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Fanfare

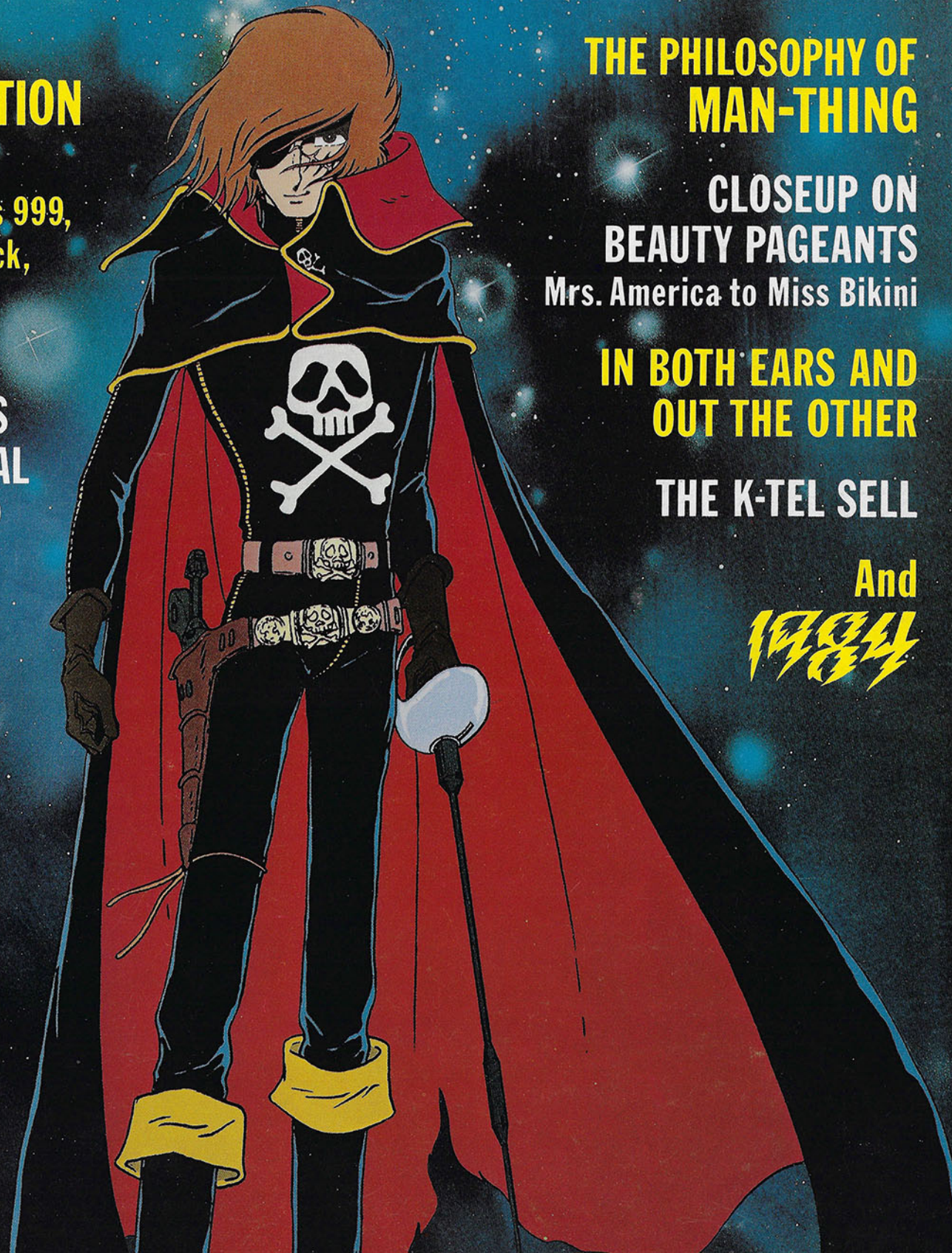
A SURVEY OF TV ANIMATION IN JAPAN

Galaxy Express 999,
Captain Harlock,
Giant Robots
and more!

ELDER GOES
COMMERCIAL
(Occasionally)

KENNETH
ANGER'S
MAGIC
WORLD

WHEN
WRIGHT
WAS
WRONG



THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAN-THING

CLOSEUP ON
BEAUTY PAGEANTS
Mrs. America to Miss Bikini

IN BOTH EARS AND
OUT THE OTHER

THE K-TEL SELL

And
1984



TV Animation in Japan By Fred Patten

Daytime kids' animated cartoons don't usually get much attention, so nobody particularly noticed when a new program called *Astro Boy* went on the air here in the summer of 1963. It happened to be an import from Japan. It ran for a couple of years, then faded into re-runs and disappeared. A handful of other TV cartoons came from Japan during the 1960s: *Gigantor*, *Eighth Man*, *Marine Boy*, *Kimba The White Lion* and *Speed Racer*. None lasted more than a brief time. Since the same could be said for almost any animated cartoon TV program, this attracted no notice. Most viewers never realized these were not American cartoons. If they did, they must have concluded that animation was not popular in Japan since there seemed to be so few programs.

In fact, these programs were the early efforts of an immensely successful Japanese TV cartoon industry. Today the number of Japanese TV cartoons is about to pass the 300 mark. There are a couple of dozen new animated cartoons shown in prime time in Japan at any given moment. Hanna-Barbera has reportedly been preparing a cartoon adaptation of Johanna Spyri's *Heidi* for years, but a Japanese version was released as long ago as 1974. It ran 50 episodes in TV serialization, and was edited into a theatrical-feature condensation — a hit not only in Japan but throughout Western Europe and Latin America. *From The Apennines To The Andes* (1976), soap-opera about a poor Italian family that emigrates to Argentina, ran for a year in Japan and in almost every Spanish-speaking Western Hemisphere nation. In 1978 a Japanese cartoon science fiction serial dubbed into French, *UFO Robot Grandizer* (called *Goldorak* in France), made headlines by becoming the first TV program to get a 100 share. Italian animator Bruno (*Allegro Non Troppo*) Bozetto was asked during a recent tour of America what kinds of cartoons he himself enjoyed; he chuckled and said he and his young children were addicted to the Japanese giant-robots being shown on Italian TV.

The first Japanese TV cartoon was broadcast on January 1, 1963. It was nine months before a second program was ready, and less than ten animated

shows altogether had appeared by the end of 1964. But in 1965 fourteen different programs from seven different studios went on the air. The number of shows has gradually increased each year until, in 1979, over thirty new ones appeared (series and special features), to join many popular cartoons continuing from 1978 and earlier — in prime time. This doesn't include the number of old cartoon programs in syndicated re-runs. A December 1979 monthly all-Japan TV guide of animated cartoons alone contains over 850 listings.

The Japanese TV cartoon industry was created by Osamu Tezuka, often called the "Disney of Japan", who had largely created the Japanese comic-book industry ten to fifteen years earlier. There had been comic-strip stories and theatrical animated cartoons before Tezuka, but they were individual and rather infrequent works, usually in the traditional Japanese art style. Tezuka was a fan of American cartoons, especially the Fleischer *Popeyes* and anything by Disney. The comic books he began drawing in the late 1940s were done in the American "big foot" style, filled with cinematic techniques: close-ups, pans, dissolves. By the early 1950s Tezuka had become so popular that he set up a studio of assistants to help him produce hundreds of stories for a wide variety of magazines and newspapers. In 1959 Toei Animation, Japan's major theatrical cartoon studio, decided to make a feature film of the ancient Chinese *Monkey King* legend and selected a 1953 comic-book version by Tezuka as its model. Tezuka assisted and received co-director and screenplay credit. It was released in August 1960, and can be seen today on American TV as *Alakazam The Great*.

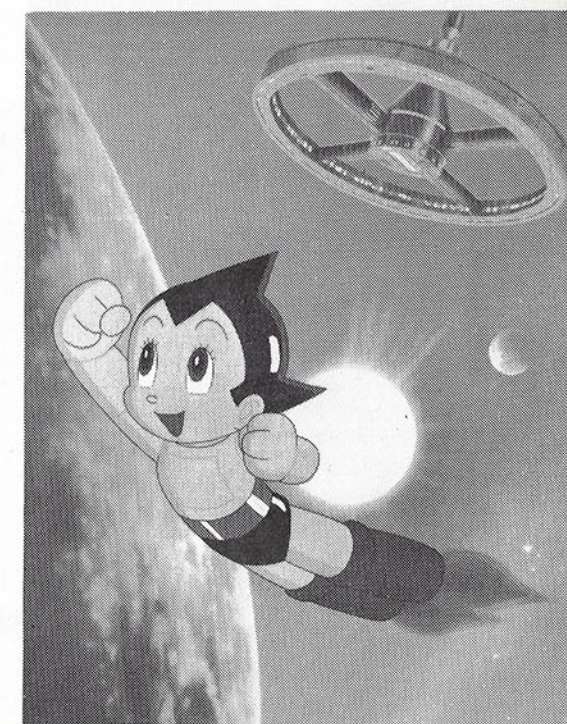
It is likely that this experience wasn't without influence on Tezuka, but what really spurred him to open his own studio was the creation in America of made-for-TV animation. By the end of the 1950s American television had run through three decades' worth of theatrical animated shorts. This was also the period when the major studios closed their animation departments. Television needed fresh cartoons, and new studios such as Hanna-Barbera were created to supply them, in limited animation. Tezuka felt he was in a position to do the same for Japanese TV.

Tezuka's studio, Mushi Productions, opened in June 1961. The first year and a half were spent in getting financial backing and going into production. The result debuted on Japanese TV on New Year's Day 1963 — *Astro Boy*, an adaptation of Tezuka's most popular comic

book series of the '50s. *Astro Boy* was a robot packed with superscientific gimmickry, but he was designed to duplicate his inventor's young son who had recently been killed in an automobile accident. The result was a flying android who was emotionally a boy about 13 years old, using his powers as a super-hero in the futuristic world of 2000 A.D. The program was fast-paced and filled with tongue-in-cheek humor, but it contained the underlying poignancy of *Astro Boy*'s trying to be a real human when he was just an artificial boy.

As soon as it was evident that *Astro Boy* was a big success—it ran for four years and a total of 193 half-hour episodes—other animation studios sprang up. Some were independent while others were new units opened by established movie studios. For the first couple of years all Japanese TV animation was in black & white. Tezuka inaugurated color TV cartoons in 1965, with another program based on one of his comic books of the '50s, *Kimba The White Lion*. (NBC deserves some credit here, because Tezuka had tried to pre-sell the program to American TV before he filmed it, and NBC refused to buy a black-&-white product.) Within a few years all Japanese cartoons were in full color.

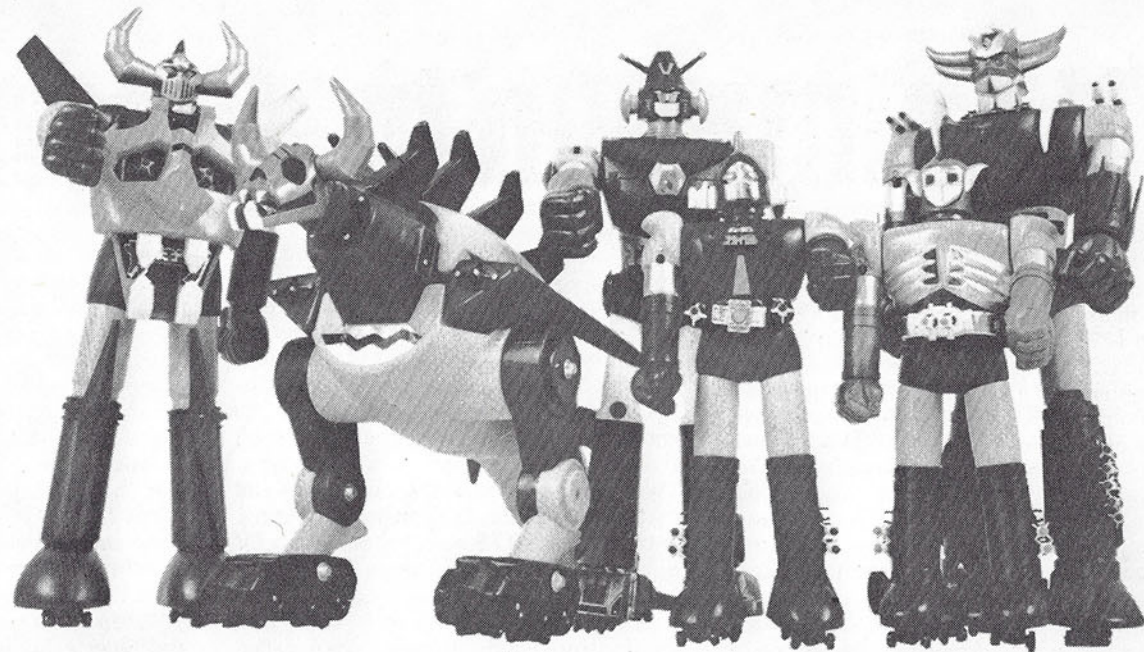
One major reason for the greater popularity of TV cartoons in Japan than in America lies in the basic attitude toward cartoons in the two cultures. In Japan,



Mushi Productions' ASTRO BOY.

Facing page: A 1940s American science fiction hero becomes a 1970s Japanese science fiction TV star in Toei Animation's CAPTAIN FUTURE. Planet Patrol officer Joan Randall; Curtis "Captain Future" Newton; kid assistant Ken Scott; Otho the android; Oog the meteor mimic; Grag the robot; on his shoulder, Eek the moon-pup; floating brain Simon Wright; and Cap's ship, the Comet.

A Toei Animation brochure shows some of the toys based upon its various giant-robot TV animation programs.



cartoons are considered a legitimate form of artistic and literary expression. Whether a cartoon happens to be for children or adults depends upon the treatment given to that particular cartoon. In America, cartoons are considered to be almost exclusively children's fare. Until the 1978 theatrical features *The Lord Of The Rings* and *WaterShip Down*—neither of which have had any influence on TV-watching attitudes—the only cartoons considered "for adults" have been light comedies, usually seasonal TV specials. There is no market in America for serious mature stories in animated-cartoon form. And, because the Japanese accept a higher degree of realism in their programs for children than is considered appropriate for American children, many of the Japanese children's cartoons are unsaleable in the U.S. as too violent or too risqué. Virtually all Japanese TV cartoons are designed for broadcast in prime time, so even children's programs are handled with enough wit and sophistication that parents will also enjoy them. There is no Japanese Saturday morning ghetto. Almost all are weekday half-hour programs, shown between 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

As in America, almost any popular TV program is soon followed by many imitations. Certainly many of the earliest Japanese TV cartoons were frankly derivative of *Astro Boy*, featuring young heroes with special powers who fought injustice, usually in a future world. Tatsuo Yoshida's *Space Ace* (1965-66) was a wild kid from a civilization that was migrating to a new planet. He got separated in his personal rocket from the space fleet and stumbled upon Earth. At first Ace often used his powers for practical jokes, but the understanding upbringing of his human foster father and sister soon made him a responsible citizen. *Space Boy Soran* (1965-67) was cast away as a baby on the planet Soran when his explorer-parents' spaceship was destroyed. After growing to his teens he returned to

Earth to search for his sister. The Soranian super-science he brought was helpful for doing good, but he often got into trouble from the mischievousness of his pet space-squirrel, Chappy.

Several programs had a strong anti-war slant. In Osamu Tezuka's *The Amazing 3* (1965-66), a Galactic Congress debated whether to destroy Earth before warlike humans could spread their destruction among the stars, or wait in the hope that mankind would end its fighting before it developed spaceflight. Three galactic patrolmen were sent to Earth to gather information. They transformed themselves into a rabbit, a horse and a duck, to operate incognito. Although they were only supposed to observe, they soon began using their galactic technology to secretly fight criminals and military dictators. In Takaji Kusunoki's *Asteroid Mask* (1966-67), war broke out in the 21st century



Takaji Kusunoki's original comic book version of TCJ Animation's ASTEROID MASK.

between normally-friendly Earth and Pineron. The culprit was a would-be dictator on Pineron who faked a sneak attack by Earth to give himself an excuse to seize total power. The hero was Peter Johansen, the first person of mixed Earth-Pineron blood, who became a costumed hero to foil the strikes of both planets against the other and fight for peace.

The first giant-robot cartoon was Mitsuteru Yokoyama's *Gigantor* (1963-67), a titanic robot built to help mankind. He was operated by his creator's young son, Jimmy Sparks, who could make Gigantor do an incredible variety of things by twiddling a simple control dial. Most episodes concentrated on Jimmy trying to figure out the best way to use Gigantor to solve a problem; or on criminals who were always trying to steal the control dial, or jam the radio signals that guided the robot, or steal Professor Sparks' plans so they could build an army of Gigantors for evil purposes.

Giant robots didn't really become memorable until Go Nagai's *Mazinger Z* (1972-74). Mazinger Z was more than just a big radio-controlled machine. He was a metal shell operated by a human (teenager Koji Kabuto) who entered his head cavity and became his brain. Also, instead of merely swatting common gangsters or power-mad dictators, Mazinger Z was pitted against a series of evil monsters and robots who matched him in size and strength. There was something about this human/robot symbiosis—a human becoming a metallic giant to protect the world from beings of elemental destruction—that seized the Japanese fancy. Since *Mazinger Z* and his own sequel, *Great Mazinger* (1974-75), there have been over two dozen TV cartoons about giant robots who defend humanity against alien invaders who send their own super monsters to stomp our cities to rubble. In some episodes the heroic robot was assembled piecemeal out of three to six components, each

operated by its own pilot (*Getta Robot*, 1974-75; *Baratak*, 1977-78.) The effort to distinguish between so many different giant-robot programs led to some strange conceptions. One resembled a 200-foot tall football player. Another could form itself into four configurations—diamond, spade, heart, or club.

Super heroes have been as popular in Japan as in the U.S. Jiro Kuwata's *Eighth Man* (1963-64) wasn't a human but an android, programmed with the mental patterns of a murdered police detective. Through Tobor, disguised as a human private eye, Officer Brady was able to continue to fight against criminals and enemy secret agents. In Shotaro Ishimori's *Cyborg 009* (1968; new series 1979), nine people were kidnapped by a worldwide crime organization that forced a scientist to transform them into bionic superbeings for criminal purposes. The cyborgs rescued themselves and the professor, and set themselves up as a team of super secret agents to fight crime.

One of the biggest hits was Tatsuo Yoshida's *Gatchaman* (1972-74). An evil intelligence from space formed a worldwide syndicate to loot Earth's resources. They were fought by the Gatchaman Force, five teenagers in bird costumes who operated superscientific weapons and vehicles provided by a security force operating from a hidden undersea base. *Gatchaman* was so popular (105 episodes) that a theatrical feature was edited from some of the most dramatic episodes. A second series, *Gatchaman II* (1978-79), proved almost as popular, and a third series, *Gatchaman F* (for fighter) is scheduled for 1980.

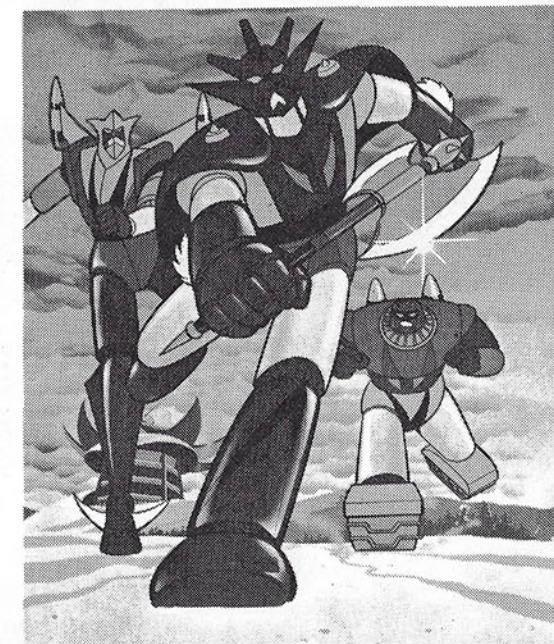
Gatchaman underwent a strange fate when it was bought by an American distributor and presented in the U.S. in 1978 as *Battle Of The Planets*. The program was not merely translated into English; about a third of each episode was removed and new animation added. Most of the alterations were necessary to market *Battle Of The Planets* as a children's program, since *Gatchaman* was an adult drama with bloody fight scenes and risqué humor. The original mood of violence and tension was lightened considerably. Scenes were added of spaceships flying between the stars, so the action could be said to take place in the jungles and cities of other planets instead of on Earth. An entirely new character, an imitation *Star Wars* robot named 7-Zark-7, was added. The main villain, of indeterminate sex in *Gatchaman*, was made definitely masculine. The names of all the characters were changed, and the second-lead hero, Jason (Joe in *Gatchaman*), was not killed off in the series' dramatic climax.

In 1974 a 26-episode serialization of a comic book titled *Space Battleship Yamato* became the most popular animated cartoon ever shown on Japanese TV. In 2199 A.D. Earth had

been under alien attack for a century. Suddenly an offer of a superscientific defense was received from Iskandar, a friendly planet across the galaxy—but Earth would have to go there to get it. All Earth's resources were poured into one super-spaceship, built in the image of Japan's famed World War II battleship "Yamato". The program became a sort of World War II in deep space, as the new Yamato hammered its way through enemy space fleets to reach Iskandar. After its initial success *Yamato* was beginning to settle back into the comfortable limbo of popular but concluded TV programs, when in 1977 George Lucas' *Star Wars* made the world space-opera crazy. *Yamato* was put back into prime-time rerun, and an edited feature-film condensation became a theatrical hit. (This feature, dubbed into English as *Space Cruiser Yamato*, played theatrically in England and as a TV movie in the U.S. in 1978.) A sequel was filmed in two separate versions. *Yamato II*, a 26-episode TV serial, pitted the Yamato against an even greater space menace which it barely but successfully conquered. (The original *Yamato* and *Yamato II* were combined and brought to U.S. TV in 1979 as *Star Blazers*.) In the theatrical feature, *Arrivederci Yamato*, searing space battles gradually reduced the crew until the hero, with the body of his fiancée in his arms, sent the disabled spaceship in a final kamikaze dive into the enemy dreadnaught to save Earth. The Japanese public is still *Yamato*-crazy and a third TV cartoon, *Yamato: The New Voyage*, has just begun serialization.

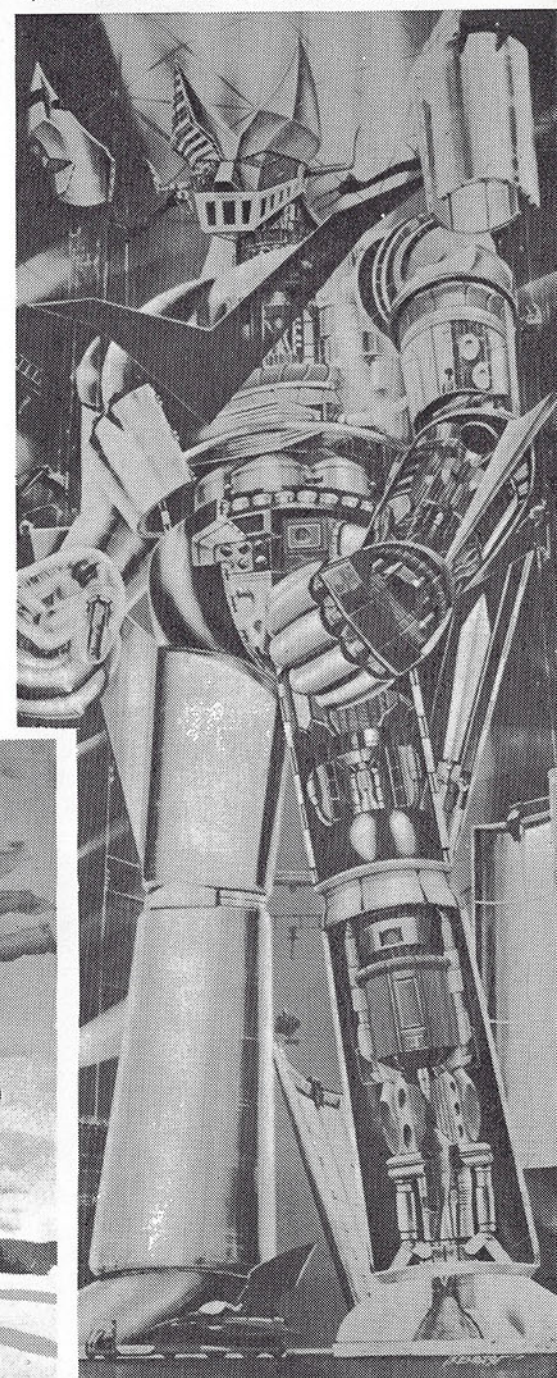
Space Battleship Yamato rocketed both space opera and cartoonist Leiji

Promotional poster shows all three configurations of *Getta Robot* simultaneously: Raiga, Dragon and Poseidon. Toei Animation's GETTA ROBOT-G.

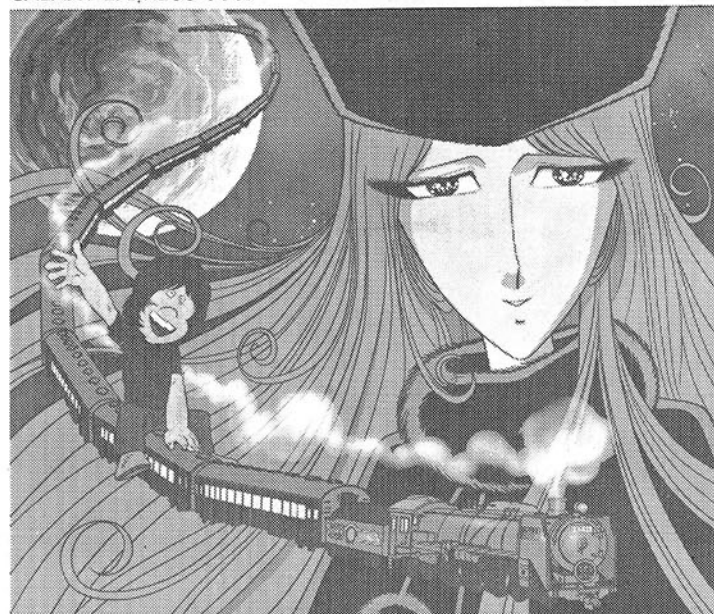


Matsumoto to major prominence. A current Matsumoto hit is *Galaxy Express 999* (1978 and still running; over 50 episodes to date). This has been described as a "symbolic space fantasy" to forestall guffaws over an old-fashioned steam locomotive chugging between the stars. The setting is the far future when the rich have all had their brains transferred into immortal metal bodies, and only the poor retain their flesh bodies. A mysterious woman rescues a dying orphan and gives him a fabulously valuable pass on *Galaxy Express 999* so he can ride to a legendary planet of eternal life.

The Research Center constructs Great Mazinger, the more powerful successor to Mazinger Z, in Toei Animation's GREAT MAZINGER.



Tetsuro the orphan and the mysterious Maeter in Toei Animation's GALAXY EXPRESS 999.



Each week's episode is set on a different planet, as young Tetsuro and his beautiful but eerie guardian adventure among humans or robots or aliens. *Galaxy Express 999* has been popular enough that the producer, Toei Animation, created an entirely-original theatrical feature adventure which set box office records in 1979.

Yet another Matsumoto hit was *Space Pirate Captain Harlock* (1978-79). In the 30th century Earth had become soft and decadent, no match for an intergalactic invasion that nobody believed in anyway. But Captain Harlock had evidence that one was imminent. He set himself up as a space pirate to goad the Solar government into rousing to a fighting stance. Harlock affected the space pirate image to an extreme degree, adding a Spanish-galleon sterncastle to his dreadnaught, the *Arcadia*. (The cartoon's soundtrack was filled with Japanese imitations of the Roger Wagner Chorale singing sea chanteys.) Harlock wasn't quite popular enough to get his program extended past

its initial 52-episode run, but he did well enough to earn a prominent guest appearance in the *Galaxy Express 999* theatrical feature.

Star Wars had a much more direct influence on Japanese TV than giving *Yamato* new life. Toei Animation wanted to do a *Star Wars* imitation, and reasoned that the best way was to buy the rights to one of the science fiction works that George Lucas had named as inspiring him to create *Star Wars*. They selected Edmond Hamilton's *Captain Future*, a pulp-magazine series in the early 1940s. Captain Future, a cross between Buck Rogers and Doc Savage, had a secret crime-fighting base on the Moon, and roved from Mercury to Pluto with his comic-relief teammates (a robot, an android and a Living Brain) to battle interplanetary criminals. Toei gave the stories *Star Wars*-era art design and a disco theme song, and added a few female characters to Hamilton's almost all-masculine supporting cast (they also added an unnecessary cute kid assistant), but otherwise

they were faithful serializations of the original pulp novels. *Captain Future* ran for 52 weekly episodes in 1978-79.

Humorous science fiction tends to blend into pure fantasy. *Yattaman* (1977-79) was a spoof on all the ponderous giant-robot dramas, drawn in a cartoon-humor rather than a realistic style. Two teenage mechanical whizzes built a giant-robot hound-dog named Yatta King, and used it to foil the schemes of a sexy villainess and her two oafish stooges. *Yattaman* was popular enough that the 104-episode program was immediately followed by a sequel, *Zenda-man* (1979 and still running), which features a giant mechanical Zenda Lion that looks amazingly like a hound-dog.

The Japanese seem particularly fond of situation comedies about children who acquire klutzy robotic companions. These exist in both animated cartoon and live action programs. One of the most popular of the former is *Doraemon* (1973; new series 1979), based on a long-running comic strip by Fujiko Fujio.

Lun Lun with her friends, and an enemy, in Toei Animation's LUN LUN THE FLOWER CHILD.



Doraemon helps Nobita get revenge on the school bullies in Shuei Animation's DORAEMON.



4th-grader Nobita Nobi was loafing at home one day when a futuristic boy and a large robot kitty-kat popped out of thin air. The future kid was Nobita's 23rd-century descendent, who had been reading in the family history how Nobita had had nothing but bad luck and misery all his life. He had wanted to bring Nobita a super-robot to guide and protect him, but with his crummy allowance all he could afford was a 23rd-century toy — and a factory reject, at that. Doraemon the robot cat was supposed to use his futuristic technology to keep Nobita out of trouble, but his all-thumbs approach and his habit of entrusting such devices as antigravity and mind-transfer to a scatterbrained 10-year-old and his playmates caused hilarious havoc.

A long list can be made of girls' fantasy programs about cute young witches or princesses from pixieland or mermaids in human form who come to a big city as a type of exchange student to "study human life". All are similar to American TV's *Sabrina*. They use their magic pow-

ers to play harmless pranks on bullies, help out their schoolmates, etc., as in Mitsuteru Yokoyama's *Sally the Witch* (1966-68), *Meg The Little Witch* (1974-75), *The Secrets of Akko-chan* (1969-70) and *Mako the Mermaid* (1970-71). A slightly more adventurous variant is the current *Lun Lun the Flower Child*. A fairy dog and cat are searching the world for a young girl pure enough to become the princess of their magic land. They select Lun Lun, a young teenager in a Disneyish Switzerland. To prove she's worthy she must successfully perform a number of good deeds with a magic flower pendant. Lun Lun is opposed by a pretty but nasty young witch and her badger assistant who try to foul up Lun Lun's helpful magic.

The Japanese also love animal fantasies. One of the first, Osamu Tezuka's *Kimba the White Lion* (1965-66), bordered on science fiction. Caesar the lion, king of the African jungle, was killed by a hunter and his mate captured for a zoo. Kimba was born on the boat going to

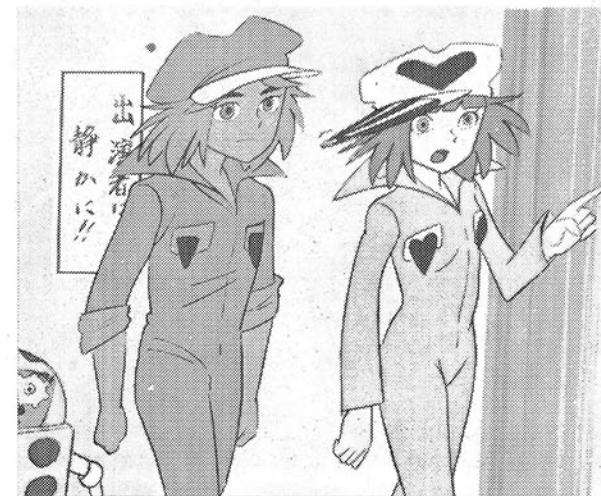
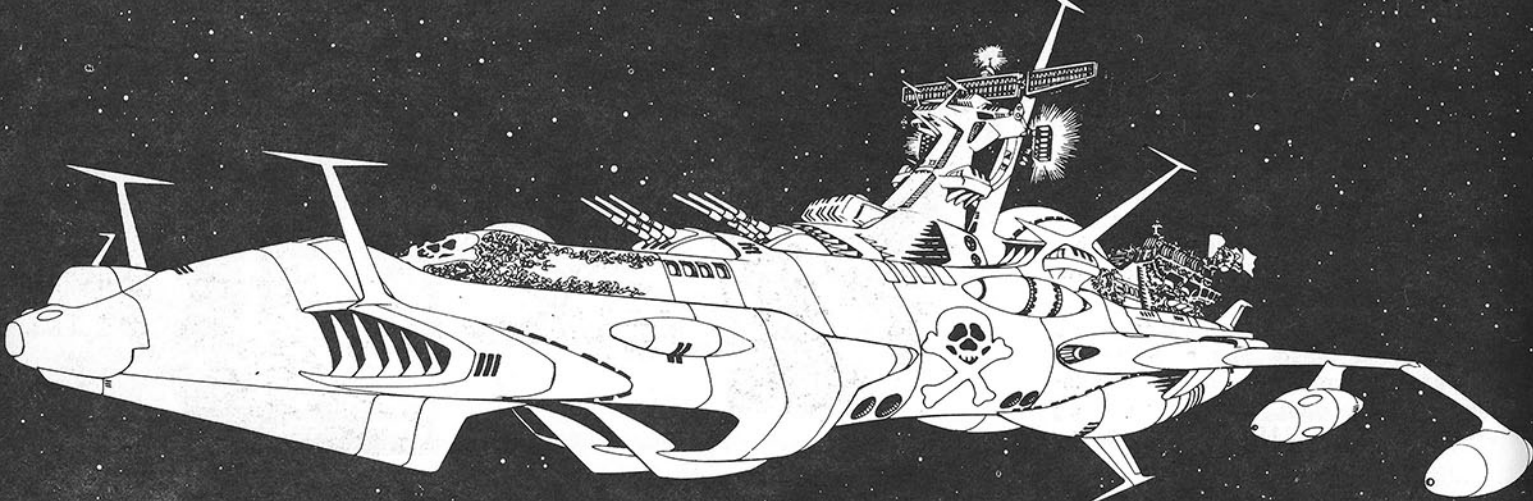
Most Americans have never seen Kimba grown up. Here he is with his son, Rune, in Mushi Productions' KIMBA THE WHITE LION.



Europe, and escaped when it sank in a storm. On his way back to the jungle he passed through human cities, and was impressed by the benefits of civilization. After the animals acknowledged him as their new king, Kimba determined to establish an animal civilization with farms and schools. Kimba's adventures often involved conflicts with older animals who did not believe in his new-fangled pacifistic ways, and with humans who would not respect the rights of the civilized animal kingdom. The first 52 episodes, showing Kimba as a young cub, were syndicated in America by NBC. NBC did not pick up the 26-episode sequel showing Kimba as an adult, married to his childhood sweetheart Kitty and with two cubs of their own.

Most other animal fantasies have been anthropomorphized fairy-tales showing handsome young honeybees or frogs or woodchucks or squirrels in their forest or pond communities, trying to impress girlfriends or battling natural enemies. One of these, *Banner the Squirrel* (1979),

Captain Harlock's 1,312-foot-long interstellar ship, the Arcadia. Toei Animation's SPACE PIRATE CAPTAIN HARLOCK.



The heroes Gan-chan and Ai-chan, and befuddled villains Tonzura, Doronjio and Boyatsuki in Tatsunoko Productions' YATTAMAN.

was ostensibly based on a juvenile nature book by Ernest Thompson Seton, *Barnertail; The Story of a Gray Squirrel* (1922). However, it's doubtful a naturalist like Seton ever put his squirrels into clothes or had them quoting Shakespeare.

Monster fantasies run a wide range from humor to grimness. Fujiko Fujio's *Li'l Monster* (1968-69) was similar to *The Addams Family* or *The Munsters*. A pre-teen prince of Monsterland visited Earth for his education. A haunted-house Monsterland Embassy was set up in an urban residential neighborhood, with Dracula, Wolfman, "Frankie", and others among the embassy residents. On occasion the embassy would be attacked by evil Monsterland revolutionary terrorists, with the human neighbors unhappily caught in the crossfire.

Go Nagai's *Abracadabra! Enmakun* (1973-74) played for more sadistic humor. Satan learned that a number of demons on Earth were plotting to overthrow him. So a young demon, Enmakun, was assigned to Earth with two assistants (a cute frost witch and a kappa, a traditional Japanese water-demon) to break up the revolutionary movement. Enmakun was friendly towards humans, and there was a lot of humor in the program, but each episode usually ended up with a lot of human innocent bystanders dead. Nagai went all the way in *Devil Man* (1972-73), which featured a superhero similar to Marvel Comics' *Son of Satan*. Devil Man, a renegade demon who wanted to renounce evil, and the regular demons from Hell fought over the fate of a Tokyo high school. Characters were impaled, had their heads or limbs ripped off (with spouting blood), or were so scared they visibly crapped in their

pants. If you can imagine *The Omen* as a comedy, you'll have some idea of the mood of *Devil Man*.

Osamu Tezuka tried an interesting experiment with his horror mystery-drama, *Vampire* (1968-69). A worldwide syndicate of were-animals, *homo lycanthropus*, was about to rise against *homo sapiens* and take over the world. A master criminal discovered their plot and tried to twist it to his own advantage. The hero was a good werewolf who tried to warn humanity. But the humans wouldn't trust any werewolf, and he ended up fighting alone while being hunted by all three factions. *Vampire* was filmed in live-action with all of the were-animals as superimposed animation. The program was generally a failure. Tezuka (who appeared briefly in it as the werewolf's friend) blamed his studio's technical inability to combine live-action and animation footage successfully, and the fact that his "cuddly" art style made it difficult for audiences to accept the were-animals as horrifying menaces. A similar experiment was made with Tsuburaya Productions' *Born Free Dinosaur Exploration Team* (1976-77), in which cartoon-animation explorers travelled into the past to hunt stop-action model dinosaurs on miniature sets. It wasn't much more successful.

"Sports adventure" is a genre that covers a lot of territory. Some programs were outright fantasies, such as Tatsuo Yoshida's *Speed Racer* (1967-68). Young daredevil Speed Racer roared around the world fighting criminals and running missions of mercy in his Mach 5, a super-racing car loaded with more gimmicks than the Batmobile. He was often accompanied by a cute little kid tagalong and a pet chimpanzee. *Combo-Tiger*

Supercar (1977-78) merged auto-racing with the giant-robot craze. Five teenaged racers could snap together their individual cars while at top speed to form the giant car, Combo-Tiger. They needed it to foil the foul play of the racers of the Demon Team, in a round-the-world race to determine whether demons or humans would rule the earth. *Tiger Mask* (1969-71), an adaptation of a popular newspaper strip by Ikki Kajiwara & Naoki Tsuji, was a sports/crime drama. The hero was a masked wrestler who had been trained by a criminal sports syndicate, but who tried to quit the gang and wrestle honestly.

Most sports animated cartoons, however, have been human-interest melodramas. Baseball (Japan's most popular spectator sport), auto racing, boxing, volleyball, soccer, tennis—you name it and there's been a cartoon soap opera about it.

There are other TV animated cartoons based upon highly successful comic strips. Machiko Hasegawa's *Sazae-San* (TV version 1969) was a family situation comedy in the tradition of *Blondie* or *I Love Lucy*. Yumiko Igarashi's 9-volume *Candy Candy* (1976-79; 115 episodes) was a tear-jerker serial for pre-teens, about a winsome young orphan who was always getting into heart-rending situations. The first episodes were set in Illinois in the 1910s, where Candy was a serving girl in a rich businessman's home. It looked more like an early 19th-century British nobleman's estate, full of servants kowtowing in a humble manner. Later Candy was sent to a finishing school in London, where she became a nurse in the Great War. Waki Yamato's *Miss Modern Girl* (1978-79) was set in Japan in the early 1920s, when the

Candy White, boyfriend Terry and pet raccoon in Toei Animation's *CANDY CANDY*.



replacement of traditional life styles by Western ways caused considerable culture shock. *Norakuro* (1970-71), which might be described as a funny-animal version of *The Sad Sack* (with dog soldiers), only lasted a year on TV although the newspaper strip by Suihou Tagawa had been popular since 1931. It may be the oldest strip in the world today still drawn by its creator.

The single most popular cartoon, and the most vehemently denounced by the Japanese PTA—according to its creator, who insists on being called "Monkey Punch"—is *Lupin III*. This is an adult crime comedy, roughly similar to Hitchcock's *To Catch A Thief* with a dash of James Bond movies. The magazine strip began in the 1960s; the initial TV adaptation ran in 1971-72 and was reckoned as the 4th all-time most popular TV cartoon in a 1977 tabulation; the current TV series began in 1977 and is currently pushing 120 episodes. This Lupin is a descendant of the famous French thriller-hero, Arsene Lupin—a world-notorious gentleman burglar, a master thief. He operates with two loyal assistants, an American gangster and a Japanese samurai. There's also a sexy girl thief who sometimes works with Lupin and sometimes is his rival for a choice piece of loot. Lupin is pursued around the world by a choleric police inspector who is usually just one step short of catching him. The series is full of witty and risqué dialog, double and triple crosses, incredible disguises and technical gimmicks, and jazz background music. Monkey Punch is a

Ha'chi to the rescue in Tatsunoko Productions' *HACHI THE HONEYBEE*.



stickler for detail: Lupin favors a Walther P-38 revolver and drinks recognizable-brand liquors (expensive ones); characters drive Toyotas or Fords or Citroens; fighter planes or military tanks are existing models. The TV cartoon has been popular enough that the producer, Tokyo Movie Shinsha, made an original theatrical feature that reportedly played to rave reviews at last year's Cannes Film Festival.

The Japanese are fond of adapting foreign classic and popular works into TV cartoons. These can range from Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1978-79) to Marge's *Little Lulu* (1976-77). Often the cartoon series may have only a tenuous relationship to the original story. Finnish author Tove Jansson reportedly objected strenuously to the *Moomintroll* program (1969-70; new series 1972), which used her characters and art style and overall background, but had all new plots.

Adaptations of foreign works include Spyri's *Heidi* (1974), Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1976), Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince* (1978-79), Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1979), Sterling North's *Rascal* (1977), Alexander Key's science fiction novel *The Incredible Tide* under the title *Conan, Boy of the Future* (1978), and two separate versions of Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1972 and 1976-77). There are many series of fairy tales: *Tales of Hans Christian Anderson* (1971), *World Famous Fairy Tales* (1976-78), and so on. There are also series which are original but highly derivative of classics, such as *Ken the Wolf*

Boy (1963-65), which could easily have called itself *The Jungle Book*; and *Adventures of Sinbad* (1975-76), a presentation of some of the Arabian Nights featuring a little Arab boy on a flying carpet.

Historical dramas set before the modernization of Japan, circa 1890, are almost all sophisticated and definitely for adult audiences. To a Westerner any program in which the characters wear traditional Japanese clothing is a "samurai adventure", a false generalization at which the Japanese wince. Many are about samurais, of course, and most are either about sword-wielding martial heroes or the intrigues of feudal court life. Two especially dramatic and bloody series involved the ninja "shadow" professional assassins—*Sasuke* (1968-69) and *The Unauthorized Biography of Kamui* (1969), both based on famous strips by the pioneer comic-book artist Sanpei Shirato. A program endorsed by the Buddhist church is *Iku-San* (over 190 episodes), currently the longest-running TV cartoon in Japan. This is a human-interest series about a pre-teen acolyte (altar boy, to use a Christian equivalent), which fictionalizes the youth of an actual famous monk. *Iku-San's* popularity is great enough to imply that it is more than just a Sunday school morality lesson. It is currently shown on UHF channels in San Francisco and New York City, and has a fair American following.

A different view of historic Japan was presented in Osamu Tezuka's horror-fantasy *Dororo* (1969). An unscrupulous feudal lord sacrificed his infant son to



In Japan even TV cartoons have symphonic suite arrangements of their background music. LP record album covers to Tatsunoko Productions' *GATCHAMAN* (*Battle of the Planets*) and Academy's *SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO* (*Star Blazers*).



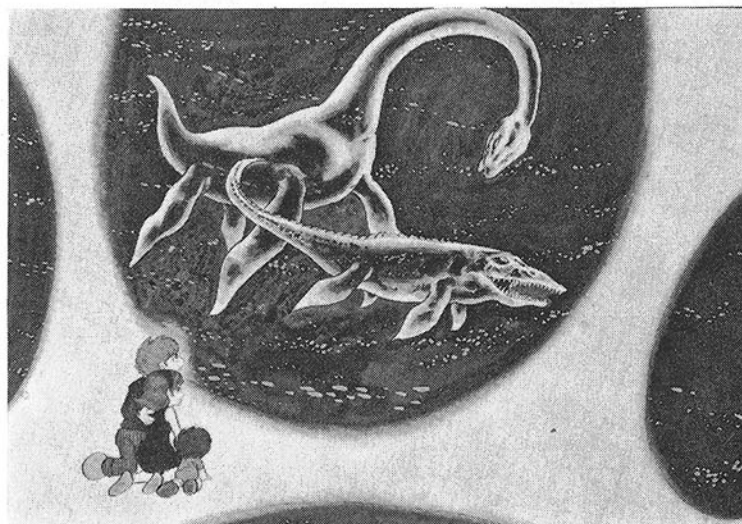
Sayo and Iku-San at play in Toei Animation's IKU-SAN.



Nota the puppy, Dororo and Hyakimaru stalk an oriental demon in Mushi Productions' DORORO.



A UFO sends three children into the past in Shotaro Ishimori's 1979 TV-special movie by Toei Animation, THE AGE OF BIG DINOSAURS.



demons in exchange for political power. The barely-living remains of the baby, Hyakimaru, were discarded and found by a peasant woodcarver, who cared for the featureless body and carved replacement parts for it. When Hyakimaru grew to adulthood he set out into the world to win his real self back from the demons. The serial was a cross between a Toshiro Mifune samurai drama and a grim *Pinocchio*: every time Hyakimaru brought another demon to bay and killed it, another part of his body—an eye, an ear, an arm—became real flesh and blood. *Dororo* (named after Hyakimaru's companion, a child thief) featured every kind of grisly monster in Japanese mythology. After Hyakimaru finished the last of them off, he went after his father for revenge—a gruesome series which presented a faithful panorama of classic Japanese folklore.

TV specials and made-for-TV feature cartoons have always been popular, but within the last year they seem to have increased tremendously in vogue. 1979 saw thirteen of them. Most were 1½-hour programs, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. the most common time slot. Some were not cartoons themselves, but were "the making of" documentaries about animation hits such as the *Galaxy Express 999* theatrical feature and the forthcoming *Yamato 3* TV series. Others were original movies. Adaptations of Occidental works ranged from crime thrillers to romantic musicals: Maurice Leblanc's Arsene Lupin mystery, *813*; Paul Gallico's sugary fantasy, *Manxmouse*; and Jean Webster's soap opera about an orphan who falls vicariously in love with her unseen guardian, *Daddy Long Legs*. Possibly the most ambitious of all, produced by Nippon Animation under IBM sponsorship, was *The Diary of Anne Frank*. This had surrealistic nightmarish sequences, an expression of human anguish in animated-cartoon form equivalent to Picasso's impassioned *Guernica*.

At present the majority of Japanese TV animation is produced by five studios: Nippon Animation, Toei Company, Toei Animation Company (much public confusion between those two), Tatsunoko Productions, and Tokyo Movie Shinsha. Each turns out approximately a half-dozen new half-hour series and a couple of TV or theatrical features per year, in addition to keeping in production on several popular holdovers from the last couple of years. Usually the shortest any half-hour series runs is 26 weekly episodes, and popular programs often run well over a hundred episodes.

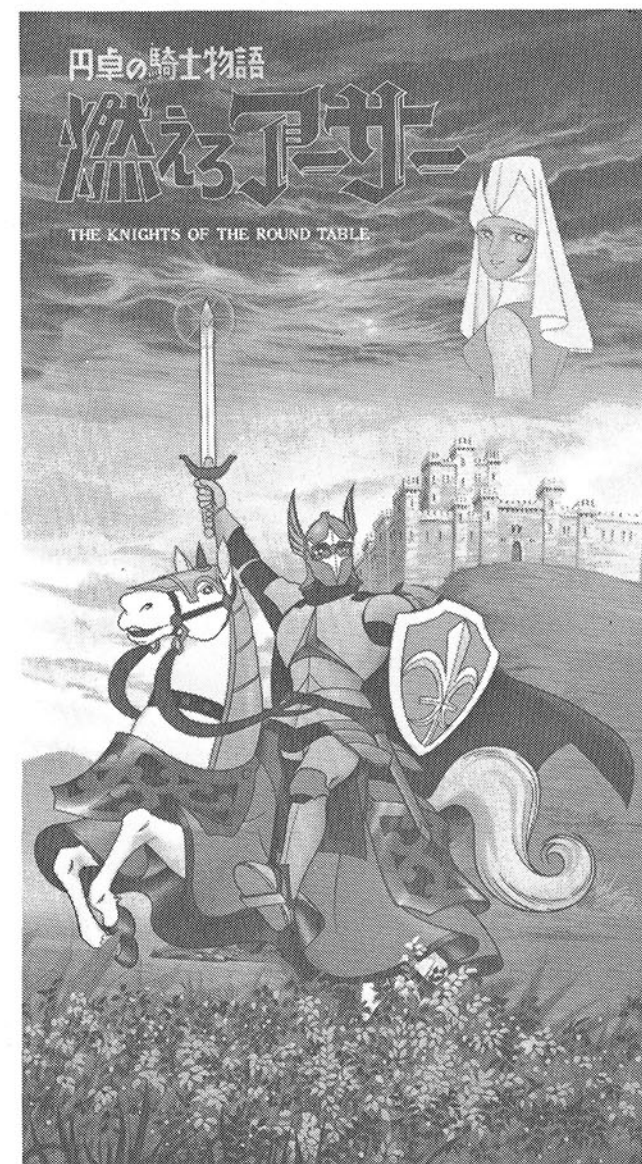
A number of other studios produce smaller quantities of TV animation, though some of their shows are very important. The first program that Office Academy ever made was the fantastically popular *Space Battleship Yamato*, with the result that from 1974 to 1979 Academy devoted its entire output to *Yamato* sequels and specials. In 1979 Academy finally released a new series, *Blue Noah*,

a drama in which humanity, on the verge of annihilation by aquatic aliens who have invaded our oceans, constructs a super submarine-battleship, the *Blue Noah*. . . (If you've got a good idea, milk it to death.) Dax International and Group TAC are studios that specialize in educational TV fare: famous fairy tales, biographies of notables such as Beethoven, *Sesame Street*-type stuff. Top Craft is a Tokyo studio that seems to have no cartoons on Japanese channels at all, yet it's the art designer and animator to which Rankin-Bass regularly subcontracts its American TV specials. This doubtlessly explains why Smaug in Rankin-Bass' 1977 production of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* was such an Oriental-looking dragon. Other studios primarily known for live-action films or TV commercials, such as Tsuburaya Productions, may produce or co-produce with another studio a couple of animated programs per year.

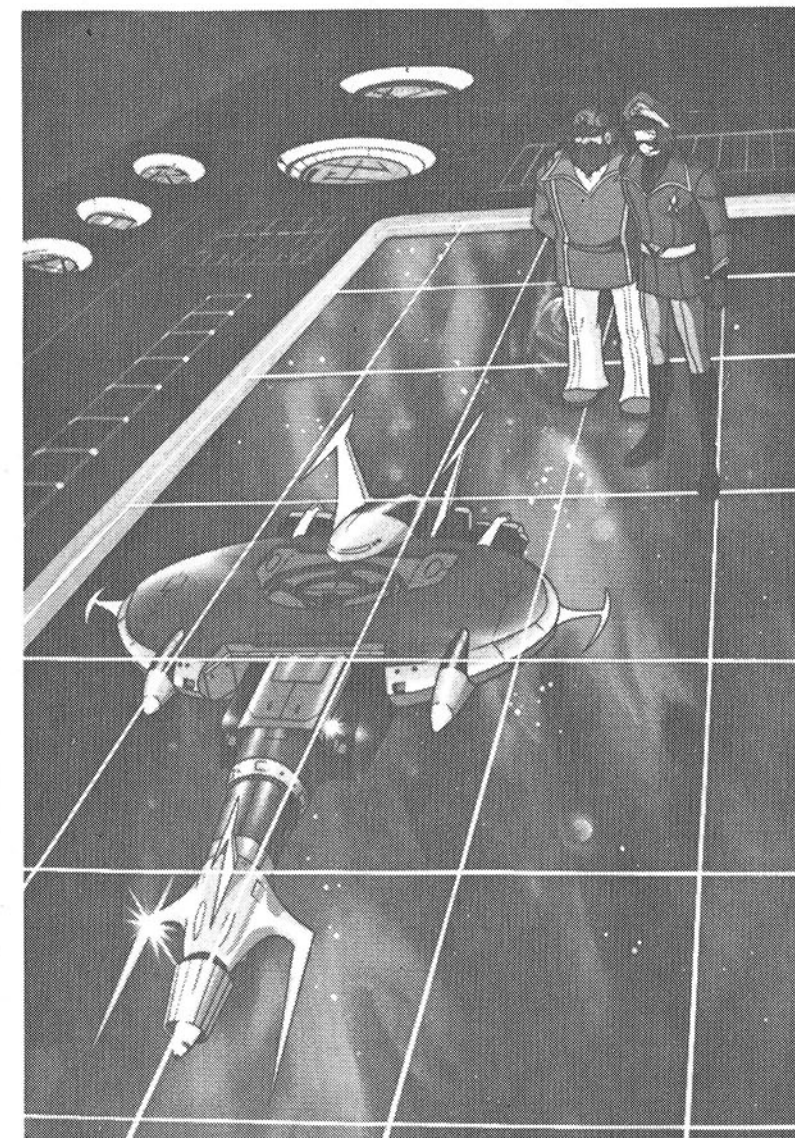
Unfortunately the two pioneer TV animation giants of the 1960s are not cur-

rently on the scene. TCJ Animation, which created such early favorites as *Gigantor*, *Eighth Man*, *Super Jetter*, *Prince Planet*, *Asteroid Mask*, *Space Boy Soran* and many more, dwindled to insignificance in the early 1970s. It changed its name to Eiken, but that apparently didn't help since no Eiken programs are listed after the 1976/77 season. Mushi Productions was a victim of its own high standards. It poured too much money into its production quality, for prestige as much as for pure esthetics. Osamu Tezuka left after a managerial conflict in 1972, and the studio shortly went into bankruptcy.

On the other hand, Mushi Productions' new owners kept it alive (if in low profile) for the next seven years by merchandising its old programs. In 1979 it released a new theatrical cartoon about two cutesy-poo polar bear cubs, so Mushi may finally be on its way to recovery and resumed production. As for Osamu Tezuka, he restricted his output to comic-book work



Promotional poster for Toei Animation's brand-new ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.



Dr. Oedo and Captain Ichimonji see a Planestor ship on the viewscreen of their spacecraft carrier in Leiji Matsumoto's giant-robot serial by Toei Animation, PLANET ROBOT DANGUARD ACE.

Each volume of the ROMAN ALBUM series tells everything about a particular TV cartoon. Volume 17 covers TCJ Animation's EIGHTH MAN.



for a couple of years and then opened a new studio in 1976, Tezuka Productions. It has produced two TV-special cartoon features so far, is about to release a 2½-hour theatrical animated feature, *Phoenix: 2772 A.D.*, and has announced plans to begin work on a new *Astro Boy* TV series.

This indicates that, even though individual studios may suffer setbacks, the Japanese TV animation field is a dynamic one. October is a month that many new programs go on the air in Japan, and the October 1979 lineup showed the usual variety in animation: *Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*, several samurai and other Japanese historical dramas (some with fantasy elements), fairy tales and modern fantasies, a few giant-robot and other science fiction adventures. Nippon Animation has acquired the rights to create a funny-animal series starring the USSR's official cartoon-mascot for the 1980 Olympics, Mischa the bear cub. Advertisements announce that on 8 January 1980, NHK (the Japanese equivalent of the BBC) will begin airing a serialization of Selma Lagerlof's classic fantasy, *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils*.

Out of all this TV animation, however, all the U.S. has seen in the last decade has been sanitized kiddie versions of *Gatchaman* (as *Battle of the Planets*) and the first two *Yamato* serials (as *Star Blazers*). Reportedly they're getting low ratings because, even in watered-down versions, they're too mature for young children with short attention spans. They contain long sequences in which people simply stand and talk, establishing characterization and motivation, instead of running frantically about and comically

crashing into things. Dialog is serious and meaningful, instead of a series of silly quips. Voices are natural instead of artificially squeaky or gravelly. Yet these programs are shown in 2:30 p.m. kiddie-cartoon time slots when they are inaccessible to school-bound or working teens and adults such as *Star Trek* fans who are their natural audiences—or, worse yet, at the uncivilized hour of 5:30 a.m. In time slots like these it's no wonder hardly anyone is even aware of their existence. So Japanese animation studios can go on producing wonders for Japanese viewers and for TV audiences throughout Europe and Latin America, while Americans continue under the belief that the world's finest animation is an occasional new Disney feature and what's produced in Hollywood for Saturday-morning kids' programming.

This article is rather ambitious in that it's written by an American animation fan who has never been to Japan. However, I do belong to the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization, a fan club which has a large videotape library of Japanese TV cartoons and has regular screenings in the Los Angeles area. (Anyone interested in further information can contact me, Fred Patten, at 11863 West Jefferson Blvd., Culver City, California 90230.) Also, for research purposes, there's a tremendous animation fandom in Japan, and dozens of illustrated books and magazines cover these programs in detail. Information is readily available on program titles, original broadcast dates, episode title lists, production credits, reproductions of studio model sheets, theme song lyrics and sheet music, and anything else



Tokyo cartoonist Osamu Tezuka in Los Angeles at a screening of the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization, December 1978, at which Tezuka's TV-special feature length *BANDER'S BOOK* was shown—a light-hearted potpourri of space opera, time travel, weird horror and fairy tale.

ANIMAGE, a monthly 150-page color-illustrated magazine which surveys current Japanese animation in depth. These two issues cover-feature Tokyo Movie Shinsha's *LUPIN III* and Animation Staffroom's *TRITON OF THE SEA*.



a fan could wish to know. Just try to get similar information about any American TV animated cartoon!

Major sources used for this article include issues of the monthly animation fan magazine, *Animage*; the invaluable 3-volume *Complete Works of TV Animation*, by Taku Sugiyama (1978-79); a 1978 movie-fan-format illustrated index, *Invitation to the Wonderful World of TV Animation*; and the March 1979 issue (a special on animation) of the fine-art magazine, *Bungeishunju Deluxe*. I would also like to give sincere thanks to Maco Tojima, a cartoon fan from Japan currently in Los Angeles as an exchange student, for her kind assistance. ■