

MAFFAPA

#53

FALL

1995



Welcome to the 53rd issue of MAFFAPA, Martial Arts Film Fan (and Asian Culture) APA, for October 1995. Contributions have been received from the following people:

Mark Jackson, 2043 SE Isabell Road, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

Amy Harlib, 212 W 22 St. #2N, New York, NY 10011-2756

(Amy also provided the Hong Kong Festival programs)

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Robert Mallory, 502 Kinsland Rd., Franklin, NC 28734(new address)
cover art by Ron Lim

Welcome new contributor Jeff Segal, 3641 Parkview Drive,
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The deadline for Maffapa 54 is January 31, 1996. 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 (higher copy count) 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 9 x 12" self-addressed envelope, so I can send Maffapa #54 to you.

HONG KONG ACTION CINEMA by Bey Logan has now been published by Titan Books, in large trade pb format, price unknown. Titan is a British publisher. 190 pages, lots of neat stuff. Maybe Diana knows a mail order source for it.

Sometimes I am lacking cover art, and have in past used art contributed by other Maffapans. The cover art gets photocopied at Kinkos, which has suddenly gotten sticky about copyright violations (due, no doubt, to their recently being successfully sued over the issue). So if anyone decides to contribute art to Maffapa, whether for the cover or interior art, I need a separate sheet of paper on which the artist has written (or similar words): I give my permission for Laurine White to photocopy my art for her newsletter, signed _____ (exactly as you sign the name on your art work). I can use the self-serve copiers to copy anything, but sometimes I prefer to get a higher quality job done by the staff behind the counter.



Hello! Laurine invited me into her APA. A sample issue (#49 Fall 1994) gave me a cross section of your wide ranging interests. I will be comfortable having so many possible topics to contribute; dwelling on any one aspect of Asian culture or cinema could become deadening.

Maybe I should introduce myself with this letter. After a misspent youth and cantankerous young adulthood partially spent wallowing in books and movies, I stumbled into the clutches of Fandom in 1989. Correspondence with film freaks and mail order videos introduced me to the kind of obscure USA and European flicks I had only salivated over in reference tomes.

I stumbled over BLACK MAGIC TERROR/ QUEEN OF BLACK MAGIC and REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES during the waning years of the 1980's. Along with pics like the uncut LADY TERMINATOR, the aforementioned sorcery films were whacky experiences but not enough to fire up that glaze eye stare movie fanatics develop over their cinematic dream dates. Too many sour Saturday afternoon encounters with lousy televised chop suckey flicks made me leery of low budget Asian titles.

I enjoyed movies like KWAIDAN and especially the starkly visualized ONIBABA. They revived my interest in Nipponese productions. I had not paid much attention to Japan's cinema since outgrowing its giant monster slugfests and older generation t.v anime. It also helped that the Lone Wolf and Cub manga the now defunct First comics company was translating interested me in samurai cinema. I enjoyed the few dubbed-in-English KOZURE OHKAMI-related tapes distributed in USA video stores.

A Cinefantastique review of something entitled A CHINESE GHOST STORY clued me in on additional Far Eastern film developments. I tracked down the American released MAD MISSION III. It was quite dizzying. The following day, a mail ordered copy of something called A BETTER TOMORROW II arrived and blasted me into Far Eastern film fanaticism; I still remember staggering around, telling everyone around me that they had to see this movie. A Chow Yun-fat guy was supposed to be the star. I Didn't know Chow from Mao but the big guy with duo pistols was, in my initial opinion, agreeable enough to charm westerners. A new friend unearthed A CHINESE GHOST STORY from Chinatown in Philadelphia. I loved this one. The lack of subtitles on my (I think) Mandarin print proved little hindrance to appreciating the colorful poetry of CGS's storyline.

Soon afterward, I plunged into Japanese cinema. If the bulk of Chinese productions I am interested in is concentrated during the past fifteen years, then most of my favored Japanese titles were made during the 60's and 70's. I am making a strong effort to dip into earlier Chinese cinema and later Japanese flicks and uncovering all sorts of gems.

As Diana Bringardner noted in MAFFAPA #49, information on these films was difficult to locate. However, there now seem to be a number of articles and interviews in publication. Also, books such as THE ASIAN FILM INDUSTRY (John A. Lent, Christopher Helm Publishers, 1990), PERSPECTIVES ON CHINESE CINEMA (Chris Berry, - editor, BFI Publishing, 1991) and older and recent volumes are trickling in. One does have to beware of the occasional error creeping into a review or article. I perpetuated a few glitches myself in magazine writings, I am afraid.

I have also noticed the new viewer interest in, depending on your gender or tastes, Asian aesthetics. No, Laurine, I promise not to sink to sleazy depths! I can honestly say that prior to slamming into Far Eastern films, there were only a few Asian ladies who caught my fancy. Now, I no longer can get quite the same thrill from "Baywatch" proportioned women. The only constant in my tastes these past few years is that I prefer petite gals, caucasian or not. As for the formidable array of Asian action actresses, the appeal for me is their deceptively vulnerable appearance and ability to take care of themselves. It is quite a pleasant contrast.

I have had so many tape trades in progress during the 90's that there was no time to apply for a Chinese videostore membership. By September 1995, several elusive titles were beckoning me so for the first time in my dozens of Chinatown visits, I joined several shops. Amusingly, a helpful clerk in one store placed their well worn "gweillo" videocover book before me, not realizing that I had already viewed the Woo, Chan and Jet Li titles enclosed. I startled the clerk by handing her the Chinese characters for an all star (but obscure) comedy. That particular shop has what I think is a population of Mandarin language cassettes. Most of the time, my dialect dears cannot separate Mandarin from Cantonese but a better skilled friend heard several tapes and pointed out this fact.

Once, pirated Mandarin lang. cassettes outraced bigscreen premiers to our area. Rumors circulated that some imported bootlegged titles arrived in N. American Chinatowns prior to their overseas theater debut. Unconfirmed reports have had Federal investigators cracking down on these illegal immigrants.

from Jeff Segal
3641 Parkview Drive
Bensalem, PA 19020

Nowadays, I prefer Chinatown dining over Americanized (ie-watered down) Asian restaurants. I remember picking uneasily over that first authentic meal several years ago (" Hey, What is this stuff? It looks carnivorous!"). My guide to Chinese culture is a Malaysian born Chinese who for a period of time worked as a detective for my father (ah, what stories I can tell). A college grad, he lived in both Singapore and Malaysia, worked in Indonesia and visited numerous Asian and European nations prior to coming to the United States. He grows nostalgic when smacking his lips over a bowl of Singapore noodles. When an available weekend morning presents itself, we look forward to multi-course dim sum meals to boost out sagging cholesterol levels. My favorite dim sum dish is: crab claws stuffed with tender meat and breaded over.

Since he has been over here, my friend has seen more Chinese flicks than back at home. He enjoys the Japanese Zatoichi series, Canto comedies and was impressed with his first Woo experience (THE KILLER). He is also now an admirer of Amy Yip's thespian talents and wonders why he never met a Chinese gal overseas with her, ah, profile. Aside from Lin Ching-hsia, whom he considers to be very elegant, my pal dismisses most Chinese actresses (including my fave, Fennie Yuen Kit-ying, who he says is too skinny). Spaghetti westerns and Clint Eastwood authority figure flicks (especially the "Dirty Harry" series) were popular with the Chinese he lived with in Asia.

Chinese Cinema, especially HK movies, have had a euphoric effect on so many diverse viewers that they could be used as a tool to whittle away some cultural barriers in our so called melting pot societies. They encouraged me to learn more about Asia. Despite family friends who are Japanese, Filipino and Korean, it took a popular cinema to open my eyes to another world.

I have overstayed my welcome . Until next time, bye!

Jeff Seng

Typical novice viewer's review.

Flick Picks by Debbie Fletcher

HARD BOILED

After viewing most of this film from behind my fingers, I can only wonder at how it got away with a simple R rating. By rights, this movie should have been rated NC-17 for the sheer brutality of it. However, I do realize there are some to whom this sort of thing appeals which is why I was compelled to review it.

The plot centers on Chow Yun-Fat as Tequila, a plainclothes policeman in Hong Kong who is looking to bust some big-deal gun runners. Tequila finds himself in the mood for revenge after his partner is killed in a bloody teahouse shootout.

During his quest, Tequila encounters a gang member named Tony (Tony Leung) who is able to kill without so much as flinching. After a touch-and-go face-off in which Tequila learns that Tony is actually another cop under cover, they join forces.

Everything comes to a roaring conclusion in a veritable hailstorm of flying bullets and spurting blood in a hospital which just happens to house the arsenal of the big crime boss.

I am at a loss as to find adjectives to describe the way the violence is portrayed in this film. While graphic is adequate, it is really an understatement. Let's just say that it's graphic violence magnified at least 10 times!

If this sounds appealing to you, by all means, go for it. However, please, and I'm begging you, leave the kiddies home.

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CARLIER PACEY BERNARD GUILD 3-16-94

from Linda Koncak



BARTOK & AYERS

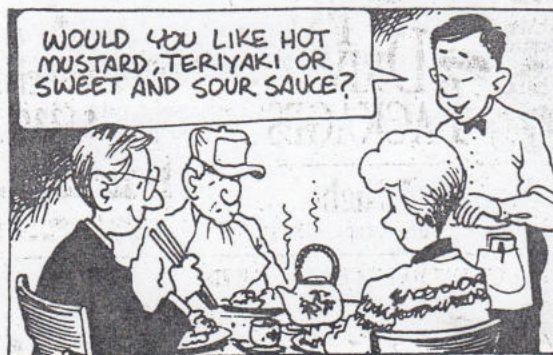


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BARTOK & AYERS

REPERTORY FILMS



RELIGIOUS PERIL: Jackie Chan risks life and limb for ancient religious artifacts in *Armour of God*, playing at the Inwood.

CASA LINDA THEATRE — *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* lives every Friday and Saturday at midnight. It's just a step to the left. Let's do the Time Warp again. No one under 17 admitted without a parent. Casa Linda Theatre, 150 Casa Linda Plaza, Garland Road and Buckner. Call 321-2141. \$5.50.

DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART — The museum's series, "American Animation: The Golden Years," concludes with a retrospective of everyone's favorite hare. Ten cartoons from 1940 to 1949 show the development of the surprisingly complex rascally rabbit, Bugs Bunny. The fast-talking 80 minutes of animation screen Sunday at 2 p.m., in Horchow Auditorium, DMA, 1717 N. Harwood. Call 922-1200. \$3; \$2 for DMA members, students and senior citizens.

INWOOD THEATRE — "Midnights at the Inwood," a summerlong series of adventure thrillers from Hong Kong's No. 1 action hero, Jackie Chan, offers two choices this weekend.

- In *Police Story*, police detective Chan is framed for murder when a police drug raid goes awry, which forces him to run from the gang and his own squad. The film screens midnight on Friday and Saturday only.

- In *Armour of God*, Chan is commissioned by a millionaire antique collector to acquire pieces of an ancient religious artifact. The film shows Friday and Saturday, plus August 5, 6, 12 and 13, at midnight. 5458 W. Lovers Lane at Inwood. Call 352-6040. \$6.50.

MAJOR THEATRE — Official update: Because of rising operation costs, the Major is now a three-day theater, open Friday through Sunday only.

- "The Unofficial Larry Powell's, Nyuk-Nyuk-Nyuk, Spread Out, Etc. Three Stooges Festival" stars Larry, Curly and Moe. You can guess the rest. Screens Friday through Sunday at 7:45 p.m.

- *The Bride With the White Hair*, based on one of the most enduring love stories in Chinese literature, is a period fantasy populated by a two-bodied monster, magic and great martial-arts fight scenes. It stars Leslie Chung of *Farewell My Concubine* fame. Shows Friday through Sunday at 10:15 p.m.

- *Minotaur*, a film by Dan McCormack, journeys through the world of a pop icon, in which absurd is sacred and excess is mandated. Shows Friday and Saturday only at 12:15 a.m. 2830 Samuell at Winslow. Call 821-FILM. \$6.

Maffapa for October 1995, from Laurine White, 5422 Colusa Way, Sacramento, CA 95841-2304, ph # (916) 332-7461

Correction to last issue - The Stephen Chiau movie I called OUR MAN IN BEIJING, is actually titled FROM BEIJING WITH LOVE.

MOVIES: Don "The Dragon" Wilson has a small role in BATMAN FOREVER as a gang leader with luminous paint making his face look like a skull. (He's better-looking this way.)// It was bad enough last year that, every time I turned on a premium channel, it seemed like FAST GETAWAY was on. FAST GETAWAY was the bank robbery movie that co-starred Rothrock and one of those interchangeable Corey's (Haim, Feldman). Now there's a FAST GETAWAY II with the same cast. Aacckk!// DESPERADO (the EL MARIACHI sequel (more like a remake) with Antonio Banderas) has lots of gunfights, including some John Woo-type gunfights. Why haven't the critics noted that influence?// Ron Lim noted that in episode #1 of the syndicated XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS (Hercules spinoff), Xena and a villain have a fight that's a direct swipe from FONG SAI YUK, as they balance and jump around on the heads of their followers in a crowded room. The episode 3 weeks later had a scene right out of CHINESE GHOST STORY. No wonder they "borrowed" from HK sources. Someone is quoted in TV Guide (issue of Oct 1-7) as saying they based the Xena character on the strong "female superheroines" (sic) in the kung fu movies. (What about the male superheroines?)

Seen recently on Cinemax: STEELE JUSTICE (1987) starring Martin Kove (the ruthless rival karate instructor in KARATE KID) as the hero, ex-Nam vet, ex-cop; Soon Teck-oh (Mark, this guy co-starred in the Judge Dee movie) as a respectable businessman in the L.A. Asian community, but actually a crime lord wanting vengeance over a clash with the hero back in Nam; Ronny Cox (nasty in ROBO COP and former San Francisco comedian) as a manipulative L.A. police captain; Bernie Casey as a sympathetic cop (he was completely wasted in UNDER SIEGE #1; an article in FIGHTING STARS described him as a Renaissance Man, but he's underappreciated in Hollywood); Eric Lee in a minor role (listed as "New Thug" in end credits); Al Leong (a villain in UNDER SIEGE and THE PHANTOM) as a nasty; Tak Kubota (who stole the show in THE HUNTED earlier this year) as "Goldtooth", a walk-on role; Mark Dacascos (CRYING FREEMAN) is listed as a stuntman. All the Asians are supposed to be Vietnamese, but they're played by Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, with only one authentic Vietnamese-sounding name. Watchable only for the castmembers I like.

Also on Cinemax: HONG KONG 1997, (1994) stars Robert Patrick (morphing Terminator in T2) as an assassin who guns down a corrupt PRC general in a famous floating landmark restaurant (which I saw in '85) on the eve of the PRC's takeover of Hong Kong from the British (on my birthday, 1997). He strolls through the place in slo-mo, kills three men. Later, he and his Chinese (female) lover, both naked, kill armed, black-clad intruders in their hotel room. (Every time the hero turns around, he's in another shootout.) Did the producer think we'd accept this guy as a blond Chow Yun-fat substitute? Not only lacking the style and charisma, he delivers the incredibly trite dialog in a voice lacking all presence. Tim Thomerson, so tough in TRANCERS #1-5 and DOLLMAN, cowers on the

ground the first time he's caught in a shootout, but later dies gloriously as a 2-gun man, in a hail of Triad bullets. Ming Na-wen (from ER and JOY LUCK CLUB, and no, someone else is the naked lover in this) is also tough, using martial arts and a gun.

Also on Cinemax: THE FORCE, (1994) an enjoyable ghost cop film; an unorthodox street-smart karate-kicking police officer is killed from ambush in the shell of the old L.A. jail. Later a rookie is wounded in the same place, in an unrelated shootout. As he collapses from his wound, a shadow approaches. When he returns to his beat, he acts strange in crisis situations, doing exactly as the veteran officer would have said, done, kicked, with no idea why he acts this way. He makes a nuisance of himself to the veteran's widow. She takes him to her husband's spiritual advisor, who detects the second presence inside the rookie's head. The veteran cop's spirit wants to learn who murdered him. The rookie is put on psychiatric leave, and blames the Presence for destroying his career at its promising beginning. But he persists in his investigation of the veteran's death, and he, his squad car partner, and the widow confront the killer in the old jail. The end is out of GHOST. The spiritual advisor is played by Aki Aleong, the only name I recognized. For the last 2 years I thought he'd changed his name to Al Leong, but that is a younger, completely different actor specializing in villainous henchmen roles. It's been awhile since I'd seen Aki Aleong in anything.

On Showtime: Roger Corman Presents - BLACK SCORPION (1995), with a masked female vigilante in a skimpy comicbook crime-fighting outfit, fighting an entire Asian streetgang, a duo of female wrestler/jewelrobbers, a murderous pimp, and other evil-doers by night in the City of Angels. She performs high slashing kicks while wearing black boots with impractical stiletto heels (as witnesses say "Nice boots!"). She isn't quite as busty as the comicbook females, but is adequate enough. There's a reverse-sexist (OK, guilty pleasure) scene where she ambushes the hero in his own room, throws him down on the bed, and then, uh, (well, he really did want her), and afterwards, marks his chest with her Scorpion Ring. The only actor I recognized plays the likeable crook who runs a chop shop. He turns her ordinary red sportscar into a crime-fighting, morphing, color-changing vehicle complete with a computer that hacks into other databases and generates hologram data on the windshield. (He programs the computer to respond to "Yo!") The stealth car equipment was lifted from a top secret military installation. The villain is a cyborg in armored suit, wheezes like Darth Vader, and threatens to poison the air. BLACK SCORPION looks like a pilot and gets a winter video release.

BOOKS: CHINA TRADE by S.J. Rozan (a female mystery writer), St. Martin's Paperback, Sept 1995, the first in a new mystery series, with New York Chinatown private investigator Lydia Chin. The 2nd book, CONCOURSE, will be in pb next year. Lydia lives with her mother on the edge of New York Chinatown. She has had her P.I. license for 6 years, yet 2 of her 4 older brothers keep asking her to get into some line of work more appropriate for a woman. If she fails in a case, they think it will affect the family's "face". Hired by a Chinatown museum, China Pride, to recover a box of

valuable donated porcelains stolen from its basement, she calls in an occasional partner, Bill Smith. Smith, a big, husky, older P.I., has more than just a professional interest in her. She mixes in the affairs of 2 Chinatown gangs, resulting in the deaths of several people. You find out more than you want to about old Chinese porcelains, and less than you would in an Amy Tan novel about Chinese culture. (But Amy Tan's heroines aren't detectives.) Lydia's been studying tang soo do since she was a kid, and she packs a gun. This one isn't a bad read.

For a great read, try William Marshall, author of the Yellowthread Street mysteries, set in Hong Kong. *MANILA BAY* by William Marshall, Penguin Books, 1986 (used): follows the format of the Yellowthread books, with one majorly serious case, and two humorous ones; only the setting is now Manila, with Philipino cops. The serious case involves a bald-headed killer using explosives to destroy the owners of a famous one-legged fighting cock with a long string of victories. One detective, Ambrosio, is after someone who throws stinkbombs into air-conditioned cabs (used by the rich) then robs the fare. There's one great scene with Ambrosio using his nose to track the perp through back alleys. Ambrosio, armed with his own stinkbomb supply, throws one at the perp, who then douses himself from a squirt gun filled with a neutralizing liquid (making himself stinkless). This continues until the squirt gun is empty and Ambrosio still has one bomb. (The stinkbombs are made from durians, which you might find next time you wander into an Asian market.) Another cop, Bontoc, from a minority tribe of former headhunters, is assigned to protect a public Manila dinosaur park from nightly intruders. (Someone up the chain of command thinks he's only an illiterate savage, to be completely hoodwinked by what's really going on every night.) So Bontoc, armed with a plastic "native" axe he picked up at a souvenir shop, lurks amid the dinosaur models, waiting for what he's been told are Japanese tourists wanting to dig up and take home the bones of Japanese soldiers buried there in 1945. And the only Japanese that Bontoc knows is "Kore wa pen desu ka?"

INCHES, the first new Yellowthread Street novel in 6 years, by William Marshall, The Mysterious Press, Warner Books, August 1995. One deadly crime and 2 less serious, but this ends a downer, as people are desperate to escape Hong Kong with some wealth (if not their own, someone else's) before '97. "Soon the Communists would come. A little at a time, piece by piece, Hong Kong was becoming a dying city, sinking a little more each day back into the soft, dark earth under its foundations. There in the dark, soft earth, there lived other forms of life not seen before, that did not live in daylight or in the sounds and movements of life and families and brightness. Alien forms of existence, everywhere there was decay and loss and hopelessness of purpose, one by one, growing in numbers each day, they began to surface" is how the book ends. The writing is not easy for me to describe, so I'll let the critics do it: "wildly comic novel, which celebrates the dying of the light with the antic wit of the damned"; "an audacious mixing of near slapstick comedy with mass murder, realism and pulp-style fantasy"; "Marshall's style - blending the hilarious, the surreal, and the poignant - remains inimitable and not easily resisted." The scene

with the cop standing on scaffolding outside the 18th floor of a building, while holding off hordes of hungry seagulls (and the fierce Attila the Seagull) with a baseball bat, is hilarious.

THAI GOLD by Jason Schoonover, Bantam, 1988 (used), has a cover that screams "Indiana Jones" and oozes machismo throughout. The treasure this time is the 2,500-year-old head of Buddha, covered with gold and flashing perfect ruby eyes. The hero's profession and lifestyle are somewhat modelled after the author's, a dealer in antiquities for museum collections. I can't sympathize with the hero, who's been spending his money on booze and Bangkok whores. What a macho waste.

CHINA DOME by William H. Lovejoy, Pinnacle Books, March 1995, set in 1996, with the Chinese government building the largest, most advanced airport in the world, just north of Hong Kong. The government named it Deng Xiaoping Airport, but it is popularly nicknamed China Dome. Four companies (American, Russian, German, Franco-British) are bidding on an exclusive SST contract. The hero is an American ex-fighter pilot (Nam vet) representing the American company. He's macho, divorced, in his 40s. The heroine, sleek, rich, tall, sophisticated (fights the men off with a stick), represents the Franco-British company. It's instant physical attraction, yet as business rivals they're verbally cautious. At first opportunity, they're in the sack together. (Of course you don't want to read action novels with dweeby heroes/heroines, but must they both exude this many pheromones? At least they don't come on quite as strong as a couple from a Von Lustbader novel.) The hero has Clive Cussler novels in his library. No wonder there's a blurb from Clive Cussler on the book cover saying "a master storyteller"! Terrorists have caused two explosions at the (still under construction) airport. The Chinese government is trying to find out who, how, and why, with the cooperation of the 4 rival SST bidders. There's no evil Chinese government here; the terrorists are international, with only a few Chinese dupes. Most of the Chinese airport personnel are rather sympathetic. CHINA DOME is a pretty good read, aside from boring (to me) byplay between male and female leads (the usual smoldering glances, the icy silence between quarrels, etc).

FIRES OF EDEN by Dan Simmons, Harper Prism pb, September 1995, set on Hawaii, the Big Island, with parallel stories set in 1866 and now. In both times, demons have broken free of underground chambers where they'd been imprisoned by the goddess Pele, and they are killing people, missionaries in 1866, tourists now. In 1866 Samuel Clements and the fictional equivalent of Isabelle Bird climb into the lava tubes to end the menace. In the present it is a descendant of hers who attempts the deed. I like the strong female characters here. A group of Japanese has a minor role, with their interest in purchasing a luxury resort on the island. The American capitalist jerk trying to hide the evidence of tourist body parts, so he can unload the moneyloser of a resort, is a hoot. His name, Trumbo, is close enough to Trump. In one scene, a big black dog trots by with a hand in its mouth (as in YOJIMBO). The volcano sequences are spectacular. (In the 1800s Isabella Bird visited Japan, including the isolated Hokkaido, and wrote a fascinating travelog, available from Tuttle Books.)

A SAMURAI'S TALE by Erik Christian Haugaard, Houghton Mifflin trade pb, first published in 1984. Haugaard principally writes for boys, but this story about a young samurai in the service of one of Takeda Shingen's generals (16th century warlord period) would probably interest anyone who likes historical Japanese stories (most of us). It has male bonding, more than enough father figures, young romance/courtship with poetry, a genuine badger ghost, ronin, besieged castles and massacres. Oda Nobunaga is the same nasty warlord you love to hate. There's mention of a possible sequel at the end of the book (the untold story of vengeance for a dead master), but, as far as I know, that hasn't been written.

WILD CARDS: BLACK TRUMP (Book III of a New Cycle), edited by George R.R. Martin, Baen Books, August 1995, is the latest in a series set in a parallel world that was infected by an alien virus several decades ago. The world is divided into "jokers", those mutated by the virus into grotesque shapes; "aces", those mutated in a positive way, given super powers; "nats", natural people who haven't caught the virus. Jerry Strauss is an ace who can change his appearance to look like anyone else. In the latest book:

A face appeared at Belew's window. It was a handsome, round Asian face with deep soulful eyes. "Can't you pick a face and stick with it? Who the hell are you now?"

"Chow Yun Fat," the face said. "The Cary Grant of the Orient. He stars in all those John Woo action flicks. Chow Yun Fat is like a god in Asia. They'll never shoot at him." Chow Yun Fat showed them a suave smile.

Later - Chow Yun Jerry held up a hand, waved, smiled, strolled casually toward the blimp. The incoming fire ceased. "Chow Yun Fat!" the defenders exclaimed in unison. Then they all raised their rifles and cut loose for all they were worth.

"Of course," Belew said conversationally, "John Woo is the most outspokenly anti-Communist filmmaker in Asia, and the local boys may have figured they could reap some Brownie points by dusting off his pet star, cultural icon or no."

By the end of the book, Jerry Strauss gets to meet John Woo.

I flipped again through the pages of MEMOIRS OF AN ASIAN MOVIEGOER by Mel Tobias, published in 1982. On page 207 is a photo of "new matinee idol from tv land, Chow Yum (sic) Fat in Ann Hui's THE STORY OF WU VIET. The film is commendable for the sensitive performance and striking handsome presence of lead Chow Yun Fat (one of Hong Kong's box office attractions). Chow has a sympathetic "loner" look and bottled emotional intensity that he projects to great advantage." Parts of the movie plot seem prophetic: "Wu Viet (Chow Yun Fat) is the South Vietnamese ex-soldier who reaches the shores of Hong Kong as a last refugee" (the last helicopter out of Vietnam in A BETTER TOMORROW III). "Wu later consents to be a paid assassin and professional killer."

On page 179 (reprinted from an article on John Woo from the Hong Kong Standard, September 20, 1977): "One of Hong Kong's latest and hottest show biz properties today is a young director, John Y.S. Woo. He has only three kung fu films to his credit, none of them worthy of superlatives. 'I have been a director for only 4 years. I do not believe that age is vitally important when it comes to making films. Real talent and luck are what really

counts. You've got to be at the right place and at the right time and to be able to accurately feel the pulse of the cinematic audience as well. The next story I'd like to take a crack at is something James Bondish with a Hong Kong flavour.' He is not inclined to make sex movies, but is rather prone to depicting violence. John does not subscribe to the view that violence on screen leads to violence in the streets. 'On the contrary, a lot of people get relief by seeing someone being beaten up,' he added. His biggest dream is to make a film which will be accepted internationally, from Cannes, Berlin to Milan. The world of show business is full of dreams and sometimes they do come true."

ZINES: Tom Weisser, new editor of Asian Trash Cinema (ATC), has replaced the lively letter column with more reviews of Japanese crap films (with women being kidnaped, mistreated, the usual garbage). The new reviewers are rather ignorant. One thinks the Tokugawa family is the Japanese imperial line!? Another said Terry Tsurugi ripped out a human heart (no, it was a larynx) at the end of STREETFIGHTER #1. Weisser announced that ATC has a new bi-monthly schedule. Oops, I "forgot" to include the ATC address here. Time to let this subscription lapse.

The publication schedule of CineRaider hasn't changed (still 3 times a year or less), but the columns, reviews, and film coverage are always excellent. Craig Ledbetter, former ATC editor, is now doing some writing for CineRaider. 3 great issues for \$12, from Richard Akiyama, PO Box 240226, Honolulu, HI 96824-0226.

Don't miss out on ASIAN EYE #2, 90+ pages of HK movie reviews, with a large section on gyonshi and horror movies! This is the Summer '95 issue, for \$7 US (includes postage), (no checks) money order or Canadian cash to "Colin Geddes" at 253 College Street, #108, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R5, Canada. It's got a nifty wraparound cover drawing by T.S. Hart, of a gyonshi shot at by arrows. Colin promises more Japanese film coverage next issue. He has a supply of old-to-somewhat-recent Chinese movie posters he is selling for between \$5 and \$50 each. No Shaw posters. For a list of what's available, send \$1 to his friend Cameron Scholes, 20 St. Patrick Street, Suite 811, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2Y4, Canada.

KUNG FU GIRL #2 was sent out in September '95. You won't find it in the zine, but make checks payable to "Keith Allison". His new address is: KFG (or Keith Allison), 718-210 SW 16th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601. Issues 1-2 should be available for \$4 each, includes postage. #2 lacks page numbers, but toward the end of the issue is a half-page of Internet web page addresses where you can find info on Hong Kong cinema, Godzilla and sentai stuff. Keith has put together a second good fat issue here, with reviews of Hong Kong movies: kung fu, drama, romance, ghostly, with a couple of pages of Chiau Sing-chi movies, some stuff on Chow Yun-fat, a review section on Hong Kong pop CDs, coverage of some Japanese musical group, a partial episode guide to Patlabor, coverage of various other weird and Asian cinema zines, and a page on the 1994 Godzilla movie. This is a definite fanzine, with a fanzine feel (no, not mimeo, but photocopy) and fanstyle writing, not slick cinema commentary as can be found in the latest -

HONG KONG FILM CONNECTION Vol III #III (Sept '95),

subscription (one year, 6 issues) for \$15, from Hong Kong Film Connection, PO Box 867225, Plano, TX 75086-7225. The new issue has a letter column! and a change in attitude toward complaints about subscriptions. They give you a phone number to call if your subscription check hasn't been cashed within 3 weeks (it took 4 months to cash mine) and they really want to hear about your subscription problems (they say). This is a really professional looking issue! (still needs a proofreader (sic) though) 40 pages, old and new movie reviews; with this zine I don't need to ask a certain movie collector what's she's talking about when she mentions certain recent titles, and I'm clueless (hi, DB). Read it and you too can sound expert on the 1995 HK movies! There's also a dense scholarly article (plenty of footnotes on its sources) on Wong Kar-wai, a Yuen Clan filmography and article, an interview with Robin Shou (MORTAL KOMBAT), more stuff coverage of Chow Yun-fat. Keith Allison and HKFC critics complain about Wong Jing's misogyny, but I **still** like BOYS ARE EASY.

VIDEO WATCHDOG #27, March? April? 1995, PO Box 5283, Cincinnati, OH 45205-0283, maybe available for \$8 as a backissue now. This issue has sections on Ed Wood and John Carpenter films, with 9 pages of reviews on HK and Japanese films (11 movies) written by Eric Sulev and John Charles. What's so great about VW is that the reviews not only cover various supernatural, horror and fantasy films, but also tell you the defects and plusses of the tapes and LDs they're sold on. "Even with its technical limitations and atrocious subtitles, this is the more faithful and respectful rendering" [the Golden City Cinema LD of A BETTER TOMORROW, as opposed to the dubbed Worldvision/Republic video].

VIDEO RENTALS: BEHEADING 1,000 is about the (Ming dynasty?) Emperor's executioner who has beheaded 999 criminals before his retirement. The last 7 he beheaded were members of a bloodthirsty killer band, the 8 Immortals. Only one of the 8 has managed to stay free. An imperial guard almost caught her but was bewitched by her beauty. They made love, then she castrated him and escaped. The executioner is married, has a lovely daughter, as well as a rather inept executioner apprentice (looks like, may be Chien Shao-hou) in love with the daughter. The executioner retires to open a wayside restaurant in the wilderness. A new servant (the disguised 8th Immortal) kills his wife and serves up those infamous "pork buns". Confronted by the executioner, she kills herself. It is mentioned that, because she dressed in red for her death, she will return as a vengeful ghost. Then why did the court dress the other Immortals in red before their executions? So all will return as vengeful spirits, of course. The poor executioner is about to be killed by the ghosts, but cuts his own throat with his own weapon. His sword has now slain 1,000 people (mostly evildoers), endowing it with magical properties. The apprentice can now use it to slay some angry Immortal ghosts, the rest being finished off by a spiritual friend of the executioner. The spiritual friend had given the executioner some help earlier in the movie, but had to leave, to arrange his sister's wedding. Now the wedding party shows up to fight the evil ghosts. The party is accompanied by a band of monks, among them the former imperial guard. The ghost of

the female Immortal bows before the monks and finds redemption. (She had said she was raised by the Immortals, so how could she help but become a killer, like them.) The other ghosts face unpleasant karmic recyclings in future. The executioner becomes a heavenly warrior and the apprentice marries the daughter. This may be an old legend, of interest for the supernatural elements.

FROM ZERO TO HERO with recognizable faces, but I don't recall the names. B*I*Z*A*R*R*E. The artist for a popular Hong Kong comicbook, "Superman in the Messy World", is exploited by his boss, publisher of a sleazy line of comics. A popular movement stages demonstrations against the publication of comics heavy on the sex and violence, like the HK reprints of Japanese manga and their HK imitators. "Superman in the Messy World" looks more like a recent Marvel or Image superhero comic; it's among the targetted comics. (The artwork is very good.) The artist lives with his mother, the principal of an elementary school. She's with the demonstrators, has no idea what her son does for a living. (That's a bit strange too.) The artist is a jerk, carries his artwork around in big envelopes tied with string. He always bangs into people, the envelope bursts open, and the artwork goes flying. So he misses deadlines, and his boss is ready to replace him with someone cheaper. He also feels somewhat guilty about drawing an exploitation comic. He has this fantasy, as the costumed "Superman" he rescues "Miss Daihatsu" from murderous gunmen, whom he destroys with buckshot to their rearends. Then he drapes Miss Daihatsu across the hood of a car and they have wild sex. One night he's rushing down some steps with his artwork, a deadline to meet; he trips, the artwork goes flying. (A street bum uses the pages for fire kindling and toilet paper.) He wakes at the bottom of the steps, and discovers he suddenly has a Super Punch, a Super Kick (no flying ability, x-ray vision or anything like that, however), not a dream! Like CatWoman in BATMAN RETURNS, he makes himself a Messy World Superman costume and goes out to rescue crime victims. His first rescuee is a nun, being mugged. Miss Daihatsu she ain't, but, in his fantasy, she is. And after rescuing her, he...(fadeout). Next day's headline is about a costumed, masked sex pervert. Next he rescues father-and-little-girl street peddlers from protection thugs. He carries off the father, sets him on the hood of a car (fadeout). Next day, more sex pervert headlines. Then he rescues a dog from being beaten. "Miss Daihatsu" he murmurs to the dog (fadeout). He realizes he has a serious problem. The movie has some genuine villains, a gang (skilled martial artists) that traps young women to sell into prostitution. They kidnap the daughter of his mother's friend. The female lead sleeps with a tv producer to get her own news show, then betrays the hero on her show (a regular Jenny Jones). Like him, she has compromised her principles. It's a typical modern HK schizo film, part comedy, part serious, all lightweight.

KWONDOSCOPE By Robert Mallory

At the price of \$69.50 for Scarecrow Press' new book The Encyclopedia Of Martial Arts Movies the first question to be considered is this: is it worth the money? I would say yes for two reasons. One, nothing on this scale has been since Meyers, Harlib and the Palmers put together the tome Martial Arts Movies: From Bruce Lee To The Ninja and as such it is a must have for we fans. We're talking a comprehensive listing of all films of the genre from 1920 through 1994 with most of them reviewed and in most cases rated. The second reason is the fact that there are so few books on these type of films that it is not valid to balk at paying even a hefty sum for such a definitive work as done here by Bill and Mary Palmer and Richard Meyers (it is unfortunate that Amy Harlib was not approached to play a part in this. Perhaps Amy should consider coming up with a book herself. I'd buy it!).

In an effort to make this book as complete as possible the authors even included an Addendum to cover films they would have otherwise missed. My future rentals and purchases of videos will be greatly influenced by the information given in this (as Poe would say) "curious volume of forgotten lore"! The book is near perfect.

The preface remarks that some errors are bound to be made and here am I to tell you about them. First off in the listing of the four movie "Shaolin Series" the second film is listed at one point as being "Shaolin Martial Arts" and at another point as being "Disciples Of Death". Obviously more than one series

is involved here. Also it is stated that Bruce Lee appeared in ~~three~~ episodes of Longstreet. Lee appeared in a total of four. Also I see "Goodbye Bruce Lee...His Last Game Of Death" and "New Game Of Death" listed separately and given different ratings. Thing is, they are the same film! "Street Fighter Counterattacks" and "Street Fighter's Last Revenge" are also one film (we're talking Sonny Chiba here, not some video game). The question is asked in the text if "Ninja Assassins" is the same film as "Enforcer From Death Row". Happily the answer is yes; I'd hate to think there were two different movies that bad!

Unhappily Jackie Chan's "Dragon Fist" is misidentified as being another of his films, namely "Dragon Lord". And when it aired on T.V. the first time Shogun ran over nine hours (minus commercials!). Left out altogether was Fred Williamson's martial art movie That Man Bolt. We'll never see it put out on video at this rate. As for "Infra Man" he was not battling aliens from outer space but instead was combating Subterraneans from the hollow earth. At least it was in this movie! In regards to "Cantonese Iron Kung Fu" using a Lion style one merely has to consult the book or watch the training video. (both written by Dr. Leung Ting) called Shaolin Ten-Animal Form Of Kwan Tak Hing (yes, that Kwan Tak Hing and he not only demonstrates the ten sub-styles but demonstrates some of the applications among other people) to see that such a style exists. So the next time that Monty Python guy says he wants to fight the "Lion" we can have Kwan Tak Hing oblige him. Now don't make me type that name again! I haven't seen the film "Black List" but I suspect Chen Sing's "Jiu-Jitsu" was really Chin-Na or Shou Chiao as Kung Fu's many grappling techniques fall under one (if not both) of these categories.

Now as the readers of M.A.M.A. know, Richard Meyers knows the story why The Big Boss and "Fistof Fury" were named over here by the Confusing titles of Fistsof Fury" and "The Chinese Connection respectively. In fact the story is told in this book correctly, so the alternate title for both films being "The Chinese Connection" was obviously a typo. If there is one thing I can relate to it's typing errors when a deadline is upon you. Apart from the listing for the movie "Fistsof Fury II" (later renamed the more accurate "Chinese Connection II") saying Bruce Li reprises Bruce Lee's role when he instead plays the brother, I really couldn't find any more mistakes in this 467 page book. And we are talking big pages here.

Actually this book covers even more ground than the title suggests as films with various of these actors are included even when it is not a film of the martial arts genre, such as Marlowe", most of Segal's movies, "Majin" etc. and the review tells you when a movie is not really a martial art flick. For some strange reason Cannonball II" is not listed even though Jackie Chan had more screen time (and fighting!) than in the first one. Personally I think it would be a better idea to list these other genre movies together in the back like they did the Addendum. Just a thought.

There is some intriguing information in the entries such as the one for "Bloodsport" where it says that Frank Dux's(a real life person played here by Jean Claude Van Damm) claims have been debunked. I can't say that such news surprises me as I have a suspicious mind but I do wish the authors gave the source of the debunking as I'd love to read that myself. Can any one out there give me the details on this?

Speaking of Jean Claude Van Damme I noticed that this book gives a favorable review for one of my favorites, "No Retreat, No Surrender".

I've always enjoyed the "urban legend feel" to this movie, something it has in common with "The Last Dragon") and never felt the objections to the movie were valid. Mind you there are valid objections to the movie, it's just that none of it's critics ever use the right ones! Our hero Jason is supposed to be trained in Japanese Karate by his father but instead fights like a Taekwondo stylist. These methods get his head handed to him ("Here, I believe this is yours!") through out most of the movie. So he gets retrained, this time by Bruce Lee's ghost and wins, not by using Jeet Kune Do (Bruce did not teach high chambered kicks for example) but by using the same "watch me telegraph my kick" tactics that lost him all those street fights earlier! Now there is a valid criticism of this movie!

Some of the other entries could have given some more information. The one for "Men Of The Dragon" neglects to mention that it was a T.V. movie, not a theatrical release (at least not in this country). Or that the Mas Oyama biographies "Champion Of Death" and "Karate Bear Fighter" (wherein he is played by Sonny Chiba) were actually film adaptations from the Japanese comic books (the term for them is Maanga I believe) and as such were not intended to be accurate and were not represented to be true to Mas Oyama's life. So lighten up, people. If Mas Oyama was upset with the movies he wouldn't have done a kata for the opening credits for both these movies, dig? And speaking of Sonny Chiba (as I frequently do) there was no mention that his "movie" The Bodyguard was taken from his T.V. show "The Bodyguards", (except for some footage shot here of Aaron Banks and William Louie). Which reminds me, in the listing for William's film "The Old Master" (also starring Jackie Chan's old er...Master in real life, Yu Chanyuan) did come out on videotape

under the overused title "Master Of Kung Fu". When my best friend Nick Kalogeras and I met Mr. Louie at the end of one of Aaron Bank's Oriental World Of Self Defense shows he was surprised to find out from me that this film was out on video (somebody must have been cheating William of his share of the residuals or something). Nick eventually bought the video of the movie for him in case you were wondering.

It would have been good if the entry for Jim Kelly's movie The Black Samurai had mentioned that the film was an adaptation of the Black Samurai books written by Marc Olden. Or that the entry for "Kung Fu Fever" featured Ron Van Clief as the very worthy opponent for Dragon Lee. Instead we get for the entry of the movie "Pantyhose Hero" complaints about humor at the Gays expense. Here the heroes were trying to save them from a killer but still the reviewer felt the need to add Pro-Gay (not to be confused with Ben-Gay) Propaganda. Meanwhile Fred Williams has his most genre oriented film (That Man Bolt) unlisted, a literary source for a Jim Kelly film (The Black Samurai) goes unmentioned and a Ron Van Clief role (Kung Fu Fever) goes unnoticed and these are all Black Martial Artist/Actors! Clean up your own act before you decry discrimination. Not every one feels right and wrong are determined by what passes as Politically Correct this week anyway (what was P.C. a few years back would have been Anti-Gay so why liberals act like this is written in stone is beyond me). Besides, people who are not religious shouldn't preach to those who are. I think a Shaolin Monk once told me that....

Okay, I'll admit that I've been ultra (or is that "Infra") picky in reviewing this book. It was either that or page after page of raving on about what a great book this is. And it really is! It would be hard to imagine a more useful source of information on these

types of films. The amount of research this book must have required had to be immense. And as I mentioned much earlier in this review, there has been quite a scarcity of books on this subject. You could fill a library (well, maybe a private library) with books on Horror Movies or Science Fiction or Fantasy Films. Maybe you could do the same with books on Mystery/Suspense films. But our favorite genre? Let me put it this way; if all the books on this type of movie were put together you could count them on your hands and have fingers left over. I mean you wouldn't have to worry about needing to take your shoes or boots off if you know what I mean. I suppose that comes as a disappointment to you Billy Jack fans.....

So what am I trying to say? Namely that while no one is apt to agree with every review here the fact remains that this wealth of data is not overpriced even at seventy dollars. In other words, if you have a yen towards these movies (and would you be reading this if you weren't? What are you, a Spy working for one of those other genres?) then by all means start saving up all your Yens to buy a copy of this book. It is a bonafide "must-have" item. The Britannica was never like this! Till we meet again what can I say but

BYE-YAAH!

Trip to Japan - July 1994
Part Four

by Robert Walsdorff

July 21

I decided to go on my own to Shinjuku to practice traveling on the subways. I found it! After looking around, I took the JR train in the other direction and got off at Yurakucho and found the Tourist Information Center. I got some maps and pamphlets and took pictures with my video camera.

Back at the hotel my friend, Masanobu, called and said he would drop by at 7:00. While waiting, I saw an American cartoon show, "Inspector Gadget," dubbed into Japanese. It was obviously mimicking Inspector Clousseau. Masanobu arrived and we took the train to Akakusa. There were lots of old buildings, interesting architecture, and colorful side streets. We saw Sensouji Temple, a pagoda, etc. Masanobu said the area was popular with Caucasian tourists.

We ate at an Italian restaurant called Cake and Pasta. We had Calbona (spaghetti and ham in cream sauce) and iced tea. He asked me many questions about how to reply in English when answering the phone at work.

After returning to the hotel by subway I got a call from my friend, Yoshihisa. We made plans to meet. I also called my friend, Naoki, and we made plans to meet.

July 22

I spoke to my brother, Howard, on the phone in the morning. Yoshihisa arrived an hour late. He first went to the wrong Miyako Inn. He had a big van and we drove to Shinjuku. We went to a restaurant near the train station and had okonomiyaki. At the train station I met Jean Dewey, an American who has been living in Japan since 1988 teaching English. We have corresponded for years, but this was the first time I met her. We went shopping for CDs and video tapes.

We went by train to Mita, where we met Naoki and Keiichi at the hotel. We exchanged gifts and then went to the post office where I had packages to mail.

Jean had to leave as she was going away for the weekend. Yoshinori and Kenzaburo arrived at the hotel. The five of us went out to a restaurant and had an elaborate meal. Keiichi announced that he had just learned that he was becoming a father.

July 23

Kenzaburo picked me up at the hotel at 6:30 and we took the train to Kokubunji. I hadn't eaten breakfast, so Kenzaburo insisted we eat breakfast at Mos Burgers, which Kenzaburo called "the most famous burgers in all of Japan." I had a teriyaki burger, french fries, hot dog, and strawberry shake. We then met Satayo, Yoshinori, and Naoki. Naoki drove us by car to Kofu. It was a long drive with plenty of tolls, tunnels, heavy traffic, and beautiful scenery. As Naoki drove Ken turned to me and asked if I had taken out life insurance before taking the trip!

We saw the Takeda Shingen shrine. They had my picture taken in costume as Takeda Shingen and paid for a plaque. We visited the museum, grave sight, and buildings.

We had a special lunch in Kofu, a dish served only in the Land of Kai. It was called Kosoke. It was a delicious stew with chicken, carrots, string beans, sweet potatoes, long potatoes, thick udon noodles, etc. Kofu is a very attractive small city with a beautiful backdrop of the mountains.

We then proceeded to Mount Fuji. We rode up to the middle area. We walked around and took pictures of the scenery. Mount Fuji is, of course, Japan's most famous mountain and world famous. We did not climb it as that would take a full day and it was already late afternoon.

On the way back we stopped at a stand to get fresh corn on the cob, plums, and grapefruit juice. We then stopped at an ice lava cave and went through the slippery and challenging trek inside. We then stopped at the Royal Host Restaurant, an American style restaurant, and made plans for the next day.

I said goodnight to Naoki and Yoshinori and went to the train station with Kenzaburo and Satoyo. Satoyo said that she couldn't join us the next day as she had to go home. Kenzaburo went with me to Tamachi Station.

July 25

I met Naoki, Kenzaburo, and Yoko at Tamachi Station the next morning and we ate at an American style restaurant called Love's for breakfast. I had mentioned that I had gone to Akakusa with Masanobu and enjoyed it but regretted I didn't have my video camera with me. Kenzaburo insisted we go there so I could take pictures. I did. I also got many things at the mall for friends and family. We went to the Star Shop which had photos of Japanese performers. I also sampled authentic senbei for the first time and an unique isotonic Japanese soft drink.

We took a 40 minute boat ride down the Sumida River. The scenery was great. I had mentioned casually not finding a Sanada Hiroyuki CD when I went CD and video shopping in Shinjuku, so Kenzaburo insisted upon taking me to some stores to find it! We had no luck at first, but Ken kept taking us to one place after another until I found it!

We also went to the Imperial Palace but there weren't enough people for them to have a tour inside, so we had to settle for going around the grounds outside. After still another elaborate meal (Kenzaburo said he thought I put on weight since arriving in Japan) I said goodbye to Naoki and Yoko. Kenzaburo and I took the train and took some pictures of Tokyo Tower at night.

July 25

This was my last day in Japan, but there wasn't much time to go anywhere as check out time was at 12:00. I saw Abarenbo Shogun on television. I took the shuttle bus to the airport. It was fun seeing some famous sights including Tokyo Disneyland from the window. I got to the airport by 3:30 and went through customs. I took a flight from Tokyo to Los Angeles, then from Los Angeles to Dallas, and finally Dallas to Nashville. I met my brother at the airport and rode in his truck back home, tired but filled with memories of a very exciting second trip to Japan.

DOUBLE KITCHEN

ダブル・キッチン

TBS FAMILY COMEDY SERIES の巻

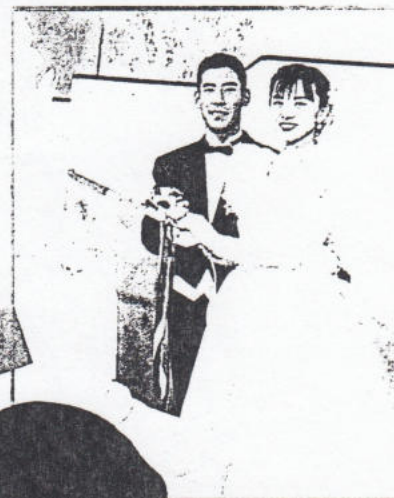
ストーリーは永遠のテーマ「嫁と姑」の熱き闘い。息子が結婚して、嫁を連れて来るのは生まれたときから分かっていたけれど…、いざ迎えてみるとかわいさ余って憎さ100倍!? きっと心底嫌っているわけではないのだろうが、姑が嫁をいじめるのは女の習性? それとも日本の伝統?

SHINOBU
&
MIYAKO
(TOGETHER)

出会い…



結婚…

楽しい
結婚生活の
はずが…SHINOBU
MARRIES
MIYAKO
(above)

バトルは「最初の晩さん」から始まった



STARRING

YAMAGUCHI TOMOKO
AS MIYAKOTAKASHIMA
MASANOBU
AS SHINOBU

東京近郊・つくし野の2世帯住宅はとってもすてき!

しかも、住んでいる人たちはみんな個性満点

ここで女の同士の闘いがあるなんて...

花岡家長男

忍・28歳

(高嶋政伸)



HANAOKA
MIVAICO

29 YEARS
OLD

OFFICE
EMPLOYEE



2階の住人: 忍・都夫婦

忍の妻

都・29歳

(山口智子)

HANAOKA
SHINOBU

28 YEARS
OLD

SALARY MAN

MIYAKO'S
MOTHER
TANIMURA
YAEKO
53
YEARS
OLD



(赤座美代子)

谷村八重子・53歳

都の母

その 母同士の対立と
夫のふがいなさ



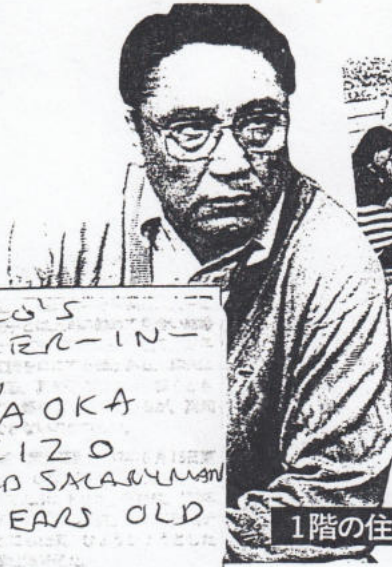
その 嫁は働きに出かけ
姑が家に残る



▲都にとって、八重子のいる実家は気の休まる場

BOTTOM LEFT PICTURE: MIYAKO & MOTHER
ABOVE CENTER PICTURE: SHINOBU
WITH HIS MOTHER & MOTHER IN-LAW.
ABOVE RIGHT PICTURE: MIYAKO ON TELEPHONE
CALLING HOME FROM THE OFFICE.

忍の父
啓三・59歳
(伊東四朗)



▲花岡家は行事好きの家族。が、嫁は姑にこき使われる

忍の母
真知子・57歳
(野際陽子)



MIYAKO'S
FATHER-IN-LAW,
HANAOKA
KEIZO
RETIRED SALARYMAN
59 YEARS OLD

1階の住人: 啓三・真知子夫婦とるみ

MIYAKO'S
MOTHER-IN-LAW,
HANAOKA
MACHIKO
57 YEARS OLD
HOUSE KEEPER



忍の妹・次女
るみ・21歳
(坂井真紀)

HANAOKA
RUMI
21
YEARS
OLD



静の夫
寺田ユウノスケ・37歳
(佐野史郎)



忍の妹・長女
寺田静・24歳
(横山めぐみ)



TERAOA
YUNOSUKE
THE
MUSICIAN
HUSBAND.
HIS AGE: 37

HANAOKA
SHIZUKA
MARRIES
YUNOSUKE.
HER AGE: 24



THE AGES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HANAOKA FAMILY ARE LISTED.
MACHIKO ALWAYS POINTS OUT THAT HER DAUGHTER IN-LAW IS OLDER THAN HER SON. HOWEVER, SHE NEVER POINTS OUT THAT HER SON IN-LAW IS OLDER THAN HER DAUGHTER SHIZUKA.

HOWARD WALSDORFF P.O. BOX 247 GREENBRIER TN 37073-0247

ダブル・キッチン

VIDEO REVIEW: "DOUBLE KITCHEN"

CHARACTERS

HANAOKA MIYAKO
HANAOKA SHINOBU
SHIZUKA
RUMI
TANIMURA YAEKO
TERADA YUNOSUKE
MACHIKO
KEIZO

CAST

YAMAGUCHI TOMOKO
TAKASHIMA MASANOBU
YOKOYAMA MEGUMI
SAKAI MAKI
AKAZA MIYOKO
SANO SHIRO
NOGIWA YOKO
ITO SHIZO

SYNOPSIS:

THE COMEDY SERIES EVOLVES AROUND THE NEWLYWEDS SHINOBU & MIYAKO. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN HOME BUT IT IS UPSTAIRS FROM MIYAKO'S IN-LAWS, MACHIKO & KEIZO. MIYAKO'S FATHER IN-LAW ISN'T A PROBLEM, BUT HER MOTHER IN-LAW TREATS HER BADLY. MACHIKO CRITICIZES MIYAKO. MACHIKO BELIEVES A WIFE SHOULD NOT WORK & MIYAKO WORKS. MACHIKO THINKS THAT MIYAKO NEGLECTS SHINOBU. MACHIKO DOES NOT LIKE MIYAKO'S COOKING. SHE THINKS SHE IS WASTEFUL LIKE MOST YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY AND SHE NEVER THANKS HER FOR ALL THE THINGS (OR SHALL WE SAY, MEDDLING) SHE DOES. SHINOBU HAS 2 SISTERS. THE OLDER SISTER, SHIZUKA MARRIES YUNOSUKE, A MUSICIAN. YUNOSUKE'S IN-LAW PROBLEM IS THE REVERSE OF MIYAKO'S. KEIZO DOESN'T WANT HIS DAUGHTER MARRIED TO A MUSICIAN. AS THE SERIES CONTINUES, KEIZO RETIRES. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS RETIREMENT MONEY IS LESS THAN WHAT HE WANTED. KEIZO IS SEEKING EMPLOYMENT WHICH ADDS FUEL TO THE FIRE. THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER IN THE HANAOKA FAMILY IS RUMI, WHO GETS ALONG WELL WITH MIYAKO. RUMI IS LOOKING FOR A JOB & MIYAKO'S MOTHER YAEKO OFFERS TO HELP. RUMI SAYS SHE ISN'T INTERESTED IN MARRIAGE BUT PREFERS A CAREER (BUT THAT WILL CHANGE LATER). THE SERIES IS ABOUT THE NEWLYWEDS, MIYAKO & SHINOBU & THE FAMILY.

COMMENT

I ENJOY "DOUBLE KITCHEN" VERY MUCH. IT IS ONE OF THE BEST COMEDY SERIES EVER. TAKASHIMA MASANOBU PLAYED SHINOBU IN THIS SERIES IN 1993 AFTER WORKING IN "HOTEL" AND THEN THE ACTOR RETURNED TO "HOTEL" AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL SERIES RETURNED. SO HE WORKED IN "DOUBLE KITCHEN" IN-BETWEEN THE "HOTEL" SERIES. TAKASHIMA MASANOBU IS EXCELLENT IN THE ROLE OF SHINOBU. YAMAGUCHI TOMOKO IS OUTSTANDING AS MIYAKO IN "DOUBLE KITCHEN" AND LATER THE ACTRESS PLAYED THE FEMALE LEAD IN "LA BELLE EQUIPPE KITCHEN" WHICH I LIKE TO REVIEW LATER FOR THE A.P.A. IF YOU EVER HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH "DOUBLE KITCHEN", PLEASE DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND WATCH IT.

ASIAPHILE # 48! WRITTEN + PRODUCED BY AMY HARLIB, 同安美, 212 W 22 ST # 2N, NY, NY 10011-2756
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IT'S HONG KONG FILM FESTIVAL SEASON AGAIN! IN WHAT WILL BECOME A TRADITION, I'VE HONORED FESTIVAL BROCHURES AND SENT THEM ALONG TO MAFFAPA WITH MY USUAL CONTRIBUTION SO THAT EACH OF MY COMPATRIOTS CAN ENJOY THE LOVELY PHOTOS AND VALUABLE INFO CONTAINED THEREIN.

I, PERSONALLY SAW "THE NEW LEGEND OF SHAOLIN", "ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA V", "THE BRIDE WITH WHITE HAIR II", "BUTTERFLY LOVERS" + "FIST OF LEGEND" - THE LAST BEING ONE OF THE ALL TIME GREATEST 5 OR 6 MARTIAL ARTS MOVIES EVER MADE. I CAN'T PRAISE IT HIGHLY ENOUGH. THE OTHERS WERE ALL SOLID, ENJOYABLE, EXCITING AND INTERESTING EXEMPLARS OF THE GENRE OR SUB-GENRES BUT "FIST OF LEGEND" REALLY SHONE AS A PURE MARTIAL ART MOVIE WITH MORE GOREGEOUS REALISTIC MOVEMENT THAN NEARLY ANYTHING ELSE EVER DONE PLUS IT HAD A GOOD PLOT, CHARACTERS AND EVERYTHING ELSE TOO. I ALSO SAW SOMETHING SO TERRIBLE, SO DISAPPOINTING I DON'T UNDERSTAND ITS APPEAL - "EXECUTIONERS". THE STORY HAD NO REAL LOGIC; THE THREE AMAZONS DID NOT GET ENOUGH TO DO & WHEN THEY DID, THE SFX WERE TOO SILLY & EXAGGERATED; IN BETWEEN ACTION SCENES THE MELODRAMA LACKED INTEREST; THE VILLAIN WAS SUCH AN INSANE, CACKLING CARICATURE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY AS A THREAT; THE SETS, COSTUMES WERE DREARY, DREARY, DREARY. IF THIS WAS MEANT TO BE CAMP IT TOOK ITSELF TOO SERIOUSLY (TOO MANY AWFUL SONGS FOR INSTANCE AT INCONGRUOUS MOMENTS), OR WAS TOO EXTREME TO BE FUNNY AND WAS SIMPLY STUPID. DAMN ME FOR A HERETIC BUT I JUST DON'T GET IT. I'M GLAD I NEVER SAW "THE HERETIC TRIO."

I ALSO SAW "BANDIT QUEEN" WHICH I RECOMMEND HIGHLY AS A GUT-WRENCHING, HARD-HITTING DOCDRAMA WITH EXCELLENT PRODUCTION VALUES. IN ADDITION TO THE SENSATIONALISTIC CONTENTS MENTIONED IN THE ARTICLE, ONE COMES TO APPRECIATE THE SUBTEXTS: THE HORRIBLE SEXUAL POLITICS OF BRUTALITY AGAINST WOMEN IN SOUTH INDIA; THE EVILS OF THE CASTE SYSTEM; THE HEROIC SPIRIT THAT CAN RISE ABOVE THESE THINGS. VIEWERS OF "BANDIT QUEEN" WILL ALSO GET TO SEE STARKLY BEAUTIFUL SCENERY, LOCAL, EXOTIC SOUTH INDIAN COLOR AND TO HEAR THE MAGNIFICENT SCORE BY NASRUT FATEH ALI KAHN.

Outlawed!

Indian censors consign a searing biopic to the shelf

By RICHARD CORLISS (NEWSWEEK)

RAPE VICTIM. MARAUDER. MURDERER. Superstar! Phoolan Devi, an outcast Hindu woman, became a folk hero as head of a band of outlaws preying on India's corrupt elite. Part Joan of Arc, part Ma Barker, on Feb. 14, 1981, she staged her own St. Valentine's Day massacre, leading the slaughter of 22 villagers she suspected of aiding her enemies. Yet her surrender, in 1983, was on her own terms, to the cheers of 10,000 supporters. On her release from prison last year, three political parties asked her to run for office.

Bandit Queen, written by Mala Sen and directed by Shekhar Kapur, is a vibrant, instructive document with a fierce star performance by Seema Biswas. The film has an Indian heart but a Hollywood pulse; it moves with the fevered outrage of an Oliver Stone melodrama—*Natural Born Killers* meets *Heaven and Earth*. Most Indian movies are either humid musical fables or languid art films in the Satyajit Ray mold. *Bandit Queen* is neither. It is an assaultive experience, blistering with ripe obscenities, the frontal nudity of its star and three stark scenes in which Phoolan is raped—enough to have the film banned 10 times over in a country where a bare shoulder can send the censors frothing.

Bandit Queen was indeed banned. But Kapur believes that the censors, who demanded 25 significant cuts, have another agenda: "To them the film's most offensive aspect is its depiction of the caste system. To expose this hierarchy of inequality is the worst sin I've committed."

Devi, who sued to stop a Toronto Film Festival screening of *Bandit Queen*, has since settled with the producers and, says Kapur, "now stands by the film." But the Indian government would not grant her a passport to attend the U.S. premiere. American filmgoers can see an exciting movie that brings Devi's story to life with passion but without passing judgment. In India, though, a venal game is being played: the upper-class guardians of public morality who once defamed this low-caste rebel are now ensuring that *Bandit Queen* remains an untouchable. ■



INDIAN UPRISING:
Biswas as Devi

RECOMMENDED
READING →

THE AGE OF HIROHITO

In Search of Modern Japan.
By Daikichi Irokawa.
Translated by Mikiso Hane
and John K. Urda.
163 pp. New York:
The Free Press.
\$25.

By Frank Gibney

WITH a reign that lasted from 1926 to 1989 (not counting three earlier years as regent for his ailing father), Hirohito was, along with Franz Josef of Austria and Victoria of Britain, one of the world's great dynastic survivors. Although the era over which he presided was optimistically named Showa (meaning, broadly speaking, "enlightened peace"), it encompassed the most turbulent events in Japan's — and, for that matter, the world's — history. Not long after his return from a celebrated trip to Europe, Regent Hirohito — the very model of a constitutional crown prince — was the target of a failed assassination attempt, part of the social turmoil that came after the disastrous Kanto earthquake of 1923. Only six years after Hirohito took the throne, the assassination of Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai, followed by later militarist uprisings, put an effective end to the so-called Taisho Democracy of the 1920's.

The military's conquest of Manchuria in 1931 was succeeded by the invasion of China in the late 1930's, which in turn led directly to World War II. That total war, in which some 10 million Japanese troops went out to fight in China and the Pacific islands, resulted in total defeat and total disaster, climaxed by the American firebombings of Japanese cities and then the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The surprisingly successful American occupation led in turn to social transformation and to the dynamic, churning economic superpower that Japan had become by Hirohito's death.

Through all the turbulence the Showa Emperor remained a remote, somewhat two-dimensional figure, one whose image changed from the general on the white horse reviewing the troops to the peaceful marine biologist in his laboratory to the avuncular head of state congratulating his citizens on their postwar prosperity. Through it all, few Japanese blamed their secular pontiff for anything. Even now, during the current soul-searching, his memory floats above the fray: while the older generation still sees him as a respected reminder of its history, younger Japanese think of him as part of the national furniture, if a bit irrelevant to the times.

Daikichi Irokawa, one of Japan's most distinguished historians, views things quite differently. In "The Age of Hirohito," a concisely written and marvelously insightful book on the Showa Emperor's life and times, Mr. Irokawa paints Hirohito as a bright but indecisive dynast, a complex man whose life was devoted to a single effort, on the whole successful, to preserve what one might call Japan's imperial connection. He shows how the would-be constitutional prince of the 1920's readily turned himself into the militarists' cheerleader of the 30's and 40's — despite his inner reservations about the wisdom of the war effort. And far from lauding Hirohito's decision to end the war when he did, Mr. Irokawa censures him for continuing to

Frank Gibney is the president of the Pacific Basin Institute in Santa Barbara, Calif., and the author of "Japan: The Fragile Superpower."

work for some kind of illusory military stalemate for fully a year after even Japan's generals were conceding that the war was lost. During that period, Mr. Irokawa reminds us, some 1.5 million Japanese died, along with many times more that number of Asians and also 50,000 young Americans. He concludes: "To absolve the Emperor of all responsibility for the war because of his decision to end it is to ignore the facts." In sum, Hirohito's responsibility for both bringing Japan into war and prolonging the suffering is "irrefutable."

It is of the utmost importance that a scholar of Mr. Irokawa's stature now makes this statement for a world audience, based as it is on a wealth of documentary evidence long available in Japan but rarely advertised to foreigners. At the conclusion of the war in August 1945 the Emperor was absolved of any responsibility by the American occupiers, who felt they needed his cooperation to govern Japan with a minimum of armed force. But this absolution only served to reinforce the tendency of Japanese Government leaders since that time to dodge any accountability for a record of wartime destruction and atrocity that has few parallels in modern history. Speaking of the millions of Japan's victims in Asia, Mr. Irokawa comments: "Even 45 years after the end of the war, Japan had not formally apologized to these people or compensated them. Can such a nation be said to have any moral principles?"

Despite his strong words on Hirohito's wartime role, Mr. Irokawa supports retaining some kind of emperor system in Japan (although he would prefer a monarch acting as a kind of national cultural conscience without being the official head of state). He acknowledges Hirohito's "unique talent as a leader" in restraining the military die-hards in 1945, in sustaining the national morale during the worst of the postwar days and in ultimately forging a considerable bond between throne and people. He severely criticizes the Japanese establishment, however — the news media included — for whitewashing the imperial failings. As he sees it, the greatest paradox of Showa political history was that the Emperor, "who had the absolute support of the Japanese people . . . did not use the people's power. Instead, he was manipulated by a small group of militarists and bureaucrats."

ALTHOUGH I have devoted the greater part of this review to Hirohito and war responsibility, I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the brilliant overview Mr. Irokawa gives us of life in Japan's postwar half-century. He is one of Japan's few social historians — and one of the world's best. While other writers on modern Japan have focused on economic or political history, Mr. Irokawa examines the extraordinary "life-style revolution" that turned a conservative, largely agrarian society into the wonder of the mass-consumption world. Feminist awareness, illness, the information society, mass murderers and the changing moods of popular songs all come under his microscope. This is, in the best sense of the phrase, a "life and times" book. The subtitle, "In Search of Modern Japan," is fully justified by the author's empathetic treatment of his subject — for Mr. Irokawa, now 70, is himself a product of the Showa era. The translators, moreover, have done a marvelous job of bringing "The Age of Hirohito," published in Japan in 1991, to an American audience; and Carol Gluck, a professor of Japanese history at Columbia University and no mean social historian herself, has written an illuminating foreword.

If I had to recommend a single recent book that could explain the fascinating, if often disturbing, complexity of modern Japan, this would be it. □

FESTIVAL HONG KONG

1 9 9 5

Cinema Village

22 East 12th Street, New York City (212) 924-3363
August 11 - September 7

FRI 8/11	SAT 8/12	SUN 8/13	MON 8/14	TUE 8/15	WED 8/16	THU 8/17
Return of the God of Gamblers 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:25, 12:40	The New Legend of Shaolin 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri 12, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Once Upon a Time in China V 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	The Bride with White Hair II 2:30, 4:15, 6, 7:45, 9:30	The New Legend of Shaolin 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Return of the God of Gamblers 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:25
FRI 8/18	SAT 8/19	SUN 8/20	MON 8/21	TUE 8/22	WED 8/23	THU 8/24
Twenty Something 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	Fist of Legend 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	He's a Woman, She's a Man 12, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Return of the God of Gamblers 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:25	C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Fist of Legend 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	He's a Woman, She's a Man 2, 4, 6, 8, 10
FRI 8/25	SAT 8/26	SUN 8/27	MON 8/28	TUE 8/29	WED 8/30	THU 8/31
City on Fire 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	Executioners 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	Butterfly Lovers 12, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Fist of Legend 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Twenty Something 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	City on Fire 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Executioners 2, 4, 6, 8, 10
FRI 9/1	SAT 9/2	SUN 9/3	MON 9/4	TUE 9/5	WED 9/6	THU 9/7
The New Legend of Shaolin 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	Once Upon a Time in China V 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12	The Bride with White Hair II 12:45, 2:30, 4:15, 6, 7:45, 9:30	Executioners 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Butterfly Lovers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	He's a Woman, She's a Man 2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Once Upon a Time in China V 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

A Presentation of Rim Film Distributors in association with Peter Chow International

Onto 97' and Beyond

Dawn. July 1, 1997. The People's Liberation Army march forcefully across the northern border of Hong Kong. Leading the way is a giant portrait of a smiling Mao in vivid color, half-immersed in a sea of red flags and banners. The chorus singing of International can be heard from afar as the penthouse office of CitiBank across the harbor. Filing behind the soldiers along the narrow dirt road is a herd of newly appointed



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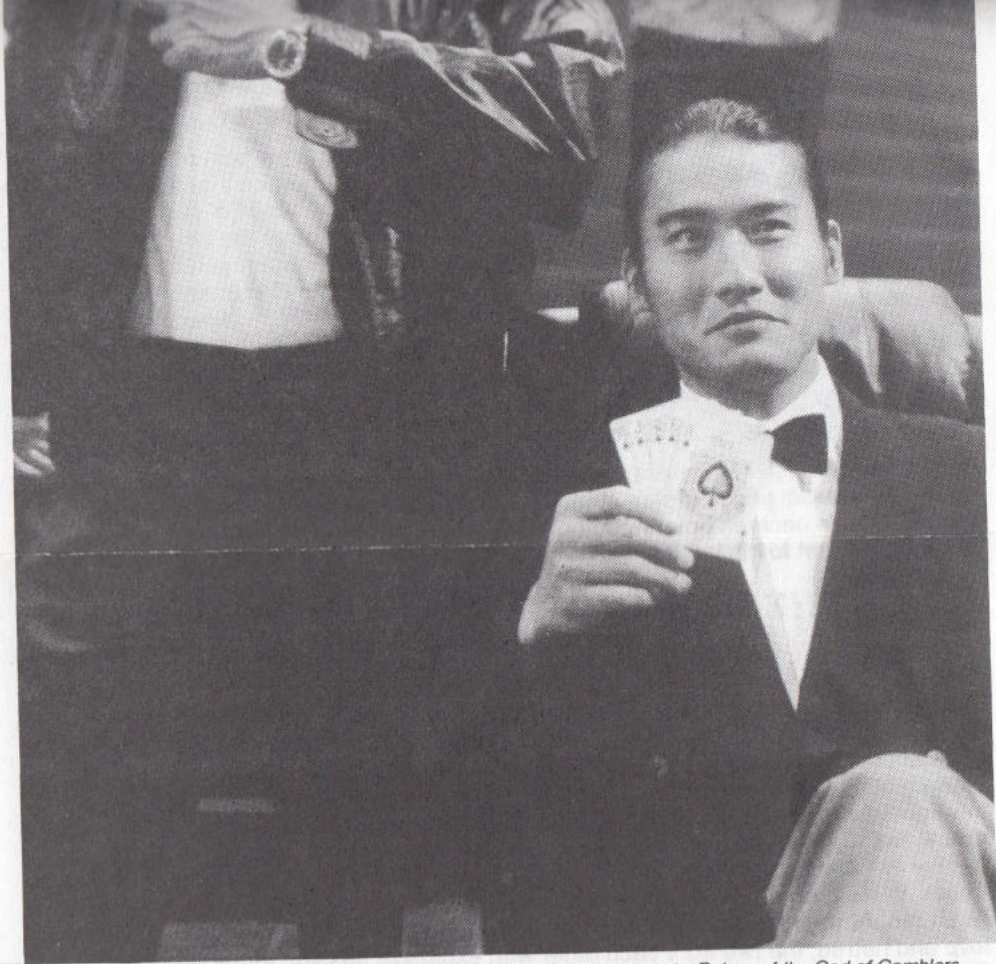
across the harbor... narrow dirt road is a herd of newly appointed government officials, community board members and censors, steps in unison, vigorously waving the little red flags (or books, one can never be too certain) to a small group of western tourists in front of a cheering crowd of mostly peasants...

Such scenario may never occur. Surely not all during that very first hour. But the inevitability of 1997, when Hong Kong will be reverted to China's sovereignty, has had profound impact upon its six millions plus denizens. Today, with the clock ticking and less than two years remaining, people are finally, with resignation, beginning to face the future for what it may hold for them.

The 1995 Festival Hong Kong will present a total of eleven films, the best and most representative of the latest of Hong Kong cinema. While they possess imagination and vibrant action typical to the Hong Kong film genre, in various ways these films express common concerns in Hong Kong: growing self doubt and identity crisis, desperate powerlessness, and the unspoken wish of a mysterious force that would somehow salvage everyone from all that is uncertain and grim.

This year's selections include many familiar names and genres. Old guards of the 80's such as Tsui Hark, Wong Jing, Leslie Cheung, Jet Li, Chow Yun-fat, Brigitte Lin, Michelle Khan, Maggie Cheung, and Anita Mui are at the pinnacle of

Mitchelle Kahn shows her kick in *Executioners*.



Chow Yun-fat (standing) and Tony Leung (seated) show their hands in *Return of the God of Gamblers*.

their career here. At the same time, special attention is rendered to new and daring visions propelled from the works by Peter Chan, Gordon Chan, Teddy Chan, Derek Yee and a sparkling new class of stars like Anita Yuen, Carina Lau, Carrie Ng, Chingmy Yau, Lau Chin-yun, and Zhao Wen-zhou who are positioning themselves to take center stage in one of the world's most dynamic cinema.

The four weeks long program will open five brand new films during the first week and three on the second weekend and three more the third weekend. There are more action heroes and heroines, more passions and passionate romances, and more explosions and explosive stunts than ever in this year's films. This annual Festival is an event one goes to in search for cool summer relief and dazzling excitement. It will be an experience that lingers on for a long time.

FESTIVAL HONG KONG

RETURN OF THE GOD OF GAMBLERS

1994 125min, Directed by Wong Jing, Starring Chow Yun-fat, Tony Leung, Chingmy Yau, Ng Sin-lin
8/11 FRI, 8/17 THU, 8/21 MON 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:25, 12:40 (FRI ONLY)

On the eve of his Hollywood debut, Chow Yun-fat returns as the God of Gamblers in this jovial comedy steered by Hong Kong's most popular director Wong Jing. A wicked and twisted Taiwanese gangster rips Chow from his bucolic retirement in Paris to return to the casino table so the charlatan can declare himself the new God and gain control of a multi-billion dollar fund. The savvy Chow plays the role with his usual characteristic charisma and addictive charm. Assisted by a hilarious Tony Leung (*The Lovers*), the two destroy the very threads of the gangster's scheme and cleverly fool everyone along the way. Revenge, thrills, and sex appeal culminate in a breathtaking final showdown. And to no one's surprise, the God of Gamblers restores peace for the world once again.

THE NEW LEGEND OF SHAOLIN

1994 95min, Directed by Wong Jing, Starring Jet Li, Tse Miu, Cheng Sung-yung, Deannie Yip, Chinmy Yau
8/12 SAT, 8/16 WED, 9/1 FRI 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (FRI & SAT)

This impressive array of outlandish comedy and fantastic martial arts with Jet Li as the stern hero has grabbed international attention since its release last year. Playing Hung Shi-kwan, a Shaolin militia leader, Li returns home to find his family brutally massacred and his blood brother turned against him due to an unjust court order. Li and his agile young son (Tse Miu) venture to revive the power of the Shaolin temple and battle those who have wronged them. Li masterfully confronts the notorious enemies hot on his trail, while tangling up with an ever-plotting mother and daughter team of swindlers. Superb martial arts rule this film as both Li and his adoring son (yes!) blaze across the screen with showers of kicks and stunts in spine-tingling sequences.

CEST LA VIE, MON CHERI

1993 98min, Directed by Derek Yee, Starring Anita Yuen, Lau Chin-yun, Carina Lau
8/13 SUN, 8/22 TUE 12 (SUN ONLY), 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

Director Yee spins gold out of the most melodramatic straw here. Min (Anita Yuen) is fragile, naive and forever cheerful and Kit (Lau Ching-yun) is handsome, aloof and world-weary. Yet as one they make a couple whose web they weave will determine both life and death. Winning her first Best Actress award in 1994, at age 22, for her riveting role in this film, which was also named Best Film, Yuen opens Kit's long-shut eyes to joy and beauty, paving the way for him to appreciate life and goodness. Even with glittering Hong Kong hanging in the background, poverty seems so irrelevant when they stroll the streets, holding and loving each other. But a *House on the Prairie* it is not, as terror and sadness await the couple, tormenting their happily-ever-after-ending in this heart-wrenching romantic film.



eye-opening sex scenes, *Twenty Something* is a story of a circle of friends searching for purpose in their casual encounters, one-night stands and after-hour drunken activities. The Chinese title of the film: *From Nine to Five*, that is, *From 9 pm to 5 am* suits the bed-swapping, smooching twenty-somethings who pour down pots of coffee after nights of debauchery to make it to work in the morning in one piece. But Alice adds a sparkle of sincerity to the film when she meets Mick and decides she wants more than empty flirts and passionate sex. She stands in utter contrast to her friends who continue nights throbbing with sexuality and spontaneous affairs.



FIST OF LEGEND

1994 102min, Directed by Gordon Chan, Starring Jet Li, Nakayama Shinobu, Chin Siu-ho, Kurata Yasuaki

8/19 SAT, 8/23 WED, 8/28 MON
2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (SAT ONLY)

Two decades after the first telling of this unforgettable tale, Bruce Lee's *Fist of Fury* returns full force to the screen in Jet Li's *Fist of Legend*. In the film, Li soars through the air with flawless martial arts technique,

mesmerizing the crowd as he paints the true story of the debacle of legendary Master Huo at the brutal hands of a Japanese master. Infuriated at this defeat, Li, the star student of Huo, dashes back from studying in Japan to seek ultimate revenge. Not even the fiercest among the conspirators can survive Li's center-stage extravaganza of martial arts attack. Li's pulse-quickening visual eruption of kinetic vehemence insures a seat-grabbing experience.

HE'S A WOMAN, SHE'S A MAN

1994 105min, Directed by Peter Chan, Starring Leslie Cheung, Anita Yuen, Carina Lau, Eric Tsang
8/20 SUN, 8/24 THU, 9/6 WED 12 (SUN ONLY), 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

Don't gender the players in this reversed *Tootsie* flick, for they may confuse you! Anita Yuen, who won her second Best Actress Award this year for her role, has since become the hottest and most desirable diva in Hong Kong. Yuen plays a devoted fan of popular singer Rose (Carina Lau) who is involved in a topsy-turvy relationship with her charismatic producer Ming (Leslie Cheung). Willing to go to any end to meet Rose, the willowy Yuen disguises herself as a man, and with a twist of fate is chosen to be the next budding star for the record company. Working closely and creatively with Ming, Yuen falls in love with him. But her feelings are just kids play until Ming begins to fall for Yuen, alas, the young man, in the midst of a stormy yet sexy relationship with Rose. Such hysterical gender-swapping guarantees one sumptuous story of love triangle in cinema.



ever after ending in this heart wrenching romantic film.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA (V)

1994 101min, Directed by Tsui Hark, Starring Zhao Wen-zhou, Rosamund Kwan, Max Mok, Kent Cheng

8/14 MON, 9/2 SAT, 9/7 THU 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (SAT ONLY)



Widely regarded as the best of Tsui Hark's impressive series that features the legendary Master Wong Fei-hung, a folk hero in South China at the turn of the century, this final installment continues at a tumultuous time in China when the country is bombarded by allied forces from the west resulting in total lawlessness and anarchy. Master Wong and his entourage are on a passionate quest to restore law and order in a land now governed by evil, conniving pirates along

the Southern coast. Tsui blasts the screen with mind-blowing fights, all-out acrobatic fantasia and non-stop humor on Wong's spectacular journey to victory. Master Wong's unceremonial wedding in the film undoubtedly adds one more accomplishment to his legacy!

THE BRIDE WITH WHITE HAIR (II)

1994 85min, Directed by Ronnie Yu and David Wu, Starring Leslie Cheung, Brigitte Lin

8/15 TUE, 9/3 SUN 12:45 (SUN ONLY), 2:30, 4:15, 6, 7:45, 9:30

This second installment continues with the famous Chinese tragic love story combining the supernatural and raw passion. The devastating beauty Lian (Brigitte Lin) falls madly in love with an upright martial arts hero Zhou (Leslie Cheung), causing him to be expelled by his own clan. The story develops through the bewildered eyes of the second generation, who are helplessly muddled in this great love affair, which often takes dark and mysterious turns, twisting along the path of extreme ecstasy and misery. Lian, wrecked with sorrow, turns to evil forces, while Zhou searches desperately for the legendary Holy Flower in order to heal Lian. At their reunion near the Mountain of Eternal Snow, overwhelmed by love and hatred, the two fight each other with explosive passion to the bitter end. Such unforgettably lavish and fantastic romance seep deep into the essence of uncompromising love.

TWENTY SOMETHING

1994 96min, Directed by Teddy Chan, Starring Chow Ka-lin, Bai Gar-shien, Yau Cho-yue, Cheung Tse-lin, Chan Siu-chuen, Cheung Hung-ong

8/18 FRI, 8/29 TUE 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (FRI ONLY)



Is the fun-seeking Baby Buster Generation X in this compelling Hong Kong version of *Reality Bites* not from Manhattan? Causing great controversy over its

sexy relationship with Rose. Such mystical gender swapping guarantees one sumptuous story of love triangle in cinema.

CITY ON FIRE

1987 104min, Directed by Ringo Lam, Starring Chow Yun-fat, Danny Lee, Carrie Ng

8/25 FRI, 8/30 WED 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (FRI ONLY)

Indisputably one of the best films ever produced in Hong Kong, *City on Fire* provides a superb vehicle (Best Film in 1987) for Chow Yun-fat (Best Actor the same year), the soon to be "coolest import from Hong Kong" (LA Times). The film, known to have inspired Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, has a surreal quality of eerie violence, erupting at ALL probable moments. Chow plays a jaded police officer who is assigned to spy on a deadly gang of jewel thieves. While holed up in close quarters, he develops a deep emotional bonding with the members and wins the complete trust of Foo (Danny Lee), the leader of the gang. The story unfolds into a mishmash of loyalty, justice, fate, sacrifice and blood as Chow is left hanging on the edge, living out his obligation dangerously.

EXECUTIONERS

1994 97min, Directed by Johnny To, Starring Michelle Khan, Maggie Cheung, Anita Mui, Anthony Wong

8/26 SAT, 8/31 THU, 9/4 MON 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (SAT ONLY)

The sequel to *The Heroic Trio*, this film continues to feature the three superwomen warriors, Wonder Woman Tung (Anita Mui), Chan San (Michelle Khan) and Chan Chut (Maggie Cheung), telling the story of their heroic acts in battling evil. It is a film that Hollywood of *Batman*, *Judge Dredd* and *First Knight* has never dared to make. In a futuristic world of post-nuclear explosion, water, one of the last essentials left to human kind is polluted, and the only existing water purification system now falls in the hands of the disfigured and wickedly ambitious Black Warrior (Anthony Wong). Our heroines, the Heroic Trio, return and fight to overtake the evil man. In their apocalyptic warfare against the Black Warrior to save those still hanging on, they spare nothing, not their families nor their own lives.

BUTTERFLY LOVERS

1994 107min, Directed by Tsui Hark, Starring Nicky Wu, Charlie Young, Xu Jin-jiang, Carrie Ng

8/27 SUN, 9/5 TUE
12 (SUN ONLY), 2, 4, 6, 8, 10

Eternal love after Death?

For the most passionate of lovers, Yes! Tsui Hark reworks the legendary Chinese tale of two lovers, who are forced apart due to class difference, in this most

elegant Eastern *Romeo and Juliet*, and enhances the storytelling with perhaps the best soundtrack ever composed for a Hong Kong film. Chu Ying-tai (Charlie Yeung) is sent to college to polish up before marrying off to a wealthy family. Disguised as a boy, the only way to be accepted to school, Chu quickly develops a close friendship with classmate Liang Shan-po (Ng Chi-lung). When her true identity is revealed, they fall passionately in love, ripping at each other's soul and wanting to have a life on earth of love and matrimony. Their dream is shattered by Chu's class-conscious parents. On the eve of Chu's arranged marriage, Liang dies of deep sorrow. And Chu makes the ultimate decision and elopes with her lover, to the eternal world where they can forever be together.



Mark Jackson/ 2043 SE Isabell Road/ Port ST. Lucie, FLorida 34952/(407) 337-2303

WELL I'M BACK!

It is now November 12 and I have been back for all of 3 days. I didn't get a chance to do anything for MAFFAPA during my trip so I shall begin now.

And now, as we speak, at 221B Baker Street in London, England, a generous family has converted a Victorian House into The Sherlock Holmes Museum. The restoration is first rate. It is exactly the way Holmes would have set up their living quarters and the Museum follows the stories to the last detail.

First, there are 17 steps leading from the ground floor hallway to the first floor landing. From the steps we can either turn to the left onto Holmes bedroom or proceed into the study.

If we enter Holmes' personal quarters we see a valise packed with items of clothing for a brief stay at his intended destination (Baskerville Hall?). At any rate, The walls are decorated with portraits of some of the notorious personalities of the Victorian period: Lizzie Borden, Dr. Neil Cream and George Chapman ,(The last two were convicted murdereres who were each suspected of being Jack the Ripper, as well). A velvet rope prevents one from entering the study from his bedroom so we step onto the landing to walk into THE STUDY.


Yes, on October 26, 1995, I entered the study of Sherlock Holmes. While somewhere in London there is a Sherlock Holmes Pub where one can see a reconstruction of THE STUDY, here one can actually sit before the fireplace that dominates the left wall and stare out one of the two broad windows to share the same view of Baker Street that Holmes enjoyed. The space separating the window from the fireplace is devoted to the racks of chemicals Holmes needed for his experiments on blood types and soil samples. The space between the fireplace and the rear wall is devoted to a bookcase filled with reference works alluded to in the Holmes Canon.

There are two chairs and a table where one sits before the fireplace. On the table rests a pipe and deerstalker hat. (I didn't touch the pipe but the hat fitted me perfectly).

There is a writing desk along the rear wall with a padded chair on which rests the medical bag of John H. Watson M.D. I took a peak in the bag and it contains forceps, bandages and medicines which a physician from the Victorian Age would carry. Since Holmes admired the exploits of General Charles Gordon, who was on the losing side in the massacre at Khartoum, a table with artifacts honoring his memory rests against the wall between the two windows.

A table with a tea setting is placed on the wall to the right and a rack with walking sticks rests over the doorway leading to Holmes' quarters.

WE DANCED
ON THE
CEILING
WITH JOY!



The second floor had Dr. Watson's room which overlooked the back yard while their landlady, Mrs. Hudson lived in the room facing Baker Street. Today, Dr. Watson's room is filled with literature, paintings, and photographs of the Victorian period along with a bulletin board where one can leave a business card along with a register for signing one's name (I did both).

Mrs. Hudson's room is dominated by a large bust of Holmes along with memorabilia from the adventures and selected correspondence written to and by Sherlock Holmes.

The two rooms on the third floor were reserved for the maids' quarters but now holds material relating to Holmes (e.g. reproductions of illustrations from The Strand magazine and Deerstalker hats) available to Museum visitors.

If one follows Sherlock Holmes to any extent (say, to the point of knowing he was an expert in "the Japanese form of wrestling known as Baritsu" -- named after E.W. Barton-Wright who adapted Jiu-Jitsu to European needs and wrote articles about "Japanese Wrestling" for the issues of the British publication Pearson's Magazine for March and April, 1899), The Sherlock Holmes Museum on 221-B Baker Street is a rewarding experience.

(Incidentally, the authorities in London changed the numbering system of Baker Street so there would be a 221-B after all.)

One more item. On October 29, I was outside London dining in the upper loft of a tavern that dated back before 1,000 AD where I struck a conversation with a couple sitting next to me. By the wildest of coincidences, they were Holmes fans too. One of my new friends even had a pipe with a curved stem.

November MAFFAPA from Diana Bringardner

Getting ready for two weeks in Vancouver and San Francisco so things are a bit rushed to say the least.

Have found the tinniest bits of time to read. CHINA TRADE, is a fun mystery by S. J. Rozan set in New York's Chinatown involving stolen porcelain, art dealers, Chinese gangs and a glimpse into the sights, sounds and smells of Chinatown. The follow-up CONCOURSE is due very soon in hardback. Also working my way through the YELLOWTHREAD STREET police procedural/mysteries by William Marshall; very strange, bizarre and fascinating reads.

Along with martial arts films I enjoy the martial arts comic, Usagi Yojimbo. Stan Sakai who writes this excellent book says one day in the future Usagi and Wong Fei-hong will meet up. Sounds like fun. And even more Usagi news:

GOLD RUSH GAMES ANNOUNCES USAGI YOJIMBO RPG

Gold Rush Games announced the acquisition of a license from Stan Sakai and Usagi Studios to produce the USAGI YOJIMBO ROLEPLAYING GAME. The game will be based on the popular USAGI YOJIMBO comic books by Stan Sakai.

The game will allow players to adventure in the world of early 17th century Japan alongside their favorite furry friends such as Zato-Ino, the blind swordpig, Gen, the blustery rhino bounty hunter, and even our favorite samurai rabbit, USAGI YOJIMBO himself! Players can encounter the ever present Togake lizards, and even the nefarious Neko ninja!

USAGI YOJIMBO ROLEPLAYING GAME is currently scheduled for release in the Winter of 1996. For additional information, contact Mark Arsenault at Gold Rush Games.

Gold Rush Games
P.O. Box 2531
Elk Grove, CA 95759-2531

If you are a sumo fan, SUMO WORLD, is available in English by subscription. Write to Andy Adams for details. One year (6 issues) \$35.00.

Andy Adams
Sumo World
c/o Foreign Press Club
1-7-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100, Japan

There is also a sumo mail list available from MojorDomo@esssjp.stat.ncsu.edu with "subscribe sumo <email address>" in the body of the message. An RFD to start rec.sports.sumo was also called just last week so maybe one day soon there will be a sumo newsgroup too. The Kyushu tourney started a few days ago and there have been many upsets already; looks to be an exciting two weeks.

If you want Japanese manga (in Japanese) but can't find anywhere to purchase them there is Iwase Books in Atlanta. Iwase is a Japanese book store willing to mail order Japanese manga and magazines:

Iwase Books
3400 Wooddale Drive
Unit C-510
Atlanta, GA 30326
Phone: 404-814-0462
Fax: 404-814-0561

For a really nice selection of Asian books (in English) contact Charles E. Tuttle Co. and ask for their catalog:

Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc.
RR 1 Box 231-5
North Clarendon, VT 05759-9700
Phone: 802-773-8930
Fax: 802-773-6993

And for those near Atlanta I've also found an excellent place for Chinese CD's and magazines:

World Journal
5150 Buford Hwy. A-170
Doraville, GA 30340

Been watching the ATV series FIST OF FURY starring Donnie Yen and found it quite good and exciting. But what I'm really looking forward to is Tsui Hark's TVB holiday series SUPER IMPACT due in late November or early December and starring Cheu Man-check (Zhao Wen-zhou) of Once Upon A Time in China 4 and 5. It also stars Max Mok Siu-chun, Kent Cheng and Ziong Xin-xin (Clubfoot) The previews look great.

Till Next Time....



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

I guess my wish for more action oriented cartoons is slowing being fulfilled.

I can now choose from Teknoman, Princess Tenko, Sailer Moon (which is a goofy cartoon but I kinda like it) Streetfighter and Savage Dragon cartoons among others.

They also brought back GI JOE in a new format; this is one cartoon that just will not die. (smile)

I think they should study Japanese animation for storyline development techinques.

The Crying Freeman, Vampire Hunter D. and Fist of the North Star animated storylines are still my favorites so far.

They showed a english dubbed Japanese cartoon called "RONIN WARRIORS" over the summer here that I liked but I did not get all the episodes on tapes and station here decided not to rerun these episodes. Oh well.

I must do like David Spade's Hollywood Minute on Saturday Night Live when I think about the new Streetfighter cartoon on the USA Network; Chun Li's spin kick techniques was great the first time I saw it when it was in the Fist of the North Star movie and animated series performed by the lead character Kenshiro. (smile)

Hopefully in the near future they will show more cartoons like these; until then I will be waiting.



TERROR YAKI

ゴジラ・エビラ・モスラ 南海の大決闘
EBIKRAH, HORROR OF THE DEEP
(Japanese title: NANICHI NO
DAI KETTO, which means "Great
Duel of the South Seas", released

in Japan on 12/17/66; American
title: GODZILLA VS. THE SEA
MONSTER, German title: FRAN-
KENSTEIN UND DIE UNGEHEUR
AUS DEM MEER] Toho, 1966. Exe-
cutive Producer: Tomoyuki
Tanaka, Screenplay:
Shinichi Sekizawa, Pho-
tographed by Kazuo
Yamada, Art Dir: Takeo
Kita, Sound Recording:
Shoichi Yoshizawa, Di-
rector of Special Effects:

Eiji Tsuburaya, Dir.; Jun Fukuda,
Lighting; Kiichi Onda, Asst. Dir.;
Takeshi Sano, Music; Masaru Sato,
Filmed in Tohoscope & Eastman
Color, Starring: Akira Takarada,
Kumi Mizuno, Akihiko Hirata, Jun
Tazaki, Hideo Sunazuka, Chotaro
Togin, Toru Watanabe, Toru Ibuki,
Hideko Amamoto, Ikio Sawamura,
Hisaya Ito, Chieko Nakakita,
Haruo Nakajima, Hiroshi Sekita,
Parr Bambi, Studio No. 1 Dancers.
Reviewed by Damon Foster



EBIKRAH,
HORROR OF
THE DEEP.



For years I knew this film was known in Britain as EBIKRAH, HORROR OF THE DEEP. But I had always assumed their EBIKRAH HORROR OF THE DEEP was the exact same English dubbing as America's GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER. Imagine my surprise when a bootleg tape of EBIKRAH, HORROR OF THE DEEP (recorded off late night British TV!) started floating around the U.S. video traders' underground! Though in English, this is an alternate dubbing from the one we've grown up on. Exactly why there would be any need to dub a film into English twice is anyone's guess. One can only assume the U.S. and U.K. have different standards for overdubs, or maybe one print couldn't appear in the other country for copyright reasons. Stranger still, EBIKRAH itself sounds like it was dubbed by Americans. The characters are not dubbed in British accents, and sound more American than the ones in the U.S. dub, where some characters were given slight Japanese accents! This confuses things all the more. Do the British think Japanese can only be dubbed sounding like us yankees? I don't get it—I mean, GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER is the American version, we expect them to sound American.

In both versions, the dialogue is similar, though not exactly identical. Example: A scene on the boat, a guy says: "Then you're really the robber we heard about on the radio". In the British print, the exact same line is translated as: "Then you are that burglar we heard about". Additional comparisons:

U.S.: "I feel like a monkey. Heh heh."

U.K.: "Now I even feel like a monkey."

U.S.: "Something stinks."

U.K.: "The whole thing stinks."



U.S.: "You're here on schedule."

U.K.: "Thank you, Captain."

U.S.: "X dash 1 2 is now delivered."

U.K.: "X dash 1 3; has been delivered."

U.S.: "Hold your fire! To the ship, quickly!"

U.K.: "Stop firing! Return to the ship."

U.S.: "Look what's out there!"

U.K.: "Look! The giant claw!"

U.S.: "You saw that- even if you manage to escape from us, you won't escape from the monsta!"

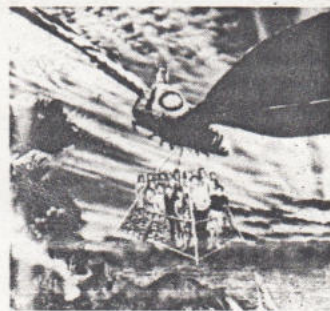
U.K.: "Did you see that? Even if you manage to escape, you can't get away from Ebirah!"

You get the idea? Both prints offer basically the same thing, only different. Nowhere in SEA MONSTER is the "mammoth lobster" called 'Ebirah', though the name is commonly used in the Japanese & British versions. The villainous soldiers are called "Red Bamboo" in the U.K. print, but have no name (other than "those men", "those soldiers", etc.) in the American dubbing.

Of the two versions, I can't really say one is a hell of a lot better than the other. I suppose Britain's EBIRAH is the superior of the two, as it appears to be uncut. The American SEA MONSTER omits a whole sequence of Rota (searching for his brother) going to a police station. Strangely, the American SEA MONSTER has an additional shot of the boat the Yahlen (taken from later in the flick) in a storm at the film's very beginning. This was a ridiculous edit, as the first boat was supposedly destroyed in the storm, yet it quite obviously says Yahlen on it, and a

brief glimpse of characters soon to be introduced! So the continuity sucks in the American dub. EBIRAH also has excellent credits, SEA MONSTER has virtually no graphics other than the title. So we now finally know Mothra's two singers in this film are called Pair Bambi, the successors to The Peanuts in previous Mothra movies. EBIRAH also has that letterboxed format, so the whole widescreen picture fits in the TV screen. This is fine if you don't mind the two black blocks on the top & bottom of the screen. The only advantage the American version has are superior voices. These are the cool voices of people like Jack Grimes, etc., voices you'd associate with SPEED RACER. The British dub, on the other hand has plain, uninteresting voices. One guy in particular sounds like a high-pitched cartoon character, it's ridiculous.

As a film on the whole, whether British or American, it's



great, and still holds up after all these years. I praised it in a review back in OC#11 (1990), and my positive statements still apply today. The special effects are cool, the characters are likeable and interesting. It was the first Godzilla movie to have a 'jungle adventure' setting, rather than the usual 'monsters stomping on Tokyo' setting. Of course, this is because it was originally suppose to be a King Kong movie, but when Toho couldn't get the rights for Kong, they quickly changed it to Godzilla. This explains why the



FRANKENSTEIN
und die Ungeheuer aus dem Meer

setting is an island, Godzilla is energized & awakened by lightning (which happened to Kong in KING KONG VS. GODZILLA), and there's a brief scene where Godzilla nearly befriends a native girl, Dayo (Kumi Mizuno).

Storywise, Rota is off with a couple gogo dancers to find his lost brother Yata. It's early in the film where the story gets ridiculous; our heroes trespass onto a boat called the Yahlen, and its owner (Akira Takarada) turns out to be a criminal who aims a rifle at them. Within seconds, they're all friends, and agree to all spend the night together on this small boat. If some stranger aimed a gun at you, would you be able to sleep? Let alone in the same room with the thug? Rushed intros aside, it's not long before a storm takes them to an island inhabited by Godzilla, an evil Red Bamboo militia, an overgrown lobster called Ebirah, a giant condor and native slaves taken from Infant Island. The course of this lively adventure/comedy has our heroes trying to help native girl Dayo (Kumi Mizuno) rescue her people, used by the Red Bamboo soldiers as slaves. After Rota locates his shipwrecked brother Yata, Godzilla destroys the Red Bamboo arsenal and defeats Ebirah. As for our human heroes, they hitch a ride from Mothra, and return home.

****-Damon Foster

「大巨獣 ガッパ」
MONSTER FROM A PREHISTORIC PLANET

[British title: GAPPA THE TRIPPHIBIAN MONSTER, Jap. title: GIGANTIC BEAST GAPPA] Produced by Hideo Koi, Dir.: Haruyasu Noguchi, Screenplay: Iwao Yamazaki & Ryuzo Nakaishi, Based on a story by Akira Watanabe, Special Effects Dir.: Akira Watanabe (formerly a Toho SPFX art director), Released to The Land of the Rising Sun in April, 1967. Released in the Land of Lowering Standards by A.I.P.-TV in 1968. Starring: Tamio Wakachi (Kurosaki), Yoko Yamamoto (Itoko), Keisuke Yukioka (Funazu), Reviewed by John Marshall

The worst thing about this movie is the title. First of all, the "prehistoric planet" is Earth, referring to Earth's prehistoric period. Second, it's about three monsters from a prehistoric planet, not one. A better title would be MONSTER

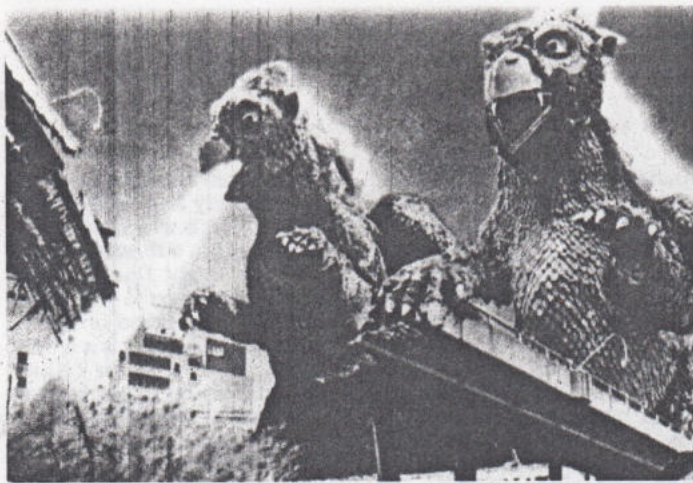


AND TWO OTHER MONSTERS FROM A PREHISTORIC PERIOD OF A NONPREHISTORIC PLANET. I'm glad I got that off my chest.

Anyway, MONSTER FROM A PREHISTORIC PLANET is a ripoff of the British film GORGO (which of course was inspired by Japanese man-in-a-dino suit films) in which a mommy monster rips up a civilized country in search of her baby (kidnapped by human scientists). In MFAPP, though, there's also a proud Papa Gappa wreaking havoc. The best thing about the monster scenes is that while I watch 'em I yell "Papa Gappa" over and over again like Beavis having an epileptic fit. So the parents smash up Japan and get the baby back at the end.

This movie gets a lot of flack because there's nothing original about it. But there was nothing original about STAR WARS either, but people seem to like that film a lot! When watching MFAPP, you need to consider that this was the Nikkatsu Film Company's first and only attempt at giant monsters and as such, is a very impressive effort. The creative team must have sat through KING KONG VS. GODZILLA and MOTHRA about fifty times each to really get the feel of a sixties Toho monster film, which this strongly resembles.

The monsters have that Toho/Tsuburaya look, being your basic bird/dinosaurs. In fact, they look a lot like the ULTRAMAN monster Hydra from "Terror on Route 87" (#20), except with more expressive faces. Another plus is that an effort was made to hire actors who stood out from each other. Several of the cast members look like brothers of Toho stars like Akihiko Hirata, Akira Kubo, and Yoshio Tsuchiya, while the female lead reminds me of Yuriko Hoshi (GHIDRAH, GODZILLA VS. THE THING, etc.). Especially good is Keisuke Yukioka as publisher Funazu, ranting and raving to rival KING KONG VS. GODZILLA's tyrading tycoon Ichiro Arishima. MFAPP



attempts in every way to match a mid-'60s Toho monster film in scope and appearance, and pulls it off fairly well. Although the miniatures are lacking, the photography tries hard to make the Gappa couple look dynamic. Most successful is their attack on an island village, where they are filmed from a low angle and lit to look quite ferocious in their wrath (wraths?).

Well, sorry this review isn't very amusing. But I wanted you guys to know that MFAPP is a pretty cool movie. Since they won't be making any more 1960s Japanese monster films, you should learn to appreciate the qualities of all the ones you've neglected over the years. Says who? Says ME! *** -John Marshall

ESP-Y

Toho; 1975, Exec. Prod.: Tomoyuki Tanaka, Orig. Story: Sakyo Komatsu, Screenplay: Ei Ogawa, Dir.: Jun Fukuda, Photographed by Shoji Ueda, Dir. of FX: Teruyoshi Nakano, Cast: Hiroshi Fujioka, Kaoru Yumi, Masao Kusakari, Yuzo Kayama, Tomisaburo Wakayama, Eiji Okada, Reviewed by Damon Foster

I had wanted to see this complete loser of a movie for 20 years! Any tale of Japanese spies with telekinetic powers starring KAMEN RIDER's Hiroshi Fujioka, COZURE OKAMI's Tomisaburo Wakayama, not to mention Kaoru Yumi (the cutie who bared her breasts in PROPHECIES OF NOSTRADAMUS) has got to be good, right? Wrong! I mean, there

are at least four different categories for bad films: 1. Bad. 2. Worse. 3. Worst. 4. ESP-Y! I really hated this boring, cheap, talky movie! I'll never sit through it again, I'd rather floss my teeth using Abe Vigoda's earwax! Hell, even dubbed in English, it's terribly uninteresting and pointless!

But this awkward combination of sappy music, preposterous melodrama and an artsy-fartsy tint has a couple moments which were almost worth waiting for. There are a couple incredibly brief fist fights, but are darkly photographed and not choreographed well enough to remind you that lead hero Hiroshi Fujioka is the original Kamen Rider, and its gun shootout isn't especially exciting either. So the only worthwhile shots (aside from short glimpses of Kaoru Yumi in tight clothing) are a couple FX scenes (a miniature airplane and a crumbling building), and a hilarious shot of Hiroshi Fujioka, propelled by ESP-teleporting and an exploding car, who seems to fly in the air just in time to collide with a sniper, knocking him down! This cartoon-like scene of humor is so out-of-place in an otherwise dead serious movie.

Bad acting and worse dubbing is the highlight of this useless tale of secret agents of secret organization ESP-Y (a combination of ESP, as in Extra Sensory Perception, and Spy) who are apparently hired to protect some politician at an international meeting at a consulate, or whatever. Our heroes are Tamura (Hiroshi Fujioka), and some former race car driver called Miki. But my favorite character was a dog. This German shepherd is the best actor in the film, and the only one whose real voice is heard through out the movie! That's right, he wasn't dubbed! Why didn't they just get some American dog to dub in the barks? Oh well, if the dog dubber had been a chihuahua or poodle, it might have added un-

intentional humor and made this flick a little too entertaining. Anyway, Tomisaburo Wakayama plays the lead villain, a demented rich guy who also has ESP. The course of this dead-slow talker has Fujioka and the other agents traveling around trying to rescue Kaoru Yumi's character, who gets kidnapped & hypnotized at one point. Let's see, what else happens? Oh yeah, the baddies give our boy a jolt which temporarily removes his ESP, and Miki has flashbacks to a childhood love. Though it's never explained why as a little girl, she was a blond American, yet grew up to be a stunning, red haired Eurasian chick. But the point is, it all ends happily ever after, because an ESP duel involving flying objects (like swords & knives) starts a fire, killing the main villain and burning down his mansion. If I've made this movie sound exciting, I apologize. -Damon Foster

MIGHTY JACK

Distributed by Celebrity's Creature Features, Presented by Sandy Frank, Produced by Eiji Tsuburaya, Yasuji Morita & Yasuhiro Itoh,

A Tsuburaya Production, based on the 13 episode TV series from 4/6/68 to 6/29/68, Consisting of 13 Hr.-long Episodes, Writers: Shinichi Sekizawa & Eizaburo Siba, Creative Consultant: Jessie Vogdl of Cinemedia Ltd, Feature Concept & Editing: William L. Cooper Jr., Music: Isao Tomita, Cameraman: Yoshihiro Mori, SFX Cameraman: Kazuo Sagawa, Editor: Akio Agura, Dir: Kazuo Mitsuta, Featuring: Hideaki Nitani, Naoko Kobo, Hiroshi Ninami, Hideyo Amamoto, Masanari (Masaya) Nihei, Wakao Ikeda, Akira Kasuga, Seikou Fukioka, Noriaki Inoue, Yoshitaka Tanaka, Mitsubu Ohya, Eijiro Yanagi, Reviewed by Damon Foster

What we got here is yet another feature length video release from Sandy Frank in the 1980s,

this time edited from episodes of the "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-meets-VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA-meets-Britain's-UFO" television series from Tsuburaya. It's been quite a while since I've seen original Japanese episodes of this slow-paced series, the last time I saw one (around 1983?), I still had hair, a little youth (but she left me) and a vaguely optimistic viewpoint about the future of the Earth and mankind. But now, over ten years later, I finally get to see portions of this average science fiction drama dubbed in English. Being that MIGHTY JACK has absolutely no superheroes and is incredibly talky, this is one show that just needs to be completely understood to be enjoyed.

Fans who want more ATRAGON should like this series/ compilation, as MIGHTY JACK too deals with a flying submarine, and could be called "Atragon minus the Drill". At times, it also looks like a Science Patrol without the aid of Ultraman. This is one of the more realistic, almost believable Japanese sci-fi programs; it's writing is intelligent, and adult at times. It originally was broadcast for the adult market, on Saturday nights, 8:00-9:00PM on Fuji TV. But perhaps adults weren't fooled by the many miniature vehicles used, and its grown-up approach didn't hold the attention of the kiddies, so it died after just thirteen episodes. While I would be lying if I said it was one of my favorite programs (much like if I said I believe Rush Limbaugh, MTV is worthwhile, I enjoy the Superbowl, and I think Polly Shore is one funny guy), I do feel it's a shame that MIGHTY JACK, perhaps Japan's only equivalent to STAR TREK didn't last long. Perhaps if it had monsters and consisted of 30 minute episodes like ULTRA Q, it would have been successful. But that would defeat the whole purpose of doing an FX series meant to concentrate on espionage-type stories.



So defeating the whole purpose is what happened starting on July 6, 1968, when the program's sequel series, TATAKAE MIGHTY JACK ("Fight Mighty Jack") began broadcasting; the program's second (and more successful) season. Numerous cast changes, 30 minute episodes, a 7:00-7:30PM timeslot and a campy streak at least amused the kiddie audience, though it was all drastically different from the original season. Thankfully, there's absolutely no footage of TATAKAE MIGHTY JACK in this English dubbed movie, therefor allowing the film to be serious and coherent (if not a little confusing, thanks to awkward edits). Whether this is good or bad is debatable; this movie is kind of interesting, but I must confess that if the phone hadn't rang, I would have fallen asleep during its slow middle.

But regardless of the lackluster approach and severe lack of action & violence, MIGHTY JACK will definitely appeal to FX fans; plenty of Eiji Tsuburaya's well-detailed miniature vehicles are shown through out; submarines, jet planes, missiles, maybe even an occasional spaceship, etc. These miniature sets are splendid, and just as good as those in any actual feature length Toho movie. The only unconvincing ones are those in water (of which there are plenty), since water drops & splashes are always a certain size, and this makes the scale of these submarines all too obvious.

There are familiar faces in MIGHTY JACK too. The lady who played Silver (in SPACE GIANTS) cameos as a suicidal double agent who blows herself up when it's discovered she's planting transmitters & bugs (of which there are plenty), and one of the main stars is none other than Masaya Nihei (aka Masanari Nihei), who was in the samurai flick WARRING CLANS (with Makoto Sato), GORATH and is best known as Ito (aka Ide) from ULTRAMAN's Science Patrol. It's

a relief to see him actually acting, and not goofing around like that bumbling moron Ito (the Japanese equivalent of Forrest Gump). Masaya/Masanari Nihei plays a Mighty Jack member called Genta Akira ("Gen" for short), though dubbed 'Jerry' in Sandy Frank's version. Many characters now seem to have inappropriate English names, like Eddie, Mary, Catherine and Dr. Hyde. Another supporting character is played by Hiroshi Ninami (who I suspect played Kita in SPACE GIANTS) and Isei Amamoto & Jerry Ito appear in the flick too.

In the final analysis, I feel this MJ video is okay. Not overly exciting, but not stupid either. I do feel this show looks better as weekly, hour long episodes, rather than trying to sit through a two full hours of strangely edited drama. The fade outs for commercial breaks are irritating, and there's a long scene (seemingly added in at random, by mistake) of a phone ringing.

The story deals with two rival, secret underground armies, Q (bad guys) and Mighty Jack (good guys); the "Jack" refers to the Jack in a deck of playing cards, like it's the 11th card or whatever, and there are eleven MJ members. In the original Japanese version, both are completely secretive, even the CIA & FBI don't know either exists, though the English version tells us otherwise (a newscast says Mighty Jack was formed by the president to battle Q). In the Japanese version, Mighty Jack was funded by Mr. Yabuki ("Colonel Yabuki" in America), Japan's richest man. The war between Mighty Jack & them terrorists at Q is all public in the English dub. The first episode (written by Shinichi Sekizawa) has our heroes like Ippei Amada (Hiroshi Minami) & Gen (Masaya Nihei), in their all-purpose battleship (it flies and swims, armed with missiles, beams, smaller ships, aircraft & submarines), off to rescue their new commander, Major Harold

Atari (not the most likeable of the heroes). After Mr. Nintendo- that is, uh, I mean, after Mr. Atari is rescued from Q's island fortress, they bomb the whole place. The second hour, which seems to be confusing cross edits between episodes #6 and #13, deals with treacherous halfbreds and spies trying to steal a secret weapon which manipulates the melting of ice, and eventually leads to the final battle of artillery as MJ officially wipes out the mysterious organization known as Q. It ends after the lead villain takes a gun to his head. **1/2 -DF

THE LAST WAR

Japanese title: THE GREAT WORLD WAR] Not Produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka, Directed by Shue Matsubayashi

(Masturbayshi? Uh huh huh.) Play of Screens by Toshio Yasumi & Takeshi Kimura. Special Effects Director has a 99.99999% chance of Being Eiji Tsuburaya. Released in Japan the day before October 9, 1961. Also reported to be released the day after October 7, 1961. Released in U.S. of "Aaay" sometime in 1964-'65. Starring in no particular order other than importance of their characters: Akira Takarada (Takano), Yumi Shirakawa (Seiko), and Frankie Sakai (amiable, hard-working Mokichi), Reviewed by John Marshall

THE LAST WAR was a very hard film to track down. Since it has no monsters, the obese, unwashed, short-sighted, greedmongering "video dealers" never carry it, and it NEVER showed up on TV. /On the contrary, I caught it locally in my area one afternoon in the mid-1970s. It was so hard to sit through, I doubt they ever repeated it. -DF/ Until recently, that is, when Heritage Entertainment (God, I love them) re-released a movie package including LAST WAR, HUMAN VAPOR, and GORATH to TV. THE LAST WAR is a must-see film because it was made during Toho's peak period and features an

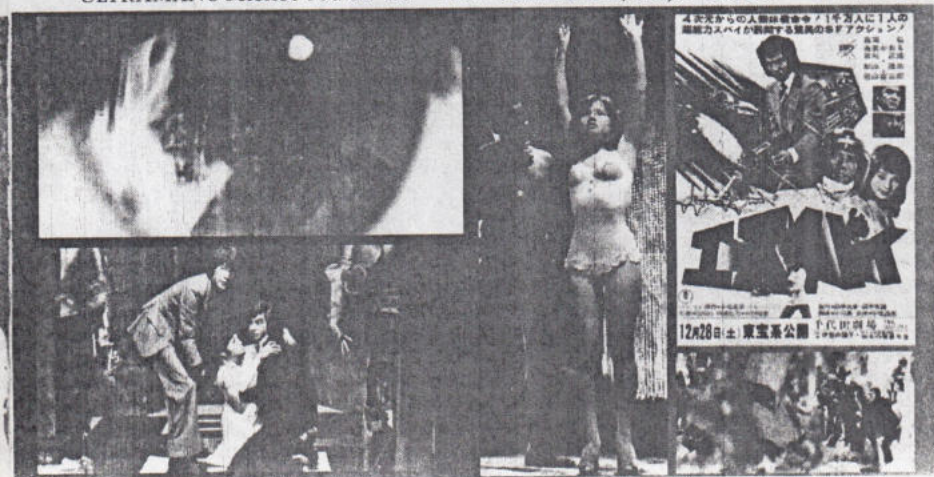
all-star Toho cast. I seem to be saying that about a lot of films, these days. Eiji Tsuburaya's effects display lots of military hardware as two nations (unnamed, but it's 1961 so you can bet it's not Greenland and Rhodesia!) go to war and wipe out all civilization on Earth.

This movie is what you call a "four hankie picture" because you

will be bored enough to jerk off approximately four times during the film. That is why I advise you not to see it in a theater! Otherwise, you might find Pee-Wee Herman sitting next to you, inquiring about what brand of hankie works best. This film is a weepy drama about a sailor (Akira Takarada) trying to get back to Japan one last time to see his love (Yumi Shirakawa). A lot of flashbacks inform us that postwar Japan was a very westernized city filled with people just like you and me, feeling helpless in the midst of the cold war but still finding time to work hard, raise families, and Worship at the Institution of Their Choice. All of this ass-kissing is necessary for an American version of a movie which makes a lot of inferences about how violent and destructive Americans are. The movie's main flaw is in the endless preachiness of Akira Takarada's narration. However, and amazingly enough, Takarada's voice is dubbed by the same guy who did it in MONSTER ZERO, so we really get the feeling of authenticity. And even though THE LAST WAR is boring, it's also fascinating as we look at the lives of likable characters whose lives are doomed from the start.

The performances are outstanding. Akira Takarada is probably the handsomest actor ever to appear in movies (and no I'm not a fag, so back down, homo readers) and his Takano is very believable. Equally good is Toho star Yumi Shirakawa (H-MAN, GORATH, SECRET OF THE TELEGIAN) as an extremely intelligent girl who must play Junior Servant around the house to her imposing but lovable dad. Dad is played by Frankie Sakai, star of MOTHRA and a popular comedian/actor whose career ran for many years. He has a pivotal role in the SHOGUN mini-series as a proud village leader who must commit hara-kiri. Unfortunately, there are no Shogun Warrior robots in SHOGUN, so don't be misled by that title. Frankie's ailing wife in THE LAST WAR is played to perfection by Nobuo Otowa, in the typical reticent, sunken-eyed, beaten-down-but-chin-stays-up Japanese wife fashion.

The American version includes the song "It's a Small World" and an anti-war speech by JFK (who escalated Vietnam) to round out the film. It's a credit to the American distributors that most of the film's powerful, uncomfortable, anti-Super Powers message is left intact. *** John Marshall (who says, "Make Love with Me, Not War!")



MIRROR OF THE FUMA #42: from Nikki White. 15 Duffus Place. Wanniasa. ACT
2903. Australia

Hmm, #42 - the Answer to Life, the Universe and Everything - if you are a Fuma ninja!
MAFFAPA #52 was another enjoyable read, thanks to all of you who ferret out such interesting articles from various magazines or bring from your own backgrounds information and ideas new to me. Such being Wardell Sims's contrib. (Welcome!) with its fascinating discussion of how Chinese martial arts have permeated areas of popular culture which are a closed book to me, viz. rap/hip-hop (look, I find Tchaikovsky a bit modern and as for Mahler and Bruckner...!)

Translated a brochure on Japan's Self Defence Force Air Corps stunt flying group, Blue Impulse, into English for a book on aircraft. What fun - a whole new vocabulary to do with jets, not to mention SDF ranks.

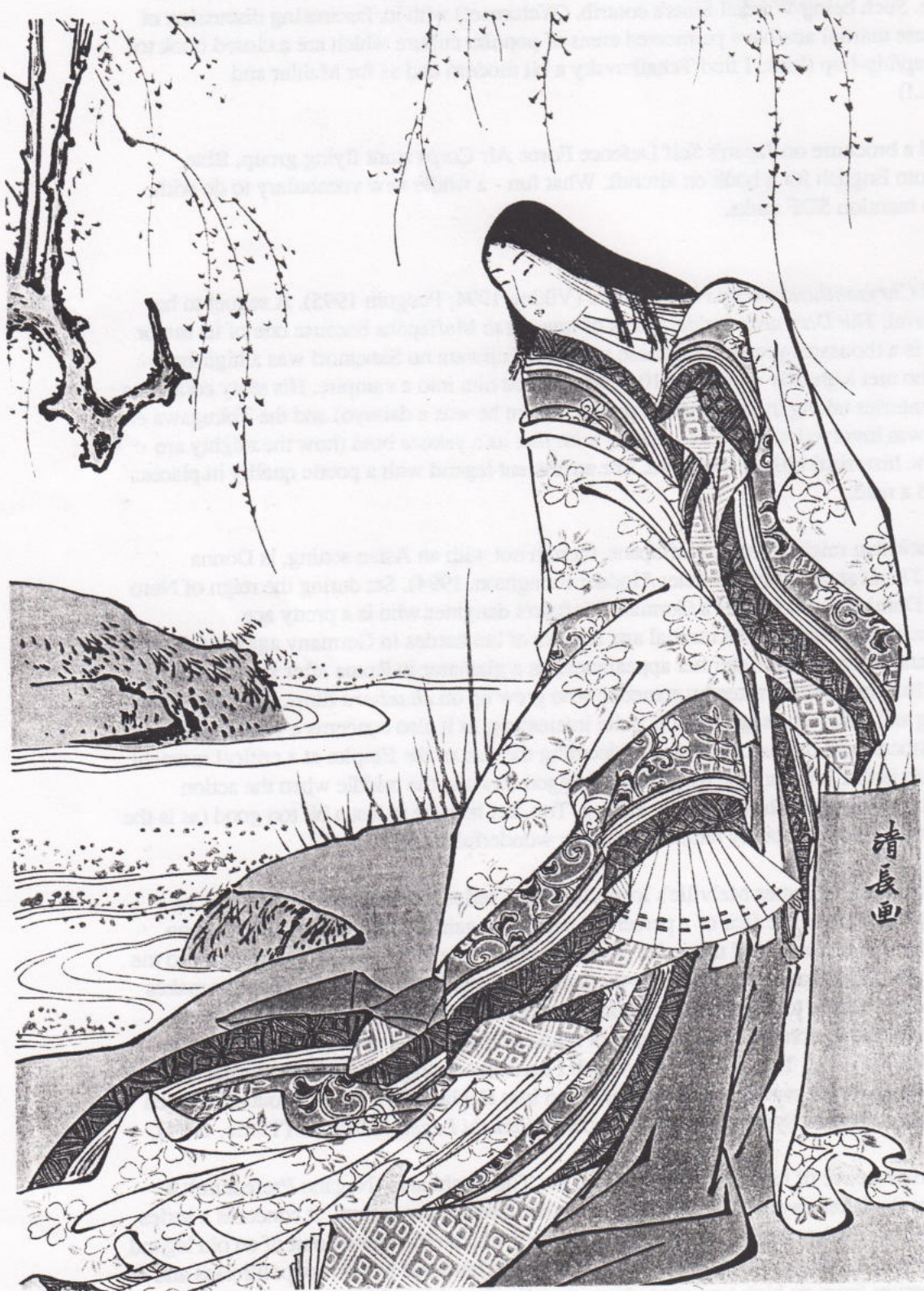
BOOKS

Blood and Chrysanthemums by Nancy Baker (Viking 1994; Penguin 1995). A sequel to her vampire novel. *The Darkness Inside*, this is of interest to Maffapans because one of its major characters is a thousand-year-old Japanese vampire. Fujiwara no Sanemori was a high-born courtier who met a ghostly woman in 1045 who turned him into a vampire. His story continues over the centuries taking in the Sengoku period (where he was a daimyo) and the Tokugawa era (where he was involved with a duel), ending with him as a yakuza boss (how the mighty are fallen!). The historical bits are well told, like an ancient legend with a poetic quality in places. Well worth a read.

Another book that might interest Maffapans, though not with an Asian setting, is Donna Gillespie's *The Light Bearer* (Berkeley/Hodder Stoughton, 1994). Set during the reign of Nero through to Domitian, it concerns a German chieftain's daughter who is a pretty ace swordswoman and warrior. The martial arts aspects of her battles in Germany against fellow tribesmen and Romans, and later her appearances as a gladiator in Rome after she is captured read to me like they were written by someone who grew up on *chanbara* films. They have the same swing and flow. The story itself is quite interesting, as it also concerns a young male Roman aristocrat and the part both play in deciding the fate of the Empire at a critical moment. Its chief fault is that it is way too long. It gets bogged down in the middle when the action moves to Rome, though it has a rousing ending. Too, her heroine is just a bit too good (as is the hero), and the author constantly reminds you how wonderful she is.

I read somewhere that James Melville's Inspector Otani series has finished due to a lack of interest by publishers in the face of a perceived backlash against things Japanese. I have no idea how true this is: the end of the series or the backlash. The latter sounds suspiciously to me like typical 90s flim-flam when some jack-the-lad newly appointed marketing manager makes some arbitrary decision to justify his existence (market research, as one cynical Melbourne wine journalist had it, consisting of a couple of marketing managers getting together over a beer one Friday night...) The same article, which I don't have, suggested some Japanese authors of detective tales whose works have been translated into English. By chance, I found one such in a secondhand shop in Sydney, Uchida Yasuo's *Togakushi Legend Murders* (Tuttle, 1994).

This was a rich weave of haunting folklore from the Togakushi area (Nagano Prefecture); a tragedy from the latter days of World War 2 and a solid police procedural. It concerns a series of rather bizarre murders carried out around Togakushi which echo some point of an old legend and the efforts of a Columbo-like detective to solve them, hindered by corrupt politicians and political pressure from on high brought to bear on police activities. Of interest to Maffapans



清長画

for its picture of one side of modern Japan; the legend attached to the murders and any whodunit fan. (Maffapans might also recognise Togakushi under the older reading of the name - Togakure - though no mention was made of ninja).

Minor whinge with the translation (apart from it being a bit too American-slangy for my tastes) was that he completely mistranslated the discussion of the noh play on p. 107. The play must be *Aoi no Ue* and he misses the point and translates the section as though it were about haunted hollyhocks rather than the haunting of a woman named Hollyhock.

Venture in the East by Bruce Lancaster (Alvin Redman, 1951). This story is set in 1637-1638 and concerns members of the Dutch Factory at Hirado who unwittingly become embroiled in the Shimabara Rebellion and its aftermath. Chief among these are Dirk Jongh, an Englishman by birth, who speaks Japanese and knows the people; the Director, Becker, a real bureaucrat with no love for the Japanese; the historical Francois Caron, a Frenchman by birth who also speaks Japanese; and Trudi Van Os, the spirited Japan-born niece of one of the other members.

This is a colourful, fast-paced novel with a good amount of background, cultural and historical, yet doesn't get bogged down (and he uses the real names of the historical characters unlike Clavell et al.) Lancaster explains in the preface the liberties he's taken, using Tokyo rather than Edo and simplifying some of the personal names to avoid confusion. After all, the book was published a scant six years after the end of the Pacific War. The historical background is sound except one minor whinge: he calls the samurai attached to the shogun the 'Imperial Army' and gives the men in it pre-war Japanese ranks such as *taisa* (colonel) and *gunso* (sergeant) and attributes to the Japanese many traits and attitudes associated with early 20th century Japanese. Trudi was a typical Hollywood heroine drip who, while not lacking courage, definitely lacked commonsense, rushing into danger and having to be rescued, doing the Hollywood heroine thing of beating ineffectually with her fists on the back of some man restraining her, and making irrational objections to certain decisions. The way she is mistaken for a Japanese because of her dark colouring when she is of pure Dutch descent is also a bit hard to swallow. On the other hand Caron and the wily lord of Hirado are well drawn. The descriptions are vivid giving a good feel of the sights and sounds of 17th century Hirado or the desperate siege of Hara Castle and its unhappy inmates.

FILMS

Chinese Ghost Story was shown on SBS with subtitles in August. As it has been reviewed in an earlier MAFFAPA, I won't go into details. It was an amazing film with some quite eerie sequences plus those wonderful fight scenes where, in defiance of the laws of gravity, characters zip around from tree to tree or fight flying through the air. Talk about pile on the agony - just when you thought everything was all done and dusted - they went to Hell for Round Three! Very colourful, lots of action and a fairytale story.

Samurai (Universal 1979) starring Joe Penny and James Shigeta, directed by Lee Katzin, was from ye local video shoppe and appears to be a failed pilot for a TV series. It certainly plays like one with obvious build-ups to commercial breaks. It concerns Lee Toshio Cantrell (Penny) who works for the Public Prosecutor's Office in San Francisco and his war against a crooked property developer, a very typical plot for a 70s-early 80s TV series. What makes it different (so the script-writers think) is that Cantrell is half-Japanese (his mother glories in the unlikely name of Hanaogi Mitsubishi, thus combining an 18th century tart with a multinational), he was born and grew up in Japan and studied martial arts under various teachers including Shigeta, the family's major-domo, to turn him into a "samurai" in the family tradition. Yes, right.

He has a red belt (which he seems to like to wear around his head when he gets into his black glad-rags to take on the villains with swords on a series of night raids. He does a lot of swinging about a la Errol Flynn and a fair bit of chopsockey but we hardly ever see him use those swords. He drew them chiefly to knock out a window, jam a lift-door open and to cut off a door handle. The only time we saw him using a sword as it was intended was in the obligatory martial arts training scenes (one was a kendo sequence, the other judo). The dialogue was every bit as a hokey and corny as you might expect (including a glorious sentence from Shigeta that implies in Japan they don't have any laws and you can just go and chop up your villain. News to Inspector Otani, no doubt.) Penny was about as animated as the sword he used as a window and lift opener. And oh, the hair and flares!

Shogun Mayeda (1991) with Sho Kosugi, Toshiro Mifune, Christopher Lee, David Essex and Uncle Tom Cobley and All, directed by Gordon Hessler. I hired this also from ye video rental shoppe. This was an American-Japanese co-production shot in Yugoslavia and Japan with an international cast. Set 1600-1602, it concerns a retainer, Maeda (Kosugi) sent by Ieyasu (Mifune) to Portugal to buy a large quantity of muskets and the adventures he has getting them.

There were glitches galore (I doubt Ieyasu had a 14-year old son called Yorimune at the time, and the idea of taking the blonde daughter of a sea captain back to Japan was bizarre), but history be blown, this is pure Sat'day arvo at the flicks stuff - huge fun, exciting, lots of sword-play (both European with rapiers and Japanese with *katana*), sea battles, colourful costumes and even more colourful characters. It starts in Japan with Sekigahara and never lets up through ambushes, sea voyages, treachery, attempted poisoning, duels of honour, capture by corsairs, escapes, recaptures, etc.

It was good to see both Mifune and Lee, two of my favourite actors, in a film together again (last time being *1941*), though nobody would get any acting honours. I was highly amused that the villain was a Christian priest - even the tricky Muslim turned out to have more honour than he!