

EAST ASIA AND MANGA CULTURE: EXAMINING MANGA-COMIC CULTURE IN EAST ASIA

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INTRODUCTION

It was in the 1980s that Japanese *manga* and *anime* (animation film) were first reported as making major advances into the world stage. Even today (particularly in the current post-bubble era in Japan), some maintain that *manga* and anime, cultural aspects native to Japan, enjoy worldwide popularity. Though *manga* and *anime* have the potential to become global products, the reality is not so simple. In fact, *manga* and its globalisation cannot be fully understood within a framework that is premised on the view that *manga* is a cultural aspect peculiar to Japan. This report discusses the results of investigation conducted on *manga* in East Asia and proposes a new framework for understanding *manga* and comics.

In this report, the following definitions apply: *manga* for Japanese story-telling comics produced after World War II (WWII); comics or BD (*bande dessinée*) for Western story-telling comics; *manga-comics* for works that fit neither of these two definitions nor in cases which include both. These terms are used for convenience to separate the above categories from others such as satirical comic pictures, and one-frame comic drawings and cartoons.

GLOBALISATION OF MANGA

The globalisation trend of *manga* can be broadly divided into two regional areas: Asia, and Europe and the United States.

Asia: Centring on the former colonies of Japan, including Taiwan and Korea (ROK), copies produced without permission called 'pirated editions' or 'imitations' were distributed in the region shortly after World War II. Later in the 1980s, following economic growth and the progress of democratisation in the region, more and more homes began to own television (TV) sets

and Japanese-made *anime* and television programmes became popular. In 1991, Star TV (satellite broadcasting for Asian countries) launched programming services and this helped to accelerate an *anime* boom, followed by a *manga* boom. Almost at the same time, copyright-related offices of Japanese publishers were finally put in place and established, and a new age of publication based on formal agreements was realised. In 1997, however, the spread of *manga* temporarily lost steam following the economic crisis in Asia.

Europe and the United States: There had originally been a world market for American-style comics and cartoons.¹ In Europe, BD, which mainly developed in France and Belgium, enjoyed popularity. Japanese *manga* was translated in the US and other locations infrequently and in very limited amounts. In the 1980s, the age of multi-channel satellite broadcasting emerged in Europe (in contrast to Japan and the US, broadcasting stations were owned mainly by the state in most countries). Because these broadcasting stations were facing a shortage of visual media content, they aired large quantities of cheap Japanese *anime* that were not protected by copyright agreements. In or around 1990, the general situation changed greatly as the viewing audience who had watched Japanese *anime* in the 1980s became purchasers of Japanese *manga*. Initially, English versions produced in the US arrived in France via the United Kingdom, but eventually formal agreements came to be concluded directly with publishers. By a curious coincidence, a great quantity of *manga* was exported to the West almost at the same time as they were exported to East Asia.

There are some common features between the above two aspects of globalisation. In terms of market characteristics, *manga* sold on the market is divided into two types: a small number of items with a large volume

of sales and a variety of items with a small volume of sales, without any in-between types.² Although it is often reported that Japanese *manga* and *anime* are 'dominating world markets', in actuality only a few – such as Dragon Ball, Sailor Moon, and *Pokemon* – have attained success in world-scale markets.

In turn, many so-called 'maniac' works such as *Evangelion* which has only a limited number of readers even in Japan, have been translated in many different countries. This type of *manga* consists of products classified as 'a variety of items with small volume of sales', and the main purchasers are young otaku (hardcore fans) who wish to buy as many *manga* works as possible. The leader in the world market of comics and cartoons is by far the United States.

Characteristics of the East Asian market compared with the European/US market are as follows:

1. In terms of *manga* types, humorous Japanese works based on everyday life such as *Doraemon* and *Crayon Shin-chan* enjoy tremendous popularity. In addition to *manga*, the animation film *Ikkyu-san* which has no original *manga* work and the non-*anime* TV drama *Oshin* have enjoyed popularity since the 1980s in many regions.
2. Local *manga* publishers produce Japanese-style *manga* in addition to translated versions of Japanese *manga*, nurture local comic artists, and have gained some market share. In Taiwan and Korea, in particular, *shojo manga* (a genre geared towards young teenage girls) enjoys brisk sales.
3. In the 1990s, supported by a synergy with video games, TV dramas, music and 'fancy goods', *manga* permeated local society at a faster pace and to a wider extent than similar phenomenon observed in the West.

Regarding the first characteristic: *Doraemon* can be termed a classic popular *manga* in East Asia, while the work is almost unknown in the West. Though *Doraemon* was aired in some areas in Europe, it did not enjoy the popularity it had in East Asia. It is not easy to judge how children in a country will respond to *Doraemon*, and it seems that Western TV stations felt there were some risks in broadcasting it. The author assumes that the key factors are whether or not people grow accustomed to the work and whether or not they feel a cultural affinity towards it. Also, the existence of hit dramas such as *Oshin*, a film describing the life

of Asian people which invokes a feeling of familiarity from Asians, has produced a synergetic effect among different media – an effect which cannot be expected in the West. Factors commonly seen throughout East Asia – such as a traditional sense of values, the importance of parent-child relationships, family relations, and poverty – have helped to facilitate accessibility to Japanese works, leading to a lower barrier for translation efforts.

Regarding the second characteristic: for many years, pirated editions were published (some East Asians argue that they were not illegal versions because no copyright agreements had existed). There is a history of technology transfer for producing local *manga* works including imitations (in Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong). Japan is idolised as a leading developed nation (reminiscent of Japanese sentiment following WWII in which American culture was idolised), and newly introduced copyright agreements have been made with Japanese publishers.

In Korea, Japanese culture was not officially recognised until 1998 when a ban on cultural imports from Japan was finally eased. In reality, many works from Japanese pop culture had been distributed in the country, but under the label of 'Korean-made'. Boosted by rapid economic growth and the advance of democratisation, a sense of yearning for Japan and things Japanese started to appear among young Koreans. These feelings ran contrary to the general anti-Japanese sentiment in the country.

As there are a considerable number of applications for copyright agreements for *manga* from the former colonies of Japan such as Korea and Taiwan, Japanese publishers made it a condition in concluding agreements that works produced by local artists should appear in local *manga* magazines. In Korea and Taiwan where the market for Japanese *manga* had been developed before the introduction of formal copyright agreements with Japanese publishers, publication of Japanese-style *manga* was already established involving nurtured local artists, with paperbound pocket editions of independent books added to *manga* magazines with several serial works.

The quality of Japanese-style *manga* in East Asia has been relatively high, supported by the fact that local artists have been oriented towards Japanese-style *manga* in their work. In addition, Japanese publishers have encouraged the promotion of local works, and there

are increasingly more opportunities for Korean and Taiwanese works to be published in Japan.

Without a doubt, the globalisation of Japanese *manga* has been backed by the country's relationship with foreign countries based on Japan's industrialised economy.

Generally, a flow of information and culture is prone to follow a one-way direction from an economically advanced country to a less-advanced nation. . . . The most basic element is the size of the domestic market. . . . In a developed market, high costs can be spent in content production, the costs can be recovered in the domestic market; therefore products are competitive; and incentive toward creative works becomes great. This can be explained in the world market by the example of works produced by Hollywood. At the same time, economic relations between two countries, expressed by such indicators as trade values and the number of tourists, determine the direction of the flow of information and culture. (Ishii 2001) ³

The flow of Japanese *manga* to East Asia almost nearly corresponds to the gap in economic power and the status of economic relations between the relevant countries, although there are some regional differences in terms of religion, government policies, and national system. As Ishii points out, human resources and cultural background are basic conditions for the production of cultural content. Japanese *manga* and anime have established a domestic market incorporating special expertise and ample human resources.

Supported by the country's economic relations with other nations, Japanese *manga* and *anime* first made their way to East Asia in the 1980s, and then on to Europe and the US. In turn, the advance of Korean and Taiwanese *manga* into Japan, like exports of Hong Kong films, suggests that the economic development of those economies has changed the direction of what was a one-way flow from Japan to East Asia.

Since 1992, translation of overseas *manga* has been prohibited in China, although Japanese *manga* can be observed as having a considerable influence in the country.

The advance of *manga* into other countries is closely related to various complicated conditions including distribution systems, social systems, economical, political and cultural background, human resources,

a history peculiar to the cultural field, and the quality and content of work. Therefore, the inroads *manga* has made into other countries cannot be discussed based on the quality of the contents or cultural tradition alone.

FRAMEWORK OF THE CONCEPT THAT MANGA IS A CULTURAL ASPECT NATIVE TO JAPAN

The advance of Japanese *manga* is often understood, both at home and abroad, as an aspect of cultural tradition.

If comic pictures are defined as a form of popular art, then the history of comic pictures in Korea dates back to the ancient Kokurea era. . . . It is not an exaggeration to say that contemporary Korean comics thoroughly imitate the creative style and the drawing style of Japanese *manga*. . . . Korean comics must overcome this tendency to imitate Japanese *manga*-style creative activity and generate a typical style peculiar to Korean comics (Son 2001:45–48).⁴

It is said that anti-Japanese sentiment is stronger and runs deeper in Korea than in Taiwan, which was also a former Japanese colony. This underscores the argument concerning a clash of the indigenous cultures of the two countries. A similar framework for understanding *manga* may also be seen in other regions in East Asia.

In the West, comics are argued as dating back to the wall paintings of ancient peoples. Meanwhile more than a few historians have pointed out that Japanese *manga* originates from various expressions in ancient times, particularly those in *Choju Giga* (scrolls of frolicking animals). In understanding comics within the framework of Korea's own indigenous culture as well as that of other East Asian countries, the argument that comics began with ancient works may be supported by *manga*.

In the West and in Japan, the claim that ancient drawings are the origin of *manga* comics might stem from a desire to appreciate an undervalued field in an indigenous culture, i.e. by seeking out an originator in line with normal tradition. Such an argument is rarely used to attack a culture of foreign origin. In Japan, such circumstances led to the revival of an early-modern word *manga* (comic picture) which has been used in late modern times. Also, on a national level there was a need to adequately appreciate the traditional culture of the country as exemplified by the designation of

national treasures.⁵

The style of Japanese *manga*, which has now come to be globalised, was supported by modern printing technology developed after the Meiji Reformation, specifically the modernisation of newspapers and publishing systems, and was established via influence from American comic strips (serials of story-telling comics with many frames, text balloons and narrations) in the early 20th century. Meanwhile, the framework of *manga* history that directly links contemporary *manga* to pre-*manga* expression before the modern age does not address the issue of discontinuity in the history of *manga*, but places emphasis only on cultural continuity over history.

In fact, in reviewing the developmental process of Japanese comic pictures and *manga*, we find many features connected to Japanese traditional culture, for example, the influence of *kamishibai* (picture-card shows), *kodan* (story-telling), *rakugo* (comic stories), *setsuwa* (narratives), and picture designs associated with the vertical writing of Japanese letters. It is impossible, however, to discuss *manga* within a framework based solely on traditional culture native to Japan because the background factors of *manga* are too complicated.

DUAL STRUCTURE OF MANGA-COMICS IN EAST ASIA

The above issues will be applied to the situation of *manga*-comics in East Asia. It should be noted that the following is based on a summary of the author's research and collected data⁶ including several estimates that remain tentative until the study is completed.

In East Asia, a dual structure exists, with Japanese *manga* on one hand and local *manga*-comics on the other. Japanese *manga* first made its way into Hong Kong in the 1960s. In the 1970s, strongly affected by the artistic expression of Japanese *manga*, thin Hong Kong *manga*-comics books (mainly featuring Kung Fu action stories) were sold at street stalls. Subsequently, artists of Japanese-style *manga*-comics set up their own publishing companies and developed a market. Later, these *manga*-comics publishers came to conclude formal agreements with Japanese publishers. At present, the market for *manga*-comics in Hong Kong is almost equally controlled by Hong Kong-made and Japanese-made works, with the latter holding a slightly larger share.

In Taiwan, *Norakuro* and other Japanese comics were popular when the country was a Japanese colony. Shortly following WWII, Taiwan-made satiric humorous cartoons began to appear (domestic satiric humorous cartoons were published in China and Thailand as early as the first half of the 20th century). In the 1950s, pirated editions and imitation magazines and books of Japanese *manga* emerged⁷ and later in the 1980s the publishers of pirated versions developed and expanded into firms that controlled the nation-wide distribution network. Although most of the distributed works were Japanese *manga*, some Taiwanese artists prospered and the market expanded considerably, supported by the lifting of martial law in 1987 and the progress of democratisation. At present, Taiwan is one of the largest importers of Japanese *manga*; at the same time, it is also an exporter of illegal copies of video games and *anime*.

Native to mainland China are *Lianhuanhua* (pictorial prints of serial stories with narratives written above or below the picture) which are said to have originated from novels with illustrations such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* during the Sung and Yuan dynasties (see figures 1 and 2 for an example from a series of Chinese *Lianhuanhua*).

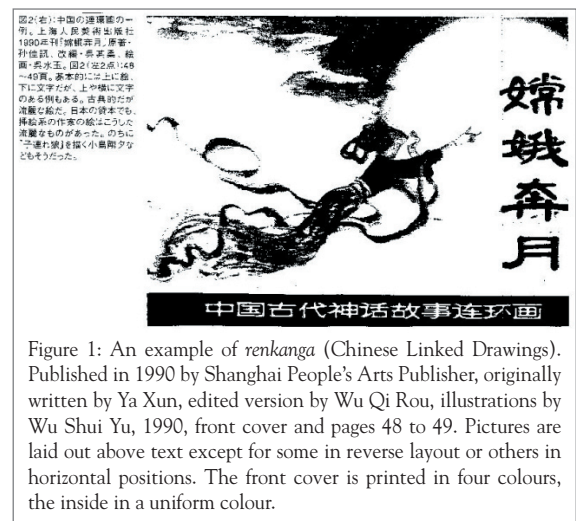
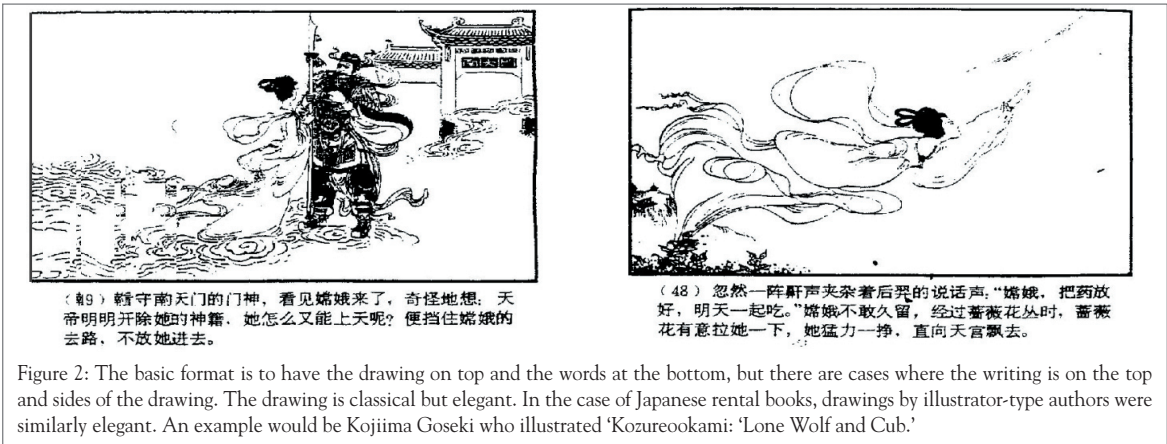


Figure 1: An example of *yenka* (Chinese Linked Drawings). Published in 1990 by Shanghai People's Arts Publisher, originally written by Ya Xun, edited version by Wu Qi Rou, illustrations by Wu Shui Yu, 1990, front cover and pages 48 to 49. Pictures are laid out above text except for some in reverse layout or others in horizontal positions. The front cover is printed in four colours, the inside in a uniform colour.

Lianhuanhua have been published using modern printing technology since the 1920s using the stories of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Journey to the West*. These two comics were very popular and are regarded as the origin of contemporary story-telling comics in China. The author obtained a copy of an illustrated story-type *Lianhuanhua* at a street-side rental library in Guilin. Its



style resembled Japanese illustrated stories and it was a small book containing one frame per page with pictures and text sentences. This type of comics declined in popularity in the mid-1980s,⁸ which might be related to the appearance of a considerable number of pirated editions of Japanese *manga*. Distribution of such pirated editions increased while Japanese anime began to be broadcast in the 1980s [A Chinese-version of *Tetsuwan Atom* (Astro Boy) in the same size as *Lianhuanhua* was confirmed]. Currently, many artists and magazines strongly influenced by Japanese *manga* are appearing in China.

If *Lianhuanhua* are regarded as a type of traditional Chinese *manga*-comics, then the emergence of Japanese *manga* in China may possibly have supplanted Chinese tradition. A similar replacement occurred in Japan following WWII, when *Tezuka*-style story-telling *manga* supplanted illustrated stories by Soji Yamakawa and others.

It is assumed that publications similar to *Lianhuanhua* were published and distributed in Taiwan and East Asian countries inhabited by overseas Chinese merchants. Mr. Kuiyi Shen describes *Lianhuanhua* in English as follows:

[In 1935] every afternoon at two o'clock, publishers brought newly published comics there [the center of comic publishing in Shanghai], and then at about six o'clock, the new comics appeared in the street bookstalls. . . .

During the late 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, besides the World Book Company (which published a popular *Lianhuanhua* book *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

in 1927) and a few other big publishers involved in this business for a short time, there were about 20 small publishers which published comic serials and no more than ten professional cartoonist workshops.

Each cartoonist (a kind of traditional workshop) usually had several apprentices working for him. This master-apprentice system continued until the beginning of the 1950s.⁹

Meanwhile in Hong Kong a system of in-house division of labour was introduced into the territory influenced by the production style of American comics, together with a corporate copyright system. Wong Yuk Long who started the system of division of labour denied the influence of the US (Mr. Wong is the original artist of the Hong Kong comic *The Chinese Boxer*, which appeared in 1971 and is still sold on the market. He currently heads Jade Dynasty Pub. Ltd.).

On the other hand, the influence of Hong Kong films and the production system for *Lianhuanhua* might be the basis for the division of labour. In Hong Kong, newspapers, magazines and comics are displayed at street stalls in the evening, which is the same as *Lianhuanhua*. A production-publishing-distribution system similar to that of *Lianhuanhua* is seen all over East Asia, not just in Hong Kong. These include circulating libraries, distribution via street stalls, cartoonist workshops and group production under a master-apprentice system. Such a system was also observed in Japan in the past.

In Korea, the emergence of teahouses that sell newly published comics and Internet cafes has made traditional circulating libraries, *man-hwa-bang* (comic shops)

appear small and insignificant in comparison. Today, in addition to publications created by major publishers, *manga-comics* offered at rental libraries are popular in Korea, and are produced and published in factory-like workshops. They are called 'everyday comics' because they are published on a daily basis (Figure 3 and 4).



Figure 3: A Korean rental *manga-comic*, 'Great Killer' volume number seven published by BEST COMICS in 1998. The attitude in the character's expression is reminiscent of the 'Contemporary Japanese Comic Strip,' and the influence of Japanese *manga* can be seen in the drawings. There are nine volumes, each with the same cover design.

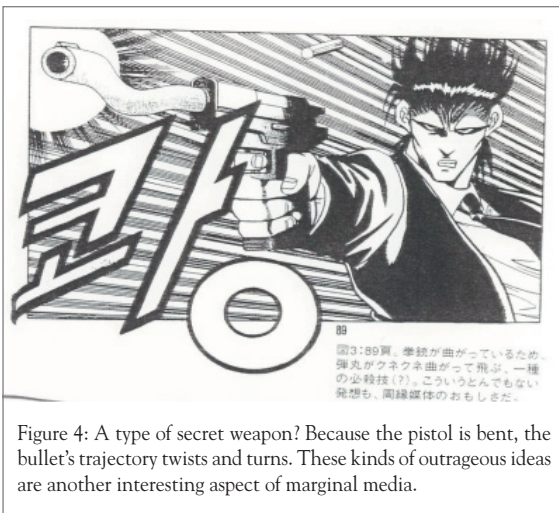


Figure 4: A type of secret weapon? Because the pistol is bent, the bullet's trajectory twists and turns. These kinds of outrageous ideas are another interesting aspect of marginal media.

They seem to resemble rental *manga* in Japan that declined in popularity in the 1960s.¹⁰

Chie Yamanaka describes the situation as follows using a book by Son Sang-Ik as her reference:

It is said that *manga* in the form of independent volumes appeared in Korea two to three years after the 1945 liberation. . . . In those days, publishers were very small businesses and distribution was limited to only local networks, and no independent *manga* books were displayed on bookstore shelves. Rather, *manga* books were placed at the storefronts of stationery shops or toyshops to attract customers. In the mid-1950s, Chappan appeared, which were street stalls that displayed *manga* in or around the marketplace and payment was received from passersby who read the books at the stalls. . . . A new system was developed under which publishers supplied *manga* to newly established wholesalers who then supplied *manga* to *jwa-pan*. Even today, *jwa-pan* are seen everywhere in town . . . and are being developed into comic shops.¹¹

In Indonesia, circulating libraries called *taman bacaan* (reading gardens) existed and rental *manga-comics* were distributed there.¹² Indonesian versions of rental *manga* were strongly affected by American comics, and increased in popularity during the 1960s and 1970s. However, in the 1980s, they were supplanted by new American comics. The distribution network connected publishers of rental books, wholesaler-bookstores in large towns, and *taman bacaan*, and the spine of books contained the address of the wholesaler-bookstore but not that of the publisher. Rental books are usually unicoloured and contain about 50 to 60 B6-sized pages (Figure 5). About ten works from a popular serial, which had appeared in a magazine, are combined into



Figure 5: Rental *manga-comics* at *taman bacaan* in Indonesia. The front cover of Sang Penari Setan is by Shnthly Sheba, details unknown. The sensational and provocative cover gives one an impression of a marginal culture.

an independent book of the same size. However, there existed no royalty system, and all original manuscripts were bought up.

In Thailand, *manga*-comics distributed for sale at street stalls are nearly the same size as rental books in Indonesia but are thinner, containing only 30 to 50 pages. Popular contents include monster stories, with the front cover being multi-coloured and excitingly provocative and the contents unicoloured (Figure 6).¹³ In the evenings, these publications are lined up in street stalls in towns and are priced at 5 baht (15 yen). They are cheap when compared with the price of a meal at stands in Thailand that go for 40 baht. In contrast, Japanese *manga* are expensive at 40 to 50 baht (120 to 150 yen). Purchasers of Japanese *manga*, Hong Kong *manga* and translated versions of American comics are limited to the children of the new middle class in Bangkok, while people in the low-income class, as well as farmers and blue-collar workers love 5-baht *manga*-comics.

The obvious dual structure of *manga*-comics can be seen in Thailand: on one hand, there is Japanese *manga* for young people in the new middle class or higher social classes that emerged during the rapid economic development of the country, and on the other, there

are local versions of *manga*-comics that are strongly influenced by Japanese *manga*. It is thought that a similar trend of dual structure exists to some extent throughout other regions as well.

In Indonesia, Japanese *manga* are read by people in the upper income bracket and sold at shopping malls comprising stores, amusement halls, restaurants and bookstores. In addition, in such shopping complexes, you can see a large number of pirated versions of Japanese 'cute' goods and other Japanese pop culture products. If one wanted to buy a used book (an old rental book) one has to go to a secondhand bookstore on the so-called black market that is popular but involves a certain amount of risk.

Japanese *manga* (pirated editions or imitation versions) and local works are distributed under the same limited and marginal production-distribution system. However, the market has developed while continuing to transform, owing to industrialisation and the introduction of formal copyright agreements. In Hong Kong, local comics and Japanese *manga* have co-existed, while competing with each other: one comprises American comic-type Hong Kong works in thin and multi-colour volumes containing one work, and the other Japanese-type



Figure 6: Covers of *manga*-comics selling for 5 baht each at a stall in Thailand (titles and publishers unknown). Horror-type monsters and the sensational pictures create a unique provocative nature and remind the author of Japanese rental *manga* in the old days.

magazines containing multiple serials and independent books. In Korea, the market is broadly divided into Japanese-type *manga*, local works of major publishers, and rental books of 'everyday comics'.

In Thailand and Indonesia, the market is clearly divided into two segments according to reader group – one for Japanese-originated *manga*-comics and the other for local comics. The purchasing group consisting of society's middle class has matured, and as a result, the former dual structure either has disappeared or become blurred. Today there remains a difference mainly in the characteristics of distribution and types of media.

MANGA-COMICS AS MARGINAL AND MIXED CULTURE

The dual structure corresponds to the difference in distribution style and the gap in the purchasing power of middle and lower class, thus relating the *manga* to economic power and economic relations. An identical dual structure also existed in Japan in the past, and it remains today in a different sense.

The *manga*-comics sector, including *Lianhuanhua*, which are sold in street stalls, stationery shops and toyshops, resembles the *Akahon manga* and picture book sector in Japan. (*Akahon* originally meant popular fiction with narratives in the Edo period, but in recent years, it has come to mean books sold in marginal publication-distribution systems, in contrast to *manga* that are sold in major publication and distribution systems). Previous studies on Japanese *manga* have placed emphasis on *Akahon* and rental book media, partly because Osamu Tezuka, originally an artist of *Akahon*, and rental *Gekiga* (Japanese contemporary story comics) contributed greatly to the progress of Japanese *manga*, and partly because fans and researchers of *manga* generally attach themselves to these marginal cultures.

A history of post-war *manga*, which was established after the 1970s, has duly recognised a revolution in creative works that was brought about by an interface between the lower-grade sub-genre and major genre of *manga* publication and distribution. In a sense, the marginal sector including *Akahon*, rental *manga*, erotic *manga*, and coterie magazines of amateur *manga* artists is revitalizing *manga* published by major central publishers, serving as a driving force for dynamism toward development, and reflecting the vitality of *manga* as popular culture. Therefore, it is considered that even sensual expressions

as well as scenes of violence are of significance in that they contribute to popular culture.

Like *Lianhuanhua* and rental *manga*-comics in East Asia, Japanese comic pictures and *Ponchi-E* (combination of letters and pictures) of the past largely deviate from the modern outlook of art, in which genuine art using letters is represented by literature and genuine art using pictures by paintings. Therefore, comic pictures and *Ponchi-E* of the past are positioned as a marginal and mixed type of culture, and for this very reason, they have potential vitality transcending the borders of different media.

Then, how and at what stage in *manga* history did Japanese *manga* gain the competitiveness that enabled its globalisation? One reply may be the time at which *manga* began to include themes particularly geared towards young people who had reached puberty and early adolescence. Although extreme expressions of sex and violence have been condemned the world over, these two factors nevertheless symbolise the growth process of young people, and therefore Japanese *manga* adopted these two factors as its main themes. In this way, the age structure of readers was gradually expanded and at the same time, the market for *manga* was developed with increased diversity in genres and themes for *manga*.

Importantly, as there was no actual norm for *Akahon* and rental *manga*, styles of Osamu Tezuka's works and rental *Gekiga* changed drastically to encompass youth as its readers. In the late 1960s, the *Gekiga* expression in *Shukan Shonen Magazine*, a weekly boys' magazine, became popular and was perceived as a major style, serving as a breakthrough to expand the scope of readers.

The covers of 5-baht books in Thailand and rental books in Indonesia are somewhat sensational and provocative. Their readers are not limited to children but also enjoyed by older readers in their adolescence as well as female readers. Japanese rental books also include adolescents as its readers. In addition, *Lianhuanhua* were not produced solely for children and the same can be said for *Kusazoshi* (picture books) in the Edo period.

Major publishers could have created enlightening and educational content and media based on a modern view that made a distinction between innocent children and mature adults. In contrast, the borderline between

child and adult has seemed ambiguous in the sector of marginal publishers. Such a 'delay' in modernisation, i.e. the fact that contrary to major publishers, marginal publishers have delayed establishing a modern view for children, helped to bridge the gap between the marginal and major sectors and led to the success in involving adolescent readers. In addition, it is the author's impression that people in East Asia have no concept of a generation gap between children and adults while in the West people seem to have a cultural tendency to separate the two as the norm.

If the dual structure of *manga*-comics in East Asia is based on the same cultural background as in Japan, so far Japan alone could trickily utilise the 'delay' in the progress of the unique development of *manga*. Studies of Japanese *manga* have paradoxically attached significance and value to the 'delay'. While the author is not certain whether the same applies to East Asia, he is certain that such a supposition is interesting in clarifying what Japanese *manga* is.

However, if the supposition is applicable only to the framework of culture native to Japan, that would mean that other regions can do nothing more than imitate Japanese *manga*. Also theoretically, a characteristic specific to each region or country and matching each dual structure would have to be discovered. This would then support the theory that the creation of a country's own *manga*-comics has eliminated an invasion by Japanese culture.

Preconditions for globalisation of popular consumption-based cultures are economic and social elements such as industrialisation, provision of an information infrastructure, and a mature middle class. The author does not infer that culture is an upper structure of a particular economy. Today, the globalisation process is advancing in complicated circumstances where a particular culture has a range of consumption behaviour and conversely, particular consumption behaviour is positioned as part of the culture.

Manga-comics are considered part of contemporary popular culture, and they clash or mix with other media and different cultural aspects in the same way that the general consumption market does. Such a situation can be understood if we review the formation and development process of Japanese *manga* and the reality surrounding *manga*-comics in East Asia. In their

development, *manga*-comics have clashed with different cultures from the very beginning. For example, Japanese *manga* were impacted by the West and were affected by American comic strips during their developmental process. In addition, Hong Kong *manga*-comics were established via the influence of Japanese *manga*. A dual structure, with *manga*-comics produced by major publishers on one hand and those as a marginal culture on the other, can be considered as a cultural clash within a country. Such dual structures in East Asia reflect the influence of Japan and the United States.

If this idea is realistic, then *manga*-comics are defined as a cross-cultural phenomenon produced by different cultures. Kazuko Horikoshi describes the globalisation of *manga* and *anime* as follows:

(The globalisation of Japanese *manga* can be explained) as a global result in which Japanese-made works have encountered local cultural features, generated something like a chemical reaction, and then accumulated individual cases in successive encounters. . . . (Many *anime* works which have made inroads into other countries) have very few features that are peculiar to Japan. In a sense, their lack of indigenous characteristics, and strongly fictitious settings, have helped them to make their way into different countries and facilitated the formation of a preference towards *anime* among local people. . . . While we export *manga* and *anime*, recipients in different countries are simply judging Japanese works excellent as consumers.¹⁴

Reportedly, works created by Disney Studios featured a reduced amount of 'American characteristics' during the process of its globalisation.¹⁵ In turn, the works produced by Hollywood, the global leader with a well-established industrialised domestic market, continue to incorporate truly American characteristics which have become symbols of Hollywood.

In addition, Japanese *anime* and *manga* may at times contain many Japanese features to a similar extent, rather than being works without nationality. As discussed above, each culture in East Asia has its own unique characteristics but they generally accept foreign culture generously. Foreign consumers do not merely adhere to Japanese *manga* works. Sometimes their brand preference for character goods such as Hello Kitty and Snoopy is strong and sometimes they prefer Japanese brands in general.

The author uses the terms 'Hollywood type' and 'Beatles type' in explaining Japanese *manga* in a foreign country. The Beatles were obviously influenced by American rock 'n' roll and R&B. However, during the process of their globalisation the established Beatles-brand music style was rooted in different regions and then developed into regional pop music everywhere in the world. Today nobody says that the Beatles were part of the invasion of British culture and it may be possible to consider that the globalisation of *manga* has followed an identical process. The popularisation of the Beatles music was a cross-cultural phenomenon, and its globalisation and cultural characteristics cannot be explained according to the specific features of British culture.

The globalisation of *manga* is an interesting phenomenon when such a two-sided perspective is taken into account. Hiroshi Odagiri paid attention to a combination of different cultures: Japanese-origin contents and local culture in different countries. In his words, "An appreciation of *manga* works abroad does not have any significance. Resultant changes brought about by the Japanese contents are the true value."¹⁵

In East Asia, people are keen on catching up with Japan, and appreciate *manga*-comics with increased motivation. In turn, the concept of a marginal genre involving a sense of 'delay' and a borderless interface of two sectors cannot be accepted easily. However, the viewpoint of the interface may encourage the further development of *manga*-comics in East Asia, and there we can find the possibility of interchanges of different cultures through *manga*-comics and other popular culture.

A framework, which sees a cross-cultural interchange in *manga*, may be a touchstone toward such possibility. The author believes that the globalisation of *manga*-comics should be understood as a phenomenon that occurs between their global nature and the characteristics of indigenous culture.

Notes

1. Comics, represented by *Superman* and *Batman*, are rather serious and realistic in nature and involve story-telling using a lot of frames, whereas cartoons are generally simplified and contain exaggerated drawings including a wide range of types such as one-to-several-frame cartoons, and animation films such as *Mickey Mouse* and *Peanuts*. These words have

not been strictly defined.

2. Hirohito Miyamoto, "American Manga, Likely to Become Interesting" in "Manga-no-Ibashi (Whereabouts of Manga)", *Mainichi Shimbun*, 9 Feb. 2001. He reports on the situation of manga in the US. As far as the author knows, a similar situation is happening worldwide.

3. Kenichi Ishii, "Chapter VIII. International Distribution of Culture and Information" in *Popular Japanese Culture in East Asia*, ed. Kenichi Ishii, Soso-sha, 2001, 212-3, 216.

4. Son Sang-Ik, "The Situation of Comics in Korea" in *Pictorial Record – Asia in Comics, Where Are We Heading for?* Ed. Asian Center of the Japan Foundation, 2001: 45-8. The Korean comic picture in ancient days refers to a woman's face painted comically on the wall of burial sites in the fifth century. Son is an exceptional researcher who studies and writes about the Korean manga market from his unique point of view.

5. This paper owes much to the presentation by Hirohito Miyamoto's research group on *manga* history, *History of the Word Manga*, (30 March 2002) as well as its background information. Miyamoto's research will likely be instrumental in completely changing the framework of the view on Japanese *manga*. Miyamoto, "The Origin of Manga; Established as an Impure Genre. 110 Literal Themes from Around the World. Manga and Literature." *Weekly Asahi Encyclopedia, Asahi Shimbun* Nov. 2001: 292-5.

6. A survey in 1993 conducted at Hong Kong Comic Publishing Company; trips to Taiwan and Korea in 2000 to gather information on the situations regarding *manga*; the author's book *Manga and Its Global Strategy*, Shogakkan: 2001; research in Thailand and Indonesia in 2001, with fellowship granted by API (Asian Public Intellectuals) sponsored by the Nippon Foundation; refer to Fusanosuke Natsume's "The Situation and Possibility of Comics in East Asia" in *Asia Center News* no. 20, (2002): 10-14, at the Japan Foundation's Asian Center.

7. Please refer to Pictorial Record of the History of Taiwanese comic pictures for "Special Exhibition of the History of Taiwanese comic pictures from 1945-2000" held by the National Museum of History (Taipei, 2000).

8. Wang Yong Sheng, "Developing Chinese Comic pictures" in op. cit. *Pictorial Record for 'Asia in Comics'*: 35.

9. Kuiyi Shen, Lianhuanhua and Manhua – picture books and comics in old Shanghai; John A. Lent, *Illustrating Asia – Comics, Humor Magazines and Picture Book*, University of Hawaii, 2002. 104- 5.

10. op. cit. *Comics and Their Global Strategy* by Natsume (in Note 8), 135–6; op. cit. "The Situation and Potential of Comics in East Asia" by Natsume, 12.

11. Chie Yamanaka "Position of Japan in Korean Manga

- History of Accepting Japanese Manga” in *Annual Report of Human Science* (Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University), Mar., no. 22 (2001): 127.
12. Fusanosuke Natsume, “Taking a Stroll in Asian Comics” in the magazine *Da Vinci*, Nov., (2001): 135.
13. Based on the author’s interviews with the following persons conducted from June 26 to July 6, 2001: Staff of Gramedia Editing Dept. at Elex Media, a translation and publishing company of Japanese *manga* in Jakarta; Jonathan L., employee at *Ani-Monster*, an information magazine focusing on *anime* which is based in Bandung; Agus Dejamico, the author’s acquaintance residing in Bali and rental book collector.
14. Kazuko Horikoshi, “International Tour for Comic Pictures”, in the magazine *Comic Fan* no. 15, Zasso-sha, 2002, 104-5.
15. Tetsuo Arima. *What is Disney?* NTT Publishing, 2001, 37.
16. Hiroshi Odagiri, “Front Line of Internationalisation – Overseas Business of Manga and Anime” in the magazine *Comic Fan* no.16, June 2002 in the special feature: “Manga in the World,” 21; other references including Kazue Kawahara *Children’s View in Present Days* (Chuko Shinsho, 1998).

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