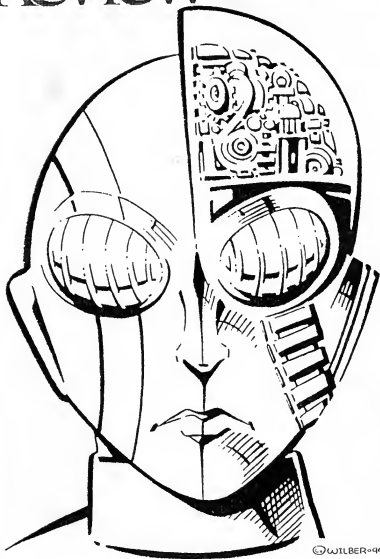


# Kaiju. Review

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Monster Culture

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**ROLL CALL**

After a long break here we are back with another issue of Japanese monster culture, whether you like it or not!

Greg Chang returns to these pages with an in depth look at Toei's Kikaïda series, a cult favorite among fans since its debut. Greg's report is enhanced by Ron Wilber's original art (also featured on the front cover) and a post script by kaiju wunderkid August Ragone.

Marshall Crist digs into the serious subject of Go-Go dancing as seen in kaiju eiga films, and continuing in this sombre vein Paula O'Keefe has contributed a wonderful article concerning the disrespectful but often hilarious treatment that cable's Mystery Science Theatre 3000 has given the English language versions of some of our favorite (and not so favorite) Japanese monster films. More than a few friends of ours have complained about this show to us over the years, all we can assume is that they just don't get it.

Kevin Grays continues his history of Tsuburaya Productions with an account of their third major television series: Ultra Seven, episode guide by Lenell Bridges and Roger Shy. Our friend Norman England is back with a travel guide for fans lucky enough to make it to the city of Kyoto.

There's an art contest that needs your vote so we can award prizes, and much, much more. Enjoy.

If you did anybody see Kaiju Review in Hobby Japan 9/94? Check out the Godzilla Festival article, pg. 75, KR was there! Dan also contributed to the new Toho Godzilla 40th Anniversary Special Box (11/93) T.I.L. 2235 !!

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# KAIJU BUZZ NOTES...

## DIGITAL DOMAIN TO DO FX FOR TRISTAR GODZILLA

Digital Domain has been selected to handle the special effects for TriStar's upcoming big-budget rendition of Godzilla.

### WHO IS DIGITAL DOMAIN?

Digital Domain was started in 1993 by director James Cameron ("Terminator 2", "Aliens", "The Abyss"), special effects expert Stan Winston ("Jurassic Park", "Aliens"), and CEO Scott Ross, with the backing of IBM.

### WHAT HAS DIGITAL DOMAIN DONE LATELY?

In it's first year of existence, DD has worked on the prestigious projects, Interview With the Vampire and True Lies. They are currently in production with Apollo 13 an astronaut movie starring Tom Hanks. They've also done some commercials, including a Timex spot featuring a computer animated Statue of Liberty, and the Rolling Stones video Love is Strong, where the band walks, Godzilla-like, through New York City.

### THE GODZILLA CONTENDERS

Originally, Industrial Light & Magic, perhaps the most well known special effects house, founded by George Lucas of Star Wars fame, was given first crack at producing the special effects for TriStar's Godzilla. While ILM did the Godzilla Charles Barkley commercials for Nike, reportedly, early design concepts for the big G movie did not meet with Toho's approval. George Lucas has plenty

of friends in Hollywood (among them, Steven Spielberg) and ILM will manage to keep busy with work for Jurassic Park II among other projects. In the battle between Sony (TriStar, Godzilla) and Matsushita (Universal, Jurassic Park) Lucas finds himself on Spielberg/Universal's side, leaving TriStar's Godzilla to Cameron.

### THE GODZILLA GIG

Special effects are the name of the game in the American Godzilla film (while it would be cool to see Satsuma in the flick, don't count on him wearing the rubber suit!). In fact, it is already known that Godzilla will be "virtually 100% computer-generated," according to producer Robert Fried. In addition, Godzilla's nemesis, the Griffin, will also be computer generated and may also involve digital morphing. In fact, the number of special effects estimated for the film are so numerous, that additional FX houses, Video Image and Sony Pictures Imageworks, will also help out on the film. And Stan Winston will be a very busy man; in addition to his partnership role in Digital Domain, Stan Winston Studios will do the animatronics for the film.

### HOW BUSY WILL THEY BE?

Plenty. With an estimated budget between \$100-\$120 million, Godzilla will have between 400 and 500 special effects shots with an effects budget of \$38-\$50 million. This is DD's biggest assignment, since they produced 150 shots for Apollo 13, 104 shots for True Lies, and 42 for Interview.

Godzilla's Special Effects Supervisor, independently contracted to work on this film at Digital Domain, is Boyd Shermis. He has produced many commercials but

perhaps most notably got the job because of his one and (to date) only feature film credit: *Speed*, on which he worked with Godzilla (and *Speed*) director Jan de Bont. The other FX supervisors are Mark Stetson (Digital Domain), Tim McGovern (Sony's Imageworks), and Richard Hollander (Video Image)

....Diane Reed



## NEW TOHO GODZILLA : "JUST OK"

The early word on Toho's latest and possibly last Godzilla film (for awhile at least) is mixed. The action oriented plot owes more to Hong Kong than Hollywood this time around thanks to 1st time Godzilla director Kesho Yamashita. Yamashita's directorial style is much more action oriented than Takao Okawara in terms of visual pacing, he goes in more for the frenetic pace commonly seen in the work of JJK helmers like Ringo Lam or Tsui Hark. The cliches are all too evident.

The plot line revolves around the efforts of the UNGCC to build a new action figure capable of being marketed in an even wider variety of shapes and sizes than last year's. Based on the Mogera design seen in 1957's *Chikyu Boeigun* (Earth Defense Force, aka *The Mysterians*), the new version continues the animemecha wet dream

begun with last year's version of the MG. It flies into space, it can bore into the earth, it splits into two components! Remember how many different MechaGodzilla toys, and kits were made available last year? Expect even more of this one.

Of course Miki Saegusa (Megumi Odaka) is still the major connecting character (other than Godzilla), this time she's involved in a plot to control the big G using mechanical telepathy. Of course the good guys (?) are not the only ones interested in controlling Godzilla.

Thrown into the mix is a new kaiju, an alien caricature of Godzilla with big crystal lumps on his shoulders, a jaw line reminiscent of Biollante, and a cool multiple beam ray. The story line has Space Godzilla spawned from left over G-Cells floating around inside a black hole. While this creature may be quite thrilling to the younger fans, for whom these films are actually intended, older viewers may find the creature a bit silly looking.

However a new monster is an improvement in terms of creativity considering that every film since Biollante has basically featured nothing but retreads of old characters.

Along the way we get to see more of Miki's honorable posturing over the rights of Godzilla, we see another piece of Toho Mecha get its ass kicked (while remaining collectible) and by the end of the movie we see Godzilla figure out how to tap into SG's source of energy (like Folger's, it's the crystals) with one big bite allowing him to lay waste to the SG in an explosive climax, followed of course by the inevitable Big G Little G exit into a moist horizon. Speaking of the kid (or young gojisaurus, as our Otaku friend's prefer to call it), if you were concerned that it looked sort of stupid last year, you are going to love how it's matured. It's obvious what audience Toho had in mind we they designed this character.

Despite the departure of several members of Kawakita's effects crew to the Daiei Camera film, it was business as usual for the 21st Godzilla epic.

Kawakita continues to demonstrate a marked preference for optically created battle effects (beam and pulse weapons from the meka creations, rays from the monsters), as opposed to the hard hitting, physical combat seen in the original Godzilla films. On set explosions coupled with post optical effects have been the mainstays of Koichi Kawakita's style since the relative (by Toho's standards) failure of 1989's *Biohazard* film, the only other Kawakita G-film to feature an entirely original kaiju (Baltra doesn't count since it's basically just yang to Mothra's yin).

The running time for the new film is one hour and forty-five minutes, with the last 45 minutes devoted to the final battle in Fukuoka. In the course of the fight Godzilla and Mopera do team up in order to finally defeat Space Godzilla. Seemingly out of the fight Mopera tunnels beneath the ground coming up underneath the crystallized Fukuoka Tower (a source or channel to Space Godzilla's power) and destroys it. Space Godzilla then destroys Mopera (the crew survives), but thanks to the freed up energy, Godzilla is now more powerful than ever and he destroys S.G.

On a four star scale *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* only gets 2 1/2 stars, with the highlight being the new Mopera design, and its heroic commander, the low point, the film's predictability. Dan Reed

# JAN DE BONT MEETS WITH TOHO

Jan De Bont the director of *Speed* was honored recently in Japan, where his runaway hit film opened the Tokyo Film Festival (held in Kyoto) this September.

The last week of September De Bont, armed with some of the preliminary storyboards for the TriStar *Godzilla* film, visited the main offices of Toho Co. Ltd. in Tokyo. There he met with the producer of

the current Toho *Godzilla* series Shojo Tomiyama and Special Effects director for the series, Koichi Kawakita. KIR's sources in Japan indicate that there is a very strong possibility of Mr. Kawakita acting as an advisor on the Tri Star film.

While most of the content of the meeting has been kept under wraps, it is our understanding that Toho is happy with De Bont, and is looking to the project with great anticipation. Out of respect to their own *Godzilla* series, it has been decided by both TriStar and Toho that the new *Godzilla* will not enter Japan in the film, as was previously noted in the fan press. Instead his activities will be limited to North America.

Some footage has already been shot for a trailer planned for use next Summer. The backgrounds were shot in Oregon without the Big G. *Godzilla* will be added via digital imaging, sometime next Spring.

# NEW COMPOSER SELECTED FOR LATEST GODZILLA FILM

Akira Ifukube apparently meant it when he said he intended to retire from scoring Toho *Godzilla* films after *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*. Although fans can anticipate hearing some of the composer's established themes in the latest *Godzilla* outing, the bulk of the new work will be done by Takayuki Hattoroi. Hattoroi comes from a strong music background, his father is a well known (in Japan at least) conductor of classical music, his grandfather was the composer of many popular Japanese tunes in the twenties and thirties. Hattoroi recently completed the score for a Japanese baseball movie called *Hero Interview*.

If normal Toho methods continue Hattoroi will have less than a month to score the new film.

Principal photography on *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* wrapped in early October, with an early preview of the new film scheduled for the second week in November.

## KOBE GODZILLA STORE GOES OUT OF BUSINESS

The popular Kobe Godzilla Project (see Winter '93 KR) closed in early October due to financial problems and a breakdown in their relationship with the Toho company. Toho insiders have informed KR that the G-Project is thought to have violated an agreement made with the Studio regarding the distribution of materials relating to their characters outside of Japan. How this will impact on other pending legal actions the studio is preparing to take in North America is unknown at this time.

## MORPHIN CONTROVERSY

While the TV series from Saban Entertainment which at one time utilized footage from Toei's 14th Super Sentai series (Kyoryu Sentai Zyuranger) continues to break new records in ratings and related toy sales both here and in other Western countries, the show has not been without its problems. The show was pulled from broadcast in New Zealand in September because the show was considered too violent. New Zealand regulators reported that they had received many complaints from school officials who had reported increased aggressive activity among the younger children who make up the show's core audience. One teacher complained of getting high kicked by one over zealous fan of the Green Ranger.

In October Scandinavia banned the show after it was temporarily linked to the beating death of a five year old Norwegian girl by a gang of young boys who were reportedly acting out their own version of the fight sequences seen on the show. The girl had been beaten unconscious and left in the snow to freeze. The ban was later repealed however when no direct link could be established between the children's actions and their viewership of the program.

Most recently the show was removed from a Canadian Cable channel intended for children called YTV, after the Ontario branch of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council found that the show "depicted excessive violence." The group went on to state that the show depicted violence during more than 25% of its running time, and that it encouraged children to imitate the violence that it shows. Canwest Global Entertainment a private Canadian broadcasting network has said it will continue to air the show, while it negotiates with Saban Entertainment about altering the show's content. Because the decision by YTV to remove the show was a voluntary one, Global was not obliged to do the same by law. They say that since the show does not feature "death, blood, or dismemberment", that it is not really violent.

In an interview on WNBC's Live at Five broadcast actress Thuy Trang (the only Asian character in the show's cast without a mask on) was asked what she thought about the show's reputation for violence. She responded by saying: "I don't see it as a violent show at all, because basically there's a lot of positive messages out there for the kids. Not only that, but when we're using the physical stuff like karate, gymnastics and all that, it's a form of exercise for the body and the mind."

## ULTRA NEWS

All is not well with Ultraman the Ultimate Hero. Evidently, rumors were spread that the show had run into some post production problems that resulted in its delay until 1995. Those rumors were created in order to divert attention from the real problems the show has experienced in finding an outlet in the U.S. It seems that Tsuburaya Productions was not all that happy with the American production. Reportedly when Ultracom

and Major Havoc Productions asked Tsuburaya Productions of Japan what they thought of the show the only response was "No comment".

Although work is currently underway on re-editing the show for the U.S. (or English language version) don't expect to see this show on regular television any time soon. Most likely it will be re-edited into video packages, and may possibly show up as part of a potential classic Ultraman package that may show up on cable in the future. News of the original series' re-appearance on U.S. cable is sketchy at this point, but the Sci Fi Channel has been named as one possibility.

### ULTRA SUCCESS IN CHINA

While Ultraman's ultimate U.S. success seems questionable at this time (beyond the hard core fans anyway) it has become a huge hit in mainland China. The Chinese have reportedly gone crazy for Ultraman! Tsuburaya Japan has made the entire run of all 10 Ultra series available to Chinese television, where the shows are being aired in their original order.

The first large scale Ultraman Convention in China drew over 100,000

fans. Since that was about twice the number expected near riot conditions resulted. Reportedly the con (which took place in Shanghai) was brought to a halt only hours after it began when the crowd rushed the stage during a live show causing it to collapse. Miraculously no one was hurt. Rumors of video bootleggers being removed from the show and placed in front of firing squads are said to be highly exaggerated.

In response to the great success in China, Tsuburaya Productions Japan is wasting no time and has already started development of an 11th Ultra series featuring a mostly Chinese cast with a Japanese actor playing the Ultra alter ego.

### CARTOON ROBOT TO GO LIVE ACTION



The cartoon classic Gigantor is currently being developed into a live action feature by 20th Century Fox. The script is being handled by Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home screenwriters, Steve Meerson and Peter Krikes. Fox reportedly out bid several other major studios including

kaiju crazy Columbia / TriStar for the rights. The budget is expected to run fifty to sixty million dollars with the effects details yet to be determined. The film will be released under Fox's new Family Entertainment banner. More details as they become available.

### ATLANTIS ANIMATED

Atlantis Films the same production company responsible for the rebirth of Jonny Socko and his Giant Robot as a series of original animated videos is currently at work on a new animated series based on the classic Japanese science fiction novels Kaitei Gunkan (Undersea Battleship) and Kaitei Okoku (Undersea Kingdom) by Shunro Oshikawa.

The storyline of the new version is said to differ greatly from the live action scenario created by Shinichi Sekizawa for the Honda / Tsuburaya collaboration released in 1963. The action now takes place just a few years in the future. The undersea battleship called the Go Ten Go in the original film is now called the Rai Ko Go (Thunderbolt). The new ship's design is under the supervision of Takashi Watabe who was in charge of the mecha components of the Giant

Robo anime.

The main backer of this production was the publisher Kadokawa Co., with Toho Co. Ltd. said to be very upset at the prospect of having no involvement with the film. It seems that while Toho retained copyright protection over their own version they never had it with regard to the original source material, thus making it available to anyone. However due to a need for additional funding (as well as wider distribution) the anime's producers have approached Toho in hopes of reaching an agreement.

The series is expected to debut as an OAV sometime in 1995, and if successful may be worked into a theatrical feature.

## ELECTRONIC KAIJU

Ultraman Powered has been released for the Japanese 3DO system. It features actual footage from the show and provides side scrolling one on one fighting action. Ultraman's foes include: the Baltan alien, Alien Da Da, Red King, Jamra, Telesdon, Gabora, Aboras, Banilla, Kemlar, and the deadly Zetton alien. In the works is Bandai of Japan's new Ultraman game for the upcoming 32 bit Sega Saturn System that will reportedly junk the current Sega CD system.

Meanwhile Saban's *Might Morphin Power Rangers* are tearing up the game scene in every format available from Gameboy to Sega CD. They're even pioneering the introduction of Barcode style games (common in Japan) to the U.S. market. Other more Japanese oriented superheroes (and other types) who are headed for the game screen in various formats include, *Kamen Rider ZO* (Sega CD) and the animated *Lupin* and *Gundam* characters (Super Famicom, Sega CD).

Acclaim Entertainment is developing a new *Godzilla* game based on the TriStar film. It will be released on the 64 bit Ultra 64 Game System from Nintendo and the 32 Bit Saturn System from Sega. Acclaim

will use its special motion capture technology to bring *Godzilla* to life. Toho Co Ltd. is also developing a two player fighting game that will feature characters from their new *Godzilla* film that they claim will surpass the *Turbo Duo* game currently in release.

Finally, game maker Sammy Co. is about to release a *Gamera* game for the Super Famicom. This game will feature scenarios from both the original *Gamera* series as well as the latest one due this spring, featuring Gyaos. It's a one player fighting / strategy game and you can count on its being released eventually in the US to tie into the giant Japanese monster boom of '95 / '96.

## SONY PICTURES

A look behind the scenes at the Studio that would re create *Godzilla*

In the modern motion picture business, a good idea is never enough to get a movie made. Now more than ever, movie makers are only a piece of a larger, corporate, pie. And there is no decision made that isn't at least in part made by the parent company.

SONY, you may recall, was not too long ago thought of as a manufacturer of consumer electronic goods. However, since 1990 the Sony name is synonymous with Hollywood, as the Japanese giant invested billions of dollars to take over two of the seven top U.S. film studios: Columbia and TriStar.

As readers of the *Kaiju Review*, you are familiar with the fact that TriStar, an American studio, is making a *Godzilla* film for the American audiences. What you may be wondering is: What's taking so long?

Recent headlines shed light on some of the Sony turmoil. Peter Guber, formerly the Chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment, unexpectedly announced his resignation on September 29th. Sony had paid an estimated half billion dollars just to hire Guber (and his partner, Jon



Peters, who resigned from Sony a few years ago) away from Warner Bros. Not only was this a decidedly unAmerican way of doing business (coming with the stiff multi-million dollar penalty) but it proved to be a questionable one as well. Reportedly, Guber spent millions of dollars on everything from office decor to chartering the Sony jet, not to mention sinking over 700 million dollars into studio stinkers including *Hudson Hawk* and *The Last Action Hero*. Not happy with the bottom line (and perhaps more than a bit perplexed by American creativity), Sony purportedly placed "spies" on the Hollywood lot to report back on the studio activities. "When you pay that kind of money, you don't just watch from the sidelines," they said.

Reportedly, Sony installed a bi-lingual 28 year old Harvard MBA named Ken Munakata to watch the moves of the American Columbia and TriStar executives. Munakata was often seen dining with Sony chiefs Akio Morita and Norio Ohga, perhaps briefing him on his observations of the proceedings at the studio. Or, you could believe the Sony story which is that Munakata coincidentally arrived at Columbia after quitting his career position at Sony's Tokyo headquarters, relocating to L.A. to attend film school and then landing a job at Columbia just days after the Sony takeover.

With the studio hemorrhaging cash, Sony has been looking for some time for a partner to help shoulder the financial burdens (and, presumably, share the wealth, should Sony's fortunes take a turn for the better). Talks were held with Turner Entertainment, the cable giant TCI and at least one phone company, but at least one obstacle -- Peter Guber -- had, until now, been in the way of completing a deal. With Guber out of the picture, new management at last has a chance to come in and turn the studio around.

Meanwhile, within the regime there were staff turnovers and defections,

including the heads of marketing, production, former chairman Michael Nathanson (who was taken out by the Heidi Fleiss scandal), and perhaps most importantly the departure of Jonathan Dolgen, the cost-cutting czar who could have saved the studio, who defected to become chairman of the new mega merged **Viacom Inc.** entertainment operations (including **Paramount Pictures**).

Needless to say, with management turnovers, fiscal problems, and interference from the Japanese-owned parent company, many of the delicately nurtured relationships with talent suffered. Most pointedly here, the budding relationship with **Tim Burton**, who was rumored to be slated to direct the American *Godzilla* movie, soured, causing Burton to defect to of all places Disney, for his *Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Ed Wood* features.

While Sony may no longer have Burton, it does have the kind of picture Sony is looking for in *Godzilla*. Remember, first and foremost, Sony makes hardware. It bought the American movie studio because it wants to own the software that consumers will be playing on the hardware they buy from Sony. That's called vertical integration, and it drives most of the corporate takeovers in America today.

The marketing goes like this: first you make the hit movie. Then you have the ancillary businesses of soundtracks, home video, laserdisc, etc. The latest extension of the home entertainment line is video games. So you want to make movies that are not just blockbusters in the theaters and in homes, but also are knockouts at the toy store.

This story wouldn't be complete without looking at one of the biggest success stories in Hollywood -- *Jurassic Park*. It should be noted that *Jurassic Park*, which is an **MCA/Universal Studios** movie, is also owned by a Japanese giant, the electronics company and Sony competitor **Matsushita**. These

two last fought it out over the battle between beta and VHS (you know which format won, but did you know that it was Sony that was pushing for beta?). In fact in Japan Sony is considered the underdog in the battle of the corporate titans, and therefore has a lot more to prove. With Matsushita's home run success in Jurassic Park, Sony needs a hit now more than ever.

Obviously, Godzilla, now in the hands of Sony, fits the mold, its success in all markets, from theatrical release to video game, is all but guaranteed. What remains to be seen is if and when Sony will pull itself together to produce the blockbuster hit that it so desperately needs. If ever there was an excellent Japanese-American collaboration for a Japanese-owned American movie studio, Godzilla fits the bill (and hopefully will help pay them, too).

#### NEW GAMERA FILM LOOKS GREAT

1995 is likely to go down (among fans of Japanese monster culture at least) as the year Gamera finally met the Godzilla challenge and won. Unlike Godzilla vs Space Godzilla the early word on Daiiei's new Gamera film, *Gamera vs. Gyaos: Decisive Air Battle*, is very positive. With greater post production lead time than is normally allotted to a Toho Godzilla film the producers have managed to put together an exciting and original giant monster show piece. The designs and photography are top notch. Several members of the effects crew (under the direction of Shinji Higuchi) are veterans of the last few Godzilla films and they have put this experience to good use in Gamera's first entirely new film since 1971. The advances in animatronics and animation, as well as optical post production effects have really elevated this film far above previous expectations. The viewer is always aware of the fact that this is a giant monster film



from all the great low angle photography employed in the film. It's really great to see the big T (turtle), finally get the treatment he deserves.

#### NEW GODZILLA CARTOON IN THE WORKS

Although information is a bit sketchy at the moment, Kojo Review has learned that a new Godzilla cartoon show is being developed for syndication possibly as early as the Fall of 1995. With a new line of Godzilla toys produced by Trendmasters hitting store shelves early next year it was inevitable that a cartoon series would be released in order to build consumer identification with Japan's favorite monster. More as details emerge.

#### GODZILLA GETS OFFICIAL NOD FROM JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

On the occasion of Godzilla's 40th Birthday Toho's most successful franchise was given one of Japan's Cultural Award of Merit in recognition of the monster's long history and great national art contributions. This story was featured on both of Ted Turner's cable news networks. The new 'Little Gojira' suit was seen rolling out Godzilla's birthday cake.

#### GODZILLA COUNTDOWN

Godzilla will appear in New York City's Times Square on New Year's Eve this year, on the Sony Jumbotron video screen. In an effort to launch 1995's big promotional drive for consumer recognition in North America, the popular monster will be used to count down the seconds to the new year. Expect to see a Godzilla exhibit next year at the Sony Center in New York as well.





### GODZILLA BIRTHDAY PARTY

On November 3rd, Toho Studios held a special invitation only party for the studio's most enduring cinematic creation Godzilla. The party was held in the famous Sound Stage #9, site of many of the titanic battles fought in the big G's past.

In attendance were some 500 fans selected from a group of nearly 6,000 applicants. Where were you?

Toho estimated that some 82 million people have seen Godzilla in action since his debut back in 1954.

Asked about his expectations for the American Godzilla film being produced by TriStar, Toho's Special Effects Director Koichi Kawakita was quoted as saying he was very much looking forward to seeing a new style of Godzilla. "There aren't that many monsters in American culture, like there are in Japan," Kawakita said. "It's part of our heritage. It's a dream we must work to preserve."

### TOHO'S CYBERCOP IN DEVELOPMENT FOR AMERICAN SYNDICATION

Streamline Pictures the company who brought Akira to our shores is currently developing the Toho teleseries Electronic-Brain Police CyberCop (Derruno Keikatsu) the 34 episode series that debuted on Japan's NTV network in 1988, for either video or syndication.

Rumor has it that Streamline will be dubbing the series rather than editing a group of non Asian actors into the existing footage for the non costume segments of the show.

Toy collectors should be aware of the fact that Kay Bee toys (and possibly other national chains) are currently selling the original Takara CyberCop figures under the name Power Force "Zero Section Armed Police". These are really well designed figures that are a real cut above the typical action figure available today thanks to their advanced articulation (26 joints).

There are five figures available, with the most collectible being the Blazord figure (the officer in the original show), which is packed one to a case.

### DARK HORSE GODZILLA

Comic book fans will finally get a chance to see more of Godzilla this Spring thanks to the folks at Dark Horse Comics. Creative Director Randy Stradley has brought together some of the comic industry's leading talents for a 12 issue series set to debut in May of '95. Art Adams is slated to do the cover art, with Kevin Maguire creating the story. The first issues will be penciled by artist Brandon McKinney, with inks by frequent KR contributor Keith Aiken.



### RIDING THE RAILS WITH ULTRAMAN

Ultraman and a few of the more famous Tsuburaya kaiju are being used to promote passenger safety and rules of common courtesy in a new series of posters on display at local Train stations around Japan.

The posters use the famous characters to illustrate ideas like

"Don't run on the platform", or "Don't smoke outside the designated areas". Of Course Ultraman plays the good guy in these scenarios with characters like the Baltan alien, and faking acting incorrectly.

The series has become so popular in Japan that the rail service has had to ask people not to remove the posters from public areas.

Additional material by Robert Dagg, Lenell Bridges, Mattel Jones, Norman England, and August Rapone

# REVIEWS



## REDS KITS REVIEWS

REDS, an acronym for Real Extremely-Detailed Sculptures, began producing a series of 100mm resin kits in 1993. The 100mm is not the scale of the models as the actual height of each model varies with the height of the base and the pose of Godzilla. Thus, the scale for Godzilla from 1954-1975 would be 1/500, from 1984-1989 would be 1/800, and 1991 forward would be 1/1000. The 100mm series through June 1994 includes six kits. I have bought kits #1, #2, #5 and #6, and these kits are profiled in this review. Kit #4 depicts Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster with Godzilla leaping off a small rock base to battle a partially submerged Ebirah below. Kit #3 is from Son of Godzilla showing Godzilla and Minya sitting on a rock in what appears to be a father and son talk.

Here is the data on the kits #1, #2, #5, #6:

### REDS #1 - Godzilla '62

Kong-Goji on rock base

Yen Price: 3,000 Yen

Expect to pay: \$40-\$50

Figure height: 8.9cm or 3.5 inches

Base height: 2.0cm or 0.8 inches

Space needed: 12.0cm X 13.5cm or 4.8 X 5.4 inches

### REDS #2 - Godzilla '64

Mosu-Goji on beach facing twin larvae in sea

Yen Price: 5,400 Yen

Expect to pay: \$65-\$80

Figure height: Godzilla: 9.6cm or 3.8 inches; Larvae: 8.5cm or 3.4 inches

Base height: 1.6cm or 0.6 inches

Space needed: 10.0cm X 28.0cm or 4.0 X 11.2 inches

### REDS #5 - Godzilla '54

Original Goji in street next to clock tower building

Yen Price: 4,800 Yen

Expect to pay: \$60-\$75

Figure height: Godzilla: 8.7cm or 3.5 inches; Clock Tower: 8.4cm or 3.4 inches

Base height: 0.4cm or 0.2 inches

Space needed: 19.0cm X 13.0cm or 7.6 X 5.2 inches

### REDS #6 - Godzilla vs

Mechagodzilla

Current Goji facing Super Mechagodzilla in scattered rubble

Yen Price: 6,500 Yen

Expect to pay: \$80-\$100

Figure height: Godzilla: 10.0cm or 4.0 inches; Super Mechagodzilla: 12.0cm or 4.8 inches

Base height: 0.5cm or 0.2 inches

Space needed: 9.0cm X 32.0cm or 3.6 X 12.8 inches

## GENERAL COMMENTS

First, the good news: The figures definitely live up to their name as they are well detailed and sculptured figures. In fact, all of the models had detail as good as, if not better than, the detail one would find on eight inch kits. Also, the sculpturing and posing of the figures is excellent. My only complaint would be that the Godzilla '64 (Kit #2) had a larger ridge where the eyebrows hit the nose than what you see in movie. Now, the bad news: They could have used a little more quality control. All four of the models had at least some shifting of the molds. Thus, there was a significant seam on most pieces. On the Godzilla bodies this was particularly annoying, since if you tried to file/sand down the seam too much, you would be filing away the detail on the body. The dorsal fins were even more annoying as the pieces were small to begin with, so there wasn't much to do except to use putty to help them stand-up straight. After painting, the seams are not as noticeable and are bearable. Also, the fact that the fins are clustered helps hide the putty work required to fit them into place.

I built all of the kits with the exception of kit #6, *Godzilla vs Mechagodzilla*, which was built by Ray & Jim of *Fantasy Creations*. All of the Godzillas are comprised of 21 parts: A main body w/ head and legs; the tail; two feet; two forearms w/ paws; 15 dorsal fins (2 outside and 1 middle row of 6 fins each). The feet, forearms and tail typically required a bit of trimming to fit the pieces and some putty work to fill the gaps. If the dorsal fins were molded properly, they were not too bad. The one thing one should pay attention to is that on the "older" Godzillas, the top and bottom fins on the outside rows are very small. If you are not careful, the pressure required to cut the piece from its tree may send the piece flying, then you'll be searching for a piece slightly larger than your trimmings. You'll need tweezers to hold these pieces

when you're cutting them and when you're gluing them. One note, the #6 kit also has a jaw piece, and it is the only kit with an open mouthed Godzilla.

As far as painting goes, the main thing to remember is that these kits are small, making the mouth and eyes very small. With the exception of kit #6, all of the mouths are of the clenched teeth variety. So, unless you're a world class microsurgeon, I would not recommend trying to paint the teeth individually. If you do, you'll more than likely end up with a white blob rather fierce looking teeth. What I (eventually) did was dry brush the teeth very lightly until an amount of color had accumulated to give the effect of a distinct top and bottom row of individual teeth. As far as the eyes are concerned, you are on your own. The eyes on Kit #5 are a bit more difficult since that particular version of Godzilla has white surrounding the entire pupil.

I'm only going to make a few comments brands of paints and colors. First, I like my Godzillas grey, with a dark base, a black wash, and a medium drybrush. Second, I tend to prefer the Polly O water based paints as they are easy to use with regard to thinning (you just add water) and cleaning, and they leave nice flat finishes. However, their colors, outside the grey range, are somewhat bland. I ended up using some Testors colors for the more vibrant parts (Leather for the Mothra larvae and Sea Blue for the, what else, the sea). If you need to gloss things up, Tamiya has a nice clear gloss paint which I used to give the sea a shimmering look. This gloss is really good on the eyes of larger models to give the Big Guy that glazed eye look. Overall, I think the painting of Godzilla is a personal preference.

## Reference Material:

Pictures of the Models: Check page 39 of the *Hobby Japan Winter 94 Godzilla Special* for Kits #1-#5 and try Hobby

Japan January 94 for Kit #6. The Hobby Japan Winter 94 Godzilla Special is the best reference material I've seen so far with regard to resin and vinyl kits, and I recommend it to anyone who is building, or considering building, Godzilla models.

Kitbuilding Skills: Kaiju Review #3 and #4, Fine-Scale Modeler, and Terry Webb's The Garage Kit That Ate My Wallet.

Sources of Models: I got mine from New England Resin & Vinyl, 150 Vine Street, Reading, MA 01867, Phone (617) 944-5528. Also, check out a few issues of The Toy Shop (a Krause Publication presented in the same tabloid format as Sports Collectors' Digest) at your better bookstores like Barnes & Noble. I have noticed that over the past few months I have not seen ads offering the REDS kits and your best bet (at least on the East Coast) is to wait for the Chiller Theatre Show usually held in the Spring and Fall. Also, if you live on the East or West Coasts, you should definitely check out Yaohan Plaza. These places have a variety of Japanese stores in a mini mall setting, including Pony Toys and a Kinokuniya bookstore. The East Coast Yaohan is about one mile south of the George Washington Bridge on River Road in Edgewater, NJ (River Road follows the Hudson River and runs beneath the GW Bridge). — Paul Banks

## MORE REDS REVIEWS

REDS a garage kit company that is mainly known in Japan for their nude and scantily clad lady kits, recently began producing a new series of Toho monster models. Their two most recent models are the 100mm Godzilla '93 (Godzilla vs Super MechaGodzilla) and Fire Rodan. The Godzilla vs Super MechaGodzilla model is the 6th in their series of 100mm Godzilla kits, all of which depict actual scenes from the Godzilla movies. This particular model is of Godzilla battling Super

MechaGodzilla in the closing minutes of the film. It features a 100mm Godzilla and a 120mm Super MechaGodzilla, (MG with the Garuda connected). Destroyed buildings litter the two piece connecting base, which is reminiscent of the old Aurora Prehistoric Scenes bases. This way the figures can be displayed together or separately.

The resin cast kit consists of 53 pieces, and comes with four color photographs: one of the finished kit, and three from the film. Moderate modeling experience is necessary. I highly recommend this kit. The price is ¥ 6500



Fire Rodan is a bigger kit, with a wing span of 32cm, and features Rodan perched on a rock. It is also cast in resin and consists of 13 pieces. This kit has several seams that require putty work, so again a moderate amount of experience is needed to build this kit successfully. Compared to other kits I have seen, the REDS version comes the closest to representing the way Rodan actually appeared in the film. I would recommend this kit to collectors. It also included four color photos from the film. The price is also ¥ 6500. I was able to purchase both of these kits directly from REDS in Japan. Their address is: REDS INC., 2-5-6 Kuramae, Taito-ku, TOKYO 111 Japan. Telephone: 03-3863-0576 fax: 03-3863-0577. When I ordered, I sent the price in Yen (check your bank for conversion rates) plus 20% for air mail shipping. Delivery took about four weeks.

— Charles Blankenship

## MORPHIN RANGERS

### POWER RANGERS: THE SECOND SEASON

By now, there can be no question that Saban's *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* is the most successful live action Japanese fantasy series ever in the United States. This program, which combines footage from the Japanese series *Zyuranger* and new scenes with American actors, has achieved greater popularity in our country than even the various incarnations of *Ultraman*. Of course, technically speaking, the show is not really Japanese, but rather an Americanized version of the original Japanese concept. If you can accept this and enjoy the show for its campy humor, it works pretty well. Comparisons to the superior Japanese versions probably aren't entirely fair, since they are geared to a different audience with different sensibilities. I love *Power Rangers* in spite of (because of?) its many flaws. However, love it or hate it (and I know there are many people on both sides) it is undeniable that MMPR is hot and it has focused quite a bit of attention on the live-action genre. If it adds new fans to our ranks, I believe its success can be viewed as a plus, no matter how many of us feel about its quality.

With rampant popularity comes one inevitable question: What have you done for me lately? Faced with an onslaught of imitators and a dearth of workable *Zyuranger* footage, Saban had something of a dilemma. How could they continue the show at its present ultra-low budget level and maintain its popularity? Obviously, they couldn't, so they increased their budget somewhat (although it's still very low). They also added some new wrinkles to recapture the interest of their audience. First, they wrote out the *Zyuranger* robots and replaced them with the robots of *Dairanger*, *Zyuranger's*



*"Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. Party of two."*

successor. These robots were re-named the *Thunderzords*. Next, they replaced Rita Repulsa with Lord Zedd, a completely new villain. Finally, they set in motion some very interesting new plotlines, which have probably been carried through by the time you read this. I'm certainly not revealing them if you don't know already.

Make no mistake about it, all of these changes were a big gamble. Any changes in a popular series are potentially disastrous. Could *Power Rangers* pull it off? The answers were to be revealed in the second season opener, where most of the changes would be made.

*The Mutiny* was the three part season opener, which was originally broadcast in prime time. In this story, Lord Zedd arrived and took over the attack on Earth, placing Rita in a jar (!?). He created *Pirantishead*, a fish monster who takes control of the *Dragonzord* and *Tyrannosaurus zord* and freezes the other zords. This necessitates the creation of the *Thunderzords*, which combine to form the *Mega-Thunderzord*. *Mega-Thunderzord* uses its *Thunder Saber* to blow *Pirantishead* to Kingdom Come.

*The Mutiny* was something of a disappointment in my opinion. For one thing, there is a lot of build-up to events in

the story, but the payoffs are way too brief. In three episodes, we get to see very little of the Thunderzords. When they are finally combined into Mega-Thunderzord, all this truly impressive looking robot gets to do is basically stand around and let Pirantishead beat on it. When the Rangers finally fight back, they blast the monster just once and he's destroyed. This story would have worked much better as a two-parter. In its current form, the viewer is frustrated when each episode ends right when the action starts to pick up.

Then, the beginning of the next episode hastily resolves the conflict and starts off on another plot point. Overall, the story is poorly constructed and in desperate need of some re editing.

Another big let down were the Rangers' fight scenes. These have usually been one of the strong suits of the show, but not this time. They were stiff and very unconvincing, even embarrassing. Since this problem has apparently been resolved in some of the later episodes, I must assume this storyline was something of an anomaly in that regard. Perhaps it was due to the new stunt director's initial inexperience or the difficulty of fighting in those Ranger costumes (I believe this story featured the first U.S. filmed fights with the Rangers in costume).

Humor has always been one of the strong points of this series and *The Mutiny* was no exception. In fact, I found it much more satisfying in this respect than most stories. Particularly amusing was the new roles given to Bulk and Skull, the token bullies. This trait has been virtually eliminated, thank goodness, and now they are merely pawns out to uncover the Rangers' true identities. However, I could have done without Rita's truly dreadful song at the end. And was it really necessary to have Zordon mop, shamelessly and go into hysterics like a big goober (it was funny, though)?

The performances were actually pretty good. Most of the Rangers seem to be increasing in their confidence in their

roles. I think the stand outs are Walter Jones (Zack) and Amy Jo Johnson (Kimberly) in terms of acting ability. However, everyone's performances still run hot and cold. Hopefully, they will all continue to improve. On the villain front, Lord Zedd was truly outstanding and wonderfully malevolent. The unidentified actor in the costume has the perfect menacing body language and Robert Axelrod provided a truly threatening voice (you can also hear him in *Zeram*).

Altogether, *The Mutiny* was not terribly satisfying in most regards, but it did introduce some very interesting new concepts. If everyone involved with the show can work to improve on this initial offering, I see no reason why the second season of *Power Rangers* shouldn't be every bit as successful as the first.

- Christopher Elam

## GUYVER 2 : DARK HERO

HD26771.1 UPC:14381-2677-6

Running time 127min Rated: R

New Line Home Video \$49.99 (laser)

Finally available on laser disc and home video here in the States, Steve Wang's follow up to the first Guyver live action feature is 100% better this time around. Although the first film had plenty of action and a decent cast, the campy qualities and unintentionally stupid intentional humor spoiled the effect for many fans. This time out Wang is alone in the director's chair and left to his own devices delivers a first class product. The story picks up a year after the events of the first film. A new lead actor (David Hayter) takes over the role of the Guyver's alter ego, as he tries to find the meaning of the bio-boosted armor while fighting off a new horde of Zoanoid monsters. His search takes him to an archaeological dig, where an ancient spaceship has been discovered. The ship not only contains the secrets he has been searching for but also a second Guyver



weapon that one of the Zoanoids manages to use on himself, setting up an awesome battle of the Guyvers.

Technically the second film is light years ahead of the first one. The monsters are very evil this time, not cracking wise in the Jimmy Walker vein like the first film. They even look more interesting in terms of the design. For example the 'mosquito man' has long syringe like fingers in order to get to the victims vital fluids, the creature also makes a low buzzing sound that is like a bug flying close to your ear.

The fight scenes are some of the best I've seen outside of a Jackie Chan film! The Guyver's transformation sequences are very well done, rivaling and surpassing most previous attempts at bringing this style of 'live action' comic book to the screen. Fans of the Guyver OAVs (original animated videos) who were disappointed by the first film should be sure and check this one out.

-Rob Dagg

## SPEED TRIBES

by Karl Taro Greenfeld  
Published by Harper Collins  
ISBN 0-06-017039-5  
\$23.00 287 pages

Although many typical kaiju fans will be disappointed to find that this book has no pictures to look at and in fact has very little (if anything) to do with Japanese fantasy films or television, those fans whose interest in Japan's culture goes beyond giant monsters, and quick change superheroes will be pleased to find that Karl Greenfeld's book offers some interesting insights into the youth culture of today's Japan. Greenfeld was born in Kobe, the child of a mixed marriage (his father an American, his mother Japanese). Greenfeld grew up and attended school in the U.S. but returned to Japan in the eighties, and lives there today, working as a journalist.

While the book briefly explores the

lives of a variety of social and economic types including young money brokers, cocktail bar hostesses, gang members, drug dealers, and even porno stars, the readers of this fanzine may be particularly interested in the final chapter Snix: 'The Otaku' which finally offers some outside perspective on exactly who (or what) the otaku are.

From the book: "The otaku came of age way back in the eighties with Paleolithic 186 computers and Neanderthal Atari Pac-Men as playmates. They were brought up on junk food and educated to memorize reams of contextless information in preparation for multiple-choice high school and college entrance examinations. They unwound with ultraviolent slasher comic books or equally violent computer games. And they discovered by interacting with computers instead of people, they could avoid Japanese society's dauntingly complex Confucian web of social obligations and loyalties. The result: a generation of Japanese youth too uptight to talk to a telephone operator but who can go hell-for-leather on the deck of a personal computer or workstation."

The book goes on to quote the editor of LAP TOP magazine Abiko Seigo who describes the otaku: "These are kids unlike any that preceded them in Japan....Where they are coming from is a world where all the usual perspectives - such as whether something is good or bad, smart or stupid, et cetera- are irrelevant because all of those things are based on social relations. If you don't socialize, you don't have much sense of morality. The only thing that matters to them is data. How much do you have and how much can you memorize."

Judging from Greenfeld's book Japanese otaku have about as much in common with the classic American 'fanboy' as William Gibson has in common with William Shatner. From the book: "Their [otaku's] obsession with gathering may, at first seem no different

than the fanaticism of collectors of rare books, or baseball cards. But it is as if instead of trading actual cards, card collectors were to trade only information about cards. ('Did you know that Hank Aaron had to pose seven times for 1970 Topps baseball card 500 before they were happy with the shot and that the bat he was holding, actually belonged to Eddie Mathews?') The objects themselves are meaningless to otaku-- you can't send Ultraman or a German tank through a modem, but you can send every piece of information about them."

While Speed Tribes is far from the last word on the subject of what makes Japan's (forgive me) Generation X tick, it is recommended as a lively introduction to the subject for kaiju fans interested in reading about more than just monsters.

Mattel Jones

## GODZILLA ITALIAN STYLE

Godzilla aka Godzilla, Re Dei Mostri.  
Produced by Luigi Cozzi / T. Tanaka  
Directed by : I. Honda / T. Morse  
Edited by : Alberto Moru. Special Effects  
colorization : Armando Valcudia. Music:  
Magnetic System, soundtrack released on 45 rpm

and then on various collections including a recent CD), where the title is misspelled *Gozzilla*. Produced by Luigi Cozzi and r.l. for BNC by Renato Barbieri.

Life in the busy streets of Hiroshima then, suddenly a blast. Death among the ruins of what was once a city.

It is with documentary footage that Luigi Cozzi begins his version of *Godzilla* ('54). Released in a colorized version with Sensurround sound effects in 1977, Luigi Cozzi is probably best known for the film *Starcrash* (1979) a low budget *Star Wars* inspired movie, featuring the beautiful Caroline Munro. More recently Cozzi has been responsible for a series of *Dario Argento* style horror thrillers (Cozzi has been a long time collaborator and supporter of Dario Argento) including the delirious *Opera* ('87) like *Paganini Horror* ('90).

Cozzi has been a fan, critic and supporter of science fiction and horror films since the fifties. He has written books, and hosted TV shows about the genre. He has naturally been a fan of Japan's fantasy cinema history. Curiously Toho even produced one of his lesser known films *Dedicato A Una Stella*



LUIGI COZZI

LA PIU' GRANDE  
APOCALISSE  
DELLA  
STORIA DEL CINEMA

**GODZILLA**

con Raymond Burr

nella  
meravigliosa sonoro a visuale  
della

SPECITRORAMA 70

di ISHIRO HONDA, TERRY MORSE

una produzione TOHO per la Paramount Film

CON GLI INCREDIBILI EFFETTI VIBRATORI E SUSSULTORI DEL «FUTURE-SOUND» SU QUATTRO PISTE MAGNETICHE A DIFFUSIONE STEREOFONICA

INIZIO FILM: 15 - 16.50 - 18.40 - 20.30 - 22.30

E UN FILM PER TUTTI

(Dedicated to a Star), which achieved a solid third position in the charts when released in Japan in 1977.

The first time I saw Cozzie's cut of Godzilla, I was eleven years old and it really amazed me. Especially effective was the 'Future-sound' effects, that caused my seat to rumble and shake every time Godzilla walked the streets of Tokyo. It was as if the monster was crashing into the theatre itself! Years later when I saw the film on video (the film has never been officially released on tape, the few copies around are from 16mm prints, or off TV, where it had only a few broadcasts) 'Cozzilla' as it might be better to call it, seemed simply weird. Weird for its strange colorization. The effect is best described as psychedelic. Everything looks florescent, including a glow in the dark Raymond Burr. A bizarre effect conceived by Armando Valeda (who handled the special effects for Starcrash), by simply placing colored gels at random over existing black and white footage.

The film is also strange for its extensive use of actual documentary footage from the Second World War. Godzilla is attacked by planes which explode without the use of any 'special effects' and there is footage of actual victims of atomic warfare in Japan, edited in as having been attacked by Godzilla. This is some truly scary stuff: Bodies half burned, with bones exposed, corpses floating ashore, children that look like dried apples.

If Godzilla was originally intended as a statement against the use of atomic weapons, the message is even stronger in this version with its use of scenes of genuine suffering and death like in one of the Faces of Death films. The problem is that Cozzie seems to have been more interested in re-editing the scenes of Godzilla's attacks, to the disadvantage of the human elements of the story. Eliminated are big portions of Akihiko Hirata's scenes, reducing his character to a cipher that shows up at the end of the

film with the deus ex machina like Oxygen Destroyer. Even the Raymond Burr footage has been reduced to a minimum, although this is no great loss in my opinion. "Cozzilla" should be seen if for curiosity value only, good luck finding a copy however since it was never released outside of Italy. - Max Della Mora

## HIKO NO SEIKI- MINAMIMURA TAKASHI (ROAR OF THE CENTURY- MINAMIMURA'S MONSTER ART COLLECTION)

ISBN4-257-03360-6

Published by Asahi Sonorama Publishing  
Y 1700

A4 Format, softcover, 75 pages.

Hiko No Seiki is a book completely dedicated to the popular Japanese artist Takashi Minamimura whose artwork frequently graced the many merchandising elements of Japanese fantasy films that were directed at children, from book illustrations to record jacket covers and beyond. While monsters of all types and shapes seem to have been Takashi's favorite subject, he had a particular soft spot for both Godzilla and Gamera. While I don't consider myself an art critic, to me Minamimura's art is some what simplistic, yet still very effective.

Minamimura's art provided fertile ground for the young Japanese fan's dreams of kaiju fantasies. His art depicted never before seen clashes between already established characters like Mogera and Angilas, and placed these characters into fresh situations like Rodan's attack on a zoo (curiously a very similar scene was depicted in one of Topps Dinosaur Attacks cards).

The book reprints in full color the long lost art that Minamimura did for books, record jackets, and other items that are now something only collector's (and deeply nostalgic Japanese) are likely to drool over and spend lots of Yen on. Most

of the material in the book is from the late sixties and early seventies. Books like the fascinating *Yokai Daizukan* (Ghost Big Picture Book) published in 1967, a pictorial guide to monsters from around the world. These included such kaiju as Gan-Ma, the 'all eyes' creature from the *Akuma Kun* (Mr. Devil) serial, the mythical Yukionna (Snow Woman), and even classic European creations like Dracula and Frankenstein's Monster. Other dai kaiju (giant monster) represented in the collection include Dai Majin (from a 45 RPM story / music record *Dai Majin Gyakushu*, these records usually came with a small heavily illustrated story book).

Needless to say much of *Itoko No Sekiki*'s pages are devoted to Godzilla, Gamera and Ultraman. The last part of the book features an interview with the artist followed by an accurate bibliography of every illustration reproduced in the book. Not your typical kaiju book, and all more worthwhile as a result.

- Max Della Mora

## TO THE STARS

an autobiography by George Takei  
Published by Pocketbooks  
\$22.00 ISBN 0-671-89008-5

In the last year *Star Trek* fans have been bombarded by no less than five *Star Trek* related personal histories, with more reportedly on the way. Of special interest to readers of this publication is George Takei's account of his life and involvement with the series. Of special interest to kaiju fans because of Takei's early days in Hollywood when he occasionally worked dubbing Japanese films into English for Western audiences.

From the book: "I watched Keye [Luke] work, and I learned from him to individualize my characters. As the image of the bright young scientist on the screen silently moved his lips, I studied the

movement closely just as Keye would; I gave him an astute, analytical voice. As the young honeymooner seemed to whisper sweet nothings into his bride's ear, I gave him audible passion in sync with his heavy breathing. As the image of the man terrorized by the enraged monster mutely opened his mouth, I gave him a series of blood curdling screams that matched every tremble of his tonsils. With earphones over my head and intensely focused on the silent images, I stuttered cried, pontificated, and shrieked. No, this was not some madman's asylum. It really was the modern-day equivalent of the *henshi*, the men who narrated the Japanese films I remembered from my boyhood back in the internment camps. I thought, I've got to tell Daddy about this connection."

This account of the dubbing of *Rodan* goes into some interesting detail, like how the King Brothers seldom got out of their seats during the production, while the director seldom sat down since most of his time was spent on the phone with his bookmaker.

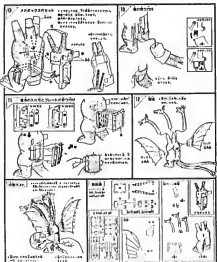
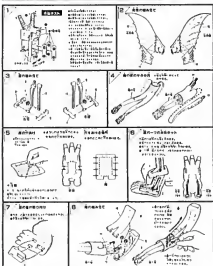
While the book admittedly has little to do with the history of kaiju eiga it does provide a pleasant alternative to the rather self important rumblings of William Shatner and Nichelle Nichols and provides readers with a key perspective on the Asian American experience in Hollywood. Takei's book is much less egotistical in tone, and makes for the best celebrity bio since Adam West's book *Back to the Batcave*. Mattel Jones

## BANDAI REAL ACTION KING GHIDORAH

Bandai has managed to beat Tokyo Marui to the market with their latest Real Action figure release; King Ghidorah. Following the success of the first two entries in this series; *Godzilla '93*, and *Godzilla '54*, KG represents an interesting advancement in figure animation. Using some of the improvements pioneered in

the second figure (Godzilla '54) such as using a simple three triple A battery power source and simplifying the on / off switch, the new KG figure is a great addition to the series. The servo motor has been redesigned in order to accommodate the 'independent' movements of Ghidorah's three heads as well as its flapping wings. Once again presented in kit form, the KG proved fairly simple to build, the chief difficulty was slipping the skin over the plastic endo structure. The sculpt is based on the '91 version of the monster and as with the earlier models in this collection the design is unique to this series and therefore highly desirable to all Bandai, or Toho kajuu collectors. This kit is retailing in Japan for around \$50. (U.S.) but it's been selling Stateside for around \$100. If you are a big fan of this character and don't feel like you will be able to afford the \$500. + cost of Tokyo Marui's version when it comes out next year, then this might be a good investment. As with the earlier items in this series the biggest drawback to realistic action (and this is also true of Tokyo Marui's Godzilla and Mothra animatronic figures) is the drone of the servos. The next figure scheduled in the Real Action series is Space Godzilla, with Gamera, and Mothra also planned for eventual release.

Mattel Jones



## LAKE OF DRACULA

Paramount / Gateway Video

VHS 16-VI

ISBN 0-7921-3254-8

81 min. Unrated (under \$10.)

A Toho Co. Ltd./UPA presentation

Executive Producer: Fumio Tanaka

Screenplay by Ei Ogawa, Masaru Takezue

D. Photography: Rokuro Nishigaki

Director: Michio Yamamoto

Featuring: Midori Fujita, Sanae Emi, Choei

Takahashi, and Shin Kishida

Paramount / Gateway's release of *Lake of Dracula* (the edited and direct to television version of Toho's *Chi O Suu Me* [1971] (*Blood Sucking Eyes*, aka *Lake of Death*) suffers from the same fate that most pre 1980's Japanese genre films have had to endure, the look and color of the original film has been replaced by a faded panned and scanned version. That aside; this film is highly recommended for Toho fans who are interested in seeing what else the company was up to while *Godzilla* was busy fighting Hedorah and preparing to face such notable kaiju as Gigan and Megalon.

The film is a sequel in theme only to Yamamoto's first attempt at a Japanese vampire film *Chi o Suu Ningyo* [1970] (aka *The Night of the Vampire*). While the previous film attempted to mix traditional Japanese ghost lore with more Western vampire storylines, *Lake of Dracula* seems more directly inspired by the type of films Terence Fisher created for Hammer in the late fifties and early sixties. Aside from the obvious Gothic elements, Fisher's frequent use of color to create a horrific mood is adopted by photographer Rokuro Nishigaki to great effect, especially in the case of the red sky seen at the start and end of the film.

Unfortunately these qualities suffer more than a bit in this faded print. Although the obvious commercial blackouts are not too disturbing in this version, the elimination of the graphic vampire death sequence (lifted from Fisher's *Horror of Dracula* ['58]) is a real disappointment. Worst of

all is the ep/slp copyguarded recording of the tape which causes what color is left to pulse in and out on throughout the flick.

So what's to recommend this video? A few things; this will probably be your only chance to see this film, and serious devotees of Toho and/or monster films in general should not miss it.. The dubbing (and translation) is handled well, keeping the original creator's intentions intact, the acting is good especially in the case of Midori Fujita (Akiko) who centers the film with a performance that, maintains viewer empathy from start to finish. The plot's framing device concerns Akiko's childhood encounter with the vampire that haunts her imagination as an adult, is well handled and serves to re enforce the atmosphere of menace that permeates the film.

A subtle sexual tension is created by the relationship between Akiko, her sister Natsuko (Sanae Emi) and Akiko's fiance Dr. Saki (Choei Takahashi), whom Natsuko is obviously attracted to, as well as the usual vampire / victim sexual dynamic present in most films of this sub genre.

Of special note is the performance of Shin Kishida as the vampire. With few lines delivered in the film (dubbed with a slight European accent) the actor depends almost entirely on physical presence to convey a sense of undead dread. Kishida succeeds in setting the correct tone of power and evil. The actor would later appear in *Godzilla vs the Cosmic Monster* (MechaGodzilla) [1974] as the Interpol Special agent Namara, and also starred in the television series *Kaiki Dai Sakusen* [26 episodes from 9/15/68-3/9/69] as a member of the Science Research Institute which spent each episode investigating supernatural phenomena like ghosts, possessions, and even vampires.

Mattell Jones

## GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA

TLL2236

three disc CAV

18,000 yen available 12/1

Toho's latest addition to their CAV laser collection of the Kawakita Godzilla series is not due to hit the stores until December 1st, but here's an exclusive sneak preview:

As usual the film itself is spread over the first four sides in CAV format. The picture transfer is up to the usual high standards of this series, with a booming audio mix that is particularly effective during the Adonou island battle between Godzilla and Rodan and in the final battle at Chiba.

Of special interest to collectors are the final two documentary sides of the disc. This section begins with a short statement from Okawara and Kawakita about why they choose the MG as Godzilla's next adversary.

Next is a series of behind the scenes segments showing how some of the "fleeing people" shots are staged, just as this starts to get boring, Kawakita explains how the shot of Godzilla attacking the Yokkaichi Petro Complex was inspired by Tsuburaya's shot of Godzilla attacking the Nagoya oil refinery in *Godzilla vs. the Thing*, and the shots are contrasted. Following this we see some of the Godzilla in Kyoto footage including a few zoomed angles.

The next section details the production of the first battle on Adonou island between Godzilla and Rodan. The highlights here are seeing Kawakita himself operating the Rodan head puppet for the close up shots of Rodan pecking at Godzilla, and watching Satsuma gleefully stomp Rodan. This disc really gives fans more Satsuma for their money than the previous three.

This chapter is followed by a step frame segment detailing the evolution of the new Rodan design.

The next section features behind the scenes footage of the creation of the MG, followed by a step frame sequence of the various initial designs.

Following this is a segment focusing on the Ruby Godzilla. A highlight here is showing actress Ryoko Sato getting used to acting with the BG. Another step frame section follows, concerning the BG, and some fans will be surprised at some of the more interesting designs the studio passed up on.

The next segment is titled *Go! Go! Go!* and concerns the shooting of the climax. I used to think Dave Barker was crazy for blowing up his Big Guy Kaiyodo model, but he's got nothing on what Kawakita's crew does to the MG here. Another highlight is Rodan being blasted into the building by the MG, and Kawakita's explanation for the melding of Rodan with Godzilla at the end. As the crew carries out the MG side 5 ends.

The next side begins with a series of out takes featuring Godzilla's attack on the Yokkaichi Petro Complex, followed by unused shots of Godzilla and the MG's first encounter, including an interesting Godzilla POV shot of the MG's approach. This is followed by several shots of the Toho's meka on the wave in the film's primary daylight battle sequence featuring "conventional" forces. Next is some

interesting footage of Godzilla in Kyoto, including several nice low angle shots. Some shots here are very reminiscent of scenes from *Monster Zero* (Godzilla's feet crushing through Japanese homes).

The next section features an interview with Mamoru Takashima. Next is director Fukun Okawara apparently talking about teaming up two generations of Takashima (Father & Son) since documentary footage of this follows. Tadeto Takashima is also interviewed. Next is a series of staged scenes featuring young Takashima, the most interesting of which includes 'Aoki' arriving at UNGCC and getting a Zatoichi like demonstration of usenet disposal by another member of G-Force, next the Alert Code goes off and Aoki is on his way to the MG with the operations manual in one hand and his uniform in the other. He hesitates to change on the turbo lift because of the presence of Catherine Burger, but 'Sasaki' tells him not to worry since Burger is a replicant. Aoki tries to examine Burger more closely and gets a stiff elbow in the gut for his effort. He is told the replicant remark is just a joke, Burger is actually U.S. Air Force. The sequence continues on board the MG as Aoki frantically attempts to study the operations manual as the MG flies into battle against Godzilla, King Ghidorah and Mothra. Within moments the MG is destroyed with the ship's computer voice intoning, "...no survivors" only then does Aoki realize he is in a simulation.

More unused sequences follow, most significantly is a scene in which Miki Saegusa establishes a rapport with the Ruby Gijira, who at first seems fierce, but then playfully lets down her hair.

Next is documentary footage of the filming of the movie's final sequence; Godzilla and Ruby G walking into the wet horizon. Detail is shown of the wire puppet Ruby G that follows Satsuma in the suit.

The next segment is very interesting as it details the production of the 3D film *Monster Planet of Godzilla*. Several effects sequences from this film, which also features Rodan and Mothra, as well as a stripped down version of the Garuda model (as a new space ship) are shown, followed by a lengthy step frame section featuring production art and the story boards.

The final portion of the disc is taken up with five (evolving) versions of the trailer for *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla*, including the first one that featured some cuts from 1989's *Gumbed* (taking the place of the MG), and the poster art! Following this is the trailer seen last Christmas in Japanese theatres for TriStar's American version of *Godzilla* "ground breaking special effects" which is nothing but titles and a Toho era Godzilla silhouette. Too bad about the 12/94 date!

Next is a series of TV commercials that use Godzilla, including two versions of one for MBS (a cable broadcaster), one for Wow Wow (a pay per view movie channel) that features multiple *Godzillas* emerging from Tokyo Bay, one for Bandai's King Scale motorized Godzilla toy (with Muxer Tunk remote control), and a clothing sale ad for Seiyu.

The disc closes with a trailer for *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*. I rate this disc as the best overall documentary job to far, with the Hi8 format disc naming a close second.

—Dan Reed





# TSUBURAYA LEGEND

## ULTRA SEVEN

by Kevin Grays

With the tremendous success of the original Ultraman series, it was inevitable that Tsuburaya Productions would seek to follow up on the show with a new program. Instead of returning the first Ultraman to Earth for another round of adventures, a new hero was created out of the existing mythos surrounding the region of Nebula M78. The new hero would come to be known as Ultra Seven (Urutora Sebun). (Reportedly because Ultra Two through Six didn't sound exciting enough to Noboru Tsuburaya Ed.). The show aired from October 1st, 1967 to September 8th, 1968 and ran for 49 episodes. Broadcast like the original on the TBS network in Japan, the show would enjoy the same success as its predecessor.

The storyline introduced M78 Agent 340, whose duty consisted of mapping the planets and charting their orbits. While studying the Earth, Agent 340 chanced to observe the selfless heroism of a young man named Jiro Satsuma, who had slipped while mountain climbing and then cut his own rope rather than risk the life of his friend who clung helplessly above him. The alien observer was so impressed by this act of bravery that he decided to model a human form for himself based on the young man's image.

Since the threat of alien invasions was an already well established precept in Tsuburaya's Ultra continuity, it was only natural that the main action of the series would revolve around another organized team dedicated to the defense of the Earth. In this case an elaborate organization was

devised known as the TDF (Terrestrial Defense Force). The TDF was designed as a global operation with bases located in almost every major world power, both the North and South Pole as well as two Orbital platforms in space. The Japanese operations featured in the show were divided between the elite Ultra Garrison, the Military Police Forces, the Science Corps, the Medical Center Personnel, the Military National Guard, and the Space Station V3, and V2 crews. The officers of the Ultra Garrison are the primary focus of the series. It is into this organization that a mysterious stranger calling himself Dan Moroboshi (Koji Moritsugu) arrives. Moroboshi is the adopted personality of M78 agent 340.

His invaluable help in fighting off the Kool alien invasion featured in the series first episode *The Invisible Challenger* (directed by Hajime Tsuburaya and written by Tetsuo Kinjo) leads him to be inducted into the Ultra Garrison. This episode was retitled *Enter - Dan Moroboshi!* in the Canadian / American version recently seen on TNT, with the alien invader identified as the Emperor of Zundar.

In situations of great crisis, when giant enemy aliens or monsters make their attacks and little hope remains for the Earth defense operations the extraterrestrial agent from M78 appears. By putting on his 'Ultra Eye' glasses (referred to as the "Task Mask" on the Turner version), to use his Ultra form to help defend the Earth. Agent 340 is soon dubbed 'Ultra Seven' by the six membered Ultra Garrison since it is clear that he is

also out to protect the Earth from alien incursions.

Seven also has the allegiance of several creatures from other M78 ally worlds. Called the capsule kaiju Moroboshi keeps them stored in miniature form, ready for any pending emergency. He can select from the Living Robot creature : Windam,



Koji Moritsugu as Dan Moroboshi

from the Metal planet; the Great Buffalo Beast : Mielas, from (you guessed it) the Buffalo planet; or the Dinosaurian Monster : Agira (called Berkin in the Turner version), from the Animal planet.

Popular actors to re appear in Ultra Seven include Iyoshi Ishii, who played the impetuous Special Search Party Officer Arashi in the original Ultraman. In the new show he portrays Shigeru Furuhashi of the Ultra Garrison. Akihiko Hirata and Kenji Sahara both had recurring roles as General Yanagawa and General Takenaka respectively.

Tohl Narita would be responsible for most of the creature designs in this series, while Toru Fuyuki composed the soundtrack and main titles sequences for the series. As with the last series many versions of the main title would be created, including an English language one for use with the popular Hawaiian version.

Ultra Seven averaged about a 22.3% to 28.5% share of the Japanese television audience during its run. Many Japanese fans have in retrospect come to consider this the finest of the Ultra shows thanks to its special attention to character development, writing, and dramatic content. The superior quality of this show is unfortunately not as evident in the Turner version which was re-cut and dubbed in Canada before finally showing up earlier this year on TNT at six o'clock in the mornings six days a week. On the positive side, they did retain the original names of most of the characters except Ann Yuri [Yuriko Hishimi] who became Donna Mishibata. This was a nice change of pace from what producers like Sandy Frank (Gamera, Mighty Jack, Fugitive Alien) generally did in terms of Americanizing all the character's names in his re-cut versions (or for that matter getting rid of the original Japanese actors entirely as is the trend with today's shows)

One aspect of the Turner version that really doesn't ring true with the original material is the repeated attitude of male chauvinism with regard to Donna's role as part of the team (and frequently in terms of other female characters). In the two series that preceded *Ultra Seven* (as well as in the Japanese version of *Ultra Seven* itself) the role of the female characters was an important one, and greatly respected (aside from the occasional good natured kidding by the dominantly male cast of characters). English dialog from other members of the Squad to Donna like: "This is no place for a girl!" or "Go back to the ship, this is a man's job" are just false in the context of the original.

Another aspect of the Canadian version created for Turner that was apparently meant as 'humor' was the overstated nationalism on the part of the *Ultra Squad* members. Frequent references were made concerning the superiority of their Japanese technology, and the idea of losing to an alien invader was more a matter of 'losing face' in the Asian sense of the phrase, than failing to defend the entire Earth. The original series made it abundantly clear that the TDF was an international organization, that singled out no one country as the main source of pride.

While it is obvious that most of the dialog changes were intended to be humorous, it is none the less distracting for fans accustomed to the superior re-dubbing of the original *Ultraman*. An example of this occurs in the episode *The Brave One* (originally episode 38 *The Courageous Battle*, written and directed by Toshihiro Iijima) when Donna offers to carry the suitcase of Dr. McClaine who has come to Japan to perform an emergency operation on a boy named Osamu, the doctor says "No, no, I'm a Democrat, we carry our own luggage," as if confusing Japan with mainland China or something. Later in the same episode after quite a few

automobiles have been abducted by a giant robot attacking the highway, a radio traffic report broadcasts: "and now the traffic report, any of you who would rather not go home by way of outer space would do well to avoid the expressway." Later Dan identifies it as a Zantar Battlebot (actually a Crazygon in the original version) from Zantar planet of scavengers, who have no cars of their own, so they come to Earth to steal ours, along with the drivers, since they will need chauffeurs as well. In the original the cars are needed by the Handa aliens simply for scrap with little concern for the fate of the hapless occupants. Despite such alterations the human drama between Dan and Osamu remains intact, as Dan does his best to be there for the boy, who is afraid to face the operation he must have to save his life. Another example of misplaced humor occurs in the two part episode *Planets in Conflict* (original title: *The Ultra Guard Goes West*, written by Tetsuo Kinjo and directed by Kazuho Mitsuta). After the *Ultra Squad* fails to prevent the destruction of a submarine carrying foreign delegates, Commander Kiriya makes the dead pan reflection: "Too late. Boy, I just hate it when that happens."

In addition to dialog alterations the Turner version frequently suffers from lousy editing. The majority of the 'Eye Slugger' sequences have been removed owing apparently to concerns over violence, and it was not uncommon for the action to abruptly cut to commercial and return with the danger already passed. However despite such problems, the overall quality of the original show did occasionally come through in the Turner version. The *Fugitive Fortune Teller* (Look For Tomorrow, written by Samaji Nonagase and Shozo Uehara, and directed by Samaji Nonagase) is a good example. It shows Kiriya's convictions as he risks his own credibility over the predictions of an elderly fortune teller who fears for his life at the hands of the enemy because he

holds the key to an alien threat to the Ultra Garrison. Another noteworthy episode was called **Mother Knows Best** (originally episode 24 **Return to the North!**, directed by Kazuho Mitsuha) in which Furuhashi's mother indicates a desire for her soon to give up his dangerous lifestyle and return to a more traditional life in northern Japan with his family. The story illustrates how she comes to understand how important the TDF is to her son and how important her son is to the Ultra Garrison. Trapped in a sabotaged craft and headed toward a mid air collision with a passenger airliner it looks like Furuhashi may have to self destruct in order to save the lives of the innocent passengers.

Another episode worth noting, because of its exceptionally well directed climax is **The Devil's Angel** (originally episode 37: **The Stolen Ultra Eye**, directed by Toshi tsugu Suzuki) in which an alien girl steals Dan's task mask. Unable to transform without it Dan cannot stop the intergalactic missile that her people have launched toward the Earth. The Ultra Garrison intercepts and decodes a transmission that leads them to understand that her alien superiors have abandoned her to the same fate as everyone else on Earth when the missile strikes, she is expendable. In a dramatic, and moody sequence Dan confronts the girl in a night club (called the "Purple Onion") that looks like something out of the '60s American rock scene, that she is using as a base station. They share telepathic communication and Dan informs her "No one is coming for you. We intercepted this message from your superiors" He gives her a print out to read for herself and the girl is so stunned, that she is unable to reply, she just stares at Dan. The silence and the mood conveyed by the photography create a more

powerful statement than any words could make. Then Dan mentally tells her : "Earthlings aren't perfect, but most try to do good. Stay, live with us. You could be happy here, we wouldn't betray you." So shocked she cannot reply, she simply hands over the Task Mask to Dan so that he can transform in time to reverse the course of the approaching missile. Before Dan can return the girl kills herself using a device concealed in the night club's jukebox. Afterward the eerie silence is broken only by the sound of a clock's chimes. In close up we get a final shot that includes a painting of a hand with the English words "I Love You" printed on it. When Dan returns all he finds is the girl's amulet, which he picks up from the floor.

(Editor's note : ) Despite the many faults of the Turner version, at least it provided many new fans with the opportunity to see a program that here to fore was only available in Hawaii in the '70s, or from bootleg dealers at science fiction conventions, and pictures in Japanese publications. If you would like to see more of the series then show your support by writing to Ultracom at 12440 Moorpark St., Suite 150, Studio City, CA 91604.

Kenji Sahara (center) as Gen. Takenaka



# ULTRA SEVEN EPISODE GUIDE

Episode	Date	Title	Kajju, Alien, etc.
#1	10/01/87	The Invisible Challenger	Alien Gwai Washuu (Ultra T's Capsule Kajju)
#2	10/08/87	Green Horror	Alien Washu
#3	10/15/87	The Lake's Secret	Alien Fui Biking Mecha (Ultra T's Capsule Kajju)
#4	10/22/87	Speed Mecha, Reply	Alien Gindai
#5	10/29/87	Vaporized Time	Alien Vira
#6	11/05/87	Dark Zone	Alien Fragment
#7	11/12/87	Space Frontier 301	Alien Upotto
#8	11/19/87	The Masked Trench	Alien Mithos
#9	11/26/87	The Android Zero Debut	Alien Chiball Android Mecha
#10	12/03/87	The Strange Neighbor	Alien Kacen
#11	12/10/87	Flight To Devil's Mountain	Alien Wild Space Dragon Kajju
#12	12/17/87	From The Planet, With Love	Alien Spall
#13	12/24/87	The Man From V3	Alien Aylon
#14	01/01/88	The Ultra Guard Green West (Part 1)	Alien Fudo King Joe
#15	01/08/88	The Ultra Guard Green West (Part 2)	Alien Fudo King Joe
#16	01/15/88	Shining Eyes In The Darkness	Alien
#17	01/22/88	Underground Girl Get Out!	Robot G. Team
#18	01/29/88	The Infamy X Escape	Alien Bell Comenga Sofian Pilot
#19	02/05/88	Project Blue	Alien Emperor Bado
#20	02/12/88	Defeat Earthquake Factor X	Alien Shupay Gandora
#21	02/19/88	Drive Away The Undersea Base	Iron Rock Alien Mory
#22	02/26/88	The Human Farm	Alien Boyen
#23	03/05/88	Look For Tomorrow	Alien Shadow Cobra
#24	03/12/88	Return To The Moon!	Alien Cassa Washuu (Ultra T's Capsule Kajju)
#25	03/19/88	Showdown At 140° Below Zero	Alien Fall Gander Mecha (Ultra T's Capsule Kajju)
#26	03/26/88	Super Weapon R1	Star Base Guron
#27	04/02/88	The Cyber Strategy	Robot Alien Borg
#28	04/09/88	Dark 700 Robot!	Alien Kill Diag-Tank
#29	04/16/88	Solitary Earthman	Alien From
#30	04/23/88	Glory For The Good Of Whom	Alien Fleir
#31	04/30/88	The Devil's Finest Dressing	Daddy
#32	05/07/88	The Wandering Planet	Alien Page
#33	05/14/88	The Invading Dead	Ripper Agon (Ultra T's Capsule Kajju)
#34	05/21/88	The Vanishing City	Shadow Han
#35	06/04/88	Home Of The Mirrorworld	Deoran
#36	06/11/88	Catastrophe In 1/10 Seconds	Alien Zampy Pekin
#37	06/18/88	The Golden Ultra Eye	Maya
#38	06/25/88	Courageous Battle	Crazy Gao
#39	07/02/88	The Seven Assassination Plan (Part 1)	Alien Gao Arion Warden
#40	07/09/88	The Seven Assassination Plan (Part 2)	Alien Gao Arion Warden
#41	07/16/88	Challenge From Beneath The Sea	Alien Tepen Water Kajju Tyroto
#42	07/23/88	Agent Of No-Halt	No-Halt Gopert
#43	07/30/88	Evil Deeds Of The 4th Planet	Robot Commander
#44	08/06/88	The Secret Her-Coming	Alien Frodyaga
#45	08/13/88	Home Of The Super Age Being	Alien Gaura Gory
#46	08/20/88	Showdown Between One And Seven	Alien Sarnos Agon (Ultra T's Capsule Kajju) Imai-Ultra-Seven
#47	08/27/88	Who Are You?	Alien Fook
#48	09/03/88	The Greatest Invasion In History (Part 1)	Alien Glavo Pandora Land II
#49	09/10/88	The Greatest Invasion In History (Part 2)	Alien Glavo Pandora Land II

# GO-GO DANCING IN THE KAIJU EIGA

An Appreciation  
By Marshall Crist



In the 1950's, as American International was perfecting the technique of marketing lurid drive-in double bills to bored teenagers, the emergence of rock and roll as the form of popular youth expression led to that music's inclusion in many non-musical films. While rock might at first seem inappropriate in movies designed to create suspense or fear, the adrenaline rush provided by the 4/4 beat would energize many scenes in films as diverse as *Earth Vs. The Spider*, *The Crawling Hand*, and later *Frankenstein Meets The Space Monster*, and the orgiastic *Village of The Giants*. Overseas, the link between the physical chaos of giant prehistoric monsters attacking urban areas and the social chaos of kids thrashing about wildly to "primitive" music would be explored many times by Japanese filmmakers during the period of 1965-1971.

Surprisingly, the otherwise much-maligned *Frankenstein Conquers the World* (8/8/65) would prove to be the seminal film in this regard. With no fewer than three go go dancing scenes, it can be viewed as not only the first, but also the most rock-driven Japanese giant monster film. Go go first appears in an early sequence where the young "Frankenstein" watches a dance show on television. When one of the dancer throws back his head and screams with enthusiasm, the monsterish youth reacts and throws the TV set out a nearby window like a rock star trashing a hotel room.

The implication that rock insights violent behavior is reinforced later when the now much larger Frankenstein escapes and "attacks" (actually, pushes) the *Haru Maru*,

a party boat full of go go dancing young people. (Toho kaiju eiga have a tradition of nautical musical scenes dating back to at least *Gojira* (11/3/54), which featured the motif in two separate boat attack sequences.)

The final scene in *Frankenstein* to feature go go dancing occurs when Baron, Frankenstein's rival, destroys an A frame building filled with Japanese youth wearing European mountaineering clothes. One choice bit of dialogue seems to have been altered in the translation to English. In the U.S. version, a man asks a woman at the bar, "Wanna try it?", in reference to the dancing going on around them. In the Japanese version, the line appears to be, "Would you like to Frap?" Needless to say, the revelry attracts Baron and he feasts on the reckless youth (off screen).

Later that year, Daiei would use go go in *Gamera* (11/27/65). In the best scene in an otherwise lackluster film, police try to break up a dance to save the partiers from their own foolishness. The scene is punctuated by some great surf-style guitar; the roof of the building is punctured by Gamera.

The following year go go dancing was served up by *Godzilla Versus The Sea Monster* (12/17/66). The film opens with a marathon dance contest, the winner of which is to receive a boat as the prize. Although the film's protagonists lose the contest, they nonetheless wind up shipwrecked on an island with Godzilla. The go go music from the introductory scene would be used subsequently by Toho's ad department, appearing in trailers for *Son of Godzilla* and *Latitude Zero*.

There is also a "surprise" go go scene for first time viewers of the Japanese version of *Sea Monster*. Toward the end of the film Godzilla finds himself attacked by jets, and the battle is accompanied by go go music. The U.S. distributor apparently

thought this to be too ridiculous and removed the offending music.

One work that is highly derivative of the Japanese kaiju eiga is worth mentioning here. South Korea's *Yonggary, Monster From The Deep* (1967) contains two go go scenes. The first occurs during the titular monster's initial attack. Some kids in a club attempt to live it up, fearing that their time is short. However, unlike the similar moment in *Gamera*, the youths efforts are an unsuccessful facade. Several are seen crying, and one breaks down and prays while another pours beer over his head. (This scene almost recalls the chaos of the mud-and-beer wrestling sequence that opens *Village Of The Giants*, with both films featuring a fluid-flipping breakdown of the social order.)

Later in *Yonggary*, the monster itself participates in the go go dancing. Apparently exposed to a chemical that makes it itch, the creature whirls around trying to relieve itself of its unpleasant condition and go-go swells on the soundtrack. In a similar fashion, the young human characters in these films attempt to relieve the angst and malaise (or in this case, fear) from which they suffer, by means of their acts of musical abandon.

While not featuring any go-go dancing, *Gamera Vs. Zigra* (7/17/71) does feature some noteworthy rock music on the soundtrack. King Features apparently thought so much of this piece that they attempted to dub it onto the credits of their English language version as well, but in a painfully edited state. In the Japanese version, the music is heard only during the evil faux space woman's pursuit of two Earth kids, and is rather cathartic. (The reoccurring presence of evil space women in kaiju eiga is worthy of an essay all its own.)

One week later, the final chapter in the

kaiju eiga go go story would be written. The release of *Godzilla Vs. The Smog Monster* (3/24/71) was a major milestone in this extremely esoteric area, but it was also to be the last of such. The first go go sequence in the film takes place in a nightclub as dancers writhe to a souped up version of the theme song, the notorious "Save the Earth". This extended scene is intercut with Hedorah's first on land attack and Godzilla's rebuttal. The impact of this acid tinged moment is tremendous; it's just too bad the filmmakers didn't have the confidence to let the music overlap a bit more with the monster action.

Incredibly, toward the end of the film, one of the characters, whose youthful enthusiasm is only eclipsed by his naivete, suggests a go go rally to help defeat Hedorah! In an open field, the kids rock out to what is basically an extended guitar solo with a bit of percussion and keyboard backing, as some baffled old timers look on. While the lighting and staging of this scene are designed to make the onlookers appear to symbolize a segment of society with a hopelessly antiquated disdain for the youth movement, it should also be noted that when Hedorah does show up, he pukes slime all over the kids, possibly killing many of them. Their attempts to go up against the system (as represented by a monster composed of industrial pollution) fails miserably. This seems to imply a surprisingly schizophrenic attitude toward the film's youthful target audience, but the funereal nature of the scene itself is an all to fitting end to the go go tradition in such movies.

Finally, there are a few items worth examining that don't technically constitute go go dancing scenes in kaiju eiga, but are still relevant. One is the tendency in Toho's trailers to feature bizarre music. Hence in the *Sea Monster* preview Godzilla's march of destruction becomes a can can. In the trailer for *Yog, Monster From Space* (8/1/70) there is a lively rock

guitar solo during the octopus attack scenes. In the *Latitude Zero* trailer, not only is the ubiquitous *Sea Monster* dance contest piece used, but also plenty of brassy, *Batman* (TV show) style music. If the latter actually appears in the finished film, then the forthcoming Toho laser disc may be worth the wait.

Furthermore, the "theme song" "March Of The Monsters" by Crown Records" appearing in the U.S. theatrical version of *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969) is one of the few times an American distributor contributed something interesting to a foreign film. It may not appear on the Paramount video, which states that it is a "special home video version" (which usually means that somebody didn't want to pay for particular music rights) but it is definitely on the old Sinitar Video edition.

Because of its relative availability in the U.S., *What's Up Tiger Lily?* (1964), while not a monster film, is worthy of inclusion because of its dance scenes (although mostly dubbed over by 'The Lovin' Spoonful') and for the inclusion of several of us panting otaku's favorite Toho kaiju eiga actresses. Seeing this film makes one ponder the general unavailability of *The Killing Bottle*, an espionage themed film that completes Toho's Nick Adams trilogy.

And finally, there is Paramount's September release of Toho's *Evil of Dracula* (1975) to look forward to. Scored by Rûchiyo (Smog Monster) Manabe, this gothic film features music described by Stuart Galbraith IV as "sounding very much like a cat walking across an organ's keyboard while a five-year-old plays with an electric guitar." We can only hope!



# KAIJU KOMEDY ART KONTEST



A Mark Ikui

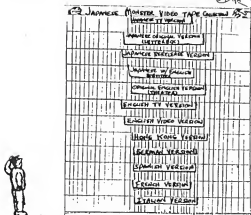
Last issue a few of you noticed our hidden contest for fabulous prizes and responded by sending in some kool and crazy kaiju komedy art, that art is displayed on the following pages and we need you the reader to help our judges pick the top four entries. Fourth prize is a Bandai King, Kong, (one of their coolest figures), Third prize is a Real Action Godzilla (he walks and roars), Second Prize is a Tsukuda Godzilla '93 (G vs MG) soft vinyl kit, and First prize is an actual Toho crew Jacket!

All voters will be entered into a new contest just for participating, in the judging, the winner will be picked by a random drawing, and announced (along with the other winners) next issue.

Remember only one vote per subscriber.



B Roy Ware



C Charles Blankenship

"GEE - I WISH I HAD LABELED MY TAPES!"

Chaplin



N-NO FAIR!

TWO AGAINST ONE!?

LEAVE HIM ALONE,  
YOU EVIL MONSTERS!!

SOD'S

HEY, SHADAP!  
WE'RE TRYIN' TA  
MAKE OUT HERE!

WE... TAKE ME HOME

ONLY HIM.

D James Cho

7.010 74

WHEN IT WAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED AT THE MID-WESTERN GODZILLA FORUM CAN THAT TRI-STAR WAS DOING AN AMERICAN VERSION OF GODZILLA, REACTION WAS IMMEDIATE.... THERE WASN'T A DRY SEAT IN THE HOUSE!

ONLY I, AMONGST ALL THESE FOOLS, KNOW THAT TIM BURTON IS THE ONLY DIRECTOR WHO COULD DO "GODZILLA" JUSTICE!

IT WOULD BE AWESOME IF 'THE BIG G' FOUGHT HULK HOGAN! THEY COULD CALL IT "THUNDER-BEAST IN PARADISE". WHY NOT? THEY DID GODZILLA VS. BARKLEY! THE HULKSTER IS A MUCH BETTER ACTOR ANYWAY!

I DON'T CARE WHO'S IN IT OR WHAT IT'S ABOUT... IT'LL BE A HIT! SO NATURALLY I'LL HAVE TO CHARGE TRIPLE FOR ALL MY GODZILLA OR PUFF-WHITE CASTLE CUPS: \$200 EACH!

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE ONLY LOGICAL PLOT IN MY BASEMENT FOR WEEKS. THE ENTERPRISE GOES BACK TO SAVE THE DINOSAURS & THEY CREATE GODZILLA WHEN A DRUNKEN SCOTTY ACCIDENTALLY FIRES A PHOTON TORPEDO INTO A T-REX HERD.

I JUST KNOW HOLLYWOOD WILL DO THE KING OF THE MONSTERS PROUD! I HEAR TOM CRUISE IS PLAYING SARIKAW (MY FAVORITE CHARACTER) WELL, IF HE'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR "INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE" HE'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR GODZILLA!

F. Larry Wachup

# ULTRAFAN



F Jeff Holleran



G Charles Blankenship

THE MIGHTY GODZILLA-  
ONCE AGAIN TERRORIZES  
THE CITY OF TOKYO...



THIS GIGANTIC MONSTER  
IS OVER 400 FEET TALL &  
HAS NUCLEAR BREATH!



AS SECONDS PASS, THE  
BIG G DESTROYS THE  
CITY AND ITS PEOPLE!



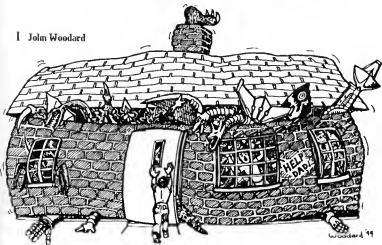
SHRONK!  
AAUGH!  
AARRGH!

GODZILLA'S ON  
T.V. AGAIN, HUH?  
"GROW UP  
ALREADY!"

© 1994 Tim Burt

II Dominic Tocci

I John Woodard



woodard '99

HEY, KIDS!  
MEET GODZILLA!

子供達へ  
ゴジラを  
紹介します



J Jeff Holleran

FEARS WHICH MAY BECOME REALITY, AND YOU HAVE GODZILLA, WHICH IS REALITY. GODZILLA SAYS WE SHOULD FIGHT OUR OWN

# GOTT - GUY!

GODZILLA'S THE ONE WITH THE BAD BREATH. YOU HAVE YOUR



BATTLES. OH! IT'S GODZILLA!! • BANANA OIL •

K Bob Johnson

## Reader's Ballot

First Place\_\_\_\_, Second Place\_\_\_\_, Third Place\_\_\_\_, Fourth Place\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_, City\_\_\_\_\_, State\_\_\_\_\_

Zip\_\_\_\_\_

(Please note that only Kaija Review subscribers are eligible to vote, and only once, and remember all ballots will be entered into a random drawing for a remotely controllable Godzilla & Mofort, deadline for voting 12/15/94, and don't forget only a letter would cut up a copy of Kaija Review, so feel free to shred this entry, or use a 3 x 5 post Card)



Silhouetted in the lower right-hand corner of the TV screen, Joel Hodgson and his robot pals, Tom Servo (L) and Crow (R), spout non-stop humorous commentaries on the movies they -- and the **Mystery Science Theater 3000** viewers -- are forced to watch each week.



# KAIJU IN ORBIT: JAPANESE FILMS ON "MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000"



by Paula O'Keefe

Even the most ardent fan of Japanese fantasy film must admit that the genre contains its share of less than classic films. And, like the lesser films of many other genres, a good number of these have found their way into synchronous Earth orbit, to be heckled, parodied and generally abused by Joel Robinson and the robot crew of the *Satellite of Love*. During its five (going on six) seasons on the air, *Mystery Science Theater 3000* (MST3K) has shown eleven Japanese films, and each has been received with the fast-moving mixture of commentary, satire, and humorous musical tribute that makes MST3K unique.

A quick introduction: MST3K is a comedy/fantasy film program produced on a shoestring budget in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. It made its debut in 1988 on a Minneapolis UHF station - KTMJ/Channel 23, now defunct - and has been showing on the cable network Comedy Central since 1990. Its basic premise: mad scientists are showing an endless supply of the worst movies ever made to an isolated subject in an orbiting satellite, to test the effects of the cinematic sludge on his sanity. The subject (series

creator Joel Hodgson as Joel Robinson, from 1988 to 1993) fights back by using parts of the satellite's controls to create three robot friends, two of whom - wise guy Crow T. Robot and debonair, tuneful Tom Servo - watch the movies along with him. Together the threesome pelt each film with a steady barrage of wisecracks, from sharp topical references, to lame puns and everything in between, with original musical numbers added for spice. The mission's "evil overlords" have thrown everything from biker movies and Westerns to Hercules and Santa Claus films at the intrepid trio, but the vast majority of *Satellite* movies have been horror and science fiction, and that's where we begin.

That MST3K's Japanese cataloging has been largely composed of incoherent, hacked to bits dreck is, as you might suspect, the fault of the infamous Sandy Frank. Those who had previously encountered the notorious Mr. Frank only through *Battle of the Planets* back in the '70s, and were later amazed by the comparative quality of genuine Gatchaman episodes, easily recognized his studio's touch here. Badly dubbed, abysmally voice acted, clumsily edited, with overall production values left in the basement, these Americanized prints represent the nadir of kaiju. The *Satellite* crew is well aware of this, and has on several occasions nailed the blame directly where it belongs, as we'll soon show.

The first Japanese film shown to the SOI (Joel calls his vehicle/home the "Satellite of Love") crew was *Godzilla vs. Megalon*, screened late in Season 2 (1990). Hodgson enthused to the press at the time, "We're thrilled to have this movie. *Godzilla* is a major star." Thrilled he might have been, but he and the "bots took plenty of slices out of this one. One comedy break assembles clips of action sequences into a mock commercial for the series "Rex Dark, Eskimo Spy", and in another the robots design their own

imaginary monsters. Running comments on the big battle between Godzilla, Mepalón, Gigan and Jet Jaguar take the form of prizefight commentary. The worst whack comes in the finale, when the crew sings its own "translated lyrics" to Jet Jaguar's theme song: "Jet Jaguar? Jet Jaguar! He mother never really love him/ He crime fighting, covers up a basic insecurity/ He dickey covers up an adam's apple the size of a Toyota/ He basically good hearted but he'd like to bash that kid against a rock..." and observes that "His head looks like Jack Nicholson." (Deep thanks to Norman England and Kaiju Review for providing the real lyrics and translation in KR#6!)



Godzilla made a return appearance the following week with *Godzilla versus the Sea Monster*, the last film of Season 2. This featured perhaps the most entertaining tribute the SOL has created to any film, the wonderful "Godzilla Genealogy Bop," in which Joel and the robots explain Godzilla's evolution and detail his family tree ("It started with a nuclear blast and pets that were released/ Like baby alligators and other nasty beasts?/ Right, the fusion reaction caused them to grow a thousand times their size/ Well, that explains Godzilla's attractive tail and thunderous thighs!"). It seems

that Godzooky, the offspring of Godzilla and the Loch Ness Monster, eventually sired Ron Perlman, from whom descend Kermit the Frog, the Incredible Hulk, swamp Thing, and the worst mutation of all - Karl Malden's nose. A delightfully funny number and one that shows real affection for Godzilla-related trivia (how many fans remember Godzooky these days? -- not that he especially deserves it, but full points for effort, anyway). Also presented with *Godzilla versus the Sea Monster* is a skit in which Crow and Servo, dressed as the Twin Fairies of Mothra's island, make fun of their faith in Mothra and get their comeuppance when Mothra (played by Mike Nelson - the

show's head writer, Man of a Thousand Faces, an host since Joel's October 1993 departure) puts in an appearance on their viewscreen.

Season 3 (1991) was the classic year for fans of kaiju movies MST-style. That year the SOL hosted no fewer than nine Japanese films, including five starring Gamera. The "Titanic Tortoise," in fact, got into the action right away, with Gamera showing, as the

second film of the season. Gamera would prove to be the the Satellite's greatest musical inspiration, beginning with this episode's classic "Tibby, Oh Tibby." In this touching and hilarious number sung earnestly to a rubber turtle in a fishbowl, robot Tom Servo takes the role of Kenny as he swears their eternal devotion ("Tibby, my Tibby, your blood may be cold/ but I know that your heart burns as hot as a coal/ it burns with a love only turtles can feel...") while Joel and Crow look dubiously on. In another sequence, Joel finds the robots - whose patience with kaiju kid sidekicks wears very thin very fast - performing a voodoo doll assault on

Kenny and hears their list of grievances. "He's a child of privilege and he can walk into maximum security military situations and they treat him like an adult just because he's befriended a stupid ol' turtle," gripes Crow. "Yeah, yeah," agrees Servo, "and he never gets into trouble even though his friendship with Gamera is causing the death of millions, and he skips school whenever he wants to and never even gets sent to his room! And that voice! Have you ever heard anything so annoying?" In the end, they put it to an open vote: "What do you, the viewers at home, think? Is he a confused, precocious kid who's fallen in with the wrong species? Is he a starry eyed dreamer in search of his long-lost mother? Is he a juvenile delinquent who should have the book thrown at him before millions more needlessly perish? Send you thoughts to 'Kenny: What Gives?'" One wonders what sort of mail they got on this topic! As if all this weren't enough, the third break even had Gamera (played by Mike Nelson, in a green turtleneck sweater) visit the Satellite via their viewscreen. "Gamera" came across as rather cynical, suggesting that the presence of an adoring little fan like Kenny made him look pretty good to the press despite the havoc he was wreaking in all directions; the robots were suitably impressed.

Two weeks later, MST3K screened *Gamera vs. Baragon*; after his debut, probably Gamera's strongest and most coherent film. No song this time, but the film does inspire an amazingly manic routine by Servo, advertising the imaginary "5000 Piece Fightin' Men and Monsters Play Set," over studio shots of Joel and the bots playing with plastic soldiers, rubber monsters, and a sackful of every animal and character toy imaginable. "Astonish and baffle your friends and foes while you pulverize Japan! Pose in the nude with the Frisky Kitten Revue [a line-up of plastic bikini girls] then watch the action from high atop Tokyo Tower as the twisted

world you've created explodes in rivers of blood and endless pain!" rattles Kevin Murphy, the voice of Servo, in his best radio announcer tones. "Price subject to whim! Some parts may be made of chicken! Buy bonds! Mommy!" Definitely one of the stranger Satellite moments.

*Gamera vs. Baragon* was unfortunately followed by the derivative and pretty silly *Time of the Apes*, another from the Sandy Frank catalogue. With its jaw dropping, pseudo science (exactly how did these kids and their teachers get into the far future again?) and repetitive chase capture escape chase plot, it goes to the bottom of the Satellite's kaiju roll call. Joel and the 'bots made a fair hatch of lemonade from this lemon, however, basing skits on little Johnny's "I don't care!" attitude, the Scopes evolution trial, and a parody fashion report by Crow using clips of the film's ape characters in various ensembles ("This spring's ape is dashing, daring, and absolutely shameless in paramilitary garb!" gushes the robot). For a closing break they race through "The Sandy Frank Song," which sums up their feelings toward their least favorite guy: "Horrid movies from Japan! Films are always poorly dubbed!" they sing, "He's the source of all our pain!" Couldn't have said it better myself; it's barbed enough to make Servo mutter, "Joy, I hope he doesn't see this."

Next in line was *Gamera vs. Gaos*, the eighth movie of Season 3. Once more, all three of the mid film breaks derive from the film. In the first one, Joel tries to demonstrate how to make a Gaos nusk despite ridicule from the robots; in the second, Joel, dressed in a makeshift Gaos costume, appears in a routine (possibly inspired by Gamera's appearance as a flaming saucer). The third, one of the shortest and most intriguing, has the crew in full Wagnerian opera dress to perform the epic "*Gameradammerung*, or Gaos I: x

Machina". Unfortunately they barely begin before running out of time - a real pity as we'd love to hear what they would have done!

The next Japanese film to which the Satellite was subjected was *Fugitive Alien*, which was then and remains a near total cypher to puzzled MST fans. Listed in no movie guide, a film seemingly without a history. (*Fugitive Alien*, along with its sequel *Starforce: Fugitive Alien II*, were edited down from the short lived Tsuburaya series *Suta urufu* (*Starwolf*) that aired in 1978 on Japanese television. Editor)

It's a Star Wars inspired adventure in which Ken, a young member of the Valna Starwolf Raiders - an elite and much-feared fighting force in curly red wigs - accidentally kills a comrade and is banished from his world, joining forces with the crew of the Terran spacecraft that rescues him. Choppy and baffling, as such patchwork films usually are, it's got pretty good looking hardware and the mid film breaks are less enjoyable than usual. The best one has Joel and the 'bots attempting to diagram the film using Syd Field's screenplay model; Crow has the best explanation of the plot and is awarded a RAM chip (the 'bots favorite treat). *Fugitive Alien* does, however, contain one great running gag, based on the fight scene in which Ken is nearly run down by heavy machinery: "He tried to kill me with a forklift!" sung spiritedly to the tune of a stirring passage from the soundtrack, is repeated through this film and its dismal sequel, *Star Force : Fugitive Alien II*.

After this confusing adventure, it's a relief to see the return of good ol' Gamera. The Satellite team evidently feels the same way about Gamera vs. Guiron, responding with an inspired batch of musical and funny bits. The robots invent their own lyrics to the kids' bicycling theme ("We're gonna ride our bicycles, we're gonna go and have some fun, we're gonna fill our hearts with love, when we ride our

bicycles," they sing) and the mid film breaks include not only Crow and Servo as Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in "Who's Afraid of Gamera Turtle," but an enthusiastic (and carnivorous) version of the Gamera theme sung by all ("Gamera is really neat, he is filled with turtle meat, we've been eating Gamera! Shell, teeth, eyes, flames, breath, scales, fun!"). They also have a great time with the kids' badly dubbed dialogue and Gamera's unforgettable high bar gymnastic routine. But the gem of the episode is "Michael Feinstein's Gamera", with all purpose stand in Mike Nelson at the keyboard, playing the part of the Broadway piano star. While the mad scientists, Dr. Forrester and TV's Frank, listen raptly, he compares the Gamera theme to the works of Rodgers & Hart or George and Ira Gershwin performing it as if it were the centerpiece of a hit musical. "Gamera's enchantment still grows, he fills our hearts with love," croons Nelson as Feinstein. "Gamera's the latest thing, he fills our hearts with spring, spring, spring! Anytime you want some moonbeams, Gamera is the thing!" The sort of absurd brilliance that makes MST3K great, and has earned Gamera a special place in every MSTic's heart.

Well that would have been a hard one to top, and they didn't. The next Japanese adventure to appear on the SOI screen was *Mighty Jack*, about as pointless and incomprehensible a two-hour stretch as any they've sat through (they were still complaining about it a year later). Another Sandy Frank offering, this one is as much a mystery as *Fugitive Alien*, with no information about its background generally available. (Overlooked by most film guides that jump from *Mighty Crusaders* to *Mighty Joe Young*, *Mighty Jack* was a Tsuburaya series re-edited into a feature length film. The original series ran 13 episodes in 1968. Called *Maitai Jiyaku*, the show was a departure for Tsuburaya Productions, as an hour long adventure

drama, the show exhibited the influence of Hollywood's spy films and the hi tech adventures of Gerry Anderson's classic Thunderbirds (Editor) Fans and SOI crew alike sit bewildered as a special international strike force of good guys, called "Mighty Jack" for no apparent reason, battles a special international strike force of bad guys, known only as "Q", over the secret formula for solid water ("You mean ice?" ask the robots). Again, Joel and the 'bots can't get much of a grip on this one, so the sketches slip a little; one is an ad for Mighty Jack Dog Food, and another has the robots putting Joel in a light trap like the one the film's villains use, pointing out that it's harmless if the victim simply keeps his eyes closed. The final break is their comment on the whole business, a pointed and disgusted song called, "Slow The Plot Down" ("We'll make you a movie that's long and immense! Just give us a plot that makes no fuggin' sense") in which they comment that not one of them can remember a single element of its storyline.

Things had to get better than that, right? They do, in the SOI's next, and last, visit from Gamera, Gamera vs. Zigra. Though Joel and the robots open the film with a root beer party to celebrate their final Gamera film, they give the big guy a pretty good send off. The first mid-film break has the robots conducting a guided tour of Gamera's insides, using a scale model (seems he's actually constructed pretty much like a condo...) which purports to explain how he can fly, breathe in space, shoot flames and all his other wonders. In the second break, the robots display shoebox dioramas showing their favorite moments from Gamera films, including a terrific Baragon built from Play-Doh. The closing break is priceless: "The Many Themes of Gamera" in which the SOI crew and even the mad scientists perform the Gamera theme in reggae, bebop jazz, rap, operatic, choral, and thrash metal versions you'll have to see and hear to

believe. Forrester and Frank's metal band, with their Mole People slaves on guitars and drums and the mad scientists in Harley-Davidson t-shirts, is simply one of the best sight gags in MST3K history.

The last Japanese film to air on MST3K was Star Force: Fugitive Alien II, airing near the end of Season 3. It's a pity they couldn't come up with one more Gamera film (where's Gamera, Super Monster?) or even a better grade science fiction movie for the occasion. Crow T. Robot must agree, as he views the credits with alarm and wails, "A Fugitive Alien sequel! We're in for the most painful two hours of our lives!" But they settle down and deliver a few good parting kicks to this second awkward adventure of Ken and the crew of his adopted ship the Bacchus III. In one break, they assemble action figure toys (including a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle) and play out an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting starring the ship's rum soaked Captain Joe. The closing break is a fitting finale, a rousing medley of all the themes from the film's soundtrack with original lyrics, including Tammy's theme (sung as "I Love Ken") and the following verse: "We are gonna find Sandy Frank/ We just want to ask him why/ We want to stick it to Sandy Frank/ And sit on his chest, and gob on his face, and make him cry!" This last is sung with a vindictive relish that leaves no doubt how they feel about the name behind such stumbling filmic zombies.

Thus the Satellite parade of kaiju and aliens closes. It's been more than two years since MST3K showed a new Japanese film. Regrettable, since, as I hope I've shown, such movies have inspired some of the show's funniest routines and best music. As past MST traditions are abandoned one by one, I think wistfully how glad I'd be to see Godzilla on the SOI again, or Gamera... or even Sandy Frank.

# KIKAIDA EPISODE GUIDE



## A Jinzoningen Kikaida Episode Guide

by Greg Chang

### Introduction

This is Jinzoningen Kikaida, the superhero show that played in Japan from 1972-73 and hit Hawaii in 1974. The story line is vintage seventies superhero TV:

Dr. Komiyoji is a robot scientist working for the Dark Demolition Corps, a largely secret organization dedicated to the domination of Japan, the world, etc. Its leader is Professor Gill, a spiny grey haired madman with a goatee and garbed in a silky black robe.

Komiyoji decides to build a robot that will fight not for the Dark but against it. He gives his robot a human form, adorned with denim jacket, sequined jeans and black gloves. But when he changes to Kikaidar, he's a super-powered fighting machine with a bright two-toned colored outfit, yellow stripes and a head with see-through mechanical gears.

All robots built in the Dark (and Jiro/Kikaidar is one of them) are designed to follow the orders of Prof. Gill and do evil. So what Komiyoji placed in Jiro is the conscience circuit. This circumvents any evil behavior normally inherent in Dark creations; thus, Jiro is able to oppose Gill.

However, the circuit is not complete. This causes major complications, particularly when Prof. Gill blows his flute. This device is a command-like whistle, driving Dark androids to bring forth great gobs of iniquity and bad behavior. Jiro's conscience circuit is designed to resist the flute's calling; however, since it's not perfect, there is conflict. Part of Jiro resists the flute and the other is drawn to it. The result is a moral tug-of-war causing Jiro great pain. He can't change to Kikaidar and is obviously vulnerable to

attack (Dark robots, of course, are not affected).

What saves Jiro time after time is something which blocks the flute's noise: an explosion, diving underwater, being buried underground, revving up his motorcycle engine. This aspect is as classic as anything else in the show, and causes many of the uninitiated to scoff at this repeating pattern in the show. Well, it may be a gimmick but so's Kryptonite.



After the first episode, Dr. Komiyoji is lost and thought dead. He later pops up but is afflicted with amnesia. The Dark wants him to get back to work while Jiro tries to save him from their evil clutches. Komiyoji, caught in between, is filled with fear and confusion. He usually chooses to run from all situations, especially anything connected with the Dark, which he is still fearful toward. Yet, he retains most of his robotic engineering knowledge. Many a time he comes across a disabled Jiro and, beyond explanation, is able to fix him. Usually, he's seen as a lonely wanderer, taking odd jobs to pass the time, wondering if he has any semblance of a real life.

Jiro's quest is simple: Bring down the Dark and reunite Dr. Komiyoji with his children, Mitsuko and Masaru. Mitsuko is a young woman who is well versed in robotics, enough to fix Jiro when the need arises. She also grows fond of Jiro as time

passes on, sometimes clouding her better judgment. Masaru is a young boy, maybe six or seven, and helps out big sister in their quest to find their father.

Also with them is Hanpei Hattori, an enterprising private detective who claims lineage to Hanzo Hattori, a legendary Iga ninja. Some of the time he is self absorbed, but he becomes a loyal confidant, often bailing the Komiyoji kids (and even Jiro) out of trouble time after time. He is also the designated comic relief foil in the show, displaying the ability to perform both verbal and physical humor. (A similar character was introduced in the sequel to Kikaider, Kikaider O I, but he bombed out quickly.)

The classic Kikaider episode might go like this:

- 1) Introduction of the monster.
- 2) Specify the crime to commit and the victims involved.
- 3) Introduce Mitsuko, Masaru and Hanpei in the web of characters.
- 4) The monster attacks and Jiro appears. Preliminary fight.
- 5) Spend more time with the victims and M/M/M.
- 6) The monster and Jiro confront once again; Prof. Gill blows the flute.
- 7) The flute is blocked and Jiro changes to Kikaider; final fight.
- 8) Reconciliation and final narration.

## EPISODE GUIDE

The following is a listing of all 43 episodes, outlining the basic storyline in each. I've also annotated each episode with personal thoughts and general trivia. Episode titles are translated as literally as possible.

### #1: GREY RHINOCEROS KING: MESSENGER FROM HELL

The Dark Demolition Corps emerges from the shadows of secrecy to promote terror

and evil, primarily through the destruction of a dam. Grey Rhinoceros King and his mechanical henchmen are torturing one of the engineers when they are interrupted by Jiro, playing his red acoustic guitar. A small fight ensues and Jiro allows the engineer to escape. Kikaider later emerges and fights some more before returning to the Dark base and the basement lab, where Dr. Komiyoji and Mitsuko work. Unfortunately, Professor Gill discovers Jiro's purpose and sets Komiyoji's lab ablaze. In the chaos Jiro and Mitsuko escape the Dark base while Komiyoji is lost.

### #2: THE MYSTERIOUS, MURDERING GREEN MANTIS

Mitsuko and Masaru and in hiding while Jiro tries to find a place for them to stay. Mitsuko suggests Dr. Ishigami, an old family friend, may be able to put them up. Unfortunately Green Mantis gets there first, kills him, and admits to the murder to his wife disguised as Dr. Komiyoji in an attempt to draw him out. As Green Mantis (as Komiyoji) and company are driving off in the darkness, they broadside the car of Hanpei Hattori, making his series debut.

### #3: THE DEATH CHALLENGE OF ORANGE ANT

Orange Ant, after destroying a lighthouse, takes a town hostage and plans to make its citizens lab rats for the Dark. However a child escapes and tells Jiro to save his mother. Jiro is injured after a bout with Orange Ant. Afterwards Mitsuko tries, for the first time, to complete his conscience circuit.

### #4: THE EVIL BLUE BUFFALO SETS A TRAP

Yukiko Togawa, a scientist employed by the Dark, attempts to run away to see her injured daughter, Hikari. Blue Buffalo tracks Yukiko to Hanpei's office and



makes a mess of things. The Dark kidnaps Hikari in an attempt to convince her otherwise. In other developments, Blue Buffalo is auctioned off for 500,000 yen.

#### #5: THE EVIL CLAWS OF YELLOW JAGUAR

Mitsuko and Masaru -- still looking for their missing father -- are temporarily staying with Miki Sakuma and her younger brother, Gen. Miki is the head of the Green Project, an ambitious, utopian plan to redesign Tokyo's urban setup, in addition to developing forestation. This doesn't sit well with the Dark, who prefer a more polluted city. Yellow Jaguar kills four men working on the Green Project, an act acknowledged curiously by Professor Gill.

#### #6: BLACK HORSE AWAITS AT THE EXECUTION GROUNDS

The Dark is operating a phony bus service, gathering up would-be travellers to its execution grounds to be used as guinea pigs for Black Horse's wrath. Meanwhile, Dr. Komiyoji blindly dials his residence and stumbles upon his family. Disoriented and paranoid, he hurriedly discards the phone when he finds himself being pursued. Jiro is certain that the voice belonged to Komiyoji, who later finds himself in Hanpei's office. For a price Hanpei decides to help the frightened

Komiyoji.

#### #7: BLUE KONG GOES BERSERK

A scouting chaperone is murdered by the Blue Kong at a campsite after allowing the children to escape. Her widowed husband and son begin an on-street campaign to inform people of the Dark and its evil ways, but are largely ignored. A discarded leaflet is picked up by the wandering Dr. Komiyoji, who finds "Dark" a familiar appellation and decides to inquire with this man. However, Blue Kong makes it there first and kills him. Komiyoji, stumbling onto the scene, is framed when he is seen cradling the dead body.

#### #8: THE EVIL LAUGH OF CARMINE SPIDER

The Dark is developing a poison called the XR-4 and needs the blood of a child with RH negative blood. Carmine Spider finds a boy, Ken'ichi, who may fit their purposes. The woman in charge of making the poison is sent to fetch Ken'ichi; however this may also be the long-lost brother she's looking for.

#### #9: THE DEATH CRY OF RED CONDOR

Red Condor kills everyone in a remote, rural village and sets up a base in which to perform experiments. In the dark of night,

### EPISODE ANNOTATION

#1: During Gill's roll call of the monster roster, he refers to two monsters that never appeared: Scarlet Dog and Red Snake. The final fight scene, with Kikaida driving his motorcycle around the

Android Men, is seen in the opening titles -- and remains untouched to the end.

#2: Green Mantis is seen with "monster like" feet, walking in the stormy night. However in one specific picture card, he's wearing the same Converse-like,

high top sneakers that all the Android Men wear.

#3: The fact that Jiro rejects perfecting his conscience circuit is important; with one, there would probably be no series. Mitsuko says that Jiro ("second son") was named in memory of a deceased older brother,

Dr. Komiyoji comes wandering through the town and is captured. Subsequently, Mitsuko and Masaru arrive, hearing rumors that their father was seen in a certain village, and proceed to inquire with the townspeople – but there doesn't seem to be any around.

#### #10: SCORPION BROWN CRAZED BY HUMAN BOMBS

Scorpion Brown (the self-proclaimed "Greatest Android in the World") is equipped with a new high heat energy source. Professor Gill orders the capture of Dr. Nakabori, who discovered the power source in a secret locale. Jiro tries to save Nakabori but fails. With the help of Hanpei, he secures Nakamori's daughter, Kazuko, from capture. Kazuko, wearing a locket with a mysterious element, may be the key to solving Nakabori's whereabouts.

#### #11: GOLD WOLF HOWLS FROM HELL

Dr. Komiyoji is staying at the residence of Dr. Tadokoro, who may be able to treat his amnesia. The house is being stalked by Gold Wolf, who turns into his evil, monstrous self when the full moon appears. When safe from moon beams, he adopts a human form sans evil character. Gold Wolf (in human guise) later reveals to Mitsuko that he is an Komiyoji creation

with a conscience circuit even more flawed and incomplete than Jiro's. Unfortunately, the full moon peeks out and the Gold Wolf comes out fighting, managing to place a Wolf Bazooka square in the middle of Kikaida's chest.

#### #12: THE EVIL WITCH, SILVER CAT

The Sakuragaoka Art Museum is in possession of the Treasure of Munpa, containing a gem which, when placed in a robot, would improve it immensely. Mitsuko and Masaru see the museum's curator (another family friend) to see the treasure their father told them about, and also hoping that the exhibit will somehow attract their father's attention subliminally. Silver Cat comes along with other plans. In one of the few flashback scenes during the series, we see the Komiyojis (father and daughter) constructing Jiro on an operating table.

#### #13: PINK TIGER ATTACKS THE AMUSEMENT PARK

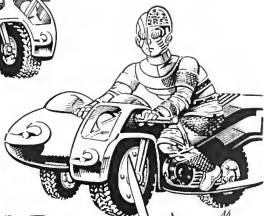
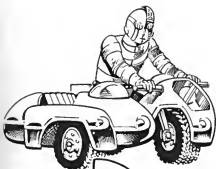
Jinbei, an old Komiyoji robot, rides a carriage at the Yokohama Dreamland – a park targeted by Prof. Gill for destruction. Before doing so, Pink Tiger and company kidnap Jinbei to find out where Komiyoji might have hid a secret robot part in the park. Jiro is able to communicate with his robot brother being tortured by Pink Tiger.

Taro. No explanation is made when Ichiro (Kikaida 01) makes his debut. The lighthouse man at the beginning of the episode is Akira Yamaguchi, who went on to play Johji Yuuki in KAMEN RIDER V3 and Yutaka Daimon in DENJIN ZABOIGA.

#14: Hikari, the injured

daughter, is played by a girl [whose name I can't read in the credits] who has appeared in superhero shows. I've seen her in KAMEN RIDER VS. SHOKKA and the 3-DINAZUMAN movie, as well as regular episodes of KAMEN RIDER. See also Episode #29.

#5: Gen, wearing the Death Belt, starts "playing Kikaida," jumping about and such. It's the only time in the "Kikaida Universe" where a kid mimics the "real" hero. "Gen" was also seen in FIVE RIDERS VS. KING DARK and the Inazuman series.



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The Yokohama Dreamland locale was also used in the 3 D movie, *Tobidasu Jinzouningen Kikaida* ("Kikaider Flies Out").

#### #14: SILVER TORTOISE CALLS OUT FOR THREE MONSTERS

Prof. Gill holds the Dark Demolition Corps' first (and only) memorial service, reviving the first 13 monsters. Making an ostentatious entrance before his offended sempai is Silver Tortoise, who happens to be stronger than any of them. Prof. Gill tells Silver Tortoise to test his strength on the Dark's alumni, resulting in a lot of unnecessary waste. The three acute ones (Green Mantis, Orange Ant and Black Horse) step aside and survive to afflict much pain on Jiro.

#### #15: THE SHADOWY CURSE OF GOLDEN BAT

An extended, introductory prologue begins this episode — a primer for the series. The main story involves the miraculous return of Taro, the older brother of Mitsuko and Masaru long thought dead. Jiro suspects that "Taro" is really a Dark conspirator; Mitsuko remains optimistic, showing Jiro a book stolen from the Dark base. Jiro finally accedes and accompanies Taro to a secret locale where the new Dark monster is being delivered.

#### #16: RED FEMALE JELLYFISH INVITES YOU TO THE RIVER OF HELL

The Dark is developing poisonous mini jellyfishes, designed to fly and strike people whenever electric light is shone. Komiyoji comes along and assists a girl attempting to clean a polluted river in memory of her deceased brother. Mitsuko and Masaru, riding with Hanpei, think they see their father picking garbage and rush down to see if it's him, only to be distracted by a group of kids who have inadvertently found the poison, Dark jellyfishes accidentally released into the river.

#### #17: RED HORNET'S KIDNAPPING SCHEME

The Red Hornet Squadron begins spraying selected areas with poison gas, killing wildlife and causing people to drop like flies, hacking and wheezing. Dr. Oyama, the "EPA chief" resolves to find the source of the pollutants. Prof. Gill reacts by ordering the kidnapping of Oyama's daughter, Yumiko, who happens to be in Ikaho where Hanpei has brought Mitsuko and Masaru to look for Dr. Komiyoji. Along with Yumiko, Red Hornet takes Mitsuko and Masaru hostage. Dr. Oyama is steadfast in his passion not to knuckle under to the Dark's demand to cease his investigation for his daughter's life.

#6: Like in #4, Hanpei performs real, Iga Ninja magic. He toned down for pretty much the duration of the series. Prof. Gill also talks about holding an auction for Black Horse, which was the last time he ever thought of doing that. Note that Black Horse never actually blows up.

#7: With this episode, the Android Men abandoned their "Dak dak" chant and adopted a more echo-like chant which seems to sound like "giu-giu." Fans in Hawaii, however, thought they were saying "Get 'um-get'um." Hence they have always been identified as the "Get'um

Guys." Note also that Jiro Double-Chops Blue Kong — not Kikaida. NGN translated the monster's name as "BLUES Kong."

#8: Jiro changes with silly string in his facel. Unfortunately, the producers never really varied the changing surroundings much.

# **#18: BLACK CHAMELEON: THE GREAT ROBBERY OPERATION**

After initially failing, The Dark, led by Black Chameleon, spearheads another attempt to plunder a shipment of Uratonium, a developmental atomic substance. Their plan involves diverting the shipment convoy to a secluded pass, blocking access from all other route. This also impedes the plans for Mitsuko, Masaru and Hanpei, still in Ikaho. Accompanying them is Sayako, who was also featured in the previous episode.

# **#19: THE MURDERING CRIMSON KING CRAB EMERGES!**

Crimson King Crab is looking for a 50-carat emerald to be used in a new laser rifle. With the right gem, shooting this laser at any machine would turn it into a bomb -- including Kikaido. The chosen gem is a ring being worn by Reiko Mitsumori, a jewelry store clerk, and it's her late mother's keepsake. After an initial attempt to steal the gem fails, Reiko leaves the ring in the care of Hanpei, whereupon the usual madness occurs.

# **#20: AOTA TURTLE'S POISONING PLAN!**

Aota Turtle begins polluting the water supply of a small town, consumption of which would turn people into zombies,

susceptible to suggestion. The first batch, however, isn't strong enough and Prof. Gill orders the dumping of a new, stronger poison. Jiro tells the director of the local water pumping station to develop an antidote. He goes to the mountains, hampered by a leg injury (caused by Aota Turtle), to cook up the solution before the water valves open.

# **#21: THE POISONOUS FANGS OF PURPLE RAT**

Purple Rat breaks into the laboratory of a hospital, intending to steal germ samples to develop the Dark's New Bacterium. Dr. Komiyoji stumbles onto the scene and is attacked by an unknowing Purple Rat with a germ spray. Hanpei comes along to investigate the break-in, later discovering that Komiyoji was being treated there after his attack. Mitsuko rushes off in pursuit as Komiyoji tries to run away but is cut off and attacked by Purple Rat, who sprays her with the same bacteria. Jiro, arriving too late, does what he can to alleviate her suffering.

# **#22: WHITE SAW SHARK'S 12-HOUR NIGHTMARE**

An extensive operation is begun at midnight in the small apartment of a mother and son. The assignment: Track the path of a jumbo jet and then fire upon it with a laser rifle, causing it to crash in a

Note, too, how Jiro mispronounces Hanpei's name. No one ever got it right.

**#9:** It's the first time Gill successfully recaptures Komiyoji but he doesn't believe the claims of amnesia. Hanpei's observations at the end, while ignored by everyone

in the series, were probably the clearest explanation for Komiyoji's state of being,

**#10:** A real bulky costume with an enormous tail -- who wore this thing? Kikaido's Side Machine motorcycle is revealed to have the classic Tire

Slasher. The dummy Scorpion Brown holds at the top of the cliff is pretty phony, if you ask me. Scorpion Brown's mechanical pieces aren't shown after blow-up, a first.

**#11:** Jiro's guitar melody is modified a bit in the second half. Gold Wolf,

densely populated area full of apartment buildings. The boy gets unexpected visitors resulting in more hostages for White Saw Shark; however the boy escapes. The whole town is ordered to stay indoors until the boy is found. Which causes headaches when Hanpei & co. come into town, looking for Dr. Komiyoji.

### #23: THE THREE YELLOW ANT LION BROTHERS!

The Dark conspires to murder Ayako Kato, the fiancée of a burgeoning robotics scientist so that he'll stay out of Japan and not pose a threat (as a revived Dr. Komiyoji would be). Ayako, however, rejects the notion of postponing the wedding, as it would -- literally and figuratively -- break her father's already weak heart. The matrimonial accouterments, once again, trigger romantic feelings in Mitsuko toward Jiro. Meanwhile, in front of a horrified Hanpei, the Yellow Ant Lion team demonstrates its "Alphabet" attack strategy.

### #24: THE DEVILISH PINK ARMADILLO

The female Pink Armadillo is gathering up men, implanting control devices in their brains. One of these men turns out to be Hanpei, who tries to pick up a lady in a pink leotard outfit, follows her into an alley, and comes face to face with a

monster instead. Hanpei and a dozen other men start doing tasks in the Dark with an almost jolly attitude. Prof. Gill decides the implants need perfecting and orders the capture of Dr. Yagji, whose house Mitsuko and Masaru happen to be staying at.

### #25: THE DEATH WHISTLE OF ORANGE SNAIL

The Dark captures Dr. Komiyoji and is shown phony film footage of Kikaider murdering his children. This deception leads him to swear revenge toward this evil Dark robot, Kikaider. Komiyoji's subliminal fear of anything having to do with the Dark spurs him to build a new robot capable of defeating Kikaider. Jiro is stunned when he comes face to face with his new "brother".

### #26: THE ARCTIC PLAN OF GREEN MAMMOTH!

Hanpei is meeting an old flame, Machiko, who runs a greenhouse, where Dr. Komiyoji happens to be temporarily employed. Nearby, Prof. Gill awakens Green Mammoth to begin a global freezing project. Green Mammoth manages to spray his Mammoth Dry Gas on Kikaider, turning him numb and causing his body to rust. Kikaider, unable to change back to Jiro, is brought back by Machiko to the greenhouse while Hanpei fetches Mitsuko

hooked up with wires to that cross apparatus, looks pretty creepy.

#12: Silver Cat does aerial somersaults, which is something I thought only Kamen Rider monsters did. In the title, Silver Cat is identified as a "witch" and adopts a female form. But, as a kid,

I never believed this "cat" was female.

#13: In my opinion, one of the Dark's most evil and vicious monsters ever, a real hall of famer: extended torture sessions, high-pitched hyena cackle, always referring to Jiro as "that traitor!" The actor

playing Jinbei gets a special place in the opening credits. He may be/have been someone well known, but this is only conjecture.

#14: In books, posters and this episode, Silver Tortoise is identified as the first of the "New" Dark Demolition Corps,

and Masaru.

## #27: THE EVIL LOVE OF VIOLET TOP SHELL

Part One of a trilogy featuring three monsters: Violet Top Shell, Red Okoze [stingfish] Fish, and Green Sponge. Dr. Araki has a blueprint for a new conscience circuit and has contacted Mitsuko about it. However, Violet Top Shell inadvertently kills Araki before he reveals where the blueprint is. Kikaider arrives too late, though managing to break apart Green Sponge and disable Violet Top Shell. Jiro becomes distraught that another innocent person has died on his behalf; Mitsuko, on the other hand, says she can't stand to see him suffer anymore when Gill blows the flute and resolves to see Dr. Araki's daughter, Taeko, regarding the whereabouts of the plan. Later, Jiro comes across an injured woman in a black outfit, leather boots and a violet-colored scarf.

## #28: RED OKOZE FISH MAKES THE BABY CRY!

Part Two begins with Masaru being chased by Red Okoze Fish. Jiro leaves Masaru at a spot near the beach while he goes and fights. He is injured and returns to Mitsuko, telling her to get Masaru; instead, she fixes Jiro first. Masaru, chased once again by Dark androids, thinks Mitsuko and Jiro have abandoned

him. Mitsuko meets with Taeko and asks her where the blueprint may be. The plans are in an amulet worn by her baby daughter; Red Okoze Fish grabs Taeko's baby while Jiro battles Gill's flute.

## #29: GREEN SPONGE REVIVES A THIRD TIME

The trilogy concludes with Green Sponge, adopting a decidedly suspicious human guise, in pursuit of Masaru, who is unknowingly in possession of the blueprint. Dr. Komiyoji, now a taxicab driver, sees "Green Sponge" chasing the familiar looking boy and throws a body block on him. Masaru is suddenly picked up by a chauffeur-driven girl. She immediately empathizes with Masaru's situation and decides to run away with him. Mitsuko and Jiro return to the Komiyoji house, where she confesses her feelings for him were more important than her brother; Jiro, as always, becomes visibly unsettled at this revelation.

## #30: RED SQUID TARGETS THE LIVES OF ATTRACTIVE COEDS

Red Squid begins smothering female college students, compacting their collective knowledge into handy capsules and increasing his brain power. He targets one girl, Chidori Shimamura, a student of robotic engineering. She is, however, oblivious to virtually everyone around her:

something never really explained or elaborated upon. As a kid, I thought this would be the final episode with a grand battle royale as its finale. Instead, Silver Tortoise did most of the damage, which pissed me off. The Silver Tortoise costume was later recycled for KIKAIJIA 0-1, dyed crimson and

adding horns. Trivia question: Who are the monsters who are blown up by the Tortoise?

#15: Taro, the doomed fire chief, is first mentioned in #3. Among other things, Jiro goes off alone to play guitar and actually takes a "nap."

#16: One of only a few times where Android Women, adorned with fishnet stockings, assisted the monster.

#17: Nothing especially distinguishing, except Sayako debuts here and in the next episode. She may have continued on as a regular character, perhaps

Red Squid's threats, Jiro exhorting her to get to safety, Hanpei's romantic advance. About the only person she is fond of is the hot dog vendor who frequents her house, who also knows a thing or two about robotics...

### #31: GOLDEN OCTOPUS CALLS OUT FOR JIRO'S DEMISE

Part One: Mitsuko and Masaru journey to Yonago, becoming friendly with a fellow traveller, Mr. Tsukahara, and his daughter Kazuko. They go their separate ways, with Tsukahara and Kazuko sightseeing on a rocky ledge where a Dark base is located, and meeting up with Golden Octopus. Jiro arrives but is too late to prevent Tsukahara from falling off the ledge. Tsukahara is later picked up by a fishing vessel, where Dr. Komiyoji happens to be working. The two of them are discovered and chased by the Dark, evading mortar fire from a helicopter.

### #32: THE EVIL SHINING HANDS OF BLUE ELECTRIC EEL

Part Two: Everyone begins combing the sand dunes looking for Jiro. He manages to evade and eventually pulls off the arm of Blue Electric Eel. Jiro, battle worn, passes out clutching Electric Eel's arm (now in human configuration) and is found by Dr. Komiyoji. He recognizes this person who has helped him so much and attaches the

Eel's arm on him. This results in wildly unpredictable circumstances when Kikaider and Blue Electric Eel meet up again.

### #33: DECREE OF THE VICIOUS RED CRAB

Red Crab is having trouble with his brother Crimson King Crab (with horns and a new coat of paint), who is going berserk in the Dark base. Red Crab manhandles him easily and brushes aside his demands for a rematch with Kikaider. Crimson King Crab escapes and finally gets his wish but is no match for Kikaider. The compassionate Mitsuko pleads for Kikaider to stop his attack, a cry for mercy. She takes Crimson King Crab back to her father's old laboratory and intends to fix him up.

### #34: THE MONSTER WITH CHILD, BLACK NEEDLE MOLE

Kazuko Momoyama, whose husband was murdered for betraying the Dark, is in possession of a microfilm containing detail of a conspiracy to destroy power plants. For safety reasons, she secretly placed her daughter, Mayumi, in an orphanage. She hides the microfilm in one of several dolls and asks Dr. Komiyoji, now tending bar in her pub, to deliver the toys to the orphanage. The Dark hears about Mayumi and sends the daughter of Black Needle

as a foil for Hanpei.

#18: Major league terrorism act. The chemical being transported, "Uralonium," seems to be a phonetic variation of "Uranium."

#19: NGN translated this monster's name (Kabuto pani enji) as "Maroon

Helmet-Shell Crab." I remember the 1975 subtitles as "Crimson King Crab"; indeed, kabutogani can be translated as "king crab..."

#20: ...On the other hand, I was not able to find a suitable translation for this particular kaijin.

Aota Game was referred to as Aota Turtle (Game) in 1975; NGN offered "Green Waterbug." Since the voice talent mirrored that of Silver Tortoise, I accepted the turtle appellation. I submit that Hanpei's guitar rendition was one of the funniest moments ever in Japanese superhero TV history.





Mole, disguised as a little girl, to find the whereabouts of the microfilm.

### #35: THE DEATH OF JIRO AND THE "MAGNET END"

Dr. Komiyoji is working as a farmer in a remote rural area, but not remote enough to keep from being attacked from a slew of robot crows. Jiro comes by and is immediately swarmed. Komiyoji drives off and Jiro gives chase, only to be cut off by the Black Crow. However, Kikaida's finishing "Magnet End" has no effect on Black Crow, and he is subsequently clobbered. Despite Mitsuko's protests, Jiro takes extreme measures to deal with Black Crow.

### #36: CRAZED JIRO ATTACKS KOMIYOJI

Blue Beetle and the Dark begins a series of bank robberies, ostensibly to fund the Hip Project for which Komiyoji's services are required. As they are leaving another bank, and energetic photographer named Mari begins snapping away. Jiro saves her but is subsequently blown out of the sky by Blue Beetle's Flash and begins leaking oil. Dr. Komiyoji, now a security guard, comes across Blue Beetle as another robbery takes place.

### #37: JIRO'S BROTHER AND FOE, HAKAIDA

Purple Starfish separates Dr. Komiyoji from an immobilized Jiro and takes him away before everyone else arrives. Mari tells everybody that she saw Jiro assaulting Komiyoji. The police chief orders Jiro under arrest; however, he is snuck away from the police into Hanpei's car. During the pursuit, Mitsuko is able to repair Jiro. Unfortunately his vocal circuits are paralyzed. Taken in later, Jiro is exposed as a robot and unable to defend himself verbally. The police chief "sentences" him to be dismantled and studied by a university professor. Meanwhile, the Dark has drugged Dr. Komiyoji and had him complete the evil circuit for Gill's ultimate Dark warrior: Hakaida!

### #38: HAKAIDA WILL KILL JIRO!

Jiro breaks out of prison and is confronted by Hakaida, resulting in the first of many grand battles. Unfortunately, Hakaida's only weakness prevents him from finishing the job, frustrating Prof. Gill. Later on, Saburo — garbed in leather outfit, yellow scarf and brandishing a silver knife — introduces himself to Mitsuko, Masaru and Hanpei as Jiro's younger brother: born when Jiro went awry. Back at the police station, Mari's incriminating pictures are developed, convincing Masaru (and Hanpei, to a lesser extent) that Jiro has gone over the edge. Jiro later discovers the connection between Hakaida and Dr.

#21: Another vicious, iniquitous monster. Jiro really gets it in this episode. Also, Mitsuko gives a robotic engineering lesson.

#22: The laser rifle aimed at the jumbo jet was, of course, used by Crimson King Crab and in at least one episode of KAMEN

RIDER. I'm not kidding.

#23: A well-constructed episode featuring a real monster squad, a vulnerable Mitsuko, slapstick from Hanpei. Everything except perhaps the tin-foil wings of two of the three Ant Lions...

#24: Another female monster being assisted by female android women, this time dressed in full powder-pink leotards (as opposed to the dark grey for the male counterparts). One of the few times there was on-location shooting on a crowded city street.



The Evil Dr. Gill

Komiyoji.

### #39: REVENGE FOR FATHER: NATIONWIDE MANHUNT FOR JIRO

Kikaider manages to escape another round with Hakaide without much harm. Meanwhile, the Brown Angler fish hypnotizes boys from their nighttime classes back to the Dark. Hanpei and Masaru are about to be taken as well but Jiro knocks them aside, further increasing the suspicion that he's gone crazy. Saburo arrives thereafter and challenges Jiro, endearing him to Masaru. Afterward, Saburo gives Masaru the Death Whistle, a device which immobilizes any machine, and says to use it on Kikaider, blow the whistle, and he'll come by.

### #40: WATCH OUT! JIRO STOPS FUNCTIONING!

A boy is painting a portrait outdoors containing an electrical tower. This just happens to be a Dark tower where Grey Grasshopper plans to transmit a signal throughout Japan. Masaru is finally able to make use of the Death Whistle but, upon arrival, Saburo shows him that his aim still needs work. The boy was planning to enter his portrait in an art show so Masaru volunteers to deliver it; unfortunately he drops the Death Whistle. Jiro then gives Masaru the lost Whistle and tells him that he doesn't want to live any more if he can't be trusted.



One of the "Get'um Guys"

#25: KIKU translated Daidai Katatsumuri as Great Snail; however, I saw "daidai" listed as "orange" in a dictionary so I will acquiesce to NGN's translation here. Pink Tiger, Gold Wolf and Black Chameleon appear briefly toward the end, all looking decidedly pale.

#26: Green Mammoth briefly appears at the end of #25 but starts out frozen in ice here. One of the three things Prof. Gill ordered frozen was the Hikari Shinkansen. 'Those bastards! I've ridden on one!

#27: Violet Top Shell's human form has a cool,

somber look with that hat and those big, black boots. On the other hand her partners in crime (in human form) all look like housewives to me. The loyalty angle is given attention here with the hunt for the conscience circuit layout and Violet Top Shell actually wanting one.

## #41: JIRO BLOWS APART

A secret roadway is discovered by construction workers. It leads to the Dark, and the Red Mine Bullfrog comes by to keep it secret, blowing up everyone with land mines and anyone/anything instantly on contact. Mitsuko and Masaru receive a postcard (delivered via miniature jet rocket) with a photo of a comatose Dr. Komiyoji and a map. Mitsuko and Masaru proceed onward and are captured. Jiro is on the way himself but Hakaidai is in hot pursuit. He manages to do away with Hakaidai for the moment but comes face to face with Red Mine Bullfrog. Unaware of his special power, Kikaider attacks head on... with predictable results.

## #42: CHANGE MALFUNCTION & THE BETRAYAL OF HAKAIDAI

Hanpei manages to gather the pieces of Kikaider's blown-up body and lower them through a vent to the cell where Mitsuko and Masaru (and their father's still brainless body) while Hakaidai battles Red Mine Bullfrog. Hakaidai later concludes that, with Kikaider dead, he has no purpose in life and becomes extremely distraught, deciding to vent his rage on Prof. Gill, whom he thinks created him. After being soundly beaten, Gill shrieks that Dr. Komiyoji made him, whereupon Hakaidai then storms to the holding cell.

## #43: THE END OF JIRO OR DESTRUCTION OF DARK?!

Jiro, who still can't change to Kikaider, tells Mitsuko to transfer Dr. Komiyoji's brain back from Hakaidai's body. He then draws Skeleton Squirrel away on a chase. Mitsuko, as usual, is concerned with Jiro and becomes momentarily hysterical. The brain surgery papers are secured and Mitsuko commences the operation. Meanwhile, Jiro tries in vain to get as far away as possible. Skeleton Squirrel is amused when Jiro's attempts to change remain unsuccessful.

**HAKAIDAI,**  
believed by some fans to be the original inspiration  
for Darth Vader



#28 : Another language quandary. The Japanese name is Aka Oni Okoze. I looked up "okozc" and found "stingfish" listed. "Okozc Fish" is an old KIKU appellation. NGN's term is "Scorpion Fish" (thankfully everyone agrees he's red). "Red Devil Stingfish?" You pick'em I choose what I grew up on.

#29: More casting notables: The girl who runs away with Masaru sure looks like Hikari (#4) -- how to explain this one? The creepy guy playing Green Sponge's human form is Kenji Ushio, who was the Ambassador of Hell in KAMEN RIDER, as well as another B&W show I'm not familiar with.

#30: An episode with classic, Japanese camp humor: Chidori confuses Red Squid, Chidori distracts Jiro, Mitsuko and Chidori "competing" for Jiro, Hanpei in drag for the umpteenth time.

#31: When Golden Octopus is beating up Jiro, he says he's getting revenge for his past comrades: Violet Top Shell, Green Mammoth, et al. It would have been more astute to mention a more varying roster: perhaps one of the first thirteen.

#32: KIKAIKER, like KAMEN RIDER, was a

veritable travelog: specific geographical areas were easily identified, along with selected hotels and businesses. The northwestern city of Yonago was a classic example, with its scenic coastline and the rolling sand dunes in Tottori-ken. This whole locale was featured in the aforementioned Kikaida 3-D movie.

#33: It is never really explained How Crimson King Crab, remodeled and all, came back. And who knows what Mitsuko really intended to do in her father's laboratory.

#34: NGN calls the monster "Black Porcupine"; I prefer the old "needle mole" as it's a more specific translation and it reads and sounds better, besides. Black Needle Mole is the most recent monster in the 3-D movie. This episode is one of the more memorable, as the little girl needle mole is symbolic for so many things -- note the musical interlude after the first fight with Kikaido. People who watched the show only sporadically usually remember specific details from this episode.

#35: From here on to

the end is essentially the "home stretch" of the series. Hakaida's silhouette makes its premiere, causing mass speculation and anticipation (at least amongst my friends). One of the more puzzling things is how "Denji (Magnet) End" comes up as "The End" in subtitles, then and now. In #1, Kikaido phoneticizes "The End"; after that it's only Denji End. You will also notice that the episode titles don't mention monster names anymore.

#36: Two specific characters are introduced here: Mari (the photographer who doesn't figure much toward the end) and the unnamed police chief (also used for comic relief purposes). The concluding episodes of KIKAIDA can be characterized by their unpredictability. Just when you think something/someone will interfere with the flute it doesn't. And what happens when opposites collide is certainly significant.

#37: Noteworthy episode in that, for the first time, Kikaido doesn't fight a monster to the finish. This show features the main characters going through increasing stages of adversity and how they deal with them.

The episodic formula, used for so long, has now been discarded. This is the series in full maturity.

#38: The episode everybody was waiting for: The Ultimate Battle. I know someone who swears that Hakaïda was the inspiration for Darth Vader. It's too bad they felt the need for Hakaïda to have a "weakness" like Jiro.

#39: Brown Angler Fish is one of the more incredible kaijin outfits: bulky, moving mouth. Who designed this thing? Another Kikaider weapon is introduced here, the "Finger Hurricane."

#40: This episode gives a different twist on how the flute could affect Kikaider: Just turn up the volume. More heavy-duty emotional scenes, with Jiro very close to cracking.

#41: Everything, of course, leads up to the inevitable climax. Since Jiro can't have a preliminary fight with Red Mine Bullfrog, there's a Hakaïda fight instead.

#42: In the early episodes, everything was so comfortably predictable. Here, things definitely go wacko: Hanpei picks up the pieces, Hakaïda running amok, Jiro's voice sounding groggy, Gill

looking at the face of death.

#43: The series reconciles in essentially the same way the original manga version did; specifically, how Mitsuko is left, metaphorically, standing at the altar. The song played over the final scene is appropriate: *Doko e yuku no ka*, or "Where Are You Going?" Nowhere is there even a hint of Kikaider 0-1, as it should be. There is true closure as the kana for "owari" appears on the screen.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

A Toei production for broadcast on TV Asahi 7/8/72-5/5/73, Created by Shotaro Ishimori, Tohru Hirayama, Writer: Shukei Nagasaka, Masaru Igami, Director: Hiroyuki Kimura, Music composed by: Chumel Watunabe, Featuring Daisuke Ban as Jiro, with costume stunts provided by the Japan Action Club

KIKAIDA was created and produced in the fall-out of the explosive hit teleseries MASKED RIDER (aka Kamen Rider), along with SUPER HUMAN BAROM 1 and HENSHIN NINJA ARASHI, all three unleashed upon the Japanese public in the early part of 1972.

Legendary comic author Shotaro Ishimori (nee Ishinomori) -- famous for such hits as CYBORG 009 and KAMEN RIDER was commissioned by Toei Creative Producer Tohru Hirayama (GIANT ROBO) to develop a new type of superhero. Ishimori, went on to pen a robotic parable of the classic fairy tale Pinocchio.

Veteran writer Masaru Igami (who penned scenarios for MOONLIGHT MASK in the late fifties and later MASKED RIDER) was on board to get the series off to an exciting start. But the man responsible for the shaping of KIKAIDA's overall story and subplots was Shukei Nagasaka, who would later helm the scenarios for such hits as AKUMAIZER 3 (1976) and VIGILANTE ZUHAT (1977), both for Toei.

The android monster suits were created by Kaimai Productions -- who also produced monster suits for a number of other superheroic series. Its founder Eizo Kaimai worked under Kaiji Yagi at Toho in the Tsuburaya group until 1965.

- August Ragone

# KAIJU HIGHLIGHTS OF KYOTO

by Norman England

Who among us doesn't dream of a trip to Japan, home to Godzilla and company. For those of us who have been lucky enough to make the long haul to Japan, our time for many obvious reasons, is mostly spent in Tokyo: It's easy to get to (for now Narita Airport seems to be the gateway to Japan for most Westerners), hotels have very competent English speaking staffs, an abundance of hobby, toy and animation shops. Lastly, it is the sight of more Godzilla battles than any other Japanese city. Quite a long list of very solid reasons to pick Tokyo as your number one destination.

Still, as an example of the "real Japan", it is sorely lacking. The Tokyo area, or Edo as it was known when development began in the area in 1603, is, relatively speaking, one of the newest cities in Japan. The city only really gained momentum after the capitol was moved there in 1868. At that time it became the symbol of the new government's attempts to catch up with the western world. So in terms of the true culture of 'old Japan', the city has few sights to offer.

For the eleven hundred years before Tokyo was Japan's capitol that distinction befell the city of **Kyoto** in central Japan. A city literally overflowing with Japanese history, as well as being featured in last year's Godzilla film, *Gojira* vs. *Mekagojira*.

Tucked in a valley surrounded by forested, medium sized mountains, Kyoto appears at first to be a small rural town. But this is the true beauty of the place; for it is a modern city with all the conveniences that we have come to expect in the 20th century yet it contrasts this

with a well-preserved sense of simpler times from the Japanese past. The sense of timelessness is held together in part thanks to the more than 2,000 temples and shrines that are scattered throughout the city. That and an incredibly strict city council that has final approval over any and all construction done in the city.

If Tokyo is where Japan is headed then Kyoto must be where it's from. This city is in many ways the soul and spirit of Japan, offering a balance against the chaotic, fast paced urban wastelands of Tokyo. For that reason Toho has in the past been restricted from allowing their monsters to tread where even the Allied Forces were respectful enough to leave undisturbed in World War Two. It wasn't until the 20th Godzilla film that the Big G was allowed a short and mildly destructive visit.

For those planning a trip to Japan who plan to see more than Tokyo, I've put together a list of locations seen in *G vs. MG* that can easily be incorporated into any official itinerary for the city of Kyoto (such as the one found in the excellent book, *New Japan Solo* ISBN 4 7700 17 391 \$17, available at Kinokuniya Books 212-765-1461).

Now, not only will your Kyoto trip allow you a visit to the historic side of Japan, you can double your fun visiting the Kyoto sights knowing that "Godzilla was here" even if only on the big screen!

If you're not sure how to get to Kyoto from Tokyo, don't worry, it's really quite easy. Take the Shinkansen (known in the West as the Bullet train) from Tokyo station. A day trip from Tokyo to Kyoto is possible, but not really recommended since the Shinkansen takes a bit less than 3 hours each way. Still, an early riser can

easily get to Kyoto from Tokyo by 11AM (catch the 8:21AM Hikari-347 in Tokyo and arrive, four stops later, in Kyoto station at 11:00AM).

Those wishing to stay overnight in Kyoto will find there are many hotels to choose from. Those wanting to return to Tokyo the same day can catch the Hikari-276 at 7:44PM and arrive back in Tokyo at 10:21PM. There are many other trains and times to choose from (over 50 a day) plus the Nozomi is a slightly faster, but more expensive Shinkansen train than the Hikari. The cost is approximately 24,000 yen for a round trip ticket.



As you pull into Kyoto, one site that you'll notice right away is Kyoto Tower, the structure Godzilla destroyed with a belch of radioactive bad breath in last year's film. Kyoto Tower is by far the tallest building in the city at 328 feet, so it's quite hard to miss. Its rather distinctive shape, like something you might see in a *Jetsons* cartoon, makes it difficult to miss. The building is actually a hotel, with an observation platform located near the top.

This hotel is located directly across from the JR (Japan Rail) train station, so getting to it will take all of three minutes after your train pulls in, making it the ideal spot to start your Kyoto trip. The station, by the way, can also be seen in the film. A Bullet train arrives just as Godzilla is about to make his move on Kyoto Tower.

Before going up I recommend a visit to the Kyoto Tourist Information Center, which is located just to the right of the tower. Here you can get directions and other advice in English, or just pick up free

city maps. Best of all you can even pick up a discount pass to Kyoto Tower which will lower the entrance fee by a 100 yen.

While admission is steep, it does offer the most complete view of the city, in fact on a clear day you can see all the way to Osaka. On the 3rd floor of the tower is a large painting showing Godzilla destroying the building, several posters from the film, and a display detailing the 40 year history of Godzilla.

Originally built as a tourist attraction the Tower contains a few (at this point) rundown exhibits that probably are not worth your time. It reminds me of the trip I took to the Korean city of Pusan last year where I discovered a huge mural of Godzilla at the entrance of a building, went inside and discovered a room full of animatronic squirrels covered in an inch of dust. There's enough to see in Kyoto with out wasting your time with the 'tourist traps'.

The best thing about Kyoto Tower is the view. If you look out the north window (away from Kyoto Station) you'll an updated version of the establishing shot of Kyoto seen in *War of the Gargantuas*. Thanks to the strict building codes the view has not changed radically.

Looking almost directly down you'll see the temple called Higashi Honganji. Entrance to Higashi Honganji is free. While not necessarily an old temple (1895) its main building is the largest wooden structure in Kyoto and houses the most tatamis I've ever seen in one room.

Less than a mile away from Kyoto Tower is one of Kyoto's oldest temples: Toji. A short trip by taxi, (cost about 800 yen), you can also go back to Kyoto station and make use of the city's excellent bus service. If you opt for the bus, go to the outdoor platforms across from the tower, wait at gate C5 for bus 19. The cost is 200 yen.

Toji Temple is seen twice in *Godzilla vs MechaGodzilla*. First when Kazuma drives past the back gate, and later when Godzilla strolls past on his way to Kyoto





Tower.

Toji is most famous for being home to Japan's largest five story pagoda, which is set in front of a small pond stocked with colorful carp and sun bathing turtles. Built in 796 by Imperial edict, it was turned over to the Shingon Buddhist sect in 818 and has been in their possession ever since. Toji also features many beautiful ancient statues housed in several elegant, old buildings across from the pond. Admission is 500 yen, but don't go on the 21st of the month. That's when over 300,000 pilgrims come to worship in front of the Kooboo dashi statue!

The most famous shot of Godzilla in Kyoto is the view from the lookout deck of Kiyomizu dera (probably the most famous temple in all of Japan). Though it's a bit of a "touristy" temple, it is authentic and does contain some nice structures as well as that great view of the city.

Located in the picturesque Higashi-Yama section of town, the temple was founded in 780, but the present structure

dates from 1633. Kiyomizu dera is unique in that it is one of the few temples that one doesn't have to take ones shoes off before entering! Which brings me around to some good advice: Always wear your best socks (no holes please) when going to Kyoto or anywhere in Japan for that matter! It can save you from some very embarrassing moments.

Kiyomizu dera is rather large and will probably take more than an hour to really see. Finding the lookout will be easy because the entrance naturally leads to it. Beneath the deck and down a long flight of stone steps is the run off of a nearby river. It is said that this water has magical properties and will invigorate the mind and body, so a sip is recommended. Kiyomizu dera, meaning, "pure water", gets its name from this water.

Finally, there is a brilliant shot of Godzilla trodding through central Kyoto with the bridge at Sanjyo street supporting people in their mad dash to flee from this wrath.

Sanjyo ohashi Bridge is located in central Kyoto and has been an integral part of its history. Once the site of Kyoto's trade center, in fact, the center of all major trading in Japan, it is now just one of many bridges crossing the Kano River. Still, many Japanese tourists come to see and cross this bridge that has appeared in countless paintings and books from past ages.

While Godzilla's Kyoto appearance was brief, the filmmakers were able to pack a lot in and it demonstrates a recent trend in Japanese pop culture the slow turn away from western influences in favor of a tighter focus on their own roots.

Japan is full of many interesting and breathtaking sights. For those with the time (and funds) the rail trip to Kyoto is like a journey into Japan's past. A trip I can promise you'll never forget. I'm sure even Godzilla has fond memories of this place.



# KAIJU KOMMENTS

PAUL BANKS.

Summer 94 issue was excellent with many pieces of much desired information about the current Godzilla projects. One thing I hope you would follow up on would be the expense (to the extent you feel comfortable), accommodations and cuisine of your trip to Japan so that other kaiju enthusiasts who are fascinated by Japan can deliberate such trips for themselves.

I can only guess that your context was inspired to an extent by that guy who commented on my first letter about liking Godzilla movies. Unfortunately, I have not had the time to come up with an entry. However, as I was looking at my King Kong Bandai figure, I noticed a strange resemblance to someone. Pick up your figure and look straight at it. Then turn it about 90 degrees in either direction. Then picture it in a white sequined jump suit with a guitar around its neck singing "I Love Me Tender." That's right, I believe the King (Kong) was modeled after the "King", Elvis Presley.

Wow, people are seeing Elvis in the strangest places these days. Before we traveled to Japan we spent a lot of time studying various travel books including: Fodor's, Insight Guides, Rough Guide to Japan, and others. We stayed in a Western style hotel in the Giza, and by far the most important component in our trip was knowing someone who lived there, who was willing to show us around.

JIM CIRIBONELLA

Fort Lee, NJ..... Thanks for another great issue of Kaiju Review! Details of your visit to Toho Studios, Norman England's untiring efforts to translate the Songs of Godzilla were read with intense interest. All in all a job well done! It is disheartening to learn that The Godzilla Chronicles is being pulled from the shelves in Japan. True there are a lot of Godzilla books out there but this one in particular is a stand-out entry in that it chronologically references all of Toho's non-Godzilla genre films too...Although it wasn't mentioned, your readers might be interested to know that The Godzilla Chronicles was one of the few books on the subject to feature nudity. In fact a nude actress appears on (or rather dominates) page 167, right next to the controversial photograph. No controversy over that however! (Not that I care, but it is an interesting point.)

Thanks for the feedback, Jim. Readers should write Jim for a copy of his most excellent Newsletter / Catalog of Bandai figures, CDs, books, and lenses. The prices are at times, way too high for my taste, but Jim is to be commended for making so much product available in rich U.S. lands. Write to Jim at P.O. Box 1614, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, remember to include a S.A.S.E.

MICHAEL KELLER

Ft. Worth, TX..... Thanks very much for KR #6, I've enjoyed it immensely. I really like that KR has moved away from being strictly a Godzilla-oriented publication and has gotten into other tokusatsu as well...My Favorite article is definitely Kevin Gray's piece on Tsuburaya studios. Kevin's contributions to Monster Attack Team have been the most celebrated and it seems that his usual level of quality holds true for other publications as well...I must disagree with Max Della Mora in regards to his comments regarding Ultraman 80. Although Max is right in saying that Ultraman Towards the Future is one of Tsuburaya's worst productions, U-80 by no means deserves to be lumped in with it. I, and several others including August Hagone and Bob Johnson consider it one of the best of the Ultra series; and certainly head and tails above Gridman, good show that it is. And along those lines, even though Ultraman, the Ultimate Hero is a superior show to Ultraman, Towards the Future, in coherence, acting, special effects, monster design, and overall entertainment value, I can understand why it wasn't picked up.... it is lacking in what should be its critical factor = action. The monster battles are incredibly slow and drawn out, and consist of little, if any fighting. Ultraman's infamous ray beam powers are used very sparingly, only once in the first three episodes, in fact. I'm told that in one episode there is absolutely no contact at all between Ultraman and the monster..... With this in mind it's easy to understand why companies like Saban would rather pick up much more action filled purely Japanese shows which, spliced and diced as they may be, are more likely to draw in a large audience.

Interesting comments Mike, your letter echoes the feeling of a lot of fans I've heard from re: Ultraman, Ultimate Hero (aka Ultraman Powered). About U-80, I guess everyone is entitled to their own opinion.

RON WILBER

Liberty, NY..... Thanks for KR #6 it was worth the wait. From Luis Medero's delightful cover to Paul Roche's strong design on the back cover KR is loaded with interesting material. Keith Aikeo's centerfold is a great idea, beautifully executed. I enjoyed all the Ultra material. I think I was deprived as a kid because no station in my area ran the Ultraman show.... I love the piece your wife wrote for KR "Our Visit to Toho". Very well done, informative, and fun. Always great to read Norman England's articles. This was a surprise to find out what our favorite kaiju actors are up to. So good to know that Kumi Mizuno is still active. Norman also contributed a fine article on the Songs of Godzilla. The Penmatz also contributed a lot of non kaiju music

that is fun to listen to, especially if you're at all fond of the girl group / girl pop sound of the early 60's. I'd recommend The Peanuts Oldies Vol 1 and Vol. 2. Eimi and Yumi sing Japanese versions of Italian, Spanish, and American pop hits. If you need a Godzilla connection just imagine folks listening to this as they drove to the theatre to see King Kong vs Godzilla or The He-Man.

By far the best thing about doing a zine like KR is the nice people you come into contact with. Ron Wilber is easily the most prolific and talented contributor to these humble pages, and on top of that he has become a trusted advisor and good friend. Thanks Ron!

#### MARSHALL J. CRIST

Marshallan Beach, CA....Regarding your latest issue there are about a million things I'd like to comment on, but here are just a few. The Toho liner disc schedule for this year is great news, especially Atragon, which I consider to be a major hole in my collection right now. Fortunately I live within driving distance of Ken Crane's Superstore, and I'm sure their import buyer is sick of looking at me.... Norman England's Songs of Godzilla article is something I've wished for for years and deserves a sequel. It was particularly nice to read about Infant Island Maidens and Save the Earth, which are probably my favorite songs from the Toho films. The checklist (of Godzilla C/Ds) from issue #5 was particularly invaluable, although I wish it could be expanded to include more non-Godzilla kaiju music....Again thanks a million for your great mag.

Thank you Marshall, your contributions to this as well as the last issue are greatly appreciated.

#### EDWARD HOLLAND

Fl. Worth, TX.... I really enjoyed the latest issue of the review. There was a lot of variety. The Tsuburaya piece by Kevin Grays was great. The reviews were cool. The letter section was a bit long. The reflections on your visit made me feel I was there at Toho. The Songs of Godzilla was very interesting, loosely translated or not. Overall I enjoyed #6, and thanks for the mention.

Thanks Ed, coming from another zine editor (Monster Attack Team) your praise is especially well taken. Thank you for the plug too by the way, I just wish you'd send me a copy.

#### CHANCE WINSTEAD

New York, NY.... I really liked KR # 6, the Ultra coverage was very interesting. It's a real credit to Kaiju Review, that you have managed to attract so much talent to its pages. Kevin Grays seems like quite the kaiju expert, and the artistic help provided by Wilber, Aiken, Mederu, Roche, and the others is invaluable. I especially enjoy reading Norman England's articles about living in Japan. I am lucky enough to get to travel there

about once a month on business, but to actually live there for any length of time would be quite a challenge. One misconception that I think came across in #6 was that Japan's Hiroshima survivors have a lot of clout in terms of the media, nothing could be further from the truth in my opinion. The Tokyo Federation of Atomic Bomb Sufferers, almost half a century after the bombings still lists themselves as "The Tokyo Friends Association" on the return address of all their membership mailings. After the war, when most people used public facilities for bathing, bomb victims had to bathe in rivers because they were shunned by the general public and refused admission to most bath houses. It was quite common for families to forbid their children from marrying the children of bomb victims, because they were considered tainted. Today Japan is about the 'team' spirit than the individual one. The rule of thumb in Japan has been "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down",

Yes it's not all fun and games there. It's a real credit to Norman England's personal character that he's gotten along as well as he has there. Yes Virginia, the Japanese are cool but they are different.

#### PLUG SECTION

General Interest monster fans (who also like to collect toys) should check out **MONSTER MASH**, a monthly newsletter and monster appreciation society rolled into one, send a s.a.s.c. to Club 13 P.O. Box 733 Bellefonte PA. 16823

Fans of MST3K should check out Paula O'Keefe's scrapbook & review zine **SHADOWGRAMMA**, it's a huge compilation of newspaper clippings and original review material concerning the best comedy show on cable TV, send \$3. (to cover postage) to Paula O'Keefe, P.O. Box 1065, Washington Grove, MD 20880

Godzilla collectors take note, fellow fan Dave Barker has decided to sell off a portion of his massive collection of models, toys, and other items relating to the big G. Send a s.a.s.c. and one (refundable) back to Dave Barker c/o 118 Cloud Crest Drive, Henderson, NV 89015 for a copy of his list.

Since Pony Toys stopped selling Godzilla stuff (for now at least), your best bet in New Jersey is a place in Clifton called **OUTER LIMITS**, its located at 433 Pingel Ave. For more information call (201) 340-9393. I've only been there once, but I was impressed by the selection, it's more expensive than Pony Toys was, but cheaper than most places in New York City.

**SEND YOUR COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, OR RANTS TO:**

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