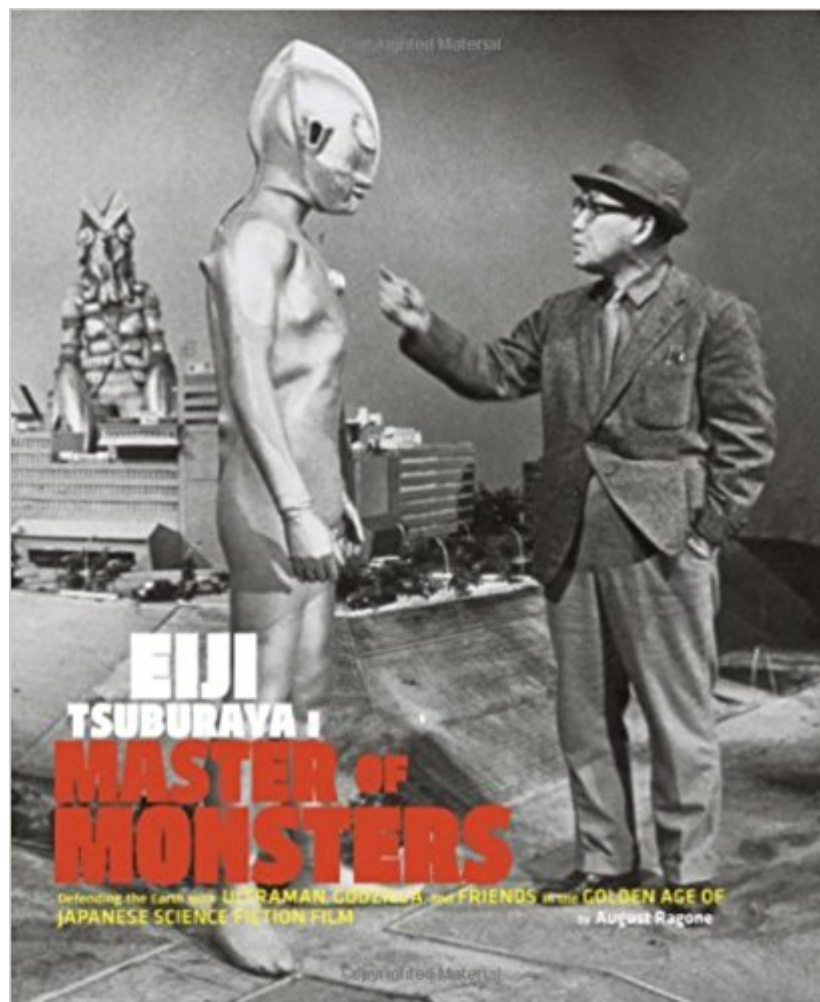




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# Eiji Tsuburaya: Master Of Monsters: Defending The Earth With Ultraman, Godzilla, And Friends In The Golden Age Of Japanese Science Fiction Film





## Synopsis

Now in paperback! Behind-the-scenes hero to anyone who's thrilled by giant monsters duking it out over Tokyo, Eiji Tsuburaya was the visual effects mastermind behind Godzilla, Ultraman, and numerous Japanese science fiction movies and TV shows beloved around the world. The first book on this legendary film figure in English, this highly visual biography surveys his fascinating life and career, featuring hundreds of film stills, posters, concept art, and delightful on-set photos of Tsuburaya prompting monsters to crush landmark buildings. A must-have for fans, this towering tribute also profiles Tsuburaya's film collaborators, details his key films and shows, and spotlights the enduring popularity of the characters he helped create.

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## Customer Reviews

"A gorgeous book filled with fantastic photos and information about the father of tokusatsu."-Kaijucast'The difference between this book and other coffee table volumes that have covered daikaiju before, though, is the staggeringly researched detail that Ragone has put into the text itself. This is not just a picture book to flip through, nod approvingly at and stick on the shelf; this is a record easily in scale with the monsters Tsuburaya created a critical and historical look at the creation and output of an industry that spanned (and has continued to span) the decades. -Tooth and Dagger, October 2007'In Eiji Tsuburaya: Master of Monsters, San Francisco based writer August Ragone has produced a fond, generously illustrated biography of the tokusatsu (special effects) genius ' -Time Magazine, December 13, 2007'Anyone with a taste for reading about frantic

production schedules and creative jury-rigging solutions will find much to enjoy in Ragone's text.'-Powell's Books.com, November 2007"[A] loving, well-researched tribute to the greatest of all Japanese Monster Makers!!"-Guillermo del ToroDirector of Pacific Rim and Pan's Labyrinth"Eiji Tsuburaya was a very reserved man on the set. Most of the direction he gave me for the performances was, 'I trust you to do it. Do what you feel is best, I'll leave it up to you.' And that's the way he was for most of the films we worked on together after Godzilla. After the wires broke on the Rodan suit, causing me to fall several meters onto the miniature set, he chided, 'It's good that you didn't die; because I need you to finish the film.' And I replied, 'That's easy for you to say; I'm the one inside the costume.' But, these things would sometimes happen. It's been forty-three years since Tsuburaya has left us, but what a happy feeling to have a book published about him after all this time. And that it came not from Japan, but from the U.S.! I'm sure the Old Man would be as happy as I am. August did a wonderful job. Thanks to all for not forgetting him."-Haruo Nakajimaoriginal Godzilla suit actor (1954-1972) and the Man of a Thousand Monsters"When I moved to America to start filming Godzilla, this was one of the few books I brought with me. Eiji is a true inspiration, and a one of a kind innovator of special effects, the likes of which we'll probably never see again in cinema."-Gareth Edwards, director of Monsters and Godzilla (2014).

August Ragone has written and commented on Japanese film and pop culture for more than 20 years. He lives in San Francisco.

For a book which first appears to be just a biography of Japan's greatest monster-maker (and I don't say that to diminish its subject, not at all), the reader is also treated to a good glimpse of the filmmaking world Eiji Tsuburaya devoted his life to. Not like the multi-mega-bucks budgets and the high stakes publicity buzz or manufactured star power of Hollywood in the USA, you get the real sense that filmmakers in Japan pursue their craft with a genuine devotion to an art form and a noble profession. Mr. Tsuburaya was clearly no exception. Japan has and has had its media stars, but this book leaves you with the impression that dedication to the work is as or even more important than any public acclaim or fat paychecks. In fact, it is abundantly clear that Tsuburaya's love for his work came at the expense of his health and perhaps longevity in his later years. This book is not just about a guy who made rubber monster suits. It's about a man and the team of loyal and dedicated artisans he assembled that, collectively, with their "sensei's" guidance, expertise, vision and instinct created some of the most impressive cinema visual effects ever. Inventing many and perfecting most of their techniques, often with skeletal production budgets--certainly not with the avalanches of

money equivalent Hollywood productions get for their SFX--you can begin to understand the sheer skill and talent these craftsmen had to fool the eye and immerse the viewer in their worlds. Not always; on occasion there might be a scene in a Tsuburaya film which appears rough around the edges or a bit stretched in quality. This can virtually always be attributed to the Tsuburaya production team being pushed or rushed for time, and/or simply not having the budget they were expecting or promised. August Ragone's book conveys these insights well, not just for kaiju films but for everything production Eiji Tsuburaya was involved in: historical pieces, documentaries, dramas, etc. This a focused history book, not just a text and photoplay layout of monster movies. The book is filled with what must be archival photographs of Tsuburaya filmmaking, both pre-production and actual on-set shooting. It's surely true that most of these images have never been seen in the USA, or even anywhere else outside of Japan before August's book gave them to us. They will let you see a view of the painstaking work that went into the detailed miniature sets these Japanese artists created from scratch. And you will get a feeling for the absolute hell it was and still can be for a stunt actor to be inside one of those cumbersome rubber monster costumes. For hours each day of filming. My take-away impression after reading about it was that they did it out of a dedication to their craft and art form, not giant paydays. All of this and more can be learned from the pages of "Eiji Tsuburaya: Master of Monsters" by August Ragone. And be assured, if you love kaiju or tokusatsu movies of any kind, or just are interested in fantasy filmmaking, your first time read-through won't be your last.

This book is the bible for anybody interested in the genre of tokusatsu, Ultraman, and Japanese science fiction in general. August Ragone has collected an impressive amount of informations and historical pictures. I find myself reading this volume cyclically, to be immersed in the wonderful world created by Eiji Tsuburaya.

I've loved Godzilla and his Brobdingnagian Japanese brethren since I was a kid, and time never dampened my enthusiasm. Now in my 20s, I was there opening day to see Hollywood's takes on the genre with 2013's Pacific Rim and 2014's Godzilla. But I have a confession to make: as time goes by my love becomes more directed to those films made in the '50s and '60s. Not just Godzilla, but the dozens of other Toho films (Mothra, H-Man, Gargantuas - and everything in between), and not just Toho, I also really enjoy those made by other studios as response to Toho's success in that era (the Daimajin films being a particular favorite) as well as the TV shows (like Ultraman). In that era the genre had an energy and spirit that has rarely been duplicated since. I feel that, aside from

some exceptions, most Japanese kaiju films made in the last few decades have been analogues to reheated leftovers. Which is what makes this book the best of all the books and magazines on the subject I've come across. In covering Tsuburaya's life and career August Ragone covers the era that interests me most. Eiji was truly the heart of Japanese science fiction and fantasy films in the '50s and '60s. He was the father of special effects in Japan, and the success and iconic stature of these films owes more to him than any other one person. Along the way we learn about his influences, the various personalities he collaborated with to create the movies and shows, like director Ishiro Honda, and we even get some insight into those movies from other companies with which Eiji had no involvement (addressed because the people who did the effects were often former members of Tsuburaya's crew!).... but that is not all! You see, along with all that good stuff I've covered, this tome is basically an art book! Hardly a page goes by without some amazing images. There are many posters and promo stills, but most are behind-the-scenes shots of the monsters and miniatures being built or incredible behind-the-scenes images showing the monsters and miniatures in the process of filming. It's quite a trip to see so many photo's of Godzilla patiently taking direction from Tsuburaya! Unfortunately, Tsuburaya didn't live past the decade where he did his greatest works, but his legacy lives on in every thudding footstep. Buy this book. You won't regret it!

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