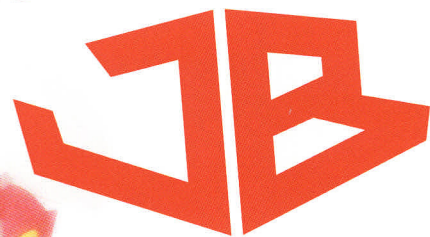




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Los Angeles. Christmas 1973.

That was when I was first exposed to toys from Japan. My aunt and her family who were stationed at a military base in Japan, sent a huge box of toys to me for Christmas. One by one, I opened figures that just blew me away. I had no idea what the names of them were, but I knew these were cool toys. I'd call them seaweed guy (Zazon, from Return of Ultraman) or lion man (Lionmaru) or green guy with star on his head (Mirrorman).

Unfortunately, that would be the last time a package like that would show up, as my aunt and her family returned to the US.

I would start my collecting again in the late 80's, buying Bandai toys and such from stores like Pony Toy Go Round in LA, and Kimono My House in Emeryville. Within a short period, I made my first major toy trade with Super Collector, Sanford Mok. I am now hooked for life. Opening the box from Sanford was as close to replicating X-mas '73 as I will ever get. I received what would be the core of my vintage Ultraman collection.

Then comes the internet. I chance upon someone in Japan who understands English, and even better is willing to search for old toys. I make a transaction and it goes very smoothly. Then he offers more, and I buy. More, I buy, more, buy, buy-buy-buy.....!!!!!! You get the drift.....

Oh yeah, this guy's name is Masato Shono.

In the following years, I would not only see Masato's business grow, but my collection literally explodes. I would put up my first website with my Ultraman collection. Ebay enters the picture, then Yahoo Japan. Ultraman website number two launches, and I take my first trip to Japan.

In a nutshell, that's my story...I'm still trying to finish my Ultraman collection (ha-ha)..... impossible ?

Probably, but the hunt is what keeps me (and other crazy collectors) going.

But one thing seemed to be missing from all this, and that was a book or magazine in English about these cool toys. Well, the book is coming from Jimbo (see article in this issue), and you are now holding, what we hope will be, a 3-4 times a year publication. We'll try to always have a good cross section of articles on vinyl figures, diecast, and other crazy stuff.

This has been a lot of work, but it's been fun too. I hope opening this 'zine will be like X-mas '73 for you.

Mark Nagata 10/31/02

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Illustration by Mark Nagata

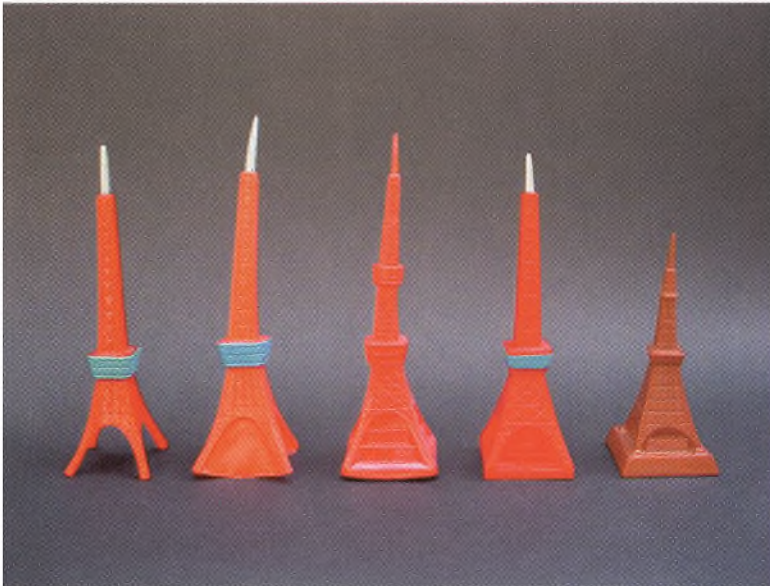


Photo by Micheal Garlington and Jim Matison

So, what's with these dumb plastic towers you say? I'll tell...but first a little background information on them. I've heard some collectors say, "...why are they including a Eiffel Tower with my kaiju?" Well, sparky it may look like the Eiffel Tower in Paris, but it ain't. It's the Tokyo Tower, in Japan, which was completed in 1958 and was inspired by the Eiffel Tower. Anyways, a monsters gotta destroy or hold something in it's hands...so various companies use this landmark to include with their toys. Here's a guide to your towers, left to right:

1. M1 Tower - thick vinyl, legs on base are cut out, slightly shorter than the original towers.

2. Bullmark Tower - There are actually four versions of this tower. The red example with silver indented spike you see pictured here with the flashing still attached, the same version, but with the flashing removed, a red version with a blue painted spike that contains no indentions, and a yellow vinyl version. The yellow vinyl version was only available with the Bullmark giant-size King Ghidorah, and the red version came with various Bullmark giant-size kaiju. All towers that came with the giant-size figures had the flashing removed, but can be either the blue or silver tipped versions. Later, as Bullmark made figure-packs of overrun vinyls, they included towers like this one, where the flashing was not removed. The flashing is easily cut off and indistinguishable from a pre-cut version.

3. Bandai 1991 Tower - Came with the Gomora and Red King 1991 Bandai giant size reproduction figures. Has an added second observation platform on the tower, as well as a two-story building underneath the base of the tower, and is completely unpainted. The base is slightly rounded and has a round hole in the bottom.

4. Modern toys tower - Came with Gamera giant-size vinyl, and is a faithful, but smaller version of the original tower with addition of a building underneath the base of the tower's legs, and is made of a slightly thicker vinyl. The base is intentionally squared off and has a square hole in the bottom.

5. Marmit tower - a smaller unpainted version on a triangular base, and easily distinguishable from the previous towers.

#### FRESH OUT OF THE MOLD!

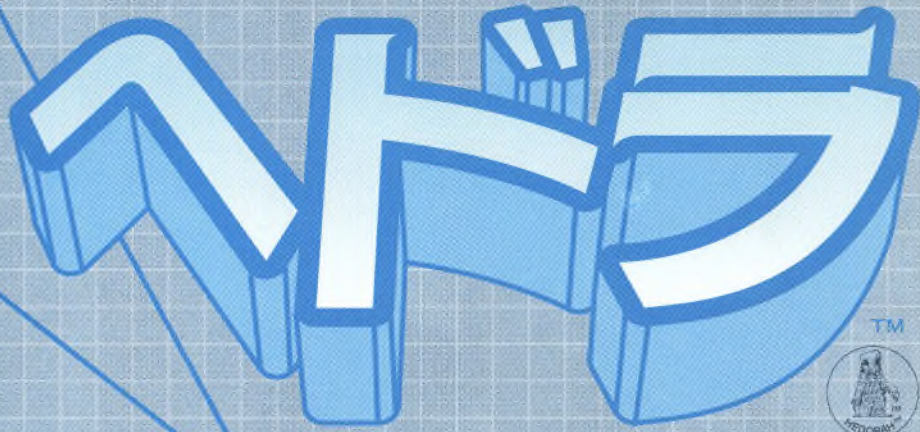
Chronicle Books is publishing a large coffee table style book featuring photos of Japanese toys. Overseen by our own Jimbo Matison, it will be titled "So Crazy Japanese Toys!" I snuck a peek at the book in its rough layout form and it looks great. Great design and even better photos. (see the photo of Gesura on the left for a sample!)

All of the toys in the book are based on TV shows, old and new, no animation or movies. The book is split into 5 categories:

1. Men In Rubber - All of your good Ultraman types.
2. Rockin' Chicks - Fuji, Tackle and more!
3. Cute N' Cuddly - You know you like Booska and Robocon.
4. Motor Heroes - Kamen Riders, Barom-1 and all their peers.
5. Freaky Foes - All the bad-ass kaiju you can handle.

The book is to be released spring 2003 and will be distributed everywhere. We're working on a feature article about "So Crazy Japanese Toys!" for the next issue of Super-7, look for even more information then!

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BY: MATT ALT

Ten A.M. It's freezing outside, raining, and I'm on a packed train. I've already been up for four-and-a-half hours already, thanks to jet-lag, and I'm tired as hell. But I could have a bullet in my belly and it couldn't slow me down: I'm on the hunt.

I get like this whenever I go back to Japan. In fact, the minute I step off the plane and into the stale, smoky air of Narita International Airport, I can feel my chest tighten and my breathing quicken. It doubles after I step off the Narita Express train and into Shinjuku Station downtown. I'm finally back again. Too bad I don't usually get in until seven or eight in the evening. Most of the shops are already closed or closing.

The efficient under-seat heaters warm the cabin of the Chuo-line train; as I recline on a seat I was fortunate enough to snatch as I boarded, I almost doze off to the repetitive lull of the train clattering along the tracks. Almost. I snap back into focus as I remember the Magic Box ad in the newest issue of Hobby Japan: there were some serious deals listed in there. Emphasis on were: by the time I managed to get the magazine, several days had elapsed since publication. The die-hards and freaks have already probably picked the shop clean of bargains like toy-hungry pirhana. Whatever the case, I can't let doubt stop me: I'm like a toy-seeking cruise missile that's just been armed and launched. Too late to turn back now, and Alen will kill me if I don't find him the cheap set of Scramble Dash wings I promised him for his Jumbo Great Mazinger.

The train arrives and I stumble bleary-eyed out of the station, winding my way through a labyrinth of streets. Even the semi-suburban areas feel like something out of Blade Runner here, and the glaring neon signboards, diesel-smelling air, and filthy snow packed in the gutters don't help my 'lag-hangover-induced condition. In spite of myself, I look up into the gray sky, raise my fists, and laugh as a grimy rain pelts my face. Fellow pedestrians quickly move to the other side of the street, but I don't care. I'm a block from the store, five thousand miles away from my birthplace, and I've never felt closer to home.

"The store" is something of a misnomer. Magic Box is one of the oldest and largest used-toy stores, and the recent craze for vintage diecast has filled their pockets like never before. In the past few years they've expanded their original humble shop into a gaggle of spin-off stores, subsuming almost the entire block in the process. Tiny shops, aimed at microscopic delineations in an

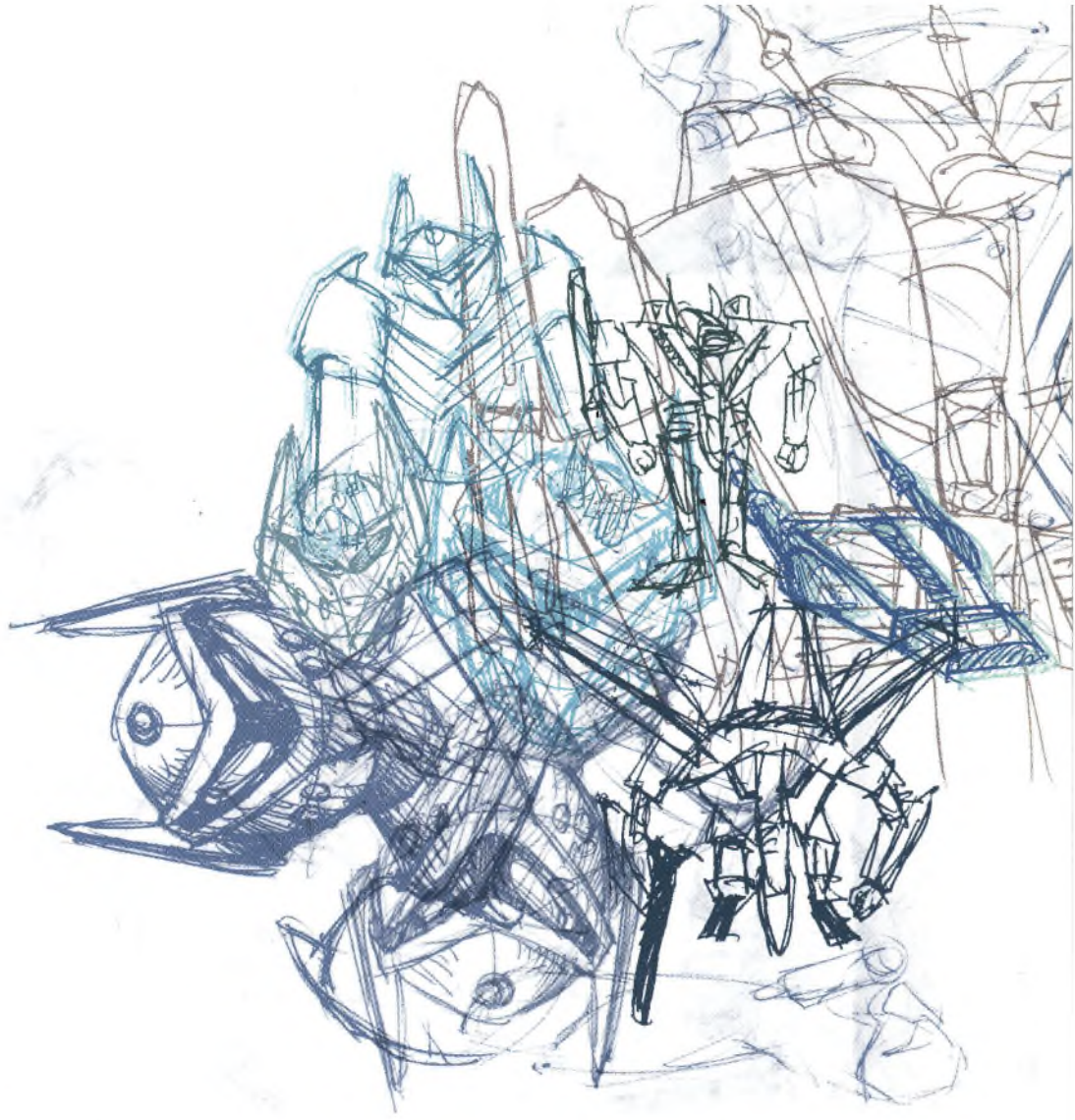
already-narrow hobby, line the side of the road. I pass Paper Star, the poster, menko, and trading-card store. I trudge past Micro, the shop dedicated to gumball-machine and other tiny robot toys. I'm almost waylaid by Seikatsu, some bizzare new Magic-Box formulation with a crudely-mimeographed "Welcome to Toy's Hell" sign hanging in the window. Come to think of it, they ALL had that hanging in their windows. Have to check that out later, but it's an appropriate sentiment for this little journey. Abandon all hope of leaving solvent, ye who enter here. Ah, there's Magic III.

The door-chimes jingle and the two women behind the register look up for a moment, only mildly surprised to see a gaijin face in their store, before they return to meticulously wrapping old chogokin boxes with transparent plastic. How could I forget? Magic Box ONLY hires attractive female clerks, presumably to attract love-starved otaku to the store like bait on a fishing-line. Not to mention quashing any hope of negotiating prices: they're there for window-dressing, not as toy-experts. Nice job. Surrounded by dusty, decaying boxes of character-toys, stifling air, and fanboys a-plenty, this must be akin to serving time on a plane of hell for them. Bad girls in a previous life? We'll never know.

I'm startled out of my reverie by the sharp, acrid aroma that only comes from assembling hundreds of old diecast and vinyl toys together in a cramped space. Hard to breathe, but no matter: the sight before me takes my breath away anyway. Floor to ceiling, wall to wall, shelving everywhere -- and on it, pile after pile of carefully arranged toy boxes, nary a space between them. Walls of super-alloy, entire universes of vintage toys. Trying to take it all in, I twirl like a ballerina, transfixed, eyes sparking like a little pixie-girl who's just gotten the pony she's always wanted. Overstimulation. The clerks regard me for a moment and begin whispering. Never mind, I'm in heaven. Or "Toy's Hell," depending on your viewpoint.

Bingo. There's the VF-1J Takatoku I'd been looking for. Not bad for only having been in the store thirty seconds. Bingo, there's the Scrander wings. Woah, a set of all three Diapolon diecasts. And the big score: a Robot Factory Guardian, a Jumbo Machinder Dol, and a pair of Nakajima Jumbos of Tekkaman and Pegas. Talk about a target-rich environment; I'm nearing oversaturation levels here. Microman, Dougram, Gundam...No matter where I turn my vision is filled by vintage toy. Thank God I can still blink. Otherwise I'd be starting to feel like young Alex from A Clockwork Orange.





I silently rifle through the wad of bills in my pocket. Time to bust a move. I flash the ladies my most winning smile.

"I hope you will forgive me for intruding at what appears to be such an inconvenient time," I say in my most polite Japanese. "But if it would not be too much trouble, I should very much appreciate if you would show me several of the items which I have interest in." Blank stare from the ladies. Usually, I have to pry 'em off me after an act like this, but my stalwart little shop-clerks stand all but unmoved. Tough crowd. Suddenly I get it. They've just finished artfully wrapping each and every piece in the store, and Captain America storms in asking for them to take them out. Maybe it's time for that winning smile again. "I apologize for my persistence in this matter," I add somewhat unhelpfully.

"Don't worry about it. Being persistent is just fine," says one of the women, her downward-averted eyes telling the true story. Or am I just being paranoid? Probably. These multi-cultural exchanges always leave my head spinning. Or it could just be the cheap sake I drank on the plane-ride over here.

Whatever the case, a pile of boxes steadily accumulates on the counter as I check piece after piece. As always, I'm agonizing over "potentials": Tekkaman jumbo, or Pegas? I don't have the money for both. And the Valkyries...

"Sir, were you aware we're having a fifty-percent-off sale today?" asks one of the clerk-clones, startling me out of my reverie.

My jaw dropping, I can only nod to acknowledge her. I'm absolutely dumbfounded. This is all-but unheard of. Wordlessly, uncontrollably, I begin to pile ten-thousand-yen note after ten-thousand-yen note on the counter with a visibly shaking hand. Shaking because of the shock of the discount - or because of the fact that I know this means I'm going to spend double what I initially planned. And here I was, thinking I could quit anytime...

"Ah, which will it be, sir?"

"All," say I with a tone of finality.

Completely unsurprised, one clerk begins counting the mountain of bills piled on the counter as the other stuffs my acquisitions into plastic bags. They're obviously more than familiar with this kind of obsessive, pathologically wallet-draining toy-mania. In fact, the thought of how the hell I'm going to get a pair of two-foot-tall boxed Jumbos back in my suitcase hasn't even entered my discount-addled brain yet. Not to mention the terror of carrying them home on a crush-friendly, crowded train.

My wallet lightened, I bid my disaffected young friends a fond farewell and step outside the musty shop. The rain has stopped, and the sun shines weakly through a rapidly-thinning cloud cover. I fill my lungs with cold Tokyo air. There's no time for worry. It's going to be a good trip.

And this is just the first store of the day.

MFTM Report >1.0

## "My Hero"

"The prince of all micros"—Ninety percent die-cast, and my best micro buddy, is the Space Glider. The translucent colors of the time travelers used to seem cooler, but in 2002 translucents have lost a bit of their luster. See thru is commonplace in the toy industry. Think of how many color variants of ghost, or flame, or glow there are of your favorite Ultramonster, or microman, and compare that to last time you held the die cast Woo in your palm, duh, never. The weight and feel of the Space glider in the hand harkens back to an earlier time. His streamlined torso, simple wing pack, and gladiator type helmet are visions of a simpler future. Space glider kicks ass.

There are now three generations of Space Glider.


First came the original Microman version, which was part of the 1975 Super Steel series. M211 Ken, in gold and silver, M212 Kelly, in green and silver, and M213 Kim, in blue and silver. These were very well designed. The colors were very true, and as you will see in a second, Takara, the original producer didn't skimp (except for the helmets, which were all blue).

Then in 1976 Mego Corp. released the "Space Glider." This is the skimpy, cut corners version we all grew up with. There were three colors with no names to confuse our tiny American brains, just green, gold, and blue, all with silver. The colors were dulled down, rivets replaced the screws making them impossible to repair, and they fixed him up with a fat head. The same fat head that Mego would also later slap onto the Pharoid. Unlike the Microman version, the Space Glider's head only came in gold, not anodized to match the colors of the figure. As an added bonus, Mego also took away the movement in the ankles.

The most recent, the third generation of Space Gliders should be in stores as you read this. Abrams, the owner of the Micronauts license has given Palisades the rights to put out Micronauts again. In the lineup of the first release is Space Glider. There are four color combos: blue/black, green/silver, silver/gold, and red/silver. These look to be a definite improvement quality wise over the old Mego Space Gliders. Each comes with it's own color coded helmet, what looks to be a new head sculpt, and a blaster to kill people with if you get bored. Palisades is also doing something really cool with the reproductions— They are producing only their own original colors, so there will be no confusion with the vintage goods, and the value of the vintage ones won't bottom out either. A couple of the colors stink, but all in all I think this is a great idea, and will lead to a bit more success with the new pups.

Space Glider rules.





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BY: SEAN BONNER



Jumbo Machinders- What's rare? That's a big question. People write to me all the time asking how rare a particular jumbo is. Maybe they saw it for sale and want to know if they should rush to get it or if they can wait 'till next time. Maybe they have one they are trying to sell and want to know where to begin price wise. Motivations may vary, but it's a damn common question regardless. I also hear from a lot of people who want to start collecting jumbos and need to know where to start. Sometimes instead of asking they just proclaim, "I'm going to start collecting jumbos, and I'd like to start with Doublas M-2, please tell me where to find one." As if it's that easy. HA! So, the question remains... What is rare, and just how damn rare is it?

From inquiries like these to cryptic e-mails from Tom Franck & late night drunken answering machine messages from Matt Alt, it's obviously something everyone is curious about. So in perfect toy-nerd fashion I decided to put together a line up. Before we go any further, there are few things you should take into account when reading this:

- This is based solely on opinion. My opinion, and I'm just some jerk with a bunch of toys, so take that however you want.
- Some pieces are easier to come by in some parts of the world that in others, for this list, I'm basing the list on finding things in the US.
- I'm only including things I have seen, or know for sure to exist. There's a lot of lore out there about some pieces and their existence, and I could make a whole list of nothing but rumors. So for this arguments sake, it's gotta be certifiable.
- On that same note, there are a lot of bootlegs, reissues, and what not out there that I don't even want to get mixed up with, so only original Japanese jumbos are taken into account here. Shoguns, Uni-fives, or Mexican knock offs are not a piece of this action.
- The number one easiest to find jumbo isn't really "easy to find" if you know what I mean. Jumbos by nature are a pain in the ass to collect, and this list is all relative to something. I'm just not sure what.
- Finally, should you decide to jump into to this crack addition like hobby, it's important to mention that these things get exponentially harder and harder to find. Think of this like a Richter scale, the higher up you get, the difficulty (and price!) is multiplied by everything below.
- One more thing, if there are any glaring mistakes, I'm pretty sure they are Matt's fault.

So there you have it. Just to beat a dead horse, this is not law and it might not even be accurate but it's what I feel is correct at the moment. My answer might be different next week but for now that should do the trick. Through a lot of collectors might disagree on the exact placement of some of these on the lists, one thing that most of us agree on is that you can't really set up a blueprint for collecting jumbos. You can't make a list and decide to buy those jumbos in that order. It just doesn't work. You have to grab what comes along as it does, because in many cases, you might not get the chance to get it again later.

### THE 10 HARDEST TO FIND JUMBOS

1. Garada K7
2. Green Ghost C-3
3. Ultraman Leo
4. Rokuron Q9
5. Spacer
6. Lensari
7. Dabulas M2
8. Getta III
9. Robocon
10. Sun Vulcan

There's a lot to consider here. Sometimes things that were produced in great numbers, like Robocon, can still rank very high because the demand for them is also high. While a character like Green Ghost C-3 was produced in small numbers but isn't very popular. If something is on this list you can be fairly certain that you could NOT just go out and buy it at the drop of a hat. They turn up very infrequently (if ever) and when they do they are snatched up in a second, or they have a price tag, which makes them almost impossible to touch.



### THE 10 EASIEST TO FIND JUMBOS

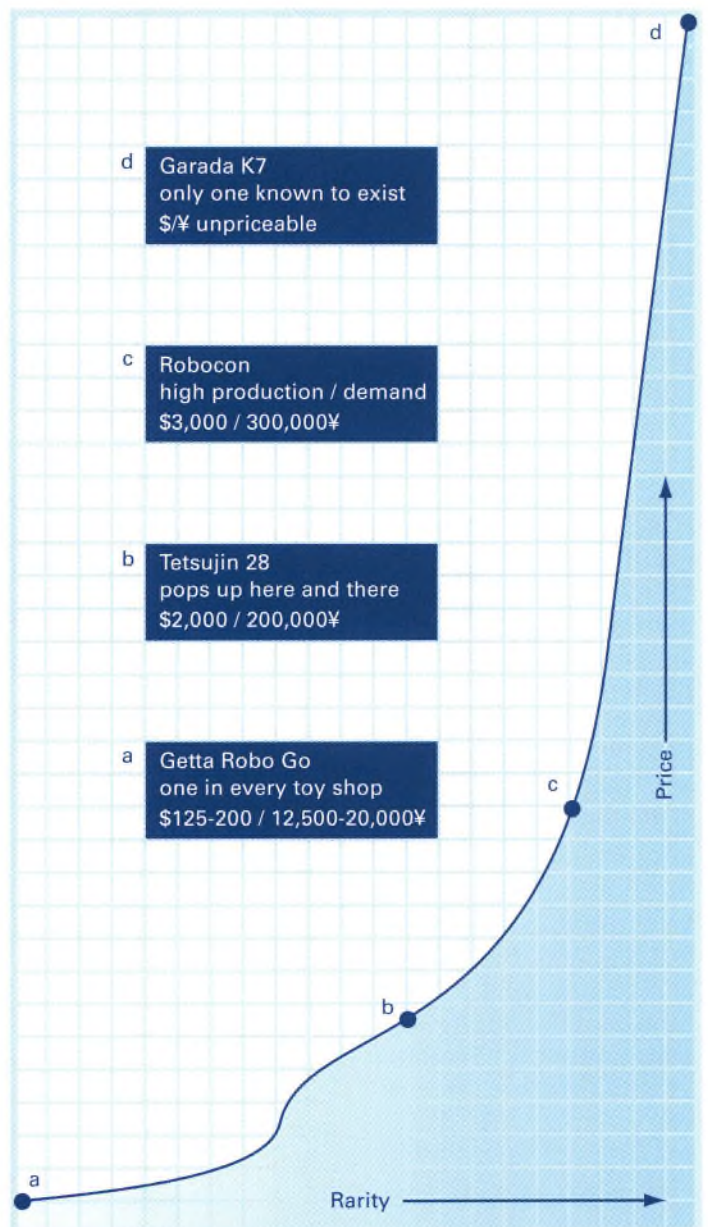
1. Getta Robo Go
2. Fiverobo
3. Giant Gorg
4. Capsule Robo G
5. Tekkaman
6. Pegas
7. Big Dai X (aka X Bomber)
8. Mazinger Z
9. Raideen
10. Getta Dragon

This is based on what turns up the most and we've all seen offered very frequently. The Getta Robo Go was released in 1991, which probably plays into this. It's everywhere. These characters were either produced in such huge numbers or just aren't very sought after which makes them turn up so often.

### NEXT 10 EASIEST TO FIND JUMBOS

11. Getta Poseidon
12. Great Mazinger
13. Jeeg
14. Kamen Rider V3
15. Battle Fever J
16. Godsigma
17. Tetsujin 28
18. Getta Liger
19. Gaiking
20. Gardian

If we narrowed this listing down to jumbos produced by Poppy only, a lot of these would be in the top 10. Depending on whom you talk to they might still be considered common. Regardless of ranking, if you wanted one of these jumbos and had the cash ready to spend, you wouldn't have to wait too long to find one. Take Getta Poseidon for example. Getta Robo G was a popular show so they made tons of these jumbos, but for some reason that I will never understand, Poseidon was the runt of the 3 three characters. Those two things combined make 'ol tank legs a very easy acquisition. Personally this is one of my favorite characters.



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DEVIL-BADOU

BY WARREN SCHWARTZ

- || | | |
- GOLD-VENA
- EARTH
- MARS MAN
- JUPI-ROS
- SATURNA
- DEVIL-BADO





GOLD-VENA

SATURN-ACE

ULTRA-EARTH

MARS-MAN

JUPIROS

DEVIL BADOU

BY WARREN SCHWARTZ

In 1997 high on a shelf above the entrance to Mike Z's legendary Day-Old Antiques stood the first and only Capsule Robo G I had ever seen. I gazed at his Aztec-like face until Mike's voice drifted into my ears. "It's not for sale. Somebody already bought it." "For how much?" I asked. "Nine hundred dollars" he replied. He told me he'd find another one, but it might take awhile. A year passed, as I continued to locate and collect Popy diecasts. One afternoon at work I got a call from Mike. "I got a lead on a Capsule Robo mint-in-box." "The guy's bringing it in tomorrow." I had almost forgotten what it looked like, but Mike's voice triggered every detail.

I hurried over to Day-Old the next day, forked over nine hundred bucks, and walked out with my new Japanese version of the Treasure of Sierra Madre. It was perfect. The packaging, two vinyl figures with big heads, a stash of missiles MIBag, and the catalog, all intact. I was knocked over by the catalog! Although I couldn't read a word, the graphics told the story, sort of.

Apparently, Robo G had 5 cohorts which looked nothing like him, but had a family resemblance to each other, viewed through a purple haze. They travelled around on foot tanks fighting an evil black-winged bionic-brained creature. And as I later discovered they could fit into the capsule-like head of the big robot. This was cool, no? It began to add up. But how to find out any more about this obscure series. Was it in fact a series anyway?

A month later a friend at the office told me to check out a new auction site called eBay. They might even have some of the Japanese antique toys I was looking for. I tried various searches, and one day hit on a vinyl figure which was being auctioned off by Roy Ng - Grace Oriental - Hong Kong. It was the same figure as one pictured in the catalog of psychedelic robots. I couldn't believe it. Japan was coming to the US via Hong Kong! Roy's website had everything. I printed his whole site and poured over its contents. Everything familiar or obscure, abundant or rare, pricey or, well, pricey was there - and available. It made me a little sick. But I eMailed Roy, struck up a pen-pal type friendship, trusted him enough to send him cash, and in return I had a mail-order bride for Capsule Robo G. Gold Vena.

A few months later, as promised, Roy also sent me the catalog, translated from Japanese into English. This was extraordinary because neither was his native language, and yet he made it perfectly clear what had been up to now the mystery of Astro Mu.

Roy Ng's translation of the "Story of Astro Mu" is printed below. Translation:

In 20XX, Earth is Center of the Solar System. Many space ships travel between Earth and the other planets. A space probe, Orient Go, is launched to travel outside the Solar System. It's mission is to contact other life forms.

"Ha! The Dark Galaxy is shaped like a horse head."

"Oh! What is it?"

"Oh! No....."

"What's happened Orient Go?....."

"Please check. What has happened?"

A warp speed spaceship, Patrol Go, has been launched to the Dark Galaxy.

"Oh! Orient Go has been destroyed!"

"Look! An unknown battle spaceship."

"Invention Department! May I attack? Please reply!"

D..D..D..D..

Booooo. Ahh.

"Hahahahaha.....I'm the Dark Galaxy Alien."

"Hahahahaha....I come from the Dark Galaxy." "The Dark Galaxy was born many tens of thousands of years ago. A Dark Galaxy Alien's goal is to take over the Solar System. We may need to kill all living things. I am the the Dark Galaxy Shogun. This is my mission."

Sign: "Solar System Defensive Force"

"Ladies and gentlemen." "Danger. Urgent. This is a case for the Invention Department"

"Astro Mu 5 is now ready."

"You are the best warriors chosen from each planet."

#1 Earth's representative - Ultra Earth.

#2 Venus' representative - Gold Vena.

#3 Mars' representative - Mars Man.

#4 Jupiter's representative - Jupiros.

#5 Saturn's representative - Saturn Ace.

"Astro Mu 5" - "Let's Go!"



In 1973 "Nakajima of the Turtle Mark" decided to produce it's own exhuberant psychedelic sentai series of vinyl toys, rather than purchase expensive established licensed characters. Their extensive production included 6 small vinyl figures with sparking tanks, 6 larger nodder vinyl figures, 2 larger sparking tanks - 1 with an artillery carrier, a mid-size missile firing vinyl Capsule Robo G, and the jumbo machinder version of this character. Various accessory items and a play set were also produced. A checklist is printed below:

<b>Nodders:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Ultra Earth MIB w/removable mask (yellow)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Ultra Earth missile body MOC
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Ultra Earth costume MOC
-----	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Gold Vena MIB w/removable mask (pink)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Gold Vena missile body MOC
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Gold Vena costume MOC
-----	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Mars Man MIB w/removable mask (blue)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Mars Man missile body MOC
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Mars Man costume MOC
-----	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Saturn Ace MIB w/removable mask (orange)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Saturn Ace missile body MOC
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Saturn Ace costume MOC
-----	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Jupiros MIB w/removable mask (green)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Jupiros missile body MOC
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Jupiros costume MOC
-----	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Devil Bird MIB w/removable mask (purple)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Devil Bird missile body MOC
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Devil Bird costume MOC
<b>Vinyls:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Ultra Earth w/mask w/sparking tank MIB
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Gold Vena w/ mask w/sparking tank MIB
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Mars Man w/mask w/sparking tank MIB
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Saturn Ace w/mask w/sparking tank MIB
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Jupiros w/mask w/sparking tank MIB
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Devil Bird w/sparking tank MIB
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Enemy Kaiju #1
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Enemy Kaiju #2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Enemy Kaiju #3
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Enemy Kaiju #4
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Enemy Kaiju #5
<input type="checkbox"/>	3" Capsule Robo G
<input type="checkbox"/>	10" Capsule Robo G mid-size missile firing vinyl
<b>Playsets/Vehicles:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Astro Mu 5 Sparking Tank MIB (green; blue variation)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Astro Mu 5 Artillery Carrier (blue)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muta Z Sparking Tank MIB (blue)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Astro Mu 5 Playset with Space Playmat
<b>Jumbo Machinder:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	24" Capsule Robo G Jumbo Machinder



Top to bottom:  
 All five 3" removeable mask astro-mu hero 3" vinyls.  
 Detail shots: Gold-Vena (orange with yellow), Earth (all yellow).  
 Saturn-Ace (orange and red) and Jupí-Ros (all green).



Top Row:  
 Capsule Robo G Jumbo Machinder. from left to right: box art, packaged jumbo, chest and head detail with astro-mu earth figure inside, additional head detail, 2 photos of the jumbo with head removed showing astro-mu figure "controlling" the robot, capsule Robo G and missile-firing vinyl shown in size comparison, detail of missile firing capsule Robo G.

Bottom Row:  
 Boxed Astro-Mu Devil Badou nodder (body and suit), packaging insert for boxed Devil Badou nodder, assembled Devil Badou with comic book, Devil Badou with mini kaiju vinyl and mini Devil Badou vinyl, back and front of carded Devil Badou (suit only), front and back of Devil Badou body carded nodder (body only).



ADDITIONAL STORY BY MATT ALT

Ah, the poetry of mid-Seventies Japanese toy companies on the prowl. Hungry for revenue, they stalked the rapidly-evolving character toy market like predators on the hunt. And every once in a while, when the marketplace seemed as dry and foreboding as the African savanna in the dead of summer, desperation set in. A mighty firm like Popy or Bandai could hope to weather such conditions, subsisting on internal reserves and biding their time like patient lions waiting for prey. But what of those not blessed with the reserves of the lion?

What of the turtle?  
 Yes, the turtle: the Nakajima Manufacturing Company, to be

precise. Or "Nakajima of the Turtle-Mark," as millions of Japanese children knew their toy-manufacturing operation in the 1970s.

The year is 1973. Nakajima had already proven their mettle with a spectacular run of Gatchaman, Rainbow Man, and Tiger Mask figures, having produced what would become some of the most sought-after vinyl toys on the planet. But where to go next? Buying those pesky character licenses cut into the already meager profit margins in the cut-throat character toy marketplace, but kids were hungry for more. Sentai shows were incredibly popular, but Popy had pretty much sewn up the licensing on that little pot o' gold. What to do, what to do...

(I cannot confirm if Nakajima management was actually ON mescaline at the time of their next step. They might have been coming off a three-day drunk. Or had a religious vision. I don't know. It's just that as an aficionado of all toys Japanese, the pure genius of what Nakajima created boggles the puny confines of my toy-addled brain.)

They created their OWN sentai series.

Their own INSANE sentai series. Hell, who needs a TV show? Not Nakajima! In fact, without the constraints of a TV censor to hold them back, Nakajima was able to produce some seriously twisted designs. I'm talking about the all-original, Nakajima-Manufacturing-Company-spawned, totally demented adventures of the one and only ASTRO-MU FIVE team! From their psychedelic clear-sparkly bodies to the unsettling bio-mechanical theme running throughout the entire line, the only thing UN-original about the Astro-Mu Five "action boys" was the fact that they were based on the tried-and-true five-man Sentai team concept. Vaguely. Whoever designed these babies must have been coming down off a SERIOUSLY bad trip, as the designs are so nightmarish that it's really difficult to separate the "bad" guys from the "good."

Having designed and named their team, Nakajima was missing only the fact that their characters had no story. An easily remedied problem: they simply footed the bill for a comic serial to be published in Boken-Oh, a popular boys' comic magazine. They even published a record-single of the "Astro-Mu Five Theme," furthering the charade that this was anything more than a thinly-veiled, ingenious ploy to sell more toys. Once again proving their capitalistic acumen, Nakajima also included tiny pamphlets containing selected comic stories in the packaging of each toy. The black and white comics were hastily-drawn and had plots as thin as a Z-grade porno film, but Nakajima had helpfully stuffed half of each booklet with glorious, full-page color ads for other toys in the line-up. In fact, the ads were FAR MORE INTERESTING THAN THE COMIC ITSELF! Sneaky.

The story: in the year 20XX, the Astro-Mu Five team defends the solar system from the invading Dark Badou Aliens. Using their "secret base located hundreds of meters below the moon's surface," they transform into Ultra-esque heroes and do battle with Devil Badou and his evil minions. Astro-Mu Five consists of (duh) five characters with hokey names: Ultra Earth, Gold Vena, Saturn Ace, Mars Man, and Jupiros. Nakajima produced a "standard" six-inch vinyl for each team member (and one of Devil Badou as well).

The design of the toys was as amazing as the concept itself. Each ten-inch figure featured a pipe cleaner skeleton clearly visible through the funky clear-sparkly vinyl body -- a highly underutilized effect in the world of vinyl figures. Coupled with the fact that each figure had removable masks and incorporated a pulley mechanism to allow them to slide along a taut string, you're looking at some seriously cool toys.

This page:

Top: Astro-Mu Earth Nodder, 3" removeable mask vinyl, and 1999 reproduction vinyl. Middle: Both versions of the 1999 reproduction Astro-Mu earth vinyl. The arm attachment on the right was a Hyper-Hobby mail-away exclusive. Bottom: Astro-Mu Gold-vena riding in the trailer of the sparking tank.





Nakajima also produced a disturbingly organic-looking, spring-powered, spark-throwing tank called Muta Z (a fire safety hazard the likes of which is probably illegal these days), a "battle set" of half-size vinyls paired up with bad guy figures, and a set of five tiny vinyl team members with friction-powered sparking vehicles (what IS it with these guys and fire, anyway?)

This is all fine and dandy, but what self-respecting sentai team would dare venture forth into the world without a super-robot? Enter Capsule Robo G, the Jumbo Machinder of the series. Although somewhat minimalist, it's a striking piece: a rivet-mottled body with a head reminiscent of a Mexican wrestler's mask and bristling with missile launchers. Nobody made 'em like Nakajima, and Capsule Robo is an instant stand-out in any lineup of Jumbo toys. But that's not all. Not only did it come with a pair of Jumbo-stompable bad guy figures, but it doubled as a powered suit for the team members! Any of the ten-inch Astro-Mu Five vinyl figures can be inserted into Capsule Robo by simply removing and replacing his head. (Hence the "capsule" in the "robo.") Talk about visionary! This was a first in the world of Jumbo Machinder toys, and it hasn't been duplicated since.

In keeping with Jumbo tradition, Nakajima faithfully produced a single arm attachment for Capsule Robo, the not-so-imaginatively named Gun Hand. Capsule Robo's arms were also standardized so as to accept Popy XX and ZZ-series Jumbo Machinder arm attachments as well, doubling the owner's pleasure. And to round out the satisfaction, Nakajima sold a missile-firing vinyl Capsule Robo Junior, too. Man, these guys were PROLIFIC!

Alas, it's a Darwinian struggle for survival in the wild jungle that is the Japanese toy marketplace. Only the largest and fittest toy-producers continued to thrive until modern times, and despite their drive and vision, the toy division of Nakajima went the way of the dinosaur. It's really a shame that a firm as visionary as Nakajima didn't make it, but what they left behind rank as some of the most beautiful pieces in the toy history of ANY country.

The surprising thing is that, with the exception of Capsule Robo G, these toys are about as obscure as they come. Although they're not particularly rare, they're not easy to find, either: mentioning "Astro-Mu Five" to the average collector is likely to be greeted with a hollow stare (actually, that's probably due to their mortgaging their personality to afford more toys.) Whatever the case, there's no question that the nightmarish world of Astro-Mu Five made quite an impression on Japanese kids -- and there's no denying the fact that some of the most original toy pieces were made by tiny, desperate firms like "Nakajima of the Turtle-mark." The toys are out there -- find 'em if you can!

This page:

Very Top: Two views of the 3" Devil-Badou vinyl and mini-tank.  
 Middle top: Group shot of both larger tanks and a few foes.  
 Middle bottom: Muta-Z box art. Bottom: 3" Kaiju and Muta-Z tank.

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# KIKAIDA KIKAIDA-01

BY SANFORD MOK

PICTURES: ELAINE MOK  
ADDITIONAL WORDS AND PICTURES:  
MARK NAGATA  
KIRK TANIGUCHI



- 16.5" Masudaya Talking Vinyl 1.
- 12" Unlicensed removeable mask vinyl 2.
- 11.25" Takatoku Standard Vinyl - Red Eyes 3.
- 12.5" Bandai Mechanical Boy Light-Up 4.
- 12.5" Takemi Light-Up Vinyl 5.
- 12" Henshin Cyborg Costume 6.
- 11.25" Takatoku Standard Vinyl - Black Eyes 7.
- 8" Takatoku Medium Size Vinyl 8.
- 8" Takatoku Medium Size Cyborg Vinyl 9.
- 5.5" Takatoku small vinyl 10.
- Large Side-Machine 11.









11.25" Standard-Size Takatoku Kikaida figure. Later Bandai release of the same Tokatoku figure with their packaging. The figure was also available with red eyes and black outline in earlier releases.

6" bagged Kikaida unlicensed vinyl  
11.5" loose unlicensed Kikaida vinyl with removeable mask.  
12" bagged unlicensed Kikaida vinyl with clear dome.

Bandai mechanical boy with box.  
Takemi/Modern Toys light-up Kikaida with box.

5.75" Takatoku Grey Rhino  
5.25" Popy Hikaider  
5.75" Takatoku Android-Man

4" Takatoku Orange Ant  
4" Takatoku Blue Buffalo  
4" Takatoku Green Mantis





*Bandai mechanical boy, Takemi light-up Kikaida, Takara Henshin Cyborg.*

*12" Henshin Cyborg Kikaida and Kikader-01 by Takara.*

*Bagged 4" Takatoku Orange Ant  
Bagged 4" Takatoku Blue Buffalo  
Bagged 4" Takatoku Green Mantis*

*Bagged 5.5" Popy Cyborg Kikaida  
Loose 7.5" Takatoku Cyborg Kikaida  
Bagged 5.75" Takatoku Cyborg Kikaida*





Takatoku 7.5" middle-size Kikaida vinyls.  
On the left is a loose vinyl with black-eyes.  
On the right is an earlier version with red-eyes and black outlines in a bag.

12" Round-Headed bootleg.  
Although very similar to the standard Takatoku vinyl, this vinyl is slightly taller, the chest lines form an "X" in the center of the chest, and the mechanical arm (red) has a yellow band at the elbow, which the Takatoku does not.

3" Kikaida-01 pendant figure.

Top: Box for figural erasers,  
Bottom: Large bagged pencil sharpener vinyl  
next to eraser rubber figure. Note same mold.

6.5" bootleg vinyl with black belt, 5.75" Bootleg vinyl,  
6.5" Bootleg vinyl with yellow belt.





KIKAIDA CHECKLIST	KIKAIDA-01 CHECKLIST
<input type="checkbox"/> 16.5" Masudaya Talking vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 16.5" Masudaya Hawaii Non-Talking vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 12.5" Bandai Mechanical Boy <input type="checkbox"/> 12.5" Takemi Light-Up Vinyl <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> 12" Henshin Cyborg (1972) <input type="checkbox"/> 12" Unlicensed Vinyl - Removeable mask <input type="checkbox"/> 12" Unlicensed Vinyl - Clear Dome <input type="checkbox"/> 12" Unlicensed Vinyl - Round Head <input type="checkbox"/> 11.25" Takatoku Vinyl - Red Eyes <input type="checkbox"/> 11.25" Takatoku Vinyl - Black Eyes <input type="checkbox"/> 11.25" Bandai copyright of TT Vinyl* <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> 8" Takatoku Vinyl - Red Eyes <input type="checkbox"/> 8" Takatoku Vinyl - Black Eyes <input type="checkbox"/> 8" Takatoku Cyborg Vinyl <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> 6.5" Unlicensed Vinyl - Black Belt <input type="checkbox"/> 6.5" Unlicensed Vinyl - Yellow Belt <input type="checkbox"/> 5.75" Unlicensed Vinyl <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> 5.75" Takatoku Cyborg Vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5" Takatoku Regular Vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5" Popy Cyborg Vinyl <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> 5.75" Takatoku Grey Rhino Kaiju <input type="checkbox"/> 5.75" Takatoku Androidman Kaiju <input type="checkbox"/> 5.25" Popy Hakaider Kaiju <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> 4" Takatoku Orange Ant Kaiju <input type="checkbox"/> 4" Takatoku Blue Buffalo Kaiju <input type="checkbox"/> 4" Takatoku Green Mantis Kaiju <hr/> <input type="checkbox"/> pencil sharpener vinyl figure	<input type="checkbox"/> 12" Henshin Cyborg (1973) <input type="checkbox"/> 10.75" Bandai Standard Size Vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 8" Popy Medium Size Vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5" Popy Small Size Vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 4" Popy Flying vinyl <input type="checkbox"/> 3.5" Popy Pendant vinyl <hr/> <p>*rumored to exist, but not proven</p>



The Hawaii Kikaida Talking Vinyl

In the original Japanese release and the reissue by Masudaya of the talking Kikaida, the talk-box is contained inside the vinyl, activated by a push-button at the top of the back panel. This panel also has vent holes that allow the sound to be heard clearly. In the export version sent to Hawaii, the talk-box was removed and packed separately in it's own printed bag. (top left) The back panel of the figure was also remolded to be totally smooth. A comparison of the two back panels are shown at top right. On the bottom right are two photos of a rare packaging variation of the Masudaya talker with a TV screen box insert and manga style illustrations.



KIKAIDA SIDE-MACHINES	NEWER KIKAIDA RELEASES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Scale by Masudaya - Japanese</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Scale Hawaii (top left and right)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium Scale by Masudaya</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Scale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small plastic cycle (blue or yellow) (middle left)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 16.5" Masudaya Reproduction Talker</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 15.5" Medicom Kikaido Non-Poseable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 12" Medicom Kikaido</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 12" Medicom Kikaido-01</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 12" Medicom Hakaider</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 12" Medicom Android-Man</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 9.25" Medicom Kikaido</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 9.25" Medicom Hakaider</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 9" Billiken Tin Wind-Up Kikaido</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 9" Billiken Tin Wind-Up Hakaider</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 7.5" Ohtsuka Kikaku Kikaido</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 7.5" Ohtsuka Kikaku Hakaider</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 7.5" Ohtsuka Kikaku Kikaido-01</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 7" Banpresto Kikaido</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 7" Banpresto Hakaider</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 6" Die-Cast Kikaido Nostalgic Heroes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 6" Die-Cast Hakaider Nostalgic Heroes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 5" Banpresto Kikaido</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 5" Banpresto Kikaido-01</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3.75" Banpresto Kikaido Figure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3.75" Banpresto Kikaido-01 Figure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2.75" Gashapon Set</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Popy Die-Cast (1972) (boxed)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Popy Die-Cast (blister carded)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 15" Die-Cast Side-Machine (Hong Kong Exclusive)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 4" Popy Die-Cast Side-Machine Regular-Size by Nostalgic Heroes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 4" Popy Die-Cast Side-Machine Large-Size by Nostalgic Heroes</li> </ul>	
KIKAIDA-01 DOUBLE-MACHINES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Scale (bottom left)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium Scale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Popy Die-Cast (1973)</li> </ul>	

The Hawaii Kikaido Side-Machine

There are two versions of the large size Kikaido Side-Machine. There is the standard Japanese version, as well as an export Hawaii version. The two version are fairly similar, but have a few key differences. The easiest way to tell the Side-Machines apart, is that the Hawaiian versions have the word "Kikaider" spelled in English on a sticker on the gas tank. (look under the forearm in the top right picture.) Additionally, if you are really lucky, the Hawaii version came with a red plastic guitar. This guitar has become one of the "Holy Grail" items for Kikaido collectors. These guitars were quickly lost by children, and can double the price for a complete loose version with the guitar.

ULTRAMAN FIGURES BY  
MARUSAN AND BULLMARK



---

BY: MARK NAGATA



1966 Ultraman Gun set box art

The year was 1966. A new show debut on Japanese TV, called Ultraman. It was an instant hit, spawning a deluge of toys and related items for years to come.

All this excitement and half a world away.

I didn't actually see an Ultraman episode until 1975, some 9 years later. I had no clue that many toys existed of Ultraman, since in America they never marketed one. I would later learn of the UPC model kit of Ultraman and the fact that the series was first run in the US in the late sixties. But where I was in California, I never found anything related to the show.

Never the less the impact this series had on me would forever change my toy collecting life. Bandai toys would start releasing new toys based on Ultraman in the mid to late eighties, and that was when I started buying.

left to right:  
 Marusan 1st head mold - front view  
 Marusan 1st head mold - side view  
 Marusan 2nd head mold - front view  
 Marusan 2nd head mold - side view





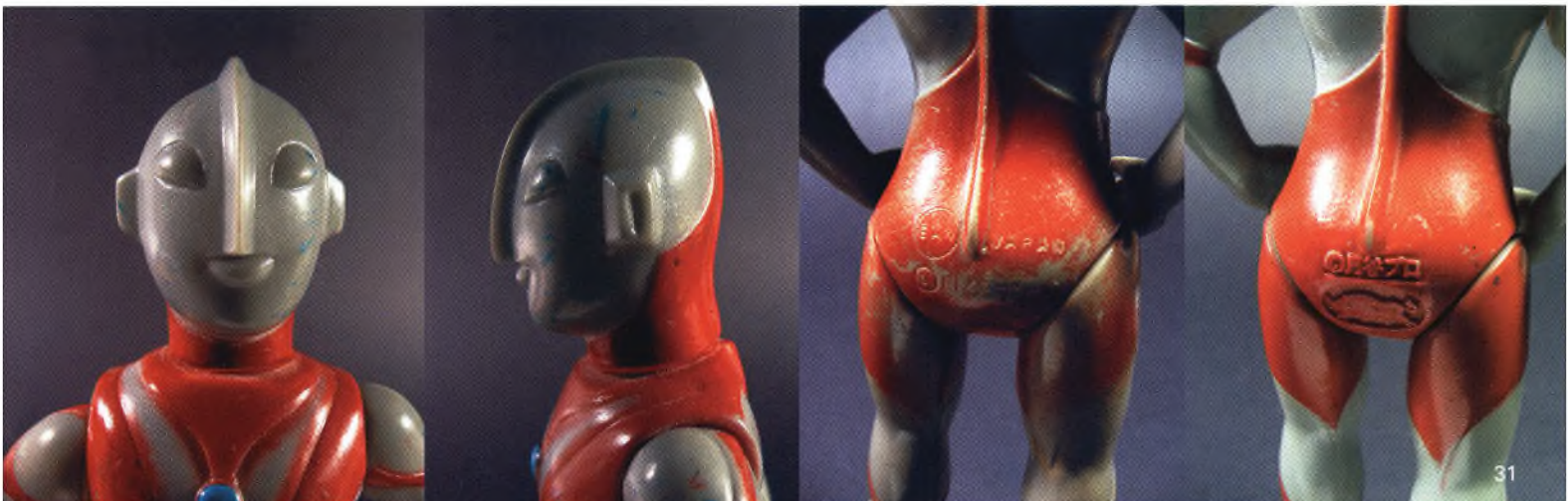


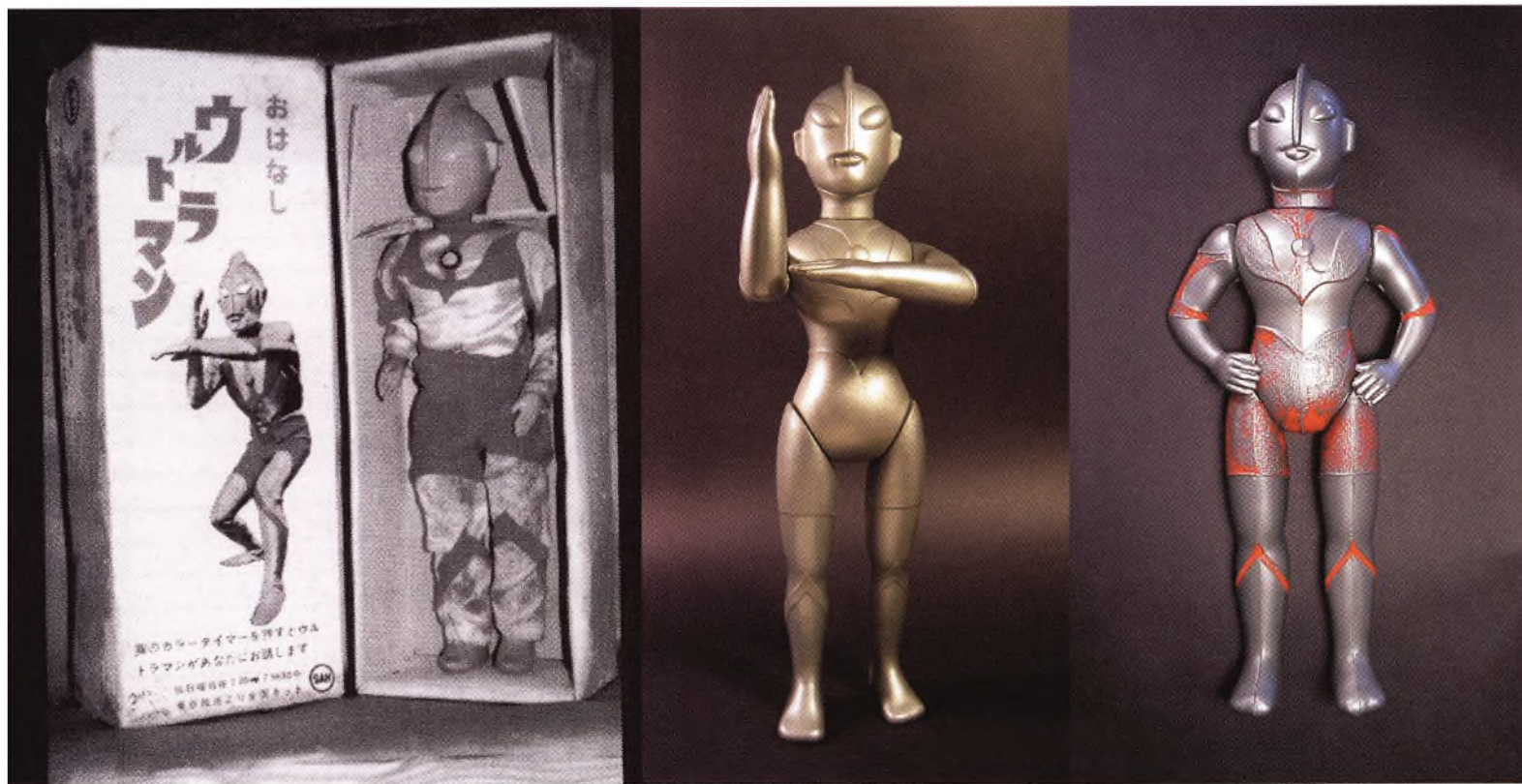
left to right:  
 Marusan 1st version  
 Marusan 2nd version  
 Bullmark 3rd version

After finding a few reference books on old Japanese toys, I was shocked to see all these cool looking figures of Ultraman but not new ones. These were primitive looking, and from a time period I had not collected from.

1966 saw the first vinyl figure release for Ultraman by a company called Marusan. Standing 9 inches tall, this toy was a rather simple interpretation of what the actual Ultraman on television looked like. Unlike the type A mask in the series, this first version, had a smooth face and strangely sculpted ears. The figure sported a circle "san" logo, the word Japan, and the Tsuburaya copyright on the backside. A second version of this figure features a newly sculpted head, with more accurate ears, and eyes that are more slanted. Perhaps an attempt at making the figure a bit more tough looking.

left to right:  
 Bullmark 3rd head mold - front view  
 Bullmark 3rd head mold - side view  
 Marusan rear copyright  
 Bullmark rear copyright





An 11-1/2 inch size was also sold, which looks identical to the 2nd Marusan version and has a circle san on the foot. Also, a 12 inch tall unpainted figure made of poly-vinyl (a lighter weight, and cheaper material) was sold, with paints. A sort of do it yourself project for the kids.

For Christmas of 1966, a special department store only figure was the 19 inches tall Marsuan Super Giant size Ultraman. It was sold unpainted, and sported bent arms with joints at the elbows, so a child could pose it in the specium (beam) shot pose. Made of poly-vinyl and not vinyl like the smaller toys, it is a fragile figure which can be dented very easily. Today finding one in good condition and unpainted (as many children painted the figure) is a tough task. This one figure remains my all time favorite, for pose and sculpt. To me it captures that era, and the character perfectly.

An elusive figure by Marusan is the very large, 20 inch plus tall figure made of plastic with movable joints and sporting a cloth "ultra" costume. This figure also had a talk box inside it. I have never seen one for sale, and the picture here was taken from a old ad in the back of Figure King magazine. I do know a near mint boxed example sold for \$10,000. If this is true than it would be the most expensive vintage Ultraman figure.

As Marusan started to go out of the vinyl toy business, a new company called Bullmark stepped in to keep releasing toys based on Ultraman.

Bullmark re-released the original 9 inch version, but this time the famous Bullmark logo would be stamped on the backside. There also exists what are called transition figures, which have the Marusan logo missing, and no Bullmark logo. These figures were either released by Bullmark or Marusan, while the molds were being retooled from the Marusan to the Bullmark logo. The 11.5 inch Ultraman vinyls are good examples of this variation.

Figures from 15 inches tall to 3-3/4 inches tall were made by Bullmark. The various small sizes or "minis" were sold in many set combinations. Some came on colorful cardboard cards or were in plastic carrying boxes. All featured various Ultraman and family members.

I feel the early toys, seem to capture a quality that has yet to be re-captured in newer toys. The early Marusan and Bullmark figures have a very Buddha-like quality that lies at the essence of what Ultraman was all about. In fact, an early influence to the Ultraman designers was in fact, Buddha.

The actual series only ran 39 episodes and ended with Ultraman flying home. Amazingly, Ultraman would never have another series again. But, this would not stop the onslaught of toys based on the original ultraman which continue to this day.



opposite page (left to right):  
 20" Marusan cloth costume doll with box, 19" Marusan Super Giant  
 Size Ultraman, 12" poly vinyl paintable Ultraman by Marusan.

this page top: (left to right):  
 Giant Size Ultraman front and back, Medium size Ultraman figures  
 by Bullmark.

below:  
 top left: Marusan 12" paintable Ultraman foot copyrights.  
 bottom left: Giant Size Ultraman foot copyrights. (san?)  
 center: comparison of bulmark and transition foot copyrights.  
 top right: back side of the mini-size ultraman with crossed  
 arms by Bullmark  
 bottom right: back side of the mini-size Ultraman with beam  
 pose by Bullmark.





*This page:*

*top: All Bullmark mini-size Ultraman figures 4.5"-7.5" tall.*

*middle: All Bullmark posed mini-size vinyls.*

*bottom: Ultraman Cork Gun set (large size) by ToyMark from 1966. This rare set includes a metal rifle which shoots corks at cardboard targets. There are two versions of this set with either large or small guns.*

*Opposite page:*

*bottom left: Odd Bullmark with double foot manufacturer marks.*

*center: Rare 1966 Ultraman Soaky bottle made of fragile poly-vinyl.*

*Left: Bullmark 3.75" pendant figure with chain.*

All prices are based on current source books, auction prices, dealer sales, and my own and other collectors observations. Prices can and will fluctuate, up and down, depending on supply, demand and condition of items. This is by no means a definitive price guide, but rather a starting point for the collector to reference only. These prices are not offers of sale or purchase.

Prices based on a near mint toy (C-9) without packaging. Original packaging for early vinyls is sometimes more rare than the toy. So, original packing can add substantially to the over all value of the toy.

This list includes vintage licensed figures through the 1970's, and not bootlegs or unauthorized versions. Any re-issues are included, within the original list. Later toys by Popy, Bandai and others will be included in future articles.

Company/Year	Size	Description/Notes/Estimated Value
Marusan 1966	20"	Posable doll with cloth Ultraman costume with talk box. Super rare. \$3000+ loose, complete \$10,000+ with box (one known)
Marusan 1966	9"	Standard size, 1st version with different ear sculpts. Circle san logo on backside. \$1000+
Marusan 1966	9"	Standard size, 2nd version Normal ear sculpts. \$700 +
Marusan 1966	19"	Super Giant size. Also called a self paint doll / christmas department store special. Sold with brush and paints to decorate the toy. Circle san logo on foot bottom. \$2000+
Marusan 1966	12"	Giant size, Self paint doll , circle san logo on foot. \$500+
Marusan 1966	11.5"	Medium size. Larger version of standard size. Circle san on foot. \$400+



Company/Year	Size	Description/Notes/Estimated Value	Company/Year	Size	Description/Notes/Estimated Value
Bullmark 1966	9"	Standard size. Identical to 2nd Marusan version. Bullmark logo on backside. \$700+	Bullmark 1970	4.5"	Arms in "x" pose , left arm over right arm. Comes in these colors: Unpainted grey vinyl with yellow eyes \$60 Unpainted all red vinyl with yellow eyes \$60 Blue grey vinyl painted red and yellow eyes \$55 Unpainted Sparkle vinyl re-issue by Tsuburaya Comm., 1999 \$20
Bullmark 1966	9"	Standard size. Molded in all red vinyl \$1000 + (very rare)	Bullmark 1972	3.75"	Pendent figure with chain - \$70
Bullmark 1966	11"	Medium size. Identical to below 11.5" inch figure, but missing Bullmark logo. Has copyright and 1966. From Marusan molds. Transitional figure without Bullmark stamp. \$450	Bullmark 1974	7-1/2"	Small standard size. Legs are slightly bent at knees. Part of a series of 8 figures - \$150 Bandai re-issue/B-Club. 2000 \$60
Bullmark 1966	11.5"	Medium size. Larger version of standard size. Bullmark logo and 1966 on foot. \$300+	Bullmark 1970	6.5"	Skinny face and body. \$90
Bullmark 1970	15"	Giant size doll, helmet cannot be removed. \$350	Bullmark 1970	5.5"	Deep red paint, wide body sculpt. \$90
Bullmark 1970	4.5"	Arms in beam pose , right arm over left arm. Comes in these colors: Unpainted grey vinyl with yellow eyes \$60 Unpainted all red vinyl with yellow eyes \$70 Blue grey vinyl painted red and yellow eyes \$55	Bullmark 1970	4.75"	Jointed at arms, neck and waist. \$65
			Bullmark 1970	4.5"	Jointed at arms and waist only. \$65



glen e. friedman - seonna hong - tim biedron - shag - lynne naylor - tim biskup - liz mcgrath - camile rose garcia  
coop - paul frank - dave cooper - sinc - fafi - kirsten ulve - shepard fairey - martin ontiveros - esm artificial

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**THE FIRST GODZILLA**  
(A MILLION AND ONE STUPID VARIATIONS)

BY BRIAN FLYNN  
& MIKE JOHNSON

THE FIRST GODZILLA

BY: BRIAN FLYNN & MIKE JOHNSON

F/G/H/I/J - bullmark



F	G	H	I	J
PANTONE 330	PANTONE 330	PANTONE 316	PANTONE 3165	PANTONE 5467

B	C
PANTONE 316	PANTONE 330

G	K	J
PANTONE 330	PANTONE 3302	PANTONE 5467



marusan - B / C



G / K / J - green bullmarks





R	Q	P	O	N
PANTONE 580	PANTONE 349	PANTONE 432	PANTONE 309	PANTONE 5467

### Marusan (1966-1969)

- A Darker Blue-Green vinyl, Steep tail - Tail A (not pictured)
- B Darker Blue-Green vinyl, one copyrighted foot, red eyes, tail C
- C Green vinyl, two copyrighted feet, orange eyes, tail C
- D Bright blue unpainted vinyl, tail ?
- E Tsubaraya copyright on foot (not pictured), tail ?

### Bullmark (1970-1975)

- F Green vinyl, orange eyes, tail B
- G Green vinyl, orange eyes, tail C
- H Darker Blue-Green vinyl, red eyes, tail B
- I Lighter Blue-Green vinyl, red eyes, transition foot, tail B
- J Dark green vinyl, red eyes, tail B
- K Hawaii version, flesh vinyl with blue spray, tail D
- L Hawaii version with green metallic spray, tail D

### Reproductions

- M Unpainted flesh vinyl, bootleg from original molds, tail A, 1983.
- N Bandai re-issue with paper tag, modified tail B, 1991
- O Marusan real version (came with a minya figure) tail A, 2000
- P Marusan grey version (black and white), tail A, 500 made, 1999.
- Q Marusan bright green version, tail A, 400 made, 1999.
- R M-1 glow in the dark version. Came with a marusan history book. tail A, 500 made, 2002.
- S Marusan 7" scale version, dark green version, modified tail B, 1998.
- T Marusan 7" scale version, green version, 250 made, tail D, 2002.



original vs. repro – G / N



This article will be dealing with all the known variations to the original Marusan/Bullmark Godzilla vinyl and the various reproductions of it over the years. The article will go through the variations in terms of their importance to price and rarity, starting with the most important to the least important. First and foremost is....

**Manufacturer:**

The very first Godzilla vinyls were manufactured by Marusan, and later by Bullmark. The Marusan vinyls were produced in less numbers and are older than their Bullmark counterparts, and roughly worth 50% more than a bullmark in the same condition.

**Tail versions:**

There are four tail versions on the godzilla. The very first tail is commonly called the "steep" tail (tail A), and was only on the very first marusan figures to be released. This tail version is extremely rare, and is worth thousands of dollars for any godzilla that turns up with one. The tail can be differentiated from later tails as it makes an almost 180° turn from the base of the figure, and has 7 complete section lines along the tail. This tail version was later used on all three Marusan full-size reissues, as well as the glow M1 reissue.

Marusan then modified the "steep" tail, by softening the arc of the tail to roughly 45° at the end of the tail. During their remake of the tail, the rejoined sections do not match up smoothly, and it creates a "bump" in the tail between the 5th and 6th sections. This tail is commonly referred to as the "6 tail" (tail B) because it has 6 countable section lines along the tail instead of the 7 section lines on the "steep" tail.

It is unclear if Marusan or Bullmark modified the tail for the third time, but, at some point the end of the tail was resculpted yet again, so that the "bump" in the previous tail was removed. In this resculpt, the tail was restored to having 7 section lines, the last section being small and crooked. This is often called the "7 tail" (tail C). There is no discernible price difference for a "6" or "7" tail, as they seem equally common.

Lastly, Bullmark resculpted the tail end yet a fourth time. So far this version of the tail is only found on the two Hawaii versions of the Godzilla. The end of the tail is completely resculpted and looks seamless to the original body of the tail. This version has seven section lines as well, as is called the "Hawaii" tail (tail D). Refer to the chart on the next page for a diagram of all four tail variations.

**Spray Variations:**

As a whole the Marusan vinyls have significantly more silver spray than the Bullmark vinyls. For Marusan vinyls, the more silver spray the figure has on it, the higher the price will be. Some Marusan and early bullmark figures, especially the blue-green vinyls it seems, are almost completely covered in silver, while later figures, usually the green vinyls, have dramatically less silver paint applied. Also, Marusan figures have a very dark blue spray that runs from the top of the back of the head and down the spines of the Godzilla, while later Bullmark versions have a much lighter, almost tonal metallic blue lightly sprayed on the spines.

The paint variations that make for a significant value increase are the two different Hawaii versions of Godzilla. The first version is a flesh colored vinyl, that is completely oversprayed in blue paint (K). This is easily the rarest of the Godzilla paint variations, and actually owes more to the vinyl color change than the paint, but it is different enough in it's own right. The second Hawaii paint version is a green vinyl with a metallic green overspray, gold spines and silver eyes (L). Many times this figure is referred to as the "white-eye Godzilla" by American collectors. Technically, the eyes are silver, but, we will go over eye colors later. Both figures are extremely difficult to track down, but the green is considered to be easier to find than the flesh/blue version.

### Vinyl colors:

With the exception of the flesh colored Hawaii vinyl mentioned above, vintage Godzilla figures come in four general colors: light blue-green, darker blue-green, light green and dark green. While many collectors refer to both blue-green hues as blue, there was actually a unpainted figure in an blue vinyl, so, it is important to distinguish the blue-green from the blue, which is more accurate to their true color. Also, if you look at the main photo, it is easy to see that there are two distinctly different hues in the blue-green family. (figures H and I) To that point, through years of manufacturing and vinyl composition fluxuation, the colors tend to shift slightly within any of the four color families. For example, most light-green vinyls are very close in color, but do not always match perfectly, but look completely different when compared to the darker green vinyls. Generally speaking, vinyl color does not make a difference in price (other than the flesh version) and is just indicative of the time or factory it was produced. Blue-green vinyls tend to be older than either of the green vinyls, but some were made concurrently, so there is no rule to allow accurate dating of Godzilla vinyls by color.

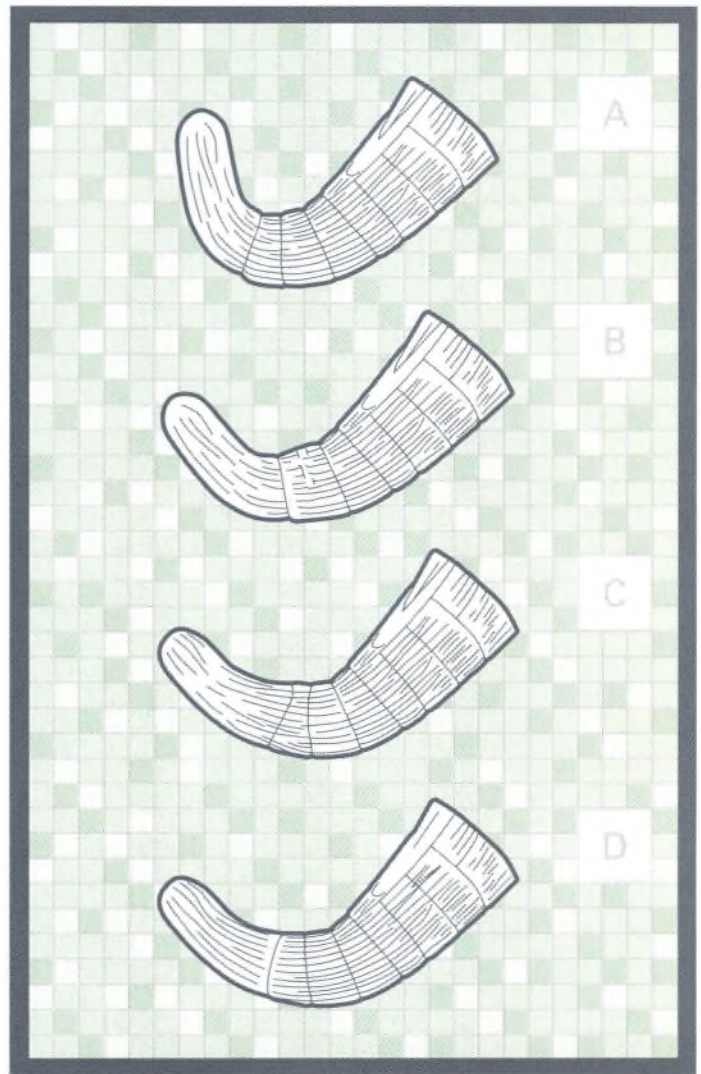
In 1983, a group of fans located the original molds to original Marusan and Bullmark vinyls, and cranked out a number of Godzilla figures in an unpainted flesh color. These figures are different from the Hawaii flesh colored Bullmarks, as they have the original "steep" tails (tail A) and not the "Hawaii" tails (tail D). Any potential flesh-colored Hawaii vinyl should be checked to make sure it is original and not a fake version of the 1983 bootleg.

### Feet copyrights:

There are two marusan feet copyrights variations; one with a copyright on both feet, and one with a copyright on the left foot and a blank right foot (see photo at top left). The version with two copyrights is a bit tougher to find, and commands about 25% more than a one foot coyright version in the same condition. There is also a version with a Tsubaraya copyright instead of a Toho copyright. I have heard of two reports of this toy, but no pictures have surfaced yet. Lastly there are the "transition" foot versions, which are blank on the bottom of both feet. These figures were made as Marusan went out of business, and Bullmark began to take over, and are generally lumped in with the Bullmark figures. All the rest bullmark releases have the bullmark stamp on the left foot and have a blank right foot. When Bandai made the 1991 reissue, they moved the bullmark stamp to the right foot, and added an additional copyright to the left foot, so that you cannot switch either legs onto an original figure (see photo on the middle left). Bandai also had a small sticker on the bottom of every 1991 reissue, but these are easily removed. The three Marusan re-releases all have smooth, unstamped feet with the copyright information transferred in white ink to the bottom of the feet. The M1 has the original bullmark stamp on the left foot, and an additional copyright stamped into the right foot.

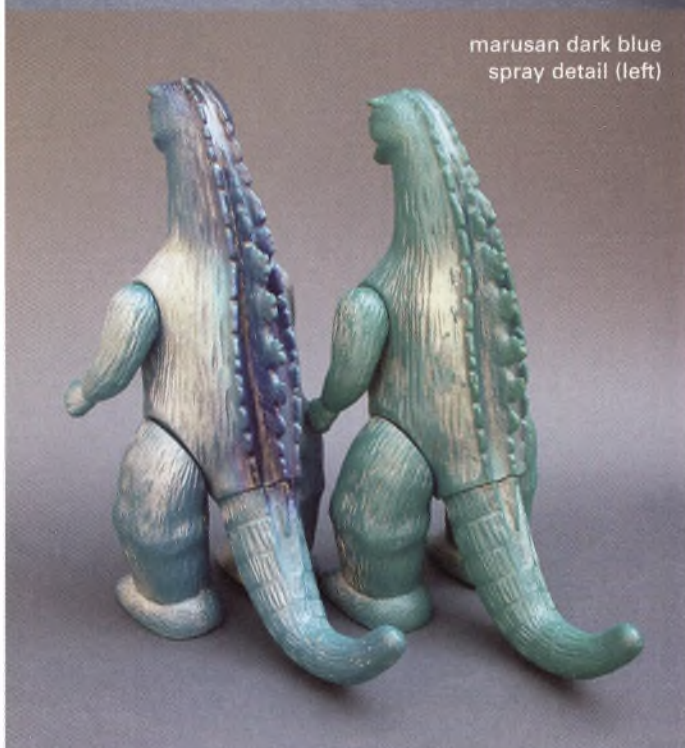
### Eye colors:

Probably the most debated, yet worthless variations around, the original Godzilla figures have (as far as have been noted so far) only three seperate colors. Luckily the colors correspond to vinyl colors, so there is no fear of an unending amount of possible colors and vinyl combinations. The first eye color is red. Red eyes are found on the blue-green vinyls and dark green vinyls. The second eye color is orange, and is found on the light-green vinyls. This color is often times referred to as pink, and sometimes white. The problem is that the orange paint used to paint the eyes was a volatile mix (chemically speaking), and seperated rather quickly





Tails B / C



marusan dark blue spray detail (left)



red and blue plastic godzillas

into its two color components - an orange mixed with a white base. So, the figures then have a variety of colors in the eye, some with more orange, some with less, some with the white fully separating from the orange, some without, and some even hinting of a bit yellow. What that leaves is a huge quandary over color variation, when in actuality, it is all the same base paint, and not different at all. The last eye color is silver, and is only found on the two Hawaii figures. Rumors abound of white and gold eyes on vintage figures, but none have surfaced that actually are a genuine white or gold paint, but rather just a deteriorated orange.

**Reproductions and Other Bootlegs:**

As talked about before, the first remake of the Godzillas figure was the 1983 flesh colored bootleg. There were several standard Godzillas and Ultraman kaiju made, as well as at least one giant size vinyl. The Godzillas vinyl was made from the Marusan mold, while many of the other kaiju were made from Bullmark molds.

In 1991 Bandai made the first official re-release of the vinyl which came tagged with a folded paper tag around the arm or neck held on by a gold elastic string. This vinyl is considerably darker than any of the original figures, but looks very similar to an original. Because of the similarity to the original figures, the 1991 reissue line was met with a very lukewarm response, and they are still quite easy to find.

Knowing that collectors wanted vinyls that varied from the originals, Marusan first released their new re-issue in a 7" scale with the original colors in 1998. The idea was that the figure would be in scale with the newer Godzillas smaller scale figures, but once again, this figure was met with a lukewarm response. In 1999 Marusan released full-size versions Godzillas in black and white (like the movie) and bright green colorways. Both were limited event exclusive figures and limited to 500 and 400 pieces each. In 2000, the Godzillas was released with a reproduction blue Minya as a 2-pack event exclusive and limited to 250 sets. In 2002 Yuji Nishimura opened his toy museum on the outskirts of Tokyo, and Marusan made an exclusive version of their 7" Godzillas in green vinyl for the opening. The back side of the backing cards of these figures have stickers that are numbered 1-250.

In 2002 Yuji Nishimura also released a painted glow in the dark version of the Godzillas figure through his company, M1. This figure came with a small, digest sized Marusan history book, and is usually autographed either on the book or header card by the ex-president of Marusan. Oddly enough, M1 changed the foot copyrights to Bullmark, but kept the Marusan "steep" tail. If M1 follows past trends, we can expect unpainted glow versions, as well as some other color variants of this figure in the near future.

Finally, there are the red and blue plastic vintage bootlegs. These are made of a thin blow-molded plastic and then sprayed with highlights in a single color. While looking almost identical in source to the Marusan/Bullmark Godzillas, upon closer inspection, they are definitely a different mold. While the form is definitely the same, the skin detail along the body is raised from the surface, as opposed to recessed on the original vinyl. Most likely, these are actually bootlegged from the Bullmark plamodel instead of the vinyl, but when placed next to the original vinyl, they look nearly identical, the red version predating the "Burning" Godzillas look by two decades.

Uh, oh. we thought we were done, but another tail variation crept up on us! With literally 18 hours until press time, we don't have time to revise the entire magazine and article to include tail E, but we didn't want to leave it out either!

Continued on page 54.

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There is nothing like seeing an entirely new genre of toys for the first time to really get the blood flowing again.

Such is the case with the Masudaya light-up and sparking figures. While most hardcore collectors know about these figures, very few own any of them. Why? Because most collectors, even the die-hards have never actually held one of these figures. Yeah, there are a few pictures here and there of single figures, but always very small, and never to scale. (at roughly 6.5-7" tall apiece, they measure up well to the standard bandai "hero" vinyls.) It seems that most every collector that has actually seen these figures in person has proceeded to begin their own search for these unique vinyls.

The light-up figures were originally intended to be a substitute nightlight for Japanese children. Rather than a wall plug-in, you had a figure of your favorite hero, whose head, when the battery compartment in between the legs was pushed in, could light-up to ward off shadows and evil at any time of the night. Along with that, the figures had full articulation on both arms and legs, so that the figure had full play value as well. What could be better? Sold as individual carded figures, the bubbles holding the figures are lightly sealed, and then stapled for good measure. All three carded examples I have seen have the seal deteriorated, but the staples are intact. Each card graphic is custom to the particular hero it contains, and there is no mention of any additional figures on the card backs, although there is an additional tag stapled on the Keiji-K figure that shows the three robots: Mazinger-Z, Keiji-K and Red Baron. As each figure had an internal battery

compartment, the majority of loose figures no longer have the small plug in the bottom to hold the battery, and many times are missing the entire internal compartment itself. These figures were played with, and later stored, and as with most battery-op toys, the battery compartments corroded and decayed rather quickly, then were later removed. As you can see from the photo above, finding loose figures with mint compartments can be a little tricky.

The next question seems to be, how rare are they? That is a little tough to answer. As these figures seem to be fairly obscure, even for the Japanese collector, the demand for them is fairly low, yet, they turn up very rarely, making them a pain to track down, and indicating a possible low production run. The last few examples that have turned up on Yahoo Japan have ranged from 7500¥-25,000¥ for loose examples, yet I have recently purchased a carded Kamen Rider V3 (not pictured yet) from a Japanese dealer, with mark-up for 20,000¥. With that in mind, it is difficult to attribute prices to any of them. The Mazinger-Z and Keiji-K seem to be the most expensive based primarily on the relative expense of their characters in general, while Tiger-7 seems to be the most affordable and common, having been imported into Hawaii and actually showing up in collections stateside.

To that same point, the Masudaya sparking Kamen Rider-X was also imported into Hawaii and turns up stateside on occasion. Other sparkers include Great Mazinger, Getta Robo-1, and Ultra Leo. While the sparkers are similarly sculpted to the light-ups, they are not quite as finessed in their overall presentation. Let's face it, the vinyls have a giant plunger in between their legs.



Most collectors have had a chance to run into the Kamen Rider-X sparking figure, and this is easily the weakest of the four figures. The character itself has very little detail in the costume (by nature of the hero himself), and the silver used to paint it is very fragile, wearing away quite easily. So, when finding a used version of this toy, it is easy to be less than enthusiastic about the quality of the figures in the sparker series, but don't let that stop you - the Great Mazinger is done very well, and the Getta Robo-1 may be one of the best iterations of that character ever produced. Nice and stocky, I get more offers of purchase for Getta-1 than just about any other toy in my collection. The sculpt of the Ultra-Leo is a bit more comical, as the figure has no visible neck, and maintains the stocky body proportions like the other figures from the series.

Once again, pricing these toys is very difficult, and there is no definite rate to gauge against. All three of the boxed examples you pictured here were bought for roughly 12,500¥ apiece, but that was several years ago, and the price has no doubt risen since then. I know of one collector that has been searching for these figures now for well over a year, and has yet to turn any of them up other than the Kamen Rider-X, and that figure was from Hawaii, not Japan.

What does this all mean? Well, I am willing to bet there are more light-ups out there that haven't turned up yet (my guess is two more for three separate groups of three), and maybe a sparker or two as well. With the demand of collectors tracking these figures increasing, you can be assured that dealers and buyers will be paying more attention to these obscure toys in the years to come.

Masudaya	Checklist
Light-ups: (roughly 6.75")	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tiger-7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inazuman
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kamen Rider V3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultra Taro
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keiji-K
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mazinger-Z
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red Baron
Sparkers: (roughly 7")	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kamen Rider X
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Mazinger
<input type="checkbox"/>	Getta Robo-1
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ultra Leo



Something is different here. Diffuse light emanates from a low point in a blue-gray sky. The air is a choking mix of fog and ochre-colored dust. You stand above a mountainous landscape. The terrain appears plausible but, like a high school reunion, not quite right. You seem to see forest and mountains from above and below at the same time. You are a giant and a hero. Somehow you missed the transition, but this is no time for hesitation...

You hit the ground with a great tremorous wave of concussion and compressed air. Buildings, trees, even the hills gyrate in deference to your might. Your quarry is a hideous, screeching monster, wreaking stumbling but calculated devastation on a distant chemical plant. His prehistoric form surges and sways amidst violent flashes of light and smoke. You have to admire, if only for an instant, the yellow-white beam he transmits from his golden headplate drawing an explosive line of destruction across towers and treetops. So cool! He is an awesome, ominous sight! Still, he must be stopped--children almost certainly are playing nearby!

You sweep across vast territories with a single stride. Your animal agile movements are swift and darting. Despite your enormity, you bring no harm to the land and its hidden residents, stepping only on barrens of gravel and dust that somehow greet each footfall. A stiff wind swirls in your wake.

In an instant, you tower above a polluted industrial complex staring directly into the monster's startled, but aggressive approach. You dig for whatever leverage can be had for a giant standing on a gravel plain. This is what you've been waiting for... Let's fight!!!

You see the monster, then yourself, a giant robot with amber-light eyes in a dull silver, almost dirty, red striped costume. Next, you see the monster hurling you into a building almost completely destroying it. Then a young man appears. He is surrounded by blinking electronics with wires hooked to his head and arms. He is grimacing with pain...

Your martial arts are formidable; the monster flails helplessly against your piston fists and flying kicks. Nonetheless, you will soon be brought to the brink of humiliating defeat. Only by some miracle of determination will you be saved--along with the timely aid of an extra powerful weapon that for some reason you have not used yet.

Inevitably, you send the monster to a piecemeal oblivion. You are the giant robot, the young man piloting the giant robot, a little boy being saved by the giant robot, and a viewer of the whole giant robot fantasy on a Tsuburaya television production of Jumborg Ace. If you are lucky enough to be eight years old, you will soon be face down in a sandbox reenacting the entire scene in a micro-world of toys. Your big-headed, two-eyed, tilt-angled viewpoint will show you everything you saw on the screen, in every cool-posed, physically anomalous detail. When you're a bit older, the tiniest inclination to illicit mayhem may even lead you to complete the reenactment by blowing a cheap plastic monster to smithereens with an M-80. (You'd never do that to a good toy!) You'll stand in reverent awe, the moment of the blast forever etched in your memory, forever symbolizing the greatness of Jumborg and the triumph of childlike heroism over a towering evil, forever commemorating the hypnotic, dreamlike play that gripped you that day.





*Opposite page:  
left to right:  
11.5" Takemi Jumborg vinyl, Jumborg Tricycle vinyl by Popy,  
10" Unlicensed Jumborg vinyl, 6" Unlicensed Jumborg vinyl.*

*This page:  
A Group shot of Jumborg-Ace and Jumborg- Nine old and new*

Tsuburaya somehow read your soul and dressed it up like Jumborg Ace...As an adult, when a young man's dreams seem distant and irrelevant, you'll realize the mighty gift Tsuburaya has given you. You'll conduct yourself with quiet humility, fully prepared should a moment for greatness ever again call out to you...

You'll...

What?!! Oh!...Sorry...lost myself for a moment there...

I was trying to describe what I saw in my first Jumborg Ace vinyl. I really did not see any of what I have described; in truth, I was not prepared to understand what I was seeing. Japanese toy art tends to be dense with allusion and subtle communication. Still, if you look at an object long enough, even we gaijin (foreigners) can begin to understand it. You just have to get some control over the emotional impact of a first sighting...

I am not sure what grabbed me the first time I saw a Jumborg Ace vinyl, either in Yuji Nishimura's vinyl book or on the web. It decidedly was love at first sight, but not the kind of passionate love you feel for a toy of great beauty or mystery--like say, Ultraman Jack (take my word for it, Ultraman Jack is otherworldly). No, it was more like the warm attraction you feel for a homely pet, like a bulldog or a fat cat. Jumborg in so many ways says he's secondary and derivative. This is clear in the toys--at least in the older ones--and it is one big reason they are so cool. Jumborg is like a half-hearted attempt to abstract and re-implement ideas that were working well in the Ultraman series--one of several such attempts during the early seventies. Early on it seemed to me that

Jumborg was a cheap copy for the masses; intriguing, yet accessible, even a bit funny...Jumborg's design seemed to adapt some of the Japanese passion for uniformed super beings to the humble man on the street. That sense of contradiction was irresistible to me...

Now, don't get me wrong. Jumborg is not just a headtrip; there are plenty of heart-pumping cool in the toys for anyone interested in Japanese vinyls.

But what is so great about a guy in a funny-looking suit wearing goggles? Certainly doesn't have that bug-eyed mystique of Ultraman or Kamen Rider, or even some of the other secondary characters like Fireman or Redman. Yes, we can say he's a robot, but with a face? But, that aside, this looks like a real guy; a real Japanese guy in a not-so-super, super-hero outfit.

Of course, these were the very things I liked about the figures... And, actually, I had it all wrong about the real guy, because I was looking at a toy rather than the show on which it was based. Where I had imagined a costumed super hero of the comic-book, Spiderman variety, popping out of his car to take on the bad guys, Jumborg was really a giant super robot. In only attending to funky-coolness of the toy, I had missed the main point of the figure. Yet, even my uninformed, emotional response was onto something; at a glance, the old toys were communicating important human subtleties of the robot and his story.

Anyways, this is just a primer, a pre-cursor to that story. In the next issue, expect a giant article that goes over the history of Jumborg in great detail, old to new, from Takemi to Tsuburaya Communications, from Japan to Thailand. See you there!

# The Briefs

are a good band to listen to if you need energy or want to get tired. Figure out which you need and apply. You can't help the crunching desire to pogo when you hear them. What the honk does this have to do with toys? Musicians like toys too. Let's see what these four punks think about them.

1. What do you think of when you hear the word Godzilla?

Steve E. Nix: 3 things: 1) The impending doom which will surely befall our current megalomaniacal civilization. 2) P.C.P. and 3) I've got two Godzillas. One on a button on my jacket and another larger one on top of the refrigerator like guarding the fruit. Fzckin' fruit.

DANIEL J. TRAVANTI: Would it be wrong if I said, Godzilla? Is this a trick question? This interview so far is awfully hard.

Lance: The weird sex tales of Raymond Burr.

2. Favorite Godzilla movie?

DJT: I'm a huge Raymond Burr fan so I'd have to say the first one. Oh wait, that's Raymond Burr that's huge. I'll say Godzilla Vs. Monster Zero!

Steve E.: Am I lame if I say Godzilla Vs Bambi? Well, Bambi's lame. Lame lame lame.

Lance: Yes, that Bambi one is nice.

3. What the fzXk do you think Mathew Broderick was thinking when he agreed to do the Godzilla Movie?

DJT: Teen Wolf.

CHRIS: The same thing he was thinking when he agreed to do project X.

Steve E.: He was thinking, "I wish to God that I had met Donovan when I had a chance to. Talk about totally fziking screwing up an opportunity of a lifetime. I'm glad that I don't think I'm bi."

4. Micronaut experiences?

DJT: I bought every one I could from the local Woolworths and the ones I couldn't afford, I'd take from my friends. Jim Quandell, if you're out there, I want my Hornetroid back.

Lance: I used to cut them up into little pieces.

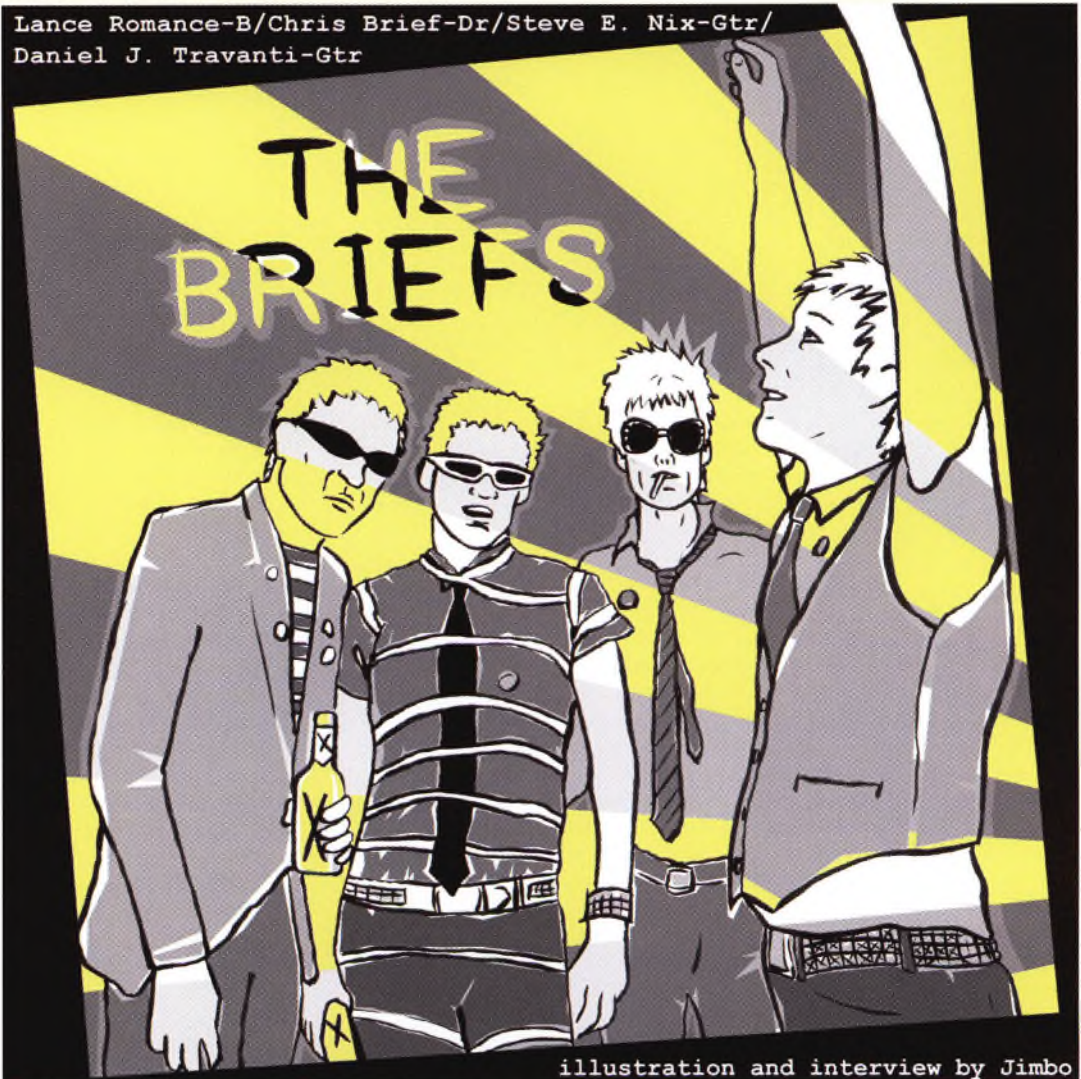
5. Favorite Micronauts?

Lance: The ones that didn't mind being cut up.

DJT: anything with a glow in the dark brain.

6. If Darth Vader and Baron Karza were drinkin' buddies, who'd be last standing?

Lance Romance-B/Chris Brief-Dr/Steve E. Nix-Gtr/  
Daniel J. Travanti-Gtr



Oh, my aching  
Hornetroid!

DJT: my Baron Karza always fell over, so I guess I'd say that Darth guy.

CHRIS: Don't underestimate the Dark side of the force.

Steve E.: Darth Vader because he is an alcoholic. He'd be the last one standing, he'd eat those pickled eggs, Slim Jims(tm) and other shht they have on the bar. He'd forget all about the force and talk gibberish.

Lance: One time I tried to drink 30 beers while wearing the Darth Vader mask. I woke up in a puddle of urine under the bridge.



"Giant Robo, smash Potter's glasses!"



Mmm...Trixie

7. If Johnny Soko and Harry Potter were to rumble, who'd win?

DJT: "Harry Potter", isn't that a porno? Go Johnny Go!

CHRIS: I hope Johnny Soko kicks Harry Potter's ass. I hate that Harry Potter.

Steve E.: I would like to think Johnny Soko, but I haven't seen Potter's movie yet, so I can't really give an informed answer. I've read in the papers that he's into black magic and that can be some pretty powerful stuff.

Lance: Harry is a big wimp, Johnny hands down

8. Superman or Ultraman?

Daniel: Hands down it's Ultraman.

CHRIS: Superman.

Lance R: Ultraman.

Steve E.: Superman or Ultraman what? What? I feel kind of in the dark here. It's dark and goddamn cold!



A rare Ultraman with Charles Nelson Reilly grimace doll.

9. Spridal and Chim Chim were my first imaginary friends and Trixie was probably my first woody. How about you?

CHRIS: Mr. Rogers, Super Grover, Punky Brewster. You figure out which is which.

Lance: I remember my first woody, didn't know what to do with it, so I beat it up.

10. Anybody ever into the Shogun Warriors toys? Shooting fists are pretty sweet.

DJT: I Still have 4 of them. I'm caressing my Great Mazinga right now.

CHRIS: I couldn't afford them. I could only view them from across the counter or behind glass. The closest I got were Go-Bots.

Steve E.: Yeah, I liked those. I didn't have one but I had a friend who had all of the killer toys. We'd mix 'em up and put the Shogun Warriors in the Star Trek transporter and have them appear on planets where they would take on the Space 1999 crew. Commander Konig would get taken as a slave.

Lance: I shot my fist all over the place.

11. Are toy collectors nerdier than D+D Dungeon masters? Who gets more play?

DJT: The D+D guys in hindsight kinda' scare me, like allot. I'd say the toy collectors get more action, 'specially the sex toy collectors.

Steve E.: At least toy collectors seem to be able to lead a sort of double life. The D+D guys you can spot in a second. They always walk around in trenchcoats and those wide-brim leather hats and ponytails and boots. I say toy collectors get allot more play.

12. What the Newcastle were you thinking when you wrote the lyrics to Raccoon?

Steve E.: I'm glad you like it. The truth is I was thinking about being a raccoon. It was a quickie. It fell together real fast.

13. I like beer.

DJT: Yes, me too.

CHRIS: I like kool aid.

Steve E.: That's very sweet. I like deer too!

Lance: Well, that's nice.

So now that you've learned a bit about these creeps, you can go see and hear them at [www.thebriefs.com](http://www.thebriefs.com). Go otaku go!



BY: CHAD HENSLEY



Many consider the 1970s to be the golden age of Japanese Science Fiction film, television, and comics. During this time period, Tokusatsu (Japanese for "special photography") movies and TV shows, anime, and manga thrived, producing some of the most memorable live-action and cartoon heroes in Japanese history. One hero from the hey-day of this decade is Denjin Zaboga, a live-action television series that first aired in Japan on April 6, 1974.

Denjin Zaboga was produced by the same team that created The Space Giants (aka Magma Taishi) and Spectreman. Roughly translated, "denjin" means electric-man; Zaboga being a human-sized robot. The television series centered on Interpol agent Yutaka Daimon who returns to Japan only to discover that his father has been murdered by the Sigma Gang crime organization because of the formula for "Daimonium"-- a substance created by Professor Daimon. In the first episode, Yutaka is brutally killed as he confronts the evil Doctor Akunomiya, a half-man, half-cyborg mad scientist, and his diabolical robot cohorts. However, Professor Daimon has implanted a fail-safe mechanism inside the heart of his son and miraculously revives Yutaka. Yutaka soon discovers an "electro-spark switch" in the shape of a pronged key that plugs into the back of his electronic brother, the robot Denjin Zaboga, and activates his mechanical heart-- a device very similar to the one implanted in Yutaka! Yutaka can command the actions of Zaboga, including the transformation of the robot into a motorcycle that he can ride.



Denjin Zaboga lasted for fifty-two episodes. The first thirty-nine are filled with plenty of kung-fu action and bizarre battle scenes as Yutaka and his robot brother seek revenge for their father's death. While Dr. Akunomiya uses his abilities to create an army of cyborg beasts and monstrous robots in his efforts to destroy them. The last thirteen episodes of the series shift plot dramatically and appear to be unpopular with fans as a result of the unbelievable story line and down-scaled costumes. In these episodes, Yutaka and his robot brother find themselves in a battle against the Dinosaur Army-- an empire of crocodile-like men ruled by an enormous, three-headed, cyborg dinosaur. In the final show, the three-headed dinosaur and Zaboga destroy each other in a spectacular battle to the death.

Soon after Denjin Zaboga aired on Japanese television, toy companies unleashed a slew of character toys from the TV program! Takara made a carded Denjin Zaboga costume for their Henshin Cyborg outfit series. Popy die-cast collectors are sure to appreciate a five-inch die-cast Zaboga created for Grip's Jumbo series line. The figure is very shogun warrior-like, especially the design of the robot's lower body. The toy's right hand is detachable (called the "Chain Punch" in the television show), connected to the arm by a length of chain. The die-cast can also be converted into a clunky version of Zaboga's motorcycle form and a compartment on the robot's back houses a homing plane (though in the television series the homing device is a miniature helicopter and is housed inside Zaboga's head!). However, the die-cast figure does not shoot anything which may have effected the toy's overall appeal at that time.



The toy company Bullmark produced some two dozen or so three-inch to five-inch vinyl figures from Denjin Zaboga, including at least twelve enemies. The five-inch figures came bagged with a header card. However, Bullmark also released two bubble-carded sets each containing four four-inch vinyl figures (Zaboga and three villains) and a set of four three-inch vinyls that came with a miniature vinyl of the Tokyo Tower in a clear vinyl bag.



One of the five-inch vinyls made by Bullmark is of Dr. Akunomiya's Golden Robot creation-- a young woman with Martian-like antennae who can transform into a fierce gold plated robot. Another vinyl bad guy is a strange bluish green, insect-looking robot called Arizaira. As for five inch good guys, Bullmark made a Zaboga in motorcycle form, Yutaka riding Zaboga in motorcycle form (called "Machine Zaboga"), Yutaka riding special attack motorcycle, one of Yutaka's allies on a motorcycle, and at least two versions of Zaboga himself.

Bullmark also released several taller vinyls including a standard sized Zaboga and a bulky, but smaller, missile-firing Zaboga that came in a window box. Perhaps, Bullmark's most ingenious Zaboga is a twelve inch vinyl and plastic version with almost all of the same abilities as his television counterpart! The top of the robot's head rotates back to expose a helicopter. The chest opens to transform Zaboga into motorcycle mode. Similar to the Grip Jumbo, the robot's left hand is attached to a chain, while his right hand is removable. Each knee of the robot shoots a missile and a door on the top of each foot opens to reveal one half of a miniature car. In the last few years, modern Japanese toy companies participating in a nostalgic retro-style toy boom have released several Zaboga toys. Takara made a new Denjin Zaboga outfit for their Henshin Cyborg 99 series. Yujin has released two Zaboga gashapon sets. Last year, Uni-Five produced a die-cast "Machine Zaboga" with Yutaka riding him. This summer, B-Club finally got into the act with a re-release of the standard-sized Bullmark Zaboga vinyl. Yet, despite the renewed interest in the transforming robot, Denjin Zaboga remains only marginally popular outside of Japan. ■



*This page: top left: 5" Zaboga and kaiju. top right: 5" and 4.5" kaiju. middle: Henshin Cyborg 99 figure with Denjin Zaboga suit. bottom left: Two different 3" kaiju and Tokyo tower from bagged set. bottom right: Four different motorcycle figures.*

*Opposite page: top: 12" Denjin Zaboga vinyl by Bullmark. bottom (left to right): Grip Jumbo die-cast figure, unif-five die-cast Machine Zaboga, and a Yujin Gashapon set.*



### The Art of Idea: The History of Gamera and Nitto Kagaku Kyozaï

#### The Beginning of an Era

In 1964, the Japanese movie industry was in trouble. More and more Japanese were staying home with their TV sets, in lieu of going to the movies. The "Golden Age" of the Toho series was about at the end. Marusan made its first Godzilla vinyl. These events would, a brief time later converge into the greatest epoch of sofabu history, the first kaiju boom. It was this year that plastics manufacturer Nitto Kagaku Kyozaï (Nitto Science Teaching Material Co. Ltd.) would come into being. Nitto made everything from telescopes to motorized fans to model kits, in an era where diversity meant staying in business.

Nitto's beginnings were in the highly competitive plastic model kit industry in Japan. During this era, the most popular model kits were WWII theme kits, such as troops, tanks, aircraft and ships. In fact, Nitto's first model kit line was called "Combat 7", which featured seven different soldiers, along with guns and equipment that would need assembly and paint. These kits were not very realistic, in fact they seemed to be more toy like which you will see as a reoccurring theme in the Nitto product lines. Nitto would begin making everything that everyone else at the time was doing such as cars, speed boats, pistols. Anything that could be a model was a model.

In 1965 Daiei Motion Picture Company, Ltd. released "Dai Kaiju Gamera." Ghidrah revitalized Toho's stale Godzilla franchise. The postwar economy of Japan was about to reach its zenith and TBS began to broadcast "Ultra Q", which would change everything, forever.

Marusan, who started the vinyl kaiju toy, would rise to the top of the rest, with its almost exclusive "Ultra Q" license. Pi Productions produced Space Giants in color. The first kaiju boom was ready to explode! But the real catalyst would come from Tsubaraya productions, when it decided to change the formula of "Ultra Q" to "Ultraman"!

#### The Great Christmas Shopping War of 1966

By 1966, everybody was jumping on the kaiju bandwagon. There was no end to the toys, both cheap and expensive that were being produced. Ultra Q, Ultraman and Godzilla toys were flying off the shelves by mid year. Nitto had been fairly quiet through this period, perhaps not having the money or facilities for a lucrative Toho or Tsubaraya license. But Nitto had been in communication with Daiei about its new franchise, Gamera. "Gamera vs. Barugon" was released in November 1966, just in time for the Christmas shopping season. Nitto released its first three Gamera kits this year, the Remocon Gamera, a large battery powered remote control model toy, and wind-up Gamera and Barugon model kits. Nitto wanted its peice of the vinyl market, and would release its own Gamera and Barugon vinyls in time for Christmas. Nitto molded Barugon in an upright position, like its model kit counterpart. Daiei's opinion of the Gamera and Barugon prototypes (which would later become Gamaron and Wanigon), was that the monsters should be able to face each other. They felt kids would more readily accept them that way. So the vinyls followed suit.



**Dai Kaiju Story**

1967 will be remembered for being the apex of the first Kaiju boom. It was really the only time "everybody" tried to get in on the action. Specifically Nikkatsu (Dai Kyouju Gappa, which Nitto would add to its series of sofubi and model kits) and Shochiku (Uchu Dai Kaiju Girara), who to this time had not made any giant monster films. The Godzilla series really took a series of wrong turns after "Monster Zero", with "Sea Monster" and "Son of Godzilla", but it didn't matter because kaijus were the hot commodity. Daiei released what would be its most popular Gamera film, "Gamera vs Gyaos", but was also was first in a new interesting sub-genre that was getting a lot of attention, ghost stories. The manga turned cartoon "Ge Ge Ge Kitaro" was probably the only real resistance to kaiju product. Nitto was already producing model toys from "Ge Ge..", so Daiei again turned to Nitto to create its "100 Monsters" series of toys and models, based on the Daiei film series. The 100 Monsters sofubi's were Nitto's finest work in the medium. I maintain that they were the first true "realistic" sofubi, acknowledging that kids wanted something that closely or very closely resembled the character. 1968 through 1970 were a dark period for Nitto in concern to Gamera. Marusan, who had conquered every other kaiju licence it seemed, had taken over Gamera too, and produced three smaller sized vinyl toys of Gamera, Gyaos and Viras. Nitto did keep its rights to make a Gyaos model kit though. The last Gamera film of the 1960's, "Gamera vs. Guiron" would not have any sofubi or model merchandising at all. At the close of the sixties, there had been three Ultra series, nine Godzilla movies, five Gamera movies,

and numerous other superhero series. The second kaiju boom was about to begin. Its catalyst would once again be Ultraman with help from Kamen Rider.

**The Nitto Decade**

Marusan for the most part went out of business in 1969, leaving its licenses to Bullmark. During this transition, two things occurred. Nitto was able to get its Gamera license back and Tsubaraya decided not to give all of its licenses to Bullmark. Changes were happening at Nitto as well. It shed its "educational" component, changed its logo and focused directly on its toy and model divisions. Between January and July of 1970, Nitto launched its single greatest toy assault on toy shelves with its "Ultra Kaiju Series" vinyls. I am guessing it was close to when Daiei released "Gamera vs. Jaiger". There were four types in three sizes Standard, Medium, Mini and Pendant. The standard size would eventually include Gamera and every adversary, plus a new Gappa. ⇒

*Opposite page: Shigeru Komatsuzaki artwork for the Gappa Model Kit.*

*This page: top row, left to right: Standard and mini Jaiger, Standard Gamera vinyl, Standard Jaiger vinyl. This page: bottom row, let to right: Medium Barugon vinyl, Standard Gappa vinyl, Jaiger battles Gamera, Standard Barugon vinyl.*

The Medium size skipped Barugon, Viras and Jaiger, but included Gappa. The mini size skipped Viras, but it was made as a Pendant toy. The Pendant toys were the same as minis, except they were molded with an eyelet where a chain could be threaded through. The pendant toys are almost always butchered, where the eyelet was cut off. So finding one with the eyelet is difficult. Nitto did brand new molds for Gamera, Barugon and Gappa, to make them more in scale with the new series, which was imperceptibly smaller than the first run.

In 1971, Nitto added the last Gamera sofubi adversary, Zigra, from "Gamera vs. Zigra". Zigra was made as a Standard, Medium and Mini figure. Shortly after, Daiei was forced to declare bankruptcy. By this time however, Nitto had over 100 different Gamera and Gappa toys and model kits. The model kit side of business was very busy, making a whole new series of Gamera kits. Nitto also added "Return of Ultraman", "Mirrorman" and "Silver Mask" model kits to its line up. The vinyls would be sold for a few more years until they were all sold.

1975 saw the last Godzilla movie "Terror of Mecha Godzilla" and a major wain in kaiju popularity. Animated Robot shows were the big thing, as well as Kamen Rider. Ultraman Leo was the lowest rated Ultra show ever, and marked the end of Ultra's ten year dominance of Japan's young male population. A new company was born out of the Japanese conglomerate firm Bandai, called Popy, which specialized in character toys from both live action and animated shows. Bullmark's passing was tied directly to live action kaiju shows, as they disappeared, so did Bullmark, closing its doors in 1976.

1975 was different for Nitto. It wasn't doing sofubi, but was still a big player in the model kit business. It did see its market share diminished however, by Bandai who made more realistic looking models, and had the valuable Tsubaraya and Kamen Rider licenses. So Nitto decided to remold its Gamera, Gappa and Gyaos wind-up walking model kits and freshen the whole series up. They brought in Shigeru Komatsuzaki, one of the most famous post war pop artists in Japan to do the box illustrations for the Walking and Running series Gamera model kits. It should be noted that Komatsuzaki-san had done other illustrations for Nitto prior to 1975, such as the Mirrorman series and just about every military model kit Nitto produced. Barugon was missing from this re-release, instead being replaced by its prototype, Wanigon!

I suspect Nitto did this for a couple of reasons, namely Wanigon looked like Barugon and Nitto did not have to pay royalties for it.

By 1977, Japan begun to show that it missed its kaiju. This was reflected in Popy's creation of the King Saurus series of sofubi. They were smaller than standard vinyls of past, but sold for around the same price (380 yen) and were more detailed and realistic. Once again the cornerstone was Tsubaraya's Ultra franchise and to a lesser degree Toho's Godzilla. So in 1978, Nitto gave us its last Gamera series sofubi, the Nitto Kawada series. So called since Nitto only manufactured the toys and Kawada distributed them. Nitto had probably long lost its own distribution network for toys. These days, Kawada is known for its Daiablocks, which are similar to Legos. The Nitto Kawadas were by far the best designed vinyl Gamera toys, and were about the same size as the Popy Kingsaurus series. They included Gamera, Barugon, Gyaos, Gappa, T-Rex and a Brontosaurus. I don't think these were produced in any great numbers. I have read that they were limited to one particular chain of department stores, but cannot deny or confirm that. Nitto re-issued its model kit line again to support this vinyl series, along with its dinosaur model kits.

I believe that the Nitto Kawada series had a lot to do with Daiei producing "Space Monster Gamera" in 1980. Gamera's popularity had come full circle, and this movie, as bad as it was, certainly helped. It also gave Nitto another excuse to re-issue its Gamera model kit series one more time. It was what I call, the last unsponsored release of these model kits.

### Sayonara Nitto Kagaku Kyozaï

All good things come to an end it seems, and Nitto would be no exception. The mid-1980's saw the last Nitto issue of its Gamera model kits, in conjunction with Uchusen Quarterly. Nitto did not go out of business, it just left the model kit business, that is until a few years ago to re-issue its Machinen Krieger model kit line. Sofubi producer Amapro made my favorite homage to Nitto, sofubi figures of Wanigon and Gamaron. They even produced a five minute movie called Wanigon vs. Gamaraon. It was a draw.

So that is a brief history of Nitto. It could be said that Gamera and Nitto helped each other stand the test of time. It still remains one of the greatest synergies between character franchise and manufacturing company to date.

### Godzilla continued...

So far, we have seen two instances of tail E, and they have both been on Bullmark figures that are covered in lots of silver spray.

Tail E is almost identical to tail D, but is noticeably different when compared to tail D. Tail E, has seven segments, and almost exactly the same patterning, but the gap around the seventh segment line is much thinner, and there are fewer detail lines, with a different pattern on the last segment. This is most obvious if you look at the long lines running the length of the final segment on tail D, while there are shorter, broken up lines on tail E. Overall, the linework is different on the entire back portion of tail, but is based on the same earlier tail version, so both tails are still similar.

Is this really a big enough difference to matter? Well, a different tail, means there has to be a different mold, so someone made an intentional change to the tail. You be the judge from there.



Tail E / Tail D



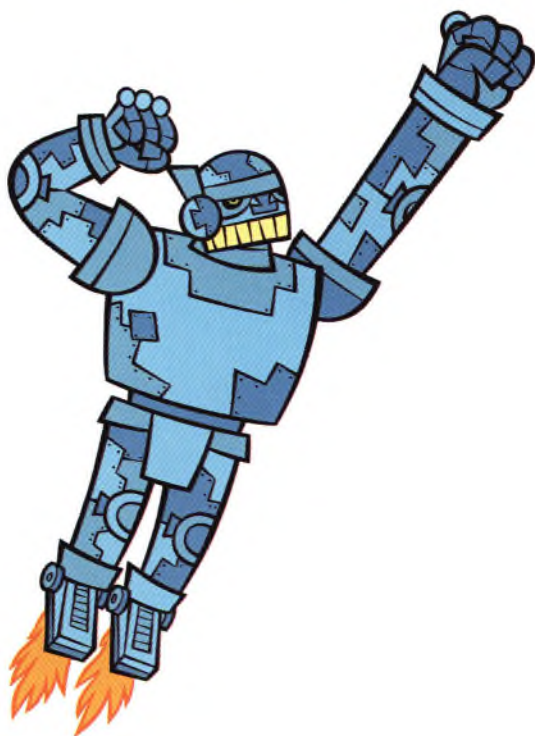
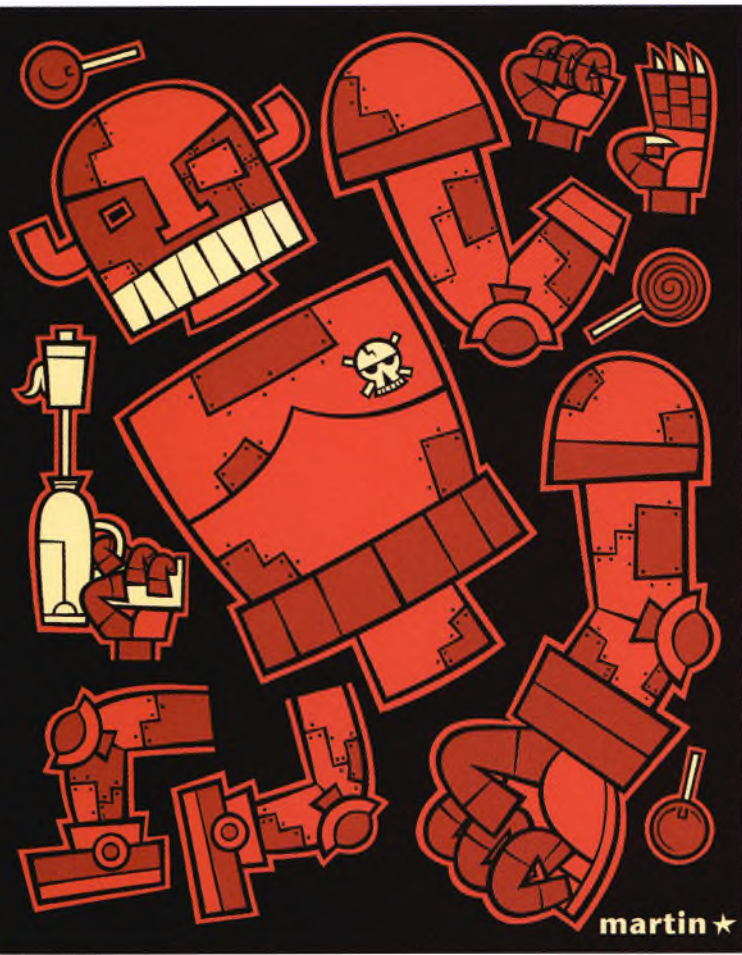
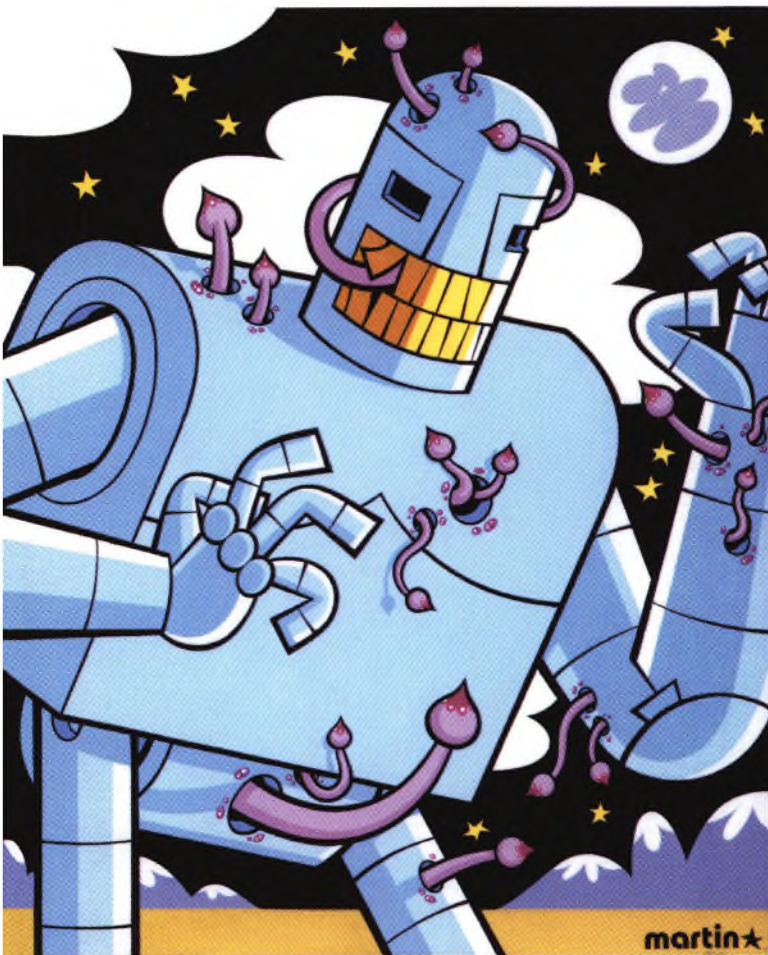


Coop is a devil-girl drawing, lead-sled driving, fez wearing, kaiju collecting, goateed spawn of all things wrong. His illustrations have appeared in just about every conceivable nook and cranny of American pop-culture, especially the ones that have not been cleaned lately. His work was just collected into the book "The Art of Coop: Devil's Advocate" by Aperient Press, and can be bought at both better and lesser bookstores nationwide.

[www.coopstuff.com](http://www.coopstuff.com)



Goro, Greenmons Garamon and Ragon are ©2001 Tsubaraya Productions, Co. Ltd.



Martin Ontiveros lives in Portland, Oregon, and growing up, had little interest in anything but comics, cartoons, movies, toys, and drawing. Somehow he has managed to channel these interests into a somewhat successful career in painting and illustration, including the Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot children's book series. Martin's work will appear both in Portland's Gallery Bink and the Sci-Fi Western group show at San Francisco's 111 Minna in January 2003.



Tim Biskup is a painter and animator living in the sunny hills of Los Angeles. His love for Japanese toys threatens to upset the minimalist balance in his pristine mid-century home on a daily basis, but he somehow manages to keep it all in check. Tim just recently returned from Japan where he participated in a three man group show featuring heavyweights Gary Baseman and Mark Ryden. Check him out at: [www.timbiskup.com](http://www.timbiskup.com) or [www.gama-go.com](http://www.gama-go.com)



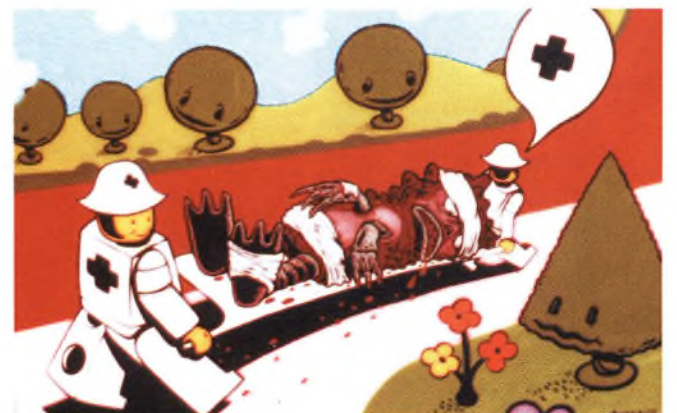
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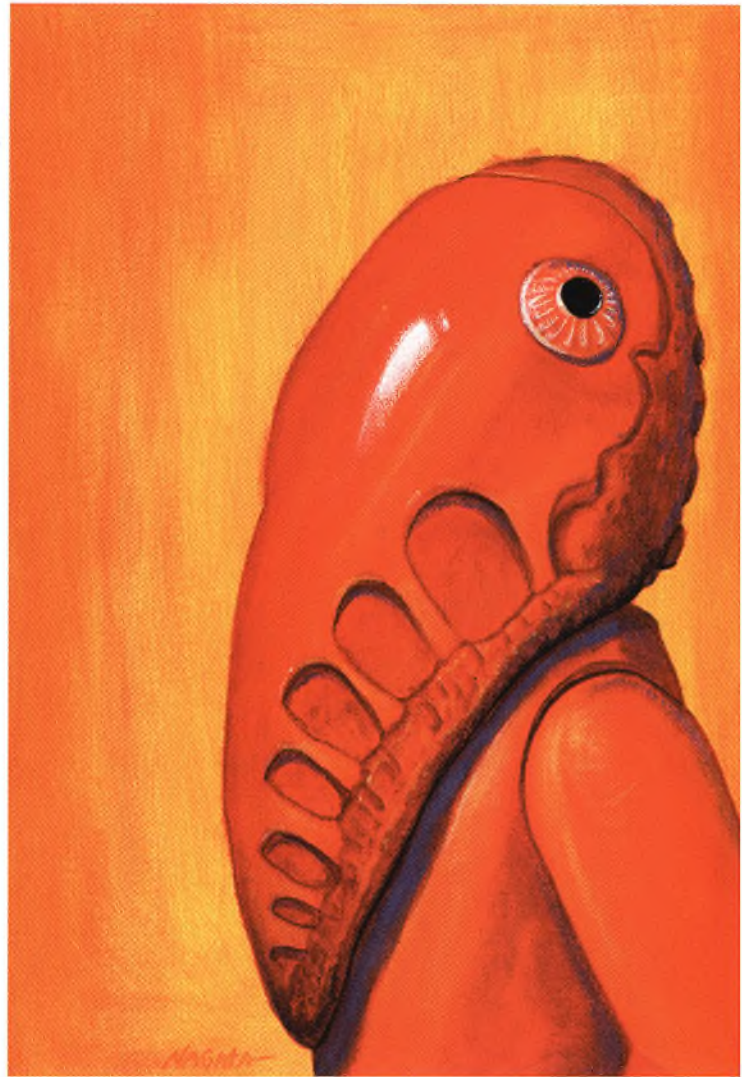
Bwana Spoons is a fine artist and freelance illustrator from Portland, Or. Bwana is also the brainchild behind ANLFM Moonshine, MFTM, Soft Smooth Brain, and a host of other crazy ideas. His new art magazine Pencil Fight should be out by the time you read this. He also has more micronauts than anyone you have ever met in your life.

Ever.

Check it all out at: [www.grasshutchcorp.com](http://www.grasshutchcorp.com)



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Mark Nagata is an illustrator living in San Francisco. He paints all day, and then watches his son Max tear the limbs off of his vintage Ultraman toys. More of Mark's work can be seen at [www.marknagata.com](http://www.marknagata.com)

Alex Wald is an International Man of Mystery and Toy-nut. Not much else is known of his secret whereabouts. See if you can find him at [www.ultramonster.com](http://www.ultramonster.com)



Rising from the depths of the humidity of Houston, Tx. Tim Brisko can photograph anything. Tim is an avid die-cast robot collector, as well as a regular contributor to ToyboxDX.com. How he does all this from Houston is a mystery to us all.

See his work at: [www.briskodesign.com](http://www.briskodesign.com)

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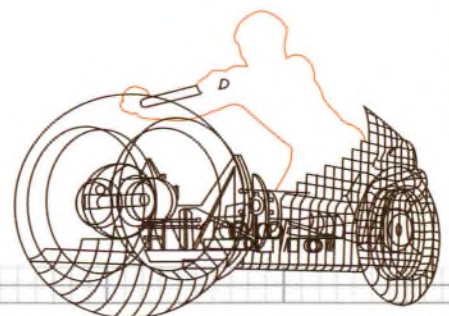
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**Looking for Japanese Items?**

**[www.m-world-service.com](http://www.m-world-service.com)**

## **MASATO INTERNET WORLD SERVICE**



**Masato Internet World Service can help you find that item you've been looking for.**

**Here are the services we offer:**

### **Japanese Auction Service**

**We can place bids for you on any Japanese auction site.**

### **Selling Service**

**We can sell your items on Japanese auction sites.**

### **Purchasing Service**

**Any type of Japanese item can be purchased.**

**In addition, Masato Internet World Service can search for your hard to find items from your want list.**

**For new or old , rare and hard to find items, contact **Masato Internet World Service****

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