



Manga as a study aid at school libraries

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Abstract:

New types of literature or reading materials have been spread over among teenagers like Manga and cell-phone novels. Both of them have been popular among teenagers in Japan for almost more than a decade. Although older generations including children's librarians are annoyed by those reading materials, those materials inspire reluctant teenage readers to have interests on knowledge and information. Or Manga demands teenage readers to expand their cultural literacy skills.

Now it is the time Manga should be discussed on its quality to select at libraries and how to make young generation to spread reading edge by reading Manga all over the world. But the point is how to select Manga and how to use for studying aid. In Japan, at school libraries from elementary school level to high school level, Manga has been one of the most popular holdings as a study aid, for history, science, classic literature, moral education, and so on in Japan. Manga has been a "primer" or supplement for children to study and read more on school subjects. But historically Manga has been criticized in society because of their expressions or contents. School teachers and school librarians has been tried to set up criteria for selecting and using at school classrooms and libraries last 60 years. Also publishers have been made 'Gakushu Manga' (=learning manga) for schools.

This paper explains historical analysis on Manga as study aid with criteria for school libraries, and the present situation in Japan.

Contents:

1. Manga as study aid
 2. Brief historical background of Manga
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1. Manga as study aid

"Berusaiyu no Bara 『ベルサイユのばら』 (Lady Oscar: La Rose de Versailles)" by Riyoko IKEDA, "Hadasi no Gen 『はだしのゲン』 (Barefoot Gen: a cartoon story of Hiroshima)" by Keiji NAKAZAWA, "Asaki yumemisi 『あさきゆめみし』 (The Tale of Genji)" by Waki YAMATO, "San-goku-shi 『三国志』 (Three Kingdoms)" by Mitsuteru YOKOYAMA, "Hi no tori 『火の鳥』 (Phoenix)" by Osamu TEZUKA, and so on. Those Manga books were 'standard' collection at school libraries. Sometimes, or often those Manga books play a role as supplement materials for history classes at junior or senior level schools. Also a genre of Manga called 'Gakushu Manga 「学習漫画」 (Manga for study)' for history, science, and so on are widely collected at school libraries with Manga biographies. Those Manga books are regarded as not only supplement but also stimulating children's curiosity for study.

This paper tries to explain why and how school libraries in Japan became to hold and use Manga as study aid or library collection. And its criteria for selection of Manga with explaining the brief historical background. Lastly the present trend for children and youth on Manga in Japan suggests the future possibilities on Manga reading among young generation.

2. Brief historical background of Manga for study

Before WWII

The expression as Manga is from Hokusai-Manga published in 1834, but first Manga for children was published in 1898 as called "Shonen Kyouiku Nihon Punch e-banashi 『少年教育日本パンチ絵話』" (=educational comic story for boys) among many caricatures for adults. Since then Manga not only for adults but also for children and youth had been published a lot. Among them some Manga like "Bouya no Mitsurin Seihuku 『坊やの密林征服』 (Jungle conquered by a Boy)" by Takashi HAGA in 1939 or "Kasei Tamken 『火星探検』 (Mars Exploration)" by Taro ASAHI in 1940 published by Nakamura-shoten included a few information about overseas or space science, but mainly entertainment¹.

During WWII in 1938 the Department of Interior announced to control publishing books and picture books for children including Manga². After that, Manga creators and publishers decreased making the number of Manga and changed contents to 'conservative'.

After WWII

After WWII, again many Manga has been published. Most Manga books were rented at Kashi-hon-ya (rental bookstore) for children in those days because the number of public libraries with children's rooms were a few. Manga books for Kashi-hon-ya was called 'Aka-hon(Red book)'Manga with realistic narrative stories and illustrations for high-teenage working youth readers. But young children were fascinated Manga and rented those books. Those Manga books were criticized as too much violent and sexually explicit expressions and so on.

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

Publishing Manga for study

First Manga book aiming for study might be "Benkyo Manga 『勉強漫画』 (Study Manga)" by Reiji AKI who was a former school teacher on geography, published as a monograph in 1950³. This Manga was basically published serially on "Mainichi Shougakusei Shinbun 『毎日小学生新聞』 (Mainichi Newspaper for Elementary-school-children)" before and during WWII. School teachers had been tried to do reading guidance of Manga at classrooms in those days⁴. In April of 1954, School Library Law was promulgated. At the same year the Ministry of Education had a national meeting and strongly hoped to set up an organization to judge 'good' books and 'bad' books for children.

The selection of Manga as school library collection was discussed at a National Convention of School Library Association in 1955⁵, but mostly participants insisted reading guidance should be done from Manga to classic literature. That means school libraries didn't need to have Manga as a collection.

In 1962, a publisher Shuei-sha started to publish a series of "Gakushu Manga of Japan History 『学習漫画日本の歴史』 (全 12 巻)". After that, several publishers started to make a series of 'Gakushu Manga' or Manga version of biographies. But, main stream of Manga publishing has been 'Geki-ga', comics with realistic stories and illustrations, and non-sense comics. Also many Manga stories were re-made for TV. During 60's and 70's it had been a battle between Manga creators/publishers and society. Some mothers gathered Manga books and burned on street because they were very bad for their children.

Story-Manga (graphic novels)

Late 70's 'Story Manga', graphic novels, based on Manga magazines were started publish as monograph series. For example, "Turi-kichi Sanpei 『釣りキチ三平』 (Fishing-mania-boy Sanpei)" by Takao YAGUCHI, which was published serially on "Shounen Magazine 「少年マガジン」 (Manga magazine for boys)" from 1973-1983, sold 17.2million issues totally. "Dragonball 『ドラゴンボール』 " by Akira TORIYAMA, which was

published serially on "Shounen Jump 「少年ジャンプ」" from 1984-1995, was sold 1,500million issues⁶. More and more both school libraries and public libraries added Manga as a part of collection.

School Libraries and Manga

In 1984, at the National Convention of School Library Association discussed about Manga again. Participants who thought school library can hold Manga insisted, (1) there are many Manga in society and children read them, and that is ridiculous not to consider Manga (2) School library should collect materials not only for studying but also nurturing and heightening the level of students' culture (3) Manga should be regarded as youth culture (4) reading Manga is a kind of reading. But people at the other side said, (1) reading Manga is not introductory of reading of literature (2) Manga is totally different from typographical culture (3) 'Gakushu Manga' is just a partial collection of fragmentary information (4) Manga influence badly over ways of thinking or viewpoint.

Then, next year national survey on reading and school libraries was done. About 50% of school libraries didn't hold Manga because (1) inappropriate for school library purpose (2)no self-confidence to select Manga (3)disturbance against reading (4)prohibition of Manga by school regulations.

As a result of this survey, School Library Association set up a committee on making criteria to select Manga, and discussed. The draft of the criteria was reported at a National convention in 1986.

3. Criteria of Manga at school libraries

The Criteria by School Library Association

SLA started to discuss and report the draft in 1986, and last version of the criteria decided in 1988. Later in 2008 the criteria was revised. (8) of 1988 version was withdrawn from 2008 version because school librarians recognize that already and no need to mention any more. Since this criteria was announced, not only school libraries but also public libraries tend to adopt this criteria for their own collection policy or make up by their own.

●SLA criteria to select Manga(1988)⁷

- (1) Does it show the quality of the illustration excellent?
- (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' mind by using vulgar expression?
- (6) Does its story to praise an evil or injustice?
- (7) Does it glorify a war or violence?
- (8) Does it treat the weak or disabled people discriminatory?
- (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) Do its bookbinding and quality of paper strong enough for using by many readers?

(14) Story Manga which does not finish will be evaluating through all volumes after the story ends fundamentally.

Senior level school library's collection policy on Manga

Not all school libraries made and announced collection policy but several schools made public. For example, Okayama prefecture Okayama Ichinomiya Senior High School which is one of registered 'super science high school' and also UNESCO school, and its school library made selection policy and criteria⁸ including Manga.

● Okayama Ichinomiya Senior High School Library Selection Policy and Criteria on Manga(2009)

① The works which got award like Tezuka Osamu Culture award, Media Art Festival Manga award except award by publishers because lack of fairness

② After spending time for a while, the reputation on those works or creators are stable

③ The theme of those works are academic and sociology, and possibility to assist curriculum

④ The theme of those works are distinctive; the method as Manga like illustration, frames, composition, saying, and story is regarded high literally and artistic; provide ample room for readers to think; possibilities to stimulate readers' another interests and concerns through Manga works

Now not only school libraries but also public libraries have their own selection policy and criteria on Manga.

4. School education and Manga

Teaching and Manga after 90's

After 90's more school teachers had been tried to use Manga at classrooms. School librarians had been required to prepare Manga for those materials. Manga for using as study aid are categorized several patterns at present. They are;

(1) Titles indicate 'Gakushu'(学習=study) and the contents are related textbooks on history, science, and so on. For example, "Berusaiyu no Bara (Lady Oscar: La Rose de Versailles)" by Riyoko IKEDA is widely suggested by world history class teachers for understanding the background of French revolution.

(2) Manga biography.

(3) reading materials for moral or peace education. For example, "Barefoot Gen" for understanding the life of a boy during the war and after suffering atomic bomb in Hiroshima. Or "Hikari to tomoni (With lights)" by Keiko TOBE which story is about autistic children or "Donguri no ie(a house of acorns)" by Osamu YAMAMOTO for understanding disabled people.

(4) classic literature works re-made to Manga. For example, "Asaki Yume misu (The tale of Genji)" by Waki YAMATO.

(5) introductory information by Manga. For example, 'Gakushu Manga' series for science, history, etc.

But still many school librarians hesitate to collect and hold Manga as school library collection now.

One school librarian suggests how to collect Manga at school library practically in 2009⁹. He suggests,

(1) select Manga with excellent reputation as a standard. For example, "Hadasi no Gen (Barefoot Gen)" by Keiji NAKAZAWA, "Kamui-den 『カムイ伝』 (The Legend of Kamui)" by Sanpei SHIRATO, "Hi-no-tori (Phoenix)" 'Black Jack" by Osamu TEZUKA, etc.

(2) select Manga which can be used for classes or subjects. For example, "Berusaiyu no Bara (Lady Oscar: La Rose de Versailles)" by Riyoko IKEDA, "San-goku-shi 『三国志』 (Three Kingdoms)" by Mitsuteru YOKOYAMA, etc.

(3) select hard-cover version or pocket-book sized version. Because they are evaluated fully, and completed the story and easy to plan to buy. In Japan standard Manga works tend to re-publish as hard-cover version or Bunko version (=pocket-sized book).

(4) Last stage is selecting and collecting Manga fully.

The reasons why many school libraries hesitate to hold is that Manga is easy to break, a story with many books as a series, and quite often new publishing. Also students easily take out from school libraries without completing procedure, reading Manga during classes. To prevent those troubles, school libraries should put Manga near circulation desk and circulate as a set.

Government guidance for teaching

Curriculum from elementary schools to senior high schools are controlled by national government, the Ministry of Education as the School Education Law and its enforcement regulations. Since April of 2011 the government guidance for teaching of elementary school based on this enforcement regulations has been changed. Junior level and senior level will be changed after 2012. This guidance for teaching explains detailed each subjects what and how to teach. All teachers need to teach following this guidance.

Two subjects of the guidance for teaching at elementary schools ask teachers to teach with Manga, Art and Moral education same as junior level education. At art class of elementary school level, students will be able to use Manga and other illustrations and information as learning materials¹⁰. As for moral education class students can express their opinions by using Manga and other materials¹¹. At senior school level, only students at art class require to understand Manga. It says, "(c) Distinctive forms of expression as found in works from Japan and overseas countries covering a very diverse range, which

includes manga comics, illustrations and diagrams should be available and ready to be used."^{1 2}

5. Manga for future

There are many kind of Manga publishing in Japan. More and more school libraries tend to hold Manga books as a part of collection, but still half of school libraries strongly hesitate to hold Manga. That is because not only way of thinking toward Manga but also financial problems and staffs.

At school libraries, 'Gakushu Manga' is most popular as a collection. But it is needed to be checked and reviewed its content or expression appropriate or not, but actually not be fully reviewed. 'Story Manga' also need to be reviewed and discussed whether can be used for education materials or study aid. It is because mostly elementary and junior level schools don't hire professional librarians or librarian-teachers, only volunteers.

Students want to read more Manga, but school libraries hesitate to accept their requests because of lack of budget to buy. Recently Manga is getting hard to understand for reading-problem-holding youths, and school librarians notice that many children cannot read Manga. Those teenagers like to read easier books called 'Boys' Love(Ya-yo-i)' books which mostly gay stories, or cell-phone stories which fully sexual explicit expression or drug and violence, 'Teens' Bunko' (=Pocket-sized books for teens) books which are mainly fantasy or love stories, and 'Light novels' which are easy to read.

Many of those reading materials are criticized in society. Authority accused Manga is caused teenage crimes. Some local government including Tokyo metropolitan government revised Youth Protection Act and strongly controlled or banned Manga mainly. This is the discussion point whether teenagers' right to know through Manga or limited freedom of expression for protecting youth from 'harmful' Manga. It seems like real a popular light novel (with Manga and anime version), "Library War". In 1950's teachers tried to educate students' Manga literacy skills. We should try to ask teenage youths to educate Manga literacy again by themselves.

¹ 清水勲『年表日本漫画史』臨川書店 c2007 p144-145、150-151

² 石子順「社会の動きと漫画の歴史」学校図書館 No.358 1981.6 p9-15

³ 阪本一郎「学習漫画のあり方」児童心理 18(3)通巻 208号 1964.3 p298-307

⁴ Many textbooks for teachers on reading guidance in those days. For example, Toshokan-gaku Kyouiku Kenkyuukai (Research group on School library education) ed. "Shougakusei no Dokusho Shidou (Reading Guidance for Elementary School Children)"図書館教育研究会編著『小学生の読書指導』学芸図書、1952, and explained how to guide children to read Manga. And those years, a Professional magazine on school library(「学校図書館」)printed several articles on cases how teachers taught Manga reading at classrooms.

⁵ 増田近文「学校図書館とまんがー是非論から評価論へー」学校図書館 No.468 1989.10. P9-18.

⁶ "KINO" No.1 pub. by Kyoto Seika University. 2006.

⁷ 全国学校図書館協議会制定「学校図書館図書選定基準」

School Library Association. Selection criteria at school libraries. 2008.

⁸ 岡山県立岡山一宮高校図書館 <http://www.itinomiya.okayama-c.ed.jp/itiko.htm>
学校図書館選定方針および基準(平成 18 年 3 月 31 日制定、平成 20 年 7 月 3 日一部改定)
<http://www.itinomiya.okayama-c.ed.jp/tosyokan/sensyo.pdf>

⁹ 笠川昭治「学校図書館とマンガ--図書館が苦手なマンガと上手につきあう方法 (特集 図書館におけるマンガの行方)」
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¹⁰ http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afiedfile/2009/06/16/1234931_008.pdf (2011.5.24.)

¹¹ http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afiedfile/2009/06/16/1234931_011.pdf (2011.5.24.)

¹²

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