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Interviews: ComicsOne and kung fu comics

Posted on Friday, May 07 @ 01:54:08 2004 by [Staff](#)

[bckat](#) writes *"ComicsOne advertises itself as "Your #1 source for kung fu comics" on its web site. At WonderCon 2004 in San Francisco, I spoke with Editor-in-Chief Shawn Sanders about what makes ComicsOne unique as a publisher and vendor for kung fu comics. Here is what he had to say..*



K: Kat Avila
S: Shawn Sanders

K: What are "kung fu" comics?

S: "Kung fu" means "skill." Speaking generally, kung fu is any martial art originating in China with a strong background from Shaolin Temple - China's quintessential school for kung fu.

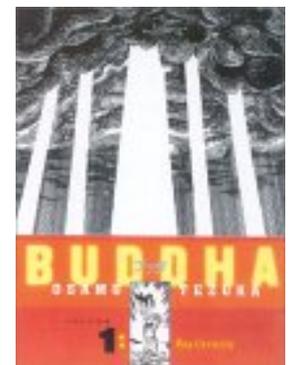
Any comic displaying kung fu as a primary means for the protagonist to dispatch the

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bad guys (or vice versa) could easily be deemed a “kung fu” comic. However, Chinese kung fu comics are usually set in a world full of powerful superhuman kung fu practitioners. Stories focus on the lives of said practitioners, including master-pupil relationships and pupil-pupil (or kung fu brothers and/or sisters) relationships. The intricacies of their numerous kung fu styles and the ramifications of traveling down the “kung fu path” are also strong plot points in Chinese kung fu comics.

These comics are often adapted from kung fu novels or movies, most of which have never been translated for American audiences. The illustrations have a unique kinetic, cinematic appeal that often leaps from the page. The artwork is full-color with dynamic creativity and presentation. Each book is so full of life that readers may feel like they are actually watching a full-featured Hong Kong kung fu movie.

K: Was your Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon series adapted from the movie?

S: Our Crouching Tiger comic is adapted from the novels, NOT the movie.

K: What is your understanding of wuxia fiction?

S: These are usually (and not unlike the kung fu comics) romanticized, soap opera-style Sword & Fantasy novels heavily steeped in Chinese mythology, traditional Chinese medicine, and religious/philosophical themes from Buddhism and Taoism. You'll find a strong blend of kung fu action relationship drama.

K: As editor-in-chief for ComicsOne, what are the major differences between Chinese comics and Japanese manga? We've talked before about a lot more narrative, focus on master-pupil relationships, cinematic flair.

S: What I just said regarding wuxia novels applies implicitly to kung fu comics. Now tack on the enlarged size format, which beautifully displays the intricate artwork from classic watercolor painting to cutting-

produced mature stories that dealt with injustice, human rights and the environment. Buddha: Kapilavastu is one of those stories. [Read the Review!](#)

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edge computer graphics.

K: Jademan translated and sold single issue kung fu titles way back in 1989. Do you know what happened to them?

S: Jademan folded from declining sales and legal issues that I am not completely clear on.

K: ComicsOne was started by owner Robin Kuo in 1998 with e-books. Why did ComicsOne move away from e-books?

S: ComicsOne moved away from e-books because there just wasn't a strong enough market for that format of literature. Nothing beats holding a gorgeous work of art right there in front of you.

K: Besides kung fu comics, what else does ComicsOne publish?

S: ComicsOne publishes some of the more obscure titles from Asia. We also publish Japan's Crayon Shinchan (about an obscenely mature five-year old toddler, an Asian Dennis the Menace) and Iron Wok Jan! (a zany cooking comic with the intensity of a kung fu film - complete with real-life gourmet dishes), and Korea's My Sassy Girl based on the hit movie of the same name.

K: At a convention I think I can find ComicsOne by looking for the crowd watching a Storm Riders video. Which comic conventions does ComicsOne regularly attend?

S: Anime Expo, FanimeCon, San Diego's Comic-Con.

K: Anything you want to add about ComicsOne?

S: ComicsOne offers readers a short but exciting glimpse into various kung fu comic graphic novels. From historic period pieces to modern-day exploits and sci-fi adventures, ComicsOne has a kung fu title for you!

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