

#3 OWARI

おわり



what's up
tiger
Lily?

THE BEGINNING OF "THE END"

Is it just me or has this been an exceptionally hectic year? Don't answer that question; I think it probably is just me. To say that my life has been in a constant state of upheaval since last issue would be a gross understatement. I won't bore you with the details, but my future (to say nothing of Owari's future) has been a big question mark these last few months. Things are sort of settled now, but I can only guess what lies just around the bend.

You can rest assured that I haven't been resting on my laurels in my time off. I have been using my spare time wisely to improve the fanzine you are now reading. Although I am proud of my first two issues, I would be very short-sighted if I tried to stand pat and not make any changes. For instance, one comment which I heard from several readers was that the content of #2 was too limited. You got me! There was little variety in #2, for reasons too tedious to mention. I have tried to rectify that little problem this time. Let me know what you think. I have also implemented some new design wrinkles that should make Owari stand out. I hope you like them.

I suppose I should have discussed my next topic in the first issue, but it honestly didn't occur to me. I will often mention other fanzines in these pages and I frequently list addresses of various people, businesses, and publications. However, unless otherwise stated, I have no direct affiliation with these people and I cannot take responsibility for their actions. I know that at least two fanzines I have plugged have apparently disappeared without a trace. My advice would be to send any fanzine one long self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) along with a request for information.

As I alluded to above, this issue is jam-packed with stuff. In fact, I had so much cool stuff that I couldn't possibly fit it all in a meager 20 pages. It looks like there will be more Owaris in our future. Whoa, let's not get ahead of ourselves! This is only our first anniversary. Yep, it's been one whole year since the first issue of Owari was published. Can you believe it? I know I can't. Enough of my ramblings! Let's get this road on the show! Uh, whatever...

"Look at my yoyo!"

Christopher Elam
Christopher Elam

ON THE COVER: Tatsuya Mihashi is surrounded by (from left) Akiko Wakabayashi, Kumi Mizuno, and Mie Hama. Meanwhile, the mysterious floating Woody head gives us the skinny on this issue's feature article.

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PUBLISHED NOV. 1996

"TWO WONGS DON'T MAKE A WIGHT!"
The Story of What's Up, Tiger Lily?
by Christopher Elam, amiable zany

The Sixties were a terrific time to be a spy. The pop culture landscape was teeming with hordes of suave sophisticated guys with fast cars, faster women and megalomaniacal enemies intent on (wait for it) ruling the world. The reason for this espionage explosion is no mystery. The James Bond films were blockbuster on a global level and they sparked much interest in secret agent shenanigans. One of the most basic rules of filmmaking is that if someone hits upon a successful formula, his low-budget competitors will slavishly imitate it and generally beat it to death. The spy genre was no different.

For our purposes, the only "almost" Bond movies that are of any importance right now are a few that originated in Japan. Yep, that's right, Japan - the Toho Company, Ltd. to be precise. Some genius(es) at Toho recognized Mr. Bond's popularity and decided that they should get in on the act. Thus was born the film series known alternately as either Kokusai Keisatsu ("International Police") or Kokusai Himitsu Keisatsu ("International Secret Police"). For clarity, I will hereafter refer to it as the INTERPOL series, which is what the name is referring to in the first place. The first film in the series was the 1963 entry INTERPOL Code 8 (Kokusai Himitsu Keisatsu Shirei Hachigo) - the English title is an accurate translation. It was this movie which introduced viewers to two-fisted ladykiller secret agent man Jiro Kitami, portrayed by the charismatic Tatsuya Mihashi. Mihashi's co-stars in this initial installment included Makoto Sato, Yosuke Natsuki, Kumi Mizuno, and Jerry Ito, all familiar faces to Japanese sci-fi fans.

Things start to become fuzzy at this point. There are supposedly four additional films, but solid data has only surfaced on two follow-ups. Whether there are 3 films or 5 films is a matter for serious film students to research. There seems little doubt, however, that the final INTERPOL movie is The Killing Bottle (Kokusai Himitsu Keisatsu: Zettai Zetsumi) - I have seen "Zettai Zetsumi" translated as both "Catch 22" and "Big Danger". The Killing Bottle, directed by Senkichi Taniguchi and released in 1966 rather than the commonly reported 1967, is notable because it marks the final Japanese film of the late Nick Adams, star of Frankenstein Conquers the World and Monster Zero. Nick appears as secret agent John Carter, but he does not become the Warlord of Mars. ERB in-jokes aside, Adams and Mihashi cross paths with a number of favorites in their quest to prevent the assassination of the President of Buddhabal (the one & only Jun Tazaki!). Let's see, the roll call this time includes Kumi Mizuno, Makoto Sato, Akihiko Hirata, Yoshio Tsuchiya, Tetsu Nakamura, Eisei Amamoto Sachio Sakai, Ryuji Kita (from King Kong Escapes and The X from Outer Space) and Anne Mari (Seijun Suzuki's Branded to Kill & Ultraman episode 32 as Patra). Quite a line up! None of the INTERPOL movies have been issued to video in their original format, but the lack of availability of The Killing Bottle is the most depressing.

By now, you think I have sailed so far from this article's original premise as to never return. A-ha! Fooled you, didn't I? There is one other INTERPOL movie on which we have some info. It is from either 1964 or 1965 (sources conflict) and is also directed by Senkichi Taniguchi. Its title is Key of Keys (Kokusai Himitsu Keisatsu: Kagi no Kagi) - yes, "Kagi no Kagi" does mean "Key of Keys". The English title is also given as A Key of Powder. While negotiating with Toho, American Godzilla exploiter Henry G. Saperstein was offered Key of Keys. As Saperstein tells it, he thought the movie was no good (no accounting for taste!), so he deliberately made a very low bid. Toho accepted the bid and Saperstein was saddled with the rights to a movie he didn't want. Given Saperstein's track record regarding the truth, his version of the preceding events and that which followed should probably be taken with a grain of salt.

In 1966, Saperstein took the movie to the boys at AIP, his distributor at the time. They didn't like it either. Somehow, though, someone had a rare flash of inspiration. Why not re-dub it as a comedy? The project was initially offered to Lenny Bruce, who turned it down because he didn't want to have to censor his humor. The second choice was a comedian/writer who had made his feature film debut a year earlier. It was a guy named Woody Allen.

It's fairly rare for one person to create an entirely new kind of film, but Woody Allen (with more than a little help from his fellow writers/voice dubbers) did just that. When the dust cleared, the English dubbed print of Key of Keys that had been provided by Toho International had been supplanted by What's Up, Tiger Lily?. The real tests still lay ahead. Was the movie funny? And would potential customers pay to see it?

As is usually the case, "funny" is in the eyes of the beholder. Many people (including me) think What's Up, Tiger Lily? is an uproariously unpretentious and irreverent satire of spy movies in particular and all movies in general. Of course, there are just as many folks who find the flick disrespectful, badly written, stupid, boring, just plain unfunny and possibly racist to boot! Both sides have a point and neither is really wrong. Individual perception is a big factor in whether a movie works or not.

Not open to debate is the fact that What's Up, Tiger Lily? more or less tanked in its initial release. Even a music score performed by special guest stars The Lovin' Spoonful (appearing in insert sequences designed to pad out the film, allegedly over the objections of Allen) was unable to attract a profitable audience share. What's Up, Tiger Lily? might have disappeared forever had Woody Allen not later become a hugely popular (albeit far too serious, in my opinion) filmmaker. Tiger Lily experienced a renaissance of popularity as hordes of Woody converts discovered it when it was re-released to cash in on his success. Now, Woody film scholars make idiots of themselves by analyzing Tiger Lily for hidden meanings, deep truths, and vast profundities. I doubt it has any, but that hasn't stopped them from discovering lots of stuff that no one cares about in the first place. I really LOVE pompous film scholars. Don't you?

Here's the part where I discuss the plot. The action begins right at the outset with footage that is apparently not from Key of Keys. Speculation has it that it could be from INTERPOL Code 8, but this is not a certainty. Then, Woody is interviewed on-camera and gives us the origin of the picture. Some of it is accurate and some of it...isn't. The story itself centers on Japanese secret agent Phil Moskowitz, lovable rogue, as he attempts to retrieve the egg salad recipe of the Grand Exalted High Macah of Rasper (or is it Rasher?), a non-existent but real sounding country. Don't ask me why egg salad - I got enough aggravation. Aiding Phil are the comely sisters Terri Yaki and Suki Yaki. They go after that bozo Shepherd Wong, who stole the recipe in the first place, but things get complicated when Wing Fat enters the picture. He wants to steal the recipe from Wong so he can sell it back to him, that's how he makes his living. A series of captures, escapes, double crosses,



triple crosses and quadruple crosses later, the movie is over and we are treated to a mild striptease by former Playboy Playmate China Lee whilst Woody chomps on an apple.

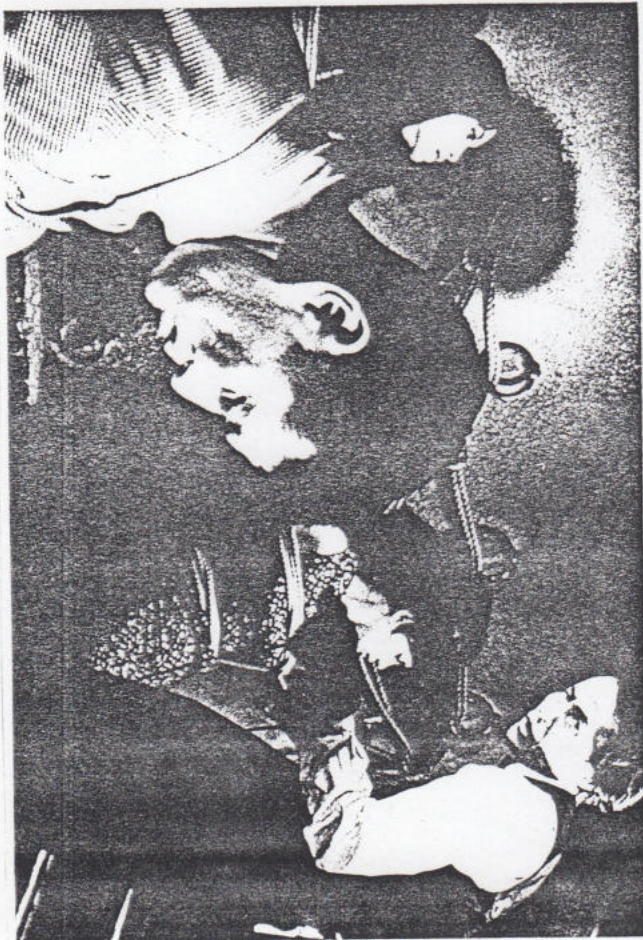
The above synopsis really doesn't even begin to describe the lunacy involved in What's Up, Tiger Lily? nor does it do it justice. You really have to experience it firsthand. There's something about gags like Wing Fat's special camera and the wedding arranged by the "cobra man" that loses something in the retelling. If this sounds appealing, I'd wager you'll love the film. The plot (such as it is) doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but I don't think that's very important in something of this nature.

Is What's Up, Tiger Lily? offensive? Maybe. It all depends on your frame of mind. A number of jokes rely on a knowledge of ethnic stereotypes. Yet, in my mind, these notions are stretched to such an absurdist degree that it becomes obvious that the participants are mocking such backward preconceptions. Another potential problem is the suggestiveness of a lot of the humor. In these jaded times, though, it all strikes me as harmless, even innocent. It comes across with an engaging "Yahoo! We're talking about naughty stuff!" attitude. Then again, it's possible that Tiger Lily offered the first clue to a Woody hang-up that almost engineered his downfall. Ye cats, I'm starting to sound like those pompous film scholars I just bashed so righteously!

In summation, the INTERPOL film series seems like lots of fun, engaging little movies laced with generous doses of action and humor. What's Up, Tiger Lily?, on the other hand, is an oft-imitated one-shot with lots of action and a humongous wad of humor. The best part is that we don't have to choose between them. All of them are waiting for us to find them.

"FOR THAT JOKE YOU SHOULD ONLY DROP DEAD!"
The End of the Story

(Christopher Elam was almost shot and killed just before the opening credits. He wants 3 8x10's and 1 wallet-size. Don't tell him what to do or he'll have his mustache eat your beard.)



EISEI AMAMOTO ("cobra man") is best remembered as Dr. Who in King Kong Escapes and Minami the toy consultant in Godzilla's Revenge. You can look for him in Atragon, Gorath, Ghidrah--The Three-Headed Monster, Attack of the Mushroom People, Dagora, the Space Monster, Message from Space and far too many other movies for me to list here.

SACHIO SAKAI (Wing Fat henchman 1) is Hagiwara the reporter in the original Japanese version of Godzilla. Other films to his credit include Gorath, Godzilla's Revenge, King Kong Escapes, King Kong vs. Godzilla, and Yoq-Monster from Space.

KUMI MIZUNO ("presidents girl") is the darling of kaiju fans everywhere. Her sci-fi films are Gorath (Takiko Nomura), Attack of the Mushroom People (Maimi Sekiguchi), Frankenstein Conquers the World (Dr. Sueko Togami), Monster Zero (Miss Namikawa), The War of the Gargantuas (Akemi Togawa), and Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster (Dayo).

MAKOTO SATO (Phil's partner) played that nasty gangster Uchida in The H-Man. You can find him in Message from Space as Urocco and in assorted action and war movies.

TETSU NAKAMURA (The Grand High Macah of Rasper) was Nelson's main henchman in Mothra and the mad Dr. Suzuki in The Manster. Among his other films are Atragon, The H-Man, Latitude Zero, The Mysterians, Yoq-Monster from Space and The Last Dinosaur.

OSMAN YUSUF (gambler with cigar) was one of the token foreigners in tons of Japanese movies. He was Nelson's second henchman in Mothra and King Stone in Sonny Chiba's The Street Fighter. You can spot him in such films as King Kong vs. Godzilla, Godzilla vs. the Thing (U.S. version only), Battle in Outer Space, Gorath, Son of Godzilla, King Kong Escapes, Latitude Zero and The Last Days of Planet Earth.

JUN KUROKI (Shepherd Wong henchman) can be identified by his lean features and considerable beard. He is part of the investigation team in Ghidrah--The Three-Headed Monster and one of Dr. Who's helicopter pilots in King Kong Escapes.

HANS HORNEFF ("the director") is another foreigner who turns up in all sorts of Japanese stuff. He is a reporter in Terror Beneath the Sea, the German U-boat commander in Frankenstein Conquers the World and Sir Yesterday in Ultraman episode 17.

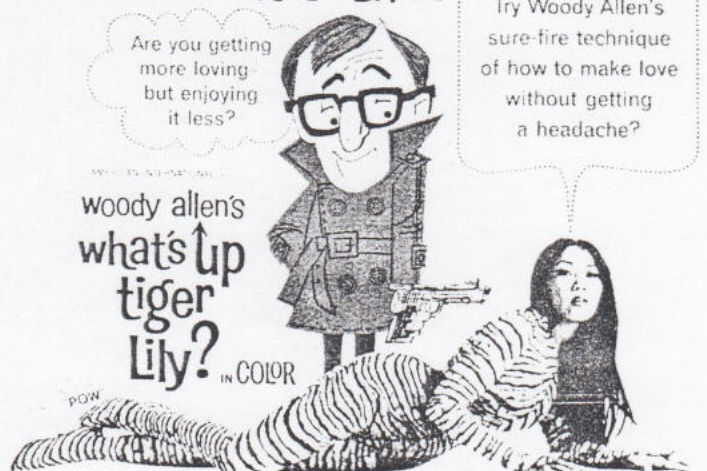
YOSHIO KATSUBE (man dancing in the club) appears in more Japanese films than I care to contemplate. His most noticeable parts are probably as the young scientist manning the viewscreens in Destroy All Monsters and the second-in-command military guy in Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster.

HIDEO SHIBUYA (dealer) plays reporters in a lot of Toho films, including Frankenstein Conquers the World (where he asks to take pictures in Frankenstein's cage), King Kong vs. Godzilla, Gorath, Destroy All Monsters, Dagora, the Space Monster, and The War of the Gargantuas. He is credited as "Shinpei Mitsui" in some films.

NOTE: There are a few actors in Tiger Lily that I have only tentatively identified. I won't list them until I'm positive. Sorry, maybe some other time.

O-FACTOID: CONSUMER ALERT!
Yes, it is my sad duty to inform you that there are, in fact, two versions of What's Up, Tiger Lily? on video. The first was issued by Vestron in the early 80's. It is not a perfect transfer, but it is uncensored. A later Goodtimes Home Video version had a nicer picture, but was recorded in LP mode AND utilized a print that had been re-relooped. This version is vastly inferior.

WOODY ALLEN STRIKES BACK!



Lewis Smith no Gyakushu

(AKA: Lewis Smith's Counterattack, Lewis Smith Raids Again, & Lewis Smith, the Fire Monster)

Toy reviews by the expert/non-expert mentioned above.

Rating System: *****(The Best)-*(The Worst)

Space Godzilla (10" version)

Made by: Trendmasters Approx. price: \$20

I like Trendmasters. I really do, but stuff like this makes them hard to love. From the much-maligned Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla comes its crystalline alter ego, rendered in the loudest hunk of blue plastic I have ever clapped eyes on.

What more can be said, but it's the smurfiest Space Godzilla of them all. The tail comes in two segments (like the Bandai sculpt) and Space Godzilla's scale is appropriate to his body size.

However, Space Godzilla wasn't blue, and he sure as hell wasn't this kind of blue. Also, in what I consider to be the first of a disturbing trend, it doesn't even sound like the Space Godzilla of the movies.

While the sculpt is good (the large scale and ferocious appearance make it a good step beyond Bandai's sculpt, which made Space G look retarded and blue, but I don't wanna get into that...), my advice is that you don't buy this. A Garuda would be a better investment.

Rating: *

Gigan (10" version)

Made by: Trendmasters Approx. price: \$20

Just when Trendmasters had me worried, they do something like this. This is coming from a kid who can remember Gigan taking a powder in the two movies he was featured in.

From all indications, Gigan's bulked up big time. Depending on the angle, this makes him look either fearsome or silly. However, whatever the sculpt, of note is the special attention given to his coloring. It is about the most detailed on a Trendmasters figure so far. The main problem I have with the figure is...he doesn't stand up too well. His tail is too small for a balancer. And, again, it doesn't sound like the Gigan I remember.

Nevertheless, after the disappointment of Space Godzilla, I was happy that this figure is a flawed leap forward. I can't say I'm too crazy about ANY of the new figures in the "Godzilla Wars" line, except maybe the MOGERA '94 which exceeds the Bandai counterpart in every possible way [despite the fact that Toho and Trendmasters insist that the name should be spelled "Moguera"-CE]. However, I like this figure, for some dumb reason.

Rating: **½

Final Stage Destroyer

Made by: Bandai Approx. price: Import [i.e. expect to pay through the nose and several other body parts-CE]

First, let me get this off my chest: For the duration of this review, the monster who opposes Godzilla in his latest movie (which our esteemed editor refers to as Godzilla vs. What's His Name) will be referred to as "Destroyer", not "Desutroia" or "Destroyah". It's an English name, so let's try to spell it in English!

Made of soft vinyl, Destroyer is about the nastiest looking creature ever in kaiju eiga. Nine out of ten of my friends won't even touch the thing because it looks so ugly.

Bandai made up with me for their pathetic Space Godzilla. Destroyer is an almost frighteningly accurate representation of the monster's final stage, even down to the color scheme. The figure is articulated in eight places so you can pose your cute'n'cuddly demon whichever way flips your omelette.

While the movie's gotten some bad reviews, I think anyone who likes this design will love this figure. Somebody must've lit a fire under Bandai after SG. If you ask me, that's a good thing.

Rating: ****

And now, an annoying pause...

Regarding Bandai's decision to revamp the entire Power Rangers line, this is the last gasp of a great thing. While I don't doubt that their new line will be a moderate success, their days as a market force are over. However, this is a good time to stock up on OhRanger merchandise, which, from my observations, will be coming over here relatively unspoiled. So check it out while Bandai still has some clout to bring this stuff out over here.

(Lewis Smith is just this guy, you know? He will trade an Infinite Improbability Drive for a Burning Godzilla figure.)

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THE FATALLY FURIOUS LEWIS
CARICATURE, courtesy of
Arvelle Whittaker

フランクシュタイン
地底怪獣

THE
KAIJU
DETECTIVE



by
Ronnie
Burton

FRANKENSTEIN
CONQUERS THE WORLD

Additional
Research:
C. Elam

(above) Tadao Takashima, Kumi Mizuno, and Nick Adams examine Frankenstein's still living severed hand.

FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD - AN OPINION

One of Toho's most finely crafted--and underrated--monster films is *Frankenstein Conquers the World*. Despite the harsh criticism directed at it by many, the film has a great many things going for it. Akira Ifukube created one of his most vibrant music scores for the movie. A lot of talent went into the construction of the film's numerous miniatures, including the Hari-maru (the party ship which Frankenstein draws close to), the buildings in the residential district which Frankenstein prowls after his escape from the warehouse, the farm village set in the mountainous area which is attacked by Baragon (some of those miniatures were used in *The War of the Gargantuas* to create a very similar village), the spooky-looking Shirane Hostel and perhaps best of all, the oil fields in Akita which are destroyed by Baragon early on. The detail on all of these miniature sets is astounding!

Many familiar faces of the kaiju eiga genre populate this film, including Yoshio Kosugi as the military commander, Yoshifumi Tajima as the captain of the sub which brings the indestructible heart to Hiroshima, and Noburo Nakamura as a museum curator. Ikio Sawamura has a bit as an elderly man whose dog has been killed, Kenji Sahara and Hisaya Ito play policemen and Senkichi Omura has a bit part as a TV cameraman.

Granted, the monster Baragon does resemble a canine, especially in closeup. He still effectively conveys menace in every one of his scenes, more than all the Power Rangers kaiju combined. Don't get me wrong--I'm not knocking Power Rangers, but there is definitely several differences in the design and execution of the creatures that proliferate that and many other rental series. The monster Baragon is much more awe-inspiring!

My only complaint--and it's a minor one--is that Frankenstein is less than fearsome looking (to put it charitably) in some parts of the movie. In the parts that are dimly lit, he looks rather eerie.

The battle with the octopus¹ was well staged, but I'll concede that its placement is awkward, making it seem like an afterthought. The same thing happens in the Paul Naschy horror film *The Night of the Howling Beast* (AKA *The Werewolf and the Yeti*). The anticipated battle between the werewolf and the Yeti is only marginally connected with the rest of the story and doesn't happen until the final ten minutes or so of the film.

For some baffling reason, some scenes with Kumi Mizuno (one of the best parts of the film!) and Nick Adams talking over dinner and later taking a scenic tour were excised from the film upon its U.S. release. Maybe the distributor was afraid that it would offend American "sensitivities" or something.

Anyway, the first Toho Frankenstein film has received an unfair amount of criticism from so-called "experts". But, I maintain that it is a film made with imagination, technical talent, and taste--qualities sorely lacking in today's high tech horror/SF movies from Hollywood.

Ronnie Burton

¹Ronnie is referring to Frankenstein's duel with a Daidako, one of Toho's giant octopi. Scripted and filmed in Japan, it was not used in the film's Japanese version (at least not the original one). AIP had intended to utilize this alternate ending for the U.S. version (originally tagged *Frankenstein vs. the Giant Devilfish*), but these plans were dropped. The 12 minute sequence is available on a supplement section of the Japanese LD.

FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD
Additional Credits for U.S. Version.
An American International Pictures
release.

A James H. Nicholson & Samuel Z. Arkoff
presentation.

Written from a synopsis by Jerry Sohl.
Based on a story by Reuben Bercovitch.
Executive Producers: Reuben Bercovitch &
Henry G. Saperstein.

Re-Recording Supervisor:
Salvatore Billiteri.

Re-Recording:
Titra Sound Studios
(New York, New York).
Color Prints by Pathé.

Running Time: 87 minutes.
Released July 8, 1966.

Re-released to television by
UPA Productions of America.

FRANKENSHUTAIN TAI CHITEI
KAIJU BARAGON
("Frankenstein vs. Subterranean
Monster Baragon")
A Toho Co., Ltd./Benedict Pictures
Corporation production.
A Toho release.
Eastman Color. TohoScope.
Running Time: 90 minutes.
Released August 8, 1965.
(May 8, 1965, according
to one source.).



"Some milk?": Dr. Togami (Kumi Mizuno) & the child Frankenstein (Mr. Nakao).



Noriaki Inoue & Noriko Takahashi party down at the Shirane Hostel.

STAFF:
Executive Producer: Tomoyuki Tanaka
Screenplay: Kaoru Mabuchi [Takeshi Kimura]
Cinematography: Hajime Koizumi
Art Director: Takeo Kita
Recording: Wataru Konuma
Lighting: Shosichi Kojima
Music: Akira Ifukube
Sound Arrangement: Hisashi Shimonaga
Assistant Director: Koji Kajita
Editor: Ryohei Fujii
Sound Effects: Sadamasa Nishimoto
Processing: Tokyo Laboratory, Ltd.
Production Manager: Junbiko Yamada
TOHO SPECIAL EFFECTS GROUP
SPFX Cinematography: Teisho Arikawa & Sokei Tomioka
Optical Cinematography: Yukio Manoda & Yoshiyuki Tokumasa
SPFX Art Director: Akira Watanabe
SPFX Lighting: Kuichiro Kishida
Matte Process: Hiroshi Mukoyama
Assistant SPFX Director: Teruyoshi Nakano
SPFX Production Manager: Tadashi Koike
SPFX Director: Eiji Tsuburaya
Director: Ishiro Honda
UNCREATED:
Still Photographer: Issel Tanaka
Prosthetics: Teizo Toshimitsu

(The following production credits are culled from *The Japanese Filmography* by Stuart Galbraith IV and are unconfirmed.)

Makeup: Rika Konna
Casting Assistant: Ai Maeda
Transportation: Yashitomi Transportation
Wire Works: Fumio Nakadai
Color Director: Kiyashi Tsurusaki
Dubbing: Toho Dubbing Theatre [Japanese version only]

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above two SPFX cinematographers are usually billed in English language sources as Sadamasa Arikawa and Mototaka Tomioka, respectively.



FRANKENSTEIN - Toho Style!

(Ronnie Burton is an avid fan of Japanese monsters and an all-around nice guy.)

(C. Elam is this weirdo who can crack you up with a dead-on impersonation of Dr. Reisendorff.)

CAST (Japanese billing order):
Tadao Takashima - Dr. Kenichiro Kawaji
Nick Adams - Dr. James Bowen
Kumi Mizuno - Dr. Sueko Togami
Yoshio Tsuchiya - Kawai
Koji Furuhata - Frankenstein monster
Jun Tazaki - Okayama police chief
Susumu Fujita - Osaka police official A
Takashi Shimura - Hiroshima physician during the war
Nobuo Nakamura - Dr. Suga, the museum curator
Kenji Sahara - Okayama police officer Tadokoro
Hisaya Ito - Osaka police official B
Yoshifumi Tajima - Captain Murata, the submarine commander
Kozo Nomura - reporter A
Haruya Rato - TTV director
Ikio Sawamura - elderly Hiroshima resident
Yoshio Kosugi - JSDF commander A
Noriaki Inoue - boy at Shirane Hostel
Keiko Sawai - Tazuko Toi, the dying girl
Noriko Takahashi - girl at Shirane Hostel
Peter Mann - Dr. Reisendorff, the German scientist
Ren Yamamoto - Genki, Kawai's co-worker
Yutaka Sada - Hiroshima hospital administrator
Kenzo Tabu - newspaper editor
Shigeki Ishida - university professor
Haruo Nakajima - Baragon
Yutaka Nakayama - TTV lighting man A
Senkichi Omura - TTV lighting man B
Nadao Kirino - Hiroshima police officer Okabe
Yasuhiko Saijo - TTV cameraman
Shin Otomo - Okayama police officer Sugiyama
Shoichi Hirose - Shimizu Tunnel worker
Junichiro Mukai - policeman at the cave
Toshihiko Furuta - farmer at the cave
Mitsuo Tsuda - Shimizu Tunnel chief
Hiroteo Kimura -
Hideo Shibuya - reporter who asks to take pictures
Yoshiko Miyata - farm worker who discovers cows' bones
Masaaki Tachibana - reporter C
Tadashi Okabe - reporter B
Rinsaku Ogata - JSDF commander B
Nakao - child Frankenstein
Kazuo Kumakura -
Goro Naya - voice of Dr. Bowen [Japanese version only]
UNBILLED:
Kazuo Higata - reporter in the background
Hans Horneff - German U-boat commander
Minoru Ito - lab assistant at Hiroshima hospital
Junpei Natsuki - man with large hat at the cave
Kamayuki Tsubono - Okayama desk officer

YOU MIGHT BE A JAPANESE SUPERHERO IF... (by Christopher Elam)

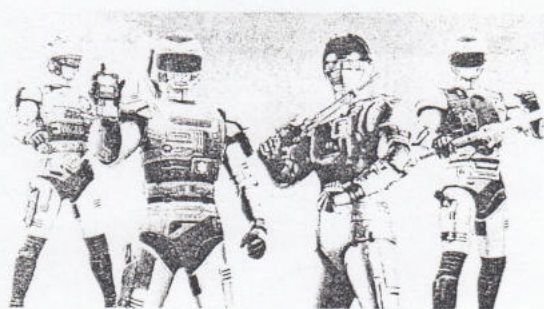
Well, all right! You've got your crash helmet, your colorful jumpsuit, and your contract with a Japanese toy company. On the surface, it appears you have all the ingredients to be a successful Japanese superhero. But, are you sure? Below is a quiz to determine if you have all the necessary traits. If you meet all the qualifications, or even some of them, then you too might be a highly merchandisable character from the Land of the Rising Sun. So, without further ado... (and with apologies to Jeff Foxworthy), Owari proudly presents this valuable public service to all would-be defenders of truth, justice, and the Japanese way.

You might be a Japanese superhero if...

- *you feel a strong desire to pose and shout your name in battle.
- *your enemies stand around like a bunch of dopes when you pose and shout your name in battle, rather than doing the sensible thing and killing you.
- *little children with high-pitched voices and bad outfits are constantly running to you for help.
- *you don't bleed when slashed by a sword - sparks fly from your body.
- *your opponents all have impossibly long names like "Violent Evil Alien Ninja Jack Satan" or "Subterranean Fluorescent Kaiju King Kamasutrasaurus".
- *your presence leads indirectly to the death of every kindly old scientist within a 500 mile radius.
- *you announce the name of every power or weapon you use (i.e. "Zowiemán Spinning Super Strato Kick!").
- *you discover that the love of your life is really (a) a servant of evil (b) a secret agent (c) an alien visitor (d) dead.
- *you belong to an elite agency dedicated to battling weird menaces which is staffed by only six people (huh?).
- *you know anyone whose name includes the word "guy".
- *(males only) at least two different gorgeous women are in love with you (this is a problem?!?!?!?!?).
- *you constantly feel the need to "power up" your arsenal (i.e. your "beam blaster" gets upgraded to "Ultimate Beam Bazooka").
- *(females only) your costume comes equipped with superfluous earrings attached to the helmet and/or a skirt to go with your spandex.
- *you frequently talk to disembodied voices and no one questions your sanity (to your face).
- *you will use any word or phrase, no matter how ridiculous, as long as it is in English (i.e. "Nifty Buster Robo - Go!").
- *you wear a blinking light on your chest and not because you are a moronic football fan trying to get on TV.
- *that mysterious cool character who keeps popping up turns out to be your long-lost _____ (insert relative of choice).
- *you suspiciously eye any strangers you meet, figuring they're really monsters in disguise (and you're usually right).
- *you reason that any problems you have in your life are due to the diabolical machinations of your foes (and you're usually right).
- *your name is "Hayata".
- *having your own line of sausages sounds like a pretty neat idea.



This is Chikyu Sentai Fiveman, sterling examples of Japanese superheroism.



Here we see Jiban and the Winspector team, more up-standing Japanese super beings.



THE RETURN OF
STEELMAN
エイトマン

2/7/92

THE RETURN OF JETMAN
Part 2: Generation Conflict
by Lewis Smith
Edited by C. Elam

Jet Phoenix watched his new charges intently from his station above the Skywatch training center. They were, in a word, dreadful. They had absolutely no teamwork. The main problem seemed to be that Gai, Ken, and Etsuko were constantly at odds with each other. All of them wanted to be the leader, but none of them seemed willing to wait for the rest of the team to naturally follow.

Gai blasted one of the training robots with his Wing Gauntlet. He threw another toward Ken and shouted, "Catch!"

Unfortunately, Ken flew away from the robot when he should have blasted it. The robot and Gohan collided at top speed. The machine was reduced to scrap metal while Gohan crashed to the floor. He picked himself up and walked over to Ken, who had just landed.

"Ken," Gohan said as he glared at his teammate from behind his visor, "you were supposed to shoot the robot, not run from it!"

"Nobody tells me what to do," Ken replied coolly as he levelled his Wing Gauntlet at Gohan. "Especially not you, round boy!"

"Hey!" Reiko cried as she whizzed to the scene. She seized Ken's wrist, but he shrugged her aside effortlessly. She slammed into one of the training center's walls.

"KEN!" Gai exclaimed as he brought his blaster to bear on his brother. "Shoot him and I'll bring you down."

Suddenly, a burst of energy struck the wall and interrupted the confrontation. The two brothers turned and faced Jet Phoenix, who had left his post to resolve the situation.

"I believe some explanations are in order," was all that the mystery man said.

"Well, Ken here missed his cue and I called him on it," Gohan responded. "The next thing I know, he's sticking his blaster in my face!"

Jet Phoenix turned to face Ken. "Do you have anything to add?" he asked.

"Yeah, I do!" Ken asserted loudly. He stepped up to Jet Phoenix so that they were helmet to helmet. "I'm sick and tired of jumping through your hoops. I'm only sticking around to save Mom and Dad, not be some G-Force type hero."

"Being a 'hero' is not the point," countered Jet Phoenix. "You five have to work together to defeat Thanatos. These powers are worthless if you don't learn how to use them and you're not helping anyone by losing control."

"Why do you care?" Ken asked. "You won't even tell us who you really are! What are you hiding?"

The rest of the Jetmen observed the exchange with rapt fascination. All of them had shared Ken's questions, but none had dared give voice to their concerns. They could feel the tension between the two powerful personalities.

Jet Phoenix stepped away from Ken and considered his words carefully. Finally, he said, "It's nothing that concerns you."

That was not the answer Ken wanted and his temper flared. He took a swing at Jet Phoenix, but the enigmatic commander caught his fist in mid-punch. His grip was firm and unyielding as he held Ken's fist.

"I understand," Jet Phoenix said softly. "You're under a lot of stress. Just make sure this doesn't happen again."

He released Ken's hand and the young man stood dumbfounded. "This training session is over," Jet Phoenix announced. "You can return home now. I'll alert you if we're needed."

With that, he left through the heavy doors of the training center. The rest of the team stood staring at each other. Ken could feel the piercing gazes of his friends. At last, he found the courage to speak.

"Gohan, Reiko," he said haltingly, "I'm sorry. I guess I'm just worried about Mom and Dad."

"As for the rest of us aren't worried about our parents!" Etsuko pronounced indignantly. She was Gohan's older sister, but they had little else in common. "Maybe if you'd stop acting like a baby, we could do something about it."

"Screw you," Ken retorted. "You're just mad because you're not the leader."

Etsuko turned away, then whirled around and landed a spinning roundhouse kick to Ken's gut. He fell to the floor.

"Stop it!" Gai demanded. "Neither of you deserve to be leader if you can't even control yourselves!"

Gai stomped away without saying another word. Gohan lingered behind, as he was unwilling to leave his sister alone with someone she had just floored.

Ken eyed her as he got up and brushed away imaginary dirt. "Lucky shot," he said, "but that's the only one you get. Try that again, ice princess and I'll forget that Gohan's my friend."

Ken then stalked away, with Gohan following close behind trying to patch things up. Reiko studied Etsuko and could tell that she was smiling under her helmet.

"You enjoyed that, didn't you?" Reiko asked. "Yeah," Etsuko agreed. "Arrogant jerks like that are begging to be taken down a peg."

The two girls exchanged glances and laughed as they left together. It was (to coin a phrase) the beginning of a beautiful friendship, though they couldn't have been more different. Etsuko was a college bound genius; Reiko was busting her rear just to get through the juku. Etsuko did as she was told; Reiko had dyed her hair white and liked to hang out at rave clubs until the wee small hours. Etsuko had a great relationship with her parents; Reiko hardly ever saw her mother. Reiko knew it was difficult to be an actress and a single parent, but she had often wished for a family more like Etsuko's. She had noted ruefully how little her routine had changed since her mother had been kidnapped.

At that moment, Reiko's mother, Ako Hayasaka, was in the company of evil. She and her surviving comrades from the original Jetman team were secured on a wall in a massive warship between dimensions. The ship carried an invading army from an other dimensional realm and was commanded by a ruler similar to Count Radeige, the being they had fought twenty years earlier.

His name was Thanatos and he surveyed the unconscious forms of Ako, Ryu Tendoh, Kaori Tendoh, and Raita Ohishi. A stark white light from above was reflected by his blueish skin as he contemplated his latest strategy.

He turned to the cyclopean entity Destron and asked, "The operation to reactivate their powers was successful?" His massive armored form cast an imposing shadow over his prisoners.

"Yes, my lord," Destron replied humbly. "We were even able to

boost them. As long as they have this extra power, we control them."

A door slid open and Thanatos' advisor Haes strode in. "Your group's chariot has been prepared, my lord," he announced, "but as you've no doubt surmised, we're two members short."

"A minor difficulty I intend to rectify," Thanatos said. "Now, leave me. I have much work to do."

A short while later, Thanatos sat in the Chaos Room in his chamber. The Chaos Room was a remarkable invention that simulated a hyper dimensional plane and allowed Thanatos to exert his powers to the fullest. He had already made most of his preparations and had even secured a fifth member for his team. But he had something special in mind for his sixth and final member. The humans were so pathetic, he mused, that they thought that they had tapped into the full power of the Birdonic Waves. They had barely scratched the surface. He would show them the unbridled fury of Birdonic Waves at their maximum potential. All he needed was a suitable candidate for the process.

Thanatos concentrated and reached out with his mind. He searched for a heart as black as his own among the insignificant humans. One voice sang out among the crowd like a dirge. He moved towards it.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Kei Mizuno," the voice replied. Thanatos could see her now. She was quite attractive by Earthling standards, but her eyes radiated shafts of broken glass. He was temporarily taken aback, as he had not dreamed that humans were capable of the evil he sensed in this woman.

"Why do you hate?" he asked.

"All my life, I've been denied," she answered, her thoughts slicing the air like a cold knife. "My father was supposed to be one of their heroes, their Jetmen. But instead he was killed trying to help people escape from the satellite before it was destroyed."

"He died out there," she continued, "and I died, too. I was alone and forgotten. The Jetmen claimed all the glory and left me with nothing. I would give my soul to see them obliterated and be worshipped in their stead."

"Then I will give you the power you crave," Thanatos said. "I will make you the instrument of Jetman's destruction."

Three hours later, the call came from Mt. Fuji and it set off every alarm at Skywatch. Jet Phoenix triangulated the signal and notified the others. His heart sank when the image flickered across his monitor. Though he had never been especially religious, he said a silent prayer when he saw what was happening. His worst fears had been realized.

Gai, Ken, Gohan, Etsuko, and Reiko raced into the doors of Skywatch. They assembled in the command center, where Jet Phoenix simply nodded and activated the teleportation system. All six of them vanished, only to rematerialize on Mt. Fuji.

"I'm happy to see you could all join us," Thanatos said with a flourish. "It would be a shame if you were late for your own execution!"

Gai tried to activate his Cross-Changer, but Jet Phoenix stopped him and shook his head. "Not yet," he whispered.

Thanatos' grand declaration continued unabated. "I do not make it a habit to lower myself by engaging inferior lifeforms in physical combat. However, my disciple has no such compunctions. Kei Mizuno, if you please..."

Kei suddenly appeared on a small rock formation. Behind her stood the full complement of the original Jetman team: Red Hawk, White Swan, Yellow Owl, Blue Swallow, even the supposedly deceased Black Condor. Kei lifted her wrist deliberately to display her Wyvern Changer.

"Henshin!" she exclaimed as she pressed a button on the device. Instantly, she was garbed in her uniform. She could feel the Birdonic Power coursing through every fiber of her being.

"Green Wyvern!" she shouted.

She then led her enthralled teammates in their battle cry. "Kurokaze Sentai Jetman!" they declared in unison.

Jet Phoenix knew there was no turning back. "It's time!" he ordered and the five youths activated their Cross-Changers. They announced themselves to their adversaries.

Gai: "Red Hawk!"

Ken: "Black Condor!"

Gohan: "Yellow Owl!"

Etsuko: "White Swan!"

Reiko: "Blue Swallow!"

"Jet Phoenix!" their mentor added.

In unison, they proclaimed, "Chojin Sentai Jetman!"

After that, it was time for action. Green Wyvern led the attack, clashing immediately with Jet Phoenix. She was exceptionally elusive; all of Jet Phoenix's punches and kicks failed to connect.

"Can't hit what you can't catch!" she mocked as she avoided him. The green jewel on her belt glowed and she was quickly armed with a shimmering energy sword. She struck Jet Phoenix and sent him careening into a boulder.

Jet Phoenix just lay there for a moment. He understood the full gravity of the situation. "She's more powerful than any of us," he thought before he bravely returned to engage her further.

Anyone who could have helped Jet Phoenix even the odds was busy elsewhere. Ken deftly dodged an errant laser beam from his rival Black Condor and took to the air. The young man jetted to his opponent and rocked the black clad figure with a powerful uppercut. Ken zipped away, anticipating a swift response to his brazen attack. There was none. Instead, the Black Condor stumbled around and acted hopelessly confused.

Ken was puzzled. He had always heard that the original Black Condor had been a ruthless and efficient fighter. Yet, Ken was winning easily. Something weird is going on here, Ken thought. Besides, Black Condor is dead. Isn't he?

Ken put his thoughts aside and decided to address the matter at hand. "I'm finding out who you are!" he exclaimed as he began jerking on his opponent's helmet. He ripped it off and was greeted by a familiar face. But it was not Gai Yuki.

It was Starblade. Thanatos had long known of Starblade's treachery and had at last arrived at a satisfactory solution to the problem. He had hypnotized Starblade into believing that he was the original Black Condor and had outfitted him in an appropriate costume. Thanatos had hoped that this psychological warfare would tip the scales in his favor, but if Starblade fell in battle, well, that was an acceptable sacrifice.

"Falling in battle" appeared to be exactly what was going to happen to Starblade. His master had not infused him with Birdonic Waves

and he was clearly outmatched by Ken. It didn't help that he was also a virtual zombie. He flailed wildly at Ken, who finally knocked him unconscious with a series of powerful kicks.

"About time something went right today," Ken said as he stood over his vanquished enemy.

His comrades were not faring nearly as well. Gai had intended to stop his father with nonlethal force, but such pretenses were gone when he realized that his father would not be so obliging. He wanted to end the fight as soon as possible, so he activated his Jet Power and leapt into the air. He focused his Birdonic energy into his clenched fist. Forgive me, he mentally pleaded.

"Hawk Fist!" Gai shouted as the blow connected with his father's helmet. There was no effect! Ryu drew back and knocked Gai away.

Ken, having made short work of his foe, flew to his brother's aid. He used his Wing Gauntlet to send two blasts Ryu's way, but Ryu evaded them and unholstered his Bird Blaster. He fired twice, striking Ken both times, and downed his son.

Gohan, meanwhile, was going toe-to-toe with his father and neither of them were moving. Each hit did no damage at all. Indeed, it seemed to Gohan that his father was becoming stronger with each punch he absorbed. Even his Owl Earthquake had been reflected back at him.

Etsuko had no luck with her rival either. Even using her Swan Blizzard, she could not stop Kaori. The original White Swan pummeled her successor with a ferocity she had never displayed while in her right mind.

It was Reiko who ultimately arrived at the solution. She had used her Swallow Division Jet Power and her duplicates' efforts proved fruitless against her mother. However, a stray blast from one of them had struck Ryu and caused him to recoil in pain.

Her accidental discovery made Reiko so excited that she was actually able to remember how to use her helmet's communicator. "You can't win against your counterparts!" she cried. "You've got to change opponents!"

The Jetmen took her advice and it worked. Etsuko used her Swan Blizzard to freeze Ryu in place, while Ken shrouded Raita in his Condor Stealth Cloak and caused him to lose consciousness. Gai and Gohan dispatched Ako and Kaori by bashing their heads together rather forcefully. Only Kei Mizuno...Green Wyvern remained.

This fact did not go unnoticed by Green Wyvern. She left Jet Phoenix lying on the spot where she had been beating him mercilessly and soaked in what had happened.

"Just as I thought," she sneered, holding her laser blade at the ready. "It doesn't matter WHO the Jetmen are! You're all worthless! WORTHLESS!"

Green Wyvern was like a woman possessed as she began to manifest another of her special abilities. Green lightning arced off her to the unconscious foursome and then back to her. Jet Phoenix had never seen such a thing before, but he instinctively knew what was going on. She was draining them of the Birdonic energy.

"Jetman! Form on me!" he shouted.

The heroes moved quickly and lined up to get in position. Six Wing Gauntlets fired simultaneously at Green Wyvern. The field formed around her, but instead of being reduced to nothingness, Green Wyvern shattered it with ease.

The green lightning subsided. "If that's the best you can do," she said coldly, "you're dead."

At that moment, everyone assembled was shocked when, seemingly out of nowhere, a lone figure tackled Green Wyvern. It was Starblade, who had regained consciousness but still believed he was Black Condor. He had seen what Green Wyvern had done and he wanted revenge.

"You won't get away with hurting them," he muttered sleepily as he tried desperately to hit her again. Green Wyvern quickly became annoyed with him and soon ran him through with her sword. For good measure, she sent out a green flash which enveloped him and turned him to ash.

Jet Phoenix seized the opportunity that the distraction offered. "Now's our chance!" he exclaimed. "Jetman, fan out!"

The team took off and mounted their offensive, for all the good it did them. Etsuko and Reiko attacked from both sides, but Green Wyvern swatted them out of the air with her Wyvern Razor Boomerang. Gai surprised her for a moment with his Hawk Fist, but was helpless when she retaliated with a strike from her sword.

"Wyvern Slash!" she screamed as sparks flew off Gai's chest from the impact. She raised her sword for a second strike, but Ken saved his brother from certain death by sending a volley of energy bursts her way. Ken turned to offer Gai assistance and Green Wyvern took advantage of his momentary distraction. She levitated herself, then launched her body like a missile. She crackled with green energy as her Wyvern Fire Kick made contact with Ken's jaw. The pure force sent Ken spinning out of control.

Gohan rushed Green Wyvern and locked her in a bearhug. Though he was twice her size, Gohan soon found himself being hoisted in the air by the woman. She held him for a few seconds, then grew bored with the game and tossed him several yards away.

Jet Phoenix looked on in horror. Even the combined efforts of his entire team could not match the power of this one woman.

Thanatos also viewed the battle with apprehension. His Jetman team had proven less than capable, but Green Wyvern was another story. Thanatos realized what he had created and felt a chill run down his spine. Whatever the outcome of this battle, he did not want to be present for it. He teleported back to his ship.

Green Wyvern fixed her attention on Jet Phoenix. "I'm tired of this farce," she said. "I'm going to end it, and when I'm through, I'll have all of your powers, too."

The jewel on Green Wyvern's buckle glowed again. Jet Phoenix noticed that the area had suddenly grown dark. He looked up and saw that the sun had been blotted out by an immense shadow of something both birdlike and serpentine. It was Jet Wyvern, a grand war machine created by Thanatos to dwarf the mecha of the original Jetman.

Jet Phoenix knew it was time to test the fruits of his many years of labor. He had hoped it wouldn't come to this. He spoke into his helmet's communicator. "Command Alpha," he said. "Scramble Jetfighters and Garuda."

The computers of Skywatch deployed the six super air vehicles to Mt. Fuji. "Jetman," Jet Phoenix said, "this is a whole new ballgame, so follow my lead."

Jet Phoenix pressed a button on his belt and his charges were automatically teleported to their color-coded Jetfighters. He pressed another button and he was transported to Bird Garuda.

"The computer will help you with the flying," Jet Phoenix told the others as he checked his control system. "The weapons are controlled by you. Just aim, lock, and fire."

From the ground, Green Wyvern laughed malevolently. "You're wrong if you think you can intimidate me! DEAD WRONG!"

With that, Green Wyvern vanished in a flash of green light and

reappeared behind Jet Wyvern's controls. She guided the craft toward the Jetfighters. It discharged high intensity power beams from its eyes and thrashed its lengthy tail.

Each of the Jetfighters was equipped with a special weapons system and the Jetmen used them after Jet Phoenix rocked the Jet Wyvern ship with his Garuda Missiles. Gai and Ken followed him with their rapid-fire Double Jet Beams. Reiko fired her Wing Cutter, rending some of the robot's outer shell. Gohan damaged the exposed areas further with his Owl Bombs, while Etsuko spread her blinding Swan Fog.

Green Wyvern cursed under her breath and stabbed several buttons on the control panel. Heavy machinery began to move around her. Jet Wyvern converted to its humanoid mode and landed on the ground below.

"God Wyvern transformed!" she announced triumphantly.

Jet Phoenix's voice came over the helmet communicators. "Jetman," he said, "I'm overriding your controls to initiate Jet Icarus mode."

As he spoke, Bird Garuda was also changing, shifting until it became the humanoid Jet Garuda. It landed directly across from God Wyvern as Jet Phoenix sought to protect his team from attack at that critical time.

The five Jetfighters circled their Birdonic powered systems linking them. Each became a part of a humanoid whole. The Jetmen were teleported to a new control room. Gai appeared in the main control chair, while the others appeared at the four stations which ringed the central point.

"Engage - Jet Icarus," the computer voice said.

Jet Icarus and Jet Garuda stood side by side. Jet Phoenix led the attack with the smaller Jet Garuda, calculating that Green Wyvern's unfamiliarity with her robot and its ponderous size would work to his advantage. He had not anticipated Green Wyvern's sudden, almost supernatural, mastery of all of the capabilities of her mecha.

"DEVASTATION PULSE!" she commanded as a surge of energy was emitted from God Wyvern's chest. Jet Phoenix was jolted as his robot sustained heavy damage. It fell to the ground, its gyros out of order. God Wyvern closed in for the kill.

"Jet Punch!" Gai commanded as he pulled the lever that launched Jet Icarus' fists at the enemy. Green Wyvern was caught off-guard and her robot was staggered. She worked furiously to right herself.

The fists locked back into their proper positions. Jet Phoenix, having recovered his bearings, raised Jet Garuda back to its feet. The robots presented a united front once more.

"All right," Gai said as he punched the control keys, "now that we've got your attention - BIRDONIC SABER!"

Jet Icarus clanged its hands together and slowly drew them apart. A thin shaft of light appeared which changed into a sword. This was the Birdonic Saber, the final weapon of Jet Icarus.

"Well, two of you and only one of me," observed Green Wyvern. "Not my kind of odds. I'm leaving Jetman, but I'll be back. I don't need Thanatos or anyone else to wipe you out."

With that, God Wyvern rose above them, changed back to Jet Wyvern, and flew away.

"YES!" Gohan exclaimed. "We rescued our parents and we beat that psycho, too!"

Gai looked at the viewscreen and saw that Jet Phoenix had already returned to Bird Garuda mode. He then heard the commander's voice over his communicator.

"All of you...I think you need to come down here," Jet Phoenix said somberly.

Uneasily, they teleported to the battlefield. Jet Phoenix was kneeling over their parents. All of them seemed very still. As they approached, the Jetmen realized that Green Wyvern had taken much more than their parents' powers. Their parents were dead.

Gohan fell to his knees in shock while Etsuko burst into tears. Reiko turned away, unwilling to accept the bitter truth. Gai just stood there. Ken boiled with anger as he stormed over to the still kneeling Jet Phoenix.

"YOU LIED TO US!" he screamed as he flung his helmet to the ground. "YOU SAID WE COULD SAVE THEM AND THEY'RE DEAD! I SHOULD KILL YOU MYSELF!"

"Ken," Gai said, "just shut up."

"It's not over yet," Jet Phoenix said quietly as the orange jewel on his belt began to glow. His body became a mass of Birdonic energy. The energy coalesced into the form of Jet Phoenix's mythical namesake.

The youths stared wide-eyed as the firebird grew until it enveloped their parents. Then, just as quickly as it had started, it was over. Jet Phoenix was kneeling in exactly the same place as when they'd discovered him.

"Wh...what happened?" Ryu asked as the four parents got up slowly. "You've been through quite an ordeal," responded Jet Phoenix.

"It's over now."

"Who are you?" Kaori asked.

Jet Phoenix thought for a moment as he stood up. "My name is Jet Phoenix," he said, "and this is Chojin Sentai Jetman. They rescued you."

The five children could hardly believe what they had seen as they rushed to their parents. Jet Phoenix felt a sense of relief that he had accomplished something that day. Yet he could not help but worry about what the future might bring.

Green Wyvern looked at the starfield outside her cockpit and felt hate. Her father had died out here in the cold space of space. Still, the celestial void was the most peaceful refuge available. Not that Green Wyvern had ever allowed herself to be at peace.

The truth of the matter was that she could have won. Her ship had only sustained minor damage and still surpassed the combined might of both Jet Icarus and Jet Garuda. She had not left because she had been losing. She left because she didn't want to win...so soon. Where was the enjoyment in that?

Thanatos screamed over the communications system for her to return to his ship. She switched the speakers off. She would return soon enough, but only to make it clear who was really in charge. What a fool Thanatos had been. But, after all, how could he know of her plans?

One week later, two generations of Jetmen toured Skywatch, the refurbished and rechristened Skycamp complex. All of the original Jetmen were in perfect health. It was if the whole thing had been just a bad dream.

Jet Phoenix knew differently as he stood apart from the rest of the gathering. He kept his sacrifice private as he wondered what the price of victory would be. He had included bio-scans and telemetry of his proteges when he had filed his report with Skyforce. The information would be forwarded to Dr. Komoyoji, who could determine if there would be any ill effects from the Birdonic Wave Power. Jet Phoenix knew that he couldn't be too careful when lives were at stake.

But this was a time for celebration, so Jet Phoenix tried to focus

on the positives. He noted the new closeness between Ako and Reiko. It seemed as if they had spent more time together in the previous week than they had for the past year. Neither had discussed what had happened, but it seemed as if both of them wanted to take advantage of their second chance.

Second chances, Jet Phoenix thought, are few and far between in life.

Jet Phoenix's reverie was interrupted when Ken walked up to him. The young man didn't say anything at first, merely looking at the floor. Finally, the words seemed to come to him.

"Look," he offered, "I guess I misjudged you. I thought you were only looking to beat the aliens. I didn't think you cared about any of us. What I'm trying to say is I'm...I'm..."

"No apologies necessary," reassured Jet Phoenix, "though I'm sorry to see you leave. You could be a valuable team member."

"That's another thing," Ken said. "I decided to stick around for awhile. Gai needs me, and besides, that Etsuko is too dangerous to let run around unsupervised."

Of course, Jet Phoenix thought as Ken rejoined his family. When she thought Ken was a safe distance away, Etsuko dragged her brother with her to talk with Jet Phoenix.

"I know I said I didn't want to do this," Etsuko explained before anyone even asked her, "but I've changed my mind."

"Any particular reason why?" Jet Phoenix inquired, suspecting it would have something to do with Ken.

"Kenshiro Tendoh is too dangerous to let run around unsupervised," she replied.

Of course, Jet Phoenix thought.

"Besides," Etsuko added, "what would you do without a field leader?"

"I'm staying, too," Gohan said. "Anything that keeps me away from Dad's godawful vegetable surprises can't be all bad."

The four original Jetmen gathered on the far side of the room. They watched their children with more than just a little interest.

"I'm not crazy about this," Raita said. "They're just kids and they're risking their lives."

Ryu smiled. "Actually," he said, "they remind me a lot of us twenty years ago when we fought Byram."

"Was I ever that young?" Ako asked as she brushed hair out of her face.

"No," Ryu said. "You were younger."

"I wish Gai could have been here," Kaori said.

Ryu was silent for a moment as his mind travelled back seventeen years to the day he married Kaori. He remembered making his peace with Gai Yuki on that park bench and discovering Gai's lifeless body only minutes later. Gai had been dying of a stab wound as they'd talked. It was an ironic end for such a heroic yet troubled individual.

"So do I," Ryu said. "He wasn't such a bad fellow when he wasn't trying to beat me up."

As he spoke, Ryu spotted Jet Phoenix across the room. The two of them had hardly met, yet Ryu felt as if the mysterious figure was an old friend. Ryu could sense that the children would be in good hands.

"Gai always had a snide remark for any situation," Ako reminisced. "I wish he could have been here, too."

"Gai is here," Ryu said, "as long as we remember him."

TO BE CONTINUED

(Lewis Smith can't believe the size of that minister's mole. He will wash your windows with his tongue because that's just the kind of guy he is.)

O-FACTOID: For those of you who have trouble with garbled phonetic English, here is what Dr. Sugata (Akihiko Hirata) says to Dr. Anne Barton (Linda Haynes) in Latitude Zero:

"Everything is near normal. You see? The cranial bruise has already healed, the lung puncture has closed, the broken ribs have knitted quickly. The new marrow injections promote healing in a miraculously short time. There is nothing to be concerned about - all he now requires is ample sleep." (Sugata also says "In the morning." & "Good night, Dr. Barton.")

O-FACTOID: There exists an English dubbed version of the show Kamen no Ninja Aka Kage ("Masked Ninja Red Shadow") entitled Ninjascope: The Magic World of Ninjas.

O-FACTOID: Magnum P.I. meets Gamera? It could have happened! In the film Mr. Baseball, one of Tom Selleck's co-stars is Jun Hamamura. Hamamura is best known to Japanese monster film fans for his role as "Dr. Murase" in the first Gamera movie, whether you know it as Daikaiju Gamera, Gamera the Invincible or Gamera.

THE MAN BEYOND BIONICS



"INFRA-MAN"

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"Infra Credit Where It's Infra Due"

Rule of thumb: Never trust a Goodtimes video box.

It started innocently enough. I had just finished scribbling my Infra Man review which would eventually see print in Kaiju Review #9. I was preparing to type it when I realized that I needed some credits. I glanced through my notes and could only find a cast list. I should include more than this, I thought. However, I was in no mood to watch the movie again to copy the credits. Then, I had what seemed at the time to be a great idea. Why not just copy the credits from the box of the Goodtimes Home Video cassette? So I did.

Bad move. When I watched the movie again a few months later, I discovered that the box's credits were, shall we say, somewhat less than accurate. I really should have known better. After all, wasn't this the same company that claimed that the 1976 film A.P.P.E. was released in 1967? By the time I learned that my reference material was wrong, it was too late. My errors had been immortalized in print. DOH!

In the interest of presenting accurate information, I have prepared a revised and expanded credit listing for Infra Man. I don't want to waste valuable space in Dan Reed's fanzine rectifying my faux pas, so I'm including it here for anyone who cares. If you are one of those people who has not seen Kaiju Review, you can send one long SASE to Dan Reed at 301 East 64th Street, Suite 5F, New York, NY 10021. Onward and upward with the arts!

INFRA MAN (1975)

Alternate English Titles: THE SUPER INFRAMAN, THE INFRA SUPERMAN
German Title: INVASION AUS DEM INNEREN DER ERDE ("Invasion from the Earth's Interior")

A Shaw Brothers Production. Filmed in ShawScope (Panavision).

Producer: Runme Shaw

Cast: Li Hsiu-Hsien [Li Sau-Yin, Danny Lee] - Raymar/Infra Man
Wang Hsieh [Wang Shieh] - Professor Chang
Liu Hui-Ju [Terry Liu] - Princess Dragon Mom
Yuan Man-Chi [Wuan Man-Tzu] - Mei Mei (Chang's Daughter)
Lin Wen-Wei - Chu Ming [Tu Ming]
Huan Chien-Lung [Bruce Le] - Hsu Long (Sergeant)
Chen Shu-I [Tsen Shu-Yi]
Chiang Yang
Lu Sheng

Screenplay: I Kuang [Yi Kuang]

Cinematography: Ho Lan-Shan

Lighting: Chen Fan

Art Director: Johnson Tsao

Editor: Chiang Hsing-Lung

Main Title (Original Version): Amber Huang

Assistant Director: Li Yung-Chang

Make Up: Wu Hsu-Ching

Costumes: Liu Chi-Yu (Uncredited: X Productions of Japan)

Executive Producer: Peng Chang [Peng Cheng]

Props: Li Wo

Fighting Instructor: Tang Chia

Stunt Coordinator: Yuan Hsiang-Jen

Music: Chen Yung-Yu

Sound Recording (Original Version): Wang Yuang-Hua

Director: Hua Shen [Hua-Shan]

U.S. Version

A Joseph Brenner presentation.

American Editorial Supervision: E.H. Glass

Main Titles: The Optical House

Stereo-Infra Sound & Dubbing: Picture Scores

English Dialogue: Peter Fernandez

Mix: Emil Neroda

Distributed by Joseph Brenner Associates, Inc.

Copyright 1976 Infra Associates



Infra Man co-star Huan Chien-Lung is seen here in his "Bruce Le" mode. As "Le" (that's right, with one "e"), he appeared in a number of low budget martial arts films. A few examples are Bruce Le's Greatest Revenge, Bruce Strikes Back, Return of the Red Tiger, Enter the Game of Death (really!), Bruce vs. Bill (no lie!), and (brace yourself for this one) My Name Called Bruce. Yes, you read that last title correctly.

**POWER
RANGERS:
THE DRINKING
GAME!**



Created by Lewis Smith

WOW!
COOL!
EXCELLENT!
RADICAL!

TOTALLY
AWESOME!



Are you kidding!?!?? Totally unauthorized by Saban Entertainment.

WARNING! "Power Rangers: The Drinking Game!" is intended as a work of satire and should not be taken seriously. We here at Owari do not in any way condone irresponsible drinking. In fact, your humble editor does not drink at all. Nope, not even water! If you are idiotic enough to play this game, that's your own problem.-CE

Instructions: Unless otherwise specified, have one sip of beer per successfully met condition.

Anybody says:

"Let's do it!"
"Let's get the job done!"
"Back to action!" (2 sips if it isn't Jason or Tommy)
"Aw man!"
"All right!"

Jason:

Does his intensely goofy kiai
Cracks a stupid joke in battle (i.e. "Let go of me, you overgrown asparagus")
Displays leadership ability
Looks at a girl (2 sips if he seems interested)
Worries about power level

Zack:

Displays fighting ability (2 sips if they're actually fighting and not just showing off)
Doesn't act like a stereotype
Gets shot down by Angela
Sulks (whole beer if it's because the others forgot his birthday)
Uses his weapon in a fight

Billy:

Gets a date (whole beer if he actually goes)
Says something really intelligent
Asks Zordon how they defeat the new monster
Straightens his glasses
Gets fooled (whole beer if it's an evil spell)

Trini:

Does Kung-Fu
Says something really obvious (i.e. "Hey look, it's attacking!")
Gets hit by the bad guys
Plays with dolls (whole beer if it's Mr. Ticklesneezer)
Translates Billy into English

Kimberly:

Talks about her poodle
Dresses like a slut (whole beer if it's under the influence of an evil spell)
Says, "Oh no."
Gets captured

Tommy:

Calls the Dragonzord
Doesn't wear shoes
Wears his communicator
Embarasses Bulk and Skull
Says, "What's going on?"

Zordon says:

"Good luck, Rangers."
"Behold the Viewing Globe."
"We have an even bigger problem."
"Activate the intergalactic scanner."

Rita:

Has a headache
Is on Earth
Reprimands the others
Casts a spell (whole beer if it's an evil one)
Smiles

Goldar:

Captures a Ranger
Fights the Rangers and disappears (whole beer if he's large)

Scorpina:

Talks
Beats the crap out of the Rangers
Grows

Anybody:

Uses a weapon invented by Zordon (2 sips if it's not Billy)
Shoots a bad guy with a Bladeblaster
Gains the other Ranger's powers
Has their last name mentioned
Impersonates the Rangers

Drink the whole beer if:

The Green Ranger is in the Dragonzord cockpit
It takes three times to get the Dragonzord to shore
The parents of Angel Grove disappear
The Red Ranger uses the Green Ranger's powers
Kimberly kills the monster

Kill the whole six-pack and call the doctor if:

The Green Ranger is in the Ultrazord cockpit with everybody else.
The Mega-Dragonzord kills the monster [refresh my memory - exactly which one was that?-CE]
Someone pays for stuff at the Juice Bar (Is all that loitering good for business?)
The Command Center gets trashed
Tommy kisses Kimberly
You see the word "ZyuRanger" written on anything

POSTSCRIPT: We recently contacted Lewis at his new residence, the Murfreesboro(NC) Rehabilitation Center. Here's what he had to say:

"...it deals with just the first cast, mostly because none of the others seem to have a hell of a lot of avenue for me to make fun of."

What do you think, readers? Anybody out there game to make any additions pertaining to all of the many colorful and colorless characters which have popped up since year one?



TOHO MONSTER & SCI-FI FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled by Christopher Elam

The following list is an attempt to place Toho's monster and science-fiction productions in chronological order according to their original Japanese release dates. For the sake of convenience, all titles are the original U.S. release titles (where applicable). Films which were distributed by Toho but produced by other companies have been excluded. Some examples of these films are THE FACE OF ANOTHER (1966), ULTRAMAN (1967), DAIGORO VS. GOLIATH (1972), VIRUS (1980), TOKYO BLACKOUT (1987), ZIPANG (1990), MIKADROID (1991), and GAMERA—THE GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE (1995). Also omitted are films with only a tenuous connection to the science-fiction genre, such as the INTERPOL series and THE AGE OF ASSASSINS (1967). This list is still a work-in-progress and will no doubt be modified in the future. Revisions and corrections will appear in upcoming issues of Owari.

- *GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS! (November 3, 1954)
- *THE INVISIBLE AVENGER (December 29, 1954)
- *GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER (April 24, 1955)
- *HALF HUMAN (August 14, 1955)
- *MADAME WHITESNAKE (July 5, 1956)
- *RODAN (December 16, 1956)
- *THE MYSTERIANS (December 28, 1957)
- *THE H-MAN (June 24, 1958)
- *VARAN THE UNBELIEVABLE (October 14, 1958)
- *THE THREE TREASURES (November 1, 1959)
- *BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE (December 26, 1959)
- *THE SECRET OF THE TELEGIAN (April 10, 1960)
- *THE HUMAN VAPOR (December 11, 1960)
- *MOTHRA (July 30, 1961)
- *THE LAST WAR (October 8, 1961)
- *GORATH (March 21, 1962)
- *KING KONG VS. GODZILLA (August 11, 1962)
- *ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE (August 11, 1963)
- *THE LOST WORLD OF SINBAD (October 26, 1963)
- *ATRAON (December 22, 1963)
- *GODZILLA VS. THE THING (April 29, 1964)
- *DAGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER (August 11, 1964)
- *GHIDRAH—THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER (December 20, 1964)
- *FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD (August 8, 1965)¹
- *MONSTER ZERO (December 19, 1965)
- *THE WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS (July 31, 1966)
- *GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER (December 17, 1966)
- *KING KONG ESCAPES (July 22, 1967)
- *SON OF GODZILLA (December 16, 1967)
- *FANCY PARADISE (1968)²
- *DESTROY ALL MONSTERS (August 1, 1968)
- *LATITUDE ZERO (July 26, 1969)
- *GODZILLA'S REVENGE (December 20, 1969)
- *KONTO 55: GREAT SPACE ADVENTURE (December 20, 1969)
- *THE VAMPIRE DOLL (July 4, 1970)
- *YOG—MONSTER FROM SPACE (August 1, 1970)
- *LAKE OF DRACULA (June 16, 1971)
- *GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER (July 24, 1971)
- *GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND (March 12, 1972)
- *GODZILLA VS. MEGALON (March 17, 1973)
- *TIDAL WAVE (December 29, 1973)
- *GODZILLA VS. THE BIONIC MONSTER (March 21, 1974)
- *EVIL OF DRACULA (July 20, 1974)
- *THE LAST DAYS OF PLANET EARTH (August 3, 1974)
- *ESPY (December 28, 1974)
- *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA (March 15, 1975)
- *TOKYO BAY BURNS (July 12, 1975)³
- *HOUSE (July 30, 1977)⁴
- *THE WAR IN SPACE (December 17, 1977)
- *BLOOD TYPE—BLUE (November 23, 1978)
- *DEATHQUAKE (August 30, 1980)
- *SAYONARA JUPITER (March 17, 1984)
- *GODZILLA 1985 (December 15, 1984)
- *GUNHED (July 22, 1989)
- *GODZILLA VS. BIOLLANTE (December 16, 1989)
- *SUPER GIRL REIKO (1991)²
- *GODZILLA VS. KING GHIDORAH (December 14, 1991)
- *GODZILLA VS. MOTHRA (December 12, 1992)
- *GODZILLA VS. MECHAGODZILLA (December 11, 1993)
- *YAMATO TAKERU (July 9, 1994)
- *GODZILLA VS. SPACE GODZILLA (December 10, 1994)
- *GODZILLA VS. DESTROYER (December 9, 1995)
- *MOTHRA (1996)²

NOTES: 1-May 8, 1965, according to one source.
2-Month and date of release unavailable as of this writing.
3-Possibly released in the U.S. under the title HIGH SEAS HIJACK.
4-August 24, 1977, according to one source.

SOURCES: *Entertainment Bible 50: Godzilla Daizukan (Bandai;1992-93)
*G-Fan #19 (Daikaiju Enterprises; January/February 1996)
*The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Godzilla by Ed Godziszewski (Daikaiju Enterprises; 1996)
*The Japanese Filmography by Stuart Galbraith IV (McFarland; 1996)
*The personal collection of Ronnie Burton



MADAME WHITESNAKE



THE HUMAN VAPOR



DAGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER



Q&A: SUSUMU YOSHIKAWA



EDITORIAL NOTES: The following interview with Mr. Susumu Yoshikawa, one of the producers of the sentai series on which Mighty Morphin Power Rangers/Power Rangers Zeo is based, originally appeared in slightly different form on the Internet. Mr. Yoshikawa helped create the sentai series and was in charge of the shows from GoRanger (1975-77) through Goggle V (1982-83), the early sentai series which defined the form of the genre. Aiko Sasaki conducted this interview at the Tokyo offices of the Toei Company, one of Japan's major film studios, in May 1995. Sasaki also provided copious notes to explain certain things which may be unfamiliar to American readers. I have modified some of these notes, but the text of the interview itself remains the same.-CE

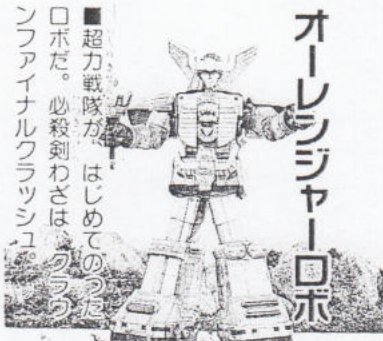
THE JAPANESE SENTAI SHOWS TURNED INTO THE POWER RANGERS:

AFX: Mr. Yoshikawa, I am really curious to know how this typical Japanese show turned into the most popular children's TV show in the world right now, the Power Rangers. How did it happen?
 SY: It goes back more than 10 years. In 1981, Toei International in L.A. tried to produce the American version of Taiyo Sentai Sun Vulcan ("Solar Task Force Sun Vulcan", the 5th sentai series), because it was thought that the series seemed quite popular in the U.S. (Some of the sentai series were shown on local UHF channels in the U.S., and at the same time, there was a certain popularity among fandom, which might have contributed to this idea.) There was even a suggestion that I might go to the States and supervise the whole project. But the whole idea unfortunately faded away because they couldn't sell the show to the U.S. TV stations. In 1987, Mr. Haim Saban of Saban Entertainment approached us, saying he wanted to produce a U.S. version of Chojinki Metaldar ("Super Mandroid Metaldar", Toei's action-packed robot TV show, later turned into a component of VR Troopers). But despite this effort, later the project faded away again.

In 1992, Mr. Saban approached us again, saying that he wanted to produce the U.S. version of Eyoruu Sentai ZyuRanger ("Dinosaur Task Force ZyuRanger"). We thought it was a good thing if it happened, but on the other hand, we thought it might be just another failed attempt, because it was the third time for us. But more than ten years worth of effort was finally rewarded. As a matter of fact, it was a team effort by our vice-president Yoshinori Watanabe (who is the real driving force behind the Toei kiddie shows, a powerhouse of energy), Toei International, and Mr. Saban; and I am certain it was really thanks to Mr. Saban's passion for our show and his willpower. I guess he was pitching around from station to station in the U.S. by himself, and I can imagine he might have spent an awful lot of money on his efforts. I really admire his enthusiasm.

As you know, in the end the show was on the air from September 1993 [it premiered August 28, 1993-CE] on Fox TV, a network of 135 stations. This was the birth of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, and now the show is being broadcast in more than 30 countries all over the world. To be honest, none of us would have even dreamed of this scale of success. Even Mr. Saban didn't, initially.

AFX: Why do you think the show was not sold initially?
 SY: The main obstacle was the actors. The idea that all the characters are played by Japanese can alienate the American audience, which is really understandable. So when Saban made the U.S. version, they replaced the Japanese with American actors.
 AFX: Whose idea was that?

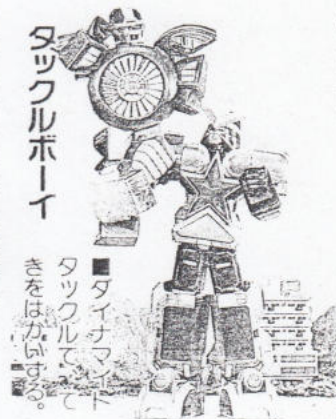


超力戦隊が、はじめてのロボットだ。必殺剣わざは、クラウニアファイナルクラッシュ。

オーレンジャーロボ

This page: OhRanger Mecha Daishugo!
 (above) OhRanger Robo
 (right) OhBlocker holds Tackle Boy aloft

オーブロッカー



タックフルボーイ

ダイナマイトタックルで、きをはかいます。

SY: Mr. Saban's idea. The casting of Power Rangers reflected the multi-racial society in the U.S., which was good.

SPIDER-MAN, JAPANESE STYLE:

SY: Once we bought the license from Marvel Comics and made the Spiderman [sic] for Japanese TV. (This happened after the ratings for the second sentai series JAKU Dengeki-Tai didn't go that well.) We were thinking about how to make the show and so on and so forth. Then my boss Watanabe suddenly came to us and said, "Put a Transformer robot in the Spiderman." We were baffled. I said, "You mean put a big robot in the Spiderman show?" and he said, "That's right." I felt it was a strange combination, but come to think of it, the character has to have punch, you know, and you have to think about the possibilities of merchandising. So we made up a new background for Spider-Man in order to have this big robot in the story.

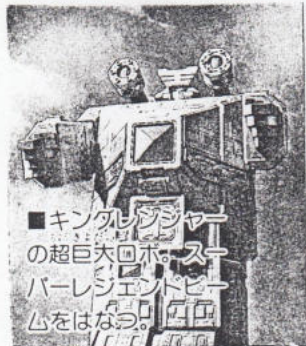
Later, Stan Lee, the creator of Spider-Man (along with Steve Ditko & Jack Kirby-CE), commented to us, "This is different, but it's quite interesting in its own way." And he mentioned that when he previewed our version to his staff, they were very impressed with the idea. Of course he suggested his own different opinions to us, but at the same time, he appreciated a lot of the good things in our show. I always think that the name of the game is, in the end, how can you make a hit show? So, as Stan Lee allowed us to make our own version, we cooperate with Saban to make their show successful in America. I know there are some nitpickers around. But again, I firmly believe that the show must be made in such a way that the majority will appreciate it; and yet I never intended to compromise the dignity and the spirit of the show by doing that. It is intolerable for me to make a piece in a very easy-going manner.

TOEI IS HEADING OVERSEAS:

AFX: Do you have any particular tactics concerning the future expansion of business overseas?
 SY: As I mentioned, we now have three TV shows in partnership with Saban, and the Fox Power Rangers feature is coming in the summer. Our relationships with foreign counterparts are really important to us and we value them highly. Also, in the future we would like to make features which we can export to foreign countries directly, with Toei as the key production group. We have already produced more than twenty features in recent years starring American actors like Brooke Shields. The live action version of Fist of the North Star is one of them. But our dream for the future is to make features using Power Rangers or VR Troopers type sci-fi characters alone, and, if possible, to show them widely in the U.S. The thing is that when you use these characters alone, you don't have to worry about the actors anymore. Hakaider, which we released in Japan recently [a mecha anti-hero feature, based on the character from the robot show Hikaider-CE] is the first attempt at that direction. While continuing to develop relationships with foreign counterparts, we would like to work towards that goal in the near future. I think we know now where the goldmine is, but we still have to find the way to get to it.

THE FURTHER TOEI/SABAN LIVE ACTION SERIES:

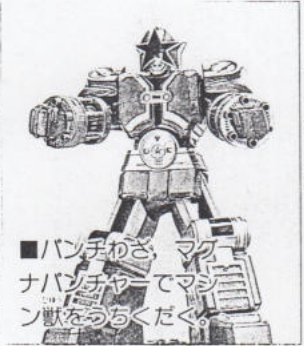
AFX: Do you have any further plans for co-productions with Saban?
 SY: As you know, VR Troopers has already aired from September 1994 in syndication in the U.S. (As most of you should know by now, this show is edited from Toei's Chojinki Metaldar and Jikuu Senshi Spielban or



キングピラミダー

キングピラミダーの超巨大ロボ。ステパーレジェンドヒーローをはなつ。

King Pyramider



レッドパンチャー

パンチわざ、マクナパンチャーでマシン敵をぶっ壊す。

Red Puncher



ガンマジン

正義の超古代武人。マジン刀流のわざで、悪をばっ倒す。

Gun Majin



"Super Sentai"



SUPER DEFORMED
 SUPER SENTAI
 (preceding page)
 left:Ryu Ranger
 (DaiRanger)
 right:Battle Japan
 (Battle Fever J)
 (this page)
 Members of:
 top-Goggle V
 middle-Maskman
 bottom-Liveman

"Dimensional Warrior Spielban"[footage from Uchu Keiji Shaider - "Space Sheriff Shaider" was also later used-CE]]. And from this autumn, September 1995, there'll be a new series Masked Rider, based on our show Kamen Rider Black RX. (Black FX, the ninth Kamen Rider series, originally aired in 1988-89 in Japan.)

We went to America last February to discuss what kind of show it will be, and we took Shotaro Ishinomori (a famous Japanese sci-fi manga artist, who created the original character and concept of the Kamen Rider shows) with us to the meeting with the Saban team so that we could consult him and get his input. We also talked over how Toei could offer help in terms of actual production, and how Bandai, the major Japanese toy company which works closely with Toei on projects including the sentai shows, could be involved this time.

And of course, the Power Rangers feature film opens on June 30th in the U.S. It's going to be a 6 billion yen mega budget movie. Initially, the budget was around 2-3 billion yen, but the people in Hollywood said that if the movie was guaranteed to be a hit, more money would be invested. First it increased to 4 billion, and now 6 billion.

However, we haven't decided yet whether we are going to release this feature in Japan or not. That's because there are some cultural differences, and because Japanese children might not always have the same tastes. [At the time of this interview, the Power Rangers TV series had not yet aired on Japanese TV-CE]. So we'll see the preview of this feature and then we'll decide. And the same goes for other Asian countries, since Toei has the distribution rights in Japan and other Asian countries. [Since this interview, another Toei/Saban project has been announced - Big Bad Beetleborgs, based on Toei's Jyukou B-Fighter or "Heavy Armor Beetle Fighter"-CE]

MR. YOSHIKAWA'S BACKGROUND:

SY: As you know, 19 sentai series have been made since 1975, so I've been involved in this show for 21 years. [With the premiere of Gekiso Sentai CarRanger, there have now been 20 sentai series-CE]. But my first production in this field was actually Kikaider (another Ishinomori robot action show) 24 years ago. Since then, I've been doing this kind of job (laughing). Toei has a long history even before Kikaider in this field, like Captain Ultra (a Japanese TV space opera), Aka Kage ("Red Shadow", a hi-tech ninja show), Ge Ge no Kitaro (a monster show based on Japanese folklore), and needless to say, Kamen Rider as well. That was supervised by my immediate boss Mr. Watanabe and Mr. [Toru] Hirayama (one of the most prominent Toei producers, the driving force behind the studio's early "men-in-monster suits" action shows). At that time I was doing adult TV action dramas, including more conventional samurai dramas, modern action dramas like The Bodyguard starring Sonny Chiba (a famous Japanese action star, best known in the U.S. for the "Street Fighter" films (unrelated to the later video game). He can be glimpsed briefly in True Romance-CE). But you see, when it comes to Japanese TV shows, the show's sponsors (major advertisers) have a huge power over the content. For instance, they can say, "Oh Sonny Chiba should not smack these politicians," or "Oh you cannot blow up our manufacturer's cars in the story," and that sort of thing. Adult hero series on TV are so restricted, more so than you think. So I was frustrated. At this point, my boss, Mr. Watanabe, asked me to produce a children's show, so I took the assignment. Interestingly, you can do much purer action adventures in a kids' show, more interesting and much faster-paced action-adventure. You definitely have more freedom and you can do it very boldly. In a children's show, evil is evil, and justice is justice, just that; so you

can concentrate on the detailed entertaining ideas. In that sense, I think I am working in the mainstream tradition of Toei action adventure, which is inherited from the good old days of the company's samurai entertainment features.

THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH SABAN:

AFX: How do you work with Saban Entertainment?
 SY: Basically, Toei has the original work's copyright, and has the right to consult on the actual plans and production of the Saban Entertainment version, because we have our own policy concerning the content. So you cannot mess up the content or just take liberties-in other words, the U.S. versions are being made in the spirit of not invading the original work's essence. As for VR Troopers, reportedly they even mimicked (or, you might say, respected) the original order of shots, exactly the same way in some scenes. When it comes to the Power Rangers, we shot some of the additional fighting footage and FX footage for them here in Japan. Also, we provide them the monster suits. The Toei team is really good at that, so our crew make them, and sometimes supervise how they do it. In any way we can, we back them up 100% to make their show work.

WHAT KIND OF MAN IS HAIM SABAN?

SY: Well, for me, to make a piece of work, whatever it is, you need to be crazy. That's the reason why I like Saban. I'm doing things in a crazy way here in Japan, and Saban is also Mr. Crazy in America. I think it might be that he's Jewish; his enthusiasm and vitality are just beyond imagination. He's been trying to make this thing happen for ten years, you see? I really admire his energy. He also watches these kinds of TV programs with much more attention than I do. He sometimes explains to me that this thing happened and that thing happened in such and such an episode, which I don't remember exactly.

As far as I understand it, he used to be a music producer in Paris, and he won two gold discs there. He had a huge hit with Mazinger Z records (featuring music from Toei's TV robot animation) and then he used that money to move on to Hollywood. I truly recommend you cover him as well. He's really quite a guy. Definitely not one of those run-of-the-mill people!

HOW IS BANDAI INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT?

AFX: How do you design characters in the show? Are you heavily concerned about merchandising toys from the early stages of each project?
 SY: In the early days, like when we did GoRanger, for instance, Mr. Ishinomori and Toei discussed it together and decided which designs were the final ones. Popy, the toy company which used to be a subsidiary of Bandai and specialized in merchandising toys, became one of our show's sponsors, roughly just before Kamen Rider started (1971). Then gradually our working relationship grew. (Initially, Popy was only one of the show's advertisers, then gradually, they started suggesting some alterations in the design of the characters and gadgets in the show.) Popy was acquired by Bandai as its most profitable main section, and in recent years, they started initiating their own ideas, saying things like "We are thinking of launching such and such a type of robot, couldn't you put that into the show?" In this way, after more than twenty years of experience, Bandai and Toei have built up a strong business partnership, so now their role in the show is quite vital to its success.

[Special thanks to Rob Perchaluk, for making this interview available to us]



Dash! Dash! OhRanger!!



Hiroshi Miyauchi as OhRanger's mentor, Sanbocho Miura. Miyauchi is well-known for his roles in Kamen Rider V3, GoRanger, Zubat, JAKQ, Winspector, Solbrain, and the films Sister Streetfighter & The War in Space.

Of the new Godzilla series, I consider this one, by far, to be an instant classic. This film is powered with excellent monsters, which I'll get to in a moment, but more so it had a strong storyline.

I feel that the Toho Company often lacks strength in their storylines which causes films such as Godzilla vs. Biollante and Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla to be almost laughable. However, that is not the case with this film. This story remains right on track throughout the entire film and you never get the chance to yawn.

As for the kaijus, Godzilla looks great and his adversaries look worthy. Let's start with the King of All Monsters. The Godzilla suit in this film, called Batogoji, is nothing short of spectacular. Godzilla gives the film that "oomph" that every film needs. A visual "oomph"!

Mothra, G's old adversary and the only one to beat G twice, is again arisen for our enjoyment. The only major change is that she now possesses an energy field weapon, cool for attacking our hero.

A new kaiju called Battra enters the scene and strikes me as a desperate need to create some beast to fight G. It lacks creativity, at least in its larva stage. In its imago stage, it looks fierce and more likable.

The effects are at their best and take you on a ride of enjoyment. I especially found the effects of the underwater fight scene between G and Battra to be breathtaking. As a child, I always wondered if G could use his fire underwater. Mystery solved!

When the three finally meet at the end of the film, you're left confused about who to cheer for. You find that G is no longer the one we want to win, not to say we want him to lose, but that maybe, just this once, that we should scream victory to our two flying friends.

Overall, this film is filled with excitement and visual satisfaction. One could only hope that the future of Toho's G film series could be based on this soon to be classic film.

***** (Five Stars out of Five)



RODAN '94

v.s.



Artwork: Marc Dunworth

For those of you who've been wondering what Kimberly has been up to since she quit as the Pink Ranger on Mighty Morphin Power Rangers...

EH...
IT'S A LIVING!



CLOSING CREDITS & OTHER TRIVIA

FORGING OUR SPIRITS IN THE TRADITION OF OUR ANCESTORS DEPT.
This issue is dedicated to Dr. Klahn, who is building a fighting force of extraordinary magnitude. He has our gratitude.

GUILTY PARTIES DEPT.

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PLASTIC PLAYMATES DEPT.

Do you still like to play with toys? If you do, Greg Cordaro wants to hear from you. Though I ineptly misplaced his business cards (sorry Greg!), I believe he calls his operation "Planet X Productions". You can contact Greg at P.O. Box 392, Holtzville, NY 11742 or call at (516) 997-1733 from 7:00 p.m.-11:30 p.m. EST.

!@#SUPS DEPT.

(Sure to be a regular feature, this is where I fix my mistakes. Hooboy, there's a lot of 'em!)

#1[NOTE: pages in #1 are unnumbered]

pg. 6: I make reference to the Varan suit being in Destroy All Monsters. It was apparently just the flying model left from Varan the Unbelievable and not the suit itself.

pg. 11: To my eternal chagrin, I learned after my Kenji Sahara article saw print that Kenji Sahara and Yumi Shirakawa were NOT married.

pg. 12: It also turns out I made a couple of errors in the film list. Shinsuke Takeno in Half Human is played by Kenji Kasahara, a completely different actor with a similar sounding name. Takeno does not die in the film, but the U.S. version confuses matters a great deal. Sahara is in Frankenstein Conquers the World, but his character is a policeman and not a soldier.

#2

pg. 19: It seems Masahiro Takashima does play Sho Kuroki in Godzilla vs. Destroyer. So much for logic. Oh, there's also some spelling variations. It should (probably) be Sayaka Ozawa (rather than Osawa) and Destroyer (rather than Destroyah).

#3

pg. 15: I have some adjustments to make to this issue's filmography, but I don't want to retype the whole blessed thing. For the record, the full title of Michio Yamamoto's second vampire film is THE LAKE OF DRACULA (with a "the" at the beginning). TOKYO BAY CONFLAGRATION is a more accurate translation than TOKYO BAY BURNS and it is the former title which I will use henceforth to refer to this movie. It is also worth mentioning that there are more Toho comedies (such as some of the vehicles of The Crazy Cats) that incorporate sci-fi elements. Further research on these films is pending.

FORMER GLORIES DEPT.

Owari back issues:

#1(Oct./Nov. 1995)-articles on Varan, Yog, King Seesar, and Kenji Sahara; Lewis Smith's Guyver story and toy reviews; fan art & trivia-\$1.50

#2(May 1996)-reviews of Mighty Morphin Power Rangers:The Movie & Godzilla vs. Destroyer; Lewis Smith's The Return of Jetman begins; fan art & assorted foolishness-\$2.00

#3(Nov. 1996) Hey, cowboy, you're reading it!-\$2.00

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "Incredible! The mighty Galactor is forced to waste his time on ladies' footwear!"-Galactor, G-Force

NEXT ISSUE

Ah, to be a devil-may-care bon vivant like our erstwhile mascot El Beardo (pictured below). Alas, I must content myself with being the editor of a low-budget fanzine. Easing my pain is the thought of such excellent articles like the ones awaiting us in Owari #4. Our feature will be a big piece on Godzilla's Revenge engineered by David (Xenorama) McRobie. We will also have The Return of Jetman Part 3, the return of the Kaiju Detective, and my in-depth analysis of the many Japanese monster film books that have been coming out of late. Plus, there will be whatever other nonsense I can dream up.

photo: Amy Elam

