

# Books

**Star Blazers, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2.** Created by Yoshinobu Nishizaki, edited by Mitsuru-Menjo & Studio A.S.H., English dialogue by William Ross. Tokyo: West Cape Co., Ltd., 1983. \$11.25 per volume.

The comic-book industry in Japan is thriving, with sales on some individual weekly titles exceeding three million copies. Comics creators in Japan are idolized and frequently chosen as celebrity spokesmen for products in commercials.

Japanese comics have seldom appeared in the United States, partly because the Japanese language is read from right to left, not left to right as English is. Japanese comics would have to be printed in reverse in order for the panel placement to be correct. This, together with the cost of translating the comics and relettering and re-positioning the speech balloons, has made it a costly proposition to reprint Japanese comic books for American audiences.

*Star Blazers* takes place in the year 2199, when everyone on Earth lives in underground cities which were designed to protect them from radiation caused by atomic attacks from the planet Gamilon. The radiation is seeping into the ground, and the cities are endangered. Earth is offered some Cosmo DNA by the Planet Iscandar and told that Cosmo DNA will remove the radiation. But Iscandar is 148,000 light years away.

So Space Cruiser Yamato, a World War II battleship converted into a spaceship and outfitted with engines capable of warping space, is dispatched to Iscandar to bring back the Cosmo DNA. The story of the Yamato is the story of the perils (including the Gamilons) en route to Iscandar — and how the crew meets those perils.

If some of this sounds as though it might be familiar, you may have watched some of the Yamato TV series, *Space Cruiser Yamato* and *Space Cruiser Yamato 2* — which began syndication in America (in heavily edited form) as *Star Blazers* in 1979. It's for this reason that the English translation

**By Don & Maggie Thompson**

of the Japanese anime comics is titled *Star Blazers*, rather than *Space Cruiser Yamato*, which was the original title.

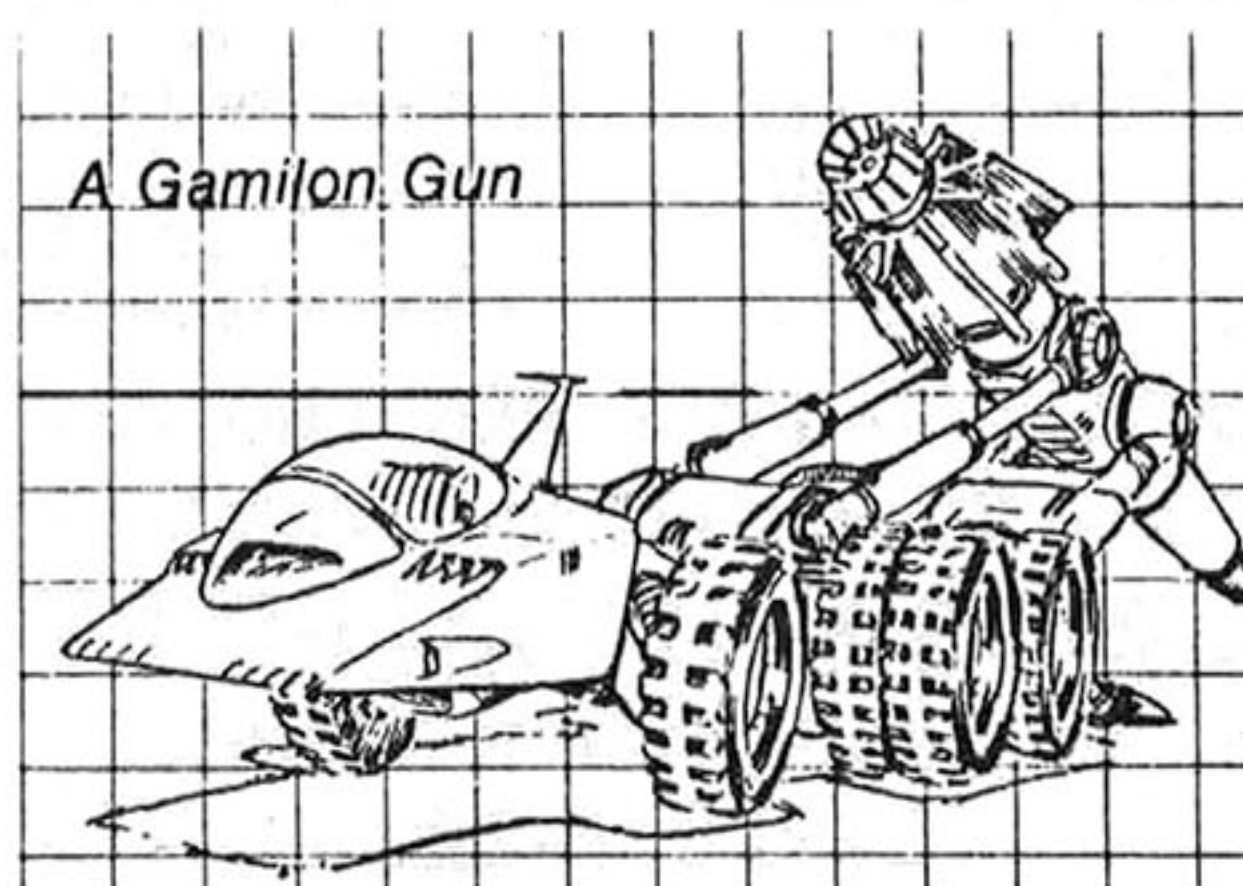
These are the first two of an intended series of five volumes, which will tell the complete story of the Yamato's journey to Iscandar — and back. The trip has to be accomplished in one year, and at the conclusion of each chapter, the number of possible days remaining is given. It's an effective device that maintains the story's suspense.

As with Japanese movies and TV cartoons, there is some bad "dubbing" in these issues. The word balloon placement, often confusing even in American comics, is even more confusing here; it is often difficult to tell which balloon to read first.

Long-time science-fiction fans are likely to be unimpressed by the science: The "wave motion engine" "compresses molecules into Takion particles which move faster than the speed of light . . . When they move, they pull the ship along with them." Assuming the writer meant to say "tachyon," the science is still, shall we say, questionable.

The reader is left in the dark as to why the alien forces would travel unspecified light years to turn Earth into a radioactive basketball — and why the Iscandar queen couldn't have sent the Cosmo DNA just as easily as she sent her sister, who died making the journey.

If you can't get past this sort of objection, you're probably not going to enjoy



© 1983 by Yoshinobu Nishizaki, West Cape Co., Ltd.

this set of five volumes. It's best taken unquestioningly and without looking for complex motivations in its characters.

It's also best taken without too demanding an examination of the proof-reading. The back cover copy tells of "young astronaut soldiers," and there are many cases in which the text is in error or ineffective.

That said, we should point out that America has an ever-growing audience for the Japanese series and comics. And these are *stunning* comics, with a color range beyond run-of-the-mill U.S. comics. What we have here are, after all, movie cels — and they successfully suggest the pleasures of watching the animated series: The raising of the ship from its grave in the long-scorched sea bottom, the spacewarp to Mars, and the farewell to the solar system are especially vivid.

Fans of nuts-and-bolts will be delighted by the extensive charts and diagrams of the hardware involved in the story. There are black-and-white pictures (labelled "Blue Prints") of everything from Alex Wildstar's gun to Gamilon High Speed Carrier Fighters. And there's a two-page diagram of the layout of the Yamato, to boot.

Ardith Carlton has called anime sets "the next best thing to owning your own copies of the movies." Certainly, if you have already enjoyed *Star Blazers* on TV, you'll want to grab these books.

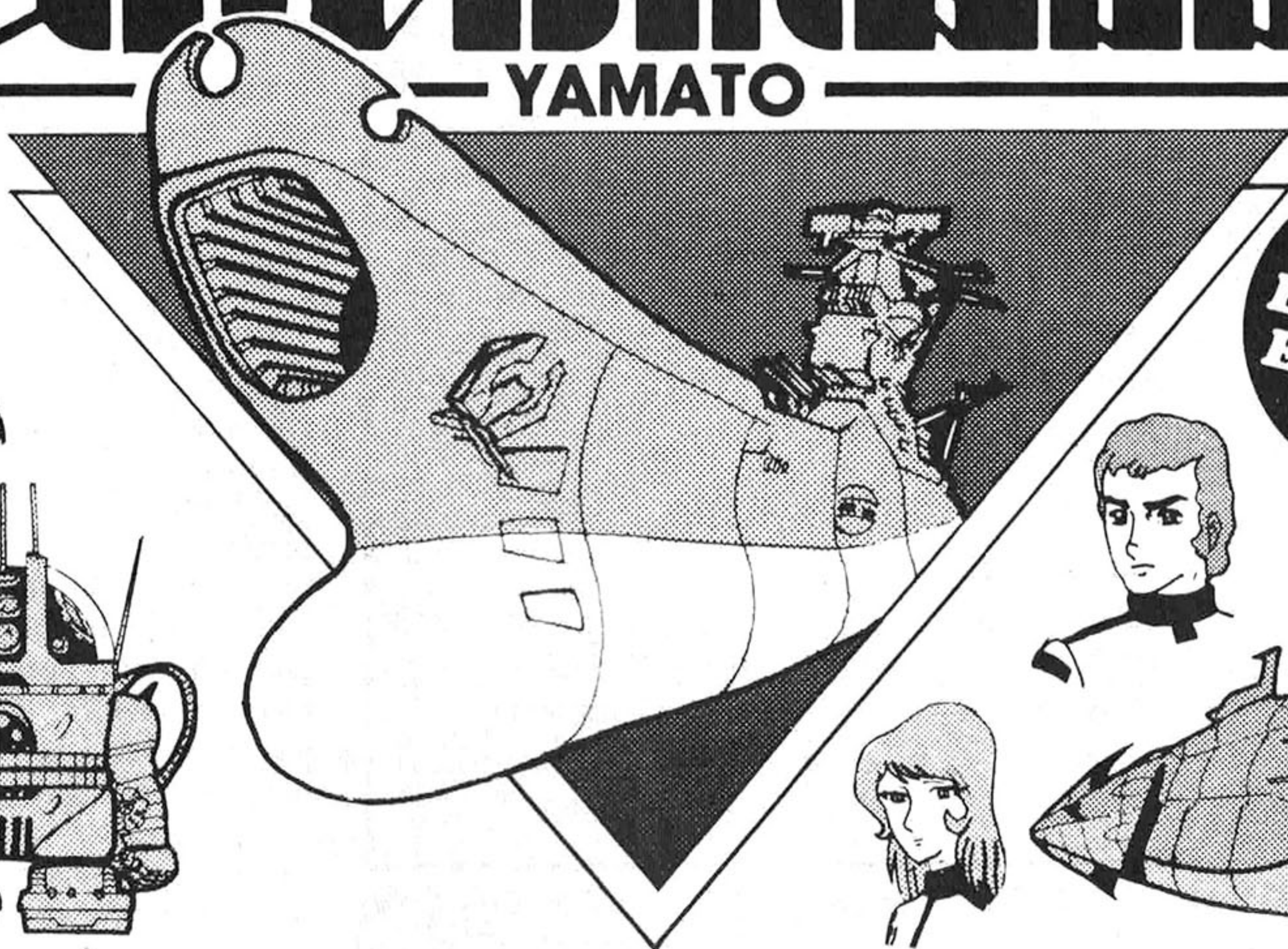
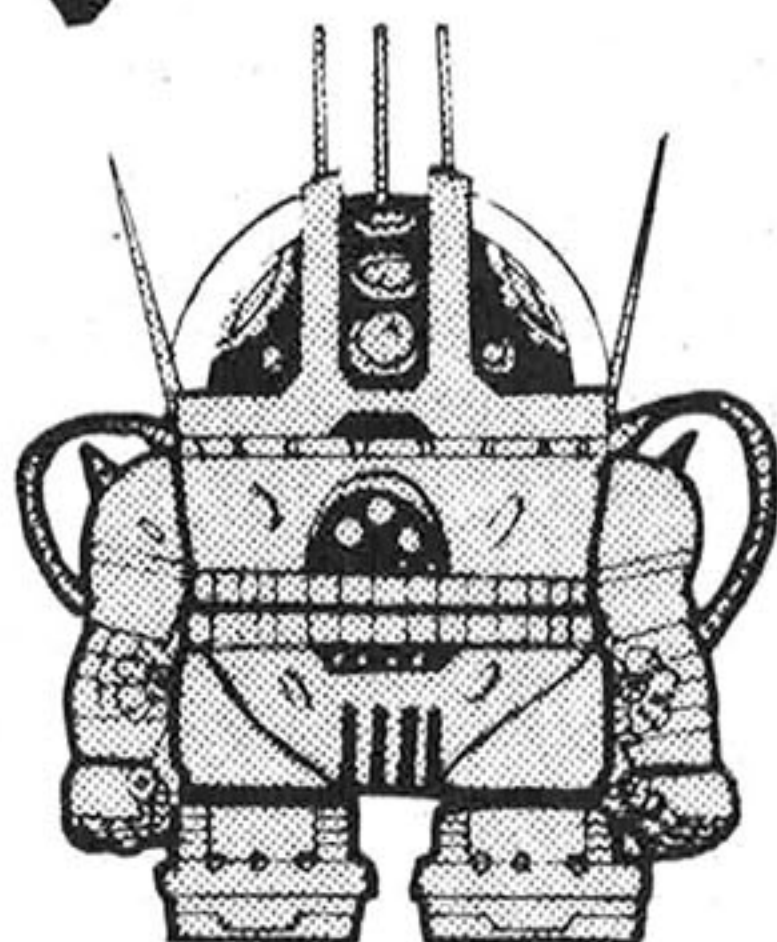
**Collecting Comic Books.** By Marcia Leiter. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983. \$8.95.

The press release for *Collecting Comic Books* calls it "the first 'how-to-get-started' guide on the topic." Indeed, while there have been "how to" publications — and portions of other books have been devoted to getting started with comics collecting — this is the first self-contained, widely available book that exists to initiate the beginner to comics.

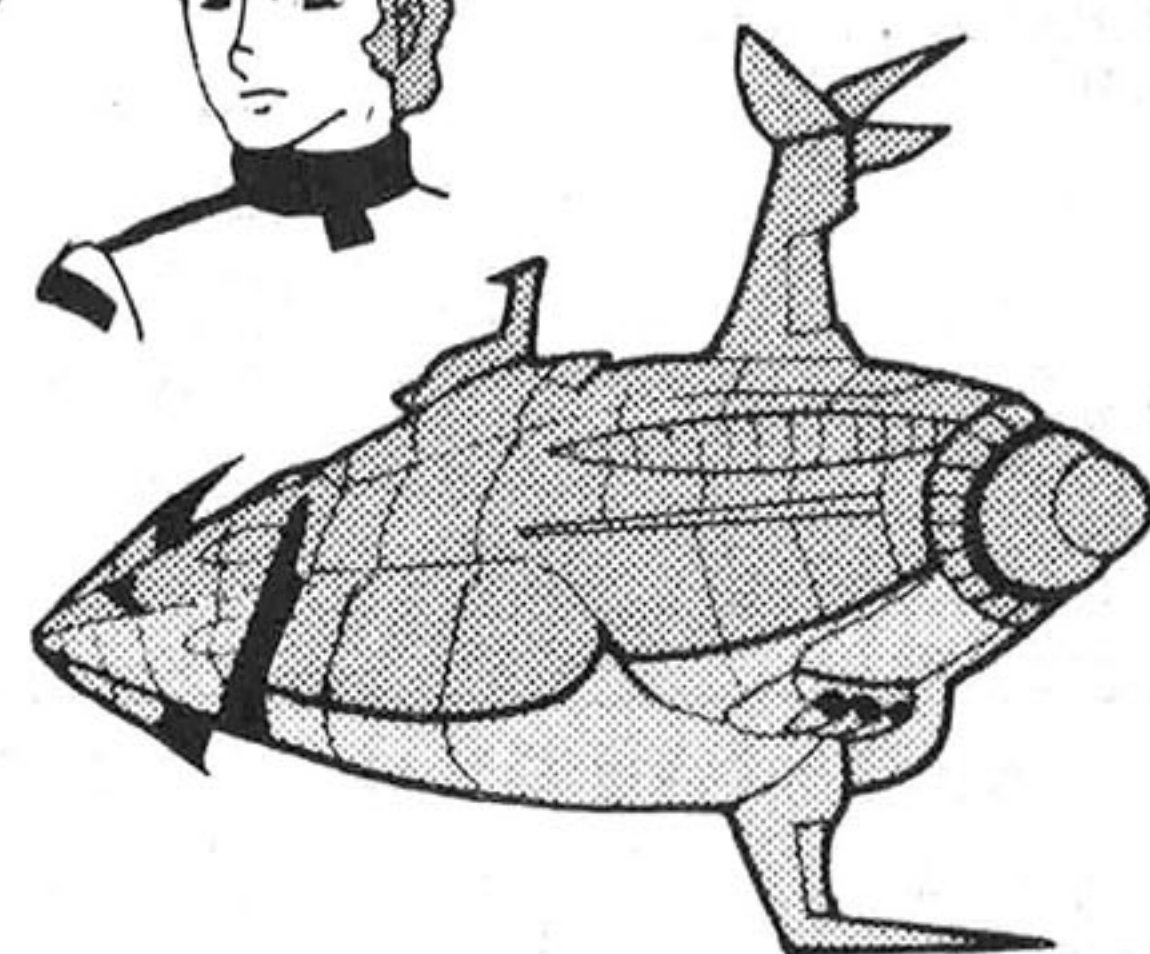
At least one distributor says he feels that the book is almost *too* basic — that someone who has been collecting comics long enough to be visiting a comics shop will already know what this book offers.



# ENTER THE WORLD OF **STAR BLAZERS** YAMATO

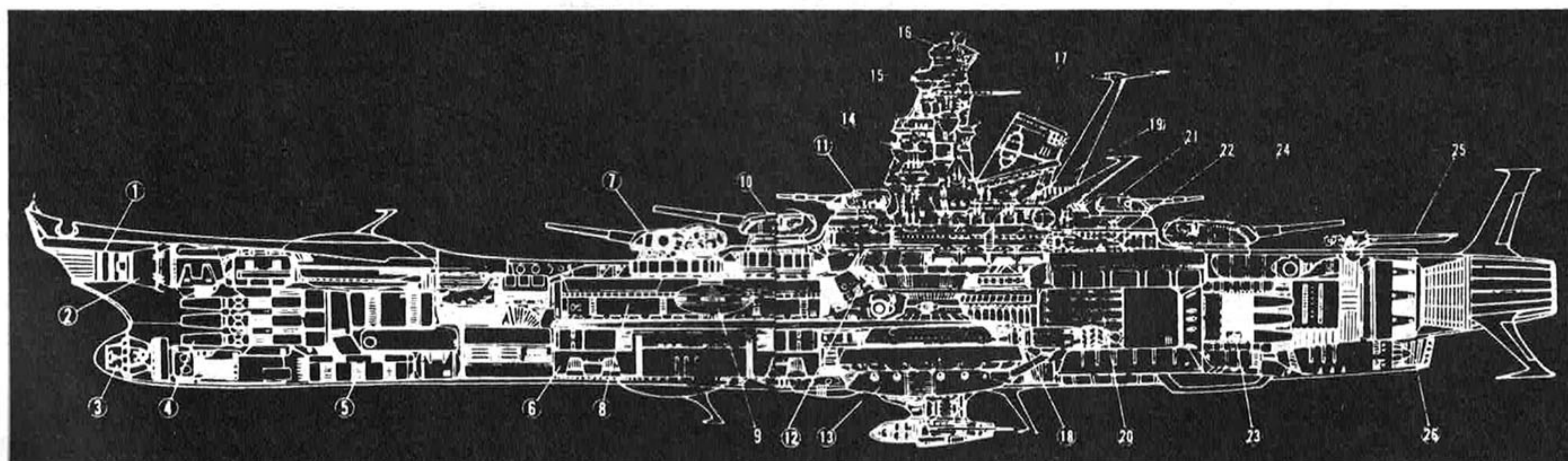


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# MANGA AND ANIME

## Japanese Comics and Animated Cartoons



寺沢武一

泣くのはよしなよ。ひととは涙を流すから悲しくなるのさ。なに：不幸だって！オイオイやめとけよ。太陽が輝く下に生きていて、二本の足があれば、人間はどこへでもいけるし、なんでもできる。おたくが不幸な環境にしがみついていること自体が、不運なのさ。運てのは自分自身、力づくで勝ちとるもんだ！え：その運てえのに負けたらどうするかって！！フフ：その時は笑ってこまかすさあ！！



寺沢武一  
1039

### By Ardith Carlton

More and more in recent years, the dewy-eyed damsels and unruly-haired heroes of Japanese animation have been finding their way to U.S. shores. And, while their adventures have had their stories watered down and bits of adult humor relegated to the cutting-room floor to make them more "suitable" for the kiddies of the North American con-

**Cobra Manga:** Space pirate Cobra has appeared in an animated movie, a TV series, and 13 manga paperbacks. The book-jacket photo is of Buichi Terasawa.

continent, the animation quality and shredded-but-still-superior stories have drawn increasing numbers of fans.

The ranks have swelled from the die-hard devotees of Sixties imports like *Astro Boy* (in Japan, *Mighty Atom*), *Kimba the White Lion* (*Jungle Emperor*) and *Giganto* (*Iron Man 28*), to people swept in by the latest wave of

transformed series such as *Star Blazers* (*Space Cruiser Yamato*), *Battle of the Planets* (*Science Ninja Team Gatchaman*), and *Thunderbirds 2086* (*Techno-boyger*).

But only a tiny fraction of available series and movies have been released in North America, and many fans in quest of more of the unique animation find



**Anime Comic Genma:** While riding a train, Joe recalls what happened earlier, when the mystic princess Luna and alien cyborg Bega pushed him to develop psychic powers so he could help them defend mankind from invading demons. Here are a cover and two-page spread from the five-volume Fujimi Comics anime adaptation of the hit 1983 movie *Genma Taisen* (also called *Harmagedon*).



themselves leaping the language barrier and looking to Japan.

*Anime* (the Japanese word for "animation" and pronounced ah-nee-may) can be seen on Japanese television every day — older programs are rerun during mornings and mid-afternoons, while early evening hours are reserved for first-run series, which usually air once a week. There are hundreds of *anime* series and movies, with dozens of new ones produced each year, covering countless subjects — from flat frogs to flying trains. But an even wider variety

of stories, as well as art styles, can be found in the pages that a hefty chunk of *anime* hails from — those of the *manga* ("comics").

*Manga* stories are usually serialized in weekly or monthly *manga* magazines, which sell by the millions for around 200 yen (about \$1) apiece. About 20 different serials are published together in some of the magazines, filling some volumes with nearly two inches' thickness of newsprint. Not only are they good bargains for a week's entertainment, but stacks of the *manga* magazines also

make great insulation during cold winter months!

The more popular *manga* serials are reprinted in paperback books of about 250 pages each. It takes a number of volumes to complete the story, usually at least three and sometimes more than 20 — a venerable baseball strip, Shinji Mizushima's *Dokaben*, has 48 volumes to its credit and is still going strong.

Different lines of *manga* paperbacks, with names like Sun Comics, Champion Comics, Power Comics, Princess Comics, and Flower and Dream Comics, are published by a variety of companies.

Like the *manga* magazines where their contents first appeared, millions of copies of a book may sell each year, and the best-selling *manga* series are kept perpetually in print. In Japanese bookstores where *tachi-yomi* ("standing and reading") is allowed, it can be next to impossible to make your way through the *manga* aisles — the crowd of *manga* readers, strong of leg and quick of grab, often carpets the entire space between aisles and at times may threaten to spill out the door.

Those *manga* serials with the largest following usually become candidates for animation. Some, like Tetsuya Chiba and Asao Takamori's boxing saga *Tomorrow's Joe* and Akira Toriyama's hit comedy *Dr. Slump*, have appeared as *anime* and *manga* at the same time. But an increasingly important factor these days is merchandising possibilities — when Mitsuteru Yokoyama's SF *manga* epic *Mars* hit the airwaves four years later as the TV series *God Mars*, any similarities between the *anime* version and the original *manga* seemed

***But only a tiny fraction of available series and movies have been released in North America, and many fans in quest of more of the unique animation find themselves leaping the language barrier and looking to Japan.***



purely accidental. But the newly added ranks of giant robots and characters lent themselves with calculated perfection to successful lines of goods, from models and toys to rice bowls and bicycles.

It seems that just about anything that will hold still long enough to have a logo or major character's likeness slapped on it can be sold. An especially maniacal fan of Reiji Matsumoto's *Space Pirate Captain Harlock* can dress in a T-shirt, shorts, and sandals plastered with Harlock's one-eyed smirk, keep money in his Harlock wallet, ride the train using his Harlock pass case, write in Harlock notebooks with Harlock pencils kept in his Harlock pencilcase at school, come home and eat dinner from his Harlock dishes with his Harlock chopsticks, then have a Harlock lollipop for dessert. And then there are the pajamas!

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***It seems that just about anything that will hold still long enough to have a logo or major character's likeness slapped on it can be sold.***

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Of course, none of this could have come about if *manga* and *anime* didn't enjoy the massive popularity with the Japanese public that they do. The storytelling in some *manga* have transformed them into novels of epic proportions told through comic art, and the motion, music, and voice actors of *anime* bring the stories even further to life. There is seemingly something for everyone, and favorites in Japan, past and present, cover a vast assortment of subjects.

North American fans of the Japanese genre are most familiar with the science fiction and fantasy series, along with the angle in *anime* most associated with the Japanese — giant robots. But, contrary to the impression the imported "Shogun Warrior" toys of a few years back gave to people on this side of the ocean, giant robots aren't just hunks of tin cavorting about and stomping on silly monsters — the people operating the robots are what is important to the story. In recent years, mighty robots used to project justice, save mankind, and perform other heroic acrobatics have been appearing less and less often. The new trend has been towards robots which function as battle weapons that the heroes just happen to use. This trend stems back to

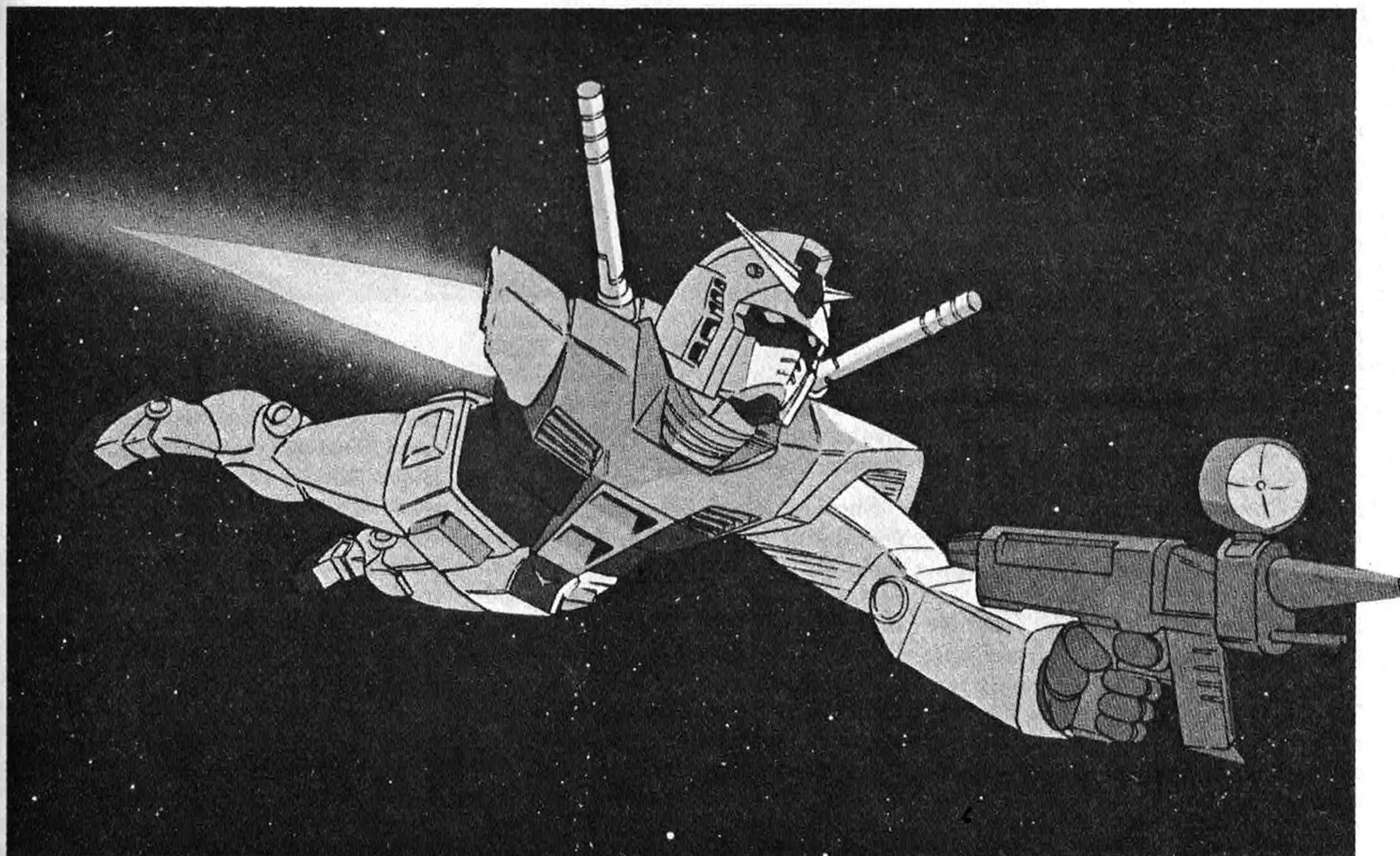
the success of an *anime* series of 1979, *Mobile Suit Gundam*.

Animated by Nippon Sunrise and named for the experimental battle-suit piloted by hero Amuro Rei, *Mobile Suit Gundam* revolved around the war between the rebellious Earth colony Jion and the young survivors of a destroyed colony which had been loyal to Earth. While struggling to prevent the Zabi family and its Jion forces from overcoming Earth, Amuro and some of his comrades discovered that they had "New Type" (a kind of extra-sensory perception) abilities. Between the New Types and some politically prompted sabotage in the form of Jion Major Char Aznable, who was bent on bumping off the Zabi family, Earth managed to win the war.

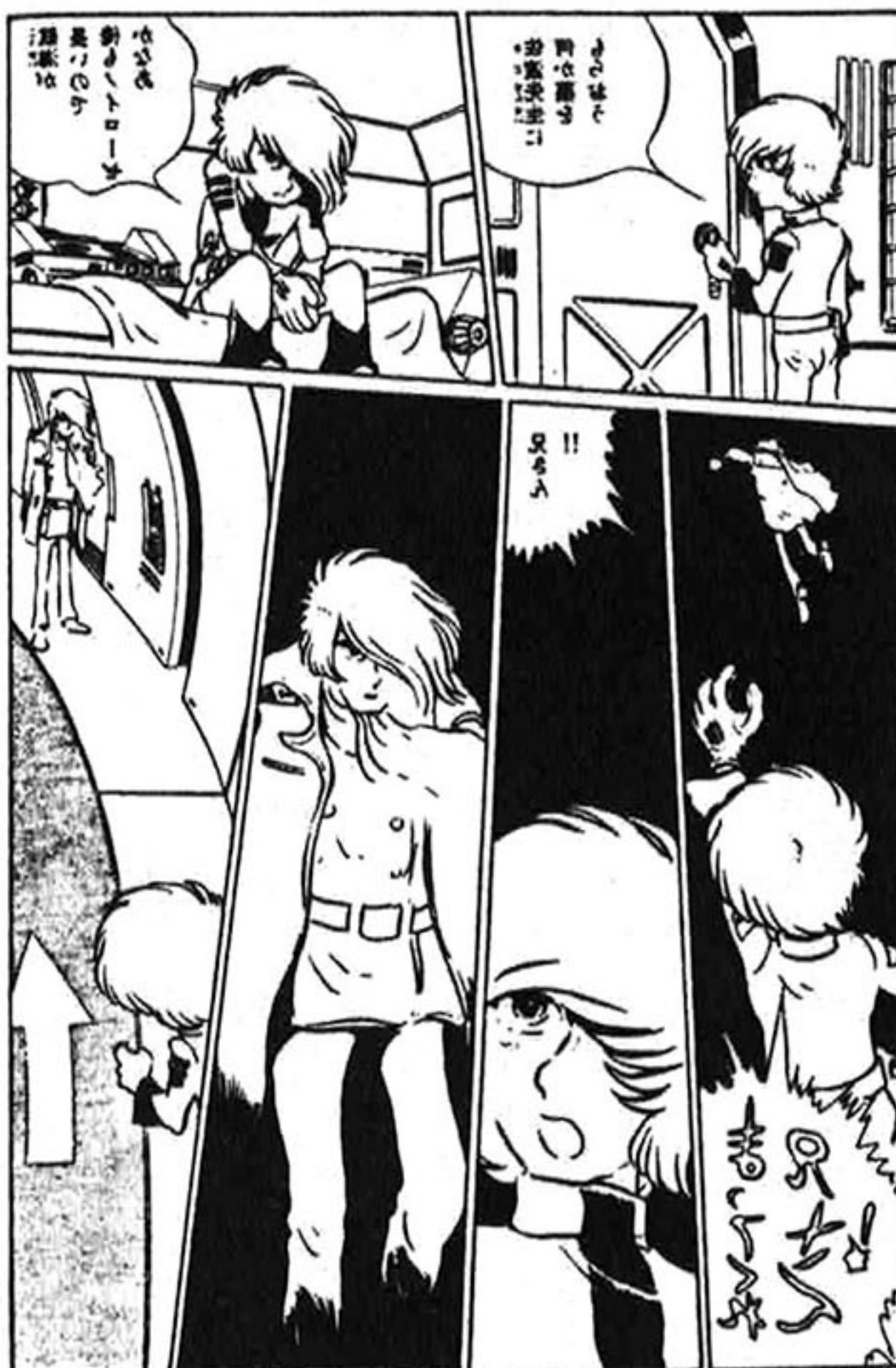
The technological detail in the robotics and orbiting space colonies were a rarity at the time *Gundam* was done and earned the series a sizable share of its following, as did the intricate and skillfully spun subplots. The 43 episodes of the series were condensed (and some new animation and music was added) to create three feature-length films, which did well at the box office when they were released in 1980, 1981, and 1982.

While many *anime* series get their

***Gundam:*** The battered Gundam is sent into its final battle, as the bloody war between Earth and its renegade colony Jion comes to a close. *Mobile Suit Gundam* has been acclaimed for its technological detail and helped bring about a new breed of giant robot character.







**Yamato Manga:** In Reiji Matsumoto's original manga version of *Space Cruiser Yamato*, an apparition of Susumu Kodai's older brother appears and warns the young captain-to-be to stop Yamato's Earth-saving voyage to planet Iskandar. (Note: The Japanese pages have been flopped for better reader comprehension.)

start as *manga*, *Gundam* did the opposite, appearing in the monthly *manga* magazine *Boken O* (Adventure King) in a serial drawn by Yu Okazaki after the series had begun airing. It was later reprinted as a two-volume *manga* paperback set of *Mobile Suit Gundam* Sunday comics, published by Akita Shoten.

A few years earlier, *Space Cruiser Yamato* (seen in North America and in a number of countries around the world as *Star Blazers*) spurred Japan's *anime* boom of the late Seventies. The saga of the Japanese World War II battleship being reborn as a spaceship and saving the world of 2199 from the radiation and general nastiness of the alien Gamilas race wasn't particularly successful when it first aired as a series in 1974 but, when a feature pieced together from the 26 episodes was released in 1977, *Yamato*-mania suddenly swept Japan.

Two series and four movie sequels have followed, including two finales to the epic which have turned out to just be alternative endings to the story, culminating in the March 1983 film *Space Cruiser Yamato — The Concluding Chapter* (also billed in English as *Final Yamato*), that *Yamato*'s producer Yoshinobu Nishizaki swears is the real ending. However, both a feature and a series dealing with Gamilas villain leader Desslar, tentatively titled *King of Desslar*, are being planned for late 1984, so the story may continue without

*Yamato* herself for some time.

Like *Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Yamato*'s *manga* adventures began after the *anime* version had appeared. No less than 17 paperback volumes of *manga* have been reprinted since then. Three of those were drawn by co-creator Reiji Matsumoto, and that *Yamato* set was published by Akita Shoten as Sunday Comics. The other 14 books form a 2926-page adaptation of the *Yamato* saga in Sun Comics, published by Asahi Sonorama. Akira Hio drew *Space Cruiser Yamato* (three volumes), *Arrivederci Yamato* (three volumes), *Yamato — The New Journey* (two volumes), *Be Forever Yamato* (two volumes), and *Yamato — The Concluding Chapter* (two volumes), while R. Masuo was responsible for the two volumes of *Yamato III*. (You'll find a more extensive examination of the *Yamato* saga in *Comics Collector* #3.)

Shotaro Ishimori's *manga* *Cyborg 009*, dating back to 1964, dealt with a team of nine super-cyborgs and their battles against not only crime, mad bad-dies, and odd things in general, but also their own individual pain, resentment, and embarrassment at being separated from the rest of the human race. Kidnapped from all over the world (007 was from Great Britain, of course), the nine were rebuilt as cyborgs to be the flunkies of The Black Ghost. But under the leadership of 009 (originally a blond

half-Japanese named Joe Shimamura), the Cyborgs and their designer, Dr. Gilmore, rebel and eventually squelch The Black Ghost's plans to take over the world. The Cyborgs' assorted and often sordid adventures span 15 volumes of *Cyborg 009* Sunday Comics published by Akita Shoten and a dozen *Cyborg 009 Series* volumes of Shonen Sunday Comics from the Shogakukan publishing house.

The hefty animation history of *Cyborg 009* began with two features done by Toei Doga in 1966, *Cyborg 009* and *Cyborg 009 — Monster War*. A black-and-white series followed in 1968. In 1979 the Cyborgs were revived in





# AL YAMATO



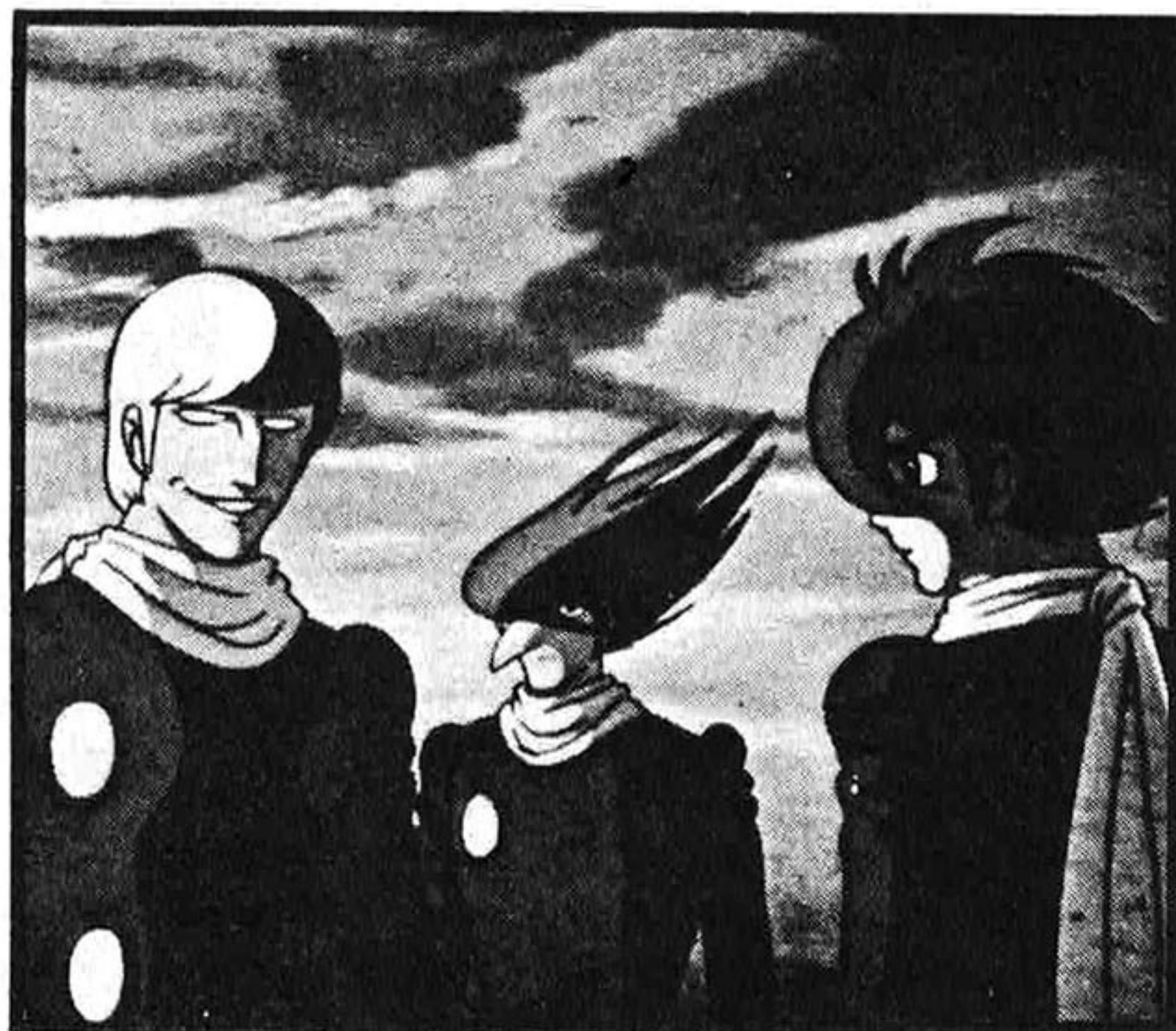
color by Toei Doga and Nippon Sunrise for a year-long series. Toei Doga's 1981 feature *Cyborg 009 — The Legend of Super Galaxy* was the Cyborgs' last appearance, but if their past track record and continuing popularity are any indication, it may not be long until they return.

A cyborg of a different sort is the star of Buichi Terasawa's manga *Space Adventure Cobra*. When a few too many enemies for comfort were hot on his heels, the space outlaw Cobra hid in plain sight by having his face and hair changed and getting a partial memory wipe. The memories of his past returned when the thoroughly unpleasant Pirate

**Yamato Anime:** After a decade of voyages through galactic seas, the space-soaring battleship Yamato finally met her end in the 1983 feature film *Space Cruiser Yamato — The Concluding Chapter*, also known as *Final Yamato*. An earlier film, 1978's *Arrivederci Yamato*, was screened at the 1983 World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore for an estimated crowd of 500, while thousands more are familiar with the saga's English-dubbed version, *Star Blazers*.

**Even though his left arm is a bionically attached "Psycho Gun" from the elbow down, capable of sizzling holes through people if the thought crosses Cobra's mind, trouble doesn't take the hint and keeps Cobra occupied with plenty of disgustingly evil beings and scantily clad women wherever he goes.**





パラボラアンテナ  
指向性の極端に強い極短波の送受信に使用  
と、衛星間通信に使われるパラボラアンテナ群  
がある。

**Cyborg 009 Anime:** Cyborgs 004, 002, and 009, along with the rest of the Cyborg soldiers, have gained a following in the States since a subtitled version of the 1979 color series was broadcast in New York and New Jersey by a Japanese-language television station.

Guild finally hunted him down three years later, and Cobra and his shapely Armoroid companion lady leapt back into the fray. Even though his left arm is a bionically attached "Psycho Gun" from the elbow down, capable of sizzling holes through people if the thought crosses Cobra's mind, trouble doesn't take the hint and keeps Cobra occupied with plenty of disgustingly evil beings and scantily clad women wherever he goes.

Since the debut of *Space Adventure Cobra* in the pages of the weekly manga magazine *Shonen Jump* in 1979, the serial has filled 13 volumes of Jump Comics paperbacks (published by Shueisha) and is continuing. A 3-D feature was animated by Tokyo Movie Shinsha and released during the summer of 1982, and the following October a 31-episode series, also done by Tokyo Movie Shinsha, began airplay under the slightly shortened title *Space Cobra*.

A recent addition to the mounds of manga is Tsuguo Okazaki's *Justy*. The story follows Cosmo Policeman Justy Kaizahd and his obnoxious partner Bolba Cicren in their assignment to hunt down throughout the galaxy and "liquidate" murderous criminals with extrasensory perception. With them on the force are the team's mascot Astaris, a girl who has the mind of a 5-year-old but whose body sprang to maturity in the shock of seeing Justy liquidate her Criminal ESPer father. (Justy's "older sister" Jelna desires him but can't do a thing, since he thinks he's her younger brother.)

Justy himself lives in quietly contented ignorance of the childhood he

forgot when his ESPer powers asserted themselves but has just made the rather unsettling discovery that he's immortal. Will the next Criminal ESPer find a way to do Justy in? Will Jelna ever get more than the usual good-night kiss from him? And will Bolba make one wise-crack too many, and get kicked out of the story by popular demand? Volume 3 may hold the answers — it has just been published by Shogakukan's Shonen Sunday Comics.

The story has not yet been animated, but *Justy's* popularity is growing, both in Japan and among manga collectors in North America.

*Devilman*, by Go Nagai and his Dynamic Pro Studio, is considered by many to be a manga masterpiece, and to this day a Devilman Fan Club still operates in Japan. It is difficult to fit *Devilman* into a specific classification — gore practically drips from the pages, but what at first glance would appear to be a horror or doomsday story all boils down to a tale of friendship. Young Ryo Asuka convinced his best friend, notorious coward and crybaby Akira Fudo, to let the demon Amon enter his body. Akira became Devilman — able to change to Amon's form at will, while keeping his own human compassion — and fought to protect mankind from the increasing threat of bloodthirsty demons. But Ryo soon discovered that he himself was Satan, and had to fight Akira to the death in the battle which became Armageddon. The story was published in five volumes, with a one-book sequel *New Devilman* by Kodansha's Kodansha Comics line.

*Devilman* was animated by Toei Doga

**Gore practically drips from the pages, but what at first glance would appear to be a horror or doomsday story all boils down to a tale of friendship.**

in 1972, minus Ryo and the plot of the manga, as a weekly monster shred-fest aimed at the wild kiddie crowd. Insult was added to injury with a final appearance in a 1973 Toei Doga feature, the mostly mindless *Mazinger Z vs. Devilman*.

With a history as long and lyrical as Japan's, the past holds just as many possibilities for stories as the future does. Two examples are Sanpei Shirato's *The Life of Kamui* and Osamu Tezuka's *Dororo*. Although *The Life of Kamui* first appeared as manga in 1964 and predated *Dororo* by a few years, both were animated (under the titles *The Biography of Ninja Kamui* and *Dororo and Hyakkimaru*), and the two 26-episode series were even broadcast on the same nights from April to September of 1969. In addition, both took place in feudal Japan — but there the similarities ended.

As with some of his earlier manga works (like *Ninja Bugeicho* and *Sasuke*), Shirato set *The Life of Kamui* in a harsh world of suffering. Samurai, near the top of the social order, kept lowly villagers in torment. But Kamui, a misfit shunned since his youngest days, raised himself to be a ninja and gave the samurai back a bit of what they'd been dishing out for so long.

*The Life of Kamui* filled 21 paperback volumes, most recently reprinted as Golden Comics by Shogakukan. A companion series, *The Biography of Kamui*, detailed early adventures of the ninja's life, and scattered chapters have appeared from 1965 to 1983 — enough to make up a six-book set of Big Comics, also published by Shogakukan. And work has just begun on a highly touted feature-length animated film, *The Sword of Kamui*, a mere 20 years after *Kamui* first saw print.

In contrast to the bleak setting of *Kamui*, Osamu Tezuka's *Dororo* took place in a Japan alive with the magic of gods and demons. But the magic often worked against men, and hero Hyakkimaru was a case in point. When he was born, his father cut off the baby's ears,



nose, eyes, and limbs, sacrificing them to 48 demons for power and setting what was left of the baby adrift in a stream. Hyakkimaru was found and raised by a woodcutter, who fitted him with wooden parts. After the blind swordmaster, Hoshi, helped him sharpen his fighting skills, Hyakkimaru began his quest: For each of the demons he killed, a part of his real body would grow back. His bratty young sidekick Dororo was usually more hindrance than help, but by the saga's end Japan had a few less demons to worry about, and Hyakkimaru was whole once more.

*Dororo* debuted as *manga* at about the same time the animated series was being broadcast and appeared until 1972. Four volumes of *Dororo* Sunday Comics have been published by Akita Shoten.

Modern-day sports stories are among the most dramatic of the Japanese genre. Tales are never told from the grandstand — the audience is bonded to the heroes or heroines and experiences their strains of training, pains of discipline, and drains from constant competition. Sporting contests can be fun, an outlet for anger or guilt, an arena for full-scale combat and revenge, or a way to prove one's worth.

Nearly every sport imaginable has been featured in *manga*, and some of the most popular stories have also been animated. Sumika Yamamoto's 1973 *manga* *Aim for the Ace*, which chronicled the career of Hiromi Oka in women's tennis competition, was animated as a series by Tokyo Movie during the same year and was revived as a movie in 1979 by Tokyo Movie Shinsha. *Tiger Mask*, a pro-wrestling tale drawn by Naoki Tsuji and scripted by Ikki Kajiwara, filled 14 volumes of Kodansha Comics paperbacks and inspired two series done more than a decade apart, *Tiger Mask* in 1969 and *Tiger Mask the Second* in 1981, both animated by Toei Doga.

Ikki Kajiwara also scripted what may be the most popular sports saga of all time in Japan, *Star of the Giants*. With art by Noboru Kawasaki, *Star of the Giants* began as *manga* in 1966, and followed Hyuma Hoshi on the long and perilous path to becoming a professional baseball pitcher, from his boyhood training and school career to finally

**God Mars:** The only thing the Tokyo Movie Shinsha series *God Mars* shared with its original *manga* version, *Mars*, was a hero with a fierce forelock whose robot happened to be an anti-proton bomb designed to destroy the world. While *God Mars'* new characters and robots were tailor-made for merchandising the show, they also helped make it one of the biggest hits of 1982, complete with 64 episodes and a feature film.

Summer 1984



**Cyborg 009 Galaxy:** Cyborg 009 and his comrades leave Earth to save ethereal Queen Tamara and to brave the deadly Dugas Corps in the 1981 Toei Doga feature film *Cyborg 009 — The Legend of Super Galaxy*.

being signed by the top team in Japan, the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants and competing against the team his father was coaching, the Chunichi Dragons. The *manga* ended in 1971 when an arm injury forced Hyuma's retirement, but a legacy of 19 volumes of Kodansha Comics and three anime series — Tokyo Movie's *Star of the Giants* in 1968 and 1977's *New Star of the Giants* and *New Star of the Giants II* in 1979, both by

(Continued on Page 89)





## MANGA

(Continued from Page 73)

Tokyo Movie Shinsha — keeps the story fresh in fans' memories.

One of the most powerful of all sports dramas was *Tomorrow's Joe*, a creation of artist Tetsuya Chiba and author Asao Takamori. Joe Yabuki, a homeless young hell-raiser, meets up with Dampai Tange, an old drunkard who'd given up on being a boxing trainer until he came across Joe. The two became the terror of Japanese boxing circles, and Joe worked his way up through the ranks until he got his chance to fight a rival from his prison days, Toru Rikiishi. Rikiishi went down two weight classes to box the bantamweight Yabuki and, between that and a blow to his temple, he died in the ring. Joe went into a deep depression but after a year of soul-searching he launched a comeback. Finally earning a fight with World Bantamweight Champion Jose Mendoza, Joe repaid his debt to Rikiishi with his own death in the ring.

The original *manga* of *Tomorrow's Joe* ran from 1968 until 1973 and was reprinted in 20 volumes of Kodansha Comics. The first half of the *manga* saga was animated as a 79-episode *Tomorrow's Joe* series by Mushi Pro in 1970 and, 10 years later, a movie condensed from the series was a huge hit. Tokyo Movie Shinsha picked up the cue and animated the remainder of the story in *Tomorrow's Joe 2*, a 47-episode series, in 1980. A movie condensation of the second series was released to theaters in 1981.

For every serious serial, there seem to be five humorous ones. There are comedies for all ages, from simple gags strung together to school life and boy-meets-girl (and vice versa and often going a bit beyond that) comedies to adventures bristling with one-liners.

Young children adore *Doraemon*, the blue robot-cat creation of two artists who sign themselves "Fujiko Fujio." *Doraemon* has a pouchful of whimsical gadgets which are always good for a gag or two — face erasers, pencils which know the answers to written tests, and live pogo sticks. There's also practically no escape from him — besides about 25 volumes of *Doraemon* Tentomushi Comics (published by Shogakukan), episodes of Cine Doga's *anime* version have aired weekly since April 1979, at least four Cine Doga-animated theatrical features have been released, and in many Japanese stores *Doraemon*'s roly-poly figure decorates signs designed to attract the attention of children.

Kermit the Frog may be big in Japan,

but the top frog to many is still Pyonkichi the Flat Frog, hero of Yasumi Yoshizawa's ever-popular *manga* *Pervert Frog*. Pyonkichi used to be a happy, normal frog, until a boy named Hiroshi tried to catch him. Hiroshi tripped during the chase and ended up with Pyonkichi permanently plastered on the front of his shirt. Hiroshi wears the shirt every day to keep the flattened frog happy, and Pyonkichi takes advantage of the situation by getting Hiroshi into trouble every other panel by insulting people, eating things, or lifting girls' skirts.

The *manga* adventures of the boy and his frog began in 1971 and still appear every so often — three volumes of *Pervert Frog* Shueisha Manga Bunko paperbacks have been published by Shueisha. A *Pervert Frog* series was animated by Tokyo Movie in 1972, and a second series, Tokyo Movie Shinsha's *New Pervert Frog*, kicked off a *Pervert Frog* revival in 1981.

*Dr. Slump* is a phenomenon that has lasted for four years and shows no signs of slowing down as it enters its fifth. Akira Toriyama's gag *manga* follows the misadventures of inventor Sembei Norimaki, the self-styled "Dr. Slump," and his various silly creations that wreak havoc on the equally silly denizens of Penguin Village. The star is Sembei's masterpiece, a bespectacled little girl android named Arale, who is a rabid fan of Ultraman and Godzilla, loves to make things go "boom," and is the strongest thing on Earth and a few other worlds.

Nothing is safe from parody in the pages of *Dr. Slump*. Japanese movie monsters, *anime* institutions like *Mighty Atom* and *Iron Man 28*, and even such American imports as Superman, Batman, *Star Wars*, and Clint Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" character appear regularly in various ridiculous incarnations. *Dr. Slump* has even added a word to the proper-greeting-conscious Japanese language: *Ohakonbanchiwa*, an all-purpose combination of *ohayo gozaimasu* ("good morning"), *konni-chiwa* ("good afternoon"), and *konbanwa* ("good evening").

*Dr. Slump* hit the airwaves in April 1981 as a Toei Doga-animated series, and more than 140 episodes have been broadcast to date. Three theatrical features have done fairly well at the box office, and all manner of *Dr. Slump* merchandise spurs its popularity even further. Besides innumerable records, toys, boxes of candy, and video games, its continuous run since January 1980 in the weekly *Shonen Jump* *manga*

magazine has been reprinted in 11 volumes of *Dr. Slump* Jump Comics, with a 12th book on the way. With its nonsensical humor for all ages, *Dr. Slump* is one of the biggest — and certainly one of the most profitable — comedy hits in comics history.

An increasing share of the *manga* being produced are "high school comedies," which usually feature school life and generally rambunctious behavior — things the highly pressured students of today's Japanese middle and high schools would no doubt like to do, if they could only get away with it. The *manga* are rowdy and risqué and anything goes — even sex, although simple suggestion is substituted for all-out action.



*Urusei Yatsura Anime:* In a scene from the first episode of the *Urusei Yatsura* series, alien Lum gives Ataru a taste of her electrifying personality.

*Urusei Yatsura* is by far the most popular of the current high school comedies. In this fast-paced mixture of fantasy and frustration, an otherworldly (heavy on the "worldly") minx named Lum attached herself to hapless hero Ataru Moroboshi, who could neither get rid of her nor explain the predicament to his ex-girlfriend Shinobu. Ataru was constantly on the receiving end when Lum's short temper erupts into alien outbursts of electrical shocks and lightning storms, and things got no better when Lum's friends and family came to Earth to support her in her choice of Ataru as a mate, or when she enrolled in the same school as Ataru and Shinobu.

Kitty Enterprises's *anime* version has just passed the 100-episode milestone in



its broadcast career, and plans are progressing on a second movie to follow up the highly successful feature of early 1983, *Urusei Yatsura — Only You*. Rumiko Takahashi's original *manga* appears weekly in the *Shonen Sunday* *manga* magazine, and 17 *Shonen Sunday* Comics paperbacks have already been spawned. Shogakukan has even printed two *Urusei Yatsura manga* books in English. Designed to help Japanese students in their study of the English language, the books are being snatched up by North American collectors for a slightly different reason!

The popularity of the adventure-comedy *Lupin the Third* has become almost as widely spread as the locations of the star's international capers. The creation of an artist known simply as Monkey Punch (with a bit of an assist from the Arsene Lupin stories by French author Maurice Leblanc), chic thief Lupin's life is one of glamour, thrills, car chases, and crazy color combinations as he skips around the globe in search of nifties to lift. His companions are two Japanese gentlemen from different ends of the cultural spectrum — Daisuke Jigen, who styles himself after the storied Chicago gangster gunmen, and Goemon Ishikawa, the kimono-clad 13th-generation master swordsman of his family line. Just one step behind the trio is Police Inspector Zenigata, seemingly Wile E. Coyote's first cousin, whose sole mission in life is to arrest Lupin. Lupin's own goal is Fujiko Mine, an elusive brunette who acts as both friend and foe — whichever it is the most profitable to be at the time. Their highly detailed exploits have been published in two sets of *manga* books — 21 volumes of *Lupin the Third* in 100-Ten Land Comics and at least 15 volumes of *New Lupin the Third* in Power Comics, both lines published by Futabasha.

*Lupin the Third* was first animated as a 26-episode series by Tokyo Movie in 1971 but didn't really take off until Tokyo Movie Shinsha did a second series in 1977 — a series which went on to last three years and 155 episodes. During its run, two *Lupin* films were released. The first, 1978's *Lupin the Third*, was dubbed into English and is known in the U.S. as *Mystery of Mamo*. The second, *Lupin the Third — Cagliostro Castle*, was released in 1979 and to this day is acclaimed as one of the greatest animated movies ever made. A subtitled version played to rave reviews at the Cannes Film Festival in 1980 and was one of the features at the 1983 World Animation Festival. Sadly, the film has not yet found a distributor for

North American release, although the new commercial laser-disk video game "Cliffhanger" which is now in arcades in the States is made up entirely of scenes from the two *Lupin* films.

*Lupin the Third* has inspired a space-age sequel which aired in France, *Lupin the Eighth*, and the latest news from Japan is that Tokyo Movie Shinsha is gearing up to start production on a new *Lupin the Third* series in April for broadcast in Japan beginning in October 1984.

The outstanding musical scores of most series and movies should be mentioned here. They are just as important a part of *anime* as the stories and animation work and, quite naturally, are released on records. Theme-song singles are chart-toppers, and background scores (known in *anime* parlance as "BGM," BackGround Music) and their symphonic, synthesizer, and choral variations sell as albums. Accomplished musicians such as Hiroshi Miyagawa (formerly a composer of themes for the twirling turtle-monster Gamera, now famed world-wide for his *Space Cruiser Yamato* scores) and Kentaro Haneda (with at least four series' theme songs and BGM and co-creation of a movie score to his credit in the last two years) have found their niche in the industry and have a devoted following. So do popular anime tune crooners like Isao Sasaki (*Space Cruiser Yamato*, *Science Ninja Team Gatchaman*, *Galaxy Express 999*), Ichiro Mizuki (*Captain Harlock*, *Mazinger Z*, *Eternal Orbit SSX*), and "Mio" (*Combat Mecha Xabungle*, *Aura Battler Dunbine*).

Books are also a big source of income for the *anime* and *manga* industry. *Anime* comics — glorified photo-novels, stills from *anime* movies and series episodes with speech balloons and sound effects superimposed over the top — are among the most popular types available. Not only do they use the exact dialogue from the *anime* they're recreating, but at times they show the most minute of details in motion.

Several different companies cater to the *anime* craze by publishing highly detailed magazine-sized softcover books which are packed with pages of story details, reproductions of animators' character and mechanical design sheets, staff interviews, and beautiful color photos. Many *anime* movies and series can boast of at least one.

Tokuma Shoten's "Roman Albums" are some of the best in the field. 58 different volumes have been published to date, each on a different *anime* production. While some are out of print now,

every so often they turn up for sale among stateside collectors or in Japanese used-book shops. The closest rivals of the Roman Albums are Shogakukan's recent "This is Animation" series, with three books covering the history of popular Japanese *anime*, a hefty 1983 update volume, and separate volumes on recent hit series like *Macross*, *Orguss*, *Yamato*, and *Esteban*. Other good books of this type are Futabasha's "100-Ten Land" books and Shueisha's "Roadshow Special Editions." The prices of these books range from 480 to 1200 yen apiece, with the "This Is Animation" 1983 update book weighing in at 1800 yen.

Keibunsha Daihyakka books have just as much information in them but are aimed at children and worded simply — a boon for novice Japanese-to-English dictionary jockeys on this side of the ocean. Squat little volumes published by Keibunsha, their 350-or-so pages are crammed with facts, drawings, and some color photos. Of the 151 published to date, more than half are devoted to *anime* and *manga*, and list for 600-650 yen apiece.

Although actual animation cels are made available by studios and can also be found at *anime* festivals and conventions, demand has conspired against many a collector who wanted cels of major scenes and characters. However, the publishing house Shonen Gahosha has eased their anguish a bit by printing "Animation Cel Collections" for movies — volumes with 12 full-color cel reproductions and the movie's story told with color stills on the reverse side of each background. Collections have been published for hit films like *Adieu Galaxy Express 999*, *Arrivederci Yamato*, *Be Forever Yamato*, *Mobile Suit Gundam*, and *Arcadia of My Youth* and usually list for 1200 yen each.

True, *manga* and *anime* and their books and magazines are in Japanese, but don't let that scare you away — the pictures are in a language that everyone can understand. If you find the stylistic art intriguing, are fascinated by some of the characters or robots, or are searching for exciting epics spun from unique angles, you've found the right place — and you're not alone!

