

ORIENTAL CINEMA

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INSIDE:

GYONSI: A special issue dedicated to Hunan's hopping vampires!

ACES GO PLACES: The crazy antics of the characters in this slapstick comedy featuring anyone from Yasuaki Kurata, to Richard Kiel!

ANIME: Included is a special mini-fanzine that focuses exclusively on these 1-dimensional characters, so you can have an anime time.

GIGANTIS: Let us return to thrilling days of yesteryear and observe this classic movie about dinosaurs! Hell, the movie is almost as old as dinosaurs themselves!



EDITORIAL

PART 1



I was six years ago that the previous issue of ORIENTAL CINEMA was released. And five years before that was the debut of issue #4. So I guess it's safe to assume that there won't be another issue after this until 5 or 6 years have passed.

Anyway, here I go again, publishing yet another fanzine. Other amateur zines to my credit include: JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI, BRAVEYAR, JAPANESE MONSTERS, PACK, and the one-shot JAPANESE MONSTERS AND SUPERHEROES. But of all of my magazines, the funnest one to publish has got to be this one, ORIENTAL CINEMA, since it covers all sorts of Asian films and TV shows (not just Japanese ones), and unlike PACK, is specialized enough to focus in just one general area.

In ORIENTAL CINEMA, I hope to continue writing about the usual Japanese monsters and Chinese gungfu (that's how I choose to spell and pronounce it, since it is how Bruce Lee pronounced it, and is just as accurate and applicable as 'kung fu') I'm most commonly associated with, but also including articles on lesser-known stuff like MR. VAMPIRE, ACES GO PLACES, and whatever new super-hero series has been released this week.

This issue is my special "Jumping Vampire of Hunan Issue!" These Chinese blood-suckers with a tendency toward hopping have a name. Generally it's pronounced "Gyonsi," but China is so full of different languages and dialects that there are other pronunciations in different provinces, like the pronunciation "Kyonshi." And then of course, there's the Japanese, who can't pronounce Gyonsi or

Kyonshi, as they say "Kyonshi" when referring to these Chinaman undead. So whether you choose to call these oriental zombies kyonsi, gyonsi, or kyonsi, you're correctly saying the word which describes the cannibalistic cadavers from China, whose legends were first developed in the 1600s, during the Ching Dynasty.

Regrettably, despite painstaking research, I've been far from successful in locating any English language literature which even makes mention of these fascinating tales from old China. The horror stories of Chinese gyonsis are as intriguing as those depicting the European vampires, the Haitian zombies and the Egyptian mummies. However, since the Chinese kyonsis didn't make a noticeable debut in movies until the early 1980's, they're more obscure than the assorted mummies, vampires and zombies created from the legends of other countries. These western species of undead villains got a head start in movies during the earlier half of the 20th century.

1921 was the year that the black & white German horror movie NOSFERATU appeared, thereby marking the first cinematic appearance of a vampire. Boris Karloff was chosen to play the first Egyptian livingdead to appear on screen in 1932 with the release of THE MUMMY. Also that year, moviegoers were introduced to Haiti's concept of walking corpse in WHITE ZOMBIE. Since then, horror movie fans have been treated to similar chills by similar undead characters such as werewolves, Franksteins, ghosts,

and in recent years, the likes of Freddy Krueger and Jason. Apathetic horror movie fans in America are no doubt familiar with these over-exposed denizens of predictable American motion pictures. It is my attempt (as always) to be revolutionary by giving exposure to a virtually unknown (in America, that is) type of horror film. The Eastern gyonsi movies are no better, and no worse than the various Western vamp/zombie movies. They are equal, yet different to their round-eyed cousins. My intention is to give all you so-called horror fans a chance to see a new type of monster from a fascinating country which is not yet known for its unique contributions to the horror film genre.

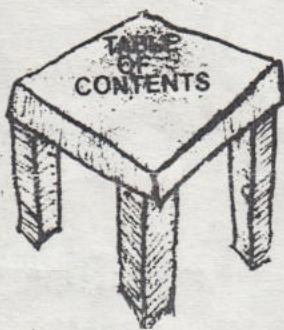
If your curiosity is not yet peaked, perhaps it will be by the time you've read some of my exposés on these innovative, culture-filled motion pictures from Hong Kong. And if, after you've read my groundbreaking articles, you're still content to stick with all those Freddy Krueger movies and not give the oriental movies a try, then you're a closedminded son-of-a-bitch who will never amount to anything creative. But assuming that you have some interest in history and culture, and you've got a liberal enough brain to try something new, here's what you can do to try and locate such films.

Check out local Chinese, Japanese and Korean videotapes and theatres. If you just happen to live in the bay area of northern California like I do, there are numerous Chinese videotapes like: B&K Wong Corp, 37217 Fremont Blvd. in Fremont, and two of the World of

Video stores; one in Hayward (at 24050 Grand St.), and one in Fremont (at 38487 Fremont Blvd.). Additional oriental videotapes can be located in the Chinatowns of San Francisco and Oakland. Another possible source is a mail order company which specializes in martial arts, horror and Chinese films called Jars Video Collectibles, P.O. Box 113, Little Neck, N.Y., 11363. Final note in regards to your introducing yourselves to the alternative world of the gyonsis: Check out MR. VAMPIRE as your first gyonsi film. Since it's probably the best one, it's a good way to find out if you can learn to enjoy this type of avant garde horror.

Despite the fact that this is supposed to be an issue mainly devoted to those lovable gyonsis, there will be variety to the issue as well. Naturally, it wouldn't be complete without an obligatory article on a Godzilla movie for all you old-timers! This issue's Godzilla flick is GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER. And for the very young, and the young at heart, I've reserved an entire section focusing EXCLUSIVELY on cartoons! My cartoon section will be sort of a "fanzine within a fanzine," and has been included as a gift from me to all you fans of 1-dimensional characters from Japanese TV.

Oh well, at this point, I really don't know how this issue is going to turn out, since this Editorial is the first column I've typed and edited for the issue. At the end of this should be my final entree for this Gyonsi issue, typed & edited after the issue is completed. It will be called Editorial Part 2, featuring my closing comments. Until then, this is Demon Foster signing off.



FANZINES FOR SALE

Any interest in ordering back issues of any of Demon Foster's fanzines? If so, simply send \$1.50 per issue, which includes postage. Send to Demon Foster, P.O. Box 576, Fremont Ca., 945370576. And then I'll send you your order, as soon as the check has been cleared!

JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI #2 (1978)

Enjoyable for its unintentional humor caused by its crudeness. Full of rare photos and artwork. Reviews include: GAMERA VS MONSTER X, SUPERCAR GATAIGA, THE EVIL BRAIN FROM OUTERSPACE, and MONSTER ZERO. Most recommendable hard-to-find pictures and clippings.

JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI #4 (1982)

Strangely written, but not as infantile as JMSF #2. Not only has it got its share of rare clippings and pictures, but it's very informative as well. Articles featured: CAPTAIN HARLOCK, BATTLE FEVER J, STARBLAZERS, ULTRAMAN 80, SHOGUN WARRIORS--FORCE FIVE, GAMERA, SUPER MONSTER, GATCHAMAN, GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND, MESSAGE FROM SPACE, and LAST DAYS OF PLANET EARTH.

ORIENTAL CINEMA #5 (1983)

Small but compact. Lots of information, but much is inaccurate. Featuring: GODZILLA KING OF THE MONSTERS, HAWK OF JUSTICE, SAIYUKI, RASHOMON, KING OF THE MONGOLS, DUEL OF THE IRON FIST, INFRAHMAN, KING BOXER, and anime like TENDO MUSHI NO UTA, INAKAPPE TAISHO, and CHINESE GODS.

PACK, ONCE MORE (1988)

The third issue of PACK is the official publication of the Punk Action Club, dedicated to all sorts of bizarre entertainment. PACK ONCE MORE has articles on: GHOST NURSING, ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE, REANIMATOR, THE DEAD PIT, THE MR. VAMPIRE trilogy, DENZIN ZABOGA, THE PAUL HOGAN SHOW, some comix, a satire of Garbage Pail Kids, and an exclusive interview with the punk rock band from Washington called Moral Cruz.



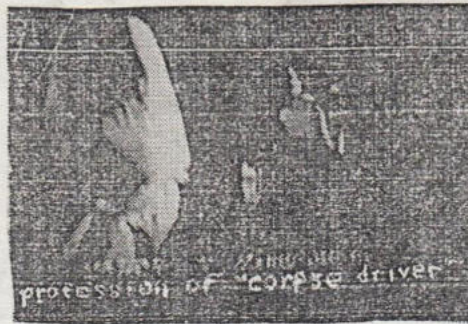
1. COVER
2. Me talking you this.
3. LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE / ACES GO PLACES
4. MR. VAMPIRE
5. GIGANTIS, THE FIRE MONSTER
6. MR. VAMPIRE II
7. THE GREEN HORNET
8. MR. VAMPIRE III / CHOP SOCKEY REPORT
9. A mini-newsletter which is a satirical look at Japanese cartoon fans and their clubs. This parody contains material that some people may find offensive, but which is really smashing!
10. CHOP SOCKEY REPORT (continued)
11. MAGIC STORY / ABRAKADABRA
12. NINGEN UPDATE
13. KUNGFU VAMPIRE BUSTER
14. HELLO! DRACULAR
15. RAI RAI KYONSHIZU
16. SWORDS & TADISH
17. The very last page, not including the picture on the back cover.

LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE

the ACES GO PLACES films

STARRING SAMUEL HUI AS KING KONG,
CO-STARRING CARL MAK AS ALBERT (BALDY)
AU, ALSO FEATURING SILVIA CHANG.

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE SEPARATE REVIEWS I WROTE INDIVIDUALLY, LONG AGO. THEY'RE ARTICLES ON THE "ACES GO PLACES" MOVIES. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO-MONTH GAPS IN BETWEEN WHEN I WROTE EACH OF THEM, SINCE I NEVER JUST SAT DOWN AND WATCHED EACH VIDEOTAPE BACK TO BACK. I RENTED EACH FILM GRADUALLY, OVER THE COURSE OF ABOUT SIX MONTHS. SO WHEN I WROTE THE ARTICLE ON CHAPTER I, I WAS ENTIRELY UNFAMILIAR WITH THIS CHINESE MOVIE SERIES. BY THE TIME I WROTE MY REVIEW FOR CHAPTER FOUR, I WAS SOMEWHAT OF AN AUTHORITY, AND CONSIDERED "ACES GO PLACES" TO BE A HOUSEHOLD WORD.



Director: Joseph Kuo
Starring: Carter Wong

This typical period adventure opens with a heroic rebel called Lin Yun Chang in a sword duel with a deceitful follower of the local corrupt government. After he defeats his evil opponent, he returns home. He's then visited by an old classmate called Ko Lung Ta from his old days at Shaolin Temple. Both are now gungfu masters, but on opposite sides of the law. Much to Lin Yun Chang's surprise, Ko Lung Ta is now working with the greedy politicians. When it becomes clear that Lin Yun Chang will never join forces with the government, many fights break out. Carter Wong (18 BRONZE MEN, BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA) plays the mean gungfu emperor Fang Ta, who uses gold weapons called Soul Breaking Need-

les. Not only is Lin Yun Chang stabbed by one, but so are his two equally anarchic friends Hsiang Yeh and General Wong. From here, we're lead to believe that all three are dead. Their bodies are taken to a Taoist called Mr. Lu, who is also an experienced 'corpse driver.' He revived all three heroes, plus three other gyonis and Aops them back to Chen County for a burial. On their way, government troupes inspect the six so-called gyonis, only to discover it was all a trick. Our three heroic rebels are not really gyonis. They're still alive, and were just pretending to be hopping corpses in hopes of evading Ming Dynasty soldiers. The other three mock-vampires also turn out to be patriots in disguise as well. Basically, from this point on, it's a series of gungfu battles as the six good guys destroy all the soldiers and eventually, Tang Fa himself.

I first discovered this dishonest movie in a Korean videostore around 1984-85. At that time, I was into George Romero's zombie movies and the Italian imitations. I had heard rumor of a Chinese zombie movie called ZOMBIE HOLLOCAUST, but have long since come to the disappointing conclusion that it must just be a Chinese title for DAWN OF THE DEAD, or some such movie. Then I found some obscure little Chinese film called LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE, as it was written on the rental box. I eagerly rented this Korean dubbed (and badly) Chinese horror (hah) movie, only to discover that the actual superimposed title on the movie itself was THE SHAOLIN BROTHERS, and not LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE at all!

As just another Chinese martial arts costume-drama, it succeeds. The medieval Chinese clothing and sets are decent replicas of old times, the acting is sufficient, and the story is fast-paced. The martial art choreography is quite good, but I doubt if the actual actors are doing their own mid air flips and high jumps. And, like most Chinese gungfu flicks, it's got recognizable stock-music. In this case, it's been stolen from PLANET OF THE APES.

However, LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE/ THE SHAOLIN BROTHERS falls as a horror movie, since the gyonis are featured so briefly in the film.

I consider myself fortunate that this is the very first gyonis movie I ever saw. This is the only one I know of where they actually explain what the Hunen-based legends of 'corpse herding' are all about. Although classic gyonis movies like MR. VAMPIRE and HELLON DRACULAR are infinitely superior to this one, neither of them contains any real historical information on the gyonis or even why the Taoists are paid by relatives of their deceased clients to turn the dead bodies into hopping gyonis. I gather from this otherwise typical Chinese swordfilm that the bodies of the deceased in the area of Hsienghsi must be buried in the same province they were born, so that reincarnation is a possibility. So a Taoist wizard is hired to do what is called 'corpse herding,' sometimes 'corpse driving' or 'corpse walking.' Using his magical powers, the Taoist revives his deceased clients, attired in their traditional Manchu burial uniforms (consisting of a fancy robe, beaded necklace, shoes, pants and a funny looking hat) as well as a yellow talisman (an instrument in eveting evil). In different world-wide legends, a talisman can be anything (i.e. crucifix, idol, etc.), but in this case, it is a long piece of paper with a spell written on it. When glued to the head of the now mobile gyonis, the hopping cadaver is under the control of the Taoist, and won't resort to causing typical undead terror like blood-sucking. With the talisman in place, the Taoist leads all the corpses in single file line as they travel on foot to their proposed burial site. Unlike the European vampires, these Chinese gyonis are victims of abdominal rigormortis, preventing them from moving their legs separately. This is why these oriental zombies hop.

LEGEND OF THE LIVING SHAOLIN BROTHERS (or whatever the hell it's called) claims to be based on true events and real people. If so, I tend to doubt it's authenticity, since I don't think real-life battles with fascist dictators and their armies performed gymnastics, jumped up to 30 feet high (a phys-

ical impossibility) or used fancy artistic sword swinging obviously inspired by Chinese acrobatic operas. However, it is interesting to consider whether or not rebels in the 1600s did impersonate gyonis to hide their true identities from guardsmen. If this legend is true, then perhaps there really were gyonis in existence at one point! I'm anything but superstitious, but even the legends of zombies in Haiti have their basis and facts. From what I gather, voodoo zombies at Haiti were dying people, but not quite dead yet. After all, once a person dies, their brain can't activate any limbs, the heart ceases pumping crucial blood to all parts, and the carcass gets too rotten to stand up, even if it wanted to. Yet a dying body which looks entirely dead could possibly be put in a hypnotic trance by a Haitian witch doctor, who spent their lives researching voodoo. I tend to believe that the Taoist gyonis have this in common with the voodoo zombies. The science (magic?) of voodoo was developed during the slave trades when African priests combined their mythology & folklore with that of the Spanish conquistadors. On the subject of the possible existence of gyonis, there was a fairly recent Chinese vampire movie called VAMPIRE'S BREAKFAST, which dealt with the sinister exploits of a European Dracula-like character on the loose in Hong Kong (for more details on this one, check out my in-depth review in PACK #3). In an intense press conference scene, a Chinese policeman compares a 1930 report from an Italian anthropologist which mentions voodoo in the South American caribbean, and the cop compares it to China's one legends of corpse drivers. Though hard to follow, the subtitles in VAMPIRE'S BREAKFAST go something like this: "They anesthetized the dying natives to make them look like dead and then unearthed them to sell as slaves. This is similar to corpse walking in Hunen. They're not bloodsuckers as suggested."

Fact or fiction, zombies and gyonis are a fascinating subject. And it's this saving grace which makes LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE perhaps just a little more intriguing than many other post-DREAMED SWORDSMEN swashbucklers. As a martial arts adventure, LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE is fun, though the plot is too complex to follow closely, and the gungfu seems a bit too formed and polished, since the martial arts were actually just being founded at this point in time. But taken as a fantasy, it can entertain. Its only historical entertainment is unintentional humor.

As I stated before, this late 1970s picture is the definitive gyonis film, although such creatures are featured only briefly, and they all turn out to be hoaxes anyway. If it weren't for LEGEND OF LIVING CORPSE, I never would have understood its first imitation, the outstanding masterpiece, MR. VAMPIRE.

ACES GO PLACES

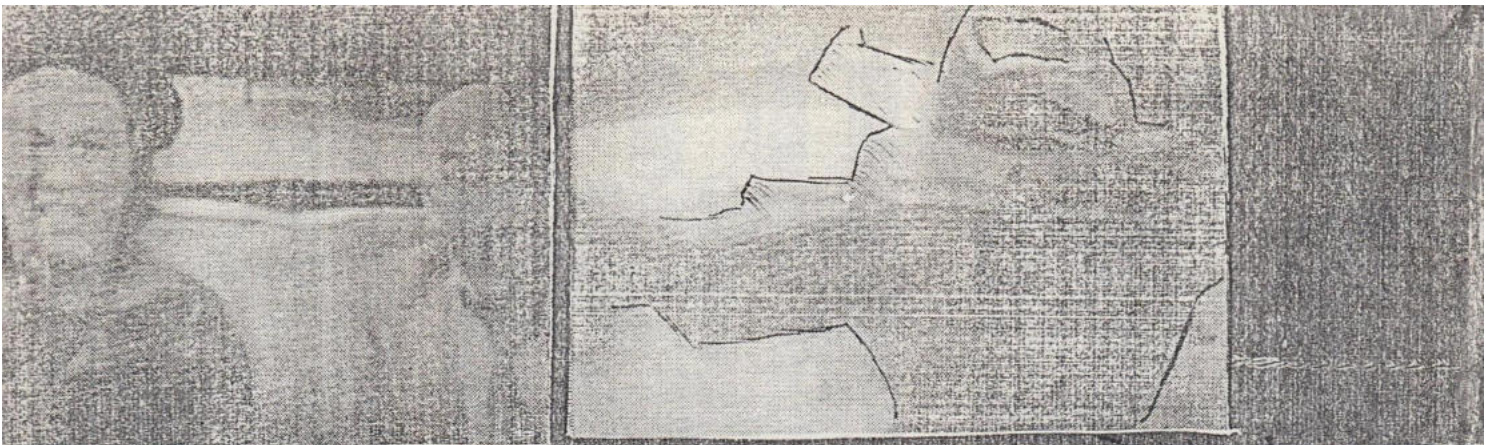
A Cinema City Film Presentation
Directed by Carl Mak & Dean Shek
Screenplay: Raymond Wong
Action scenes: Hong Kong Action Stunt
Editor: Tony Chow
Starring:
Samuel Hui, Carl Mak, Sylvia Chang,
Dean Shek, Chen Sing, Carrol Gordon

The fact that I would even consider renting a movie so far from my sphere of interests indicates that perhaps I'm abusing my interest in Chinese movies. Normally, whenever I check out Chinese movies, I rent martial arts adventures or horror movies depicting gyonis (Chinese vampires that hop). Yet this time I took a chance and rented a spy spoof called ACES GO PLACES. I've never been into flicks like OUR MAN FLINT or those horrid James Bond movies, so perhaps my examination of this silly crime drama was a silly mistake.

It all started when I was in a local Chinese videostore browsing passed oriental video rentals like MR. VAMPIRE and THE ONEARMED SWORDSMAN when I came to a shelf loaded with Chinese action comedies. Almost all of the boxes looked the same; artwork depicting collages of characters and scenes in the movie (s). The artwork was colorful, and the goofy-looking facial expressions of the characters give the impression that the movies are funny. ACES GO PLACES is one of the many flicks in that category. I suppose that I never would have rented this one-in-a-million, dime-a-dozen movie if there hadn't been two Shogun Warrior like robots in the background on the box cover of ACES GO PLACES II, the sequel to this one. Having been into Japanese superheroes all my life, these two Chinese adaptations of Japanese robots intrigued me. So I decided to check out ACES GO PLACES II just for the robots. But first, I might as well look into its prequel, the original ACES GO PLACES, to see what it's all about.

The plot has something to do with a jewel thief with a heart of gold who made the mistake of stealing some diamonds from some Italian mobsters who were doing business in Hong Kong. The thief, who's name rhymes with King Kong (which it may be, either as a joke, or maybe they don't associate the name with Hollywood's giant gorilla) ends up keeping the diamonds despite numerous confrontations with mob European criminals, a Chinese millionaire and his henchmen, and police officers who he eventually teams up with.

Nothing surprised me about this lively



comedy, except that it has no English subtitles whatsoever, or in any language! About two minutes of the film take place in Italy, where the mafia members talk in English, dubbed in the most stereotypically Italian voices & accents ever. The remainder is of course, in Chinese, but I had no trouble following the plot.

Interesting to note that gangsta superstar Chen Sing makes a guest appearance as a villainous millionaire out to get his hands on the diamonds. Regrettably, he never demonstrates his martial arts capabilities,

since he's not involved in any of the fights, what few there are.

ACES GO PLACES II (1983)
 Cast: Samuel Hui, Carl Mak, Silvio Chang & Yasuaki Kurata

Unlike its predecessor, this second film does indeed have English subtitles! As a result, I got the name of King Kong's hairless policeman assistant, which is Albert Ai, nicknamed Baldy. The original movie had shown how King Kong, Baldy and an uptight female cop teamed up against criminals for the first time. For this sequel, it's already established that King Kong and the two police officers are partners in fighting crime. Plotwise, much is rammed from chapter 1: heroes getting caught up in numerous chase & fights against a local Chinese mob, plus foreign agents. This time, the foreign devils are Americans, not Europeans. The scenes where the Americans speak English features voices just as ridiculous as those of the dubbed Italians in the first movie. The main American villain is a cowboy hitman called Filthy Harry, who parodies Clint Eastwood both visually and verbally. As for the Chinese mafia, the leader is again played by a veteran star of martial arts flicks. This time, it's played by Japan's Yasuaki Kurata, a star in both Tokyo and Hong Kong. Regrettably, ACES GO PLACES II gives Mr. Kurata no chance to display his karate expertise.

ACES GO PLACES II is a definite improvement over part 1. It's funnier and has got more gangfu, which still, isn't much. Samuel Hui, who plays that common King Kong fights much like Ho Chung Tao (called Bruce Li in America), copying his style of kicks, punches and facial expression. But by far the highlight of ACES GO PLACES II is its robots. The villain creates two Transformer-like robots that our heroic scientist must battle. One of the two robots is automatically assembled from 8 Helicopters. To combat these Shogun warrior-ish assassins, Kong creates his own army of little robots, copying Japanese leg robots (Gigajet Robot, Dai Denzin, Vulcan Robot and Gigantor, to name a few). The battle of the robots is the film's highlight, and almost gives ACES GO PLACES II classification as a science fiction film, but not quite.

Other fancy gadgets include futuristic vehicle (car, motorcycle & jet pack) and missiles.

ACES GO PLACES III: OUR MAN FROM BOND STREET

ACES GO PLACES showed how Albert (Baldy) as first met the female police sergeant. **ACES GO PLACES II** showed the two of them dating each other and getting married. For this third chapter, the two are married, living together, and have a child. As for our heroic King Kong, he's joined a British syndicate and side them in obtaining a valuable crown, until he realizes he's been double-crossed.

ACES GO PLACES III starts off with King Kong girlwatching in Paris France. It is there that he has a breathtaking battle with American actor Richard Kiel, best known for his role as Jaws in the James Bond movies. Other Caucasian actors include look-alikes of Peter Graves, Sean Connery and Ronald Reagan. Unlike the first two ACES GO PLACES movies, this one features no English dialogue with the possible exception of an occasional "ya ya." All the characters (Chinese, French, American, British, Arabian, etc.) speak flawless Chinese, even when talking to each other.

As far as entertainment goes, I liked this one more than the first one, but those robots in #2 still take the cake, making #2 the best movie to date, where as the first two had a little martial arts, this one has none. But it does have an amazing motorcycle and car chase which outdoes the Road Warrior movie.

This is the only ACES GO PLACES movie, to the best of my knowledge, that was ever released to American videotapes dubbed in English. My version in Chinese, I've never seen it in English. It's a bad that they released this one, since it's far from being the best in the series.

ACES GO PLACES IV

After marvling following ACES GO PLACES III, I was excited to see the fourth of the series. Yet this exciting sequel was my least favorite. It's the best one to date! Even those Shogun warriors in ACES II don't stand up to the scintil-

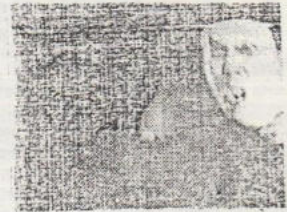
The Caucasian villains this time are New Zealanders, led by a villain not unlike a groin bender in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARC. What these New Zealand criminals are after is a remarkable diamond which generates energy which when combined with the right futuristic, high tech equipment, can turn ordinary people into super strong killers. This is what happens to Baldy toward the film's end. Using his new found powers, he destroys the whole lab, and nearly kills King Kong & friends in the process.

Baldy's son is no longer a baby. He's a quick-witted little runt (approximately five years old) who tries to battle the foreign hitmen, despite his size.

Although ACES IV features the usual secret agent battles involving speedboats, car chases, planes, guns and helicopters, this motionful picture actually features a decent amount of serious martial arts action! This chapter has got more gangfu than all three of the previous pictures combined! Samuel (King Kong) has no longer mimicks Bruce Li when he fights. Now it seems that good old Samuel is taking lessons from Jackie Chan! The fights in ACES IV are so full of wild stuntwork that you'd think it was produced by Golden Harvest and Boho Films, featuring Jackie, Sam, and Yuen. But this isn't the case. Believe it or not, this is still ACES GO PLACES, new and improved!

Although the ACES GO PLACES saga has never had any low budget entries, I think this one is the most expensively produced yet. ACES IV is a massive film. **end**

Despite my love of this movie, I must confess that I dislike a sequence involving the sacrifice of live animals. I admire Lam Jing lot, but I can't help feeling anger toward him and the whole film staff for allowing both a snake and a chicken to be slaughtered on film just for the sake of a movie. They could have used fake critters, since the death of an animal on film is not only sad, but gross as well. This is not uncommon in chink films. They have little or no



respect for animals, and see them as mere expendable objects, rather than living creatures.

Putting things on a more positive note, there is MR. VAMPIRE's special effects. The make-up for the gyonis is pretty good, far more ghoulish and convincing than that on the gyonis in LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE. Particularly effective, if not downright sickening, is the makeup job applied to the right half of the face of the movie's ghost lady in a scene where a magical ghost repellent causes her to fly backwards and crash, landing face first. I also liked the occasional super-imposed lezer-like effects used to represent the power of Taoism as it detects, confines & battles the denizens of the occult.

A plot element added which wasn't included in LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE was that when gyonis are on the hunt for victims, they rely mostly on their sense of smell which detects the scent of breath coming from their human prey. The advantage to the human is that by not breathing, the gyonis's instinct for warm blood is shut down, and the creature remains still as though in a trance, until you cease holding your breath. And as a more technical gyonis film, it seems that not all gyonis hop. Some can walk slowly, much like the zombies in a George Romero movie. It seems that only a gyonis which has been dead for a specific amount of time is likely to hop. Their victims become vampires that don't hop. Even the main gyonis villain in MR. VAMPIRE ceases hopping toward the movie's latter half, and acts a little more life-like, as he walks, prowls and tries to run a little. As for the gyonis's victim, I assume that the leg stiffening process that makes them hop doesn't occur as quickly as the victims's transformation from human to gyonis. About the gyonis itself, he seems to have overcome his rigormortis after having been revived for

MR. VAMPIRE
 ("THIÊN SỰ BÁT MA")

Produced by Golden Harvest, in association with Boho Films 1985

STARRING Lam Jing Ying

LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE first introduced the gyonis to movie audiences in the late 1970s. But it wasn't until producer Raymond Chow signed the contract to have this masterpiece produced that the gyonis became popular among the cinemas of the orient. MR. VAMPIRE is truly an influential, groundbreaking movie that changed the Asian movie industry. Like its inferior predecessor, this classic combines horror with comedy, not to mention gangfu. But where as LEGEND OF THE LIVING CORPSE concentrated more on fighting than horror, MR. VAMPIRE is a horror film first, a gangfu film second. Both of its main stars are excellent martial artists. Lam Jing Ying played a villain in a Golden Harvest gangfu film from 1980 called MAGNIFICENT BUTCHER. He's also appeared in a number of Jackie Chan movies, including MY LUCKY STARS and HEART OF THE DRAGON. I also seem to remember seeing him (or his lookalike) playing small parts in Bruce Lee's first two movies.

a few days.

Non-martial arts actor Michael Hui plays the 3rd hero, Man Choi. He and his brother Samuel Hui of ACES GO PLACES fame are popular comedians in China, and each have been in their own set of films. Michael Hui got top-billing when he starred in another horror comedy, called TO HELL WITH THE DEVIL, which was a unique film, though preposterous.

One of the greatest things about MR. VAMPIRE is its lack of little kids! There are none of them anywhere in the movie! I'm sure you've all seen oriental monster movies which feature irritating children as main characters. This infantile tendency is especially common in Japanese science fiction fantasies like GAMERA VS ZIGRA and GODZILLA'S REVENGE. And now, as China's gyonst movie genre gets older, that same childish process is infiltrating. It seems that after MR. VAMPIRE, the gyonst saga has gone to the kiddies.

Another thought comes to mind as I watch my videotape of MR. VAMPIRE for perhaps the tenth time: The Chinese love ballads! I have never liked musicals, but since the average Chinese film has only one singing song per film, I can tolerate it. And since the songs aren't the actual characters singing them, all the better. Usually, such tunes



are used to show the passage of time, as visual shots depict various situations of the film's characters. But in the case of MR. VAMPIRE, the bell is used as an introduction to the lonely female ghost, as we see her for the first time, escorted by what I call "clown ghosts," but more on them later. Her song is, unfortunately, sung by children. It merely explains that the attractive spirit is on the search for a lover.

Previously, my term "clown ghosts" indicates these comical spirits have what appears to be circus makeup on their faces. From what I gather, they're all good, since statues of them are always placed next to coffins at funerals. Perhaps they're good luck charms or another type of talisman.

As for the gungfu aspect of MR. VAMPIRE, there's not a whole lot of it, but a satisfactory amount. The type of fighting used is the typical post-Jackie Chan form of 1980s cinematic gungfu. By that, I mean that it features the backbreaking stunts, a little gymnastics, and none of the artificial-looking snake technique, crane technique, or fruitbat technique



commonly found in the movies made from the late 1970s and early 1980s. Also lacking are all the never-ending training sequences. MR. VAMPIRE is non-technical with its gungfu, and I don't recall anyone ever even saying "gungfu" anywhere in the movie. In China, typical movie fighting is based on martial arts, just as most older American movie fighting was based on boxing.

SYNOPSIS

After a greveworker called Chou impersonates a gyonst to frighten his native co-worker Men Choi, their little scuffle accidentally causes the talismans to fall from the faces of some stationary gyonst that were being stored at that same house. Fortunately, the owner of the house Mr. Kau arrives with his corpse driver friend (the one in charge of the gyonst). By biting their own fingers, they draw blood, which, although the gyonst consume blood whenever possible, also acts as a temporary paralyzer when debbed on the gyonst's forehead. With the gyonst tranquilized, the angry corpse driver places the controlling talismans on the heads of his deceased clients (the gyonst) and they hop to their graveyard, guided by the mystical corpse driver.

Later, Mr. Kau is hired by a millionaire called Mr. Yam to bless the grave of his father, to appease his angry spirit. This is a requirement, since Mr. Yam's intention is to move his father's coffin to another site. Why he wants to do this is never explained in the otherwise informative English subtitles. As it turns out, Mr. Kau's Taoist magic fails in keeping the gyonst in its coffin. At night, the corpse revives and makes an attack on Mr. Yam's house. Mr. Yam is killed, and Mr. Kau is mistaken for the murderer by an inept police officer, the nephew of the now dead Mr. Yam. When Chou attempts to break his boss (Kau) out of prison, he's attacked by the now gyonstified Mr. Yam! The policeman arrives to see the battle, and releases Mr. Kau. Together, the three of them destroy Mr. Yam.

Men Choi gets injured by the main gyonst (the one they dug up) during another battle, and drastic steps must be taken to make sure he too doesn't become a bloodsucker.

And if that's not bad enough, Mr. Kau must save Chou from the ghost of a lady who keeps seducing him!

Once the ghost lady is eliminated, and Men Choi is cured, they battle the main gyonst again. Then the corpse driver returns with his own gyonst. Then it's a case of good gyonst vs. bad gyonst. The good gyonst lose, but Mr. Kau gets the last laugh by dropping a burning chandelier on the gyonst, burning it to its second and final death. But some of the helpful gyonst were also destroyed in the fire, much to the regret of the corpse driver.

That climactic duel where the corpse driver's clients (sedated gyonst) surround

and close in on the villainous gyonst was my favorite scene when I viewed MR. VAMPIRE for the first time. I've always liked monster vs. monster fights, and I wish this brief confrontation had been longer.

The entire final battle with the gyonst is pretty long. This is a characteristic common in Chinese movies; lengthy duels. Like THE ONE-ARMED SWORDSMAN, FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH, FISTS OF FURY, MAGNIFICENT BUTCHER or any other Chinese gungfu movie, time-consuming battles always dominate the finale. And although MR. VAMPIRE's final fight isn't necessarily all gungfu, the sequence is in step with traditional Chinese cinema climaxes; long, but exciting.



END

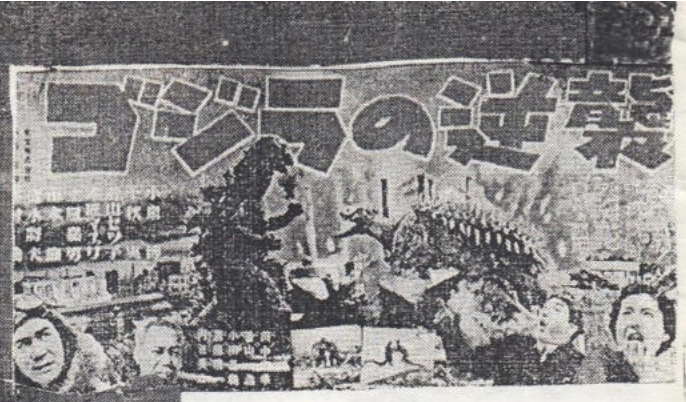
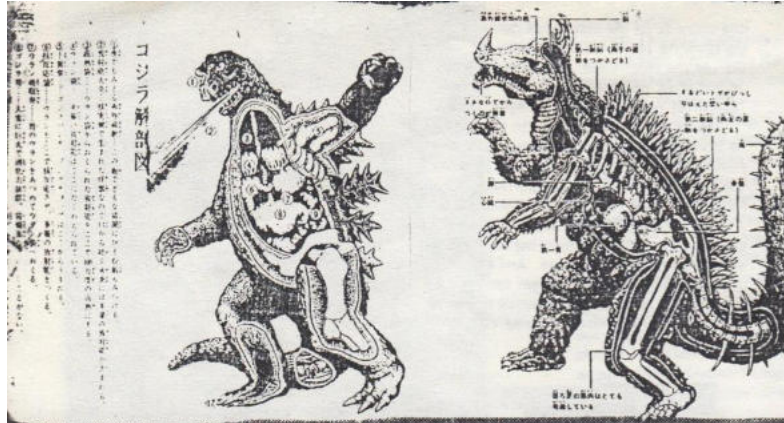
GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER



GIGANTIS, THE FIRE MONSTER 1955
(original Japanese title: 'Gojira No Gyakushu')
Presented by Paul Scheibman, a Toho Production, original story: Shigeru Kayama, Photography: Seizichi Endo, Screenplay: Takao Murata & Sigeaki Hidaka, Art Director: Takeo Kito, Asst. art director: Teruaki Abe, Sound: Masanobu Miyazaki, Lighting: Messyoshi Onuma, Special Effects: Eiji Teburaya and his staff, Akira Watanabe, Hiroshi Mukoyama, & Masao Shirato, Produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka, and Directed by Motoyoshi Oda.

Cast:
Hiroshi Kozumi as Tetsuo
Satsuko Wakayama as Hidemi
Hindru Chiaki as Kobayashi
Takashi Shimura as Yaman

American version produced by Paul Scheibman
Associate Producer: Edmund Goldman
Director & Film Editor: Al Sarno
Sound by: Ryder Sound Service, Inc.



MR. VAMPIRE 2

1986
Produced by Golden Harvest & Bona Films
Starring: Yuan Biao, Lam Jing Ying & Chen Hsiao Hou

The infinitely superior predecessor MR. VAMPIRE took place in the old days the late 1800s, or maybe the early 1900s. This one takes place in the present modern times, and begins with an archeologist and his two assistants exploring an old cave. From buried coffins deep in the cave, they discover the bodies of a family of three gyonis, held dormant by the so-called "corpse appeasing talismans," placed on their heads during the 1600s by ghost tamer Chung Kwei. The offspring of the older two gyonis is a little boy who is the first to revive when his talisman falls off. The gyonis boy escapes, and hops away from the archeologists. The two adult gyonis (husband and wife) are also let loose



when a careless assistant to the archeologist tempts with their talismans. As a result, he gets bitten and later goes to a doctor for help. The doctor turns out to be Lin Cheng Ping, a descendant of Mr. Kou, the heroic toist from the first film in this series. Lin Cheng Ping and his son-in-law Jen (a descendant of MR. VAMPIRE'S Chou character) investigate the situation. As the adult humans clash with the adult gyonis, the gyonis boy enjoys playing around with little kids. He had befriended a little girl who had thought he was a Vietnamese immigrant in need of shelter and friends. So the kids give the gyonis boy the ridiculous nickname of "Okay Boy," as well as sunglasses (gyonis can't stand sunlight, or any kind of bright light, for that matter) as they take him out to a park. When Okay Boy is eventually reunited with his gruesome parents, he must

The previous issue of ORIENTAL CINEMA featured an article on that highly inspirational Japanese monster flick from 1954, GODZILLA, KING OF MONSTERS. And now, it's first sequel, the rarely seen GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER.

The story centers around two pilots called Teushloka and Kobayashi, who live and work at a fishing village in Osaka. Their trouble begins when, while briefly stranded on a tiny island off the coast of Japan, they witness a battle between two enormous dinosaurs called Gigantis and Angilas. The two pilots escape and make their way back to Osaka, but so do the giants.

At a scientific conference, the same Dr. Yamani who was in this film's prequel identifies the Gigantis monster as a close relative of Godzilla, who had destroyed Tokyo the previous year. The other monster is called Angilas, who has just appeared for the first time.

After Gigantis knocks Angilas unconscious and hurles him into the sea, he destroys Osaka,

although I wish they hadn't removed the original Japanese music in favor of American music. The Yogi Bear-ish voice given to Kobayashi gives him a rather retarded personality. That narration delivered by the character of Teushloka makes this film strikingly familiar to GODAN, which had the same type of narration, and probably the exact same voice-dubber.

The very opening (before the credits) has a semi-scientific American voice discussing hydrogen and/or atomic bombs, which brings to mind the beginning of THE DEADLY MANTIS (the 1950's sci-fi flick, not the 1980's gungfu movie of the same name).

All the scenes involving Godzilla/Gigantis and Angilas (also pronounced Anguliras and Angilosaurus) are sensational, definitely the high points of an otherwise average 1950s grade B monster film. The battles between these two resurrected dinosaurs are shown in fast motion, as they both scratch, bite and struggle. The nature of their fight (instinctive & vicious) combined with the high speed projection makes their scenes very convincing, as though it really were two animals in a life or death struggle. This is the only Japanese monster movie where the giant against giant battles come off so realistically. Both costumes are well-designed, and Godzilla looks much better than he did in GODZILLA, KING OF MONSTERS. Unfortunately, we rarely hear the original Godzilla roar from 1954. To longtime fans of the Godzilla series, even Angilas (who returned in four more movies later on) has a distinguished, recognizable roar. In GIGANTIS, both Godzilla and Angilas have the same roar for the most part. Often in GIGANTIS, both monsters use the Angilas roar. Somewhere, somehow, somebody goofed.

In what is the second and last Godzilla picture to be filmed in 85W, there are the usual scenes of human characters which dominate most of GIGANTIS, giving it subplots and character development. But in this case, the scenes of humans (i.e. a pointless, brief chase involving escaped convicts) add nothing positive to the picture, and seem merely added as filler because without them, the movie would only be about 20 minutes long.

All in all, GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER, though crude because of its antiquity, is a decent effort, and I do prefer it over its predecessor.



END



just as his brother already did to Tokyo. Then Gigantis himself also returns to the sea.

A large search headed by Kobayashi and Teushloka occurs with the help of the Japanese army. Gigantis is finally located, wandering on a humungous iceberg. Kobayashi sacrifices his own life in a plan which involves covering Gigantis with ice. And so after some missile firing, kamakazi plane stunts, and explosions, Gigantis is trapped in the ice.

The original Toho title is GOJIRA NO GYAKUSHU, which translates roughly as "Retaliation/Revenge of Godzilla." Yet the English pronunciation of "Godzilla" is held under copyright by American International, the American releasers of the original GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS. Since it was Walter Grae, who released this one, a new name for Godzilla was chosen, Gigantis. The English version really isn't that bad.

force them to cease their attack on the little girl's family. Then the two heroes arrive and kill the mother gyon-si, and the police corner the father gyon-si in a small greenhouse where they destroy him with a small missile. Jen and Lin Cheng Ping attempt to take Okay Boy back to his tomb but are confronted by the two assistants of the archeologist who are now vampires themselves. The flick ends with the 2 assistants chasing our heroes as if freeze-frames.

The English subtitles are decent, almost as good as the subtitles in the first MR. VAMPIRE movie. But good subtitles and good movies are two different things. Where as its prequel could be enjoyed by older people, this one is strictly for children. The first movie was fun, this one is stupid.

The special effects are lacking in both quality and quantity, the attempts at humor are pathetic, and the martial arts are practically non-existent. What little fighting shown is sufficient, but there should have been more of it. MR. VAMPIRE II wastes the fighting and acting skills of Yuan Bao and Lam Jing Ying. The majority of their stuntwork in MR. VAMPIRE II consists of getting thrown through breakaway furniture & other props. But at least they do it with style. I bet they were injured while doing these death-defying

falls and crashes, in the tradition of all the mid-1980s post-Jeckie Chan action films of China.

Though bad, this movie is an important, influential addition to the gyon-si genre. MR. VAMPIRE II introduced the concept of a young gyon-si. This concept is one which would repeat itself in later films. It seems that kiddie response to part I lead producers to gear this sequel exclusively to the younger crowd. There are many questions an adult would ask regarding this film that children may overlook, such as: Why do only adult gyon-sis attack people? How was a child from the 1600s able to activate a toy robot with no previous instructions?

I also really can't stand any of the music for this film. It's got not one, but two ballads, and bad ones at that. And that humming song meant to sound touching comes off as naive and immature. The kind of tune so bad that you'd only expect to hear it in a parody.

The battles with the gyon-sis are choreographed nowhere near as well as those in the original chapter. Battle #1 involves a heroic character who is no martial artist, so the struggle comes off as little more than just fooling around. The second battle is a little better, since it's when Yuan (Jen) Bao discovers the gyon-sis for the first time. Bao's gungfu is good, but much of the confrontation has everyone breathing some narcotic chemi-

cal called 'reterder' from a broken jar. Everyone runs around slowly, in low-pitched voices. Rather than slowdown the film, the actors intentionally move slow. This whole sequence drags on forever. I suppose somebody in China must have actually considered this whole scene funny.

A new element added is the emotions of the gyon-sis. Where as the two previously reviewed gyon-si movies present the gyon-sis as mindless robots, this film shows the gyon-si family as being close, and they even seem to care for one another.

The funniest pun is a cheap in-joke where Lam Jing Ying's character mentions Samo Hung and two of his horror films. Lam Jing Ying says to inquisitive cops: "My master Samo had Spooky Encounters, now he's met the Dead and the Deadly, last year I caught Mr. Vampire."

Chen Hsiao Hou, who would later play a main hero in NEW MR. VAMPIRE (U.S. title: KUNGFU VAMPIRE BUSTER), plays the archeologist in this movie. In MR. VAMPIRE II, he's never given a chance to display his considerable martial arts skills. Check out his fighting ability in superior horror movies like THE DEAD AND THE DEADLY and ENCOUNTER OF THE SPOOKY KIND.

end



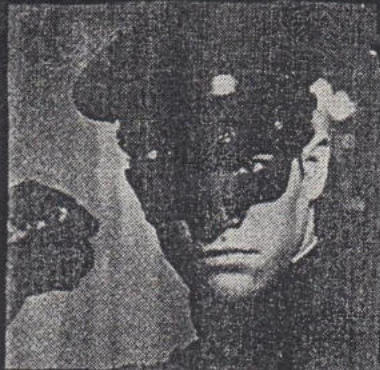
GREEN HORNET

A Greenway Production in association with 20th Century Fox, based on the popular radio dramas of "The Green Hornet Inc." created by George W. Trendle, associate producer: Jerry Thomas, asst. to the executive producer: Charles B. Fitzsimons, music by Bill May, theme played by Lionel Newman, production supervisor: Jack Sonntag, unit production manager: Mark Evans.

Cast:

Van Williams as the Green Hornet
Bruce Lee as Kato
Wende Wagner as Lenore Case
Lloyd Gough as Mike Akford





1966 was truly an important year for celluloid adventures depicting martial arts and/or superheroes. Japan's Tokyo Broadcasting Service (a major network) created the ULTRAMAN TV series that year (which turned out to be one of the most revolutionary programs ever created), and Hong Kong's Shaw Bros. company produced THE ONE ARMED SWORDSMAN, which was the first Chinese martial arts film to make millions of dollars, and one which made a star out of Jimmy Yung Yu. But not only the Chinese and Japanese were getting into the action of the newfound genre. 1966 was also the year that ULTRAMAN's American counterpart, BATMAN debuted. This was the year of physical combat in fantasy, at a time when two-fisted action was finally becoming widespread among films and TV. But if any series displayed fictional self-defense well, it would have to be the underrated TV series from America which marked the martial arts debut of Bruce Lee, THE GREEN HORNET.

I've never seen any evidence that there was any serious karate-like action in films before 1966. I'd seen early samurai movies (RASHOMON, SANJURO, SEVEN SAMURAI, etc.) from the 1950s, but I found that they concentrated more on drama and preachings of honor & bushido than serious martial arts action. What little fighting shown was of course, kendo, Japanese fencing. Since technically, Japanese karate wasn't invented in Japan until the 1920s, and the samurais were banished in 1868. In the pre-1966 American action films, the only ones depicting martial arts, like action that I can recall were lame spy flicks like those featuring James Bond.

Although the character of Batman (in the show of the same name) used a fighting technique more reminiscent of American boxing than Chinese gung-fu, the BATMAN TV series played an important role in developing the modern martial arts flicks. For had it not been for BATMAN, there never would have been THE GREEN HORNET, without which there would never been THE BIG BOSS.

The caped crusaders proved that there was an audience who wanted an exciting superhero TV series which could blow away the utter boredom of the painfully naive SUPERMAN TV show of the 1950s. And so BATMAN's producer decided to take another old hero from 1940s serials. This remake was to be the third version of The Green Hornet (there had been a B&W serial and some sort of radio play). That producer was William Dozier, who needed an oriental male martial artist to play the hero's sidekick (no pun intended), Kato in the series. The original serial featured Keye Luke in that

role, though he was a bit too old in 1966 to play Kato again. Another factor was that 1966 was a year of karate awareness, and this Lew Kato would have to know some fancy kata-ork. (The old serial had Kato as just a chauffeur, who's only martial arts display was an occasional karate chop to the back of an enemy's neck.) Fortunately, Bruce Lee had a chance to strut his stuff at a 1964 karate tournament at Longbeach. American karate pioneer Ed Parker had filmed Lee's demonstration and eventually showed the footage to a hair dresser for celebrities called Jay Sebring, who later died along with Sharon Tate during Charles Manson's carnage spree, who got the films of Lee to be viewed by client William Dozier. Dozier was impressed by Lee's martial arts capabilities, plus the fact that Bruce Lee was the only actor capable of pronouncing Britt Reid, alias the Green Hornet. The end result was Lee's co-starring with Van Williams in one of the most original, yet underrated TV shows of all-time.

Broadcast for the 1966/67 season on ABC, production began in June of 1966. Lee made \$400 a week, and would later receive regular royalties for its successful repeats in the orient. However, the series had poor ratings in America, which resulted in its cancellation after 30 half hour, full color episodes.

The plot dealt with the adventures of Britt Reid (who, in the original serial and radio show was a nephew of John Reid, alias the Lone Ranger) who was editor and publisher of The Daily Sentinel. But Reid has a secret identity as a masked vigilante who took



the law into his own hands called the Green Hornet. Aided by his trusty Chinese servant Kato and assorted futuristic weapons such as a supercar called Black Beauty, guns which fire gas and needles, and a remarkable baton called the Hornet Sting, the Green Hornet battled organized crime while letting the general public believe that he too was a criminal.

THE GREEN HORNET maintains the same unrealistic approach as its inferior (but more successful) predecessor BATMAN, but without all the camp, tackiness, tongue-in-cheek humor, outlandishness, and all over stupidity of BATMAN. Where as the villains in BATMAN (essentially comicbook characters in acted form) are elaborate caricatures and overdone stereotypes, the Green Hornet's foes are for the most part, ordinary mobsters. My memory of viewing THE GREEN HORNET and BATMAN in 1966 is a fuzzy memory indeed. My memory of THE GREEN HORNET in 1966 is limited to its 3D-like animation of the hornet from the opening credits, alth-

ough I seem to recollect the masks on our two rebellious heroes. My memory of BATMAN in 1966 (when I was two years old) is distorted, since its immense popularity keeps it in almost constant syndicated repeats each year. Regrettably, THE GREEN HORNET never enjoyed the American syndicat-



ion which keeps re-introducing BATMAN to generation after generation. My love of TV karate (i.e. adventure, not sparring tournaments) started in the mid 1970s as a result of Japanese superhero programs like JINZON-INGEN KIKAIKA and HIMITSU SENTAI GORENGA, which eventually lead to my idolizing many martial arts actors including Bruce Lee, and I often regretted not being able to see THE GREEN HORNET, unlike Lee's over-exposed ENTER THE DRAGON movie. Not until 1988 (15 years after Lee's death! 22 years after THE GREEN HORNET first appeared! About 13 years after I got into these types of programs) did I finally get a chance to be reacquainted with what were probably my childhood heroes. No thanks to American TV stations. The gratitude goes to the miracle of bootlegging and word of mouth. Granted, corporations have a right to whine about illegal video-copying & selling, but when these same companies are doing nothing (i.e. no syndication, no pre-record releases) to make viewing of such programs accessible, video pirating seems perfectly reasonable.

In comparison to BATMAN, the main similarity between both shows, aside from the concept of two masked crime-fighters battling evildoers is the score. Although both theme songs are different, the incidental background music for both shows is nearly identical. As for individual differences, there's the fights. BATMAN's fights were long, drawn out, sometimes unconvincing, featured superimposed words like "Pow" and "Bom," and were usually saved for the episodes' grand finale. But the superior fist fights in THE GREEN HORNET were shorter, realistic, had no comical superimpositions, and could (and sometimes did) occur at anytime in the episode. Lee insisted that they not overdo the fights or make them last too long. Lee knew that realistically, he could knock out those crooks with a single punch or kick. This effect worked well. Characterwise, the Green Hornet and Kato were more ruthless than the two caped crusaders. Where as Batman and the Boy Wonder were sickeningly clean-cut and full of ultra-conservative morals, the Green Hornet & Kato were a little more human. Although they're concerned with fighting crime, they admit that they're also in the crimefighting business for personal gain. I feel that the Green Hornet & Kato are more efficient fighters than the goody two shoes Dynamic Duo, since in most cases, the caped crusaders take two episodes to defeat their foes. Those horrid cliff-hanger episodes where the

climax features Batman & Robin about to die in the most ridiculous manner is more frustrating than suspenseful. At least most episodes of THE GREEN HORNET are complete stories within themselves, without the heroes' effectiveness being tarnished in favor of vulnerability.

It is indeed unfortunate that Bruce Lee was given only a co-starring roll in this one-of-a-kind series. The producers hadn't realized that Lee was the most talented person on the staff. Nowadays, what single name comes to mind when the term "Green Hornet" is mentioned? Would it be Britt Reid? No. How about Van Williams? Nope. Perhaps William Dozier. Not quite. The first name to come to mind is Bruce Lee. THE GREEN HORNET is now known almost exclusively as a Bruce Lee series, even though he only played a second hero. Exactly what became of Van Williams is anyone's guess. As for Bruce Lee, we know he went on to be not just the most famous gungfu star worldwide, but he became one of the world's most famous actors, period.

Although every episode gave Bruce Lee a chance to display at least a little of his martial arts, these fights weren't as fast as those he would later do in Golden Harvest's movies. Supposedly, the cameras used to film THE GREEN HORNET weren't able to keep up with Lee's lightning speed kicks, and it looked as though Kato's opponents were just falling down for no reason. So Lee was asked to slow down his kicks and punches, which also made his fighting skill seem lower than it was.

Perhaps the reason the ratings for THE GREEN HORNET were so bad was because, despite Bruce Lee's appearance, the series was maybe a touch on the boring side. Compared the BATMAN, the atmosphere of THE GREEN HORNET was serious, sometimes complex. Trying to squeeze a complicated storyline into a single half hour is no easy task. Also, I thought that maybe there were too many guest characters per episode, and that can be distracting. The continuity was also a bit uneven. I mean, one min-



ute, characters are talking in slice-of-life situations like in some timid soap opera. And in the next scene, Kato presses the switch to make the Black Beauty appear by having the whole floor (in the garage) turn around and go upsidown as the other car sticks to the original floor, and the two cars switch places, so that the Black Beauty is now on the top where Britt's car was, and vice versa.

There were three episodes of BATMAN which featured the Green Hornet and Kato as guest stars. One episode merely featured the two guest heroes sticking their heads out of a window as the caped crusaders climbed by on their batrope. But the other two episodes involved both a team up and a confrontation between all four comic heroes. I won't go much further into detail on it, since this is supposed to be a THE GREEN HORNET article. Besides, I'm saving that whole "Batman vs the Green Hornet" story for a future article.

END

MR. VAMPIRE 3

Produced by Golden Harvest & Baha Films in 1986, featuring Lam Jing Ying

Entertainment & excitement returns in this installment of the Mr. Vampire saga. MR. VAMPIRE III is not only a return to the thrills and chills of the first flick, but comes off as an opposite to chapter 2! Despite the existence of an undead child in MR. VAMPIRE III, this film is nowhere near as infantile as its predecessor. Although MR. VAMPIRE III lacks the adult sexual subplot as seen in MR. VAMPIRE II, MR. VAMPIRE III is more for adults than kids, but it can be enjoyed by all ages.

MR. VAMPIRE is the most suspenseful of the trilogy, but this one is the scariest. The main female villain is a frightening yet attractive witch who's scratchy voice can send chills up one's spine. Other terror-inspiring elements for this movie include the occasional use of gore, the likes of which weren't in either of the predecessors.

Another plus for this fast-paced thriller is its use of special effects, equalling those in the original MR. VAMPIRE. Super impositions and ghoulish makeup abound. And even lots of explosive effects run rampant throughout the production.

Although MR. VAMPIRE's humor was more laughable, this one at least offers a few chuckles, which is more than MR. VAMPIRE II did.

Unfortunately, the video rental box has no English writing on it at all. I had rented and copied it, and viewed it several times without even knowing its title. Not until I inquired at a Chinese videostore was I

informed it was the latest in the Mr. Vampire Trilogy. Perhaps its best that the title makes no boasts of it being connected to the Mr. Vampire movies, since it has no vampires or gyojis anywhere in it! But this doesn't stop it from being a fantastic horror movie.

I was relieved in an obligatory anti-animal scene (like I mentioned in my article on MR. VAMPIRE) where an evil witch chops off the head of an iguana to drink its blood, that they used a toy rubber iguana, and not the real one that we first see relaxing on a tree branch. I suppose that the zoo they rented the little fellow from made the producers sign a paper prohibiting the cold-blooded murder of this cold-blooded lizard. Sorry all you animal killers from Golden Harvest, you lose!

The story takes place in old times as Lam Jing Ying (this time no Yuan Bai) returns to play Mr. Kou. Kou is aiding some resistance fighters in battling an army of murderous bandits. As the defensive townspeople wage a blood & guts battle against the criminals, it's discovered that their leader is an evil witch lady with many magic powers, including control of bats and bugs. With the exception of this sinister sorceress and two of her fellow warriors who get captured, all the evil invaders are defeated. The witch attacks later to rescue her two assistants, but accidentally kills them, thanks to a trap set by the ingenious Mr. Kou. Kou, with the help of some other fighters, manages to kill her, knocking her down into a well. However, she eventually returns from the dead as a ghost. The result is yet another breathtaking battle of backbreaking stunts and Taoist magic. During the climactic fight, you can't help but feel for the heroes and admire them for being such persistent troopers. These determined fighters really hang in there, despite numerous defeats, miss-haps, and setbacks. Mr. Kou comes off as a real expert in what he does. He's a believable hero that the audience has lots of respect and faith in.

An important subplot involves a common called wing who confronts two ghosts called Ta Pao and Hsiao Pao. These three

good guys figure prominently in aiding Mr. Kou in defeating the villains.

Besides the usual talismans and yin & yang symbols used against gyojis, an additional ghost deterrent is tar. Tar, in this motion picture, is invisible to ghosts. So remember, next time you're haunted by a Chinese ghost, wear lots of tar all over your body and you'll be safe.

One final note comes to mind as I close this article on the spectacular film MR. VAMPIRE III: verifies something first brought to my attention in MR. VAMPIRE II. And that's a plot element which deals with the humans suppressing their undead attackers. Ever notice how cocky some Chinese guys get when they've finally got protection from their monstrous hunter? I mean, sure, things like mirrors, bright light, sticky rice, ying & yang, and talismans render undead villains helpless. Yet I don't think that in a real-life situation, I would want to flaunt it by dancing around the baddie, singing Chinese equivalents of: "Nye, nye, nye! You can't get me!"

END



This article is more or less a continuation of that article in the previous issue of ORIENTAL CINEMA, also consisting of mini-reviews of Chinese gungfu movies. Since the number of Chinese martial arts films in existence is astronomical, it would be expensive, time-consuming and impractical to give long, detailed extensive, critical in-depth reviews to all of these dime-a-dozen movies which number in the millions. Assuming that I plan to continue to publish this fanzine, this section should become a regular column, reviewing all those good & bad fist films we love to hate, or hate to love.

IMAGE OF BRUCE LEE 1980

With: Bruce Li (Ho Chung Tao), Yang Sze, Chang Wu Lang, Lei Dana

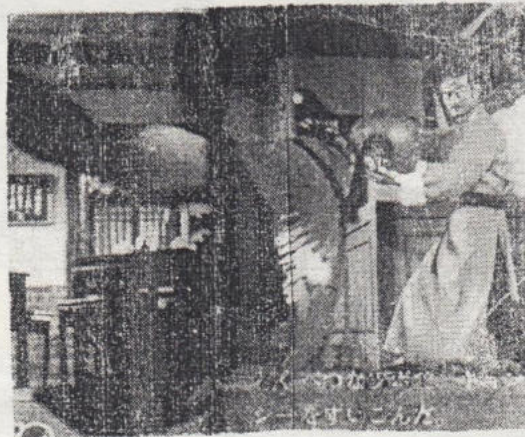
A crime drama centering on two policemen investigating counterfeiters in Hong Kong.

This flick tries to be a Bruce Lee rip off, as you can tell from the title. But the movie has nothing to do at all with Bruce Lee. There's just one scene, where the lead female character (played by the same beauty who played the sheldemon in INFRAMAN) says that the lead hero (played by Ho Chung Tao) looks like Bruce Lee, and he ought to be in movies.

The rest of the picture involves secret agents attempting to locate some plates used for printing fake money. The film contains 15 fights, 13 of which are worth watching. The rest of the movie is naively made and poorly constructed.

2 MOVIE—Drama

"The Ninja Warlord." (Chinese, 1981). A renowned boxer takes on a Japanese ruler who wants to control China's fishing industry. Chan Sini, Kurata. 12 hrs.



THE NINJA WARLORD (1981)
 Producer: Pei Ming, Production Coordinator: Yu Yun Ping, Fighting Instructor: Cheng Tsung and Huang Chien Chun, Screenplay: Cheng Sung, Film editor: Sing Chung, Cinematographer: Chang Chi, Editing: Lin Piao Sherring, Chen Shang, Yasuaki Kurata, Irene Leder, Hang Yuan Shen, Chou Chiang, Sun Jim, Han Yuo Chai, So Heng, Li Cha Ting, Chen Ling Wei, & Jun Li Jen

A renowned Chinese boxer takes on a Japanese ruler who wants to control China's fishing industry.

Yasuaki Kurata (the movie's most well-known actor) is once again typecast as an evil Japanese villain. In Japan, Kurata starred in Toei's FIGHTING DRAGON TV series (Incidentally, Yang Sze made a guest appearance on this adventure program). But in China, Kurata is just another Japanese villain.

The prejudice in this movie offended me, and I'm not even Japanese! But I have many Japanese friends, and none of them are as diabolical as the ones in this film (except for maybe Mr. & Mrs. Tamura, but that's another story). My only grudge against the Japanese (except for the Tamuras, whom I have several grudges against) is that they still kill whales. If China's films must continue to be anti-Japanese, why won't they be constructive? How about a film where Chinese gungfuers take on a Japanese whaling industry, to save an endangered species? I suppose my love of whales & other animals comes from my father Larry Foster, an artist and noted whale expert, somewhat well-known among conservationists and environmentalists.



YASUAKI KURATA

Well, I really seemed to have strayed from the subject, since this is supposed to be an article on a Chinese gungfu flick, not whales and politics!

The movie is okay. Well photographed, good acting, and nice music. Action is scarce. Fight scenes are lacking in both quality and quantity.

Another bad thing about this blood & gore film, is the title. Inaccurate, since it has no ninjas at all!

INVINCIBLE KUNG FU LEGGS (1979)
 (Original Chinese title: 'The Legg Fighters')
 Presented by: Chern Jing Der, Asst. Manager: Chen Wen Ho, Unit Production: Pan Shang Kuo, Cameramen: Chuan Yin Chien, Asst. Director: Chang Chien Fu, Lighting: Lin Chen Hui, Continuity: Wang Rin, Screenplay: Chang Hsin, Fighting directors: Peng Gong, Suen Rong Jui, & Wang Yao
 Starring: Tern Daw Liang (alias Tan Tao Lian), Shieh Guang Lih (alias Hsio Kuang Li), Peng Gong, Jin Long, Suen Rong Jui, Wang Hsieh, Tsai Hung, Wu Kuo Ting, Lang Tsu, Chen Chia Hsi, Shih Ting Ken, Hsieh Chang Wan, Hsiao Ho, Yuan Pao, Wang Wao

During a duel of martial artists, Fang Fei (a cruel fighter) is killed. In spite of the fact that he cheated (he pulled out a knife), Fang Fei is the loser. The other fighter is Tan Hai Chi, who has emerged victorious.



Feng Pa (Fang Fei's brother) wants revenge, and plans to kill Tan Hai Chi.

The film also involves a strict gungfu teacher called Ho Gung Fan, and how he attempts to teach his female student how to defend herself. But Ho Gung Fan's training is so strenuous that the student's servant (called Chin Fa) must try to rescue her from the harsh lessons.

Chin Fa himself is a comedian, in the classic tradition of Jackie Chan.

Ho Gung Fan eventually leaves. It is at this point that Tan Hai Chi enters their lives, he's to be their new instructor.

The flick's opening duel gives the impression that this whole movie will be an all-serious, no humor movie. A few minutes later, quite the opposite. The film becomes a hilarious comedy. The funny antics are very laughable.

The fighting choreography is shockingly good. Not only are the kicks lightning fast, but seem to come in contact with their targets.

The acrobats, gymnastics and stunts are utterly amazing. Most of the time, you actually get full facial glimpses of the heroes as they do these stunts, to prove that the actors are performing these feats, and not stuntmen.

The voice dubbing is interesting. The voices are indeed dumb, but they add to the fun. One of the villains (who likes to wear bells) sounds like Yogi Berra.

On the whole, this entertaining period film is action-packed, and is one of my favorites.

This movie introduced me to Shieh Guang Lih (also spelled Hsio Kuang Li), who's since become my favorite actress.

MOVIE—Drama
 "The Invincible Kung Fu Legs." (Chinese: 1979) A student sets out to avenge the death of his elder brother. Jan. Tao-Liang—(2 hrs.)

THE SAVAGE FIVE
 Screenplay by: I Kuang, Film Editing: Kuo Ting Hio, Cinematography: Yung Mu To, Sound Recording: Wang Yung Hua, Props: Ho Chieh Fu, Makeup: Wu Hsu Chin, Director: Johnson Tsao, Assistant director: Ho Chih Chiang, Fighting Instructor: Tang Chia, Music: Yung Yu, and starring: David Chiang, Ti Lung, Chen Yuan Tai, Li Hsiu Hsien, Wang Chung, Chiang Tao, Frankie Wei, Wang Ping-Ping, Lu Ti & Wang Ching.

In SEVEN SAMURAI, it was Takashi Shimura and Toshiro Mifune who lead the heroes to rescue villagers from bandits. In the film's American remake THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, it was Yul Brenner who led the team of heroes. Then, in 1977, we saw an outerspace version called STAR WARS, with Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill playing the heroes. On NBC's terrible adventure series THE A-TEAM, it was Mr. T who helped lead the attack on terrorists who conquered a town, in its pilot. And then of course, was Lou Ferrigno's movie, SEVEN MAGNIFICENT GLADIATORS.

THE SAVAGE FIVE is a Chinese gungfu version of the popular plot. The time, it's David Chiang & Ti Lung who defend a village from bandits.

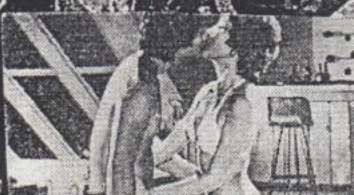
This is an uncreative, slow, dull, typical gungfu yarn. The villains are far too corrupt, making the movie unrealistic. Chiang Tao (again type-cast as a villain) and his followers just begin beating up innocent people, for no reason.

The fights are few, the music is depressing, and the voice-dubbing features voices which don't fit the characters. Particularly funny is the scene where Ti Lung's characters sings. Perhaps the Chinese version has him actually singing for real, with real Chinese words. In the English version, his 'singing' consists mainly of: "La da dum do la yo la la dum do do," and the like. Quite silly.

THE SAVAGE FIVE was made in the mid-1970s, at about the same time that The Shaws also made INFRAMAN. Li Hsiu Hsien, who played the heroic Inframan, appears in THE SAVAGE FIVE, and so does Lin Wen Wei, who played Tu Ming in INFRAMAN, and the so-called acrobatic in THE SAVAGE FIVE.

BRUCE LEE. HIS LAST DAYS, HIS LAST NIGHTS
 A Shaw Bros. Presentation of Cambridge Films Release, Film Director: John Lo Mar. Cast: Betty Ting Pei, Li Hsiu Hsien, Wang Sha, Lu Chun, Nan Kung Hsun, Huang Man, Ku Wen Tsung, Li Peng Fei, Li Shou Chi, Chin Ti, Peng Peng, Chiang Song.

Now here's a sentimental drama that's advertised as an action flick. Previews of the movie will show nothing but fight scenes. In the film, the fights have milwida gaps inbetween. The rest of the picture involves actress Betty Ting Ping (playing herself), and how this poor, unfortunate, innocent girl was tormented by people who insisted she killed Bruce Lee. Li Hsiu Hsien, however, does look a lot like Ho Chung Tao/Bruce Lee (another Lee imitator). In fact, this film's fight-scenes



were later spliced into a Bruce Li film, as stock-footage. Bruce Li and Li Hsiu Hsien are so similar (in both appearance and fighting skill) that the stock footage fits in well.

Back to BRUCE LEE; HIS LAST DAYS, HIS LAST NIGHTS. The music is good, and so are the fight scenes. But the dubbing, acting, and directing are of poor quality. Because of these bad elements, I'm not very fond of this motion (or "motionless") picture. I also found the scenes of sex and nudity to be offensive.

To be honest, this is one of the worst gungfu films I've ever seen. [cont.]

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A SAT-
IRICAL
NEWS-
LETTER!

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BLOODY FISTS (1972)
 Producer: Jimmy Pascual, Directed by: Chuo Teng Hong, Fighting Directors: Yuen Woo Ping, Music by Chao Fu Liang, and starring: Chen Sing, Chen Kuan Tai, Liu Ta Chuan, Henry Yue Young, Lindy Lim Yue Mei, H.K. T.V.B. Star: Hong Kwan Choy, Pui So Leh

A nasty fellow called Chen Sen has returned to China after living a few years in Japan. While in Japan, he mastered some of the Japanese martial arts, like karate & judo. But in China is a special root called "dragon herb." This plant can cure a plague which has been killing people throughout the orient. Chen Sen has returned to China for two reasons; to get revenge against those who forced him from China, and to obtain the dragon herb. Along with a corrupt gang of evil Japanese, Chen begins terrorizing a local Chinese village. Among the people killed by the Japanese is a deaf mute called Yaba. One of Yaba's friends decides to avenge Yaba's death. This friend is an escaped convict.

A typical pro-Chinese, anti-Japanese, chop sockey movie. Complete with commonly heard, familiar sounding stock music from CHINESE CONNECTION and BLESS THE BEASTS AND THE CHILDREN. At times, this motionful picture seems identical to REVENGE OF THE DRAGON. Kungfu great Chen Sing appears in both movies, although his name is spelled differently in the opening credits for each film.

As with all martial arts movies, I found this one to be enjoyable. But there's nothing that stands out. After seeing this movie, my mind is pretty blank (so what else is new?). There's nothing that I remember about it. So many movies are exactly like this one.



KUNG FU WEEK
BLOODY FISTS

TONIGHT'S MOVIE AT 8



44 MOVIE—Drama
 "The Bloody Fists." (Chinese; 1972) A fugitive (Chen Sing) aids villagers who are being harassed by Japanese martial-arts experts. Lindy Lim Yue Mei, Henry Yue Young, (2 hrs.)

44 MOVIE—Adventure
 "Incredible Kung Fu Mission." (Chinese; 1981) Commandos pose as acrobats to rescue an imprisoned comrade. John Lone



KUNG FU WEEK
THE INCREDIBLE KUNG FU MISSION

TONIGHT'S MOVIE AT 8



INCREDIBLE KUNG FU MISSION (1981)
 Directed by: Chang Hsin Yi, starring: Chen Lung, Hsu Chung Hen, Ting Hwa Choong, Wei Ping Ao

Some corrupt military soldiers have captured a rebellious man called Tin Ten Fang. Lu Chi is a gungfu expert who is in charge.

Shu Tin Kang is a martial arts expert who is scheduled to lead a gang of five martial artists. Their duty is to rescue Tin Ten Fang. Although skillful fighters, they're a bit careless and tend to fight with each other. However, Shu Tin Kang teaches them well, and using strict gung fu discipline, teaches the five men to get along with each other. Thus, the incredible gungfu mission begins. Shu Tin Kang rescues Tin Ten Fang, who is later killed by the same deceitful man who hired our doomed heroes to rescue the poor guy! In the end, Shu Tin Kang is the only survivor.

This impressive movie is a fantastic combination of beautiful fight choreography, cute & fancy clothes, hilarious antics and very British voice-dubbing.

I think that I've said what I had to say about this terrific picture. It's fun, fastpaced, creative, psychedelic, and utterly wonderful.

I guess my only real complaint is that all of the film's heroes (each with their own individual personality) get killed at the end of the movie. Of course, this merely adds realism to an otherwise fake (yet fun) motionful picture.

Wei Ping Ao has a cameo at this flick's beginning. He's once again type cast as a wimpy villain.

NOTE: This article was written six years ago when I obviously loved it. I have seen it once or twice since, and I don't like it that much anymore, because I don't like the lead hero because he was in a piece of garbage called A STRUGGLE THROUGH DEATH.

SHAOLIN HANDLOCK
 Produced by Run Run Shew, Screenplay by I Kuang, Cinematography: Tseu Hui Chi, Lighting: Chen Feng, Sound Recording: Wang Tung Hwa, Art Director: Chen Ching Tseng, Editing: Chiang Hsing Luang, Asst. Producer: Wan Po Han, Asst. Director: Hung Ke, Costumes: Liu Chi Yu, Props: Yuen Haiang, Makeup: Wu Hsu Chang, Fighting Instructor: Tang Chia, Music: Chen Yung Yu, Producer: Mono Fong, Director: Ho Meng Hwa, and starring: David Chiang, Chen Hui Min, Lo Lieh, Chen Ping, Yeh Ling Szu, Shen Li Wei, Lu Chi, Tu Lung, Hui Ying Hung, & Chan Shen

The son of a gungfu instructor is Li Chen Ying. His father was Li Pai, who was murdered by a former friend (now an assassin) called Fung Yin Paw. Li Chen Ying (being the typical vengeful hero that he is) decides to get revenge. Li Chen Ying pursues Fung Yin Paw to Bangkok. After killing Fung Yin Paw, he sets out to defeat Fung Yin Paw's boss, who paid to have Li Pai killed, called Ling Ho.

And so now our hero is off to kill Ling Ho, the mafia leader. After a number of tight situations, Ling Ho and his corrupt mob has been destroyed, because Li Chen Ying used the "Shaolin handlock," a violent fighting technique that Li Pai had taught him.

Yet another chop-sockey movie that glorifies revenge. The movie appears to be rushed, quickly made. There is not much character development. But my comments to this film could be applied to damn near every 1970s gungfu film. Good fights, terrible acting, and okay music.

SUPER POWER
 Producer: Pui Ming, coproducer: Wo Wing Ping, Starring: Billy Chang, Directed by: Lin Chen Wei

This film is only good for its display of the martial arts. The fight scenes are well choreographed (and the titles feature Billy Chang performing with some martial arts steal rings), and are basically a series of armlocks (examining the traditional Shaolin styles). It looks more like they're playing pattycake than fighting.

The rest of the movie isn't all that appealing. The horrible acting and horrible voicedubbing isn't even worthy of discussion. But I would like to comment on two particularly naive scenes during this motion picture. There's a dinner table scene where a bunch of martial artists talk, and brag of their skills. Certain members of this dinner party seem to get offended at what is being said. Why? There's nothing offensive about it. Another scene is where a rather attractive oriental girl (wearing feminine makeup) goes into a restaurant, dressed like a man. The men in the restaurant (who must be blind) think she's male! One guy then looks at her breasts (and the actress who plays this girl is flat, her one masculine quality) and finally comes to the conclusion that she's female. Yet her boobs are practically undetectable.

RETURN OF THE KUNG FU DRAGON
 Presented by: Chen Ching Te, Supervisor: Lee Sun Siung, Screenplay: Lee Ge Sun, Story: Lin Yu Yien, and starring: Sun Kuan, Rin Fang, Chang Li, Chan Hsin

A corrupt army of bandits (led by General Black) has just defeated a wise-man called Sun Chal. Now that he's out of the way, they're going to attack China's ruling clan. And so General Me (a soldier at the palace) finds the princess and he helps her escape. She's later given to a wizard called Shang Chow Chen. Using

magical powers, he creates some fog which will protect her for 19 years. After 19 years, the princess no longer is there for protection. However, she is destined for gungfu. But the princess later discovers that she's not really a princess. She's actually the daughter of a soldier. How confusing? The whole movie is this way.

Confusing yet fun. The whole film (despite occasional lunacy and poor voices) is very entertaining.

The costumes are utterly incredible, but all far fetched.

THE LOST KUNGFU SECRETS

Produced by Chen Ching Te, Supervisor: Leo Hsin Hsiung, Screenplay: Lo Tzu, Kungfu director: Chan Wa Chuen, and starring: David Chiang (alias Chang Dai wei & Chiang Tai tai), How Wong, Tsei Hun, Hui Gin, & Chang Tsung.

Corrupt soldiers from the Ching Dynasty are using Christianity to recruit people into their army. Be describing it as a wonderful religion, Chinese civilians are eager to join. They all end up as extra warriors of the Ching dynasty. The leader of these soldiers is an evil general called Hung San Chen.

Predictably, there's a gang of gungfu heroes who like to beat up all bad guys.

Tang Tao Chang (David Chiang) is one rebellious soldier who is tired of the cruel army, so he joins up with the team of heroes.

The opening title/credits sequence of this abnormal comedy drama is misleading. It gives the impression that this is an incredibly action-packed, exciting film. The flick itself isn't as entertaining as its opening graphics. But it's okay.

The soundtrack is rather inferior (although some of the sound effects are nice. They even echo). The voice-dubbing is horrible. There's a scene at the beginning where a horse is running along a road. Because Chinese films are made without sound (every sound is dubbed in a studio), a substitute sound was created for the horses galloping. It actually sounds like two coconuts being hit together.

END

MAGIC STORY

Presented by Ocean Shores Video, 1987

Attempting to follow this slapstick story is no easy task for someone like myself who's ability at understanding Cantonese is equivalent to my being able to breathe underwater. There are no English subtitles on my VHS copy of this lousy (and I do mean lousy) flick. The overall script is self explanatory, but there are certain things I can't figure out, like why that old man makes a werewolf robot that he never really



activates. Or why the gyonst boy can walk perfectly well yet he prefers to hop like the rest of the gyonstis.

On the whole, even MR. VAMPIRE II blows away this piece of garbage, but MAGIC STORY succeeds where it fails. MR. VAMPIRE II attempted at, but fails. MR. VAMPIRE II wanted to be cute and enchanting but ended up just plain stupid. And although parts of MAGIC STORY also exceed in utter stupidity, it's cute & enchanting. Even its cute musical score is delightful. I must confess, I even liked the ballad for this one, sung by a lady with children doing the chorus! Other tunes include stock-music from Italian movies like ZOMBIE and one or more of the spaghetti westerns starring Clint Eastwood.

The film's general plot is a non-martial arts variation on the first two Mr. Vampire movies. From MR. VAMPIRE came the setting: A Chinese countryside's village, in the late 1800s. Taken from MR. VAMPIRE II is the overdone concept of a gyonst family searching for their runaway (or "hop-away") son. MAGIC STORY begins with the three adult gyonstis emerging from their coffins. There are three of them: A wife, a long-fanged husband, and a grandmother obviously played by a man. Upon their awakening, they discover their young son is missing. Their only guess as to where he is lies in his watch. It makes a chime sound they can hear, even from great distances. But the gyonst boy loses it and someone else finds it. Any human caught with that watch becomes a target for the gyonstis.



It is in this inaccurate film that the once pure Chinese concept of gyonstis gets contaminated by Western folklore. The gyonstis in MAGIC STORY have an unfortunate tendency toward turning into bats! However, the surreal way their transformation occurs has nothing to do with the story, and seems to be added for symbolism. The first transformation occurs at the film's beginning when we see the three gyonstis leaving the interior of a very Chinese looking mortuary. As the titles & credits occur immediately after, we see a cartoon of a European haunted castle, and three bats flying out the window. The second and last metamorphosis from gyonst to bat occurs at the ending, just as the ending credits begin to appear. What happens is the cops shoot at the gyonst boy, who explodes. From his smoke and ashes comes a bat which flies up into the sky and turns back into the gyonst boy. It freeze-frames as the movie comes to its long overdue end.

Other aspects to this movie include the obligatory Taoist wizard, the obligatory corpse driver, the obligatory cocky guy who flaunts his temporary ability at warding off a gyonst, and even some of those "clown ghosts" I mentioned in the MR. VAMPIRE review. But this time, they're playful children, and not rickshaw carriers. Another often done scene is where a gyonst begins mimicking (like a mirror's reflection) a human, doing exactly as he does. This has also been done in ENCOUNTER OF THE SPOOKY KIND, HELLOH DEACULAR and KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER (a.k.a. NEW MR. VAMPIRE). The one "obligatory" thing not present is gungfu, which I've always considered to be an important ingredient to the average gyonst picture. END

GON SIZE MIM TAM

Now here's one of the most unusual gyonst movies I've ever seen. Porno movies are the same all over the world. Take a well-known movie, and make an X-rated parody of it. There is even a porno parody of MAX HEADROOM called MAXINE. In China, exploitation artists are always up on the latest trends in mainstream films, so it was only a matter of time before some sick pervert decided to create a hardcore pornographic addition to the gyonst genre.

As a typical explicit porn flick, it's really not much different than all the others. It's got a simple plot made longer by its never ending intercourse scenes, characters who fuck each other before they're ever really introduced to the audience, and a rather low budget. I've never been a fan of porn films, and have never gone out of my way to see them (except for this one, but that was exclusively to see the gyonstis). I can understand why anyone would like to see sexy members of the opposite sex in the nude or in tight and/or skimpy clothing. It's a natural biological attraction. However, I can't stand watching two people having sex, no matter how attractive I find the female to be. I just don't like seeing nude males, just as I'm sure many females don't like seeing nude females. Watching explicit close-ups of sexual organs in action sickens me, and so do kinky things like oral sex and anal sex. For these reasons, I was not able to watch most of this terrible movie. In general, I think that the unfortunate individuals who always watch these films are either dissatisfied with their own sexual life (or lack of it), or are so cultureless & lack creative interests that they rely on a simple biological function to keep themselves busy. But I'm not condemning pornography. I'm no uptight conservative with nothing better to do with my life than preach in an opinionated manner what should be legal and what shouldn't. Freedom of expression shouldn't be destroyed, and I feel that if people actually want to create and view pornography, that's their own business.

As a gyonst movie, this movie leaves much to be desired. I even place it lower than MAGIC STORY, which previously had the record of being the worst gyonst movie I've ever seen. Since it's low budget, the gyonst makeup is far from convincing, especially since the makeup crew neglected to put makeup on the naked bodies of the gyonstis, yet applied ample amounts to their faces! The only real special effects I can recall are adequate explosions aimed at the gyonstis as they do flipflops during an anticlimactic battle. Oh yes, and there's an explicit (hah!) gore scene of a gyonst eating the guts from a fallen victim like in a George Romero zombie epic. This long, drawn-out shot could have been more shocking if it the bloody internal organs had been more realistic. Finally, there's gungfu. I seem to remember one or two bottles where the horny Taoist corpse driver fights to subdue an out-of-control gyonst. Their super brief fight is highlighted by flipflops, the likes of which, any average gyanst (including myself) can perform. The combative strikes (what few there are) are what I call "patty cake gungfu." You know the kind, the kind where the two fighters rarely hit each other's bodies, yet their arms continually clash, using assorted chops, punches and blocks. In a genuine gungfu film (especially the ones made after 1970, and up until present), this is usually done quite well. But when non-martial artists who are only skilled at on-screen humping attempt it, it looks painfully unconvincing.

The story begins at daytime with a Taoist corpse driver escorting a group of

gyonstis as they hop in single-file line. Despite the sunlight, the gyonstis seem to be alright (no decaying, no sunglasses). They lack talismans at this point, so I assume that the sun keeps them from attacking people. Well anyway, after a Chinese ballad during the corpse herding across the forest, the true intention of this dishonest corpse driver comes into light. He's a thief who plans on stealing the valuable death uniforms off the bodies of his deceased clients. And so he does, and in doing so, discovers that one particularly reluctant gyonst is female. As the corpse driver engages in an act of necrophilia, the other gyonstis run amok. From there, there are gyonstis rampaging scenes, unimportant characters performing the old 'in-out,' and there's even a shot where a male gyonst goes all the way with a large breasted Chinese girl. At the movie's long-awaited end, the corpse driver uses Taoist talismans to take the gyonstis back under his control. But as the Chinese 'The End' is super-imposed, the gyonstis strike again and attack the corpse driver, to the accompaniment of a freeze-frame effect.

END

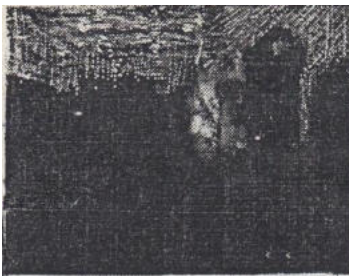
ABRA KADABRA

1986 Cinema City & Films Co., and Long Shong Pictures Ltd., Screenplay: Raymond Hwang, story: Edmund Lee, Director: Peter Mak, Produced by Dean Shek, Carl Mak and Wang Ting Hsiang

China is full of mediocre horror comedies like TO HELL WITH THE DEVIL and TIL DEATH DO WE ESCAPE. The gyonstis are the one major achievement of the Chinese in the horror film genre. I had expected this little flick to be just another dumb Chinese horror romp. But as far as all these silly ghost films go, this has got to be one of the better ones. But like other Chinese horror films (MR. VAMPIRE included), this one features an obligatory hoax scene where a human dresses up as an undead villain to scare a friend. The special effects for this light-hearted teenybopper movie are very good. Nice super-impositions, and nice makeup, especially on the main villainess. Those colored contact lenses are quite eerie. My favorite FX shot comes near the end when a man's body melts away, not unlike something you would expect to see in a film like THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN. The atmosphere can also be quite creepy, despite the intentionally humorous content. That scene where the ghost lady "Pinkish Red" flies over the swimming pool in pursuit of an unaware victim is not only eerily atmospheric, but beautifully staged. As for chills, the most chilling scene is at the chilling end when our heroic humans (college-age kids who work at a mall) evade chilling ghosts on their own chilling turf for the chilling climax. Much to my surprise, the picture even has maybe one or two kicks and punches! Gungfu was the last thing I had expected. The movie is anything but a martial arts movie. Although my comments on the flick are basically positive, it's really not that great a film, but not all bad either. Final comment before going into the plot: Why the hell is there a 22 super imposed in the middle of the screen for the final 10 or 15 minutes? It has nothing to do with the story, and merely gets in the way! How annoying. I guess they were having technical difficulties at the time of production, or perhaps a fired technician did it as a vengeful joke.

The plot has something to do with a late stripper called "Pinkish Red," who's

END



trademark was a red hood & cape she wore before and during each revealing performance. Anyway, one day a jealous & abused trower in the wardrobe department intentionally poured some sort of flammable liquid all over Pinkish Red's robe. More vengeance occurs that night in the same club as a couple of angry young men set fire to the whole place. It seems that they were kicked out for having been under age. Everybody died in the fire, and because of the flammable robe, Pinkish Red was the first to burn. The customers, clubworkers and Pinkish Red are all ghosts now. Pinkish Red is on the search for living victims to kill, in hopes of being reincarnated. Cheng Sheng and his friend nicknamed Rambo (I kid you not) enlist the aid of an ESP telepath called Kang Vowel in helping them retrieve a girl called Cicci, who's been kidnapped by Pinkish Red. And if all that's not enough hassle, a foolish college professor took a device called a "Spirit Machine" which he invented to a local cemetery with some students. Dozens of traditional hopping gyonosis arise, and one even escaped from the graveyard and hops all over modern Hong Kong. She's an attractive lady, attired in a bridal gown. Like the gyonosis in many other movies, she seems to overcome her rigamortis later in the movie, and begins to act more like a Romero zombie than someone on a popo stick gone out of control.

EAD

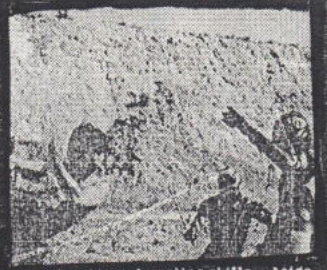
NINGEN- UPDATE

First of all, "ningen" is a Japanese word that is often used by narrators in the superhero TV shows of Nippon. The literal translation of the word is something very close to "mechanical man."

Originally, this column was to be a continuing article (from issue to issue) on Japanese superheroes. This article, being #1, was to review all those boring old pre-ULTRAMAN b & w heroes like

Prince of Space. But I just wrote about all those dull shows & films in an issue of PACK a few months ago, and I reviewed the Ultrabrothers, Kamen Riders and Space Sheriffs a year ago in the late JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI publication. So I've decided not to rehash all that stuff just for the sake of historical review, and instead, do an up-to-date write-up on all the pathetic new superhero programs from 1988 to 1989.

What all these new TV shows have in common is a heavy emphasis on special effects and childish predictability. No more of the unique wise-guy type of heroic character featured in the mid 1970s classic KAIKETSU ZUBATTO series. Also lacking is the spectacular stuntwork from semi-old programs like UCHU KEIJI GYABAN ("Space Sheriff Gavann") and KAGATSU SENTAI DAINAMAN ("Dynaman") since J.A.C. superstars like Junichi Haruta and Kenji Ohba have gone off to do newer and better (nah!) things. So what do we have left? We've got a bunch of cute Japanese airheads who got their acting rolls in dumb hero adventures by means of New Faces Contests. Their fighting skills are secondary to their



merely adequate acting skills. Aside from these actors' pay checks, it seems that much of the budget goes to special effects. There's really nothing wrong with that, certainly, since the sci-fi element was always an important ingredient with the superhero programs. But the excessive progression of special effects has taken its toll on another necessary aspect of Jap heroes: martial arts! For the most part, the karate skills of most of our cybernetic heroes in recent years seems to be a result of quickie self-defense basics that the actor(s) learned after he'd first been cast to play the heroic mechanical man ("ningen") in whatever series was in production that particular minute. Gone are the days when an actor like Hiroshi Watari would study martial arts, gymnastics & acting extensively for years at Sonny Chiba's Japan Action Club, in hopes of eventually getting that big break; starring in his own superhero series (in this case, the masterpiece UCHU KEIJI SHARIBAN).

In 1988, LIVEMAN and probably KAMEN RIDER BLACK/RX debuted. LIVEMAN, though not as horrendous as 1986's DIMENSIONAL WARRIOR SPIELVANN, was a shallow series with overdone special effects, and martial arts which rivaled Dan Knott's karate demonstrations in THE GHOST & MR. CHICKEN. LIVEMAN was the latest in the superhero teams called Sentais, which started in the early 1970s with HIMITSU SENTAI GORANGERS, on through early 1980s classics like TAIYO SENTAI SUN VULCAN. Things began deteriorating after KAGATSU SENTAI DYNAMAN, and LIVEMAN has got to be the worst of the bunch. Each Sentai series had one aspect which made it stand out from the others. Aside from this one aspect, all these TV shows (GOGGLE V. BIOMAN, FLASHMAN, BATTLE FEVER J, etc.) were identical. The one thing which was unique for LIVEMAN was that the series started out with merely three heroes (old SUN VULCAN) but during middle ep-

isode, bringing the team's membership up to the usual number of heroes: five. KAMEN RIDER BLACK, which was later reincarnated as KAMEN RIDER RX, also degenerated out of a once fantastic line of TV shows from the early 1970s.



the Kamen Riders. Both these new Kamen Riders (BLACK and RX, actually the same character, but not really, know what I mean?) are featured in one show which lasted two seasons, but the name changed from BLACK to RX, or was it RX to BLACK? I keep forgetting. Like its equally stupid competitor LIVEMAN, BLACK & RX rely on big-shot special effects, rather than serious live action. After LIVEMAN's long overdue demise, it was replaced by the final 1980s Sentai, TURBO RANGERS (1979). That's as in-depth as I care to go on any of those predictable programs, since they give me a feeling of de ja vu. Far more creative and better are two worthwhile new superhero programs called JIRAIYA and CYBERCOP, which is what this article will concentrate on. Both programs add life to the current Japanese superhero genre, which otherwise, is rather bland. This is not to compare either series with the superior programs from the Golden Age of superheroes (1970s), which featured masterpieces like DENZIN ZABOGA, KAIKETSU ZUBATTO, AKUMAIZA and JINZO NINGEN KIKAIWA. But both JIRAIYA and CYBERCOP, as far as late 1980s superheroes go, represent the best of the worst. Like BLACK RX, LIVEMAN and the like, both these new shows excel at special effects, but unlike those other two mentioned, do not neglect the needed action scenes required to make it a decent program.

WORLD NINJA WAR, JIRAIYA
JIRAIYA is what I call a "what if" show. In this case, the whole sentence would be "What if everybody in the world was a magical cyborg ninja who had amazing powers?" Jiraiya himself seems to be a mere face in the crowd

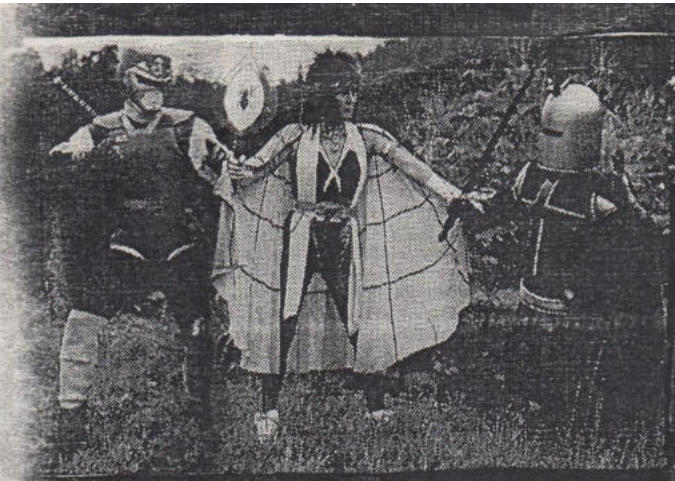


control of wealth and power. Many of these incredible warriors are good, many are evil. Some can't decide whether they want to side with our heroic Jiraiya, or team up with any one of a hundred different rival ninja monsters.

JIRAIYA succeeds as pure fictional fantasy, yet offers nothing in the way of authenticity. True ninjas were (and are) assassins, not cybernetic superheroes and soldiers of fortune. No Japanese superhero series could be considered realistic, and Jiraiya has got to be the most far-fetched to date. It seems that everyone and their brother now has the universal ability to transform into a futuristic superhero and/or futuristic villain. Most other superhero programs at least feature the hero battling a single group of villains who create monstrous baddies on an episodic basis. Although Jiraiya has got his own group or most hated rivals (led by a viking-like demon), Jiraiya seems to encounter ninjas from all parts of the world, including America, China and Europe. These ninjas are nothing like



the black hooded spies from feudal times in early Japen. They're space-age warriors with a variety of weapons, new and old. During the course of this childish yet exciting series, we see futuristic ninjas with weapons such as bombs, swords, laser beams, fire, nunchokus, shurikens, guns, missiles, sais, whips, knives, death rays, and any other weapons you can think of. Their other powers may include flying, clinging to walls, breathing underwater, quick molecular transformations, illusive disappearing capability, X ray vision, and any other powers you can or can't imagine. One never knows what may happen in this "anything goes" series. At any moment, Jiraiya's Chinese foe Chan Kungfu may



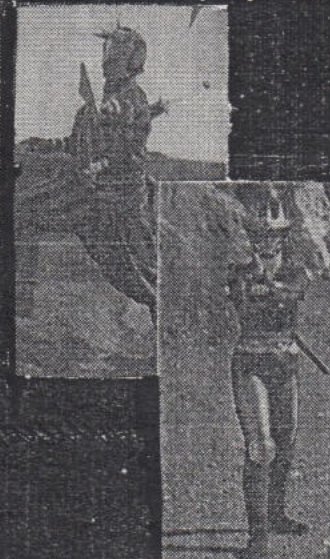
turn into a spectacular dragon, or Jiraiya may (toward the later half of the series) 'gashin' into an enormous Shogun warrior robot called Jiraiashin, a live action look-alike of Raideen. Gueststars like Junichi Haruta and Kenji Ohba may crop in from time to time. And how about them crazy henchmen, obviously coded for comic relief. I swear, these dudes look like Heckle & Jeckle trying to impersonate Toshiro Mifune!



The plot unsuccessfully tries to take place in the future. This is pulled off painfully bad, since the characters, the people, their streetclothes and the city buildings & streets are anything but futuristic. It's quite obvious that the setting is present times, and not some space-age. The program's staff would like us to think that JIRAIYA takes place at an age when superduper technology has reached an alltime high. Combine all that electricity with occult, mythology and black magic, and you've got one hell of a mess full of magic bionic soldiers of incredibly elaborate designs! Despite overwhelming competition from dozens of other magic warriors, Jiraiya, called Toha in his mild-mannered uncostumed form, remains the toughest. His high-tech combat suit was created by a foreign Caucasian scientist called Professor Smith, and his kendo skills were taught to him by his grandfather, an elderly ninja called Tetsuzen. There are two other students; Toha's sister Kai, who has

her own futuristic costume as well. When attired in this white & silver battle uniform, her name becomes "Himenin Emiha." The other student is some dumb little kid who's name is something equally dumb, like "Yamaji Manabu." Another supporting ninja heroin is the sexy Rei, who, when not busy swordfighting with assorted baddies, runs around in a tight, short leather miniskirt (studded, ever!), which is enough to make any average male cream in his jeans! When she transforms into her superhero identity, she's known by her full title: "Kinin Reiha." Additional supporting regular characters pop in every now and then, but there are too many to count. Yet no matter how many heroes there are, there are at least twice as many villains. Many are loners, but there are three main baddies who are all part of the same gang. Their horned leader is called "Oninin Dokusai," and his partner in crime is "Hoshinin Retsukido." The third regular villain is yet another sex appealing female, despite scraggly teeth. She's called "Chigounin Benikiba," and is the cause of many a waldream.

Like all 1980s superhero programs from Toei, the FX are magnificent. The kendo duels are okay, though nothing to brag about. The theme song is poor, yet the incidental background music is nifty enough to make



up for it. My favorite things about Jiraiya (aside from the fact that it went off the air) are its plots and characters. One never knows when a villain may suddenly switch sides and become a hero! Also unpredictable is weather or not a dead villain is really dead, because of their tendency toward quick reincarnation. Things like this often happen in this wild & crazy series that breaks all the unwritten rules!

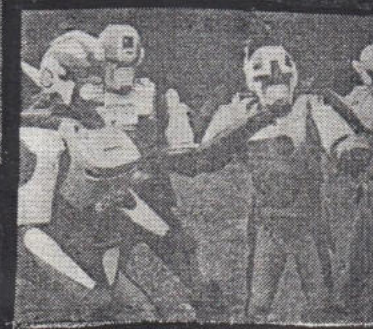
CYBERCOP

Just when I expected all post-SHARIBAN superhero programs to be predictable, lousy and boring, along comes this innovative addition that breaks almost as many rules as WORLD NINJA WAR: JIRAIYA! The rules, in this case, were established by all of Toei's superhero programs to come out after UCHU KEIJI SHARIBAN ("Space Sheriff Sharivann") and KAGATSU SENTAI DAINAMAN ("Dynaman"). The rules seemed to be basically this: 1. The actors who play these heroic 'ninning' aren't really to fight much, let the stuntmen get THEIR knees dirty! 2. Make each show a complete rip-off of the previous one. 3. Don't be too original or creative, after all, time is yan!



Ever since Toei created KAMEN RIDER in 1971, the company has become Japan's dominant supplier of superhero shows. Such programs improved each year until Toei reached their peak with UCHU KEIJI GYABAN in 1982. With the exceptions of SHARIBAN and DYNAMAN, the programs from 1983-'88 leave much to be desired. So amidst all these lame programs comes CYBERCOP. This unique program was created by Fuji TV, a competitive rival of TV Asahi who are most commonly associated with the superheroes of Toei. In my opinion, CYBERCOP succeeds where many recent Toei programs fail.

It's no secret that Japanese superheroes constantly copy each other. Yet rather than be obvious about it, CYBERCOP chose lesser-known programs to mimick. Instead of imitating JIRAIYA & METALDAR, CYBERCOP snatches ideas from recent American live-action superhero shows. These two influential American superheroes are PHOTON and CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE. PHOTON is a joint production between American and Japanese companies, and CAPT. POWER is an American made combination of ROBOCOP, STAR WARS, and UCHU KEIJI elements. But both American programs were shot on video, not unlike older American kiddie shows (i.e. LAND OF THE LOST, FAR OUT SPACENUTS, etc.) of the 1970s. But the concept of a Japanese sci-fi series to be videotaped rather than filmed on celluloid seemed unlikely. Yet CYBERCOP's video format shows the influence of both American predecessors, both of which were moderately successful in Japan. On the one hand, it's hard to take CYBERCOP seriously at first, since its video content makes it look like a soap opera. Also, special effects are more effective on celluloid than on video. On the other hand, the unique video look gives CYBERCOP individuality. CYB-



ERCOP really stands out from all the other programs, which are basically all the same series.

But anyone who knows me knows what a fanatic I am for martial arts adventures. My main grudge against recent Japanese serieses is their lack of good solid karate action. Although CYBERCOP lacks the plentiful duels of classics like KAIKETSU ZUBATTO and UCHU KEIJI GYABAN, it at least tries to have an occasional battle where the actual actors do their own kicks and chops, which is more than I can say for garbage like LIVEMAN.

Masaaki Delmon, best known for his roll as Shimizu in GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA (1974) plays Captain Hidayoshi Odo, the leader of a futuristic defense patrol called Z.A.C., which stands for Zero Section Armed Constable, whatever the hell that means. There are many members, but the four main fighters are young men called Akira Hojyo, Toshiya Takeda, Hout Ryonichi, and Saionji Wasamu. These four young studs are the ones who change into their Cybercop forms, known as: Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mercury, which is their own misspelling of Mercury. These four heroes use assorted weapons (i.e. SD Gun, Wrist Saber, Fire Slugger, etc.) and vehicles (i.e. Blade Liner & ZAC Reader) in the battle against Professor Einshyutain and Defuin Jyoshi, as well as many other evil alien invaders from the same corrupt group. **END**

KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER

Produced by William Chang. Designed by Hue Yao Liang. Scenario: Huang Ying. Unit manager: Chung Chen, Director of photography: Ku Kuo Hua, Fine arts director: Ho Chien Sheng, Action directors: Chien Yueh Sheng & Li Ching Chu, Directed by B. Chen. Presented by Ocean Shores Video. Cast..... Huang Ha, Lu Fang, Wang Hsiao Feng, Chien Hsiao Hou

I first reviewed KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER in 1988, for the fanzine PACK #3. But that article was on its original Chinese version, since back then,



I had no idea an English dub was in existence. The original Chinese version was called NEW MR. VAMPIRE. I prefer the English title, since the oriental one attempts to make the flick an addition to the Mr. Vampire trilogy. KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER is in no way related to the other three films. But KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER isn't that accurate either, since there's not that much martial arts in the movie itself. The English voice dubbing is an accurate translation of what I recall was said in the Chinese version (I should know, I watched it about five times before I ever saw it in English). The lip-sync is also convincing, nearly flawless. However, Chinese humor translates strangely when changed into English. In this case, I think literal interpretations are a mistake. Perhaps they should have spent more time & money in spicing up the humor to make it funny to us Chinese language impaired people.

HELLO! DRACULAR



KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER

STARRING:
LU FANG
WANG HSIAO FENG
CHIEN HSIAO HOU

Spirits alive? Yeh, just about in this madcap comedy of kung fu ghosts & ghouls that reach out to haunt you!

The antics of 2 Krazy Taoist priests get real wild as coffins explode, vampires fly, graves ignite, and our 2 fiendish kung fu 'Ghostbusters' Bust!



As I stated about 89 words ago, there's not a lot of gungfu, but there's a certain restrained amount. That which is used is quite good, featuring kicks that make full-contact with their targets, as well as all those current, state-of-the-art falls and jumps. It's those hair-brain, I mean hair-raising stunts first seen in 1984 when Jackie Chan made PROJECT A.

Unfortunately, there's really only one gyonsi in the movie, not including one other that appears briefly in the first five minutes. The main gyonsi, though ugly, isn't very scary, and lacks the stiff limbed motions and hopping which usually accompanies most gyonsis. This undead villain really isn't shown much until the last 20 minutes. The majority of the story takes place in a hotel and involves the heroes dealing with a female zombie that keeps pestering them.

Synopsis

Yin month is a month when spiritual powers are most active. As a result, a female corpse is revived and becomes responsive to the brainwave patterns of a young graverobber. His mind now controls her body's movements as well as his own. Therefor, she follows him around, doing exactly as he does. He seeks help from a taoist who is on an

important mission. He's transporting a corpse across a forest. Eventually, the main characters (taoist, corpse, female zombie, graverobber, and the taoist's assistant) arrive at a hotel where they stay for the evening. But a mischievous rival taoist is nearby, and he keeps pestering the heroes by removing the talisman from the corpse. It becomes active and goes on a minor rampage through out the hotel, until an army of soldiers destroys it with a cannon.

All in all, KUNGFU VAMPIRE BUSTER isn't a bad film. But if it's considered an addition to the MR. VAMPIRE series, I think they made a mistake of releasing this one as opposed to superior classics like MR. VAMPIRE or MR. VAMPIRE 3. Perhaps the reason this one saw American release and the others didn't was because KUNGFU VAMPIRE BUSTER is the least exotic. For example, there's less Chinese culture, less references to taoism, and the vampire/gyonsi doesn't hop. My Chinese language copy of NEW MR. VAMPIRE is condensed to make it more compact and fast paced. I always edit down my films that are boring due to language barriers. My English KUNGFU VAMPIRE BUSTER is the actual pre-record, so it's uncut. But even in English, the movie tends to be boring, and drag on forever.



(I E N D I)

Produced by Kinko Films Inc., Ltd., in association with Paragon Films

Paragon Films, who are somehow responsible for distribution of the MR. VAMPIRE trilogy, also hold copyrights for this one. I'm not sure what the association is, since Golden Harvest & Boho Films are most commonly credited for MR. VAMPIRE, yet credits indicate this juvenile fantasy was created by Kinko Films.

The first thing I noticed about the video print of HELLO! DRACULAR is that it's in widescreen. This is useful, since it makes it possible to see all that's going on in the shot, and makes the subtitles that much more readable. There are only a couple of times when the edge of the super-imposed words go off screen. The rest of the subtitles are easy to follow, despite unbelievably bad English & grammar.

HELLO! DRACULAR may be a childish kiddie film, but it's a damn good one, easily outclassing MAGIC STORY and MR. VAMPIRE 2 if they're going to make gyonsi movies about children, this is how it should be done. It's lively, flashy, fast-paced, and action packed. The special effects are dandy, and there's a lot of spectacular gungfu throughout.

The story starts out with the obligatory corpse driver escorting his hopping clients across a typical old Chinese village. But a typical young gyonsi (called "corpse kid," "kid corpse," & "little konsi") arrives and is searching for his father by removing the talismans from the faces of the adult gyonsis to get a look at their faces. One of the rev-



ived adult gyonsis turns out to be a master (it's never explained just what he masters) of a family consisting of a grandfather and his grandchildren. They're experts in gungfu & taoism, so they manage to escape from the forest of the activated gyonsi. The remainder of the constantly evolving story deals with their attempts at subduing their deceased master, as three foreigners (Americans) try to capture the gyonsis. The three Americans are a nun, a priest, and a greedy businessman called Mr. Robert who believes he will become rich if he can take some gyonsis back to America as an exhibit. Most of their scenes have them speaking English, but that's only a small percentage of the movie. Most amazing is how the American priest is such a good martial artist. That's rare among American missionaries of the 1800s. There are clown ghosts in this movie, who are conjured up toward the end, so that they can instinctively battle their traditional foes, the gyonsis. The duel is decent, but I wish the clown ghosts wouldn't act like Michael Jackson. The clown ghosts in this case are actually the same boys we see through out the movie. Toward the climax, their taoist grandfather changes them into clown ghosts, in hopes they can more efficiently fight the rampaging gyonsi that had kidnapped a girl called Ten.

Ten. When the clown ghosts fail to defeat the gyonsi (spelled "konsi" in the subtitles), the Taoist alters their structure. Their bodies become covered by what appears to be either a barrel or a bell. When they look like this, I quit calling them clown ghosts and call them barrel boys. Whatever the hell they are, they fail to defeat their hopping enemy. So then a stupid-looking fat kid called Chi Kue Pih ties lit dynamite to his body and charges at the gyonsi and they both die in the explosion. Chi Kue Pih had been bitten earlier, so he was doomed to become a gyonsi anyway. I didn't cry when he died, I just wish the classic moment had happened earlier in the film, and not at the very end.

As for obligatories, watch for the following traditional scenes seen a million times before a gyonsi's body gets controlled by the brain of someone else, a man gets foolishly brave when he suppresses a gyonsi, a chicken is killed so



they can use its blood in a spell, and there's the usual spine tingling stunts & falls and maybe one or two quick shots of gore.

Although most of the main actors in HELLO! DRACULAR are kids, they're not especially annoying, much to me surprise, with two exceptions. That ugly fat pig called Chi Kue Pih is quite disgusting, and there's a scene where a magic spell requires that the taoist drinks Chi Kue Pih's urine which is both sickening and stupid. The other exceptionally bad scene is where the lead female character Ten Ten sings & dances. Her acting & talking scenes are tolerable, but her singing voice ruins an otherwise good movie. Fortunately, it's only got one ballad. But the ballad is a very bad one, as Ten Ten uses taoist magic to control the gyonsis and they all dance to the tune.



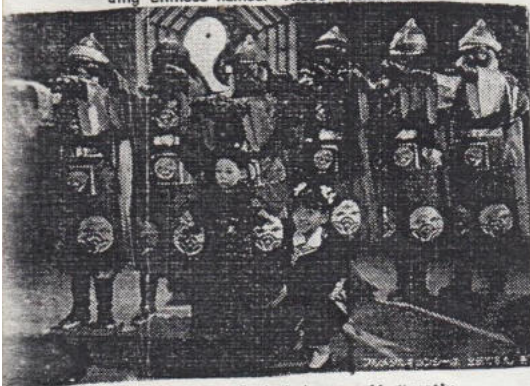


RAI RAI KYONSHIZU

Cast:
 Ten Ten.....Ryu Shi I
 Soika.....Ryu Shi Hen
 Tonbo.....Ti Don Zon
 Chibikuro.....Chin Hsiao Chen
 Ojilsen.....Kin To
 Keide.....Ri Jya
 Debu.....Pan San
 Fuiful.....An An
 Baby Kyonshi.....Hoshi I Conin

HELLO! DRACULAR was just a beginning of a phenomenon which was to become the most successful thing in the orient since fired rice. HELLO! DRACULAR was such a huge success with eastern kiddies that Chinese TV studios got into the act by turning that movie into a TV series. This exciting Chinese program was released to Japan as RAI RAI KYONSHIZU.

As the above cast credits indicate, the Japanese have difficulties in writing & reading Chinese names. Those names are



translated into English by myself, directly taken from Japanese credits on the TV show. Notice the first name of the actor who plays Baby Kyonshi? It says Hoshi, which is not what I consider a Chinese name, but a Japanese one. A typical flaw. Other examples which have nothing to do with this article but are good demonstrations include.....
 Ti Lung's Japanese written equivalent being Tei Rin, Tsiu Su Keung is Tsui Shyao Chan, Wang Tao is Yan Tao, and the most ridiculous example of all is that in Japanese language both written and pronounced, Bruce Lee and Blue Three are identical, except for the separation of the two words. Certain things about the Japanese are very efficient, but their language isn't one of them! However, I'm very happy that the Japanese had RAI RAI KYONSHIZU released to their country, since without them being the middlemen, we Amer-

icans would never have gotten access to this unique series.

This Chinese equivalent of GHOST BUSTERS is more than similar to its theatrical predecessor HELLO! DRACULAR, which it is a remake of. Many of the same characters return, including that ugly Chi Kau Pih, who died in the original movie. The Japanese dubbed version calls him Soika. Many other characters such as the grandfather, Ten Ten and the corpse driver also return. Lacking are the three Americans, but this series offers many new characters not in the motion picture. Many of the aspects of the show are taken from right from the movie, such as gyonshi (now called "kyonshi"), gungfu ("kanfu"), the corpse herding, clown ghosts, talismans, comedy & taoism. But it tends to get experimental and more elaborate. Outlandish villains include a bat-like wizard called Coumori (Japanese word for 'bat') and a group of armor plated gyonshi called "Full Metal Kyonshi!"



I really like this colorful, psychedelick, wild & crazy series, despite its occasional GHOST BUSTERS rip off music. All music seems to be added by the Japanese for the Japanese version, since the ending credits' song has Japanese singing. So does the opening song, all 1 1/2 seconds of it. Other aspects of RAI RAI KYONSHIZU to comment on: The martial arts performed by our infantile heroes is magnificent, and so are the stunts. The special effects are also quite enjoyable.

In Japan, RAI RAI KYONSHIZU offered the producers of superhero shows a run for their money. Indeed, the competition from this Chinese rival may have taken its toll on superhero profits. There is as much kyonshi merchandise (dolls, games, T-shirts, etc.) as there is superhero merchandise. I'm glad those trendy superhero designers are finally seeing that something new is taking their superhero audience by storm. Perhaps this new threat from China will make the creators of superhero predictability decide to be a little more creative. It is indeed much harder to come up with stories as unique & unpredictable as RAI RAI KYONSHIZU than it is to crank out nonsense like FLASHMAN, KAMEN RIDER BLACK, MASKMAN, LIVEMAN and TURBORANGERS. All these typically pathetic superheroes have episodes always based on the same thing; the obligatory buddies create another monster each episode, which the heroes kill at the climax. Although RAI RAI KYONSHIZU is childish in its own charming way, its



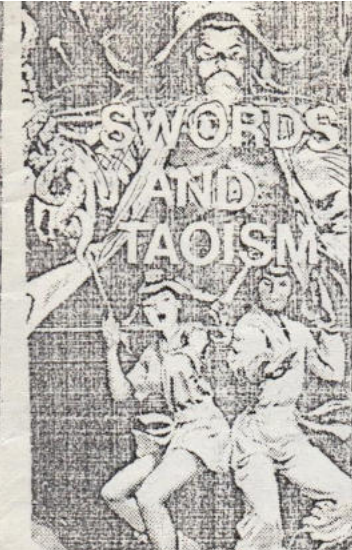
ABOVE: Gyonshi fever at a department store in Tokyo.

scripts are less predictable than its Japanese counterparts. There's no set format, except that you know there will be kids, magic, martial arts, and of course kyonshi. What follows is a plot description of one of the episodes.

This particular episode begins with an evil sorcerer called Coumori testing his newly revived kyonshi called Bombo. Coumori conjures into existence a clownfaced barrel-boy called Fuiful. Being instinctive rivals, Fuiful and Bombo battle it out until Bombo wins. The test has proven Bombo to be a powerful fighter, so Coumori puts him into suspended animation using a talisman. Fuiful, only mildly injured, escapes. Over at the home of our heroic taoist kids, they tamper with voodoo-like magic to play tricks on each other. Later, they sneak into the local corpse driver's home to use his dormant gyonshi as target practice for their gungfu. But their mischievous kicks & punches prove disastrous, as the kyonshi's talisman falls off, so he awakens and escapes. The abused kyonshi meets and befriends Baby Kyonshi, the obligatory cute little corpse kid. As the two hang out that night minding their own business, Fuiful appears. After a brief battle, the adult gyonshi/kyonshi is stunned by Fuiful, and then the heroic kids arrive. They attempt to prevent Fuiful from destroying the kyonshi, but they too end up knocked unconscious. Ten Ten befriends Fuiful, and talks him into letting the boys bring the runaway kyonshi back to the home of the corpse driver. Meanwhile, the grandfather and another taoist plan a trap for Bombo, by using a local police chief called Debu as bait. Bombo arrives and just as he attacks, there's a freeze-frame and the Japanese words for "To be continued" are super imposed on screen. No two episodes are alike, but they usually involve the same basic antics as this one. Other ones may have the kids themselves controlling their own gyonshi who battles Bombo, or sometimes a battle with Coumori himself.



END



SWORDS AND TAOISM

You've all heard of "sword & sorcery," right? That's a phrase used to label American & European films which take place in medieval times and combine sword-fighting with magic. Perhaps you've seen examples like NIGHT STAR-GODDESS OF ELECTRA, the SINBAD movies, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, CONAN, RED SONJA, DRAGON SLAYER and HAWK THE SLAYER. Well, the orientals have been making sword and sorcery flicks too, and that's what this column specializes in. I chose the word "taoism" instead of "sorcery," since many Chinese fantasy flicks seem to make mention of taoism. In the category of Asian fantasy, one of the most celebrated mythical characters is the Monkey, or Monkey King. This particular issue's SWORDS AND TAOISM column includes the Monkey character, since I'm reserving a whole issue to good old Sun Wu Kung, alias Goku and Alakazam. ORIENTAL CINEMA '88 will be a mostly Monkey issue, just as this is a mostly gungfu issue. But as for now, here are some lesser-known Far Eastern medieval fantasies.

the CRAZY BATTLE OF THE GODS... it's not necessarily boring, but not terribly exciting either. **WONDERFUL EYES & MARVELOUS EARS** is a charming, but somewhat trilly fantasy piece.

This is not a gungfu film despite all these awe-inspiring duels. Nearly all these awe-inspiring duels are performed by professional martial artists. The fights consist of little more than people waving a stick around. One particularly bad fighter is a big who's fight choreography is filmed a scene at a time, planning each swing of his staff inbetween takes. The photography and editing is quite jerky here, with characters' positions altering each time the camera goes on or off. The best dual occurs when the two bumbling demons encounter the Monkey King (more details on him next issue) in Heaven: what they damage his gate while trying to spy on him. The character is a decent fighter and acrobat, and sometimes makes the movie worth watching because of his presence alone.

There's a giant bird called the Divine Eagle which looks to be about six feet long, with a wing-span about the same. The Divine Eagle is the greatest thing that the movie's special effects department did. It is definitely a masterpiece, somewhat out of place in an otherwise bland movie. Other FX include the usual sufficient super-imposed rays, and decently crafted sets.

THE GUARDIAN (1982)
 Presented by Tsai Kuang Chen & Hie Hon Yung, supervisors: Chang Tsang Fong & Hiang Heiso Hui, planning director: Danny Chang, starring: Yuet Yang, Wu Hsiao Fai & Cheng Rin.

If ever there was a Chinese period movie to avoid like AIDS, it's this pathetic drama dealing with bland fantasy and martial arts performed by non-martial artists who can't even fake it. The gungfu battles in THE GUARDIAN are very few, which is fortunate, since they're anything but exciting.

The whole film has something to do with the world of ghosts, in their assorted ranks and costumes. It's a very complex plot, and it would take many pages to go into detail as to exactly what happens from scene to

and I wish I could see that the main character is a judge who in the first half of the film is a living human and in the second half is a ghost. In the movie's main plot, he is drawn by a beautiful wife's ghost, who's husband he sentenced to be beheaded at the beginning of the movie. From that point on, the judge is a high ranking ghost in the land of the dead, but he uses his judgement and divine mercy to right wrongs in the afterlife, which, due to a lack of special effects & early sets, looks strikingly similar (identical, in fact) to the world of the living humans. The so-called "spirits" are anything but spiritual.

I must confess, it's got an intriguing, unpredictable plot that kept me on the edge of my seat, so it's worth watching at least once. But throughout the whole film, I was anticipating the appearance of a dragon which was featured prominently on the rental box cover: in the film itself, the dragon's appearance is literally one second long! So if you come across this misleading movie in a videotore, don't rent the movie to see the pictured dragon. If you're in the mood for a unique, culture-filled story, go ahead. But if you're like me, and you just want to get a look at that spectacular dragon, merely look at the rental box, since that offers the best glimpse of the dragon!

LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI
 Presented by Haruki Kodakawa, Executive Producer: Haruki Kodakawa, Original Story by Toshio Kameta, Produced by Hideo Sato, Izumi Sugawara, Screenplay by Toshio Kameta, Kinji Fukasaku, Director of Photography: Seizo Suenaga, Art Director: Chikara Imamura, Narrated by Kaiko Hatazuka, Directed by Kanji Fukasaku. Special effects by Nobuo Yajima.

Starring: Hirojuki ("Henry"), Duke, Senada as Shimbe, Hiroko Yakashimaru as Princess Shizu, Etoku ("Sun") Shiomi as Kano, and Shinichi ("Sony") Chiba as Dosetsu. Also featuring Kanji Ohba.

My first exposure to this movie was in its original Japanese form known as SATOHJI HAKENDEN. A couple years after I got it on videotape, it finally reached American video stores under the title LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI. Now that I've got both versions on

video, I can safely say that the two versions are equal. What SATOHJI HAKENDEN has in its favor is that it's in wide screen, so you can see all the action and even the little scenes off in the corner of the screen. However, LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI is not in widescreen, therefore, everything is more closely, without those annoying black margins on the top and bottom. Either way, transferring movies to video has its advantages and disadvantages. Occasionally, important scenes are accidentally removed from the American version as a result of its not being widescreen. An excellent example is in a scene where a magistrate's head is chopped off by Etoku Shiomi, and the head goes right out of frame. This shot was for more complete in-

ON HAKENDEN.

The story of LEGEND OF EIGHT SAMURAI is based on an old Japanese fairy tale, also called SATOHJI HAKENDEN. Toel not only made this a but an outspace remake in 1970 called MESSAGE FROM SPACE as well. Both MESSAGE FROM SPACE and LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI strikingly similar to each other partially because they're based on the same fable, but also because both movies feature Chiba, Shiomi, & Senada. The script for both films is basically about a gathering of assorted heroes from different walks of life who team up to battle an army of local villains, in the case of LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI, the baddies are a demonic clan. Different types of villains suit different films, and other imitations of this fairy tale include SEVEN SAMURAI and STAR WARS.

In this version the main hero is a young reclusive, whip-wielding and troublemaker who wanted to be a samurai, but couldn't, because wasn't born of royalty. He's played by JAC (Tad) Hirojuki Senada. Another one of the "eight samurai" is slightly inebriated title, since technically, only one of the eight heroes is a true samurai (a mystical wise man played by JAC founder Shinichi Chiba. Chiba's "I" prototype Etoku Shiomi plays an anti-social, violent loner who gets her kicks by decapitating local greasy politicians. And Kanji Ohba, JAC member who starred in many superhero TV shows (SPACE RIF BAYANIK, BATTLE FEVER, J. KAGE NO GUN and DENZIMAN) plays the only real samurai. The remaining four heroes are played by unfamiliar faces destined to stay that way.

WONDERFUL EYES AND MARVELOUS EARS.
 Supervisor: Fu Ching Hui, Produced by Tsai Shih Cien, Screenplay: Chang Yen Fu.

The beginning of this Chinese slapstick comedy starts off in ancient times, and we are told of two magic trees at Chi Pen Mountain. The two mysterious trees are called Spirit Peach and Demon Willow. Any unfortunate human who attempts to deface (i.e. eating a peach off one, or trying to chop it down) ends up dead, since each tree is possessed by a defensive demon. Villagers have seen many people die as a result of these trees, so they've decided to band together to destroy both trees. The demons retaliate by leaving their trees. With the exception of pointed ears on one of the demons, they both look human and begin to live among the humans in the village. One demon called Kou Chien is nicknamed Wonderful Eyes because of his fantastic eyesight. Kou Hing is the other copy demon, and has the title Marvelous Ears because of his good hearing. The two of them get mischievous and cause trouble for corrupt officials they dislike. The havoc caused by our two demonic heroes results in their being banished to Heaven, where they're forced to patrol the clouds as security guards.

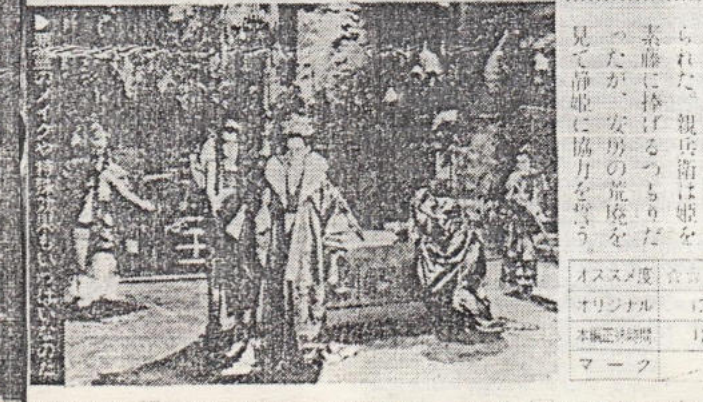
Perhaps I've over-simplified the plot a little too much. The story has got more detail & characters than I mentioned, but the overall script seems more or less the same as what I've jotted down. Much of WONDERFUL EYES & MARVELOUS EARS appears to be filler, done in a round-about way so as to keep the movie feature-length. Much could be edited out and the film wouldn't miss a

LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI, as it appeared on Japanese TV in 1985.

●解説 滝沢馬琴の「南総里見八犬」に現代の解釈を加え、青春ロマンスとしてよみがえらせた伝奇スペクタクル時代劇。原作・脚本は鎌田敏夫、演出は黒川彌太郎の傑作。監督に当たったヒット作だ。監督に当たったヒット作だ。

ひろ子と広之の初顔合わせが話題なり。撮影中は美しいムード。ブ・シーンも度々はOKが出たが入て話し合い、納得するまで撮りしたという。8000万円かけた室のセットをはじめ、特殊効果もの。萩原流行や京本正樹も助主題歌をAORシンガーのジョ・オパニオンが歌う。

安房・船山城が黒野馬軍団の居る。静姫、葉丸、九郎、一太郎は葉丸家の素藤(黒野馬軍団)の主人(夏木マリ)とともに悪徳に



4 9火

TBS 映画スペシャル 後8・00〜10・18 (138分)

里見八犬伝

昭和52年(角川春樹) 事務所

監督 深作欣二 出演 葉丸丸ひろ子 真田広之 千葉真一

●解説 滝沢馬琴の「南総里見八犬」に現代の解釈を加え、青春ロマンスとしてよみがえらせた伝奇スペクタクル時代劇。原作・脚本は鎌田敏夫、演出は黒川彌太郎の傑作。監督に当たったヒット作だ。

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えた静姫は、葉丸をもった8人の同輩を捜す。だがその途中、静姫は犬江親兵衛(真田広之)と

いう浮浪青年に捕らえられた。親兵衛は静姫を素藤に捧げるつもりだったが、安房の荒廃を見て静姫に協力を要する

オススメ度	☆☆☆☆
オリジナル	136分
本編放映時間	120分
マップ	

I think the movie, like most Japanese period movies, excels in boredom. This overblown story would be much better off if it were thirty minutes shorter. However, it does have its exciting moments. There are scenes in the film where the heroes get involved in chases and fall off cliffs, and encounter ghoulish things like witches, giant snakes, a giant centipede and demonic possession.



The film's climax involves a swordfight as the eight samurai (referred to as "eight ninjas" through out the film, but they're not ninjas either) duel to the death with an army of soldiers hired by the demon clan.

This movie, despite the JAC actors is not a martial arts film, but a sword & sorcery film. This motion picture has more in common with RED SONJA than ROARING FIRE.

Japanese beauty Kaiko Matsuzaka was given credit (even in the English version) for narrating the movie, yet her narration (in Japanese, of course) was removed from the English version. But the English credits still list her as narrator, even though her voice is nowhere to be found in LEGEND OF THE EIGHT SAMURAI.

All in all, this film, though not especially exciting, is a big budget film of epic proportions.

Last and certainly least: The music. I suppose the background music is sufficient, but the beginning and ending (and a romantic, slow motion love making scene in the film's middle) feature horrible songs with some geek named John O'Banion singing in English.

(* END *)

EDITORIAL

PART 2

Well, there you have it! ORIENTAL CINEMA Number Six, the gyonsi issue! This issue is revolutionary to me not only because it's my first fanzine to have a specific subject, but also because it's my first magazine of mine to be typed by a Macintosh microcomputer word processor. Ten years after ORIENTAL CINEMA's debut, it's finally entering the age of computers. At this point, I suppose I prefer word processors over typewriters, but only because I have been able to store all these articles and columns on a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk. That way, is ever I were to have lost or damaged an article, I still had an emergency backup on disk. Proofreading is also easier and cleaner. But this doesn't change the fact that no matter how much I proofread, some errors still go undetected until after the issue is supposedly completed.

OC No. 6 is my comeback issue. I had achieved moderate success and exposure with these publications in the 1970s when the Japanese SF fandom still had an active underground of fanzines and newsletters. By the 1980s, the Japanese SF scene had become the Japanese anime scene. My interests had diverted into quite another direction. By 1983, I needed alternative interests. I experimented with fashion, politics, music, and sometimes drugs. I had a lot of fun during this rebellious "punk" period which lasted roughly from 1980 to 1988 (technically, I'll always be a "punk," but there are different levels of involvement). But I felt I wasn't being creative. And during my new wave years, I discovered many new exciting films from the Far East that I regretted not having written about earlier. The early fanzines I did weren't unlike all those other 1970s fanzines, focusing mainly on giant monsters. The old Toho classics will always be included in ORIENTAL CINEMA, but not exclusively, since I plan on making the fanzine diverse. I'm sure most of you are sick of reading only about Godzilla and Gamera all the time anyway.

As I mentioned in the SWORDS & TAOISM column, next issue will be a Monkey King issue. The versions of JOURNEY TO THE WEST to be included in ORIENTAL CINEMA No. Seven will include: THE MONKEY, HAVOC IN HEAVEN, TAY DU XI, ALAKAZAM THE GREAT, NEW PILGRIMS TO THE WEST, SAIVUKI, maybe SPACEKATEERS, and of course MONKEY WARS. How many of you have actually seen obscure rarities like THE FANTASTIC FLYING BABY, and 1926's MONKEY FIGHTS GOLDEN LEOPARD? If any of you reading this have these films on videotape, or know where I can get them or any other Monkey movies I've not listed here, please contact me at once! In fact, write to me regardless, to give comment on this issue. Did you like it or hate it? And why? Any suggestions for improvement? Did you learn anything? Did I publish any misinformation? Were you offended by Allan Retsof's salute to animation geeks, the "ANIME EXPLORER?"

At this point, I don't know whether or not I'll include another of Allen's ANIME EXPLORERS. It depends on what kind of response I get. Allen claims it was intended for old-timers who despise Japanese cartoons and its fans. Understandably, fans of cartoons may be offended by the mini-publication. If you were shocked, disgusted or offended by that parody of CFD literature, I suggest that you do two things: 1. Tear it out and burn it. After all, nobody is holding a gun to

your head, forcing you to read it. 2. Grow up! Spoofs are, after all, healthy. Everything popular should be parodied, because its important to make a statement which will get emotions flowing, and to make people think.

It seems that making an issue as complex as this is a never-ending process. Even now, as I look over this issue, much should be corrected and re-written. I'm not just referring to all these spelling errors. My RAI RAI KYONSHIZU article has extreme inaccuracy that I'll try to clear up now. Most of the information was fairly accurate, but most of the photographs in the article aren't even from RAI RAI KYONSHIZU! I had realized this mistake only after I had written the article and done paste-ups! The photos used are actually from HAI TZU WONG, known in Japan as YUU GEN DOUSHI! I suppose I shouldn't feel too stupid about mistaking one for the other. After all, both RAI RAI KYONSHIZU and YUU GEN DOUSHI are for the most part, the same thing, despite the change of titles. Both of them feature the same actors, same characters, and same elements: gyonsis, martial arts, little kids, comedy, special effects, and magic. Even though the next issue of ORIENTAL CINEMA will mainly spotlight the Monkey King, I'll include a regular column called CHINESE CHILLERS. Aside from including more RAI RAI KYONSHIZU and YUU GEN DOUSHI, I hope to include less spectacular horror films from the orient, including: THE RAPE AFTER, WICKED WIFE, GHOST SNATCHERS, TO HELL WITH THE DEVIL, 'TIL DEATH DO WE SCARE, RESCUE FROM HADES, LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES, THE DEAD & THE DEADLY, ENCOUNTER OF THE SPOOKY KIND, GHOST NURSING, THE ACCIDENT, ESCAPE FROM CORAL COVE, and THE OCCUPANT. Of course, including every one of these movies in one single issue is impossible, but if ORIENTAL CINEMA lasts beyond next issue and continues for many more, I hope to inform all you readers about these rarely seen motion pictures and a lot of others.

Well, I guess that about wraps it up for this addition of ORIENTAL CINEMA. My last document is an updating report on new news, written by my friend August Regone, whom I first met in 1978, at a theatre for Northern California's premier showing of GODZILLA ON MONSTER ISLAND. Coincidentally, ORIENTAL CINEMA also debuted that year.

Ramon Foster

GYONSIS CREEPING UP FROM THE EAST

compiled by A. Regone
The Japanese Toai company who has been producing a number of "kid detective group" TV series for the last three years, has decided to change direction and produce a Chinese mythology TV series- PAI-PAI THE LITTLE WITCH. The series features the misadventures of a band of fumbling wizards in ancient China, and the whimsical little witch who gets them out of trouble- some demons, a little magic, fantasy and a dash of martial arts are displayed in this juvenile comedy series that began airing in Japan in February 1989.

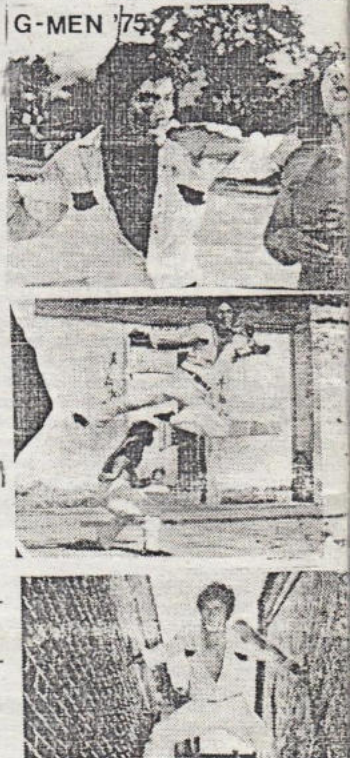
Japan and Hong Kong are in negotiations to coproduce a big budget SFX-laden, gyonsi movie THE DEVIL KING aka KING OF EVIL. The cast will be Hong Kongese as will be live action staff- the special effects will be created in Japan- demon/gyonsi designs are under

charge of noted designer Ryu Noguchi- who's contributed to the Japanese fantasy TV series' RED BARD, SHADOW STAR, DENZIMAN, SPACE SHERIFF SHIDER, MONSTER HUNTER JUSPION, and many others. The film should be released some time in mid-late 1989.

From Hong Kong came a gyonsi/Jackie Chan rip-off called THE HAPPY LUCKY STARS aka THE FIVE LUCKY STARS VS. GYONSI. The movie combines the above two genres and mixes it with children- in what other film would you see "Our Gang" types (with names like Little Jackie Chan, Little Yuen Bolo, Little Samo Hung, etc.) dressed like the Ghostbusters, fighting ancient Chinese ghosts!

Former boy area makeup artist and now Hollywood era, Steve Wang, an American and a Hong Kong movie company have produced THE JITTERS, a straight horror flick that does not utilize the Chinese myths wholly, but draws from them what they think will score U.S. audiences. The film is subtitled THE YEAR OF THE GYONSI.

Another coproduction, not in the horror vein is a return to the all-out martial arts films of the 70s. The producers, Japan and Hong Kong, the film THE LAST BATTLE. The stars Yasuaki Kureta and Yang Sze. /NOTE: Both the Japanese actor and the Chinese actor have starred together many times before, including TV shows like G-MEN '75 and FIGHTI DRAGON. /The movie is to be blazed across cinema screens in summer of 1989.



Director, writer, star Samo Hung Kimpo is now in New York directing a martial arts action movie starring Sutil Danning! If you haven't seen Samo's directorials WHEELS ON MEALS, MR. VAMPIRE, ENCOUNTER OF THE SPOOKY KIND, SUMMER LUCKY STARS or EASTERN CONDORS yet, you don't know what you are missing.

THE END [?]

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