infer is that that was then, this is now and that people have it in their power, in the words of the Elvis Presley song "Are You Lonesome Tonight?", to fashion for themselves "a brighter summer day". "To me", Mr Yang says, "tragedies wake people up. The best way to avoid a tragedy is to show one." ♦

Chinese Crackers:

At The Hong Kong Film Festival

...The Hong Kong film festival presented some fine movies from mainland China which were satirical or guardedly critical of the state. Such works are surprising only four years after the Tiananmen Square massacre. A few of the films are described.

Full Text COPYRIGHT Economist Newspaper Ltd. (UK) 1993

The best films to be seen at the Hong Kong International Film Festival this year all came from China and had many of the qualities once associated with the Italian realists and with that quirky brand of Czech humour evident during the Prague spring. Yet four years ago, after the Tiananmen Square massacre, many wrote off the Chinese cinematic new wave as finished for at least a generation.

The most heartening film in Hong Kong was the latest by Huang Jianxin who, in 1985, made the sharpest satire on state bureaucracy ever to come from Communist China in *The Black Cannon Incident*. He seemed at great risk in the post-Tiananmen backlash. Yet here he is, in 1993, with *Stand up, Don't Bend Over*. It is an equally uproarious satire, this time at the expense of the new entrepreneurial class. Huang Jianxin spares neither old Communists nor new.

Old-style cadres setting their teen-aged daughters to spy on the neighbors attract the same rough treatment as up-and-coming whizz-kids, whose enthusiasm for the new creed of greed outstrips their commitment to humanity and civility.

The resurgence of humour is one of the most hopeful signs in Chi-

nese films and the Hong Kong festival opened with a film paying unashamed tribute to the lighter side of life. *For Fun*, directed by Ning Ying, who studied for seven years in Rome under Bernardo Bertolucci, is about Peking Opera buffs who form a senior citizens' club, whose members can compare the finer points of old-time performances. The film is heart-warming because it rises above its narrow subject-matter to become a universal portrait of old people everywhere.

China's big gun for 1993, also about Peking Opera stars, will be *Farewell to My Concubine*. It is the newest film by Chen Kaige, whose *Yellow Earth* was one of the first films of the Chinese renaissance in the mid-1980s. It was to have been in the Hong Kong festival but was withdrawn at a late stage, clearly with its sights on a top award at the Cannes festival in May.

In the absence of this film, the finest Chinese films in Hong Kong were *The True Hearted* and *Mama*. The former, playing in town outside the festival, is a simple story by Sun Zhou about a small boy living with his maternal grandfather after his parents' divorce. In terms of reference you reach for the highest comparisons: this is in the same warm, humanist tradition as *Bicycle Thieves* and *Pather Panchali*. *Mama*, directed by Zhang Yuan in

black and white, is a study of a mentally disabled child. It looks painfully authentic but is in fact acted throughout.

What the director is trying to underline is the still considerable room for improvement in state facilities for treating the mentally handicapped.

Mr Zhang made the film outside the state system with funds scratched together from various

sources. It will benefit from the new arrangements under which Chinese production companies are empowered to become their own distributors and, for the first time, to market their products overseas independently of the state-run import/export organization. Hitherto the requirement to channel films through this body has been one means by which the central authorities controlled the face China's film makers presented to the world. ◇

Splash of the Cockerel

('Feng Shui' Predicts the Stocks — Pretty Well)

Full Text COPYRIGHT Economist Newspaper Ltd. (UK) 1993

Financial theorists have spent decades trying to drum it into brokers and investors that efficient markets are unlikely to be outguessed by stock analysis, no matter how canny. Maybe the punters will be convinced by confirmation from an improbable source, Hong Kong's feng shui men.

Feng shui—the two Chinese characters stand for “wind” and “water”—is a 4,000-year-old technique for improving your chances in life by arranging furniture, travel dates, choice of mistress and so on in a way that takes best advantage of the interplay of luck and natural forces. This is taken seriously in the Chinese parts of the world. Many a Hong Kong tycoon, western as well as Chinese, will not go ahead with a building or an investment without calling in the feng shui man. There is even a going rate—HK\$2 (\$0.25) a square

foot—for a feng shui consultation about office space.

In late 1991, as a lark, the Hong Kong office of Credit Lyonnais Securities asked the feng shui men to deliver their thoughts about the Hong Kong stockmarket in 1992. The prediction was remarkably accurate about the big turning-points in the Hang Seng index. As Credit Lyonnais learnedly explains, “an Elliot wave analysis of the chart found an eerie number of near-perfect Fibonacci ratios between the chart movements.”

How did the feng shui men do it? Take their (deadly accurate) prediction of bad blood between Britain and China over Hong Kong in 1992. The feng shui men noted that the curved road beside China's de facto embassy in Hong Kong “resembles a curved knife that cuts the mouth of Hong Kong people.”

...The ancient Chinese practice of feng shui, which advises practitioners on the future by determining the effects of luck and natural forces, is taken very seriously by Asians. A feng shui analysis of the 1992 Hong Kong stockmarket was amazingly accurate.

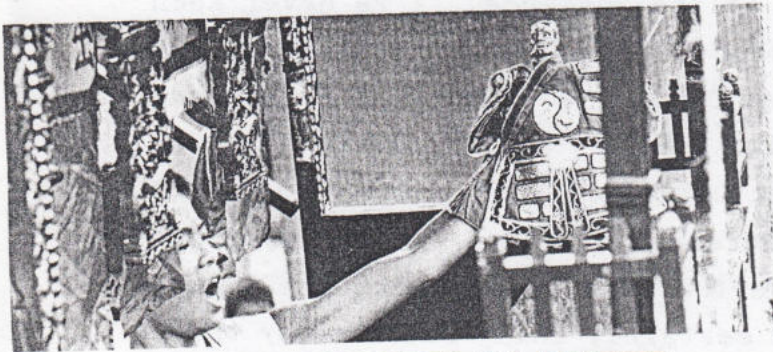
ASIAPHILE #40: WRITTEN & PRODUCED BY 何安美, AMY HARUB, 212 WEST 22ND ST, #2M, NY, NY 10011 (212) 989-8217.

ON THE REVERSE OF THIS PAGE IS THE MOTHER OF ALL TESTIMONIAL LETTERS CONCERNING ONE OF MY RECENT FEW AND TOO FAR BETWEEN PERFORMANCES. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST GLORIOUS DAYS OF MY LIFE. APPARENTLY THE AUDIENCE AND THE PRESENTER LIKED IT TOO. DESPITE THIS OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE FEEDBACK THE FRUSTRATING, INFURIATING STATUS OF MY NON-CAREER REMAINS THE SAME DESPITE ALL MY EFFORTS. IF I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN MY WORK AND THE HEROIC SPIRIT SO MUCH I'D GO GIBBERINGLY INSANE.

ALSO KEEPING ME SANE ARE MOVIES LIKE 'THE PUPPETMASTER'. DESPITE ITS EXTREMELY SLOW PACE AND LENGTH, IT WAS BEAUTIFULLY SHOT AND ACTED AND FULL OF SCENES OF TAIWAN PEOPLE, COUNTRYSIDE AND RURAL BUILDINGS. IT WAS LIKE GOING HOME TO TAIWAN A LITTLE BIT AND SO I FOUND IT MUCH MORE SATISFYING THAN SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T

New York Film Festival

Alice Tully Hall: Wednesday, October 6, 1993, at 6:15 p.m.
Thursday, October 7, 1993, at 9:00 p.m.



THE PUPPETMASTER

Taiwan, 1993

Director: Hou Hsiao-hsien
Producer: Chiu Fu Sheng
Executive Producers: Michael Yang and H.T. Jan
Associate Producer: Chang Hwa-Kun
Production Company: Era International Ltd.
Screenplay: Wu Nien-Jen and Chu Tien-Wen
Photography: Lee Pin-Bing
Sound: Du Du-Jih and Meng Chi-Liang
Editor: Liao Ching-Sung
Music: Chen Ming-Chang
Art Directors: Chang Hung and Lu Ming-Jin
Costumes: Chang Kuang-Hui and Juan Pei-Yun
Assistant Director: Chen Hwai-En
Running Time: 142 minutes.
Cannes Film Festival 1993: Special Jury Prize

Cast:
Li Tien Lu (child): Cho Ju-wei
Li Tien Lu (teen): Cheng Kuei-chung
Li Tien Lu (adult): Lin Chung
Li Hsi: Hung Liu
Ong Hsiu: Bai Ming-hwa
Ko Meng Dang: Tsai Chen-nan
Li Nee: Kao Tung-hsiu
Lai Hwat: Yang Li-yin
Tan Dei: Hwang Ching-ru
Tan Shing: Wu La-yun
Tan Ah Lai: Li Chuan-Tsain
Tan Shik Hong: Li Wen Chang
Li Giao Ngo: Tsai Yi-hwa
Big Eyes: Chen Yi-Shan
Police Officer: I Toshiro

Did Japan lose World War II because of a puppet show? Li Tien Lu thinks so, and it's part of the wonder of *The Puppetmaster* that you gradually come to see things his way. Using the biography of this 84-year-old performer as his source, director Hou Hsiao-hsien (*A City of Sadness*) has created a film that's epic in scope but personal in outlook, astonishingly rich in atmosphere but as unforced as the passing moment. Here is life as it's experienced by a man who pulls strings on marionettes and assumes someone is pulling one on him.

KNOW TAIWAN. THE REAL 84 YR OLD MR. LI SERVES AS BOTH AN ON-SCREEN NARRATOR AND VOICE OVER SPEAKER AS SCENES FROM HIS LIFE ARE ENACTED BY ACTORS. THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH SCENES OF PUPPET SHOWS AND TAIWANESE OPERAS. PUPPET SHOWS AND TAIWANESE OPERAS WERE SOME OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT LIVING IN TAIWAN. IT WAS ALSO LOVELY TO HEAR THE TAIWANESE LANGUAGE AGAIN (IN TAIWANESE, ENG. SUBTITLES). THIS WAS FILM AS ART - HEAVY ON CHARACTER, CINEMATOGRAPHY, CAREFULLY CHOSEN TYPES OF MUSIC AS THE SCORE, METICULOUS EDITING AND VERY LITTLE "ACTION." I LOVED IT FOR ITS ABILITY TO TRANSPORT ME BACK TO TAIWAN AND THE WORLD OF A PERFORMANCE SPECIALTY I LOVE AND APPRECIATE BUT I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND IT FOR EVERYONE.

(2)

The Abigail Adams Smith Museum

421 East 61st Street • New York, N.Y. 10021 • Telephone 212 838-6878

September 27, 1993

He An Mei/Amy Harlib
212 West 22nd Street 2-N
New York, NY 10011

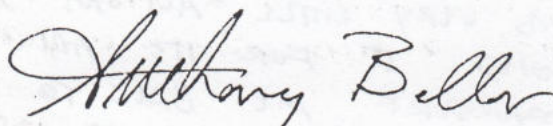
Dear Ms Harlib:

Congratulations on a wonderful performance yesterday afternoon! I must say I am very pleased by both the quality of your presentation and the audience's response to it. Your unique combination of folklore, drama, dance, acrobatics and philosophy was enjoyed by all -- an inspirational and memorable experience -- just bear in mind the rapt faces of the audience. I've never seen so many children so quiet and intent at one of our programs before.

I'd also like to add the particular surprise I felt at your remarkable talent for story-telling. From your audition, I knew of your excellent performance skills, but never anticipated the extent of your ability to enthrall an audience verbally. It was apparent immediately that you have a wonderful talent for narration. Your rapport and feel for children was certainly fully returned by them.

All-in-all, a delightful afternoon. My efforts in arranging your booking were fully rewarded. Let's see what we can do in the future.

Sincerely,



ANTHONY BELLOV
Director of Public Information and Programs

P.S. - THEY ONLY BOOK THE SAME THING $1\frac{1}{2}$ YEARS(!!) APART, THAT
MEANS I WON'T RETURN TO THIS VENUE UNTIL FEB. 1995!!
-INCREDIBLE-

FILM FORUM

1

FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HANOI

BY **TIANA**
(THI THANH NGA)

**"INTENSE,
PERSONAL,
SUPREMELY
SELF-CONFIDENT.
The packed and
layered journal
of a very special
innocent abroad."**

—VINCENT CANBY, NY TIMES

IN ENGLISH, FRENCH & VIETNAMESE
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

LAST WEEK
ENDS AUG 3

"A TOUGH-MINDED FAIRY TALE." —JULIE SALAMON, WALL ST. JOURNAL

**"GUERRILLA FILMMAKING OF THE VERY HIGHEST ORDER.
A Dazzling, Postvérité Whirl. Breaks through the crust of naive
tourism and makes for something TRULY WONDEROUS."**

—MANOHLA DARGIS, VILLAGE VOICE

I LOVED THIS DOCUMENTARY FINDING IT POWERFUL AND MOVING ON MANY LEVELS. I REALLY RELATED TO TIANA AS A PERFORMER WHO WANTED TO FIND HER ROOTS AND TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE HEROICALLY REBUILDING THEIR COUNTRY AFTER THE HORRIBLE WAR. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF SCENES THAT LITERALLY MADE ME CRY - IT WAS THAT INTENSE. MARTIN SCORSESE MOVIE FANS WILL APPRECIATE THE CLIPPINGS FROM SOME OF TIANA'S CHOP SOCKEY FLICKS - THEY WERE OF THE LOW-BUDGET CONTEMPORARY SETTING ACTION VARIETY AND VERY CAMPY. THE DAY I SAW THIS, TO MY SURPRISE, TIANA HERSELF WAS MAKING A PERSONAL APPEARANCE SO I GOT TO MEET HER. SHE'S JUST AS GORGEOUS IN REAL LIFE AS SHE WAS IN REEL LIFE AND EXTREMELY WARM AND FRIENDLY. SHE SEEMED GENUINELY APPRECIATIVE OF MY REACTION AND MY TRIBUTE - THAT 'FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HANOI' MAKES THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF VIETNAM AND EXPATRIATE VIETNAMESE IN THE USA BECOME MORE REAL AND MORE UNDERSTANDABLE THAN ANY PREVIOUS "NEWS" FOOTAGE I'D EVER SEEN - THAT WE HAVE A TRUE CROSS-CULTURAL BRIDGE HERE.

TWO BOOKS I'VE READ HAVE HAD THE SAME REVELATORY EFFECT. 'WHEN HEAVEN AND EARTH CHANGED PLACES' BY LY HASLIP (MEMOIR OF A VIETNAMESE WOMAN WHO SURVIVED THE WAR AND EMIGRATED TO AMERICA) & 'A GOOD SCENT FROM A STRANGE MOUNTAIN' BY ROBERT OLSEN BUTLER, AMERICAN FLUENT IN THE LANGUAGE FROM LIVING FOR YRS IN VIETNAM WRITES SHORT STORIES →

FILM FORUM

209 West Houston St., New York, N.Y. 10014

Box Office: (212) 727-8110

FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HANOI

(1992, 78 mins.) Produced, written & directed by Tiana (Thi Thanh Nga). A Friendship Bridge Production. Cinematography: Michael Dodds, Bruce Dorfman, Jamie Maxtone-Graham. Supervising Editor: Pam Wise. Edited by Roger Schulte. In English, French & Vietnamese with English subtitles.

July 21 - August 3, 1993

Mon-Fri: 2, 3:30, 5, 6:35, 8:15, 10

Sat-Sun: 1, 2:35, 4:10, 5:45, 7:20, 8:55, 10:30

Tiana in person Wednesday, July 21 at the 8:15 show.

As Tiana Alexandra she was a female Bruce Lee in low-budget kung-fu movies and as Tiana Banana she sang pop music on Euro-television. In FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HANOI the filmmaker stars as herself as she journeys back to the Vietnam she left at age 5 in 1966. (Tiana's father had been press liaison for the South Vietnamese government.) With a combination of fearlessness, innocence and guile, Tiana manages to informally interview the major figures who dominated the war: General Vo Nguyen Giap (the North Vietnamese commander who defeated both the French and the Americans); Pham Van Dong (ex-premier of North Vietnam); and General Westmoreland (former U.S. troop commander). She even tangoes with Oliver Stone in one of Hanoi's hotel lounges. This portrait of Vietnam today is a case in point: the personal is political.

Excerpts from Vincent Canby's review (NY Times, July 21, 1993):

"...an intense, personal, supremely self-confident feature-length documentary that owes a lot to the cinema journalism of Michael Moore, the man who confronted General Motors in ROGER AND ME. Like the Moore film, FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HANOI is as much about the film maker behind it as it is about the subject it appears to be exploring... the record of one remarkable young woman's efforts to construct a coherent identity out of bits and pieces of lives lived as a series of compromises... The roles available to Asian actresses being limited, she became increasingly obsessed by her real-life role as an Americanized Vietnamese. Who was she? ...The initial result of these explorations is FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HANOI, the packed and layered journal of a very special innocent abroad.

Back in the United States, at a benefit performance of "Miss Saigon," she runs into Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the former American commander in Vietnam. She doesn't hesitate to push a microphone into his face and ask him why, in the film HEARTS AND MINDS, he said that Asians do not value human life as dearly as people in Western civilizations do. The surprised general thought he was just going out to see a Broadway show. Though Tiana has included the HEARTS AND MINDS clip... the general at first insists that he never said any such thing, but he goes on to explain what he really meant, none too successfully.

The film makes superb, sometimes sarcastic use of material from old newsreels and propaganda films. Equally important, though, is the way the director portrays her affection for her father and the other members of her family in this country. In many ways hers is a divided family, but it also appears to be an unusually strong and loving one. There's a lot of rich, sometimes still raw material here.

TOLD FROM THE POINT-OF-VIEW OF VIETNAMESE EXPATRIATES LIVING NEAR NEW ORLEANS. THIS EXQUISITELY WRITTEN BOOK IS UTTERLY CONVINCING & WON MANY LITERARY AWARDS.

PARTIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE NYS COUNCIL ON THE ARTS & THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS



Notes from ORIENTAL CINEMA AND VIDEO [by Damon Foster, editor]

As I struggled in pain to recover from an injury sustained on my latest video, AGE OF DEMONS, my immobility made me realize this was a good time to get out the old VCR and start reviewing tapes for articles in OC#15. The topic will be basically, "Bruce Lee and his imitators," though my usual columns (SWORD & TAQISM, KATZO NINGEN UPDATE, CHOP SOCKEY REPORT, MODERN HEROES OF HONG KONG, CHINESE CHILLERS, TERROR YAKI and, unfortunately, PHILIPINO FILMS) are there too. What follows are edited highlights of my articles on Lee clones. Since there are more Lee clone movies than there are hairy legs in a San Francisco woman's restroom, I obviously can't include each &



every review (unless YOU'RE gonna' pay my printing bill). During the course of writing that issue's humongous article, I came to realize how fascinating Bruce Lee's career is, thanks to info supplied by Robert Mallory. Like Bruce Li & the boys, Bruce Lee also got his big break in the 1970s chop sockey movement. He started out as an extra in Shaw Bros. movies, like HONG KONG 1973, but best known as the co-hero in INFRAMAN, until he entered his Bruce Lee phase. His Lee kung fu films are typical, but gained a special interest in America in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As the likes of TREASURE OF BRUCE LEE ran rampant on pay TV, Lee found his audience to be in America, since he and the other Lee mockeries were never big in Hong Kong, especially after the demise of the Bruce Lee craze. So in the 1980s, Bruce Lee appeared in numerous American and/or international films. The following reviews are mostly of Lee's new & old films, but also a few other films of interest, like my obligatory review of DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY.



BLACK SPOT- Bruce Lee's 1990 comeback, meant to revive a career which had sagged like the tits of a 100-year-old Dolly Parton! He was better off in his old 1970s Bruce Lee wannabe phase, than in this typical, modern HK actioner, derivative of John Woo's & Jackie Chan's superior films. There's on-location filming in France, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Golden Triangle, whatever THAT is. **BLACK SPOT** has the same decent production values of recent HK films (way above his '70s chop sockey), but there are faults & continuity flaws throughout. Yet it's nice to see Lee back in action. His fighting skill hasn't deteriorated, but it's amazing how old he looks! He's virtually unrecognizable. I saw **BLACK SPOT** in Chinese, from a Chinese store. But there's possibly an English dub available, since it has many caucasians; it's possibly a HK/U.S. co-production. The first half of **BLACK SPOT** looks like a typical HK gangster film, with chases, recaptures, escapes, gunplay, martial arts, dull dialogue, and urban setting. Lee plays a very fortunate Chinaman, working as the only male at a 'kung fu health spa,' full of white models, mostly blondes. From there, this far-fetched, unrealistic story becomes kind of like a war film (**EASTERN CONDORS** and **BULLET IN THE HEAD** come to mind) as Lee (playing Wong Lung) is forced by mobsters to go smuggle drugs. In one scene, he fights a huge, barbaric guy in the ring, an excuse for more gore. The tradition of babes & blood continues as he deals with mobsters (Lo Lieh & Chiang Tao in cameos) in HK, until he ends up in some oppressed Thai village. Lots of insightful inquiries and social statements as Lee discovers a pitiful village where even the children's livelihood is based on the growing & manufacturing of opium. Then an army of soldiers & Interpol agents, lead by a sexy blonde who can't act for shit arrives, and it's a big, explosive shootout between the two groups. Lee does a few more kicks until he's shot dead by one of his own comrades who's gone trigger happy. * *

BRUCE AND SHAOLIN KUNG FU- Heroic Ching Lung (Bruce Lee) is from Ching Wu Gym, and there's a 'Bruce' in the film's title. Otherwise, this action packed war story hasn't a thing to do with Bruce Lee. This is a thrilling adventure, a fun cheap



rockey from the late 1970s. Bruce Lee imitates both Lee and Jackie Chan in this tale of Japanese oppression in Shanghai & Korea. The Japanese characters have character development & depth, although the dubbing pronounces these warriors 'samurai.' At times, this thriller gets vaguely cultural, almost educational.

AGE OF DEMONS

A dirt cheap video, involving comedy, martial arts, T&A, fantasy, horror, punk rock, and a remotely coherent plot. **WARNING: CONTAINS MATERIAL WHICH SOME PEOPLE MAY FIND OFFENSIVE, VULGAR OR INDECENT. LIFE CAN SOMETIMES BE THAT WAY.**

ORIENTAL CINEMA

Damon Foster's continuing fanzine on Asian films; Godzilla, John Woo, Ultraman, Jackie Chan, Kamen Rider, etc. The current issue is OC#14, and OC#15 will be available in October.

OC-\$6.00
ADD-\$15.00



DAMON FOSTER, P.O. BOX 576, FREMONT, CA, 94537-0576

Storywise, Bruce Lee kicks serious ass against Jap soldiers & martial artists played by Chiang Tao & Yang Sze, to avenge the death of his brother & teacher (Chen Sing), and countless Chinese victims of Japanese occupation of China. After Lee learns tee kwon do in Korea, he wastes more Jap bastards until they gun him down, like in **FIST OF FURY**. Highlights include a catchy though stupid disco theme song ("Seven! Seven! Super seven!"), a sexy Korean babe, and of course, fights, swords & acrobats! * * 1/2

BRUCE LEE'S GREATEST REVENGE- If this really is Lee's greatest revenge, I'd hate to see his worst! Though logically & coherently written, this is one of the most typical & predictable in a genre of already typical & predictable films. Scene by scene, it's almost a complete remake of **FIST OF FURY**, with Bruce battling unbelievably barbaric Japanese who poisoned his

**ALL PHOTOS ON THIS
PAGE ARE FROM A.O.**



Bruce, D-Day at Macao

BRUCE, D-DAY AT MACAO

Starrings: Bruce Liang
Hu Ching
Wong Yuen
Lee Jai Ding

An explosive combination of World War II and World War I, the guerrilla capture of Macao, a young agent must defeat the Japanese military plane. A young girl, who gains possession of the plane is a Willy Chaiture. The Japanese agent has hidden the plane in a mine. The agent and the girl have to find the plane and when they do a Kung Fu Battle is waged on the beaches of Macao that is a violent and exciting battle that was waged on the beaches of Normandy.



Teacher. Le does Lee kims (screams) through out, and there's the usual honor & dishonor BS involving signs (Le destroys an anti-Chinese sign, and the Japanese school's sign). The only scenes not mocking FIST are at the beginning, when Le attempts Jackie Chan's EAGLE'S SHADOW. The remainder is pretty common & average repetition, treating us like idiots (which I got used to, very early in this whole article). I almost don't want to give it a star, but since the fights of Bruce Le, Yang ('Bolo') See and Ku Feng are fun, and because all the heroes actually survive the climactic duel, what the hell?!

BRUCE STRIKES BACK- Bruce Le's last gasp as a Lee imitator, but this late 1970s thriller represents the upcoming Le of the 1980s. Filmed on location in Rome & Paris, it otherwise has typically cheap HK production values. Music from ENTER & James Bond films, despite an over abundance of upbeat disco through out. Lots of great kung fu, and curvaceous babes galore, titillate action abounds! In a drugged female orgy scene, I beat off to a cliche of a girl licking what appears to be ample female breasts. When the shot zooms out, the breasts turned out to be those of Yang See! I instantly become disgusted, and softer than Charmin. Script has Le as an ex-mobster, still hassled by Italian mobsters because he resigned. He also must rescue some gals who've been kidnapped & drugged by that same mafia. This involves battling not only Yang See, but a Chinese Goldfinger (combining ENTER's Han and Bond's Oddjob), Italians, ninjas and a climactic duel with Huang Cheng Li. It's set at the Roman Coliseum, and shamelessly rips off RETURN OF THE DRAGON. But the whole movie is big fun, they even have animation of the villain's x-ray, as he breaks his bones (aka STREETFIGHTER). ***

BRUCE VS. BILL- Aside from some poor photography (bad focusing, occasional blurriness), BRUCE VS. BILL rules! A lame title like BRUCE VS. BILL doesn't exactly do wonders for an all-out action adventure like this fun, thrilling, suspenseful, immensely entertaining, motionful picture! There are fights from start to finish, and the script tends to be amusing, witty and sometimes goofy or silly, but never stupid. The setting would appear to be modern, because they have cars, and certain characters, like rich mobsters & foreigners wear fairly up-to-date attire. However, there's an absence of ugly shirts (the trademark of '70s kung fu farces), and many lower class characters (peasants and kung fu students) wear traditional Chinese garb. There are many

characters, but I gather Le plays a hitman, sort of an anti-hero. Attired in disco duds (but spends most of the film shirtless), and with his wisecracking pet parrot, he and another hero are protecting their keys to a safe. The hidden safe contains lots of money, so all the film's bad guys are dying (literally) to get them keys! But Bruce Le and his partner take on all comers, get double crossed a few times, battle villains on a moving train, and Le defeats Chiang Tso to retrieve the much sought after money. * * *

CHALLENGE OF THE TIGER- Another Bruce Le chop sockey from the late 1970s; Hong Kongese, though featuring plenty of caucasians. Average for a 1970s setting, but a lack of translation (no English dubbing, no subtitles) kept me from enjoying this typical combination of violence & sex. *

DRAGON FORCE [aka POWERFORCE]- At one time or another, every major HK action star of the 1970s had his American and/or international movie, hoping to be known outside Asia. DRAGON FORCE was Bruce Li's failed attempt at worldwide stardom, and I think this 1982 epic was his last movie. It's a shame that his career didn't flourish after this magnificent adventure! I wish he'd have made more films like this, instead of his earlier plague of identical, predictable, cheap sockays he'd done in the 1970s. After this thriller, he either retired or bombed at the box office. DRAGON FORCE tells me he could have continued to star in HK's 'new wave' in filmmaking, since DRAGON FORCE (produced at the same time as ACES GO PLACES) offers a hint of things to come. Though resembling '70s chop sockey, there are elements of the up & coming HK explosion of the 1980s. DRAGON FORCE can appeal to oldtimers AND fans of more recent HK crime movies. DRAGON FORCE is half Hong Kongese, and half British. The whole thing was mouthed & acted out in English, but dubbed anyway. It's obvious that Li is mouthing genuine English, but is dubbed regardless. I imagine its TV version is heavily edited, because of its violence, T&A and bloodshed. So rent the uncut version if you can find it. Other than Li, the only familiar face I recognized was a bald henchman, who's been in GHOST NURSING, and maybe KARAOKE THE HONG KONG CAT. Even some of the comedy in DRAGON FORCE is funny at times. Synopsis: Terrorists hire ninjas to kidnap an attractive blond princess! So a British secret agent (Bruce Baron) is sent to rescue her, so he's off to the Far East. There he encounters lion dancers, a kung fu monk, more pretty girls, a kabuki samurai, and Bruce Li as their leader. Called 'Dragon Force,' they're

a cult of martial artists who right wrongs. Unfortunately, the evil ninjas who kidnapped the princess are wronging right! So Bruce Li leads the task force to the enemy island, where the movie suddenly decides to remind us of ENTER THE DRAGON. In order to rescue the princess, Li & Co. engage in more epic fights full of kung fu weapons, stunts and more. Twice Li uses Spock's shoulder pinch (called a 'neck' pinch in STAR TREK) to knock out female attackers. Finally, our heroes rescue the princess, after all these great fights. ****

DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY - Here's America's first attempt at making a Bruce Lee biography, and as such, is even less accurate in portraying Lee's life than the average Bruce Li cheapie out of Hong Kong! Big budgeted, slickly produced, this 1993 farce tried hard to be as trendy & mainstream as possible, its TV promos billed it as a passionate, erotic love story. I must say, this advertisement paid off, the theater was crowded opening day, unfortunately; I caught an 11:30 matinee, hoping the theater would be empty, but every gang member, teenybopper airhead, and general beer-smuggling low life was in the theater. None of these rowdy idiots know jackshit about Bruce Lee. One guy in line said, "I hope this movie isn't all in Japanese." Regardless, the uncomfortable surroundings didn't detract from the fun of this movie. As a movie, it's not at all bad; just don't expect anything faithful to Lee's life. I would list all the story's mistakes & inaccuracies, but that would take up the whole issue. The fights are the best I've seen in any American martial arts film, except for the ones with Jackie Chan or the real Bruce Lee. This film's Lee portrayer is some Chinese-American gymnast called Jason Scott Lee, who apparently only learned kung fu for this film. The fight choreographer is HK's John Cheung, who appears as a villain.



and was also in PROJECT A and IMAGE OF BRUCE LEE. There are other interesting guest appearances, like Van Williams (the original Green Hornet) playing GREEN HORNET's producer, and Bruce's daughter Shannon, appearing briefly as singer of some 1960s pop band



THE YOUNG
BRUCE LEE





THE YOUNG BRUCE LEE

Castings: Bruce Lee
Chan Kwok Kue
Hon Kwok Choi
Shek Kin

ang fu street gangs run rampant in Hong Kong. Allied, the young Bruce Lee strives to perfect his lightning technique under the expert tutelage of Master Yeh. His Wing Chun Boxing Style is supreme, and he is continually threatened by other schools of kung fu jealous of his power, ability and agility. Defeated by the infamous Snake Fist Style, Bruce learns the style from 3 obnoxious — armed with his expertise and filled with rage against the bullies who have brutally murdered his friend.



playing "California Dreaming" (my god, I hate that 1960s hippie shit!). I guess that song was from the Mamas & Papas (who I hate), but Shannon is far too attractive to play Mama Cass. I guess she got the part because of her singing career. Then there's actress Nancy Kwan of 'Suzy Wong' fame, who was at Bruce's funeral 20 years before, and appears in this film as a restaurant owner. Anyway, **DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY** was supposedly based on the book "Bruce Lee: The Man Only I Knew", by Bruce Lee's widow Linda. I read that book, and many others on Lee, and think this story is too far-fetched, certainly not faithful to any Lee bio I read! Obviously, this is a vision of Linda Lee's, the way SHE wants us to remember Bruce Lee! At least the cheaper HK films (with Bruce Li & the boys) were less biased, not letting personal feelings get in the way of the truth. For example, being a Linda Lee story, there's absolutely no mention of Lee's affair with Betty Ting Pei. The story starts with Lee as a child (Sam Hou) in HK, who has re-occurring nightmares of a demon attacking him. Whether this is true or not (Lee's subconscious continually haunted by a demonic samurai), I don't know, but Bruce, like Brandon, had a certain paranoia about death, both suspected they'd die young. **DRAGON** implies maybe the demon had something to do with their untimely deaths. This was never proven, so I hope demons don't threaten this film with a lawsuit. Later, an adult Lee (Jason Scott Lee), using kung fu taught to him by Yip Man (Louyong Wang), beats up caucasians sailors, looking like a scene right out of some anti-foreigner HK film! The irony is

teaching kung fu. Then Lee gets hassled by John Cheung and other Chinese immigrants who don't want Americans to learn kung fu (a more realistic recreation of this conflict was in **BRUCE LEE, THE MAN THE MYTH**). Later, after he's developed jeet kune do, he stars as Kato in **GREEN HORNET** in a fight where he rescues Green Hornet from a mad doctor in a Frankenstein-iah lab. Amazingly, this fight was more exciting and epic than any episode of the actual show. So the story roles along, he gets into a fight or two, and when David Carradine gets the role in **KUNG FU**, Lee heads back to HK, where we see actual clips from **THE BIG BOSS** and **RETURN OF THE DRAGON**. **DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY** ends with **ENTER THE DRAGON** in production, to maintain a happy ending. Little of his death is mentioned, so as to maintain a happy ending, so that all the little kiddies in the audience wouldn't cry. ** **FIST OF FEAR; TOUCH OF DEATH** [aka **DRAGON VS COBRA**]- Morally, this deceitful American documentary is the worst! Do the morons who made this have no shame? An exploitive kung fu movie is one thing, but an exploitive documentary? I thought documentaries were meant to inform & educate, but this one is unbelievable bullshit, it misinforms & uneducates! It features glory-seeking, stuck up martial artists like Fred Williamson, Ron Van Clief, Teruyaki Naga, Richard Barath, and worst of all, Aaron Banks & Bill Louie! These two geeks were also in last issue's **THE BODYGUARD**, which had Aaron Banks' most intelligent line ever, "That's not how Sonny Chiba did it." Well, in this equally bad movie, Louie & Banks again make asses of themselves. Banks comes off as the most egotistical, opinionated bastard since Damon Foster, and his 'actual interviews' (discussing Bruce Lee's death) looked artificial & acted, not natural. Bill Louie again tries to imitate Bruce Lee, in one scene, he's in a cheap Kato costume! His 1970s disco mustache and buck teeth make him look more like a clown, despite superb fighting skills. In another scene, he supposedly pulls out a guy's eyeballs while sparring in the ring. Who writes this stuff? The setting is the 1979 Karate Championship, featuring more ridiculously staged bouts, flashbacks (a couple attendants thwarted rape attempts on the way to the event) and of course, the halftone entertainment: A segment on Bruce Lee! As in **BRUCE LEE THE LEGEND AND THE REAL BRUCE LEE**, it's more footage of teenage Bruce in **THUNDERSTORM**, a tearjerker they've dubbed into a Lee family 'home movie.' Through out it, they've got Bruce talking about his 'karate,' and 'samurai ancestors!' I'm not kidding!

Of course, **THUNDERSTORM** has no fights, so in come clips from some old period films from Taiwan! Endless, meaningless swordplay as Chan Lee, a 'Chinese Samurai' (Bruce's supposed ancestor) fights dozens of villains for no reason. After the fights, we return to young Lee in **THUNDERSTORM**, dubbed in a faggy voice & ridiculous dialogue. Is this unintentional humor? Intended humor? It's hard to tell, the whole film seems borderline comedic. There's other stupid Lee ripping off here. There are at least a couple interviews where Lee is shown; stock footage from **LONGSTREET**! As dubbed Lee speaks to Aaron Banks & host Adolph Caesar, talking about his 'karate', his voice is nothing like Bruce's and has no Chinese accent! In another short, Lee, "the greatest karate expert of them all," is supposedly seen in a film. The host says, "Here is a scene of that film," and we see a quick glimpse of some guy jumping in the air, it's obviously not Lee despite Bill Louie's dubbed voice (again trying to yell like Bruce). However, the movie has a couple decent cleavage shots, and the unintentional humor & innaccuracy makes it a comedy; a movie so bad it's fun. It's definitely in a league with **PLAN NINE**. For sheer entertainment value, because it's such a hilarious atrocity, it could deserve 3 stars. But that would undermine its corruption. As a movie which tries to present itself as a factual documentary, it's a true crime, deserving threats of slander, like a far-fetched tabloid. Whoever made it is an asshole. *

FIST OF UNICORN [aka **BRUCE LEE AND I**]- I've never seen this one! But I'd love to, since it's the only Bruce Lee exploitation

Dragon Force



that he immediately sets sail for America, despite its many evil whites!?!? What gives here? Much of the remainder takes place in America, I would have rather seen more stuff on his early HK years and his gang involvement, since details are more illusive than a vegetarian at a butcher shop. So the remainder concentrates on his family life with Linda Emery/Cadwell (Lauren Holly, not a bad looker, from the neck down, anyway), who, as you know, he met at college while



film made BEFORE his death! Filmed between **CHINESE CONNECTION** and **RETURN OF THE DRAGON**, but not released until after Lee's death by sleazebags for a quick profit. Unicorn Chan stars, who was in **CHINESE CONNECTION**, **RETURN OF THE DRAGON** (as 'Jimmy'), **BRUCE LEE THE MAN, THE MYTH** and **BLOOD HERO**, not to mention **BAD BOY**, which starred both Unicorn Chan and childhood friend Bruce Lee when they were kids! Both were

good friends, so Bruce did his best to make Unicorn (not a good martial artist) look good in *FIST OF UNICORN* (later called *BRUCE LEE AND I*, after Lee's demise). Supposedly, Bruce coached him & did choreography behind the scenes, working with Yasuaki Kurata! Rumor has it that Bruce Lee even made a walk-on cameo, and that a hidden camera supposedly caught Bruce rehearsing with Unicorn. Is it true that Unicorn secretly put this footage in the film without Bruce's permission? Is it true that Bruce was infuriated and never spoke to Unicorn again? We may never know if all this is true, but this rarely seen film explains that photo of Bruce with Yasuaki Kurata in the previous OC!

FUTURE HUNTERS- Bruce Li? That's what the credits say, yet he's nowhere to be found! This is a derivative adventure, an American/Filipino film from the early '80s, featuring Bruce Li in a brief cameo near the beginning, and he battles fellow HK chop sockeyear Wang Cheng Lee (AKA Huang Cheng Li). This fight is very 1970s Hong Kongese, and the highlight of an otherwise stupid movie. Unfortunately, the Li scenes are out of place in this ripoff of every type of adventure, from *ROAD WARRIOR* to *INDIANA JONES*. This awkward, offbeat fiasco also features a cameo by Richard Norton, who'd later appear with Li in *REVENGE OF THE KICKFIGHTER*. Had Norton, Li & Huang Cheng Li had larger roles, this movie might be good. Instead, it's just another romantic cliffhanger, recommendable to fans of other predictable adventures. The two main characters are a good-looking young blond couple I've never heard of. They're on the quest for a magic sword which can alter the future. Their adventure leads them to HK, where Bruce Li protects them, and steals the film. Unfortunately, they leave HK, so Li just disappears from the rest of the film! The remainder is an endless jungle adventure; never ending escapes and captures as they flee from nazis, tribes, dwarves, amazons, and the rapist lumberjack from Russ Meyers' UP.

REVENGE OF THE KICKFIGHTER- Another Bruce Li war movie, a 1986 adventure starring Richard Norton & Ti Wei (now 'Dick Wei'). Bruce Li actually only has a co-starring role in this *RAMBO*-ripoff, made by and for Americans. I don't think *REVENGE OF THE KICKFIGHTER* is its original title, because there's not enough 'kickfighting' and far more "Rambo"-ish heroism. A decent budget, on location filming in Vietnam, HK and Bangkok. The acting is pretty bad, though it's hard to tell; things are sped up, and NOT just the fights! It's weird, everyone speaks English, yet it all

appears dubbed. Otherwise, it's typical US made stuff, same old music & dialogue as any domestic film. The story has Bruce Li (called 'Lu Shao Lung' in the credits) & Ti Wei as brothers who learned ninjutsu from some old man in Vietnam. After the war, both went their own separate ways, and Ti Wei becomes an assassin out to kill American veterans. There's excessive gunplay through out, guaranteed to burn out even John Woo freaks. But most of the martial arts are clumsy. Our three main actors, no stranger to major HK extravaganzas, manage to fight well, but its their inferior American opponents who fail to react correctly. The only good fight is at the end, when Ti Wei finally confronts Richard Norton & Bruce Li. For a moment it looks like a scene from a HK film. #1/2

SUPER DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY- You just gotta see this one to believe it! A movie so pathetically horrid, it gives *AMSTERDAM CONNECTION* a run for its money! Even Bruce Li doesn't fight well, this must be one of his very first. Nonsensical, bad acting, bad writing, bad editing, bad directing, bad music, and unbelievably bad dubbing! Sounds like the dubbers have thick accents and a poor grasp of English. It's supposedly the story of Bruce Lee's life, although even the Americans are dubbed calling him by his Chinese name Shao Lung, sometimes Lee, but never Bruce. Betty Ting Pei is called 'Tong,' and Bruce Lee supposedly impregnates her! But most of the rest of this fiasco is vaguely faithful to Lee's life, in a cheap, regurgitated way. The actress playing Linda Lee is almost as ugly as the original, and there are scenes of Li imitating Lee in his movies, but they're unlike any Bruce Lee movies I'VE ever seen. The most amusing scene was at the beginning, in an el cheapo variation on Bruce's Longbeach karate tournament, which landed him the role as Kato (also briefly recreated in this stinker). The 'tournament' consists of little more than the usual 'my Chinese kung fu is better than your Japanese karate' racism. Supposedly, there's also a film called *BRUCE LEE-SUPER DRAGON*, but I believe it came to America as *DYNAMO*, to avoid confusion with *SUPER DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY*. Also to avoid confusion, this movie has no relation to the *AMERICAN DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY*, the similarity in titles is just an extraordinary coincidence.

So there you have it, edited highlights; selected reviews at random, from OC#15, due out this October or November. It was meant to be my final OC, I never want to do

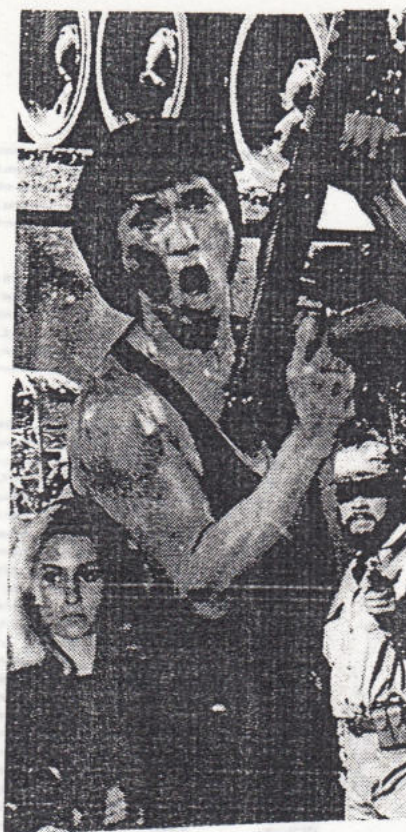
another! It just got too big for its britches! These massive magazines, with their in-depth, groundbreaking info, full-color inside & outside covers, incredible diversity, nearly drove me into bankruptcy and drug abuse. So I decided OC#15 would be the final issue. But just when OC's death seemed imminent, along comes a publisher (finally!) willing to ease the pain. The only problem is he wants all the material (photos & articles) by late September! I'm typing this up in August, which leaves me a month to complete OC#16! OC#15, the final issue of OC as we know it, isn't even done yet! So here I go, running around like mad, trying to complete two fanzines, so that #15 can be out by November, and the altered #16 can get finished by January! Fortunately, after OC#15, my Desktop Publishing & Wordperfect days will be over. My new publisher will handle all the graphics & paste ups, which is quite a burden off my back! The catch is that the next volume of OCs will be much smaller than the epic magazines I struggled to create. Regardless, OC#16 will be a ninja issue, the definitive magazine on ninja movies & TV shows. So one moment, I'm reviewing a Bruce Li/Le movie, and the next, going even lower, sitting through ninjas flicks, easily the worst subgenre of the martial arts movie. So what follows is a sneak preview of what to expect from OC#16.

AMERICAN NINJA- My god! I can't believe I rented (PAID FOR!) and watched this one! After years of critiquing the likes of Jackie Chan & John Woo, I'm actually viewing something so lame! Michael Dudikoff as a ninja



who investigates corruption on a military base. He gets a chance to defeat Steve James & Tadaashi Yamashita, even though his fighting skill rivals that of a common ladybug. "

AMERICAN NINJA 2- Better than the first, which isn't saying much. Dudikoff & James rid an island resort of more bothersome ninjas, with the enthusiastic help of some marines. By this time, I began to understand the format of these awful U.S. made actioners. Bad continuity, stupid humor, and horrendous



柏楊鉅著「異域」中秘密大公開 第三中國??
是否有人在蠻荒中建立 坤沙——張奇夫的父親 是前國民黨將軍??

「金三角」毒王坤沙向美國總統討價還價 每年三億美元是否可消除毒品??

美國欲 緝拿毒王坤沙

黑龍走廊

導演：呂小龍

「末代皇帝」製片 才女 再展傾力攝製

出品人：呂小龍 廖瑞金 葉美江 洪

BLACK SPOT

TAI SENG Video Marketing Ltd.

170 South Spruce Ave. Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94115
Tel: 415-771-1811
Fax: 415-771-1812

CAST:

CHENG YU MAN	WONG YAO	SUSANA	CHUNG CHIAO	ANGIE SONG	LE SHIAO LUNG	FANNY HILL	LO LINA	NAME ANN	ELIZABETH GORDON
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呂小龍製片公司 金章影片私人有限公司 聯合出品 金年影片私人有限公司 榮譽發行

BRUCE LE IS BACK,
IN "BLACK SPOT!"

Bruce Lee The Invincible

battles are lightened by putting in things Americans can do, like gunplay, car chases, explosions, etc. These elements ped out the story, to hide the fact that Dudikoff can't fight. Each film has some sort of empire of ninjas; a training camp, run by

KILLER ELITE- Not including James Bond's **YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE** (1967), this horrible piece of crap was America's first attempt at making a ninja movie. It starred James Caan, and was made around 1974. Even the ninja episodes of **KUNG FU** and **CHIPS** were more fun than this stinker. The fights were horrible, and its writers don't know the difference between Chinese & Japanese cultures. If nothing else, it makes all later U.S.-made ninja films look good, except for **ROBOT NINJA**.

MIRAI NINJA ["FUTURE NINJA"]- We yankees know this Japanese thriller as **WARLORD**, while Aussies & European snobs think it's called **ROBOT NINJA**. We don't call it **ROBOT NINJA**, because of the American film (below) of the same name. Regardless, **MIRAI NINJA** is a spectacular superhero thriller, full of fantasy, special effects and moontent! *****

ROBOT NINJA- When I first heard there was a movie with this title, I figured, it had to be good! Any combination of martial arts & sci-fi can't go wrong! But then I heard it came from JR Bookwater, who made **DEAD NEXT DOOR**. He has a knack for taking a great idea and ruining it. HOW could somebody do a bad superhero film about ninjas?! It can't be done! Just ask any fan of the low budget series **NINJA ARASHI** (Japan; 1972)! Surely even JR Bookwater, who made one of the worst zombie movies ever, could come up with some serious fun, in a great title like **ROBOT NINJA**! But you know what? JR has done it again. Don't ask me how, but he's yet again made one of the worst movies ever! It's budgetary restraints are only part of the problem. Sure, it's dirt cheap, but that's forgivable. These guys don't know a damn thing about Japanese superheroes, and this is an exploitive film, a ripoff at half the price! There are no ninjas or robots in the film! It's about some geek who makes a plastic mask in his garage, based on a comicbook hero! There's no martial arts! The whole tape is too dark, virtually unwatchable; I gotta' headache trying to watch the actual pre-record! Avoid this one at all cost!

SUPER NINJAS- Chang Cheh's epic slaughter fest. Nonstop

swordplay, as Chinese swordsmen skilled at the Lin Kwei (original Chinese art which spawned Japanese ninjutsu) styles take on the five element ninjas. Wild stuff! ***

WORLD NINJA WAR: JIRAIYA-TOEI's childish yet entertaining superhero program about futuristic ninjas of all shapes and nationalities, battling it out for a treasure called the Pako. **1/2

My main reason for considering doing a ninja issue is because this is a film genre I know little or nothing about, and should have kept it that way. Yet every time I went into a regular, suburban videotape store, I'd see all these 'American' ninja movies in the martial arts section, or so I thought. So I decided to see what all the fuss was about. Turns out almost every one of them is a Chinese gangster film! There are very few actual U.S.-made ninja movies in existence! Most are from cheap places like Thailand, but a HK company spliced in random ninja fights for American release only! The Thai footage of these many films include drama, T&A, shootouts, occasional kung fu, and other typical stuff. Meanwhile, there's always some American (Richard Harrison, Joff Houston, some unknowns) edited in, fighting multi colored ninjas! So there are two stories at once; the dramatic Thai stuff, and out-of-place scenes of magical ninjas! They explode, vannish into thin air, WALK up trees, change into frogs, have magical flutes which hypnotize snakes into attacking villains, and the usual excellent swordplay & acrobatics! The HK shots of caucasian ninjas are great fun for superhero fans, but the main filler (dirt cheap melodrama from Thailand or the Philippines) is generally unwatchable.



BRUCE AND THE SHAOLIN BRONZEMEN

Starring: Bruce Lee
Hsiung Lung who is a martial art expert, is doing his kung fu exercises, when his master called his attention. His master knows how good and excellent he is as a martial art so he orders him a mission to perform. His master gave him one half piece of coin and he was assigned to look for the other half. In this coin the location of the treasure is being given which has been stolen and left by some Japanese workers during the World War II.

Bruce Lee's 7-Promises



some wealthy, power-mad villain not skilled in martial arts. *

AMERICAN NINJA 3- Steve James teams up with David Bradley, who, unlike Michael Dudikoff (not in this one), can fight. Our heroes, assisted by some cute Japanese women, tackle ninjas & a mad scientist on a ship. *

AMERICAN NINJA 4- Dudikoff is back, rescuing David Bradley from Arabs & ninjas in Africa. Interesting to note an appearance by Ken Gampu, the bald African of **KILL AND KILL AGAIN**, and **THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY**, where he played a politician. In A.N.-4, he leads a team of heroic road warriors.

COMMANDO; THE NINJA- Shot on videotape, it's derived from some Chinese TV movie or series, set in modern times. Meng Fei as a ninja in search of Tanaka's secret formula (something to do with chemical warfare), encountering mobsters, Americans, babes, and a heroic Taoist-surfer type! They call Taoism "hocus pocus!" There are plenty of dull moments, but plenty of fun scenes too. Don't be fooled by the rental at your local videotape store; they of course, try to make it look like an American actioner. ** 1/2

EMPIRE OF THE SPIRITUAL NINJA- Bottom-of-the-barrel bullshit from Bangkok (try saying THAT ten times fast!). Featuring mixed footage from at least two different films. Some shots of Americans, others of ninjas, but it's mostly about some Thai detectives; ridiculous dubbing.

EXECUTIONER- I've reviewed Sonny Chiba's underrated masterpiece many times before, and still feel it's the best ninja film ever made. Chiba as a descendant of Koga Ninjas, who gets help from Makoto Sato & Yasuaki Kurata, as they kick yakusa butt! There was also an inferior sequel called **DIRTY HERO**. What happened?! *****

Spirits of Bruce Li

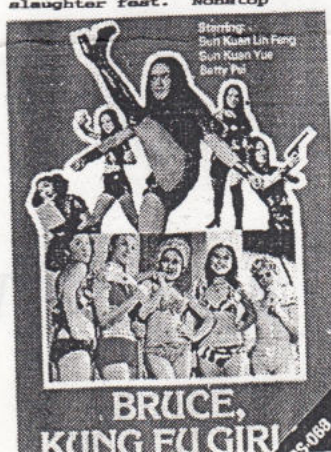


BRUCE LEE A DRAGON STORY

Starring: Bruce Li
Na Yu Hsu
Tung Po



NINJA VS BRUCE LEE



MIRROR OF THE FUMA #34: from Nikki White, 15 Duffus Place, Wanniasa, ACT 2903, Australia

It's been a busy few months since last I wrote. In August I went to the USA, New England mainly, but on the way back, I stopped off at San Francisco. Laurine came down from Sacramento to meet me at my hotel and we had a great day walking round the town.

We started with Chinatown and a small park with a statue of Sun Yat-sen in it and some people doing some sort of exercise with Chinese swords. SF's Chinatown is much bigger than those in either Sydney or Melbourne, being wide as well as long. We haunted a number of CD shops looking for soundtracks of Chinese films. I didn't buy any as I had just about reached the limit of my baggage (I went rather beresk in a Sun Video shop in Bangor - an Aladdin's cave compared with what we have out here). The popular Chinese singer being played was good listening, however.

Laurine also showed me an alleyway often used in martial arts films to represent Hong Kong, which it did, being narrow and picturesque. There was a barber on the corner with photos of assorted stars in the window, apparently quite a famous spot. She also pointed out, as we passed, a number of sweat-shops.

We then walked along the waterfront to Pier 39 and the Cannery. It was a lovely clear day with a brisk breeze putting white caps on the water in the bay. Such a change from the humidity of the East Coast where I'd spent the past fortnight.

At Pier 39 I bought some T-shirts (Marvin the Martian and Michigan J. Frog) for my brother and sister-in-law who are big Chuck Jones fans. I eschewed the Star Trek stuff as being way too expensive. We ate at one of the takeaway shops there then crossed the road to wander in to the Cannery where we went to a comic shop but there wasn't anything much there.

We then walked up hill and down dale past a cinema showing double bills of Chinese martial arts films in the Italian section and through the former gay area to the Japan Cultural Center. (If covered with snow, San Francisco would make a fabulous ski run. Some of those hills reminded me of Stampede or Rough Rider at Mt. Blue Cow).

The Center is a little bit of Japan plonked down in the middle of an American city - the Japan you go to when you can't afford the real one (and with the yen as strong as it is these days, at least 15 million Australians can't, no wonder you find so many on the West Coast, America having now become the bargain holiday destination). It has the little restaurants and small shops you find the in the Land of the Rising Yen.

Our first port of call was a video shop which was where Laurine said anime fans came to get their fix. There were lots of other movies besides anime, they included a whole section of chanbara films in both English (i.e. videos with English subtitles) and Japanese. Amongst the latter I noticed Hara-kiri and one of the Shinobi no mono series, Kirigakure Saizo. These were all for rent but there were some for sale, mostly for around the \$50-\$60 mark, though Mifune's Miyamoto Musashi II (aka Samurai II) was \$29.95. We also noted with some amusement that some of the tapes for rent were pirate tapes!

After that, I made a quick trip into the Kinokuniya Bookshop while Laurine rested her feet. I was after a copy of Saikaku's This Scheming World (Seken munasanyo). They didn't have it but I got another of his novels instead, Some Final Words of Advice.

We then had dinner in one of the little restaurants (called 'Mifune' I think, if so, it was appropriate) - udon soup, sashimi, pickle and salad. Good value. Then it was back to the hotel, by bus this time, where we made our farewells. Once again, I'd like to thank Laurine for showing me San Francisco and for being such great company.

Stirrup, Sail and Plough: continental and maritime influences on Japanese identity was an international conference held at the Australian National University 20-23 September which I

attended. Most of the speakers were from Japan with some from Canada, Britain, the USA and Korea as well as Australia. It was a fascinating conference even if the theme of influences on Japanese identity did get a bit lost at times. It was enlivened at times by a rather peppery Korean who got stuck into Japanese nationalist pretensions, the emperor system and any attempt to whitewash their past, leaving the audience somewhat gob-smacked.

Some of the most interesting papers dealt with the origins of the Japanese and the language. One speaker postulated that it was originally a creole developed to enable communication between the various trading communities settled on the islands.

Other papers dealt with how the Thais saw Japanese in the 17th and 18th centuries (samurai settled there and served as mercenaries and there was a flourishing trade between the two countries, even today part of the royal Thai regalia is a samurai sword); how the Japanese viewed their own isolation during the same period, as seen in the poetry of Basho, Buson and Issa; what the Koreans thought of Japan in the same period (not a lot, apparently - like Australians today, they saw them from one point of view: warmongers to the Koreans, the economic power to Australians, and they studied them purely in that context to the exclusions of other aspects of their civilisation).

A particularly interesting couple of papers demolished the idea that Tokugawa Japan was a Confucian society as Confucian scholars were far from appreciated and generally kept out of high office. There was a lively session on World War 2.

One theme that emerged strongly was that contrary to the monolithic rather bland 'one race, one language' image put about by Japanese officialdom, there are many peoples and languages in the archipelago and always has been. Anyone who's studied ninja from a historical perspective as I have knows that but it was good to have it articulated again and in so many ways at a conference.

Tunnel vision of another sort also came in for a serve. At the opening, one of the convenors said that the trend in study in universities in Australia in recent years was directed chiefly by economic considerations to the exclusion of everything else. He hoped the conference would open up perspectives and convince the powers that be there is more to Japan than trade statistics: that there are people living in the country. So one in the eye for economic rationalists (I'm very fond of an abbreviation used by a writer in the Asian Studies Review - 'econorats') and corporate pygmies who seem to dominate everything these days.

Films

Story of a Eunuch (1990, Beijing Film Studios) was on SBS. This was the first Chinese film historical (as opposed to chopsokey in period dress) that I've seen. Set in the late 19th century, it told the story of a young peasant boy, Yang Yutai, who is forced at 13 by his poverty-stricken family to become a eunuch. At 15 he enters the Forbidden City as Eunuch Junior Grade and body servant to one of the senior eunuchs who is a friend of the Chief Eunuch.

His life is miserable - he's beaten at every turn. However, he makes friends with a eunuch boy, Rong, a year younger than him, and Wang, another eunuch in charge of the palace pharmacy who advises him to gain the favour of the Dowager Empress, Cixi to escape the brutality. He does this by joining the palace theatre troupe where he comes to her notice and is appointed a watchman. He then rises through the ranks though he and Rong plan secretly to bring down the Chief Eunuch and his mates for their cruelties and injustices and because they had Wang the pharmacist summarily executed.

It was a very interesting film, if a little grisly. At first it seemed to stress the cruelties and capriciousness of the Qing court (gods, I hate pinyin but since I started with it, I'd better stick with it) and I thought it was going to be a PRC morality tale. But soon it concentrated on the human interest side, showing subtly how Yutai gradually changed, as all who are caught in a corrupt system change, how he suffered and caused suffering in turn. Even at the end,

though, he was still sympathetic. The actor who portrayed him was very good.

Another plus was that it was shot in the Forbidden Palace and featured actual historical events, most notably the Dowager Empress entertaining the foreign ladies (though I doubt they wore such gauzy dresses!). I also enjoyed the scenes showing training for the opera troupe as well as performances and details of court ceremony and life (watchmen ritually calling out to secure the palace gates and doors, for example).

I also saw a pirate copy of Raise the Red Lantern so can't recall cast and credits. This was a very interesting look at life in a certain sector of society in China in the early part of this century but a bit depressing.

Basically it told the fortunes of a young educated girl who marries a wealthy man as his Number 4 Wife. The red lantern of the title refers to those placed outside a wife's door if the husband (who remains a shadowy faceless, even spineless figure) has chosen to spend the night with her.

The focus of the film was on the scheming and in-fighting amongst the wives to ensure themselves of the dubious honour. Like the eunuchs in the above film, they, too, are caught in a totally artificial situation, like hot-house plants. Women who might have otherwise developed friendships amongst themselves or at least been good neighbours are forced to regard each other as enemies and rivals and to carry out elaborate stratagems against each other. In the film, the cost of this system is high with death for one and madness for another.

It wasn't all unrelieved gloom as there was humour in some of the interplay, particularly in the matter of the foot massage, a special privilege granted the wife who was to have the husband for the night.

Drunken Angel (Yoidore Tenshi, Toho, 1948) was on SBS a while ago, another of Kurosawa's early films and his first with Mifune. The story, for anyone who doesn't know, is about a doctor (Shimura Takeshi) who tries to help a tuberculoid young gangster (Mifune) and their explosive relationship.

The thing about these old films that makes them doubly fascinating for me is that they depict a Japan as vanished and as alien as that seen in Sanjuro or Yojimbo - the immediate postwar period when Tokyo was half rubble with swamps such as the one which figures prominently in this film.

The doctor has a crusading spirit against all germs, particularly TB and is always warning people. Yet he is flawed - he has a drinking problem and his 'bedside manner' might best be described as abrasive. He tends to yell and hector his patients - even throw things at them if they don't listen. Yet he means well. It's just that his interpersonal skills are totally lacking.

The gangster is brash, showy, a cock of the walk but, as the doctor observes, not all bad. He still has some conscience. He is also, for all his bravado and aggression, mortally afraid of his disease and this lends him a strange vulnerability. Mifune was very young but what a magnificent animal he was (the quick, darting movements, the tendency to lash out as a sick or wounded animal does - and what a spunk!).

Naturally, they spend a fair bit of time bashing each other up. Things change when Mifune's boss, Okada, gets out of jail and it's rather funny watching him being humble and submissive. It's about then things go a bit pear-shaped for him - his disease worsens and a desire to be protect a woman who used to be Okada's mistress and now is living with the doctor leads to his death.

I spotted one bizarre blooper. There's a scene where the doctor's slapping away mosquitoes and fanning himself and otherwise giving every indication of high summer - yet his breath is coming out smoke when he speaks!

On 4 October four episodes of The Samurai (Onmitsu Kenshi) were shown at a local cinema. There are about 8 or 9 episodes known to be left over from the 60s in the country, with the original English dubbing. Some of these have been released on video (see reviews in earlier Maffapas). Three chaps (two from Brisbane, one from Sydney) have been screening selected episodes around the east coast.

A few days before, one of the Queenslanders, a disc-jockey named Greg Newman, phoned me up because he'd heard about the 80-page fanzine I did on the show in 1988 (the text of which, with some modifications, appeared in Maffapa #27-#31). We chatted about the show and he told me they'd be bringing some episodes to Canberra. He was very enthusiastic - the only person I've encountered who talked of Amatsu Bin by name without the need of the prompt "He played Fuma Kotaro/Kongo of Koga." He'd been trying to get in touch with him for an interview. I remarked rather drily that without a ouija board that would be difficult as he died in 1979. He was quite shattered by the news and couldn't get over it even when I saw him again on the weekend.

He sent me some publicity material which I distributed at work and at one of the main public libraries. At work, it was fascinating to see the way people's eyes lit up when I mentioned the show or they saw the flyer. "Oh yes, I used to watch that, that's my favourite show..."

The turnout was quite good at the cinema considering it was a ghastly day and most Canberrans leave town on a long weekend (it was Labour Day or 8-Hour Day). The organisers had a small display of memorabilia including the wig Ose wore as Shintaro (one of the trio, Gary, had met him on a trip to Japan in 1989 and been given it), a poster for the 1965/66 stage show he did in Australia, some gum cards, photos from one of the feature films, the two already-released videotapes of episodes plus a new third volume and a souvenir program which listed the episodes and reproduced newspaper and magazine articles.

The episodes shown all featured Amatsu Bin as it happened. They were "The Spider" where he played Genzo the Spider, a Koga ninja; "Musai's Curse" where he played Fuma Kotaro; "Revenge" and "Master Ninja" where he played Kongo of Koga.

After the screening the guys wanted to come back to my place to view some tapes I have of Amatsu in other roles and also to see my memorabilia. We spent a few hours all talking nineteen to the dozen before they had to go. In all this I discovered that the actor who played "Shusaku", Omori Shunsuke, had died of cancer in his 30s (ca. 1989).

The new video tape contains "The Spider", "Master Ninja" and an episode of The New Samurai, from its third and final story, "The Magic Bell" (episode 4) (also with Amatsu as Togakure Genki).

This last was a bit of a revelation. I'd always remembered the series as being set in Kyushu but this story (about the search for a treasure sword, the Corolla Sword, which had belonged to a famous pirate, Murakami) seems to have been set in the Kanto region on Honshu. This episode was set in Edo as was the previous one, going on context. At the end, Genki and his group do leave Edo - to go to Nikko.

Perhaps this was a last minute attempt to recapture the ratings of the original series by bringing the storyline back to the original's old stamping ground, along with bringing back a popular player of villains from the first series (Amatsu).

The other thing was that, with the exception of the hero, "Kage Shinnosuke" who was dubbed by William Ross who did "Shintaro", all the other dubbing was by completely different people. Not even Tonbei had the same voice which was very distracting. The dubbing was done in-house and was not very imaginative, using bland, generic American voices better suited to Route 66 than The Samurai with no attempt, as in the original series, to match them to the voice types of the Japanese actors, thus depriving Amatsu of his deep sepulchral voice and making him sound like some Californian punk.