



## KENSHIRO IS BACK!

Packed with awesome visuals and head-exploding action, *New Fist of the North Star* totally rocks! *by Dennis A. Amith*

### NEW FIST OF THE NORTH STAR DVD VOLUMES 1-2

Suggested for 17+, 55 minutes, 2004  
(ADV Films)

I remember over a decade ago, when I first watched the “Hokuto no Ken” (Fist of the Northstar) film. It was definitely one of the coolest, darkest and violent anime I have ever seen. And through reading the manga on “Shonen Jump”, many of my friends during those old school days couldn’t get enough of the series.

Definitely a staple in the history of Japanese anime and manga, the series has captivated audiences in different parts of the world.

In the early 1980’s, the manga sold 60 million copies in five lan-

guages, worldwide.

The manga series created by Buronson (writer) and Hara Tetsuo (artists) spawned two hit television series, two animated feature films and one live action movie.

It’s been a very long time but Kenshiro is back!

The series returns with a three volume original animation DVD release from ADV Films based on a novel by Buronson which takes place after the last series and films were done. Buronson wanted fans to know what has happened with Kenshiro since the TV/manga series.

In the first volume titled “The Cursed City”, the focus is on the “Lost Land”.

Continuing the theme of a land

devastated by war, water is very difficult to come by that many men trade their wives or daughters for water with Sanga, the merciless lord of the City of Lost Land.

Of course, there are a group who are rebellious against Sanga and his minions and they live in the “Village of Freedom”.

This is where two of the lead characters are from. Tobi who sells information (like where to find good water) to villagers, always wonders if his little brother Bista ever survived the war and the woman he loves, Sara, the healer of the village uses pressure point techniques similar to Kenshiro’s “Hokuto Shinken” techniques.

As for our main protagonist, Kenshiro, the heir of the The Fist of the North Star has had enough of Sanga and his minions and what they have done with the Lost Land by murdering, enslaving and causing fear to the villagers.

Let’s just say that the last thing anyone wants to do is mess with Kenshiro, so to say the least, volume 1 of the new series makes up one exciting story line that leads up to an awesome battle between Kenshiro and Sanga.

For those familiar with the series, there is definitely enough violence and mayhem to definitely keep “Fist of the North Star” with its roots.

As for the voice acting, although there is a new Japanese voice actor for Kenshiro, the voice acting in my opinion is perfect. From Kenshiro’s stoic voice to his trademark “yah-yah-

## what are we watching on dvd

yah-yah-yah”.

For English dub fans, I can say that you won't be disappointed because the voice acting is also very well done in this series.

As for sound, as always, the English track has a 5.1 mix but I was very stoked (and I must admit...a little shocked) to hear the Japanese track with a 5.1 mix. A definite plus for those who enjoy watching with the original Japanese dialogue. The audio and to hear explosions going from different directions via your home theater system is always a blast.

For J!-ENT fans, the special features include a treat for fans of Gackt.

The rock vocalist (former lead singer of visual kei band, Malice Mizer, now soloist) and popular television personality is featured

in the press conference (along with Buronson and Hara) regarding his role as a voice actor of Seiji and singing the ending theme song for the anime series.

In interviews, Gackt is not exactly the most talkative, Japanese media knows that, so it's interesting how they try to extract as much from him as possible. Very interesting to say the least.

There is also an interview with the American dub voice actors regarding their feelings of the series and their characters.

Also, a very interesting addition to the special features is an interview with Relson Gracie of Jiu Jitsu Sensei regarding the martial arts of “New Fist of the North Star”.

The martial arts pro discusses the usage of pressure points and

a comparison with the anime and reality and answers questions such as “can pressure on those multiple pressure points cause someone's head to explode like in the anime?”

On the second volume titled “The Forbidden Fist” after what transpired on volume 1, the story continues with Lord Doha (Bista) who is near death and the only way to keep him alive is by getting a certain type of medication. Unfortunately, the only way to get that is going through the Clifflands, a land haunted by demons who practice a mysterious killing technique.

Only one man is tough enough to go through that challenge, so Kenshiro leaves the Lost Land while another mysterious man of power named Seiji tries to move

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in and take control.

This volume focuses on Kenshiro and the martial arts of Hokuto and Hokumen but also on Seiji and why he is such a bastard.

Obviously, this volume is the bridge setting up for the explosive final volume which leaves me highly anticipating a battle between Kenshiro and Seiji. I can't wait!

As for the special features on volume 2, J!-ENT fans will be happy to know that there is another interesting featurette at Gackt's first major voice acting role (Seiji) and the media's attempt to get him to talk about his role. And in case if you were wondering, they do succeed. Also, it was quite interesting to see Gackt go to the voice recording room with two bodyguards which prompted a question from media about that. Very interesting!

Also, a look at behind the scenes of the American voice actors during their recording and an interview with Michael Zang of Jai Yen Yen Street Combat & Self Defense System showing comparisons with the animation and reality.

Both volumes feature the character bios and ADV previews.

The return of Kenshiro and the "Fist of the North Star" series was definitely a treat for many fans and so far, I have been enjoying the story line and the visuals of the anime.

You don't necessarily have to watch the previous TV series (released by Manga Entertainment), watch the animated or live version of the film or read the manga (released by Viz) to understand the story line of the new OAV's but if you did, it would help you understand Kenshiro's powers and also the scars on his chest. Also, I think you would enjoy this "New Fist of the North Star" even more. But on its own, without previous knowledge of the series, I have no doubt in my mind that you will enjoy the new series.

One thing I also want to bring up is that "New Fist of the North Star" is definitely not meant for youngsters and there are some gruesome fighting sequences as well as nude scenes, thus the 17+ rating.

As for those of you who were big fans of the original series or want to see watch a very well done anime action series, you won't be disappointed with "New Fist of the North Star".

A definite must have for the collection of anime action fans. It truly rocks! **A**

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