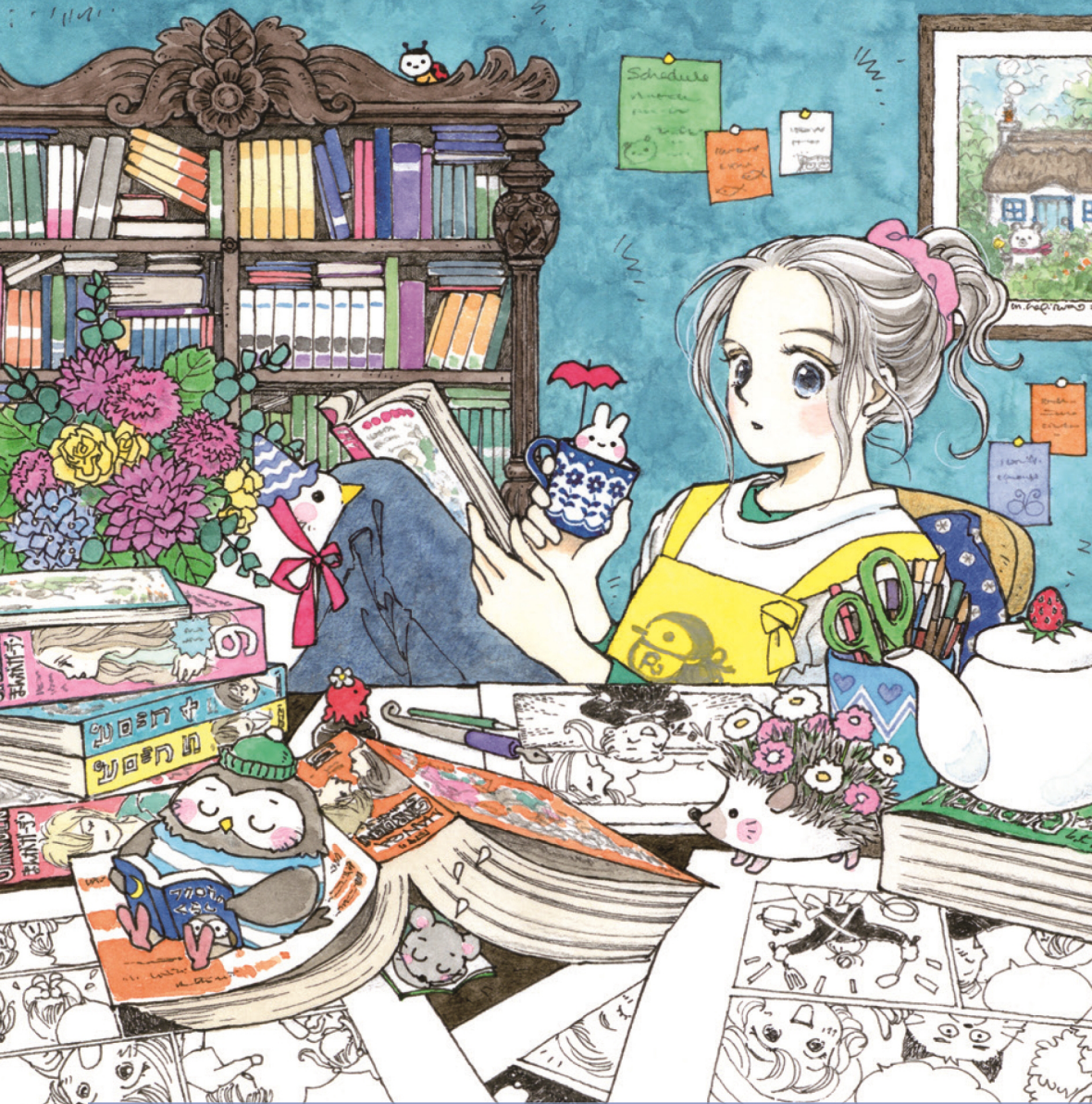


BLOOMSBURY comic STUDIES



MANGA

Shige (ed) Suzuki
and
Ronald Stewart

a critical guide

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Manga

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Covering major genres, creators, and themes, the Bloomsbury Comics Studies series are accessible, authoritative, and comprehensive introductions to key topics in Comics Studies. Providing historical overviews, guides to key texts, and important critical approaches, books in the series include annotated guides to further reading and online resources, discussion questions, and glossaries of key terms to help students and fans navigate the diverse world of comic books today. Derek Parker Royal previously edited the series from its launch to his passing in 2019.

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Manga

A Critical Guide

*Shige (CJ) Suzuki and
Ronald Stewart*

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The *Bloomsbury Comics Studies* series reflects both the increasing use of comics within the university classroom and the emergence of the medium as a respected narrative and artistic form. It is a unique line of texts, one that has yet to be addressed within the publishing community. While there is no shortage of scholarly studies devoted to comics and graphic novels, most assume a specialized audience with an often-rarefied rhetoric. While such texts may advance the scholarly discourse, they nonetheless run the risk of alienating students and representing problematic distinctions between “popular” and “literary.” The current series is intended as a more democratic approach to comics studies. It reflects the need for more programmatic classroom textbooks devoted to the medium, studies that are not only accessible to general readers, but whose depth of knowledge will resonate with specialists in the field. As such, each volume within the *Bloomsbury Comics Studies* series will serve as a comprehensive introduction to a specific theme, genre, author, or key text.

While the organizational arrangement among the various volumes may differ slightly, each of the books within the series is structured to include an historical overview of its subject matter, a survey of its key texts, a discussion of the topic’s social and cultural impact, recommendations for critical and classroom uses, a list of resources for further study, and a glossary reflecting the text’s specific focus. In all, the *Bloomsbury Comics Studies* series is intended as an exploratory bridge between specialist and student. Its content is informed by the growing body of comics scholarship available, and its presentation is both pragmatic and interdisciplinary. The goal of this series, as ideal as it may be, is to satisfy the needs of novices and experts alike, in addition to the many fans and aficionados upon whom the medium popularly rests.

Derek Parker Royal (c. 1964–2019)

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NOTES ON JAPANESE NAMES, TERMS, AND TITLES

Japanese names in this book follow the Japanese convention in which the surname comes before the given name. We use the modified Hepburn romanization system, but some exceptions are made for certain manga creators, including Matsumoto Katsudi, Matsumoto Leiji, Takahashi Macoto, and Anno Moyoco, following the manner in which their names have been presented on their official websites or in their publications. Names of scholars who have published in English follow the order given in their publications. Manga creators, including duos and groups of creators, are referred to by the names or pen names credited in their publications as well. Following the scholarly convention, we use surnames for manga creators and scholars in subsequent references, but some exceptions are made for those better known by a pen name—for instance, we use Rakuten instead of the surname Kitazawa when referring to Kitazawa Rakuten. We italicize Japanese terms, but terms with Japanese origins that can be found in standard English dictionaries, such as manga, anime, and shogun, are not italicized. With regard to the titles of manga, there is no hard-and-fast rule on how to approach this when writing in English. Generally, along with a romanization of the original title when we introduce a work, we include either an English translation or an indication of the meaning; subsequent mentions use whichever seems the easiest to understand the Japanese or English version—for example, Asō Yutaka’s manga is rendered *Nonkina tōsan* (Easygoing papa), and thereafter *Easygoing Papa*. In the case of works which are known through published English translations, we as far as possible give preference to these titles.

INTRODUCTION

The Prominence of Manga

In 2019, the British Museum in London held the “largest ever exhibition of manga” outside Japan. Titled “Citi Exhibition Manga,” it occupied the prestigious Sainsbury Exhibition Galleries and featured fifty manga artists, seventy titles, and 162 works. It covered manga’s history, production processes, diverse genres, impact on other media forms (e.g., anime, video game, and cosplay), and growing international reach and influence. Although it was the museum’s most popular exhibit of 2019, attracting more visitors than that year’s Rembrandt and Captain Cook exhibits (Sharpe 2020), the exhibition also prompted questions and criticism, including arguments against the artistic value of manga, inquiries about the target audience of the exhibition, and critiques of the display methods employed for the exhibited manga works—i.e., doubts about whether a few of the manga excerpts, displayed in isolation, taken from a long graphic narrative series can be fully appreciated. One critic disapprovingly noted “[w]e go there [to the museum] to have our eyes opened to artistic and historical wonders, not to get more of what’s on offer everywhere, 24/7” (Jones 2019).

Although this critic’s remark poses questions about institutional conventions on its own, the social role of museums, and cultural authority/power, it rightly points out the ubiquity and prominence of manga even beyond Japan. Indeed, over the last couple of decades, Japanese comics known as “manga” have been circulated globally and embraced by people all around the world. In North America, manga has increasingly become one of the most prominent and visible popular cultural offerings from Japan, starting around the late 1990s. Although there had been much earlier translations of Japanese comics, it was around the beginning of the new millennium that a handful of US publishers began to translate manga titles into English, making them widely available in bookstores.¹ This so-called “manga boom” invited young readers who had been raised on a multimedia visual culture to the world of Japanese comics. Although manga volume sales peaked around 2007 in the North American market, manga publications have continued to enjoy relatively strong sales as well as growing demand at public libraries, leaving a significant impact on not only manga readers and fans but also comics creators and other visual artists, including illustrators, designers, filmmakers, and animators. Since around 2010, several Japanese manga authors have gained

international recognition, winning such prestigious comics honors as the Eisner Awards in the US and the Grand Prix at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. As comics and graphic novels have been re-evaluated in North America (and elsewhere), many teachers, educators, and librarians have found cultural and educational value in manga and have incorporated them into school curriculums and library collections.

In Japan, manga are embraced and “read by nearly everyone of all ages” (Norris 2011, 252). That said, this does not mean that most individuals in Japan passionately read all kinds of manga. The Japanese manga industry has segmented the market based on genres and target readerships, including the four most well-known classifications—*shōnen* (boys), *shōjo* (girls), *seinen* (young adult men/adult men), and *josei* (adult women)—although these categorical boundaries have been increasingly traversed by readers following their own interests. Manga books and magazines are deeply embedded in people’s everyday lives, found not only in bookstores and libraries but also in convenience stores and at neighborhood cafés, hair salons, dentists’ waiting rooms, and laundromats, among other places. Manga—or, more precisely, comic strips—also appear in daily newspapers, regular magazines, and literary journals, and on posters and public announcements common at train stations and bus stops, and so on.

The sheer volume of manga published is massive. Statistically speaking, in the 1990s, almost 40 percent of all print publishing in Japan consisted of manga or manga-related publications (such as manga books, magazines, manga illustration books, etc.). While this percentage has been in decline since the 2000s, manga account for nearly 80 percent of Japan’s expanding electronic publishing market (Yano keizai kenkyū-jo 2016) and are still among Japan’s most commercially viable and popular cultural products. In the Japanese media industry, manga stories and characters are frequently adapted into other visual products such as anime, films, video games, collectible cards, and character goods through industrial transmedia adaptation practices.

In recent decades, the people producing manga have no longer been limited to professional manga creators who work with editors and publishers. Since the mid-1970s, manga fans’ self-publication activities have become more and more vibrant, and they hold their own buying-and-selling events for their *dōjinshi* (fanzines) all over Japan. Since the mid-2000s, the Japanese government and its agencies have taken advantage of manga’s global popularity (along with that of anime, fashion, and video games), leveraging it as “soft power” under the “Cool Japan” campaign.² These instances exemplify the social, cultural, and economic impacts of manga in today’s Japan (and beyond).

What is Manga?

What exactly is manga? This simple question invites multiple answers and responses depending on whom you ask. Some say that manga is a part of, or

born of, contemporary Japanese popular culture, while others regard it as part of, or an extension of, traditional Japanese culture. While some dismiss manga as “juvenile trash” or low-brow entertainment, others argue for its artistic and cultural value. All of these assertions are both right *and* wrong. This is because, historically speaking, manga has undergone changes in its meanings, its place in society, and its cultural functions, *and* various agents in the field of manga have transformed (the notions of) manga in different historical moments. While reserving a more in-depth, historically situated discussion about what manga has been and is for the later chapters,³ we would like to begin with a brief but nuanced discussion of how to approach and understand what we call “manga.” Most simply, “manga” can be translated into “Japanese comics.” To study manga critically, however, we need to examine both of these words—“Japanese” and “comics”—rather than taking them as givens.

Let us first discuss the term “comics,” a highly contested concept that also carries with it “much cultural and intellectual baggage” (Earle 2021, 12). “Comics” etymologically shares its origins with terms such as “comic” and “comedy,” words describing things that are funny or mirthful. Due to these associations, comics have been (mis)taken as a form specifically for humorous narratives or comedic performance. In the US, the term “comics” has been long associated with specific comic book genres such as funny animals and superhero fiction,⁴ both of which have tended to carry the assumption that comics are children’s entertainment and not to be taken seriously. Since the 1980s, these assumptions have been undermined with the rise of “serious” comics that are capable of complex and profound expression, but have still persisted, as Douglas Wolk (2008) writes, “As cartoonists and their longtime admirers are getting a little tired of explaining, comics are not a genre; they’re a *medium*” (11; emphasis in the original). For these reasons, such terms as “graphic novels” and “graphic narratives” have been proposed and used by creators, critics, and scholars, although the validity of these terms are still being debated.

For our purposes, we use “manga” in the same sense as we do “comics,” meaning manga should be understood first as a *medium* that, to borrow Karin Kukkonen’s concise definition of comics, “communicates through images, words and sequence” (2013, 4).⁵ As a medium, manga is not only used for visual storytelling as entertainment products but also for personal/artistic expression, education, journalism, intellectual provocation, advertisement, business manuals, public announcements, propaganda, and more. This framing of manga as a medium might be obvious to manga experts and those who are familiar with the diversity of manga.⁶ However, outside of Japan, manga is sometimes perceived as a certain set of stylistic and/or character design features, vaguely called “manga style”—for example, large saucer eyes, pointy chins, small mouths, slender bodies, and/or curvy-lined body design features, as exemplified in many of the swelling number of English-language “how to draw manga” tutorial books available. To be

clear, manga indeed employs a diverse range (or combination) of drawing styles and methods, ranging from (photo-)realistic to cartoony or iconic/abstract, to name a few. With that said, the term “manga” has also been used to refer to cartoons and certain illustrations, especially those drawn by *mangaka* (manga creators). While our primary focus is on multi-panel narrative forms, these too will come into view in this book.

Next, when we translate “manga” as “Japanese comics,” we are indicating manga is something associated with Japan—linguistically, culturally, geographically, or otherwise. Still, the “Japan” in “Japanese comics” should be understood not so much as a place of “origin” but as a contextual site through which the accumulation and transformation of aesthetic conventions, cultural mediation, and new production take place.⁷ As we shall see in more detail in Chapter 1, what is now called “manga” is, in fact, an amalgam of various cultural traditions, socio-technological factors, and historical interactions with comic art and other (visual) media forms, some of which go beyond the national and cultural boundaries of Japan.⁸

Mindful of the complications mentioned above, in this book we use the terms “manga” and “Japanese comics” interchangeably. In doing so, we follow the standard usage of the plural form of “comics” in recent English-language comics scholarship to discuss the medium, while adhering to the singular form of “manga” when the term refers to the medium—for example, “manga is a multimodal medium.” Also, in discussing concrete instances of individual or multiple titles, we treat “manga” as a plural noun—for example, “many self-published manga are sold at the Comic Market.” The Japanese language lacks plural nouns (with the exception of certain pronouns)—or more correctly, pluralization in Japanese differs from that in English—and the word “manga” is used in both singular and plural cases; thus, here too we refrain from using the word “mangas.” In Japanese, *mangaka* is the word used to describe the person credited for an individual manga work; we use this along with the terms “manga creator” or “manga author” as well. It is worth noting here, though, that in present-day manga production, numerous creators—especially those who are serializing in manga magazines—work with assistants or as a team consisting of a script writer and an illustrator/artist. In the case of the latter, we indicate individual roles as “writer” and “artist,” or credit their work division as “script” and “art” when necessary.

The Rise of Manga Studies

As in the early development of comics criticism in Anglophone contexts, earlier studies of manga in Japan were first cultivated by manga practitioners, cultural critics, and independent scholars.⁹ In the early twentieth century, *mangaka* like Kitazawa Rakuten, Okamoto Ippei, and Hosokibara Seiki attempted to explicate the history of, or theorize, the object of their

professional discipline, manga—though in their time, “manga” meant single-panel cartoons and comic strips. Since then, a number of scholars in the fields of education, literature, psychology, and linguistics have written about manga from their professional perspectives, but much of this early discourse expressed conventional paternalist and educational concerns about the impact of manga on the development of children. In the 1960s and 1970s, with the maturation of manga as a medium for young adults and adult readers, cultural critics such as Ishiko Junzō (1967) and Tsurumi Shunsuke (1967 and 1984) discussed manga as part of the culture of “the masses” (*taishū*), but still tended to frame it in relation to the concept of “art.”¹⁰ A significant turning point for the current state of the academic study of manga was the death of Tezuka Osamu (widely hailed as the “god of manga”) in 1989, which prompted the re-evaluation of his lifelong career achievements and the medium of manga in general.

Throughout the 1990s, critics like Natsume Fusanosuke (1995, 1997) and Yomota Inuhiko (1999) published books about manga, both of whom devoted most of their attention to manga’s formal, visual, and stylistic function rather than to themes or analyses of narrative elements. Of particular importance is a book titled *Manga no yomikata* (How to read manga, 1995), edited by Natsume and another critic, Takekuma Kentarō, which catalogs examples of visual coding and expression employed in manga. The renewed interest in the medium expressed in these books and an increase in media attention to the growing manga industry in the 1990s ultimately produced a new academic engagement with manga. In 2001, the Japan Society for Studies in Cartoons and Comics (JSSCC, Nihon manga gakkai) was founded “with the purpose of promoting Japanese-language manga studies” (JSSCC, n.d.). Although there was an initial resistance to the institutionalization of studying manga within academia, new scholarship provided the momentum for the medium to be taken seriously and even the cultivation of the growing field of “manga studies,” inviting the participation of many scholars and researchers from different disciplines and fields. Nowadays, courses about manga are offered at Japanese colleges and universities. The amount of scholarship about manga in Japan and beyond has been growing, although manga studies is yet to be put on the solid footing of well-established disciplines such as literature or art history.

In the North American Anglophone context, the study of manga has developed in various disciplines over the past few decades. As early as 1983, Frederik Schodt published *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, which offered an introduction to the rich world of Japanese comics for Anglophone readers. In 1996, Schodt also published *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, which showcased not only numerous *mangaka* and manga magazines but also manga’s interplay with other popular media and fan activities in Japan and in the Anglophone world. Since then, a number of scholarly monographs and edited volumes about manga have been authored by academics from a wide variety of disciplines, such as cultural anthropology,

sociology, literature, and gender studies. Cultural anthropologist Anne Allison's *Permitted and Prohibited Desires: Mothers, Comics, and Censorship in Japan* (1996), for instance, examines Japanese popular culture including erotic manga through a lens of gender and sexuality in relation to the cultural logic of late capitalism in 1980s and 1990s Japan. Sociologist Sharon Kinsella's *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (2000) ethnographically explores the rise of the Japanese manga publishing industry, tracing the maturation of the manga medium in relation to shifting social situations in Japan. Similarly, Jennifer Prough's *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga* (2011) investigates the inner workings of the Japanese manga publishing industry with a focus on *shōjo* manga. Whereas these books have each taken a sociological/cultural anthropological approach to Japanese comics in the latter half of the twentieth century, Deborah Shamooin's *Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girls' Culture in Japan* (2012) interrogates the medium's interaction with literature and visual culture, tracing its relations with early twentieth-century "girl culture" and visual aesthetics in girls' magazines. These scholars offer well-informed, contextualized understandings of manga and its relation to industry, readership, society, and culture while cultivating a space for scholarly engagement with manga in English-language academia. Yet they often approach manga as an entry point for examining social, historical, and anthropological topics about Japan or discuss Japanese comics within the larger frame of Japanese studies (as part of area studies). As mentioned above, however, as a medium, manga employs a combination of verbal and pictorial modes for communication and/or storytelling. Such cross-discursivity in the medium (Chute and DeKoven 2006, 768) is at odds with the conventions of traditional disciplines—literary studies or art history, for instance—and the medium of manga warrants its own methods for analysis and examination.¹¹ Manga scholar Jaqueline Berndt (2008) reminds us of the critical importance of the media/medium-specific approach by observing the problem that "academic theses and papers often give the impression that while manga may serve as a mirror for various social and cultural discourses, neither the media-specific aspects of comics nor the Japanese discourse on comics needs to be taken into account" (295). Taking this as a cue, this book seeks to engage both Japanese- and English-language scholarship as well as highlight the medium-specific nature of manga.

What to Expect in this Book

As an entry in the *Bloomsbury Comics Studies* series, *Manga: A Critical Guide* provides an overview of manga with social, historical, cultural, aesthetic, and critical matters in mind. Informed by the recent scholarship on the subject of manga, the book provides an introduction to the study of manga and manga's social and cultural impact. In so doing, the book

provides much-needed insights for discussing manga and manga-related culture without over-generalizing or uncritically repeating what has previously been said about Japanese comics. The book also serves as a useful guide for navigating the rich world of Japanese comics, as it maps out several key issues in manga and offers some methodological approaches to the medium. That said, it is, of course, impossible to do justice to the entire diverse and evolving world of manga *and* manga studies in a compact volume such as this. Rather, the book offers multiple entry points into discussing manga, with critically informed approaches and methods.

Chapter 1, “Historical Overview,” delves into manga’s cultural history. The chapter is divided into two time periods: Part I describes the development of early manga (including proto-manga forms) up until the end of the Second World War, and Part II covers the period from 1945 up to the present. Although each section is recounted in a roughly chronological order, manga has not always developed in a linear, progressive way. While a handful of existing histories of manga emphasize a direct genealogical connection between contemporary manga and Japan’s pre-modern visual culture, or fetishize Tezuka as the “origin” of narrative manga, we re-examine such claims and consider manga as a modern medium. Emphasis is placed in this chapter on key actors and comics (manga) movements in modern history that (re-)invented the medium by situating each example in its socio-historical context.

The ubiquity of manga in people’s everyday lives—in terms of the vast quantity of commercially produced titles and the use of manga (and/or manga characters) across various media platforms—generates social, economic, and cultural implications and ramifications, including some unintended consequences felt across different social and cultural spheres. Chapter 2, “Social and Cultural Impact,” addresses a selection of salient topics about manga and its relationship to society and culture. The chapter is divided into the following sections: “Controversy and censorship,” “Gender and sexuality,” “Historical representation,” “Media mix and *dōjinshi* participatory culture,” and “Cultural status and institutions.” Each section demonstrates how manga have had dynamic impacts on society and culture and have even intervened in and/or (re-)shaped social and cultural values at different historical moments. This chapter also provides socio-cultural background information and critical perspectives related to each topic, useful for approaching manga as an object of study.

The *Bloomsbury Comics Studies* series also aims to meet the needs of pedagogical instruction. As such, Chapter 3, “Critical Uses,” offers teachers and educators a sort of toolbox of pedagogical resources. The focused sections in this chapter are “Bounds of manga,” “Formal and visual analysis,” “Biographical approaches,” “Gender and sexuality studies approaches,” and “Historical questions and historical representation.” Each relatively short section provides a set of different approaches and frameworks for discussing manga, followed by a series of questions that can spark discussions on any given manga work at

the instructor's discretion. Readers will also find a few short-focused topic [Box Text]s to further background understanding and discussion.

Chapter 4, "Key Texts," is for those who wish to further explore the diverse world of manga. It is intended to provide a wide variety of manga in terms of subject matter, genres, styles/forms, and more. However, we must stress that the collection of works introduced in this chapter is not meant to be taken as a "canonical" list of manga. In selecting the titles, we also considered the availability of English translations for use in classrooms. However, the list also contains works that have not been (fully) translated into English but which have been included because of their social and cultural significance. The list is extremely selective and limited—in the end, the world of manga is immense, and no one can fully grasp the totality of the subject. In addition to these chapters, this book also offers an Appendix that contains a list of manga(-related) museums and a link to the companion website of this book that offers more pedagogical topics and ideas as well as materials for classroom use.

Lastly, we fully acknowledge the limitations of this book. It is not the purpose of this publication to offer a comprehensive picture of manga's development and socio-cultural impacts. The sheer multitude and diversity of manga elude any such attempt. Also, in our rapidly globalizing and digitizing world, Japanese comics have become more mercurial and transformative. Beyond Japan, manga fans all over the world have been adding multivalent meanings to the medium and transforming it in their respective contexts.¹² More recently, there are non-Japanese authors who have published their Japanese-language manga in Japanese manga magazines, and there are Japanese *mangaka* based in Japan who contribute their artwork to American comics publishers. Although we make occasional allusions to these cases, these recent transformations of manga outside Japan are beyond the scope of this volume. We also could not address any of the more recent developments in online/digital manga, which have increasingly been occupying a more significant part of manga production, distribution, and consumption. Some of such online "manga" are accompanied by sound, voice, and/or animated images, which radically reframe the fundamental notions of manga. We admit that this book sidesteps these topics and leaves them to future research and exploration. *Manga: A Critical Guide* is, in the end, an overview of manga and an introduction to manga studies. Having said that, we still hope that readers will find the book useful and intellectually stimulating. It is an invitation to scholars, researchers, librarians, students, general readers, and fans to join the ongoing and developing conversations happening about manga.

Notes

- 1 Sociologist Casey Brienza (2009) attributes the preeminence of manga in the US market to the format and the venues for sales: manga were sold in book

format and shelved at regular bookstores, not (solely) specialty stores like comic book stores.

- 2 Political scientist Joseph Nye explains that soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments” (Nye 2004, x). He discusses the resources a country has—culture, political values, and foreign policies—for exercising its own soft power.
- 3 Also see “Bounds of manga” in Chapter 3 for more on how critics have attempted to (re-)define the meaning(s) of manga.
- 4 A “comic book” in this case refers to a traditional US publication format for comics, typically a thin magazine with a limited number of pages (approximately twenty-eight to forty-eight pages), often featuring a serialized narrative.
- 5 Kukkonen (2013), drawing on the work of Klaus Bruhn Jensen, qualifies the term “medium” as something constituted by three aspects: “(i) it is a MODE of communication, (ii) it relies on a particular set of technologies, and (iii) it is anchored in society through a number of institutions” (4).
- 6 In recent years, within Japan, the term “manga” has been increasingly used for the medium—not “Japanese” medium—exemplified by the Japan Media Arts Award that has granted awards to non-Japanese comics under the name of the “manga award.” Likewise, a study group in the Japan Society for Studies in Cartoons and Comics (JSSCC, Nihon manga gakkai) uses the phrase *kaigai manga* (lit. “overseas manga”) in referring to non-Japanese, international comics.
- 7 See Kacsuk (2018) for more in-depth discussion about the tension between “manga as a style” and comics as “made in Japan.”
- 8 A complicating (and fascinating) factor in defining manga is the recent phenomenon of non-Japanese comics creators who call their works “manga” instead of “comics” or other such terms (see Brienza 2005). Also, there are several nationally or ethnically Japanese “manga” creators who live and work outside Japan. These cases prompt a number of questions about the “bounds” of manga (see “Bounds of manga” in Chapter 3) as well as the potential for what we might call “world comics.” This recent trend, driven by recent globalization, requires an inquiry beyond the scope of this book.
- 9 See Berndt (2008) and Theisen (2017).
- 10 Both authors respectively reconceptualized manga—or more accurately, *gekiga*, a new type of graphic narratives aimed for young adult readers in those days—and its relationship with ordinary people (*taishū*). For Tsurumi, manga belongs to what he calls “liminal art” (*genkai geijutsu*), an intersectional space of the lives of ordinary people and aesthetic sensibility of art. As for Ishiko, see Suzuki (2014).
- 11 See Hatfield (2010) and Suzuki (2020).
- 12 For instance, see Bitz (2009), Johnson-Woods (2010), Perper and Cornog (2011), Brienza (2015 and 2016), Hemmann (2020), and Welker (2022). Among them, Michael Bitz’s work is remarkable in documenting how students at an inner-city high school in Manhattan are not only consuming manga but also collaboratively creating manga, which contributed to the development of their literacy—including cross-cultural literacy—and identities.

1

Historical Overview

Part I: The Emergence of Manga to 1945

The Problem of Start Points and Definitions

This section will attempt a historical overview of manga development from its earliest forms through to the end of the Second World War. But where should this history begin? Looking for the start point of any cultural form is always a fraught endeavor. The medium of manga is no exception. As is the case with comics, it was not suddenly born whole nor is there a pure form (see Gabilliet 2010, Introduction). Moreover, it is easy to find antecedents to manga-like elements dating back long before the emergence of a form recognizable as manga today. How manga is defined shapes the content of its histories; what is and is not included, and how far back the history will extend. In Japan, three basic views of manga history have developed: all rely on differing perceptions of what manga are. The first of these historical perspectives is the “long tradition” history which uses broad definitions of manga to reach back centuries and place its roots within Japan’s lengthy and rich traditions of visual arts. The second viewpoint sees manga as complex narratives and the product of post-1945 developments in which the role of Tezuka Osamu is pivotal. The third perspective views the basic form of manga as emerging gradually in the late nineteenth century, influenced by Western comic art, social change, and, importantly, the growth of modern print media industry—newspapers, magazines, and later books—which by the 1920s would form a truly mass media.

While the first two views of manga history are common in popular discourse, it is the third historical perspective, of manga emerging in the late 1800s, that has gained broad scholarly consensus in Japan in recent decades, and it is this perspective that we will adopt in this section to relate a pre-1945 manga history. In doing so, a degree of contextualization will be necessary as multiple socio-political factors, such as the influence of foreign and domestic media—particularly European and US comic strips as well as the most popular form of entertainment in the interwar period, film—Japan’s growing literacy and urbanization, and its economic circumstances,

as well as its deepening militarism and long descent into the “dark valley” of total war, all impacted on the trajectory of manga development.

Before jumping into this history, however, as the “long tradition” and “Tezuka Osamu-centric” views are still influential in shaping perceptions of manga history both inside and outside of Japan, both will be examined in brief, and their problems will be highlighted. In addition, a look at the history of the term “manga” and its continually shifting meaning is warranted because, despite the impulse by many to nail it down to a single fixed meaning or essence, its meaning remains in flux and highly dependent on context.

The long-tradition type histories place the origins of manga in ancient times and draw a straight unbroken line of development to the present. This type of long-view overarching history emerged in Japan around the beginning of the twentieth century, probably influenced by histories of comic art in the West.¹ However, it was the publication the first book-length history of manga, Hosokibara Seiki’s *Nihon manga-shi* (A history of Japanese manga), in 1924 that cast the mold for later histories until recent decades.² While some start with eighth-century artifacts, such as caricature-like graffiti in the Buddhist temple Shōsō-in, most begin with the twelfth-century picture scrolls *Chōjūgiga*. This set of scrolls, more formally known as the *Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga* (lit. “Humorous Pictures of Beasts, Birds, and Humans”), were officially declared a National Treasure in 1872 when the newly formed modern nation-state conducted a survey of cultural properties. So, from the start, when writers of manga histories, many of whom were *mangaka*, linked manga back to the *Chōjūgiga*, they were not only seeking to create an indigenous tradition but were also conferring on manga, and their profession, a legitimacy and an elevated status.³ Attention is usually only given to the first of these scrolls as it features cartoonish anthropomorphic rabbits, frogs, and other animals engaged in humorous activities, and, purportedly, satirical comment on the Buddhist clergy of the time.⁴ With this as a start point, long tradition histories use a unifying definition of manga as “pictures with a spirit of humor and satire” and chronologically list subsequent artifacts that fit this broad categorization. Included are other brush-drawn picture-scrolls (*e-makimono*) from the Middle Ages through to the sixteenth century; these are followed by examples of humorous woodblock prints and books from the flourishing urban print culture of the Edo Period (1600–1868), and these in turn lead seamlessly into cartoons and comic strips of modern periodical print media of the Meiji Period (1868–1912) and then through into the postwar period. When this type of history began to be written, what were popularly called manga were, almost without exception, cartoons and comic-strips humorous in content. So, defining manga as essentially humor and/or satire at the time no doubt seemed appropriate. Today, however, this definition seems hardly adequate as strictly adhering to it would exclude swathes of postwar comics which are not particularly humorous, while including many artifacts from past centuries that would not strike someone these days as manga.

Nonetheless, these histories linking present manga culture to the ancient past have continued. This has been made possible by finding surface “manga-like” or “comics-like” forms of expression or aspects in artifacts from the past, such as cartoonish drawings (exaggeration, simplification, and/or anthropomorphism as in the *Chōjugiga*); movement and effect lines (for example in the twelfth-century *Shigisan engi* [Legends of Mt. Shigi] picture scrolls); proto-speech balloons (emanating from chests and usually indicating thoughts or dreams rather than speech in late eighteenth-century *kibyōshi* [yellow-cover] books); the use of the word “manga” in titles (such as the famous set of nineteenth-century copybooks *Hokusai Manga*); commercial print entertainment (Edo Period woodblock prints); or more recently, shared themes (such as Japan’s folklore ghouls, *yōkai*), as well as image and text interplay and narrative. Despite the multiple and at times contradictory definitions used, the resultant chronological progression, unencumbered by historical detail, juxtaposes examples to provide satisfying, easy-to-understand, and convincing narrative of development. The historical and cultural gaps between these disparate artifacts are largely left to be filled in by the reader’s imagination in much the same way as the gutters between panels in comics. A general belief in progress provides the glue that holds these narratives together. Consequently, even today this type of long-tradition history remains widespread. Indeed, versions of them can be found in Japan in popular publications, websites, exhibitions, government reports, tourist brochures, and even postage stamps. The plaques awarded annually by the Japan Cartoonists Association (Nihon mangaka kyōkai), to best manga artists of the year, still feature a large relief image taken from *Chōjūgiga*, evoking this type of history and connecting their profession to a long national tradition.

Unfortunately, these histories are problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, and most importantly, chronology *does not* equal continuity. While popular, these histories tend to offer little to no evidence that the works presented are representative of their times, or that there is any genuine continuity of cultural practice over time. In other words, they are gross simplifications of lived history. Secondly, in order to make a pleasing story of development, a narrative start point is sought leading to the creation of a myth of origin. A third problem is the ethnocentric nature of these stories. Inside Japan, part of the appeal of narrating a centuries-long national tradition unique to Japan is its appeal to cultural nationalism. While outside of Japan, the narratives’ ability to fit in with Orientalist or exoticizing views of Japan and its culture is also attractive. Sadly, inward-looking narratives of this kind tend to downplay foreign influences, leaving out of their field of vision the transnational flows of cartoons, comic strips, and comics from the late 1800s into the twentieth century which were much more significant in shaping manga’s development than most of Japan’s older visual traditions. For these reasons, long-tradition views of manga history, though popular, have become subject to criticism by manga historians, who

see a need to focus on shorter periods of time and to account more for cultural complexity (for more detailed critiques, see Miyamoto 2009b, Stewart 2013).

The other common way to tell the history of manga development is to start with the “god of manga,” Tezuka Osamu, by seeing a narrowly determined “story manga” (*sutōrii manga*) as the foundation of contemporary Japan’s manga culture. Manga in this view tends to be defined as a particular type of comics storytelling, not just long-form (*chōhen*) comics which had already begun in the prewar era, but more dramatic complex narratives that could address serious topics and explore internal psychological states. It is a type of storytelling thought by many to have been pioneered by Tezuka in his early postwar works. This discourse emphasizing Tezuka as the originator of Japan’s manga culture is one that grew out of 1970s and 1980s discourses which began to perceive postwar Japanese comics as something “unique”—without precedent in Japan and different from comics in other countries. Tezuka was seen as having created the foundation of “story manga” with his elaborate storytelling, as well as through his reputed introduction of filmic techniques, the “star system” of a reusable cast of characters, division-of-labor production employing assistants, and greater literary depth. This depth was conferred on his work in particular by bringing tragedy into comics. This medium had, before postwar developments, been a predominantly simple humor-filled form of children’s reading material. Tezuka himself would assert that he was the first to introduce tragedy into manga with his 1948 manga *The Mysterious Underground Men* (*Chiteikoku no kaijin*) by allowing a central character to die. In this manga, an anthropomorphic rabbit called Mimio, who is the companion of the story’s protagonist John, is heartbroken after being shunned by John for betraying his trust. But Mimio returns and sacrifices his life to save John. The narrative concludes with Mimio passing away while John, at his bedside, watches over him (Takeuchi 2016, 20, 110–15).

The discourse around the emergence of a “Tezuka-style” and the myth of his creation of long-form story manga became an opportunity for many to draw a line between Tezuka’s work and pre-1945 manga, even though the foundations of his work were clearly built by *mangaka* who came before him (Washitani 1998, 110). While Tezuka’s work caused a revolution in postwar manga and he still remains hugely influential to this day, links to prewar manga run deep in his work. Many techniques and innovations popularly attributed to him found expression in the work of some of his forgotten contemporaries in the immediate postwar period and/or have antecedents before 1945. Tezuka himself freely admitted the influence on his work of the early twentieth-century *mangaka* Kitazawa Rakuten and Okamoto Ippei, whose collected works were in his father’s study (Rakuten 2019). During his childhood, Tezuka was an admirer of popular *mangaka* such as Ōshiro Noboru and Shimada Keizō, and made copies of Yokoyama Ryūichi’s *yonkoma* (four-panel) manga *Fuku-chan*, a type of training he

would later see as the start point of his own work (Tezuka 1979). That Tezuka's inspiration flows from those who preceded him is evident in an unpublished work drawn in the closing months of the war, *Shōri no hi made* (Until the day of victory). It includes numerous cameo appearances by popular manga characters from the previous two decades such as Tagawa Suihō's robot and octopus characters, Akiyoshi Kaoru's Todoroki-sensei, Matsumoto Katsudi's Kuri-chan, Asō Yutaka's Easygoing Papa, and Sakamoto Gajō's Tank Tankuro, as well as the US animation characters Bosko (Warner Brothers) and Mickey Mouse (Disney). Scholars of manga history have pointed to structural borrowings as well. For example, Ryan Holmberg has convincingly argued that in his early manga, Tezuka, a fan of Disney, borrowed significantly from Disney comics artist Floyd Gottfredson's drawing style and narrative structure (2014; 2015). The strong influence of George McManus's comic strip *Bringing Up Father*, published in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s, on Tezuka has also been noted. In recent years, scholars have pointed to his use of McManus's characters Jiggs and Maggie in the unpublished work noted above (available in print since 1995), confirming continuity with prewar US comics also (Ōtsuka 2010, 136; Exner 2018, 231; Exner 2022, 171–2). Ono Kosei has even demonstrated Tezuka's direct appropriation of elements from McManus's strip into his own 1950 manga *Fushigi hikōki* (*Record of a Strange Flight*), even going as far as to borrow an entire panel (2017, 271–4). Ono also argues that Tezuka's immediate postwar collaboration with Sakai Shichima, a veteran *mangaka* whose career began in the 1920s, on *Shin takarajima* (New treasure island, 1947) also had a great influence on him. In addition to Sakai, there were many other *mangaka* contemporaries of Tezuka with whom he interacted whose careers began well before the postwar period. Clearly, any exploration of manga development must not limit its view to just Japan and necessarily predate Tezuka. We argue that the most appropriate place to start is a period from which strong lines of continuity in development in both form and cultural practice emerge: the last decades of the 1800s.⁵

Finally, before moving on to our history, the problem of the word manga itself needs to be addressed. In this book we use a simple definition of manga as “Japanese comics,” but its actual use is not so simple. What it signifies has changed considerably over its history, and still today its meaning is by no means fixed. This makes separating out uses of the word to mean “comics” from other uses in the past difficult at times. This problem is compounded by the fact that other expressions have also been used. Looking back over comic strips, comics, and other comics-like forms in print during the first half of the twentieth century as well as the discourse around them, one can find that a wide range of terms were used to label them, some incorporating the word “manga” and some not. These include in prewar Japan, *ponchi-e* (Punch pictures), *ponchi-hon* (“Punch” books), *shashin-manga* (photo-manga), *manga-shōsetsu* (manga novel), *eiga-shōsetsu* (movie novel), *manga-manbun* (manga and jottings), *renzoku-manga* (continuous or

serialized manga), *tsuzuki-e* (continuous pictures), *firumu manga* (film manga), *katsudō manga* (moving manga, on paper but also used to indicate animation), *katsudō ebanashi* (filmic picture stories), *emonogatari* (picture stories), *ehon* (picture books), *akahon* (red books), *manchō* (sculpted or relief manga), and *gurafu komikku* (graph comic). There were even audio performances for record and radio based on comic strips called *oto no manga* (sound manga) and *manga gekijō* (manga theater). In addition, the term *manga eiga* was long used to mean animation. Whilst most of these terms have long been discarded, a few such as *emonogatari* and *akahon* would continue to be used well into the postwar period. Moreover, these competing names hint at the early interplay with, and blurred boundaries between, manga and other media.

Japan's two most famous *mangaka* of the early twentieth century, Kitazawa Rakuten and Okamoto Ippei, both of whom drew satirical single-panel cartoons as well as comic strips, were somewhat astounded by the diversity of forms that came to be encompassed by the term “manga”. Rakuten in 1928 wrote that explaining manga had become complicated because of the diversity of elements “incorporated into pictures collectively labelled manga” (Stewart 2013, 33). In the general remarks section of the first volume of his 1933 *Manga kōza* (Manga course), Okamoto listed ten different categories of manga, of which the closest in meaning to the current understanding of comic strip or comics was *renzoku-manga* (continuous manga), which he equated with film as visual narratives driven by two or three protagonists. So, the meaning of “manga” was broad, and the blurred line between what was, or was not, manga remained unclear for a considerable time to come. In a 1938 roundtable made up of publishers, educators, and *mangaka* for the purpose of debating appropriate reading material for children, participants also found themselves grappling with the problem of what the word manga actually meant. For example, debate extended to whether a short animated scene within a newsreel film should also be considered “manga” (on Okamoto's categories and this roundtable, see Washitani 1999).

When looking to define manga, or investigate its history, some people turn to an ahistorical essence of manga supposedly found in the root meanings of the two Sino-Japanese characters, *kanji*, that form this compound word 漫画. In doing this, the two characters combined are frequently translated in English as meaning something like “frivolous drawings” or “irresponsible pictures.” Unfortunately, reducing the word to the etymology of its individual characters is tantamount to trying to pin down an essence of comics in the root form “comic.” It ignores the fact that the usage of this *kanji* compound-based word manga is every bit as arbitrary as the use of “comics” in English, and its meaning is heavily dependent on context. Indeed, this compound first coined in China initially entered early eighteenth-century Japan as a term for a particular type of bird. After this it was used in Japan very infrequently until becoming a common term the

early twentieth century. This is despite famously being adopted by the prolific ukiyo-e (floating world pictures) artist Katsushika Hokusai for his series of nineteenth-century copybooks, *Hokusai Manga*. There is still a widespread and persistent myth that Hokusai coined the term manga, despite manga historians as far back as 1928 repeatedly demonstrating that the word predated his usage. To be clear, Hokusai *neither* coined the term, *nor* used the word “manga” in the way it would be employed when it reemerged as an everyday term during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Manga historian Miyamoto Hirohito, in a detailed study of the word manga’s use from the eighteenth century through to the beginning of the twentieth century, has shown how it has changed in meaning and gathered new layers of connotation. Firstly signifying a “spoonbill bird,”⁶ it would later be used to mean “writing text or drawing images aimlessly” (evoking the bird’s actions) and then the “act of drawing a huge variety of things and collecting them together” and/or the “volumes these were collected in.” It was reinvented at the turn of the twentieth century as an approximation of the Western concept of “caricature” and from there extended to mean “comic strip” and briefly a “category of fine art” (Miyamoto 2003a, 319–21; Stewart 2013, 31). As noted above, it came to mean a broad variety of comic art related forms from caricature, political cartoons, and comic strips through to animation and comics in the first half of the twentieth century.

An added difficulty is that the word is rendered in Japanese in a variety of ways using *kanji* characters, two different Japanese phonetic *kana* scripts, Roman script (alphabet), or a mixture of these. In the prewar period it was written mostly in “old-form” *kanji* 漫画 and “historical *kana* orthography” まんくわ and マンクワ (*mankuwa*). Postwar rationalization and standardization of the writing system meant that the use of “new-form” *kanji* 漫画 and of *kana* more reflective of modern pronunciation まんが or マンガ. Also, in postwar Japan, alphabetic renderings and hybrid mixes have been used. *Kanji* or *kana* script versions can be written either vertically or horizontally: in the case of horizontal writing, now written in the same direction as English, it generally ran from right to left before 1945. The choice of how to write manga can be influenced by trends, design considerations, or by the intended audience (avoiding complicated characters in manga for children, such as まん画). It can also be determined by a desire on the part of *mangaka* or publishers to differentiate their work. For example, *Garō*, arguably an alternative manga magazine, for a brief time in the 1980s marked its difference from other magazines, foregrounding its sophisticated offbeat humor, mixed with cultural nostalgia, by writing manga in more complex prewar “old-form” *kanji* and by using the archaic *kana* spelling *manguwa* on its cover. Alternate orthographies for manga have also been coined with the hope of escaping the perceived restrictive nuances of humor in the first character by replacing it with homophonic alternatives; one example is the use of the English word “man” to create

MAN 画 to mean “human pictures”; and Ishinomori Shōtarō famously used 萬 as the first character in manga to change the meaning to mean “myriad” or “all-encompassing” images. In both cases the intention was to indicate a medium of infinite possibilities.

In English the word manga is tied to less social and cultural connotation, and has taken on slightly divergent meanings since entering the language in the 1990s. Written in only alphabetic letters, many of the nuances of the varied Japanese orthographies noted above are stripped and collapsed into a single form. It also tends to have the narrower meaning of “Japanese comics” or comics in a “Japanese-style”—sometimes vaguely called “manga style.” In Japan too, in the decades since the 1970s, the word has tended to bring to mind a not-too-dissimilar image of Japan’s thick, cheaply-printed (usually in black and white), and mostly youth-oriented weekly comic magazines such as *Shōnen Jump*, *Big Comic Spirits*, and *Margaret*,⁷ which contain multiple serialized stories predominantly drawn in a style instantly recognizable abroad as Japanese comics. So, there is a large degree of overlap in meaning with English usage. As noted in the Introduction, a number of creators outside of Japan, by adhering to a perceived or stereotypical “Japanese-style,” label their work manga and themselves *mangaka*. Scholar of this kind of endeavor Casey Brienza even discusses “manga without Japan” (2009). However, in Japan the term “manga” is also used to mean comics in general, regardless of whether they are of Japanese origin or in Japanese style or not. This is clear from standard Japanese dictionary definitions.⁸ We can also see this in competitions such as the Gaiman Award for *kaigai manga* (foreign comics) and the Japanese government’s Japan International Manga Award, neither of which have stipulations on style. Moreover, as hinted above, in Japan the word manga has been, and occasionally still is, used to mean a wide variety of forms including caricature, political cartoons, and animation. Where the bounds of the word “manga” in English should lie is an open question, and one we will leave for reader consideration in the “Bounds of Manga” section in Chapter 3.

Manga’s Emergence in Modern Periodical Print Media

Here we adopt the third of the three historical perspectives given earlier to recount a history of pre-1945 manga. In this perspective, the best place to start a history of manga as a comics medium is in the last decades of the nineteenth century within a growing modern publishing industry. This is because it was in this period, particularly the 1890s, when the basic building block of manga, the frame or panel (*koma*), emerged, and when multi-panel strips (i.e., image, words, and sequence) began to appear in publications. In form, these simple panels stand apart from more traditional types of Japanese visual art. This is also the period when the term “manga” begins to

very gradually be applied to the comics medium. Over the next fifty years, periodicals, beginning with general audience newspapers and humor magazines and then in the 1930s publications for children, monthly magazines, and books, would become the main loci for manga development in Japan. Throughout this period, unlike in the long-tradition histories spanning centuries, strong lines of continuity in cultural practice and practitioners emerge.

The introduction of modern print media accompanied by the growth of an educated (i.e., literate) population with disposable income set the stage for the expansion and diversification of periodical media and the arrival of manga. The publication of periodicals (newspapers and magazines) in Japan began between the forced opening of the country in the 1850s and the formation of its new Meiji Period (1868–1912) government which set about forging a modern nation state. In the preceding Edo Period (1600–1868), a thriving woodblock-print culture produced large quantities of single-sheet prints and books for urban consumers, but they were not produced according to a set time-schedule. For example, illustrated-news broadsheets called *kawaraban* were created only after significant news events such as fires or earthquakes. Consequently, when Japan's earliest daily newspapers began to appear, sellers needed to convince customers that the content of today's paper was different from yesterday's (Duus 2013, 318). The modern publishing industry and the number of publications—apart from spurts in growth during the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) and Russo-Japanese War (1904–5)—gradually grew over time along with a gradual rise in literacy and disposable income. In 1872, the modern Japanese state introduced an education system, but its implementation was met with resistance, even protests. This was because it was not only an unwanted financial burden for the largely poor agrarian population of the time, but also robbed them of family labor. Eventually, compulsory free elementary school education was introduced in 1899. This led to a rapid increase in children attending school. In a little over a decade, nine in ten children were enrolled in schools, and the percentage of commoners in middle school to university rose to 50 percent. While females would remain barred from universities until the postwar era, 1899 laws allowed them to continue schooling beyond the compulsory four years. The law resulted in the number of girls' school swelling to 133 over the next eight years (Tipton 2002; Freedman 2019, 27). The spread of literacy among children, and in turn the population in general, created a market for a variety of publications.

Modern print media aimed at children is thought to have begun around 1877 (Imada 2019, 15). By the beginning of the twentieth century, a growing consciousness of gender-differentiated consumer categories of *shōnen* (boys) and *shōjo* (girls) had emerged.⁹ Monthly magazines chiefly targeting boys (*shōnen zasshi*) started to appear first. These featured articles on school-related subjects like science and nature, humorous short stories, reader letters, illustrations, and puzzles. The earliest titles were *Shōnen en* (Youth

academy) and *Nihon no shōnen* (Japanese youth) in 1888, and *Shōkokumin* (Little citizens)¹⁰ in 1889. Between the late 1880s and the end of the Second World War, around forty boys' titles had appeared (about two in five were short-lived, lasting less than a year). The most important of these with regard to prewar manga development was *Shōnen kurabu* (Shōnen club, 1914–62). Soon after girls' education was expanded, monthly girls' magazines (*shōjo zasshi*) also began appearing, for example *Shōjo-kai* (Girls' realm) in 1904 and *Shōjo sekai* (Girls' world) in 1906. In 1908, *Shōjo no tomo* (Girls' friend), the most popular girls' magazine of the prewar period, began publication. It would last a remarkable forty-seven years, ending in 1965. This magazine along with another long-lived magazine, *Shōjo kurabu* (Shōjo club, 1923–62), played a significant role in the formation of prewar *shōjo* culture, which came to be centered on middle-to upper-class girls enrolled in single-sex secondary schools (Shamoon 2012, 2). While there was a smattering of cartoons, and multi-panel strips had appeared as far back as the 1890s, it was not until the late-1920s that these boys' and girls' monthlies would establish popular multi-page manga sections.

Print media for general audiences and adults also began to expand in the last decades of the nineteenth century, making use of newly introduced printing technologies. Most of the earliest newspapers were small-circulation mouthpieces for political organizations or with political agendas aimed narrowly at the elite educated classes. However, this changed as society transformed over the decades that followed. There was a continued quantitative and qualitative growth in literacy, a further spread of imported printing technologies, and an expansion of urban consumer culture, as tenant farmers flowed into the cities for higher-income work in new factories and other modern businesses. These social shifts were accompanied by a move by magazines and newspapers from being political mouthpieces towards becoming commercial enterprises, and sources of information and entertainment aimed much at broader audiences. By the culturally dynamic decade of the 1920s they had become a genuine mass media with the circulations of some periodicals reaching the hundreds of thousands. Unsurprisingly, the earliest instances of manga narrative in the form of a multi-panel cartoons, or comic strips, appeared in a political satire magazine in the 1880s as political commentary. But they would begin to appear in other publications with increasing frequency during the following decade as a non-political entertainment form. Some were clearly modeled on, or copied from, foreign examples, such as multi-panel strips in the comic paper *Comic Cuts* (England), the humor magazines *Fliegende Blätter* (Germany), and *Puck and Life* (US).

The earliest appearance of a comic strip in Japan is thought to be a six-panel silent strip in the July 6, 1881 issue of the short-lived political satire magazine *Kibi dango* (Millet dumpling). It was a one-off political satire strip, the title of which could be translated as “A drawing of a thicket being poked and causing a gigantic snake to appear” (Shimizu 1991, 107–8). The

short narrative, largely described by the title, was a metaphor for a major political fallout resulting from journalists exposing corrupt officials in the Hokkaido Development Agency, who had been selling off government assets cheaply to friends. The comic strip was drawn by Honda Kinkichirō, who was the political cartoonist for both this magazine and its more famous parent publication, *Maru-maru chinbun*,¹¹ which ran from 1877 to 1907, reaching a peak circulation of 15,000. Both magazines were modeled directly on the British satirical *Punch* and featured three or four satirical cartoons in each issue. Multi-panel comic strip narratives such as the 1881 example, however, remained rare until the end of the 1880s when the magazine began to turn away from being purely political.¹² Two examples drawn by Kobayashi Kiyochika can be found in 1887 issues. Kiyochika, who joined the magazine in 1882, was one of the last great ukiyo-e woodblock-print artists. In the 1880s and 1890s he experimented widely with new styles and new printing technology that were displacing woodblock. One of these examples is a crayon lithographed six-panel comic strip in three tiers, read from the top right corner down in an “s” flow. Titled “Fairy Tale of a Modern Miss Fox” (March 12, 1887), it uses anthropomorphic foxes to tell the tragic story of a girl from a wealthy family who devotes herself to study before becoming a bride, but the shame of giving birth to child out of wedlock leads her to leap to her death from a tree into a pond. It is intended to be a satirical comment on the supposed lax moral behavior of female boarding school students. From 1894, Taguchi Beisaku, a student of Kiyochika, also created a number of six-panel strips for the magazine, but by around 1890 similar forms of expression were popping up in other publications. Many of them, like the examples above, appear to be quite original rather than copies of foreign strips.

Despite these examples of sequential comic narratives which more or less fit within current perceptions of manga as comics, the vast majority of the comic art, mostly single-panel satirical cartoons, in these magazines and indeed most publications until the 1890s were what Japanese manga historian Miyamoto Hirohito describes as “*ponchi*” in form rather than something more recognizable today as “manga” or its basic building block, the *koma* (frame or panel). *Ponchi* was a Japanese word used initially to indicate satirical cartoons in a Western mode. It derives from the name of the London *Punch* periodical and possibly also from the English language cartoon magazine *Japan Punch* (1862–87), published in the Yokohama foreign legation. In 1874, six years after the new Japanese nation-state had come into existence, the severe restrictions against publications mentioning politics or the ruling elite, which had been in place since the 1780s, came to an end. This led to a flowering of Japanese periodical publications reporting and opining on political matters. Some included political cartoons or *ponchi-e* (*ponchi* pictures). According to Miyamoto, while these were given a fresh look through new printing technology, such as etching, engraving, and in the 1880s, lithography, formally their structure and content had not

significantly changed. They still bore a close resemblance to text-image forms of expression common to the Edo Period's popular picture books (*kusazōshi*), such as *kibyōshi* (yellow-cover) books. That is, they continued to be text-heavy—text filling any open space around images within their frames—and they continued to be written in poetic meter, designed to be read aloud, possibly in groups, to enjoy the rhythm and timbre of the voice. They also continued to overflow with visual and verbal puns, and allusions designed to be unraveled and discovered by readers. Miyamoto (2002, 2005) argues that along with the increasing pace of media consumption and the move towards silent individual reading brought about by the new education system and modern reading spaces (libraries, public transport, etc.), a more image-centered frame (or panel) with minimal text, capable of being read at an instant, and more recognizable today as the *koma* (panels) of cartoons and comic strips, began to appear by the 1890s.

It is also around this time that the rarely used *kanji* compound “manga” was employed by Imaizumi Ippyō to label this new form (Miyamoto, 2002, 2003b, 2009b).¹³ Ippyō (1865–1904) spent a number of years in San Francisco where he had gone intending to study cartooning. He was encouraged to do so by his uncle Fukuzawa Yukichi, the famous writer, educator, and founder of the newspaper *Jiji shinpō* (Current affairs news). Knowledgeable about overseas media, Fukuzawa considered the lack of images in Japanese newspapers as a major shortcoming, and wanted Ippyō to draw for his paper. Soon after Ippyō's return to Japan in 1890 he joined the staff of *Jiji shinpō* as an artist, and there he would begin using the word *manga* to label cartoons and comic strips, and even labeled himself a *manga-shi* 漫画士, roughly equating to “manga professional” (Newspark 2003).

This use of the word *manga* appears unrelated to earlier usage of this Chinese ideogram compound. Shimizu Isao has reasoned that it may have been reinvented to match his uncle Fukuzawa Yukichi's long-running column in the newspaper called *mangen* 漫言, meaning “rambling talk,” by replacing the second ideogram *gen*, meaning words or speech, with the *ga* ideogram, meaning picture or to draw (1991, 17). Over the next decade, single-panel cartoons and multi-panel strips would appear sporadically in the pages of *Jiji shinpō*. The first use of the word *manga* to label an image was in a political cartoon printed in the February 6, 1890 issue called a *gui-manga* 寓意漫画 (allegorical manga) and was drawn by Kobayashi Kiyochika. The cartoon—a commentary on the state of the nation a year after the promulgation of the nation's first constitution—depicts a broken-masted sailing ship representing Japan in stormy seas as the crew, the people of Japan, frantically work the oars to move it forward (Shimizu 2008, 58). Multi-panel comic strips labeled *manga* appeared not long afterwards. One, a vertical four-panel gag strip bearing a title explaining it was a “manga (taken from a foreign newspaper)” was published on April 27, 1891. It appears to have come from a US humor magazine and reproduces a distinctly racist Western stereotype of the time: the lazy “Chinaman” in traditional

clothing. Sitting on a pier, the Chinese fisherman decides to cleverly tie his fishing line to his “pigtail” in order to read a book while continuing to fish. Unfortunately, an enormous fish bites at the line, pulling him backwards over the edge of the pier. His book flies out of his hands as he falls towards the water, limbs flailing. His bight idea ends in failure. Another strip, published on May 11 of the same year, is an autobiographical seven-panel strip by Ippyō. Titled “The Formation of Japanese Student?” it depicts his life from 1885 to 1891. Starting as an unkept kimono-clad ruffian, he evolves into a modern short-haired mustachioed gent in Western clothing. He then heads off to the West where he receives training in cartooning, returns to Japan in 1890, and sets up business the following year as an “American manga specialist” (*Beikoku manga-shi*). For Shimizu Isao, the first comic strip with a story that unfolds through a character (inner-) dialogue represented in text rather than being silent or having an external narrator, was published in the newspaper *Yomiuri shinbun* on March 8, 1892, and also appears to be the work of Ippyō (2009, 28–30). Titled “Mujiyō no kaze” (A heartless wind), it depicts a chance meeting between an upper-class dandy in Western dress and an attractive woman in a kimono. They catch each other’s eye and soon share an umbrella until a gust of wind blows off the man’s hat, revealing a bald head. They then head off in different directions in the final panel with the woman lamenting that he was just a Western lamp with a hat. Humor like this, which laughs at the superficiality of the Japanese people’s attraction to, and adoption of, all things Western, would feature often in manga over the following decades.

In 1895, Imaizumi published a book of his work called *Manga-shū shohen* (Manga collection: First volume). It contained mostly single panel cartoons, but also included some “evolution” (*shinka*) strips showing silent metamorphoses from one object into another, such as a corkscrew into a farmer, and a teapot into a frog. This was a type of strip common in US humor magazines such as *Puck* and *Judge* at the time. Ippyō later explained in a 1900 collection of reminiscences and essays, *Ippyō zatsuwa* (The ramblings of Ippyō), that his use of the word “manga” was as an equivalent to the Western term “caricature.” Yet his conception of caricature is clearly not limited to the common conception of this term—drawn exaggerations of facial and physical characteristics of a particular subject. Instead, he used it in a broader sense which included political and gag cartoons as well as comic strips, as is clear from his usage in *Jiji shinpō* and in his collected works. As an exemplar of manga, he reproduces on the frontispiece to his *Ramblings* an untitled, silent, four-panel strip by German cartoonist Hans Schliessmann.

Even though the term *ponchi* would continue to be used into the 1930s, it would be gradually displaced by other terms, and works carrying this label would increasingly fit Miyamoto’s definition of manga (i.e., instantly readable image-centric frames [panels] free of both poetic meter and complex wordplay or allusion). Beginning with a small boom in publishing during

the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5, over 200 *ponchi* books were published during the next fifteen years. These were cheaply printed small-circulation booklets produced initially by small traditional woodblock-print publishers and their artists using traditional string binding, but in the new century, some moved towards lithographic and other printing methods as well as stapled bindings. Mostly fourteen to twenty-eight pages in length, the *ponchi* books collected together gag narratives most often consisting of three to twelve panels, but with some reaching over twenty. Some of the strips appear to have been copied from overseas. In a 1904 article, “Japanese Caricature: An Imported National Humor,” American writer Joseph Berg Esenwein penned a critique of comic strips in these Japanese *ponchi* books. Analyzing strips from the 1894 booklet *Kyōiku ponchi shin’an ebanashi* (Educational ponchi: Newly-devised picture stories), Esenwein noted how Japanese comic art had changed over the previous twenty years, but criticized them for being derivative of Western work and accused them of using too many panels, resulting in labored gags. For him, they were no match for US cartoonists such as Frederick Oppen or F. M. Howarth, who worked with more economy. By the second decade of the 1900s these publications had all but disappeared, and by 1920s the word *ponchi* had come to mean old-fashioned, poor quality, unnecessarily exaggerated, or badly drawn images. Put simply by *mangaka* and pioneering animator Shimokawa Hekoten (also known as Ōten) writing in 1927, “ponchi is not an art, but manga is an art” (Jo 2013, 31), the difference had become more a question of quality rather than form.

The use of the word “manga” itself would spread over time, with initial impetus from the work of two popular *mangaka*, Kitazawa Rakuten then Okamoto Ippei, eventually becoming an everyday word by the mid-1920s. Rakuten and Ippei, along with the younger *mangaka* that they fostered, would play a major role in developing comics in Japan. The loci of this development were initially in newspapers and humor magazines, and then by the late 1920s centered increasingly in children’s magazines and books.

Towards Character-Driven Narratives and a Profession

While, as we have seen, multi-panel comic strips had started appearing in publications in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, comics or comic strips featuring recognizable reoccurring characters began to emerge early in the twentieth century. In 1982, three of Japan’s most historically significant *mangaka*, Ōshiro Noboru, Tezuka Osamu, and Matsumoto Leiji, opened a discussion on manga by giving their opinions as to when *koma-manga* (multi-panel comics) began. For them this meant narrative with reoccurring characters, and all chose prewar newspaper comic strips. Matsumoto felt that they began with Kitazawa Rakuten’s comic strip

“Tagosaku to Mokubē Tōkyō kenbutsu” (Tagosaku and Mokubē sightseeing in Tokyo). Tagosaku and Mokubē were two country bumpkins uneducated in modern ways who bungled their way through city life. This strip began in June 1902 and ran intermittently in a weekly comics page for a number of years. Tezuka Osamu, however, disagreed with Matsumoto and felt that narrative manga really began with two extremely popular strips aimed at children: the ninja-themed *Manga Tarō* by Miyao Shigeo and serialized from October 1922 for six months; and the daily adventure strip *Shō-chan no bōken* (The adventures of Shō-chan) written by Oda Shōsei and drawn by Tōfūjin (pseudonym of Kabashima Kazuichi), which began in October 1923 and continued for close to two and a half years (Ōshiro 1982, 11). These two strips were also collected and sold in book form. While all three of the strips mentioned here were serialized in newspapers, over the twenty years that separate Rakuten’s strip from the later strips there was a clear move towards more complex characters, longer story arcs, higher frequency, more child-orientated work, and an increasing commercialization of popular characters. Indeed, the 1920s saw a flowering of comic strips and newspaper comics pages. It is development in this period—between the turn of the century and the end of the 1920s, when most newspapers and magazines became much more visual in content—to which we turn to next, beginning with Rakuten.

Kitazawa Rakuten (real name Kitazawa Yasuji, 1876–1955), now considered Japan’s first career *mangaka*, began working at the newspaper *Jiji shinpō* (Current affairs news) in 1899, after being lured to the paper’s art department by a large salary. Rakuten had been working in the treaty port of Yokohama at an English newspaper run by American Edgar Vooris Thorn called *The Weekly Box of Curios*. Rakuten had been drawing cartoons, strips, and illustrations at the paper since 1896. He had initially started training in his early teens with the aim of becoming a Western-style painter in Tokyo, but after seeing and becoming excited by American comic strips in the children’s magazines *Shōkokumin* (Little citizens) and *Yōnen shinbun* (Children’s news),¹⁴ he decided that he wanted to draw something similar and sought out a tutor in Western cartooning. He found Australian-born cartoonist Frank A. Nankivell (1869–1959), who drew cartoons for the Yokohama based English-language humor and advertising newspaper publisher-cum-printing company Box of Curios between 1892 and early 1894. Two years after Nankivell’s departure for the US, Rakuten took over his position as cartoonist.

At the outset of the new century as Rakuten began working at *Jiji shinpō*, it had a circulation of roughly 70,000, which at the time was the second largest in Tokyo and fourth amongst national newspapers. *Jiji shinpō* was more expensive than its competitor newspapers, but had almost twice the content (twelve to sixteen pages rather than the usual six to eight) and promoted itself as Japan’s “number one” paper. As part of its efforts to broaden its appeal and increase its readership, *Jiji shinpō* signed an exclusive

contract with Reuters to report overseas news and expanded its entertainment content in various ways, introducing sports columns, recipes, translated jokes, and, importantly, cartoons and comic strips. Aware of the popularity of newspaper comics pages in the US, the editor wanted to introduce something similar, but with Imaizumi Ippyo's health failing, this task fell on their new recruit Rakuten. Rakuten says he was asked to draw "American narrative-style comic strips" four to eight panels in length and to "give the characters personalities" (Kitazawa 1952). On January 12, 1902, Rakuten's weekly newspaper comics page, Japan's first, was born. Its title, *Jiji manga*, was decided in consultation with the newspaper, with the incorporation of the still relatively little-used term "manga" meant to mark it as something new (i.e., not *ponchi*). Rakuten signed his introduction to the inaugural page as *manga-shi* 漫画子, meaning something akin to "manga-devotee." He would also refer to his readers as *manga-shi* when he began inviting contributions in 1903. The black-and-white page's content varied but it typically featured a cartoon or caricature and two or three comic strips (see Figure 1.1). Apart from reader competition contributions and the occasional reprinted overseas strip, the page was almost solely created by Rakuten.

On the pages of *Jiji manga*, Rakuten would pioneer the use of reoccurring characters in manga. Most famously the two characters mentioned above, Tagosaku and Mokubē, first appeared on June 29, 1902 under the title "Shinban hizakurige" (New shank's mare), a parody on the name of a popular Edo Period travel tale, which was later retitled "Tagosaku and Mokubē Sightseeing in Tokyo." This gag comic strip varied in length from three to twelve panels, but while it was presented in this modern form, it tapped into Japanese humorous traditions of both the travel story and a genre in traditional comic monologue, *rakugo*, that laughs at naïve country bumpkins trying to adjust to city life. These protagonists are often identified as Japan's first reoccurring manga characters, but Rakuten had twice created reoccurring characters before them. The first, two characters unimaginatively named Kō and Otsu, the equivalent of labeling them A and B, appeared in a serialized single-panel cartoon, "Shinnen no keshō" (Dressed up for new year), which ran for five days at the beginning of 1902. The two leaned out from a windowsill commenting on passersby on the street just below them. The second a strip, "Kuchi to kokoro" (Spoken niceties and true feelings) appeared weekly from March 30, 1902 for seven weeks. In it the two characters, Fukita and Daiyama, are both dressed in Western suits and always exchange pleasantries with each other, but this polite banter masks what they truly think. At the end of each strip their true feelings are humorously exposed by their actions, laying bare the superficiality of their spoken exchanges. On the *Jiji manga* page, Rakuten would go on to introduce a number of other characters such as the two mischievous children Deko-bō and Chame, as well as the vain, fashionable, West-loving dandy (and ultimately the butt of humor) Haikara Kidoro. The flawed or stereotypical personalities of Rakuten's characters were often revealed in



FIGURE 1.1 Jiji manga *comics page* from Jiji shinpō, June 28, 1903. Used with permission of the National Diet Library, Japan.

their names, similar to Happy Hooligan, Krazy Kat, or Dennis the Menace in Anglophone comics. In the case of Haikara Kidoro, his first name is the Japanese rendering of “high collar,” referring to the stiff starched collar of fashionable Western dress, and Kidoro puns on the word *kidoru*, meaning “to put on airs.” The popularity of the character Chame led to the creation of the verb *chameru*, meaning “to play pranks” (Kitazawa 2019, 49), and is still used today in a different form, *ochame*, to indicate a mischievous child. Rakuten created *Jiji manga* competition tasks, possibly inspired by *shōnen* magazine writing competitions of the time, by asking readers to contribute strips using his Deko-bō character. These appear to have been popular, bringing in responses from readers around the country ranging in age from twelve through twenty-four years.¹⁵ Prizes for their contributions included watercolor sets, world-famous bodybuilder Eugen Sandow dumbbell sets, and press-button metal flutes (*suifūkin*) which were a minor fad of the time.

Rakuten would continue the *Jiji manga* comics page until April 1906. While many of his comic strips look somewhat static, some excessively wordy, and his drawing style quite realistic, on this comics page he experimented extensively with the form: with varying lengths, frame structures and layouts, with silent strips, and dabbled a little in motion and impact lines. He also, on a number of occasions, introduced speech balloons (the first time on February 9, 1902) but not consistently and ended up settling mostly on narratives and dialogues set beside his comic strip panels.¹⁶ Manga narratives using just speech balloons would not become the norm until the 1930s. Poet and critic Yone Noguchi, writing in 1904 on the current state of Japanese humor, noted Rakuten’s indebtedness to American comic art. For Noguchi, while Rakuten imitated no one American cartoonist in particular, he had managed to combine American ideas with Japanese humor and this had led to the immediate success of his Sunday comics page. According to Noguchi, *Jiji shinpō*’s Sunday issue “sold in tremendous numbers,” leading to nearly all Tokyo newspapers following suit by printing “funny pictures,” though without the same success (Noguchi 1904, 475). Nevertheless, it seems clear that the popularity of the *Jiji manga* comics page played a significant role in spreading not only the form but also the use of the word manga.

In 1905 in the midst of a media boom during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), Kitazawa Rakuten created the satirical magazine *Tokyo Puck* with the publisher Yūrakusha. Though Rakuten continued to draw political cartoons for *Jiji shinpō*, he had grown increasingly frustrated with editorial caution regarding international politics. Becoming editor of this new magazine gave him freedom to cartoon as he wished. *Tokyo Puck* was modeled after its namesake, *Puck* magazine in New York, yet it differed in many ways. Rakuten’s magazine used color on every page and was multilingual, using Japanese, English and later Chinese. It was also much more visually dense, with cartoons and/or comic strips overflowing from almost all of its sixteen pages. It also stood out in Japan as different—its

large format, use of multicolor lithography, and new cover for each issue (still unusual at the time) made it eye-catching and allowed Rakuten and his students to experiment further. Though the magazine's selling point was its political cartoons, more than half the content was gag cartoons and multi-panel strips. *Tokyo Puck*'s success soon gave rise to many mostly short-lived imitators: *Tokyo Happy*, *Pakku* (Puck), *Kakuyū pakku* (Pleasure district puck), *Jōtō ponchi* (First-class punch), and *Kokkei-kai* (Humor world), as well as Japanese-language magazines *Chōsen pakku* (Korean puck) in Japan's Korean colony, and *Hawaii Puck* in the Hawaiian Japanese diaspora. Only *Osaka Puck* would achieve a degree of success, outliving Rakuten's magazine, finally changing its name to *Manga Nippon* in 1943 due to a wartime ban on English usage, and breathing its last breath in January 1945.

Despite this competition, Rakuten's magazine confidently advertised itself as the East's only genuine "manga magazine" (*manga zasshi*). In the first year of *Tokyo Puck* he began calling his profession *manga-shi* 漫画師 or manga master but later began to use *mangaka* 漫画家, the term used today. Demand led the monthly magazine to become a biweekly in 1906, and a thrice-monthly (*junkan*) publication the following year. With the increasing workload, Rakuten left *Jiji shinpō* completely and began recruiting young potential *mangaka*. These *deshi* (students or apprentices) lived at Rakuten's residence and received bed and board. Some of the earliest, such as Kawabata Ryūshi, Sakamoto Hanjirō, Ishii Tsuruzō, and Yamamoto Kanae, were aspiring artists for whom cartooning was merely a source of income en route to what they perceived as higher goals, all moving on to make names for themselves in fine arts. Others, such as Kondō Koichiro, Ogawa Jihei, and Shimokawa Hekoten, would choose *mangaka* as a career path. Along with Rakuten's supervision, they also had access to visual sources at the magazine's office. According to Ishii, copies of overseas humor magazines such as *Fliegende Blätter* (Germany), *Le Rire* (France), *Il Pasquino* (Italy), *Punch* (England), and *Judge* (US) were available (Shimizu 2001, 65). Rakuten himself was not shy about using elements from overseas artists. In one of his double-page montage cartoons depicting Japan in the future, he borrowed flying vehicles and their boarding station directly from the work of French illustrator Albert Robida.¹⁷

In the last few years of Japan's Meiji Period (1868–1912), *Tokyo Puck* started to lose its satirical bite and its readers. A reason for this is thought to be the increasing suppression by the government of political dissent, particularly after the High Treason Incident of 1910 (Kitazawa 2019, 50). This was a foiled plot to assassinate the Meiji Emperor that led to the mass arrests of socialists and anarchists throughout the country and to the execution of eleven conspirators the following year. The severity of the government reaction sent shock waves through the media, dampening most forms of political criticism. Not long after this, in 1912, angered by *Tokyo Puck* publisher Yūroku-sha's decision to sell off the magazine's publishing rights, Rakuten left to start up his own magazines. The resultant *Rakuten*

Puck and *Katei paku* (Home puck) were both short-lived. So, in 1914, Rakuten returned to *Jiji Shimpō* where he would continue to produce political cartooning and revive *Jiji manga* as a weekly (weekday) comics page. *Tokyo Puck*, however, while never recapturing its initial popularity, did manage to linger on without him, passing through three more iterations before finally coming to an end in April 1941.

Quite a number of other humor magazines would come and go in the prewar period, including *Manga*, starting in 1917, *Tōkyō kōtsūn* (Tokyo cartoon) in 1924, *Za yūmoa* (The humor) in 1927, *Manga jidai* (Manga era) in 1929, *Kakutēru* (Cocktail) in 1930, *Bakushō* (Roar with laughter) in 1935, *Manga* in 1940, and *Karikare* (Caricature) in 1941. For the most part they contained mild satire and gag cartoons with a few strips. One humor magazine that included numerous comic strips was the monthly *Manga-Man*, which ran from September 1929 to May 1930. A feature of this magazine was the relatively large number of foreign strips it reprinted, sourced mainly from the *San Francisco Examiner* (the magazine is reprinted in part in Shimizu 1987). These included Dirks' *The Katzenjammer Kids*, Knerr's *Dinghoofer und His Dog*, Swedish silent comic *Adamson* by Oscar Jacobsson, and the British strip *Bonzo the Dog* by George Studdy. The publication was also a vehicle for showcasing strips by Japanese *mangaka* such as Asō Yutaka, Miyao Shigeo, Shishido Sakō, and Yokoyama Ryūichi (Exner 2022, 154–9). These artists interested in foreign comic strips were mostly from *mangaka* Okamoto Ippei's cadre. In 1932 the members of this group would form the *Shin Manga-ha Shūdan* (New manga-faction collective). Much of the content of these prewar magazines was in the so-called "erotic, grotesque, and nonsense" (*ero-guro-nansensu*) escapist tone, which could also be understood as a subversive rejection of modernism and government control. This seemingly hedonistic fascination with the sensual, the seedy, and the silly ran strong in urban Japanese popular culture from the late 1920s through the Great Depression until the February 26 incident of 1936. This was an attempted coup d'état and a series of assassinations which led to the execution of nineteen young army officers and increased military control over civilian life. In the political climate leading up to this incident, and increasingly so afterwards, there was again a visible move away from political content. For cartoonists, this meant an increased shift to children's comic strips, a trend also visible in newspapers.

Rakuten's work at *Jiji shimpō* inspired other newspapers to employ their own artists. Indeed, after returning to the paper in 1914, Rakuten's popularity would soon be rivaled and then eclipsed by another *mangaka*, Okamoto Ippei (1886–1946). Ippei joined the *Asahi shinbun* newspaper in Tokyo in 1912, where he drew satirical cartoons and comic strips and would act as editor of the paper's various manga pages, which ran intermittently between 1921 and 1936. His drawing style was much looser and modern looking than Rakuten's stiffer, more anatomically correct cartooning. Because of his more simplistic and fluid linework, Ippei's manga are often

perceived as more “Japanese,” despite the broad international influences from both his fine art training and his interest in foreign cartooning. In particular, he held the work of George Grosz in high regard. Importantly, Ippei would embrace the use of the word “manga” for his work and as an artform. He promoted not only the term’s use but also the profession of *mangaka* by establishing Japan’s earliest professional association, the Tokyo Manga Society (Tōkyō manga-kai). Centered on Ippei and his students, the society burgeoned to include up to eighteen *mangaka*, including Rakuten, from eleven newspapers. The Tokyo Manga Society organized exhibitions at department stores, while most members participated in the society’s annual Manga Festival (*Manga-sai*) between 1915 and 1923. These “festivals” were largely private events held at locations such as spa resorts, where the *mangaka* sang, played instruments, competed in mini-Olympics, and even drew competitively. Yet, the often-humorous antics of *mangaka* at these events were reported in prominent serialized newspaper articles each year, allowing the *mangaka* to promote themselves as an early type of media personality.

Ippei, however, would take manga in a new direction to Rakuten, not only in drawing style but also in structure—one that would be dominant from the late 1910s into the mid-1920s and continue in the work of his students such as Miyao Shigeo up until the late 1930s. In the pages of the newspaper *Asahi shinbun*, Ippei developed a style of cartoons and comic strips with separated text and image. All text, narration, and/or dialogue was usually placed adjacent to the comics panel, either beside, below, or in some cases, in book form, on the opposite page. While the use of text outside of manga panels was not unusual up to this point, Ippei maintained a much stricter separation and tended to use a greater volume of text. To mark what he was doing as different from other manga, in labeling this new form he emphasized the text component. Initially he called them *manga to bun* (manga and text) for his newspaper serialized single-panel travelogue, which was collected into a narrative form in his 1916 book *Monomi yusan* (Pleasure trip). But he soon settled on the term *manga-manbun* 漫画漫文. The second half of the term *manbun* was made by replacing the *ga* 画 character in *manga*, meaning picture or to draw, with *bun* 文, meaning text. With his penchant for prose, Ippei created longer story arcs in his serialized manga. His sixty-page story *Chinsuke emonogatari* (Chinsuke’s picture-story) was first serialized in a children’s magazine, *Ryōyū* (Good friend), and published in book form in 1918. This along with his other extended *manga-manbun* narratives are considered some of the first long-form (*chōhen*) narrative manga (Ono 2018). Ippei later introduced the term *manga-shōsetsu* (manga novels) to label his longer works, such as his 1927 book *Hito no isshō* (A man’s life), and this would be taken up by a number of other *mangaka*. To readers today, many of the *manga-manbun* published by Ippei, and comparable works by others after him, look closer to picture books rather than comics, with an image on one page and text on the facing

page, or with the upper half of a page filled with an image and the lower half with text. Though over time *manga-manbun* that split the page into three, multiple tiers of image and text, bringing them a little closer to contemporary comics in structure, would become increasingly common.

Two examples of early *manga-manbun* style comics narratives can be seen on the *Asahi shinbun*'s weekly *Manga no kuni* (Land of manga) page of October 24, 1921 (see Figure 1.2). On the right is the second installment of Ippei's eight-panel strip "Ogyā yori manjū made" (From a baby's wail to a sweet-bean bun), which comically relates the protagonist Mikito's sudden late-night search for a midwife to deliver his wife's child. In this case the narrative and dialogue are to the right of each panel. On the left of the page, Ippei's student Hattori Ryōei uses another style, one also frequently employed by Ippei, of alternating text-image position and no panel frames. In this strip, titled *Mankichi to sono haha* (Mankichi and his mom), Mankichi, who lives in Tokyo, takes his mother who is visiting from the countryside to see the sights of the metropolis only to be constantly embarrassed by her uncouth remarks about city dwellers within hearing distance of those people.

Manga Tarō, mentioned above by Tezuka Osamu as a start point for narrative manga, was one of these *manga-manbun* style comics. Created by Ippei's student Miyao Shigeo, it was serialized in the newspaper *Maiyū shinbun* in 1922 over forty-five episodes, each ten panels in length. It was a humorous fantasy set in the feudal past,¹⁸ the time of ninja and samurai. In the story, the boy protagonist Manga Tarō is abducted by mythical *tengu* creatures who teach him ninja arts (*ninjutsu*). He returns to battle a series of wrongdoers with his magical ninja abilities. The complete story's 450 panels were collected and published in book form in 1923, which sold well at a price of 1 yen—an issue of the magazine *Shōnen Club* was 0.15 yen at the time. Riding the wave of a minor ninja boom of the period, which included Yamada Minoru's *Ninjutsu manga* (Ninja arts manga) in 1920, encouraged Miyao to serialize another even longer ninja arts story, *Dango Kushisuke manyūki* (Chronicle of Dango Kushisuke), in 1925. The popularity of *Manga Tarō* and the popularity of the other manga mentioned by Tezuka as a start point for narrative manga, *Shō-chan no bōken* (The adventures of Shō-chan), kickstarted a trend for newspapers to carry manga aimed at children. In her study of prewar newspaper children's manga, Jo En refers to the years between 1923 and 1930 as a "development period" in which almost sixty different comic strip titles for children appeared in papers. She says this led into the peak period from 1931 to 1937 during which close to 130 new children's strips appeared (2013, 106–7, 132–4).

The year 1923 is remembered in Japanese history as one of immense tragedy. On September 1 of that year, Tokyo and surrounding cities were devastated by the Great Kantō Earthquake. The quake triggered a coastal tsunami and caused widespread building collapses and raging fires which lasted for days, resulting in over 140,000 deaths. Despite this, the year was

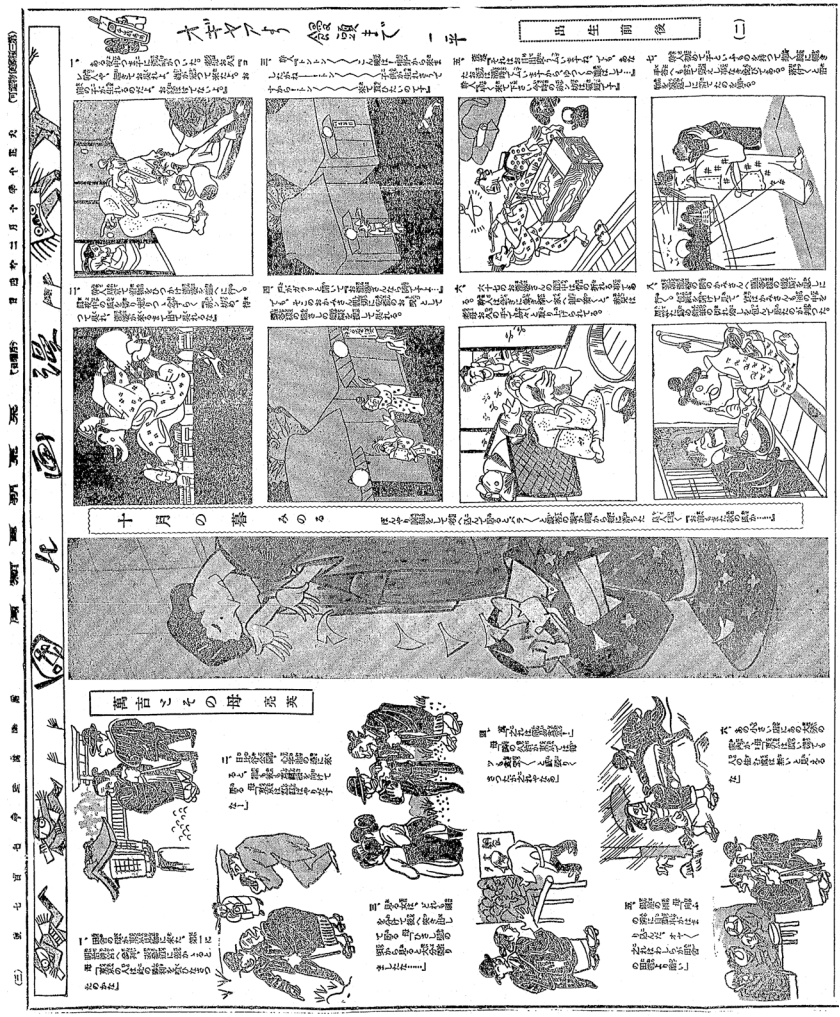


FIGURE 1.2 Manga no kuni (Land of manga) comics page, without its lower advertising section, from Tōkyō Asahi shinbun, October 24, 1921 (Asahi Shinbun Kikuzo II Visual).

a pivotal one in manga development. Apart from the publication of *Manga Tarō* in book form, the year saw the beginning of three extremely popular comic strips that would have a major impact on the direction of Japanese manga. These were *Shō-chan no bōken* (The adventures of Shō-chan), the American comic strip *Bringing Up Father* (in translation), and the daily strip it inspired, *Nonkina tōsan* (Easygoing papa). Miyamoto Hirohito argues that these three new strips differed from earlier Japanese comic strips in that their characters had more of the six elements that make postwar comics characters “stand out.” These elements are: 1) individuality (a unique appearance which can be distinguished from other characters); 2) autonomy (the character can move beyond the limited world of a single story); 3) variability (the character can change its appearance over time, by growing older, changing clothing, or just changes in the artists style); 4) complexity (the character is not based on a single trait or personality flaw); 5) non-transparency (the character possesses an inner world that is not visually represented); and 6) internally multilayered quality (the character has a modern self-consciousness, is aware of their inner world, and is capable of reflection which can in turn add to element 4 by maturing mentally). For Miyamoto, whereas earlier strips only had element 1 and to some a degree element 2, in these new comic strips the qualities 1 to 4 were at work, bringing them a step closer to characters that developed post-Tezuka (Miyamoto 2011, 85–6).

The first of these popular comic strips, *The adventures of Shō-chan* (see Chapter 4, Key Texts, for more details), is considered by some to be Japan’s “first character manga.”¹⁹ This daily strip ran from January 1923 for just over three years, beginning in a new photo-tabloid newspaper called *Asahi Graph* before moving to *Asahi shinbun* after the September 1923 earthquake. Loosely modeled on the popular UK strip *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*, *The adventures of Shō-chan* shares similarities in narrative and formal structure. Like the UK strip, Shō-chan’s story arcs run over a number of installments and it uses a combination of narration external to each panel as well as speech balloons—something still uncommon in manga of the time but standard in Britain until the 1930s. Nonetheless, unlike the UK strip, the main protagonist, Shō-chan, is a boy rather than an animal, although he does have an unnamed speaking squirrel companion. Another difference was in its panel layout, which went through a number of changes before settling on a vertical *yonkoma* (four-panel) arrangement. Also, Shō-chan ventures much further afield than the domestic and neighborhood set stories of *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*, with stories unfolding on land, at sea, and in the air. Shō-chan rides boats, planes, trains, cars, a camel, and even gains his own wings in one story; he encounters ancient peoples, mythological beings, and other creatures including a dinosaur. The strip proved incredibly popular, tapping into a much-loved theme, adventures stories, which had been a mainstay in children’s publications since the turn of the century; some magazines, such as *Bōken sekai* (Adventure world), were even devoted

to serialized adventure tales, for example a fictionalized story of Japan's first Antarctic expedition (1910–12). In this regard, driven by adventure and drama, and at times even given over to instances of tragedy, the Shō-chan strip marked a break from most other manga of the time, which were vehicles for gags. With Shō-chan, the humor was secondary.

That Shō-chan and his squirrel companion's existence also spread beyond the panels of the newspaper strip undoubtedly added to the characters' popularity. The titular character's iconic knit cap, known as a Shō-chan cap (*Shō-chan-bō*), became popular among children, and knitting patterns for them were shared in women's magazines. Through a "Memo" section below each installment, the newspaper and creator engaged readers in the world of the two protagonists. It featured fan letters and replies, and at times even updated readers on what Shō-chan and his squirrel companion had been up to during breaks in serialization. The characters appeared in advertisements and at children's events. At one New Year's event, 237 children, most sporting Shō-chan hats, gathered to listen to writer Oda speak, watch a performance of a "Shō-chan dance," receive Shō-chan medals, and have their photo taken with a cutout of the squirrel ("Shō-chan to risu," 1925). *Shō-chan no bōken* strips were tidied, colored, and collected into seven high quality horizontal format books during its serialization (see Figure 1.3).



FIGURE 1.3 Front cover of *The adventures of Shō-chan*, vol. 3 (Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun-sha, 1924). Used with permission of Kawasaki City Museum.

The second popular 1923 strip that had a major impact was of American origin. George McManus's *Bringing Up Father* began serialization from April of that year in Japanese as *Oyaji kyōiku* under exclusive license from King Features Syndicate. Initially it was a short daily strip, but after the earthquake it became a longer weekly feature. It ran in *Asahi Graph*, which had moved from being a daily newsprint tabloid to a weekly illustrated magazine after the earthquake. The move from daily to weekly publication proved a more suitable pace for serialization. This was due to the difficulties involved in translating the humor for a Japanese audience. Only strips with humor that was felt may work in Japanese were chosen; translations would then be corrected as many ten times before reaching a final draft—and even then, some were rejected. Yet, this effort paid off with the resultant translated strips proving incredibly popular, leaving the public “convulsed with laughter” (Suzuki 1938; “Japanese Cartoons,” 1932).

The popular appeal of the strip's characters Jiggs and Maggie led to them appearing widely in advertisements for various products. In 1924, an experiment in “manga-style” stage performance, a play revolving around Jiggs, opened in Tokyo. The theater justified staging the production since “manga is an art of the everyday public with no national boundaries” (“Jigusu geki” 1924). In the same year, one of Japan's most famous art educators, Yamamoto Kanae, even made paper Jiggs and Maggie masks for trial sale, along with Shō-chan masks, for visitors to an agricultural arts festival (“Jigusu to Magii” 1924). In 1925, *mangaka* Kōdera Kyūho was inspired to create a strip called *Shin oyaji no kyōiku* (New bringing up father) for *Asahi*'s magazine supplement to their newspaper's Osaka edition, *Katei Asahi* (Home Asahi). It was drawn in a form similar to the Shō-chan strip with speech balloons and external narration, but the homage to McManus's strip is clear.

The *Asahi Graph* magazine editor, writing some fifteen years after he introduced the strip, said the continued reader demand for the strip prevented them from bringing it to an end; this continued popularity was for him unexpected as he felt Japanese newspaper and magazine audiences tended to quickly tire of things (Suzuki 1938). So, even in the face of growing pressure from nationalist “spiritual mobilization” organizations in the late 1930s to purge foreign influences, *Bringing Up Father* continued for seventeen years before ending in July 1940, making it by far the longest-running comic strip in pre-1945 Japan. When it did end, it was replaced a few months later by a Japanese strip loosely modeled on it in terms of its title and its hapless middle-aged male protagonist. This Matsushita Ichio strip was initially called *Shintaisei oyaji soku-kyōiku* (The new order education for father),²⁰ but renamed *Kokusan oyaji kyōiku* (Japanese-made bringing up father) and then from January 1941, *Suishin oyaji* (Onward father). Focusing increasingly on everyday life on the wartime home front, it continued until August 5, 1945, ten days before Japan's surrender.

In his detailed study of translated American strips in prewar Japan, Eike Exner (2022) identified roughly over fifty overseas comic strips published in

Japanese, almost all introduced over about a ten-year period beginning in 1923. These included well known titles such as *Little Jimmy*, *Mut and Jeff*, *Polly and Her Pals*, *The Katzenjammer Kids*, *Happy Hooligan*, *Felix the Cat*, *Laura*, and *Blondie*. Exner argues that these strips, particularly *Bringing Up Father*, had a major influence in the spread of an “audiovisual stage” form in manga. The audiovisual stage, a concept advanced by comics scholar Thierry Smolderen, is a form where all the speech and sound effects are contained within panels, and sound and image are perceived as synchronous, just like watching a film. To add to this sound aspect, Exner argues that the use of motion lines, impact lines, stars emanating from bumped heads, heart symbols, and so on also became more apparent under the influence of foreign strips, resulting in the modern comic strip becoming the dominant form of graphic narrative, displacing the *manga-manbun* style, by the mid-1930s. As further evidence of the impact of foreign comic strips, Exner notes that a number of Japanese strips, particularly in the years immediately after *Bringing Up Father* began, read left to right (Exner 2018, 2022).

The third influential strip which began in 1923 was one directly influenced by McManus’s strip. It was the popular *Nonkina tōsan* (Easygoing papa) by Asō Yukata (1898–1961), a student of Kitazawa Rakuten (see Figure 1.4). It had begun on April 29, 1923 as an eight-panel strip in the newspaper *Hōchi Shinbun*’s *Nichiyō manga* (Sunday manga) supplement. It used speech balloons (read left to right initially), motion lines and symbols, and other emanata in its panels with no external text narrative. After sixteen episodes its publication was interrupted by the Great Kantō Earthquake of September 1923, but soon returned as a six-panel strip. As one of only two newspapers to escape damage in the disaster, *Hōchi* was able to restart its evening edition within just four days. Asō was asked by the editor of *Hōchi* to turn it into a daily strip, just as its inspiration *Bringing Up Father* had initially been, in order to help bring relief to readers who were living not only with the immediate aftermath of the disaster but also the continuing post-1920 economic slowdown that was now turning into a full-blown recession. Asō, while at first doubting his ability to do something to match McManus’s strip on a daily basis, moved to a daily four-panel strip format on November 26, 1923 and continued until October 2, 1926. Unlike McManus’s character Jiggs, Asō’s protagonist Tō-san had little luck with money or life in general. Starting out post-quake living amongst the rubble of Tokyo after his own home had collapsed, the unemployed Tō-san goes through a succession of jobs, none of which suit him, while occasionally making money only to then lose it again. Before the earthquake, *Hōchi Shinbun* had a circulation of 400,000, the largest of all Tokyo newspapers. The popularity of the strip, which ran on the front page, is thought to be one reason for the paper’s rapid post-quake circulation growth, which soon surpassed 700,000 (Hanuman 1992, 38; Shimizu 2009, 51–2).

The strip was published in book form and gave birth to a stage play, postcards, product advertisements, Tō-san-shaped figurines, and even a



FIGURE 1.4 Easygoing Papa by Asō Yutaka (1924). Personal collection of Ronald Stewart. Used with permission.

vending machine shaped like him. Asō quit the strip at the peak of its popularity to travel to Europe. On his return to Japan, he worked for a number of newspapers drawing various strips and cartoons, before having another hit in *Asahi shinbun* with *Jinsei benkyō* (Life study), serialized between May 1933 and July 1934. The strip's hero, Tadano Bonji, whose name puns with "a simply mediocre child," is the son of Tō-san from his earlier strip, *Easygoing Papa*. The strip begins with Tadano returning from high school graduation and ready to take on the world, only to find a mountain of rejection letters from every job he had applied for. The strip then, in humorous four-panel daily episodes, loosely follows his journey from student to working member of adult society with all its ups and downs. These strips were collected into six books sold as "long-form" (*chōhen*) manga. In 1934, a movie was also made based on the strip.

Newspaper manga supplements and manga pages in the 1920s and early 1930s also played a major role in early manga development. Japanese art critic Nakada Katsunosuke in a 1933 essay on the history of Japanese

manga asserted that, “[n]owadays, manga have already become an essential part of newspapers, playing the important role of taking the stiff edge off newspapers and allowing readers to more quickly grasp current events” (82). It was indeed true that by the early 1930s daily comic strips and cartoons had become a fixture in newspapers, but, perhaps due to growing competition from monthly children’s magazine manga and an increasing number of comics being published in book form, the period of newspaper companies experimenting with comics pages and comics supplements was coming to an end. Between 1919 and 1934 most major newspapers, primarily as a way to attract more readers, ran weekly comics pages or inserts.²¹ The two manga newspaper supplements that had the most lasting impact were *Jiji shinpō*’s *Jiji manga* and *Yomiuri shinbun*’s short-lived *Yomiuri sandē manga* (Yomiuri Sunday manga).

In the case of *Jiji manga*, it was its third and longest running arc (1921–32), produced in color, which set the standard for others to follow (for more on all three arcs of *Jiji manga*, see Chapter 4, Key Texts). In 1920, Kitazawa Rakuten formed a group called the Manga Appreciation Society (Manga kōraku-kai) in order to foster *mangaka* talent and work towards turning his single-page black-and-white Monday *Jiji manga* comics page into a color Sunday supplement (Shimizu 2008, 48). In February 1921 the new eight-page color *Jiji manga* was launched. Much like Rakuten’s earlier magazine *Tokyo Puck*, the front cover was usually a full-page political cartoon penned by Rakuten himself, while the content was largely comic strips. Yet by the late 1920s the cover increasingly turned to social satire, often targeting the lax morals of so-called *mobo* and *moga* (modern boys and modern girls). Within the supplement’s pages were characters developed much earlier by Rakuten, such as Chame and his bumbling middle-aged everyman character-cum-alter ego Teino Nukesaku (this wordplay name could be translated as Mr. Incompetent Simpleton), as well as serialized character strips developed by his staff. These included Nagasaki Batten’s *Sokonuke Don-chan* (Heedless Don), Kawamori Hisao’s *Ha-san Fu-san Oba-san* (Ha, Fu, and Aunt), and Ogawa Takeshi’s *Manuke Nū-san* (Foolish Nu). The supplement also introduced what are considered by some scholars to be Japan’s earliest *shōjo* protagonists: the secondary schoolgirl busy with her studies, *Hitori musume no Hineko-san* (Only-daughter Hineko), drawn by Nagasaki Batten under Rakuten’s supervision, beginning in 1924 and later changing to daily serialization; and Rakuten’s own rebellious tomboy female character strip *Tonda Haneko* (Leaping Miss Springy), beginning in 1928 and inspired by Japan’s first ever female medalist at the Amsterdam Olympic Games that year.²² The supplement also ran a small number of foreign strips, including Frederick Oppen’s *Happy Hooligan* (1925–30) and Pat Sullivan’s *Laura and Felix the Cat* (1930–2). The newspaper *Jiji shinpō*, which struggled to regain its readership after the 1923 earthquake destroyed its offices, saw the comics supplement as one way of attracting readers in the face of growing competition. At one point, copies of the *Jiji manga* section were bound with

a cover and distributed independently of the newspaper as a promotion. With three other rival newspapers starting similar inserts, *Jiji shinpō* decided to up the ante, and in mid-1931 the comics supplement was turned into a sixteen-page glossy cover magazine insert and renamed *Manga to yomimono* (Manga and reading matter) and then *Manga to shashin* (Manga and photos). Unfortunately, despite these efforts the manga supplement came to an end in July 1932, and four years later the financially troubled newspaper itself would disappear in a merger.

The other influential newspaper comics insert was *Yomiuri Sunday Manga*. From the mid-1920s the newspaper *Yomiuri shinbun* under new ownership set about overhauling its content in an effort to catch up with the nation's two largest newspapers, *Ōsaka Asahi* and *Ōsaka Mainichi*, which both boasted circulations of over a million, double that of *Yomiuri*. In August 1930, *Yomiuri* set up a Manga Department a month after another competitor, *Hōchi Shinbun*, had begun a new comics-insert. It recruited Asō Yutaka, Shimokawa Hekoten, Shishido Sakō, and Tsutsumi Kanzō. On October 26, the four-page *Yomiuri Sunday Manga* comics insert appeared, lavishly printed with the latest seven-color offset technology. Each issue contained six to seven regular comic strips. One of note was Yanase Masamu's *Kanemochi kyōiku* (Educating the wealthy). While its title was clearly a parody of McManus's *Bringing Up Father*, the strip was a highly original, at times abstract, socialist critique of capitalism. Yanase was one of a number of *mangaka* who, motivated by labor and proletarian culture movements, from the late 1920s to the early 1930s produced numerous cartoons and strips critical of capitalist society as well as the "erotic, grotesque and nonsense" cultural current (Adachi 2011).

Another noteworthy strip is one that would be highly influential on the children's page of the supplement: Shishido Sakō's *Supiido Tarō* (Speed Tarō). In this strip, the protagonist Tarō moves rapidly from one perilous situation to the next, with many of the eight-panel episodes ending in a movie-serial-like cliffhanger. The strip featured all manner of modern transport—planes, fast cars, boats, and more—with high-tech weapons and exotic-looking fictional foreign locations, all of which helped the strip gain a large following (Shimizu 1987). After twelve months its serialization moved to the children's newspaper *Yomiuri shōnen shinbun*, where it continued until February 1934. A year later, all 113 pages were published in color in a deluxe hardbound book in a 5,000-copy print run. Shishido had spent nine years in the US, intending to become a Western-style painter; however, on his return to Japan he took up work as a political cartoonist at a number of different newspapers before also trying his hand at children's manga at *Yomiuri*. These aspects of his career appear to merge in *Speed Tarō*. Shishido's use of a modern drawing style and allusions to the real world political background—the rise of fascism in Italy and Japan's ongoing war with China—are bound up in a riveting adventure narrative sprinkled with instances of humor. Manga historian Takeuchi Osamu feels the strip

carries a critique of the dangers of mechanized modernism and war, making it an extension of Shishido's political cartooning. Takeuchi also argues that Shishido's use of a variety of dramatic cinematic angles and dynamic moving vehicles raised the level of children's manga and had an impact on many budding *mangaka*, an influence he feels is visible in the famous opening sequence of Tezuka Osamu's *New Treasure Island* (Takeuchi 1988).²³

Yomiuri's newspaper comics supplement ended in December 1931, but manga continued to be printed in its weekly children's newspaper *Yomiuri shōnen shinbun*. A year later, *Jiji manga*, as noted above, also ended, and by the mid-1930s all major newspaper weekly comics supplements had disappeared. Japan's intensifying militarism and conflicts abroad cannot be discounted as part of the reason for this shift, but a more likely reason was that a major part of newspaper comics sections' entertainment role was usurped by the growing popularity of manga in children's magazines and manga books. Both Rakuten and Okamoto Ippei chose this timing to more or less bring their active cartooning days to an end. Nevertheless, popular daily strips such as Yokoyama Ryūichi's *Fuku-chan*, which began in 1936 in *Asahi shinbun* (see Chapter 4, Key Texts, for details), and many shorter-lived ones, like Shimada Keizō's cat protagonist *yonkoma* manga *Neko-shichi sensei*, would continue to appear in the pages of newspapers (see Figure 1.5). However, most of these would also vanish by about 1942 with government restrictions, due to paper shortages as the Pacific War intensified, forcing newspapers to reduce in number and in size.

Newspapers played an important role as training grounds for *mangaka*, with some actively seeking to coach new talent. At *Jiji shinpō*, the budding *mangaka* recruited by Rakuten for *Jiji manga* were given editing tasks to do until he felt their work was up to being included for publication. At the newspaper in 1930, Rakuten also started the Jiji Manga Study Group (*Jiji manga kenkyū-kai*) which included a young Matsushita Ichio, who would become well known for his long-running wartime comic strip, *Suishin oyaji* (Onward father), mentioned above, but more importantly was to be a major figure in the early postwar period in terms of his pioneering work in long-form story manga. In 1932, the vice-chief editor of *Asahi Graph*, Hata Sankichi, boasted of the Asahi Newspaper Company's training of young artists. He explained that after the 1923 earthquake, newspapers scrambled to meet demand for domestic comic strips like the popular *Bringing Up Father*, but *mangaka* could not be produced immediately. Hence there was a need to train them. According to Hata, *Asahi* was able to recruit Asō Yukaka, already famous for his *Easygoing Papa* strip, as well as another promising *mangaka*, Tsutsumi Kanzō, and these two were now instructing about twenty young artists. This training included analyzing themes found in comics strips around the world and classifying their topics for possible use, while at the same time hunting for their own topics. They also looked to foreign cartoonists for new styles while striving to create their own original work ("Japanese Cartoons" 1932).

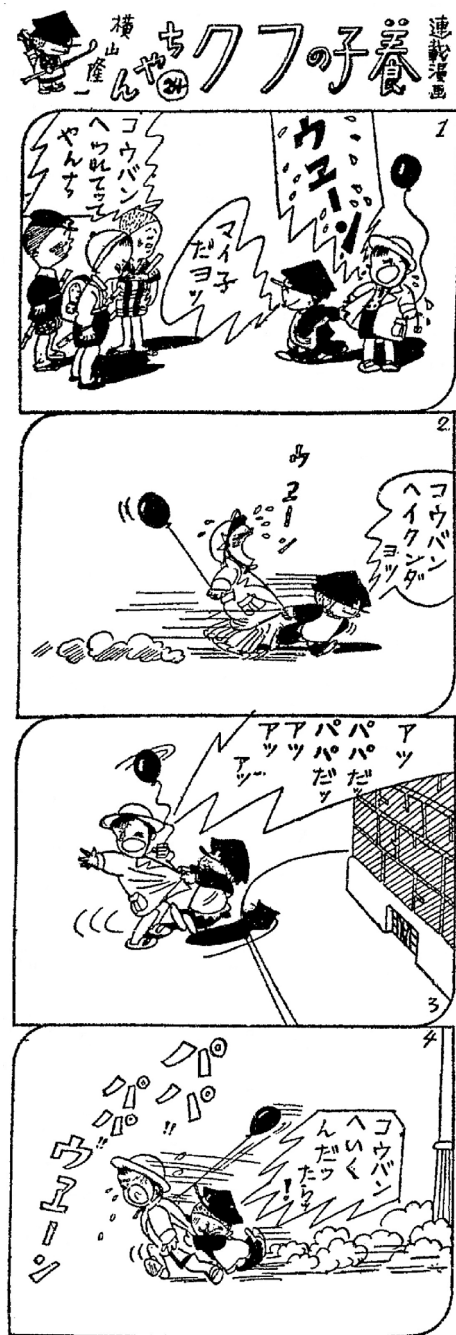


FIGURE 1.5 Example of a Fuku-chan yonkoma manga from Tōkyō Asahi shinbun, October 31, 1936 (Asahi Shinbun Kikuzo II Visual). © Yokoyama Ryūichi. Used with permission.

In the prewar period (1919–38), particularly as the profession of *mangaka* grew in the late 1920s, over a dozen *mangaka* groups were formed. Some were under or coalesced around established *mangaka*, while others were formed by *mangaka* with shared objectives. One example of the latter was the New Manga-Faction Collective (Shin manga-ha shūdan) group formed in 1932 of young *mangaka* who, influenced by overseas strips, wanted to break with older established *mangaka* such as Kitazawa Rakuten. Soon afterwards, rival groups of young *mangaka* appeared, including the Sanko Manga Studio group centered on students of Rakuten's newly established manga school, and the Leading-Edge Manga Group (Shin'ei manga gurūpu), a breakaway group of young artists from the Mangaka Association (Mangaka renmei), formed in 1926. Teacher–student groupings and associations like these played important roles in raising new *mangaka*, creating publishing projects and events, and helping members find jobs. In some cases, they were even involved in collective bargaining for better pay. The New Manga-Faction Collective's strategy of approaching publications as a group enabled their members' work to appear in over sixty newspapers and magazines nationwide in a single year (Shimizu et al. 2020, 285). Group rivalry also drove creativity (Shimura 1991), while talent was fostered and skills honed in numerous ways. Groups such as those centered on Okamoto Ippei developed their approaches through study gatherings or informal forums for exchanging ideas. Others included more formal training. Rakuten's early groups centered on his publications involved on-the-job training and his later manga studio offered figure-drawing classes to both professional and amateur *mangaka* alike.

Becoming a student (*deshi*) under an established artist was another route to a career. For some who followed this path, there was no formal training or guidance, but rather stimulation from working in close proximity to the artist in question. This was the case under Tagawa Suihō for Kurakane Shōsuke, later known for *Anmitsu hime* (Princess Anmitsu, 1949–55), and Sugiura Shigeru, well-known children's *mangaka* (Shimizu 2008, 54). Studying under an established artist was also a way to have work published. Rakuten's student Shimura Tsunehei reminisced in his memoirs that he shed tears of joy when Rakuten wrote a letter introducing him to editors at Kōdansha (Shimura 1991, 14). In 1935, soon after becoming a student of Tagawa Suihō at just fifteen year of age, Hasegawa Machiko, of postwar *Sazae-san* fame, was introduced to the publisher of *Shōjo Club* magazine by Tagawa. The introduction led to her debut with the two-page comic “Tanuki no men” (The badger mask), about a young girl who outsmarts mountain bandits in feudal times, and this in turn led to her becoming a regular contributor to *Shōjo Club*.²⁴

For aspiring female *mangaka*, social expectations made the path to professional work more difficult than for males. While female *mangaka* like Hasegawa Machiko would remain a distinct minority through into the early the postwar period, a number of female *mangaka* had appeared by the

1930s. The *Asahi* and *Jiji* newspaper-based groups mentioned above included female members. Within the Jiji Manga Study Group, there was a subgroup called the Red Nine Club (Kyūkō-kai) which was comprised of nine female *mangaka*. While most have been forgotten over time, two in this group attained relative success, continuing to produce manga into the postwar period. Kaneko Hisako drew manga for children's, girls', women's, and general magazines for over two decades and was known for her 1950s manga *Kyūko-chan* (Little Miss Nine)—the title is a conscious allusion to the name of the earlier female *mangaka* study group. Another member of the group, Katō (later Yasaki) Takeko, known in the 1930s for her strip *Koko-chan*, also drew manga for children's, girls', and general magazines until around 1960.

Children's Manga Growth, Media Interplay, and the “Dark Valley” of War

In the 1930s, monthly magazines and books for young children (*yōnen*), boys (*shōnen*), and girls (*shōjo*) became immensely popular, overtaking newspapers as the main site for manga development. Whereas manga in newspapers remained for the most part cartoons and comic strips, comics for children moved increasingly towards long-form works. Manga development in children's publications would be greatly influenced by film and other media, as well as Japan's escalating war situation.

As we saw earlier, children's magazines began in the late-nineteenth century, with gender-specific monthly magazines aimed at boys and girls emerging around the turn of the century. Almost from the very start they were dabbling in the occasional comic strip. However, by the late 1920s manga was becoming more prominent and an important selling point for these magazines, particularly in Kōdansha's stable of monthly magazines: *Yōnen Club* for preschool and early-elementary school children, *Shōjo Club* for girls, and *Shōnen Club* for boys. These magazines peaked in popularity around 1936, with *Yōnen* and *Shōjo* selling roughly half a million copies each and *Shōnen* 750,000 copies (Ikei 1988, 51). In the 1930s a typical issue was 250 to 300 pages in length with a total of twenty-six to thirty pages of manga, roughly half of these pages forming a two-color printed manga section. Each issue had a mixture of four-panel comic strips and single- or double-page spread comics, though installments of popular serialized comics ran from four to eight pages in length. Most were described at the time as amusing (*yukaina*) manga. Some of the hit serials were Tagawa Suihō's *Medama no Chibi-chan* (Eyeball Pipsqueak, 1928–9) and *Norakuro* (Black stray, 1931–41); Shimada Keizō's *Bōken Dankichi* (The adventures of Dankichi, 1933–9); Sakamoto Gajō's *Tank Tankuro* (1934–6, see Chapter 4, Key Texts); and Yoshimoto Sanpei's *Koguma Kurosuke* (Little bear Blacky, 1935–40). Kōdansha began publishing these popular strips in book form,

with immediate success, sparking off a comic book, or *tankōbon* manga, boom. This was also the advent of a pattern of popular serialized magazine manga being published as books. This pattern would last until 1941 but is not directly related to the similar postwar development that became the norm in the 1970s (Miyamoto 2009a).

Manga in book form had been around to a limited degree since the beginnings of manga in newspapers and magazines. Some scholars point to the two booklets *Wanpaku monogatari* (Scallywag tales) volumes 1 and 2,²⁵ translations of Wilhelm Busch's *Max and Moritz* published in 1887 and 1888, as well as the thin cheaply-made *ponchi-bon* booklets published at the turn of the century as the earliest children's comics in book form (for example, Miyamoto 2009a). In the early 1920s, publishers had some popular success with works by Okamoto Ippei aimed at adult audiences, with children's manga by Miyao Shigeo, and *The adventures of Shō-chan* books. In 1926, the release of a popular world literature library of attractively clothbound hardcover books selling for the relatively high price of 1 yen per volume sparked a "one-yen book" (*enbon*) fad that lasted for a few years.²⁶ Manga was not to be left behind and a number of lavish multi-volume collections were sold on subscription, starting with the ten-volume *Gendai manga taikan* (General survey of contemporary manga) in 1928, and then over the next three years, the publication of Okamoto Ippei's and Kitazawa Rakuten's multi-volume complete works.²⁷ In 1930, Kōdansha published *Manga no kanzume* (Canned manga), an attractively printed and bound collection jam-packed with over 200 pages of various comics from their magazines by the rising-star *mangaka* Tagawa Suihō. Despite the higher price of 1 yen and 20 sen, its popularity, going through numerous reprints and selling over 100,000 copies, surprised the publisher (Ono 2017, 4). Nevertheless, it was Kōdansha's publication of collections of single title serialized manga from their magazines, in particular the first volume of Tagawa's *Norakuro* in 1932 (see Chapter 4, Key Texts), followed by Shimada Keizō's *Bōken Dankichi* (The adventures of Dankichi) in 1934, that showed that comics in book form for children were a commercially viable venture. Their success soon drew other publishers into the market, most notably Nakamura Shoten which, with no serialized magazine content to reprint collections from, commissioned *mangaka* to create one-shot (*kakioroshi*) manga.

The booming children's manga book market was basically split into two: the expensive boxed high-quality production books, like those by Kodanasha, and the much more affordable (10 to 20 sen) soft-cover *akahon* (red book) manga (see Figure 1.6). The *akahon* of this period with their mostly horizontal format and generally reasonable quality two-color printed content make them visually a little different from many of the so-called *akahon* of the 1950s (see "akahon manga" in Glossary). Unlike the high-quality manga books, the *akahon* manga were often drawn by unnamed *mangaka*, had much fewer pages (twenty-eight to fifty-six pages), and sported gaudy covers. Many of these cheaper works produced by small

publishers plagiarized other works and characters—even popular animation characters Mickey Mouse, Popeye, and Betty Boop were regularly used without permission. It is thought that children were able to buy these directly, whereas more expensive manga would be bought by parents. One of the main publishers of these *akahon* manga, and one that rose above the rampant plagiarism of the time, was the Tokyo based Nakamura Shoten. From 1933, Nakamura Shoten also began publishing a line of books, under the series title *Nakamura Manga Library*, aimed at the Kōdansha's luxury manga book market. They undercut their competitor's price by selling their books for 75 sen, three-quarters of the price of Kōdansha 1 yen titles like *Norakuro*. Nakamura built a stable of popular *mangaka*, including Shabana Bontarō, Niizeki Seika, Ishida Eisuke (a winner of the Shōgakukan Manga Award in the 1950s), and the hugely influential Ōshiro Noboru, and between 1933 and 1943 published 100 titles. During this expansion of the children's comic book market from the early to late 1930s, popular themes continued to be adventure, period pieces with samurai and ninja (also called *katsugeki* or "sword-fighting stories"), and, unsurprisingly, war.

In September 1931, the Japanese army-orchestrated Manchurian Incident was the nation's first step into what many describe as the "Dark Valley" of Japan's fifteen-year war that would end with Japan's surrender in 1945, bringing the Second World War to a close. While initially not changing life or the pursuit of leisure on the home front, as the role of the military in domestic politics grew, repression began intensifying and news about the Japanese army and foreign expansion became prominent in newspapers and other media. Amid increasing tensions on mainland China leading up to the incident, Tagawa Suihō's *Norakuro*, a story about a dog in the canine military, his war adventures, and gradual rise through the military ranks, began in *Shōnen Club* in January 1931. Two years later in the same magazine Shimada Keizō's *The Adventures of Dankichi* began. This popular *manga-manbun*-style work was about a Japanese boy called Dankichi who becomes king of a Pacific island. Told from the perspective of the "civilized" protagonist boy amongst "primitive" South Pacific islanders, it is a story of exploration, leadership, conquest, colonization, and battles. Japan had, since the turn of the century, looked towards the South Pacific as a potential region in which to expand its empire. This trend clearly shapes Dankichi's outlook. Sakamoto Gajō's part-samurai, part-machine character *Tanku Tankuro* began serialization in *Yōnen Club* in 1934. Many of its storylines also involve gag-filled modern military battles. Nakamura Shoten and other publishers also produced numerous war-themed one-shot manga books.

For media historian Washitani Hana, regardless of the war, Japanese children's manga had long before these developments been ideologically suspect. After surveying manga produced between 1923 and 1935, she argues that many of the main protagonists have a master-vassal relationship with their sidekicks or companions who are depicted as the Other, rather



FIGURE 1.6 Example of ninja-themed horizontal format akahon manga cover and final page, from Spiido manga: Manga no Kondō Isami (Nakamura Shoten, 1936). The character is based on nineteenth-century swordsman Kondō Isami. Used with permission of Kawasaki City Museum.

than being in equal relationships as friends. This can be seen in the relationships between Shō-chan and his squirrel; Dankichi and his mouse and his nameless pacific islander subjects; Tank Tankuro and his monkey; and others (Washitani 1998, 110–13). This kind of colonialist ideology in comics form is not unique to Japan. For example, British comics of the 1950s often featured stories of empire in which an English hero brings order to the unruly “natives” of Asia or Africa, who then become loyal subjects (Morris-Suzuki 2005, 170). Nonetheless, in the multitude of war-themed Japanese children’s manga published in the 1930s, the direct depictions of battles and conquests of others were clearly tied in with celebrations of Japan’s military might and the country’s imperialist project.

The cross-currents of influence between manga and film also ran in both directions. From the mid-1920s and throughout the 1930s, as we saw earlier, popular manga and their characters began to move from the comics page to other media. Manga were made into stage plays such as *Nonkina Tōsan* (Easygoing papa) in 1924; children’s radio dramas such as *Karasu Kankichi* (Kankichi the crow) in 1932 and *Edokko no Ken-chan* (Genuine Tokyoite Ken-chan) in 1937; puppet plays with the children’s ninja manga character Dango Kushisuke in 1931; animated versions of titles like *Easygoing Papa* in 1925, *Norakuro* in 1933, and *Fuku-chan* in 1944; live-action movie adaptations of *Hito no issō* (A man’s life) in 1928, *Awatemono no Kumas-san* (Hasty Mr. Kuma) in 1933, and *Jinsei benkyō* (Life study) in 1934; a paper theater *kamishibai* (see Glossary section) story using Fuku-chan in 1940; and SP audio records of *The Adventures of Dankichi* in 1934, *Koguma Kurosuke* (Little Bear Blacky) in 1937, and others. Yet beyond these various media adaptations, manga’s interplay with media also flowed deeply in the opposite direction. In particular, the impact of film, the most popular media of the time, in shaping early manga cannot be overstated. One of the earliest regular manga features in the boys’ magazine *Shōnen Club*, beginning in 1916, was a two-page-spread film feature by Yoshioka Kan’ichirō, which ran intermittently for almost five years. These were short summaries of films drawn in *manga-manbun* style, with the panels echoing the appearance of strips of film, in two, later three, horizontal tiers across the double spread, with text placed above or below. In the same magazine in 1925, a film-manga (*katsudō-manga*) feature by Fujii Ichirō began serialization. Using speech balloons rather than external text, a somewhat realistic clear-line drawing style, and a structure of panels in three or four tiers, they look very much like modern comics. In fact, they look strikingly similar to the UK comic *Film Fun* (1920–62). The manga’s protagonists were Hollywood film stars, particularly comedy film stars. Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and Douglas Fairbanks, well known and loved by Japanese silent cinemagoers, all appeared.²⁸ These stars often popped up in other manga too. Douglas Fairbanks’ swashbuckling screen persona appeared in the popular manga *Nagagutsu no sanjūshi* (The long booted Three Musketeers) in 1930. He also appears to have influenced the look of the sword-carrying female protagonist

of *Mysterious Clover* (*Nazo no Kurōbā*), a 1934 insert supplement comic by Matsumoto Katsudi for the girls' magazine *Shōjo no Tomo*, which is arguably a foundational work in the development of girls' or *shōjo* manga (Holmberg 2019). Manga were also influenced by Japanese movies and movie stars. In Tagawa Suihō's 1928 *Shōnen Club* serialized manga *Medama no Chibi-chan* (Eyeball Pipsqueak), the titular protagonist is named after Japanese screen star Ono Matsunosuke, known as Eyeballs Matsu, and echoes the setting and story of one of his historical films (Washitani 1999, 33).

In her study of early children's manga, Washitani Hana (1999) points out that as early as 1913, but by the 1920s commonly, manga in magazines and newspapers used film-related terms, such as *katsudō* (moving), *katsudō-shashin* (moving pictures), *kinema* (cinema), *firumu* (film), and *eiga* (film), to describe comics and comic strips—although this practice would gradually fade away replaced by the term manga from around 1928. She also shows that it was not uncommon to frame manga so that they appeared as film strips using film-strip perforations or sprocket holes, or appeared as cinema screens with artists adding drawn curtains on the left and right of the panel. Some used film screen title cards and even mimicked film introductions. One, for example, mimicking film-production credits, declared that the manga was “Brought to you by Shonen Club Productions” (Washitani 1999, 33–4) (see Figure 1.7). Furthermore, Ōtsuka Eiji has not only emphasized the strong connection between manga and film (2010), but also demonstrated how the introduction of popular foreign animation into Japan, in particular Mickey Mouse and Felix the Cat, provided design templates for numerous manga characters (2017).²⁹ Along with the influence of the US strip *Bringing Up Father* and hit Japanese manga using speech balloons, such as *The adventures of Shō-chan* and *Easygoing Papa*, but in particular Tagawa Suihō's immense hit *Norakuro*, talking movies also had a major impact in accelerating the spread of speech balloons in manga in the 1930s.³⁰ Miyamoto Hirohito has argued that it is probably no coincidence that at more or less the same time as cinema moved from silent movies, shown with the theaters' professional narrators (*benshi*) narrating stories offscreen, to talkies, in which voices appeared to emanate from the onscreen characters, something similar happened in manga, as the predominant use of text outside the panels of manga, or *manga-manbun* form, which in some cases even mimicked the manner of speech of cinema narrators, was supplanted by the mainstream use of speech balloons without relying on external narration (see Miyamoto's symposium talk in Kawasaki et al. 2020, 180).

According to Washitani, at the same time as manga were being modeled on movies, educators and critics were taking aim at movies, asserting they were detrimental to education, calling children who frequented theaters delinquents (*furyōji*) or abnormal (*ijōji*), and describing theaters themselves as pig styes and trashcans (1999, 36). Another concern about movies was the influence of samurai and ninja period movies (*jidaigeki*) during a boom in the genre in the early 1930s. Some schools even banned their students

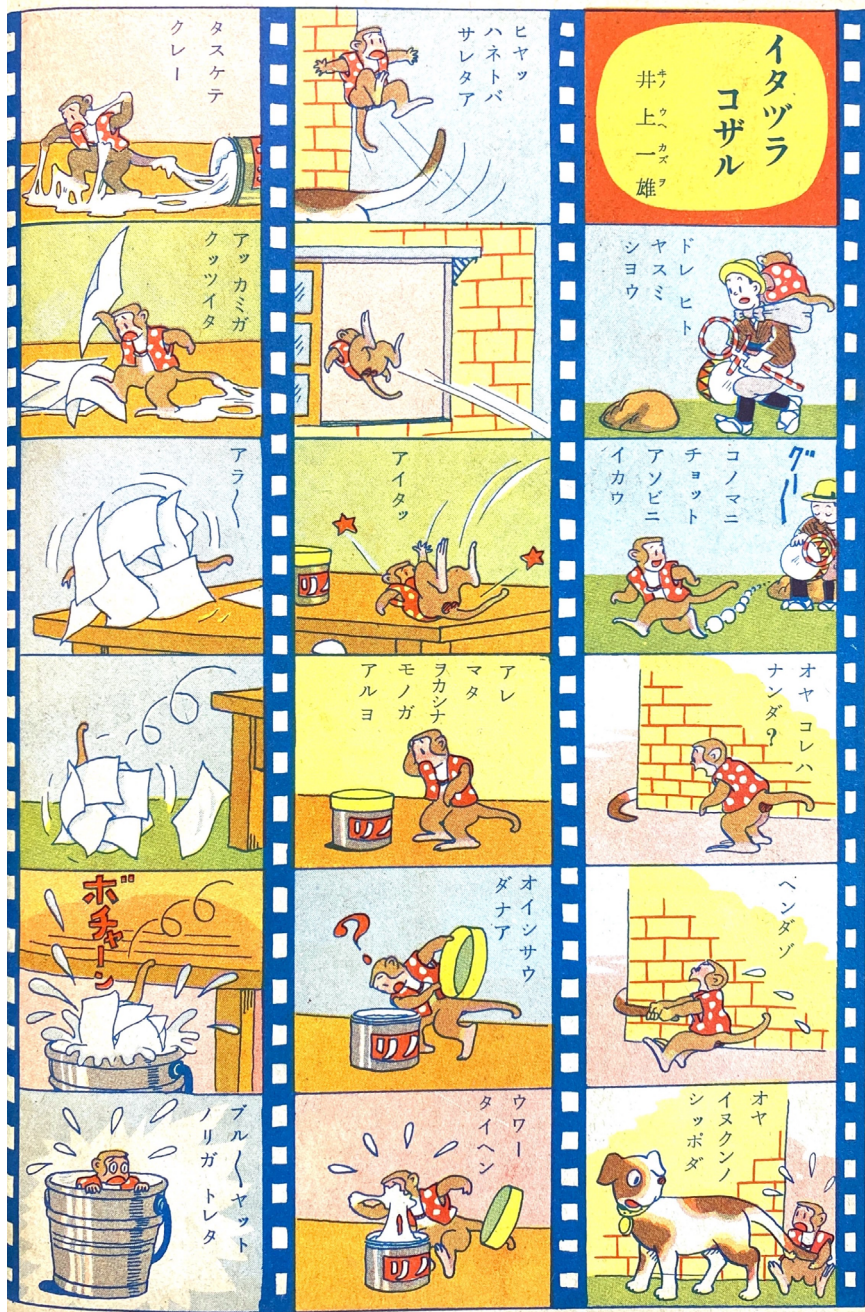


FIGURE 1.7 An example of a "film manga." Part of Inoue Kazuo's manga "Itazura kozaru" (Mischievous little monkey), Kōdansha no e-hon, May 1938. Personal collection of Ronald Stewart. Used with permission.

from going to the movies unaccompanied. In this context, manga were seen initially as a welcome way for children to have a cinematic experience in the safety of their home and under their parents' watchful eyes. Manga were also seen as a way of reducing the harmful effects of film. According to Washitani, the intensity of live-action sword battles could be defused in manga due to their more static images and by the humorous spectacle—as seen in the preceding *akahon* manga example shown in Figure 1.6—of flying cartoon heads and limbs lopped off in battle (1999, 36–9). Nevertheless, by the mid-1930s manga too began to fall under suspicion of being harmful.

Despite occasional efforts to promote manga as educational over the years, the increased visibility of children's manga in the 1930s brought increased scrutiny by critics, educators, and eventually the government. In mid-1937 a women's culture columnist for *Asahi shinbun*, while praising the educational intent of some boys' magazines, felt people “should grieve for the state of boys' and girls' humorous reading material, as there are people that even today feel that violence is an essential accompaniment of manga, and that the language of manga should be vulgar” (Muraoka 1937). In the face of these growing concerns, the publisher Kōdansha, in December 1936, launched the magazine *Kōdansha no ehon* (Kōdansha picture book) with an educational objective. This magazine became the major outlet for children's manga until its demise in 1942 after a run of over 200 issues. Up to 60 percent of its content was two- or three-color manga, each manga ranging from one to twelve pages, with four to five continuing serials in each issue. Miyamoto points out that a number of the editors were former educators, and that with this magazine they actively engaged in the education debate and promoted the benefits of their manga; until 1938, in addition to placing a banner above the cover title claiming the publication will “make children better,” they also included prefaces, written by educators and high-ranking military officers, recommending the magazine's educational benefits, and added comics with overtly moralistic messages (2007, 57–60).

Unfortunately, things changed for this and other children's manga publications in 1938 when the government began to suppress the medium. After the Sino-Japanese conflict turned into a full-blown war in 1937, the militarist government enacted the National Mobilization Law in March 1938, allowing them to nationalize the media, ration resources, set commodity prices, and curb consumption of non-essential items, as well as mobilize industry, civilian organizations, and individual labor for the war effort. Under the nation's new wartime footing, children became “mini mobilized (or militarized) imperial subjects” (*shōkokumin*) with responsibilities. In order to make children's publications more appropriate to this role, in October 1938 the Home Ministry issued the Directives Outline Regarding the Improvement of Children's Reading Material, and soon set about cleaning up the publishing industry. Editors, artists, and writers were called into the Home Ministry offices and given a dressing down. *Mangaka* Ōshiro Noboru would later recall being told by the Home

Ministry that comics were not essential for children (1982, 76). The authorities cracked down on garish colors, vulgar language, ill-mannered or gruesome content, depictions of romantic love, magazine competitions and giveaways devoid of substantial content, and false or exaggerated self-promotion of educational qualities. Publishers were requested to reduce the number of manga pages in their publications and to avoid time-wasting stories by adopting content that contributed to the formation of “Japanese spirit” such as reverence, filial piety, service, honesty, humility, and manliness (grit), as well as content that promoted knowledge of science and industrial production. They were also asked to avoid heroic war stories and depictions derogatory of the Chinese. Instead, publishers were instructed to add content that would increase understanding of Chinese children’s lives and customs, and actively promote Sino-Japanese cooperation (“Kodomo zasshi” 1938).

As a result of this clean-up, many *akahon* manga were banned, and the comics industry, which had already begun to shrink in 1937, contracted even further. Popular war-themed comics came to an end, including the two most popular children’s comics of the 1930s. The serialization of *The Adventures of Dankichi* stopped suddenly in March 1939: a short final episode in which Dankichi returns to Japan was added three months later. In the same year, Norakuro also retired from the army and moved to the Chinese mainland as an entrepreneur helping the locals before ending in 1941. In girls’ magazines, dreamy romantic images of femininity were replaced by girls at work (Tsuchiya Dollase 2008), while just as in Japanese government-promoted “national policy” films (culture films), both war heroes and silliness (funny animals in comics) were replaced by realism, examinations of character and self-sacrifice, and life on the home front supporting the nation (Tipton 2002, 128; Miyamoto 2017). With these developments, publishers modified the comic-strip form to produce more realistic “picture stories” (*emonogatari*)—a form with text outside panels (or assumed panels) which would gain popularity in the early postwar period (see part II of this chapter and Glossary)—with characters who were less cartoony in style and more restrained in action, usually promoting production over consumerism and at times imparting detailed practical or scientific knowledge (Miyamoto 2017). Examples of manga from this period, with increased realism and imparting this kind of knowledge, include Haga Takashi’s *Bokura no tōdai* (Our lighthouse, 1939), Asahi Tarō and Watanabe Kazan’s *Kodomo shinbun-sha* (Children’s newspaper company, 1940), and *Fushigina kuni: Indo no tabi* (Mysterious country: India trip, 1941) (see Figure 1.8). Miyamoto Hirohito argues that by awarding the government’s new prize for children’s literature in 1939 to Yokoyama Ryūichi’s *Chiisana Senchō-san* (Little boat Captain), drawn in this more realistic *emonogatari* style, the tone was set for many manga to come during the war period—publishers now knew what was expected. Miyamoto goes on to claim that this work also introduced a new element to

pre-1945 manga—that is, the physical and mental growth of a protagonist (2017, 30–5).

However, it was not just children's manga that was affected by the war. In October 1940, the totalitarian political party the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Yokusankai) was formed by merging all political parties into one, effectively ending all opposition. As part of their efforts to promote the country's "New Order," the new party had a home-front family of manga characters created called the Imperial Rule Support Family (*Yokusan ikka*) which could be used by any *mangaka*.³¹ The Imperial Rule Assistance Association also made one of the few remaining satirical manga magazines, *Manga*, into a state-sponsored propaganda vehicle. Some *mangaka*, such as Yokoyama Ryūichi and Ono Saseo, were mobilized and sent to the extremities of Japan's wartime empire to turn their artistic abilities towards propaganda work. In May 1943, with dwindling outlets for their manga, many *mangaka* were no doubt pleased by the prospect of possible work when the government pressured all of the roughly eight existing *mangaka* associations of the time to merge into one, titled the Public Duty Association (*Hōkōkai*). With Kitazawa Rakuten and Okamoto Ippei coaxed out of semi-retirement to act as president and advisor respectively, the group at their inauguration vowed to hone their pens in order to completely destroy America and Britain ("Manga de kessen" 1943). Things would not go their way, and manga would have to wait until the war's end to regain its freedom and vigor.

Part II: From 1945 to the Present

From Ashes and Ruins

On August 15, 1945, Japan's long war ended with its "unconditional surrender" to the Allied powers.³² Japan's defeat was certainly humiliating and tragic in the eyes of political and military leaders, but quite a few Japanese regarded it as "a great relief, a release from war and from the state" (Gordon 1993, 69). Politically, Japan's postwar period began with an occupation by the Allied powers (1945–52) that aimed to demilitarize and democratize the country. Most major cities had been devastated by air raids during the last stage of the war, and the people in those places were forced to expend every effort in order to survive amidst constant food shortages and a scarcity of materials. Since official rationing systems ended with Japan's defeat, black markets quickly developed in urban areas throughout the country. It was against this backdrop of ruin and chaos that postwar manga took shape.

Understandably, the manga of this period reflected the confusion and contradictions of "Occupied Japan." Despite suffering from paper shortages, newspaper and publishing companies that had survived the war swiftly

resumed publication, including some publications that contained cartoons and comic strips. One satirical cartoon and comic strip magazine, *Manga*, had suspended production in November 1944 after its print works had burned down in an air raid, but it was relaunched only a couple of weeks after the defeat. Yet, the content of the magazine made an about-face: its wartime attacks on the country's foreign enemies now gave way to merciless mockery of the nation's own politicians. New cartoon magazines were also founded, such as the urbane satirical magazine *VAN* (edited by Itō Ippei and launched in 1946) and the leftist *Kumanbachi* (The hornet). Some political cartoons from this period depicted the agony of wartime politicians at the Tokyo Tribunal (a 1946 war crimes trial), while others satirized the intelligentsia who had spouted slogans promoting the demolition of Western liberalism but were now celebrating the postwar end of the emperor system (Shimizu 1999a, 73). Manga—more specifically, the political and satirical cartoons of this period—addressed the abrupt inversion of social values from the emperor-centric, militaristic Japan to the postwar “democratic” Japan.

For manga authors, editors, and publishers, the end of the oppressive war regime presented new opportunities to express what they wished in manga, but the occupation government of the Allied powers (led by the US) implemented a stringent press code, censoring anything perceived as criticism of the Allied powers, defense of war criminals, imperial propaganda, references to atomic bombs or black-market activities, and so on. Under these new conditions, many cartoonists were allowed to mock Japanese political leaders openly, even Japanese imperial family members (which would have resulted in serious charges before and during the war, and would become taboo again after the occupation), but not Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (Shimizu 1991, 184).

In the process of democratizing Japan, the occupation government frequently intervened not only in the realms of politics, the economy, the law, and education, but also in media culture, especially by “encouraging” democratic values through the introduction of US culture. American cultural products, beliefs, and practices as portrayed in popular media were no longer rejected but now embraced, in part because many Japanese found in them the “material wealth of American society” (Igarashi 2000, 78). A booklet about English conversation became a bestseller in 1945, while an NHK radio show about learning English rose in popularity. It was in this context that Chic Young's *Blondie* comic strip was translated and published—with the original English published in juxtaposition to a Japanese translation—first in *Weekly Asahi* magazine (1946–56) and *Asahi shinbun* (Asahi newspaper, 1949–51), giving Japanese readers who were suffering from shortages of food and materials a glimpse into the comparatively affluent life of an American middle-class family. Partly inspired by *Blondie*, *mangaka* Hasegawa Machiko, a disciple of Tagawa Suihō, started in 1946 serializing *Sazae-san* (1946–74) in the form of *yonkoma* (four-panel comic

strips) for a newspaper. Unlike her mentor's popular wartime title *Norakuro*, which depicts the titular dog soldier receiving continual promotions up the military ladder, Hasegawa's manga humorously depicts an ordinary family living in suburban Tokyo, presenting the eponymous protagonist as an active, cheerful, and strong woman. Hasegawa's portrayal of Sazae-san provided an exemplary representation for women of the new postwar, democratic era, contrasting with the long-standing image of Japanese women as docile and demure.³³

Along with these comic strips published in newspapers and magazines for the general public, several children's newspapers (*kodomo shinbun*) and children's magazines were (re-)launched to entertain young readers. Over the course of the occupation and the subsequent decade, cartoons and comic strips featured in magazines for the general public (that is, for adults) would be the predominant form of manga. They were sometimes called "*otona manga*" (manga for adult readers) in contrast to "*kodomo manga*" (manga for children), which was associated with narrative comics. While *kodomo manga* would be the site for the development of creative and ever increasingly complex long-form comics, it wasn't until roughly the late 1960s that it would eclipse cartoons and comic strips as the primary form of manga.³⁴

In parallel with the mainstream publishing industry, there was a separate "shadow economy" that contributed to the development of postwar manga. In the early days of postwar struggle, small presses and print shops—some of which were started by shady speculators—proliferated in the war-torn, devastated cities. They produced and sold cheaply made popular fiction books, magazines, and manga volumes.³⁵ Manga volumes published by these small-scale and often little-known publishers were called *akahon* manga (lit., "red book" manga). The name *akahon* had historically referred to books for children with red covers that had large illustrations.³⁶ In the 1930s, the term "*akahon manga*" referred to manga books that became popular with children in that decade due in part to the red-colored covers (see Part I in this chapter and Glossary). In the postwar context, *akahon* manga are often remembered as manga books that were printed on low-quality paper and sold at candy stores, temples, festivals, and street-corner stores at inexpensive prices, without relying on official book distributors, although there were also well-bound manga books that were considered *akahon*.³⁷ The stories told in *akahon* manga were diverse, ranging from humorous stories, fairy tales, and slapstick comedy to genre fiction—western, sci-fi, and mystery, and so on—for boys and girls, though the quality of the art was generally poor—a number of *akahon* manga did not even credit authors. Also, plagiarism of ideas, images, and even characters from popular novels, manga, and animated films was common (see Holmberg 2012 for more). As such, *akahon* manga were generally considered "inferior" products. Having said that, however, there were also well-bound manga books that were considered *akahon*—*Shin*

takarajima (New treasure island, by writer Sakai Shichima and artist Tezuka Osamu) published by Ikuei Shuppan in Osaka, for example. Manga critic Nakano Haruyuki claims the confusion over the term and the negative association with *akahon* manga were prompted by criticism of both *akahon* manga as well as the children who read them in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Nakano 2016, 37).³⁸ Despite *akahon* manga's reputation, however, the visual narratives entertained children and stirred up interest in the medium in war-torn, impoverished Japan.

For the development of manga in the postwar period, two other visual storytelling forms must be highlighted: *kamishibai* (lit., “paper theater”) and *emonogatari* (lit., “picture-stories”). Although the exact origin is unknown, *kamishibai*, which uses a set of hand-drawn or -painted slides, emerged at the end of the 1920s as a cheaper alternative to movies, peaking around 1937, when around a million children a day across the nation would watch performances. The form's popularity went into decline after this, but enjoyed a postwar resurgence in popularity (Orbaugh 2018). In the late 1940s and early 1950s, *kamishibai* were performed on the streets or in empty lots to attract the attention of children and sell them candy or snack bars (see Figure 1.9).



FIGURE 1.9 A *kamishibai* street performance. From the Walter A. Pennino Postwar Japan Photo Collection, courtesy of the Center for Japanese Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Typically, a *kamishibai* performer orally narrates a story while flipping through different illustrated slides and voice-acting various characters (and sometimes even adding sound effects). Popular *kamishibai* story genres included action adventures, superhero stories, tear-jerkers, ghost stories, and light-hearted comedies. Some important *mangaka*, like Mizuki Shigeru, Shirato Sanpei, and Kojima Gōseki, initially honed their skills by drawing *kamishibai* slides.³⁹

Along with *kamishibai*, *emonogatari* was another form of graphic narrative that was popular with children in the late 1940s and 1950s, although the postwar popularity was a revival of the wartime period trend. Unlike the combined form of word and image of present-day manga, a typical *emonogatari* consisted of prose(-centric) narratives with fewer illustrations (with or without panels). Famous *emonogatari* illustrators included Yamakawa Sōji, Komatsuzaki Shigeru, and Fukushima Tetsuji, all of whom have left their visual influences on later *mangaka*—especially *gekiga* creators (see below for *gekiga*) (see Figure 1.10). Stylistically, some *emonogatari* and *kamishibai* drawings from this period seem to have been influenced by American comics such as *Lone Rider*, *Straight Arrow*, and *Blackhawk*, translations of which appeared in children's magazines during the occupation period (Nakazawa 2011, xiv). In addition, several memoirs and essays by Japanese critics describe the circulation of American comic books during this period, possibly brought in from the US for American GIs stationed in Japan and then circulated through black markets (Ono 2018), which influenced visual media like manga and *emonogatari*.⁴⁰

In 1947, the new Japanese constitution was promulgated, and Japan began its new life as a “democratic” nation. Drafted under the supervision of the Allied powers, it guarantees basic human rights and women's right to vote, and renounces war and the maintenance of military forces. It also stipulates that the emperor is the “symbol of the nation,” no longer in possession of political power. Furthermore, the constitution guarantees freedom of the press, though the occupation government censored any depictions of matters relating to the military. Whereas political cartoons of the time continued to lampoon the contradictions and conundrums of occupied Japan (which was a constant reminder of the dark wartime past), manga for children were filled with cheerful and sanguine stories, as though they had forgotten the recent past. Typically, early postwar *shōnen* and *shōjo* magazines—then mostly published monthly—consisted of serialized prose fiction, short stories, articles about celebrities such as movie stars and athletes, *emonogatari*, and manga (e.g., serialized manga and comic strips), though the space for manga in their pages was limited. In other words, “manga magazines”—i.e., magazines consisting almost entirely of installments of several different serialized narrative manga—were yet to make an appearance.

Still, there was one important magazine from this period that laid the groundwork for the development of postwar manga: *Manga Shōnen* (1948–68). The founder was editor Katō Ken'ichi, a former editor of Kōdansha's



FIGURE 1.10 An emonogatari based on a popular kamishibai character. Nagamatsu Takeo's Ōgon Batto: Arabu no hōkan (Golden Bat: the jeweled Arabian crown) from monthly boy's magazine Bōken katsugeki bunko (Swashbuckling Adventure Library), December 1949. Personal collection of Ronald Stewart. Used with permission.

Shōnen Club (1914–62), who came back to the publishing industry after the occupation government blacklisted him as a wartime collaborator. Katō founded his own publishing company named Gakudōsha under his wife's name to circumvent occupation control. It was from this venture that he started *Manga Shōnen*. In Katō's founding remarks, he declared his intention to enlighten and entertain children while upholding a forward-looking editorial policy (in contrast to *otona* manga that addressed the war–postwar contradiction).⁴¹ In addition to featuring works by authors who had become established before the war, such as Shimada Keizō, Tagawa Suihō, and Haga Masao, *Manga Shōnen* actively hired young manga creators, including Tezuka Osamu (who contributed *Janguru taitei*—known as *Kimba the White Lion* in English—for this magazine), Fujiko Fujio (the pen name of a *mangaka* duo), and Ishinomori Shōtarō (then known as Ishimori Shōtarō), many of whom would go on to shape mainstream *shōnen* manga in the following decades. The magazine also encouraged its readers to send their original manga comic strips via postcard for the magazine's contests, and some readers were then commissioned to serialize new stories based on their submissions. Despite its title, the earlier issues of *Manga Shōnen* were filled with prose fiction, essays, articles about celebrities and baseball players, comic strips, and *emonogatari*, but within a couple of years, more than two-thirds of its pages would be devoted to serialized manga.⁴² The success of the magazine inspired other publishers to follow suit, producing monthly magazines that featured *emonogatari* and serialized manga for children. Since around 1950, children's magazines have been a major media format driving Japanese mainstream manga forward.⁴³

For many manga creators and critics, it is still difficult to discount Tezuka Osamu's accomplishments, which played a significant role in the shaping of mainstream manga as a major force in the world of Japanese graphic narratives in the postwar period. Tezuka debuted in 1946, within a year of Japan's defeat, with *Mā-chan no nikki-cho* (Diary of Ma-chan), a series of *yonkoma* manga, for a newspaper when he was still a seventeen-year-old student in Osaka. The name of this talented young *mangaka* became widely known with his bestselling *New Treasure Island* in 1947. Many critics note that in this adventure story Tezuka employed sophisticated visual composition techniques, inspired in part by Western cinema and animated films by Walt Disney and Max Fleisher, as well as American comic books,⁴⁴ which combined to captivate the hearts of children. Many postwar authors who would produce *shōnen* manga in the subsequent decades (such as Fujiko Fujio, Ishinomori Shōtarō, and Nakazawa Keiji) have praised *New Treasure Island* and commented on its impact, especially its refined visual depiction of the speeding car on the first page and how it conveys a sense of motion. In 1948, Tezuka also published *The Mysterious Underground Men* (*Chiteikoku no kaijin*), which included tragic narrative elements. Because of this, as discussed in Part I of this chapter, some Japanese-language critics claim that Tezuka was the “originator” of long-form “story manga” (*sutōrii*

manga)—manga capable of exploring complex narratives, character interiority, and serious themes. However, recent scholarship has tempered some of this lionization of Tezuka. Miyamoto Hirohito (1998) and Ōtsuka Eiji (2013, 18) have argued that many techniques similar to those used by Tezuka in this period can be observed in prewar and wartime manga narratives. Nevertheless, it remains true that Tezuka's manga left a tremendous impact on children—including many who would later go on to become *mangaka*—who had been starved of sophisticated manga and similar visual entertainment in the dark days of wartime censorship. From this perspective, it is more appropriate to regard Tezuka as someone who successfully innovated in the realm of manga expression by renewing existing manga techniques with an elevated degree of formal and visual sophistication and postwar sensibilities, especially the experience of the war and the defeat. It is no coincidence that one of Tezuka's best-loved characters, Astro Boy (*Atomu*), is an atomic-powered robot that fights not for justice but for peace (Schodt 2007, 4). Tezuka was also constantly experimenting within the medium of manga, producing diverse genres of manga for children, including science fiction, detective stories, and historical works. In 1953, Tezuka moved to a small Tokyo apartment building called "Tokiwa Apartment" (*Tokiwa-sō*), where a number of other younger *mangaka*—many associated with *Manga Shōnen*, including Terada Hiroo, Fujiko Fujio, Ishinomori Shōtarō, Matsumoto Leiji, Akatsuka Fujio, and Mizuno Hideko (the only female *mangaka* in this group)—lived together, with frequent move-ins and move-outs. In Japanese manga criticism, these *mangaka* are regarded as the "Tokiwa Apartment" group.⁴⁵ There they produced various manga works in a competitive yet at the same time cooperative manner. This group collectively cultivated and shaped mainstream children's manga throughout the late 1940s and 1950s.

The peace treaty between Japan and the Allied powers was signed in 1951 and came into effect the following year. This officially ended the Allied occupation, and Japan regained its sovereignty (except for Okinawa, which remained under US control until 1972). On the day that the treaty was signed, the US and Japan signed another treaty, the US–Japan Security Treaty (informally called "*anpo*" or the "*anpo* treaty"), which allowed the US military to stay in Japan. The geographical location of Japan was important to the US because of the political tension and instability in East and Southeast Asia during the Cold War. This tension was partly made manifest in the Korean War (1950–3). US involvement in the Korean War brought about one of Japan's first economic booms, triggered by the US military's order of a large number of products from Japan (called "special procurement"). Along with the economic recovery, the prices of (manga) books increased, resulting in the rise of another, cheaper media format for manga consumption: *kashihon* (rental books).⁴⁶ *Kashihon* were available at *kashihon-ya* (rental bookstores or pay libraries), where a customer was able to borrow or read books and magazines for a small charge. Japanese manga

critic Nakano Haruyuki (2004, 48) notes that in the late 1940s and early 1950s the Japanese manga industry had two separate markets: the manga magazine market with nationwide circulation and the *kashihon* manga market with disparate local distribution networks. *Kashihon* publishers were all small presses, located not only in Tokyo but also in Osaka, Nagoya, Kobe, and other major cities where *mangaka* were working under contracts with individual local publishers, and their *kashihon* manga were distributed directly to local *kashihon-ya*.⁴⁷ Typically, *kashihon-ya* were private or family-owned small businesses that not only rented out books but also sold used books, sometimes along with candy, stationery products, and more. At the height of their prosperity in the mid-1950s, there were at least 20,000 *kashihon-ya* throughout Japan (Kashihon manga-shi kenkyū-kai 2006, 13) (see Figure 1.11).⁴⁸ Before the advent of television, *kashihon* offered everyday entertainment that included popular novels for adults as well as manga volumes for children. Socially, the rise of *kashihon-ya* in the mid-1950s was also a response to the sudden increase in the number of working teenagers and young adults in urban areas, where there was a demand for an increased labor force in the expanding economy. Working teenagers recruited from rural areas constituted a major portion of *kashihon* visitors (Suzuki 2013). The *kashihon* industry produced many talented manga artists, including Tatsumi Yoshihiro, Sakurai Shōichi, Saitō Takao, Satō Masaaki, Hirata Hiroshi, Shirato Sanpei, and Mizuki Shigeru.

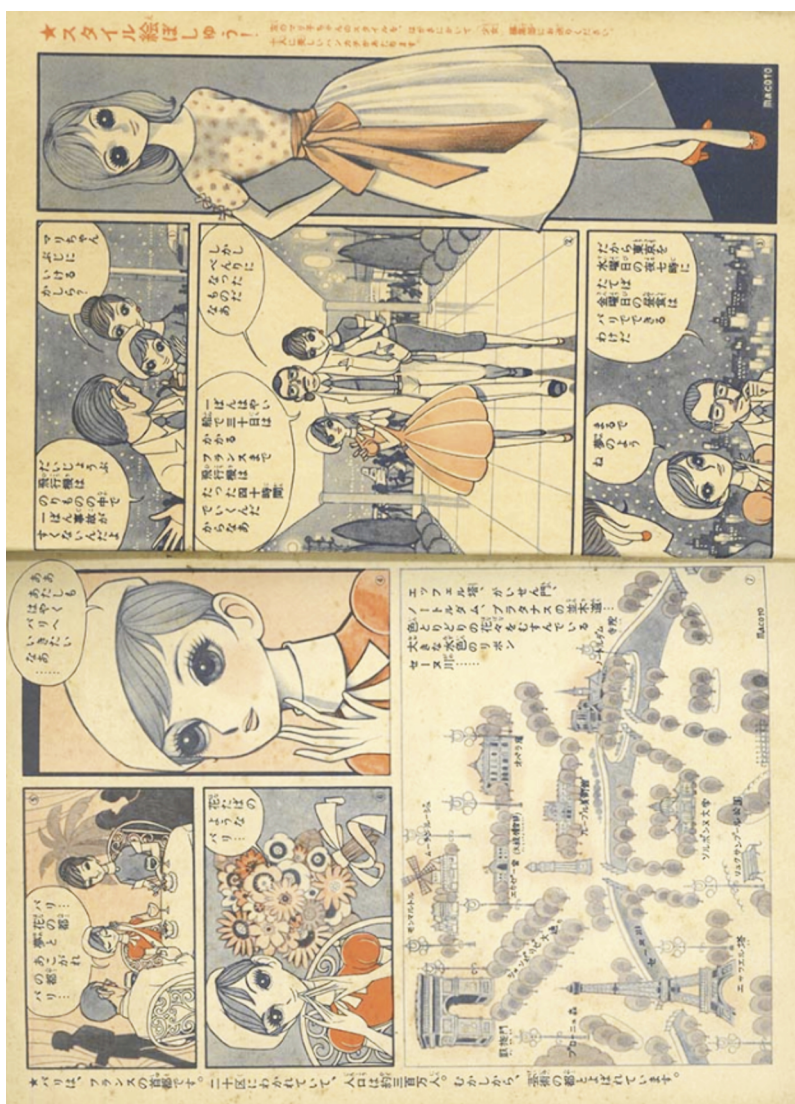


FIGURE 1.11 *Kashihon-ya*, where children flocked to read manga in book format (*kashihon manga*). Used with permission of *The Yomiuri Shimbun*.

There were also many *kashihon* manga for girls as well, a field in which male *mangaka* such as Nishi Teppei, Oda Jōji, and Takahashi Macoto and female *mangaka* such as Hanamura Eiko and Imamura Yōko were active. Some of these *mangaka* brought the aesthetic of the prewar and wartime *jojō-ga* (lyrical illustrations) tradition into postwar *shōjo* manga.⁴⁹ *Jojō-ga* refers to romanticized illustrative portraits of girls and women who look soft, dreamy, and/or melancholic, many of which were used as illustrations for prose fiction, in advertisements, on postcards, on girls' magazine covers, and so on. In Takahashi Macoto's *shōjo* manga, the *jojō-ga*-inspired character designs for girls featured huge, starry doe-eyes, and, often, fashionable Western-style clothes. He occasionally drew larger-scale young girl protagonists, like model pin-ups, using the entire height of the page and showcasing the girl's fashion and body in the foreground. These drawings were called "style pictures" (*sutairu-ga* or *sutairu-e*) and quickly popularized their style of presentation of girl characters in *shōjo* manga (see Figure 1.12). In particular, the "three-row overlaid style picture" (*sandan buchinode sutairu-ga*), a full-body drawing of a girl stretching across three tiers of panels or the entire vertical length of the page, became a common visual trope in *shōjo* manga and has continued to appear in contemporary mainstream *shōjo* manga ever since (Fujimoto 2012). In contrast to the ascendancy of these graphic narratives for *shōnen* and *shōjo* readers, cartoons and comic strips for the general public gradually withdrew from the center stage of manga publishing. Still, in the mid-1950s some manga magazines such as *Manga Tokuhon* (1954–70), *Weekly Manga Times* (1956–present), and *Manga Sunday* (1959–2013) were launched to cater to an audience of mature male readers—white-collar businessmen ("salary-men")—with cartoons and comic strips.⁵⁰ It would be long-form narrative manga (story manga), however, that would take center stage in the following decades.

Expanding and Diversifying Readerships

A 1956 Economic White Paper issued by the Ministry of Economy declared that "Japan is no longer postwar." In fact, by the mid-1950s Japan's economy had recovered to its prewar level. Around that time, Japan entered its so-called "economic high growth" period (1957–73). With the gradual increase in disposable income among the middle class in Japan, many became able to purchase manga books and magazines, while others remained frequent visitors of *kashihon-ya*. It is during this period that the number of pages dedicated to manga in children's magazines—many were serialized works—rapidly increased and the speed of manga publication accelerated. Previously, magazines were typically published on a monthly basis, but in 1956, the mid-sized publisher Hōbunsha launched a weekly manga magazine, and major publishing houses followed suit. In 1959, Kōdansha, for instance,



launched *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* (1959–present), followed by Shōgakukan's *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* (1959–present). The shift from monthlies to weeklies was, in part, a response to the dynamic reshaping of the audio-visual mediascape in 1950s Japan, mainly a result of the arrival of television sets, which had rapidly become a fixture in Japanese households.⁵¹ Yet, manga weeklies had an ambivalent relationship with this new medium. On the one hand, they had to compete with TV for their audiences, but on the other, the magazines also took advantage of TV's popularity to boost their own sales, using photos of TV celebrities and sports stars who appeared on TV on their front covers and in featured articles. In fact, the shift from monthlies to weeklies was also an adjustment that emulated weekly TV programming—manga fans (children) were eagerly awaiting certain days of the week so they could continue reading serialized manga just as they were eagerly awaiting new episodes of TV shows. On the production side, however, manga weeklies demanded intense labor and faster production from *mangaka*. To keep up with the demand for fast-paced labor, some manga creators hired assistants or set up production teams; others began to work in teams consisting of a storywriter and an illustrator (or multiple illustrators).⁵²

Along with the new manga weeklies targeting boys, *shōjo* manga gradually emerged as a commercial force in the mid-1950s. Up until the mid-1950s, manga targeting the *shōjo* demographic were published in magazine, *akahon*, and *kashihon* formats. In 1953, Tezuka's *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*, 1953–6) appeared in Kōdansha's *Shōjo Club*. Unlike Kurakane Shōsuke's comedic *shōjo* manga *Anmitsu hime* (Princess Anmitsu, 1949–55), which depicted its eponymous protagonist as a kimono-clad Japanese princess, Tezuka's protagonist, named Sapphire, is presented as the princess of a fictional Western(-looking) kingdom. In the story, Tezuka introduces her as a character who has two hearts—a boy heart and a girl heart. Born as a girl, but raised as a “boy” in order to succeed to the throne, Sapphire has to play the two gender(ed) roles of knight and princess. The novelty of the gender-bending idea with the image of the “fighting girl” caught on with girl readers and influenced later *shōjo* manga titles (see “Gender and sexuality” in Chapter 2). Around the same time, major Tokyo-based publishers launched a pair of *shōjo* magazines with more visual content (e.g., *emonogatari*, photography, and manga): *Nakayoshi* (Good friend, 1954–present) by Kōdansha, and *Ribon* (Ribbon, 1955–present) by Shūeisha. During the 1950s, a significant number of authors contributing to *shōjo* manga magazines were male, including Tezuka, Chiba Tetsuya, Yokoyama Mitsuteru, and Matsumoto Leiji (under the name of Matsumoto Akira), but while many works by male authors occupied the pages of the period's *shōjo* magazines, it is important to recognize the contributions of female *mangaka* such as the seasoned professionals Ueda Toshiko and Hasegawa Machiko. Also, several young female *mangaka* such as Mizuno Hideko, Watanabe Masako, and Maki Miyako started their careers around

this time. The genres represented in this period's *shōjo* manga were predominately comedy, slapstick, horror, and tear-jerkers—stories in the tear-jerker genre generally emphasized familial bonds, not the romance that would come to be most commonly associated with the genre in later decades.

From the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, TV shows gradually became established as part of everyday entertainment; many *mangaka* learned new modes of visual narrative from them, as well as from Japanese and Western movies. Within the *kashihon* manga industry, a young aspiring manga creator from Osaka named Tatsumi Yoshihiro began to call his manga *gekiga* (lit., “dramatic pictures”) in 1957. As documented in his semi-autobiographical work *A Drifting Life* (2008), Tatsumi's coinage of *gekiga* was motivated by the gradual maturation of the first postwar manga generation—that is, the rise of young adult readers who had outgrown childish stories. Tatsumi and a group of like-minded creators gradually incorporated darker themes and topics, including graphic depictions of violence and complex human psychology, and new visual storytelling techniques they learned from both Japanese and Western cinematic genres such as film noir and suspense and popular literary genres such as detective fiction and crime novels. In 1959, Tatsumi founded a short-lived artist collective called the “*Gekiga Workshop*” (*Gekiga kōbō*, 1959–60) with his fellow *gekiga* creators, including Satō Masaaki, Sakurai Shōichi, and Saitō Takao; the collective sent a letter, their de facto “manifesto,” to newspaper companies and other *mangaka* (including Tezuka, whom Tatsumi admired), which raised awareness of the term. From the late 1950s through to the early 1970s, the term *gekiga* came to refer to graphic narratives mainly aimed at young adult and adult male readers with little or no humorous elements (in contrast to the term “manga,” implied to be for children and carrying a connotation of childish stories and humor).

The maturing themes and content, accompanied by the gradual escalation of graphic violence and sexual depictions, in *gekiga* (as well as in manga as a whole) led to new concerns by parents about the medium their children were consuming. In the 1950s, these concerns materialized as the “Movement Against Harmful Books” (*Akusho tsuihō undō*). Although the movement targeted any print format—prose books, magazines containing nude photos of women, photo books, and so on—manga volumes and manga magazines were one of the main targets of criticism. Fueled by mass media reports, several parental and citizen groups all over the nation were active in the movement, which peaked in the mid-1950s (see the “Controversy and censorship” section in Chapter 2). On the other side of the Pacific, the US comic book industry was also facing a similar anti-comic book movement. Spearheaded by psychiatrist Fredric Wertham, the movement resulted in the introduction of the stringent “Comics Code Authority,” the effect of which was comics getting “nearly sanitized to death” (Schodt 1996, 52). In this comparative view, a similar pressure from the conservative sector of each society was imposed on manga/comics just as they were about to “grow up”

to meet a young adult (and adult) readership. According to Tatsumi Yoshihiro's 1968 *Gekiga daigaku* (Gekiga university), his coinage of the term *gekiga* was intended to differentiate work aimed at young adult readers from manga for children (25). In other words, Tatsumi attempted to circumvent the growing social pressure over *gekiga*/manga content in order to safeguard a space for creative freedom within the industry, although criticism of manga from conservative sectors of society would persist long after (Suzuki 2017a).

During the 1960s and 1970s, Japan enjoyed a series of consecutive economic booms that continued its ascendancy up the economic ladder. Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato's "Income Doubling Plan" of 1960 allowed many citizens to feel economically secure. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the first Olympic Games to be held in Asia, offered an opportunity to present the nation as a new technological power—as represented by the *shinkansen* bullet train—to the international community. While Japan's swift economic ascent was perceived as "miraculous" from outside, Japanese workers—both white collar and blue collar—were devoting their lives to intensive, prolonged work and achieving their personal economic goals. Against the backdrop of the era's economic booms, the Japanese manga industry became commercially robust, expanding its target readers while diversifying manga genres. The sports genre, centering on such topics as martial arts, baseball, boxing, and volleyball, became especially popular in the 1960s. Famous titles include the baseball manga *Kyojin no hoshi* (Star of the Giants, 1966–71) by writer Kajiwaru Ikki and artist Kawasaki Noboru, and the boxing manga *Ashita no Jō* (Tomorrow's Joe, 1968–73) by writer Takamori Asao (Kajiwaru Ikki's pseudonym) and artist Chiba Tetsuya. Both manga were serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, which became a top-selling magazine in the late 1960s.⁵³ In the field of *shōjo* manga, two volleyball manga became popular—*Atakku nanbā wan* (Attack no. 1, 1968–70) by Urano Chikako, and *Sain wa bui* (The sign is V!, 1968–70) by writer Jinbo Shirō and artist Mochizuki Akira. Both were created after the Japanese women's volleyball team won the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, which was a feat celebrated with much media hype. Including *Star of the Giants* and *Tomorrow's Joe*, sports manga often highlight a protagonist's unyielding willpower and relentless effort to train to reach their goals or beat their rivals while still underlining the importance of teamwork or friendship. Sports manga following this formula are sometimes called "*spokon* manga" or simply "*spokon*," a portmanteau of "sports" and *konjō* (indefatigable spirit in the face of any travail).⁵⁴ Such protagonists' unremitting efforts and willpower under any circumstances fitted the zeitgeist of the age, when Japanese workers devoted themselves to achieving economic betterment amid a time of economic growth.

Meanwhile, *shōjo* manga continued to gain commercial momentum, which brought about more sophisticated narrative forms and styles due to the increasing participation of female authors. Monthly *shōjo* manga

magazines now turned into weeklies. In 1963, Kōdansha's *Shōjo Friend* (Shōjo furendo, 1963–96) was founded as a replacement for *Shōjo Club*, followed by Shūeisha's *Margaret*.⁵⁵ In 1968, Shōgakukan founded *Shōjo Comic* which, as its title indicates, features serialized manga as the main content of the magazine. Previously, *shōjo* manga authors—often male authors—created their works with a didactic approach, geared toward educating or enlightening young female readers from an adult perspective. Yet, the female authors in the 1960s gradually began to create what young (and/or adolescent) girls wanted to read. One such shift could be observed with the rise of romance genre manga. Although *shōjo* manga might be most associated with the genre of romance today, that genre solidified over the course of the 1960s, first in the form of romantic comedies, then as heterosexual romance stories with Western girls as protagonists who fall in love with Western boys. It was only then, in the late 1960s and 1970s, that romance stories about Japanese characters became “available” to Japanese girl readers as a genre (Fujimoto 2009, 37–9). The initial hesitation to depict (Japanese) girls’ romantic and sexual desires in *shōjo* manga was reflective of the patriarchal system that sought to circumvent and/or suppress the expression of female sexuality and sexual agency—and, of course, the majority of editors at the time were also male—but female authors gradually broke this barrier over course of the 1960s. By the early 1970s, authors of *shōjo* manga were predominately female, including Satonaka Machiko (*Ariesu no otometachi*, Ladies of Aries), Aoike Yasuko (*Eroika yori ai wo komete*, From Eroica with love), Ichijō Yukari (*Yūkan Club*), and Yamato Waki (*The Tale of Genji*), and they explored romance stories through their *shōjo* manga.⁵⁶ Another influential genre that formed in this period was the so-called “magical girl” genre. Akatsuka Fujio's *Himitsuno Akko-chan* (The secrets of Akko-chan, 1962–5) and Yokoyama Mitsuteru's *Mahōtsukai Sari* (Sally the witch, 1966–7), originally titled *Mahōtsukai Sani*—both from male *mangaka*—created the archetype of a girl protagonist who uses magical powers.⁵⁷ The “magical girl” (sub)genre is popular across multiple media to this day.

In the 1960s the medium of manga began playing a role in the system of transmedia adaptation, initiating a synergetic co-evolution in visual storytelling. In 1959, Tezuka's manga *Astro Boy*—a.k.a. *Mighty Atomu*—was first adapted into a live-action TV show (with mixed results). Then, in 1963, Fuji Television broadcast *Astro Boy* as an animated television series produced by Tezuka Osamu's company, Mushi Production, marking the dawn of Japanese TV anime history. It should be noted here that the term “anime” was a later coinage; in those days, TV animated series were called “manga eiga” (manga film), indicating the strong affinity between the two media forms. To fund the production of this anime series, Mushi Production worked with chocolate company Meiji Seika, whose chocolate products were accompanied by Astro Boy stickers.⁵⁸ In this way, characters that originated in manga (and anime) have come to exist in children's (and

adults’) everyday life even outside of their media of origin (see “Media mix and *dōjinshi* participatory culture” in Chapter 2).

The first postwar generation of manga readers continued to grow up through the 1960s, and manga/*gekiga* became part of youth (counter) culture. In the *kashihon* market, Shirato Sanpei’s *gekiga Ninja bugei-chō: Kagemaru-den* (Scroll of ninja martial arts: The legend of Kagemaru, 1959–62) became popular, especially among (male) college students and adult readers.⁵⁹ Set in sixteenth-century Japan, the seventeen volumes of Shirato’s *kashihon* series narrate a peasant revolt against an oppressive socio-political system.⁶⁰ The timing of the publication overlapped with the so-called “season of politics” (*seiji no kisetsu*), when Japanese society witnessed a massive wave of politicized student and citizen movements. One of the largest manifestations of this turbulent period was the “anti-anpo” movement, in which students and citizen demonstrated against the extension of the US–Japan Security Treaty (nicknamed “anpo”) that allowed the US military to remain in Japan. Along with the continued political instability in Asia due to the Cold War, the presence of the US military in Japan stood in contradiction to the Japanese state’s sovereignty. In response to this atmosphere, Shirato, a son of well-known proletarian artist/painter Okamoto Tōki (1903–86), infused his works with a leftist, historical materialist mode of thought. Critics note that his *gekiga* works such as *Ninja bugei-chō: Kagemaru-den* and his next epic, *The Legend of Kamuy* (*Kamui-den*, 1964–71), were embraced by young adults and the college students of the New Left in the 1960s (Yomota 2004, 232).⁶¹ In the late 1960s, the phrase “*Journal* in the right hand and *Magazine* in the left hand” (*migi-te ni jānaru, hidari-te ni magajin*) became a sort of slogan among left-leaning university students, meaning that the leftist/liberal intellectual magazine *Asahi Journal* and the comics magazine *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* were of equal importance to them. Despite its title, *Shōnen Magazine* featured *gekiga* works, including a popular boxing *gekiga*, *Tomorrow’s Joe*. This boxing manga series narrates the life of struggle of a boxer named Joe, an underdog from a Tokyo slum who makes his way up through an adverse environment and fights until his death. In March 1970, more than 800 comics fans attended a staged “funeral” for Rikiishi Tōru, one of Joe’s rivals, after the character passed away in the story, planned and performed by avant-garde artist Terayama Shūji and his Tenjōsajiki theater group (see Ridgely 2011, 92–3). In the same month, a faction of the Japanese Red Army, a communist/far-left militant group, hijacked an airplane and fled to North Korea. Upon leaving Japan, the group’s leader made a declaration in which he compared his group’s members to Joe. At the height of 1960s counterculture, the medium of manga/*gekiga* clearly functioned as a site of symbolic resistance for youth in Japan (Suzuki, 2017a).

The rising political consciousness of the public in the 1960s prompted a collective rumination on Japan’s involvement in the Second World War, and war memories resurfaced in manga. After the end of the Allied

occupation, war-themed manga made a gradual resurgence, initially appearing in the pages of *shōnen* manga magazines. They often depicted young pilots as heroic figures on the war's aerial battlefields (Nakar 2008, 178), although some of them questioned the nation's prosecution of the war itself. In 1971, Mizuki Shigeru produced one of his masterpieces, *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* (Sōin gyokusai seyo!), partially based on his own experience serving as a private on imperial Japan's colonial war front. In 1972, Nakazawa Keiji contributed a forty-eight-page autobiographical manga, "I Saw It" (Ore wa mita), to *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, in which he depicted his own experience as a Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor. Based on that work, he produced the semi-autobiographical anti-nuclear manga *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*, 1973–87). *Barefoot Gen* has become one of the most internationally known Japanese comics thanks to multilingual translations by translators and activists who have promoted the manga all over the world.

Throughout the 1960s, the manga industry underwent a series of changes. With the *kashihon* industry's decline, manga magazines now occupied the center stage of manga publication and consumption. While the commercial momentum of weekly *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga magazines was increasing, two historically significant manga magazines were established that forged a different path: *Garō* (1964–2002) and *COM* (1967–73). Both magazines were characterized by their alternative proclivities and innovative aspirations beyond the limits on content available in the existing manga industry.

Garō was founded by editor-publisher Nagai Katsuichi with the intention of serializing the next epic work from *kashihon* manga and *gekiga* star Shirato Sanpei, who had gradually lost outlets for publishing his work due to the decline of the *kashihon* industry. Shirato also served as the editor and recruited unique and talented artists, including Mizuki Shigeru, Tsuge Yoshiharu, Tsuge Tadao, Sasaki Maki, Takita Yū, Tsurita Kuniko, Hayashi Seiichi, and Katsumata Susumu, all of whom brought diverse aesthetics, innovations in form and narrative, and unconventional subject matter into the medium of manga. Among them, Tsuge Yoshiharu's 1968 one-shot "Neji-shiki"—a.k.a. "Screw Style"—a dream-like, surrealistic work, shook up the world of manga by demonstrating new possibilities for manga/*gekiga* and challenging readers with its non-sequitur combinations of images and words. Tsuge's "Neji-shiki" made other *mangaka* and other visual artists (designers, illustrators, and avant-garde artists, etc.) aware of unexplored potential in the medium.⁶² Through *Garō*, Tsuge also began to contribute semi-autobiographical manga based on his travels into small, often desolate villages in Japan. Alongside his contemporaries, Tsuge also opened new horizons for literary or personal expression in the medium.⁶³

In comparison, *COM* was founded by Tezuka Osamu in 1967 in part because Tezuka felt a sense of rivalry with *Garō*, which had proven successful in attracting more mature readers. In his founding statement, Tezuka noted that the title was taken from the concept of "COMICS, COMPANION,

and COMMUNICATION.” In the same statement, Tezuka decried the commercialism of manga, lamenting that *mangaka* could not draw what they wanted and make a living at the same time; he declared his wish to prove “what a true story manga is” (Tezuka 1967, “Sōkan no kotoba”). Along with the magazine’s mainstay of Tezuka’s *Phoenix* manga series, which addressed philosophical and mature themes,⁶⁴ COM showcased formula-defying works for older teenagers, college students, and adult manga readers while attracting talented authors who reinvented the comics medium for greater personal expression and artistic experimentation. One such example was Ishinomori Shōtarō’s avant-garde work *Jun* (1967–71), which challenged readers with its experimental stream-of-consciousness-like free associations of images, often without any words. Unwittingly, Ishinomori’s avant-garde work sparked tension between him and Tezuka because of their differing views on what story manga should be.⁶⁵ Ishinomori had already begun to explore uncharted territory in manga expression beyond what Tezuka’s traditional ideas of manga entailed. Another author who contributed to COM was Nagashima Shinji, whose “*fūten* series” (1967–70) documents the subcultural youth group known as “*fūten-zoku*,” a Japanese version of urban hippies who practiced a bohemian lifestyle, based on his own experience as a *fūten*. Along with Tsuge Yoshiharu’s work in *Garo*, Nagashima’s manga (whose title page declares it to be a “serialized *gekiga*”) further demonstrated how the medium of manga could be used for personal and autobiographical expression. When founding COM, Tezuka intended to revive the spirit of Katō Ken’ichi’s *Manga Shōnen*, encouraging readers to actively participate. For instance, the magazine’s “Manga Prep School” (Manga yobikō) section invited readers to submit comic strips, and select strips were published and received evaluative feedback from editors and artists. Several important *mangaka*, including Takemiya Keiko, Adachi Mitsuru, Yamagishi Ryōko, Moroboshi Daijirō, Yamada Murasaki, and Ōtomo Katsuhiro, all contributed work to the Manga Prep School before their professional debuts. Another of COM’s most important sections, named “Gra-Com” (Gura-kon), an abbreviated transliteration of “grand companion,” attempted to build a nationwide network of manga fans and manga club members, asking them to send their own *dōjinshi* (fanzines) to the editorial office (see Figure 1.13). The Gra-Com section laid the groundwork for the initial surge in *dōjinshi* activity that would later evolve into a robust participatory culture by manga fans in its own right (see “Media mix and *dōjinshi* participatory culture” in Chapter 2).

The success of *gekiga* made manga publishers aware of the commercial potential of manga as a medium for young adult and adult readers (that is, instead of just for children). Beginning in the mid-1960s, a handful of new manga magazines targeting adult males in their twenties and thirties were founded, including *Manga Action* (1967–2003), *Play Comic* (1968–2014), and most importantly, *Big Comic*.⁶⁶ These magazines were called *seinen* (lit. “young adult male”), in contrast to *shōnen*.⁶⁷ The front cover of the first

ぐら・こん

Z・Z
Z・Z

GRAND COMPANION

第1回

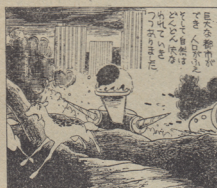
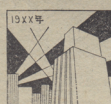
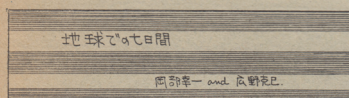
●まんが予備校／197

●まんがの好きなあなたに／200

●アシスタントの夢・声／202



ぐら・こん—グランド・コンパニオンの略。でっかい仲間たちの広場だ！

「地球での
7日間」幸一
克己「あらず」
文明の発達と
ともに自然が失
われていった。
その自然を残
すために島へ出かける。すために日本に公園都市が作られた
公園都市に住むひとりの少年が、
ある夏の夜、湖の中の無人島のはず
の小島に怪しい光を発見。その謎を
とくために島へ出かける。

まんが予備校

- ☆「ぐら・こん」は、生粋のまんがマニア☆
- ☆の広場だ。まんがをもっとかきたい、勉☆
- ☆強したいという人の願いを一つに集めて☆
- ☆企画されたページだ。
- ☆このまんが予備校へ入学された方々の☆
- ☆大まんが家への成功を祈る！ COM編集部☆

〈採点談の見かた〉

- ① コマわり
- ② ペンいれ
- ③ 構図のとりかた
- ④ テーマ
- ⑤ ストーリー
- ⑥ キャラクター

すると、その光は人工の光であり、
人の気配を感じる。
そこへリリという少女が現われ、
少年を洞穴に案内するが、そこはま
るで別世界のようだった。地面の石
ころは全部金のかたまりで、小鳥は
楽しそうにうたい、小さな動物たち
は、かきまわっていた。
ふしぎに思った少年は帰りがわ、
リリに質問すると、「わたしはこの
島の住人です」という答えがかえっ
てきた。

① (40点) 採点率が小さすぎます。
B5判(たて二一センチ、よこ
一五センチ)の1.5倍ぐらいにか
いてください。その場合、四段のコ
マわりをしましょう。

FIGURE 1.13 The “Grand Companion” section from the first issue of COM.

issue of *Big Comic* featured illustrations by the five most popular manga authors of the day—Shirato Sanpei, Tezuka Osamu, Ishinomori Shōtarō, Mizuki Shigeru, and Saitō Takao. This cover signaled *Big Comic*'s intention to bring two camps of authors—former *kashihon gekiga* stars (Shirato, Mizuki, and Saitō) and authors famous for their magazine story manga (Tezuka and Ishinomori)—together in a mainstream manga magazine that would keep up with the medium's maturing readers. It seems no coincidence that satirical and political cartoons had fallen into the margins of manga publication around this time, evidenced by the termination of *Manga Tokuhon* in 1970, a magazine that had featured cartoons and comic strips for (male) mature readers.⁶⁸ With the rise of *gekiga* and *seinen* manga for mature readers, adult (male) readers began embracing story manga (long-form narrative comics) instead of short-form comics (i.e., cartoons and comic strips). Around the same time in the field of *shōjo* manga, new manga magazines for maturing female readers were also being launched. Shūeisha's *Seventeen* (1968–present) was the Japanese version of the US fashion magazine *Seventeen*, although the Japanese edition also contained story manga.⁶⁹ The growth of manga as a medium for young adults and adult readers also allowed *mangaka* to start creating works with thematic depth and narrative complexity that required more cultural literacy and a higher reading level.

Manga Goes Mainstream

After the Tokyo Olympics, the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka marked another historical moment for Japan to showcase many futuristic and high-tech exhibits to the world. Many renowned artists, architects, and producers participated, including Tezuka Osamu, who designed the event's Robot Pavilion (sponsored by the Fuji Baking Group). Although the Osaka Expo presented a forward-looking momentum, Japan took a conservative turn in its politics. The anti-anpo movement failed—the US–Japan Security Treaty was renewed—while leftist movements descended into sectarianism and radicalized violence, which alienated the general public. The TV broadcast of the Asama-Sansō incident of 1972, a hostage crisis perpetrated by armed members of the Japanese United Red Army, sparked disillusionment and was one of the final nails in the coffin for the general public's sympathy with leftist political movements. The demise of the “season of politics” also signaled the end of *gekiga* as it had been known. The waning of the alternative and political edge of *gekiga* was foreshadowed when Saitō Takao, one of the original members of the Gekiga Workshop, began creating hard-boiled entertainment manga titles—most famously, his long-running series about a Japanese hitman, *Golgo 13* (first serialized in 1969)—and several *gekiga*-adjacent creators were hired by mainstream manga magazines in rapid succession in the late 1960s. In the course of the 1970s, *gekiga*, which had been a distinct publishing category, was gradually integrated into the

broader category of manga (as we now know it).⁷⁰ The fate of *Garō* and *COM* were representative of the direction of the manga industry's shifts during the 1970s. *COM* ended its short life in 1972 when Tezuka's Mushi Production was on the verge of bankruptcy. On the other hand, *Garō* survived until 2002, although the end of Shirato's *The Legend of Kamuy* in 1972 had a negative impact on the magazine's sales.

By the late 1960s, the *kashihon* publishing industry had almost died out. This meant that manga magazines as a format became a major vehicle for pushing manga—serialized narrative manga—forward. However, around the mid-1960s, major and middle-sized publishers started republishing serialized manga in their magazines by collecting episodes of individual series in a smaller-sized volume format called *tankōbon* (lit., “stand-alone book”).⁷¹ This publication pattern for mainstream manga—first serialized in magazines printed on recycled pulp paper and then anthologizing and republishing episodes of popular titles in *tankōbon*—quickly became common practice in the manga publishing industry in the 1970s (Miyamoto 2009a). The advent of this practice created another source of revenue for authors and publishers, while perhaps laying the initial groundwork for the social recognition of manga's cultural value due in part to the book format publication and its preservability—though manga's endorsement by mainstream and cultural authorities would come much later (in contrast, manga printed in magazines were considered ephemeral and disposable).

The manga industry in the 1970s was characterized by further commercialization and depoliticization. Both *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga magazines gained enough traction to spur the mainstream manga industry into taking major steps forward. The five most popular *shōnen* manga magazines were *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*, *Weekly Shōnen Champion* (founded in 1969 by Akita Shoten), *Weekly Shōnen King* (founded in 1963 by Shōnen Gahōsha), and *Weekly Shōnen Jump* (founded in 1968 by Shūeisha). These magazines were competing with each other to attract more of their original target readership (boys) by diversifying the genres, content, and styles of the titles they published, but they attracted young adult (male) readers as well. In the late 1970s, *Shōnen Jump* surpassed the sales of *Shōnen Magazine*, attributed to the magazine's hiring of young artists. On the other hand, *Shōnen Sunday* successfully expanded the romantic comedy subgenre, which had previously been confined to *shōjo* manga, to target young male readers. Participating in this streak of romantic comedies in boy's magazines, female author Takahashi Rumiko and male author Adachi Mitsuru each began to produce their popular titles—such as Takahashi's *Urusei Yatsura* (1978–87) and Adachi's *Nine* (1978–80) and *Touch* (1981–6)—by combining boy-oriented genres (martial arts, sports, fighting, etc.) and previously girl-oriented romance (or romantic comedy). Small- and mid-scale publishers also began to employ business models embracing segmentation and diversification in search of niche audiences. Beginning in the 1970s and continuing throughout the

1980s, new manga magazines devoted to individual, specific genres or types of manga came to the fore—that is, entire magazines would contain multiple self-contained or serialized stories in one genre, such as horror manga-only magazines, *yonkoma*-only magazines, and those devoted to leisure pursuits like mahjong or *pachinko*. Meanwhile, a new generation of *shōjo* magazines was launched: *Bessatsu Shōjo Comic* (by Shōgakukan), *Flower and Dream* (*Hana to Yume*, by Hakusensha), *LaLa* (by Hakusensha), *Princess* (by Akita Shoten), *Ciao* (by Shōgakukan), and *Petit Comic* (by Shōgakukan). These magazines set the stage for a new crop of talented female artists.

Many critics claim that a *shōjo* manga “revolution” took place in the 1970s, the period called the “golden age of *shōjo* manga” (Yonezawa 2007; Toku 2007). Several female *mangaka* made formal, stylistic, and thematic innovations to the medium, some of whom are celebrated under the moniker of the “Year 24 Group” (*24-nen gumi*) or the “Magnificent Forty Niners” in English (Thorn 2012).⁷² The authors most commonly associated with this group include Hagio Moto, Takemiya Keiko, and Ōshima Yumiko; some critics add Ikeda Riyoko, Yamagishi Ryōko, Kimura Minori, Sasaya Nanaeko (Sasaya Nanae), and others to that list. The work of these *mangaka* represented a new generation of female voices contributing to *shōjo* manga, bringing with them new thematic depths and unorthodox formal and aesthetic experimentation. Some of these authors crafted complex panel and page designs, often eliminating panel borders while adding non-diegetic, decorative illustrations to their backgrounds; others would overlap several different illustrations so as to visualize a character’s thoughts and memories in a “stream-of-consciousness” style, sometimes writing inner thoughts outside of thought balloons. Thematically, this generation of female authors often highlighted the conflict between individualist and collectivist social roles, even questioning the gender norms prescribed by Japan’s patriarchal social order (see “Gender and Sexuality” in Chapter 2). Ikeda Riyoko’s *The Rose of Versailles* (1972–3), for instance, narrates the story of the historical Marie Antoinette from her fourteenth year—note that this roughly matches the target demographic’s age range. Marie Antoinette is “sent” to marry the future King Louis XVI with the intention of preventing war in the years leading up to the French Revolution (see Chapter 4, Key Texts). In this work, Ikeda also introduces a memorable character named Oscar François de Jarjayes. Oscar is a gender-bending transvestite character like the eponymous character in Tezuka’s *Princess Knight*, a woman raised as a “man” to succeed the commander of the Royal Guard. Both main characters in Ikeda’s manga are placed in positions of struggle between their own individual desires and their social roles, a struggle that might echo the social reality of many of the story’s girl readers.

Two representative artists belonging to the Year 24 Group—Hagio Moto and Takemiya Keiko—created pioneering and groundbreaking work across a multiplicity of genres, such as science fiction (then considered a “boys’ club”), historical drama, and stories inspired by literary fiction. From 1970

to around 1972, members of the Year 24 Group shared an apartment they dubbed the “Ōizumi Salon” which functioned as a hub where they and other *shōjo* manga artists offered each other assistance and emotional support. It is also worth noting that another contemporary *mangaka*, Mizuno Hideko, though not typically discussed as a member of the Year 24 Group, created *Fire!* (1969–71), which incorporated US countercultural topics and references such as rock music, drugs, sex, racism, and the Vietnam War.⁷³ From the late 1960s to the 1970s, Japanese society witnessed the rise of the women’s liberation movement (called “*ūman ribu*” in Japanese), resonating with women’s movements in the West. Although the connection between these *mangaka* and the women’s liberation movement remains vague, it is true that they created their works at a time when phrases like “liberation of sex” and “equality for men and women” were prominently circulating in society. Indeed, it was during this period that *shōjo* manga began to depict female sexuality in a more direct way, no longer focusing only on emotional and spiritual intimacy. As a whole, the *shōjo* manga of this period have had a far-reaching cultural impact, including their influence on literary writers—for instance, Yoshimoto Banana (1964–present) and Himuro Saeko (1957–present)—and other artists.

With the availability of low-cost printing and photocopying facilities in urban corner stores, non-professional manga produced by fans gained steam, starting in the early 1970s (Kinsella 1998, 105). Previously, manga fans and would-be manga artists commonly honed their skills on their own or in high school or college manga clubs while directly meeting with editors or submitting their manuscripts to manga contests in the hopes of securing their professional debut. With the help of new and more accessible technology, however, manga fans began printing and distributing their own manga as *dōjinshi* (fanzines), often as groups that began in their local communities. Non-professional authors and fan groups in different parts of Japan also began to organize do-it-yourself *dōjinshi* events, including one of the most well-known events in this cultural space, Comic Market (a.k.a. Comike or Comiket) (see Figure 1.14). Founded in 1975 as an event where *dōjinshi* could be bought and sold, the first Comic Market attracted approximately 700 participants and thirty groups of non-professional *dōjinshi* makers (Shimotuski 2008, 10). Over the past few decades, Comic Market has grown into one of the largest activities for fan participation. The creations featured at Comic Market have expanded to other *dōjin* (fan-produced) media products, such as anime, music CDs, video games, and visual novels. Comic Market has become an important site for the manga industry itself, since a number of *mangaka* got their starts in this venue before building their own professional careers. Among the well-known artists who previously participated at Comic Market are Saimon Fumi, Takano Fumiko, Kōno Fumiyo, Takahashi Rumiko, and CLAMP (a group of female *mangaka*). In short, this fan-driven subcultural scene has supported the present-day manga industry from below (see “Media mix and *dōjinshi* participatory culture” in Chapter 2).



FIGURE 1.14 A photo taken at Comic Market on August 9, 2019. Photo: Kyodo News. Used with permission.

In the mid-1970s, Hagio and Takemiya also made important interventions in the exploration of female sexuality and sexual fantasy in the field of *shōjo* manga. Hagio's *The Heart of Thomas* (1974) and Takemiya's *Kaze to ki no uta* (The poem of wind and trees, 1976–84) depict same-sex romantic and sexual relationships between beautiful boy characters (see Figure 1.15). Those were known in those days as a subgenre called *shōnen ai* (lit., “boys love”). Inspired by these works, some fans began creating their own manga following the narrative formula of *shōnen ai*—that is, depicting homosexual relationships among boys. These fan works were first called *yaoi*, the moniker derived from the playful phrase “*yama nashi, ochi nashi imi nashi*” (lit., “no climax, no punch line, and no meaning”), referring to the typical plotlessness (or unimportance of plotlines) of early *dōjin* manga depicting explicit romance and sex between male characters. Earlier *yaoi* works were often parodic pieces derived from existing manga, appropriating boy characters from popular *shōnen* manga and pairing them in homosexual relationships.⁷⁴ Around the late 1990s, the (sub)genre became more commercialized, and the label of “boys love” or BL (*bī eru*) has been used since then. *Yaoi*/BL manga were initially—and, to a great extent, still are—produced by female manga creators for a female readership, and because of this, they are repeatedly compared to the slash fiction that has developed (fanfiction that focuses on male–male romantic or sexual relationships) in and beyond Western fandom. The genre of BL has increasingly attracted scholarly attention due to their potential (however limited) to unsettle heteronormativity as well as their global circulation/appropriation by global fans.⁷⁵

Since the late 1960s the growing interest in manga/*gekiga* as a medium for different purposes of expression, along with its appeal to mature, intelligent readers, attracted avant-garde artists who had not previously been associated with the world of manga. Some attempted to experiment with or appropriate the medium of manga for the creation of their own art, while others published their work in manga magazines. In 1967, Japanese “new wave” film director Ōshima Nagisa created an “experimental” film based on Shirato's *Ninja bugei-chō: Kagemaru-den* by filming each manga panel and recording narration. Art school-trained artists such as Inoue Yōsuke, Nakamura Hiroshi, and Tateishi Kōichi (a.k.a. Tiger Tateishi) began to explore the potential of the medium for their artistic expression. At the same time, already established avant-garde artists such as Akasegawa Genpei, Minami Nobuhiro (a.k.a. Minami Shinbō), and Matsuda Tetsuo produced manga and manga-inspired artwork for contemporary art magazine *Bijutsu techō* (Art notebook). Akasegawa, a former member of the Japanese “Neo-Dada” artist group, serialized his comic strip *Sakura Illustrated* (Sakura gahō), a parodic rendition of the declining New Left movement, first in the left-leaning magazine *Asahi Journal* and then in *Garo*.⁷⁶ Minami Shinbō became the chief editor of *Garo* and expanded the magazine's horizons, introducing manga that drew on trends in graphic



FIGURE 1.15 Takemiya Keiko's The Poem of Wind and Trees (1999, Chūōkōron Shinsha edition). © Takemiya Keiko. Used with permission.

design and illustrations reminiscent of movements in avant-garde art. These artists transgressed the boundaries of the narrowly defined “art world” and found manga a riveting “new” medium for their artistic exploration and experimentation (Suzuki 2017b). In particular, *Garō*’s penchant for alternative expression inspired literary authors, photographers, filmmakers, and musicians to contribute essays, articles, photographs, and columns, sometimes in collaboration with *mangaka*. From this genealogy of crossover between manga and the world of illustration and graphic design, the art movement called *beta-uma* (roughly translated, “unskilled-skilled” or “bad but good”) was born. Critics have argued that these *beta-uma* artists/*mangaka* employ a “primitive” art style, which looks “bad” or “amateurish” at first glance but is actually “good” on closer inspection (Schodt 1996, 141–2). The artists most associated with this movement were Yumura Teruhiko (a.k.a. Terry Yumura), Nemoto Takashi (a.k.a. Nemoto Kei), Ebisu Yoshikazu, and Miura Jun.

While some *gekiga* authors began to produce “literary” and/or “artistic” manga, others transitioned into creating gag and absurdist manga. Famously, Sasaki Maki contributed abstract and absurdist manga to *Garō* and other magazines, as a result of which he unwittingly angered Tezuka, who publicly criticized Sasaki’s manga. Manga scholar Ryan Holmberg (2009, 121) argues that Sasaki’s “*nansensu* (nonsense) manga” around 1970 was an echo of the political cynicism of the era after the decline of the political idealism of the 1960s. Indeed, nonsensical “gag manga” gained popularity around the same time. Of course, gags and comedic elements have long been one of the core elements of manga, but the gag manga of this time were characterized by non-formulaic jokes, indecent depictions, and absurd gags. Famous gag manga titles from this period include Akatsuka Fujio’s *The Genius Bakabon* (Tensai Bakabon, roughly 1967–92) and Yamagami Tatsuhiko’s *Gaki deka* (Bratty cop, 1974–80).⁷⁷ Tsuchida Yoshiko’s *I am Princess Tsuruhime!* (Tsuruhime jā!, 1973–9), a gag manga that parodied *shōjo* manga conventions, also achieved popularity. Later representative gag/absurdist manga include Toriyama Akira’s slapstick series *Dr. Slump* (1980–4), Igarashi Mikio’s nonsensical *yonkoma* comic strip *Bonobono* (1986–present), and Yoshida Sensha’s absurdist gag manga *Utsurun desu* (1989–94). Gag manga thus became a distinct genre that remains popular to this day.

During the 1980s “bubble economy,” the biggest economic boom in Japan’s history, the manga industry became a huge business, fueled by further commercialization and a growing web of interrelationships with different media industries. In this period, the manga industry became more tied with other media industries through the Japanese corporate business/marketing strategy called “media mix.” Somewhat similar to “transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins 2006), the “media mix” entails the adaptation of a single media series across multiple differing media/formats. The media mix has created a strong synergy that generates profits for and between different

media industries while providing more media outlets and platforms through which fans can access content and interact with each other. Previously, as in the case of Tezuka's *Astro Boy*, the medium of manga was the original avenue for new stories, but throughout the 1980s, manga became part of a larger popular cultural media production system. Kadokawa's media mix product *Record of Lodoss War* (*Rōdosu-tō senki*) provides a successful example of this formula for transmedia storytelling—it was originally a popular fantasy novel, then it was adapted into a TTRPG (tabletop role-playing game), anime series, manga series, and video games. The media mix prompted toy and video game companies to enter the manga-publishing business. In 1988, toy maker Bandai launched a manga magazine featuring “robot manga” (mecha manga), *Cyber Comix* (1988–92). Video game development company Enix (now Square Enix) also began publishing *Shōnen Gangan* (founded in 1991), followed by more magazines in the “Gangan” series of manga periodicals. These magazines were founded in order to appeal to the “video game generation,” and the series they published included adventure, fantasy, and gag manga, along with spin-offs from Enix's popular video game series *Dragon Quest*. Despite this world of commercially driven, dashy manga entertainment, *Garo* survived, offering an outlet to unique and talented female *mangaka*, including Yamada Murasaki, Sugiura Hinako, and Kondō Yōko, all of whom produced “literary” or poetic manga with a feminist bent.

As the manga industry expanded, a new demographic category was established to target a maturing female readership—in their twenties and thirties—known as “ladies' comic” (*redīsu kōmmikku*). In 1980, Kōdansha's *Be Love* (1980–present) and Shūeisha's *YOU* (1980–present) were founded as ladies' comic magazines. Earlier stories in ladies' comic titles revolved around relationships between adult men and women, including erotic depictions of sexual fantasies. Along with the aforesaid BL manga, the popularity of those ladies' comic titles affirms the sexual agency of women—female creators and readers—who find pleasure in the medium of manga (as opposed to other visual media such as video or film). A number of manga in ladies' comic magazines also focus on the realities of everyday life for female office workers (“OLs,” short for “office ladies”) and housewives, addressing topics concerning working, marriage, giving birth, and raising children; others escalated the sensational depictions of graphic sexual intercourse (Ito 2002, 43). Probably due to the initial association of the label “ladies' comic” and sexual content, manga targeted at women are also called *josei* manga (manga for women), referring to their target readership. As one of the most recent categories in the manga industry, *josei* manga is made up of a variety of genres, such as sports, historical drama, music, and fashion, as well as manga that address social issues including child-rearing, disability, and Japan's aging society. Also, *josei* manga appear not only in manga magazines but also in regular women's magazines and literary magazines. Authors such as Uchida Shungiku (*Watashitachi wa hanshoku shiteiru*, We are

reproducing), Okazaki Kyōko (*Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly* and *Pink*) and Anno Moyoco (*Happy Mania* and *In Clothes Called Fat*) have produced well-regarded *josei* manga and have extended the horizons of manga expression and subject matter in relation to the shifting nature of the social status of women, the female body, and the relationship between genders in Japanese society.

The unprecedented economic boom of the 1980s fostered the ascendancy of the Japanese service and information technology industries, exemplified by the rapid proliferation of personal computers and other communication media (fax machines, VCRs, mobile phones, etc.). The spread of these digital devices could be interpreted as signaling the beginnings of the post-industrial information society, where information has emerged as a central force in the economy, politics, and culture. It is no surprise that the medium of manga began to be used to disseminate information and instruction. Manga about history and other school subjects had long been produced for young readers, but the 1980s saw the rise of manga about economics, politics, science, technology, science, and specific industries gained traction. This new type of manga is called “educational manga” (*gakushū manga*) or “information manga” (*jōhō manga*). Ishinomori Shōtarō’s *Japan, Inc.: Introduction to Japanese Economics* (1986), which describes the “Japanese” way of conducting business, is one notable example (see Chapter 4, Key Texts). This era also saw the use of manga and manga-style illustrations in brochures, public announcement posters, advertising leaflets, business manuals, and more (continuing to this day), exemplifying the importance of manga as a communication tool for business, learning, and public relations purposes while at the same time raising the profile of manga in public places.

Another sign of Japan’s transformation into a post-industrial society is the rise of hyper-consumerism. After achieving material affluence by the mid-1970s, people in the middle and upper classes began to spend their disposable income on designer brand items, fashionable clothes, luxurious goods, leisure, and entertainment. Media images in eye-catching ads and on screens were set up on urban streets and (over-)saturated public space, while popular media—TV, magazines, and commercial catalogs—constantly stimulated consumerist desires. In response to such social change, new talents appeared in the genre of *seinen* and science fiction manga. Ōtomo Katsuhiro began to publish high-quality sci-fi around 1980, including his seminal manga *Akira* (1982–90). Ōtomo renewed the visual style of the medium by employing one partly inspired by French comics, most notably the works of Jean Giraud (a.k.a. Moebius). Distinct from both the Tezuka-inspired, rounded character designs prevalent in postwar manga and the naturalistic drawing style characterized by thick and coarse lines associated with *gekiga*, Ōtomo’s drawing style gives off a sense of a sophistication that is not homegrown. Inspired in part by Canadian sci-fi writer William Gibson, Shirow Masamune produced his archetypal cyberpunk manga *Ghost in the Shell*—first serialized in 1989 on an irregular basis in a *seinen* manga

magazine and then published as a book in 1991. Partly influenced by the work of Otomo, Shirow's own work presents a noir-like detective story set in a high-tech dystopian future in which cyborg characters introspect on what it means to be human. With its philosophical questioning in a high-tech context, *Ghost in the Shell*, along with other sci-fi prose and anime, kicked off the cyberpunk boom of the 1980s and early 1990s, concomitant with Japan's entry into the post-industrial information age. Kishiro Yukito's *Battle Angel Alita* (Ganmu or *GUNNM*, 1991–5), which was adapted into a Hollywood film in 2019, also emerged from this context.

After the Death of “God”

The death of Tezuka Osamu in 1989—the same year Emperor Hirohito died, thus ending the Shōwa era (1926–89)—prompted a renewed interest in Tezuka's legacy as an influential *mangaka* and in manga in general (see Figure 1.16). In his lifetime, Tezuka produced more than 400 individual manga series and drew more than 150,000 pages in total (Tezuka in English, n.d.). In the aftermath of Tezuka's passing, Japanese critics such as Natsume Fusanosuke, Yomota Inuhiko, and Takeuchi Osamu wrote a number of articles and books on Tezuka and other postwar story manga titles. Unlike previous manga criticism that focused more on thematic and narrative elements, these authors highlighted the interworking of manga's formal and visual elements for the purpose of visual storytelling. The growing interest in manga as a medium over the course of the 1990s attracted scholars, educators, and students, laying the groundwork for manga studies as an academic field.

Although the “bubble economy” burst in 1991, the manga industry continued to grow through further expansion of the media mix. The 1990s witnessed the highest volume of manga publication in the modern history of manga, epitomized by a period of record-breaking sales for *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. By 1978, the magazine's sales had already surpassed 2 million, but by 1994, it had reached an astounding peak of more than 6.5 million (Shimizu 1999a, 110, 125). Editing policy at *Shōnen Jump* is widely reputed to prioritize reader feedback, collected by the editing office through survey postcards that are enclosed in each issue, which creates an atmosphere of competition among the authors whose work is serialized in the magazine. *Jump* remained commercially successful throughout the 1990s and produced a series of mega-hits, including Toriyama Akira's *Dragon Ball* (1984–95), Inoue Masahiko's *Slam Dunk* (1990–6), Togashi Yoshihiro's *Yu Yu Hakusho* (1990–4), Kishimoto Masashi's *Naruto* (1999–2014), and Oda Eiichiro's *One Piece* (1997–present). The field of *shōjo* manga gave rise to such influential works as Takeuchi Naoko's *Sailor Moon* (1991–7), Kamio Yōko's *Boys Over Flowers* (1992–2008), CLAMP's *Cardcaptor Sakura* (1996–2000), and Takaya Natsuki's *Fruits Basket* (1998–2006), all of which achieved high sales numbers. A new cohort of manga magazines for a

“young ladies” (*yangū redīsu*) demographic was also launched. These magazines, including *Feel Young* (1989–present), *Kiss* (1992–present), and *Chorus* (now called *Cocohana*, 1992–present), were created to target female readers in their early twenties, the in-between segment of readership before *josei* and after *shōjo* (Kawaharazuka 2012, 22). Many talented female authors contributed to these magazines, including Nananan Kiriko (*Blue*) and Sakurazawa Erica (*Angel*), to name just two.

Compared to other traditional art forms (e.g., painting, literature, architecture, and sculpture), manga had been largely ignored by cultural authorities, but a drastic perceptual shift took place in the 1990s.⁷⁸ Both public and private institutions such as libraries, art museums, and galleries began holding manga exhibitions, which heightened the cultural status of manga. In the following decade, the Japanese government also started promoting manga, along with amine, video games, and fashion, under the banner of the “Cool Japan” campaign. Along with these gestures toward cultural legitimization, there has been an increasing academic interest in manga, as exemplified by the founding in 2001 of the Japan Society for Studies in Cartoons and Comics (Nihon manga gakkai), the first scholarly group devoted to the study of manga. These cases are illustrative of the ongoing reinterpretation of manga as “culture” or “art,” although what those terms mean remains obscure (see “Cultural Status and institutions” in Chapter 2).

In the twentieth-first century, the manga industry has continued to expand into other business and cultural fields through the intensification of the media mix while diversifying manga (sub)genres and content for different manga readerships. It was around the turn of the millennium that two prominent subgenres or narrative types in Japanese media took hold, both of which had a significant impact on the world of manga (and popular cultural entertainment): *sekai-kei* (world-type) and *kūki-kei* (atmosphere-type) or *nichijō-kei* (mundane life-type). The first term, *sekai-kei*, refers to a narrative formula in which the actions of an adolescent couple determine the fate of the whole world (*sekai*). Takahashi Shin’s manga *Saikano: The Last Love Song on This Little Planet* (Saishū heiki kanojo, 1999–2001) is often described as the quintessential *sekai-kei* manga. In comparison, *kūki-kei* or *nichijō-kei* refers to a narrative formula comically detailing small events in the everyday lives of a few main characters without much drama, typified by popular *yonkoma* titles such as Azuma Kiyohiko’s *Azumanga Daioh* (1999–2002), Yoshimizu Kagami’s *Lucky Star* (2004–present), and Kakifly’s *K-on!* (2007–10 and 2011–12). Critics tend to argue that these subgenres reflect conditions in a postmodern Japan where faith in modern, progressive “grand narratives” has declined, and people thus dwell instead on mundane aspects of life within their personal, intimate spheres. *Sekai-kei* narratives, for instance, focus on the intimate relationship between the two protagonists—a dynamic often referred to as *kimi to boku* or “you and me”—and do not show them proactively participating in wider social

relations, thereby flouting the conventions of (modern) coming-of-age narratives (Uno 2008). While these commercially-driven manga were thriving, *Garō* ceased publication in 2002 due to sluggish sales. Tetsuka Noriko, a former editor of *Garō*, founded a new publisher, Seirin Kōgeisha, in 1997 that began publishing the manga magazine *AX* (Akkusu, 1998–present), which is considered to have inherited the alternative proclivity of *Garō*.⁷⁹

As manga gradually became part of mainstream popular culture throughout the 1980s, access points into manga were no longer limited to bookstores. In suburban and rural areas, it has become common to find manga books and manga magazines for patrons' browsing at coffee shops, dentists' offices, hair salons, and laundromats. Manga cafés (*manga kissa*) with a large collection of manga volumes on their shelves quickly proliferated in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and people visited these locations to read manga as well as to use the internet. Around the same time, publishers began to republish well-known, classic manga titles in a softcover book format sold at convenience stores, which are to be found virtually everywhere in urban and suburban areas all over Japan.

Digital technologies have left ever-larger impacts on the modes of creation, distribution, and consumption of manga. Although several manga artists have been using digital technologies to draw manga since around the early 1980s, the rise of mobile technologies and social media has offered multiple channels through which to share and access manga. Cellphone manga—manga intended to be read on cellphones—appeared in the 2000s. With the rise of new online platforms and wider internet usage, non-professional and semi-professional artists took advantage of each new development for posting their original illustrations and manga on personal blogs, social media, and other websites. Among these, Pixiv, the Japanese equivalent of the US-based art website DeviantArt, has become one of the most popular outlets for non-professional and semi-professional manga creators. While existing print publishers were initially reluctant to embark on digital and online manga distribution endeavors—partly out of concerns about piracy—they have begun to seek new technologies and business models due to declining sales of manga in print. Digital technologies have the potential to transform print-based manga into something radically different, including “moving manga” (motion comics), manga with sound, and manga merged with other audio-visual media, but the publication conventions of story manga, especially the page layout format developed in manga print culture (i.e., magazines and books), seem to persist. This is perhaps because many non-professional and semi-professional artists still prefer publishing manga in print format, exemplified by the printed manga that remain prevalent at *dōjinshi* manga events.

After the economic stagnation that followed the bursting of the economic bubble in 1991, known as the “Lost Decade,” Japan witnessed the gradual rise of conservative (neo-)nationalism—known colloquially as *ukeika* (tilt to

the right). Neoliberal globalization engendered a reactionary nationalism in the form of populism and xenophobic exclusivism in the conservative sectors of Japanese society. Some publishers and *mangaka* have taken advantage of this trend, giving such sentiments voice in the medium. Most (in)famously, Kobayashi Yoshinori, a creator who had been best known for his gag manga, serialized a manga titled *Sensō-ron* (On war, 1995–2003) in *SAPIO*, a general magazine about politics and international affairs, in which he propagated revisionist ideas about Japan's involvement in the Second World War by whitewashing imperial Japan's wartime history.⁸⁰ Another manga artist, Yamano Sharin, published *Manga ken-kanryū* (Hating the Korean wave, 2005), which capitalized on the growing anti-Korean sentiment in popular (often online) discourse in the 2000s⁸¹ (see “Controversy and censorship” in Chapter 2). More recently, manga artist Hasumi Toshiko posted an illustration mocking the Syrian refugee crisis of the second decade of the twenty-first century by denigrating a photograph of a six-year-old Syrian girl at a refugee settlement and presenting her as a “selfish freeloader” (Osaki 2015). Hasumi was criticized for her insensitivity towards the Syrian crisis and was denounced as a racist—an online petition campaign subsequently led to the removal of the image.

On March 11, 2011, Japan's Tōhoku region was hit by an earthquake, followed by a tsunami and a meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. The so-called “3/11 triple disaster” was a national crisis—possibly the largest since the Second World War—resulting in over 15,000 deaths and 300,000 evacuees. It triggered a massive social response, spurring public debates on nuclear policy, environmental issues, and the responsibilities of the state and corporations. In the wake of the earthquake, manga publishers and artists supported the affected people in their respective ways. Some *mangaka* drew illustrations to support and encourage disaster victims in the devastated areas while others participated in charity book-signing events. Some artists—both professional and non-professional—responded to this national crisis by creating new work in various genres, ranging from autobiographical essay manga and documentary manga reportage to speculative fiction. Notably, veteran artist Hagio Moto created “Nanohana” (Rapeseed flowers), which drew a link between the Fukushima nuclear disaster and Chernobyl.⁸² A *dōjin* artist named Misukoso, then a graduate student, created online comic strips—compiled as a book titled *Field of Cole: Remember the Great East Japan Earthquake* (Itsuka nanohana-batake de) in 2013—that relate a series of tragic incidents during the 3/11 triple disaster and local, community-based efforts towards recovery on an individual, human level (Suzuki 2019).

In the current century's second decade, manga continued to produce strong-selling titles, fully integrated into the Japanese mediascape. While manga magazines no longer enjoyed the sales figures of their mid-1990s peaks, new titles were continually being published. A number of popular titles were quickly adapted into anime and live-action films while also being translated

into multiple languages and circulated globally. Such titles include Isayama Hajime's dark fantasy *Attack on Titan* (2009–21), Matsui Yūsei's speculative fiction comedy *Assassination Classroom* (2012–16), and Furudate Haruichi's sports/coming-of-age story *Haikyū!* (2012–20). While each of these were published in *shōnen* manga magazines, they attracted a significant number of female readers. In the field of *shōjo* and *josei* manga, popular recent titles include Takano Ichigo's slice-of-life series *Orange* (2012–17), Sakisaka Io's coming-of-age story *Blue Spring Ride* (Aoha raido, 2011–15), and Higashimura Akiko's romantic comedy *Princess Jellyfish* (*Kuragehime*, 2008–17). The overall market share of print publishing has gradually declined since around the turn of the century, while the market share of digitally published volumes has increased—in fact, revenue from the sales of digital manga surpassed that of print manga in 2017 (Sawamura 2020, 443). Also, some popular titles from this decade got their starts on manga(-related) websites or manga-reading applications on mobiles phones and other digital devices.

The world health crisis caused by Covid-19 impacted the manga industry and manga culture to an unprecedented level in 2020. Manga artists who worked with teams of assistants in a shared studio/space had to stop doing so. This led, for example, to the serialization of Saitō Takao's *Golgo 13* being temporarily suspended—for the first time in fifty years. The Comic Market, too, was cancelled for the first time since its inception in 1975. Yet even during this challenging time, many manga publishers and creators have continued to produce work. During the pandemic, Kōdansha began to serialize “Manga Day to Day,” a series of essay manga by professional manga artists on Twitter (see Figure 1.17).⁸³ Many of these manga present their authors' daily struggles with social isolation, which resonated with readers living under a long-lasting lockdown and challenging social conditions. Non-professional (“amateur”) *mangaka* also used social media to expressed their lives under, and the impact of, the conditions brought by the coronavirus. Further digitization of manga production, distribution, and consumption of manga is expected in the post-pandemic world.

So, what is the status of manga in present-day Japan? As described above, manga remains a very commercially viable segment of the entertainment industry. Meanwhile, manga has been increasingly legitimized by governmental agencies and cultural authorities, and scholars have increasingly taken up manga as an object of study. The growth of academic and popular interest in comics outside Japan has promoted education about and academic research on manga as well. On the other hand, as a medium, manga also serves as an outlet for the marginalized to express their perspectives and voices. For instance, Nagata Kabi's *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness* (2016) and Tagame Gengoroh's Eisner Award-winning *My Brother's Husband* (2014–17) offer a glimpse into the alienation and struggles of those who identify with the LGBTQ+ community in Japanese society. The availability of online platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and instant messaging apps such as LINE) has given non-professional and

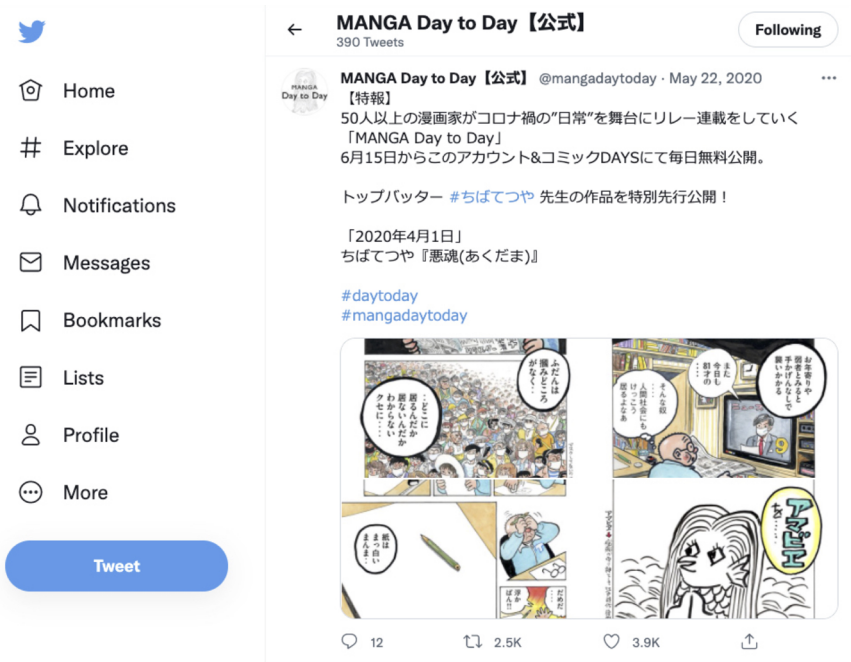


FIGURE 1.17 Kōdansha's "MANGA Day to Day" on Twitter. © Kōdansha. Used with permission.

professional *mangaka* more opportunities to produce, publish, and disseminate their original manga creations and to even receive feedback from readers without relying on existing mass media channels. Manga readers no longer rely on print media; manga are read on multiple platforms—smartphones, tablets, and computers. Manga are now accessible anywhere and at any time, so long as readers can connect to the internet. The digitalization of manga production, circulation, and consumption is expected to continue to increase in the coming years.

* * *

Although this overview can only sketch a limited portrait of the complex history of manga, we believe we have shown how the medium has continually evolved with each new socio-historical context and condition. Manga is always in flux, never in stasis. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the elusiveness of the identity of manga is owed to the fact that everyone involved in manga—authors, critics, editors, publishers, readers, scholars, and fandom at large—has been constantly reconceptualizing and reinventing the medium of manga for their own artistic expression, purpose, and

pleasure, all of which has contributed—albeit sometimes temporarily—to redefining the notion(s) of what manga is. Modern manga have been growing and changing in relation to developments in print media and technology, but recent globalization and digitalization trends have the potential to radically change the idea of “manga,” which would necessitate a reassessment of existing visual storytelling mediums in the historiography of manga beyond what has been presented above.

Notes

- 1 In English, books that sought to connect contemporary Western comic art or caricature to ancient Roman, Greek and/or Egyptian art began to appear in the second half of the nineteenth century—notably by Thomas Wright (1865) and James Parton (1878). This also became common in popular media. In 1887, one newspaper article even applied this kind of thinking to Japan, attributing the lineage of all Japanese caricature to Toba Sōjō, the assumed creator of the humorous *Chōjūgiga* picture scrolls over 750 years earlier (“Japanese Art” 1887).
- 2 An early example of humor and satire being described as essential elements of manga is the 1917 newspaper article “Manga and the Japanese People” by Totani Hakū. The article is a review of a manga exhibition held at the Mitsukoshi department store in Tokyo. In it, Totani complains about the lack of humor and satire in the works, and asserts that Japanese people are not capable of producing “true manga” (*shin no manga*). In recent decades, the prolific manga historian Shimizu Isao has continued to assert that a spirit of humor and satire are the origin or core of manga, though he admits this definition does not cover the diversity of current manga (1991, iii).
- 3 Ranging from the tongue-in-cheek to the serious, producers of manga have long made appeals about the value of their work. See, for instance, Kitazawa Rakuten’s introduction to his newspaper comics page *Jiji manga* in January 1902, and the inner-front-cover blurbs by educators, politicians, and military elite added by the publisher Kōdansha to their late 1930s comics magazines *Kōdansha no ehon* (Kōdansha picture books).
- 4 The later *Chōjūgiga* scrolls are clearly drawn by a less deft hand and lack the first scroll’s humor and cartooniness. For this reason, they tend to be conveniently left out of the historical narrative.
- 5 In Eike Exner’s recent “revisionist” history of manga, he defines “modern manga” in terms of formal features, namely speech balloons and emanata, which he calls “transdiegetic content.” For him the adoption of these features heavily influenced by US strips beginning in 1923, and becoming predominant by the late 1930s, therefore marks the beginnings of manga as they are perceived today (2022, 175–9). While this is indeed an important transition period in manga history, and one well noted by other scholars such as Yonezawa (1981), Jo (2013), and others, we adopt a broader conception of manga more in line with the term’s usage in Japanese scholarship, and see strong continuities in form, creators, production methods and consumption patterns reaching back to the 1890s.

- 6 While this may seem totally arbitrary, the first character—*man*—also means “expansive surface of water” in addition to the better-known meanings of “randomness” and “meandering.” It therefore evokes not only the bird’s wetlands habitat but also its seemingly aimless wading actions. The second character—*ga*—in this compound is also used as the verb *kaku*, meaning “to wield a brush, paint or write,” and thus points to the similar movement of the bird’s beak in the shallow waters.
- 7 In recent years, however, this perception is beginning to erode as comics both in book form (*tankobon*) and e-book, or webcomics, now outstrip comics magazines in sales.
- 8 Japan’s standard language dictionary, the *Kōjien* (Shinmura 1998), gives the following three-part definition: “1. Pictures, mainly humorous and exaggerated, drawn in a simple and/or light manner; 2. Humorous pictures (*giga*) that focus in particular on social criticism and satire. *Ponchi-e*; 3. Narratives made by lining up pictures, mostly with dialogues added. Comics.” It is notable that neither Japan nor Japanese-style form part of the definition.
- 9 The word *shōnen* has a long history of indicating youth of either sex, and still does as a legal term, indicating “minor.” However, over the twentieth century in popular discourse, it has come to mean more specifically boys when used in opposition to the category *shōjo*. The range of ages indicated by both categories has also varied over time.
- 10 This magazine, largely educational in intent, is not related to 1930s publications using the same title. By that time, *shōkokumin* had taken on a much more militaristic meaning, “mini mobilized imperial subjects,” and was used in a way not unlike *jungvolk* in 1930s Germany.
- 11 Despite its name punning on the Japanese word for newspaper, *Maru-maru chinbun* was considered a magazine. The staple-bound weekly was in content much closer to its model, *Punch* magazine, than a newspaper. In anticipation of the magazine’s satire running foul of government press regulations and censors, the title is also a playful allusion to concentric-circles often applied to “cover” characters or letters in order to block out censored sections of texts.
- 12 The magazine had long agitated for a national constitution and once this was promulgated in 1889, and with the death of its founder in 1891, the publication lost its political edge. For more details on the magazine, see Duus (2013) and Stewart (2021).
- 13 Miyamoto’s now widely accepted theory among Japanese manga studies scholars is that *ponchi* and other earlier Japanese visual arts are culturally and formally divorced from manga development, and thus, while not denying their use of some techniques similar to manga, relegates them to a pre-manga or proto-manga form of expression.
- 14 The strips in these magazines were often broken up into individual panels interspersed among unrelated text articles over a number of pages. They appear to have been a mixture of originals and copies redrawn from overseas publications. Some work in *Shōkokumin* can be identified as originating in the US humor magazines *Life* and *Puck*, and in *Yōnen shinbun*, from the German magazine *Fliegende Blätter*.

- 15 The name Deko-bō became a generic name for mischievous boy. It was used in the title given to Émile Cohl's 1908 animation *Fantasmagorie* (*Deko-bō shin-gachō*) when it was screened in Japan. Also, the name would be used for the protagonist of Japan's first animated film, *Deko-bō shin-gachō: meian no shippai* (Deko-bō's new album: A bungled great idea), made in 1917 by Rakuten's student Shimokawa Hekoten (Ôtsuka 2010).
- 16 There may have been pragmatic reasons for the delay in fully embracing the speech balloon. With this first arc of *Jiji manga*, the strips were printed using hand-carved blocks at actual size for letter-press printing. The resultant lettering in speech balloons (including smaller phonetic glosses) are difficult to read in comparison to those using typeset text outside the panels. In Rakuten's later publication, *Tokyo Puck*, though lithographed, the inclusion of English and Chinese translations meant it was more practical to place most narrative and dialogue outside the panels.
- 17 See *Tokyo Puck*'s January 1, 1907 centerspread and Robida's 1902 print, *La Sortie de l'opéra en l'an 2000* (People Leaving the Opera in the Year 2000).
- 18 Throughout this book we use the word "feudal" loosely to refer to periods before the development of a modern nation state. These were times when Japan was largely ruled by the samurai class and a shogun. We recognize, however, that there is dispute amongst historians over the appropriateness of this term as governance of Japan during these times differs from feudalism in Europe.
- 19 In 2014, *Shō-chan no bōken-ten: Nihon hatsu no kyarakutā manga* (*The adventures of Shō-chan* exhibition: Japan's first character manga) was held in the Hankyu Men's Osaka department store.
- 20 From 1940, *shintaisei* (new order) became a new buzz word for the mandated state of wartime national preparedness.
- 21 Examples of major newspaper comics supplements or pages include the following. In 1919, *Yorozu shinbun* introduced its *Nichiyō manga* (Sunday manga); in 1922, *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* began *Tōnichi magajin* (Tōnichi magazine); in 1923, *Hōchi shinbun* started *Nichiyō manga* (Sunday manga) and later in 1930, *Nichiyō hōchi* (Sunday Hōchi). *Asahi shinbun* also started three different manga pages between the early 1920s and 1932.
- 22 There were actually a number of female characters predating these in girls' magazine and newspaper strips, but they were minor characters or one-offs (see Jo 2013; Masuda 2013).
- 23 Ryan Holmberg also points to a US source of influence for this scene (see note 44).
- 24 Another way for amateurs to train and to break into the manga industry was to join the *Nihon manga kenkyūkai* (Japan manga research group), which ran correspondence courses and published instructional materials for members. The group also offered tips as well as examples of domestic and foreign cartoons and strips in its magazine *Manga no kuni* (Land of manga). Each issue also included listings of publications throughout Japan that accepted manga contributions (Shimizu et al. 2020, 230–2).
- 25 The main characters Max and Mortiz were renamed Tarō and Jirō, the names of the two mischievous servants in *Kyōgen* farces of traditional theater.

- 26 The monthly wage of an elementary school teacher at this time was 50 yen.
- 27 Unfortunately, Rakuten's complete works were never completed. With limited subscriptions to the publication project, only seven out of a planned twelve volumes were produced.
- 28 In 1917, Shishido Sakō drew a *manga-manbun*-style strip called *Hamu-kō to Chibi*, based on the silent movie comedy duo Ham and Bud, for the magazine *Manga* (Niimi 2016).
- 29 For a detailed examination of the even earlier impact on, and interplay with, Japanese animation and manga by US, French and German animation, see Litten (2017).
- 30 Eike Exner plays down the impact of sound movies on this spread, noting that their introduction lags behind that of US strips (2022, 175). Just as in Japan, so in many European countries the speech balloons did not become a standard feature of comics until the 1930s. An explanation for this delayed timing is threefold: 1) the appearance of popular local strips incorporating speech balloons; 2) new comics magazines featuring translated US strips; 3) the introduction of talkie movies allowing actors to talk audibly, making it acceptable to Europeans that "characters in comics acquired a 'personal' voice by means of balloons" (Lefèvre 2006). At this time of change in Japan, the popularity and social impact of film and animation far outstripped—with the exception of *Bringing Up Father*—almost all of the short-lived translated US strips that Exner highlights (2018, 2022).
- 31 Ōtsuka Eiji argues that this manga family and their spread across various media is the beginning of Japan's 'media mix' (2018).
- 32 Japan's involvement in the Second World War is known by different names: the Pacific War; the Fifteen Years' War (1931–45); the Great East Asia War (*Daitōa sensō*, the name used during wartime); or simply "the war."
- 33 The occupation government promoted equal rights for both sexes. When the new Japanese Constitution came into effect in 1947, women gained civil rights, including the right to participate in politics and access to higher education.
- 34 Japanese critic Odagiri Hiroshi (2010, 64) points out that the division between *otona manga* and *kodomo manga* existed as a useful device in Japanese manga criticism, but was forgotten in Japanese-language criticism after the 1970s. Odagiri argues that the disinterest in caricature and political cartoons in post-1980s manga historiography was partially responsible for obscuring the interactions between Japanese and foreign comics, which allowed for the two most popular historical narratives about manga—one that sees manga history as part of a long tradition and one that regards Tezuka Osamu as the originator of manga (see Part I of this chapter).
- 35 One component of this vibrant print culture was the flourishing hedonistic subculture known as *kasutori* culture, including a number of pulp magazines (*kasutori zasshi*), many of which featured sensual photographs, illustrations, and erotic content in their stories. Historian John Dower (1999) remarks that although *kasutori* magazines "celebrated a fugitive world of hedonistic and even grotesque indulgence, they also evoked more sobering images of

- impermanence, a world of no tomorrow, the banishment of authority, the absence of orthodox or transcendent values” (149).
- 36 Manga historian Miyamoto Hirohito (1998, 91) claims that the term “*akahon* manga” was also associated with any books by publishers/distributors located in downtown Tokyo or Osaka, regardless of their production quality.
 - 37 See entry on *akahon* in the Glossary (Appendix).
 - 38 Nakano also pointed out that *akahon* manga from Osaka, which were popular with children, were more exposed to criticism from Tokyo-based *mangaka* and journalists (Nakano 2016, 38).
 - 39 Around the 1960s, these artists were considered *gekiga* authors. See Glossary for *gekiga*.
 - 40 Research on the circulation of American comic books during the occupation period and their impact on Japanese comics still seems fragmented and incomplete.
 - 41 In his founding statement, Katō underscored that *Manga shōnen* “nurtures a child’s heart to be pure and proper.” For the magazine’s moral and ideological orientation, see Holmberg (2013).
 - 42 See Shimizu (1989).
 - 43 Some popular *shōnen* magazines in this period include *Shōnen* (1946), *Shōnen Club* (1946–62), *Bōken ō* (Adventure king, 1946–83), and *Shōnen Gahō* (Boy’s illustrated new magazine, 1950–71). These magazines for boys initially featured prose fiction as their main content, but starting from around 1950, manga (including comic strips and serialized narrative manga) took up more and more of these magazines’ pages.
 - 44 Manga scholar Ryan Holmberg (2015) underscores the direct influences on the famous opening scene of *New Treasure Island* from American cartoonist Floyd Gottfredson, especially his “Micky Mouse Outwits the Phantom Blot” (see also Holmberg 2014). In his dissertation, Eike Exner (2018) further claims that Tezuka was very familiar with translated Western comics and adapted their visual narrative techniques in his work.
 - 45 Tokiwa Apartment has been reconstructed as a museum dedicated to the legacy of this group. See the “List of museums” in Appendix.
 - 46 Manga historian Shimizu Isao notes that in the late 1940s children were purchasing *akahon* manga just like they were buying candies and snack bars (Shimizu 1999a, 88).
 - 47 While *kashihon-ya* existed since the Edo Period, publishers in the postwar period produced sturdier hardcover books which, unlike most *akahon* manga, were able to endure repeated use (Naiki 2008, 44).
 - 48 The term “*kashihon*” literally means “rental book,” which indicates that each one was published in book format. Yet, some *kashihon* manga books were produced as series, with each book containing a number of serialized manga just as in a manga magazine.
 - 49 The term *jojō* literally means “to express sentiment” and *ga* means “picture.” *Jojō-ga* was a popular trend from the 1910s to the 1930s. Famous illustrators employing this style who contributed to magazines for girl readers in that era

- include Takehisa Yumeji, Fukiya Kōji, Takabatake Kashō, Katō Masao, Matsumoto Katsudi, and Nakahara Jun'ichi. Scholar Mizuki Takahashi (2008) argues that postwar *shōjo* manga (re-)employed pre- and postwar *jojō-ga* aesthetics.
- 50 Among them, the magazine *Manga Tokuhon* (Manga reading book), published by Bungei Shunjū, actively introduced Western cartoons and comic strips by Charles Addams, Virgil Partch, Saul Steinberg, and numerous others.
 - 51 In 1959, the wedding of Prince Akihito, one of Shōwa Emperor Hirohito's sons, was broadcast on TV, encouraging the spread of television sets in Japanese households.
 - 52 *Gekiga* creator Saitō Takao founded his own production team/company, Saitō Production, as early as 1960. Division of labor in manga production typically separates the roles of scriptwriter and illustrator/artist. Famous titles created using this division of labor include *Chikai no makyū* (The promised magic ball, written by Fukumoto Kazuya and illustrated by Chiba Tetsuya, 1961–2), *8 Man* (written by Hirai Kazumasa and illustrated by Kuwata Jirō, 1963–6), and *Kyojin no hoshi* (Star of the Giants, written by Kajiwaru Ikki and illustrated by Kawasaki Noboru, 1966–71).
 - 53 The success of *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in the late 1960s and early 1970s was due to its swift adaptation for young adult male readers by incorporating young *gekiga*-(trained) authors. In fact, *Tomorrow's Joe* was embraced by college students and more mature readers, too.
 - 54 The concept of *konjō* originated from a Buddhist idea referring to one's disposition or nature, but in the 1960s it also came to mean one's indefatigable spirit or willpower.
 - 55 Both magazines still exist, but *Shōjo Friend* has become monthly while *Margaret* is currently bi-monthly.
 - 56 Along with the romance genre, the genre of horror also became popular—cultivated by male *mangaka* such as Umezu Kazuo and Koga Shin'ichi—within the field of *shōjo* manga in the 1950s.
 - 57 Yokoyama's *Sally the Witch* was inspired by the American sitcom *Bewitched*, first broadcast in Japan from 1966 to 1968.
 - 58 See Marc Steinberg's *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (2012) for one example.
 - 59 The sales of *Ninja bugei-cho: Kagemaru-den* were presumably around only 6,000 copies, but according to manga historian Shimizu Isao (1991, 189), the series probably has reached more than ten times that number of readers due to the circulation in the *kashihon* market.
 - 60 The last volume, the sixteenth, was published into two different publications.
 - 61 In fact, one graduate student at Kyoto University sent a letter to the manga magazine in which *The Legend of Kamuy* was serialized, stating that he regarded Shirato's work as making the case for the revolutionary Marxism that he was studying. Yomota Inuhiko (2004) identifies this reader as Takemoto Nobuhiro, an influential radical activist who organized the "Kyoto University Partisans" (232).

- 62 Akasegawa Genpei, a multi-talented avant-garde artist, created a manga parodying Tsuge's work (published in the July 1973 issue of *Garō*). See Akasegawa (2015).
- 63 In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Tsuge created several short manga works based on his own visits to small hamlets in Japan. In these works, he introduced autobiographical elements and "confused the boundaries between his fiction and his life" (Igarashi 2011, 281).
- 64 Beginning around 1970, Tezuka's manga began to address sex, crime, homosexuality, and the darker sides of human psychology, possibly as a response to *gekiga*. Such works include *MW*, *Song of Apollo*, and *Eulogy to Kiribito*. As early as 1959, Tezuka was experimenting with a style of a more detailed—i.e., less cartoony—*gekiga* in a story called "Rakuban" (Cave-in), concomitant with the rise of *gekiga* (Power 2009, 97).
- 65 During the serialization of *Jun*, Ishinomori received a letter forwarded by a reader who had received a personal letter from Tezuka criticizing *Jun*, stating emphatically that "it is not manga." Ishinomori, who admired Tezuka, was so upset that he even asked the magazine's editor to suspend the serialization of *Jun*. The problem was resolved by an unexpected visit from Tezuka who formally apologized for his insensitive comment. This incident was illustrated in a later work by Ishinomori ("Like the wind . . ."), published after Tezuka's death in 1989.
- 66 Starting in the late 1960s, the term "comic" (*komikku*) came into wider use, partly taking the place of *gekiga*. Some notable examples include *Comic Magazine* (founded in 1966 by Hōbunsha), *Young Comic* (founded in 1967 by Shōnen gahō-sha), and *Play Comic* (founded in 1968 by Akita shoten).
- 67 Previously there had been magazines for male adult readers, such as *Weekly Manga Times* (founded in 1956 by Hōbunsha) and *Saturday Manga* (Doyō manga, founded in 1958), but these mainly featured satirical cartoons, comic strips, and one-shot story manga. On the other hand, *seinen* magazines published story manga serials for young adult and adult readers.
- 68 Around this time, a general distinction in the meaning of "manga" emerged based on how it is written, with "manga" in kanji 漫画 being used for cartoons while "manga" in katakana マンガ was used for comics. Since then, the term "manga" has come to be first and foremost identified with long-form narrative comics, serialized in manga magazines. According to Shimizu Isao (1999b, 4), art and cultural critic Ishiko Junzō was one of those who began to write "manga" in katakana.
- 69 In 1988, the manga section was excised from the magazine and became an independent manga magazine. Japan's version of *Seventeen* is now a fashion- and celebrity-focused publication.
- 70 An exception was a fad for erotic *gekiga* during the 1970s. In these works, called "third-rate *gekiga*," the authors drew more naturalistic depictions of women's bodies and sex, though depictions of genitalia were censored.
- 71 Confusingly enough, such manga books (*tankōbon*) are sometimes called *komikkusu* (comics), as seen in the title of a recent scholarly book by Yamamori Hiroshi (2019).

- 72 “Magnificent Forty-Niners” refers to the fact that these authors were born in and around 1949, the twenty-fourth year of the Japanese Shōwa era (1926–89).
- 73 See Shamooin (2018a).
- 74 See Fujimoto (2020).
- 75 See McLelland, Nagaike, Suganuma, and Welker (2019) and Hori and Mori (2020).
- 76 Akasegawa’s work sparked controversy, possibly due to its parody of *Asahi Journal* where the work was serialized. The publisher voluntarily recalled the magazine.
- 77 It is well known that Akatsuka was influenced by Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Abbot and Costello, Jerry Lewis, and others in the Western comedic tradition.
- 78 Throughout the modern history of manga, a number of *mangaka*, artists, and critics had tried to discuss manga as “art,” though they were met with a persistent general indifference on the part of cultural authorities. See Part I of this chapter.
- 79 *AX: Alternative Manga Volume 1* (2010), edited by Seán Michael Wilson and Asakawa Mitsuhiro, gives English readers a glimpse of manga titles in this monthly magazine.
- 80 See Sakamoto (2008).
- 81 See Sakamoto and Allen (2007).
- 82 An English translation is available. See Hagio (2015).
- 83 See their Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/mangadaytoday>.

2

Social and Cultural Impact

Controversy and Censorship

Throughout its modern history, manga has continuously generated various kinds of controversy and censorship. The details of what sparked controversy, who sought to censor manga, and how different actors, such as authors, editors, publishers, and fans, responded differ in each case. The term “censorship” might evoke the suppression of expression by the state or authorities, but it also encompasses the practice of self-imposed restrictions (*jishuku*), or self-censorship, such as the cancellation or removal of manga titles from the market for the purpose of preemptively forestalling official sanction or out of concerns about the socially vulnerable. This section addresses various cases of controversy and censorship involving manga and manga subcultures in different historical moments. In doing so, it aims to illuminate the numerous impacts of the medium in society and its ambivalent relationships vis-à-vis social mores, political and cultural authorities, and fan communities.

Censorship in Imperial Japan

Due in part to their satirical orientation, including caricature, mockery and hyperbole, political cartoons have constantly stoked social controversy and incurred (the pressure for) censorship. The strictly enforced Edo Period ban on publishing commentary about the government was finally lifted in 1874. While a series of ever-restrictive publication laws would be enacted over time, the new relative freedom sparked a flowering of political cartoons in newspapers and magazines. Their satire aggressively and openly ridiculed the Japanese imperial government, politicians, and public figures, and they would, consequently, run afoul of state-level censorship with some frequency. For instance, *Maru-maru chinbun* (1877–1907), a satire and humor magazine inspired by the British satirical magazine *Punch*, was repeatedly suspended from publication or banned from sale, and on one occasion its editor was arrested, due to its cartoons.¹ To avoid disgruntling their subscribers when this happened, the magazine ran a parallel publication,

Kibi dango (1878–9), to send to them in its place until this practice was made illegal. When the Meiji Imperial Constitution was promulgated in 1889, journalist and political cartoonist Miyatake Gaikotsu parodied it in a cartoon that depicted a skeletal figure in the place of the emperor, resulting in his imprisonment on the charge of offending the emperor and the dignity of the sovereign (Shimizu 1999, 24). In 1910, a mass arrest of leftists and the execution of a dozen people accused of plotting to assassinate the emperor (known as the High Treason Incident) sent shock waves through the media, and criticism of the government declined sharply. After this, apart from a brief period of a more liberal political atmosphere in the years following the First World War, political cartooning tended to be very restrained. Many single-panel cartoonists began to turn more to social satire, gags, and/or children's strips.

During the late 1910s and early 1920s, Japan witnessed a wave of democratic and labor movements. With the era's atmosphere of political liberalism and openness came a wave of new literary and popular magazines, some of which carried more illustrations, photographs, and manga (both cartoons and comic strips); cartoonists provocatively and playfully satirized the government, politicians, police officers, and capitalists. However, as Japan further militarized itself in the 1930s, such cartoons and strips quickly fell victim to state censorship. Along with the intensification of Japan's war activities, the government commenced the systematic control of publications for children. In April 1938 the government promulgated a National Mobilization Law which gave them control over all media and allowed them to enforce cooperation with their "holy war" (*seisen*) and propaganda efforts. In the same month the Home Ministry conducted a survey of children's reading material and was horrified to find that cheap manga sold in higher numbers than any other publications (Mangestu and Sakurai 2020, 19). Six months later the ministry issued stringent guidelines regarding children's reading matter, including manga in magazines and cheap manga books (known as *akahon* manga). This resulted in a reduction of manga available and in a turn to less fantasy-based, but more practical, content in those that were published. Unlike political cartoons for the general public, many publications for children in those days were not explicitly critical of the government or political authorities.² The imposition of the restrictions on child-oriented print media was instead driven by an increasing social concern about the popularity of manga books and other child-oriented publications, some of which were alleged to contain "morally questionable" content such as vulgar speech and graphic violence.

Yet there can be no doubt that the wartime political climate provided a demand for the moral purity and political order that served as a backdrop for acts of censorship. The poet and government official Saeki Ikurō, who joined the committee that drafted the guidelines, recalled that "there were so many manga in books and magazines that were harmful to children" and hence they "ventured to cleanse them" (quoted in Asaoka 2016, 212–13).

For Saeki and others, manga was supposed to be “morally decent” and even “educational.” Under the military regime, manga was targeted as the means for a sort of “thought control” led by the Home Ministry. Even Tagawa Suihō’s *Norakuro*, a hugely popular children’s manga series about the titular anthropomorphized dog in the military, was suspended in 1941 by the Cabinet Information Office, an organization that controlled public relations and propaganda during the war era. Grappling to adapt to this situation, *mangaka* joined associations such as the Juvenile Literature and Painting Society, formed in 1939—its members included Tagawa Suihō, Nagasaki Batten, and Miyao Shigeo—with the aim of producing “healthy reading material for children” (“Healthy Reading” 1939). Prewar and wartime cases such as these illustrate that the central government directly censored any content in manga it considered to be a threat either to its social, political, and moral authority or to public order during the regime’s push for “spiritual mobilization.”

Censorship and Controversy in Postwar Japan

Directly after the Second World War, from 1945 until 1952, Japan was occupied by the Allied powers. The country found itself under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), who set about reforming Japan. Although the newly promulgated democratic Japanese constitution (drafted in 1946 and put into effect in 1947) had—and still has—a clause which explicitly stipulates “freedom of expression,” the US-led occupation government scrupulously censored all forms of Japanese mass media (newspapers, radio, print publications, etc.) through its civil control organization, called the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD). The CCD screened for content related to criticism of the Allied powers, defense of war criminals, imperial propaganda, anything pertaining to atomic bombs, black markets, and more. The topics subject to this censorship included depictions of sword-wielding samurai, ninja, and karate masters, which were banned because the CCD putatively regarded them as endorsing “feudalistic values” (which were understood to have contributed to Japan’s militarism). An example of the CCD’s censorship of manga was a children’s manga titled *Kurama Tengu*, the front cover of which depicted the titular swashbuckling protagonist fighting a handgun-armed enemy (who looks like a Japanese Buddhist). This manga cover was stamped “rightist propaganda” (Gravett, 2017, 8–9).³ During the occupation, the producers of manga—authors, editors, and publishers—were constantly mindful of the screening gaze of the authorities—the occupation government—which, in turn, resulted in self-censorship as well. This situation continued up to the end of the occupation in 1952.

While the country’s postwar constitution does not permit official government censorship, forms of informal censorship continue to exist. These include a number of social and cultural taboos, self-imposed media

standards, corporate and political pressures, as well as avoidance of ever tighter laws regarding copyright and defamation. Political cartoonists, whose work directly connects to real-world issues and people, are particularly exposed to this kind of censorship. For cartoonists, subjects that are considered taboo as targets of ridicule and satire include the emperor (after the occupation period), death, disability, corporations, the yakuza, and *buraku*, a group historically subject to discrimination (see explanation below). Newspaper cartoonists know these limits and tend to keep within them. Nonetheless, some are met with complaints from the politicians they depict or from readers who disagree with the stances they take, and every year, numerous problematic cartoons are rejected at the editorial level. Narrative manga, with its longer form capable of more nuanced depictions and largely free from expectations and assumptions that authors are ridiculing the subjects they depict, allows for some of these delicate subjects to be broached, albeit with caution.

The end of the occupation in 1952 certainly provided manga authors, editors, and publishers more freedom of expression, but the medium has been continually exposed to criticism and even suppression. Unlike wartime and occupation-era censorship, however, censure of manga mainly unfolded on a civic level, although officials—local governments and police—have also been involved. One of the most prominent cases in early postwar Japan was the “Movement Against Harmful Books” (*Akusho tsuihō undō*) that peaked in the mid-1950s. Led by civic groups such as local parent–teacher associations (PTAs) and mothers’ groups (*fujinkai*), this movement targeted various forms of print publications, particularly manga books and magazines that featured graphic violence, risqué images, and foul language (see Figure 2.1). Fueled by media coverage, the movement gained traction and demanded that publishers retract “harmful” publications. They held meetings to discuss the manga content they found problematic, and even censored manga by calling out specific manga titles. Popular manga authors, including Fukui Eiichi, Sugiura Shigeru, and Tezuka Osamu, became victims of their accusations. It is worth noting that this unfolding anti-manga movement was set against the backdrop of a maturing manga readership moving increasingly from children to young adults. By the mid-1950s, manga authors had begun creating manga catering to young adult readers who were no longer satisfied with childish stories. Most notable were *gekiga* authors such as Tatsumi Yoshihiro, Satō Masaaki, and Saitō Takao. Creating works in the genres of crime, suspense, and horror, they incorporated darker themes and violent shootouts into their stories. In fact, Tatsumi’s coinage of the term *gekiga* (“dramatic pictures”) in 1957 was partly motivated by his intention to differentiate “manga” for children from his own more “serious” works aimed at young adult and mature readers in order to circumvent anticipated public criticism (Suzuki 2013). Manga scholar Takeuchi Osamu (2016) observes that the anti-manga movement exhibited a bias that judged manga on the basis of their “educational” value for children (217)—that is,

悪書追放を呼びかける「白いポスト」
(国電東武駅北口で)



悪書、家へ持込まないで

追放に「白いポスト」お目見え

二十四日、東京の国電東武駅北口に高さ二メートルの「白いポスト」がすえ付けられた。「子どもに見せたくない雑誌や本はこのポストに——とポツカリ開けた大きな口。地元の東武母の会が作った「悪書ポスト」で、通勤の途中で読むのを禁止できぬまでも「せめてわが家へは持込まないで」という母親の切なる願いという。チリシ五千枚を配って呼びかけたが、「差出人」もポツポツ現れ、いまに山手線の各駅に作るとお母さんたちは意気こんでいた。

FIGURE 2.1 A mother's group involved in the Movement Against Harmful Books. A "white post" was where concerned citizens could drop off "harmful" books and magazines. An article from the Asahi shinbun, May 25, 1966. Used with permission.

it was assumed that manga should be morally good and educational for young readers. In this regard, the anti-manga campaign within the Movement Against Harmful Books was driven by a sense of paternalism that saw parents and adults as “protecting” young readers from what they considered “harmful” manga and their purportedly corrupting influence.

Another wave of controversy took place in the early 1990s in what is commonly known as the “Harmful Comics Controversy” (*Yūgai komikku sōdō*). This time, the focus of criticism was on sexual depictions in manga. Purportedly, the controversy began with a letter of complaint to a local newspaper by a parent who saw sexual depictions in a certain *shōnen* manga as a problem, followed by a series of incidents nationwide in which manga that contained sexual images were censored (Hori 2009, 220). Several local governments enacted “youth ordinances” to regulate “harmful publications” (*yūgai tosho*), claiming that these measures served to protect young people. An agency within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications also “requested” that the major publishers reduce violent and sexual expression in manga and other publications. Yet the 1990s manga controversy went beyond manga for young readers. By this time, manga had matured as a medium and many works had been produced for adults, including *seinen* (manga for adult male readers) and *josei* (manga for adult female readers) as well as pornographic titles. Those manga were also targeted and some were criticized on the grounds of “obscenity.”⁴ It is important to acknowledge that the Harmful Comics Controversy was in no small part a reaction to the infamous “Miyazaki Incident” in 1989. This was the shocking serial murder of four little girls perpetrated by a twenty-six-year-old man named Miyazaki Tsutomu. Given the moniker “*otaku* murderer” by some of the mass media, Miyazaki was reported to be a collector of porn and horror video tapes, pornographic magazines, and manga books. This incident ushered in a moral panic in Japanese society and stigmatized fervent manga fans, especially a subcultural group of young (and not-so-young) males called *otaku* (Kinsella 2000, 128). In 1992, as a response to the controversy, several manga authors, editors, and bookstore owners formed a group called “The Society for Protecting Comics Expression” (*Komikku hyōgen no jiyū o mamoru kai*) with a mission to resist the social and political pressure for censorship. The anti-manga controversy of the 1990s resulted in the introduction of “erotic adult comics” labels on the covers of manga books and magazines, restrictions on venues where titles could be sold, and the tightening of ordinances across numerous municipalities (Hori 2009, 220).

The first-ever court case over manga obscenity began in 2002. Known as the Shōbunkan Trial, it would ultimately make it to the Supreme Court of Japan. The book at issue in the trial, *Misshitsu* (Honey room), labeled appropriately as “adult (meaning erotic) comics” and published by Shōbunkan, vividly depicts sexual violence and features explicit renderings of exposed genitalia.⁵ The police arrested the president of Shōbunkan, the publisher’s editor-in-chief, and the manga author for violation of obscenity

laws. Although the author pleaded guilty and accepted his punitive fines, the president decided to fight the charges in court, leading to one of the most well-known manga censorship trials in Japan. The trial ended in 2007 with a guilty verdict, and *Honey Room* became the first-ever manga deemed legally obscene and banned in Japan. In her book *The Art of Censorship in Postwar Japan*, Kirsten Cather (2012) discusses the impact of the case, stating that “the judges did not, and could not, rely solely on [the] rhetoric of the young reader in the verdict because . . . the comic was being prosecuted under obscenity laws, not youth regulations” (263). In other words, the manga was criticized for what it does, its capability to offend or transgress accepted standards of morality and decency—namely, obscenity—and not for its educational value or for moral concerns regarding children or young readers. Patrick Galbraith (2104b) argues that in the years of the trial, the sustained discussion centered not only on the “obscene” manga content but also on the capacity of the medium to move and stimulate the imagination of adult manga readers even more powerfully than photography (140). Anglophone comics theory often emphasizes the medium’s power in terms of reader identification with its simplified illustrative drawings (in contrast to naturalistic drawing or photography), as famously articulated by Scott McCloud (1994, 36); in this Japanese case, such a discourse was the basis for issuing a guilty verdict. The Shōbunkan Trial attests to the maturation of the medium of manga and shows that—like literature, photography, and film, the subjects of previous indecency trials in Japanese history—the medium is now subject to continuous surveillance under the banner of safeguarding against “obscenity.”

Concerning the Socially Vulnerable

Controversy surrounding manga also originates from concerns regarding the socially marginalized or vulnerable. During the height of *gekiga*’s popularity in the 1960s, Hirata Hiroshi’s *gekiga* titled *Bloody Stumps Samurai* (*Chidaruma kenpō*), a revenge drama, was criticized for its depiction of its protagonist, a member of a *buraku* community. The term *buraku*, or *burakumin*, refers to a subaltern group of people placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy in feudal Japan. Historically, they were engaged in occupations that dealt with death or dead bodies, such as executioners, undertakers, butchers, and tanners; they had been ostracized for generations and compelled to live in certain isolated areas. Although Hirata’s work depicts the protagonist’s vengeful action as motivated by his anger toward those who discriminate against *buraku*, his manga was still criticized by the Buraku Liberation League (Buraku kaihō dōmei), a *buraku* rights group, possibly due to the intense depiction of the vengeful protagonist who commits extreme violence. Within one month of the title’s initial publication, copies of the manga were collected and banned.⁶

Several popular manga titles have also been criticized for their use of cartoony exaggerations in depicting ethnic minorities and non-Japanese characters. One recurring issue is the depiction of Black people.⁷ For instance, Tezuka's depictions of Black people have come under fire for giving them "degrading roles as savage cannibals, sexual barbarians or shiftless servants to white people" and drawing them with "physical features [that] are overly distorted in the form of bulbous lips, unfocused eyes, and animal-like faces that make blacks unrecognizable as human beings when compared to caricatures of other races" (Covert 1992). Defenders of Tezuka claim that such depictions derive from the cartoony art of exaggeration and that it is unfair to judge his manga as "racist" without considering the entirety of his work, which often expresses themes of humanitarianism and love.⁸ While critics and scholars often point out that Japanese manga authors have inadvertently learned and recreated negative, often antiquated, stereotypical, and "racist" images from Euro-American visual culture including satirical magazines (Stewart 2001) and comics (Exner 2022, 166), this does not absolve Japanese creators of their responsibility for racist stereotypes that appear in their drawings.⁹

Comics artist and critic Will Eisner (2008) once wrote that stereotypical images in comics are a "necessary evil" because comics rely on the "stored memory of the readers" (11). In other words, manga/comics authors (un) wittingly recreate what is visually recognized (and ideologically perceived) in a given society for economy in graphic storytelling. While Eisner's claim points to a certain aspect of manga/comics, it is better not to essentialize the medium as such. It is, rather, useful to examine how such stereotypical images are used in the course of the (graphic) narrative in a given work. Sometimes stereotypes are used to undermine or challenge the accumulation of historical stock images in our own visual cognitive habits.¹⁰ It is also important to analyze such visual conventions and their possible impacts in relation to form, production environments, and receptive contexts. In the Japanese manga industry, however, when such a controversy arises, publishers have often chosen to avoid public discussion and instead either recall copies of any manga in question or temporarily take them out of print, which largely fails to foster any productive discussion about the issues at hand.

Manga Controversy in Twenty-First-Century Japan

More recent manga controversies have derived from the nation's political swing to the conservative right. In 2013 the school board of Matsue City in Shimane Prefecture ordered all public-school libraries to categorize Nakazawa Keiji's anti-war and anti-nuclear-bomb manga *Barefoot Gen* as a "restricted access" book, citing its gruesome images.¹¹ Nakazawa's work has long been championed by school teachers and educators and has been placed on open stacks of many school libraries since the 1970s. The order to

remove *Gen* from open stacks was overturned roughly eight months later. This came after the situation was noticed and reported by national newspapers resulting in a flood of opposing voices from fans, educators, and academics. Regardless of this overwhelming support for the manga, in the following year, the mayor of Izumisano City in Osaka Prefecture demanded that the same manga be removed from all elementary and junior high schools in the city, claiming that the work was “offensive” to poor and mentally challenged people because it refers to such characters in derogatory terms (Gomez 2014). While these denunciations problematized the language used in relation to the socially vulnerable and graphic imagery in the manga, these two cases were, in fact, initiated by growing (ultra-)right-wing political activism. The Matsue case was instigated by a member of a right-wing group that had been attempting to whitewash the nation’s imperial violence during wartime.¹² Far-right nationalists have been a constant presence in postwar Japan, but they have become much more visible since the late 1990s, when Japan entered a period of economic recession; right-wing discourses, strengthened by online communities, have increasingly manifested themselves in Japanese local and national politics in the twenty-first century.

In 2014, three years after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, one episode in the long-running cuisine-themed manga *Oishinbo* (writer Kariya Tetsu and artist Hanasaki Akira) depicted the protagonist as suffering from a random nosebleed after visiting post-disaster Fukushima, implying that it was due to radiation. Complaints and criticism of the manga quickly spread (first online), objecting to the “prejudiced” presentation of the Fukushima situation, and charging that the manga was harming the recovery efforts of the people and communities in Fukushima.¹³ Major media outlets also played up this controversy and it became a matter of public debate. Eventually, a government spokesman publicly stated that there was no link between the nuclear incident and spontaneous nosebleeds (see Figure 2.2). Kariya remained defiant in the face of this criticism, penning a whole 270-page book in 2015 defending the nosebleed scene.¹⁴ Both the *Barefoot Gen* and *Oishinbo* cases exemplify that in today’s Japan, manga no longer remains solely in the domain of popular culture and that it is inextricably tied to social and political discourses, including the government’s agenda. This recent shift in manga’s status is not unrelated to the gradual legitimization, or incorporation, by the Japanese government of manga as a tool for national branding as part of the “Cool Japan” campaign.¹⁵

Manga Fan Culture and Controversy

Postwar controversies over manga were largely initiated by society’s moral guardians (parents, teachers, authorities, etc.), with producers (artists, editors, publishers, etc.) in the publishing industry responding. However, with the growth of pop culture fandom and participatory culture in the twenty-first century, manga fans have become major players who make

to the suspension of the proposal. In that process, manga fans engaged in political activism by creating manga *dōjinshi* and video clips and posting them on a popular social media site (Leavitt and Horbinski 2012). Such self-organized fan activism contributed to public debate about the proposed bill and freedom of expression—sometimes playfully—and thus resisted attacks on manga and the pressure for censorship from society's conservative sector.

The swift expansion of self-publishing among manga fans over recent decades has prompted a controversy over intellectual property rights.¹⁶ The fan-based production of manga *dōjinshi* (fanzines) triggered controversy over copyright due to their initial derivative orientations, such as parodying popular titles and recycling well-known manga characters. This use of existing manga characters and their likenesses in manga *dōjinshi* has been a legally “gray area.” Although infringing civil copyright laws, many authors and publishers have refrained from taking legal action against *dōjinshi* authors and groups. This is possibly because the *dōjinshi* scene has continuously played a significant role in supporting the manga industry and manga culture—for example, new professional authors have emerged from this cultural scene.¹⁷ In 2005, however, one *dōjinshi* author created and self-published his own “final episode” of *Doraemon*, the widely popular manga series by Fujiko F. Fujio which had come to an untimely end with the creator's death in 1996. Due to the *dōjinshi*'s well-crafted narrative finale, along with a cover closely resembling those of the original *Doraemon* manga volumes, this manga *dōjinshi* sold approximately 13,000 copies, which caught the attention of Shōgakukan, *Doraemon*'s publisher, who notified the *dōjinshi* author of the violation of copyright. To date, this case remains only one of a small number in which publishers have taken any action over fans' derivative works.¹⁸ In fact, in the *Doraemon* case, while Shōgakukan did send a notice to the author, it did not take legal action.¹⁹ In today's manga culture, the relationship between fans' derivative manga activities and the commercial publishing industry is maintained in a sensitive and mutually considerate way, but such a fragile balance might be undermined by outside forces such as the recently introduced “Trans-Pacific Partnership” international trade agreement's much more rigorous copyright regulations, which are yet to be tested.

Beyond “Pop Culture”

Combining the cognitive and affective power of both image and word, manga is capable of eliciting strong emotional reactions, sometimes even upsetting and offending people (regardless of a creator's intentions). Manga is a social object which both connects and disconnects people, a thing that is subject to multiple (mis)interpretations. Because of this, manga sometimes triggers heated public debates and even legal action. In principle, it is crucial to sustain freedom of expression in manga—and, for that matter, any cultural media—in order to let it to grow and flourish, but a blind faith in

the medium also allows for offensive expression that can lead to virulent imagery and hate speech toward social minorities.²⁰ It is therefore vital to remain aware of political suppression and censorship from those parties who attempt to regulate manga expression on the one hand and to consider how manga can and does marginalize voices from vulnerable groups in society on the other.

All the cases above attest that the medium of manga has been and continues to be firmly entangled with the diverse realms of society, culture, politics, education, and law, involving different agents and groups—not only authors and publishers but also readers/fans. Given the broad social, cultural, and economic impacts of manga, as well as all the parties involved in the field, it seems difficult to form a consensus among those who take different social and ideological positions. Yet whether one defends or condemns manga, what is certain is that the medium's power and socio-cultural impact extend well beyond any narrow definition of manga as mere “pop culture.”

Gender and Sexuality

Despite its renown as a modern and highly developed society, Japan is often regarded as a “backward” country in terms of gender equality. Such an ignominious reputation is further confirmed by its consistently low ranking in the annual “Global Gender Gap Report” by the World Economic Forum.²¹ Still, this does not mean that there is no history of feminism in Japan. Rather, Japan has a long, complex trajectory of feminism(s) and social activism regarding gender and sexuality in its modern history (see Bullock, Kano, and Welker 2018). As is the case in Western societies, feminist ideas and diverse forms of sexuality have been expressed in various cultural forms, including visual art, literature, film, and others. Manga is no exception. As a popular medium, it has been examining and challenging the normative ideas of gender while shaping and reshaping them for decades.

Classically, the notion of gender has revolved around what it means to be male or female, associated with the idea of being either “masculine” or “feminine” in a given society, although this kind of gender binarism has been increasingly challenged in recent years, and more diverse forms of gender have been avowed and affirmed. It is now widely accepted that gender is socially constructed, in contrast to the idea of sex, which is framed in biological terms; furthermore, scholars such as Judith Butler have claimed that our understanding of sex is also a result of cultural and social reiterative performances, not the corporeal or material fact of our existence (Butler 1995, 1–3). Meanwhile, sexuality (or sexual orientation) refers to one's sexual feelings for, attraction to, and/or preferences for others. Still, debate around sexuality—whether it is a biological drive, an (un)conscious mental state, something socially and culturally shaped, or a combination of these—

continues. Although both gender and sexuality are broad and highly contested terms, many agree that they are contingent on the context of any given society. This does not mean that sexuality in Japan is fundamentally different from sexuality in Western societies, but sexuality can be “understood through its embeddedness in particular local cultural and social formations” (Mackie and McLelland 2015, 2). Having said that, many discourses regarding gender and sexuality are shared between cultures, regardless of location. For instance, in a patriarchal society—which most nations and cultures have in today’s world—a gender divide is emphasized, and social power is asymmetrically assigned to one gender (male) over the other (female). Such inequality often appears as “norms”—prescribed gender roles or heteronormativity—and is thus taken for granted, resulting in social marginalization and discrimination against, or exclusion of, women and people who identify as non-binary or genderqueer in both visible and invisible ways. Acknowledging the multiplicity of feminist and gender studies’ debates and contestations, this section discusses only a handful of select cases that demonstrate the ways in which manga reproduce, contest, or negotiate the conventional notions of gender and sexuality.

Shōjo Manga and Gender-Bending

It is customary practice in the current manga publishing industry that manga books and magazines are classified along the lines of the age and gender of the target readership, exemplified by the key common denominators of *shōnen* (boys), *shōjo* (girls), *seinen* (young and mature adult men), and *josei* (women). In these mainstream manga categories, existing gender and sexual orientations are often reproduced not only through narrative content, form, and genre but also through titles, design, and paratexts. For instance, popular *shōjo* manga magazines carry titles like *Māgetto* (Margaret), *Ribon* (Ribbon), and *Hana to yume* (Flowers and dream) with bright, pastel-colored front-cover designs that underline and reinforce conventional notions of “femininity.” On the other hand, popular *shōnen/seinen* manga magazine titles are not always marked in terms of gender—e.g., *Magazine*, *Sunday*, *Young Magazine*, *Big Comic*—but often a couple of pages of photographs of young female models in cute outfits or swimsuits are inserted into issues or used on their front covers, an editorial practice which suggests that the target readership is heterosexual males (see Figure 2.3). As to their content, it is readily evident that numerous *shōnen* and *seinen* manga employ the motifs of fighting, competition, rivalry, and male friendship in the genres of action, adventure, and sports, whereas *shōjo* manga are filled with stories about romance, female friendship, and melodrama. Needless to say, these content orientations do not merely reflect but reinforce conventional ideas about and expectations of gender. Moreover, many *shōnen* and *seinen* manga depict a form of “male bonding”—the formation of a close relationship in the form of friendship or cooperation—among male

protagonists, which comprises what queer theorist Eve Sedgwick (1985) calls the “homosocial space” while relegating female characters to secondary status or objectified figures for boy/male characters to romantically desire. Feminist film scholar and theorist Laura Mulvey (1999) claims that Hollywood films presented women as passive and objectified in status by means of what she calls the “male gaze,” a dominating, voyeuristic masculine gaze complicit with the patriarchal order of society (843). As an image-making medium, the same objectifying “male gaze,” accompanied by the pleasure of looking, can be easily identified in male-targeted manga.²²

While the cases above testify to mainstream manga’s inclination to reproduce existing gender norms and heteronormativity, it is still important to note that manga has also provided a site in which notions of gender and sexuality can be critically examined, challenged, and even reimaged. One such example is Tezuka Osamu’s *shōjo* manga classic *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*, 1953–6). This work features a princess protagonist named Sapphire, who was raised to be a “male” successor to her father’s kingdom. Switching



FIGURE 2.3 The front cover of Young Magazine, issue no. 38 (August 30, 2021), a seinen manga magazine published by Kōdansha. Used with permission.

between male- and female-coded clothes, gendered languages, and behavioral patterns, Sapphire alternately performs both (gendered) sides of this dual identity—a “male” knight and a “female” princess—which also prompts other characters to adjust their responses to Sapphire’s presentation. While Tezuka’s protagonist might not be radically transgressive in terms of gender—that is, conventional ideas of masculinity and femininity are still maintained and reinforced in each instance—it still opens up the potential of subverting gender norms or performing non-traditional gender roles. Scholars and critics point out that Tezuka’s creation of this gender-bending character was inspired by the all-female theatrical group known as the Takarazuka Revue, which has a predominantly female fan base (Schodt 1996, 253–7; Yamanashi 2012, 174). In Takarazuka shows, all parts are performed by women; thus, women performers play male roles by cross-dressing and acting out stylized, gendered stage characters—an aestheticized gender performance inspired in part by female fantasy among the fans—through “masculine” clothing, gestures, and speech patterns. The “androgyny” of these male roles, embodied as they are by female performers, “both undermines the stability of a sex–gender system premised on a male–female dichotomy and retains that dichotomy by either juxtaposing or blending its elements” (Robertson 1992, 419).

The motifs of transvestism, gender bending, and the “beautiful fighting girl” (*bishōjo senshi*)²³ employed in Tezuka’s *Princess Knight* have become common tropes in later *shōjo* manga and continue to defy and unsettle conventional views on gender.²⁴ One such example can be found in Ikeda Riyoko’s historically important *shōjo* manga *The Rose of Versailles* (1972–3), which includes another gender-bending female character, “Lady Oscar,” who, in order to succeed the commander of the Royal Guard at the Palace of Versailles, is raised as a “boy.” This sword-wielding androgynous character, loved by female readers, became one of the main characters as the serialization continued. Japanese manga scholar Oshiyama Michiko (2007, 201) analyzes the visual elements of the characters in Ikeda’s work and argues that the author flexibly shifts her drawing styles to render gender ambiguity in the characters. For instance, when Oscar interacts with her love Andrei, the gender-signifying visual elements of both characters—such as their body parts, facial contours, long eyelashes (a sign for femininity), and thick eyebrows (a sign for masculinity)—are not pronounced; rather, they are reduced in order to produce gender neutrality. Unlike film and photography, both of which mechanically reproduce the human body with exact detail, manga’s hand-drawn, non-naturalistic stylistic orientation, along with visual metaphor, lends itself to a flexible variety of gendering and ungendering methods in presenting characters.

When discussing manga in relation to gender and sexuality, critics and scholars have frequently taken up the works of a group of female authors who began creating innovative *shōjo* manga from the 1970s: they were known as the “Year 24 Group” (*24-nen gumi*) or the “Magnificent Forty-Niners”

(Fujimoto 2008b; Thorn 2010; Shamooin 2012).²⁵ Against the backdrop of an increasing awareness of gender issues in Japan, partly informed by the second-wave feminism of the Western world, authors such as Hagio Moto, Takemiya Keiko, Ōshima Yumiko, Yamagishi Ryōko, and Ikeda Riyoko questioned the conventional gender hierarchy, gender relations, and patriarchal order in Japanese society, often by using the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and historical fiction (see Chapter 1). In doing so, some of these authors choose non-Japanese settings—say, Western(-looking) places, future societies, or even other planets. Scholars and critics argue that such a choice is a tactical move to escape (without being mere escapism) from the modern Japanese patriarchal order and create another imaginary space where fictional stories can explore alternative gender and familial relationships (Fujimoto 2008b; Yamada 2016).

Pointing to the predominance of Western characters and settings in their works, Ōgi Fusami (2004) claims that such non-Japanese elements should be understood not so much as a sign of desiring the idealized West but rather as a tool for the “erasure” of “Japan” and “masculinity” (548). In the Meiji Period, the government’s education ministry had promoted the slogan “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) as an ideal of womanhood. This slogan was a keystone of the new secondary education system for girls implemented by the ministry in 1899. It “exhorted women to contribute to the nation through their hard work, their frugality, their efficient management, their care of the old, young, and ill, and their responsible upbringing of children” (Nolte and Hasings 1991, 152). Put simply, the phrase “good wife, wise mother” was used to dictate the social position and restrict the social mobility of women by binding them to the realm of domestic life under a nationalistic and patriarchal order. The slogan was removed from postwar Japanese state policy, but its gendered ideology has persisted, as reflected in the frequent depictions of mother figures as idealized “role models” for girls in *shōjo* magazines (and *shōjo* manga). Given this historical construction of gendered ideals, it is no coincidence that in many manga by Year 24 Group authors—for instance, Takemiya’s sci-fi work *Toward the Terra* and Hagio’s “Iguana Girl”—the figure of the “mother” is associated with control or oppression, because becoming a “mother” is the prescribed destination for young girls and women—i.e., their target readership—in the Japanese patriarchal order. In other words, many *shōjo* manga created by the female authors of the Year 24 Group cast doubts on or even refute such oppressive discourses that seek to reduce female roles to motherhood and reproduction.

In the mid-1970s, Hagio and Takemiya also began creating manga that depicted romantic and sexual relationships between beautiful boys (*bishōnen*). Those works were then dubbed *shōnen ai*—a portmanteau of boy (*shōnen*) and love (*ai*)—and this new (sub)genre gained popularity among female readers.²⁶ In their representative *shōnen ai* works, such as Hagio’s *The Heart of Thomas* (1974) and Takemiya’s *Kaze to ki no uta* (The poem of wind and trees, 1976–84), the boy protagonists are drawn as having

“feminine” slender bodies with long eyelashes like beautiful *shōjo* characters while their speech and behavior are “masculine” and sometimes even aggressive (See F. 1.11 in Chapter 1). Pointing to such characteristics, scholar Midori Matsui (1993) argues that these visually “effeminate” or androgynous boys are, in fact, “the girls’ displaced selves” and “endowed with reason, eloquence, and aggressive desire for the other, compensating for the lack of logos and sexuality in the conventional portraits of girls” (178). In a similar vein, manga scholar Nishihara Mari (2016) contends that these “beautiful boy” characters can be read as people who experience marginalization and oppression in the world controlled by (male) adults, just as girls/women are oppressed by them in society (137).²⁷ If this is the case, then such *shōnen ai* manga serve to underscore the mechanisms of social oppression from a feminist perspective. Moreover, following on from this, we can see that these authors re-examined these oppressive social mechanisms and hierarchy structured around the concept of gender and sexuality, by using such boy protagonists as a means of eluding the trap of Japanese discourses of heteronormativity and reproduction, while also imagining (and endorsing) non-normative gender identities and sexual relationships.

Gekiga and *Seinen* Manga

The rise of *seinen* (lit. “young men”) manga magazines in the late 1960s allowed authors to depict more sexually explicit content. In some cases, *seinen* manga used a more naturalistic style to depict sexualized male and female bodies (compared to the cartoony styles common in manga for children). In the 1970s, several *seinen* erotic manga magazines were launched by mid- and small-scale publishers.²⁸ Since then, erotic manga catering to heterosexual male desires and fantasies have constituted a notable segment of manga publication (see Schodt 1986, 132–7; Nagayama 2020). In a different vein, Tatsumi Yoshihiro’s short *gekiga* pieces, especially those from the late 1960s and early 1970s, repeatedly depict failed masculinity, frustrated male (sexual) desires, and perversity, featuring young and middle-aged male blue-collar workers or jaded white-collar “salary men” who sometimes exhibit misogynic sentiments toward women (Tatsumi 2006, 2012a, 2012b).²⁹ In the fashion of social realism, Tatsumi’s *gekiga* offer insights on the social construction of “ideal” and “failed men” by focusing on the burdens of being a “man” under capitalist social and economic pressure at the height of economic growth (Suzuki 2013).³⁰

Around the late 1970s, another trend that sought to appeal to male (hetero)sexuality emerged in manga. The style initially originated in the manga *dōjinshi* (fanzine) subculture, where some authors began to depict cute girl characters with neotenic, child-like bodies in a highly cartoony style (in contrast to the naturalistically drawn adult women’s bodies found in most 1970s *seinen* manga). Most famously, *mangaka* Azuma Hideo drew

young female characters according to such designs, some of whom appear naked or engage in sexual activities. This “aesthetic” orientation has been called *lolicon* (from the term “Lolita complex”) and it has influenced other forms of erotic and non-erotic visual culture, including neo-pop artist Murakami Takashi. In the 1980s, fans of these *lolicon*-style manga were considered a subset of the emerging *otaku* subculture—fans with obsessive interests in things such as anime, manga, and video games. The *otaku* moniker, which entered the Japanese lexicon in the mid-1980s, carried strong negative social connotations on account of a supposed excessive interest in fictional worlds at the expense of the “real” world. In 1989, the shocking murders committed by Miyazaki Tsutomu (see “Controversy and censorship” in this chapter) ignited a “moral panic” (Kinsella 2000, 126), and subsequent media reports condemned him as an “otaku killer.” This incident socially stigmatized the people/fans called *otaku* (including *lolicon* fans), and the negative connotations of the term still persist somewhat to this day in Japan. Yet it would be a mistake to directly link the people who identify (or are identified) as *otaku*, including the fans who consume pornographic or *lolicon* manga, to criminality or see them as threats to society. There is no scientific evidence for a direct causal relationship between a fascination with *lolicon* manga and criminality or pedophilia, nor is there evidence supporting the claim that *otaku* cannot distinguish between fiction and reality. Arguing against allegations that *otaku* are people who can no longer differentiate fiction from reality, Patrick Galbraith (2011) asserts that *lolicon* manga readers have a “nuanced understanding” of fiction and reality and that they desire fictional characters “precisely because they are unreal” (110). Adopting Japanese critic Saitō Tamaki’s phrase (2000), Galbraith calls the sexual desire for fictional characters “*otaku* sexuality,” arguing that it challenges the “common sense of gender and society” (2014a, 205) and that it even has the potential to develop an “alternative system of values” (2014a, 215).

Having acknowledged some of the social impacts of these various interventions through manga (and other popular cultural practices), some with origins going back decades, the scope and significance of their influence on Japanese society still remains unclear. To varying degrees, they are all symptomatic of, or reactions to, entrenched conservative attitudes and discourses on gender roles and sexuality in Japanese society, which, despite the introduction of laws to address equality in the late-1990s, continue to create gender disparity and marginalize those who do not conform. Do these manga interventions conversely bolster, or possibly exacerbate, some of these social problems? Beyond escapism, to what degree have they become significant sites for readers to negotiate their identity? And to what degree can they be said to have contributed in meaningful ways to helping close gender gaps or gain broader acceptance of alternative social relations in terms of gender and sexuality? While beyond the scope of this study, these questions beg further scholarly attention.

Josei Manga and Essay Manga

In a patriarchal society, expressions of female sexual desires are often eschewed and/or repressed. However, Japanese manga for girls and women, especially a body of manga labeled “ladies’ comics” (*redīsu komikku* or *redikomi*) do not hesitate to express diverse forms of romance, love, and sexual fantasy. With the initial rise of ladies’ comics in the late 1970s, many female *josei* manga authors started creating sensuous stories catering to heterosexual females’ desires, offering a wide range of romantic stories, love affairs, and softcore and hardcore pornographic stories—some of which would decidedly put the lie to the stereotypical image of demure and submissive Japanese women.³¹ Deborah Shamoon argues that “the very existence [of such ladies’ comic titles] denies many common myths about pornography such as that women are not visually stimulated and that hardcore pornography necessarily proves harmful to women” (2004, 99). Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, publishers founded several manga magazines, including ones that featured erotic narratives, for adult women. In that same period, ladies’ comics diversified their themes and topics, offering more reality-based stories about adult women. Scholar Kinko Ito (2009) discusses the practice of some ladies’ comics magazines in actively soliciting stories from readers based on their own experiences; those whose stories were featured in the magazines receiving cash prizes (115–16). Such a reader-oriented editorial policy has resulted in manga works closer to what the readers (adult women) experience in their everyday lives. Perhaps because of the initial association of ladies’ comics with sexual content, more recent manga that take on a more diverse range of topics for women are called *josei* manga. As one of the latest additions to the competitive manga market, *josei* manga have increasingly incorporated a variety of contemporary gender and intersectional concerns about being a woman in society such as those involving working, parenting, single motherhood, parental care, married life, menstruation, divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, and depression. *Josei* manga have a high level of potential for productive academic attention on the basis of their mature thematic concerns shared by feminist and gender studies scholars.

While ladies’ comics and *josei* manga come from the commercial manga industry, another type of manga that caters to female sexual fantasies emerged in the sphere of manga *dōjinshi* subculture. Partly inspired by the *shōnen ai* manga of the 1970s, female manga fans began to produce “amateur” manga that depicted romantic and sexual relationships between boys or men in the late 1970s and 1980s for themselves. Called *yaoi* at the time,³² many of these self-produced manga are derivative works in which amateur authors match up existing boy characters from popular *shōnen* titles and anime and imagine romantic and sexual relationships between them. Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, commercial publishers began to publish male–male romantic and erotic manga stories, increasingly

acquiring the label of “boys love” or BL since around 2000. In these BL manga, authors have created diverse kinds of graphic narratives with their own characters, while maintaining BL’s homoerotic narrative formula. Today, BL manga form a highly visible portion of the commercial manga market. Most importantly, like slash fiction in the Western countries, *yaoi*/BL manga is largely produced by women for women.³³ These BL works offer an imaginary space in which both creators and fans explore various different forms of gender and sexual fantasy. Scholar Mark McLelland (2010) argues that “[t]hese comics [BL manga] say nothing about how gender is, but much about how it ideally should be: negotiable, malleable, a site of play” (88). More recently, BL works have gained traction and even branched off into different media formats such as novels, audiobook CDs, and video games (see Figure 2.4).



FIGURE 2.4 A large section of bookshelves devoted to BL novels (the first bookcase) and BL manga (the next two bookcases) in a regular bookstore in Hiroshima. Photo by the authors.

While some scholars identify the genre's potential for disrupting existing gender and sexual norms due to its narrative formulae for homoerotic relationships between men, others point out its limits as well. For instance, one of the common tropes used in BL manga is the pairing of so-called “*seme* and *uke*” (top and bottom) characters, which refers to one male character who takes on an aggressive, domineering role while the other takes on a passive, subservient role. This narrative formula for BL manga is thought of as mirroring the conservative gender hierarchy between men and women—that is, “roughly reproducing the male–female binary,” in the words of scholar James Welker (2015, 46). Furthermore, the women who read BL manga are often called (or self-identify as) *fujoshi*, which literally means “rotten women.” Like the term *otaku*, those who use the term *fujoshi* are aware of its negative connotation. That is, this self-deprecating but tongue-in-cheek usage suggests the somewhat abashed nature of their self-identification (when uttered by BL readers), which unwittingly sustains mainstream heteronormative ideology, since the term implies that fascination with BL manga is something socially shameful. If that is the case, reading/consuming them might remain within the realm of escapism, ultimately ensuring that these works’ potential to normalize queerness does not fully manifest in social reality. That being said, it is also true that BL has been cultivating a relatively new outlet through which women can affirm their sexual agency and express their sexual fantasies while enjoying homoerotic narratives. It is still debatable whether BL manga challenge and reshape dominant narratives of gender and sexual relationships in lived social reality or remain a consumerist “guilty pleasure.”

If *yaoi*/BL manga might be said to be oriented toward women’s (sexual) fantasies, the genre of essay manga (*essei manga*) often addresses women’s social standing and their everyday experiences in social reality. Recognized as a genre in the 1990s, an essay manga typically depicts vignettes from the day-to-day life of the author who appears as the narrator/protagonist in the work, and thus the genre can be considered as a sort of autobiographical or “life-writing” manga.³⁴ According to Japanese manga scholar Yoshimura Kazuma (2008), essay manga typically consist of a smaller number of pages (compared to a single installment of a serialized story manga), and this genre has been predominantly cultivated by women (197), although an increasing number of male authors have joined them in creating essay manga.³⁵ Widely embraced, essay manga are often serialized not only in manga magazines but also in non-manga (or non-manga-centric) magazines such as women’s fashion magazines, general interest magazines, and sometimes even newspapers. When anthologized and (re)published in book format, they are usually placed on shelves in bookstores alongside prose essay books and/or other books for women, in contrast to regular manga books that are shelved in the “manga section” of a bookstore. The position of essay manga in Japan’s media environment enables the genre to reach a wider audience beyond just manga fans. Famous titles include Saibara Rieko’s *Mainichi*

kāsan (Everyday mom, a.k.a. Kaasan: Mom's life, 2002–17), humorously narrating the author's struggles and mundane happiness as a mother raising her children and managing her family; and Hosokawa Tenten's *Tsure ga utsu ni narimashite* (My partner became depressed, 2006), a candid account of the author and her partner/husband's experience with depression. Discussing these two manga, manga scholar Akiko Sugawa-Shimada (2011) reasons that, through humor and comedic tropes, essay manga also tackle serious and "taboo themes, such as alcoholism, divorce, and death" (172). As reality-based manga, many essay manga created by women authors address the experiences and challenges of being women and their shifting social status in society from a personal point of view.

Over the last couple of decades, in line with the increasing social awareness of LGBTQ+ issues in society, a number of manga have addressed topics concerning sexual minorities, and, importantly, have appeared in mainstream manga magazines. Shimura Takako's *Wandering Son* (*Hōrō musuko*, 2002–13), for instance, dwells on the gender fluidity of its young boy protagonist who feels comfortable wearing clothes designed for girls even though he is aware of its "stigma" in the eyes of society. Another work by Shimura, *Sweet Blue Flowers* (2004–13), narrates romantic relationships, including lesbianism, among high school girls. Such works depicting lesbian and intimate relationships between girls are also called *yuri* or "girls' love." Yoshinaga Fumi's *What Did You Eat Yesterday?* (2007–present), serialized in the *seinen* magazine *Morning*, tells the tale of a middle-aged gay couple's everyday life, with a focus on cooking and food. In a similar vein, Tagame Gengoroh's Eisner-winning *My Brother's Husband* (2014–17) addresses homophobia and society's marginalization of sexual minorities by narrating the male protagonist's gradual understanding of and reconciliation with his deceased gay brother through interacting with his brother's foreign husband. Tagame has long been known as an author of gay pornographic manga (whose manga appeared in alternative, subcultural magazines). Unlike his previous works, *My Brother's Husband* was serialized in the mainstream *seinen* manga magazine *Monthly Action*. Along with a television adaptation of the series produced by NHK, Tagame's work has made a meaningful contribution to fostering the conversation about LGBTQ+ rights in twenty-first-century Japan. While Japan has yet to legalize same-sex marriage on a national level, there are several municipalities that recognize and grant legal rights to same-sex partnerships ("Same Sex Unions" 2020).

Gender and Sexuality in Twenty-First-Century Manga

The cases discussed above illustrate that manga have functioned as an important cultural site in which social discourses about gender and manga creators' imaginative interventions intersect with each other. While it is true

that mainstream manga tend to replicate existing notions of gender and sexuality, the authors discussed in this section go against the grain and create works that unsettle ossified views and even explore and affirm various forms of gender and sexual identities in their imaginative graphic narratives. Also, manga readers have been increasingly crossing over the lines of gender and age, originally compartmentalized by manga publishers' demographic divisions. It is known that male readers have been reading *shōjo* manga since around the 1970s, when male critics began celebrating *shōjo* manga. More recently, a good number of female readers have crossed over targeted gender lines and are reading *shōnen* and *seinen* manga. Shūeisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump*'s readership, for instance, is approximately 20 percent female as of 2019 ("Shūkan shōnen janpu"). There are also male fans of BL manga, *fudanshi* (lit. "rotten boys") who do not necessarily identify as gay.³⁶ Moreover, as briefly discussed above in the case of *yaoi*/BL manga, (female) manga readers/fans have been exercising their agency to produce their own manga by "queering" existing boy characters and *shōnen* manga narrative formulae. Given that many professional authors have emerged from such participatory culture scenes, it is likely that manga will continue to play an important role in the twenty-first century's mediascape in which neglected, complex, and more diverse forms of gender and non-binary sexual identities will be visualized, expressed, and affirmed.

Historical Representation

In her book *The Past Within Us*, historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki states that, in today's society, "[o]ur visions of history are drawn from diverse sources: not just from the narratives of history books but also from photographs and historical novels, from newsreel footage, comic books and, increasingly, from electronic media like the Internet" (2005, 2). Among such sources, manga do seem to play a substantial role in Japan, where they are widely embraced by the public. Indeed, in recent years, manga have become sites for historical debate, and certain manga titles about the Asia-Pacific War have sparked controversy (see Part II in Chapter 1 and below) both in Japan and abroad—how the war is remembered still remains a major point of friction between Japan and its East Asian neighbors. Therefore, it is no surprise that scholars and researchers approach war manga by examining how they convey, reflect, rewrite, re-present, or distort the past (see, for example, Natsume 1997a; Rosenbaum 2013; Otmazgin and Suter 2016). Although, understandably, controversial manga attract both public and scholarly attention, there are many other kinds of historical manga (*rekishi manga*) that convey and communicate human experiences from the past. Such manga also include the genres of biography and autobiography, respectively detailing the lives of historically important persons and the authors themselves, which also contribute to the (re)shaping of readers' "visions of history."

For manga creators, history can be a rich source of material for creating their own graphic narratives. Like historical novels, a typical historical manga narrates a story that takes places during a specific period of time in the past. Some historical manga attempt to depict realistic details about historical figures, language, customs, and manners, while others provide imaginative narratives that use both real and fictional characters and events. Some historical manga aim for a heightened sense of verisimilitude by adding real-life historical photographs of townscapes and people, chronological tables, images of newspaper headlines and articles, and maps. For instance, Yasuhiko Yoshikazu's *Nijihiro no Trotsky* (Rainbow Trotsky, 1990–6), a manga set in Manchuria during the Second World War, includes a handful of photographs of historical figures and buildings from the time of its setting at the beginning of each volume. Takemiya Keiko, in her *seinen* manga story about two Japanese girls who become geisha (*geigi*), also set in Manchuria but during the interwar years, *Kurenai niō* (The scent of crimson, 1994–6), achieves this effect through the use of near-photo-realistic townscapes, newspaper headlines, and her character's period clothing (see Figure 2.5). Similarly, the book edition of Kōno Fumiyo's *Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms* (*Yūnagi no machi, sakura no kuni*, 2004), a manga about the delayed and fatal effects of the atomic bombing

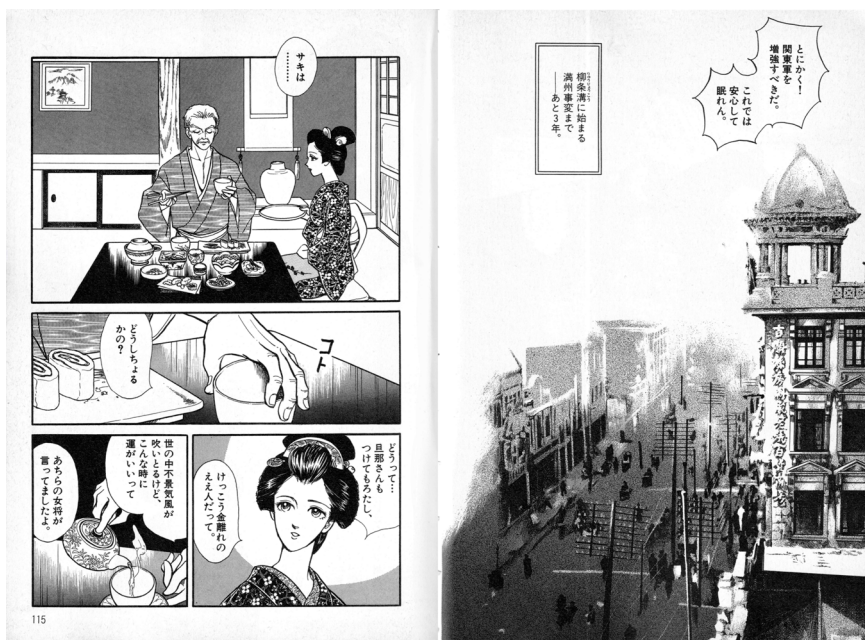


FIGURE 2.5 Pages from Takemiya Keiko's *Kurenai niō* (The Scent of Crimson, 1999, Chūōkōron Shinsha edition) combine cartoony (manga-esque) characters and a naturalistic historical background. © Takemiya Keiko. Used with permission.

of Hiroshima, contains a “References” section with detailed annotations from the author and an illustrated map of the city of Hiroshima, in order to highlight the amount of background research done so as to lend credibility to the story.³⁷ Although both manga use real-life historical incidents and settings, their stories are largely fictional. In cases such as these, the distinction between fact and fiction in historical manga is frequently blurred.

This section explores how history is represented in manga by focusing on three historical manga (sub)genres—war manga, historical drama/historical fantasy in *shōjo* manga, and *gakushū* manga (educational manga). We will not delve into questions regarding the “accuracy” or “objectivity” of presented historical facts, even though these are important questions. This is not just because, as scholars Nissim Otmazgin and Rebecca Suter indicate, manga “combines information and imagination, fact and fiction, representation and political statement” (2016, vii), but also because historical representation in manga is always and already mediated. That is, historical representation in a manga is the product of multilayered negotiations between the author’s selection and creativity, the work’s formal and visual idioms, and genre norms, as well as feedback from editors, considerations of the work’s target readership, commercial and industrial constraints, marketability, and so on. This section, instead, discusses how *mangaka* use history to create their own graphic narratives by using the different frames offered by each of these three genres. A genre is usually defined by its form, style, and subject matter, but it also relates to readers’ expectations and shared conventions—and its target readership, too. That being said, one genre will also often combine with or overlap with other genres—“historical fantasy,” for instance—and all are subject to change over time. Bearing these points in mind, this section also addresses how genres orient or anticipate, if not define, their readers’ understanding of the past.

War(-Themed) Manga

One of the most prominent among the diverse (sub)genres within historical manga is “war manga” (*sensō manga*). While war(-related) narratives were mostly censored during the occupation period (1945–52), manga depicting the Second World War reappeared in the mid-1950s, first as a genre called “*senki manga*” (war-chronicle manga) in boys’ magazines (Natsume 1997, 30–2). Mixing historical references and fictional stories, a typical *senki* manga depicts spectacular aerial the Second World War battles in which young Japanese pilots exhibit their dexterous fighting skills. According to sociologist Eldad Nakar, who surveyed war manga of this period, these manga were “predominantly adventure stories . . . and [they] do not engage the starker realities of war, especially, the omnipresence of death and suffering” (Nakar 2008, 178). Marketed to young boy readers, *senki* manga largely presented the war as entertainment.

The rise of *gekiga*, a type of manga initially targeted at young adult male readers that emerged in the late 1950s (and developed throughout the 1960s), allowed authors to depict much darker stories and graphic violence. In contrast to previous war manga for children, *gekiga* aimed to shed light on the “ugly” side of war. Nakazawa Keiji’s “*Kuroi ame ni utarete*” (Pelted by black rain, 1968) and his subsequent short *gekiga* stories, known as the Black Series (1968–73), for example, address the plight of *hibakusha*, atomic bomb survivors who suffer from the long-term effects of radiation exposure, in the fashion of hardboiled fiction. Unlike his better-known series *Barefoot Gen* (1984–95) which offers a more hopeful vision to a target audience of children, Nakazawa’s Black Series depicts revenge, poverty, disfigurement, discrimination, radiation sickness, and depression, which is, as scholar Michele M. Mason argues, “capable of making explicit and strident critiques of the USA’s barbarous use of atomic weapons” (2016, 88). Likewise, Tatsumi Yoshihiro’s short *gekiga* pieces such as “*Jigoku*” (Hell, 1971) and “Good-bye” (1972) make use of war-torn Japan as a backdrop for their depictions of moral degeneracy, corruption, and chaos. Thus, through *gekiga*, the genre of war manga has come to be equipped with an edge of social critique. Indeed, after *gekiga* expanded the horizon of the medium’s expression, Nakazawa’s autobiographical work “I Saw It” (*Ore wa mita*, 1972), although created primarily for young boy readers, was able to realize a horrific depiction of the explosion of the atomic bomb. Similarly, Mizuki Shigeru’s semi-autobiographical war manga *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths* (*Sōin gyokusai seyo!*, 1973) dwells on the dehumanized conditions Mizuki experienced in the Japanese imperial army. Published under the label of autobiography (or semi-autobiography), these works ask us to take their depictions of the war seriously and even claim “authenticity” in their historical representation, as is seen in the paratextual descriptor on the English cover of Nakazawa’s “I Saw It” that reads “A survivor’s true story” (Nakazawa 1982).

Many Japanese studies scholars point out that a number of Japanese popular cultural representations of and discourses about the Second World War follow a narrative pattern of “victimhood” (Orr 2011; Napier 2000, 162) that renders the (civilian) Japanese as helpless “victims” of the war while overlooking or downplaying Japan’s role as a perpetrator. Even well-known war manga, such as Nakazawa Keiji’s *Barefoot Gen* and Tezuka Osamu’s short semi-autobiographical story “*Kami no toride*” (Paper fortress, 1974), might be categorized as following this framework due to their focus on protagonists who suffer from the worsening war situation within Japan during the last stages of the war. In contrast, historian Matthew Penney, who has studied numerous war manga (including historical fantasy manga), argues that numerous Japanese war manga run counter to such interpretations, resisting the “‘victim’s view’ of wartime history, government silences on war crimes, and the expectations of audiences to be treated simply to ‘war as entertainment’” (2007, 49–50). In his view, the “pluralistic

character of Japanese war representation” in popular media—as exemplified in the manga of Kaizuka Hiroshi, Matsumoto Leiji, and Kobayashi Motofumi—can be subversive to dominant postwar war narratives. Whether invoking “victim’s history” or “perpetrator’s history,” however, war manga—as a glance through some of the many war manga anthologies produced in Japan over the years will attest to³⁸—have seemed to remain largely anti-war and/or anti-militarist, in tune with Japan’s postwar pacifist framework.

Given this context, it was certainly alarming in the late 1990s to observe the high sales of Kobayashi Yoshinori’s (in)famous manga *Sensō-ron* (On War, 1998), which glorifies the wartime deeds of imperial Japan, atavistically lionizes kamikaze pilots, and denies Japanese wartime atrocities. The timing of the manga’s publication, against the backdrop of mounting historical revisionism, parochial nationalism, and attempts by the government to remilitarize Japan, gave cause for another level of concern.³⁹ A number of scholars have criticized Kobayashi’s biased historical account and numerous truth-claims as being presented through a haphazard logic that is based on tenuous historical grounding (Obinata et al. 1999; Clifford 2004; Sakamoto 2008). It is, however, uncertain that this criticism, made by domestic and international scholars—some of which was published in English in international journals—reached the readers of Kobayashi’s manga (Cheng Chua 2013) due to the manga’s anti-elitist and populist stance, bolstered by the popular medium of manga.

While one can readily criticize Kobayashi’s revisionist content, it is imperative to examine how the medium-specific nature of his manga—including its form, publication format, publication venue, genre, and visual style—plays a role in communicating his political message to readers. Initially serialized in Shōgakukan’s *SAPIO*, a conservative magazine about business, politics, and current affairs filled with text-based articles and photos, Kobayashi’s manga primarily targeted adult male readers. Long known as a gag manga creator, Kobayashi mixes jokes with his politics in order to entertain readers in the form of essay manga, a genre of short-form narrative comics that depicts the author’s everyday life (see Glossary and Chapter 4, Key Texts). Using the genre conventions of essay manga, Kobayashi typically presents himself as a character with a highly cartoony design—sometimes in a super-deformed *chibi* style—which enables him to communicate his messages in a somewhat self-effacing but comical and intimate way, presenting himself as something like an “ordinary person.” Yet when he voices his own political opinions (which typically occurs at the climax of each episode), he transforms into a handsome-looking character who occupies the visual foreground, and his language becomes strong and assertive. When he criticizes liberal opponents such as politicians, scholars, cultural critics, he portrays them as sly or ugly characters in a highly caricatured manner. Such manipulation of visual tropes seems to contribute to the “effective” communication of his political messages to certain readers—arguably, on the level of affect.

While it is concerning to observe the popularity of Kobayashi's revisionist manga as well as subsequent "right-wing" manga such as Yamano Sharin's *Manga ken-kanryū* (Hating the Korean wave, 2005) and Kō Bunyū and Akiyama Jōji's *Manga Chūgoku nyūmon: Yakkaina rinjin no kenkyū* (Introduction to China: A study of annoying neighbors, 2005), how readers receive the messages these works seek to convey is another question. Scholar Alexander Bukh conducted a small-scale survey about the reception of such "right-wing" manga among Japanese college students, which found that, while some students did accept the manga messages more or less as is, just over 60 percent of his student participants disagreed with the messages. In addition, another 23 percent "admitted certain validity to the arguments made by these texts but at the same time denied their claims to objective historical truth" (2016, 147). While Bukh admits some limitations to his research, it is worth remembering that readers are never passive recipients of an author's messages, and they can even read "against the grain."

In his 1997 book *Manga to "sensō"* (Manga and "war"), manga critic Natsume Fusanosuke already noted that as the number of those who had direct experience of the war period had significantly declined, the majority of Japanese people today (including himself) receive their image(s) of the war "through various media" (4). He thus points to the ability of multimedia cultural texts, including manga, to reshape historical memories of the war but also to affect the "image of war" through depictions of fictional wars. Given the prevalence of manga in Japan and the social and cultural impact of the medium, it is thus important to keep an eye on what kind of war manga are being made not only now but also in future developments in the genre. Whose histories are narrated and whose are disregarded? What kind of war representations are conveyed? From whose point of view are wars drawn? To consider these questions, it is vital to pay attention not only to manga's content, form, and style, but also to reading communities and the medium's location in the (changing) media environment.

Historical Drama/Historical Fantasy in *Shōjo* Manga

It is undeniable that the vast majority of human histories written have been about men. To redress this imbalance, beginning with feminists in the 1970s, attempts have been made to (re)discover the role of women and their contributions to society and to rewrite existing male-centered histories to be more inclusive. In the Japanese manga industry, girls/women and historical fiction were long considered "ill-matched." When Mizuno Hideko initially proposed the idea for what would become the manga *Shiroi troika* (White troika, 1964–5), a historical romance set in pre-revolutionary Russia, an editor turned it down because historical manga was supposedly "too complicated" for girl readers (quoted in Ōgi 2004, 542). Similarly, Ikeda Riyoko's original idea for *The Rose of Versailles* (1972–3), a historical *shōjo* manga set in pre-revolutionary France featuring Marie Antoinette, was also

turned down by an editor who noted that “historical manga won’t be popular with girls” (Ikeda 2002, 123). However, both authors not only succeeded in eventually publishing their works but also proved that historical manga can be popular among girls and women. Since then, historical manga have occupied a certain segment of *shōjo* and *josei* manga production, and various kinds of historical dramas, including historical fantasy, romance, and adventure titles, are being created for female readers today.

It is safe to say that historical dramas in postwar *shōjo* manga—roughly from the 1950s to the early 1970s—were not as interested in fidelity to history as they were in using history as a “fantastic” space. Tezuka Osamu’s *shōjo* manga classic *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*, 1953), for instance, takes as its setting an unidentifiable medieval European(-like) kingdom. Likewise, Mizuno Hideko’s *Gin no hanabira* (Silver petals, 1969) is also set in a medieval Western European town and features a protagonist named Lily. The “historical” representation in these manga is far from faithful to historical reality, instead taking place in an idealized and fantasized historical past, often drawing on images of European aristocracy. In these historical dramas, *shōjo* manga creators employ such temporally (and geographically) remote settings as a narrative device to create a fantastic space that invites readers into their storyworlds while offering the visual pleasures of gorgeous dresses, decorative architecture, and ornamental furnishings. It is also common that such manga employ extreme historical moments of drastic societal change—such as Ikeda’s use of the French Revolution in *The Rose of Versailles*—to furnish dramatic effects; situating characters in emotionally charged situations is especially useful for highlighting their feelings. As discussed in the “Gender and sexuality” section in this chapter, critics and scholars have argued that the use of Western settings and non-Japanese characters is a strategic move to circumvent Japan’s male-dominated social order by creating fantastic spaces in which *mangaka* can explore alternative forms of gender and gender relationships, not (merely) a reflection of desire for the West by the target female readership (Ōgi 2004; Fujimoto 2008b; Yamada 2016). In the view of such commentators, the fantastic nature in these historical manga has an emancipatory power to find release from the patriarchal regime that prevailed in Japan when they were created.

Since the mid-1970s, however, historical *shōjo* manga have also depicted Japanese history, and in doing so, some have cast light on women’s roles that have been buried deep in history. Ichikawa Jun’s *Hana no ō* (Flower shogun, 1993–5) tells the story of Hōjō Masako, wife of the well-known shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo, the founder of Japan’s Kamakura shogunate (1185–1333). In this work, Ichikawa foregrounds not only the female protagonist’s intelligence, grace, and love, but also her role as a strong-willed, resourceful partner, equal to her husband. Likewise, Yamato Waki’s *Ishutāru no musume* (The daughter of Ishtar, 2009–17) highlights the life of Ono no Otsū, a real-life woman who lived in the late-sixteenth/early-seventeenth century, and about whom little is known except for her literary and artistic

talents and that she served renowned feudal lords like Oda Nobunga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Yamato's manga follows Otsū's life from childhood to adulthood as she eventually becomes an independent, free-spirited woman who does not rely on the auspices of men. These two works of historical drama highlight the important roles of women who existed alongside better-known "great men" but who are either overlooked or not deemed worthy of consideration in conventional historical narratives. Interestingly enough, both of these works spotlight the vibrant and eventful lives of women during feudal times, but in particular between the Kamakura Period and the "Warring States" Period (roughly late twelfth to early seventeenth century) before the relative peace of the Edo Period. It was a time in Japanese history famously associated with stories about the feats of men: strong leaders and great samurai warriors. Taking advantage of the lesser-known and less-documented lives of historical women as an opportunity to create graphic narratives about them, these manga can work to destabilize existing male-dominated historical narratives from a gendered perspective.

When depicting (or using) Japanese history, *shōjo* manga authors still often interpolate the idea of the "fantastic"—or more precisely, the mode of speculative fiction, including the idea of "what-if." Yamagishi Ryōko's *Hi izuru tokoro no tenshi* (Emperor of the land of the rising sun, 1980–4) features Prince Shōtoku (593–622) as a protagonist, but one who is, unlike historical accounts, cast as being homosexual and having psychic powers. Higashimura Akiko's *Yukibana no tora* (Snowflake tiger, 2015–20) tells the story of the feudal lord Uesugi Kenshin (1530–78) premised on an unproven and somewhat heretical hypothesis that he was in fact a woman.⁴⁰ The speculative imagination used in these manga allows the *mangaka* to employ artistic and creative license to produce imaginative historical narratives while examining and challenging the status quo through what sci-fi critic and theorist Darko Suvin calls "cognitive estrangement" (1972, 375). Suvin identifies the function of "cognitive estrangement" in speculative fiction as the genre's capacity for destabilizing our (naturalized) perceptions of the world and encouraging new ways of thinking about human society.

One outstanding example of an imaginative historical narrative is Yoshinaga Fumi's *Ōoku: The Inner Chambers* (*Ōoku*, 2004–20). It is an "alternate history" story, set in a version of Japan's Edo Period (1603–1867), in which a plague has wiped out most of the male population and the power of the shogunate government is held and passed on through women. Playing with formulas from BL (boys love) manga, the story follows the female shoguns and their inner chambers (*ōoku*), or "harems," populated with beautiful males. In this work, Yoshinaga uses the trope of gender-swapping to expose and critique the gender inequality of the Edo Period by throwing the male characters into the positions inhabited by historical women. However, the manga also suggests that its fictional matriarchal society is no better than the patriarchal and sexist Edo society that actually existed. Rather, Yoshinaga's manga reveals that corruption comes from the abuse of

power and discrimination and is supported by social practices and institutions. Discussing this manga, scholar Deborah Shamoon argues that Yoshinaga's manga ultimately suggests that "gender roles are more fluid . . . and picturing the men in powerless, objectified positions disrupts the received narrative of Japanese culture and suggests a world where things could be different" (2018b, 298). If such is the case, Yoshinaga's "alternate history" manga calls into question the idea of historical inevitability and opens alternative possibilities beyond what has historically been accumulated and structured, such as customs, power structures, and human relations.

As in the examples described above, many historical manga in the field of *shōjo* manga do not seem interested in "faithful" historical representation. This is perhaps because written and documented histories are largely about men, while women are relegated to the margins. Many *shōjo* manga authors, however, see the absence of women in historical narratives as an opportunity to create stories about the presence of (historical) women. In doing so, they use elements of the "fantastic" or speculative imagination. In her study of fantasy in literature, Rosemary Jackson argues that the genre is not a form of wish fulfillment but rather a "literature of subversion," as the title of her book states. For Jackson, each work of fantasy—no matter how it might present a fantastic world that appears to be detached from reality—is defined by the "real" social and cultural context in which it is produced. She writes that a work of fantasy "traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (1981, 2). This view can be applied to the genre of historical drama, including historical fantasy, in *shōjo* manga. The examples given above, which do not adhere to "faithful" representation, seem to be driven by a desire to examine women's position in society and even to seek social change while rewriting male-centered historical narratives through drawing the lives and contributions of real-life historical women.

Gakushū Manga (Educational Manga)

In the diverse world of Japanese comics, *gakushū* manga (educational manga) is a somewhat unique genre, bridging the domains of manga and education. Sometimes called "informational manga" (*jōhō manga*), works in this genre provide knowledge or information about a specific subject for readers to "learn" (*gakushū*) in the form of graphic narratives. The genre has its origins in supplemental materials created for elementary and middle-school subjects such as history or mathematics. While this is still a core market, the target readership of the *gakushū* manga genre has expanded since the 1980s to include adult readers. Today, a wide variety of *gakushū* manga exist, covering almost every subject area, ranging from typical school subjects to business etiquette, economics, finance, calculus, computer programming, and quantum mechanics.

Historically speaking, however, manga and education have not always been considered compatible. Although children's manga was mobilized as a tool for educating children about science for a short while in Japan during wartime,⁴¹ for most of the twentieth century, manga was regarded as low-brow entertainment and sometimes even criticized as detrimental to children. It seems that as part of an effort to shake this negative image most *gakushū* manga tied in with school learning objectives are primarily published in a hardcover book format. This makes them into a sturdy reference suitable for repeated study—not disposable ephemera—and makes them durable enough for school library use. Indeed, these tend to be the most common type of manga found in school libraries. They are further differentiated from regular manga magazines and books by being circulated as children's books (*jidōsho*) and shelved in the “children's books section”—rather than the “manga section”—of bookstores alongside other educational books.

Among the best and longest-selling titles in this genre are multi-volume sets about history—either Japanese history or world history—for schoolchildren. In the late 1960s, the publisher Shūeisha produced a twelve-volume hardcover series titled *Gakushū manga: Nihon no rekishi* (Educational manga: Japanese history, 1967) which became successful. This led to similar sets being produced by other publishers.⁴² Typically, each volume of these sets covers a different historical period: beginning with an earlier period and progressing through to the present time, they follow the style of typical school textbooks. With a broad acceptance of their educational merits, these historical *gakushū* manga are common on the shelves of school and public libraries.

Unlike other types of commercial manga, historical *gakushū* manga are typically produced by a production committee (*seisaku iinkai*), consisting of a scriptwriter, a *mangaka* who draws the pages, editors, proofreaders, and historians. It is also usual for committees to hire multiple *mangaka* to create different volumes in the same series. Professional historians lend their academic credentials to these historical narratives as “supervising editors” (*kanshū*); thus, they have a strong degree of control over the content.⁴³ Although the accounts of the past depicted are certainly based on historical figures and events, the scriptwriters and *mangaka* use creative license to occasionally include fictional characters, imaginary episodes, and jokes to entertain young readers, so long as these elements do not hamper the primary objective of conveying historical information.

Since historical *gakushū* manga have enjoyed steady growth for some decades, the narrative methods and visual styles they adopt have changed to keep pace with the trends in commercial manga. At the dawn of this genre in the 1960s, the pages of *gakushū* manga were dense with explanatory, annotative narration and characters drawn in a relatively simple and cartoony style, both of which were optimized for conveying historical facts and information. Over time, however, more sophisticated narrative approaches and more varied character designs have come to be used. In

depicting historical figures, some manga employ cuter (*kawaii*) designs familiar to today's young readers; others use a more naturalistic drawing style, as is often found in *seinen* manga. Manga scholar Itō Yū also points out that, compared to earlier versions that featured orthodox page layouts with square panels of consistent size, recent *gakushū* manga adopt varied page layouts, splash pages, and abundant uses of close-ups for a more emotional expression of historical figures as characters (2016, 59). While Itō sees this shift as evidence of a tension between “objectivity” (conveying historical information) and “entertainment” (*goraku-sei*), such techniques seem to have the potential for aiding in deeper exploration of more layers of history by presenting more complex graphic narratives.

Nevertheless, this potential is limited by the generic “learning history” frame of such *gakushū* manga. All *gakushū* manga titles, regardless of their publishing companies, emphasize their utility, attested to by the blurbs printed on their covers employing phrases like “easy-to-understand” and “useful even for college entrance exams.” In other words, the “*gakushū*” (learning) in *gakushū* manga exists in a very narrow framework, and this genre remains largely a supplemental resource for “exam preparation.”⁴⁴ Thus, no matter what approaches even the most recent historical *gakushū* manga take for depicting historical figures as rounded characters with complex personalities, their individual traits ultimately remain the same—that is, they are rarely dynamic characters who undergo significant changes over the course of a story. These limitations are due in part to the economy required to cram details of long histories into small, individual vignettes whose primary purpose is to provide information for exam-oriented education.

For this reason, historical representation in *gakushū* manga is often packaged according to a simplified symbolic pattern, constructing (cultural) myth in Roland Barthes's sense. In his famous essay “Romans in Film” (1957), Barthes analyzes Joseph L. Mankiewicz's 1953 Hollywood film *Julius Caesar* and comments that all Romans in the film wear “fringes” on their heads which functions as a sign of “Roman-ness” and is not representative of historical diversity or accuracy. In historical *gakushū* manga, a similar visual and narrative operation is at work. Each historical period is represented by its most representative events and figures; and the graphic narration typically flattens complex elements into singular, symbolic signs. As such, these historical *gakushū* manga hardly grapple with historical complexity or allude to the silenced or unmentioned “others” in history. In this sense, historical representation in *gakushū* manga remains conservative, and the genre does not challenge “established” historical accounts, despite oft-repeated claims that these manga “include new historical discoveries.”

* * *

It must be remembered that any work of historical representation is a product of selection, not only because there is a limit to the accounts that

exist in recorded history but also because there is infinite depth to historical reality. Not only does the necessity of making a history that is coherent and engaging limit what can be included, but the medium that is used also shapes what is included and how it is presented. Unlike historians, whose task is usually considered to be collecting materials and facts in order to objectively evaluate and present information in prose, *mangaka* are primarily tasked with creating visually exciting graphic narratives that appeal to readers.⁴⁵ In doing so, as do the authors of historical novels, *mangaka* fuse historical accounts and fictional stories—some imaginatively. However, this does not mean that they are divorced from social reality. On the contrary, the opposite is true—that is, each manga is shaped by the social conditions of the time it is created, and each manga is thus part of a complex web of social and cultural circumstances. This observation applies not only to the genre of war manga, which tends to invite historical debates, or to the *gakushū* manga that are aligned with the current exam-oriented Japanese education system. As discussed above, even historical fantasy, a genre that brings the unreal or the imaginary into a historical narrative, can address societal issues and critique prevailing power structures. As such, historical representation in historical manga will always carry social consequences.

Media Mix and *Dōjinshi* Participatory Culture

If one takes a stroll down a busy street of Tokyo, one will most likely encounter manga or anime characters used in advertisements, on public announcement posters, as illustrations on snack packages and water bottles, and as decorations on keychains hooked onto the backpacks of schoolchildren (see Figure 2.6). The ubiquity of manga and anime characters in (sub)urban everyday surroundings is arguably an end product of the “media mix,” a Japanese transmedia marketing and franchising strategy that has been operating for some decades. Although similar transmedia marketing existed much earlier, the term “media mix” (*media mikkusu*) was popularized by publisher Kadokawa Shoten. In the mid-1970s, Kadokawa first cross-adapted its published books into films while simultaneously featuring photographic images from the film adaptations on the republished covers of its books, intended to create a synergistic effect in the promotion of both media products. The concept of media mix overlaps with the idea of “media convergence” proposed by Henry Jenkins (2006), who explains media convergence as “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” (2). In this description, Jenkins points to the interconnectedness between (media) corporations and fans in



FIGURE 2.6 *Manga characters from Gotōge Koyoharu's Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba, Akutami Gege's Jujutsu Kaisen, Usui Yoshito's Crayon Shin-chan, and others used on snack packages. Photo by the authors.*

forming our dynamic new media culture. This section discusses the way these two forces—industry and fandom—have contributed to the expansion of manga culture in the Japanese context.

Media Mix and the Medium Specificity of Manga

While much discussion of the media mix focuses on postwar Japanese popular media (Ito 2005; Allison 2006; Steinberg 2012), character merchandizing has been a common practice since the early twentieth century. When the manga series *The Adventures of Shō-chan* became popular with children in the 1920s, the eponymous boy character became popular with children and made appearances in various advertisements (Miyamoto 2011, 89). Children flocked to Shō-chan events such as a 1924 Children's Day event billed as "Shō-chan Day" and a 1925 two-day "Shō-chan New Year Party," where they not only heard from the creators of the manga and watched Shō-chan performances and dances but also received Shō-chan medals and had their photos taken with character cutouts. Many participants wore Shō-chan caps (*Shō-chan bō*), a fad sparked by the manga ("Osaka" 1924; "Shō-chan to risu" 1925). Even at an unrelated festival, paper Shō-chan masks were also sold as souvenirs ("Jigusu" 1924). In the 1930s, when

Tagawa Suihō's manga *Norakuro* was embraced by children, the eponymous anthropomorphic dog protagonist was merchandized in the form of toys, stationery, figurines, and everyday commodities. Among those, many unlicensed products were created by various companies that took advantage of the popularity of the manga since the idea of copyright relating to licensing was not fully accepted or practiced at the time (Kimura 2019, 201). Ōtsuka Eiji (2018) points to the creation and rights control of a family of manga characters, the *Yokusan ikka* (Imperial Rule Support Family), by the totalitarian wartime government's Imperial Assistance Association as arguably an early form of "media mix." This family of manga characters were used in promoting active support for war mobilization in Japan and its colonies. They appeared in newspaper and magazine manga by well-known *mangaka* such as Hasegawa Machiko, Shishido Sakō, and Matsushita Ichio, as well as in novels, picture books, popular song, and do-it-yourself puppets.

Media studies scholar Marc Steinberg locates one of the predecessors of the media mix practice in the production of the anime series *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atomu*, broadcast from 1963 to 1966). Based on Tezuka Osamu's manga of the same title, it was the first TV anime series in Japanese TV history. When Tezuka's own anime production studio Mushi Production tried to sell the anime to a TV broadcast company, Tezuka offered episodes at a price much lower than the cost to produce them.⁴⁶ To make up for this gap in revenue, Mushi Production collaborated with confectionery company Meiji Seika, allowing it to sell chocolate snacks with stickers of the main character as enclosed premiums. One episode of the *Astro Boy* TV series even featured a Meiji chocolate snack in the storyworld (Steinberg 2012, 37–8), possibly the earliest example of product placement in Japanese anime history. Mushi Production's success with *Astro Boy* provided a template for an early media mix model in which Japanese TV anime production studios had close connections, through tie-ins, with other industries and companies, including publishers, toy companies, stationery makers, and candy and snack companies, while media content, and especially fictional characters, migrated across different media platforms. Subsequently, the media mix was practiced, refined, and expanded by Kadokawa Shoten and other new media corporations in the 1970s, shaping the structure of our current popular media systems. Well-known properties outside Japan such as *Pokémon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, and *Yo-kai Watch* were all planned from their initial stages as media mix franchises (rather than starting with only a single original media product in mind). Thus, one might encounter any of these properties in one or multiple media formats without knowing its original media format.⁴⁷

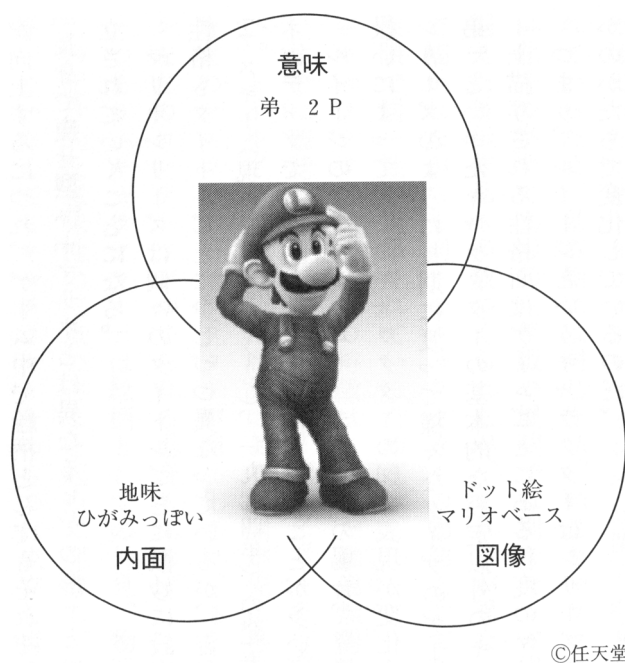
One of the reasons for the expansion of the media mix in the sphere of Japanese popular culture is companies' efforts to reduce the financial risks involved with new large-scale corporate projects while at the same time increasing synergistic effects to increase commercial gain by amplifying the visibility of (or accessibility to) products for sale. Since around 2000, the

sales numbers of manga magazines have been decreasing, but the decline in publishing revenue can be compensated for by an increase in adaptations across multiple media platforms—for example, adapting serialized manga into books (*tankōbon*), TV anime, films, games, novels, and merchandized products. In the current media ecology, some manga magazines have become deeply enmeshed in the network of the media mixed system. Such examples include Kadokawa Shoten's monthly manga magazines *Shōnen ěsu* (Shōnen ace, 1994–present) and *Dengeki Daioh* (1994–present), both of which function as outlets not only for new manga content (which can later be adapted into other media forms) but also for recasting anime, games, and light novels in the form of manga.

In his book on why Japan is a “media mixing” nation, Marc Steinberg contrasts American transmedia practices with Japanese media mix by highlighting this distinctive difference: whereas the American transmedia strategy has gravitated toward sustaining a unified worldview across different media platforms, Japanese media mix is centered on characters, allowing them to exist in different, transmedia(ted) worlds, even those containing narrative contradictions among derivate narratives or worlds (Steinberg 2015, 334). Although this view might be a sweeping generalization, it has been observed by others that recent Japanese media-mix franchises are centered on characters, not storytelling. Based on his ethnographic research on the contemporary anime industry, cultural anthropologist Ian Condry (2013) argues that in the current anime production system, character-building is far more important than storytelling or world-building (56). Previously, animated film production began with a script or overall planning, but Condry documents and analyzes the present-day, common practice of the anime industry, especially the “production committee” (*seisaku iinkai*) system—a joint venture, consisting of multiple different companies and stakeholders (such as music companies, TV broadcast companies, publishers, toy companies, and advertisement agencies)—that often begins with character-building.⁴⁸ In the Japanese media mix, Condry argues, “rather than transmedia storytelling, we witness a kind of transmedia *character* telling” (57).

Whereas existing English-language scholarship approaches to media mix focus on anime (and anime production) in the network of media industries, an important role still seems to be played by the medium specific nature of manga, especially its hand-drawn cartoony characters, in the current form of media mix.⁴⁹ In his discussion on manga characters, Japanese manga critic Itō Gō (2006) proposes the concept of *kyara*, separating it from a typical sense of character or “round character” (a character endowed with a complex, multidimensional, and unpredictable nature). According to Itō, *kyara* is something ontologically prior to character—a sort of “proto-character”—which gives a “sense of existence” and a “sense of life.” For Itō, a *kyara* (i.e., the proto-character) is shaped by visual images, whereas characters are “shaped by narrative action” (2006, 107). Japanese critic

Odagiri Hiroshi has carefully considered Itō analysis and devised a triad scheme to analyze characters in visual media (manga, anime, and video games, etc.). According to him, a character has a combination of three elements: meaning, interiority (*naimen*), and icon/image (Odagiri, 2010, 119–20) (see Figure 2.7). If a character is primarily defined by meaning, it is a flat character (a character endowed with one or a few traits; highly predictable in behavior); if a character is defined by interiority (or the conscious self), it can be a round character.⁵⁰ If character is defined by image, it is what Itō calls *kyara*. To put it plainly, *kyara* is an iconic image drawn in a simplified form, whereas a character is defined by narrative and a sense of selfhood (the interiority of a character). Itō's concept of *kyara* points to the force of iconic character design that appeals to those who can identify it without any context or narrative background. Unlike a photo-realistic character with distinctive visual details, an iconic, often caricature-derived, cartoony style of character allows itself to be identified as the “same” character at different instances, regardless of each individual (nuanced) visual difference—insofar as it carries specific identifiable iconic resemblance—even when adapted into different media platforms.⁵¹ Although



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図 3-4 キャラクター構成要素の分解

FIGURE 2.7 Luigi is divided into the three composite elements: meaning (Mario's brother), interiority (low-key and cynical), and image (pixel art based on Mario). Used with permission.

not limited to Japanese manga character design,⁵² this iconic, cartoony drawing style can most readily be observed in postwar story manga, possibly due to the intense labor typically required in producing the same main characters repeatedly in manga pages while completing each serial installment within a relatively short period of time. While drawing manga, a *mangaka* has to draw, by hand, the same protagonist repeatedly in different panels and pages throughout the story, and each image may have slight differences (e.g., postures, angles, facial expressions, etc.), but the visual resemblance of each drawn image—the iconic elements of the character drawing—guarantees recognition of the character’s identity. This economy of iconic, hand-drawn character design in the current form of manga is the key—or at least one of the keys—to understanding the character-centric media mix. In other words, the autonomy of *kyara*, with its cross-media, expansive capabilities, emerges from the cartoony iconicity, which has enabled characters to migrate into different media platforms without being bound to their original narrative context or specific media platforms.⁵³

Contents Tourism

A recent development in the Japanese media mix involves local governments and communities as actors—it is no longer limited to the private sector. As many villages and towns in rural Japan have suffered economic and population decline since the 1970s, several municipalities, in cooperation with local chambers of commerce, have initiated “village revival” or “town revival” movements (known as *mura okoshi* and *machi okoshi*). These local revitalization movements were initially developed to support local businesses, industries, and communities to maintain or increase population through the promotion of tourist spots, local products, and traditional festivals to domestic and international tourists. Since the 1990s, several local governments have begun to use manga and manga characters and settings to promote local tourism. Taking advantage of the popularity of *mangaka* Mizuki Shigeru (best known for his *Kitarō* series), the municipal office in the city of Sakaiminato in Tottori Prefecture created a tourist attraction called the “Mizuki Shigeru Road.” More than 100 bronze statues of Mizuki Shigeru’s manga characters, based on *yōkai* (Japanese preternatural creatures found in ancient folklore), line the sidewalk of the main street running from the train station to the township center (see Figure 2.8). Capitalizing on Mizuki’s fame and the fact that he spent his childhood here, the municipality has attempted to boost tourism in the town. They even target foreign tourists as can be seen from their website which uses English, Chinese (traditional and simplified), Korean, and Russian. The 2003 opening of the Mizuki Shigeru Memorial Museum was followed by a constant stream of planned *yōkai*-themed festivals, exhibits, and other events. Large illustrations of Mizuki’s *yōkai* characters are used to decorate local trains and busses, and



FIGURE 2.8 Two of Mizuki Shigeru's yōkai characters, Kitarō and his buddy Medama Oyaji, stand on a post box in Sakaiminato, Tottori. Photo by the authors.

yōkai-themed souvenirs and products are sold at vendors and shops on the main streets of the town. Sakaiminato's campaign has been recognized as a "successful case" of a town-revival movement through its leveraging of Mizuki's yōkai characters to steadily increase local tourism while regentrifying and populating previously deserted streets and local stores in the town. In 2005 the national government cited Sakaiminato's example an ideal model for what they called "contents tourism"⁵⁴ and encouraged other municipalities and local governments facing similar socioeconomic decline to follow suit.

Since these early efforts, the term "contents tourism" has attracted considerable attention from Japanese mass media outlets, local officials, media companies, and even academics. Similar to the English-language concept of film-induced tourism or media-induced tourism, Japanese contents tourism is driven by popular media, especially manga, anime, TV dramas, and games (Seaton and Yamamura 2015). In this type of tourism,

manga/anime fans visit the locales depicted in their favorite manga or anime. One well-known example is the Washimiya district of Kuki City in Saitama Prefecture. This town was used as the setting for the anime series *Lucky Star*—originally, a *yonkoma* manga (four-panel comic strip) series—that was broadcast on TV in 2007. Fans of *Lucky Star* suddenly flocked to Washimiya to visit a local shrine, take photos, and explore the town. In Japanese popular culture fandom, the activity of visiting places modeled on or featured in (fictional) anime or manga is called *seichi junrei*, literally meaning “pilgrimage to a sacred site.”⁵⁵ This media-hyped fandom activity has become prominent since Washimiya’s *Lucky Star* case, and similar “pilgrimages to sacred sites” have taken place all over Japan. In 2017, the Japan Anime Tourism Association announced a list of eighty-eight sacred anime sites all over Japan (Nagata 2017).⁵⁶ Local communities have responded to fans’ expectations by media mixing local products with images and characters from the manga and anime. The main streets of the Washimiya district, for instance, are full of *Lucky Star*-related products, cafés, souvenirs, flags, and posters. Tourism studies scholar Takayoshi Yamamura (2014) describes Washimiya as a successful example of contents tourism due to the “collaboration between the local community, the fans, and the copyright holders” (64). Contents tourism is viewed as another expression of the media mix, involving the public sector and local communities.

The proliferation of media-mixed content has also created a new communal and cultural mediascape both in urban areas and local places. On the one hand, the media mix has increased the number of entry points to a storyworld via any number of material objects and places, like a *Pokémon* character on a T-shirt or a manga character sticker placed on any commodity. On the other hand, it has also generated a situation in which fictional characters appear in the public sphere. At the Japan Railway (JR) Takadanobaba Station in Tokyo, close to where Tezuka’s Mushi Production was initially located, one encounters huge murals on which Astro Boy and other Tezuka characters are painted. At the station, instead of bell sounds, they play the melody taken from the opening song of the *Astro Boy* TV anime to announce the departure of trains. Ōme Station, another JR station in Tokyo, uses the melody from the TV anime series *Himitsu no Akko-chan* (The secrets of Akko-chan), based on Akatsuka Fujio’s magical girl manga. Manga (and anime) characters such as these have become part of everyday life through the media mix, which gives an impression (especially to outside observers) that the Japanese people as a whole embrace manga, anime, and other forms of popular culture.

Dōjinshi Participatory Culture

Whereas the current manga industry is maintained and amplified by the media mix of media companies in a top-down relationship, fans’ participatory

culture, a culture in which manga fans are no longer merely passive consumers but act as contributors and producers (“prosumers”) supports it from the bottom-up.⁵⁷ Since the 1970s, manga readers and fans have increasingly become active players in the building of fan communities, creating self-produced manga and organizing conventions in which they not only share their passion for manga but also buy and sell their own creations without relying on existing commercial distribution channels. These DIY-spirited, fan-created manga or manga magazines are known as *dōjin* (peer-produced) manga or *dōjinshi*. The term *dōjin* literally means “like-minded people” who share an interest in culturally creative activities, and *shi* as in *zasshi* (magazine) indicates their typical paper format. A typical *dōjinshi* is created, funded, published, and often distributed by fans outside of the official and commercial industries.

Historically, there has been a long tradition of self-published *dōjinshi* production in Japan. In the late nineteenth century, *dōjinshi* activities emerged in the sphere of literary production, in which “amateur” fans self-published and shared their own short stories, haiku, and *tanka* (a traditional poetry genre). In the 1920s and 1930s, political activists and union leaders printed and circulated in-house brochures, booklets, and magazines that featured cartoons and comic strips. They were not typically understood as *dōjinshi*, as these print creations were distributed to express their political arguments and discussions beyond the group membership. It is also known that in the 1950s, Fujiko Fujio (a *mangaka* duo) and Ishimori Shōtarō (who later renamed himself Ishinomori Shōtarō) created, collated, and circulated manga among those who shared their interest in manga before establishing their professional careers. These *dōjinshi* were hand-crafted and thus very limited in circulation. Around the late 1950s, manga clubs started popping up in high schools and university campuses, in which students organized meetings while honing their drawing and storytelling skills by creating manga together.

The early 1970s saw a major surge in *dōjinshi* production. Sharon Kinsella (2000) points out that that this was due to the techno-environmental shift in which “cheap and portable offset printing and photocopying facilities rapidly became available to the public” (104). The affordability of and accessibility to print reproduction technologies allowed manga fans to distribute their own *dōjinshi* more widely. This also meant that *dōjinshi* were created not only for sharing among group members but also among others who might support such an activity, allowing fans to find their own audiences.

Another reason for the expansion of non-professional manga production at the beginning of the 1970s was the manga magazine *COM*, founded by Tezuka Osamu in 1967, which encouraged the creation of manga by fans. In the spirit of Katō Ken’ichi and his *Manga Shōnen* magazine (1947–52), which encouraged its readers to contribute their own comic strips, Tezuka created *COM* not merely as a typical manga magazine for maturing readers

who wanted to enjoy serialized manga but also as a platform for facilitating communication among fans. The editors of COM were well aware of the growing numbers of manga fans participating in *dōjinshi* activities all over Japan, and thus they encouraged fans to organize local manga groups and asked them to send their manga *dōjinshi* to the editorial office.⁵⁸ A section in the magazine called Gra-Com (Gura-kon)—a contraction of “Grand Companion”—was home to this endeavor (see Fig 1.13 in Chapter 1). The Gra-Com section fostered community-building among local manga fans and groups by giving instructions and tips about how to make their *dōjinshi* and circulate it among the members. Manga groups all over Japan responded to such calls and began sending in their *dōjinshi* while holding small-scale fan meetings in various locations.⁵⁹ Cultural anthropologist Jennifer Prough (2011), who conducted research on *shōjo* manga magazine production, identifies such interactions among editors, *mangaka*, and readers in the *shōjo* magazines through the notion of a “fabricated community” (23). COM made maximum use of the Gra-Com section for developing a sense of belonging to a manga community even among the fans who were located geographically apart. This section included a subsection titled “Manga Prep School” (Manga yobikō), in which the editors invited the submission of original mini-comics. Selected submissions were published and received evaluative feedback and suggestions from editors. Many highly-regarded *mangaka*, including Takemiya Keiko, Ōtomo Katsuhiro, Yamagishi Ryōko, Morohoshi Daijirō, Okada Fumiko, and Yamada Murasaki, went through the experience of publishing their manga in this Gra-Com section before they began their professional careers.

Japanese manga fandom became more autonomous and self-reliant over the course of the 1970s. One of the triggers for this development was the sudden termination of COM in 1973 due to the financial failure of Tezuka’s Mushi Production. It frustrated amateur *dōjinshi* creators and would-be manga authors because they lost a major venue for sharing their manga and becoming professional manga authors, but several non-professional creators and creator groups continued to make their own manga and manga review magazines after the demise of COM. One of these groups, named *Meikyū* (Labyrinth) and comprising Yonezawa Yoshihiro, Shimotsuki Takanaka (a.k.a. Harada Teruo), and several like-minded others, founded Comic Market (a.k.a. Comiket) in 1975, a manga convention where manga fans could gather and buy and sell their self-published manga *dōjinshi*.

Comic Market began as a small, one-day “spot sale event” (*sokubai-kai*) for manga *dōjinshi*, with approximately 700 attendees. Over the years, it has grown steadily. Currently, it is held biannually and has become the world largest *dōjinshi* or self-published comics buy-and-sell event. Since the 2010s, it has been attracting more than 500,000 attendees, making the event triple the size of the San Diego Comic Convention (SDCC). Unlike SDCC, there was no admission fee for Comic Market until recently. Since 2019, an admission fee has been introduced to regulate the growing number of

visitors. Today, Comic Market is no longer a venue just for *dōjinshi* but is also open to other *dōjin* media, such as self-created music CDs, figurines, video games, anime works, and light novels. Commercial publishers and media companies have booths at the site as well, although the majority of participants are still non-professional individuals and groups. In addition to Comic Market, there are other similar comic conventions nationwide, including well-known ones such as COMITIA, Comic City, Comic Treasure, and Comic Live. The social and cultural impact of these fan events, along with the economic impact of this “shadow economy” estimated at 18 billion yen (approximately 162 million US dollars) cannot be ignored,⁶⁰ but copyright holders—that is manga industry authors and publishers—by and large do not attempt to intervene in this field of fannish activity over the legally ambiguous position of the fans’ derivative works (except in a few rare cases).⁶¹ This is largely because not only are these fans paying consumers of manga industry published works, but also many new talented professional manga creators have emerged from this sort of participatory culture. Several professional manga authors, including Takahashi Rumiko, Saimon Fumi, Shirow Masamune, CLAMP (a group of female manga authors), and Kōno Fumiyo, have experience publishing and selling their manga in the *dōjin* scene.⁶² At the same time, this manga fandom has also carefully created its own self-imposed rules with respect to existing industry and professional authors.

Japan’s participatory manga culture has served as an alternative site for new and unorthodox manga expression, often overlooked by commercial interests or existing mainstream publishers. This is because fans have more freedom to pursue their self-expression or artistic expression, learn new knowledge and skills with and from each other, and, most importantly, share strong support from others who find value in such *dōjin* creations. In today’s manga culture, fannish production has further expanded into online space, where fans publish their works and receive feedback—two examples of popular online platforms are Pixiv and Nico Nico Seiga. This manga fandom scene constitutes a major segment of the current manga culture, maintaining its relative autonomy in which fans sustain and self-regulate the community “of the fans, by the fans, and for the fans,” to quote one of the organizers of Comic Market (Shimotsuki 2008, 15).

Cultural Status and Institutions

Despite its current domestic and global reputation, manga was long considered low-brow entertainment for children and was consistently associated with illiteracy, vulgarity, and even idiocy throughout much of the twentieth century. As discussed in the “Controversy and censorship” section, manga has frequently been the target of social criticism and deemed something “harmful” to young readers. This low reputation seems to have

undergone a shift since some time in the 1990s, when cultural and academic institutions began to express interest in the medium, which—together with mounting media reports about the growing popularity of manga both in Japan and overseas—has raised the cultural status of manga in Japanese society. Even though manga continues to be labeled a “subculture” (*sabukarucha*)—which in the Japanese context is used to mean something low-brow beneath (or “sub”) officially recognized arts such as oil painting, sculpture, or ballet—this label has come to be a badge of honor to be celebrated, promoted as a national culture, and the concern of cultural institutions long dedicated to “higher” arts. However, the encounters between cultural institutions and manga have produced intriguing frictions and tensions, some of which foreground institutional conventions as well as the specific nature of the medium. This section first addresses how the elevation of manga’s status came about and what kind of actors and institutions were involved. With the continuing rise in the cultural status of manga in early twenty-first century Japan, political organizations, including the Japanese government and other agencies, have begun to employ the medium as a vehicle for spreading their political messages to the public. This section also discusses their mobilization of the medium and points out some of the problematic issues that arise from this interaction.

Manga’s Rising Cultural Status

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, manga—especially, long-form narrative comics or “story manga”—developed as a part of a vibrant popular culture. By the end of the 1980s, manga had become a commercially robust business, particularly bolstered by the cross-media adaptation “media mix” business model. Until recently, however, manga was not fully acknowledged by cultural gatekeepers and authorities—for example, museums, the art world, literary/cultural critic circles, and academia—although some critics and scholars have sporadically argued for the social and cultural importance of the medium throughout its history. One of the key events that triggered the initial wave of re-evaluating manga in the public sphere was the death of Tezuka Osamu. His passing in 1989, widely reported by major newspapers, prompted a reassessment of his life’s achievements and the medium of manga in general. In the following year, the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art held the Tezuka Osamu Exhibition which celebrated Tezuka as a “genius” and his manga as “art.” Many of his works were subsequently reprinted not in a typical manga book format but rather in a larger-sized, hardcover book format more associated with “literary books” (Itō 2016, 368). In 1997, the Asahi Newspaper Company created the Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize, an annual award for excellence in manga works and as manga artists.⁶³ In the same year, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, a governmental body attached to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT),

also established an annual award to recognize and give prizes for what they described as “media arts” (*media geijutsu*)—animation, manga, digital art, and video games, and so on.⁶⁴ At the same time, numerous museums, art galleries, libraries, and other cultural and commercial venues began to stage a growing number of manga exhibitions, further raising the profile of manga in society.

Along with this growing interest in manga by both public and governmental sectors in the 2000s, several dedicated “manga museums” and “manga libraries” have been the established. Unlike the already existing, smaller museums with a focus on individual *mangaka*—for example, the Cartoon Art Museum in Saitama, devoted to the life and artwork of Kitazawa Rakuten (opened in 1966)—these newer institutions collect manga books and manga-related materials with a broad emphasis on their cultural importance. One of the earliest in this new generation of manga institutions was the Hiroshima City Manga Library (opened in 1997), a public library dedicated solely to manga, which has systematically collected more than 130,000 manga magazines and books (as of 2015).

In 2006, the Kyoto International Manga Museum, one of the largest manga museums, was founded. Started as a joint venture between Kyoto Seika University and the city of Kyoto, the museum houses and preserves a collection of over 300,000 items (as of 2016), from woodblock print caricatures from the Edo Period to magazines and books dating from the nineteenth century to the present. While ostensibly a museum, the Kyoto International Manga Museum also functions in many respects as a library.⁶⁵ In fact, visitors will find numerous bookshelves loaded with manga lining the walls throughout the museum from which they can freely browse and read. The museum also offers activities such as manga drawing workshops and *kamishibai* (“paper theater”) performances,⁶⁶ in addition to its permanent exhibits and continually changing themed exhibitions. Along with the affiliated International Manga Research Center of Kyoto Seika University, the Kyoto International Manga Museum serves as an important hub for researchers and scholars today.

In 2009, Meiji University in Tokyo opened the Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subculture. Located in a small building next to the campus of Meiji University, it houses the manga collection of Yonezawa Yoshihiro, a manga critic and one of the founders of the Comic Market. With the addition of the collection from the Contemporary Manga Library (Gendai manga toshokan), originally founded in 1978 by manga collector Naiki Toshio, the facility has grown into another important site for researching manga, manga-related materials, and fan cultures.⁶⁷ In the sense that the institutional mission of modern museums is to conserve and collect artifacts of cultural, historical, and scientific significance in the service of society, the founding of these manga museums and libraries seems to have done much to “legitimize” manga as an officially sanctioned “culture” in Japan.

In the process of incorporating manga into these cultural institutions, however, challenges and questions have arisen not only over the use of public funds but also about how each institution should approach manga in terms of collection and presentation. In particular, the diverse media forms of manga—with its multiple publication formats, serialization, narrative elements, massive volume of production, and so on—have generated fascinating tensions concerning institutional conventions. First, unlike traditional museums that collect and display original works of art, the majority of items collected at manga museums (and libraries) are reproductions—that is, mass-produced copies in varying sizes and formats—not (always) one-off pieces of artwork directly made by the hand of an artist.⁶⁸ Second, many commercial manga are serialized graphic narratives, published first in pulp-paper magazines—a sign of their ephemeral consumption and disposability—which is not necessarily suitable for long-term preservation. Thus, older issues of manga magazines are often shelved in “closed stacks”—that is, access to such items is restricted, and patrons must make requests to library staff to view them, so that they might be preserved. Third, the sequential nature of manga, along with its narrative elements, seems to be a particular source of friction with institutional conventions. Many of the initial manga exhibitions at museums and galleries followed the orthodox practices applied in the presentation of artwork like paintings, displaying single pages or double-page spreads in frames hung on the wall. While such a method of presentation gives visitors an opportunity to appreciate the aesthetic aspect of manga as a *viewing* experience, it misses the narrative aspect of manga as a *reading* experience. The serialized nature of manga tended to be marginalized or completely disregarded in these methods of display. Lastly, the publication speed and volume of commercial manga magazines, published weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly, is a vexed issue for both libraries and museums in terms of collecting and archiving them.⁶⁹

To mediate these challenges and tensions, manga museums and manga libraries have devised various novel ways to explore manga and offer diverse aesthetic and interactive experiences to visitors. For instance, some recent manga exhibitions offer a reading space where visitors can pick up and read various formats of manga magazines and books—an opportunity to be more than just a static observer of displayed artwork. At the Kyoto International Manga Museum, visitors are encouraged to sit down on floors and chat about manga with friends and others, instead of conforming to the expected quiet reading more typical of libraries (Itō 2016, 374). These measures have been implemented in light of manga’s status as both a reading and viewing medium and its historical development as a communal medium—one that has been shared by people and experienced as part of their everyday lives.⁷⁰

Recent manga exhibitions have also experimented with a variety of presentation methods. One such exhibition to receive great acclaim for its

innovative presentation techniques was “Inoue Takehiko: The LAST Manga Exhibition,” held at the Ueno Royal Museum in 2008.⁷¹ Curated by Inoue himself (who is best known for his popular manga series *Slam Dunk*), this exhibition was thematically focused on the final day of Miyamoto Musashi, the legendary samurai protagonist of Inoue’s popular manga series *Vagabond* (1998–2015), at that point still being serialized in a magazine. At the exhibition, visitors were guided by screen panels placed in a zigzag fold, imitative of open manga pages, inviting them into the storyworld of Inoue’s manga.⁷² Visitors also saw both Inoue’s hand-drawn manga pages—sequentially arranged and hung on the wall at different heights—and brush paintings on large-scale Japanese paper (*washi*) roughly three meters in height, almost reaching the gallery’s high ceiling from the floor. By walking through the architectural structures of the exhibition space—different rooms, stairways, and the large hall—and the unique arrangement of the display, visitors could follow the (graphic) narrative while also appreciating Inoue’s graphic art. In her review of the exhibition, manga scholar Fujimoto Yukari (2008a) praised it as groundbreaking in that it completely changed the existing notion of a “manga exhibition” by simulating the “experience of reading manga” through the whole space of the museum (68).⁷³ This kind of creative presentation—in part a product of the collaboration between the *mangaka* and the art directors of the institution—was stimulated by the careful consideration of the medium-specific nature of manga.

These cases illustrate the challenges that arise from the encounter between manga and cultural institutions, with each such challenge also serving as an opportunity to create new approaches to how visitors can experience manga. At the same time, the measures applied by each institution also highlight the unique nature of the manga form and of its place in everyday life, different from that of other already legitimized artwork within traditional institutions. In this regard, the coupling of manga with cultural institutions has encouraged a re-examination of institutional conventions while also fostering more diverse methods for exploring manga.

Academic Institutions

Another development that contributed to the rise of manga’s cultural status was a concerted effort within academia to institutionalize manga as a scholarly field of study. As in the study of comics elsewhere, earlier writings on manga were the work of cultural critics, journalists, critic-practitioners, and some scholars in traditional disciplines (see Theisen 2017). In the wake of Tezuka’s death in 1989, a number of “manga criticism” (*manga hihyō*) books were published. Unlike previous writings on manga, 1990s manga criticism focused on formal and visual elements as well as manga’s transmedia adaptability, which attracted numerous scholars and researchers from different disciplines to the medium.⁷⁴ Around the same time, several universities began offering courses about manga—not only vocationally-

oriented courses teaching techniques for drawing manga at art universities but also courses for critically *studying* manga. Kyoto Seika University has become well known for teaching manga—both in terms of theoretical and practical courses. Building on an earlier manga course, it became the first, and still the only, university to get government approval to create a manga studies department (established in 2006). The school also currently offers a PhD program focusing on manga. At present at least twenty-four other universities have departments offering majors in manga, and many more offer manga or manga related classes in their programs. The renewed interest in manga in the 1990s eventually resulted in the first academic society dedicated to the study of manga, The Japan Society for Studies in Cartoons and Comics (JSSCC) in 2001.⁷⁵

The initial attempt to institutionalize manga within academia was met with some suspicion and hesitancy—if not resistance—from some *mangaka*, non-academic critics, and collectors because of the “possible monopolization of manga discourse by intellectuals and academics” (Berndt 2008, 301). In this context, academia was taken as a symbol of authority, which seemed to some critics inappropriate for discussing manga, a medium that had developed mostly as popular art and entertainment without any “endorsement” from the academic world.⁷⁶ The founders of JSSCC, consisting of scholars, critics, and collectors, gave these matters some thought and created a more open platform by welcoming *mangaka*, editors, publishers, collectors, and others who shared interests in manga as members of the society, in addition to university-affiliated scholars and researchers. The annual conferences of JSSCC, for instance, consist of academic presentations (first day) and a selection of featured panels or symposia that include *mangaka*, editors, and collectors (second day).

On the other hand, academia also faces its own limitations in terms of scholarly and institutional conventions when approaching manga. It is also a constant challenge to create meaningful dialogues among scholars in different disciplines as well as among academic and non-academic members. On another level, the multimodal nature of the medium—that is, manga’s meaning-making in visual, textual, and other semiotic modes—also poses a unique challenge to traditional disciplinary approaches and methods. Taking into account the formal hybridity of manga, studying manga resists a mono-disciplinary approach—as might be employed in, say, the study of literature or fine art—and calls for a re-examination and modification of scholarly conventions and methodologies. As some comics/manga scholars have discussed (Hatfield 2010), studying comics/manga entails a self-critical examination of disciplinary orientations while demanding interdisciplinary dialogues and approaches.⁷⁷

As in the case of other cultural institutions, the challenges faced by academics have indeed provided opportunities for scholars to reassess how they engage with and position themselves within their own disciplines, and also to reconsider their methods of research. In addition, the academic study

of manga has initiated interdisciplinary work and scholarly collaboration among differently situated scholars and non-academic individuals and groups, which has the potential to form a culture of openness and trust without recreating the modern, (culturally) hierarchical academic structure.

Political Institutions

In the 2000s as manga increasingly made inroads into foreign markets and domestically became even more widely embraced by the public and cultural institutions, some political organizations began to take advantage of the medium for their own respective political agendas. One of the political organizations that actively capitalizes on manga is, in fact, the Japanese government itself. Since the mid-2000s, the government has been promoting contemporary Japanese popular culture, including manga, anime, TV dramas, video games, character goods, and fashion, under the banner of “Cool Japan.” The “Cool Japan” campaign, involving multiple governmental agencies, was in large part inspired by journalist Douglas McGray’s 2002 essay, “Gross National Cool,” in which Gray discussed Japan as a rising “cultural superpower” rather than the economic power it was known as throughout the second half of the preceding century. This reinterpretation of Japan gave the government, which had struggled to get the economy back on the path to recovery after the bubble economy burst in the early 1990s, an opportunity to reinvent itself—or more precisely, to (re-)brand its image for the international community. In 2008, the government appointed the cute robot character Doraemon, taken from Fujiko F. Fujio’s popular manga (and anime) series, as Japan’s “cultural ambassador.” Government officials, including then Prime Minister Asō Tarō, publicly admitted to being avid fans of manga and anime. In 2012, the government appointed politician Inada Tomomi as the first minister in charge of implementing the “‘Cool Japan’ Strategy” (and Inada occasionally made public appearances while wearing “gothic lolita” fashion). As noted in McGray’s essay, the Japanese government actively deploys what Joseph Nye calls “soft power”—that is, the ability to attain what one wants through attraction, often by cultural and ideological means rather than by coercion or payments (“hard power”) through military or economic domination (see Nye 2004; Yano 2013, 5)—in order to make Japan appeal to the world.

Yet, the government’s “Cool Japan” campaign has been the subject of criticism and resistance. Critics like Ōtsuka Eiji and Ōsawa Nobuaki (2005, 12) reject the idea that popular culture, like manga or anime, represent “Japanese-ness” or Japanese tradition. For them, Japanese popular culture is never a reflection of “Japanese shared values,” “Japanese ethnic nature” (*kokumin-sei*), or “Japanese traditional culture” (295), all of which phrases have appeared in official campaign documents. In fact, what is discounted in the discourses of “Cool Japan” is the historical hybridization process of

“Japanese” popular culture—in other words, that Japanese culture is in fact the product of constant interaction and negotiation with non-Japanese cultural forms and media. In Chapter 1, we highlighted how one of the popular narratives about the “origins” of manga, one that can be traced back to ancient Japanese visual culture, falls into the same discursive pattern.⁷⁸

In recent years, the phrase “Cool Japan” has been heard more often within Japan than in the other countries that the campaign is supposed to target. Since the late 1990s, there has been a growing visibility of so-called “Japan-Is-Great” (*nihon sugoi*) phenomena in Japanese popular media (TV shows, popular books, magazines, etc.). These programs and publications have disseminated a “self-praising” rhetoric about Japan and presented Japanese people as being “special” and “unique” for their historical, cultural, and ethical qualities (Hayakawa 2017).⁷⁹ In this context, the “Cool Japan” campaign seems to be complicit with increasing nationalistic sentiments, being a form of cultural nationalism itself.

Similarly, media scholar Iwabuchi Koichi critiques the “Cool Japan” as a kind of a monologue by Japan, arguing that it fails to offer any cross-border platform for meaningful dialogues (Iwabuchi 2015). Scholar Susan Napier (2000) also discusses how non-Japanese audiences find one of the fundamental appeals of “Japanese” popular culture—“anime” in the case of Napier’s research—not so much in “Japanese-ness” but in “Otherness,” writing that “a generation of Americans . . . care much less about the national origins of a cultural product than they do about the quality of the product itself” (254). If this assessment holds true, the government’s “Cool Japan” campaign has little or no effect on the value of “Japanese” popular culture, and any attempt to capitalize on the global popularity of it might be ineffective or end in disappointment.⁸⁰ After all, reveling in one’s own coolness and telling others how cool you are is not the best way to persuade others that you are cool. The value of “coolness” can only be assigned by entities—like McGray, the *non*-Japanese individual who conceived of the idea of Japan as “cool”—other than Japan itself.

Whereas the “Cool Japan” campaign is still primarily considered a form of “cultural diplomacy,” the medium of manga has been mobilized more directly for political purposes by many political organizations. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the conservative ruling party in Japan, has actively employed manga to propagate their political vision among people who tend not to be politically engaged.⁸¹ Since around 2010, the party has become more explicit in their agenda to revise the current Japanese Constitution—in particular, to amend the pacifist Article 9 that stipulates the renunciation of war and prevents it from deploying its defense force for active combat abroad. The LDP’s motivation is in part a response to political instability in East Asia since the end of the Cold War. In 2015 the party created a sixty-four-page manga titled *Honobono-ikka no kenpō kaisei-tte nani?* (What are the constitutional revisions?) in order to promote their agenda for revising

the constitution.⁸² The manga, in the style of educational manga (*gakushū* manga),⁸³ portrays an “ordinary” family discussing the importance of constitutional revision. The manga explains the history of the drafting of the constitution (by occupying US forces), discusses the effects of the proposed revisions, and details why such revisions are necessary for current and future generations. The manga emphasizes that the constitution is outdated and does not suit current domestic and global social and political circumstances by pointing out that it has not once been amended since its inception, unlike the constitutions of other countries such as Germany, France, and South Korea.

On the surface, the manga imparts relevant background information about the complicated issues of such a revision in an easy-to-understand manner through its use of humor, but there are problematic elements in its presentation. At one point, the manga equates the idea of “respect for individuals” (which is stated in Article 13 about basic human rights in the current constitution) with “selfishness” by arguing that this principle can cause problems for the “public.” Also, the manga addresses the stringent rules for amending the constitution, asserting that Japan has the most onerous process for revision in the world, despite the fact that other countries like Spain and South Korea “employ similar rules for revising their documents” (Johnson 2015).

While the LDP’s motivation for employing the medium of manga to propagate their message is understandable, the manga itself has faced criticism. A local newspaper reviewed the manga by inviting three working women to comment on it (the LDP was claiming the manga aimed at women and young readers). One reader commented on the unusual structure of the protagonist family, consisting of a mother and four generations of male members; in the story, the mother is presented as ignorant about how the constitution was drafted, and the grandfather (mansplaining) fills in her knowledge gap. Another reader added that the manga put more weight on male voices throughout and thus was a reflection of the LDP’s “conservative idea of family” (Kanagawa Shinbun 2015a). The last participant, a lawyer, also noted that the manga confused the idea of “public” (*kōkyō*) with the “state” (*kokka*) (Kanagawa Shinbun 2015b). Despite such criticism, the LDP has created at least two further manga about the constitutional revisions and the position of the Japanese Self-Defense Force.⁸⁴

The political deployment of the manga is not limited to Japan. In 2008, the US Navy commissioned Japanese artists to create a 204-page manga book titled CVN 73, the hull number of its aircraft carrier USS George Washington.⁸⁵ This manga—somewhat reminiscent of Kawaguchi Kaiji’s 1989 historical fantasy manga *The Silent Service*—offers a positive depiction of the life of its protagonist, a Japanese-American named Jack Ohara, aboard the navy vessel by narrating his gradual education about the inner workings of the fleet. Similarly, in 2010, in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the US–Japan Security Treaty between the

United States and Japan (anpo), the US forces in Japan issued a mini-comic titled *Our Alliance: A Lasting Partnership*.⁸⁶ This manga features a Japanese girl named Arai Anzu (a pun on “alliance”) and a yellow-haired American boy in a rabbit-ear suit named Usa-kun (a pun on both USA and “usa”-gi for rabbit in Japanese), who visits Japan and learns of the importance of the treaty and the alliance between the two countries. The doe-eyed, cute characters seem to be deliberately designed to attract young Japanese readers.

While these two manga offer accessible information about their subjects, what remains largely unaddressed in both is the socio-historical background of their subject matter. In the case of *CVN 73*, the manga was published and distributed in Yokosuka (and other places)—26,000 copies were distributed to Japanese citizens—two months before the historic first arrival of a “nuclear-powered” fleet in Japan. Since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War, there has been a strong sentiment against nuclear weaponry in Japan. From the 1960s, Japan has officially maintained the so-called “Three Non-nuclear Principles” which states that it shall never possess or manufacture nuclear weapons, or permit their introduction into Japanese territory. Holding to these principles, some citizen groups protested the docking of the USS *George Washington* near the port city of Yokosuka, the location of a US naval base. In this context, the manga has a specific objective: in no small part, it was intended to appease this kind of opposition within Japan.

Our Alliance was also created with a similar purpose in mind. Throughout the history of postwar Japan, protests against US forces in Japan have been constant—the presence of US forces in Japanese territory is allowed by the very treaty the manga takes as its subject. Since around the 1990s, the anti-US base movement has intensified along with all-too-frequent media reports of crimes committed by soldiers stationed in Japan. Among these, the protest in Okinawa in 1995, triggered by the rape of a twelve-year-old girl by the three US soldiers, brought about a massive anti-US base demonstration, which also fueled a heated debate over the continued presence of US forces in Japan. In the context of this continuing tension, the magazines were utilized to conceal the struggles and political debates over the presence of US military forces in Japan and surrounding East Asian countries behind the “pop” veil of manga.

There is a growing trend for government and government agencies, from national down to local level, as well as for political organizations, to exploit the manga’s widespread acceptance and wide-reaching potential for their own purposes, which can be either informational or political. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare has recently promoted health and safety issues making use of characters from popular works such as *Sailor Moon* (for sexually transmitted disease awareness), *Attack on Titan* (for coughing etiquette), and Mizuki Shigeru’s *Kitaro* (for harassment and other workplace issues). The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has had manga made

to introduce its policies, and another to explain the workings of the Patent Office. Cities and prefectures have produced manga on topics ranging from home care for the elderly and healthy eating to local environmental protection. To cater for this demand from government, specialist manga production companies such as Trend Pro have appeared. Yet some works, such as the manga versions of the Ministry of Defense's annual white papers and the 2007 manga *Kokubō nyūmon* (Defense of Japan), written by the then Minister of Defense Ishiba Shigeru, just like the LDP manga and CVN 73 examples noted above, while not appearing to be explicit propaganda, still serve to promote particular political positions. Finding ourselves at such a juncture, what we as readers need is a critical study of manga—not merely analyzing what is written and drawn in a manga but also what *is not*; that is, what a manga avoids telling us. Such an approach would also include an examination of how manga are (inter)related with other social, political, and economic structures in specific historical times and places. This is because manga are always and already involved in these contexts and perform as such.

* * *

It is still debatable whether these cultural institutions—galleries, museums, academia, and government agencies—have truly embraced all kinds of manga with open arms. Among the countless varieties of manga being produced, there is much that is potentially subversive. As discussed in the “Controversy and censorship” section, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government has made attempts to put an end to certain pornographic manga. In other words, these institutions might only accept a version of manga that fits with, and does not undermine, their own (institutional) objectives. This situation also invites further questions that lie beyond the scope of this overview. For example, what kinds of manga are valued or ignored by different institutions? Who receives the benefits of the cultural, academic, or political institutionalization of manga? Who decides the value of manga? Are voices of readers or fans—located in Japan and beyond—reflected in the evaluation of manga? Without adequate investigation of questions such as these, the relationship between these institutions and manga remains ambivalent.

PUBLICATION FORMAT

For most of their history, manga have been a part of print culture; that is, they have been published, distributed, and consumed in various print formats. From the medium's earliest days to the early twentieth century, manga were published in magazines and newspapers; then manga books began to appear, first as a children's entertainment—for example,

akahon (lit. “red-book”) and *kashihon* (lit. “rental book”). Since the mid-twentieth century, however, magazine periodicals containing serialized graphic narratives (story manga) have played a central role in boosting the presence of manga in the Japanese cultural landscape. Today, a typical manga magazine is published weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Each issue consists of from ten to over twenty installments of story manga, along with readers’ columns, editors’ announcements, sponsors’ advertisement pages, and so on. Serialized manga episodes are later anthologized and republished in book form (*tankōbon* or *komikku(su)-ban*). Several popular titles run for dozens of volumes—some long-running series are collected in over 100 volumes. Sometimes, manga authors create their work in book format from the outset (called *kakioroshi*). Enduring works are at times republished in a further reduced, almost pocket-sized, format called a *bunkobon*.

However, manga magazines are not the only place you can find manga. Various forms of manga also appear in general interest magazines, fashion magazines, literary magazines, and so on. Major newspapers also carry four-panel comic strips (*yonkoma* manga) on a daily basis. Manga *dōjinshi* (fanzines) have been sold at fan conventions and some specialized stores in urban areas. Manga are also used for advertisements, public notices, business manuals, textbooks, and other purposes, which gives manga its highly visible presence in Japanese society.

Each different print format respectively orients—if not defines—content, form, narrative structure, and readership. For instance, the authors of newspaper cartoons and comic strips, working with limited space, need to compress narratives for satirical or humorous purposes aimed at the target readership of newspapers. The physical elements—paper size, quality, and shape—of each different format also define (or at least orient) the formal, narrative, and thematic properties of manga. In the case of *akahon* and *kashihon* manga, the book format allowed *mangaka* to create storylines with longer trajectories from their initial conception, whereas manga magazines require authors to consider the importance of seriality—that is, each serialized episode needs to have certain plot devices like the cliffhanger ending to incentivize readers to return for the next episode.⁸⁷ The transition of weekly magazine installments into book form often leads to noticeable changes in page layout—for example, adjustments are needed due to the removal of margin advertising used on magazine pages and/or due to differing page height to width ratios.

Comics scholar Pascal Lefèvre (2014) reminds us that the publication format “poses not only formal and thematic constraints, it implies also a particular cultural space” (n.p.). Many manga magazines are printed on cheap wood pulp paper, which suggests that they are consumed and disposed of in short order, whereas (re)published manga in book format are for collecting and preserving, sometimes even by libraries. Some

perennial sellers and popular titles hit the shelves again in different forms: such as “deluxe editions,” a larger book format printed on high-quality paper; or as thick but cheap soft cover “convenience store comics” (*konbini komikku*), printed on the same pulp paper as manga magazines. Recently, new digital media and technologies, including various screen devices, websites, and social media, are dynamically changing and partially replacing the print manga convention, serving not merely as an outlet for manga but as a space for creation, distribution, and interaction between authors and readers (see Figure 2.9).



FIGURE 2.9 Examples of the variety of publication sizes and formats. Photo by the authors.

Notes

- 1 *Maru-maru chinbun* was deeply connected to the first wave of the modern, democratic movement known as the “Freedom and People’s Rights Movement” in the late nineteenth century. The magazine offered a cultural outlet both for promoting freedom and basic human rights and for agitating for a popularly elected government.
- 2 War(-related) stories and samurai period pieces (*jidai-mono*) were considered problematic and removed. To find out more, see Miyamoto (1998, 2009).
- 3 Marks such as this as well as comments on Japanese publications, including numerous manga, made by the censors during the first four years of occupation can be seen in the collection of CCD materials preserved at the Gordon W. Prange Collection of the University of Maryland.
- 4 The controversy also impacted the *dōjinshi* (fanzine) manga subculture, which had been growing significantly since the 1970s. In 1991, two bookstore owners

were charged and arrested by the police for selling “obscene” manga *dōjinshi*. It was one of the earliest cases in which fans’ derivative manga works were criminalized. In the same year, the organizers of Comic Market, Japan’s largest fanzine buying-and-selling fair, received a sudden cancellation notice from the proprietors of the venue originally set to host the event. Since that time, Comic Market has introduced voluntary regulations concerning allowable sexual content in manga *dōjinshi* (Yonezawa 2010, 309).

- 5 Allison (2000) has shown how the popular and legal discussion in Japan about obscenity has repeatedly focused on the exposure of pubic hair and genitalia (see especially Chapter 7, “Public Veilings and Public Surveillance: Obscenity Laws and Obscene Fantasies in Japan”).
- 6 See Holmberg (2019a) and Kure (2019).
- 7 In Japan, the Association to Stop Racism Against Blacks (Kokujin sabetsu o nakusu kai, 1988–present) has been one of the leading organizations actively working to censure the negative representations of Black people in advertisements, toys, picture books, manga, and other aspects of visual culture. The group has criticized many authors, from Tezuka Osamu and Toriyama Akira to Akimoto Osamu and Yudetamago, among others.
- 8 After receiving criticism about Tezuka’s depictions, Kōdansha issued a statement to accompany their publication of the 400-volume *Collected Works of Tezuka Osamu*: “We have to carefully listen to criticism from those who feel uncomfortable and insulted . . . However, exaggerating and parodying people’s features and characteristics is one of manga’s techniques for humor . . . Tezuka parodied people from many countries and even animals or plants . . . including his own cartoony portrait where his own nose was drawn much bigger.”
- 9 For more on Tezuka’s use of Black stereotypes, see the work of John G. Russell (1991).
- 10 On this matter, see Jared Gardner’s essay on Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese* (2010)
- 11 The disputed scene in the manga depicts Japanese soldiers committing acts of wartime brutality against Chinese people. Right-wing groups also object to *Gen* showing disrespect to the national flag and anthem, and to the Emperor. For a detailed overview of the Matsue incident, see Mizuno (2015).
- 12 The group is known as *Zaitokukai*, an ultra-right-wing body that has been propagating anti-Korean and anti-Chinese sentiment through street demonstrations and online websites (Ochiai 2016).
- 13 See Brau (2016) for more detail.
- 14 See Kariya (2015) in the Bibliography.
- 15 See “Cultural status and institutions” in this chapter.
- 16 Historically, the idea of copyright in the manga publishing industry was tenuous and even lax. In earlier periods of manga history and even into the late 1940s and 1950s, plagiarism of visual styles and storylines from other manga (and other visual culture media) was not uncommon. Yet as the manga industry grew, the idea of copyright took hold. Even so, written contracts were not formally exchanged between authors and publishers until the late twentieth century due to long-standing industrial conventions.

- 17 See “Media mix and *dōjinshi* participatory culture” in this chapter.
- 18 Another known example of copyright infringement occurred in 1998, when Nintendo sued an amateur author who drew and published sexualized *Pokémon* characters in a manga *dōjinshi*. This case resulted in fines of 100,000 yen (approximately US\$1,000).
- 19 In response to the copyright violation notice from Shōgakukan, the author apologized and donated the money earned from selling the *dōjinshi* to Fujiko Productions.
- 20 In Japan there is little regulation in this respect. The country’s 2016 hate speech law can deny permission for gatherings but does not actually ban hate speech nor does it carry penalties. Moreover, with no racial discrimination laws, and as a rule no censorship, protecting the vulnerable social groups depends on organizational and individual values and public pressure.
- 21 The 2020 report ranks Japan as the 121st out of 153 countries in terms of gender parity, forty-one places lower than its ranking in the 2006 report. Japan’s gender gap is one of the largest among economically developed countries.
- 22 See Allison (1996, 36–7). More recently, in *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, Kathryn Hemmann (2020) discusses the agency of female manga authors and fans in the production and consumption of manga which challenge the male-dominant social and cultural discourses from the positions of subjects, not written/drawn objects, using what Hemmann calls the “female gaze.”
- 23 See Saitō (2011) for more about this archetypical figure.
- 24 In addition to Ikeda’s *The Rose of Versailles*, such gender-bending “beautiful fighting girls” include the female fighting detective heroine in Wada Shinji’s *Sukeban Deka* (1975–82) and the titular fighting protagonist of Takeuchi Naoko’s *Sailor Moon* (1992–7).
- 25 The name of the Year 24 Group derives from the fact that these authors were born in and around the twenty-fourth year of the Shōwa era in the Japanese calendar, a year which corresponds to the year 1949 in the Gregorian calendar—thus, the English sobriquet “Magnificent Forty-Niners.”
- 26 See Welker (2015) for more detail about the initial formation of *shōnen ai* and its development.
- 27 Nishihara’s idea is based on critic Nakajima Azusa’s discussion of “beautiful boys” (1998).
- 28 Called “third-rate *gekiga*” (or “third-rate erotic *gekiga*”) at the time, these manga/manga magazines provided pornographic and/or (over-)sexualized depictions, including erotic and grotesque (*eroguro*) images and perversion. Some of these pornographic manga became a constant target of social pressure and censorship, but still created a cultural outlet through which to explore diverse forms of sexuality.
- 29 Montreal-based publisher Drawn and Quarterly has released a few anthologies collecting Tatsumi’s short *gekiga* pieces from this period.
- 30 Still academically understudied, *seinen* manga—both *gekiga* and erotic manga—seem to offer multiple entry points to examine how male gender and sexuality is examined or reflected in the medium of manga.

- 31 Japanese feminist scholar Mori Naoko (2010) highlights women's consumption of sexual fantasy through pornographic manga for women (ladies' comics and BL manga) without descending into simplistic criticisms of pornography.
- 32 The term *yaoi* derives from the phrase "*yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi*," roughly translated as "no climax, no punch line, no meaning." The term *yaoi* was more commonly in use in the late 1970s and 1980s in a subcultural community of fans who enjoyed manga (or parodies of manga) that depict the romantic and/or homosexual relationships between boys or men.
- 33 There are, of course, a number of authors and a segment of readers of BL who identify with homosexual or non-binary gender/sexual identities.
- 34 The genre is also called "essay comic" (*essei komikku*) or "comic essay" (*kommiku essei*).
- 35 In recent years, male authors have produced essay manga, including well-known titles such as Azuma Hideo's *Disappearance Diary* (*Shissō nikki*, 2005) and Fukumitsu Shigeyuki's *Uchi no tsumatte dō desho?* (What do you think of my wife? 2007–15).
- 36 Scholar Kazumi Nagaike discusses such male readers of the BL genre and argues that the genre offers "a kind of salvation for them" and "provides a specifically queer space . . . in which the established paradigms of masculinity in Japan can be deconstructed" (2015, 205).
- 37 Both the "References" section and the map are translated in the English edition. See Kouno (2009).
- 38 For instance, see the multi-volume series *Mangaka tachi no sensō* (The war for mangaka), published by Kin no hoshi-sha.
- 39 Some revisionist historians and activists formed a group called the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho o tsukuru-kai) in 1996. The textbook penned by this group drew criticism for its downplaying of the Nanjing Massacre and comfort women (see Cheng Chua 2014). Kobayashi himself was a member of this group. The group was also active in a letter-writing campaign to local school boards and governments to remove *Barefoot Gen*, which highlights some Japanese wartime atrocities in later volumes, from school and public libraries in the wake of the 2013 Shimane incident outlined in the "Controversy and censorship" section of this chapter.
- 40 Other examples include Ueda Rinko's *Ryō*, which features a high school girl whose true identity is the historical military commander Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–89); and Kōga Yun's *Genji*, an alternate history story in which the girl protagonist travels to a "parallel" Japan where the Genpei War (1180–5) is taking place.
- 41 From the mid-1930s, wary of a growing suspicion of manga for children, some manga publishers began actively producing moralistic manga and promoted their educational value. Nevertheless, from 1938 the government took steps to reform all children's reading material including manga which were seen as frivolous. Publishers responded with manga that attempted to "enlighten" children with detailed practical or scientific knowledge until the war eventually brought manga to a halt (Miyamoto 2017). See Chapter 1 for more on this topic.

- 42 Today, many major publishing companies—Shūeisha, Shōgakukan, Kadokawa, Gakken, and Kōdansha—publish historical *gakushū* manga sets.
- 43 In this case the publisher's editors act as planners and mediators, and play an important role in conflict resolution between supervising academics and the artists (Takishita, Yamanaka and Itō 2021).
- 44 Passing highly competitive exams in order to progress through the various levels of Japan's education system and move to higher ranked schools is a major concern for students, parents, and teachers alike.
- 45 This distinction is not completely clear-cut. As Hayden White (1986) has famously observed, historians too are storytellers who impose on facts the conventions used in fiction writing to make a good story. However, we would argue that for *mangaka*, as opposed to historians working in prose, the art, and artifice, of storytelling is much more foregrounded in their work.
- 46 This low-budget production approach to anime established the typical Japanese anime TV production scheme, including animation production using limited cels, repetitive stock footage, and relatively self-contained episodes.
- 47 Originally, Pokémon and *Yo-kai Watch* were video games for handheld game consoles. *Yu-Gi-Oh!* was originally a manga title, serialized in a manga magazine.
- 48 See more on this in Condry and Steinberg's (2013) conversation, titled "Media Mix Is Anime's Life Support System."
- 49 In her review of Steinberg's *Anime's Media Mix*, sociologist Casey Brienza (2013) comments that the book misses the central role of manga by noting that "[c]ategories of print, particularly manga and increasingly light novels, are where so many media mixes originate and they, not their animated adaptations, remain, from a Japanese perspective, at the center" (para. 6).
- 50 The term "interiority" (*naimen*), as used by Japanese critics, is inherited from Japanese literary scholar Karatani Kōjin's sense of the conscious self as a modern discovery. See "The Discovery of Interiority" in Katarani's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (1993).
- 51 In Japan, one can also find merchandise and products based on real-life figures, such as celebrities and *tarento* (media personalities). Yet this kind of character merchandise based on real-life figures has less transmedia migratory traction than do fictional manga/anime characters.
- 52 Certainly, the iconic designing of characters is not unique or limited to Japanese comics. Some notable examples in American comics include comic-strip-originated Snoopy and Popeye. Still, compared with other realistically drawn characters, these characters share the cartoony drawing style of that employed by Japanese mainstream manga.
- 53 The historical fact that anime used to be called *manga eiga* (manga movie or manga film) before the 1970s suggests the centrality of the manga medium in transmedia adaptations—called "media mix" after the late 1970s—since Japanese animators tried to "animate" static manga image/icons initially.
- 54 We follow the Japanese usage of the term "contents tourism," as proposed by Seaton and Yamamura (2015), instead of "content tourism." Yamamura (2014) notes that the first public use of the term "contents tourism" was in a report

written by three governmental organizations: the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), and the Agency for Cultural Affairs (61).

- 55 Since the 1980s, more manga and anime have begun depicting ordinary people in real-world settings, often based on a local town or village, in contrast to previous depictions of heroes and heroines set in fantasy worlds. This change has contributed to the rise of contents tourism.
- 56 This number was chosen as it recalls the famous traditional pilgrimage, *ohenro*, to eighty-eight Buddhist temples on Shikoku Island.
- 57 According to Henry Jenkins et al. (2009), a participatory culture is defined as “a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created)” (3).
- 58 Such an intention was expressed in the title of the manga magazine itself, which, according to Tezuka in his inaugural preface, was an abbreviation for *comics*, *companion*, and *communication*.
- 59 The first manga convention, Japan Manga Convention (*Nihon manga taikai*), was held in Tokyo in 1972. Japan Manga Convention has become an annual event, leading to a fan group alliance called “Manga Group United” (Manga gurūpu rengō).
- 60 See “Japan Market Statistics and Research” (2018).
- 61 There have been a couple of incidents regarding the copyright issue over the history of Comic Market. See “Controversy and censorship” in this chapter.
- 62 Some professional *mangaka* also continue to sell their *dōjin* products at Comic Market (Lam 2010, 241).
- 63 Before this time, a handful of “manga awards” had already been established within the industry itself, by some manga publishers as well as by the national *mangaka* association, in order to recognize and promote *mangaka* and outstanding works.
- 64 See the “Japan Media Arts Festival” page for more: <https://j-mediaarts.jp/en/>.
- 65 As it does not allow (manga) books to be checked out, it is not registered as a library.
- 66 See Glossary for *kamishibai*.
- 67 Another important site for researching manga is the Kawasaki City Museum, founded in 1988. Although its collection is not limited to manga, it has a “manga section” and employs “manga curators,” with over 60,000 manga (and manga-related) items. More details on this institution and the others mentioned here can be found in the “List of museums” in the Appendix.
- 68 Some museums display original drawings or have specific events for such displays. The Yokote Masuda Museum in Akita (opened in 1995) is a museum that focuses on the collection of original drawings.

- 69 Kyoto International Manga Museum and some others have been forced to find additional off-site storage space as their on-site archives have exceeded their capacity.
- 70 For instance, Frederik Schodt introduces the popular practice called “*mawashi-yomi*” in which one manga magazine or book is passed around and read by many people (1996, 20).
- 71 The exhibition traveled to three other cities (Kumamoto, Osaka, and Sendai) from 2008 to 2010.
- 72 The planning and preparation for this exhibition is recorded in a documentary film titled *Inoueno* (2009).
- 73 Comparing the Tezuka Exhibition at the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art in 1990 with Inoue’s exhibition in 2009, Jaqueline Berndt remarks that “[w]hereas the early 1990s saw attempts at adjusting manga to ‘art’ as an institution, by now it is, if not art as such, the gallery or museum that gets adjusted to manga” (2020, 189).
- 74 See “Formal and visual analysis” in Chapter 3.
- 75 The society, called *Nihon manga gakkai* in Japanese, claims to have in excess of 360 full members at the time of writing.
- 76 *Mangaka*/manga critic Ishikawa Jun (2017) expressed such a sentiment.
- 77 For the tension between manga studies and area studies, see Suzuki (2020).
- 78 See Chapter 1, Part I.
- 79 Furthermore, observing the governmental push toward remilitarization of Japan in the early twenty-first century, sociologist Yamaguchi Tomomi warns of danger in the discourse’s structural similarity to the cultural self-adulation of Japan’s wartime mobilization process by its military regime in the early twentieth century (Yamaguchi 2017).
- 80 In a similar vein, cultural anthropologist Anne Allison writes that “the globalization of Japanese pop culture does not equate to Japanese soft power, because it may fail to become anchored in something in the culture or country itself,” for example, social policies and practices that could fuel a desire or attraction for the so-called real Japan (2008, 105).
- 81 While becoming more common in recent years, early examples of political parties and politicians hoping to harness manga’s popularity and its ability to convey messages include the wartime government sponsor of the satirical magazine *Manga* and early-1990s Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi’s serialized column expressing his views in the weekly *seinen* manga magazine *Big Comic Spirits*.
- 82 The manga is accessible at https://jimin.jp-east-2.storage.api.nifcloud.com/pdf/pamphlet/kenpoukaisei_manga_pamphlet.pdf.
- 83 See “Historical representation” in this chapter 3 and see the Glossary for *gakushū* manga (educational manga).
- 84 See the LDP’s “Constitutional Reform Promotion Headquarters” website: <https://constitution.jimin.jp/document/force/>.
- 85 This manga was created by Harumi Sato and Hiroshi Kazusa.

- 86 The commission to create the manga was give to a handful of Japanese manga creators. It became a series and four issues which can be accessed on the official website of the United States Marine Corps: <https://www.japan.marines.mil/Misc/Manga>.
- 87 Having said this, critic Natsume Fusanosuke notes that multiple installments of different stories in one manga magazine can “alleviate the pressure to constantly provide high-tension cliffhangers” (quoted in Zoltan 2018, 18).

3

Critical Uses

This chapter offers multiple methodological and pedagogical approaches to studying manga by introducing tools, terminology, and critical frameworks. Each section begins with a brief explanation of its analytic perspective or focused concerns. This is followed by a set of questions that can be used to generate ideas about and interpretations of a given manga and/or orient a discussion. Please note that each approach has its advantages and limitations and not all questions are applicable to every kind of manga, so they should be applied flexibly.

Bounds of Manga

As discussed in Chapter 1, the term “manga” in Japanese encompasses a wide range of work, and the idea of manga is historically contingent and changes over time. Even today, the label of “manga” is used interchangeably with *hitokoma manga* (single-panel cartoon), *gekiga*, *komikku* (comic), *monogatari manga* (narrative comics), *sutōrii manga* (story manga), and so on. Just as comics studies faces the challenge of defining comics, it is a daunting task to delimit every contour of manga. Rather than examining the complicated—sometimes hair-splitting—debates about the definitions of manga, this section introduces some attempts by critics and scholars to delineate their object of study. The purpose here is not to pinpoint what manga is but to show that the bounds of manga are never stable or fixed.

In English-language comics studies, a frequently quoted passage used for explaining comics is creator/critic Scott McCloud’s working definition: “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (1993, 20). This definition seems to exclude single-panel cartoons; that is, for McCloud, it is of importance that comics use two or more panels, which invite the reader’s participation in narrative production through the act of reading into the “gutter”—the blank space between panels.

In Japan, as far back as the beginning of the twentieth century, critics have tried to define manga. Most commonly, they were seen as pictures with the spirit of humor and/or satire. The yardstick for measuring whether the

work of Japanese artists could indeed be deemed manga or not was foreign “manga” (cartoons and strips). In comparison, Japanese attempts were found wanting by some commentators; one critic accused the Japanese public of not understanding what manga are (“*Todai*” 1909); another slammed Japanese *mangaka* for lacking the humor necessary to create true manga (Totani 1917). Such extremely broad subjective definitions of manga, while still used in some popular discourse on manga today, have come to be seen by critics and the growing field of manga studies as far from adequate.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, critics finally began looking to formal definitions in a similar vein to McCloud. One of these critics, Kure Tomofusa, explains a manga as “a set of pictures that progresses a story through a series of panels as its constituent units” (1986, 106). Although, like McCloud, Kure considers the use of multiple panels to be a typical component of manga, he also includes single-panel cartoons—even those without boundary lines—in the category of manga so long as the cartoons contain “the progression of a narrative” (102). It is worth noting that in explicating manga, Kure also points to manga’s medium-specific nature of combining both linear sequence (the juxtaposed multiple panels for storytelling) and surface (the non-linear presentation of images, as in photography or painting, which allows an observer to view a whole image, at once) as a unique feature, differentiating manga from other media forms such as illustrations or *emonogatari* (to use his examples). Natsume Fusanosuke, another influential manga critic, frequently explains manga by identifying its minimal constituents: “picture, panel, and language” (1997b, 66; 1997c, 88)—but he also emphasizes manga’s use of line work or “line-pictures” (*senga*) instead of simply “pictures” in this mode and explores the complex arrangement of those elements for storytelling and communication. These strategies can largely be categorized as formalist approaches in that they seek the “essence” of manga or comics in pursuit of definition or explanation. It is important to note, however, that Kure and Natsume conceptualized and proposed their ideas about manga when postwar Japanese story manga—long-form narrative comics—had become dominant and largely equated with the concept of manga in general.

While formalist strategies tend to see a given cultural text in isolation, often disregarding historical contexts and contingencies, historical approaches pay attention to social, cultural, and technological contexts and conditions. In his book *Dreamland Japan* (1996), Frederik L. Schodt reasons that, “[i]n a nutshell, the modern Japanese manga is a synthesis: a long Japanese tradition of art that entertains has taken on a physical form imported from the West” (21). In Chapter 1, we argued that the beginnings of Japanese manga, rather than being due to any long Japanese tradition, owe much more to the incorporation of Western comics forms (cartoons and strips) into a Japanese context as well as the dawning of the nation’s modern periodical media industry. Indeed, Japan’s first career *mangaka*,

Kitazawa Rakuten, saw manga as something universal and modern to be learned from the West and not from Japan's past (Stewart 2013, 28). Yet this historical interaction between Japanese and non-Japanese comics has long been, and often still is, overlooked or marginalized in much manga historiography. In recent years, critics and scholars such as Sasaki Minoru have emphasized that, in tracing story manga's history, "it is necessary to consider its relationship with foreign manga [non-Japanese comics]" (2012, 8). The rapid growth of newspaper comic strip manga and the move to a predominant usage of speech balloons in Japan in the second half of the 1920s has long been seen as being due to the influence of overseas comic strips (Yonezawa 1981, 17, 26; Nagatani 2000, 80). More recently, Eike Exner (2022) has examined in detail such transnational interactions, showing that the formal devices of Japanese manga—especially what he calls "transdiegetic content," including speech balloons, motion lines, and emanata—were significantly shaped by interactions with Euro-American comics rather than being an inherited tradition of Japan's long history of visual art. (As noted in Chapter 1, the introduction of sound in cinema is also now thought to have had a major impact on these aspects and the timing of their becoming established convention.)

Ishiko Junzō, a critic who wrote numerous essays on manga (including non-Japanese comics) from the mid-1960s to the 1970s, offers a view of manga as a modern medium, molded by material and technological conditions—namely printing technology, mass production, and mass distribution (1967, 21). In his book *Manga geijutsu-ron* (Manga art), Ishiko proposes that manga was born as a separate (but still overlapping) category from painting (*kaiga*), conditioned by the birth of "the masses" (*taishū*) or "ordinary people" (1967, 42). As such, Ishiko argues that manga manifests the collective lived experiences of everyday people, their mentalities, desires, and thoughts. For him, manga is never a self-contained or autonomous medium, but one that exists in relation to something else—for example, readership, technological/material conditions, publication sites, and consumption sites.¹

More recently, in his book *Tezuka izu deddo* (Tezuka is dead, 2005), Itō Gō proposes what he calls the "system theory of representation" (*hyōgen shisutemu-ron*), which sees manga as a dynamic system consisting of interactive subsystems, including manga genres/conventions, the practices of authors/readers, and interactions with other media forms (72–3).² For Itō, manga is never a static form or object, but rather one constantly in flux through a series of feedback loops by these different but related subsystems. With this view, he calls for expanding the study of manga by examining the relations among different agents and structures beyond the discussion of forms and narratives. Although Itō is hardly subscribing to Ishiko's concept of manga, both critics attempt to approach manga within a framework of media studies.

Manga Outside Japan and Digital Manga

Viewing manga from outside Japan both limits and expands the bounds of manga. The global popularity of manga has generated new generations of non-Japanese creators who have been producing “manga-inspired” works. In the 2000s, Anglophone fans and critics began to call these works “Original English Language” manga or OEL manga.³ Some non-Japanese authors have also deliberately called their works “manga” instead of comics. US-based publishers like Tokyopop and CMX (an imprint of DC Comics) have released not just translated Japanese comics but also works by non-Japanese authors under the label of “manga,” while American comics publisher Marvel has released a series of comic books called “Marvel Mangaverse,” created outside of Japan. These so-called OEL manga feature visuals that are evocative of mainstream *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga conventions, especially of the more popular manga imported during the manga boom of the early 2000s. OEL manga have helped to construct and cement the idea of “manga” as a specific drawing style—vaguely called “manga style” outside Japan—reinforced by a plethora of English-language “how to draw manga” tutorial books.

OEL manga authors and their manga initially received undue criticism from English-language fandom for their lack of “authenticity” or for their purportedly “imitative” art. In her OEL manga *Dramacon*, Svetlana Chmakova dramatizes the controversy in a scene in which one character shouts, “Manga is Japanese!!! You’re not Japanese!! So you can’t draw manga!” (2008, vol. 2, 72). While this scene is presented in a disapproving way in the story, what is at stake is the idea of manga and notions of national (or ethnic) belonging. Examining Anglophone fans’ discourses about OEL manga, sociologist Casey Brienza remarks that the American manga fandom searches for “ethno-racial authenticity” in manga but “prematurely forecloses the creative and cultural possibilities of a complexly connected global society” (2015, 96).⁴ Defining manga as a style can also be restrictive for OEL manga creators. Zoltan Kacsuk astutely points out the double bind they find themselves in. Because comics outside of Japan are not automatically recognized as manga, they must adhere closely to perceived (stereotypical) conventions, leaving their work open to accusations of being merely slavish imitations. Yet, if they seek to broaden their work in new individual directions, they risk having their creations no longer seen as manga by others (Kacsuk 2018, 14).

Recent transnational collaborations among creators and artists from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds have prompted another layer of questions. What classification is appropriate—manga, comics, OEL manga, or something else—for works like *Monstress* by Marjorie Liu (an American writer) and Takeda Sana (a Japanese artist) or *Secrets of the Ninja* by Sean Michael Wilson, a writer born in Scotland and living in Japan, and Shimomura Akiko, a Japanese manga artist? Furthermore, many creators have moved beyond national, cultural, and linguistic borders. Åsa Ekström

is a Swedish creator who currently resides in Tokyo and has published a Japanese-language work titled *Hokuō joshi Åsa ga mitsuketa nihon no fushigi* (That's what Åsa found in Japan, 2015). Or how about Fumio Obata, a Tokyo-born, UK-based artist whose English-language work exhibits the influences of Japanese and European comics? Consideration of these cases does not provide clarity as to what is and is not manga, but it does point to the fact that the bounds of manga are becoming increasingly porous and blurred. We should again recall here that while in English the word “manga” is often defined in terms of visual style or national origin, in Japan it is not—the word “manga” can refer to “any and all comics in the broadest sense.” Bearing this in mind, it may be worth considering whether it is even useful as a descriptive, taxonomical, or critical term in English.

Lastly, the recent rise of new digital media has the potential to radically change the conventional view of manga. Some online websites offer a graphic narrative under the name of “manga,” with partially animated images, voice acting, and sound effects. Such “manga,” sometimes called “motion comic” (*mōshon komikku*), might overlap with the idea of anime (or animation) or moving-image works, although hand-drawn cartoony (or manga-esque) drawings remain dominant in such works. In addition, while most Japanese publishers still prefer horizontal progression, or swiping, through manga pages (similar to print formats) on digital platforms, some digital manga, adjusted for reading on smartphones and tablets, offer different presentation methods, including what is called “vertical scrolling manga” (*tate sukurōru manga*). Some well-crafted ones aim at a dramatic effect by taking advantage of vertical scrolling—for instance, the sudden appearance of a panel or the addition of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds to enhance the reader's experience. Digital technologies used in manga production, distribution, and consumption have the potential to transform not only the drawing of manga's formal elements and styles but also our reading experiences of manga. It also necessarily entails a re-examination of what manga is and will be in the future.

The following questions and exercises can be explored for further discussion:

- What aspects of manga are highlighted or disregarded in the definitions or explications of manga put forward by different critics and scholars? Which do you find persuasive?
- Consider the similarities and differences between some of the following Japanese and non-Japanese visual storytelling forms: picture books, *e-makimono* (scroll painting), *Hokusai manga*, *emonogatari*, *kamishibai*, *anime*, cartoons, comic strips, comic books, graphic novels, etc. See Glossary for unfamiliar terms.
- Find a medium from a non-Japanese culture that is similar to manga. Compare and discuss how you would define their similarities and differences.

- Given the digitalization of manga, some of which are accompanied by sound effects or moving images, what kind of existing visual storytelling mediums do these “digital manga” overlap with?
- Create your own working definition(s) of manga. Which of the above-mentioned visual storytelling forms fit within your definition(s)? In your definition(s), do you place importance on place of origin, authenticity, formal feature, and/or drawing style? Why or why not? Compare and discuss your definition(s) with others.

Formal and Visual Analysis

In his 1993 book *Understanding Comics*, comics author and critic Scott McCloud describes comics as an “artform . . . a vessel which can hold any number of ideas and images” (6) and divides the medium into “content” and “form” for his purposes of analyzing the latter. McCloud’s seminal book developed a renewed interest in how the form of comics works rather than the stories it tells.⁵ In Japanese-language manga criticism, a similar approach to manga has become prominent since around the mid-1990s. Unlike previous manga critics who primarily addressed manga’s themes, narrative content, and socio-historical contexts, critics and scholars like Natsume Fusanosuke (1997b; Natsume and Takekuma 1995) and Yomota Inuhiko (1999) began to examine the visual components of manga,⁶ such as line work, visual/textual signs, sound effects/onomatopoeia, speech/thought balloons, panel shapes, and page layouts, as well as the relation between verbal and graphic elements.⁷ Their formalist mode of approach—known as *hyōgenron* in Japanese-language manga criticism⁸—laid the groundwork for the rise of “manga studies” in Japan.

While the medium of manga does exhibit a breadth of drawing styles, ranging from “cartoonish” exaggeration and iconic abstraction to detailed naturalistic (or photorealistic) representation, it is observed that, especially in commercial manga serialized in magazines, there is a strong orientation toward cartooning—that is, “graphic simplification of figurative shapes” (Molotiu 2020, 153). The abundant use of cartooning is due, in part, to manga’s graphic conventions, as well as to pragmatic considerations regarding the execution of labor—that is, drawing the same characters repeatedly over pages and over the course of a lengthy serialization. With regard to cartooning in manga, Japanese critics like Ōtsuka Eiji claim that visual images in manga should not be considered pictures but semiotic code or hieroglyphs. Using Tezuka’s own words—“my [Tezuka’s] drawings are not pictures but pared-down, patterned signs [*kigō*]” (quoted in Ōtsuka 1994, 6)—Ōtsuka proposes a view of manga that he calls “manga semiotics” (*manga kigōron*), which contends that manga pictures are a combination of visual signs and that postwar (post-Tezuka) manga styles are “spellbound by Tezuka’s semiotic drawing style” (Ōtsuka 1994, 31). While such a view

can be supported, it should also be recognized that a variety of drawing styles are used in Japanese manga, often even within a single work.

Scott McCloud has developed a schematic model called the “Big Triangle” for explicating different drawing styles—and other kinds of mark-making—in comics. It places one element at each of the three vertices of a triangle: “resemblance” (mimesis), the “picture plane” (pictorial abstraction, or the realm of pure shape, color, and line), and “meaning” (iconic abstraction and written language) (McCloud 1993, 52–3). The Big Triangle shows the gradations in the various realms of comics imagery, from photorealistic or naturalistic detail to formal purity (e.g., abstract art) to symbolic iconicity (e.g., emoji or written words). With this triangle, he claims, one can construct “a map of every possible form of visual art and communication” (McCloud n.d.). While McCloud provides numerous instances of known comics characters by a range of artists, it should be acknowledged that most artists combine these elements in their visual communication. This model also suggests that the medium of manga/comics is both read and seen—sometimes simultaneously, as in the case of onomatopoeic words *drawn* in the background of a panel/page.

While taking the perspective of manga as a medium—not a style—allows for the application of English-language comics criticism (as in the above), it is also true that Japanese manga has developed culturally specific visual metaphors or graphic symbols. In his book *The Visual Language of Comics*, comics scholar Neil Cohn (2013) discusses Japanese “graphic emblems” that symbolically convey intended meanings. For instance, he enumerates examples of graphic symbols with his own illustrations: a nosebleed means “lust”; a balloon extending from the nose signifies “sleeping”; and a huge sweat-drop on the forehead suggests “shock or exasperation” (157). While these visual signs might confuse unfamiliar readers, a reader who pays close attention to how they are used in context will likely find them comprehensible. After all, manga readers have experientially “learned” them by merely reading manga, without any formal education or training about each visual sign.

Vocabulary for Manga/Comics Analysis

Before embarking on formalist analysis, it is advisable to first familiarize oneself with the basic vocabulary for analyzing manga/comics. The following is a list of basic terms for performing form and visual analyses.⁹ Please note that the list below is a set of working definitions and that there are some variations in terminology depending on individual critics and scholars.¹⁰

Basic Terms

- Panel (*koma*): An individual frame or box that contains image and text. Typically, a manga page has multiple panels separated by borders, but the borders might be layered or omitted.

- Gutter (*mahaku*): A blank space between panels.
- Page layout (*komawari*): The arrangement of text, images, and panels on a page.
- Tier: A singular row of panels.
- Splash or splash page: A large, often full-page image.
- Spread: An image that extends beyond a single page. An image that extends to two pages is also called a two-page spread or a double-page spread.
- Speech balloon (*fukidashi*) and thought balloon: Also called a “speech bubble,” a speech balloon is an indicator of utterance or speech, whereas a thought balloon (or “thought bubble”) is for internal monologue.
- Caption: Text that is in some cases free-floating but usually appears in a box, making the words distinct from the rest of the panel, page, or speech balloon dialogues. It is often used for giving voice to a narrator.
- Sound effect or onomatopoeia (*on'yu*): A non-verbal sound image. The Japanese language has a large inventory of symbolic words for sounds (which in linguistics are known as ideophones)—words that evoke an idea through sound, often a vivid impression of sensations or sensory perceptions. Phonomimes (*giongo*), also relatively common in English, are words that mimic the sounds of creatures or other things. Phenomimes (*gitaigo*) are words that indicate the states, conditions, or manners of the external world or things in it—for example, *norori* (slowly or sluggishly). Psychomimes (*gijōgo*) depict psychological states or bodily feelings—for example, *waku waku* (excitement) and *ira ira* (anger or impatience).
- Emanata (*kei'yu* or *manpu*): Visual signs (or pictograms) that convey information that goes beyond what could be perceived visually in the diegesis—for example, the imagery of a bubble-like balloon issuing from a nose to denote that a character is sleeping, sweat beads for fear or anxiety, squiggles above rotten food to indicate bad smells.
- Screentone: A technique for applying textures and shades to illustrations. In the case of manga, a screentone sheet refers to a plastic material used to make a pattern or tone. Recently, similar effects are rendered by digital software.

Applying Formal and Visual Analysis

What follows is an example of the procedure for the application of formal and visual analysis, and conducting a close reading of a small number,

perhaps two or three, of manga pages. Although mainstream commercial manga are usually crafted for fast reading,¹¹ it is important to slow down, examine, and engage with both the visual and textual components of manga and, more importantly, the way those components interact with each other across the pages. Lastly, the experience of reading manga involves what McCloud calls “closure”—the act in which the fragmented images, words, and other textual-visual signs are pieced together by the reader to produce a meaningful narrative text. This means that the potential exists that each different reader will have a different interpretation of a work—in other words, there is no ultimately fixed meaning in any given constituent element of manga. Thus, creativity in one’s own meaning-making is allowed, but one should be mindful about staying logical and persuasive in one’s analyses. To generate ideas, the following suggested questions are offered as a good place to start.¹²

Graphic Style and Visual Elements

- How would you describe the various styles employed in the work—cartoony, naturalistic, or iconic (or a mixture)? More specifically, what types of lines or mark-making are used in different places (e.g., thick, thin, soft, bold, freehand, mechanical, expressive, ruled, meandering, flowing, sharp, jagged, etc.)? Does the author use a consistent graphic style throughout the work, or does the author vary their style in places? What is the effect of these choices? In terms of drawing style, how do the designs of characters compare to their backgrounds? And what type of effect(s) result from these combinations?
- How would you describe the characters’ postures, gestures, facial expressions, and bodies as depicted? Do they indicate their internal/psychological state? How are characters’ emotions visualized?
- If two characters are depicted within a single panel, which plays an active role or passive role? Where (and how) in the panel are they depicted to accentuate their power relationship?
- In what way is movement or motion depicted or suggested? Are they suggested through visual signs or by multiple panels?
- How are shadow and darkness depicted (crosshatching, screentoning, or inking)? What is the impact of this choice?
- What kind of shapes are used for each individual speech and thought balloon? What do you think their intended effects are (volume, sound quality, type of thought, emotion, etc.)?
- Describe the background and its tone. Is there a pictorial representation of the narrative world, or is it absent? How is the background related to the scene, character(s), or other narrative elements?

- What kinds of onomatopoeias or emanata—visual signs for conveying something beyond diegesis—for example, sweat beads (for fear or anxiety), a light bulb (for having an idea)—are used? For what purposes?
- In what way are drawn lines, pictures, or emanata used to convey aural, tactile, gustatory, and/or olfactory sensations?

Page Layout and Framing

- Look at the spatial layout of the whole page. Does it follow the classic “grid style” or does it employ different shapes and patterns? Do any panels overlap or extend to the edge of the page (“page bleed”)? What appears to be the intended effect of the page layout, if any?
- What does the first panel on the page depict (and in what way)? Does the page layout have any symmetrical structures? How about the last panel—especially the last panel before turning the page? Does it insert a moment of tension, suspense, or excitement in the course of the depicted event?
- From whose point of view are the objects depicted in a panel—the protagonist, another character, or the non-diegetic third person? Does the point of view shift as the panels continue? What kinds of angles are used in each panel?
- What (and how) are the figures or things in a panel focused on? What is omitted?
- How is the passage of time expressed by the page’s spatial composition or by the sequence of panels?
- Are there any flashbacks or dreams depicted? If so, how are the panel shapes, layouts, or gutters used to convey these shifts in time?
- Within a panel, how is the passage of time expressed by the interaction of verbal and visual elements? Typically, in the original reading order of manga—that is, reading from right to left—time is expected to flow from right to left. How does the application of translated text, read left to right, impact this time flow?
- Is reading direction clear from one panel to another, or does the page layout suggest various possibilities of reading paths?
- What kind of décor has been chosen for the setting? What props are visible, and what props are invisible (but expected to be there)?
- How is space composed within a panel? What is the relationship between panels?
- Where is the light source in the image (if there clearly is one)? What effect does it create?

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE DEVICES

Whereas the “Formal and visual analysis” section mostly aims to examine visual and stylistic elements, we can also look at manga as a storytelling medium using a set of analytic methods taken from the rich tradition of literary studies. For instance, we can investigate elements of manga such as title, plot, character, setting, tone, symbols, and themes. The following questions, adapted from literary studies,¹³ can be used to examine manga in terms of how each narrative device and storytelling technique achieves its effects.

Title: Does your impression of the meaning of the title change after your reading? Are there any symbolic meanings in the title? Are there multiple meanings?

Plot: How does the work start? How do different events develop? How does the work present the climax or dénouement? Does the story have a recurrent pattern in its narrative structure? Does the opening scene foreshow any later events in the story? Are the events narrated in a linear way or in ways that incorporate flashbacks or flash-forwards? Is there a turning moment (or a radical change) in the plot? What causes such a turn or change?

Setting: Identify the primary place and time period where the majority of the action takes place. Does the setting play an important role in revealing any elements of the work? What information does the setting give us about a situation or a character? Does the particular locale of its setting seem to relate to any of the work’s themes? Does the opening setting have any particular importance? How about the setting at the ending? Analyze the backgrounds in important settings, too. Does the setting contribute to the theme?

Point of view: Whose point of view is most often used in narrating the story? Is it the same as the author’s point of view or is it different? Does it shift into another person’s point of view? How does the author’s choice of point of view affect the reader’s understanding and feeling about the story? How does the author’s choice of point of view reveal or illuminate the work’s theme?

Character: Who is the protagonist (age, gender, social or economic class, occupation, etc.)? Who is the antagonist, if there is one? How are the characters—both narratively and visually—presented (are they similar to real people or not)? What kinds of traits are attached to the protagonist? How do the protagonist’s words and actions characterize him, her, or it?

Is the characterization of the protagonist dynamic (growth and change) or static (no change)? Flat (simple, two-dimensional, endowed with very few traits) or round (complex, multidimensional, capable of surprising behavior)? Are the protagonist's actions believable, given the setting and situation of the work? What kind of relationship does the protagonist have with other characters? How do the major characters, through their actions and motivations, contribute to the overall theme?

Tone: How would you describe the overall tone of the work? Does the tone of the narrator, if the narration was offered on the pages, remain consistent throughout the work? If it changes, how is it related to other visual elements of the work? How is the tone underscored or undermined by background images? Are there any ironic or sarcastic elements in events, ideals, people, or things?

Symbolism/imagery: Are there any impressive and/or recurring images? Does the work draw on a historically important image? If yes, what kind of symbolic meaning is attached to it? Do you find any symbols in the images, dialogue, setting, backgrounds, title, or plot?

Theme: What does the work try to demonstrate as a whole? What lesson(s) about life, society, history, and so on does the manga want us to learn?

Biographical Approaches

The biographical approach, or biographical criticism, is one of the classical methods for analyzing the relationship between an author's life and their works. In literary criticism, it used to be one of the most common approaches, but the predominance of New Criticism (with its formalist emphasis) since the mid-twentieth century has relegated the study of the author to the margins of literary studies. In his 1967 essay, French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes declared the "death of the author," and in doing so challenged the idea of the author as the ultimate source of the meaning of a particular work. Beginning around the same time, other literary theories, such as reader-response criticism and (post)structuralist theory, have also come to demote the author from the position of sole authority over their own works.

Nonetheless, it is still difficult to disregard completely the function of the author—whether it is a real-life person or an assumed one from the text—when reading literary and other cultural works. In the case of manga, for instance, when we read Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen*, Nakazawa's own childhood experience as an atomic bomb survivor in Hiroshima should not (or cannot) be discounted. Similarly, when reading Saibara Rieko's humoristic comic strip about her everyday life, *Mainichi Kāsan* (Daily

mom), the knowledge that the author is a mother with two children who lives in today's Japan lends the series greater authenticity. While it is prudent not to take the author as the ultimate arbiter over the value or meaning of a given manga, studying the author's life can enrich our experience of reading manga and serve for more meaningful and productive discussion.

The idea of the "author" becomes a subject of debate particularly when the genre of autobiography is under discussion. A typical approach to autobiography relies on the French theorist Philippe Lejeune's proposition of the "autobiographical pact," which (re)defines the genre of autobiography as a pact or contract between reader and writer, on the assumption that the author is detailing their own life. Juxtaposed with Lejeune's claim regarding prose autobiographies and the aforementioned equation of the author and their life (as written), there are English-language comics studies scholars like David Herman (2011) and Elisabeth El Refaie (2012) who have proposed the triple-authorial model: the *real-life I* (the author), the *narrating I* (the self who tells), and the *experiencing I* (the self told of). This threefold model is useful for analyzing autobiographical manga as well. In the US comic book edition of Nakazawa's autobiographical *I Saw It*, for instance, we can see all three roles at play. First, the paratext on the cover ("A Survivor's True Story by Keiji Nakazawa") and editor/publisher Leonard Rifas's introduction point to the real-life author Nakazawa Keiji (the *real-life I*). The first page presents Nakazawa as the protagonist, a grown-up character standing in front of the Imperial Palace in the narrative present. Then the story flashes back to the wartime period, where we encounter text narration written directly inside the panels without any text boxes (the *narrating I*) while Nakazawa appears as a child character (the *experiencing I*). This analytic frame foregrounds the constructed and mediated nature of autobiographical manga. In other words, manga—whether it is autobiographical or not—is not a transparent medium, but rather the product of a series of mediations—say, from selected accounts, fragmented memories, narrativization, and manga's formal properties, as well as material, industrial, and commercial orientations and restrictions, and so on—even if it is narrated by the author about their own life. Comics scholar Andrew Kunka (2018) reminds us that autobiographical comics/manga have a "precarious relation to the truth" (136).

The biographical approach involves inquiring into the author's biography or personal background. The paratexts of a chosen manga might be of assistance, but it is advisable to research the author's personal and professional background, interviews, and other biographical accounts written by others, if available. The following are useful questions for productive classroom discussions:

- Are there any facts about the author's life that are relevant to understanding the work in question? If so, how are they relevant?
- What aspects of incidents in the author's personal life or history correspond to the events in the work?

- Read interviews with the author, if available. Which of the author's stated ideas or opinions might appear in the work?
- Did the author go through a social, cultural, and/or historical upheaval, or some other drastic change? If so, to what extent does such an experience shape the work? If an actual event is included, how and from whose perspective is the event narrated?
- What kind of non-professional and professional careers did the author have before becoming a *mangaka*? Did those careers inform their work?
- Do any of the characters in the story correspond to real people? Are characters in the work alter egos or versions of the author?
- If the author appears as a character in the work, how do they present themselves? Is the presentation of the author visually exaggerated—self-effacingly or otherwise? If so, what possible purposes does this serve?
- How do the three forms of the author—the *real-life I* (the author), the *narrating I* (the self who tells), and the *experiencing I* (the self told of)—relate to each other in the work?
- Is the author affiliated with any social, cultural, or art movement? Alternatively, were there any such movements during their lifetime, and if so, how did the author respond to them?
- Does the author challenge or critically reflect on mainstream social values? If so, how?

EDITORS AND ASSISTANTS

Compared to the American comic book tradition in which comic books have been created by a creative team—typically consisting of a writer, a penciller, an inker, a colorist, a letterer, and so on—manga might be considered to be a creation of a single *mangaka*, like an individual author of “graphic novels” in the Anglophone comics world. However, in the current industrial practice of manga production, the manga author is not one singular agent involved in the creation process of a manga. Whereas *mangaka* typically have creative control over their work, they usually work closely with an editor and multiple assistants.

Cultural anthropologist Jennifer Prough (2010), who conducted ethnographic research in the manga industry of the early 2000s, warns us that the term “editor” can be “misleading to a Western audience” (93). She remarks that “[a]t every stage of the process editors weigh in on the content, tenor, and artistic quality of the manga story” (94). As employees

of publishers, editors not only proofread and copyedit drafts (*nēmu*) but also find and guide new *mangaka* and sometimes even train them to be a full-fledged *mangaka* who can create hit series. Some editors are also involved in finding assistants, researching materials, and writing blurbs, as well as providing emotional support. In particular, the manga editors at Kōdansha are known for their active commitment to the process of creating manga. They have regular meetings with *mangaka* to decide on the content of manga, even including storyline, plot developments, and character designs, sometimes even serving as something like a co-author. Such a high level of involvement from manga editors in the creation process seems unique even in the Japanese publishing industry, since literary editors usually do not intervene much in the content of an author's work.

Many *mangaka*, especially those who are serializing their work in manga magazines, work with assistants in order to meet tight deadlines and cope with intense workloads. The job of assistants is to take care of various processes in manga creation, including drawing backgrounds, erasing draft sketches, and inking and adding screentones (adhesive sheets for adding texture and shading). Working with professional authors, assistants can hone their manga skills, often with the expectation that they too will debut as professional *mangaka* themselves—in fact, many professional authors have experience working as assistants for senior professional *mangaka*.

To manage intense workloads in the highly competitive manga industry, several popular *mangaka* have adopted a studio system known as the “production system” (*purodakushon-sei*). This is a system for enhancing the pace of production by introducing a division of labor. The production system emerged in the late 1950s and 1960s, when the introduction of weekly publications necessitated an acceleration in the speed of manga production. Several popular authors set up their own studios, including Saitō Takao, Shirato Sanpei, Mizuki Shigeru, and Satonaka Machiko. Saitō's studio, Saitō Production, has developed a highly organized system for maximizing production efficiency, with some assistants specializing in drawing backgrounds, vehicles, or weapons, resulting in single pages passing through five or more sets of hands. In time, Saitō began to append a list of credits to his work, much like the credits that appear at the end of a film, in which he included the name of his studio. In fact, Saitō's role in his production system was similar to that of a film director who is in charge of the overall artistic and creative components of a work.

Although manga books or title pages bear a single author's name (and the copyright belongs to the *mangaka*), manga are, more often than not, the products of collaboration. In the current commercial manga industry, both editors and assistants are an integral part of manga creation, but their work is relatively invisible and less studied.

Gender and Sexuality Studies Approaches

As discussed in the “Gender and sexuality” section of Chapter 2, manga can replicate and reinforce existing gender and sexual ideologies, but at the same time it can also contest them and even suggest new or alternative understandings of gender and sexuality in imaginative ways. Such undertakings are executed not only through manga’s content and form but also through industry custom, reading practice, and active fan participation via *dōjinshi* (fanzine) production.

Gender and sexuality studies has been one of the most dynamic, inter- or trans-disciplinary academic fields over the last few decades. In manga studies, discussing manga in relation to questions about gender and/or sexuality has been one of the most enlivening approaches and perspectives in both English- and Japanese-language academia.¹⁴ Since gender and sexuality studies is an astonishingly complex constellation of ongoing and diverse discussions, theories, and practices, it would not be feasible to cover the vast array of critical perspectives and questions in the limited space of this section. In the interest of being practical, we offer only two categories of questions: “Content, form, and format” and “Authorship, readership, and fandom.” It is important to maintain an open mind with respect to multiple interpretations regarding the same manga as read/viewed by different agents in different instances and contexts. We encourage flexible adaptation, expansion, and alteration of the following questions based on the user’s experience, critical framework, and political perspectives.

Content, Form, and Format

- What kinds of women and men are presented both verbally and visually as characters in the manga? Which characters are depicted in active or passive roles? Do their roles change over the course of the story?
- What elements of the manga—both verbal and visual—are associated with the idea of femininity or masculinity?
- What kinds of genders and sexual relationships are depicted in the manga? How do the characters follow or challenge these traditional roles?
- How are their bodies depicted—are they naturalistic or cartoony? How are their genders or sexualities marked or unmarked, especially if the characters are drawn in a highly abstract or cartoony way?
- What relationships between women or between men are depicted in the manga—are there homosocial or homosexual relationships? Does the work support heteronormativity, or does it challenge it?

- To what extent can the ideas of gender and sexuality in the manga be considered a product of the past, and to what extent are they extant in contemporary society? While being wary of generalization and stereotypes, to what extent might these ideas be considered cultural?
- What kinds of narrative elements highlight or call into question the masculine/feminine binary? Does the manga offer any alternative gender and/or sexual roles or models, including non-binary or LGBTQ+ identities? If so, how?
- What incidents or behaviors are presented—either explicitly or implicitly—through heterosexual or homosexual relationships in the text? Do they become a source of conflict in the narrative? How does the manga offer solutions to said conflict?
- Does the manga illustrate fluidity in gender/sexual “identity” categories? If so, how does it illustrate this fluidity? Alternatively, does the manga explicitly call identity labels (such as homosexual or heterosexual) into question?
- How are the ideas and elements of gender and sexuality connected to other social categories such as age, class, profession, nationality, region, and race? Are there any specific words or images that highlight these intersectional connections? What are the implications of them? Are there any changes that take place regarding them in the story?
- What does the manga contribute to our knowledge of the LGBTQ+ experience in the past or in contemporary society?

Authorship, Readership, and Fandom

- Do you think the author’s gender and/or sexual identity affect the form and content of the work?
- How about your reading experience? Analyze, if appropriate, the images of women in the work by male authors or vice versa.
- If the author is identified as a woman or belonging to a sexual minority—whether self-identified or socially assigned—do you think it relates to the form and content of the manga? If so, how?
- What audience does the manga explicitly target in terms of gender? How can the manga be read by differently positioned readers—for example, how may a girl/woman read a *shōnen/seinen* manga?
- How much manga/manga magazine paratext (cover, back cover, blurbs, forewords, afterwords, and so on) is marked in terms of gender and sexuality?
- If you can locate the manga magazine in which the manga was first serialized, do the author’s gender and the target audience’s gender match?

- In the case of derivative works by fans, like *dōjin* manga, what kinds of changes did the *dōjin* artist make to the original manga or characters?

Finally, it is worth noting that we should avoid judging the value of a manga based solely on the visual images or presentation of gender and/or sexuality. While images do indeed have social consequences, we should be careful not to succumb to a reductive “media effect” perspective—for example, the idea that “exposure to sexist images leads to sexist behavior” and variations thereof. In a similar way, when approaching manga from a gender and/or sexuality perspective, we should remain cautious with regard to any allegation or claim that (over)simplistically connects manga content with the society as a whole—say, Japan or Japanese society—where the manga is produced and consumed. It is also important to keep in mind that the manga has an inherently mediated nature and that every society is composed of a multitude of differing reading communities, each bringing their own perspectives to bear on any work.

THE BECHDEL TEST

In 1985, American comics artist Allison Bechdel created a comic strip titled “The Rule,” in which one character explains the rule she sets for herself when going to see a movie:

the movie has to have at least two women in it
who talk to each other
about something besides a man

This “rule” has become known as the “Bechdel Test” in popular parlance, and has been used to examine gender representation by asking whether or not a film or other narrative work contains a gender balance. The test became more widely discussed in the 2000s as a way to look at the many twenty-first-century Hollywood films that continued to fail the test.

While manga is situated in a different cultural context and media ecology, the Bechdel Test can also be applied here. By applying the test to a given text, one can evaluate whether or not gender representation is balanced, but the goal of the test is not to judge the quality of a work or to dismiss any work that fails it. It is more important and productive to consider how the spectrum of characters’ gender portrayals affects (and is affected by) narrative structures, genres, target readerships, individual readers, and social perceptions of gender and gender relations prevalent in society.

Historical Questions and Historical Representation

As discussed in the “Historical representation” section in Chapter 2, manga and history have a fascinatingly complex relationship with each other. While there are many methods for analyzing manga, history, and historical representation, this section first offers two general approaches to consider manga and history with a brief discussion on genres, followed by a modest set of questions for practical use.

The first approach for looking at the past through manga of particular periods treats manga as material artifacts that reflect the time in which they were created. In other words, it sees the manga as a sort of historical document that can mirror to some extent the socio-cultural, economic, and material conditions of its time. For instance, the content of pre-1945 manga can be seen as evidence of historical aspects of modernizing Japan such as changing modes of dress and speech, engagement with technologies, politics, and social systems. A work like *Bōken Dankichi* (The adventures of Dankichi, 1933–9) can be probed for 1930s attitudes to, or beliefs about, non-Japanese through its depictions of colonial subjects as exotic and stereotyped (lazy, uncivilized, etc.), and how these contrast with Japanese characters. By analyzing the earlier content of Hasegawa Machiko’s comic strip series *Sazae-san* (1946–74), we can gauge to a degree what kind of social and economic conditions many ordinary people—like the protagonist and her family members—lived through in suburban Tokyo immediately after the end of the Second World War and how these conditions changed over almost three decades.

The second approach is to use history to better understand a manga’s content, including its meanings, setting, and themes, even if it does not directly depict the period in which it was created. This method locates a manga within the socio-cultural and historical context it came out of in order to analyze both its content and form as well as the possible motivation behind the work. Take, for example, Shirato Sanpei’s *The Legend of Kamuy* (*Kamui-den*), created between 1964 and 1971, an epic manga set in the early Edo Period of Japan that depicts peasants’ struggles against feudal lords. When examining this work, one can research the historical context from which it emerged, the at times tumultuous years of the 1960s in Japan—including the rise of youth counterculture, a maturing manga readership, and how the work’s stylistic features relate to a growing contemporaneous comics movement (*gekiga*)—in order to deepen one’s understanding of the work.

In addition to these approaches, we can also analyze how manga represent the historical past in a number of genres. As discussed in the “Historical representation” section in Chapter 2, there are different types of historical manga that communicate human experiences of the past to present-day readers. Historical representations in different (sub)genres—for example, historical drama, historical fantasy, (auto)biography, and *gakushū* manga—are also

prescribed or oriented by the generic expectations and conventions of each. A historical drama might be based on actual events and people, but it will often, in order to provide a pleasing narrative, amplify the story by adding imaginary details and dramatic elements, and/or by changing historical facts. On the other hand, the primary objective of *gakushū* manga is to impart the historical information in an “easy-to-understand” manner for learning (*gakushū*). In either case, manga seeks to orient our way of understanding the historical past.

To analyze historical representations in manga, it is of primary importance to remember that a manga *never* provides an unmediated account of the past. As we explained in the “Historical representation” section of Chapter 2, any manga representing the past is a product of multiple mediations; in the process of its creation, a number of instances of “filtering” take place, including the *mangaka*’s own opinions, beliefs, and selection of historical facts, as well as considerations made in light of advice from editors¹⁵ plus factors such as the target audience, marketability, and so on. In the case of *gakushū* manga, another layer may be added to this process, with directions, feedback, and corrections from a supervising scholar or scholars. Moreover, manga’s hand-drawn nature, including medium-specific conventions, affect the representation of the past. Comics scholar Hillary Chute writes that in graphic narratives “the non-transparency of drawing—the presence of the body, through the hand, as a mark in the texts—lends a subjective register to the narrative surfaces of comic pages that further enables comics works to be productively self-aware in how they ‘materialize’ history” (2008, 457). In other words, manga/comics is never a transparent window to the past, and its medium-specific nature reveals this fact in and of itself (no matter how much a *mangaka* might try to be “neutral” or “objective”). As such, we need to examine historical representations in manga by analyzing not only *what* history it depicts but also *how* it depicts history. Such a reading involves a critical analysis of how a manga tries to shape and reshape our understanding of the historical past.

Historical Questions

- Research and summarize the historical context(s) of the time period in which the manga was created.
- To what extent can we distinguish between expressions of opinion and informed facts grounded in historical evidence?
- In what way does the manga reflect the social values, beliefs, and stereotypes of the time in which it was created?
- Are there any artistic, cultural, or technological influences that helped shape the form and content of the manga when it was created?
- What specific historical events or circumstances, if any, motivated the *mangaka* to create the work? How did these events affect the author’s attitudes and expression?

- What are the major differences between the past depicted in the manga and our present time in terms of politics, ideology, institutions, economy, technology, people's lives, and so on? What common features do these time periods share (regardless of national or geographical differences)?
- To what extent is your understanding of the manga influenced by present-day social and cultural values?

Questions About Historical Representation

- Research and summarize the historical context(s) of the setting the work depicts.
- What is the focused topic of the manga in narrating the past? What is omitted regarding the main topic of the manga?
- Do any key historical figures appear in the manga? Does the manga depict them positively or negatively (or critically)? Analyze their characterization—in other words, what kind of character traits, personalities, roles, actions, or physical attributes are highlighted? What are the relationships between them and other (minor) characters?
- Does the manga illuminate the history of a country? Does it do so by following prominent historical figures or by foregrounding groups of (ordinary) people who are not often the focus of traditional historical accounts? Who is marginalized or not included?
- Does the manga offer an alternative to mainstream (or traditional) historical narratives? If so, how?
- How are the social, political, and economic tensions of the depicted time reflected in the work? Do the protagonists conform to or resist the dominant social values of the past they belong to?
- Does the manga dramatize the historical past or try to convey it objectively? In what way(s) are historical narratives presented through formal and visual devices? Also consult the questions in the “Formal and visual analysis” section in this chapter.
- If the manga presents two (or more) different historical times—say, the manga's narrative present and the past memories of the author—examine how different historical times are compared and contrasted in the work.
- What techniques does the creator use to produce a sense of verisimilitude in the manga (for example, period clothing and architecture, likenesses of historical figures, newspaper headlines, photos, language use, etc.)? Are there any aspects that distract from this?

- Are there attempts to show authority over, or fidelity to, the historical subject through the use of paratextual information?

Notes

- 1 From this perspective, Ishiko broadly discusses manga designs, illustration/ designs, and even moving images, including TV commercials and animation (called *manga eiga* at the time) under the name of manga. See also Suzuki (2014).
- 2 At least two excerpts from Itō's book are available in English (Ito 2016 and Ito 2011).
- 3 See Brienza (2015) for a brief history of OEL manga. Other terms that have been used by non-Japanese creators include world manga, global manga, nouvelle manga (NM), Euromanga, Germanga (German manga), and Original Non-Japanese Manga (ONJM).
- 4 See also Acosta (2016) for more on the dilemmas of labeling and authenticity for OEL manga creators as well as the potential of their work.
- 5 Previously, comics artist Will Eisner published the book titled *Comics & Sequential Art* (1985; revised in 1990) which also highlights how comics graphically communicate meanings and narratives to readers.
- 6 Some excerpts from Natsume's books and essays are translated into English. See Natsume (2008, 2013, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021).
- 7 In particular, the publication of Natsume Fusanosuke and Takekuma Kentarō's book, *Manga no yomikata* (How to read manga, 1995), contributed greatly to rekindling interest in the form of manga by offering a set of vocabulary for analyzing its formal and visual elements.
- 8 Manga scholar Jaqueline Berndt writes that *hyōgenron* equates to "stylistics or aesthetics in the narrow sense" (2014).
- 9 For more comprehensive terminology, see Andrei Molotiu's "List of Terms for Comics Studies" (2017) online.
- 10 The Japanese terms in parentheses are mainly taken from Natsume and Takekuma (1995).
- 11 Frederik L. Schodt (1983) writes that "[i]n contrast to the American comic, which is read slowly to savor lavishly detailed pictures and to absorb a great deal of printed information, the Japanese comic is scanned" (23).
- 12 We have consulted the following materials in generating these questions: Lefèvre (2014), Kukkonen (2013), and Berndt (2002, 308–13).
- 13 See Michael Meyer's *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* (2020).
- 14 For example, Allison (2000), Shamoon (2012), Prough (2010), and Ōgi (2015). Furthermore, there were two special issues about *shōjo* manga in *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*. See Orbaugh (2003) and Aoyama, Tsuchiya Dollase, and Kan (2010).
- 15 See [Box Text] "Editors and assistants" in this chapter for the role of editors in the manga publishing industry.

4

Key Texts

This chapter introduces selected works for those who wish to further explore the world of manga. This list is not meant to be comprehensive, nor is it meant to constitute a canon of manga titles. Instead, the following list of titles attempts to show a small sampling of the diversity of manga. We have generally selected the titles based on one or more of the following criteria: (1) their significance with regard to manga history and manga studies; (2) their socio-cultural impact in and beyond Japan; and (3) the distinctive characteristics of Japanese comics they exhibit in terms of genre, form, and subject matter, as compared to traditional Western comics. Moreover, with the availability of Japanese manga titles for the readers of this book in mind, our selections lean somewhat towards works accessible in English translation. These key texts are ordered below under four subheadings: “Pre-1945 historical focus” (introducing a handful of historically significant works), “Creator focus” (introducing important creators alongside their representative works), “Target readership focus” (introducing some titles from the five largest commercial comics categories commonly used in the Japanese manga industry), and “Variety focus” (where we attempt to show the variety of genres, types, and themes found within manga, beyond those of the preceding categorizations).

Pre-1945 Historical Focus

Kitazawa Rakuten and Others, *Jiji Manga*

Japan’s first newspaper comics page, *Jiji manga*, was created by Kitazawa Rakuten (1876–1955) at the request of the *Jiji shinpō* newspaper. Inspired by the funny pages of US newspapers, the hope was not only to latch onto the popularity of this new medium but also to soften the paper’s stiff image. While the word *Jiji* is usually translated as “current affairs,” the title is best understood as meaning “the manga of *Jiji shinpō* newspaper,” as the bulk of the humor-driven comics content is not related to topical issues or political news.

Jiji manga went through three publication arcs over three decades. The first was as a Sunday edition comics page between 1902 and 1906. During this period, apart from some reader-drawn competition contributions and the odd reprint of an overseas strip, the page was drawn entirely by Rakuten. It typically contained three to four comic strips of varying lengths. While most of these were one-offs, Japan's earliest reoccurring comic-strip characters began to appear, albeit irregularly, on the page. These include Mokubē and Tagosaku, country bumpkins who bungle their way through city life, and Chame and Dekobō, two mischief-loving boys. Some would continue to appear on and off in Rakuten's work for more than a decade. During this arc's roughly four-year run, Rakuten experimented with various comic-strip formats and expressions, on occasion employing effects lines and speech balloons, elements that would not become standard in manga until the 1930s. The popularity of this page played a major role in spreading the use of the then little-used word "manga" and led to other newspapers employing cartoonists. Rakuten abandoned the page in early 1906 in order to concentrate on magazine publications.

A second arc of *Jiji manga* began after Rakuten rejoined the paper around 1914. Just like the first arc it was a weekly single-page in black and white, though now it occasionally shifted to weekdays and its print quality was much improved. This arc gave birth to Rakuten's long-running everyman character Teino Nukesaku, who would occasionally act as Rakuten's alter ego and make crossover appearances in Rakuten's students' strips. *Jiji manga* was revamped in 1921 to begin its third and final arc. It was reborn as an eight-page multicolor comics supplement, drawn by Rakuten and a handful of young *mangaka* under his guidance. Each edition featured a large Rakuten cartoon cover, usually a political cartoon, and, depending on the period, three to seven pages of comics. Other content included articles, serialized stories, photos, and illustrations. This arc introduced readers to a number of regular US strips which were titled after their characters: *Happy Hooligan*, *Felix the Cat*, and *Laura*. *Jiji manga*'s Japanese artists adopted similar character titles and banners for their work. One by Rakuten, *Tonda Haneko*, is considered one of Japan's earliest girl-protagonist strips. By this time, however, Rakuten's realistic style had begun to look dated compared not only to the US strips but also the much more modern and stylized work of some of his students, for example the simple geometrical shapes used in the characters of Ogawa Takeshi's strip *Nū-san*.

As the newspaper company struggled to rebuild itself and its readership after its offices were destroyed in the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, *Jiji manga* went through a number of format and name changes. In the late 1920s, covers were also sold to readers so they could collect the comics insert in hardbound albums. By 1931 the supplement, renamed *Manga to yomimono* (Manga and reading material), had swollen into a sixteen-page glossy-cover magazine-style insert with more varied content and larger

advertisements. The name was again changed, becoming *Manga to shashin* (Manga and photos), before coming to an end in 1932. Rakuten took this as an opportunity to wind down his career as an active *mangaka*, but the impact of his *Jiji manga* and its cartoonists would linger on.

Oda Shōsei (Script) and Tōfūjin (Art), *Shō-chan no Bōken* (The Adventures of Shō-chan)

Remembered today as an important step in manga development, the daily comic strip *Shō-chan no bōken* (The adventures of Shō-chan) ran more or less continuously from January 1923 until May 1926. Its serialization began in the first issue of the daily photo-tabloid newspaper *Asahi Graph*, but eight months later after the Great Kantō Earthquake it moved to the same company's broadsheet newspaper, *Asahi shinbun*. The idea of using a strip came from the editor charged with creating *Asahi Graph*, Suzuki Bunshirō, who was eager to incorporate the features of tabloids he had seen while traveling abroad. Impressed with the popularity of the UK comic strip *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred* in the *Daily Mirror*, he enlisted writer Oda Shōsei and artist Tōfūjin (pseudonym of Kabashima Kazuichi) to create something similar (Suzuki 1938).

The resultant Shō-chan strip was a sensation amongst children and sparked many imitators. It is centered on two characters, a boy, Shō-chan, and his companion, a nameless squirrel, who together have numerous adventures. Many of these tales are fantasies which occasionally drew on ancient Western or Japanese myths, and at times even delved into science fiction. Unlike most pre-1940s manga, *The Adventures of Shō-chan* narratives are not humor-driven. Takeuchi Osamu points out that the strip even contains hints of tragedy, with ruined cities and dying populations, something that would have resonated with a Japanese audience who had just survived the devastating 1923 earthquake (2015, 115).

The strip's story arcs ran for between eight and twenty days, with each daily episode four panels in length. Tōfūjin's pen-drawn, clean-line style also set the look of the strip apart from earlier manga and even from its British inspiration. Nonetheless, it does mimic *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred* structurally in its use of speech balloons in tandem narration outside each panel. This regular use of speech balloons was still relatively novel for Japanese readers at the time. With the interplay between text and image not yet completely refined, the external narrative texts are at times redundant, repeating what can be easily gleaned from the speech balloons and images within the panels. Over time, the format of the strip as well as the look of its characters evolved. Beginning as a horizontal strip, read Western-style left to right, it moved to a vertical format then a grid read right to left, before moving back to and settling on a four-panel vertical format read top to bottom. As Tōfūjin

continued to refine his drawing style, Shō-chan's appearance changed slightly, as did his clothing. Over the course of its serialization these popular strips were collected into seven horizontal-format books. To make them into attractive high-quality consumer items, many of the strips were redrawn and colored, and some completely new stories were added (Takeuchi 2007).

The existence of this duo of Shō-chan and his squirrel was not confined within the panels of the strip. Fans could engage or interact with the characters through a "Memo" section below each daily installment. This featured fan letters and reports about what the two characters had been up to during their days off (i.e., breaks in serialization). Shō-chan's popularity also led to events for young fans being staged, and to Shō's iconic pompom-topped knit beanie becoming a fad among children. In 1924 the all-female theatre troupe Takarazuka also performed a stage version of the strip.

Tagawa Suihō, *Norakuro*

Norakuro, the representative work of *mangaka* Tagawa Suihō (1899–1989), was immensely popular and influential in the militaristic 1930s. The titular hero Norakuro, literally "Black Stray," is a black-dog soldier with a white muzzle and paws, a design thought to be inspired by US characters such as Mickey Mouse and Felix the Cat. Like them, Norakuro and other anthropomorphic characters who populate this manga walk upright, speak, and in some cases wear clothes. (This marks a change from earlier more realistic manga animals such as the squirrel of the *Shō-chan* strips.) In this manga the various animal types represent nationalities: the dogs are Japanese, the pigs are Chinese, the goats are Manchurians, and the bears are Soviets.

Norakuro appeared as a color comic in the manga section of the monthly boys' magazine *Shōnen Club* from January 1931 until October 1941. During the first six years of serialization these short eight-page comics stories were collected into seven lavish hardcover books with slipcases, each roughly 160 pages in length. The stories relate Norakuro's humorous experiences in military life as he gradually rises in rank from private to captain. Three more books followed in 1937 and 1938 containing original long-form narratives rather than collected strips. In these books, Norakuro and his fellow dog troops are on the "continent" (China) engaging in battles with the pigs. In one section, Norakuro even disguises himself as a pig to successfully sabotage the enemy's equipment. The manga's content over its run is reflective of the sociopolitical context. At the time, militarism was on the rise and Japan was making efforts to expand its empire's foothold, initially in Manchuria and then China. In 1931, the Mukden Incident became a pretext for a Japanese invasion of northern China, marking the beginning of Japan's "Fifteen-Year War." In 1937 the situation escalated into a full-blown war with China. Early victories brought about excitement domestically, celebrated by media including manga, but as China fought

back, the prospect of a drawn-out conflict turned the Japanese government's concerns to the home front. In late 1938 they issued a directive on children's reading material which declared, in part, that creating heroic war stories was no longer appropriate. Making fun of the Chinese, who were after all potential fellow imperial subjects, was also deemed unfitting. Children's reading material should instead educate about China and Chinese customs. This brought an abrupt end to *Norakuro's* war adventures. Consequently, he leaves the military and, as an enterprising civilian, works to help develop China. In 1939 a final book was released and two years later the magazine serialization petered out.

Norakuro's impact was huge. The popularity of the books sparked a manga publishing boom and led the manga industry to turn its focus primarily towards children. In addition, it led to an upsurge in war-themed manga, funny animal comics characters (rare before *Norakuro*), and character goods. In terms of form, Tagawa's reliance purely on speech balloons for text, at a time when many comics still had dialogue and narration outside panels, contributed to their wider adoption. His long-form narratives and use of three tiers of panels interspersed with full and panoramic double-page spreads also expanded the bounds of manga expression.

Regardless of any wartime taint, immediately after the war ended Tagawa soon resumed drawing humorous *Norakuro* strips in civilian settings, and continued well into the 1950s. After his death in 1989, two of his students carried on drawing *Norakuro* comics and *yonkoma* manga until 2013. However, these postwar efforts failed to capture the immense popularity of Tagawa's earlier work. Indeed, the continued nostalgia for his 1930s *Norakuro* books has led to them being reprinted a number of times since the war. Tokyo's Kōtō ward has created a *Norakuro* Road and a small museum which help keep this nostalgia alive. In 2019, Kawasaki City Museum held a major *Norakuro* exhibition.

Sakamoto Gajo, *Tank Tankuro*

Tank Tankuro (*Tanku Tankurō*) is a manga series by Sakamoto Gajō (1895–1973), originally serialized from 1934 to 1936 in *Yōnen Club*, a monthly magazine for pre- and early-elementary school children. Sakamoto studied Japanese painting before switching to the manga medium upon the advice of *mangaka* Okamoto Ippei. While working for a newspaper company, Sakamoto began contributing *yonkoma* comic strips to various newspapers. In 1934, he conceived of an idea for a new superhero character, named Tank Tankuro, and brought the manuscript to Kōdansha, the publisher of *Yōnen Club*. The magazine's editor-in-chief loved his idea, and the manga began to be serialized.

Tank Tankuro tells the heroic journey of the titular protagonist through an adventure story formula. Tank Tankuro is a robot-like character with a

samurai topknot. His body looks like a huge cannon ball with eight holes, and from those holes he can pull out tools and weapons such as pistols, machine guns, Japanese swords, tires (so that he can transform into an automobile), and airplane wings (so that he can fly). With those, Tankuro fights rogues and gangs while traveling to different places throughout Japan.

Because of its protagonist's ability to transform into a car or an airplane, *Tank Tankuro* is sometimes called one of the earliest sci-fi "robot" manga, but the stories never confirm whether Tank Tankuro is a human or robot. As a manga for small children, the stories also include age-appropriate humor and silly jokes while showcasing Tankuro's rather outlandish battles against villains.

Considering the historical context of its creation—the rise of the Japanese militarist regime—it is not difficult to see the characterization of this superhero as an amalgam of a samurai hero and a modern war machine. Though such militaristic associations might be problematic from the viewpoint of our contemporary era, the manga present a delightful example of Sakamoto's free-spirited imagination. And, along with other prewar manga titles, such as Tagawa Suihō's *Norakuro* and Shimada Keizō's *Bōken Dankichi* (The adventures of Dankichi), Sakamoto's *Tank Tankuro* won over the hearts of boy readers in the mid-1930s. After the manga completed its serialization, Sakamoto was deployed to Manchuria, where he served as a regional head of public relations (that is, propaganda) for the war effort. In 2011, a collection of *Tank Tankuro* stories was published in English by Presspop and reissued in 2017 by Fantagraphics Books. The cover design for these English translations was the work of American comics artist Chris Ware.

Yokoyama Ryūichi, *Fuku-chan*

Fuku-chan is a popular newspaper comic strip by Yokoyama Ryūichi (1909–2001) that bridges Japan's pre- and postwar years; it was serialized almost continuously from 1936 to 1971. The protagonist Fukuyama Fukuchi, better known by the diminutive Fuku-chan, made his first appearance in January 1936 in the fourteenth episode of Yokoyama's *Asahi shinbun* newspaper strip *Edokko Ken-chan*. Fuku-chan, aged five, was much shorter than the eight-year-old lead character Ken-chan and was the target of bullying. But Fuku-chan's popularity with readers led to him becoming the strip's focus, and in October the strip was renamed *Yōshi no Fuku-chan* (Adoptee Fuku-chan). With no father, Fuku-chan was adopted by his mother's wealthy elder brother who had no heir. Fuku-chan calls him *Ojisan*, meaning "grandfather." In his youth Ojisan traveled to and found success in the US. Back in Japan, his foreignness is marked by his alphabet-patterned clothing.

The strip revolves around Fuku-chan's home and neighborhood life. Unlike most of the other children in the strip, he is not yet old enough to attend school, though he desperately wants to. Visually, his distinctive features are his apron-like kindergarten smock and wooden *geta* clogs, his rounded head with dot eyes, button nose, and close-cropped hair, and his

trademark comically oversized school cap. This is a university cap given to him by a neighborhood high-school student who failed to enter college. Much of the strip's humor is derived from Fuku-chan's innocent but somewhat off-kilter logic, for example using a sleeping girl's platted hair as a bookmark when he is suddenly called away from reading a book.

The comic strip went through a number of title changes between 1938 and 1945. Some of these titles, such as *Fuku-chan's Troops*, testify to the escalating social impact of Japan's conflicts abroad. The war affected the content and form too. For example, a wartime avoidance of the English language meant Ojiisan's clothing temporarily lost its alphabet pattern, replaced by numbers. In 1942, when Yokoyama was sent as part of a propaganda unit to Java, an island in current Indonesia, Fuku-chan became a single-panel cartoon illustration for reports from the Japanese occupied region. Also, for a brief period, with space limited in extremely thin wartime papers, it was reduced to a three-panel strip. In 1944, Fuku-chan also took on the uncharacteristic roles of fighter pilot in the strip and of navy submariner in animated shorts. After the war, Yokoyama immediately purged the strip of any wartime flavor. The title became, and would remain, simply *Fuku-chan*. In 1946, an English *Fuku-chan* collection addressed to the Occupying Allied Forces in Japan was produced to raise money for needy children. *Fuku-chan* resumed newspaper serialization in *Mainichi shinbun*, returning to its earlier vertical *yonkoma* manga form, a format the strip likely helped establish as a Japanese newspaper standard.

The strip was hugely popular and influential. During its thirty-five-year run it gave birth to two spinoff character strips, numerous books, a 1957 radio program, and between 1982 and 1984 an animated TV series. Fuku-chan was turned into a broad variety of character goods, from prewar dolls to postwar handheld electronic games. He was used to advertise many services and products, from banks to alcohol (*sake*), and became a postwar mascot for one of Japan's top universities. The strip's humor, simple style, and cuteish characters had an impact on later *mangaka*. Tezuka Osamu considered Fuku-chan to be one of his own starting points as a *mangaka*, while Hasegawa Machiko, a fan, even gave Fuku-chan a few cameo appearances in her own work. In 1984, Yokoyama received Japan's highest civilian award, the Order of the Rising Sun, for his contributions to Japanese culture, and in 2002 his hometown of Kochi opened the Yokoyama Memorial Manga Museum devoted to his work, particularly *Fuku-chan*.

Creator Focus

Tezuka Osamu, *Phoenix* Series

Celebrated as the “god of manga,” the name of Tezuka Osamu (1928–89) shines in the history of manga. It would be no exaggeration to state that

Tezuka's influence can be found in not only postwar manga but also Japanese popular culture in general. His professional career began in 1946 at age seventeen with *Mā-chan no nikki-chō* (Diary of Mā-chan), a *yonkoma* manga serial for a children's newspaper. After this, he went on to produce "more than 700 volumes of manga, encompassing an estimated 150,000 pages of drawings" ("About Osamu Tezuka," in *Tezuka in English*) up until his unfortunate early death in 1989. Tezuka's historically important works include *Shin takarajima* (New treasure island), *Astro Boy*, *Buddha*, *Black Jack*, and the *Phoenix* series.

The *Phoenix* series is a body of manga created during different stages of Tezuka's career. Earlier *Phoenix* stories were published in the mid-1950s for *Manga Shōnen* and *Shōjo Club*, but the project became more substantial in the mid-1960s when Tezuka began (re-)serializing the *Phoenix* series in COM. Since COM was founded by Tezuka himself to cater to the maturing manga readership—that is, the young adult and adult readers of those days—he now explored more serious themes with occasional formal experimentation in *Phoenix*. Following this, Tezuka regularly came back to work on the series until his death. *Phoenix* is hence considered Tezuka's "life's work."

The *Phoenix* manga offers multiple stories in different genres, set in different historical times and places, ranging from ancient times in Japan, Egypt, Greece, and Rome to a post-apocalyptic Earth and even another inhabited planet in the far future. The title *Phoenix* refers to the ancient Greek mythical bird that cyclically regenerates. In Tezuka's manga, the phoenix, called the "firebird" (*hi no tori*), appears as a symbol of immortality. The premise of the *Phoenix* series is that anybody who drinks the phoenix's blood will be granted eternal life. Each story follows a different set of characters' desperate search for the phoenix (immortality), but Tezuka's work ultimately pronounces that such pursuits are vain efforts. Thematically, the *Phoenix* series poses a question about humanity, asking whether human beings are completely full of self-interest as they repeatedly perpetrate betrayal, murder, war, and the destruction of civilization; or whether there remains a modicum of hope in them, as some demonstrate altruistic behavior, self-sacrifice, mutual understanding, and love. In this way, Tezuka plugs his philosophy about life and death into the series.

Stylistically, the *Phoenix* series demonstrates Tezuka's well-known art style and character design—cartoony, curvy drawings in clear lines, inspired by American cartoons and comic books—but it is also mixed occasionally with the post-*gekiga*, somewhat naturalistic drawing style. The English translation is published in twelve volumes by Viz Media, but one can start reading from any given volume since each comprises relatively self-contained stories.

Mizuki Shigeru, *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths*

In Japan, Mizuki Shigeru (1922–2015) was best known for his manga featuring *yōkai* monsters. Traditionally, *yōkai* are understood as preternatural creatures and monsters found in ancient Japanese folklore and legends.

Mizuki repopularized *yōkai* characters in his manga and illustration books in the postwar popular cultural context. The immense popularity of his *yōkai* manga and their transmedia adaptations has created a strong association between his name and *yōkai*.

Born in Osaka in 1922, Mizuki was raised in Sakaiminato in Tottori Prefecture. His childhood is partly documented in his (semi-)autobiographical manga *NonNonBa*, which narrates his childhood interaction with an elderly lady known by her sobriquet “NonNonBa,” who tells folkloric stories to the young Mizuki. At age twenty-one, he was drafted into the Imperial Japanese Army and sent to Rabaul on the island of New Britain (in present-day Papua New Guinea). It was during the last stage of the war when Japan was losing major battles, so Mizuki went through the worsening war conditions at Japan’s colonial frontiers. Mizuki survived the war, though not without losing his left arm in a bombing by the Allied forces. After returning to Japan, he undertook numerous jobs to make ends meet until he started drawing picture slides for *kamishibai* (lit. “paper theater”), after which he produced manga for the *kashihon* (rental book) publishers. He also became a major contributor to the early-era *Garo* magazine in the mid-1960s. Mizuki’s financial success came with his *shōnen* (boys) manga *Terebi-kun* (TV-kun), which won the Kōdansha Children’s Manga Award in 1964. His representative manga titles include *Kitarō* (*Gegege no Kitarō*), *Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths*, and *Showa: A History of Japan* (*Shōwa-shi*).

Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths, first published in 1973, was largely based on Mizuki’s experience as a private during the Second World War. In its afterword, Mizuki claims that “90% of the work is factual,” but there are several fictional renditions. For instance, one of the main characters, Maruyama, an alter ego of the author, dies in the end, which of course is in contrast to Mizuki himself, who survived. Unlike other existing war manga, this work hardly focuses on combat scenes; instead, it highlights how the lower-ranking soldiers suffer from starvation, malaria, and injuries in preparation for possible battles. It also depicts several accidental deaths such as by suffocation from swallowing a fish, and an alligator attack in the jungle. The original Japanese title, *Sōin gyokusai seyo!*—evoking the shattering of a jewel, meaning in practice, “All personnel, fight until death!”—was a military command used during the war to order troops to embark on a suicidal charge, calling on them die a noble death fighting for the Emperor rather than dishonorably surrendering. Given this fact, it would be reasonable to identify Mizuki’s depictions of these deaths as clearly far from “noble” as a criticism of the order that ended these men’s lives.

Stylistically, Mizuki employs his signature style extensively in this work: feebly drawn, flattened, “two-dimensional” designs for human characters which contrast with the elaborate, pointillist background drawings depicting the grandeur of the natural scenery. Such a contrast offers a perspective on the absurdity of humanity’s war efforts before the transcendental majesty of nature.

Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths won several domestic and international awards, including the “Prize for Inheritance” at the 2009 Angoulême International Comics Festival in France and the Eisner Award (Best U.S. Edition of International Material—Asia and Best Reality-Based Work) in 2012.

Hagio Moto, *A Drunken Dream and Other Stories*

Hagio Moto (b. 1949) is one of the most innovative and ambitious female *mangaka*, and her critical acclaim has been increasing beyond Japan. Critics regard her as a representative member of the “Year 24 Group” (24-*nen gumi*), a group of female *mangaka* who revolutionized *shōjo* manga in terms of themes, aesthetics, and forms in the 1970s.

Hagio Moto published her first work for a *shōjo* manga magazine at the age of twenty. Critics often describe Hagio’s work as “literary” (*bungaku-teki*) due to their thematic depth accompanied by strong lyricism and symbolism. Indeed, Hagio acknowledges the influence of Japanese and Western literature on her work, such as the writing of Inagaki Taruho and Hermann Hesse. She is also known as a fan of American sci-fi authors, including Issac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, and Robert Heinlein. Her sci-fi titles, such as *There Are Eleven*, *Otherworld Barbara*, and *Sutā Reddo* (Star Red), are highly acclaimed and have won sci-fi awards in Japan. Her other important works include *The Poe Clan* and *The Heart of Thomas*.

A Drunken Dream and Other Stories is a collection of Hagio’s short stories, edited by manga scholar and translator Rachel Thorn. It is an anthology of Hagio’s short manga pieces, from her earlier career in the 1970s to her more recent works from the 2000s. Each work in this anthology has well-crafted narrative and thought-provoking visual symbolism, which invites multiple readings of each manga. As a whole, *A Drunken Dream* demonstrates both Hagio’s consistent thematic concerns and her maturity as an artist. The gems in the collected stories include “Hanshin: Half-God,” which is about conjoined twin girls—one beautiful and the other ugly—and questions the concepts of identity and beauty; “Iguana Daughter,” which presents the story of a girl who is not loved by her own mother; and “The Willow Tree,” a story about reconciliation and forgiveness between a man and his own mother as told through graphic narration without words (except for the last few panels). While each work has its own themes, the recurrent motif in *A Drunken Dream* concerns the conflict between the world of children and the world of adults—or, more specifically, the tension and reconciliation between mother and in most cases a daughter. Through these stories, Hagio also raises questions about gender norms under the patriarchal order, which oppressively determines the social position of girls and women to be “mothers.”

Nakazawa Keiji, *Barefoot Gen*

Nakazawa was born in 1939 and grew up in Hiroshima. During his early career, he created *shōnen* manga such as sport and adventure stories. He earned a reputation for his atomic-themed “black” series of works, beginning with “*Kuroi ame ni utarete*” (Pelted by black rain) in 1968. In 1973, Nakazawa authored an autobiographical short manga piece, “*Ore wa mita*” (titled *I Saw It* in the 1982 stand-alone English edition), in the then-monthly *Shōnen Jump* for a special segment that invited several authors to graphically narrate their own stories of how they became *mangaka*. In this work, Nakazawa recounted his own experience as a survivor of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. As detailed in the story, when the bomb dropped, Nakazawa Keiji was a six-year-old boy standing only one mile away from ground zero. His editor liked the story and encouraged Nakazawa to further explore a similar theme loosely based on his childhood experience. The result was the over 2,000-page-long manga *Barefoot Gen*.

The story of *Barefoot Gen* revolves around a schoolboy named Nakaoka Gen, an alter ego of the author. While the manga depicts the horror of the gruesome scenes after the bomb dropped, it also tells stories about the people who faced oppression and persecution by police, teachers, and militarists during wartime, as well as the social confusion and the proliferation of rampant gangs after the war, and the discrimination against *hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors). While depicting the harsh realities of the people in postwar Hiroshima, the manga still maintains a *shōnen* manga formula—a boy’s adventure in the land of the post-bombing devastation and the road to recovery with his friends—and thematically highlights the vitality and strength of Gen, who never succumbs to the hardships he encounters. The opening image of “wheat” symbolically suggests the strength of Gen, as wheat springs back no matter how many times it is trampled. While the manga is a real-life-based narrative, there are sections that are modified and fictional. In an interview, Nakazawa remarked that *Barefoot Gen* is a combination of true stories that happened to him and other people in Hiroshima. This statement suggests that the manga embodies both his personal, autobiographical memoir and the collective memory of the Hiroshima bomb survivors. Stylistically, Nakazawa combined the cartoony mainstream *shōnen* manga style of the 1960s and 1970s with the *gekiga*-inspired style of thick and coarse linework. Such a combination is effective in appealing to the primary demographic of boy readers while depicting the horrifying scenes that followed the bombing.

Barefoot Gen is, perhaps, one of the most international of Japanese comics, having been translated into over twenty languages, thanks in large part to the efforts of mostly volunteer peace activists and translators. The first English translation appeared in 1978, but the series has seen a number of publishers over the years, and it was not until 2009 that all ten volumes

were finally made available in English. When the New Society Publishers released the second English-language run of the series in book format in 1988, a new introduction written by Art Spiegelman, known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus*, was added. This introduction has been retained in the currently available editions from Last Gasp.

Ōtomo Katsuhiro, *Akira*

Ōtomo Katsuhiro (b. 1954) is a *mangaka*, screenwriter, and anime director, best known for his science fiction epic *Akira*. Before becoming a professional artist, he contributed manga for the “Manga Prep School” section in Tezuka’s *COM*. In the 1970s, Ōtomo started creating manga for *seinen* magazines and became known as a young talent in the genre of science fiction. In manga history, he is often described as an artist who introduced a fresh drawing style to Japanese comics. Unlike the Tezuka-inspired, curvy character designs of the postwar period or the *gekiga*-inspired thick and coarse lines of the mid-20th century, Ōtomo’s drawing style gives a sense of non-indigenous freshness and naturalistic sophistication. His elaborate designs for machines and meticulously detailed architectural backgrounds are remarkable. Such a visual style was in part inspired by contemporary new wave cinema, European poster designs, and, most prominently, the works of French comics artist Moebius (Jean Giraud).

Akira was Ōtomo’s science fiction masterpiece, first serialized in the *seinen* manga magazine *Weekly Young Magazine* in 1982. It is set in a post-apocalyptic future city called “Neo-Tokyo” on reclaimed land in Tokyo Bay. The opening of the original Japanese manga sets the series in the year 2019, thirty-eight years after the detonation of a “new type of bomb” (*shin-gata bakudan*)—the exact term used initially in Japan to describe the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima—that signaled the outbreak of the Third World War. Neo-Tokyo shows signs of recovery (in the preparation for another Tokyo Olympics), although some abandoned buildings remain on the outskirts. The story focuses on the protagonist, Kaneda, who is a teenage biker gang leader, and his buddy/rival, Tetsuo. Their accidental encounter with an enigmatic boy with psychokinesis throws them into a world of military conspiracy, political machinations, and revolutionary activities, all of which leads them to the hidden secret of the project and the figure named “Akira” that allegedly caused the previous destruction of Tokyo.

Akira is considered a landmark in Japanese comics in cyberpunk, a subgenre of science fiction, although Ōtomo threw idiosyncratic ideas such as psychokinesis, youth biker gang (*bōsōzoku*) subculture, and biogenetics into the story of *Akira*, instead of more typical cyberpunk tropes such as cyborgs, AI, or cyberspace. *Akira* can be read as a reflection on the postwar history of Japan/Tokyo—its complicity with US militarism, the socio-political impasse (after the decline of the political movements of the 1960s), and the rise of a young generation with new sensibilities and potentials.

Today, Ōtomo is one of the most acclaimed living *mangaka*, having received several domestic and international awards, including Japan's "Medal with Purple Ribbon" in 2013 and the prestigious "Grand Prix" award at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in 2015.

Takahashi Rumiko, *Ranma ½*

Takahashi Rumiko (b. 1957) is a female *mangaka* active in the field of *shōnen* manga. When she was a college student in the mid-1970s, she founded a manga study club creating manga *dōjinshi*. She also studied manga at the "*gekiga sonjuku*" (1977–88), a private manga school founded by Koike Kazuo, the writer of *Lone Wolf and Cub*. In 1978, Takahashi submitted her manga to a contest organized by publisher Shōgakukan and won an honorable mention, which initiated her career as a professional *mangaka* in Shōgakukan's *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*. Her contribution to manga development is now recognized internationally. In 2018, Takahashi was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Awards Hall of Fame, and the following year she won the "Grand Prix" at the Angoulême International Comics Festival. Her globally popular titles include *Urusei Yatsura* (1978–87), *Maison Ikkoku* (1980–7), *Ranma ½* (1987–96), and *Inuyasha* (1996–2008).

Ranma ½ is one of Takahashi's hit series which has attracted both domestic and international fans. The protagonist, named Ranma Saotome, is a teenage boy who has trained in martial arts with his father since childhood. While training in China, Ranma and his father accidentally fall into cursed springs, triggering bodily transformations; from then on, Ranma becomes a buxom girl when he comes into contact with cold water, and his father transforms into a giant panda. Both can revert to their original forms when they touch hot water. Using this plot device, *Ranma ½* narrates a story about the love–hate relationship between Ranma and his arranged fiancée Akane, and their interactions with other quirky but fun characters. Like other Takahashi works, *Ranma ½* is a mixture of genres, in this case combining romantic comedy and martial arts.

The title refers to Ranma's involuntary gender switching condition—he is half male and half female. Also, in Japanese popular parlance, the word half (*hāfu*) is often used to indicate single entities with dual qualities: people born of mixed "racial" or ethnic heritage are labeled "half," and people who change gender are (or were) termed "new-half." One of the themes of the series is about gender bending or cross-gender transformation, expressed through the body switching of Ranma and how others treat different embodiments of the same person, although it is largely used as a comedic device rather than as an explicit critique or examination of gender normativity (or conservatism). It is reasonable to surmise that the gender-bending component of the manga derives from the fact that Takahashi was one of the earlier successful female *mangaka* in the field of *shōnen* manga.

In interviews, Takahashi notes that she wanted to expand the readership for her manga, including female readers, although she was contributing *Ranma ½* to a manga magazine aimed at boys. Given how her works, including *Ranma ½*, are embraced by different readers across genders, Takahashi can be considered one of the manga artists who accelerated the crossing of traditional, commercially defined gender boundaries in manga readership.

Target Readership Focus

Children's Manga (*Kodomo Manga* or *Jidō Manga*)

Fujiko F. Fujio, *Doraemon*

While mainstream manga magazines are categorized in four major readership segments—*shōnen*, *shōjo*, *seinen*, and *josei*—there are several manga magazines that target both boys and girls. One of the largest publishers, Shōgakukan, has a series of “learning magazines” (*gakushū zasshi*) for first to sixth graders based on the Japanese elementary school system. These six magazines typically consist of articles that touch upon school children's interests, news about topical issues, short stories, interviews about celebrities and popular athletes, and manga. Shōgakukan also published magazines for much younger preschool-age readers, too. One of the popular manga appearing in these magazines is *Doraemon* by Fujiko F. Fujio (1933–96), a widely embraced and trans-generationally known manga series in Japan.

Doraemon was serialized, mostly in the above-mentioned magazines, between 1970 and 1994. Typically, each episode was a self-contained story rather than part of an overarching narrative across its serialization. The first episode of *Doraemon* set up the premise of the series: Doraemon, a “cat”-shaped robot, suddenly appears from the desk drawer of the protagonist boy Nobita. Doraemon comes from the future to assist him in order to change his disastrous future. Nobita has no talent for schoolwork or sports, is coy and awkward in the face of his love interest Shizuka, and is relentlessly bullied by his classmates, Gian and Suneo. Doraemon saves the day for Nobita by using one of many future gadgets which he can pull out from his “fourth-dimensional” pouch. Most episodes are formulaic: Nobita gets in trouble and asks Doraemon for help; Doraemon attempts to save Nobita with a future gadget, but this solution proves temporary as Nobita misuses or abuses it, causing him further trouble in the end. Fundamentally, each story is a slapstick comedy with innocent humor. Despite the passing of the creator Fujiko, the production company he established continues reprinting, adapting, and licensing his work. Doraemon continues to appear in TV and film adaptations, in children's *gakushū* manga (educational manga) covering math to manners, and in an abundance of character merchandise like stationery, bags, and lunchboxes. The titular character is also used for a

huge range of consumer product and service advertisements ranging from cars and foods to employment agencies and train companies. Consequently, even today, over fifty years after his first appearance in manga, Doraemon is ubiquitous in Japanese society and remains one of the most loved characters among Japanese of all ages.

Yanase Takashi, *Anpanman*

Yanase Takashi (1919–2013) was a *mangaka*, poet, lyricist, writer, and illustrator, best known for his widely loved character “Anpanman.” Like Superman, Anpanman is a caped superhero who can fly, but his head is a round “red bean-jam bread roll” (“*anpan*” in Japanese). Although the prototype of Anpanman can be found in Yanase’s 1969 prose short story and his 1973 picture book, the manga *Anpanman* and the anime adaptation boosted its popularity among small children. Thoroughly merchandized, *Anpanman* characters appear in numerous children’s toys, clothes, and commodities. In 2010, *Anpanman* characters became Japan’s top-grossing characters, surpassing Hello Kitty and Pokémon (Tabuchi 2010).

Yanase created *Anpanman* as a *yonkoma* (four-panel comic strip) manga series, which first ran from 1976 to 1982 in a children’s literature magazine, before moving briefly to another magazine and finally a newspaper. The story begins with the birth of the titular Anpanman, who suddenly appears—without explanation—from a bakery oven. Anpanman goes on to help children and adults while the baker, a father-like figure, takes care of him. In earlier episodes, Anpanman helps starving children and adults by allowing them to eat his head. After his head is eaten, he goes back to the bakery and the baker makes him a new “*anpan*” head, restoring his appearance and giving him energy. No detailed explanation about this process is offered because it is primarily for very young readers. For the same reason, the manga’s text uses phonetic *hiragana* characters instead of *kanji* (Sino-Japanese characters), which require higher literacy. The story of *Anpanman* became a superhero formula in which Anpanman saves the world from an evil (but still cute) anthropomorphic germ called Baikinman. Anpanman is a kind-hearted hero who helps others who are in trouble while occasionally teaching children the importance of hygiene.

In his early life, Yanase went through the hardships of both wartime, as an imperial soldier (sent to China), and the immediate postwar period of food shortages. It is perhaps this lived experience that is reflected in his characterization of Anpanman, who willingly gives of himself, offering his sweet red-bean-jam-filled pastry head to those who need food. Yanase was active in different visual cultural fields; for example, he worked with Tezuka on anime projects. In later life, Yanase served as the chairman of the Japan Cartoonists Association (Nihon mangaka kyōkai) from 2000 to 2012. In 1996 the Yanase Takashi Memorial Hall, largely devoted to his Anpanman characters, was built in Kōchi Prefecture, his father’s home prefecture.

Shōnen

Toriyama Akira, *Dragon Ball*

Toriyama Akira (b. 1955) is a mega hit maker with his *shōnen* manga series *Dr. Slump* (1980–4) and *Dragon Ball* (1984–95); the former reached cumulative book sales of tens of millions, and the latter hundreds of millions. *Dr. Slump*, a hit domestically, is a gag manga about the daily lives of a girl robot named Arale-chan (*Arare-chan*) and her creator Norimaki Senbei in a fantasy land called “Penguin Village,” whereas *Dragon Ball* is an action-adventure manga which has had an impact extending well beyond Japan, translated into over twenty languages and sold in over forty countries. Through these two series, Toriyama became one of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*’s most popular artists and helped boost the magazine’s sales throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Toriyama is also known as the designer of characters and monsters for the *Dragon Quest* role-playing video game series.

Inspired partly by the classical Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, *Dragon Ball* revolves around a boy named Son Gokū who has a monkey-like tail. Gokū is an alien (as is revealed later), although he knows nothing of this fact since he was raised by his human grandfather. The story follows Gokū’s journey with a teenage girl, Bulma, who is searching for the seven orbs, known as “Dragon Balls,” which can summon a wish-granting dragon when assembled. Throughout their quest, Gokū encounters a variety of rivals and villains who are also searching for the Dragon Balls. Earlier chapters were oriented toward the genre of gag manga (in the same vein as Toriyama’s previous work, *Dr. Slump*), but once Son Gokū joins a martial arts competition, the story becomes more focused on Gokū’s martial arts training and battles. This shift was carried out in response to the readers’ demands, prompted by *Shōnen Jump*’s famed reader feedback system (conducted via a feedback postcard attached to each issue of the magazine). Throughout the journey, Gokū continues to grow stronger and even transforms into a superhuman figure. Yet, unlike classical American superhero comics, Gokū does not merely defeat his enemies, but turns many of them into his friends after beating them. In this way, Toriyama allows Gokū to stay a good-natured, fun protagonist for young boy readers.

Stylistically, Toriyama’s main characters are drawn using curvy and cartoony lines. Along with Gokū’s boyish figure and monkey-tail, his character designs invite the emotional identification of readers who are familiar with the mainstream *shōnen* manga style. The pages devoted to battle scene depictions increased once the series began focusing on Gokū’s fighting. In these combat scenes, body movements are emphasized by framing from multiple angles, and these work in combination with effective use of motion lines and sound effects to engross readers.

Kishimoto Masashi, *Naruto*

Kishimoto Masashi's *Naruto* (1999–2014) is one of the most popular manga titles of all time, embraced by both domestic and international fans. It was originally serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* from 1999 to 2014, and its republished *tankōbon* (standalone edition) series reached a total of seventy-two volumes.

Set primarily in a village in a fictional world, *Naruto* focuses on the life of the boy protagonist Uzumaki Naruto, a ninja academy trainee. He dreams of becoming the “Hokage,” the title held by the strongest ninja leader in the community. The series introduced the titular protagonist as a young orphan who lost his parents; he is also detested by many other villagers because the nine-tailed demon fox that previously caused the destruction of the village was—unbeknownst to him—sealed within his body shortly after he was born. Naruto soon embarks on an adventure together with Sakura (Naruto's love interest), Sasuke (his rival), and Kakashi (the captain). The first part of the series can be categorized as an action comedy, still depicting Naruto's emotional growth and the bond he gradually cultivates through his rivalry with Sasuke. The second part tells the story of Naruto's coming of age after returning to the village from his adventures. While Naruto's training to become a stronger ninja—both physically and spiritually—continues, a group of renegade ninja agents called the Akatsuki aims to release the sealed demon monsters from the people they are trapped inside in order to advance their nefarious aims. Naruto and his comrades fight against them to protect the ninja world.

Kishimoto incorporated broader Asian as well as domestic legends or traditions into this series, including the Asian zodiac and Japanese ninja characters—for instance, the fictional ninja hero called Jirai-ya is adapted from a popular Edo Period work of fiction. That being said, the author filtered those figures and concepts through the lens of a contemporized rendition: his ninja characters are not the typical historical dark and secretive representations of ninja in black clothing with head and face coverings, acting behind the scenes. Instead, they are more brightly dressed and individualized boy and girl characters (all studying *jutsu*, semi-mystical ninja techniques, at their school), who serve to appeal to teenage readers. The fundamental motifs follow the standard *Weekly Shōnen Jump* formula: “friendship, effort (i.e., persistence), and triumph.” The author's skill at producing appealing characters and episodes, spanning more than a decade, is astonishing. Stylistically, *Naruto* is a quintessential example of mainstream *shōnen* manga in the 1990s and the 2000s: the cartoony character designs, combined with dynamic lines for depicting action scenes, are effectively deployed throughout the series. Due to the successful transmedia adaptations that have reached international audiences, cosplayers wearing the costumes of Naruto characters are a particularly common sight at anime conventions all over the world.

Shōjo

Takeuchi Naoko, *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*

Takeuchi Naoko (b. 1967) is best known as the author of the hit series *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*. It was first serialized in the *shōjo* manga magazine *Nakayoshi* from 1992 to 1997. *Sailor Moon* can be seen as a combination of various popular cultural ideas and conventions explored in both *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga: these include the superhero, the beautiful fighting girl (*bishōjo* fighters), team fighting (*sentai*), the magical girl (*mahō shōjo*), friendship, and romantic comedy elements and tropes. While featuring female superheroines as its protagonists, it still caters to more orthodox (or conservative) girls' interests, including fashionable clothing, accessories, and romance. *Sailor Moon* is one of the best-known *shōjo* manga titles to have been embraced by both domestic and international readers.

Sailor Moon tells the story of a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl, Tsukino Usagi, who is a clumsy crybaby. One day, on her way to school, she encounters a talking cat (Luna) who gives her a magical brooch by which she transforms into the “beautiful fighter” (*bishōjo senshi*), Sailor Moon. As the episodes progress, she assembles a team of other young female fighters in order to save Earth from the forces of evil through the use of their magical powers. While a high-school boy (Chiba Mamoru) occasionally appears to assist the Sailor Fighters as the mysterious Tuxedo Mask, the main plot follows the young girl protagonists' everyday lives and their battles. The overall narrative arc conforms to the “good-versus-evil” superhero genre; yet part of the appeal of *Sailor Moon* lies in how it presents the ordinary girls' delicate sensibilities, rich emotions, and friendship throughout the series. *Sailor Moon* is by no means a Japanese version of *Wonder Woman*: she is far from being a masculine fighter, her human weaknesses laid bare even after she transforms into Sailor Moon. Throughout the series, there are various references to Japanese and Greco-Roman folklore and myths, but the major themes of *Sailor Moon* are the coming-of-age of teenage girls, female empowerment, and their teamwork.

The art style of *Sailor Moon* is a crystallization of the mainstream *shōjo* manga techniques and styles that had developed by the 1990s. The first couple of pages in the first volume demonstrates such examples: the female protagonist is drawn with a focus on her saucer-eyed face, non-diegetic flowery and starry design patterns hang in the background, and her body looks tall and slender but switches to a cartoony and short (*chibi*) figure at moments of comic relief. Some might argue that the general lack of “ethnic” features in the character designs has helped the series have transcultural appeal, yet the series is replete with “Japanese” cultural elements, including

the protagonists' Sailor Scout clothing which are elaborations of common Japanese schoolgirl "sailor" uniforms.

Ikeda Riyoko, *The Rose of Versailles*

The Rose of Versailles, created by Ikeda Riyoko (b. 1947), is one of the most influential works of *shōjo* manga. It was first serialized in 1972–3 in the *shōjo* manga magazine *Margaret*. Although the series primarily targeted teenage girls, *The Rose of Versailles* also appealed to adult women. In 1981, Frederik L. Schodt translated the first two volumes of the series into English, but the circulation was limited, with no further translation of later volumes. Anglophone readers had to wait decades until a complete English translation of the whole series was finally made available, published by Canada-based Udon Entertainment in 2020–1.

The Rose of Versailles is a historical drama set in the French revolutionary period. It tells the story of the fictional Oscar François de Jarjayes, a young woman who was raised as a "man" by her father in order to allow her to inherit the role of commander of the Royal Guard at the French court. It is well known that Oscar's gender-bending characterization was inspired by Tezuka's *Princess Knight* (1953–6), which deploys the same trope. The main plot of *The Rose of Versailles* follows the lives of Oscar, his lifelong friend André Grandier, and the historical Marie Antoinette. As the original serialization continued, the focus of the narrative shifted from Marie Antoinette to Oscar and her love for André, due in part to readers who wanted to see more of the latter. The work also addresses the tension between women's social roles as imposed by the patriarchal feudal order and the female characters' struggles for liberation, which resonate with the central motif of revolution. It is known that Ikeda belonged to the Japanese Communist Party when she was a student, and her past political alignments can be seen in her focus on the French Revolution, since in the story Oscar begins to sympathize with the plight of the poor and the workers.

The art style of *The Rose of Versailles* is worthy of particular note. Ikeda and her contemporaries in the 1970s experimented with different creative styles of formal representation which have since become common techniques in contemporary *shōjo* manga. One of most significant of these is the frequent use of ornately decorated pages in this manga. Along with the gorgeous clothes and frilled dresses of noblewomen, flowery patterns and decorative illustrations adorn not only the backgrounds within panels but also the panel frames themselves. These images serve to symbolically convey the emotional states of characters and/or the atmosphere of particular scenes. Another influential technique is Ikeda's complex use of panels: she overlays panels and breaks down panel frames while extending the close-up images of key characters beyond panel frames for key moments.

Takemiya Keiko, *Kaze To Ki No Uta* (The Poem of Wind and Trees)

Takemiya Keiko (b. 1950) is an influential *mangaka* and representative member of the “Year 24 Group.” One of her most highly regarded works, one often said to have raised the art of manga to the level of literature, is *Kaze to ki no uta* (The poem of wind and trees), originally serialized in *Shōjo Comic* from 1976 to 1984. This work depicts romantic and sexual relationships between boys, and is hence also considered one of the first *shōnen-ai* (love between boys) classics.

Set in a boarding school in nineteenth-century southern France, *Kaze to ki no uta* portrays the life and relationship of two adolescent students, Serge Battour and Gilbert Cocteau. Serge is a new student who moves into the boarding school and shares a room with Gilbert, whose appearance is dazzlingly beautiful. Taking advantage of his beauty, Gilbert enjoys a life of debauchery, skipping classes, having sex with other boys, and even manipulating the director of the school. At first, Serge despises him, but he gradually learns of Gilbert’s painful past, after which they become more than friends.

In this work, Takemiya broke one of the *shōjo* manga taboos of the time by depicting sex—two boys in the same bed—in the opening pages. In her memoir, Takemiya reveals the initial refusals she encountered from multiple editors when she approached them about the publication of this work (Takemiya, 2016). The work thematically addresses not only homosexual relationships but also racism, rape, and incest, all of which were shocking to (girl) readers in the 1970s. The two main characters are drawn using thin, delicate lines, imparting them with a sense of gender neutrality and ethereality. Takemiya skillfully conveys the inner worlds of her characters—unvoiced feelings, emotions, and angst—by effectively using unique page layouts and overlaid panels within panels. Adding to this visual communication of inner states is the expressiveness of her characters’ hands, which are often focal points in the panels of this work. She also uses the seasons and nature in the background for symbolic and lyrical purposes throughout her graphic narrative. With the rise of boys’ love (BL) manga, *Kaze to ki no uta* was rediscovered during the 2000s and has been celebrated as one of the “origins” of this now established and increasingly international (sub)genre.

Seinen

Shirato Sanpei, *The Legend of Kamuy*

Shirato Sanpei (b. 1932), born Okamoto Noboru, is the son of the well-known proletarian painter and activist Okamoto Tōki. Shirato is best known for his classic tales set in feudal Japan, such as *Ninja bugei-chō: Kagemaru-*

den (Scroll of martial arts of Ninja: The legend of Kagamaru), *Sasuke*, and *The Legend of Kamuy*—from the Ainu language, *kamuy*, alternatively spelt *kamui*, can mean “god(s),” “divine” (i.e., of the gods), or “bear(s).” All of these manga feature ninja heroes, which contributed to the “ninja boom” in the late 1950s and 1960s, a period when many ninja manga, TV shows, and anime were made. Though *seinen* manga had not yet developed into a distinct category, Shirato created these works with maturing (male) readers in mind (and without much humor); as such, they were discussed by critics as *gekiga* at the time.

The Legend of Kamuy is Shirato’s masterpiece and was originally serialized in *Garo*, a magazine which Shirato and editor Nagai Katsuichi founded in 1964. Set in feudal Japan during the Edo Period, this epic features a variety of protagonists, such as *rōnin* (masterless samurai), ninja heroes, merchants, and resourceful peasants, all of whom persistently attempt to resist the oppressive ruling system under the Tokugawa shogunate. Critics often point out that Shirato’s leftist politics are reflected in this narrative. Due to these thematic concerns, it attracted college students, activists, art/cultural critics, and artists across various fields. The first serialization period of *The Legend of Kamuy* (1964–71) coincided with the rise of political movements in Japan led by politically active students and activists who raised voices of dissent against the establishment, especially against the US–Japan Security Treaty which allowed a US military presence in Japan.

In the mid-1970s, Shirato began to produce works based on myths and legends from all over the world. From 1988 to 2000, he also serialized the “Second Part” of *The Legend of Kamuy* in a *seinen* magazine called *Big Comic*. The English translation of his work, *The Legend of Kamui Perfect Collection* (published in 1987), is not a translation of the first original series, but rather an excerpt from the “Second Part” of *The Legend of Kamuy*. An English translation of the original *The Legend of Kamuy* series is long overdue.

Saitō Takao, *Golgo 13*

Saitō Takao (1936–2021) emerged as a *mangaka* within the *kashihon* (rental book) manga industry, creating manga/*gekiga* in the mid-1950s. With the decline of the *kashihon* industry, he shifted towards *seinen* manga magazines, contributing many hard-boiled manga titles. Saito is recognized as one of the earliest authors to adopt the production studio system. Aiming to increase the productivity of his manga, he formed Saitō Production in 1960.

Golgo 13 is one of the longest-running manga/*gekiga* series, starting in 1968 and continuing to this day. The title refers to the code name of protagonist Duke Tōgō, a part-Japanese hitman who works behind the scenes of international politics and corporate schemes. He accepts assignments to assassinate targets based on his own moral code or

philosophy—he is in literary terms a code hero. Typically, each episode has a self-contained narrative: some episodes focus on particular assignments through which the protagonist accomplishes his tasks, while others narrate tales of other characters who are active in the underground of global politics, with the protagonist merely appearing in the last scene to assassinate the key figure (and giving each of the stories some closure). Over the course of the series, *Golgo 13* has included actual historical incidents, such as the Tiananmen Square massacre and the Gulf War, though not without fictionalizing the reality-based characters and events.

Stylistically, *Golgo 13* uses *gekiga*-inspired thick, dynamic lines. In particular, the face of the protagonist is relatively square, with distinct thick eyebrows, a stark contrast with the curvy character designs in mainstream manga. The characterization of the protagonist is also unique: Duke barely speaks, his unvoiced musings expressed with ellipses (“...”) within several speech balloons. This imparts a sense of mystery and unfathomability to the protagonist.

In 2021, on the passing of Saitō, his production company announced its intention to keep alive Saitō’s legacy by continuing *Golgo 13* using the production studio system he established.

Josei

Okazaki Kyōko, *Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly*

Okazaki Kyōko (b. 1963) is a manga artist who produced a series of important *josei* manga titles in the 1980s and 1990s. Her critically acclaimed works in this period, including *Virgin* (1985), *Pink* (1989), and *River’s Edge* (1994), established her name in the field of manga. In 1996, Okazaki was involved in a car accident which has interrupted her manga-drawing manga career.

Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly, first serialized in the *josei* magazine *Feel Young* in 1995–6, focuses on the life of supermodel Liliko, who has undergone plastic surgery to stay at the top of the modeling business. Yet, due to the side effects of the treatments as well as work-related stress, Liliko has broken down both physically and psychologically. She constantly vents her frustration to her manager and the people around her. To make matters worse, she feels threatened by the arrival of rising star model Kozue, a natural beauty. The story develops as a sort of psycho-horror plot, including the betrayal of her fiancé, the illegal medical activities of the beauty clinic, and Liliko’s madness and hallucinations, revealing several secrets of Liliko’s past.

Okazaki’s works often address postmodern life and existence among youth in a hyper-consumerist culture, undoubtedly reflecting the culture of Japan’s “bubble economy” of the 1980s when society was awash with easy

credit and cash. *Helter Skelter: Fashion Unfriendly* thematically addresses concerns surrounding the female body, cosmetic surgery, and celebrity/fashion culture. Okazaki's drawing style consists of simplistic lines without much inking, often combined with a deliberately loose use of flat mechanical screentone shading which is offset from the drawn figures, overlapping with rather than following her linework. This distinctive style gives a sense of two-dimensionality to her characters. Such a flattened character design, in contrast to the typically meticulously drawn and shaded, decorative *shōjo* manga style, seems well suited to the work's themes concerning outward bodily appearances, fashion, and surface image. In 2012, *Helter Skelter* was made into a movie of the same title.

Ninomiya Tomoko, *Nodame Cantabile*

Nodame Cantabile is a manga series created by Ninomiya Tomoko (b. 1969) and originally serialized in the *josei* manga magazine *Kiss* from 2001 to 2010. The series tells the story of Chiaki Shin'ichi and Noda Megumi—nicknamed Nodame—both of whom are studying classical music at a music school. The story begins when the two meet: handsome male student Chiaki, a promising would-be conductor, meets female student Nodame, who has a slipshod lifestyle. Chiaki detests the messiness of her room but recognizes her musical talent. Working together, they develop a mutual respect and begin to encourage and musically inspire each other.

As the author Ninomiya acknowledges, there is a real-life model for Nodame. Ninomiya came across a photo of a female music student, a fan of Ninomiya's manga, and the messy room where she played the piano. This photo inspired Ninomiya to create the awkward but appealing protagonist Nodame. Before the original serialization, Ninomiya had almost no knowledge of music, yet diligently kept researching the subject over the course of the serialization. While the manga can be categorized as a (romantic) campus comedy, the author's acquired knowledge of classical music lent credibility to what she wrote in her work, allowing the readers in turn to learn about historically famous composers and classical music titles. Thematically, *Nodame Cantabile* addresses the spiritual growth of the main characters as they overcome challenges in their pursuit of becoming professionals in the world of music.

When depicting musical performances in *Nodame Cantabile*, Ninomiya takes full advantage of the graphic narration techniques developed by *shōjo* manga artists, including the symbolic use of images, floating lines, panel breakdowns, and the overlapping of internal and external voices to convey the nature of the music being performed. The popularity of the manga series rekindled an interest in classical music among fans. Orchestral concerts featuring the famous classical music pieces used in *Nodame Cantabile* were held, and tickets for them quickly sold out.

Variety Focus

Sports Manga: Inoue Takehiko, *Slam Dunk*

The prominence of the sports genre in Japanese manga might stand out in the eyes of Western audiences. In the early years of US comics, sports comics existed before they were overshadowed by superhero comics. In contrast, in contemporary manga culture, sports manga have long remained one of the most popular genres. However, during the Allied occupation (1945–52), manga about martial arts (judo, sumo, *kendo* [Japanese fencing], etc.) were subject to censorship, as they were believed to be ideologically complicit with Japanese imperial nationalism and wartime aggression. Yet at the same time the US-led occupation promoted baseball as a matter of policy and this became an impetus for the eventual rise of baseball manga. Inoue Kazuo's *Bat Kid* (*Batto-kun*, 1947–9), serialized in *Manga Shōnen*, is considered one of the earliest postwar manga about baseball. After the occupation, there was a revival of martial arts manga, along with *jidaigeki* (period drama) featuring these arts, and over time manga about other sports of Western origin (such as soccer, volleyball, and basketball) have also become popular. The period between late 1960s and early 1970s gave rise to numerous sports manga hits such as *Attack No.1* (*Attaku nanbā wan*), *Star of the Giants* (*Kyojin no hoshi*), and *Tomorrow's Joe* (*Ashita no Jō*). These sports manga highlight the protagonist's rise to the pinnacle of their sport after some setbacks and through enduring an excessive and excruciatingly painful training regime. These were called “*spokon manga*” or simply “*spokon*,” a portmanteau of “sports” and *konjō* (indefatigable spirit in the face of any travail).

Slam Dunk is a popular basketball manga created by Inoue Takehiko (b. 1967). Serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* from 1990 to 1996, the series contributed to the highest sales period of the magazine. *Slam Dunk* focuses on Sakuragi Hanamichi, a delinquent high-schooler who begins to play basketball after being introduced to it by his dream girl, Akagi Haruko. Though he has no previous experience playing sports, Sakuragi has natural athletic talent and gradually improves his skills through training, competition, and rivalries with both teammates and other high-school teams. The whole series follows the journey of the little-known high-school basketball team as it becomes competitive at the national championship level. A thematic focus is not only on the protagonist's gradual learning of basketball skills, but also on his spiritual growth through teamwork and the friendships he forges under the guidance of the team's coach.

One can find almost any kind of sports manga in Japan, ranging from tennis, badminton, table tennis, rugby, bowling, and wrestling to non-competitive sports such as mountain climbing and fishing, and even to artistic sports such as cheerleading, dance, ice skating, and so on. With

graphic novels garnering increased attention in North America, the genre of sports comics might resurface in the world of Anglophone comics.

Jidaigeki, or Period Drama: Koike Kazuo (Script) and Kojima Gōseki (Art), *Lone Wolf and Cub*

Lone Wolf and Cub was originally serialized from 1970 to 1976 in *Manga Action* by Futabasha. This manga magazine was one of the earliest *seinen* magazines, founded as a response to a maturing manga readership. Writer Koike Kazuo made a name for himself with *Lone Wolf and Cub* as a manga scriptwriter (*manga gensakusha*), earning respect from other creators and artists in different fields. Kojima Gōseki, who first trained himself as a painter of movie posters and *kamishibai* pictures before creating manga for the *kashihon* industry, pioneered new aesthetics that differed from mainstream postwar children's manga.

Set in the Edo Period, *Lone Wolf and Cub* develops around the story of Ogami Ittō and his three-year-old son on a journey of vengeance against the Yagyū clan. The clan had plotted the fall of the honorable Ogami family, including the murders of Ittō's closest family members. As a *rōnin* (masterless samurai), Ittō takes on assassination jobs while traveling all over Japan, looking for a chance at revenge. The titular wolf (*ōkami*) is echoed in Ittō's near-homophonic family name as well as his hunting ability. The series is full of subplots about the people Ittō encounters on the road. Occasional flashbacks reveal the events that led up to the present situation faced by the protagonist and his son.

One of the main themes of *Lone Wolf and Cub* is vengeance. By definition, vengeance is a response to a grievance whereby the wronged seeks retribution. The degradation of his noble status from an honorable samurai down to a drifting *rōnin* follows a traditional Japanese narrative structure, which literary critic and folklorist Orikuchi Shinobu calls the *kishu-ryūri-tan*, or the "wanderings of the young noble." Buddhist-inspired ideas and plots are also embedded in multiple episodes throughout the series, including Ogami Ittō's decision to abandon the samurai honor code and follow the *meifumadō*—translatable as the "road to hell" or the "way of the demons." Artistically, Kojima Gōseki's thick, rough lines and his brushwork create dynamic fight scenes and a distinct tone for this *jidaigeki* (period drama). The visual impact of his art distinguishes him from the cleaner, Tezuka-inspired lines of the mainstream manga style. It is notable that the last fight scene continues over 150 pages and is narrated only via visual images, without relying on text narration.

Lone Wolf and Cub has also influenced American comics, most notably Frank Miller, creator of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *Sin City*. He has made explicit reference to Koike and Kojima's work as a major

inspiration for his graphic novel *Rōnin*. American writer Max Allan Collins also noted that the graphic novel *Road to Perdition* (written by Max Allan Collins and illustrated by Richard Piers Rayner) was an “unabashed homage” to this Japanese manga series.

Gag Manga: Usui Yoshito, *Crayon Shin-Chan*

Like other comics traditions around the world, Japan has a rich history of humor comics. Throughout the history of manga, from cartoons to story manga, humor/gag manga has been one of the long-lasting forces attracting readers to the medium across generations.

Crayon Shin-chan is a gag manga series by Usui Yoshito (1958–2009). The series follows a precocious and naughty five-year-old, Nohara Shin’nosuke, known as “Shin-chan.” The story begins with Shin-chan moving to a new kindergarten, where he wreaks havoc for his teachers and classmates. In later episodes, Shin-chan continually stirs up trouble for his own parents, neighbors, and other adults in the community. In the majority of jokes and gags in the series the messy realities of the world of adults, usually concealed by a strait-laced facade, are exposed by the unruly boy protagonist.

Crayon Shin-chan was serialized first in a *seinen* manga magazine, *Weekly Manga Action*, from 1990 to 2000, and then in a magazine devoted to *yonkoma* (four-panel comics) manga, *Manga Town*, from 2000 to 2010, targeting a young adult and adult male readership. Due in part to this *seinen*-orientation, many earlier episodes of the series include numerous sexual innuendos and toilet humor, belying the protagonist’s innocent appearance. Once the anime adaptation began in 1992, *Crayon Shin-chan* became widely known, even embraced by a broader demographic of both children and adults. Shin-chan’s mischievous childlike behavior, with thinly masked hints of adult motives, allows this manga’s humor to be read at different levels and explains its broad appeal to readers across age groups.

In this series, Usui uses highly cartoony character designs with simple linework. This choice of style and format is conducive to small bites of humor. Many culturally specific jokes, gags, and references were localized in the English translation, some of which are quite a leap from the original text.

Gourmet/Food/Cooking Manga: Kariya Tetsu (Script) and Hanasaki Akira (Art), *Oishinbo*

If you remember the Japanese cooking show *Iron Chef*, you may have an inkling of the popularity of food and cooking in Japanese culture, which

revolves not just around tasting or savoring delicious cuisine but also around the entertaining artistry of food preparation. The medium of manga has also embraced culinary entertainment. In today's manga culture, there are droves of cooking manga, or "gourmet manga." In the 1980s there was a trend known as the "gourmet boom" (*gurume būmu*) wherein many people began exploring restaurants that served a wide variety of Japanese and world cuisines. In response to this trend, many popular cooking manga appeared. These offer more than just the eye candy of gourmet cuisines: they educate readers about all things culinary, including seasonal crops, diverse local products in Japan, professional cooking utensils, and various everyday home cooking styles.

Kariya Tetsu and Hanasaki Akira's *Oishinbo* is one of the longest-running cooking manga series, beginning serialization in the *seinen* magazine *Big Comic Spirits* in 1983 and continuing until 2014. Its popularity has led to it being a regular fixture in the small free reading libraries found in many cafés, doctors and dentists' waiting rooms, and hair salons. The story begins with Yamaoka Shirō, a newspaper journalist, who works together with rookie heroine Kurita Yūko to create the "ultimate menu" in celebration of their company's 100th anniversary. Meanwhile, Yamaoka's father, a famous artist and connoisseur of world cuisine with whom Yamaoka has an irreconcilable relationship, has been engaged by a rival newspaper to create a similar "supreme menu" in direct competition. Loosely following this overarching tale of rivalry between father and son, *Oishinbo* narrates the story of Yamaoka and Kurita's journey, exploring different cooking methods and cuisines, along with the human drama of the people involved in farming, fishing, cooking, and eating.

The manga's writer, Kariya, known for his opinions on social, political, and environmental issues, occasionally incorporated real-life incidents and problems into the episodes. Such topics include differences in food culture between different countries, animal rights activism, the use of chemical additives in existing products, and more. In light of this approach, *Oishinbo* has invited controversy and criticism several times over its more than three decades of serialization. In 2014, one episode in *Oishinbo* triggered a nationwide controversy related to the post-Fukushima nuclear disaster situation (see "Controversy and censorship" in Chapter 2). These incidents attest to the popularity of this manga series and to the fact that gourmet manga can often be taken quite seriously.

Essay Manga: Anno Moyoco, *Insufficient Direction*

"Essay manga" (*essei* manga) refers to a type of autobiographical comics about the author's everyday life. More often than not, each installment of essay manga is shorter in length than that of a serialized story manga. Essay manga usually present the author as the protagonist in a highly exaggerated,

cartoony, and/or self-effacing way. A common method of doing this is through the use of super-deformed “*chibi*” character designs. Historically, the genre was gradually cultivated from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s and was developed primarily by female authors. Importantly, essay manga are not restricted to typical manga magazines, but also appear in women’s magazines, fashion magazines, informational magazines (*jōhō zasshi*), and newspapers. When republished as *tankōbon* volumes, they are shelved not only in the manga section of bookstores but also in the prose essay section. As such, essay manga reach a wider readership than just regular manga readers.

Contemporary female author Anno Moyoco’s *Insufficient Direction* (2002–4) is a quintessential example of the genre. The work narrates the author’s own married life with famous anime director Anno Hideaki, the director of the globally famous anime series *Evangelion*. Each six-page chapter recounts an episode in their everyday life, with Anno graphically illustrating her interactions with her partner’s sloppy and quirky *otaku* life in a humorous way. In these episodes, the author/protagonist depicts minor annoyances caused by her world-famous anime director husband, but the overall manga charmingly celebrates their happy married life, through which they share their love for manga, anime, and popular culture. Unlike her other manga, Anno follows the stylistic tradition of essay manga in *Insufficient Direction*, presenting herself as a baby(-like) *chibi* character who undergoes various inconveniences in taking care of her partner. The opening page notes that “all characters appearing in this work are fictitious,” but this is an obvious joke (as noted by Anno Hideaki in an interview)—many of the episodes narrated in the work are, in fact, largely based on real-life events.

In recent years, male authors have explored the genre of essay manga, one such example being Azuma Hideo’s *Disappearance Diary* (2005), which narrates the author’s experience of temporary homeless life. Compared to other genres of manga, essay manga were previously not as frequently translated into English. However, since the 2010s, American publisher Seven Seas has published several essay manga titles, including Nagai Kabi’s *My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness* (2016) and Chii’s *The Bride Was a Boy* (2016). Both address LGBTQ+ issues and are based on their authors’ lives. Given the rise of autobiographical comics in North America, essay manga might attract increasing critical attention in Anglophone manga studies.

Science Fiction: Shirow Masamune, *Ghost in the Shell*

Since WWII, Japan has made its presence felt in the global science fiction landscape across multiple media forms, including film, TV, anime, manga, and video games. One of Japan’s major contributions is *Ghost in the Shell*, originally a manga series by Shirow Masamune (b. 1961). The author was

active in the *dōjinshi* (fanzine) manga production scene before establishing his name as a famous science fiction *mangaka*. *Ghost in the Shell* has become a highly acclaimed work globally in the field of science fiction.

Ghost in the Shell is a typical example of cyberpunk, a subgenre of science fiction. The story is set in a fictional future city in Japan where many people have technologically augmented their bodies and become cyborgs. They can also access a highly developed information network instantly and directly from their implanted, techno-enhanced “cyberbrains.” The story follows a female protagonist, Kusanagi Motoko, who is the leader of “Public Security Section 9,” a special governmental task force. Following a typical cyberpunk formula—think Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982)—the manga episodes narrate noir detective/murder stories set in a dystopian, class-divided society.

Thematically, *Ghost in the Shell* explores human identity in a highly technologized context. The prosthetic bodies of the main characters pose questions about what it means to be human, the boundaries between the natural and the artificial being so blurred. In one manga episode, a character’s “cyberbrain” is hacked into and its contents replaced by fabricated memories, which consequently undermines and unseats existential notions of identity and selfhood. In relation to these, *Ghost in the Shell* offers a set of philosophical questions regarding artificial intelligence, artificial life, and “posthuman” existence as beings that might succeed/replace human beings.

Shirow’s drawing style for *Ghost in the Shell* is partly inspired by Ōtomo Katsuhiro (see the section on Ōtomo), although Shirow occasionally uses *chibi* character designs for a handful of comic relief moments. Several pages of *Ghost in the Shell* are spattered with author’s notes, placed outside the panels, which provide brief explanations on (future) techno-sciences and theories.

Ghost in the Shell has become one of manga’s most successful transmedia franchises. The two anime film adaptations, made by anime director Oshii Mamoru, were based on a couple of episodes in the manga, whereas the 2017 live action Hollywood adaptation *Ghost in the Shell* offers an original story. In 2018, non-Japanese writers and comics artists (Alex de Campi, Brenden Fletcher, Genevieve Valentine, Max Gladstone, and others) created original “Ghost in the Shell” stories with their own styles, which were published by Kōdansha Comics in the US as *Ghost in the Shell: Global Neural Network*. These cases illustrate that *Ghost in the Shell* has established a narrative universe in which other artists can create their own stories.

Horror Manga: Umezu Kazuo, *The Drifting Classroom*

The global success of Japanese horror films such as *Ring* and *Ju-On: The Grudge* have given audiences around the world a glimpse into the rich world

of Japanese horror. Historically, horror stories can be traced back to ancient Japanese folklore and legends, but in modern times the genre of horror has been developed through several popular media, even adding new urban legends and scary stories to the cultural canon in the process. Umezu Kazuo (b. 1936) is best known as a master of horror manga. He started his professional career through *kashihon* manga in the mid-1950s and has created various *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga since then. In 2018, Umezu's sci-fi horror *Watashi wa Shingo* (My name is Shingo) won the Best Heritage Comic Award at the Angoulême International Comics Festival.

The Drifting Classroom is one of Umezu's horror manga masterpieces, first serialized in *Shōnen Sunday* from 1972 to 1974. The story begins with a seismic incident that transports a whole elementary school into a post-apocalyptic wasteland far in the future. Whisked away from modern society and their familiar environment, the school children and their teachers have to survive with limited resources in an unknown world. Yet some teachers start to abuse their power over the children and others start to lose their minds, while the school children themselves begin to treat each other cruelly. Reminiscent of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, *The Drifting Classroom* follows the children's struggles for survival and in rebuilding civilization in a harsh reality without relying on adults.

While the genre of horror is typically defined by its performative function of triggering the feelings of fear, dread, repulsion, and terror in the audience, horror stories frequently also address the dark side of humanity and society—the hidden aspects of which the public often might not be aware. Umezu's *The Drifting Classroom* thematically addresses the deterioration of human civilization into chaos and anarchy, amidst which humans (children) mistreat each other through abuse, manipulation, betrayal, and cruelty. At the same time, it also shows the possibility of mutual trust and integrity emerging in the process of rebuilding a new civilization. *The Drifting Classroom* features grotesque, life-threatening monsters, but it never fails to convey to readers that the scariest creatures are the humans themselves.

Experimental Manga: Tsuge Yoshiharu, “Neji-Shiki” (a.k.a. “Screw Style”)

Tsuge Yoshiharu (b. 1937) began creating manga in the *kashihon* (rental book) manga industry in the mid-1950s, his early works exhibiting both the visual and narrative influences of his contemporaries, such as Tatsumi Yoshihiro and Matsumoto Masahiko. These young *gekiga* authors were creating works in the mystery, detective fiction, and suspense genres, tapping into the darker side of society and human psychology for young adult readers (in contrast to the more sanguine manga for children of their day).

One of Tsuge's most notable works during this period was "Obake entotsu" ("Ghost chimneys"), which gloomily narrates the story of a poor, middle-aged man who takes on the dangerous job of cleaning chimneys to make money for his sick son, but in the end dies a sad death after falling from one of the chimney stacks. Tsuge's focus on the working poor caught the attention of *gekiga* author Shirato Sanpei, who invited him to contribute works to *Garo*, the new Japanese alternative manga magazine that Shirato had founded with editor Nagai Katsuichi in the mid-1960s.

There, Tsuge gradually began including in his works his own experiences and those of the people he encountered in everyday life, especially people who were struggling financially or living at the fringe of society. For this reason, Japanese critics often compare his works with "I-novels," a type of confessional genre of autobiographical fiction in modern Japanese literature. As his fame grew, however, Tsuge, who was extremely shy, began to literally run away from publicity. Starting in the mid-1960s, he often traveled into rural villages or hot spring hamlets, the places that were being left behind during the economic development of postwar Japan. Such experiences were also reflected, with a sense of nostalgia (or sometimes in the manner a horrific nightmare), in his *Garo* pieces.

The publication of Tsuge's twenty-two-page short story "Neji-shiki" in the June issue of *Garo* in 1968 caused a shockwave in the field of manga. Its dream-like, surreal (non-)narrative nature, drawn in a rough, sketch-like *gekiga* style with several photo-realistic depictions, broke the conventions of coherent storytelling in manga. The opening page depicts an unnamed young man at a desolate beach who has been bitten by a jellyfish. This begins his search for a doctor who can treat his injury. Roaming around rural villages and towns, following railway tracks, and riding on a steam train (which somehow brings him back to the town he initially set out from), he finds no one. His attempts to talk with villagers end in nonsensical exchanges. Eventually, he finds a female gynecologist who has sex with him, which mysteriously "cures" him ("the operation was successful," she tells him). Yet, the protagonist notices that the pierced artery on his arm was fixed with a safety valve and a screw. The last page depicts the protagonist on a motorboat; as he sails away, he says, "[a]nd so, whenever I tighten the screw, my arm grows numb."

Many critics have attempted to interpret this work which lacks a conventional plot. Some claim it is an existentialist "anti-manga" work; others say it operates according to a Freudian dream logic of the unconscious. While open to disparate interpretations, Tsuge's work has opened the possibility of using the medium for purposes other than coherent storytelling, thus inspiring other manga and *gekiga* creators to experiment with unconventional and unorthodox works. "Neji-shiki" has given rise to many parodic works by other *mangaka* too, including Akasegawa Genpei's "Oza-shiki" (1973) and Ebisu Yoshikazu's "San-shiki" (1988). Furthermore, the impact of "Neji-shiki" was not confined to the field of manga, with several

film directors, poets, musicians, illustrators, and designers commenting on its influence on their works.

In the late 1970s, due in part to illness, Tsuge's production pace slowed. In 1984, he serialized *The Man Without Talent*, a story about an impoverished man who lives on a riverside selling stones, in the magazine *Comic Baku*. Unfortunately, since 1987 Tsuge has not produced any work.

Some early English translations of his short pieces were published in *Raw* ("Red Flowers" and "Oba's Electroplate Factory") and *The Comics Journal* ("Screw Style"). More recently, in 2019, *The Man without Talent* was published by New York Review Comics, and, in 2020, *The Swamp*, a collection of Tsuge's short story manga, was published by Drawn & Quarterly as the first of several projected translations of works by Tsuge.

Silent Manga: Tanaka Masashi, *Gon*

Tanaka Masashi's *Gon* is a so-called "silent manga." Although this term seems redundant because the medium of manga is fundamentally non-auditory, it simply refers to "wordless manga" (wordless comics) that narrate whole stories with only illustrations and panels without using any words. Tanaka Masashi's *Gon* was first serialized in *seinen* manga magazines such as *Morning* (1991–2002) and the monthly *Afternoon* (2012–13).

The manga *Gon* follows the titular dinosaur's adventures in the animal world of prehistoric Earth. Gon is a pint-sized tyrannosaurus rex with a proportionally oversized head, cartoony eyes, and exaggerated short legs. This child-like dinosaur roams around various geographical regions, encountering other creatures ranging from small, peaceful animals to ferocious beasts. Despite being small, Gon is tough and resilient; he even defends small animals against their powerful predators.

Tanaka's visual style is characterized by elaborately detailed drawings of flora and fauna in landscapes lacking humans. Yet he adds cartoony elements when depicting the eyes and faces of animals, which successfully convey the inner emotions of these illustrated creatures, ranging from joy, surprise, and satisfaction to fear, anxiety, and sadness. Tanaka also refrains from using sound effects (sound symbols), but his dynamic use of motion lines and black-and-white contrast skillfully conveys a sense of sound, movement, and physical impact.

Silent manga has the inherent potential to reach out to readers beyond linguistic boundaries. Since 2012, the media company COAMIX (led by Horie Nobuyuki, the former chief editor of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*) has staged the "Silent Manga Audition" contest, inviting short silent comics pieces from all over the world (see <https://www.manga-audition.com/>).

Avant-Garde Manga: Sasaki Maki, *Ding Dong Circus and Other Stories 1967–1974*

Sasaki Maki (b. 1946) is a *mangaka*, illustrator, and picture book writer/artist. *Ding Dong Circus and Other Stories 1967–1974* is an anthology of Sasaki's short pieces, edited by American scholar and translator Ryan Holmberg. Sasaki's manga are known for their experimental and avant-garde orientation, as well as for their pop art-like, kitsch sensibility.

Ding Dong Circus surprises readers who expect a typical story, since each work offers a succession of non-sequitur images without giving a linear, progressive narrative, all the while retaining the conventional formal elements of manga (such as panels, hand-drawn illustrations, and speech bubbles). Still, each visual and textual element in Sasaki's work resonates with one another, much like poetry, sometimes forming novel but discernable types of relationships between visuals and written words while at other times frustrating any attempt to make sense of them. Art critic Ishiko Junzō called Sasaki's work "anti-manga," following the French "anti-novel" movement (1994, 166) due to their formula-defying, nonconformist attitude toward manga conventions in terms of both form and content.

Sasaki's style is characterized by a sense of cosmopolitan, non-indigenous illustrative design, influenced by both Western art tradition (painting, sculpting, architecture, etc.) and contemporaneous American underground comix—an allusion to Robert Crumb appears in one of his anthologized works. Still, Sasaki's work responded to Japan's specific socio-political and visual media conditions: the 1960s' political idealism was beginning to fade, while at the same time TV- and image-centric culture was becoming predominant in social life. Sasaki sometimes uses images taken from posters, consumer products, and TV commercials in his manga, the employment of such "ready-made" art objects very much in synch with the Western pop art movement.

However, Sasaki's avant-gardism invited the anger of Tezuka Osamu, who wrote an essay criticizing Sasaki's work and even asked for the serialization to be suspended. Literary author Murakami Haruki, on the other hand, celebrated Sasaki's originality and fresh style. Undoubtedly, Sasaki's experimental works push, or blur, the boundaries of manga and even intersect with other visual arts such as illustration, pop art, and design.

Educational Manga (*Gakushū Manga*): Ishinomori Shōtarō, *Japan, Inc.: An Introduction to Japanese Economics*

Japan, Inc.: An Introduction to Japanese Economics was an immediate bestseller when first domestically published in 1986. In retrospect, it conveys

the frenzied national atmosphere of mid-1980s Japan, during the so-called “Bubble Economy” period when the country’s economic power seemed to be growing without limit. The English translation was published in 1988 by the University of California Press—indicative of both America’s fascination with and growing fear of Japan at the time. The fact that it was published by the academic publisher might also suggest that the book was perceived as an introductory textbook to Japan’s economy, although it reads more like a fictional corporate drama.

The opening of *Japan, Inc.* depicts a reality-based scene in which American automobile workers are smashing up Japanese cars in Detroit. Back then, Japanese automakers expanding their markets had led to lay-offs in the US automobile industry, causing resentment. The story focuses on two salarymen (businessmen) working at the fictional company Mitsutomo Trading Co. and how they advance their business by overcoming several different challenges. Stylistically, *Japan, Inc.* uses the post-*gekiga* (i.e., rather naturalistic) art style for backgrounds and suit-wearing male salarymen. The author is Ishinomori Shōtarō, a veteran *mangaka* at the time of the series’ production, but Japanese critic Kure Tomofusa notes that he was not actually involved in the drawing process of the work (1997, 208).

Manga in the same vein as *Japan, Inc.* are called *gakushū* manga or *jōhō* manga which can be translated respectively as “educational manga” and “informational manga” (see Glossary). Manga of this genre offer practical knowledge and information in order for readers to “learn” (*gakushū*) through the accessible form that is manga. Previously, many *gakushū* manga had been aimed at young readers as supplemental materials for school subjects such as history or mathematics, but the success of *Japan, Inc.* prompted the rise of this genre for a mature readership. Today, one can find *gakushū* manga in almost any subject area, ranging from famous literary works to business manners, economics, finance, calculus, computer programing, quantum mechanics, and even how to make sewerage construction estimates.

LGBTQ+ Issues: Tagame Gengoroh, *My Brother’s Husband*

Tagame Gengoroh (Tagame Gengorō b. 1964) had been known as a creator of hardcore gay manga among a limited readership before he began serializing *My Brother’s Husband* in a mainstream manga magazine, *Monthly Action*, in 2014. This work marks a pivotal point in Tagame’s career, gaining him several domestic and international manga/comics awards, including the Eisner Award for the “Best U.S. Edition of International Material – Asia” in 2018. In the same year, the NHK, Japan’s national broadcasting station, produced and aired a three-part drama based on this work.

My Brother's Husband focuses on Yaichi, a single father who lives with his young daughter Kana in suburban Tokyo. The story opens with an unexpected visitor from Canada named Mike Flanagan, the widower of Yaichi's twin brother, Ryōji. The two brothers had been estranged due to Yaichi's implicit discomfort with Ryōji's sexuality, his immigration to Canada, and his same-sex marriage. After Yaichi's death, Mike comes to Japan to learn more about Ryōji's hometown and his past. Yaichi hesitates at first, but eventually allows Mike to stay at his home. Through living together, Yaichi learns more about Ryōji's life in Canada and his relationship with Mike. The later episodes are devoted to narrating Yaichi's gradual awareness of his own prejudices regarding homosexuality and his gradual acceptance of it.

The main themes of *My Brother's Husband* concern homophobia, cultural differences, and a non-traditional form of family. Yaichi is not overtly homophobic but initially expresses discomfort with homosexuality. Living together with Mike, however, leads Yaichi to gradually become more open-minded and eventually to not only accept Mike but also restore a meaningful relationship with his deceased brother. Throughout the series, *My Brother's Husband* addresses visible and invisible marginalization as well as the challenges faced by people with non-normative sexuality. Unlike his previous gay manga titles that targeted a gay subcultural readership, Tagame intended to create this work for mainstream audiences and heterosexual readers with a pedagogical intention. The republished manga in book format has several inserted columns that explain various LGBTQ+ issues for readers unfamiliar with the subject.

Yonkoma Manga: Hasegawa Machiko, *The Wonderful World of Sazae-San*

While there are a few magazines devoted to *yonkoma* manga (four-panel comic strips), the newspaper is their traditional home and it is where millions of people still encounter them daily. The best known *yonkoma* manga of postwar Japan is without a doubt *The Wonderful World of Sazae-san* (hereafter, *Sazae-san*), created by the female *mangaka* Hasegawa Machiko (1920–92). It was first serialized in a regional newspaper in 1946 but soon moved to a national paper where it continued until 1974. Hasegawa had begun studying cartooning under Tagawa Suihō's guidance at the age of just fourteen, publishing her first work at fifteen. With her later *Sazae-san* strip she came to nationwide prominence. Stage and screen (live action) adaptations of the strip were made, but it is the TV animation based on the strip which has been aired continuously since 1969 that has made *Sazae-san* into one of the manga that is known and loved trans-generationally in Japan.

Sazae-san was originally a daily humor comic strip recounting the story of the titular character, who lives in an extended, multi-generational family in postwar Japan. Serialized in the form of a typical vertical *yonkoma* manga, each episode offers a vignette of Sazae-san's everyday activities with a mix of light-hearted humor, jokes, and social satire, often highlighting her resourceful solutions to daily mishaps while making blunders in her interactions with her family members and neighbors in suburban Tokyo. Unlike the TV adaption which depicts Sazae-san as a homemaker with a middle-class lifestyle, earlier manga episodes of *Sazae-san* were about the ordinary people's struggles in the confusion immediately after the war, depicting poverty, rationed food, repatriates from Manchuria, and encounters with American military policemen. However, as a humorous manga aimed at a broad newspaper readership, all of these elements were presented in a cheerful, bright tone. Hasegawa's presentation of Sazae-san as a kind, goodwilled but strong female character corresponded to the rise in social status of women under the new democratic constitution, which guaranteed women the right to vote for the first time in Japan's modern history. In 1985, the Hasegawa Machiko Art Museum was founded in Tokyo's Setagaya ward, and the wholesome image of her characters is today used to promote products and services, from TVs to home loans.

APPENDIX

Glossary

***akahon manga*:** “*Akahon*” literally means “red book.” The origins of the term can be traced back to the late Edo Period and early Meiji Period (c. the late nineteenth century) when popular reading materials, including *kōdan-bon* (kōdan books), a genre of written literary form adapted from oral storytelling performances, were distinguished by their red covers. In the twentieth century, the term “*akahon manga*” was loosely used as a moniker for manga books that became popular with children in the 1930s and immediately after the war (from 1945 into the early 1950s). Circulated in book format, *akahon manga* were a primary source of comics for young readers, along with manga in magazines, up until the early 1950s. Although *akahon manga* are often remembered (and/or described) as having been poorly-made cheap publications printed on low-quality paper, there were actually well-bound manga books that were also considered *akahon*. A famous example of the latter is *Shin takarajima* (New treasure island, 1947) by Tezuka Osamu and Sakai Shichima, published by Ikuei shuppan. Some *akahon manga* were characterized by plagiarized plotlines and characters recycled from other manga and animated films and were thus considered “inferior.”

***amekomi*:** This is a contraction of “American comics” (*Amerikan komikkusu*). While in Japan the word “manga” is a general term for comics regardless of origin, *amekomi* is used by some avid comics readers to refer to DC- and Marvel-type superhero comics. There are a handful of retailers who specialize in *amekomi*.

***anime*:** In Japan, the term *anime* generally refers to animation—regardless of its country of origin—in any media format, including theater-release animated films, TV animation series, direct-to-video animation (OVA), and web forms. There is some ambiguity of usage, however, since “anime” is also invoked to refer to specific technical and stylistic properties of popular postwar Japanese animation as opposed to those of non-Japanese animation and even other forms of Japan-made animation. Previously, the term *manga eiga* (manga movie or manga film) was used in the early twentieth century, and with the postwar advent of television the term “TV manga” (*terebi manga*) was also common. Since the 1970s, however,

these have been replaced by the term *anime*. In the Anglophone context, anime signifies “Japanese” animation, often associated with particular stylistic features.

***bishōjo*:** A pretty girl or beautiful girl. Commonly used since the 1980s, the term *bishōjo* was not included in the standard Japanese dictionary, the *Kōjien*, until its 2008 edition. This is because traditionally the word *bishōnen* was considered to be the “correct” descriptor of both beautiful boys and girls. *Bishōjo* characters are cast in both *shōnen/seinen* and *shōjo* manga. One such example is Takeuchi Naoko’s manga *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*, the Japanese title of which reads *Bishōjo senshi Sailor Moon*.

***bishōnen*:** A beautiful boy. Romantic theme *shōjo* manga commonly feature *bishōnen*. Yaoi and boys love (BL) manga also regularly feature two (or more) *bishōnen* characters in their narratives, although more recent works have a greater diversity of character types. See “boys love” entry below.

boys love, boys’ love, or BL: The term refers to a type of manga (and other media forms) that depicts romantic and/or sexual relationships between boys or men. Historically speaking, the term has been used since the beginning of the 1990s, replacing *shōnen ai* and *yaoi*. Since the 2000s, boys love manga have flourished commercially, spreading to multiple media forms such as books, drama CDs, anime, theater, video games, and so on.

***bunko*:** A *bunko* is an A6-size (4.1 x 5.8 inch) softcover book. In today’s manga industry practice, manga are usually serialized in weekly or (bi-) monthly manga magazines first; then, several episodes are compiled and republished in a larger-size book format called *tankōbon* (see *tankōbon* entry below). Some manga are republished in the pocket-sized *bunko* format (or, less often, directly from manga magazines). Manga in the *bunko* format tend to be cheaper than works published as *tankōbon*.

***chibi*:** The term *chibi* literally means a person of short height. It has a derogatory sense and therefore can be seen as roughly equivalent to “shorty” in English. Anglophone manga and anime fans use the term for pointing to the highly exaggerated, “super-deformed” drawing of characters with small chubby bodies with oversized heads.

cosplay: A contraction of the expression “costume play,” cosplay (*kosupure*) is more common in use. It refers to the fan activity of donning the attire of, or dressing up like, fictional characters from manga, anime, video games, and other popular media. Those who perform cosplay are called cosplayers.

***dōjin/dōjinshi*:** The term *dōjinshi* refers to a self-published magazine, created by *dōjin*, fans who share the same interests. Historically, literary

dōjinshi or haiku *dōjinshi* have existed from the beginnings of modern Japan. From the mid-1970s, manga fans, including would-be *mangaka*, have collectively produced self-published print magazines for their coterie of audiences. More recently, with the rise of digital technologies, we have witnessed *dōjin* music (CDs), *dōjin* anime, *dōjin* videogames, and other *dōjin* media products.

***emonogatari*:** Literally, “picture story,” a portmanteau of *e* (picture, illustration) and *monogatari* (story, narrative). This was a popular form of postwar adventure and dramatic storytelling in children’s magazines up until the 1960s. Unlike manga, they are not presented in a typical comics form of sequential panels and are often text heavy. In a typical *emonogatari*, textual and visual elements are placed separately without any narration box or speech balloons. In this respect, they share similarities with the earlier, usually humorous *manga-manbun* form (see entry below).

essay manga (*essei manga*): Essay manga (*essei manga*, *manga essei*, or *komikku essei*) refers to a type of autobiographical manga based on the author’s everyday life. Stylistically, essay manga often present the author as the protagonist in a self-effacing, highly exaggerated, cartoony style.

***fujoshi*:** Coined by fans themselves, the term refers to a female fan of manga, anime, and other popular cultural texts that feature a romantic and/or sexual relationship between men (see the *yaoi* and boys love [BL] entries). The Japanese lexicon contains the homophonic term *fujoshi*, which simply means “women and girls,” but the punning usage by the fans changes the first *kanji* character *fu* from women into “rotten”—hence, *fujoshi* can be read as “rotten women” or “rotten girls.” This tongue-in-cheek and at times self-depreciative expression also refers to a female equivalent of *otaku* (an expression long associated with male fans). Though in a minority, male fans of *yaoi* and BL change the *jo* (female) to *dan* (male) to label themselves *fudanshi* (rotten boys).

***gakushū manga*:** This term can be translated as “educational manga.” Also sometimes called *jōho* manga (informational manga) or *jitsuyō* manga (practical manga), it is a genre of manga that offers practical knowledge and information for the study of a particular topic.

***gekiga*:** The term is commonly translated as “dramatic pictures.” Japanese comics creator Tatsumi Yoshihiro coined the expression in 1957 and began using it to label his and other like-minded artists’ work. One of his aims in coining and using the term was to differentiate the works he created for young adult readers from existing “manga” that were considered back then as something for children. From the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, *gekiga* developed as a movement just as the first generation of postwar manga readers were gradually maturing. Since

then, *gekiga* has come to be somewhat loosely used to mean a type of story manga with little or no humor for mature readers.

graphic novel: A “graphic novel” signifies either or both format and content: a bound book format for comics (not the US-style comic book format called by some a “floppy”) and/or long-form narrative comics sometimes with “serious” or “literary” topics. Some dismiss the term for either its “pretentious” name or for its use as a mere commercial label. In the North American context, many Japanese manga books were (or have been) sold in book format, sometimes labeled as “graphic novel”—in these cases, the term was used in the sense of the former (bound book format of comics), although, like TokyoPop’s manga books, they were relatively small in size, closer to Japanese *tankōbon* formats than the typically large-size book format of American graphic novels.

jidaigeki: Literally, “period drama.” It refers to a genre of any kind of medium—for example, manga, books, TV shows, films, and so on—set in the Edo Period (1603–1868) or sometime earlier. A typical *jidaigeki* story features samurai, and at times ninja, along with farmers, craftsmen, and merchants.

jojō-ga: Often translated as “lyrical pictures,” *jojō* literally means “to express sentiment” and *ga* means “picture.” The term was applied to illustrative portrayals of girls and women, many of which were used as illustrations and/or designs for prose fiction, magazine covers, advertisements, postcards, and so on. From the Taishō era (1912–26) into the 1930s there was a trend for *jojō-ga*. Famous painters/illustrators such as Takehisa Yumeji, Fukiya Kōji, Takabatake Kashō, Katō Masao, and Matsumoto Katsudi contributed these types of pictures to magazines for girl readers, making the style increasingly popular. In their *jojō-ga*, the drawn girls/women look melancholic and pensive, which suggests their interior, unvoiced emotions.

josei: The term literally means “women.” In the context of manga, *josei* generally refers to the target readership of female readers aged eighteen and above, although in reality each different *josei* manga book and *josei* manga magazine has their respective (or more specific) target readership. *Josei* manga have developed since the late 1970s in tandem with maturing *shōjo* manga readers.

kamishibai: Literally, “paper theater.” It is a form of storytelling using several hand-drawn illustrated paper slides (usually tabloid-size cards). In a *kamishibai* show, a single narrator controls the slides, revealing them one by one while employing a variety of differently pitched voices for the various characters in the story. From the late 1920s until the 1960s, outdoor *kamishibai* shows, often using a purpose-built wooden frame mounted on a bicycle, were performed on urban street corners as an attraction in order to sell candy to children. Also starting in the 1930s, educational *kamishibai* were long used in school settings.

kanji: Written Japanese language has three major sets of characters—*hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. *Kanji* are characters that were adopted from Chinese over time in various historical periods. Due to this historical background, a single *kanji* character can be read in sound or even meaning in multiple ways. Many *kanji* are also ideographs—that is, symbols that convey ideas or concept. *Mangaka* can use this nature of *kanji* to create humor or to add depth by assigning double, even triple, implied meanings to characters names, titles, or items.

kashihon: Literally, “rental book.” Stores that offered a *kashihon* service were called *kashihon-ya* (a rental bookstore or “pay library”). At a *kashihon-ya*, a customer could borrow or read books at the store for a small charge. *Kashihon-ya* was one of the places for readers to access manga up until the late 1960s before manga magazines from Tokyo-centered publishers began to occupy the manga market.

katakana: Written Japanese language is made up of three major character sets—*hiragana*, *katakana*, and *kanji*. *Katakana* is a set of Japanese near-phonetic characters representing syllables rather than concepts. Compared to *hiragana*, which have more curvy shapes, *katakana* look angular and are often used for words borrowed from Western languages. For instance, *komikku*, the Japanese rendering of the English word “comic,” is written in *katakana*. As *katakana* is used less frequently than the other character sets, it can also be employed to give emphasis to words, or by rendering a foreign character’s dialogue in all *katakana*, to create a sense of otherness or accent by disrupting the pace of reading. In prewar times, when *katakana* was frequently used for school instruction, many manga aimed at younger children were written entirely in this script.

kawaii: In Japanese, *kawaii* is an adjective used to describe someone or something as cute, pretty, or adorable. Etymologically, *kawaii* has nuances of small, lovely, childlike, and vulnerable. In the context of manga, *kawaii* sometimes refers to a drawing style that depicts characters as small bodies with large doe-eyes in a simplified, curvy line.

komikku/komikkusu: These are the Japanese renderings of the English terms “comic” and “comics” which can be used to indicate foreign, particularly American comics, to differentiate from manga (see entry for “*amekomi*” above). Confusingly, however, most magazine publishers who market book format editions of their serialized manga refer to them as “*komikkusu*.” In addition, when referring to manga magazines, *manga-zasshi*, the word *komikku-shi* is at times used as an equivalent. The term also appears in the titles of manga magazines such as *Big Comic* (Biggu komikku) or *CoroCoro Comic* (Korokoro komikku).

ladies’ comic (*redīsu komikku*): The term “ladies’ comic” appeared around 1980, referring to comics for women, often including fantasized depictions of sexually explicit material. However, the narrative formula of ladies’ comics quickly diversified, beginning to address the issues of working

women, childbirth, and parenting, with some of them becoming more reality-based. Due to this change, and to avoid the original association with sexual content for women, the term has recently been replaced by *josei* as a more neutral, purely audience-oriented category (see entry for “*josei*” above).

light novel (*raito noboru*): A light novel refers to a short novel that targets young adult readers. Light novels have become popular since the early 1990s. Typically, these feature several inserted comics illustrations of characters as well as on their covers, so that at first glance they resemble manga books. Light novels are usually located beside the manga section in bookstores. Appealing to a similar readership, some are even based on popular manga characters, for example, the light novel adaptations of *Naruto* and *Demon Slayer*.

lolicon (*lolikon* or *rorikon*): An abbreviated form of the phrase “Lolita complex.” In a Japanese popular cultural context, the term refers to an attraction to underage girls. The term also refers to the art style in which young female characters are drawn, with cute, childish visual traits, along with a sexual undertone.

magical girl (*mahō shōjo*): This refers to a girl character who can use supernatural and magical abilities. It also refers to a subgenre of *shōjo* manga (and anime) that feature a magical girl. Well-known examples include Akatsuka Fujio’s *Himitsu no Akko-chan* (The secrets of Akko-chan) and Takeuchi Naoko’s *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*.

manga: In present-day Japan, the term “manga” is usually employed as a catch-all label for comics, ranging from short-form comics such as cartoons and caricatures to long-form narrative comics (see entry for “story manga” below) regardless of the country of origin. Historically, the term has been, and will no doubt continue to be, used in different ways by different agents. In an Anglophone context, however, manga was or still is associated with a particular style for drawing comics, often called “manga style.” (See the beginning of Chapter 1 and the “Bounds of manga” section in Chapter 3 for more detail on its shifting meaning.)

mangaka: A manga creator, manga artist, or manga author. Throughout this book, all of these terms are used interchangeably.

manga-manbun: This can be roughly translated as “manga and jottings.” It is used to indicate a prewar narrative form in which the narration and dialogue are placed alongside picture panels (or implied panels) rather than within. Popularized by Okamoto Ippei and his students from the mid-1910s in newspapers and magazines, serialized *manga-manbun* stories collected into books are widely considered to be the earliest long-form manga. In the 1930s, this form was generally replaced by comics forms using text and speech balloons within panels. When dramatic stories that were formally somewhat similar to *manga-manbun* began to

emerge in 1940s, they were labeled *emonogatari* instead (see relevant entry above).

media mix: The term “media mix” is a Japanese term that originated in the popular media industry. It describes what media studies scholar Henry Jenkins calls “media convergence.” In Japan, media mix came into popular use in the 1980s, referring to transmedia adaptations and the circulation of content across different media platforms, including cinema, television, book, games, and toys.

nēmu: This term is used to describe a stage in the manga creation process that is generally equivalent to a “thumbnail” or rough layout sketch for a comic. For *mangaka* whose work is serialized in magazines, the *nēmu* for each episode is submitted to their editor for corrections, editorial input, and approval before proceeding to draw the actual manga.

otaku: A fan who is obsessively absorbed with a particular subcultural item or activity. For instance, a “*manga otaku*” refers to a manga fan who is obsessively preoccupied with manga—such an *otaku* might be a compulsive collector and/or reader of manga. In the Japanese context, the term *otaku* has a pejorative meaning, although it has been gradually losing its negative connotations.

pachinko: A recreational game in which a player plays a vertically-set, pinball-like machine. *Pachinko* parlors are ubiquitous in the urban and suburban areas of Japan and have been used as a form of gambling. In Japan, gambling is illegal, but there is a loophole: in a *pachinko* parlor, customers receive the “special prize” tokens at the parlor and can cash them at a vendor located off-site. In recent decades quite a number of pachinko machines have been tie-ups with popular manga, including more than thirty *Shōnen Jump* titles.

ryōsai kenbo: Literally means “good wife, wise mother.” The phrase appeared in the late nineteenth century and was used in wartime for promoting a questionable “ideal” notion of womanhood. As an ideology, it sees the social role of women as primarily the “wife” and “mother” who supports their husband and son(s) who work for the sake of the nation. After the war, it became subsumed into the gendered ideal of housewife (*shufu*), but its impact lingers and hints of it can still be detected in cultural expression.

salaryman: A white-collar (male) worker. This became the stereotypical image of Japanese workers in Japan’s high-growth economic period (mid-1950s to early-1970s). In the 1980s, the image of the salaryman who shows loyalty and commitment to his corporation spread in Western media due to the economic prowess of Japan in the period of the bubble economy.

scanlation: A portmanteau of “scan” and “translation.” It refers to the fan activity of scanning, translating, and editing Japanese language comics into another language.

screenitone: A screentone is an adhesive plastic sheet which a *mangaka* uses for adding patterns, texture, and shadow to drawings. Since the 1950s, screentones have been used in the creation process of manga, though in recent years computer-drawing software is increasingly replacing this manual process to create the same effects.

seinen: Literally means “young man.” In the field of manga, *seinen* manga refers to manga that target late teens to adult male readers. Some *seinen* manga target a younger demographic—college students to men in their mid-thirties—while others target much older readers.

sentai: The term *sentai* refers to a “task force” or “fighting team” formed to accomplish a particular mission. It also refers to a superhero genre in Japanese popular culture in which the protagonists fight as a team (*sentai*) against an evil force. Some internationally known examples of the *sentai* genre are *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon* and *Power Rangers*.

shōjo: This literally means “girl.” Yet, the term also refers to several different concepts. *Shōjo* can refer to young girls as a target audience as in *shōjo* manga, while several scholars discuss the term theoretically as referring to an in-between, volatile state of “being” (or concept) between girlhood and womanhood.

shōnen: This literally means “boy.” In the context of manga, the term can also refer to the target readership of boys, usually of school age (six to eighteen years old).

shōnen ai: The term is a combination of boy (*shōnen*) and love (*ai*). It refers to a type of story that narrates homosexual relationships among young boys. This type of story has a long tradition in literature and other artistic genres, but its history in manga is more recent. When female authors like Hagio Moto and Takemiya Keiko began creating their manga about beautiful boys’ romantic and homosexual stories from the 1970s into 1980s, they were called “*shōnen ai*” rather than boys love or BL, both of which are more common in contemporary parlance.

story manga: Typically, long-form narrative comics, often serialized in manga magazines, are called *sutorii manga* (story manga). In contrast to single-panel cartoons or comic strips, story manga refer to manga that have the same protagonist over different installments in a serialization. The term itself has been used since the mid-1950s, but some manga critics use “story manga” in a more specific way to indicate long-form manga featuring characters with complex psychological interiority and tragic narrative elements, and to differentiate these from the earlier tradition of humorous comic stories.

tankōbon: Literally, *tankōbon* means “stand-alone book.” Usually, a *tanōbon* has a robust soft cover or hard cover and high-quality paper pages. Unlike many manga magazines made of pulp, suggesting their disposability and low-brow status, once manga are (re-)published in *tankōbon* format, they can be shelved in a different section in bookstores and also be shelved in libraries. This makes them suitable for preservation and hints at a different social status.

yaoi: The term *yaoi* was in use from the late 1970s to the 1980s mainly to refer to a subcultural community of fans who enjoyed manga (or parodies of manga) that depict the romantic and/or homosexual relationship between boys or men. *Yaoi* manga first appeared in *dōjinshi*, as derivative works of existing manga and anime. The term derives from an acronym of the Japanese phrase *yamanashi*, *ochinasi*, *iminashi* (no climax, no clear ending/punchline, and no meaning), suggesting that the depiction of romantic and/or sexual interaction in *yaoi* manga is of primary interest with little attention given to plot. Historically, both authors and readers of *yaoi* manga have predominantly been women. Since around the 2000s, the term has been replaced by boys love (BL), with BL typically referring to commercial manga and *yaoi* to fan-produced works, although some fans and scholars meticulously define and even police the usage of each term.

yonkoma or yonkoma manga: The term(s) literally means “four-panel comic strip.” In Japan, *yonkoma* manga is a popular genre that appears in major newspapers and both manga and non-manga-centric magazines. Some claim that a traditional *yonkoma* manga has a narrative structure or rhythm, known as “*ki-shō-ten-ketsu*,” which can be translated as “introduction, development, turn, and conclusion (or punchline),” although many *yonkoma* defy any such formula.

yuri: This word literally means “lily,” a slang term for lesbian in Japanese. In the context of manga, *yuri* is used to label a type of manga that narrates the romantic and/or sexual relationships between girls or women. It is also called “girls love” (GL), following the term of boys love.

List of Museums

This section offers a list of selected manga museums and other manga-related facilities. Some of these have a research function that allows users to conduct archival research; others are similar to traditional museums or themed-exhibition sites. Many serve as localized centers of manga culture events and workshops. The oldest dates back to 1966, though the majority have appeared since the 1990s. Since the size, exhibited objects, display methods, operating hours, and accessibility vary, it is advisable to check official websites before visiting any of the following venues.

Research-Oriented Museums/Facilities

Kawasaki City Museum (Kawasaki City, Kanagawa): <https://www.kawasaki-museum.jp/introduction/>

Established in 1988, this was the first museum in Japan to employ a “manga curator” and over the years has held numerous important manga exhibitions. Unfortunately, the museum’s major collection of popular culture artifacts was severely damaged by floods in 2019. After two years of recovery efforts, a decision was made to demolish the museum and merge it with another city facility in a different location in the future.

Kyoto International Manga Museum (Kyoto City, Kyoto): <https://www.kyotomm.jp/en/>

Operated by the city of Kyoto and Kyoto Seika University, this is Japan’s largest and most comprehensive manga museum. It features a permanent exhibition overviewing manga history, regular curated exhibitions in its other galleries, workshops and events, and a large open on-site reading manga library as well as a research library. Its holdings of historical manga material, including the Shimizu Isao Collection, are amongst the most impressive in Japan.

Yoshihiro Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures (Kanda ward, Tokyo): https://www.meiji.ac.jp/manga/english/yonezawa_lib/

The collection amassed by Yonezawa Yoshihiro, the co-founder and long-time representative of Comic Market, was bequeathed to Meiji University where it was used to establish this library. With dedicated manga specialist staff and around 140,000 manga or manga-related items, including thousands of *dōjinshi*, it is an important research facility. In 2021, the Contemporary Manga Library (see below) was incorporated into the same seven-story facility. This makes the university’s combined holdings of around 410,000 manga-related items the largest such collection in Japan. Plans are afoot to expand this into a Tokyo International Manga Library.

Manga Archives and Libraries

Center for International Children’s Literature (Higashi-Osaka, Osaka): <https://www.library.pref.osaka.jp/site/jibunkan/index-en.html>

When the International Institute for Children’s Literature closed its doors permanently in 2010, its vast archives of over 700,000 children’s publications were moved to this new center located within Osaka Prefectural Central Library. The collection includes many rare prewar children’s magazines which were important in the historical development of manga.

Contemporary Manga Library (Gendai manga toshokan): <https://www.sites.google.com/site/naikilib/>

Japan's largest and oldest specialist pay-for-use manga library, established in 1978 by Naiki Toshio. The collection of around 270,000 items is particularly strong in holdings of postwar *kashihon* and pre-1970 manga magazines. Meiji University acquired the collection after Nakai's death in 2012 and has now incorporated it into the university's library system.

Hiroshima City Manga Library (Hiroshima Prefecture): <https://www.library.city.hiroshima.jp/manga/en/index.html>

A popular spot during school breaks, this is Japan's oldest public library dedicated to manga and has served as a model for later reading rooms established in manga museums. While relatively small, it holds roughly 154,000 *tankōbon* manga, most of which can be borrowed by visitors. It has a useful reference and research section where historical materials are preserved.

Kitakyushu Manga Museum (Kitakyūshū City, Fukuoka): <http://www.ktqmm.jp/>

This city-operated museum celebrates not only *mangaka* such as Matsumoto Leiji, Watase Seizō, and Hōjō Tsukasa who hail from the city, but also aims to collect, preserve, curate, and exhibit a wide range of Japanese comics art. In addition, Kitakyushu Manga Museum conducts regular manga workshops and competitions.

Koshi Manga Museum (Koshi, Kumamoto): <https://koshi-mm.com/>

Not far from the southern city of Kumamoto, this is a public manga library and museum with over 15,000 manga dating from the 1960s to the present. It also preserves around 40,000 manga-related items in its archives.

National Diet Library (Chiyoda ward, Tokyo): <https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/>

Japan's parliamentary, or Diet, library is the most comprehensive library in the country. Its "Digital Collection" of pre-1950s material is continually expanding, making searches for early manga in magazines as well as some early comic books, relatively easy. Librarians are on duty to help with searches, copying, and even permissions for reproduction use.

Newspark: An Interactive Museum of Information and Newspapers in Yokohama (Yokohama, Kanagawa): <https://newspark.jp/en/>

While not specifically a manga facility, one can research past and present newspaper comics here. Its reading room and archives allow you to browse 134 different newspapers, access digital newspaper databases, and search historical papers on over 60,000 rolls of microfilm.

Niigata City Manga House and Niigata Manga Animation Museum (Niigata City, Niigata): http://house.nmam.jp/h30ie_english/

These are two city-operated facilities for manga- and anime-related events, manga workshops, and manga exhibitions. The Manga House has a permanent interactive exhibit of work by Akatsuka Fujio and three other *mangaka*, a workshop space, and a well-stocked manga reading room.

Tokiwaso Manga Museum (Toshima ward, Tokyo): <https://tokiwasomm.jp/en/>

This is a recreation of the Tokiwasō apartment building where, from 1953 and beginning with Tezuka Osamu, many young *mangaka* who helped shape postwar manga gathered to live and work in a cooperative but competitive environment. Part of Toshima ward's project to become a manga culture center, it also has an exhibition space, reading room, and archival holdings.

Yokote Masuda Manga Museum (Yokote City, Akita): <http://manga-museum.com/>

This museum is dedicated to preserving and exhibiting original comics artwork. Its archives house tens of thousands of pieces of artwork by Masuda Town-born Yaguchi Takao as well as originals by eight other *mangaka* including Eisner Awards Hall of Fame inductee Kojima Gōseki, as well as popular artists Nōjō Jun'ichi and Higashimura Akiko.

Author/Creator-Focused Museums

Asō Yutaka: Asō Yutaka Archives, Oita Prefecture Museum of History (Usa, Oita): <https://opmh.iri-project.org/>

In 2012, a collection of original artwork and other items related to one of prewar Japan's most popular *mangaka*, Asō Yutaka, creator of *Easygoing Papa* (Nonkina tōsan), was gifted to the Oita Prefecture Museum of History. Much of this collection can now be seen virtually thanks to digitization support from the Agency for Cultural Affairs' archival project.

Fujiko F. Fujio: Fujiko F. Fujio Museum (Kawasaki, Kanegawa): <http://fujiko-museum.com/english/>

After the death of Fujiko F. Fujio in 1996, over 50,000 pieces of original artwork including work from his popular Doraemon comics were donated by his wife to the city where he lived for more three decades, Kawasaki. With the material, this museum was planned by the city and Fujiko's production company and opened 2011.

Hasegawa Machiko: Hasegawa Machiko Memorial Museum of Art: <https://www.hasegawamachiko.jp/>

Hasegawa Machiko is known in particular for her *Sazae-san* strip serialized between 1948 and 1974, and which still continues today as TV anime. This museum was established in 1985 with profits from manga sales as a gallery to display Hasegawa's and her sister's art collection. Due to popular demand, a section was added to the museum dedicated to exhibit Hasegawa's original manga artwork from its archives.

Igarashi Yumiko: Kurashiki Yumiko Igarashi Museum (Kurashiki, Okayama): <http://www.aska-planning-design.co.jp/museum/english.html>

Igarashi Yumiko is the artist for the 1970s hit *shōjo* manga *Candy Candy* written by Nagita Keiko. This museum celebrates Igarashi's comics artwork and her comics world of princesses. Exhibits include around fifty original pieces of artwork and rare publications. Visitors can read all Igarashi's works in the library, or cosplay in the Princess Experience Open Space.

Ishinomori Shotarō: Ishinomaki Mangattan Museum (Ishinomaki City, Miyagi): <https://www.mangattan.jp/manga/en/>

This futuristic-looking museum was based on a design by Miyagi-born Ishinomori Shotarō himself. Ishinomori produced a huge variety of manga ranging from *shōjo* manga, like *Niryū tenshi* (Second-class Angel) and sci-fi manga, like his classic *Cyborg 009*, to educational and historical works such as *Japan Inc.* and his massive history of Japan. The museum preserves in excess of 90,000 pieces of his work, which are drawn on for regular exhibitions

Kitazawa Rakuten: Saitama Municipal Cartoon Art Museum (Saitama City, Saitama): <https://www.city.saitama.jp/004/005/002/003/001/>

This is Japan's, possibly Asia's, oldest comic art museum. It was established 1966 in the former home and studio of Kitazawa Rakuten which was bequeathed to the city. Its historical archives, split between two locations, includes work by, and material related to, Rakuten and his students. With a dedicated curator, it holds regular manga exhibitions and an annual manga competition.

Matsumoto Katsudi: Matsumoto Katsudi Galley (Setagaya ward, Tokyo): <http://katsudi.com/en/homepage/>

A small gallery that exhibits the artwork of *mangaka* and illustrator Matsumoto Katsudi, whose career, spanning the pre- and postwar periods, was influential in the development of *shōjo* manga and cute (*kawaii*) style.

Mizuki Shigeru: Mizuki Shigeru Museum (Sakaiminato City, Tottori): <http://mizuki.sakaiminato.net/lang-en/>

Averaging a quarter of a million visitors annually, this museum celebrates Mizuki Shigeru's life, prolific manga output, his characters, and his *yōkai*

world by exhibiting his manga artwork (reproductions), sculptures, personal belongings, animation, and interview videos. Mizuki Shigeru Road, which leads to the museum from the station, is lined with statues of the characters from his *Kitarō* series.

Monkey Punch: Monkey Punch Collection (Hamanaka, Hokkaido): <https://www.hamanaka-lupin.com/mpcollection/>

Two permanent town-operated exhibition spaces dedicated to the work of Hamana-born Monkey Punch (born Katō Kazuhiko), creator of *Lupin the Third*.

Nagai Gō: Go Nagai Wonderland Museum (Wajima City, Ishiikawa): <https://go-wonderland.jp/en/>

Nagai Go, the creator of hit manga such as *Devilman*, *Mazinger Z*, *Harenchi Gakuen*, and *Cutie Honey*, serves as honorary director of this museum in his hometown. Divided into a number of sections, the Nagai Go History Road section presents his life and work, while Studio Go! is an exhibition space where Nagai's original artwork and occasionally special exhibits are shown.

Nagai Katsuichi: Nagai Katsuichi Manga Art Museum (Shiogama City, Miyagi): <https://www.city.shiogama.miyagi.jp/soshiki/38/3567.html>

Operated by the city of Shiogama, the birthplace of Nagai Katsuichi, who was a co-founder of the groundbreaking alternative manga magazine *Garō*. The museum houses original artwork from the magazine and related historical materials.

Nasu Ryōsuke: Yunomae Manga Art Museum (Yunomae, Kumamoto): <https://yunomae-manga.com/default.html>

This facility was established by Nasu Ryōsuke's hometown of Yunomae to preserve and exhibit his work. Nasu drew numerous children's manga between 1932 and 1949 when he began a four-decade career as a political cartoonist. While the focus is on satirical cartooning, including an annual competition, the museum also holds exhibitions focused on recent popular comics.

Tagawa Suihō: Tagawa Suihō Norakuro Museum (Kōtō ward, Tokyo): <https://www.kcf.or.jp/morishita/josetsu/norakuro/>

Located within Kōtō ward's Morishita Culture Center, its permanent display focuses on the life and work, including originals, of Tagawa Suihō, creator of the famous 1930s manga character Norakuro. Other manga exhibitions and an annual manga competition are also held here.

Tezuka Osamu: Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum (Takarazuka, Hyōgo): <http://www.city.takarazuka.hyogo.jp/tezuka/>

In 1994, five years after Tezuka Osamu passed away, the city of his youth, Takarazuka, established this museum to celebrate his life and work. The permanent exhibit traces his life through his manga, photos, and personal effects. There is a space for special exhibitions of Tezuka's manga as well as those of others. Tezuka's anime can also be viewed here.

Yanase Takashi: Anpanman Museum (Kami City, Kōchi): <https://anpanman-museum.net/>

This city-run complex, named after Yanase Takashi's most loved children's manga/anime character Anpanman, consists of three buildings and a memorial park. The main building has a permanent interactive Anpanman exhibit. The nearby gallery building displays Yanase's illustrations for the magazine *Shi to meruhen* (Poem and Märchen). The Memorial Hall is used for special exhibitions.

Yanase Takashi: Yokohama Anpanman Children's Museum (Yokohama, Kanagawa): <https://www.yokohama-anpanman.jp/>

This is a commercial facility focused on the characters from Yanase Takashi's Anpanman works and operated as an amusement center for children.

Yokoyama Ryūichi: Yokoyama Memorial Manga Museum (Kōchi City, Kōchi): <http://www.bunkaplaza.or.jp/mangakan/english/index.html>

Yokoyama Ryūichi, whose five-decade-long career began in the early 1930s, is still widely remembered for his newspaper comic strip *Fuku-chan*. Much of his original manga artwork, animation cells, and personal effects were left to his hometown of Kōchi. This material forms the core of the museum's collection and permanent exhibit. Apart from browsing manga in the museum's library, you can also view Yokoyama's TV anime and a database of his *Fuku-chan* strips.

Companion Website

<https://mangaguide.commonsgc.cuny.edu/>

QR Code:



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