



(1971) © ISHIMORI PRO TOEI

Left: Hiroshi Fujioka as Takeshi Hongo before a transformation in *Kamen Rider*.



(1971) © ISHIMORI PRO TOEI

Right: Fujioka demonstrating that he did his own stunts in the *Kamen Rider* suit.

The LAST SAMURAI

HIROSHI FUJIOKA RECALLS HIS CAREER IN JAPANESE SCI-FI

*Hiroshi Fujioka remains one of Japan's most popular and prolific actors. An icon of Japanese entertainment, Mr. Fujioka played the lead role in the original *Kamen Rider* (a.k.a. *Masked Rider*) series for Toei Studios before becoming one of Toho's leading men in the 1970s. Having appeared in such SFX films for Toho as *Submersion of Japan* (1973), *Espy*, *Conflagration* (a.k.a. *High Seas Hijack*), and *Yamato Takeru*, Mr. Fujioka's credits in the science fiction genre are legendary, but little is known about these roles in the West. Mr. Fujioka recently answered Brett Homenick's questions about his acting career in an interview translated by Yutaka Ichimura and Ms. Emiri Sato.*

Brett Homenick: How did you become an actor?

Hiroshi Fujioka: I became an actor because I had a keen interest in human beings and the history of mankind. The world of TV and movies were a great fascination to me.

Then I studied at an acting school while participating in auditions. Finally, I was scouted at one of those auditions.

BH: Do you remember working on the film *Uchu Daikaiju Guilala* (a.k.a. *The X from Outer Space*)? If so, what are your memories?

HF: It was not too long after my career started. So I only remember devoting myself to playing my role.

BH: How did you get cast in the original *Kamen Rider* TV series?

HF: I auditioned for the leading role and was chosen for that.

BH: Do you have any interesting memories from working on *Kamen Rider*?

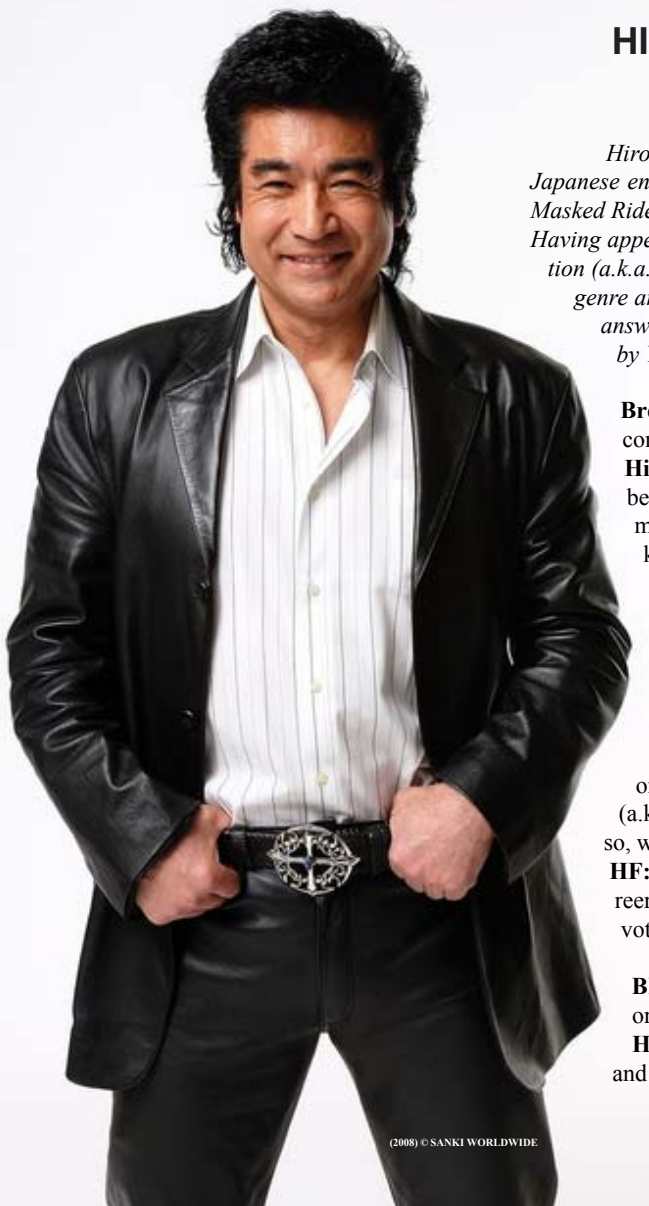
HF: In the earlier part of the series, I myself acted with *Kamen Rider*'s mask and suit on, not using a stuntman. During the shooting, I had an accident and was hospitalized with a (near-) fatal injury. Hovering between life and death, I finally could come back. I was running through the best days in my youth, devoting my life to the work. I will never forget how happy I was when I came back after the injury.

BH: What did you find difficult about working on *Kamen Rider*?

HF: I risked my life working on the earlier parts of the series, as I did both acting and suit-acting (stunts). Also, I remember the kids in those days believed I was *Kamen Rider* in real life, so they would always beg me to transform (henshin), which made me perplexed.

BH: What was Hideyo Amamoto like to work with on *Kamen Rider*?

HF: I always felt his strong influence as a sen-



(2008) © SANKI WORLDWIDE



(1984) © EMPIRE PICTURES



(1984) © EMPIRE PICTURES



(1984) © EMPIRE PICTURES

Left and above: Hiroshi Fujioka in *Ghost Warrior*, the film that resulted in him becoming the first Japanese actor to join the Screen Actors Guild. **Below:** Fujioka employs a technique called Ba tou dou with a Japanese sword. He holds more than twenty dan (rank in various martial arts skills), a true samurai!



(2008) © SANKI WORLDWIDE

ior actor and learnt a lot from his professional work ethic. I respect him from my heart.

BH: For *Nippon Chinbotsu* (a.k.a. *Submersion of Japan*, 1973), how would Mr. Shiro Moritani direct you in a scene?

HF: He was always kind and supportive to me, giving me the precise instructions during the shooting.

BH: Do you have any memories of working with Keiju Kobayashi and Tetsuro Tanba on *Nippon Chinbotsu*?

HF: I was intimidated by both of them as they were men of dignity and personality. I learnt a lot from their enthusiasm for acting.

BH: What are some of your other memories from *Nippon Chinbotsu*?

HF: Because CG did not exist in those days, when shooting the scene of an earthquake, for example, the staff actually destroyed the elaborate sets and filmed them with one take. We

did not have a chance for the second take, as all the sets, to which staff devoted their hearts and souls, were destroyed in a second. Any errors are never allowed. Each and every take was literally once and for all. It made me nervous, but I learned how concentrated and enthusiastic an actor must be.

BH: How would you describe Jun Fukuda as a director on the film *Espy*?

HF: I always felt his severe eyes on me during the shooting.

BH: Do you remember the personalities of Eiji Okada and Goro Mutsumi on *Espy*?

HF: They are great persons and actors, whom I respect very much. I learnt a lot from their personality.

BH: Were there any hard stunts to do on this film?



(1974) © SANKI WORLDWIDE



(1976) © DAIKAN PRO



(1976) © DAIKAN PRO

Left: Fujioka became renowned as an action star and frequently played police roles. **Middle:** Fujioka as he appeared in *Zero Fighter*, and **(right)** the cover for the DVD release. **Below:** Fujioka and lovely costar in *Nihon Chinbotsu*, released in edited form in North America as *Tidal Wave*.

HF: I remember the two hardest stunts especially: the fight scene with a large-built African American actor and the water scene done by myself without using a stunt actor.

BH: What was it like filming the scenes in Istanbul for *Espy*?

HF: I really like the Istanbul scenes, although we did not go there actually.

BH: Do you have any other stories to tell about this film?

HF: I believe love is more precious than life, and love can conquer anything. All you need is love!

BH: On *Tokyo-wan enjo* (a.k.a. *Conflagration*), what do you remember about director Katsumune Ishida?

HF: I do not remember him clearly. I can tell you in general, however, the directors of Toho in those days had a high caliber, although they were usually quiet.

BH: What was it like working with the non-Japanese actors in this movie?

HF: The story was about a crisis that could have actually happened. It was challenging and enjoyable to work on the film that gave me an international view.

BH: Do you have any interesting stories from the set of *Tokyo-wan enjo*?

HF: I must say that the tokusatsu (sfx) techniques of Toho in those days were just superb. We did not have CG or computers. All we could rely on was the ideas, creativity, sense, and wisdom of the devoted staff. I am still impressed with them.

BH: What would you like to tell us about working on *Yamato Takeru* (a.k.a. *Orochi the Eight-Headed*

Dragon)?

HF: I enjoyed working on that film, as it was based on the legend of Japan. I really like the Japanese tradition, culture, and history, as well as the history of the human being itself. I am especially interested in the legends of the world.

BH: Do you have any final words for readers of G-FAN magazine?

HF: I wish for the revival of the Japanese movie industry and hope that Japanese techniques, creativity, and ideas create the pictures which everyone can enjoy globally. I want to continue my journey, looking for freedom, love, dreams, and joy. I will do my best and keep challenging. I look forward to meeting every one of you in the future pictures.

Hiroshi Fujioka is a great hero who inspires us to love, to dream, to do what's right, to have courage, and to hope, not only through his roles in the movies, but in his private life. He is the real "Last Samurai" in both spirit and behavior. He believes the Bushido spirit can save the world. Therefore he expects that he can spread the Bushido spirit more through new movies all over the world!

Special thanks to Ms. Emiri Sato and Sanki Worldwide Co., Ltd., for all their help in arranging this interview. G-FAN also wishes to thank Mr. Fujioka and Ms. Sato for supplying the accompanying photographs from Mr. Fujioka's personal collection exclusively for G-FAN.

Please visit Mr. Fujioka's official Web site at: <http://www.samurai-hiroshi.com>



"TIDAL WAVE" Copyright 1973 Toho Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved.



**HIROSHI FUJIOKA'S
GENRE & TOHO CREDITS**

Hiroshi Fujioka is well known as a martial artist and is well versed in the martial arts. He holds several impressive rankings in various martial arts disciplines: Judo 3rd rank, Karate 1st rank, Battodo 4th rank, Kotachi Goshindo 4th rank, Toudo master 7th rank, Iaido 1st rank, Yari, and Shuriken.

He is also a long time member of a private volunteer group that travels to world trouble spots and refugee camps to help people by supporting humanitarian operations. He has participated in seventeen such missions.

Fujioka made his film debut at Shochiku in 1965 and took an active part in their youth line. He won fame with the popular TV superhero series, *Masked Rider*, in 1971.

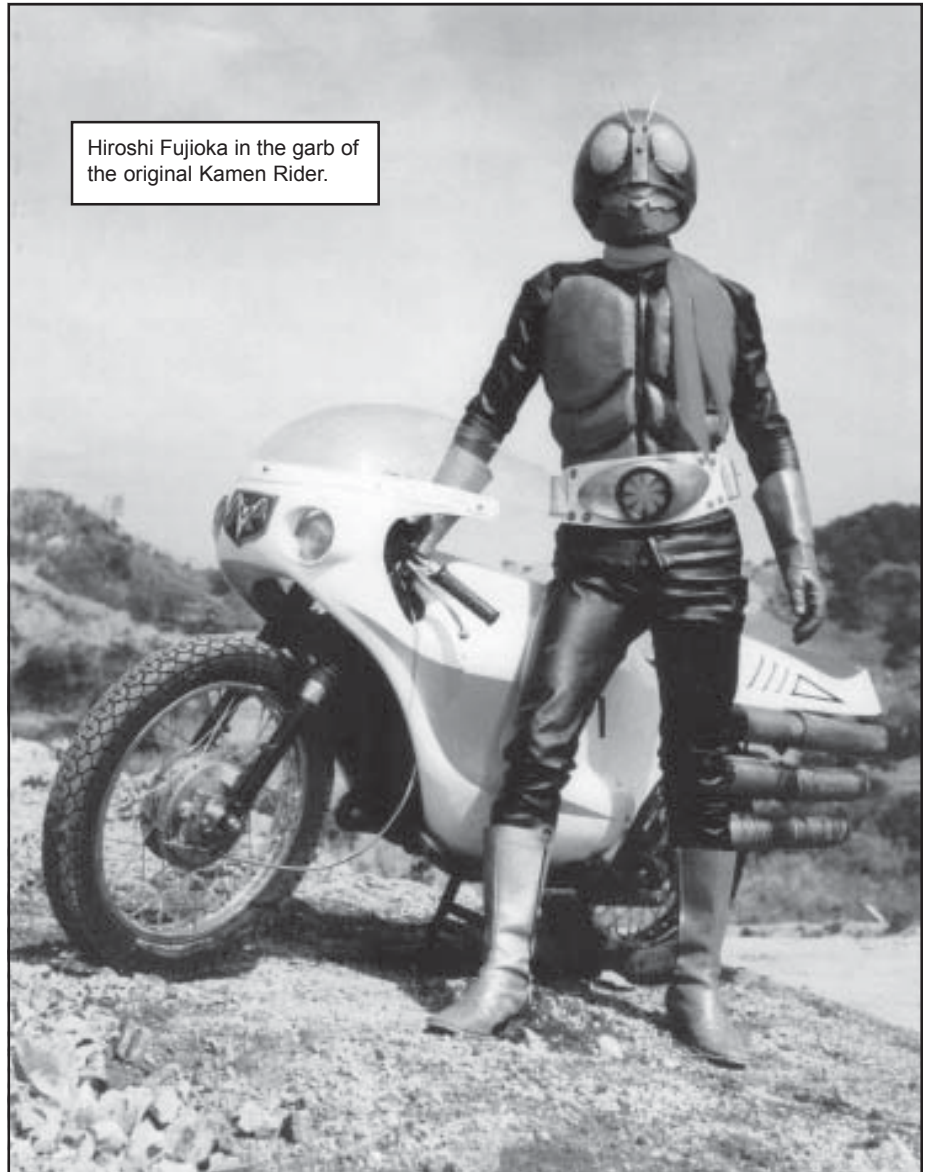
He was selected for the leading role in the Hollywood film, *Sword Kill (Ghost Warrior)*. The movie received the Critics' Choice Award at the Paris International SF Film Festival and the Hero Award at the Tokyo International Fantastic Film Festival in 1986.

In this slightly off-beat film, a samurai warrior from the Sengoku period finds himself suddenly in 20th century Los Angeles after being frozen for 400 years. Playing the lead role gave Mr. Fujioka his first taste of working in international films. He was grateful for the chance to put his talent for martial arts to use. For his role, he received the Critics' Choice Award from the Paris International Fantasy Movie Festival in 1985.

His other genre and Toho films include: *Yaju Gari* (Toho, 1973, lead role) - The story of a young detective who hunts a criminal who has kidnapped a company president; *Nihon Chinbotsu* (Toho, 1973, lead role) - This film, the biggest Japanese hit to that time, is known in America as *Submersion of Japan* and *Tidal Wave*; *Yaju Shisubeshi* (Toho, 1974, lead role) - In the follow-up to *Yaju Gari*, Hiroshi Fujioka's portrayal of a hard-boiled avenger drew acclaim from critics; *ESPY* (Toho, 1974, lead role); *Tokyo Wan Enjo* (a.k.a. *Conflagration*, Toho, 1975, lead role); *Ozora no Samurai* (a.k.a. *Zero Fighter*, Toho, 1976, lead role); *Koi no Kuchu Buranko* (Toho, 1976, lead role); *Yamato Takeru* (a.k.a. *Orochi the Eight-Headed Dragon*, Toho, 1994); *Nihon Igai Zenbu Chinbotsu* (a.k.a. *The World Sinks Except Japan*, 2006).

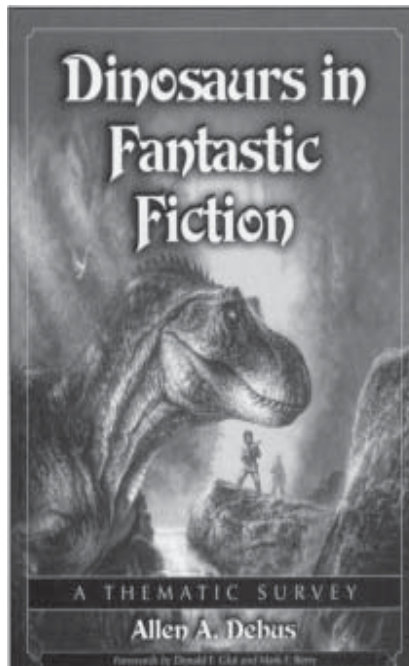
Mr Fujioka's genre TV credits include: *Kamen Rider* (a.k.a. *Masked Rider*, 1971) - Fujioka played Takeshi Hongo who was changed into a kind of superman by Shocker, a mysterious terrorist organization. He fights against Shocker to save the world. Through this role, he became a 'Super idol' in an instant, not only in Japan but also throughout world.

Mr. Fujioka is also the author of several books, including *Kamen Rider Hongo Takeshi no Shinjitsu* (1999).



Hiroshi Fujioka in the garb of the original Kamen Rider.

© ISHIMORI PRO TOEI



**Dinosaurs in Fantastic Fiction: A
Thematic Survey**

Allen A. Debus

Forewords by Donald F. Glut and Mark F. Berry

230 pages \$55 hardcover (7 X 10) ISBN 0-7864-2672-1

Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index 2006

This literary survey examines how paleoliterature originated, developed and matured from its inception in the 1820s to the present day. It follows historical trends, investigating the enlivened figurative and metaphorical meaning of fictional dinosaurs and related prehistoria. Also discussed are the ways in which dinosaur fiction mirrors contemporary ideas about subjects such as the Cold War, environmentalism, time travel, evolution and bioengineering.

McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers - Box 611, Jefferson, NC
28640 Orders - 800-253-2187; www.mcfarlandpub.com