

## APPENDIX 1: IN SEARCH OF HOSHIZURU

Helen McCarthy

In 1974, a costume event was held in Kyoto, at the 13th Japan Science Fiction Convention, Miyacon. The event included the earliest documented anime cosplay at an SF convention. The character was Hoshizuru from *Uchujin PiPi*, the costume was made and presented by the all-female SF fan group Warp-In and the cosplayer was Ms. Akanuma.

This information is contained in Yasshi Takahashi's first-hand account and digitised 8mm film from Miyacon.<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Takahashi-san for sharing his film and memories of the event.

We have known for some years that the Miyacon event was the first programmed costume event at a Japanese SF convention, possibly the first such event anywhere in Japanese fandom. I have presented the convention book cover and the little available information of the costume event in my cosplay history talks at the FANS Conference and Project: A-Kon over the last decade. No further information or image from the event was known to Anglophone costume scholars.

I occasionally search the web for early Japanese events known to have included costume. In July 2022, while working on an essay for the FANS Conference journal *The Phoenix Papers*, I found a digitised 8mm silent film of Miyacon on YouTube. It was posted by Yasshi Takahashi, Miyacon attendee and one of the participants in the costume show in March

2020. It documented snippets of Miyacon, including the costume show.

At the time of writing (early August 2022) the video has been viewed over 750 times, but it was not commented on until June 2022, when user efla2013 wrote that they were in high school when they attended Miyacon, and the “precious film” brought back vivid memories. Takahashi-san replied with further information about the event.

I was the next person to comment, posting my thanks in July 2022. Takahashi-san replied with further information including a breakdown of the costume show and the names of some participants.

I added a link to the YouTube post to my essay, and submitted it for publication. I was otherwise engaged for the rest of July, but in the first week in August, when time permitted, I went back to the film and comments. I wanted to identify any anime characters involved in the event. The earliest anime cosplay in Japan already documented in English was a 1976 *Uchuu Senkan Yamato (Star Blazers)* cosplay at a manga event in winter 1976. I hoped to find something earlier.

The video included a skit involving Captain Future, but that had to be based on the pulp novels as the anime series did not appear until 1978. But the costume titled “Hoshizuru” nagged at something buried in my memory. The costume consisted of the head of a large bird, with a pair of legs ending in flippers emerging from the huge mask. The beak opened and closed. By today's standards, the technology and

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZMFdhzPvy4>

materials used could certainly be improved, but the concept was ambitious, and on that early silent video the overall effect was impressively eerie.

I only found one anime character named Hoshizuru in any show predating Miyacon. *Uchuujin PiPi* (*Space Alien Pippi*) is Japan's first hybrid live action/anime show, intended for young children. It first aired in 1965, when many of the attendees at Miyacon would still have been in elementary school. The show is now known from only two surviving episodes. Japanese online sources confirmed that it featured an evolved crane of the future. The character was created from a bar snack by SF writer Shinichi Hoshi, a drinking buddy of *Uchuujin PiPi*'s writers Sakyo Komatsu and Kazumasa Arai. Komatsu allegedly named it Hoshizuru, and its scientific name was given as *Stellagrus bemoidie* (big-eyed-monster-like star crane).<sup>2</sup> In the anime, Hoshizuru was voiced by Tatsuyuki Ishimori.

Further research into the character (see Appendix 2) confirmed that this was definitely the character cosplayed at Miyacon. Since 50 of the 52 episodes of *Uchuujin PiPi* are lost, including any in which Hoshizuru appeared, this may be the character's only cosplay appearance.

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<sup>2</sup> The genesis of the character throws an interesting light on the connections between literary SF, manga, anime, and television and their creators. I will go into more detail elsewhere.

## APPENDIX 2: DOCUMENTING HOSHIZURU

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In 1974, a costume event was held in Kyoto, at the 13th Japan Science Fiction Convention, Miyacon. The event included the earliest documented anime cosplay at an SF convention, Hoshizuru from *Uchuujin PiPi*, made and presented by the all-female SF fan group Warp-In and worn by Ms. Akanuma. This information comes from Yasshi Takahashi's first-hand account and digitised 8mm film.<sup>3</sup>

The story of Hoshizuru's evolution as an anime character, and the fact that two other skits in the costume show were based on works by the SF novelist Sakyō Komatsu, who co-wrote *PiPi*, throws light on the intersection of literary SF, manga, anime, TV, and fandom in 1970s Japan, and says something about the creative potential of bonding over beer.

Komatsu discusses the genesis of Hoshizuru in *The Truth of Alien Pipi* in *Sakyō Komatsu's Library*, now archived on his official website.<sup>4</sup> He and *PiPi* co-creator Kazumasa Hirai were both SF novelists and hung out with other SF novelists. One of their drinking buddies, Shinichi Hoshi (1926-1997) inspired the *PiPi* character Shinsuke Hoshino, an unsuccessful manga artist. He must have had huge comic potential because he also featured as a major character in Osamu Tezuka's *W3*, aka *Wonder 3*.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Hoshi vetoed adaptations of

his works into other media during his lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

Hoshizuru was based on a snack cracker. Hoshi spotted this snack in a bar in 1965 when he, Komatsu, Hirai, and fellow novelists Yasutaka *Paprika* Tsutsui, Aritsune *Great War* Toyota and Masashi Otomo were having a few drinks, and made a sketch of it. The sketch is still preserved in the Hoshi Library and reproduced on the Komatsu webpage referenced above. It is precisely the costume displayed at Miyacon almost a decade later.

"It is said" (according to Komatsu) that Komatsu named Hoshizuru. He notes that Hoshizuru was featured in episode 34 of *Uchuujin Pipi*, aired on 25 November 1965, and that "it appeared in the anime soon after it was born" – which suggests a fast turnaround from bar to script to screen.

This episode, along with another 49 of the 52 made, is lost. However, Komatsu kept his meeting notes on the ecology of the star cranes as they appeared in the series. They live on *PiPi*'s home planet and come to Earth to deliver his lunch. Their cry is "meow meow...because children hear meow meow." They eat anything, and whatever they eat enables them to lay an egg, leaving behind a baby crane when they return home. At the end of the episode, a star crane named Hinazuru eats the word "mata ne" (continued) off the screen and it turns into

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZMFdhzPvy>

<sup>4</sup>

<https://sakyokomatsu.jp/1119/> entry dated 2021/6/28 accessed 08/08/2022

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, [https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/hoshi\\_shinichi](https://sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/hoshi_shinichi) accessed 09/08/2022

an egg from which a second star crane hatches.<sup>7</sup>

After Hoshi died in 1997, Komatsu designated his birthday, 6 September, as Hoshizuru Day. He also named one of his cats PiPi because it was “alien-like” with a big head and ears. The show and its associations obviously had strong personal significance for him – his website suggests it may have been “a laboratory for Sakyō Komatsu’s creative activities” and mentions similarities with many other works including Katsuhiro Otomo’s *Akira* and Komatsu’s own *Ashita Dorobo (Tomorrow’s Thief)* and *Kochira Nippon (This Is Japan)*.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, some of the stories and concepts in *Uchuujin PiPi*— trying to turn the trashy city of Tokyo back into a field, dreaming a world without people or infrastructure, using alcohol as tap water and then almost exploding the magma in botched attempts to fix things, going into the past to collect rainwater, trying to bring ice by spatial tube from Antarctica, using a magnifying glass to observe every stage of a life from infancy to old age – are big SF concepts. PiPi’s tiny spaceship can go anywhere in space and time, can disappear, and can easily accommodate human children with “a little co-ordinate axis transformation.”<sup>9</sup>

The relationships started or cemented on the show were demonstrably influential. An *Uchuujin PiPi* manga, written by Hirai and Komatsu with art by Shotaro Ishinomori, made its debut in November 1965 in Kodansha’s *Tanoshii Yochien (Fun Kindergarten)* magazine. Ishinomori would work with Hirai again on *Genma*

*Taisen (Harmageddon)* and with Komatsu on *Mirai no Senso (Future War.)*

The music for *Uchuujin PiPi* was written by Isao Tomita, one of the giants of electronic music; Komatsu would work with him again in 1969 on the puppet TV anime *Kuchu Toshi 008 (Aerial City 008)* based on his serial in Sankei Shimbun’s *Gekkan PTA (Monthly PTA)* magazine in the same year where *Operation Spring* shows a magma explosion beneath the Arctic. In 1979 Komatsu produced Tomita’s Pyramid Sound Stereophonic Live “Electro Opera in Budokan” at one of Tokyo’s most iconic venues.

To return to the convention costume show that sparked my interest in Hoshizuru, it was something of a Komatsu special. Komatsu’s first novel, *Nihon Apacchi-zoku (The Japanese Apaches, 1964)* inspired another of the show’s skits and was a seminal work in Japanese cyberpunk.<sup>10</sup> His novel *Japan Sinks* inspired the skit in which Yasshi Takahashi took part.

Although the prizes were taken by a long wrestling skit featuring the Shōwa Emperor and Empress and a representation of C. L. Moore’s *Shambleau* starring a girl in red PVC and an ankle-length red wig, Komatsu provided the lion’s share of the inspiration. This is certainly not his greatest claim to fame, but thanks to the skits and costumes his work inspired at Miyacon, he has a place in cosplay history.

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<sup>7</sup> Komatsu, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Komatsu, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> This immediately puts one in mind of the TARDIS.

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<sup>10</sup> Takayuki, Tatsumi, *Full Metal Apache*, 2006