



MANGA

Japanese Manga Exhibition

マンガ

Manga International Network Team (MINT)

漫画

Canzani Atrium,
Columbus College of Art & Design

Beyond the Mainstream



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Organizers:
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan
Japan Arts Council
Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture (JPIC)



EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION

What kind of style or story comes to mind when we hear the word “MANGA”?

According to research by the Shuppan Kagaku Kenkyūjo (The Research Institute for Publications), the total sales of published materials in Japan in 2024 amounted to approximately 1.6 trillion yen (approx. 10.8 billion dollars), of which comics accounted for around 700 billion yen (approx. 4.7 billion dollars). In other words, comics make up over 40 percent of the publishing market. Japan is, quite literally, a nation saturated with comics.

Given the market’s sheer scale, an enormous number of works are produced, encompassing a remarkably wide range of genres, themes, and expressive styles. Among them are styles of comic that differ significantly from the type of mainstream hits oft adapted into anime, of which some, for North American readers, may not even appear to fall into the commonly held notion of “MANGA.”

The distinctive work of the six artists participating in the MINT project clearly reflects the rich stylistic and thematic diversity of Japanese comics.

When referring to the vast, myriad field of Japanese comics that extends beyond the confines of uppercase “MANGA,” we choose to turn instead to the lowercase term “manga.” This exhibition focuses on the unique environment that continues to support the daily production of such diverse manga, highlighting three key aspects of manga publishing in Japan:

- A Manga magazines, which have long been central to Japanese manga publishing;
- B Alternative publishing forms, such as *kashihon* (rental) manga and *dōjinshi* (independent or self-published magazines);
- C The integration of manga into other publishing genres, including practical guides and children’s books.

Understanding the relationship between manga and Japanese publishing practices illuminates the differences between manga and the North American comics tradition, revealing their points of intersection.

This catalog compiles the contents of an exhibition held from September 2025 to January 2026 at the Canzani Atrium, Columbus College of Art and Design (Columbus, Ohio), organized by Manga International Network Team (MINT), a Japan Creator Support Fund initiative.

It is my hope that this catalog will serve not only to introduce the appeal of the six artists’ works as manga, but also to offer a point of entry for engaging with these works in a broader, global context.

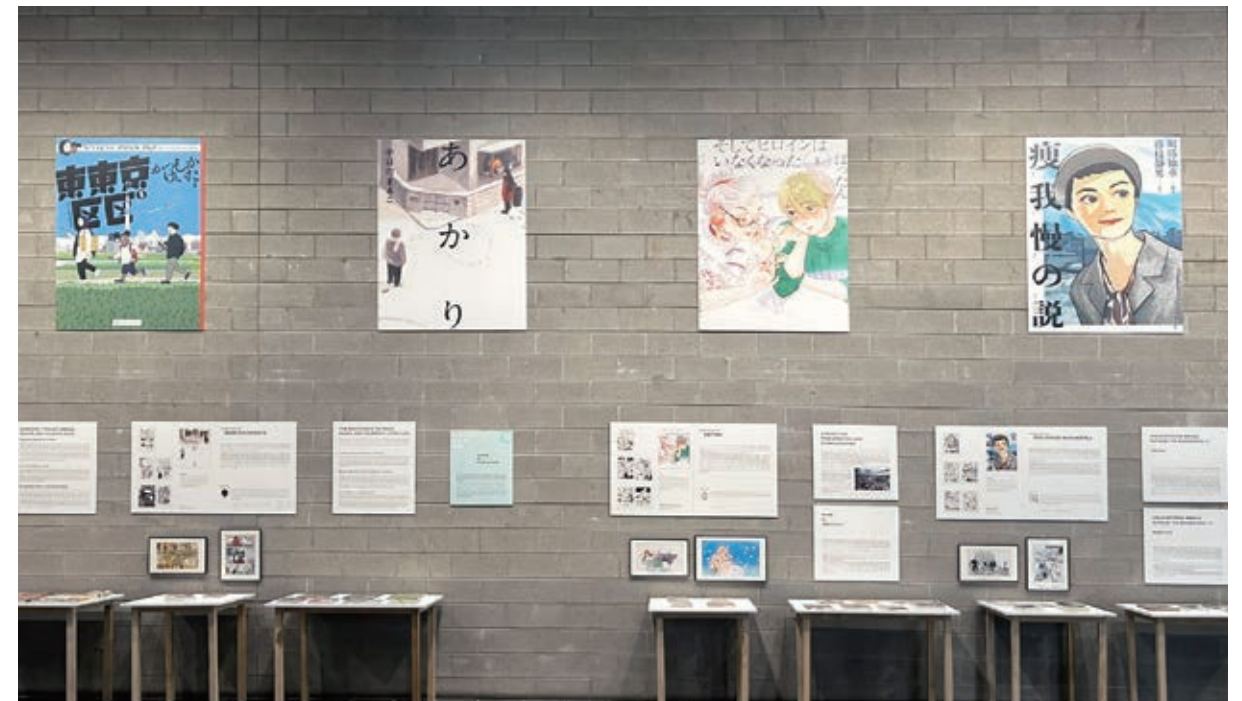
Hosei Iwashita

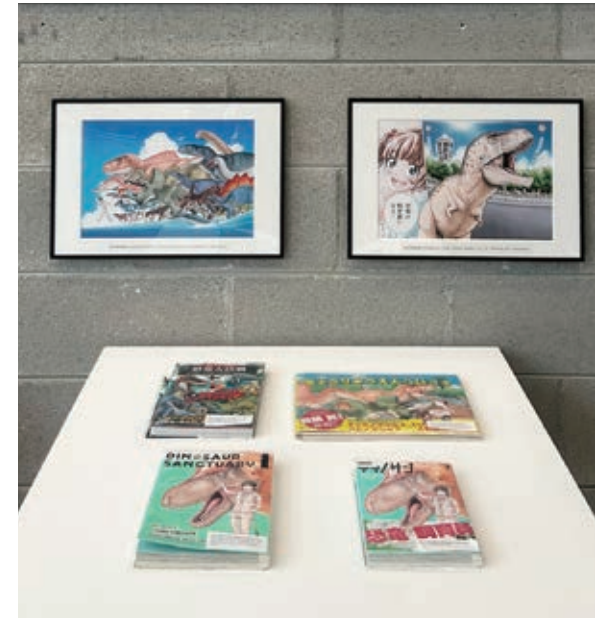
MINT Advisor
Professor, Dept. of Media Information Studies
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Sagami Women’s University

MINT Exhibition “MANGA • マンガ • 漫画 : Beyond the Mainstream”

Date: Sept. 18, 2025 – Jan. 18, 2026

Location: Canzani Atrium, Columbus College of Art and Design (Columbus, Ohio)





ITARU KINOSHITA

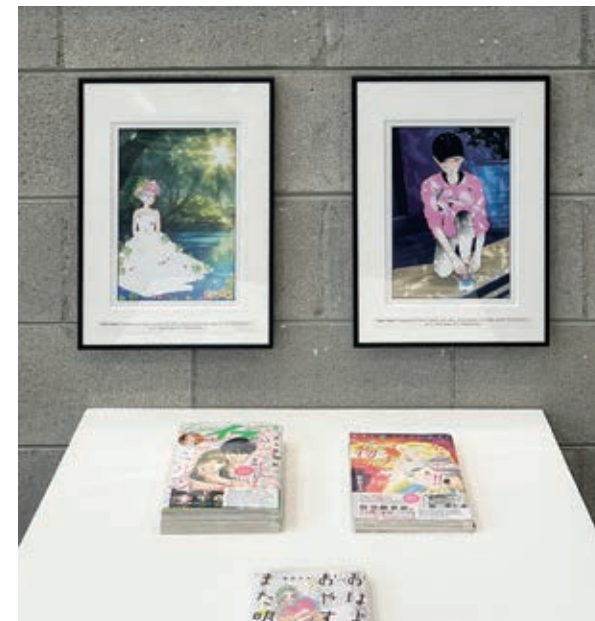
1. Itaru Kinoshita, Frontispiece for *Dinosan (Dinosaur Sanctuary)*, ch. 39, Shinchosha, 2025.
2. Itaru Kinoshita, Illustration from *Dinosan (Dinosaur Sanctuary)*, vol. 1, ch. 1, Shinchosha, 2021.



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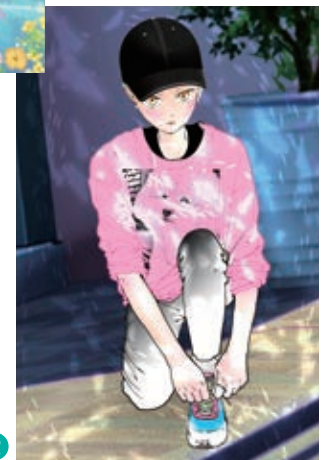


MOKA ONMAE

1. Moka Onmae, Frontispiece for *Ohayou, oyasumi, mata ashita. (Good Morning, Good Night, and See You Tomorrow.)*, ch. 31, AKITASHOTEN, 2025.
2. Moka Onmae, Frontispiece for *Ohayou, oyasumi, mata ashita. (Good Morning, Good Night, and See You Tomorrow.)*, ch. 29, AKITASHOTEN, 2025.



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TOKUSHIGE KAWAKATSU

1. Tokushige Kawakatsu, Illustration from *Yasegaman no setsu* (Grin and Bear It), last ch., original story by Shizuo Fujieda, LEED PUBLISHING Co., Ltd., 2024.
2. Tokushige Kawakatsu, Illustration from *Yasegaman no setsu* (Grin and Bear It), ch. 1, original story by Shizuo Fujieda, LEED PUBLISHING Co., Ltd., 2024.



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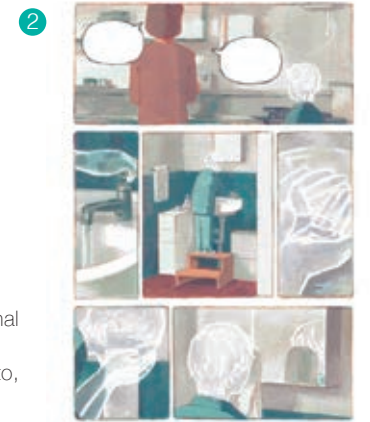


MARCO KOHINATA

1. Marco Kohinata, Illustration from *Boku ga miteinai toki* (When I'm Not Looking), original story by Tomotaka Ide, 2021.
2. Marco Kohinata, Illustration from *Watashi wa obake* (I Am a Ghost), original story by mito, ZINE, 2022.



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BATTAN

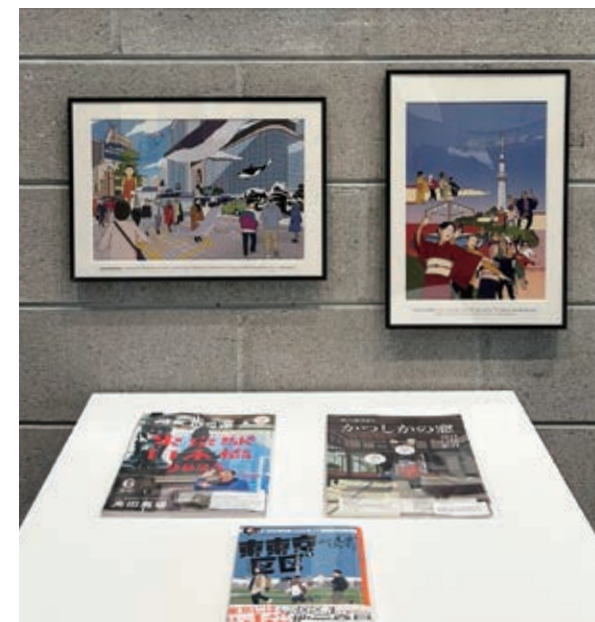
1. Battan, Cover Art for *Soshite hiroin wa inaku natta* (And Then There Were No Heroines), vol. 4, Futabasha Publishers, 2025.
2. Battan, Cover Art for *Soshite hiroin wa inaku natta* (And Then There Were No Heroines), vol. 2, Futabasha Publishers, 2024.



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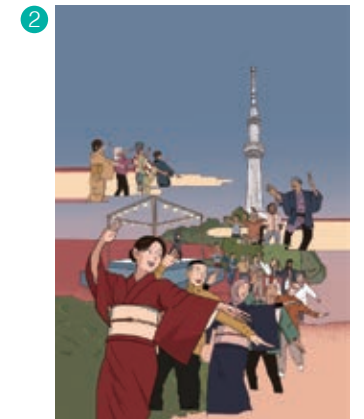


KEITA KATSUSHIKA

1. Keita Katsushika, Cover Art for *Kankoku dorama numa ni hamatte mitara* (Hooked on Korean Dramas) by Mitsuyo Kakuta, Chikumashobō, 2025.
2. Keita Katsushika, Poster Art for Sumi-Yume Bon Dance Festival- We Gather to Frolic and Play 2024, organized by Sumi-Yume Executive Committee, Sumida City.



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HOW MAGAZINES NURTURED THE DIVERSITY OF MANGA

Magazines distributed primarily through bookstores have long played a central position in Japan’s publishing culture. This applies not only to manga but to a wide spectrum of genres. Popular entertainment magazines spanning hundreds of pages featuring a mix of fiction, nonfiction, and other material have long served as a core medium of mass entertainment for Japanese readers. Among the most influential was *King*, a monthly launched by Kodansha in 1924 at the end of the Taishō era (1912–1926). By 1926, with the advent of the Shōwa era, *King* had reached a circulation exceeding one million copies. The format of contemporary manga magazines, where substantial volumes carry over a dozen serialized works across a range of titles, is a direct inheritor of this tradition.

The sheer physical volume of these magazines has played a pivotal role in sustaining the overall depth and diversity of Japanese manga. The need to fill so many pages in each issue has opened space not only for emerging artists still developing their craft, but also for unconventional or experimental works that diverge from the mainstream.

In Japan, magazines are also segmented by demographic criteria such as age and gender, and an array of specialist publications exists for a wide variety of thematic niches. This segmentation has encouraged the development of distinct genre conventions and stylistic diversity within manga.

After reaching a peak in late 1994, marked by Shueisha’s *Weekly Shōnen Jump* reaching over 6.5 million copies in circulation, manga magazine sales entered a period of a gradual decline. Since then, the commercial center of the manga industry has shifted toward collected volumes (*tankōbon*), and today, digital publishing accounts for more than half of all manga sales. Nonetheless, the magazine format—both in print and online—continues to function as a vital site for the serial publication of new works. In this sense, manga magazines remain foundational to the ecology of contemporary manga production.



© Shūkan Shōnen Jump / Shueisha

Weekly Shōnen Jump, no. 15, 2026, Shueisha

As of 2025, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* remains Japan’s best-selling magazine. Categorized as a *shōnen* manga magazine, it attracts a wide readership across all genders and ages.



Hana to Yume, no. 23, 2024, Hakusensha, biweekly

Launched in 1974, *Hana to Yume* is a leading *shōjo* manga magazine. While it features classic school-life stories typical of the genre, it is also known for its many fantasy titles.

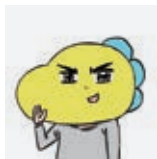
COMMENTARY ON

ITARU KINOSHITA

Itaru Kinoshita's *Dinosaur Sanctuary* (*Dinosaur Sanctuary*), set in a zoo where dinosaurs have been discovered in the modern era, depicts both the lives of the people who work there and the behavior of the dinosaurs themselves. One of the work's central appeals lies in its hybridization of multiple genres.

In the late 1960s, manga magazines targeting late-teen and older readers began to emerge. Among their key genres was the *oshigoto* (workplace) manga, which depicted various professional settings. *Dinosaur Sanctuary* follows the formula of a workplace manga, while also incorporating the speculative premise of dinosaurs existing in the present day, placing it firmly within science fiction. At the same time, the manga offers insights into dinosaur life grounded in the latest paleontological research, lending it the qualities of a *gakushū* (educational) manga as well. The work's hybridity seems to embody the very multifaceted nature of the manga magazine medium.

Artist Profile



Itaru Kinoshita graduated from San Francisco State University's School of Cinema in 2012. He made his manga debut with *Giganto wo ute* (*Attack the Gigante*, Kodansha) in 2018. His manga about a dinosaur park, *Dinosaur Sanctuary* (published in English as *Dinosaur Sanctuary*, Seven Seas Entertainment), is currently being serialized by Shinchosha. Volumes 1 through 8 are currently on sale in Japanese, with volume 7 of the English edition released in September 2025. The series is also available in Spanish, Basque, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, Portuguese, Thai, Italian, and Hungarian. The series has received several critical accolades, including nomination for the 2023 Next Manga Awards in the Print Manga category and for the "Best Continuing Manga Series" in the 2024 American Manga Awards. It was also included in *School Library Journal's* Best Books of 2024, My Anime List's 2025 "You Should Read This Manga" list, and ranked 8th in the Manga We Want to See Animated Ranking 2026. His favorite dinosaurs are the *Giganotosaurus* and *Psittacosaurus*.



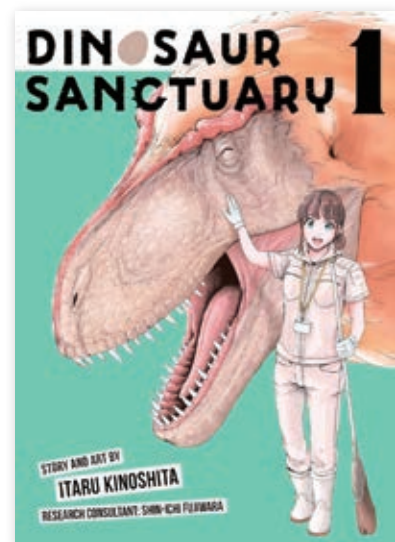
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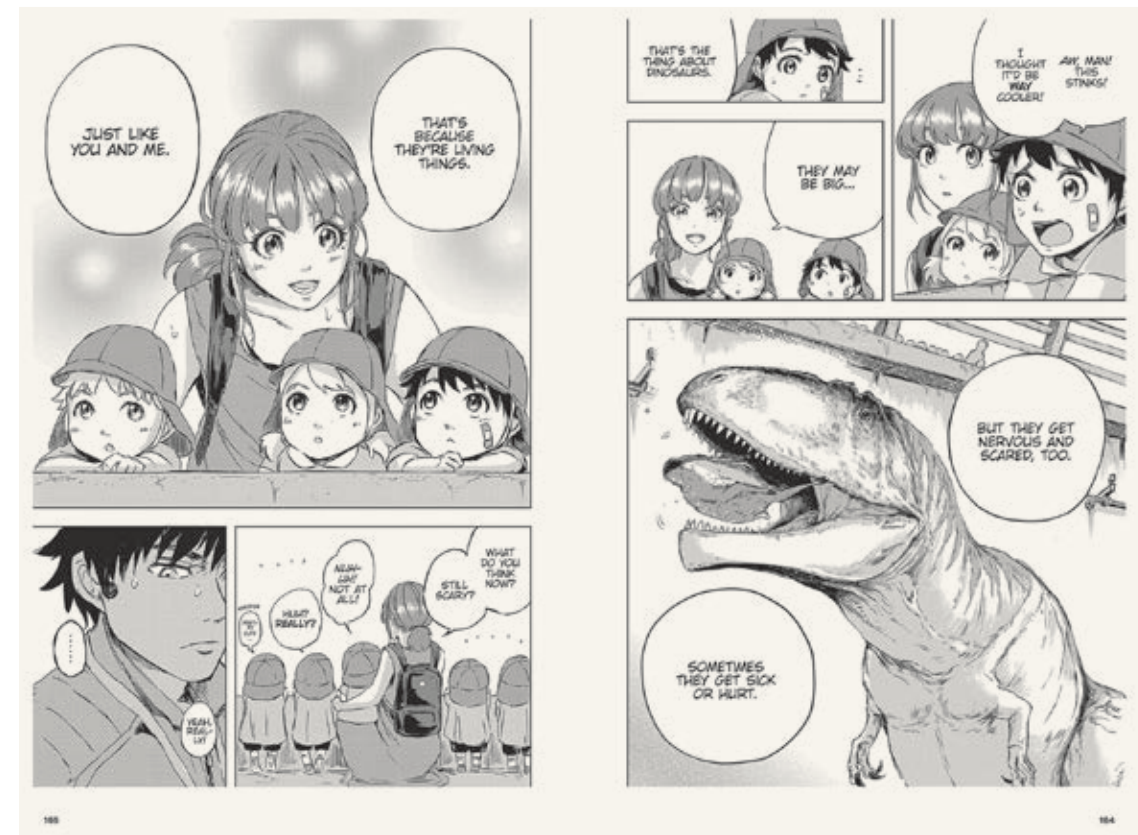
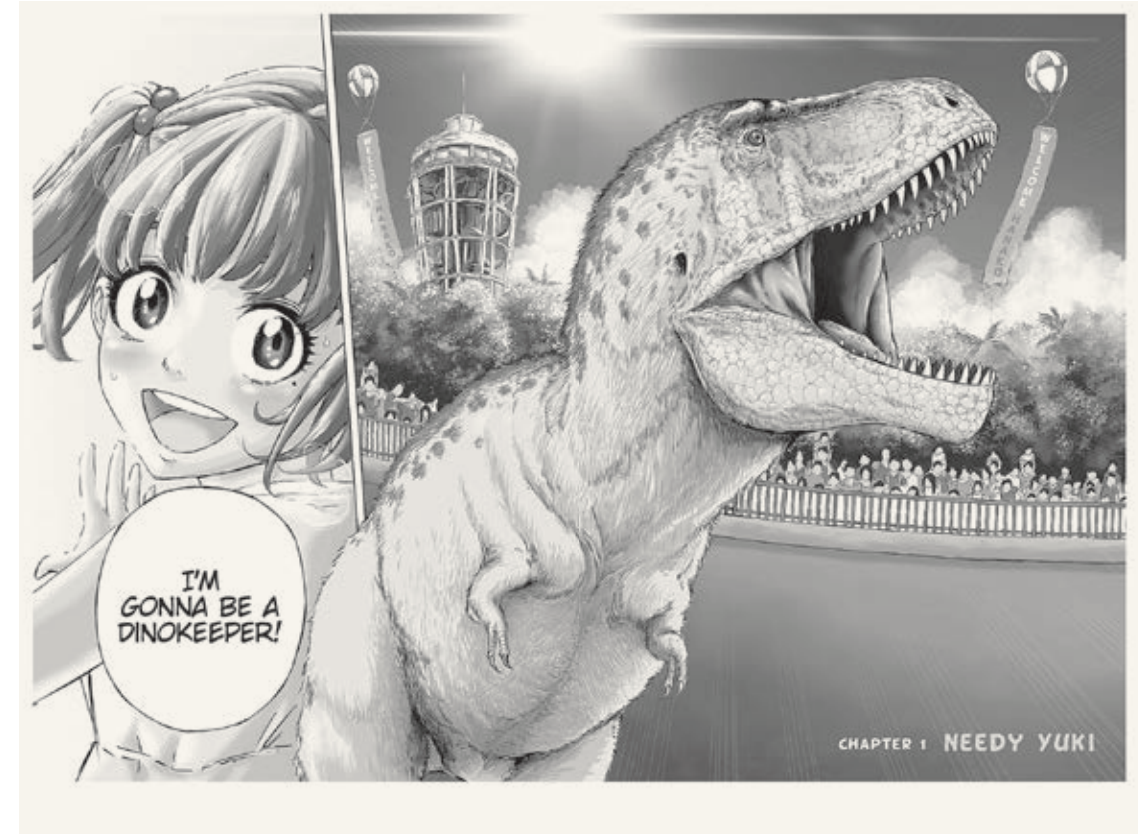


Synopsis

Dinosaurs are alive! In 1946, a remote island was discovered where dinosaurs never went extinct. Through breeding and genetic manipulation, dinosaur populations increased, and dino-mania reached a fever pitch worldwide . . . until a certain terrible incident occurred and dinosaur zoos like Enoshima Dinoland fell on hard times. Enter Suzume Suma, a kindhearted rookie dino-keeper! Can she save Dinoland from extinction?

Dinosaur Sanctuary, vol. 1

Publisher: Seven Seas Entertainment
Publication Date: September 27, 2022
© Itaru Kinoshita 2021 / SHINCHOSHA PUBLISHING Co./ Seven Seas Entertainment



HOW DID MANGA MAGAZINES COME TO BE?

Shōnen manga (or boys' manga) magazines, one of the central pillars of mainstream manga in Japan, are, despite the implication of their name, read widely across all age groups and genders. The same is true of *shōjo* manga (or girls' manga) magazines, whose readership is not limited to young women. This seemingly paradoxical situation is, in fact, a major factor underpinning both the quantity and quality of manga production in Japan.

Shōnen and *Shōjo* Magazines from the Meiji to Prewar Shōwa Era (1868–1945)

In Japanese, the word *shōnen* originally referred broadly to young people regardless of gender. However, once distinct educational curricula for boys and girls were institutionalized during the Meiji era, the term *shōjo* began to be used to denote exclusively girls, and children's magazines followed suit with separate titles for boys (*shōnen*) and girls (*shōjo*).

The Rise of Manga in *Shōnen* Magazines

Initially, popular entertainment magazines for children primarily featured novels and other prose; manga occupied a relatively small portion of their pages. However, manga's popularity rose significantly following the success of *Norakuro* by Suihō Tagawa, serialized in *Shōnen Kurabu* beginning in 1931 (Shōwa 6). Even so, once the war began, state controls on children's media severely restricted manga publication.

From General-Interest to Manga Magazines: Postwar *Shōnen* and *Shōjo* Magazines

Following the end of the war in August 1945, a wave of new magazine launches began, including many aimed at children.

From Monthlies to Weeklies

In the 1950s, both *shōnen* and *shōjo* magazines were primarily monthlies. The popularity of the *e-monogatari* ("picture story") genre increased demand for visual content, leading to larger magazine formats. Although manga were already among the popular contents, they did not yet dominate the magazines. A turning point came in the mid-1950s when magazine supplements shifted from toys to booklet-style *bessatsu furoku*, or small standalone booklets bundled with the main issue. Manga, which in the main magazine would have been limited to just a few pages per episode at most, gained access to the more generous page counts of these supplemental booklets, allowing for the development of more dynamic and dramatic storytelling.

The Rise of Manga Magazines and an Expanding Readership

By the end of the 1950s, weekly *shōnen* magazines had emerged, and in the 1960s, weekly *shōjo* magazines followed. Though these weeklies began as general-interest magazines, by the end of the 1960s they had gradually shifted to become manga-centered, and by the early 1970s had fully evolved into manga magazines.

This shift toward manga-centric content coincided with a broadening of the readership. By the late 1960s, the sight of university students reading manga magazines had become a widely discussed phenomenon. Responding to this trend, publishers launched magazines aimed at older teens and young adults (i.e., *seinen* manga), such as *Weekly Manga Action* (Futabasha, 1967), beginning in the late 1960s.

Meanwhile, magazines targeting dedicated manga fans also began to appear, including *Garo* (Seirindō, 1964) and *COM* (Mushi Pro Shoji, 1967).



© JUNICHI NAKAHARA / HIMAWARIYA

Shōjo no Tomo, no. 9, 1939,
Jitsugyo no Nihon Sha,
monthly

The segmentation of *shōnen* and *shōjo* magazines emerged in the early 20th century. The glittering-eyed girls in the *jojōga* illustration style seen here foreshadowed the aesthetics of later *shōjo* manga.



Manga Shōnen, no. 1, 1949,
Gakudōsha, monthly
(reprint edition,
KOKUSHOKANKOKAI INC.)

Founded postwar by a former *Shōnen Club* editor, the magazine featured serialized manga and fiction alongside reader-submitted manga. Many of these contributors would later go on to become professional manga artists. Despite its title, it included a variety of content beyond manga, such as fiction.



Weekly Manga Action,
April 4 issue, 1968,
Futabasha

In the late 1960s, *seinen* manga magazines began to emerge, gradually replacing earlier adult-oriented publications. *Manga Action* marked this shift. Among its standout titles was Monkey Punch's *Rupan sansei* (*Lupin the Third*), a series repeatedly adapted into anime and still popular today.

ALL SORTS OF MANGA FOR ALL SORTS OF MAGAZINES

Manga magazines in Japan are segmented not only by age group and gender but also by genre. In addition to magazines that feature a panoply of works in each issue, the abundance and variety of magazines themselves—ranging from widely read mainstream titles to highly specialized niche publications—contributes significantly to the diversity and breadth of Japanese manga as a whole.

Gambling Manga Magazines

Pachinko, pachislot machines, and mahjong are familiar forms of gambling in Japan, and magazines dedicated entirely to manga on these topics have long been in circulation. The narrative techniques developed to depict psychological tension and strategic manipulation in gambling settings have, in turn, produced major hit titles, such as Nobuyuki Fukumoto's *Tobaku mokushiroku Kaiji* (Gambling Apocalypse Kaiji; Kodansha), a series centered on deadly high-stakes games.

Nobuyuki Fukumoto's *Akagi: Yami ni oritatta tensai* (Akagi: The Genius Who Descended into Darkness; Takeshobo, 1992), vol.1.
© NOBUYUKI FUKUMOTO / TAKESHOBO 「KINDAI MAHJONG」
*Another gambling manga by the author of *Kaiji*.



Manga Pachinkō, no. 12, 2022, Guideworks, bimonthly

Pachinko is a pinball-style game that developed uniquely in Japan. Many machines feature tie-ins with manga and anime. Magazines like this one blend entertainment and instruction, offering manga that introduce new machines and explain playing techniques.

Horror Manga Magazines

Horror has long been a popular genre in *shōjo* manga. Building on the tradition of horror stories within *shōjo* manga, the 1980s saw a wave of horror manga magazines launched in response to the rise of splatter horror films. Renowned internationally as a master of the genre, Junji Itō made his debut in one such publication: the monthly *Halloween* (Asahi Sonorama, first published 1986).

Junji Itō's *Frankenstein* (VIZ Media, LLC., 2018, Eisner Award-winning work)
© JI Inc. / Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc.



Essay Manga Magazines

Essay manga, or works based on the personal experiences of the author, emerged as a genre in the 1980s and became more firmly established in the 1990s, with the launch of dedicated magazines such as the monthly *PUTAO* (Hakusensha, first published 1996). A related subgenre also developed, specializing in adaptations of readers' real-life experiences into manga form—for example, the monthly *Hontō ni Atta Waraeru Hanashi* (True and Funny Stories; Bunkasha, first published 2001). Both categories have taken shape primarily as genres targeted toward women. In recent years, many non-professional creators have found an audience by publishing such works directly to social media platforms.

Shungiku Uchida's *Watashitachi wa hanshoku shiteiru* (We Are Reproducing; Bunkasha, 1994), vol. 1.



Hontō ni Atta Waraeru Hanashi, no. 2, 2016, Bunkasha, monthly

This magazine specializes in autobiographical essay manga, where artists recount humorous personal stories. Without overarching plots or continuity, these titles make accessible, casual reading, one of the defining traits of the genre.



ALTERNATIVE DISTRIBUTION, ALTERNATIVE MANGA

In Japan, the publishing distribution system relies on intermediaries known as *toritsugi*, which connect publishers with bookstores. This system enables the nationwide distribution of not only books but also regular publications such as magazines.

In the case of manga, however, alternative publishing forms outside of this mainstream distribution structure, such as *akahon* (pulp fiction), *kashihon* manga, and *dōjinshi*, have played a significant role at various points in history. These non-mainstream outlets have often offered a degree of creative freedom and served as spaces for fostering new forms of expression.

ENCOUNTERING MANGA OUTSIDE THE BOOKSTORE (1)

Akahon

Akahon (literally “red books”) is a colloquial term referring to inexpensive, entertainment-oriented publications, primarily issued by small and mid-sized publishers. Among the *akahon* genres that gained popularity pre-war were children’s manga. With distribution routes distinct from those of mainstream books and periodicals, *akahon* titles were often sold outside conventional bookstores, in outlets such as stores that also carried toys or sweets. The genre declined under wartime publication controls, but regained popularity in the immediate postwar years, leading to a surge in titles. This popularity, however, also provoked criticism: by the 1950s, manga, like comic books in North America, were increasingly accused of posing a danger to children.

Though many *akahon* manga were small-format and short in length, hardback volumes exceeding 100 pages were also produced. Numerous manga artists began their careers in *akahon* publishing. For example, Osamu Tezuka, who would go on to become a defining figure of postwar manga, made his debut in the *akahon* format with *Shin takarajima* (New Treasure Island; Ikuei Shuppan, 1947), a work based on an original concept by Shichima Sakai.



Shin takarajima (New Treasure Island)
by Osamu Tezuka, reprint edition, based on a story
by Shichima Sakai, Shogakukan Creative, 2009

Osamu Tezuka, a defining manga artist of the postwar era, first gained recognition through *akahon* publications. Although most *akahon* were thin and compact, longer formats gradually emerged—giving Tezuka the space to showcase his storytelling skills.

ENCOUNTERING MANGA OUTSIDE THE BOOKSTORE (2)

Kashihon

While the *akahon* boom began to wane around 1950, it was soon followed by the rise of the *kashihon* (rental) bookstore business model, which reached its peak in the mid-1950s. As *kashihon* rental shops grew in popularity, some publishers began producing books specifically for them. In this context, where quantity often took precedence over quality, the barrier to debuting was lower than in magazine publishing, making *kashihon* manga an accessible entry point for new creators. As a result, many young and ambitious artists launched their careers through this system.

One significant development to emerge from this environment was *gekiga* (“dramatic pictures”), a term coined to distinguish these works from conventional children’s manga. Characterized by serious, mature storylines and detailed depictions of action, *gekiga* heralded a new direction in the evolution of manga expression.

Nevertheless, *kashihon* manga was naturally not limited to *gekiga*. *Shōjo* manga was also a popular genre, as were horror stories, period dramas, and other categories that reflected a broad and diverse readership.



Hakaba Kitarō: Ahona otoko
(Graveyard Kitarō: A Foolish Man) by Shigeru Mizuki,
reprint edition, Shogakukan Creative, 2010

Part of the long-running Kitarō series, this version was originally published by Satō Production in 1964. By that time, *kashihon* manga were already in decline. After serialization began in *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in 1965, Kitarō quickly became a beloved character.

TOKUSHIGE KAWAKATSU

Tokushige Kawakatsu's *Yasegaman no setsu* (Grin and Bear It) is based on a 1950s work by Shizuo Fujieda, a Japanese author active in the postwar Shōwa era. Kawakatsu's adaptation approaches the source material with remarkable lightness, as though Fujieda were a contemporary living alongside him in the same period. What prevents the work from lapsing into mere nostalgia is Kawakatsu's broad and deeply rooted knowledge of manga—particularly of earlier, alternative forms such as *kashihon* and *akahon*.

Kawakatsu is engaged with manga in multiple roles beyond that of a creator. He has edited independent publications such as *Kakū*, reissued rare works through self-publishing, and curated the *Kyōfu to kisō* (Fear and Fantasy) volume of the *Gendai manga senshū* (Selected Works of Contemporary Manga) anthology series published by Chikumashobō. He is also active as a critic. Through both his creative practice and broader contributions, Kawakatsu provides a vital link between readers today and the alternative traditions of *kashihon* and *akahon* manga from Japan's pre- and postwar eras.

Artist Profile



Tokushige Kawakatsu was born in Tokyo in 1992. As a child, he was inspired by *gekiga* artist Sanpei Shirato's manga adaptation of the collected works of Ernest Thompson Seton, *Shiiton dobutsuki* (Seton's Animal Chronicles). He wrote his first manga in the sixth grade and submitted a manga to the *dōjinshi* (independent magazine) *Kakū*, a monthly manga anthology similar to *Garo* magazine, when he was 18. This led to his involvement with Hokuto Shobō which was founded by Shinzō Takano, a well-known researcher of *gekiga* artist Yoshiharu Tsuge and former editor of *Garo* magazine. Driven by his passion for manga and the *gekiga* style, he resolved to dedicate himself entirely to drawing. Kawakatsu is also a fan of American comics, particularly Bob Powell's horror works and Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo*. Currently, he is especially interested in artist Bob Fujitani who started his career in the 40s.



✕ @old_schoooooool



@kawakatsutokushige

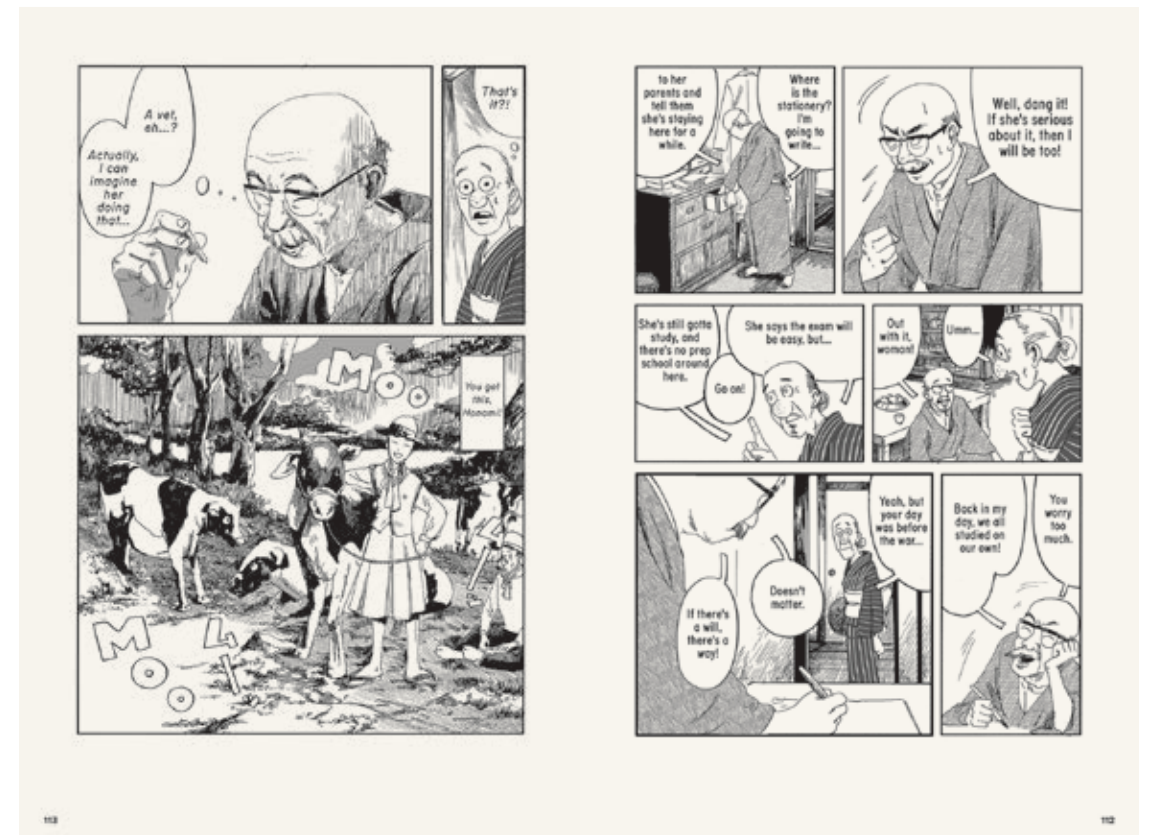
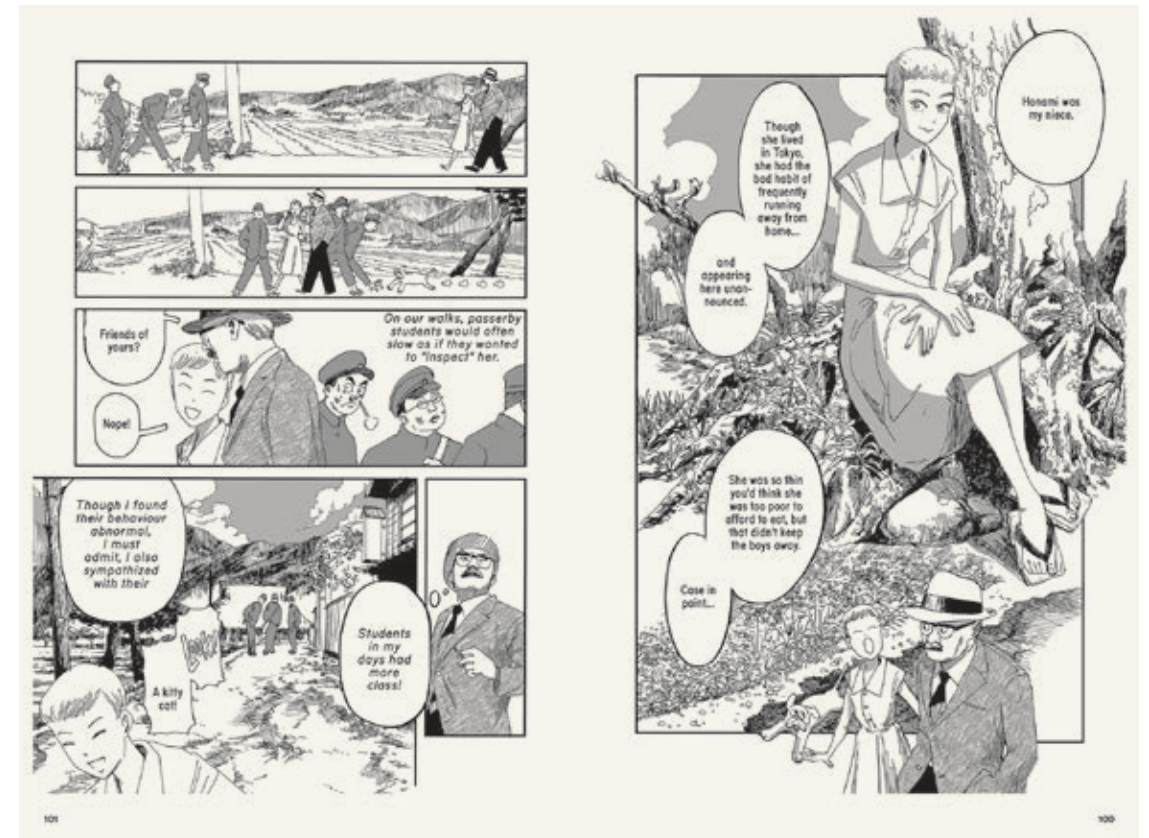


Synopsis

This is a manga adaptation of the novel *Yasegaman no setsu* (1955) by Shizuo Fujieda. Modelled after the original author, a middle-aged doctor runs his practice in the Japanese countryside. His 19-year-old niece Honami frequently runs away from her home in Tokyo, to stay with her uncle and aunt. *Yasegaman no setsu* revolves around the generational gap between the grouchy country doctor and the optimistic, naïve young woman.

Yasegaman no setsu (Grin and Bear It)

Publisher: LEED PUBLISHING Co., Ltd.
Publication Date: August 30, 2024
© Tokushige Kawakatsu / Shizuo Fujieda 2024



A SPACE FOR FREE CREATION AND COMMUNICATION

Founded in 1975, Comic Market is the largest event in Japan for the exhibition and sale of *dōjinshi*, or independently or self-published works. As manga and anime became firmly rooted in Japanese pop culture, Comic Market grew alongside them into what is now widely known as a major “festival of otaku,” drawing more than 200,000 visitors. At its core are fan-made manga known as *nijisōsaku*, or derivative works based on existing titles and characters. However, the event also features a wide array of independently published materials, including novels, critical essays, and other original content, all falling under the umbrella of *dōjinshi*.

Comic Market is just one among many such events. Some, known as “only events,” focus on fan works dedicated to a single property or franchise, while others, such as Comitia, emphasize original creative works. The sheer number and variety of these events reflect how deeply the act of making manga has taken root as a form of hobby and personal expression in Japan.

Of course, otaku fan culture is not limited to drawing manga. For example, cosplay events and other participatory fan gatherings also offer rich spaces for community and creativity.



“SONYSONY” by TAKA @ P.P.R.S, CC BY-SA 2.0



Comic Market Catalog 100, August 2022,
Comic Market Committee

Although Comic Market was canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it resumed in December 2021 and held its 100th event in August 2022. Packed with listings of participants, the catalog’s sheer size and heft speaks volumes about the depth of Japan’s otaku culture.

WHAT IS *DŌJINSHI*?

The term *dōjinshi* originally referred to independent magazines edited and published by groups united by shared interests or ideals. Manga *dōjinshi* were similarly created by groups of aspiring manga artists or by university manga clubs—fan circles known as *manga kenkyūkai*. Today, however, the term has expanded to include self-published works by amateurs, often as part of personal or fan-driven creative activity.

One of the dominant genres in fan-produced *dōjinshi* is *nijisōsaku*, or derivative works. A major subgenre within this category is boys’ love (BL), which centers on romantic relationships between male characters and primarily targets a female readership. While BL has become a well-established commercial genre, its development is deeply tied to the *nijisōsaku* culture of fan-created *dōjinshi*.

Not all *dōjinshi* are fan fiction, however. Many original works are also produced and distributed independently. Free from commercial demands, these publications allow creators to explore personal interests and experimental approaches to storytelling. For professional manga artists, *dōjinshi* can offer a valuable alternative space for creative expression. In addition, many artists have launched their professional careers after gaining attention through their *dōjinshi* work.



16bit Sensation 2: Watashi to minna ga tsukutta bishōjo gemu (The Beautiful Girl Game I Created with Everyone), Tamiki Wakaki, Tatsuki Amaduyu, Misato Mitsumi, KADOKAWA, 2021

This work features a concept by game creators Tatsuki Amaduyu and Misato Mitsumi, and art by *Kami nomizo shiru sekai* (The World God Only Knows) author Tamiki Wakaki. This commercially published edition is based off the *dōjinshi* which depicts the early days of PC-based *bishōjo* (beautiful girl) games.

COMMENTARY ON BATTAN

Soshite hiroin wa inaku natta (And Then There Were No Heroines) depicts a cross-generational sisterhood between two women—one elderly, one young—bound by the shared experience of being unable to forget a former lover. Battan, the artist behind the manga, frequently explores themes of friendship and partnership between women across her broader body of work.

Intimate relationships between women, especially when depicted in romantic or emotional terms, are often associated with the otaku-oriented subgenre known as *yuri*. Like BL, *yuri* has long been a favored genre within the realm of *nijisōsaku dōjinshi*. Nevertheless, Battan’s interest in portraying relationships between women appears to diverge from the conventions of typical *yuri* manga. Beginning her creative career at Comitia, a *dōjinshi* event focused on original works, Battan has developed a genre-independent style grounded in personal concerns. In this, her approach may be seen as resonant with that of female graphic novelists in the US and Canada whose works are likewise rooted in personal narrative rather than market-driven genre expectations.

Artist Profile



Battan debuted in 2016 with her title *Niji-iro konpurekkusu* (Rainbow Color Complex, KODANSHA). Her other works include *Ane no yūjin* (My Older Sister’s Friend, LEED), *Kakeochi gāru* (Run Away with Me, Girl, KODANSHA USA), *Kemutai ane to zurui imōto* (Secondhand Sisters, KODANSHA USA), and *Fatale Game* (KODANSHA USA). *Soshite hiroin wa inaku natta* (And Then There Were No Heroines) vols. 1–4 were serialized on the online comic platform *Web Action*. Battan loves dogs.



✕ @battan8



@battan8

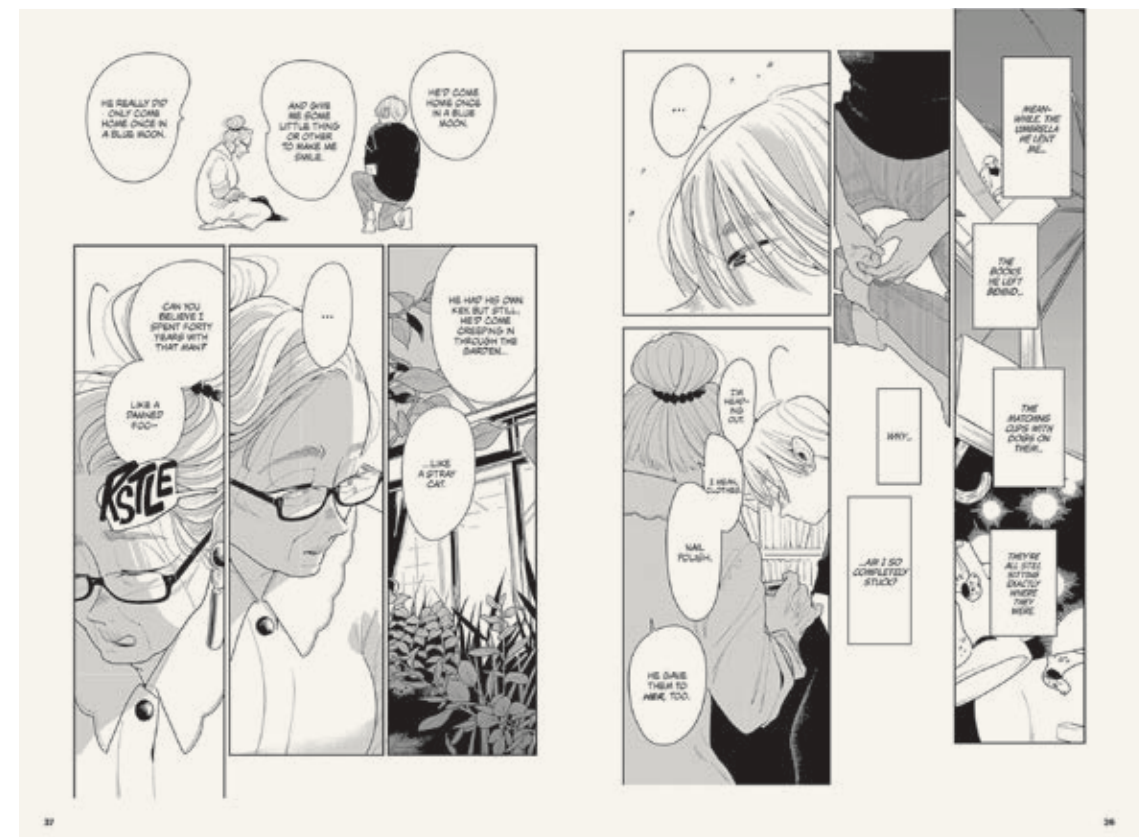


Synopsis

Taeko, a stoic woman around 30 years old, secretly harbors unresolved feelings for a lover she parted with three years ago. One day, she meets a flamboyant elderly woman, Tora, at a bar. Though Tora’s loud and overbearing personality is the last thing Taeko wants to deal with, their shared heartbreak over men makes them eerily similar. A heartfelt, intergenerational story of sisterhood, where two women—50 years apart in age—embrace their unspoken love and longing.

Soshite hiroin wa inaku natta
(And Then There Were No Heroines), vol. 1

Publisher: Futabasha
Publication Date: May 16, 2024
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MANGA IS EVERYWHERE

Given manga's substantial share of the publishing market in Japan, it is no surprise that nearly every bookstore has a dedicated manga section. But manga can also be found tucked into many other areas of the store.

For example, the children's book section often features entire shelves of educational manga. Beyond these, there is a wide range of children's books that, while not explicitly labeled as manga, are in fact told in manga form. Likewise, countless practical guides and introductory texts aimed at adult readers are published in manga form. In Japan, manga has permeated nearly every corner of the publishing landscape.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANGA AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Despite the name of the genre, *shōnen* manga today attracts a broad readership that spans all genders and age groups. As a result, *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga collected volumes and magazines are typically shelved in the manga section rather than with children's literature. Nonetheless, manga and children's literature are far from unrelated, and various points of intersection between the two persist even today.

Foreign Manga as Children's Literature

In Japan, Hergé's *The Adventures of Tintin*, a cornerstone of French-language *bandes dessinées* (BD), is widely read as children's literature. Its Japanese edition is published by Fukuinkan Shoten, a publisher specializing in children's literature, and it is generally shelved accordingly in both bookstores and libraries. Given that Japan's domestic manga publishing output is so immense, translations of foreign comics tend to struggle to gain readership. In this context, *Tintin* stands out as one of the most widely recognized foreign comics in Japan, a status owed in large part to its classification and distribution as a children's book.

Manga under the Guise of Children's Literature

Aside from translated works like *Tintin*, there are many Japanese children's books that, while not marketed as manga, are nonetheless manga in form. A notable example is the *Kaiketsu Zorori* series by Yutaka Hara (Poplar Publishing), which began in 1987 and remains popular among young readers today. Although not explicitly labeled as manga, the books use manga-style panel layouts and speech balloons. Many parents prefer their children not to read only manga—an attitude that persists even in today's manga-saturated environment. For such children, books like *Kaiketsu Zorori* offer a workaround: a way to enjoy manga under the guise of reading "regular" books. At the same time, these children's books in manga form can serve as an important entry point for developing lifelong reading habits.

Picture Books by Manga Artists

While there are manga works that circulate within the sphere of children's publishing, many manga artists also engage in the creation of children's books and picture books. One example is *Soreike! Anpanman* (Go! Anpanman; Froebel-kan), a beloved picture book series for young children that has also aired continuously as an animated TV series since 1988. Its original creator, Takashi Yanase, was also active as a manga artist. Manga and picture books both tell stories through sequences of images, so it is hardly surprising that artists move fluidly between the two forms. Yet in Japan, where manga has come to occupy its own distinct category and enormous market, the shared qualities between the two media are often overlooked. In such a context, the unique style of artists who work across these formats tends to stand out all the more.



Kotchi o miteru. (It's Looking at Me.) by Sōshichi Tonari, illustrated by Junji Itō, Iwasaki Shoten, 2024

A story that won the Scary Picture Book Contest, now published as a picture book with illustrations by horror manga master Junji Itō. Picture books can offer manga artists a chance to explore new expressive territory.



Kaiketsu Zorori: Itadaki!! Nazo no dodeka daiamondo by Yutaka Hara, Poplar Publishing, 2024

The 75th entry in the popular series. It mixes sections laid out in manga style, with panels and speech balloons, and others more like a picture book, combining text and illustrations side by side.

COMMENTARY ON

MARCO KOHINATA

Akari tells a story of emotional connection between an elderly man and a young woman, who are brought together and find new purpose in life through their shared experience of stained glass making. The gentle, hand-drawn quality of Marco Kohinata’s linework beautifully complements the story’s focus on craft and the act of making by hand.

Kohinata’s creative practice extends beyond manga to include picture books, children’s book illustration, and animation. Rather than identifying as a manga artist per se, it might be more accurate to describe her as a painter who treats manga as one part of a broader body of work. Her versatile approach is reflected in a visual style that differs notably from mainstream manga, which typically prioritizes readability through clear distinction between figures and backgrounds. In *Akari*, her nuanced handling of light and shadow, supported by this distinctive approach, transforms each multi-panel page into something that resembles the artistry of a stained-glass window in its own right.

Artist Profile



Marco Kohinata, originally from Osaka Prefecture, made her manga debut in print in 2017 with *Arutisuto wa hana o fumanai* (Artiste ne marche pas sur des fleurs.) after serializing on the manga app Comico (under the pen name MARU-CO). In 2020, this story was a Jury Selection in the Manga Division of the 23rd Japan Media Arts Festival. In 2020, *Hei no naka no biyoshitsu* (The Depth of the Sky), based on an original work by Mina Sakurai, received the Excellence Award in the Manga Division at the 24th Japan Media Arts Festival. Kohinata’s latest work, *Akari*, is published by HERO’S INC. and has received critical acclaim from critics and readers alike, with a book signing event and media coverage. In addition to creating manga, Kohinata also works on commercial illustration, animation projects, and picture book creation.



@MARU_CO_415



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HP <https://kohinatamarco.com/>



Synopsis

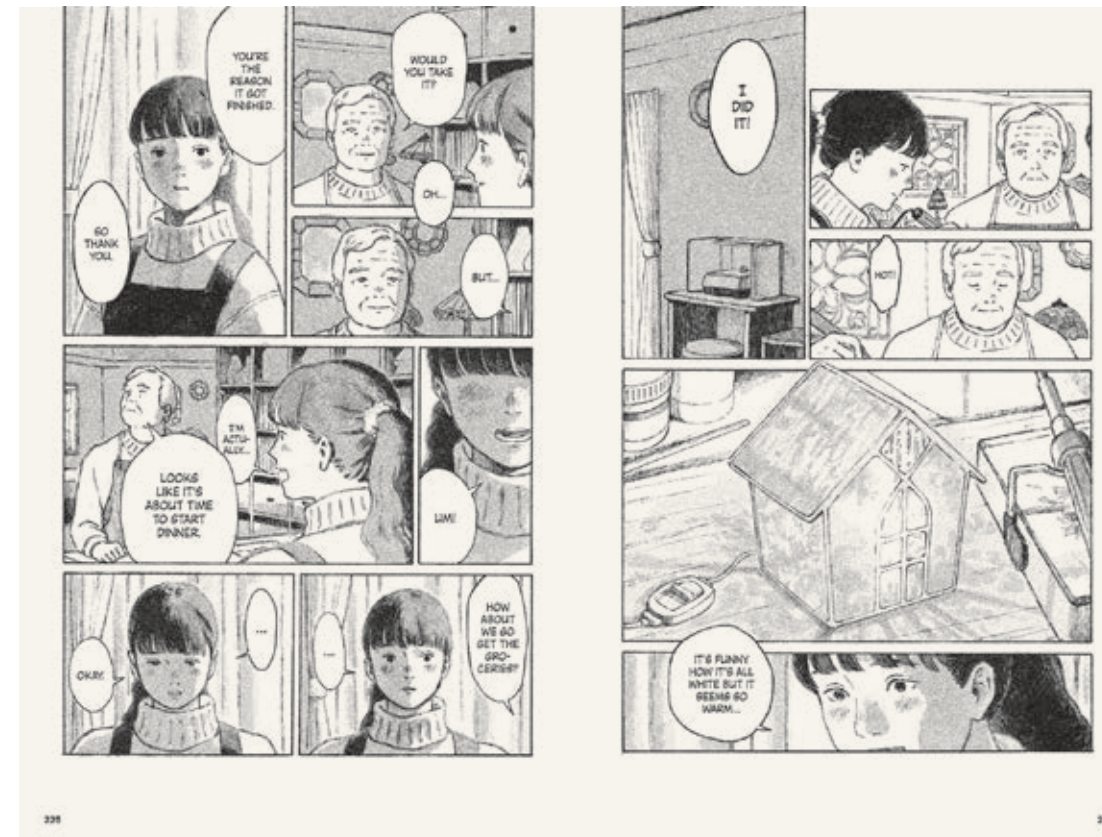
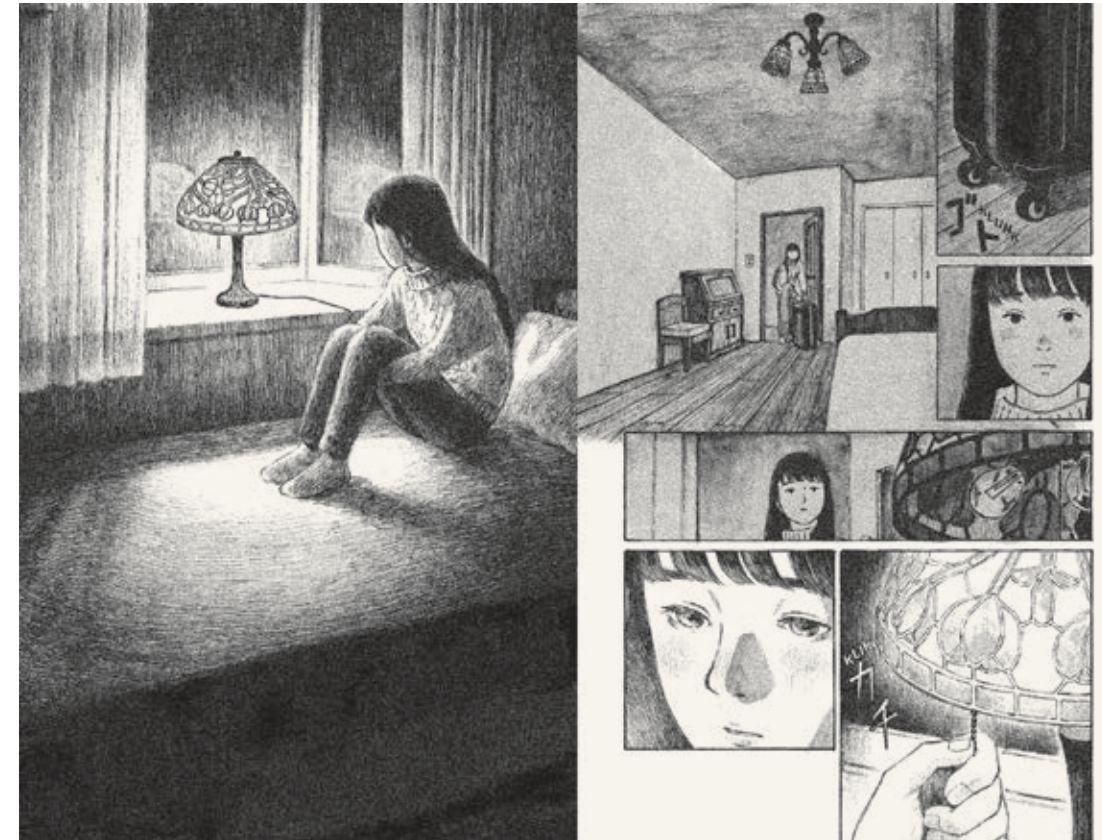
After losing his wife and his will to live, Kagari, an elderly stained-glass artist, is visited by Akari, his long-estranged granddaughter. As they work together creating stained-glass pieces, the two begin to connect on a deeper level. However, their family reunion might be more complicated than what it seems to be. A heartfelt story about the bond between an older craftsman and a young girl just beginning her creative journey.

Akari

Publisher: GLACIER BAY BOOKS LLC

Publication Date: May, 2026

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LEARNING THROUGH MANGA, ADULTS AND CHILDREN ALIKE

Educational Manga for Children

Within children's publishing in Japan, one distinct genre is that of educational manga. This genre emerged against the backdrop of prewar science education and remains popular today. A prominent example is the long-running *Himitsu* (Secrets) series published by Gakushū Kenkyūsha, a company specializing in educational reference books. The key to the genre's appeal lies in the inherent clarity of the manga form, which combines images and text in an accessible, diagrammatic way. In recent years, publishers have also drawn on the popularity and familiarity of well-known characters and manga artists to encourage children to pick up educational manga. For example, Shueisha's history-focused educational manga series often features covers illustrated by prominent artists from its flagship magazine *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. The format has also been adopted abroad: South Korea produces its own educational manga modeled on the Japanese style, many of which have in turn been translated and published in Japan. Educational manga thus serves as one of the less conspicuous entry points through which young Japanese readers first encounter manga from overseas.

Practical Manga for Adults

It is not only children who benefit from the clear, diagrammatic explanations provided by manga. A wide variety of practical guides and introductory books for adults are also published in manga form. The genre of adult-oriented practical manga is said to have taken shape in the 1980s, producing bestsellers such as Shōtarō Ishinomori's *Manga Nihon keizai nyūmon* (Introduction to the Japanese Economy in Manga Form; Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppan, 1986). This trend reflects a broader shift where, rather than "graduating" from manga to prose, many readers in Japan continue to engage with manga into adulthood. The emergence of such readers helped pave the way for the development of adult-oriented practical and instructional manga as a fully-fledged genre.

An Expanded Notion of Educational Manga

Even manga that is primarily intended as entertainment, rather than formal educational or instructional material, can often serve as a means for readers to acquire new knowledge or insight. For instance, one major subgenre of *seinen* manga aimed at young adult and adult readers is the *oshigoto* manga, or "workplace manga," in which a wide range of professions are portrayed, often with a surprising degree of technical detail. From legal procedures to dinner recipes, the types of knowledge and practical skills that manga may convey to readers span a wide spectrum. Recognizing manga's strong point as a medium through which to expand one's knowledge whilst being entertained, a project titled *Kore mo Gakushū Manga da!* (This Is Also Educational Manga!), originally organized and sponsored by the Nippon Foundation, was launched to redefine and promote such titles as broadly defined educational manga. The remarkable diversity of manga selected for the project demonstrates just how deeply the medium is embedded in everyday life in Japan, suggesting that one can begin learning from almost any manga, and that every manga offers something to learn.



© Goshō Aoyama / Shogakukan

Meitantei Conan suiri fairu: Nihonshi no nazo 3
(Detective Conan Mystery File:
Mysteries of Japanese History 3),
illustrated by Goshō Aoyama,
Shogakukan, August 2008 reprint

Popular manga characters often appear in educational manga aimed at children. While Shogakukan is known today as a manga publisher, it originally focused on educational books for elementary school students.



Manga de wakaru shinryō naika, 1-kan
(Understanding Psychosomatic Medicine Through
Manga, Vol. 1) by Yū Yūki, illustrated by Sō,
Young King Comics, Shōnen Gahōsha, 2010 reprint

With a psychiatrist as the writer, the manga presents psychiatric information in a gag manga style. Manga that blend humor with informative content on serious subjects, like this, are relatively widespread.

COMMENTARY ON

KEITA KATSUSHIKA

Located in the eastern part of Japan’s capital, the *shitamachi* (old-town) districts of Tokyo are the setting for *Higashi Tokyo machimachi* (Diverse East Tokyo), which follows three individuals of varying backgrounds as they conduct fieldwork throughout this historically layered region. Artist Keita Katsushika combines close attention to local geography and history with a portrayal of contemporary East Tokyo as a space where people of diverse origins live side by side. From the development of temples and shrines to the expansion of rail networks and land reclamation projects, the work introduces readers to a broad array of topics related to the evolution of the cityscape. At the same time, it addresses themes such as multiculturalism and immigrant communities living in Japan today. What enables such a rich density of information to be conveyed so effectively is Katsushika’s distinctive clarity of layout and composition, achieved through clean, simplified linework. His approach exemplifies how techniques associated with educational manga can also serve as powerful tools for representing the contemporary world.

Artist Profile



Keita Katsushika is a manga artist and illustrator from Katsushika Ward in East Tokyo. He debuted in 2010 with his manga appearing in independent magazines such as *USCA* and *PON-RAI*. He is also a professional illustrator, and creates artwork featured on the covers of books and magazines. *Higashi Tokyo machimachi* (Diverse East Tokyo) was first serialized on the web comic platform *Michikusa* from 2022 to 2025, but since November 2025 has been serialized on *Torch web*. In 2024, it was featured as a recommended title in *Kono Manga ga Sugoi!* (This Manga is Awesome!) and *Freestyle* magazine’s “Kono manga o yome!” (Read This Manga!). His other manga works are also being serialized in the magazines *Sanpo no tatsuji* (Walking Master) and *Metoro minittsu* (Metro Minutes).



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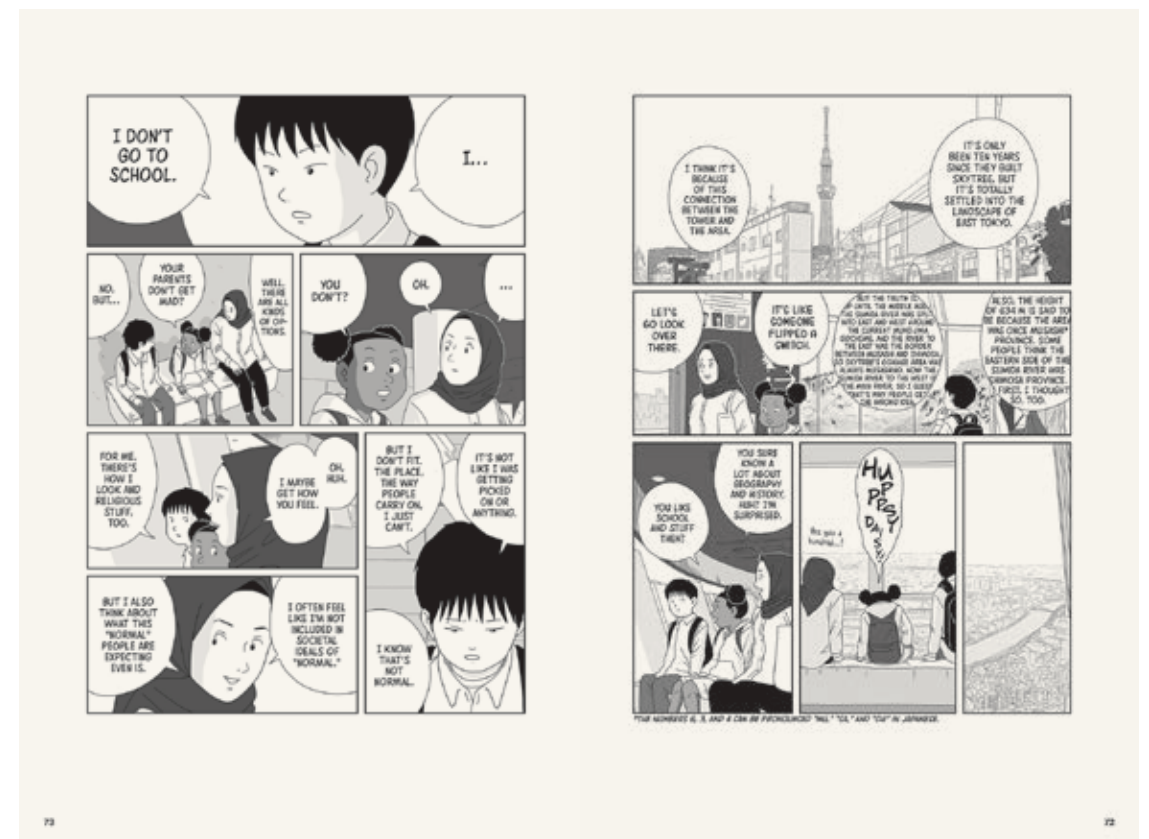
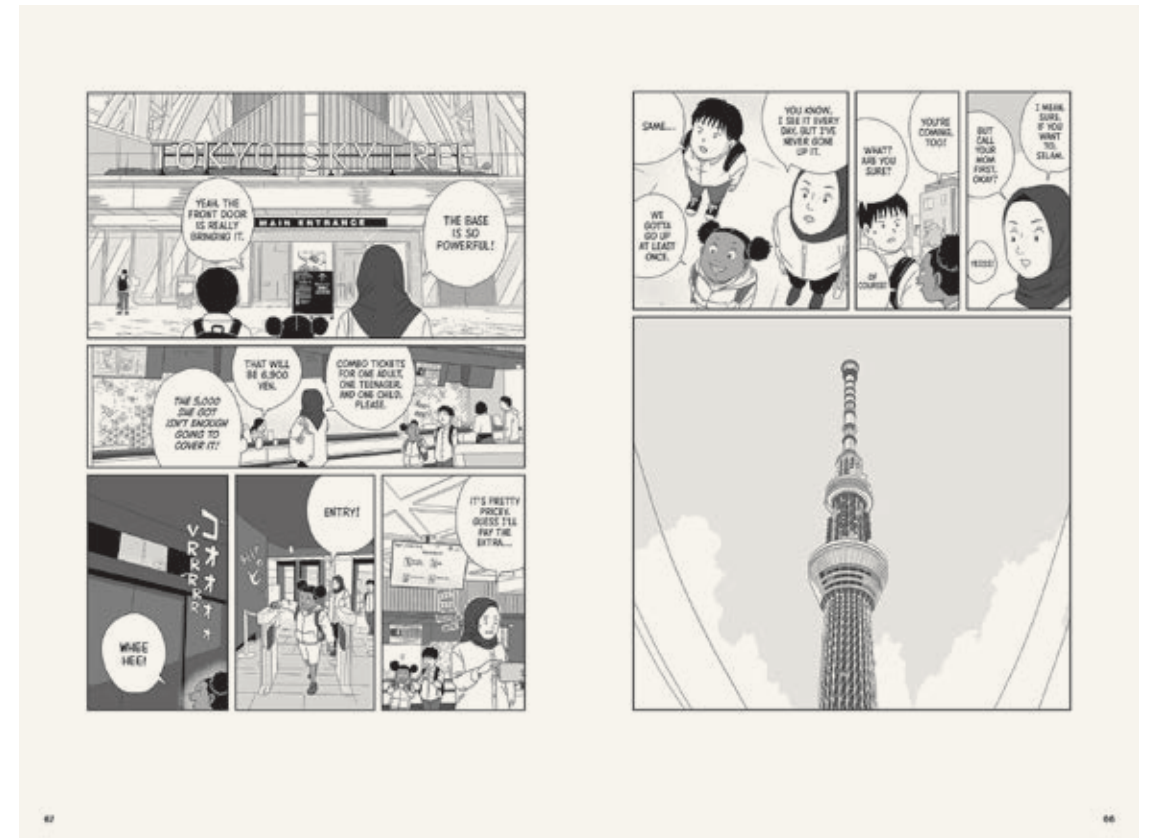


Synopsis

“There’s an ‘East’ in Tokyo.”
 Sarah, a Muslim university student; Selam, a grade-schooler born to Ethiopian parents; and Haruta, a middle schooler who refuses to go to school—three individuals from diverse backgrounds and ages. Together, they explore East Tokyo, wandering the city and uncovering the hidden charms of their hometown in this local discovery adventure tale!

Higashi Tokyo machimachi
 (Diverse East Tokyo), vol. 1

Publisher: TWO VIRGINS Co., Ltd. (Print), LEED PUBLISHING Co., Ltd. (Digital)
 Publication Date: July 12, 2023
 © Keita Katsushika 2023





Manga International Network Team

ABOUT MINT

Manga International Network Team (MINT) is a project / project team name that aims to support early career manga artists and editors in Japan who are working to achieve a global presence, and to increase the recognition and value of manga's diversity overseas.

This project is the manga section of the Creator Support Program, a program managed by the Japan Creator Support Fund, which in turn was established by the Japan Arts Council with a subsidy from the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Japanese manga is already highly regarded and recognized around the world, but the focus tends to only be on manga that has been adapted into anime. Sharing manga's diversity with the world and cultivating internationally active manga artists and editors

is essential for the future development of Japanese manga.

Through this project, manga artists and editors will have the opportunity to directly interact with manga culture outside of Japan, meet with overseas manga editors and fans, gain insight into overseas readers' tastes and sensibilities, find out what aspects of their work resonate with them, gain a new perspective with an eye on the international market, and equip themselves with the skills needed to bring their work to an international audience. These are the goals of the MINT project.



Creators

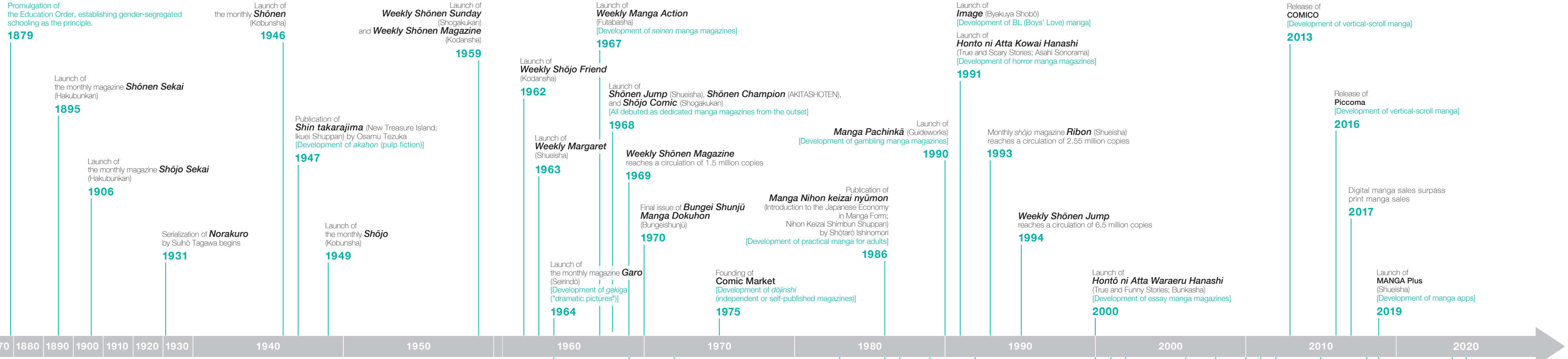
 Soshite hiroin wa inaku natta *And Then There Were No Heroines	 Higashi Tokyo machimachi *Diverse East Tokyo	 Yasegaman no setsu *Grin and Bear It
 Manga Artist Battan	 Editor Sumire Nobuto Futabasha Publishers Ltd.	 Manga Artist Keita Katsushika
 Editor Kirin Inoue LEED PUBLISHING Co., Ltd.	 Manga Artist Tokushige Kawakatsu	 Editor Emily Yoshimoto LEED PUBLISHING Co., Ltd.
 Dinosaur Sanctuary *Dinosaur Seven Seas Entertainment	 Akari *Akari Glacier Bay Books (May, 2026)	 Good Morning, Good Night, and See You Tomorrow. *Ohayou, oyasumi, mata ashita. Seven Seas Entertainment (Nov. 2026)
 Manga Artist Itaru Kinoshita	 Editor Tomoka Matsumura Shinchosha Publishing Co., Ltd.	 Manga Artist Marco Kohinata
 Editor Yuki Yamaguchi HERO'S INC.	 Manga Artist Moka Onmae	 Editor Tsubasa Kosaka AKITASHOTEN

Advisors

 Deborah Aoki (US) Manga critic and editor	 Christopher Woodrow-Butcher (Canada/Taiwan) Manga editor and critic	 Ed Chavez (US) Co-founder of American manga publishing house DENPA, LLC.	 Hosoi Iwashita (Japan) Sagami Women's University Professor of Manga Studies	 Eriko Obayashi (Japan) Owner and curator of book gallery Popotame, Tokyo	 Hiroshi Odagiri (Japan) Writer and manga researcher	 Shige "CJ" Suzuki (US/Japan) Manga researcher and Associate Professor of Japanese and Comparative Literature at Baruch College, CUNY
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This timeline charts major events related to manga culture in Japan and the world. By referring to the main text in this catalog together with the section on Japan, you can trace the evolution of Japan's diverse manga culture. And by viewing both the timelines for Japan and the rest of the world, you can see how Japanese manga has been received globally.

EXHIBITION

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MINT vol.1 Sample Catalog



MINT vol. 1, a sample catalog featuring previews of each artist's selected work, was published and printed. Thousands of copies have been given away at events we attended and we plan to give away more at upcoming events. For convenience's sake, we have also made a digital copy for all to enjoy.

MINT vol. 1
Sample Catalog PDF



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