

# ORIENTAL CINEMA NO. 7



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THE MONKEY KING • ACES GO PLACES • more MONKEY KING • JIBAN • HAI TZU • WONG • even more MONKEY KING • INAZUMAN • KINGKONG VS. GODZILLA • KATO • GOKU • perhaps some gung fu flicks • SUN WU KUNG • MAD MISSION • ALAKAZAM • BOLO • TSIU SIU KEUNG • anime (golly!) • RAI RAI KYONSHIZU •



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# EDITORIAL

PART ONE



To begin with, let me just say that THE JAPANESE FANTASY FILM JOURNAL has always been a favorite.

To begin with, let me just say that ORIENTAL CINEMA has always been a favorite of mine.

Wu Ch'ang En was the author of the ancient Chinese novel JOURNEY TO THE WEST, also known as THE MONKEY KING. This classic oriental fairy tale is by far the most famous fable in the Far East, even more beloved & celebrated than Japan's SATOMI HAKENDEN legend, which is another old saga that also inspired a number of movies (i.e. LEGEND OF EIGHT SAMURAI, see OC No. 6 for details). JOURNEY TO THE WEST is based on an actual pilgrimage which took place in the 7th century. At that time, Buddhism was a religion mostly only practiced in India. It was a Chinese priest called Tripitaka who figured prominently in bringing this Indian religion to China. Tripitaka was a real person who went on a journey from China into India to obtain Buddhist scriptures. Tripitaka was truly a revolutionary pioneer, the one who introduced the religion of Buddhism to China. From there, it spread to other Far Eastern countries like Korea and Japan. Tripitaka made the orient what it is today. By the 13th century, the incidents and situations that occurred on this pilgrimage had evolved into a whole series of legends, and it was on these that novelist Wu Cheng En, in the 16th century, based his story. Exactly how a heroic monkey could get involved in an otherwise factual story is anyone's guess. Perhaps in real life, Tripitaka captured a monkey (and maybe later a pig) on his travels and kept it (them) as a pet (s). If this theory of mine were the

case, it would seem that the story merely got more and more exaggerated. Today, the legend has gods, fairies, and demons, and in some variations, includes dinosaurs, dragons, giant spiders, and one version even featured vampires. My research indicates that no two versions are identical. In ORIENTAL CINEMA No. seven, I hope to educate all you newcomers on China's most famous fairy tale. This issue will start off with a book review on the subject, and will go on to examine many of the different movies on the ancient primata. Regrettably, I must exclude the earliest filmed version of the story. I doubt if 1926's MONKEY FIGHTS GOLDEN LEOPARD was ever released on videotape, since I haven't been able to locate it in any bay area Chinese videostores, nor do any of my penpals (many collect obscure Chinese films) have it. MONKEY FIGHTS GOLDEN LEOPARD is one of the many early Chinese filmed stage shows that has been labeled "the first martial arts film." The Japanese also made a filmed stage play about the Monkey King in the 1940s. And I can think of at least one other Monkey flick I have never seen, called FANTASTIC FLYING BABY. From what I've heard, this modern movie was no mere filmed stage performance. Rumor has it that FANTASTIC FLYING BABY was created in the 1970s, and was a full-fledged adventure, featuring real acting (instead of opera-like singing), special effects, and was in full color. I've seen none of the above mentioned three movies. Naturally I can not write about a movie I've never seen. This issue should include THE MONKEY, ALAZAM THE GREAT, HAVOC IN HEAVEN,

NEW PILGRIMS TO THE WEST, MONKEY WAR, TAY DU KI, and SAIYUKI. The Japanese even included characters from JOURNEY TO THE WEST in a 1986 beer commercial. The TV ad was filmed in Death Valley, America and featured the British new waver Roy George playing Tripitaka. Little is known about the behind-the-scenes of this event, except that as Roy George rested on the sand in between takes, he completely ruined the company's valuable antique robe he wore to play the part. Do any of you have any of these commercials on videotape? Aside from the photographs I've included on this page, I've never seen anything on these commercials.

But naturally, I wouldn't want to restrict this issue exclusively to Sun Wu K'ung. For the sake of variety, I'm including my usual columns: CHOP SOCKEY REPORT, NINGEN UPDATE, and a new one called CHINESE CHILLERS. I didn't include CHINESE CHILLERS last issue because that whole issue had enough horror films. This time around, the excluded column is my fantasy column, SWORDS & TAOISM. That column will return next issue. Other articles in this issue will include another satire of Japanese cartoons, the third Godzilla chapter called KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, and maybe even an article that compares THE GREEN HORNET with BATHAN. Since EDITORIAL PT. I is the first thing I'm typing for this issue, I do not know at this point what else will be included in this issue.

Later, Demon.

*Damon Foster*

## FANZINES FOR SALE

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### 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, INFRAMAN, KING BOXER, and anime like TENTO 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 Crux.

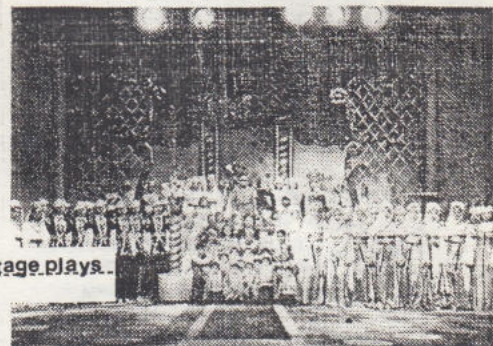
### ORIENTAL CINEMA #6 (1989)

A special issue devoted mainly toward "gyonjis" (hopping vampires). Aside from reviews of many gyonji films (i.e. MR. VAMPIRE), the issue includes THE GREEN HORNET, ACES GO PLACES, some kungfu movies, an update on Japanese superheroes, and a hard hitting satire on Japanese cartoon fanclubs. WARNING: YOU MUST CERTIFY THAT YOU'RE OVER 18 YEARS OLD, SINCE THIS ISSUE CONTAINS VULGAR SUBJECT MATTER WHICH SOME PEOPLE MAY FIND OFFENSIVE, BUT WHICH IS REALLY SMASHING.





Three photos from one of the many early oriental filmed stage plays depicting Sun Wu Kung's voyage to India.



## THE MONKEY KING (A BOOK REVIEW)

# THE MONKEY KING



A translation of the classic Chinese legend

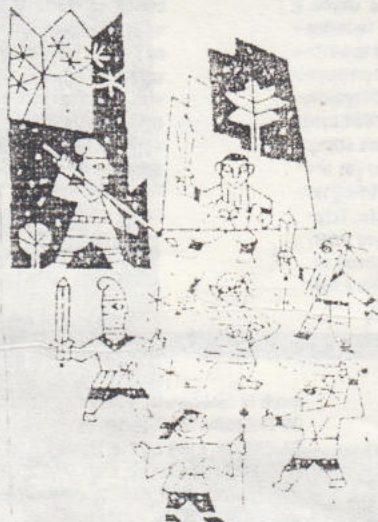
author: Wu Ch'eng-En, Edited by Zdena Novotna, Translated by George Theiner, illustrated by Zdenek Shlener, and published by Paul Hemlyn of Westbook House at Fullham Broadway, London, Printed by PZ Bratislava, in Czechoslovakia

After seeing numerous movies based on this ancient tale, I decided, what the hell, I may as well read the novel, which I thought was called JOURNEY TO THE WEST. So I looked into the computerized data at a local library, to see if they had the book in question. Their selection of novels had no such title. So I key entered the name of the novel's author, Wu Ch'eng-En. I was surprised to see how many Chinese authors listed had "Wu" starting their names, and amused that the only entry for Wu Ch'eng-En was a book mislabeled THE MONEY KING, obviously a misinterpretation of "the Monkey King!" So I notified the librarian of this error, and then

rented the book. How disappointing to read in the book's credits that this English edition from 1964 was translated into English from the so-called "original Czech version!" In 1961, this Czech edition was taken from the original (?) Chinese version. With the Czechoslovakian publishing company Artia as middlemen, it would help to explain the mysterious change in title from JOURNEY TO THE WEST to THE MONKEY KING. Actually, both titles are appropriate. But like that other wellknown novel, the Holy Bible, certain things always end up changed with each translation.

The changes in the case of THE MONKEY KING would appear to be only slight, since it has striking similarities with its theatrical counterparts. The only thing that immediately comes to mind as far as inaccuracy goes is in one chapter, there's mention of rifles. I don't believe they had guns in China during the 7th century, though I could be mistaken. But I can safely say that no movies regarding this sage ever used such fire-arms. Otherwise, this 331 page book seemed to fit in with the movies on the same subject. As a detailed novel, it is much more intricate and exact than any movie, due to the limited amount of time most movies may last. In 331 pages, a lot more can be said than in a mere feature length film, pressured to be about an hour and a half long, because of the audience's limited attention span, as well as budgetary limitations. THE MONKEY KING was quite useful to me, because it answered many questions I had which were never explained in the movie. But I recall one thing which I didn't like, and that was how briefly and inefficiently Pigsy and Sandy are introduced. In filmed versions, by the time these two important characters set out on their journey with Tripitaka & Sun Wu Kung, we are already familiar with both of them. But in the case of this book, they both just seem to pop out of nowhere, with only a brief discussion of their backgrounds. Movies also usually include Pigsy's proposed marriage to a reluct-

ant chinese girl, as well as his over all hornyness (this character is undoubtedly the most sexually frustrated of the foursome). Both these aspects of the story aren't in this English version of the novel, yet are included in many of the movies. I suppose they



were edited out, either in the English or Czech translations. Other minor adjustments may have been made, but on the whole, reading THE MONKEY KING has been an enlightening experience for me. If you are just starting to get into the JOURNEY TO THE WEST legacy, your best bet is to read this influential novel first, before going on to see ALAKAZAM THE GREAT or MONKEY WAR.

I really thought the artwork for THE MONKEY KING was trashy. I could draw better than that when I was in 3rd grade, and I still can! It is not enough that the drawings are simple and primitive, but they frequently ignore what was written in the story, thereby giving the impression that whoever did the crummy drawings did not follow the story that closely. An example of this contradiction is a description of Pigsy claiming he has tusks. There are no tusks on any of the drawings of this character.

The actual story of this book can not be squeezed into this article, nor could it fit in the whole magazine, since there's absolutely no way I can afford to make ORIENTAL CINEMA 331 pages long. But I can give a brief plot description, consisting of the basics that helped effect the movies.....

Once upon a time in the 2nd century, there was a magic stone created by the legendary creator, P'an Ku as well as many other gods in Heaven. This mystical stone was designed to be a savior to the Earth, one which would eliminate evil. It was located on the Mountain of Many Flowers. One day this rock burst open and gave birth to a stone egg. Fertilized by the wind, the egg came to life and changed into a powerful monkey, whom they called Stone Monkey. His extreme strength, wisdom & bravery lead him to be the leader of a tribe of monkeys who resided at the Mountain of Many Flowers. His simian followers called him the Monkey King. But the Stone Monkey King wasn't content with being a leader & powerful warrior among mere monkeys. He sought to improve himself, to become invincible, immortal, and a master of magic powers. So the Monkey King left his tribe and traveled to far away lands. In the many years that followed, the monkey learned from the Patriarch Subodhi assorted magical powers, including molecular transformations, cloud flying and the secrets of being immortal. It took many years to learn all this, and upon his eventual return to his clan of monkeys, he discovered they were being attacked routinely by the King of Demons. In a fair fight, Monkey defeats the King Demon for revenge, but then goes on a power trip. From there, he stole a powerful weapon called an iron cudgel (actually a staff) from the palace of the oceanic Dragon King. Now both invincible and immortal, Monkey makes a little visit to hell to scratch his name off the Death List. From there, Monkey decides to challenge Heaven itself. To keep the egotistical monkey under control, the gods agree to hire him there. He chooses his own title,

"Great Sage, Equal to Heaven." The Great Sage causes lots of havoc in Heaven, including eating all the magic sacred peaches in one of Heaven's orchards. The peaches cause immortality to whoever eats them. This action, and many other thefts causes the disrespectful monkey to get many enemies in Heaven who insist on disciplining him. Numerous battles occur, as the invincible monkey defeats all comers. He meets his match when he confronts the almighty Buddha. Buddha outsmarts the impulsive simian and as punishment, has the so-called Great Sage imprisoned under the Mountain of the Five Elements. Five hundred years later, a Chinese priest called Hsuan Tang has begun a long journey from China into India to obtain a series of Buddhist scriptures known as Tripitaka. So from that point on, Hsuan Tsang was to be known by the Indian name Tripitaka. Yet the journey to the west would be a hazardous one that the lone priest couldn't possibly survive on his own. During his travels, Tripitaka encounters Monkey, still trapped underground with only his head sticking out. Buddha had placed a magical talisman (piece of paper with a spell written on it) on the ground which kept Monkey from being able to dig himself out. And so the Monkey King pleaded with Tripitaka to release him, claiming he'd repented and accompany Tripitaka and protect him on his perilous journey. Tripitaka, desperate for a guardian, removes the seal of Buddha and he and Monkey set off on their lengthy pilgrimage to India. But despite Tripitaka's releasing the monkey (now called by his religious name, Sun Wu Kung), he's still impulsive and violent. To stop Sun Wu Kung from killing every person who threatens them in the slightest, a magical gold ring is placed around Sun Wu Kung's head. Now Tripitaka can force Sun to behave by doing a chant which makes the golden headband inflict pain on the monkey's scalp. During the course of their journey, the duo is joined by two other magical warriors of dismissed status who were also exiled from Heaven by Buddha. Both these former angels agreed to assist our two heroes on their long voyage to the west. They are an aquatic cannibal called Sandy, and a pig demon called Pigsy. The remainder of their story varies in different versions, but what they all have in common is that the characters are always battling evil demons as they protect Tripitaka. It seems that anyone who eats the flesh of this noble priest will become as immortal as the Great Sage himself. So naturally, every demon from China to India would like to take a bite out of him. And so Sun Wu Kung and his magical staff, aided by Pigsy and Sandy battle and outsmart the denizens of evil until finally reaching India, thus obtaining the long sought after Buddhist scrolls which would then introduce this Indian religion to China. And I assume they all lived happily ever after.

Like I said before, my synopsis of Wu Ch'ang En's saga is an over simplification. I excluded many intricate details which some may consider important to the story, such as the fact that Pigsy's weapon is a rake. This is actually an important aspect, since I

have never seen any versions of the story which did not feature this detail. Since this paragraph seems to be additional info not in my original synopsis, I should also explain what is meant by "cloud flying." The term is literal, it means to have control over a cloud, so that you can stand on it and control its movements. It would act as a form of midair transportation.

Anyway, I suppose now you have a basic idea of what this comical story is about. Monkey is a heroic character, one of the very first superheroes ever created. Ever since this story was written by Wu Ch'ang-En in the 13th century, the mighty Stone Monkey was kept alive in acrobatic operas and live stage plays. The 20th century eventually came, and although the Monkey King would continue to flourish in the Peking Opera, the ancient superhero would also make his debut on celluloid.

End



## KING KONG VS GODZILLA

Released by Universal International, Produced by Toho Co. Ltd. Presented by John Beck. Special effects: Eiji Tsuburaya, Japanese director: Inochiro Honda, English version written by Paul Mason & Bruce Howard, Editorial supervisor: Peter Zinner, Sound effects: William Stevenson, English director: Thomas Montgomery, character & name of "King Kong" by permission of RKO General, Inc. Cast: Michael Keith, Harry Holcomb, James Yagi, Tadao Takashima, Keiji Sahako, Ichiro Arishima /NOTE: I tend to think that the above name "Keiji Sahako," as copied directly from the film's credits, is actually a mistranslation of Kenji Sahara.

**33 MOVIE—Science Fiction**  
**"King Kong vs. Godzilla." (Japanese: 1962) Laughable clash between two of the great movie monsters of all time. Carter: Michael Keith. Omura: James Yagi. (2 hrs.)**

In Godzilla's first full color movie, the villainous reptilian mutant appears far removed from his previous appearance in the first two movies of the 1950s. Godzilla's debut 1960s appearance is one of flash and humor, unlike GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS (1954) and GIGANTIS THE FIRE MONSTER (1955), which were more gloomy and slow paced. His third adventure gives him a clearer, more polished, more high-pitched roar that was not in the first two movies, that has long since become the screech most com-

monly associated with the radio active giant. His personality has also changed somewhat since 1955. His amusing antics in KING KONG VS GODZILLA would be repeated later for every Godzilla film, with the possible exception of GODZILLA 1985, and maybe GODZILLA VS THE THING, also known as GODZILLA VS MOTHRA. KING KONG VS GODZILLA features Godzilla doing silly, non-reptilian things like clapping his hands (though only his claws make contact) and practically cheering after he scores points dueling with his simian rival, in a battle which is well staged and well photographed. The Big G's costume is not the same as that in GIGANTIS. Many oldtime fans prefer the dreary look Godzilla had in his first two films, yet I consider his design in his third film to be quite an improvement. For one thing,

an island populated by natives who worship that big hairy ape, and later the crew captures Kong, and takes him back to civilization. A popular formula, and one which would later be repeated in Toho's KING KONG: ESCAPES (Japan, 1965), Shaw Brothers' GOLIATHON (China, 1977), and a terrible Korean cheapie called A.P.E. (Korea, 1978). As a lover of sequels and a hater of remakes, I much rather would like to believe that KING KONG VS GODZILLA was an alternate chapter to KING KONG '33, and not an alternate version that can't possibly co-exist with its predecessor. Of course, if the two were related, Kong's terrible costume would have to be improved to look like the original animated doll created by Willis O'Brien for KING KONG '33. I believe that pretty much everyone agrees that King Kong looks like shit in this movie, and that the ape suit used in Dino De Laurentis' KING KONG '76 was far superior (unlike the movie itself). Exactly why Toho would willingly use such a pathetic costume is anyone's guess. My suspicion is that maybe Toho wanted to make their own original creation Godzilla look good, while making RKO's monster look poor. I think the best shots of Kong in his first Japanese film are actually of a small hand puppet, used for facial close-ups, like when he drinks the narcotic red berry juice on the island near the film's beginning, or in a later shot, where he bites a telephone wire for a quick jolt, accomplished by handy superimpositions of electricity supplied by the special effects crew. The electrical aspect of Kong being charged up is a new idea, never used in any other Kong movie before or since. A dumb idea, but no worse than the idea of a primitive ape grabbing a small female human, falling in love with her and carrying her to the top of a building. This time, the damsel in distress isn't Fay Wray, but a Japanese girl called Fumiko, who's brother is responsible for bringing Kong to Japan. But this idea is an obligatory scene, needed in all traditional gorilla-on-the-loose movies. This time, the overgrown ape's climb is accomplished by just one or two steps, since the Japanese counselor building isn't quite as high as New York's Empire State Building.

KING KONG VS GODZILLA is one of the many disappointing team-ups in the movies. Although their battle is exciting and long, Kong is disappointing because he's so different, in a negative way, than he was in 1933. Godzilla is also different than he was in his first two films, but not as much; and the changes are for the better. The first scene we see of Godzilla is an exciting shot of him breaking out of the iceberg that he'd been trapped in for eight years (see ending of GIGANTIS for more details), so his intro fits in well in this film. But as I said before, Kong's intro

# MONSTER MASH

The gorilla from Manila meets a reptilian heavyweight—head on.

## King Kong vs. Godzilla

### T O D A Y

### 3:30 MOVIE

since this 1963 costume is in a color film, we could finally see what color Godzilla's skin is, which is blue-ish green. The eyes are much larger in KING KONG VS GODZILLA than in the previous two adventures. To some, this gives Godzilla a cartoon-like look, but to me, he now seems more life-like, almost like he's looking out of the TV screen back at us. The bigger eyes also give him a personality. The remainder of the costume seems fatter, bulkier, and more muscular than the tail & thin one in GIGANTIS, which is actually more realistic than GIGANTIS, since technically, any creature that size would need to be bulky to hold himself up, or he would collapse of his own weight. But even his structure in KING KONG VS GODZILLA isn't bulky enough, realistically. But it's just fiction, I don't want to spoil everybody's fun.

This is also King Kong's first color film, and also his third, if you count SON OF KING Kong. Godzilla's presence is a sequel to his other two movies, but King Kong's appearance is, one of a remake, unfortunately (I hate remakes). The original KING KONG (1933) featured the misguided primata as being way too small to battle Godzilla, who could squash him easily. So rather than try to link both films together by making Kong's size increase grow by means of radiation or something, the film's first half involves an insufficient, rushed, mini-remake of KING KONG 1933 that involves the same elements that were in the original: a ship going to





3:30 MOVIE

# MONSTER MASH

Mighty monsters battle for supremacy...and flatten the world.

King Kong vs. Godzilla

Today

once again involves a re-telling of how money hungry businessmen kidnap him from a tropical island. Only this time, the kidnapers are Japanese TV show promoters, and not American stage show promoters. Also different is the name of the island. And Kong battles an octopus, not dinosaurs. Although the ancient duel with the Tyrannosaurus Rex is a classic battle, the Japanese Kong's fight with the octopus ("Daï Dako") from 1963 is also quite breathtaking. Although it's unlikely that an octopus would ever come so far on land for the native tribe's prized barri-juice, the battle is very entertaining. For all the scenes of the tentacled devilfish coming in actual contact with Kong, a rubber doll was used. For close-ups, they used a real octopus. It's painful to watch these scenes, knowing that this innocent demizen of salt water had to suffer, and may have suffocated on the set. To make matters worse, the scenes involving this unfortunate member of the mollusk family feature a very bad matte effect, with a bright outline separating one matte from the other. Like every giant ape movie, we never do see exactly how the boat crew got the big ape onto their ship. We see Kong get blind wasted drunk from having one to many, and then he passes out, to the accompaniment of the natives singing a native chant (and a funny one at that! What they're really singing I don't know, but it sounds like "Sheer criticism!"). The next thing we see of Kong is of him unconscious on an enormous raft enroute to Japan. During Kong's reluctant voyage, Godzilla is going on his third battle with Japanese soldiers and tanks. The tanks, like the other miniatures in this movie are fantastic. Most other special effects bits in KING KONG VS: GODZILLA are also pretty nifty. But as I said before, I don't like King Kong's design, nor am I particularly fond of their messy matte work (i.e. watch for the scene where superimposed soldiers walk all over Kong after he faints due to more music and red juice in the form of mist. The superimposed people who tie ropes & balloons to Kong represent some of the worst matte effects ever put on film). Other minor FX errors can also be spotted in KING KONG VS GODZILLA including a shot that occurs just as Kong and Zilla are about to have their final battle. As Kong, floating in the air because he's tied to hot air balloons approaches Godzilla, Godzilla looks up at him. It's possible to see the

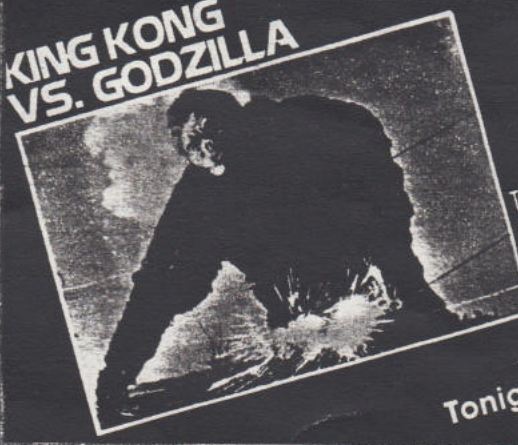
hand of an FX technician pulling the string that makes Godzilla's head arise. The music from CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON served its purpose quite effectively in that American classic. And its re-use in KING KONG VS GODZILLA also fits the scenes well. But let's not forget that these tunes are only added for the junkie dubbed version, not the original Japanese. The only Japanese music left intact for American release was the native chants used during the movie's island scenes. In fact, all the scenes of talking natives are original, using the actors' real voices as they speak in their native tongue. The only native dubbed is the whimpy translator. He's dubbed when he speaks English to the two crewmen from civilization, but not when he speaks native to his chief. The result is two distinctively different voices for one character. Otherwise, all the dubbing for the movie is excellent. However, there are other things added to the American version. Throughout the movie, we seem to switch from scenes of the original Japanese actors like Kanji Sahara, to added American scenes of what appears to be a newscaster, talking to us from what would seem to be some 24 hour news TV station. The American host more or less updates the story about every 20 minutes or so. There's even an interview with a dinosaur expert who goes on to explain why a battle between King Kong and Godzilla is inevitable, claiming they're instinctive rivals. Also included for these American shots are occasional commentaries from supposed foreign correspondents from other countries. The switch from American host to the foreign reporters (one from Japan, one from Italy) is accomplished by a communications satellite that orbits the Earth. Footage of this satellite is actually stock footage from another Japanese sci-fi film from Toho, called BATTLE IN OUTERSPACE (1959).

By now you probably know that KING KONG VS. GODZILLA's plot is basically just an excuse to bring to of the world's greatest monsters together for a confrontation. Even if you haven't seen the motion picture, the title tells all. So far, I haven't really gone heavily into the plot, but have revealed enough of it by mentioning key scenes like Godzilla's resurrection, and King Kong's capture. Going heavily into its story would be pointless, since its been done so many times: by old monster magazines and Japanese SF fanzines from the 1970s, and because it's one of the most commonly seen Godzilla films, so I'm sure you've all seen it. But, for the sake of a complete review, let's just say that the two monsters arrive at Japan while Japanese characters say and do funny things, the military is unsuccessful in defeating either monster, the two giants are brought together in hopes that they'll destroy each other, Japanese characters say and do more funny things, both monsters eventually battle and fall into the sea, and Kong surfaces to swim back to Fero Island. Godzilla never does come to the surface, and we never do see the outcome of their underwater battle, so it's impossible to know who was the winner. The only loser was the audience.

For the longest time, I've considered KING KONG VS GODZILLA to be the worst of the Godzilla movies. But as I watched it for about the 30th time to write this review, I enjoyed the climactic fight, as well as the overall light-hearted, humorous atmosphere. Yet in comparison to the other movies, I must still prefer most

of them over this one. Unlike the rest of the population, I really like the Godzilla movies of the 1970s: GODZILLA VS. SMOG MONSTER, GODZILLA VS GIGAN, GODZILLA VS MEGALON, GODZILLA VS MECHAGODZILLA, and TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA. The other ones of the 1960s are also quite good, with the exceptions of GODZILLA'S REVENGE (which was my alltime favorite movie when I was eight years old) and SON OF GODZILLA. KING KONG VS

GODZILLA, being one of my least favorites, fits in there somewhere with my other dislikes: GODZILLA-KING OF THE MONSTERS, SON OF GODZILLA, GODZILLA'S REVENGE, and of course, GODZILLA 1985, a film so boring that it has got to be the Lawrence Welk of Godzilla movies. Yet I do admire KING KONG VS GODZILLA despite its many flaws, since it was a creative effort which at least tried to offer something new.



Two famous monsters clash in a hair-raising fight to the finish!

Tonight's Movie at 8 **4** KT



**King Kong Vs. Godzilla**  
Michael Keith, Harry Holcomb  
Wednesday 3:30 P.M.



## TAY DU KI

Having never seen *MONKEY FIGHTS GOLDEN LEOPARD*, I am not entirely certain exactly what the early opera-like stories involving Monkey are like. But in my mind, this Vietnamese movie is a good example of what all those Chinese movies from the 1920s, 1930s, and maybe the 1940s have to offer. Apparently, early Chinese adventures and fantasies were mere stage plays put on film, as though somebody in the front row were filming the live performance with a movie camera. Although *TAY DU KI* is not a stage play (the movie has real sets and an outdoor shot for the background of the opening credits), it does have artificial characterisations, ballads, and its martial arts are entirely dance-oriented.

*TAY DU KI* is feature-length, and is in full color. The movie is not blatantly cheap, but big budgetted it is not. For this type of film, the sets seem to suffice. Everything is fake looking, just like the original stage plays which inspired the movie. The simple sets could be a result of their trying to mimick a stage-like atmosphere, or maybe because Vietnamese movie producers, like others in their poor country, can't afford a hell of a lot. My comments on the sets could be applied to *TAY DU KI*'s costumes as well. The costumes on the human characters look standard for those in most

average Chinese period films, but the Monkey King himself looks particularly bad (not that he's ever really looked good in any films). The one character who's design is fitted to Pigsy. In fact, this is probably the best "Pigsy" design I have ever seen. Where as Sun Wu Kung (Monkey) is just an actor with what looks like shoe polish on his face, Pigsy's detailed face piece is a large makeup & mask piece, complete with large ears. Other "animal" costumes are the most unbelievably artificial things imaginable. Some look like what a kid would wear on Halloween, or maybe like something you would expect to see on a contestant on *LET'S MAKE A DEAL*. Another cheap effect comes when Tripitaka does his chanting to cause Monkey King's golden headband to cause him pain. We see what appears to be sparks coming from the monkey's head as he struggles and suffers. This is accomplished by doing what all us amateur film makers learned to do as children when we needed cheap, quick super-impositions that were meant to represent things like rays, and laser beams. We would simply scratch the film. The fact that Vietnam's professional film crew would use this crude method demonstrates how primitive their technology is.

The martial arts are practically non-existent in *TAY DU KI*. There are many duels involving swords & staffs, but these unexciting battles are too artificial, too dance-like, and too musical. This tends to take away the suspense which normally accompanies most fights in films. Also lacking is any real sense of emotion, since the opponents are too busy dancing and

anticipating each others' choreographed moves to bother to show any anger, rage, or fear.

The story takes place after the original *JOURNEY TO THE WEST* saga which deals with all the introductions of each of the four characters. *TAY DU KI* begins where all four heroes are already united, and are traveling to India to fetch the Buddhist scriptures. The producers assume everyone is familiar with these well-known characters, so there's not much explanation on them. *TAY DU KI* offers one of the many possible adventures that the foursome may have encountered on the way to India. Since *TAY DU KI* has no English subtitles, it's hard to know exactly what's going on. I gather that it's basically just how our heroes encounter more cannibals and pull through a number of tight situations. As I recall, the villainous characters this time are magical fairies who can change their forms into animals such as dogs and frogs (using some of the worst animal costumes imaginable).

Like I may have said earlier, I've never seen any early Monkey stage plays, nor have I seen 1925's *MONKEY FIGHTS GOLDEN LEOPARD*, so until then, this Vietnamese movie serves as a good example. In my mind as to what all those early films and plays must have been like. Because of its old-fashioned style, *TAY DU KI* could have been made in either the 1950s or 1960s, but its semi-modern technology would indicate its creation was either in the 1970s or 1980s. So I guess it's safe to assume *TAY DU KI* was made sometime between the years 1950 and 1988!



# CHOP SOCKEY

REPORT

"Hillyyaaa!" is now a phrase of the past. It seems now that when discussing martial arts flicks, more widespread sayings include "Right," "Straight away," "Bastard," "Damn You," and of course, the most common two words of all "But still!" As for females in these chop sockey films, they usually just say "Am!" I hope to include all these obligatory lines as well as obligatory scenes (i.e. training scenes, rape attempts, revenge, females unconvincingly disculping themselves as males and fooling everybody except the audience, etc.) in a new amateur movie I'm working on. This no budget, non-professional flick will be a satire on martial arts films, making fun of the movies of China, Japan and even the pathetic American ones. The movie I'm shooting is being done on video, and should be completed in the late summer of 1989. If any of you readers live in or near the San Francisco area, and would like to be involved in production of the movie, please contact me. At this point, the movie has no title, so we're calling it "WACKY CHAN." But in order to parody the martial arts genre effectively, I've had to review many movies, and take notes. Based on these notes are the following movie reviews. I've given them ratings between 1 and 10.

## DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS

1979, featuring Simon Yuen, Huang Cheng Li & Chien Yuet Sun

Here's one obscure little out-of-the-way unimportant Chinese gungfu flick from 1979. I first saw it on a Saturday afternoon on a Chinese TV station during what I called "Chinese Theatre," where they broadcasted feature-length Chinese movies at 3PM. I believe the year I saw DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS to be 1986, since that was the year Jackie Chan's HEART OF THE DRAGON was released. Through out the TV showings of

DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS, there were trailers for HEART OF THE DRAGON during the commercial breaks, advertising Chan's epic for its showing at some nearby Chinatown theatre. I guess at the time, I hadn't seen many of Jackie's films, and considered DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS a complete rip-off of SNAKEFIST FIGHTER. But viewing DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS now that I have most of Jackie Chan's movies on tape makes me view this predictable film differently. DANCE doesn't rip-off SNAKEFIST FIGHTER specifically, but borrows from all of Jackie Chan's movies of the 1970s. Like THE WAYS OF KUNG FU, MONKEY KUNG FU, COWARD BASTARD, MAGNIFICENT BUTCHER, 7 COMMANDMENTS OF KUNG FU, and THE AVENGING BOXER, this motionful picture is one of the many post-Jackie comedy movies featuring comedy, excellent martial arts, witty little stunts, drunken bums, a lot of training sequences, and mild vengeance, which is one of the few things that was left over from the kung fu films from the early 1970s (FIVE FINGERS OF DEATH, Bruce Lee's films, LADY KUNG FU, etc.) although the revenge in the late 1970s movies wasn't as severe.

The main hero in DANCE is an unknown actor whom I've never seen in any other movies. But a few other characters are played by familiar faces. The late Simon Yuen (SNAKEFIST FIGHTER, EAGLE'S SHADOW, WORLD OF DRUNKEN MASTER, etc.) once again stars as an elderly gungfu instructor, as usual attired in a blue, torn-up martial arts uniform. Like in all of his films as a drunken bum, he generally only appears for shots of his face, since doubles are always used for any shot which involves any physical activity remotely similar to fighting. At the movie's beginning, Chien Yuet Sun (THE THREE AVENGERS, SLAUGHTER IN SAN FRANCISCO, KUNG FU VAMPIRE BUSTER, HOCUS POCUS) appears briefly as an obligatory number's racket thug. He battles it out with the adopted mother of the film's Chan-like hero. This woman, despite her age, turns out to be a formidable opponent. The actress is strikingly skillful & limber, so I assume that she's had training as part of a Chinese acrobatic opera of some kind. The traditional white-haired bearded villain is portrayed by none other than Huang Cheng Li (BRUCE LEE SECRET, TOWER OF DEATH).

DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS is not especially substantial, but is definitely not one of my favorites. The others of its type that I listed at the beginning of this article are better than this dime-a-dozen movie.

The story was a bit hard to follow, since the English subtitles at the very (and I do mean VERY) bottom of the TV screen are just barely readable. I was able to gather that the relationship between the young hero and his not-so-young drunken master was that the master was the youngster's adopted father, though not intentionally. It seems that the master bum had left his wife (the acrobat mentioned earlier), and sometime during that separation, she adopted the kid. When a local villain called "Rubber Leggs" and his lone henchman show their ugly head, the young hero decides to learn gungfu from his reluctant father. After the token training scenes, the drunken master scolds his irresponsible pupil for being a failure. The disillusioned young man leaves and learns more gungfu from a bizarre, sickly martial artist who is so pale he looks dead. The character is ill, and knows he'll die soon, so he spends most of his time sleeping in a coffin like a vampire. Combining the techniques taught to him by his adopted father and the sick man, he eventually defeats the white haired, bearded nuisance. A plot twist comes at the end when the young hero has illusions (probably caused by all the wine he drunk to perform the drunken style) after defeating the baddie and thinks his father is the villain. The ending freeze frames as the hero chases the bum as the sick man tries to calm him down.

RATING: 5

## REVENGE OF THE DRAGON

Presented by Cory B. Sarangaya, Producer: Jimmy L. Pascual, Planning: Kwok Hung, Production manager: Michael Fung & Felix Chan, Camera directed: Hwa San, Light system: Ma Kwan Hwang, Sound effects: Michael Fung, Music: Chow Fu Liang, Editing: Kwok Teng Hung, Art design: Co Kin Ping, Assistant Director: Chiao Lu Chiang, Action

## DANCE OF THE DRUNK MANTIS



Director: Chiang Hung, and starring.....  
Chen Xing, Henry Yue Young, Charlie Chiang,  
Linda Ling, Sun Lan San Kwai, Larry Fang,  
Wang Ching, Fung Kun, & Kent Chen

From a jail come three prisoners. Their names are Chen Chiang and Ko Lei Fung (I couldn't find the third name). They've been released because they're gungfu experts, and the police want these former inmates to attack a violent group of men who are terrorizing a village. These badguys are Saw San Au (leader), Tang Lung, and Fong Se Hung.

And so the heroes come in contact with the villains. After a number of tough situations, Chen Chiang is the only survivor.

REVENGE OF THE DRAGON is literally actionpacked. There are a few scenes of dialogue, but for every talk scene, there's an even longer fight scene.

The photography is also quite interesting.

The movie is coldblooded, with little or no sense of humor.

The voicedubbing is fairly good, although there are scenes where young men speak with older voices.

The title "Revenge of the Dragon," isn't the movie's real title. The opening graphic was obviously added on for TV release, using a cheap videocamera.

RATING: 6

#### WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE

Produced by Seasonal Films, probably in 1982.

By now, you all know that in Hong Kong, gungfu films have been for the most part, replaced by what they now call action films. After dozens of identical movies in the 1970s, the genre just seemed to get tired of repeating itself. WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE was made sometime around 1983, and was one of the last



involve revenge or rival martial arts schools. As is evident in the title, this semi-gory movie features cannibals as villains, not gangsters or Japanese. I suppose that WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE could be the "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" of Chinese gungfu films. Naturally, any movie which combines both martial arts and cannibalism would have to be rather bloody. And although this dark humored oddity may have more spinetingling bloodshed than the average Chinese gungfu film, the gore is nothing compared to that in most recent American horror films. Softening the atmosphere of the picture is its humorous content. Lots of gross comedy involving cannibalism, masochism, and an enormous, grotesque horny female (obviously played by a man) abound in this this entertaining adventure.

Specifically discussing martial arts, its not especially good, but no worse than most average chop sockey movies of the 1970s. And unlike Jackie Chan's movies, there is not any breathtaking stuntwork. The main hero is played by an actor who is only a decent martial artist, not an absolutely outstanding one. As yet, he's never attracted a following in any western country, unlike Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, David Chiang, Billy Chong or Jimmy Wang Yu. Therefore, he has no known English name to call him by. I know him by his Chinese name Tsiu Siu Keung, but his undetermined name has also been translated Tu Thieu Cong and Tsui Shao Chan. The many named actor also appeared as Raymond in NUOI QUI ("Ghost Nursing"). That movie's beginning credits listed actors' names like Norman Chu, Melbourne Wang, and Tom Chin. It's impossible to know which of these three western adaptations is the English name for Tsiu Siu Keung, since he's never used any of the three in any other movie to the best of my knowledge. Another commonly seen actor in WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE is Kou Sheng, who undoubtedly has other spellings and pronunciations with his name as well. That's the problem with being Chinese; all these different Chinese languages such as Cantonese, Mandarin, Cambodian, Thailand, Manchurian, Mongolian, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Taiwanese all have different pronunciations for names. Anyway, Kou Sheng (or whatever) appeared in other movies, like when he played a monk in THE PEAKOCK KING, a gangster in MONKEY KUNG FU, and he also was in some war movie called HEROES SHED NO TEARS.

Storywise, it seems as though there was this village that was isolated from civilisation

since it was surrounded by nature for miles around. The villagers somehow aquired strange tastes for forbidden pleasures like cannibalism and sometimes masochism. But a sense of brotherhood and loyalty was in effect, preventing them from killing & eating each other. Yet if any strangers, drifters or nomads should be so unfortunate as to wander through or near town, they would become the source of a feast of the local townsfolk. One by one, these depraved killers gobble up numerous traders and hunters who have been traveling the nearby forests. But the luck of the villagers changes one day when a new wanderer comes to town. Fortunately for him, he's a master of gungfu. The brave fighter is a government agent called 999 (played by Tsiu Siu Keung) who is on the search for a criminal called Rolex, recognizable only by the tattoo of a fist, printed on his chest. Rolex is indeed now living among the cannibals, but regrets their treachery and plans on escaping, if he can make it by the masked assassins who do all the actual dirty work (i.e. capturing human prey, killing them, chopping them up, putting their pieces in bowls of steamed rice, etc.). By the time 999 finally finds the now reformed Rolex, 999 must defend himself from the villagers themselves, who see him as their next meal. Rolex is eventually killed by the psychotic leader (played by Kou Sheng) of the cannibals, and sometime after that, the evil leader is defeated by 999, who escapes the village by going down river on a river on a raft with some friends.

Other characters also exist, including a bumbling thief who, near the end, teams up with our heroic 999. There's also a female cannibal who keeps saying in Chinese that that she wants some heart. In the Chinese language, we are meant to assume that she means she just wants to be loved. But at a trick ending, we're supposed to be fooled when she reveals her true meaning: She literally wants someone's heart. She tears a heart out of a dead villain's chest. But the English subtitles translate her words strangely, making it obvious what she meant in the first place so I wasn't fooled by the so-called "trick" ending. These subtitles by the way, are different than most subtitles on Chinese videotapes. Normally, English subtitles are so big that they stretch all the way out of the range of the screen, making understanding them difficult. But this time, they're small enough so that the WHOLE line fits! However, they're way too small to read on a 9" by 11 1/2" TV screen. However, if your screen is about 16" by 21", you should be able to read the subtitles without too much squinting.

I first became aware of WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE in around 1984, when me and two friends (August Ragone, & Barrie Evans) were wandering around Chinatown theatres on our way to see MONKEY WAR at the now defunct Sun Sing Theatre. We saw posters & stills advertising WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE at another now dead theatre which was called the Seasonal. I never did get around to seeing WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE until its eventual release to video in 1988, and upon seeing it, I was not disapointed.

RATING: 8

## TSIU SIU KEUNG



Chinese martial arts movies made to take place around the time of the boxer rebellion, which not to say that it has anything to do with the boxer rebellion, which it doesn't. However the attire on the film's characters is the same as that which is normally seen in films of the early 1900s. WE'RE GOING TO EAT YOU ALIVE is not another anti-Japanese movie, nor does it

### THE ASSASSIN (1979)

Starring: Shinnichi ('Sonny') Chiba, Yusef Osman, Pico Carrison, Ryche Uchida, Takeshi Kamama, Kozi Heo, Zlyo Chiba, Keko Kuramoto, Kirk Fonda, Araki Kuzi, Nenzi Kobayashi, Ryoziro Nishimoto, Tachunari Kameyama, Mayumi Huzii, Kozi Shimada.

Sonny Chiba plays Hayata, a secret agent who poses as a hitman for Tokyo's largest underworld gang to battle drug smugglers.

Normally, I don't review a movie unless I have seen it three or more times. But in this case, I'll make an exception. I've seen this film only once, and that's more than enough.

If the movie was all in Japanese (with or without English subtitles), or all dubbed in English, it would be a nice little flick. Instead, half of the movie is dubbed with English voices. The remainder of THE ASSASSIN is in its original Japanese soundtrack. At one point, all the characters are talking in Japanese (and it's quite noticeable), in conversations which last quite a long amount of time. Why they show this on American commercial TV is beyond me. But the majority of this picture is in English. But these scenes are even worse than the Japanese dialogue parts. The voice dubbing is unrealistic, naively written and the voices don't fit the characters at all. This entire review could be devoted entirely to criticizing the voicedubbing, but THE ASSASSIN has many other weaknesses that I'd like to complain about.

The acting is terrible. Even Sonny Chiba himself seems below par.

I should also point out that this is not really a martial art film, although it does feature three or four fight scenes which are short, badly choreographed and far between with mile-wide gaps. The majority of its action sequences are chase scenes and gunfire scenes.

It's surprising that Toei (Japan's company of companies) made this dull film. Toei also produced Chiba's very good film, THE KILLING MACHINE, a great one called THE EXECUTIONER, and the halfway tolerable THE STREET-FIGHTER. At this point, I can't imagine any Toei/Chiba movie being worse than THE ASSASSIN. RATING, FROM 1 TO 10: 4

### YOGA AND THE KUNGFU GIRL

Produced by Long Sun Film Co., Ltd.  
Starring Chi Kuan Gin & Pai Ying  
Special recommendation: Phoenix Chen  
Director: Sun Young

This inferior gungfu drama which should have been titled "Kungfu and the Yoga Girl" (since the title heroin is a master of yoga, gungfu) deals with a deaf mute girl called Phoenix who is in a traveling acrobat troop lead by their employer and instructor called Madam Kau. One member of the group is the impulsive Huang Fei, heavily into gambling and gungfu. Trouble begins when the leader of the town's local mafia tries to rape Phoenix. They fail, yet the mob is determined. Numerous battles occur as the mob is eventually overthrown by a rival gang, equally evil. Let's see, what else happens? Oh,

yeah, Madam Kau is accused of selling poison, Madam Kau gets killed, then Huang Fei, Phoenix and another member of the otherwise dead troop battle and defeat the main boss.

This movie is not only childish, but boring. Despite the presence of gungfu superstar Chi Kuan Gin, the fights are a bit on the lame side. Lead heroin Lal Ping is truly a master at yoga and tumbling. Her strength and limberness, not to mention her stamina is absolutely incredible. However, that's not gungfu. I suppose the idea of making a movie where villains are defeated by splits and handstands is innovative, but it's not effective. Oh well, I suppose they should try every idea, no matter how dumb, at least once.

I found Phoenix's sign language to be irritating. All the characters seem to understand sign language, but for us sign language impaired people, a woman's voice is dubbed over to narrate what the sign language means.

The gungfu techniques have such ridiculous names as "Chicken lays an egg" and "the cow is not a coward."

KUNGFU AND THE YOGA GIRL features all the usual scenes: obligatory gambling scene, drunken bum scene, obligatory rape attempt, vengeance, and of course, some training sequences.

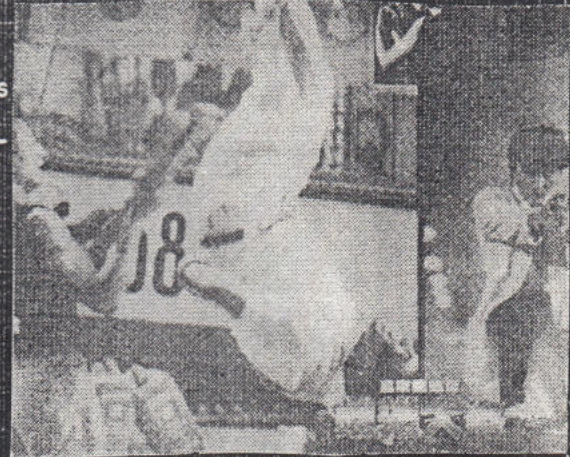
As a rating from 1-10, I'll give this one a 4, but that's only because of Pai Ying's flexibility. Without that, I'd give it a 2.

### IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3

Produced by D&B Films, starring: Cynthia Khang, Hiroshi Fujioka, Ti Wei, Paul Chin and Yue Hwa

As I sat there in the Chinatown theatre watching the movie screen and seeing Hiroshi Fujioka beat the shit out of Yue Hwa, I could not help but consider it a historic occasion. It was a case of Kamen Rider vs. Sun Wu Kung, the Stone Monkey King! Both veteran actors appear in this 1988 action film from China. Hiroshi Fujioka makes his Chinese movie debut in this magnificent thriller. Fujioka, like many Japanese actors, is most commonly associated with his work in Tokyo's Toei Movie Company. Japanese movies to his credit include TIDAL WAVE, ESPY, and HIGH SEAS HIJACK. He also made his American debut in the atrocious "Japanese samurai in L.A."

flick called GHOST WARRIOR. But by far, Hiroshi Fujioka's most wellknown, most beloved role was as the lead hero in that highly influential superhero series from 1971 which changed Japanese TV forever, the classic KAMEN RAIDA ("Masked Rider"). In his



first Chinese movie, he plays an angry Japanese police officer. Yue Hwa is a Chinese actor who is no stranger to movies himself. He is an old star who has been in a number of action films (THE MONKEY, COME DRINK WITH ME, MONKEY KUNG FU, SEVEN BLOWS OF THE DRAGON, & LUNG WEI VILLAGE, to name a few), yet I've never seen any evidence that he can fight. For IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3, he plays a dishonest, rich designer of jewelry. Additional guest actors appear from time to time in IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3, such as Fiong Tsui Feng, (GHOST SNATCHERS) Eric Tsan and Richard Ng (WHEELS ON MEALS, MR. VAMPIRE 3). All three actors are most known for their starring together in Samo Hung's "Lucky Stars" pictures. Another supporting actor is Ti Wei, who plays the main male villain and takes part in the climactic duel. Ti Wei is best remembered for his role as the commanding pirate from Jackie Chan's PROJECT A. The main hero, I mean the main heroin of IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3 is a female cop played by the gorgeous Cynthia Khang. She's got an extremely pretty face and nice-looking legs that she knows how to use in a fight. Her speed, strength, stamina and limberness are considerable. However, it is painfully obvious that for maybe a couple of the stunts, a stuntman was used.

The movie itself is a modern day action film from Hong Kong featuring stunts, gunfire, explosions, chases and gungfu. In comparison to other films of its type, it lacks the hilarity of ACES GO PLACES, and the indescribably outstanding stuntwork of Jackie Chan's modern day actioners (i.e. POLICE FORCE). What IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3 has to offer is fierceness. There is a lot of bloodshed & some gore, plus a few brutal



death scenes. The death of Hiroshi Fujioka's partner Ken is staged in such a way that we really come to cheer the Japanese hero on, hoping for him to tear apart the villains responsible. The avenging character is called Hiroshi Fujioka, nearly the same as the actor's name. But the Chinese in the movie pronounce it much differently than the Japanese. The Japanese actor demonstrates his superior acting ability quite well in a touching, sentimental scene in a traditional Japanese graveyard shortly after the funeral for his policeman partner Ken. The sequence depicts his talking to the 4 year old (approx.) son of the deceased cop. The naive, innocent kid claims in a cute manner, he's too young to avenge his father's death, and has no gun, so he asks our hero to do it.

The story is not that unusual, a vengeful cop out to severely punish the two jewel thieves who killed a fellow police officer during a jewel theft in Tokyo. Fujioka follows the two criminals to Hong Kong. From there, he eventually teams up with a Chinese policewoman who aids him in his quest for revenge & justice. In the end, both thieves end up dead, but so does the Japanese hero. I would like to have seen Hiroshi Fujioka do perhaps a little more of the actual fighting, but I imagine he was kind of tired, since at the time of making this movie, he had been in the business for seventeen years.

Supposedly, IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3 is the third in a series of modern day action flicks which always team up a Chinese actress with a Japanese guest star. One of its prequels was ROYAL WARRIORS starring Hiroyuki Sanada. I guess IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3 is one of those "sequels" where none of the original characters return, and it is a whole new story having absolutely nothing to do with its predecessor. Maybe one day these irresponsible movie-makers will realize their mistakes.

RATING: 9

#### THE EAGLE KING

Produced: Se Wai, Present: Bau Rong, Screenplay: Lo Do Tak, Directed: Kail Lao

Master Chu is the leader of a martial art school. His followers include Tin Ah, Yu Fang, Kwai Cha and Pai Ching.

But a terrible flood occurs which destroys part of a Chinese village. Food and other supplies are sent to the damaged village. But Lord Shi (a local ruler) decides to keep the supplies for his own profit, rather than giving it to the needy flood victims, whom it was meant for. Lord Shi also has plans to rebel against China's emperor, so that he himself can become the emperor.

Fortunately, a local good guy called Shao has witnessed the execution of a spy who rebelled against Shi. Before the spy dies, he informs Shao of Shi's diabolical plans. Shortly after, Yu Fang enters

a bar, where some of Shi's men try to pick up on her. She is not impressed, so she uses her gungfu skills to beat them up. Somehow, things do not get very peaceful afterwards.

The fight choreography is okay, as is the rest of the movie. But nothing is better than "okay."

The music is mostly stock-music, often included in many other gungfu pictures, and STAR WARS.

The film's humor is also okay. It is mildly amusing when some of the men in the movie pose as women.

RATING: 5

#### 2 MOVIE—Thriller

"Bolo." (Chinese; 1979) Prison inmates are recruited to battle evil vigilantes. Paipiao. (2 hrs.)

[Ch. 2 plans an announcement warning that this movie may not be suitable for all family members.]

#### BOLO

Music: Chow Foo Liang, Editor: Cheung Kok Cheng, Art: Union Design, Executive Producer: Lau Ny Banito, Production Managers: Yang Sze & Jason Pai Piao, Cameraman: E Chung, Assistant Director: Li Kok Keong, Script: Yeung Hon Ning, Starring: Jason Pai Piao, Yang Sze, Wong Ha, Chin Yet Sun, San Kwei, Lau Yet Fan, Chiang Tao, Tog Slew Meng

Yang Sze returns as Bolo, a character he first portrayed in ENTER THE DRAGON. But the character in ENTER can not be the same guy as in this movie. Aside from the difference in time periods (ENTER takes place in modern times, BOLO takes place in the old days), there is the fact that the character Bolo does not match both films. In ENTER, Bolo was a cold-blooded executioner. The Bolo in this flick is far more jolly, friendly and humorous than the brute in ENTER.

This flick is one of the most poorly written productions I've ever been unfortunate enough to see.

For the first time, the acting is even worse than the voice dubbing (which is also horrible).

Not surprisingly, this movie (under its theatrical title BOLO THE BRUTE) was chosen for "Dog of the Week" for an early episode of the old SNEAK PREVIEW series when it was hosted by Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert. But normally, American film critics and martial arts movies don't mix. Critics tend to dislike any movie involving martial arts, unless it stars Chuck Norris. Although I agree with their panning of BOLO, they've also included in their "Dog of the Week" enjoyable movies like SHOGUN ASSASSIN, A HARD WAY TO DIE, and the excellent LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES (a.k.a. SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA).

The plot for BOLO (what little there is) is about two prisoners who are released from jail so they can defend a village from mobsters and the like.

RATING: 3



#### THE MAN CALLED TIGER

With: Jimmy Wang Yu and Okada Kawai

A martial arts expert called Chin Fu who tries to infiltrate the Japanese gang responsible for Chin Ka Chang's (his father) death.

This is a slightly above-average gungfu movie. On the whole, it is just as good (or bad, depending on your reaction to gungfu films in general) as most other motion pictures of its type.

The photography, editing, voice dubbing and musical score are all quite good.

Unfortunately, the lead hero isn't all that appealing. His face remains expressionless throughout the film, and he is rather stupid-looking. On the whole, he is just plain boring.

Last, and certainly not least, the gungfu choreography. The fight scenes are well paced, and the hero fights with utterly incredible speed.

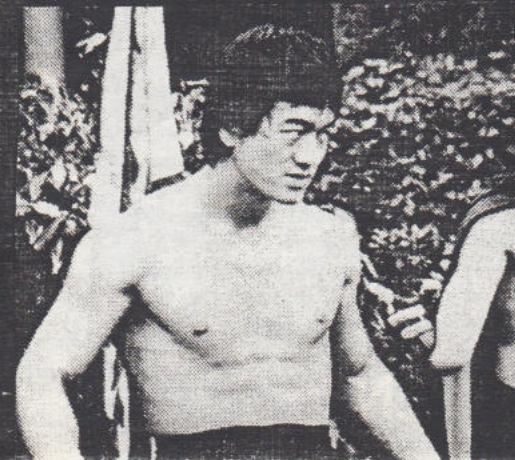
RATING: 6 1/2

#### BRUCE LEE, WE MISS YOU

Producer: Liu Hsiao Ling, Director: Lee Kon Cheung, Starring: Ho Chung Tao, Chen Pei Ling, Ou Yang Chung, Lung Fei, San Mou, Ou Yang Hui

Bruce Li plays a martial art instructor who is also a Bruce Lee fan. On the day of Lee's death, he becomes upset, and sets out to discover why Bruce Lee died.

The movie's qualities (acting, voice dubbing, etc.) are all okay. The only especially good elements in this motion picture are, of course, the fight scenes. The beginning of the flick has very little action, so it's dull. But the second half of the flick is very exciting. The fight scenes are plentiful and long.



## DREADNAUGHT

Directed by Yuen Kwei, starring Liang Chia Jen, Yuen Baio, Kwan Tak Hing & Lily Li, produced by Golden Harvest

Aside from some dazzling Hongdance scenes, this has got to be not only one of the worst martial arts movies in my collection, but one of the worst movies, period! Like I said, a couple of well-choreographed Hongdances add entertainment to an otherwise useless movie.

The plot is a real mess which would seem to be about an insane criminal upset over the death of his wife, killed by bounty hunters. Somehow, a necklace figured prominently in her death scene. I assume that either she or one of her killers was wearing it at the time of her defeat. But somehow, somewhere, Yuen Baio gets the necklace. He ends up as being a target for the killer, who occasionally stalks him, while wearing Peking Opera makeup on his face to conceal his identity.

Other actors include Liang Chia Jen and Kwan Tak Hing. Liang Chia Jen's film credits include his playing the Manchu's top axeman in the classic FIVE MASTERS OF DEATH, the main hero in THUNDERING MANTIS & CANTONEN IRON KUNG FU, an old man in THE MIRACLE FIGHTERS, and a bumbling nomad in ENCOUNTER WITH THE VAMPIRE. DREADNAUGHT is the only movie I've seen him in as yet where he hasn't a beard. With the exception of ENCOUNTER WITH THE VAMPIRE, all those movies blow away this piece of garbage. Kwan Tak Hing once again plays Huang Fei Hong (1847-1924), a real person who was a son of one of the legendary Ten Tigers of Kwangtung (see the classic 1979 movie of the same name). Huang Fei Hong is the character that actor Kwan Tak Hing is now most commonly associated with, having played the folk hero in numerous movies in the 1950s. In more recent years, the now elderly Kwan Tak Hing has made memorable guest appearances in modern gungfu films like MAGNIFICENT BUTCHER, ACES GO PLACES IV, MAGNIFICENT KICK, and unfortunately, DREADNAUGHT.

DREADNAUGHT was made in 1982 and was one of the last so-called "kung-fu movies." Current Chinese martial arts films take place in modern times and are called "action movies." I mourn the loss of 1970s gungfu films. But viewing this chaotic mess (DREADNAUGHT) makes me glad that most Chinese companies have given up on the genre. If they can't do it right, don't do it at all.

As I try, in vain to sit through this boring piece of shit, I can't help but feel that there's nothing in the movie that isn't mere filler, featuring characters fooling around in silly, senseless scenes which seem to have no importance to the story, what little it has. Final complaint: Martial arts. What little it has is neither good nor bad. Nearly all the battles are incredibly short, and usually consisting of a single punch or kick. As a rating from 1 to 10, I would give it a 1, but the Hongdancing is decent, so I'll be extra kind by giving it a 3.

# END

## THE MONKEY

Directed by Ho Meng Hua, Producer Run Run Shaw, Story: Eng Kang, Film editing: Chiang Hsing Loo, Set Production: Chen Chi Ruey, Writer: Chung Hung, Sound Recording: Wang Yung, Asst. Director: Ang Yeng, Makeup: Fong Yu, Music: Ng Fo Ling, Lyrics: Li Chun-Cu

### CAST:

Yueh Hua as Wu Kung, Ho Fan as Hsueh Chuang, Pan Pan as Pa Chieh/Piggy, Tien Shen as Sandy, Kao Pao Shu as the Dragon Prince, and Diane Chung Chung-Wen as whoever the hell she played

Shaw Brothers' 1968 version of 'Journey to the West' starts off with superimposed words (not unlike those at the beginning of STAR WARS) rolling upwards, telling us in English how the priest Hsueh Chuang (actually called Tripitaka according to the book, but Chinese can't pronounce that Indian name) traveled into India during the Tang Dynasty to get the Buddhist scrolls. From there, we see the story starting where Hsueh Chuang (Tripitaka) is already on his way to the West, escorted by helpers. All his companions end up dead as a result of a



freak storm. Next up, the lone priest discovers the imprisoned monkey Wu Kung who'd been buried by Buddha 500 years ago. Hsueh Chuang/Tripitaka releases the magical seal (a piece of paper not unlike a gyron's talisman) of Buddha, so the Stone Monkey escapes. As the grateful ape accompanies the priest on his pilgrimage to India, they encounter a dragon man called Third Prince who, like many other evil demons, wants to eat Hsueh Chuang's flesh for the sake of immortality. But even when the guy turns into his true enormous dragon form, he's no match for the Monkey

King and his iron cudgel. This dragon looks more like a prehistoric dinosaur than a traditional Chinese dragon, and is one of the film's highlights. This mechanical marvel was obviously inspired by Japanese giants like Godzilla and/or Ultraman's enemies. Anyway, to repent for his sins, the Third Prince is forced by the Goddess Kuan Yin to turn into a horse and to assist our heroes on their perilous journey. Wu Kung must also be disciplined, since he's too bad tempered to get along with the priest. The Heavenly Goddess gives the Stone Monkey a golden ring which he's to wear around his head. Not knowing what it's for, Wu Kung enthusiastically puts it on his head and likes it at first. But then Kuan Yin gives the priest a small jade sculpture with a calligraphy inscription carved into it. When these symbols read aloud, Wu Kung receives a powerfully intense headache which will help to discipline him, should he behave naughtily. Meanwhile, Pa Chieh ("Piggy" in the English subtitles) is intent on marrying an unwilling lady played by Diane Chung Chung-Wen. To relieve the unfortunate girl of this horror (if having sex with an obese pig is not horror, I don't know what is), Monkey intervenes by impersonating her. What starts off as mere toying around becomes a duel between Piggy/Pa Chieh and Monkey/Wu Kung. Whenever Piggy hits Monkey with his rake, sparks come out. But the indestructible Monkey wins and Piggy agrees to join them on their journey. The third and final adventure deals with the introduction of the cannibal from the Sandy River. He too is called "Sandy" and is the leader of an underwater fortress. They manage to capture the priest and take him underwater to the kingdom. But Piggy and the Monkey King aren't far behind. Just as Sandy and his aquatic minions are about to prepare a feast, our two heroes arrive. As the two of them battle it out with their foes, Sandy grabs the priest's unconscious body and carries him away. After Sandy and the priest reach the surface of the water and travel on land with Piggy & Monkey in hot pursuit, the Goddess arrives once more and confronts Sandy. Fearing the wrath of the gods, Sandy begs forgiveness and offers his assistance to Tripitaka, the Stone Monkey and Piggy on their voyage to India.

The beginning and ending of THE MONKEY (MONKEY on the trailer, MONKEY GOES TO THE WEST on the video rental box) seem like two completely different films. The beginning shots in the Demon King's cave where the Third Prince (dragon man) arrives to challenge them (they fight over who gets to eat the priest) seems more or less like a traditional Chinese period film of the 1960s, featuring adequate swordfighting with even some bloodshed. The actor who plays the Third Prince even played a villain in Jimmy Wang Yu's THE ONE ARMED SWORDSMAN (1966). The ending scenes in the cheap underwater kingdom remind me of Vietnam's TAY DU KI. The set is tolerable at best, and the superimposed matte background of fish-tank-sized fish meant to look big just looks stupid. Worst of all are the costumes which reflect the theatrical look of the original primitive operas that inspired the movie. The mock-turtle (reminiscent of the one in the British ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND movie) looks especially artificial; nice shell, but the actor lacks any sort of turtle mesk! Now you know what I mean by "artificial." Also, nobody in this so-called underwater kingdom swims, they walk on the ocean floor,

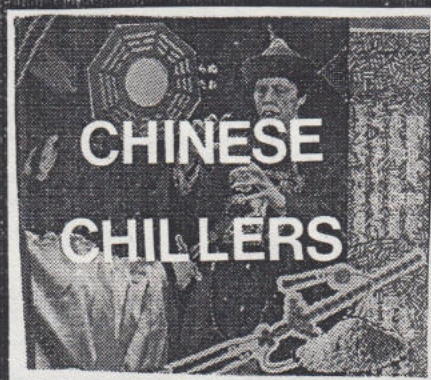
do see his face at the time of the flip. Despite the fakeness of the climactic battle, it's still quite suspenseful, and we can't help but cheer Monkey and Pigsy in their fight. The grand finale also involves Monkey multiplying himself into several replicas of himself, resulting in a whole army of Stone Monkeys taking on the oceanic demons.

Included in THE MONKEY that was not included in THE MONKEY KING book is Pigsy's obsession with attractive female humans. Aside from his thwarted attempt at marriage, THE MONKEY also features a rear nudity shot (which was no big deal to me, since I've always been a tit-man myself) as Pigsy peeks at some ladies skinny-dipping in a pond.

As I mentioned before, THE MONKEY is a musical. Nothing wrong with that certainly, but I think a musical should have good sound quality. This it is sadly lacking. There seems to be too many scenes where the sound features a fluttering, rumbling noise. It sounds like there was some sort of damaged wiring in their microphones.

All in all, THE MONKEY is my favorite 1960s version of the legend, since the only other two versions of the 1960s I know of are mere cartoons, unfortunately. Also, to the best of my knowledge, this is the only Shaw Brothers version of "Journey to the West" made.

END



### SPIRITS VS. ZOMBI

You know, I really just can't figure out the various Chinese film companies that keep cranking out this trash. The nearest thing I can guess is that they are actually trying to see who can create the worst gyonsi movie imaginable. It seems that only the ones created by Boho Films (ENCOUNTER OF THE SPOOKY KIND, MR VAMPIRE, etc.) and Kinko Films (HELLO! DRACULAR, HAI TZU WONG, etc.) are worth watching.

As for the award of the worst hopping vampire movie, this pathetic drama ties with GON SZE YIM TAM, but with MAGIC STORY in hot pursuit. Since all new gyonsi movies maintain a traditional level of mediocrity, I suppose that this is to be the standard for the genre.

Makeup on the gyonsis is terrible, with many of the problems in GON SZE YIM TAM (see ORIENTAL CINEMA #6). The makeup doesn't look realistic or scary, and lacks

any real detail. These disappointing facials consist of mere clownwhite all over the face, but with darker eye shadow on the eyelids. The only special effects of any interest are a couple scenes at the beginning, of the two gyonsis jumping so high it could be classified as flying. Special effects aren't all that's lacking. What's also not present is any fear or suspense. Occasionally, SPIRIT VS. ZOMBI unsuccessfully attempts at humor. With no interesting characters or scenes, it's hard to enjoy such a film, let alone pay attention to it.

I would classify it as being worse than GON SZE YIM TAM, except for two scenes of martial arts which almost make SPIRIT VS. ZOMBI worth watching. The first scene occurs during about the middle of the film and takes place on a film set as a filmcrew films their own gyonsi movie. The shot they're filming looks like one of those classic movies from Golden Harvest or Kinko Films; it features an old style set, and a Taoist using martial arts to battle the gyonsis. The movie that the crew is making looks much better than the actual film SPIRIT VS. ZOMBI. The other good scene is at the film's end, and is a duel showing the only other gungfu in the movie. This battle is very much Chinese opera inspired, and features a goofy hero using magic powers to change his form as he battles his opponent. Among other characters, the hero even becomes the Monkey King briefly.

"SPIRIT VS. ZOMBI" is a stupid title, since it doesn't accurately represent the movie's content, and they spelled the word "zombie" incorrectly.

The script is a complete rip-off of MR. VAMPIRE 2, since both films take place in modern times and involve gyonsis emerging, and getting separated so the young gyonsi boy befriends other little kids. Only this time, it's two gyonsis (father & son) instead of three. And they are discovered underground hibernating by construction workers, not scientists. An interesting twist this time is that the gyonsis practically never bite anyone, and try to use restraint from harming anyone unless provoked. They both communicate with each other by telepathy. They can come out in the daylight without the slightest discomfort, and decide to try and live among humans so they stop hopping, and walk like normal people, to be less noticeable.

There's only one familiar face that I could recognize. That's Ku Feng, who has

...in many Shaw Bros. films in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. Since the demise of the Shaw studios, their actors have ended up in films from other companies. Fortunately, the veteran actor Ku Feng is only featured in SPIRIT VS. ZOMBIE for about five minutes during a press conference early on in the film. It would be sad if a talented star such as he were a main character in this feature-length fiasco. Think of it, it would be going from classics like AVENGING EAGLES & CRACKSHADOW BOXERS to the bottom of the barrel with this stinker.

KINKO'S TRILOGY update

\*\*\*\*\*KINKO'S TRILOGY update\*\*\*\*\*

At last, I think I've finally figured it all out! Remember last issue when I claimed that HELLO! DRACULAR is either a sequel or prequel to RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU? Or how about when I called RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU a Chinese TV show?! Well, that was all just a bunch of bullshit. Now at last, the truth can be known, I hope.

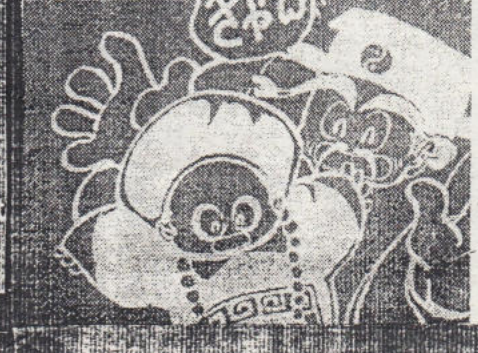
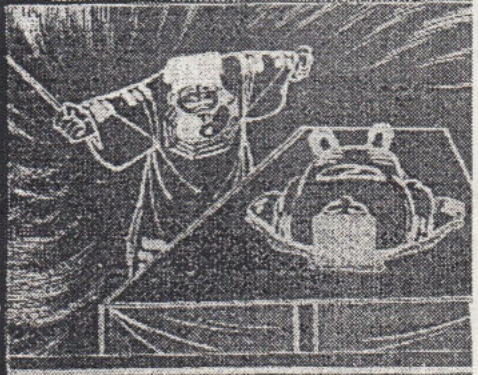
When Golden Harvest and Boho Films created the MR. VAMPIRE films, their distributor Paragon Films decided extra money could be made if a more juvenile series of gyonsi movies was produced. Paragon Films hired the obscure (but highly efficient) Kinko Films to create theatrical, feature-length films which borrowed heavily from the MR. VAMPIRE movies. Kinko's gyonsi movies are more youth oriented, and have twice as much special effects and martial arts as their predecessors from Golden Harvest. At this time, I know of three of Kinko's gyonsi movies: HELLO! DRACULAR, HAI TZU WONG, and a third that I don't know the Chinese title of. Like MR. VAMPIRE, all three of these elaborate kiddie films were immense successes in China. This paved the way for their being released to Japan. Japanese releasers cut each movie into 25 minute segments, and released them as three separate TV shows. HELLO! DRACULAR became known in Japan as REI GEN DOUSHI, HAI TZU WONG became YUU GEN DOUSHI, and the other Chinese movie became the Japanese TV show RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU. All three movies/TV shows were remakes of each other, featuring the same characters usually played by the same actors in all three.

Chinese title:  
HELLO! DRACULAR  
Japanese title:  
REI GEN DOUSHI

The main characters in story #1 are a grandfather and his grandchildren. His grandchildren are a young girl called Ten Ten, an ugly fat kid called Chi Kua Pih ("Saika" in the Japanese dub), a little boy called "Little Black" who always wears a white hat, and two older boys in their teens. These two young adults are featured only in this film, and seem merely added for their fighting & acrobatic skills. They do practically no acting, have very little dialogue, and merely sink into the background for any scenes that don't require them to fight. Another heroic character is a kid corpse called "Baby Kyonshi" in the Japanese version. This undead little tike was considered so cute by the oriental audiences that he was guaranteed prominent roles in the two preceding movies. "Debu" (in Japanese version) is an army squad leader who appears not only in this movie, but in RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU as well. Naturally, no gyonsi movie would be complete without an obligatory Taoist corpse driver. This one also appears in RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU. The three other main characters are Americans who have never returned in any other remake to date.

As a childish kiddie film, it has got its share of stupidity. Things I hated included the ballad where Ten Ten sings about ducks and the gyonsis dance (the song is different in the Japanese version, but equally as irritating as the original stupid Chinese song), explicit bathroom humor which combines vulgarity, tastelessness & naiveness, use of sacrificial animal blood for taoist spells, and any scene (and there are a lot of them) featuring the hideous Chi Kua Pih (Saiko) character.

However, HELLO! DRACULAR is not without its good points. The martial arts are great, as are the stunts (lots of breakaway furniture). The special effects are wonderful. The action & FX both combine well at a climactic battle as soldiers fight to keep the rampaging gyonsis away from a village. But flash is not the only positive thing in HELLO! DRACULAR. The script is intriguing both dramatically and historically. The three Americans (who speak English in the Chinese version of the movie) add cultural diversity, as the Christian American priest and the Taoist Chinese monk eventually



combine their own religious weapons (i.e. Christian crucifix & holy water, and the Taoist's talismans and doll-like Clownghosts) in hopes of defeating the rampaging gyonsis.

Scriptwise, it all starts when a fatherless boy dies (as we are told through a flashback) by falling off a cliff. Though dead, the kid still wants his dad, and can't rest in peace. The little brat returns to life as a young gyonsi, who's own loneliness makes adult male gyonsis around him go toward him like a magnet. The "Baby Kyonshi" (Japanese name) thinks they're all his father. This corpse kid hops by the local corpse driver and his deceased clients, thereby causing all the gyonsis to run amock (I mean hop amock). And if that's not bad enough, the Baby Kyonshi also revives a particularly powerful gyonsi, who was a martial arts master when in his former life. The master was being transported by his young students (the five kids mentioned at the beginning of this review) and their grandfather. The master gets revived, and he attacks everyone, and bites the corpse driver before hopping away in pursuit of a horse. The remainder of the movie more

Japanese title:

## RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU

Unlike the previous REI GEN DOSHI and the upcoming YUU GEN DOUSHI, I've as yet been unable to obtain an original Chinese version of RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU. I assume that RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU came after REI GEN DOSHI, since the RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU is more elaborate, more experimental than REI GEN DOSHI. The overall plot rem-



ains the same as the previous REI GEN DOSHI. Young kids versed in martial arts & magical taoism battle gyonsis with the help of their grandfather, a wiseman. There are other similarities between the two movies (if you're Japanese, it would be "the two TV shows," not "the two movies"), which is to be expected, since RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU is a remake of REI GEN DOSHI. The gungfu is equivalent to that of REI GEN DOSHI, and perhaps a little better, since newcomers Chin Hsiao Chan and Kuhun Kuhun Shen (another malformed name which comes from trying to translate a Chinese name into Japanese, then from Japanese into English!) are dandy martial arts actors. Lacking are all the plentiful stunts & falls involving break-away furniture that were scattered throughout the predecessor. And since the two gymnast teens from #1 are not present, RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU isn't quite as acrobatic as the previous adventure. The special effects are even better in #2, since the outlandish script allows for more ideas and more interesting costumes. The Japanese voice dubbing leaves much to be desired. Though much of the timing for the spoken lip syncs seems to suffice, I noticed a lot of unnecessary grunts that happen when the supposed character never moved his mouth, nor did any such gesture to justify any verbal sound. Another thing which sets this one aside from the film it rem-

akes is the excessive use of overdone rituals. Of course, all movies about Taoism need ceremonial scenes of these characters performing spells, yet RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU has got more of that than any one other single factor. These rituals usually involve fire, chants, jumping around, occasional animal sacrifice, fancy gungfu poses, and colorful special effects (which abound through out RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU). The music ranges from good to terrible. Fortunately, there are NO ballads in the Japanese version (no more of those awful "ducky" songs like the one in HELLO! DRACULAR!) The suspenseful background music is effective, and I enjoyed some of the uppitty tunes used during the fights, even though it rips off musical style from Toei's SHODENSHI BIOMAN (1984) superhero program. But one song in RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU mimicks the funky music of that American GHOSTBUSTERS ("Who ya Gonna Call?") movie, a type of song I despise.

This production features the return of that cut little girl Ten Ten (Ryu Shi I), as well as that fat goon Chi Kua Pih (Ryu Shi Han), now called Saika. Little Black (Ti Don Zon) also returns, known in the Japanese dub as Tonbo. Both of the elderly wisemen (the grandfather and the corpse driver) also are in #2. A new kid on the block is Chibikuro (Chin Hsiao Chan), who's skill at gungfu and acrobats is notable. His mother is Kaeda (Rt Jya), a widow who's husband ended up as a gyonsi. She seems to have a slight crush on a new hero called Tien Wern (Kuhun Kuhun Shen) who is niether a child nor an old man. The character is a taoist between the ages 25-35 probably, and he dresses in traditional medieval uniform,

or less involves numerous confrontations (and subplots such as Ten Ten's briefly being kidnapped by the master) with the master and the other gyonsis released earlier. The grand finale has the wise old grandfather using his magic to turn Little Black and the two teenage acrobats into clownghosts, the hated rivals of the gyonsi. But even as clownghosts (with or without their barrel-shaped bodies), they fail to defeat the master. Chi Kua Pih was bitten earlier, so he too will become a gyonsi so he wants to die. He ties dynamite to his body, lights it and jumps on the master. They both die in the explosion. Try to hold back your tears.



not unlike something you'd expect to see in a period film (a.k.a. costume drama) like *KID WITH THE GOLDEN ARMS* or *AVENGING EAGLE*. Returning for his second film is another character, it's Debu, the bumbling army leader. Baby Kyonshi (Hon I Yuan) also returns, and two new demons appear: there's a barre!-boy (a type of clownghost) called Fi Fi (An An), and an evil wizard called Coumori (the Japanese word for bat, which fits the villain well). I don't know the name of the guy who played Coumori, but I know he played a character in *THE MIRACLE FIGHTERS*.

Chinese title:  
**HAI TZU WONG**  
 Japanese title:  
**YUU GEN DOUSHI**

From what I had gathered from photos, this third entree would have had to be the best in Kinko's trilogy. Until I eventually rented the flick itself from a local Chinese videostore, I had expected *HAI TZU WONG* to be the most colorful, psychedelick and flashy of the three. And indeed, upon viewing this otherwise disappointing romp, my eyes were treated to a fancy sequence taking place in a cave. The scene featured colorful costumes, psychedelick effects, & an enjoyable battle. Sadly, the rest of *HAI TZU WONG* was so stupid and boring it made me want to cry. But don't get me wrong, *HAI TZU WONG* can still be considered good when compared to inferior gyonsi works like *MR. VAMPIRE 2*, *MAGIC STORY*, *ENCOUNTER WITH A VAMPIRE*, and *GON SZE YIM TAM*. However, *HAI TZU WONG* doesn't stand up to its superior two predecessors. The main problem with #3 is its utter dullness. There is really not much action in this one as there was in the other two.

Much of the cast is the same as in *RAI RAI KIYONSHIZU*. The character of Ten Ten is once again in this remake, only this time as a pretty young woman of approximately seventeen years old. The new actress playing Ten Ten this time is Lin Wen Tin, who was born on July 17, 1967. The attractive new star has acted before in small action roles, some video appearances and opera performances. But to the best of my knowledge, has never appeared in a gyonsi flick before. She's got the spotlight in *HAI TZU WONG*, since the whole story revolves mostly around her character. She is a skillfull martial artist,



**SYNOPSIS**

A horned demon emerges from underground and wreaks havoc upon China. The heroic Taoist from the previous film Tien Wern (again played by Kuhn Kuhn Shen) attempts to perform an anti-demon ritual, but the uninvited demon himself invades Tien Wern's household. Tien Wern is immediately defeated and possessed by the demon. The demon kills our conquered hero's wife Chin Lian who is pregnant. Her father is the same old wiseman from the first two movies, who's in charge this time of a group of dead soldiers called Golden Shield Reanimated Corpses ("Full Metal Kyonshi" in Japanese dub) that eventually gets stolen by a couple of conmen skilled in magical Taoism. As for the deceased Chin Lian, her father uses magic to allow her unborn daughter to come to life, in a magical birth. The daughter is named Ten Ten, and she grows up to be a master of magic and gungfu. Ten Ten and her

equally magical grandfather go on a pilgrimage to destroy the demon, and to retrieve the kidnapped, missguided "Golden Shield Reanimated Corpses." These Manchurian gyonsis are used in robberies by the two thieves. Somewhere along the way, Ten Ten & her grandfather adopt five orphans who were forced to perform in an acrobatic opera for little or no money. The kids this time still retain their gungfu, but unlike the first two movies have no knowledge of Taoist magic. This group of kids features the return of Chibikuro ("Darkie," in the English subtitles of the Chinese version), the return of Tonbo (alias "Dragonfly" this time), and three new kiddies: a new boy called An An, a new girl called Juan Juan, and a small, very young girl called Mi Mi. Anyway, all these kiddies had been exploited by a greedy scoundrel called Chu Ge Liang, before our two heroes adopted them. All seven characters end up cornering the two thieves and their gyonsi warriors at a hotel/restaurant. After a decent battle, both villains and the stolen imperial gyonsis are subdued. Then Ten Ten's long lost father Tien Wern wanders into town, still possessed by that satanic viking after all these years. Tien Wern has become a mental case, and a bum. He dies in the film's anti-climactic battle, as the good guys wipe out the demon with the help of Baby Kyonshi and some more stiff-limbed clownghosts.



end of KINKO'S TRILOGY update

**CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE VAMPIRE**

Executive Producers: Tsui Sun Liang & Shan Che Wu, Producer: Chou Ling Kong, Coproducer: Yuen Wo Ping, Production Supervisor: Wu Moun Liang, Martial Arts Director: Yuen's Clan, Production Designer: Brandy Yuen, Director: Yuen Wo Ping

Kinko's trilogy has its first rip-off, which is kind of silly, considering that Kinko's trilogy itself is a rip off of the *MR. VAMPIRE* classics. *CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE VAMPIRE* can not compare with either film series. *CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE VAMPIRE* is not a terrible movie, just a



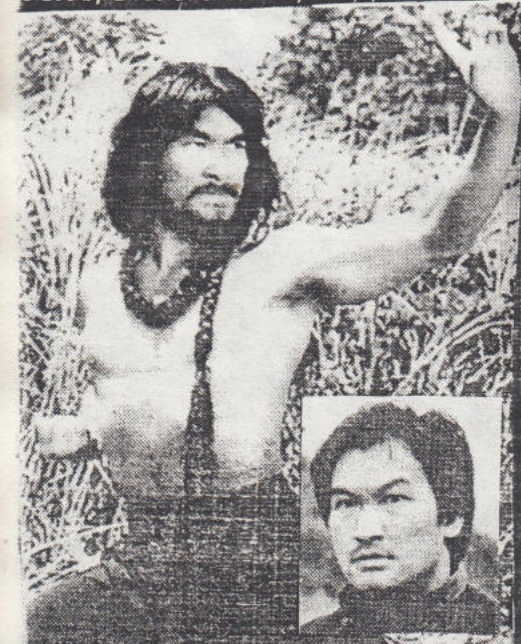


bad one. Nothing is done well, some of the actors are decent fighters but they never get into any good duels, the attempts at comedy rival the worst of PEE WEE'S PLAYHOUSE, and the biggest flaw in the flick is its lighting, or lack of it. Nearly the whole film takes place at night, and they were trying to capture authentic nighttime atmosphere by making everything so incredibly dark that it's nearly impossible to tell what's going on. The me, this comes off as a complete waste of celluloid. CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE VAMPIRE looks like reject footage which should have ended up on the cutting room floor.

I must confess, there are perhaps two or three nice FX scenes, but they were nearly ruined by the dark photography. Off the top of my head, I recollect a decent looking makeup job on the motionless picture's gyonsi, a melt away face, and a climactic shot of the gyonsi exploding when hit by a thunderbolt.

Liang Chia Jen plays the main hero in the movie. His heyday was in the 1970s, the age of the gungfu films, with that genre in hibernation, gungfu actors like the 42 year old (41 when he made this film) Canton born Liang Chia Jen often get stuck in movies like this. The only martial arts he does in CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE VAMPIRE is a single back knuckle fist to the face of an egotistical wizard.

Plot: In the village of Hunan Wanling, cursed corpses which don't rot must be exorcised by a Taoist once every fifty years or the



cadaver will resurrect as a gyonsi. Well, that's just what happens, thanks to an irresponsible Taoist. Fortunately, a traveling Taoist, called Ku-Su (Liang Chia Jen) has wandered into town. Ku-Su has frequent encounters with the gyonsi, but no villagers believe him, and even consider him a nuisance. Meanwhile, a group of little kids (who's master is a teacher of some acrobatic opera) has made a new friend, who is (you guessed it!) a corpse kid. This corpse kid isn't a traditional hopper att-

ired in Manchu uniform. His attire is basically ragged Chinese peasant clothes of the early 1900s (the setting of the story). He does not actually hop, just sort of stumbles. He is dubbed in an irritatingly high pitched voice that does not fit the character at all. Getting back to the story, the villainous gyonsi gets defeated after the nomad Ku-Su teams up with the concieted Taoist.

#### WICKED WIFE

Supervisor: Sheu Chyang, Producer: Lu Kung Sen, Assistant Producer: Pan Chen Dau, Screenplay: Lin Hun Run & King Mine, Photography: Li Shyh Tye, Lighting: Shive Tong, Valt Production: Jang Yu Po, Dress: Chen Shew Wha, Stage Proportions: Yeh Ching Yaw, Recording: Kao Fu Kuo, Fighting Skill Director: Koun Horn, Director: King Ming, starring:..... Liang Shew Sun, Wong Shay, Ku Jan, Koun Horn.

Wierd! That's this movie. In most horror films, you can tell what is going to happen through out the flick; you can immediately spot who the hero is, who'll die, and what will happen from scene to scene. But not in this unique picture! I have seen this unusual, unpredictable film twice, and both times I was intrigued.

Things to watch for in this strange production include: Overdone whipping scenes which go on forever, a couple of faggs, a ballad, an actress who actually has real live centipedes falling out of her mouth just for the sake of filming, long gungfu fights (again utilizing whips) in what's not even a martial arts movie, and a silly restaurant sequence involving goofy drunk characters. Their speech patterns and gestures are very much inspired by Chinese opera traditions. It ends up naive & pointless when dubbed into English. While I'm on the subject of English dubbing, I must say, I'm glad WICKED WIFE has an English soundtrack instead of the usual subtitles which are so hard to read. Can you imagine trying to follow a wierd and complex plot like this by means of bad subtitles?!

WICKED WIFE has got a complicated plot which is hard to follow. It seems to involve a righteous servant called Ching Hu trying to investigate a series of killings, some caused by a tiger, others by magical centipedes. Ching Hu is also always on the search for his fiance, whom he was separated from as a child (their proposed marriage was arranged by their parents). His only clue as to who his mysterious fiance is lies in two jade pendants- he's got one, she has the other. His secret bride turns out to be the girl Ting Mae, whom he's the servant of. Her corrupt husband Ha Fei had kidnapped her as a child and forced her to marry him against her will. So she sets about sicking her pet tiger on Ha Fei's henchmen, killing

them all so she can steal their magic water. The water is useful in curing the poison from Ha Fei's deadly centipedes, which would otherwise turn their victims into zombies. Another character is Ting Mae's sister Ching Hong, who is a martial artist that runs a sleazy restaurant. WICKED WIFE ends when Ching Hu, Chin Hong, & Ting Mae battle and defeat Ha Fei, using his own "zombifying centipedes" against him.



邪妻

WICKED WIFE

FIN

## NEW TILGRIMS TO THE WEST

Created by Seasonal Films, Producer: Lo Wei

NEW TILGRIMS TO THE WEST is one of my two favorite feature-length, theatrical Monkey movies. The monkey's staff swinging is well choreographed and the special effects are fantastic. NEW TILGRIMS was created sometime in the 1970s, probably shortly after STAR WARS, since some of the photography and special effects are so similar to that of the overrated American blockbuster. Special effects technology at that time was improving in China rapidly. TILGRIMS indicates the improvements in China's film industry since 1968 when the comparatively bland THE MONKEY was filmed.

The choreography of the weapons duels is not absolutely outstanding, but is equal to that of many martial arts costume dramas made at about the same time. I don't know if the actor who played Monkey did his own martial arts & stunts, and I don't really even know who the actor is (the entire cast lacks any familiar faces). With all these tricky camera shots (i.e. shots of side views, or characters moving around too quickly to get facial glimpses), it is impossible to tell if it's a stuntman under the Monkey attire. The stunts are very simple, although it takes an experienced gymnast to do that back flip off of the table during a climactic fight. Getting back to Monkey's uniform, I think the makeup was more effective in THE MONKEY, since there was more of it. Sun Wu kung's makeup in TILGRIMS is rather

lacking, so the average person would never guess that this person was meant to look like a monkey. Of all the characters, Pigsy looks the best, but much different than the entirely hairless Pigsy in THE MONKEY. This Pigsy is more reminiscent to the one in TAY DU KI, but more human-like.

The very beginning of this spectacular non-musical starts off with what looks like meteors flying around in outer space. These special effects are wonderful. I assume that this introductory sequence is meant to briefly describe the creation of the Stone Monkey, called Monkey Sun and Sun Wu Kon by the English subtitles. I gather that these meteors (as I call them) each represent another element (Earth, Water, wind, fire, etc.), all of which figure prominently in the creation and fertilization of the Stone Egg. After this, all of the original novel's details regarding Monkey's rise to the top (learning transformations and cloud flying, eating all of Heaven's magic peaches, etc.) are skipped, just like in Shaw's THE MONKEY (1968). After the outer-space sequence, we now see Monkey Sun in Heaven preparing to battle the Heavenly soldiers. He's already made his mischief known, having eaten all of Heaven's immortality-peaches reserved for a special peach banquet, stolen a drink called "elixy-er" (at least I think that is how the novel spelled it) and been generally disrespectful. The angelic warriors materialize and in an outstanding duel full of marvelous special effects (i.e. superimpositions for lazer-like projectiles) with Monkey Sun emerging as victor despite overwhelming odds against him. Since the rampaging Monkey seems unstoppable, the supreme Buddha himself arrives to save the day. Buddha wagers that Monkey Sun can not fly out of the enormous hand of Buddha.

If Monkey Sun can leave the palm of Buddha, the rebellious simian will be awarded the status of a Buddha himself. However, if Monkey Sun fails to leave Buddha's hand, he must pay for the damage he has caused. His payment will be in punishment; he will be buried in a cave for eternity, or until he changes his evil ways, which ever comes second. Thinking this to be an easy task, Monkey Sun flies onto Buddha's outstretched hand. The cocky monkey then successfully flies off of the hand, so he thinks. For an encore, he flies on his little cloud long and far until he reaches what he thinks to be the four pillars at the end of the Earth. He steps off his parked cloud and writes his title, "Great Sage, Equal to Heaven." After pissing on another, he gets on his little cloud and flies all the way back to Buddha. Then Buddha shows Monkey the hand he thought he'd escaped from. And right there, on one of Buddha's fingers was the graffiti that Monkey Sun had written earlier. This reveals that Monkey was tricked. He had never successfully left Buddha's hand. His punishment was to be buried underground. And it is then that we finally see the opening credits and the title NEW TILGRIMS TO THE WEST. "Tilgrim" is obviously a misspelling of "Pilgrim." From there, the story starts off just like in 1968's THE MONKEY, featuring the priest enroute to India with several followers who are again killed as a result of extremely bad weather conditions. This time, Tripitake is called Sun Tsung and he must now continue his journey to India alone. But the storm has severely weakened Tripitake, who faints. He's revived and re-energized by a goddess I assume to be Kuen Yin, according to the book. Kuen Yin informs Sun Tsung (Tripitake) that he is to release Buddha's seal from the ground

where Monkey Sun has been buried for five hundred years. She gives Tripitake the uniform that the Monkey King is to wear as well as the gold ring which when the monkey places it on his head, he gets disciplined in a painful manner. With these gifts from Kuen Yin, Sun Tsung feels confident in releasing the undisciplined monkey from his tomb. And the disciplining is necessary, according to Sun Tsung/Tripitake, who is appealed to see the stone monkey mercilessly kill a gang of thieves who had surrounded them. Monkey Sun then gets irritated at Sun Tsung's excessive nobleness and attempts to fly away on his vehicular cloud. But the harsh priest assumes a lotus position and prays, mentally reciting the memorized incantations carved on a plaque given to him earlier by the goddess. After Monkey Sun's severe headpain stops, he attempts to remove the golden headband he so foolishly agreed to put on, but it won't budge.



Naturally, the vengeful monkey turns on his strict master, attempting to obliterate him with his cudgel (staff). But it's of no use, since Sun Tsung just concentrates with his eyes closed again, and Monkey Sun's pain-inflicting ring does its thing. Monkey Sun agrees to obey the priest unconditionally. The two begin their journey and arrive at a household haunted by a pig demon called Pigsy who was originally an angel up in Heaven, but banished to Earth as a pig. Pigsy has his eyes on a girl who lives in that house that Pigsy wants to marry (he wants to marry the girl, not the house). The family is in fear of the pig. Monkey Sun changes his appearance to that of the fearful fiance and sets about teasing Pigsy. When Pigsy realizes he's been had, a spectacular duel occurs between the two animals as Pigsy's rake clashes with Monkey Sun's cudgel. Pigsy suffers defeat and disappears. The next day, Pigsy reappears to beg forgiveness from Sun Tsung & Monkey. Knowing that the two are on a mission from Heaven, Pigsy knows the priest can put in a good word for him in Heaven, possibly gaining Pigsy re-acceptance. The trio set off on their journey and before long encounter the cannibal from underwater called Sandy. Sandy comes off as a silly clown this time, he doesn't take his duel with Monkey seriously. He even resorts to goofy dance movements during their battle. When it becomes clear to him that the monkey is guarding the venerable Sun Tsung, he begs forgiveness and proves his obedient loyalty by using his magic to part the water of his lake so that they can get across it. But this massive procedure triggers the awareness of some hungry demons who know that eating Sun Tsung's flesh will cause immortality. Using a magic gourd (an old-fashioned, organic type of cantine) that sucks up whoever's name is called out loud, the gruesome demons capture Sandy, Pigsy and Sun Tsung. Monkey Sun realizes that it will be hard to conquer these villains so long as they have this incredible gourd so by

means of transformation and other deceit, he tricks a foolish demon into trading so that now Monkey Sun has the gourd. From there, there's a scene where Monkey Sun impersonates a female demon and eventually rescues his fellow travelers. Next up is the 3rd and final adventure in TILGRIMS. Having defeated all the demons, our heroes set upon their journey to the west. But an old wiseman informs them of a nearly unstoppable forest fire that can only be ended by a magic fan now in the possession of some stingy fairies. In order to put out the massive fire, our heroes attempt to take the fan from the fairies. This serves as an excuse for martial arts-like duels, super-imposed FX, crazy antics such as characters impersonating each other, and a sequence involving Monkey Sun intentionally getting into a villainess's stomach where he dances around, causing the evil fairy much pain. Toward the movie's end, it seems that as the battle takes place in the clouds, not even the combined forces of Monkey Sun, Pigsy ("Pa Jo") and Sandy can defeat the Buffalo King (a fairy) and his queen. So then, the same Heavenly soldiers that fought Monkey at the film's beginning arrive and assist our heroes. The villains are defeated, so the heroes get the long sought after fan and with it, they put an end to the forest fire, and once again step onto the road to India. End

**MAD MISSION:**  
more on

"Aces Go Places"



原班人馬再重遇力大出擊!

導演 陳俊良

國語對白 中英文字幕



When I first discovered the ACES GO PLACES movies in mid-1988, I had no idea of how much would end up loving the movies later on. At that time, I thought I was the only American familiar with this lively film series. Then I heard from William Connelly (editor of the fanzine MARTIAL ARTS MOVIES ASSOCIATES) that he had all four (though a new ACES movie is out called THE TERRACOTTA HIT, so now it is "all five," not "all four") ACES movies dubbed in English! I was dumbfounded! I had no idea that there were English language versions of this obscure (so I had thought) film series. My ACES videos were in Chinese.

Thanks to William Connelly, I've finally gotten to see the English ACES! As it turns out, the English titles have been changed from ACES GO PLACES to MAD MISSION, although ACES GO PLACES is used as a subtitle for the second movie. I personally prefer the title ACES GO PLACES over MAD MISSION, since MAD MISSION sounds more common, less unique. ACES GO PLACES is a really cool, chic title which seems to boast of slick cockyness. As I enthusiastically watched the new MAD MISSIONed versions I found the English dubbing to be quite good, exceptionally, in fact. It's convincing, and although I recognized a few voices, it doesn't sound like the same British dubbers who usually dub all those chop sockey films where they always say "But Still," and "You Shut Up." And the Chinese humor seems to translate fairly well into English. Even the English versions have a few funny one-liners.

#### MAD MISSION (1982)

Produced by Carl Mak & Dean Shek, Screenplay & Production design: Raymond Wong, Car stunts by Denver Mattson and assisted by Hong Kong Action Stunt, Explosive Stunts: Gene Grigg, Motorized Glider stunt: Richard Grigsby, Tight-rope Stunt: Bob Yerkes, Motorcycle Stunts: Or Saw Leung, Editor: Tony Chow, Executive Producer: Paul Lai, Directed by Eric Tsang, starring Samuel Hui, Carl Mak, & Sylvia Chang, special guest appearances: Dean Shek & Tsui Hark, introducing Carroll Gordon.

It was intriguing to finally see this influential film in English, after only being familiar with an entirely untranslated Chinese version.

My original speculative synopsis of the story that I typed up for ORIENTAL CINEMA #6 seemed basically accurate. But according to this new (to me!) English adaptation, I made one or two errors. For example, gungfu veteran Chen Sing (a.k.a. Chan Sing, Chen Hsing, Chan Xing, etc.) did NOT play a gangster out to get his hands on stolen diamonds as I had reported. Sing's character is actually the jealous brother of a couple of cute girls in the movie. The over-protective brother physically punishes those who date or offend either of his sisters (one of his unfortunate victims is played by the actor Shih Tien, who was also in SNAKEFIST FIGHTER and EAGLE'S SHADOW). The only scenes not redubbed are the ones of the foreign devils (Italian, American & British) who spoke English to each other even in the Chinese version.

As I watch ACES GO PLACES, I mean MAD MISSION, it comes to mind how similar Sam Hui is to Jackie Chan, as far as facial expression goes. In their early films, both have an unfortunate tendency to make childish expressions during romantic and/or sexually oriented scenes. This really irritated me through out MAD MISSION as well as its sequel. The scene in MAD MISSION which I found childish occurs at a dinner table when Sam Hui's character meets the sister of the characters played by Chen Sing and Cynthia Chang. Sam Hui just sits there, gazing into her eyes with a naive smile on his face, as though in a trance.

There have been a few name changes for American release. Sam Hui is now referred to by his real name, instead of King Kong, which he is called in the original Chinese versions. Perhaps this is due to copyrights from RKO, though a minor character (a cop at the movie's beginning) uses the name briefly in this English dub. Carl Mak's ("Carl Maka," in the English version's credits) character is now called Kody Jack, as a parody of America's equally bald Kojack cop. For MAD MISSION, he's even intentionally dubbed in a New York accent not unlike that of the 1970s TV detective.



**Samuel Hui**

MAD MISSION: ACES GO PLACES (1983)  
English release by Atlas International & Dieter Menz, Produced by Carl Mak & Dean Shek, Production design: Nansun Shi, Directed by Eric Tsang, Motorcycle stunts: Cylon Or, Robert Simper & Phil Argent, Car Explosions: Gene Grigg & Roger Hansen, Car Stunts: Douglass Airth, Jeannot Laga, Hong Kong Action, Cast: Samuel Hui, Carl Mak, Sylvia Chang, Suzanna Valentino, Yasuki Kurata, Joë Dimmick, and Hector Britt.

Like I said in the previous issue, the Shogun Warriors in movie #2 are the greatest thing in the flick. This is not to say that without these robots, MAD MISSION: ACES GO PLACES is bad. Even without the mechanical assassins, this is still quite an entertaining movie, probably my favorite in the series. It is the most action packed, fast-paced, and humorous in the series. MAD MISSION: ACES GO PLACES is full of chases, comedic situations and a few fights. So with all these factors, it comes as no surprise that I prefer this second chapter to most of the others.

Movie #2 is no gungfu movie, yet there are at least a couple of noteworthy battles which make use of martial arts. In a traditional gungfu flick, there's so much fist fighting that it tends to lose its impact and excitement after a while. But this motion picture keeps its fights well spread apart, so that when the duels eventually do begin, it seems new and refreshing. When the characters aren't busy fighting, they confront each other in other types of action oriented conflicts, such as chases and car crashes. There were some impressive stunts in the movie's motorcycle chases, where stuntmen may have been injured. One sequence in MAD MISSION: ACES GO PLACES involves the hero flying by means of a jet pack.

There are two villainous big (approx. 7 feet high) robots in the flick, plus an army of toy-like miniatures designed by our hero as a counter-attack. The special effects for the robots are quite good. The two giant robots look like characters from Japanese superhero shows such as DAI-TETSUJIN 1-7, KAGATSU SENTAI DYNAMAN, DAI SENTAI GOGLE 5, and TAIYO SENTAI SUN VULCAN. The shots of the little robots are reminiscent of the miniature vehicles used in DENJIN ZABOGA. Once again, I say the special effects are fantastic, and I do prefer the designs of the two evil robots over that of the ones in any Japanese superhero series.

Speaking of Japanese, Yasuki Kurata guest stars as a villain. In Chinese films, the Japanese superstar (who plays HEROES in his own native country!) is typecast as a badguy. For this film, he plays some sort of mafia (yakuza?) leader who has time-bombs strapped to our two heroes. Yasuki Kurata has been in more Chinese movies than I can list, and has starred in Japanese movies like THE TIGER'S CLAW, Chiba's THE EXECUTIONER, and TV shows like FIGHT! DRAGON and G-MEN '75.

The English MAD MISSION: ACES GO PLACES has a differently edited beginning than the original Chinese ACES GO PLACES 2, though versions have basically the same footage. ACES 2 begins with helicopters changing into a Transformer which attacks King Kong in his apartment. After he destroys the deadly robot by smashing a TV set over its head, he ends up in a breathtaking motorcycle chase with several henchmen. After he defeats them and falls into the ocean, we see the title. Then there's a sequence which takes place in New York introducing the caucasian badguys. In the

English version, these New York shots occur first, then the title, and then the robot. I tend to prefer the English edit, since it gets the New York scenes out of the way, and the calm intro makes the proceeding action scenes very exciting. The English scenes of the New Yorkers are a little longer in the English version, and have a different soundtrack (even though both versions are in English). One villain called Filthy Harry is meant to be a Clint Eastwood spoof, so the English version should have kept the original Chinese version's dubbed voice, since it sounds more like Eastwood's voice than the one in the American version.

The script seems like an excuse for lots of comedy & action. The Italian mafia wants to open a branch in Hong Kong, so they hire an American hitman called Filthy Harry to kill Kody Jack and Sam. This rivalry is the cause of much conflict. And then of course, are the two dangerous robots, sent by other American devils. Another villain is a Japanese yakuza leader who is a rival of the caucasian mobsters. His female helper keeps framing Sam, so he must escape from miss-guided police as well.

One especially funny subplot involves a maniac who escaped from a nearby nuthouse. The silly character is convinced he's part of the FBI, and therefor keeps getting involved on the war between our heroic duo and their many foes.



There you have it! The first two MAD MISSION movies. I will continue with this subject in the following issue of ORIENTAL CINEMA. In future issues, I hope to include sequels like MAD MISSION 3: OUR MAN FROM BOND STREET, MAD MISSION 4: YOU NEVER DIE TWICE, Samo Hung's LUCKY STARS GO PLACES, and the brand new blockbuster ACES GO PLACES 5: THE TERRACOTTA HIT!



END

## MONKEY WAR

It's a damn good thing that Lo Wei left Golden Harvest in the mid-1970s and formed Seasonal Films, since it was Seasonal Films that produced MONKEY WAR, which is not only my favorite Monkey movie but one of my all-time favorite films, period. It's a fast-paced, lively, colorful comedy with some of the most entertaining battles ever put on celluloid. Being a direct sequel to NEW PILGRIMS TO THE WEST in particular, its special effects and action choreography are the same as those in its prequel. All the same actors who play the four main characters (Tripitaka, Mighty Monkey, Po Chien & Wu Ching) return again, attired in the exact same uniforms they first wore in TILGRIMS.

Despite my intense love of this wild & crazy flick, I must admit that the martial arts choreography is a bit slower than that in its prequel. To make up for this one inadequacy, MONKEY WAR has improved special effects. Like its predecessor, MONKEY WAR has a lot of super-impositions depicting fire, lightning, and rays as the forces of good and evil clash. Other flamboyant effects include giant spiders & bats, plus effective flying scenes of winged soldiers who take on Mighty Monkey & Co during the ultra-climactic duel.

Humor is also quite prominent through out MONKEY WAR, which is a slapstick comedy, more so than TILGRIMS. Even MONKEY WAR's ballad (sung twice in the movie by veteran actor Wei Ping Ao) is funny, not to mention catchy! On the subject of humorous songs, they also use the theme from the Japanese cartoon STARBLAZERS ("Uchu Senkan Yamato") for many of the scenes depicting the flying warriors. This version of the song is all instrumental, and more keyboard-oriented than the original Japanese trumpet version from Hiroshi Miyegawa.

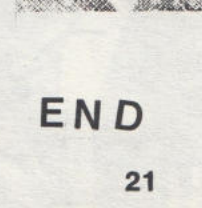
Plotwise, MONKEY WAR can be divided into three episodes:

1. The beginning.....  
On their journey to the west, the foursome arrive at Chu Chi Province and are asked for assistance from a Taoist monk of Chi Kuan Temple. It seems that the Taoists are being forced by the king to do strenuous labor and serve two evil yet goofy wizards calling themselves the Deer God, and the Goat God, played by Wei Ping Ao (STRUGGLE THROUGH DEATH, INCREDIBLE KUNG FU MISSION, FIST OF FURY, BRUCE LEE SECRET, and of course, the gay villain from RETURN OF THE DRAGON). The two magical villains have convinced the king they're gods because of their ability to control weather. When Mighty Monkey uses his own magic to thwart that of the evil duo, the king tells the monks not to obey them. Angered, the two evil bumblers summon their minions to battle the king's soldiers and the Taoists. Mighty Monkey, Po Chia/Piggy, & Wu Ching/Sandy get in on the action, so the two main beddies retreat.

2. The Deer God & Goat God inform a group of 'spider fairies' that San Tsang's (Tripitaka) flesh can cause immortality, so the female spiders kidnap him. Later, the queen (who sometimes wears clothing similar to Malaysian & Indian style) decides to marry the captive priest, rather than eat him. They succeed in doing neither, for it isn't long before Mighty Monkey and friends come to the rescue,

which results in an outstanding battle. Note: It is during this middle adventure that we see an obligatory scene (also in THE MONKEY) of Piggy watching bathing beauties.

3. The Deer God & Goat God flee the scene of the battle where all the spider bitches were killed, and stumble into the bat monsters of Flying Man Valley. The winged men capture the two "gods," who talk their way out of imprisonment by convincing their winged captors of the advantages (immortality) in eating San Tsang's flesh. But having just destroyed an army of fairies and giant spiders, Monkey is on the alert. So the winged demons take turns changing into peasants which keep wandering by our migrating heroes. Mighty Monkey is the only one among our heroes who can see past the disguises of the baddies, and immediately attacks and defeats each of them. But through the deceived eyes of Tripitaka, it looks as though the monkey is killing innocent peasants. He scolds the monkey, punishes him and finally fires him from his job as the bodyguard. By the time Mighty Monkey returns to his kingdom of monkeys at the waterfall, San Tsang/Tripitaka and Sandy have been captured by the batmen. So Piggy goes to the Monkey King's domain to ask Mighty Monkey to re-consider and rescue San Tsang, despite his harshness and foolishness. Out of the forgiving kindness of his heart, Mighty Monkey swallows his pride, and he and Piggy go to Flying Man Valley to battle the villains and rescue San Tsang, who is both embarrassed and ashamed of himself for jumping to conclusions. Mighty Monkey and his fellow pilgrims have defeated the badguys, so they all once again head off to India.



END

# ALAKAZAM THE GREAT

(1961)

Japanese credits: A Toei Production, Scenario: Keinosuke Uegusa, Directed by Taiji Yabushita & Osamu Tezuka, Written by Osamu Tezuka & Keinosuke Uegusa, Produced by Hiroshi Okawa, Photographed by Haru-oto Otsuka, Komei Ishikawa and Kenji Sugiyama, Co-director Daisaku Shirakawa, Artwork & color: Hajime Numai, Masaaki Yano, Koichi Meeba, Backgrounds by Eiko Sugimoto, Saburo Yokai, Kazuko Ozawa, & Mataji Urata, & Kimiko Saito  
 American version: Written by Lou Rousoff and Lee Kressel, Produced by Lou Rousoff, Music: Les Baxter, Sound Editor Kay Rose, An American International Release

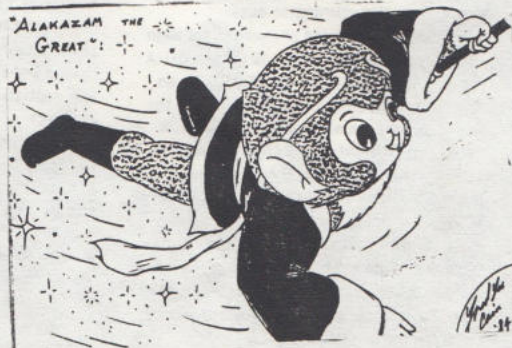
You all remember this one, don't you? ALAKAZAM THE GREAT is the only version of 'Journey to the West' ever released to America. This theatrical, feature-length cartoon was released to the USA by James H. Nicholson (of American International) along with ALI-BABA AND THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD and SINBAD THE SAILOR (two other Japanese cartoon movies) in the early 1960s, American International bought the foreign rights to ALAKAZAM, as well as apparently exclusive rights to any and all versions of the Monkey King legend. This would help to explain why NO other versions of the myth have ever been released to the U.S. Its American release was accompanied by a fantastic array of promotional products featured at the theatres including 9" tall Alakazam plush monkeys, 9" by 12" color posters, hand puppets, and rings featuring pictures of the hero. Managers of theatres showing ALAKAZAM could rent an 11 foot helium balloon to float 150 over the cinema, which boasted, "Alakazam is coming to town." One silly promotion gimmick that never occurred (fortunately) was an idea of American International to have real live caged monkeys on display in the theatre lobby. Going a step beyond that cruelty was an idea of selling the unfortunate apes to customers for \$20.00 each!

ALAKAZAM THE GREAT was chosen to be in a book called THE FIFTY WORST FILMS OF ALL TIME, made by Harry Medved and Randy Dreyfuss. The flick is no masterpiece, but I disagree with them quite strongly in labeling it as one of the fifty worst films. If I were listing worst films, I would include many movies I dislike, such as THE CURSE OF BIG FOOT, PLAN 9 FROM OUTERSPACE, BLESS THE BEASTS AND CHILDREN, any PIPPI LONG-STOCKING films, A FISH CALLED WANDA, THE BREAKFAST CLUB, and nearly anything featuring Mickey Mouse, Dudley Moore, Molly Ringworm, Tom Cruise or George Engel. But the book

lists a bunch of bad (?) flicks I've never heard of like DUNDI, THE GOLDWYN FOLLIES, and THE LOST HORIZON. Aside from ALAKAZAM, they also included two other films I enjoyed; HORROR OF PARTY BEACH, and the excellent GODZILLA VS THE SMOG MONSTER.

American film critics didn't have much nice to say about ALAKAZAM; "Well..... Not likely to put Disney out of business - Philip T. Hartung, Commonweal" "Bomb. Lowest rating! Dull..... Japanese cartoon with American actors doing the voices might have been more appealing in Japanese. A bad excuse for children's entertainment - Leonard Martin, TV Movies." "Grueling. Ponderous - Motion Picture Herald." So much for critics.

I ceased being a fan of Japanese cartoons (or, snigger, anime, as they call it, yuck yuck yuck, hardy har har!) at about the same time that UCHU SENKAN YAMATO became STARBLAZERS in America. When I saw those trendy nerds & geeks forming clubs like the Cartoon Fantasy Organisation, I decided that as far as I was concerned, the Japanese animation was no longer a chic, underground cult, but a laughable fad, full of the squarest



bunch of REVENGE OF THE NERDS rejects imaginable. So now I don't think too highly of animation, although ALAKAZAM THE GREAT is one of the better ones. It's got great art & animation, and is quite colorful & imaginative.

The fact that it's based on an ancient novel makes it intriguing. For the original Japanese version, none of the original Chinese names (Sun Wu Kung, Pa Chieh, etc.) are kept, since the Japanese have such difficulty in pronouncing Chinese names. Sun Wu Kung's Japanese name is Goku, Pa Chieh is Haka!, Tripitaka is Oshu, and Wu Ching is Gojo. The script for this flick is loosely based on the novel, but with nearly the whole story squeezed and condensed to fit the mere length of a theatrical film. The religious story begins with the Stone Monkey (now called Goku) demonstrating his bravery, so he gets to be king of monkeys. There's no flashback to the stone egg he hatched from, as described in the original book. From the point of his attaining status as Monkey King, we see rushed stories about his learning magic and cloud flying, eating Heaven's peaches, getting imprisoned by Buddha, going on his pilgrimage with Oshu, fighting then befriending Gojo & Haka! and then they all battle the evil buffalo demon and use his magic fan to put out a disastrous volcanic fire. The finale depicts our heroes' arrival at India where they're greeted by Buddha.

As a comedy, ALAKAZAM unapologetically mishmashes cultures and technology which the story itself predates. Unlikely aspects include TVs, telephones, a groom's suit & tie, and bullfighting. Fortunately,

all these advanced traditions are added exclusively as in-jokes, and don't upset an otherwise ancient setting.

The advantages cartoons have over live action are evident. The result makes ALAKAZAM seem like the most imaginative of the Monkey flicks, since doing all these colorful effects and costumes in real life would have cost a fortune. For the first time, Pigsy (Pa Chieh, Haka!, etc.) doesn't look like a man in a costume, but a real pig, though 1-dimensional.

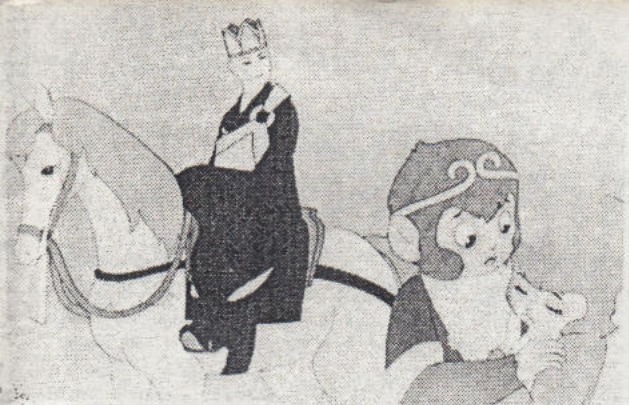
The American version has all the characters' names changed once again. In English, the Monkey King is not referred to as any oriental name, such as Sun Wu Kung or Goku. His new American name is Alakazam (hence the new title) Tripitaka/Oshu is known as Prince Armet by American fans, and Sandy/Wu Ching/Gojo is now called Max Lulipolo, and the most ridiculous Americanization of all is Pigsy's translation from Pa Chieh to Haka! to (get this) Sir Quiggly Broken Bottom. The English names of the villains are rather stupid as well. Other changes in the version include the musical soundtrack, though some music remains the same in both versions. An example is the scene where Alakazam/Goku battles the two McNair Brothers in both versions, the same Chinese music is played, the kind of opera music that sounds like somebody rolling a metal bucket down a flight of stairs. Other original Japanese music has been removed from certain scenes, and replaced by inferior music by Les Baxter. His first name fits him well. However, I do prefer many of the American ballads over the singing in the Japanese version. The original Japanese songs (did I fail to mention this is a semi-musical?), aside from being in Japanese are too old-fashioned, so the English version features a few songs by Frankie Avalon as replacement. Frankie Avalon sung the songs, but contrary to popular opinion, did NOT dub Alakazam's voice for the dialogue scenes. Alakazam's speaking voice is that of whoever (Jack Grimes? Billy Gerber?) dubbed in the voice of the title character in SPEED RACER, Akira Kubo's voice in SON OF GODZILLA, and even Bruce Lee's voice in INFRAMAN.

There were a few edits for the English adaptation, such as two quick cuts of removed deaths (in the Japanese version, a deer is covared in hot lava, a demon falls in a boiling pot of liquid) and another puzzling adjustment: footage of celebrating demons (from the film's end) was spliced out of its proper spot and placed in the film's beginning for what is meant to be the monkeys having a party of their own as they cheer on whoever is brave enough to jump down the waterfall. It's never explained why the evil demons would party with the monkeys, who are actually rivals. A useless alteration.

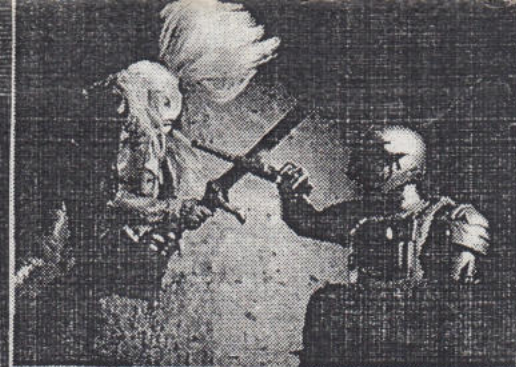
The American releasers were paranoid that the original story about the origins of Buddhism might be boycotted by Christian religious fanatics (who may fear that the movie will convert their kids to the oriental religion), so the whole story was changed from an ancient religious story to a "be nice to your neighbor" story.

Once upon a time there was a mythical kingdom called Majutso Land (China) which had a tribe of monkeys lead by Alakazam, who got his job by proving his bravery by





palace was in the middle of a desert. (This version ignores other versions where the character lives underwater.) Now that all four heroes are finally united, they team up against King Gruesome and his demonic followers. Fester ends up helping our heroes out, having turned against the villains when cheated. Then the heroes travel again briefly, and reach their destination and are welcomed by King Amo. As a reward for having learned virtue and the like, King Amo makes Alakazam's disciplining ring of pain vanish. The story ends with Alakazam's return to Didi (asleep at the kingdom by the waterfall), where they all live happily ever after, and all that



### KIDOU KEIJI JIBAN

Special effects fans should get a kick out of this 1989 Toei series broadcast in Tokyo on TV Asahi. The FX are truly spectacular, among the best in any Japanese science fiction program to date. The costumes are all quite slick, the super-impositions are beautiful visuals, there are imaginative sets and firey explosions galore.

Music for the program was created by whoever the hell did the tunes for the Space Sheriff Trilogy (1982-1984), and it certainly shows. For JIBAN, whatever songs weren't taken directly from those shows (i.e. GYABAN & SHARIBAN) by means of stored stock-music, is new (created for JIBAN), yet sounds strikingly similar to the musical score for its superior predecessors.

Like all Japanese kiddie shows, JI-

jumping off a waterfall, He seeks to better himself so he leaves his kingdom by the waterfall and seeks out Merlin the wizard (Patriarch Subhodi) After Merlin teaches him transformations, magic and self-defense, he decides to become king of Majuso Land by challenging the mighty King Amo (Buddha). So he goes to the heavenly abode of King Amo and his first stop is a tree of forbidden fruit. He helps himself to the fruit and is immediately attacked by its guards, including Hercules. It is during this series of fights that he obtains his new weapon (cudgel) from an opponent (no mention of the Dragon King or his underwater kingdom from which the staff originally came from) and keeps it as his own. Then Alakazam takes on King Amo himself. Like all versions, the ape thinks he's escaped so he leaves his mark on five long pillars which turn out to be Buddha's, i mean King Amo's hand. Alakazam gets locked in a cave, but there's a small hole to the outside world so that his girlfriend (an ape that's not in any other version) Didi can give him chestnuts to eat. But it's not long before King Amo's wife (Kuan Yin) arrives and announces her son Prince Amat (Tripitaka) is on a pilgrimage. Alakazam will be freed, so he can accompany the priest, i mean prince Amat arrives and does a prayer causing Alakazam's imprisoning cave to vanish. The released ape is reluctant to go along, so Amat throws (like a Frisbee) a magical gold ring at him. The metallic headband magically hovers around the confused and curious primate and then lowers itself onto his head, planting itself there. Pain is inflicted if Alakazam refuses to attend the pilgrimage. Shortly after Alakazam bids farewell to Didi, he and the prince encounter the monstrous pig Sir Quiggly Broken Bottom, who's intent on marrying a teenage girl against her will. Alakazam impersonates her and plays games with Sir Quiggly Broken Bottom. When the unaware pig claims he is tougher than Alakazam, the egotistical monkey loses his temper and reveals his true form. After a battle, the magic ape persuades the magic pig to a cave inhabited by three other demons, the McSnarl Brothers and a horned kid (similar to the one in A STORY OF CHINESE GODS) called Fester. Fester escapes, but Alakazam defeats both McSnarl Brothers. Sir Quiggly surrenders and offers his assistance on the pilgrimage. Fester reports to King Gruesome (an orange-eyed bull) that Alakazam is a threat. By this time, our heroes have been joined by a 4th pilgrim who originally tried to eat them. He's an aborigine cannibal called Max Lulipolo (Sandy, Wu Ching, Gojo, etc.) who's

Elements in this story neglected to mention are traditional scenes from the book and other versions, including a scene where the monkey lets an opponent swallow him to cause internal pain, the quest for a magical fan, and getting sucked up into an organic bottle.



Last issue, it turns out I was wrong in claiming 'ningen' means 'mechanical man.' I have heard mention of ningen in the SAIYUKI ("Monkey") series, which has no robots. So until someone correctly defines the word, I shall assume it means "super man," "fighting hero," "extremely powerful dude," or something along those lines. Whatever the hell it means, they still use it a lot in Japanese superhero programs, so I'll keep it as a title for this column.

Last issue I told you all about JIRAIYA. JIRAIYA ended just as 1988 did. The newest superhero for 1989 is JIBAN, reviewed in this issue. KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX and CYBERCOP are still airing, but LIVEMAN has been replaced with the newest Sentai (superhero team), TURBORANGERS. More details on that one next issue. My other choice series to review for this edition is a blast from the past: INAZUMAN!

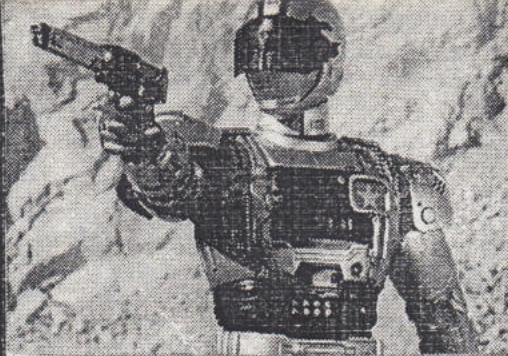


Ban is of course, childish. Yet no better, no worse than others of its type. By now I've come to overlook this traditional naiveness, since it is inevitable. Besides, the rest of JIBAN's welldone production values make up for its stereotypical stupidity.

Another unfortunate tendency I've had to get used to is the declining amount of martial arts from year to year. After SHARIBAN (1983), the amount of karate in such programs has gradually been reduced. Recent shows have had very little, which can be considered a lot by comparison to JIBAN. As far as two-fisted action and stuntwork goes, JIBAN has practically none. Shinichi ('Sonny') Chiba's Japan Action Club is mentioned in the opening credits, but don't ask me why. There does not seem to be much fighting or stuntwork. JIBAN is a 'gun series,' not a 'kick series.'

Last issue, I mentioned that the Japanese are becoming influenced by us westerners, since CYBERCOP is so inspired by CAPTAIN POWER & THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE. JIBAN proves that theory since this series is basically an imitation of America's ROBOCOP movie; but borrowing computer ideas from MAX HEADROOM, and spicing it all up with a flashy, traditional Japanese superhero format, full of psychedelick effects, monsters galore, some uniform henchmen, and a fast-paced plot.

The hero's transformation from human to robot is done differently than in most previous programs. As yet, this early in the series, there's no official pose or word that the hero uses to change. Every other series to date has some ritual that always occurs during the transformation. But JIBAN is unique, one of a kind as yet. The hero's transformation is very subtle, and we never really do see the actual metamorphosis. The human hero just seems to leave the picture and later (sometimes it is immediate, sometimes

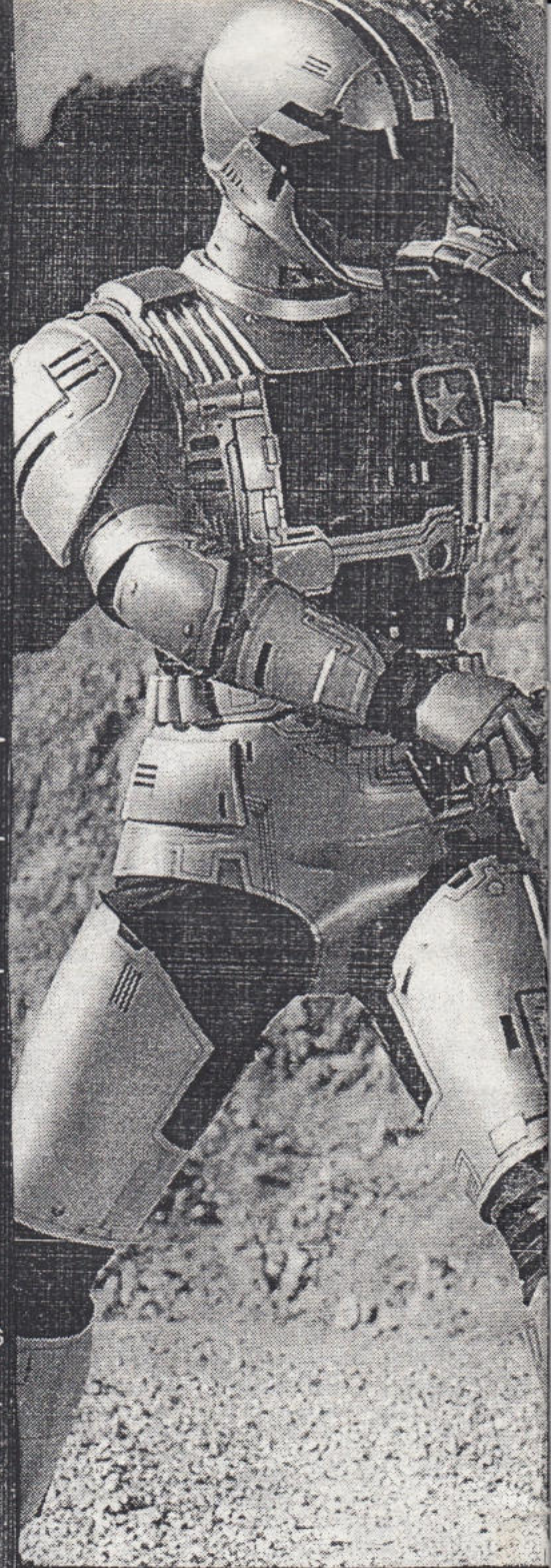


it's eventual) the robot appears.

Other than that, this show is not too much different than JUSPION, SPIELBAN, and METALDAR. Same locations, same same photography, and oh yes, same sword. Once again, the hero defeats the episodic monster with a light saber (even the new Kamen Riders use them).

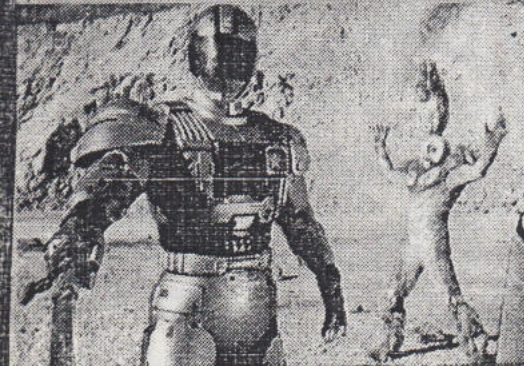
Plot summary:

Jiban is a mechanical cop out to thwart the evil plans of a caucasian scientist called Dr. Giba (played by Leon Mengetchy). The diabolical white is aided by two equally diabolical yet airheaded assistants. They're Japanese, twins, female and have gorgeous leggs. Their names are Mashiya ("Marshia?") and Kashiya. They may look like attractive women, but can transform into scary monsters. Speaking of which, that is what the three criminals specialize in. Their monstrous creations include such bizarre beings as Bubi, Muku and henchmen called Biofons. But not to worry, our righteous cyborg Jiban has pals of his own as well, so THERE! When he's not in his metallic form cruising in space-age vehicles like his Saikan (a motorcycle), Spairasu (an air vehicle), or a car called Rezon, he can sometimes be found in his human form. As a mildmannered guy, he is called Naoto Tamura and though not robotic, is still a devoted policeman (white shirt, big ugly tie, gun & holster, much like America's Sledge Hammer TV cop in appearance) who enforces the law. His crimefighting assistants are Riyo Katagi and Masutsu Mura. Their police chief is Kasaou Bandou. Another supporting character is a little girl called Mayumi Igarashi. One other 'friend' is a talking computer, referred to as Boy. Jiban's pistol is called Maximillian TYPE 3. It is!



#### INAZUMAN

I could vommit out humble praisings for this utterly outstanding masterpiece forever, and still wouldn't have efficiently expressed my love for the show. I was a little kid in the 1970s, watching other action heroes of the period like JINZONINGEN KIKAIDA and HIMITSU SENTAI GORENGA. So to me, the 1970s were the golden age of Toei heroes, like DENZIN ZABOGA, KAIKETSU ZUBATO, AKUMAIZA, ROBOT KEIJI, and of course LION MARU.





INAZUMAN, like many of its 1970s colleagues, does indeed tend to have a certain underdeveloped style, making it look crude by today's standards. Yet this innocence gives it a tacky, camp-like atmosphere reminiscent of that of BATMAN. This is not to say that I only like INAZUMAN for its unintentional humor. INAZUMAN is entertaining as a serious, exciting superhero series, the way it was meant to be enjoyed. The program is well paced with enough dramatic filler to maintain suspense (it's better to know for what cause they're fighting than to just have endless battles).

Getting back to its crudeness, I can

pinpoint specific elements. The special effects, for example rarely exceed that of LOST IN SPACE. The miniatures look exactly like the line of toys the series inspired, and probably are. The costumes are unrealistic and sometimes even laughable, though not necessarily cheap. The average design for a villainous robot in INAZUMAN looks like what you'd expect to see in a cartoon, but is a 3 dimensional version. The martial arts also look inferior when compared to that in UCHU KEIJI GYABAN, beyond a doubt the greatest superhero series ever created. For INAZUMAN, the karate looks rather slow in all the costumed fights. This is to be forgiven, since way back when this series was being produced, the genre was still young. It took years to perfect the art of speedy choreography while attired in a heavy, bulky robot costume. However, INAZUMAN's non-costumed fights (where human characters do battle) are a bit faster and with better form. Another old fashioned element is the music of these 1970s hero TV programs. I prefer the blaring horns of INAZUMAN's theme to that of ANY and ALL 1980s superhero shows, music of which falls into one of two categories.....

1. Synth disco. Somehow electric keyboard music of the new programs just doesn't generate the heroic impact of the horns from the 1970s programs. It's bad enough that this audio plague is replacing hard rock in many nightclubs and concerts, but I don't want to hear it as part of a theme for a TV show! Hearing it is comparable to eating plastic.
2. Symphonic boredom. I've always hated the professional, typical orchestra music of movies like STAR WARS, GODZILLA 1985, and STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. This dull music does not highlight, it detracts.

Thankfully, INAZUMAN does not make use of either type of music, since the series was created long before the genre had progressed (hal) to that style. Often, when I see the opening credits for INAZUMAN, I get chills down my spine, goose bumps and sometimes even watery eyes. The horns in the song, the forceful singing, the fast-paced beat all make up an exhilarating theme song (and the ending song isn't half bad, either). And the basic visuals are equally breathtaking. Newer programs boast of high-tech special effects in their opening credits, thereby detracting from the excitement of the hero himself. But the incredibly exciting title sequence for INAZUMAN



sticks mainly to our heroic android himself, as he battles the badguys to the accompaniment of freeze-frames and sound effects (which are loud enough to hear, but do not drown out the tunes).

Another really nice thing about INAZUMAN is that the hero never swordfights. Many 1970s heroes don't use swords, but after watching all these predictable, identical 1980s programs where the hero always kills his foes with a STAR WARS-ish sword, it is refreshing to watch swordless oldtimers like Inazuman in action.

INAZUMAN has a unique concept which has never been done in any other superhero series. INAZUMAN stands out from many others because of the unique way the hero transforms from human to cyborg. Other programs feature the character in just two forms, human and hero. But the transformation for this one is more complex. The hero Gorou Watari can not simply become Inazuman. By saying "Choriki Shora!" he becomes a stepping-stone character, actually like a cocoon, called Sanagiman. He must temporarily stay in this alien form for a few moments before going on to become the full-fledged hero, Inazuman. Although Sanagiman is not easy to destroy, he is no fighter. This creature always gets beaten up before he yells "Choriki Shora!" thus completing transformation into the third and final stage.

The first season of this program was called INAZUMAN FLASH, and had the blue hero battling an army of robots called Despa, lead by the demonic Gaizeru (Played by Milton Ishibashi). For the second season, the program's title was shortened to INAZUMAN, and involved the hero in a battle with monsters this time, not robots. The villains are commanded by Banba, and are called Phantom.

# INAZUMAN

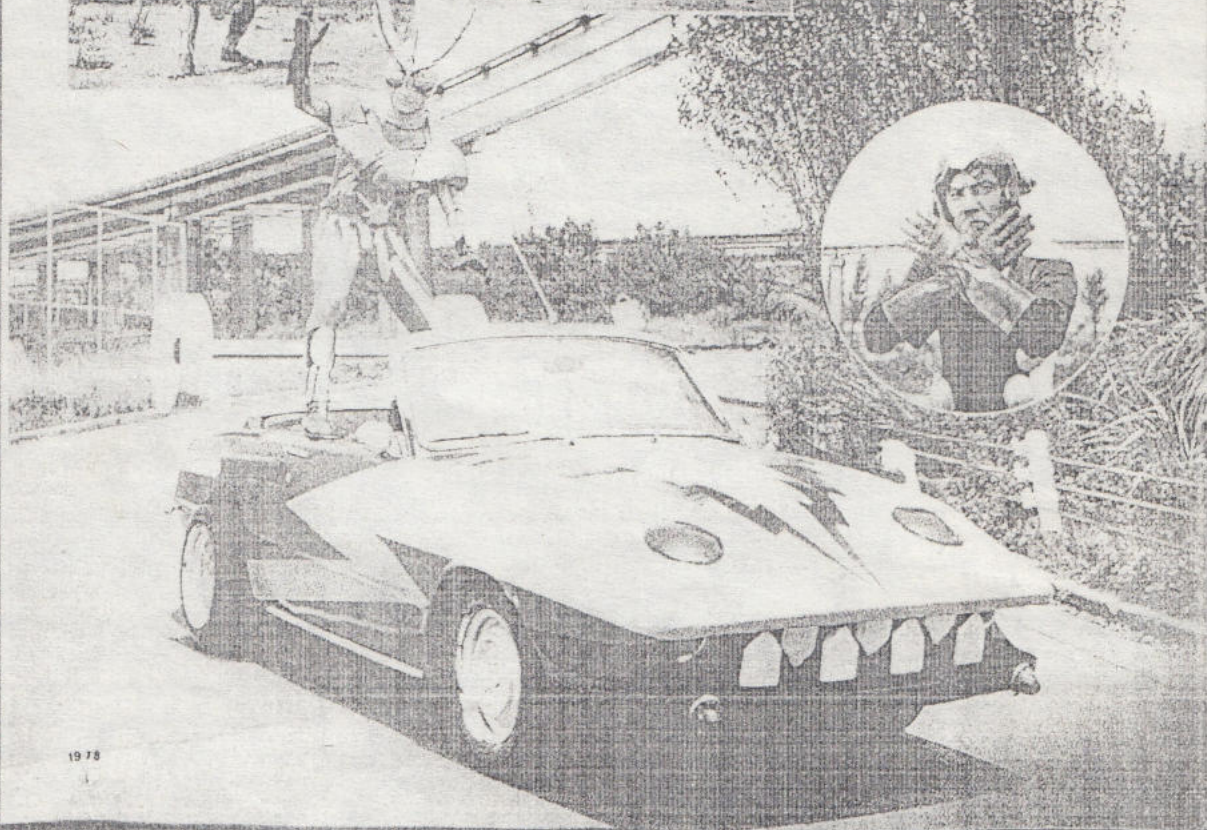
THE LIGHTNING MAN 48 half-hour episodes

Young Goro is endowed with a super power by which he can transform himself. He has discovered the discovery that as Inazuman, his tremendous will power can move huge rocks and destroy concrete buildings.

Thus he devotes himself to defeating the evil King Phantoms who are trying to wipe out the Inazuman race from the face of the earth, and then planning to build a new empire.

Over the mountains and under the sea, Inazuman fights the evil Phantoms.

A special feature of this series is the sequence in which Goro is transformed into Inazuman. It resembles the metamorphosis of a insect. Threads fly out of Goro's fingers, forming a cocoon, which he begins the transformation, exploding out of the end of a thunderbolt.



1978

Toei is always unsuccessfully trying to sell their shows to the American market. With the exception of JOHNNY SOKKO & HIS FLYING ROBOT, a few badly dubbed episodes of DYNAMAN, and all those cartoons, American distributors won't touch the stuff. Above is a page from one of Toei's promotional books intended for syndicator's conventions in America. Well, the ad didn't work.

END

# SAIYUKI

Produced by NTV & Kokusai Hosi, Directed by Ysuke Watanabe, Costumes: Kotaro Watanabe, Editor: Yasuo Hiraki, Lighting: Director of Special Effects: Hiroichi Tekano, Photography: Yukio Yoda, Music: Micky Yoshino, Producers: Tsuneo Hayakawa, Munao Yamada, Tadehiro Negotomi, Kazuo Morikawa, Ken Umageya, Based on the novel by Wu Cheng En, Screenplay: Mamoru Sasaki, English Adaptation: David Weir, English version directed by Michael Beckwell for World Wide Sound, London, Cast:  
 Monkey.....Masaki Sekai  
 Pigsy.....Toshiyuki Nishide  
 Sandy.....Shiro Kishibe  
 Tripitaka.....Masako Natsume  
 And also featuring Takao Inoue, Yetsuko Tanami, Emi Shindie, Maci Carcer

I'll never forget that fateful day in 1980 when I turned on the TV on a Sunday at 7 PM. It had been three years since either of the bay area's local Japanese TV channels had shown any live action superheroes. So it came as a delight when I tuned in and saw the very first episode of SAIYUKI, a Japanese TV show based on the ancient Chinese novel 'Journey to the West.' There were no English subtitles for translation, yet I watched it faithfully for nearly as long as it lasted, practically a whole year!

Little did I know that SAIYUKI would later be dubbed into English by British people. The English version was of course released to Britain, Australia and maybe Canada, but has never been released to the U.S. because of copyright problems (I assume it's because the bastards who released ALAKAZAM to America still have exclusive rights). It is unfortunate that the English SAIYUKI, now called MONKEY will probably never reach the U.S.



MONKEY is an accurate version of the fairy tale, and one that is very entertaining as well. Everything is translated well, with some of the most convincing voice dubbing I've ever encountered. The voices match the characters well, and in the case of Sun Wu Kung ("Goku" in the Japanese version, "Monkey" in the English version), his dubbed voice is damn near identical to that of the actual Japanese actor playing the heroic ape! He is even dubbed in with an accurate imitation of a Japanese accent. The names of all the characters are taken from the novel, since Japanese names like Oshu, Goku, Hekai and Gojo are too hard for Americans to remember and pronounce. The original Chinese names (Sun Wu Kung, Wu Ching, Pa Chieh, etc.) are not much easier. Taken from the book are names like Sandy, Tripitaka, and Pigsy. In MONKEY, the characters are known by the no-

vel's names, which is much better than the names in the other English film; Alakazam, Amat, Quiggly Broken Bottom, etc. With ALAKAZAM THE GREAT as its only rival, MONKEY the series is beyond a doubt the best English adaptation of the often-told story. Surprisingly, MONKEY was not entirely well received in English speaking countries. A trendy magazine for airheaded teenyboppers called 'Starhits' labeled MONKEY useless. Normally, such criticism doesn't offend me because I see it as a matter of opinion. Yet the idea of this one-of-a-kind series being useless is NOT true, which is NOT my opinion, but a bloody fact! The fact is that MONKEY is useful! What other English TV show reveals to western audiences the 'Journey to the West' story? I think the writers of Starhits are as ignorant as the posers who subscribe to that moronic publication.

Godaiigo (also spelled Godeigo) is the name of the rock band who did the music score for SAIYUKI/MONKEY (all the original tunes are kept in the English version as well). They're a half American half Japanese band who also supplied music for one of the GALAXY EXPRESS 999 cartoons. Their theme song for SAIYUKI/MONKEY is entitled "Monkey Magic," and is sung entirely in English, even in the Japanese version. This upbeat song represents the state of music in Japan back in 1979, when the song was recorded. As I listen to it, I can detect that it still has a lot of disco in it, which was a dying form of music at that point. "Monkey Magic" also has slight traces of heavy metal, which was just arriving at Japanese pop culture at that point. Godaiigo's ending theme is called "Gendhara," which is a much softer, more mellow song.

As an all-out TV show consisting of many 60 minute episodes, NHK TV (a major Japanese network) had no reason to rush the show, or cram any plot elements together. This can not be said of any feature-length Monkey movie reviewed in this issue. At last, there's a moving picture (I mean not a flat, 1-dimensional book) that is long enough to include all the assorted details, situations & subplots of Wu Cheng En's original saga. I've seen every episode of this amusing TV series in its Japanese version, plus a few of the English ones. I must say, they didn't miss a thing!

NHK does not normally create & broadcast fantasies like SAIYUKI/MONKEY. As I recall from my four month stay in Tokyo in 1985 (where I even toured the TV station), the network has mostly news and historical soap operas like NHK Taiga Drama (also a favorite with Japanese viewers in the bay area). The more imaginative stuff is usually created by TV Asahi and sometimes Fuji TV. But as newcomers to the world of fantasy, they did a decent job at creating SAIYUKI, which lasted two seasons, once as SAIYUKI, but called SAIYUKI 2 later on. I suppose that it helped to have Jun Fukuda on the staff. He's worked a lot with Toho and helped to create many of the Godzilla classics. But as for as special FX go, NHK could have learned a thing or two from China's Seasonal Films, the makers of NEW TILGRIMS TO THE WEST and MONKEY WAR. The sets and costumes for



SAIYUKI are decent, but the series lacks the super-imposed visuals and stunning effects of the two Chinese flicks.

The cast of SAIYUKI has only one familiar face that I could recognize. That was Toshiyuki Nishide, who plays Pigsy. He co-starred with Hiroshi Fujitaka (KAMEN RIDER, IN THE LINE OF DUTY 3, GHOST WARRIOR, HIGH SEAS HIJACK, TIDAL WAVE) in a Toei TV series about cops called SPECIAL CRIME INVESTIGATION FRONT, which also featured the actor who played Aka Ranger in HIMITSU SENTAI GORENGER, and the one-armed guy in THE KILLING MACHINE.



End

To me, the American TV series BATMAN is a household word. I can't imagine any American not being familiar with this unique, one-of-a-kind series. For me, as a child, BATMAN was the greatest thing since candy. As a youngster, the program seemed realistic to me, since it was one of the few programs I watched regularly that was live-action. Because of this wellknown program's repeats, I've grown up always watching BATMAN. Then when I was about 8 or 9 years old, I was watching the series one day and I finally noticed something humorously far-fetched and I said to myself, "Hey, that part was kind of silly." Since that moment on, I've become more and more aware of the program's all-camp content. At the age of 25, I now consider BATMAN to be a stupid yet entertaining comedy series.

But even now, despite this disillusionment, I still view the series in awe, and consider BATMAN to be one of my favorite American superheroes. When I say BATMAN, I'm referring to the TV show, NOT the 1940s B&W serial, and NOT all those trillions of comic books put out by Marvel or D.C., or whatever company makes them. And it irritates me that the new BATMAN movie of 1989 is a remake (how typical of modern movie makers) and not a sequel to the TV series. As far as I'm concerned, Adam West IS Batman, there can be no other. I have not seen the new movie, and I'm considering boycotting it.

BATMAN the TV show was one of the wildest, fast-paced, most colorful programs ever to grace American TV. Each episode featured the Dynamic Duo battling it out with the most elaborate, outlandish villains imaginable. But the Dynamic Duo met their match when two rival superheroes invaded Gotham City. These rebellious guest stars were the stars of their own series. And so, fighters from two different programs starred side-by-side in three episodes of BATMAN. The two new co-stars are the Green Hornet and Kato!



When THE GREEN HORNET made its debut in 1966, Bruce Lee officially became a star. Sure, there were all those old B&W Chinese dramas he starred in as a child, and he supposedly made guest appearances in American TV shows like HERE COMES THE BRIDE, or something like that. Not only did THE GREEN HORNET popularize Bruce Lee in America, but the martial arts as well. Last issue, I stated that there were no decent representations of martial arts in films or shows before THE GREEN HORNET. And since no readers have written to me claiming otherwise, this belief is proven. In an issue of William Connelly's MARTIAL ARTS MOVIES ASSOCIATES, an interview with the American actor Steve James also makes mention of THE GREEN HORNET's bringing martial arts to American audiences for the first time.

From what I've seen, THE GREEN HORNET is a slick TV show. Rarely do we get superheroes of such a rebelliously chic nature. Sure the heroes fight evil, but they both had a tough, not so cleancut attitude. They were cool, they were anti-heroes.

We've all seen Bruce Lee's five feature length gungfu films from Golden Harvest. Many of us have seen each flick more than once. As for devoted fans like myself, not only have I memorized nearly every line from the English versions ("Dope in ice?," "You can take this from me and then get out of here," "It's a RoIs," "Don't waste yourself," "You lose, Carl Miller," etc.) from watching them so much, but I also have the original Chinese versions of the first three. After viewing these five movies over and over, it always comes as an exhilarating experience to get to view rarely seen Lee footage, such as his presence in all thirty episodes of THE GREEN HORNET. Like ENTER THE DRAGON, we get to actually hear Bruce Lee's voice since he's not dubbed. His kiai (warcry) is nowhere near as high-pitched in THE GREEN HORNET as it would become for his feature length movies.

The adventures of the Green Hornet and Kato were exciting indeed. One of their less exciting misadventures occurred when they left their home town and came to Gotham City. It is there that they encountered their caped counterparts, the Dynamic Duo.



**BATMAN, episode #42: "The Spell of Tut"**

The first time the Green Hornet and Kato came to Gotham City and met Batman & Robin was both brief (27 seconds, to be exact), and like all meetings of the four, dissapointing. In this case it would seem that Green Hornet & Kato were in town on special assignment for The Daily Sentinel, in pursuit of criminals. The two most likely heard a noise outside the window of their apartment, located near the middle or top of a skyscraper. Kato opened the window to investigate and discovered the Dynamic Duo climbing the side of the building with the aid of their trusty "Batrope." In this introductory meeting, both parties wondered what the other was doing there. The conversation was brief, and all the talking was done by Batman and the Green Hornet, Kato's only line was "Nice to have met you." Then the Green Hornet & Kato stick their heads back into the apartment and close the window. Robin makes comment on the unusual attire of the Green Hornet and Kato (this was meant to be sarcastic humor, considering that the Caped Crusaders' uniforms are even more outlandish) and then the two continue on their bat-climb in hopes of cornering the evil King Tut.

The idea of having guest stars (in this case, Van Williams & Bruce Lee) appearing during the Dynamic Duo's obligatory wall climbs was a prominent gimmick, done in many episodes. I don't recall who all the guest stars were during these cheap in-jokes, but I know Jerry Lewis was one and maybe Buddy Hackett. This has never been done effectively. Of course, everyone knows that Burt Ward & Adam West were never really climbing; they were obviously just walking, while photographed by a camera on its side. When the guest stars (be it Bruce Lee or Jerry Lewis) stick their heads out the window, it

looks even worse, since it is painfully noticeable that the characters are not bending over sideways to look out the window. These people are obviously standing (or maybe sitting) upright, and it sometimes looks as though they're hanging straight out the window with no gravity to yank on them. It's quite apparent that any such gravity is only tugging at them from within the building.

**BATMAN, episode #105: "A Piece of the Action"**

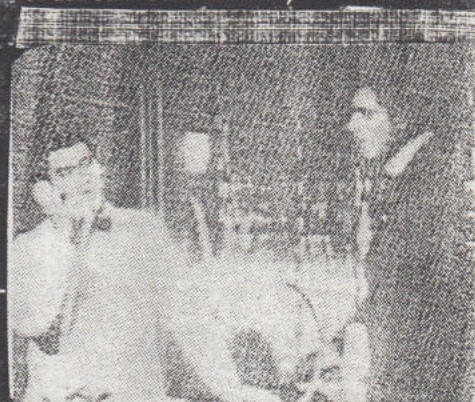
Again, the Green Hornet and Kato arrive in Gotham City on special assignment. They're out to nab a counterfeiter called Colonel Gumm. But since our two vigilantes have reputations as criminals, Commissioner Gordon enlists the aid of the Dynamic Duo to capture the Green Hornet and Kato. But all along, the real criminal is that scoundrel with an obsession for Alphabet Soup and postage stamps, Colonel Gumm. An intriguing subplot is also revealed, about how both Bruce Wayne (Batman) and Britt Reed (Green Hornet) are actually old classmates who knew each other as youngsters, though not necessarily as the best of friends. Another quest star in this epi-



sode is an attractive yet airheaded female character called Pinky Pinkston. The climax of the episode builds up to what looks like a fantastic battle; both the Green Hornet and Bruce Lee arrive to confront Gumm and his henchmen, while the Dynamic Duo climb up the building and go in through the window. Before the anti-climactic battle, both the Green Hornet & Kato end up pushed into a machine without their doing any fighting whatsoever. The remainder of the scene has the obligatory lame fight

(with the usual "Pow" and "Bam" super impositions) as the Caped Crusaders get defeated. The ending is a another stupid cliffhanger, as Colonel Gumm now has all four superheroes in his custody, and plans on flattening them all into human postage-stamps.

Bruce Lee's appearance in this episode can be basically classified as



four separate, ultra-brief scenes:

1. The very beginning. This footage is among the best in any episode of BATMAN, as the two guest heroes arrive at the stamp factory where Colonel Gumm and his followers work. The fight lasts less than two seconds, but gives Bruce Lee a chance to knock out a henchman with a lightning quick roundhouse kick to the face. This kick is so unbelievably fast that it can be missed if you blink.
2. Without their dark clothes & masks Britt Reed & Kato are in their apartment. Bruce does deliver one or two lines of dialogue, but most of the time he's just in the background, cleaning one of Britt's shirts, as Britt talks on the phone.
3. Green Hornet & Kato in their apartment, dressed in their uniforms and holding their masks, getting ready to leave. They speak of their upcoming duel with Gumm, but are aware of an inevitable confrontation with their heroic rivals, the Dynamic Duo.
4. Kato & Green Hornet drive up to the badguy's location and go inside as the Caped Crusaders climb up the outside of the building. It is around here somewhere that this episode offers its only scene of all four heroes in the same shot. Batman & Robin are looking from the outside window where they

see Green Hornet and Kato get locked into a large stamping machine by the villains.

This episode and its sequel are considered classics among the BATMAN TV show's episodes. But this is only because of the restrained presence of the one and only Bruce Lee, since the story and characters are as preposterous as those in any other episodes of BATMAN.

### BATMAN episode #106: "Batman's Satisfaction"

Batman & Robin punch their way out of the clutches of Colonel Gumm, and then they rescue the Green Hornet and Kato from their captivity. The middle of the episode involves ridiculous characters like Gumm and Pinky Pinkston. The not-so-grand finale takes place at a stamp exhibition where all four heroes move in on the baddies before turning on each other.

The scenes of Lee in his final BATMAN appearance are:

1. Batman is aware of the Green Hornet's weapon "the Hornet Sting," so he turns off the machine so that there will be enough room for them to use this weapon to break out. And so they do, and all four characters face each other in the same shot, although they just talk, no fighting.

2. Bruce's classic line "Gungfu is gungfu, it's not child's play." The statement occurs in their apartment as they discuss their upcoming duel with not only Colonel Gumm, but the Caped Crusaders as well.

3. The ending fight, as all four heroes attack & defeat Gumm and his assistants. When that's done, Batman battles the Green Hornet, and Robin (snigger) takes on Kato!

The anti-climactic free-for-all is okay at best, which is more than can be said for any other fight in the BATMAN series.

As the main two heroes of the show, it comes as no surprise that Batman & Robin are the highlighted ones during the fight, and they get all the exposure. The Green Hornet isn't shown fighting up close very much, he's mostly off to the side. Saddest of all, as Kato does his

share in defeating henchmen, we never get a good look at him in action. His excellent kicks are all in the background, and are very hard to spot with all the inferior actors in front of him, taking all the glory as they do inferior fighting. After the main villain and his henchmen are defeated, both heroic duos take on each other. The idea of Burt Ward sparring with Bruce Lee is funny, but the idea of Burt Ward actually being a match for him is hilarious. In fact, it looks to me as though during most of the fight, Lee is fighting a stuntman and not Burt Ward himself. Of course, in real life, Bruce could have easily wasted Burt Ward, Adam West, Roger C. Carmel and everyone else in that room in ten seconds. Sometime during the course of the battle, Robin receives one of Lee's kicks and then says to Batman: "It's a good thing those guys aren't in town every week!"

The comparisons are easily measured between each duo. With their conflicting personalities put side by side, it's evident that the Caped Crusaders are more noble than the Green Hornet & Kato. The Green Hornet actually seems to be the most polite of the four, but Kato seems to have a chip on his shoulder, not unlike the actual actor who portrayed him. Also, it seems rather strange to see Hornet & Kato opposing Gumm, who is very much a traditionally silly BATMAN villain. This makes these two anti-heroes seem out of place in BATMAN, since the characters they normally confront in their own series are less colorful, more down-to-Earth.

Back in 1967 when these episodes were made, the producers obviously had no idea they had an imminent superstar on set. Bruce's talents were underestimated at that time, but he got the last laugh by eventually becoming legendary, one of the greatest movie stars of all time.

### EDITORIAL PT. 2

Looking back over the content of this issue, I must once again apologize for its unreadability. I tend to experiment with different formats, trying new ideas so I can have ORIENTAL CINEMA stand out from all those other fanzines catering to different categories of the genre. I do feel I've succeeded in making this fanzine's format unique, for better or worse. One of the most disappointing things in this issue is my KING KONG VS GODZILLA article. The review was not even readable. To make up for that, my next issue will be mainly devoted to the subject, giant Japanese monsters. I hope to include all those out of date oldtimers like Godzilla, Gamera, Rodan, Mojin, Ghidrah and the like. But for the sake of variety, my regular columns CHINESE CHILLERS, SWORD AND TAOISM (excluded in this issue), CHOP SOCKEY REPORT, and KAIZO NINGEN UPDATE will also be featured.

There are other fanzines and newsletters which cater to the Asian film genre. One of them which is worth checking out is called the "Martial Arts Film Fan APA." For details on how to subscribe or get copies of it, write to Laurine White, 5422 Colusa Way, Sacramento, Ca., 95841.

No readers have ever sent in comments to me concerning ORIENTAL CINEMA's good or bad points. Things certainly have changed since the 1970s when I was publishing JAPANESE MOVIE SCI-FI. Back then, all my readers were eager to send in letters of comment, saying how the issue could be improved. Since none of you have sent in any criticism or praise about ORIENTAL CINEMA, there will not be much change between this issue and the next. You all seem to think it's perfect, so why mess around with perfection?

Almost sincerely,  
Damon.

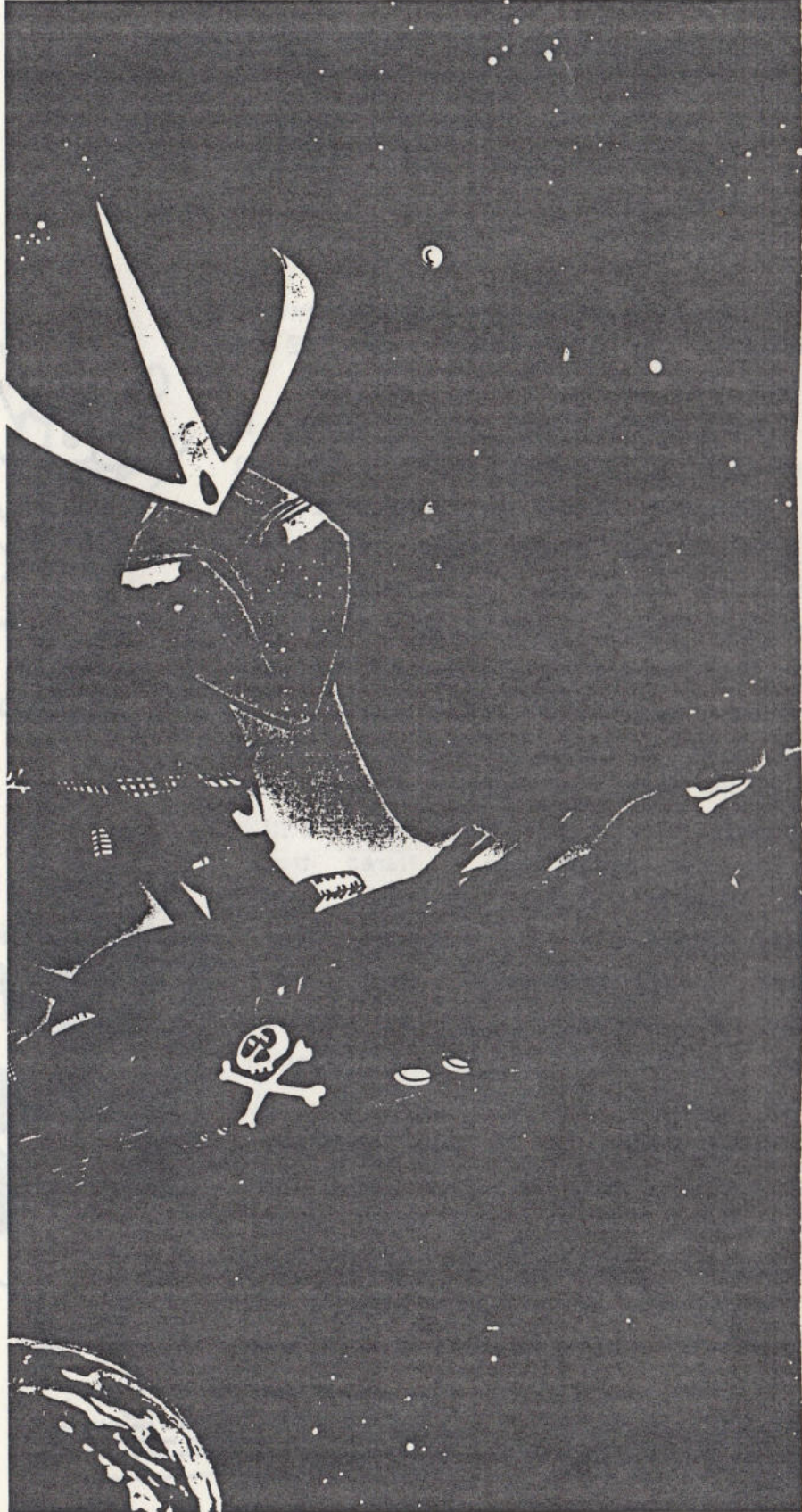
Damon  
Foster





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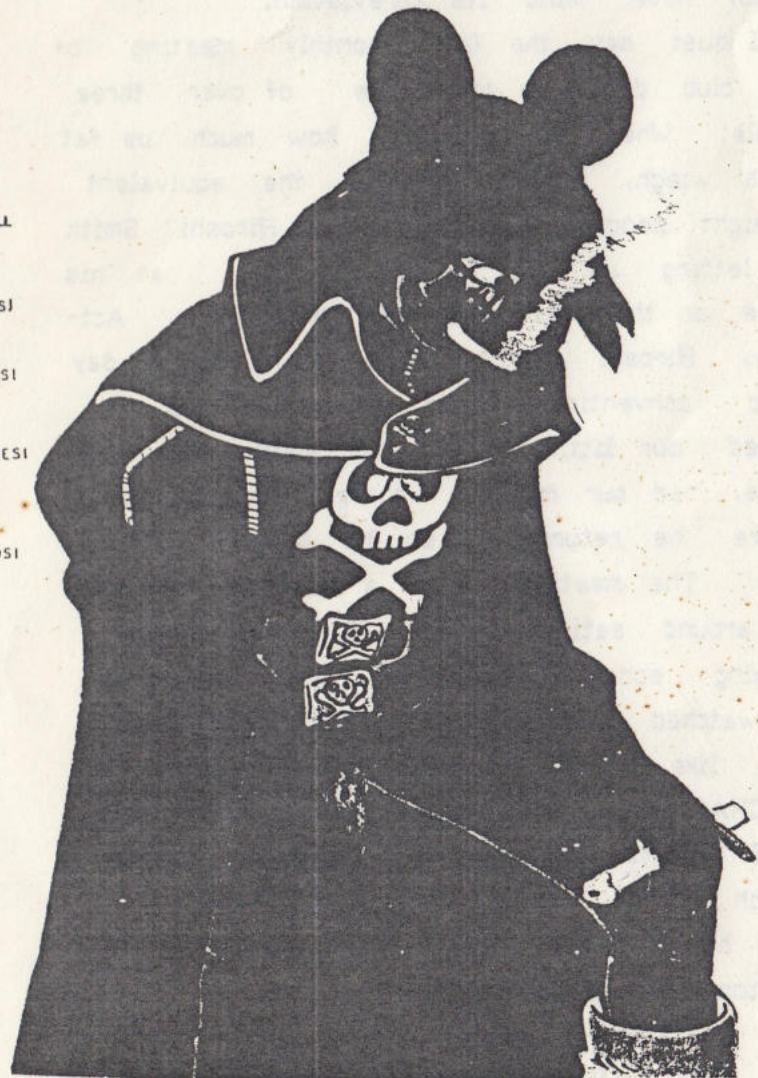
INSIDE

ARTICLES!

REVIEWS!

MORE  
ARTICLES!

MORE  
REVIEWS!



## ANIMEDITORIAL

Golly willickers! Hi there, or as the Japanese say, Midori! To begin with, let me just say that ANIMAG has always been a favorite. To begin with, let me just say that the ANIME EXPLORER has always been a favorite of mine.

There's been a name change in this cartoon fan club. The name for the group is no longer what it was in the previous issue. Our new title is the Fandom Animation Group, never mind its abbreviation.

I must say, the first monthly meeting of this club drew an attendance of over three people! When you consider how much us fat slobbs weigh, that's roughly the equivalent of eight people! Thanks go to Hiroshi Smith for letting us hold the get-together at his house on that sunny Sunday afternoon. Actually, Hiroshi Smith was at a three day comic convention that weekend, so he missed our little party. We snuck into his house, had our meeting there, and got out before he returned, so he doesn't even know! The meeting was a success as we sat around eating cookies & potato chips, drinking soda & Cool-Aid, and of course, we watched videotapes of Japanese cartoons like SPUD RACER, STARGAZERS, GOTCHA' MAN, ROBOHECK, and BANNER THE TAPE WORM. We watched all these tapes, though things would have been better if we'd had a VCR to play them on, not to mention a television set!

Anime-sincerely,

Allen Retsof

## \*\*\*\*\*ANIME JOKE OF THE MONTH\*\*\*\*\*

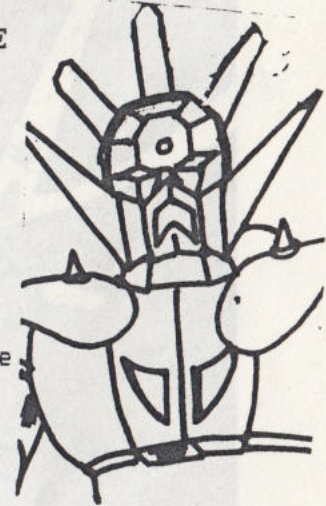
Q: What's the difference between a fan of Japanese cartoons and a sniveling little rat faced gitt?

A: Absolutely nothing!

## \*\*\*\*\*

JAPANESE CARTOONIMATION ON THE RISE  
by Mike Lice

Guess what? Nope, you're wrong, so guess again. Give up? Okay, I'll tell you. Japanese anime (or 'cartoonimation,' as I like to call it) is getting more popular, more commercial, and more trendy! Isn't that great?! I've always liked to be with the in-crowd! Of course, we fans of anime are hardly in a position to judge what is IN and what isn't. After all, in the cause of humor at our own masochistic expense, many of us still like to wear bellbottomed flared trousers, alligator shirts, bow-ties, side burns, mustaches and hideously big collars on our three-piece suits. Obviously, our philosophy is: Us anime freaks are all just a bunch a unfashionable squares, so let's just go all out stupid-looking, to give everyone else a laugh. Well anyway, I have torn out a section of the most recent issue of TV Guidance magazine and circled some of the hot new animes from Nippon that are currently being shown in your area:



● ROBOTRON—Cartoon (7 min.)  
In this episode, robo-pilot Scot Jett loses his hat.  
● WATASHI WA DAI CHIKUIN—in Japanese (37 min.)  
Evil kangaroo accountants from the planet Okama come to earth to capture the world's greatest sushi slicer.

characters in the story.  
● ELECTRONIC AVENGERS—Cartoon (21 min.)  
On the eve of an important duel with the villainous Dildotron, the heroic astronaut-turned-cyborg Scott Droid discovers he's just a 1-dimensional cartoon and emits hari-kiri.

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