



JAPAN Bibliography

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MANGA & ANIME: FOCUS ON YOUTH AUDIENCES

August 2005

Stephen Merkel-Hess

Manga (by the Numbers) in Japan

Manga and anime are elements of mass culture in Japan. Cartoons, drawings, and comics are examples of “Manga”, while movies, videos, and animated pictures are “anime”. Anime is also called “Japanimation.”

At least 10 manga magazines sell one million copies each week or each month. Manga account for about one-quarter of all printed material sold annually in Japan. More than 3000 professional manga artists are at work in Japan, and about 300 manga artists make an above-average living from manga alone.

Anime/manga target all ages and social groups. They encompass all genres: science fiction, action adventure, romance, historical drama, erotic, literary, information, humor, and sports.

Selected Manga and Anime Websites

www.abcb.com/parents/

A parent’s guide to anime. Reviews. G=Family. PG=Parental Guidance. M=Mature. *Princess Mononoke*, for example, rated M.

www.abcb.com/index.htm The anime café. Anime reviews, quizzes, an anime encyclopedia, forum, etc.

www.yale.edu/anime/glossary.html The 100 most essential words in anime.

www.dnp.co.jp/museum/nmp/nmp_i/articles/manga/manga1.html A history of manga.

Manga

The manga reviewed below are divided into suggested age-appropriate categories. Many of the titles suggested for younger audiences can be enjoyed by older readers. The cautions about crude or vulgar language and sex and nudity are approximate.

For All Ages

BTX v. 1: X Resurrected

Masami Kurumada. 1995, 2004. \$10. ISBN 1 59182 639 X
Sci fi/Action. Robotics. The Machine Empire. Artificial intelligence machines called BTs (Beats) morph and cause complications.

DragonballZ v. 10

Akira Toriyama. 1984, 2003. \$8. ISBN 1 56931 929 4
Action-oriented. Several main characters. Not much story. Warring schools of martial arts. Explosive action throughout the book.

Kodocha: Sana’s Stage v. 10

Miho Obana. 2002. \$10. ISBN 1 59182 186 X
Child star, Sana Kurata, is a budding diva, the center of her family and friends. Friendships. Relationships. Minor love scene.

Metropolis

Osamu Tezuka. 1949, 2003. \$14. ISBN 1 56971 864 4
Science fiction/Humor/Action. An artificially created girl/boy searches for her non-existent parents. An allegory for the Cold War. Unlike most of today’s manga, this has all rectangular boxes in a logical progression that’s easy to read. Charming, especially when compared to many sex and violence manga and comics.

Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind Vol. 2

Hayao Miyazaki. 1990. ISBN 0 92927 959X
Fantasy. Set in a post-industrial, corrosive, corrupt, and evil world. In some ways this is similar to J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* saga. The main character has a fragile purity, a mix of *Elfquest* meets *Star Wars*’ Princess Leia. Very wordy. Greatly detailed pictures.

For Junior High and Older

Barefoot Gen: Life After the Bomb: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima, Part 3

Keiji Nakazawa. 1999. ISBN 0 86719 452 9
Gen, about age 10, survives the atom bomb in Hiroshima. Even though the details are gruesome and Gen’s life is difficult, this book brims with humanity without being preachy or political. It is based upon the author’s own childhood and survival in Hiroshima. Part of a three book series. **Highly recommended.**

Black Jack v. 1

Osamu Tezuka. 1987. \$16. ISBN 1 56931 316 4
Black Jack is an unlicensed medical doctor with highly developed skills and insights to perform lifesaving operations. There is tension and drama on each page. The book is divided into five short stories. Very readable and compelling. The drawings are linear and easy to follow, in strong contrast to most manga. **Highly recommended.**

Dark Water

Koji Suzuki. 2004. \$10. ISBN 1 4139 0044 5
Horror. Four short stories brimming with macabre and tormented tales. Easy reading but more suitable for older readers due to the ‘darker’ content of the stories.

Ranma ½ v. 1

Rumiko Takahashi. 1993. \$17. ISBN 0 92927 993 X

Ranma, the main character, changes from boy to girl, due to cold and hot water. His father changes between a man and a panda. Martial arts, but silly. Humor throughout. Wild action, craziness, looniness. Romantic entanglements. There are 34 volumes in the series.

For High School and Older

Adolf: A Tale of the Twentieth Century

Osamu Tezuka, 1985, 1995. \$17. ISBN 1 56931 058 0
Historical fiction. This story centers upon three Adolfs: Adolf Hitler, Adolf Kaufmann, the son of a German diplomat father and a Japanese mother, and Adolf Kamil, the son of German Jewish refugees who own a bakery in Japan. Race, nation, rape, humanism, humor. World War II from a Japanese perspective. A masterpiece. **Highly recommended.**

Akira: Book 1

Katsuhiro Otomo. 1988, 2000. \$38. ISBN 1 56971 498 3
Science fiction. Considered a classic 5-volume manga masterpiece. Not a lot of reading. Many readers will think the reading is too dull. Suitable for high school and older.

Rebound v. 1

Yuriko Nishiyama. 1997, 2003. \$10. ISBN 1 93151 402 X
Sports. Street basketball competition in Japan.

The Ring, v. 1

Hiroshi Takahashi. 1998, 1999. \$15. ISBN 1 59307 054 3
Horror, terror, weirdness. Humans with extra powers. A woman “comes back” from the dead and speaks via a videotape.

Anime

Japanese animation is wondrously, awesomely gorgeous and rewarding, as in *Grave of the Fireflies*, *Rail of the Star*, or *Spirited Away*. It is worlds away from the Disney type of animation: more color and depth, less gaudiness, better movement of the people and animals, higher concepts, and not just aimed at the lowest common denominator. However, some of the animation available relies upon either fantasy and gratuitous violence, or excessive cuteness.

Video

Dragonball Z: Arrival

1998, 1999 80 minutes
Sci fi/Fantasy. Superheroes, alien warriors, violence. There are at least 15 titles in the series. For the under 12 audience.

Grave of the Fireflies

1988, 1992. 88 minutes. ISBN 1 56219 051 2
Two young orphans in World War II Kobe, Japan, face bombings, hunger, homelessness, despair, and death. In spite of the terrible circumstances, there is a beauty and timelessness about the movie. The animation is stunning.
Highly recommended.

Gundam W: Endless Waltz

1995. 85 minutes
For ages 12 and under. Science fiction. English dialogue. The Earth Sphere is finally enjoying global peace. A child emperor. Peace, War, and Revolution. Lots of shoot-em-up and intrigue.

Masters of Animation

1996. 84 minutes (but only about 30 minutes feature Japanimation)
Part of a 4-volume series on animation, volume 4 features Japanese animation. All shorts, some appropriate for classroom use.

Princess Mononoke

1999. 134 minutes. ISBN 0 78881 381 1. Rated PG 13 in the US
Princess Mononoke is raised by wolves. The young Ashitaka is sent to find a cure for a deadly curse. He and the princess encounter a battle between a human clan and the animal gods of the forest. The most popular film EVER in Japan, until *Spirited Away*. Inspiring nature scenes. All voiced in English. **Highly recommended.**

Rail of the Star

1997. 80 minutes. ISBN 0 27270 252 3
Based on the novel by Chitose Kobayashi. Chiko is a Japanese girl in Korea. Wonderful scenes of her life while Japan is in power. Courage, tragedy, triumph. This is a sanitized version of Japanese life in Korea. English subtitles. **Highly recommended.**

Spirited Away

2001. 124 minutes.
A young girl experiences a strange, new world and calls up courage she didn't know she had. Rated PG in the US. Filled with strange and marvelous creatures and sights. Not to be missed.
Winner of the 2003 Academy Award (US) for Feature Animation.

DVD

Akira

1987, 2001 124 minutes
Science fiction. For high school and older. Mature language and intense violence. Neo-Tokyo, motorcycle gangs, three ‘old’ children who have special powers, terrorists, etc. Based on the 5-volume *Akira* series. The quality of the animation is unsurpassed.

InuYasha: Episodes 4 – 6

1998 75 minutes
Fantasy. Spirits, fighting, demons. For ages 12+.

Samurai X: Ruroumi Kenshin

1999, 2000 60 minutes
Historical fiction/Action. 19th Century Japan, at the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. A young warrior makes his way as an assassin. Beautiful animation that at times is lyrical and uplifting, combined with a tremendous amount of bloodshed. Historical background notes available. Suitable for high school and older due to the ultra-violence.

Steve Merkel-Hess teaches English/language arts at Northwest Junior High School, Iowa City School District. He first realized the power of comic books/graphic novels/manga for teaching reading about 15 years ago, and has taught a manga unit every year since.

Excerpted from the full (18-page) bibliography, which is available online in pdf format at <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/biblio/manga-anime-full.pdf>

For more information on Japanese popular culture, see our *Internet Guide* at <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/iguide/pop.htm>

The National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies is made possible through the generous support of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.