



# **Manga and Libraries in Japan**

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## **1. Introduction**

There has been a long history of Manga (Comics, or graphic novels) publishing in Japan since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some scholars have pointed out that '*Chouju Giga*' drawn by Toba-Sojo around 11 century is one of the oldest comic illustrations. Now, people outside of Japan, especially the younger generation are fascinated by translated Japanese Manga and several related things. This article reports about the Manga publishing situation, historical disputes over Manga, and how Manga has been treated at libraries in Japan.

## **2. Manga publishing in Japan**

The expression Manga comes from Hokusai- manga. Hokusai KATSUSHIKA (1760-1849) drew humorous and critical cartoons, and moved on later to stories based on 4-frame-cartoons - these were called Manga. They are different to bande dessinée. Manga which have been translated into English are mainly long story Manga, so in US they are

known as Manga ‘graphic novels’, but Manga includes not only fiction but also nonfiction like history, biographies and other reference materials. 4-frame-cartoons developed into Kamishibai which is a series of story cartoons on more than ten pieces of cardboard. Later those stories started to be printed in newspapers and magazines for children and young people.

Japanese Manga is still printed in magazines today, and also published in book format. Each magazine has a target readership, such as boys, girls, young men, young women, adults, and others. In the year 2010, there were 288 titles of magazines that printed mainly Manga. Among them 65 titles are for children and young people (28 for boys and 37 for girls) and 223 titles are for adults over 21-years-old (60 for young men, 61 for young women, 15 classified as ‘boys-love’<sup>i</sup>, 22 print 4-frame-cartoons, and 65 for others)<sup>ii</sup>. Manga magazines for children and young people are aiming for both study and recreation. For example, “*Weekly Shonen Jump*” is a Manga magazine for boys. This magazine has been printed “*ONE PIECE*” by Eiichiro ODA and “*DRAGON BALL*” by Akira TORIYAMA serially, and was sold 2,876,000 issues in 2010. Most of Manga books are estimated by those magazines which age/sex readers are targeted. So “*ONE PIECE*” and “*DRAGON BALL*” are Manga for boys.

Manga books based on those magazines for adults are often the main targets of accusations by the authorities. But a recent trend is Manga for girls which contains extremely sexually explicit illustrations and stories drawn by young women, and read by young girls.

(Chart 1) Cumulative total printing numbers of Manga over one hundred million<sup>iii</sup>

Title	Number of volumes	Creator (author)
<i>DRAGON BALL</i>	1-42(all)	Akira TORIYAMA
<i>NARUTO</i>	1-54	Masashi KISHIMOTO
<i>ONE PIECE</i>	1-60* <sup>1</sup>	Eiichiro ODA
<i>SLAM DUNK</i>	1-30(all)	Takehiko INOUE
<i>Kochira Katsushika-ku Kameari Kōen Mae Hashutsujo</i> * <sup>2</sup> (こちら葛飾区亀有公園前派出所)	1-172	Osamu AKIMOTO
<i>Doraemon: Gadget Cat from the Future</i>	1-45(all)	Fujiko F FUJIO
<i>Oishimbo</i>	1-105	Testu KARIYA / Akira HANASAKI
<i>Detective Conan</i>	1-70	Gosho AOYAMA

<i>Golgo 13</i>	1-159	Takao SAITO
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\*1 Most recent one is vol.64 which published on Nov.4, 2011, and printed over 4 million as first printing.

\*2 Not translated into other languages.

Most of these Manga books are targeted at both boys and young men. Manga books for girls and young women are not so widely sold like the books mentioned above, but several titles have been printed more than a million times. For example, "Glass Mask" by Suzue MIUCHI has been printed 355.82 million times (vol.1-46, continued), "Kimi ni todoke"(=Reaching You) by Karuho SHIINA has 146.19 million (vol.1-12, continued), "Nodame Cantabile" by Tomoko NINOMIYA 35.6million (vol.1-25, finished), or "Clover" by Toriko SHIINO 77.43 million (vol.1-23, continued) cumulatively.

(Chart 2) publishing numbers of new Manga titles

	2006		2010	
	New titles	%	New titles	%
General	68,970	88.7	68,142	91.2
(Manga)	(2,713)	(3.9/3.5)	(3,302)	(4.3/4.3)
Children	4,825	6.2	4,160	5.6
Study aid	3,927	5.0	2,412	3.2
Total	777,722	100.0	74,714	100.0

(Chart 3) printing numbers of copies of books

	2006		2010	
	(X10,000)	%	(X10,000)	%
General	35,524	88.4	33,923	92.0
(Manga)	(2,969)	(8.4/7.4)	(3,333)	(9.8/9.0)
Children	3,308	8.2	2,043	5.5
Study aid	1,345	3.4	910	2.5
total	40,177	100.0	36,875	100.0

### 3. Dispute over Manga

As mentioned above, Manga was named after Hokusai Manga. Hokusai picked up the theme of humorous illustrations about rich or high class people's lives, or natural disaster and plague with irony or satire. After Japan changed from Samurai-centered society to modern industrial society in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Manga has to criticized authority with humor. Also Manga has been used to educate children and young people in learning natural sciences, machinery, geography, and moral education.

The first Manga for children, 'Shonen Kyouiku Nihon Ponchi E-hon banashi' (=educational comic story for boys) was serially published from 1897 in a newspaper for elementary school students. Later, the first Manga book for children, 'Shou-chan no Bouken' (=adventure of a boy named Shou-chan) was published in 1923. This was a fantasy Manga story. Then "Bouya no Mitsurin Seihuku" (=Jungle conquered by a Boy) by Takashi HAGA in 1939 and "Kasei Tanken" (=Mars Exploration) by Taro ASAHI in 1940 were published.<sup>iv</sup> They were an adventure story with information on the jungle or Mars. The first Manga book aiming for study might be "Benkyo Manga" (=Study Manga) by Reiji AKI who was a former school teacher on geography, published as a monograph in 1950<sup>v</sup>. He had drawn this Manga in the 'Mainichi Shougakusei Simbun' (=Mainichi Newspaper for Elementary - School - children) before and after the World War 2.

In those days there were about 700 public libraries and membership libraries in Japan, and a few offered a youth service with fees. Those libraries permitted youth to read books inside the library building that included educational Manga books. Children rushed to go to those libraries and read books and Manga. Observing this, more publishers started to publish more Manga books.

From 1938 and during World War 2 the Department of Interior announced its intention to control reading materials for children including 33 Manga books<sup>vi</sup>. After that Manga creators and publishers decreased the number of Manga publications and changed the content to war favor stories. The authorities tried to control information through creating and publishing by restricting books and magazines for children and youth at the time of the war.

After the World War 2, the American occupation authority (GHQ) censored the content of publishing including children's books, picture books, school newspaper, kamishibai, and Manga. During this occupation era (1945 - 1949), 'Kashi-honya' (=rental bookstore) were widely settled, and children or working teenage youth used them to get 'Akahon Manga' (=red colored book cover Manga book, because mostly book cover illustrations were used red color) by paying very cheap fee. Those Manga books were criticized for containing too many

violent and sexually explicit expressions. A critical movement against those 'Akahon-Manga' depicted Manga as low. Some parents' groups collected Manga books including Osamu TEZUKA's "*Astro boy*" and burned them on street.

In 1950, the first 'Youth Protection Act'<sup>vii</sup> in wide-area was promulgated in Okayama by the local government as an ordinance and this is still active now. This act indicates both recommended 'good' books and 'harmful' books for children and youth under 18-years-old including Manga. The aim of this ordinance is protection and nurturing children and youth under 18-years-old. Local government decides which book is 'harmful' or not without open criteria. Now all 47 local governments hold this kind of 'Youth Protection Act'.

After the settlement of those local acts publishers and bookstores have tried to self-restrict by putting stickers indicating Manga for suitable age since 1991.

In the late 50's 'Geki-ga'(=Dramatic Manga) started to publish. 'Geki-ga' illustrates realistic stories and illustrations with lots of violent battle scenes. Also nonsense comics with many sexually expressions were widely published. Then, in the late 70's more 'Story-Manga' (=graphic novels) begun to be published as books based on Manga magazines. School authorities and parents, and others insisted those Manga contain lots of 'harmful' word expressions and illustrations for children. They demanded local government revise the content of the 'Youth Protection Act' and restrict the stream of free expressions on Manga.

A more recent dispute over Manga and Anime was a revised proposal by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in 2010. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government tried to prohibit the violent or sexually explicit expressions with 'non-existent youth'. The Tokyo governor, Shintaro ISHIHARA, is also a professional writer who often mentions the Manga, Anime, and video games related to this bill. Not only the 'Writers' Guild of Japan', publishers and Manga creators' groups but also the Japan Federation of BAR Association and Japan Library Association joined forces to protest against this revised proposal because it was seen to violate freedom of expression. This proposal changed 'non-existent youth' to more concrete sentences, and most policy makers at Tokyo Metropolitan Congress agreed with the proposal and passed it. 80% of publishers in Japan locate their headquarters at Tokyo, so many of them are influenced by this Tokyo 'Youth Protection Act'.

#### **4. Manga at Libraries**

Now what have librarians done with Manga at their libraries? In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century local government instituted prefecture libraries and some offered materials and places for children

and youth. School libraries started to operate before public libraries, even though the scale was very small.

After enacting and enforcing Library Law<sup>viii</sup> in 1950 and School Library Law in 1953, more library services for children and youth have been discussed. The first national meeting on children's services was held and discussed on Manga at public libraries in 1955. About half of school libraries at both elementary and middle schools already offered 'Gakushu Manga' (=Study Manga) as a study aid. But children's librarians at public libraries strongly hesitated to hold Manga in their library collections and circulate them to children and youth. This was despite the Japan Library Association<sup>ix</sup> adopting 'the Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries'<sup>x</sup> in May 1954 with no exception of age.

Librarians who were (are) protest against Manga at libraries insist that they express lots of sexual, violent, segregated expressions, not suitable for young children, and that libraries should not use their book budgets for Manga. Librarians who were (are) aware of the Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries insist that libraries must provide books and other materials to everyone who want them including children, so Manga should be provided to those who want it. This discussion keeps going on now among librarians and others.

Present librarians might select Manga from an educational standpoint. For example, Saitama prefecture library union catalog system (containing the catalogues of 58 public libraries) indicates that 44 libraries hold 'Hadashi no Gen' (=Barefoot Gen) about World War 2 and atomic bomb in Hiroshima but only 8 libraries hold "DRAGON BALL". Alternatively, librarians may select from an academic standpoint or a literature standpoint. Even though 9 libraries hold a Manga version of "ONE PIECE", 22 libraries hold a novelized version of "ONE PIECE" without original Manga version.

One alternative is for libraries to collect Manga books and other materials as part of a special collection. For example, one of the branches of Hiroshima city library<sup>xi</sup> holds only Manga. Kyoto Seika University holds a Manga Museum inside the library<sup>xii</sup> because this university has a graduate school on Manga and offers doctor/master programs. Meiji University are preparing a Manga library<sup>xiii</sup> with a collection donated by a graduate who begun a comic-market in Japan. There are more research libraries at academic circumstances.

## 5. Manga at School libraries

As Manga in modern Japanese society started to be published with an educational aim, school libraries began to hold educational Manga. There are some standard collections of

Manga books at school libraries. In 1962 Shuei-sha (manga publisher) started to publish "Manga Nihon no Rekisi" (=Japanese History Manga version). Not only Japanese history but also Chinese or world history Manga books have been published, and sold to school libraries mainly. Other publishers started to publish the same kind of educational Manga books.

At elementary school libraries most Manga books are 'Gakushu Manga' (=Study Manga) but middle or high school level libraries hold more various story-Manga with educational information. For example, "Hadashi no Gen"<sup>xiv</sup>, "Berusaiyu no Bara"<sup>xv</sup>, "Asaki Yume-mis"<sup>xvi</sup>, "Hikari to tomoni"<sup>xvii</sup>, "Donguri no iye", "Oisinbo"<sup>xviii</sup>, "Kamui-der"<sup>xix</sup>, "Black Jack"<sup>xx</sup>, and so on.

In the 1960's elementary school teachers tried to use 'Gakushu Manga' (=Manga for study) as reading materials for substitute of textbooks, an innovation which included reading guidance. During the 1970's and 1980's, discussion over Manga among school teachers and school librarians has become more heated, and criteria to select Manga at school libraries was established.

#### **Criteria to review Manga for selection by School Library Association, 1988.<sup>xxi</sup>**

- (1) Does it show the excellent quality illustrations?
- (2) Does it use vulgar words intentionally?
- (3) Does it respect the dignity of humanity?
- (4) Does it naturally go on and extend the story?
- (5) Does it try to stimulate readers' minds by using vulgar expression?
- (6) Does its story praise an evil or injustice?
- (7) Does it glorify war or violence?
- (8) Does it treat the weak or disabled people in a discriminatory fashion?
- (9) Does it distort or ignore an academic truth or historical facts?
- (10) Does it treat real people correctly based on fair outlook and facts?
- (11) Does it suitable for intended readers?
- (12) Do they break the intention of the original works if they are?
- (13) Is its bookbinding and quality of paper strong enough for using by many readers?
- (14) Serial Manga which does not finish will be evaluated through all volumes after the story ends fundamentally.

Some school libraries which have established their own criteria to select Manga refer to the SLA's criteria, and more school libraries collect Manga. Some public libraries follow the

school libraries' trend, and some accept whatever users demand.

## 6. Conclusion

Librarians in Japan still are in favor to word-oriented materials. Also librarians know that adult or teenage users can find Manga at different places like Manga-book-café, Manga-toshokan (membership Manga library), or second-hand bookstores. But how about young children? Does it enough for them to read only word-oriented materials? They have been born with multi-style information like moving images, Internet, and Manga. There would be other effectiveness for young readers to read, study, and think.

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<sup>i</sup> 'Boys-Love' (BL) is named for the stories which is about gay love stories.

<sup>ii</sup> 『出版指標年報 2011』全国出版出版協会、2011. P222

<sup>iii</sup> Above. P220.

<sup>iv</sup> 清水勲『年表日本漫画史』臨川書店 2007年 p144-145、150-151

<sup>v</sup> 阪本一郎「学習漫画のあり方」児童心理 18(3)通巻208号 1964年6月 p298-307

<sup>vi</sup> 石子順「社会の動きと漫画の歴史」学校図書館 No.358 1981年6月 p9-15

<sup>vii</sup> 'Youth Protection Act', 'Youth Protection Ordinance Reform Bill' or so on. Each local government use different expressions, and the contents are partly different. Some mention only books, some mention sexual materials and magazines, and others mention to add video games. Mostly those acts try to protect children and youth under 18-years-old, but some set up them under 16-years-old.

<sup>viii</sup> 法令データベース <http://law.e-gov.go.jp/cgi-bin/idxsearch.cgi>

<sup>ix</sup> Japan Library Association <http://www.jla.or.jp/english/tabid/77/Default.aspx>

<sup>x</sup> Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries. <http://www.jla.or.jp/portals/0/html/jiyu/english.html>

<sup>xi</sup> Hiroshima city Manga library <http://www.library.city.hiroshima.jp/english/locations/index.html>

<sup>xii</sup> Kyoto International Manga Museum <http://www.kyotomm.jp/english/>  
<http://www.kyotomm.jp/french/>

<sup>xiii</sup> Tokyo International Manga Library [http://www.meiji.ac.jp/manga/english/yonezawa\\_lib/message/](http://www.meiji.ac.jp/manga/english/yonezawa_lib/message/)

<sup>xiv</sup> "*Hadashi no Gen*" (=Barefoot Gen: a cartoon story about Hiroshima) by Keiji NAKAZAWA in 1973

<sup>xv</sup> "*Berusaiyu no Bara*" (=Lady Oscar: La Rose de Versailles) by Ryoko IKEDA in 1972-73. The story is about the life of Oscar who is a beauty in male attire for being a guard for Marie Antoinette at the time of the French revolution.

<sup>xvi</sup> "*Asaki Yume-mis*" (=the Tale of Genji) by Waki YAMATO in 1979-1983. The story is based on one of famous classic story 'The Tale of Genji' which was written around AD1000 which is required reading material at middle and high schools.

<sup>xvii</sup> "*Hikari to tomoni*" (=with Light) by Keiko TOBE in 2001-. The story about the daily life of sight-disabled people.

<sup>xviii</sup> "*Oisinfo*" (=The Gourmet) by Tetsu KARIYA and Akira HANASAKI in 1983-2008. Cooking story by a culinary journalist Shiro Yamaoka and Yuko Kurita who visit many restaurants or chefs.

<sup>xix</sup> "*Kamui-den*" (=The legend of Kamui) by Sanpei SHIRATO in 1967. This is one Geki-ga manga, and the theme is about segregated people at the time of Samurai to struggle to live.

<sup>xx</sup> "*Black Jack*" by Osamu TEZUKA in 1975. The story about legendary doctor with a 'God hand' (but who asks a high fee).

<sup>xxi</sup> 全国学校図書館協議会制定「学校図書館図書選定基準」

<http://www.j-sla.or.jp/material/kijun/post-34.html>