

# The Kaiju Review

# fall '93

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## The R.C. Godzilla

by Dan Reed

**The most interesting** new **Godzilla** collectible to come along in quite awhile is **Tokyo Marui's R.C. Godzilla**. A 1/100th scale walking, talking, tail swinging replica of the first Goji incarnation, circa '54, it's also the most expensive toy I've seen this year.

Naturally **Dave Barker** would be the first collector I knew of that would acquire Tokyo Marui's entry into the Goji collector market.

Having solid Japanese connections seems to be the best way to amass **Godzilla** items short of going there yourself (or spending lots of money at American outlets). Dave was able to have the RC **Godzilla** shipped out to him the day it went on sale in Japan.

The RC **Godzilla** stands about twenty-one inches and weighs a little over twenty pounds. Using the **Inoue Arts/Paradise** 1/100th scale Goji '54 as a starting point, Tokyo Marui has created a true "mecha" **Godzilla**, that has inspired much praise both here and in Japan.

I asked Dave how he would rate the toy in relationship to other big ticket **Godzilla** items.

"It's somewhere between the **Combat Joe Godzilla Suit** and **Kaiyodo's** three foot **BioGoji**". Dave is in a position to judge, seeing as he owns all three.

Dave explains that the suit for the RC toy is a reproduction of the **Inoue Arts/Paradise** Goji '54. The endomechanism is constructed of ABS plastic and galvanized steel. It's not exactly bulletproof however, as Dave explains: "You've got to take it easy at first, you don't want to run it for four

hours knocking down building block skyscrapers in your living room.

"My experience with radio controlled cars has taught me to be aware of stressed out servos that can smoke out plastic gearboxes."

"You should put the suit on and let the mechanism slowly adjust itself to its dimensions. Work the mechanism from the head to the tail making adjustments as necessary."

This simulacrum Goji walks, swings its tail and opens its mouth to roar at the control of a hand held remote.

The suit occupied Dave's attention for the first few days after it arrived. "It looked pretty cool all by itself; you could suspend it from a wire and display it alone, it fills out so nice."

Dave explains that, "the suit opens at the back, similar to the **Takara Combat Joe Godzilla** or the real one. In order to fit it properly over the chassis, you'll need to cut and then resuture the seam along the spine. It comes with cement, suture and a plastic sheet to protect the mechanism from glue. Once it's on it's pretty much permanent."

However, the instructions accompanying the toy indicate that additional suits will become available, enabling the collector to change the look of his Goji to later incarnations of the monster.

"People I've talked with from **Kaiyodo** (during the **Louisville Model Show**) indicated that they may become involved in the production of future suits for the RC."

### Welcome to the third

**Kaiju Review**. This newsletter is intended for the serious fans and collectors of Japanese monster media, and what a great time it is for all of us. Every time we think we've squeezed the last dime out of our budget, some new and even more desirable product comes along. It is my goal to provide a comprehensive look at some of the best of the new items available and recommend a few of the best places to find them.

As the 40th anniversary of the **Godzilla** legend approaches, you can expect to see a great deal of mainstream coverage particularly in light of the upcoming **TriStar** film. Remember, you were there first. Long after the trend setters have moved on to the next *big* thing, the hard core Goji devotees will still be hard core. It is you for whom this Review is intended.

My thanks for all the great feedback I've recieved from the last two issues. That's the whole payoff for doing a zine in the first place. I've made some great new friends, and that makes the effort worthwhile.

As you can see, the **Review** continues to evolve in its content and format. Whatever you might think about it, take the time to write and let me know.

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# Kaiju News & Reviews

A must have for any serious Goji toy collector is the **Godzilla Toy Museum**, published in hardcover by **Bandai Books** and put together by **Takashi Kuraji** and **M-I's Yuji Nishimura**. Over 100 pages of stills and box art detailing the history of tin, soft vinyl, and novelty items created in the **Godzilla** image. Yuji is one of Japan's leading collectors of Godzilla memorabilia. At the **Famous Monsters Convention** I was showing him a German poster I had bought for **Godzilla vs. Monster Zero**, and he pointed to the X-ites uniform and gun and said "I've got this". His collection of actual film props is incredible, many of them rescued from the trash.

**Godzilla kitbuilders** will be happy to learn that the dino mail order house **Monstrosities Inc.** has added the **Kaiyodo Godzilla** series to their already outstanding catalog of prehistoric replicas. This important collection features scaled reproductions of every major goji type, sculpted by such outstanding kaiju artists as the great **Yuji Sakai** (who has so far designed plastic art recreations of Godzillas '54,'55,'62,'64,'68,'91 and the incredible 3' Biogoji '89).

In order to promote the new acquisitions, company president John Carlson has hired noted pyrotechnics specialist and kit builder safety advocate **Dave Barker** of Las Vegas, Nevada to do a series of build ups of the Kaiyodo Godzillas.

"I've asked David to help us out, not only by building and painting the models, but also by photographing them as well," Carlson said, "David has a great artistic sense, particularly when it comes to Godzilla, a subject he is absolutely fanatical about!"

The company will also carry several of the Kaiyodo kaiju models released in conjunction with **Godzilla vs Mothra**. "We'd love to expand the number of things we can offer from Kaiyodo; they have a lot of other kits in their line including Robots, superheros and Anime

characters, that there seems to be a tremendous demand for."

Interested parties should write to;  
**Monstrosities Inc. c/o P.O. Box 1024 No. Baldwin, N.Y. 11510.**

**Have you seen the new series of models from the Japanese company that calls itself REDS, Inc.** The collection so far includes; 1. **Godzilla '62** (standing on a rock base), 2. **Godzilla '64** (facing off against the twin **Mothra Larvae** in a simplistic diorama base), 3. **Godzilla '67** (sitting on a rock with **Minya**, considered by many fans to be the ugliest of the Goji styles, this is actually a pretty nice display item), and 4. **Godzilla '66** (the best action piece of the series, it features **Godzilla** leaping off the cliff to face **Ebirah** below). The company name is an acronym for **Real Extremely Detailed Sculptures**. Comfortably sized for your bookshelves at 100mm, the kits are resin cast, which due to costlier quantity shipping tends to make them less common at SF Con dealer rooms. If you find 'em and you like what you see, buy 'em; they'll be very rare, very soon.

**Gavalla**, a monster seen only in **Honda's** second-to-last **Godzilla** film, **Godzilla's Revenge**, has recently returned in model kit form from both **Volks** and **Wave**. The **Wave** kit is no. 33 of their 50mm **Dai Kaiju-Soshingeki** metal cast series. The **Volks** kit is up to the usual high standards of their **SFX Collection** series, and is cast in resin.

It's been a good year so far for collectors of **Bandai** **Godzilla** related figures. After last year's excellent **Godzilla vs. Mothra** inspired additions to the series, the company, who could have easily sat back and waited for the next movie's designs to be made available, has instead set upon a course of creating toy versions of several more of our favorite dai kaiju characters. So far they have released **Hedorah** (Smog Monster), **Gimantis** (from **Son of Godzilla**), **King-Scasar**, **Jet Jaguar**,

and my personal favorite:

**Goro-saurus**. Each figure maintains a more realistic approach of sculpting the creature to its film likeness. Remember, these toys are a bargain when purchased new (from a reputable dealer). They are sure to become valuable collector items within a short time, which will make them all that much harder to acquire. The Review still recommends **Pony Toy Go-Round** as the least expensive source for obtaining them. You can call [213] 941-8753 for information on mail orders or visit their New Jersey and L.A. locations.

The word from **Toho** is that with the next installment in the series, **Godzilla** will be killed, and replaced sometime in '95 by the adult version of the **Son of Godzilla** that was created for this movie. The new film features a **Mecha Godzilla** that has an uncomfortable resemblance to **Barney**. **Rodan**, who is also featured in the film, has been streamlined somewhat, and now more closely affects the look of a prehistoric creature.

Next up on **Toho's** **Kaiju** drawing board is a **Gamera** film. Having acquired the **Daiei Film Company**, the decision to return the monster turtle to the screen seems a natural given the company's tendency toward sentiment and cuteness in the last and current **Godzilla** films. Can little **Kenny** and his pet turtle **Tibby** be far behind?

**Tsuburaya Productions** is slated to have a new **Ultraman** series available for U.S. syndication sometime in 1994. Production is taking place in Los Angeles and that city will also be the setting for the new series, the first **Ultraman** production since the aborted Australian shows seen here a few years ago.

Walking out after seeing **Jurassic Park**, I pictured the inevitable sequel beginning just like a scene from **Destroy All Monsters**. You know, with a helicopter tour of **Monster**



Island, with a good look at some of the inhabitants. That would be pretty cool right? I enjoyed the movie a lot and predict that it will ultimately replace ET as the biggest grossing film of all time.

## Tohotronics

by John Rocco Roberto

**Kaiju games** for video and computer systems have been few and far between since the video game industry revitalized itself in the mid 1980's. Games like **Rampage**, **King of the Monsters**, and a few others whose names, like their popularity, escapes me, were the norm for many years. However, as popular as some of these games were, none of them featured the true "King of the Monsters" — **GODZILLA**! That all changed when Toho Games released **Godzilla** in 1989, and **Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters** in 1991; and now, news out of Tokyo is that Toho Games will be releasing two new **Godzilla** games for 1993/1994. The first, tentatively titled, "**Super Godzilla**", was rumored to be ready for release in August 1993 for the **Super NES**. Unfortunately, sources inside Toho Games have indicated that they are pushing the release date back to the summer of 1994. No explanation was given for this decision but a representative from Toho Games gave the impression that the August '93 date was only a rumor. The game is currently available for the **Super Famicom** in Japan (the Japanese equivalent to the **Super NES**). The second release, simply entitled "**Godzilla**", will be a **CD Rom** game for the **Turbografx 16** game system due out in November, although information gained from **Turbo Technologies, Inc.** claims that the November '93 date is very tentative.

Although I received this news with great anticipation, I also have some reservations about both releases. **Godzilla** games of the past have not exactly lived up to expectations, and representatives from Toho Games informed me that the **Super NES** game

would be a reworking of the first **Godzilla** game, while the **CD Rom** game would be a two player action/fighting game along the lines of **Street Fighter**. As I find it very difficult to review games based solely on their press releases, I will hold off on doing so until I have some hands-on experience. I also believe that, like life itself, all endeavors should start at the beginning, so I will devote the remainder of my comments to reviewing the first two **Godzilla** games for the **N.E.S.**: **Godzilla**, and **Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters**.

**GODZILLA**, released in 1989 at a retail price of \$45, is an action/fighting game much like the majority of titles available for video games, where you, the player, must guide your character through a scrolling scene battling all sorts of enemies. In this game, you play **Godzilla** and **Mothra** defending the Earth from the invading forces from Planet X and their legion of space monsters: **Gigan**, **Mecha-Godzilla**, **Hedorah**, **Varan** (from *Varan the Unbelievable*), **Baragon**, **Gezora** (from *Yog: Monster from Space*), **Moguera** (from *The Mysterians*) and finally **Ghidora**. The action of the game is played on two screens, the first, the game screen, is a chess board-like field (called the **Ring Field**), which **Godzilla**, **Mothra** and the other monsters move about a 29 square grid superior positioning themselves to attack or defend. The object, getting **Godzilla** or **Mothra** to the enemy headquarters hex in the lower right side of the field. After each move the screen changes to the **Battle screen**, where **Godzilla** or **Mothra** must fight their way past lasers, missiles, spaceships and various other obstacles until they clear the scene, at which time the **Ring Field** reappears and the whole process starts all over again until the **Ring Field** is cleared and the enemy **HQ** is destroyed, then a new **Ring Field** appears; there are 8 fields in all. There is very little more to the game than this and unless you enjoy this type of action/fighting game it can become boring very fast. Its only

saving grace is that the graphics during the **Battle screen** are very good, with **Godzilla** and the other monsters depicted very well and very large on the screen. Unfortunately, during the battles when fighting one of the space monsters, the background is completely black. The games also include a password mode which allows you to save the game at the **Ring Field** you are currently on and not start back at the beginning. One interesting note: if **Destroy All Monsters** is entered into the password screen a **Ring Field** with all the enemy monsters can be played. Overall the cart should be enjoyable to those who like the action/fighting type video game, and may be worth tracking down to add to your collection even if you don't. It may be necessary however to visit a discount house or shop around as it is no longer easily found.

**Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters** was released by Toho Games in 1991 at a retail price of about \$49. It is a strategy/simulation game of the battle between monsters like **Godzilla**, and the various units that make up the **Allied Defense Forces**. If you love simulation games (and I do) then you won't be disappointed. There are 12 independent scenarios in this game, any of which can be selected at the beginning of the game. I recommend they be played in order, as it allows the game to follow a loose storyline. In the game, you play the **Allied Defense Force**, and it is your job to defend cities, industry, atomic plants and all sorts of civilized society from **Godzilla**, **Mothra** (both mature and larva), **Rodan**, **Ghidora**, **Hedorah**, **Baragon**, and a **UFO**. It seems man's destruction of nature has enraged the monsters, resulting in grave consequences. The action of the game is played on two game screens much like the first **Godzilla** game. The **Map Mode**, the screen where most of the action takes place, is an overhead view of cities, mountains, rivers, etc. where turns between the player and the monsters alternate much like in a chess match. While the monsters trample their way

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through cities, industries and everything manmade, the Allied Defense Forces have at their disposal tanks, missiles, AA guns, planes, a **mazer tank**, a freezer gun, the **Super X2** and the ability to construct the **SY-3**. There is also a scientist as well as technicians that the player can refer to for information and advice on how to defeat the monsters. At one point, if you find and protect Mothra's egg, then Mothra will switch sides and fight with the Allied Defense Forces. As enjoyable as this game is, there are two major drawbacks: the graphics, and the music; the latter being so bad it is best left off, an option the game actually gives you. The graphics during the Map mode are poor, the overhead view of the landscape looks awkward as do the units representing the monsters and military forces. Whenever an installation or city is destroyed, a small graphics window with the word "destroyed" appears in the middle of the screen. The only decent graphics in the entire game appear during the other screen in the game, the Battle Mode. When a monster is attacked, or attacks a unit of the ADF, the screen switches to a side/scrolling view of the attacking unit and monster. The graphics here are very good, from the recoil of the tank's cannon to the glowing fins on Godzilla's back; the graphics are far superior to the Map Mode and are consistent with the graphics of the first Godzilla game. The only drawback of the Battle Mode is the fashion by which battle results are determined. The very top of the screen has a gun site like a slot machine. Using the 'A' button on the control pad to stop the slots, the player tries to obtain the correct combination of symbols to affect the outcome in their favor. According to what three symbols appear in the gun site, the amount of damage inflicted or sustained is determined. Overall, if a simulation game is more to your liking than an action/fighting game, then I highly recommend *Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters*. However, like the first *Godzilla* game, finding this game may prove difficult as it is not readily available.

One last thought. *Godzilla 2* would be the perfect game to convert to the CD Rom system. Not only would the

graphics be improved on a 16 bit system, but with CD Rom it would be possible to use digital footage from *Godzilla* films for when the monsters attack a city, instead of using the picture window with the word "destroyed" on it. It would also be possible to use real actors to portray the scientist and technicians; something along the lines of the *Sherlock Holmes* CD games currently available. CD Rom would also allow the music from Toho's productions to be used instead of the standard video game music. However, there has not been enough interest in this project for Toho Games to consider it.

## GOJI KITBUILDING

by Charles Howarth

### BUILDING

Any *Godzilla* Collector has got to be amazed by the amount of *Godzilla* models that were released in the past few years. I hope this article will help new hobbyists and give some ideas to more advanced kit builders.

The first thing I always do after buying a new model is to make sure all the parts are in the box. Most of the time they are, but I purchased a couple of kits that were missing parts. If you have bought the model from a reputable dealer, he should exchange it or, as in my case, I bought a *Paradise Godzilla* Kit that was missing a part. I informed the dealer of the problem, he called *Paradise*, and in a month I had the part I needed.

The next thing to do before starting to build a vinyl model is to wash all the parts off in warm soapy water. This washes off any mold release that may still be on the parts of the kit. I always use pretty hot water

when washing a kit, because if a part is bent out of shape the heat helps return it to normal. Then you are ready to assemble your model.

Even though the instruction sheets for *Godzilla* models are in Japanese, they still can help you out some. **Kaiyodo** kits for instance show a drawing of all the parts in the model. At the end of each part there's an area that's shaded in. This is the excess vinyl that has to be trimmed off each piece. For this you need a sharp razor-knife. Each part has a line that separates the excess vinyl from the part. After cutting off the excess vinyl, try fitting the piece into the model. If it doesn't fit properly, try cutting a little more excess vinyl off, or heating the piece with a hairdryer to return it to its proper shape.

When the parts fit well, glue them in place with any super glue, such as **Zap-a-Gap** brand. This glue will bond the part in a matter of seconds, so make sure it's where you want it.

After the model is completely assembled comes the job of putting all the joints. I use **Doctor Micro tools** or plain old **Testors** putty. The method I use is to simply put a little putty on my finger, then smear it on the joint. After that, I dig the putty out of the crevices on both sides of the joint and sculpt it with some type of sculpting tool. I use a tool I bought at a ceramic store. Certain types of dental instruments work well too. After your model is all puttied and painted, you shouldn't see any of the seams. If there are still seams that are noticeable, go over it with putty again, and then repaint your model. Some vinyl kits have moveable joints such as ones made by **Billiken**. These can be put together easily by heating the socket with a hairdryer, and for example pushing an arm or leg in its socket.

### Painting

I always paint my *Godzilla* models a dark shade of green. (*Some Godzilla*



kitbuilders, particularly the Japanese, prefer shades of gray such as Tamaya's german gray as an alternative to dark green -Editor) Then I drybrush them with a lighter shade of green. This effect is easy to do and looks great.

Drybrushing is done simply by dipping the brush in the paint you are using, then running the brush back and forth on a piece of paper towel or cardboard until there is very little paint left on the brush. Then brush your Godzilla model with it. The paint will only hit the high spots of the model, and brings out the detail on your kit. Drybrushing also works well on the fins on Godzilla's back. Off-white or silver looks great, depending on which version of Godzilla it is.

I paint the very tips of the fins normally, then as I get closer to the center of the fin, I drybrush it, fading it gradually into the green. The claws and teeth I do in an off-white or ivory, then stain them by mixing brown paint with a little thinner, and brush it on. The last thing I paint on a kit is the eyes. On older style Godzilla models I paint the eyes off-white, and the newer style Godzilla brown. The hardest part is painting the pupils, and getting them both aligned properly. Nothing looks worse than a cross-eyed Godzilla! I try to draw the pupils in with a pencil first, and then paint them. But even then I still might wind up doing them over two or three times, before getting them right.

Most smaller Godzilla kits, such as Kaiyodo's 20 cm. series I paint with a brush. On models that are one foot and two feet tall I use an airbrush. For those who are getting into the hobby heavily, this is an invaluable tool. It takes some time to learn how to use an airbrush properly, as I can attest to, but the results are amazing.

For further information on creature and figure kit building the Review recommends:

**Son of the Garage Kit that Ate My Wallet** by Terry Webb

**Garage Kit Builders and Glue Sniffers Magazine**

and looking at the pictures in **Hobby Japan**

## Stewart Galbraith IV and the Kaiju Tome

Interview by Dan Reed

**I met Stewart Galbraith** at the **Famous Monsters of Filmland Worldcon** earlier this year, while I was looking through a stack of French and German **Toho** film posters. Stewart is a writer of film and television criticism and a long time fan of Japanese genre films.

Stewart has been at work for a while on a book about the history of Japanese science fiction and fantasy films which is due to be released this Fall by **McFarland & Company**. I had the chance to talk with him about the book just before he relocated from Michigan to sunny southern California, where he is looking to further his formal education as well as expand his collection of film memorabilia.

*KR: What made you decide to write a book about Japanese fantasy films?*

S.G. : I've always enjoyed these movies ever since I was a kid. At the same time I wanted to read about these films so I could learn more about them, but there just hasn't been that much written on the subject before. So I decided to start doing research.

I was very much inspired by **Bill Warren's** great book **Keep Watching The Skies**, the best book that's been written on the subject of the science fiction films of the 1950's. In fact, it's one of the best books written about films period; it's full of some very insightful comments on the subject and some very useful information by someone who really enjoys those films. It has a few entries on the Japanese films from that period (the book only covers up to 1962). It made me want to read more about them, so I began to look further into the subject.

*KR: What were some of your sources?*

S.G. : I pretty much looked all over the place. In addition to some of the old fanzines like **Japanese Fantasy Film Journal** and **Japanese Giants**, I used trade publications of the film business like **Variety** and the **Hollywood Reporter**. The Japanese film industry publishes a yearly volume to promote its productions and that was very useful. One of the most interesting areas were the films themselves. I've had a great time watching many of the films in the original Japanese widescreen editions. There is a lot of information to be found in the material printed by Toho.

I also recieved help from several people including **Michael Hayes** (credited as the book's **Research Associate**) who wrote the book, **Widescreen Movies**.

He was an invaluable help in assembling the filmographies. He was able to dig up all sorts of data. Most of it came from the trades. It's amazing what you can find in back-issues of **Variety**.

One day Mike and I came across an ad for a film that was never made, called **Godzilla vs Cleveland**. It was a **Golan/Globus** production.

*KR: Are you able to read or speak in Japanese?*

S.G. : No, not at all actually. This book takes an American point of view with these films; that is, the entries discuss the U.S. versions of the films that we've grown up watching over the last 25 or 30 years.

Now, for those films where the Japanese and American versions differ dramatically, such as **Varan the Unbelievable** or **King Kong vs Godzilla**, I discuss the variations between the two versions.

I did receive help from people who do understand Japanese. Another person who was a tremendous help in

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putting together the book was a guy named **Horacio Higuchi**, an amazing guy who speaks like seven languages. He lives in Brazil and works in their film industry. He has also written a lot of film criticism for some French publications, as well as for a zine called **Monster**. He was a lot of help with the Japanese material.

I also recieved help with the Japanese sources from **David Milner** who has written for magazines like **Cult Movies** and **Markalite**.

*KR: How does your book judge these movies?*

S.G.: Well it's a very positive book. As you know, Godzilla and his kin are probably the most disreputable film genre around, especially here in the United States. Of course we know better.

There are a lot of interesting things to be found in them, and you find that some of them are actually very good movies if you just give the best of them a shot.

The book is dedicated to **Honda**, **Tsuburaya**, **Ifukube**, and **Tanaka**, the creative force behind the best of the Toho genre films. It is a very positive book for Toho (among other studios).

Of course I'm critical of their really bad films. I think some of their films from the '70s were just terrible.

*KR: What are some titles you like and don't like?*

S.G.: Well, as far as Toho goes, I think their best films came from the period between the late fifties and the early sixties. **Mothra**, **Atragon**, **Godzilla vs The Thing**; I really enjoy **Battle in Outer Space**; some people like **The Mysterians** but I really prefer this one: the film **Attack of the Mushroom People** has a really terrible reputation mainly due to the title, but I think it's a very interesting film.

Other films, I like a film called **Warning from Space** (also known as **Mysterious Satellite**), Daiei Film Company 1956. It's about some friendly

starfish aliens out to save the earth. I don't care much at all for the **Gamera** films; I do like the **Daimajin** series.

I also really like several of the more recent Godzilla films, like **Godzilla vs King Ghidora** and **Godzilla vs Mothra**.

*KR: So you enjoy the new films?*

S.G.: Very much so. I think Toho has done an excellent job of making the films seem new again and yet at the same time continuing to involve many of the people who have been associated with the series for many years.

I thought it was wonderful that they brought back **Akira Ifukube** to do the film score, and it's great to see some of the old faces again among the new casts.

*KR: What are your thoughts on the TriStar film?*

S.G.: I hope that it's not just a lumbering monster film.

I think what they need to do is take a long hard look at the (Toho) series and try to understand what is it about them that has enabled Godzilla to last nearly forty years. I'd love to see them use an Ifukube score, but I doubt they will.

( *Danny Elfman more likely ..Ed* )

In the introduction of my book, which Bill Warren wrote, he mentions the TriStar film. Basically he wonders whether with all the advances in computer animated effects if the end product would still be Godzilla. I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

The book is entitled **Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films:**

**A Critical Analysis and Filmography of 103 Features released in the United States, 1950-1992**, it will be available in from McFarland Press this fall for

\$35. You can write to McFarland press about availability of this and many other fine genre film histories including Bill Warren's, **Keep Watching the Skies**, at : **McFarland & Company, Inc.**, Publishers Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640.

## R.C. Godzilla

Dave has speculated that it would be great if **Tokyo Marui** had the vision to create a sort of kaiju **Capt. Action** out of the endomechanism by providing a wide selection of suitmation designs to go with it.

"I'd love to see a **Mecha Godzilla** suit that would be perfect cover for the sounds of gears and servos that accompany its movement, and I think there might be room to add flamethrowers to it."

The suit is assembled from parts like the original kit. It's painted a dark charcoal gray, with nice detail on the fins.

Ever the perfectionist Dave plans to customize some of the weaker aspects of the paint job such as the eyes (a recent issue of **Hobby Japan** indicated that plastic eyes may become an available option).

According to his sources in Japan, the toy will have only one production run, assuring its collectibility from the start. Selling here in America at prices ranging from around eight hundred to a thousand dollars, it retails in Japan for four and a half to five hundred dollars. "When it roars the acoustics and look are so perfect it makes the whole damn thing worthwhile."

Dave would be happy to advise fellow collectors on any technical problems they may encounter with the RC Godzilla. You can write to him at **5855 Natures Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada 89122**.









# Dai Kaiju Video Reviews

## GODZILLA vs.

## BIOLLANTE

Reviews of Toho Video CAV  
Laser Box Set and HBO  
Videocassette

By Robert Biondi

### CAV Godzilla vs. Biollante

Following up on last December's release of *Godzilla vs. King Ghidra*, Toho Video now offers *Godzilla vs. Biollante* in a special 3 disc CAV set. Sides 1 to 4 are of the movie itself, shown at its regular running time of 105 minutes (contrary to "rumors from the funny farm" that the CAV set contained an expanded, two hour version), while Sides 5 & 6 contain supplemental material.

I used to think that my Japanese pre-record of *Godzilla vs. Biollante* was of the highest quality. But after seeing the wonders of the CAV set, my first reaction was to throw the pre-record out! The picture quality of the CAV set is ultra sharp and almost looks three-dimensional, while the Dolby surround sound really THUNDERS! The CAV set is truly the ultimate format for *Godzilla vs. Biollante*.

The supplements present an interesting "making of" documentary that was not broadcast on Japanese television. The documentary begins in the order of the movie's shooting schedule, showing video-monitor shots of all the special effects scenes (in normal speed photography), followed by the same scene from the finished film. Tracks from *Koichi Sugiyama's* fine score are played in the background during the "making of" shots. Throughout the documentary, we are treated to color storyboards of various scenes, as well as designs for the Super X2 and other wonderful machinations. Highlights include designs for the "Bio-Godzilla" as it evolved from model mock-up to suit construction to finished costume.

Designs for *Biollante* are well represented as dozens of color drawings for both stage *Biollantes* are displayed. Of special interest is test footage of a STOP-MOTION ANIMATED *Godzilla* fighting with *Biollante's* tendrils. But best of all is the inclusion of scenes that were not used in the final print of the movie. Shown in chronological order with the shooting schedule, these scenes include:

Two persons in a motorboat sailing toward the "Rose" *Biollante*, only to be capsized by the biological monster's tendrils;

Repair work on the Super X2's "Fire-Mirror";

*Godzilla* stalking through the forest just prior to his first battle with *Biollante* (this scene appears to have been inspired by the introductory shot of *King Kong* in the 1976 remake);

*Godzilla* destroying a stone bridge during his attack on Osaka;

*Godzilla* stalking through the Japanese mountains, carefully followed by a helicopter;

*Godzilla* looking directly at the "Super-Godzilla" *Biollante*, through *Biollante's* point of view;

and Close-up of *Godzilla's* head as he revives in the water.

The two best scenes involve the climax to both monster battles. After *Godzilla* incinerates the "Rose" *Biollante*, the plant monster's spores fall to earth and blanket the surrounding countryside with a beautiful rose garden (this scene neatly corresponds with a line spoken earlier in the movie: speaking of Dr. *Shiragami's* deceased daughter, Miss *Asuka Okouchi* says, "Ekira used to say that one day the desert

would come alive and be carpeted with all sorts of wild flowers."). The other scene occurs at the end of the second battle -- *Biollante* opens its massive jaws towards the fallen *Godzilla*, and in a magnificent display of cartoon animation, *Biollante* disincorporates itself, wraps itself around its opponent (and part self), and then its spores float to the sky, leaving *Godzilla*.

[Also included at the end of side 5 are two versions of a *Toyo Tire* commercial that features the *Godzilla* design used in this film striding through an Artic area while two reporters in a prop driven plane buzz him, taking pictures. It almost perfectly captures the style of earlier Toho whose main characters were often guy/girl reporter teams-Editor]

The "making of" documentary concludes on Side 6, and is followed with a showing of four different theatrical trailers (the appearance of *Biollante* being kept hidden until the final trailer) and all the major and minor pieces of movie material; posters in various designs and sizes, official movie programs, lobby cards, etc. Overall, the supplements are put together better than those in the *Godzilla vs. King Ghidra* CAV set, and provides an interesting look into the making of a *Godzilla* movie. The price for the *Godzilla vs. Biollante* CAV set is about \$180.00; the CLV (one disc and no supplements) is available for about \$70.00.

Toho Video's next-release in the CAV series will be the 1992 version of *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (3 discs for \$180.00). They will also be releasing both the Japanese and American versions of the 1964 version of *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (2 discs CLV for \$100.00). Both sets are due in Japan in the late Fall.

## HBO's *Godzilla vs. Biollante*

Last December, three years after its domestic release, *Godzilla vs. Biollante* was finally given a

Con't next page



stateside release via HBO Video [for Miramax (The Crying Game) Films]. This is the first case of a Godzilla movie going directly to U.S. video, and the presentation merits a "good news/bad news" rating.

Starting with the bad news, the dubbing is mediocre, both in quality and wording. Although the writers made an honest attempt to be faithful to the original Japanese story (rather than phonetically fitting words to the Japanese actors' lips) it still seems that something was lost in the translation. Where the dubbing was recorded is not credited, but it sounds as if the "kung-fu school of dubbing" was contracted. The dubbing actors seemed to take their work seriously, but it's distracting to watch Japanese actors speaking in voices with Australian accents. The foreign actors who spoke English in the Japanese version were also dubbed, and now sound WORSE! Another weak point is the way the National Land Agency "G" Alarm Signals are treated. English translations of the Alarm Signals are scrolled almost directly over the original Japanese characters, making the translations very difficult to read. The viewer might want to run these scenes in slow speed to make the Alarm Signals out. The worse point is that the film is in MONO, a poor substitute for the spectacular Dolby surround sound from the Japanese version. Finally, at \$69.95 retail, the price is a bit steep (but since Godzilla vs. Biollante was broadcast on Cinemax during the summer, it's hoped that the price may come down).

These drawbacks aside, there is much to recommend HBO's release. First, the movie is shown at its full running time of 105 minutes, with no "additional American scenes" spliced in and/or substituted (quite unlike *Godzilla 1985*). The only visual difference is when the closing credits roll up: the painting of Biollante in the heavens is quickly shown, then switches to a black screen as the credits continue. Another positive point is that the print used is very good, and while it can't compare to the CAV version, the picture quality still ranks very high. Best of all, the film is shown letterboxed, thus allowing the viewer to enjoy *Godzilla vs. Biollante* in its full cinematic glory (if one can look past the mono soundtrack). Another nice point is

the videocassette box; the front cover is a reproduction of the advance poster, while the back panel contains a very literate description of the movie. This respectful presentation is a far cry from the hideous, cartoony artwork and ridiculous descriptions found on the Toho movies recently released by Paramount/Gateway Video (not that we should criticize Paramount too much; they should be given credit for releasing the Toho movies from clear negatives and at affordable prices).

So, the bottom line is that if you don't mind spending big dollars (and watching a film in Japanese with no subtitles) definitely go for the Toho Video laser CAV set. But if you insist on English, rent or buy the HBO videocassette.

## Word of warning to collectors!

A bootleg of the English dub of *Godzilla vs. Biollante* has been in circulation since Summer 1992. This copy is from a print that was butchered down to 85 minutes! Exercise care if you see these copies selling at collectors' conventions. A quick way to tell if a copy is the 85 minute version is that the four "G" Alarm Signals are missing from the opening credits. If you can, ask the dealer to play his tape from the beginning, and then you'll know for sure.

(Robert Biondi also writes for *Action Figure News & Toy Review*. His articles can be found in back issue #5 (all *Godzilla* issue, with complete *Godzilla* saga co-written by the explosive David Barker); #7 (*Godzilla vs. King Ghidra* synopsis); and #10 (*Godzilla vs. Mothra* synopsis). For information and prices on back issues, write to: *Action Figure News & Toy Review*, 556 Monroe Turnpike, Monroe, CT 06468. Say that you heard about them in *The Kaiju Review*.

## Godzilla Raids Again (Gigantis, the Fire Monster)

Laser Review by Dan Reed

Generally considered to be a rather mediocre follow up to Honda's first *Godzilla* picture, *Moyotoshi Oda's* sequel, *Godzilla Raids Again* (AKA *Godzilla's Counter Attack*), is probably most interesting to the Goji completist when considered in context with the first film, and as compared with *Hugo Grimaldi's* inane revision of the same material for the Warner Bros. version seen stateside.

The key narrative point put forward in this picture is that *Gojira* is actually one of an unknown number of similar creatures, hiding out in the world's more remote locations. This is all neatly explained via the use of some footage from the earlier film and a great cameo by *Takashi Shimura* who returns as *Dr. Yamane*. This easily accounts thematically for all the interesting variations in *Godzilla's* appearance throughout the rest of the series.

Although speckled in some places, the print was easily up to the standards I'd come to expect from Toho Video's more recent remasterings. However, I found most of the day for night sequences a bit too murky on this laser. The soundtrack is digital mono.

The score by *Masaru Sato* suffers of course when compared with *Ifukube*, but when taken on its own merits, serves the material adequately.

The biggest difference between this version and the American one is the absence of an omnipresent narrative dialog (a common device in other dubbed kaiju films, such as *Rodan*).

As side 2 is in CAV, we are treated to some interesting supplementary material in chapters 24, and 25. Over 1500 pictures, ranging from publicity shots of the actors to behind-the-scenes photos of the tokusatsu crew at work, so vividly sequential, that you can use your remote control to re-animate them.

Priced around \$70 (U.S.) it's a worthwhile



# Our Man in Osaka

## by Norman England

**Japan.** A simple word that can extract many different responses from people. Some dwell on past mistakes, while others see her as an economic giant bent on global domination. To those of us who see beyond all that, Japan has been an unending source for fantasy, sci-fi, horror, animation, etc. Still, even to those that love her, it is a mysterious far-off place where just a little over one hundred years ago foreigners were not allowed to set foot. Things change. My recent move to Japan may be of interest to some of the readers of *Kaiju Review*.

A little background may be helpful though. I've been interested in Japan ever since I saw my first *Godzilla* film back in the late 60's on TV; *Son of Godzilla*, I think it was. Later, when I saw *Godzilla's Revenge* in the theaters, I saw a city and a people so different from my world in New York. I have continued to have an interest in it long after most of my friends had left for higher ground.

Around 1986 when the yen began its climb, more Japanese were able to afford the trip from Japan to the States. Living in New York City, a popular destination for Japanese, has put me in contact with many Japanese with whose help I've been able to make several prior trips, couch surfing across most of Japan, enjoying this beautiful country. I've also spent the past six years studying the language, something I recommend to anyone who wants to get the most from this place. I'm now living in **Osaka** with my fiancé, Yuko, who I met while she was vacationing in America.

**Osaka** is the third largest city in Japan but is considered to be the second major city here. It was also the sight of two *Godzilla* films: *Gigantis, The Fire Monster*, which now goes under the ridiculous name, *Godzilla Raids Again*, and *Godzilla vs. Biollante*. My apartment has a perfect view of **Osaka Castle** and the kyobashi business area which *Godzilla* demolished in 1989.

One event linked to the new film that I

unfortunately discovered the day before it was to happen was a *Godzilla* vacation in which you would fly to Tokyo and be able to be an "extra" running from *Godzilla* in the new film.

**Kyoto** and **Kobe**, two gems of Japan, lie just an hour away. Unlike **Tokyo**, it's easy to visit other places without a major undertaking. Plus, there are far less non-Japanese and thus more of a chance to live in the "real" Japan. In my town of **Tenoden** I'm the only non-Asian. This makes for a lot of stares from older folk and a lot of attempts at English from the younger ones.

**Being a collector** of *Godzilla* toys, models, games, books, CD's, posters, etc., my first order of business was to check out the local toy and hobby stores. Most hobby shops here are little mom-and-pop type stores, usually a room about 10'x10' filled from floor to ceiling with kits. These places are good for finding the latest models but usually are a bit limited in the kaiju area; they have mostly plastic kits, planes, robots, boats, etc. The next step up from here are Department Stores such as **Daic**, **Daimara** or **Sogo**. These places generally carry just the plastic types but can be good sources for paints, brushes, and toys such as the **Bandai** line. The best are the true hobby shops or better yet a manufacturers outlet.

Personally, I prefer the mom-and-pop stores. These places are usually run by devoted couples who always seem to be about 65 years old or more. The service is always first class and anything that's not in the store is just a phone call away.

I like to go to my neighbor store, where I often visit with the owner, talking about America (a favorite subject of the Japanese) and *Godzilla*. I enjoy how people talk about *Godzilla* here. Here he's not an import, he's part of the culture.

## THE KAIJU REVIEW

Even those who aren't "with" *Godzilla* see him as part of the country's folklore.

Yuko and I went to see *Jurassic Park* on opening night. We bought our tickets two weeks in advance so it only cost \$15.00 a seat (it's normally \$18.00). If you want preferred seating, a special section where the chairs are white, it costs \$25.00 a seat. People here don't understand the concept of a line and we had to wait in a lobby where we were packed in together so tightly that if you raised your hand to scratch your nose you couldn't lower it again. Luckily, that only lasted for an hour!

The big thing here as a result of *Jurassic Park* is dinosaurs.

Everywhere you go, bags, posters, models sitting next to late night talk show hosts... dinosaurs. I was hoping that *Godzilla* would get more attention than it has but it seems that *Rex*, a film about a small girl and her pet tyrannosaurus, is getting all the attention. That film features a baby t-rex made by **Carlo Rambaldi**, which I think looks pretty fake.

So far, though, things are going better than I could have hoped. I have a nice apartment and a girl who's helping me overcome the mistakes and *faux pas* I would have certainly fallen into if I was here alone. How would I have known that it's proper etiquette to go to your surrounding neighbors, introduce yourself, and present them with a gift? Yuko said not doing that would be incredibly rude. (Can you imagine trying that in New York??)

I've now been here a little over 2 months and have mapped out several of the better hobby shops for myself. In the coming months I plan on discovering as many more as I can.

In upcoming issues of the Review I plan to bring you interviews and inside stories on the amazing Japanese kit culture, the latest word on all film projects, and most importantly, a fan's travelogue of Planet Nippon. Comments/questions....write in care of the *Kaiju Review*.



# DORSAL NOTES

**Wanted!**  
more readers like...

I hope you've found something of interest in this issue of the **Kaiju Review**. I am greatly indebted to the assistance provided in this edition by contributors, **John Rocco Roberto, Chuck Howarth, Dave Barker, Robert Biondi**, illustrator **Kenneth Hare** and correspondent **Norman England**. My thanks to author **Stewart Galbraith** for taking the time to talk to me during the last days of his move to California, and to **John Carlson** of **Monstrosities, Inc.** for relating details of his company's association with **Kaiyodo**.

Also I'd like to logroll a bit for my friend **Craig Ledbetter** who edits **Asian Trash Cinema**, one of the better sources for information on Hong Kong and Japanese genre films. For subscription information write to Craig at PO Box 5367, **Kingwood, TX 77325**. Thanks for the plug, Craig!

As I hope you've noticed, the Review has expanded quite a bit with this issue, and will continue to evolve as a zine. These changes, coupled with the overwhelming response generated by the Review's targeted distribution at such events as the **Chiller Show** in New Jersey, the **Famous Monster's Convention** in Virginia, and of course **Pony Toys**, have led to the need for a token subscription fee to help defray printing and mailing costs. If you would like to continue to receive the **Kaiju Review**, please send a check, cash, or money order for five dollars, for the next 4 issues (cheap), payable to me;  
(Dan Reed), 301 East 64th Street, Suite Five F, New York, NY 10021. Of course writing me an interesting letter, or sending neat items my way, will always assure that you receive the next issue. I am also interested in hearing from people who'd like to contribute articles to the Review. This newsletter was created as a forum for fans and collectors to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the hobby with others. All materials sent cannot be returned without a **s.a.s.c.** and, at your request, and will be considered available for publication.



Kenneth Hare

## Kaiju Kommments

TKR c/o 301 East 64th Street, Suite 5F, NY, NY 10021

Dear Dan:

Picked up a copy of the **Kaiju Review** at the Famous Monsters convention. It was cool. But of course, I'm always up on anything Japanese and monstrous.

I don't know about the idea of an American Godzilla film. What makes the Toho pictures so cool is the fact that they are Japanese. A Japanese Godzilla and an American Godzilla will be two totally different animals, just like Japanese food is different from American food. Monstrously yours,

**Toby K. Roan**  
Durham, NC

Dan:

Saw your zine at Yaohan Plaza. What a great discovery! I'm not the only crazy Goji fan out there, what a relief. I especially enjoyed your laser reviews. Keep it up!

I think the American Godzilla film should star Sigourney Weaver as some sort of Journalist who gets caught up in the battle against Godzilla. I think it would be really cool considering all the advances in computer special effects. You could still have a man in a suit but by overlaying lots of special effects the end result would be fantastic.

I think Dave Barker is off base about the Japanese losing face. Like you said both Columbia and TriStar are divisions of Sony. I'm sure if it's the biggest hit ever the Japs will cry all the way to the bank.

**Matt Jones**  
Brooklyn, NY

Dan:

Thanks for sending me the first two issues of your excellent **Kaiju Review**. I hope you enjoy the posters I've enclosed: I picked them up (and a lot more) during my last business trip to Tokyo.

It's good to find a source for information especially written for the collector's market. I love Godzilla. I hope Hollywood doesn't try to make a stupid joke out of him.

Sincerely,  
**Chance Winstead**  
N.Y.C., NY

Mr. Dan Reed:

Watch your step goji boy or we take away computer.

sincerely,  
a couple of really litigious members of the  
**Toho Legal Department**  
Tokyo, Japan

Dear Mr. Reed:

I was thrilled to find The **Kaiju Review** at the Famous Monsters Convention this past May. It's great to find a publication that is not only informative, but serious minded (relatively speaking) about this subject matter.

I'm especially interested in Japanese movies on laser disc. If you can offer some information on mail-order outlets that offer them, I would be most grateful.

Thank you.

**Jeff Protzman**  
Pittsburgh, PA

[Try Laser Perceptions at [415] 753-2016  
1739 Noriega St. San Francisco, Ca 94122,  
ask for Eldon]-DR

Dear Dan:

It was good meeting you at the Chiller Show. It wasn't until I got back home that I found time to read the copy of TKR that you gave me. It's everything I could want in a newsletter! Information on new kits, movies, etc., and all of it presented in a professional easy-to-read format. Please add me to your mailing list

I'll try to keep you informed with news from DarkHorse.

Keep up the great work!

Best,

**Randy Stradley**  
Creative Director  
Dark Horse Comics

Dan,

Thanks for the 2nd issue of the **Kaiju Review**. The issue's look was an overall improvement. (Not that issue #1 was bad).

I hated Godzilla vs. Mothra, and don't hold much for the Japanese series if they plan on doing nothing but remake the '60s.

I'm not a toy collector so [I] don't care for that angle, but I'm sure that's a minority opinion. I plan on plugging the **Kaiju Review** in the next A.T.C. out in July.

**Craig Ledbetter**

Editor, **Asian Trash Cinema**,  
**European Trash Cinema**  
Kingwood, TX

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