



YOU'RE  
READING THE  
WRONG WAY! THIS IS  
THE END OF A 10-PAGE  
MANGA. JAPANESE WRITING  
READS FROM RIGHT TO LEFT,  
SO PAGES AND PANELS  
ARE SEQUENCED IN WHAT  
SEEMS LIKE REVERSE  
ORDER TO WESTERN  
READERS.

JUST FLIP  
TO PAGE 255 AND  
START READING  
"BACKWARD" TOWARD  
THIS PAGE! YOU'LL  
SOON GET THE  
HANG OF IT!



DONALD DUCK AND MICKEY MOUSE HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY DORAEMON\* AND POKEMON! THIS IS THE POWER THAT JAPAN WIELDS. THESE ARE THE NEW COMIC STARS OF ASIA. KIDS EVERYWHERE WANT TO LEARN JAPANESE SO THEY CAN READ THESE BEFORE THEY'RE TRANSLATED!

國際漫畫獎賞大會

\*THE TIME-TRAVELING ROBOTIC CAT OF THE CLASSIC MANGA BY FUJICO F. FURUO.

THE INTERNATIONAL MANGA AWARD WAS PRESENTED BY TARO ASO, A FORMER FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER KNOWN AS ROZEN ASO BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE FOR THE GOTH MANGA ROZEN MAIDEN. LAST YEAR, ASO VISITED THE GEEK-FRIENDLY AKIHABARA DISTRICT OF TOKYO AND GAVE A SPEECH ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF MANGA AND ANIME.

THIS INTEREST IN JAPANESE POP CULTURE IN ITS RAW, UNFILTERED FORM IS NEW. IN 1969, FEW AMERICANS KNEW THAT ASTRO BOY CARTOONS WERE BASED ON MANGA—OR THAT THEY WEREN'T MADE IN THE U.S.! NOW THE ASTRO BOY MANGA IS WIDELY AVAILABLE IN AMERICA, AS ARE MANY OF OSAMU TEZUKA'S MORE "LITERARY" WORKS FOR ADULTS.

WHAT 20 YEARS AGO SEEMED TOO CULTURALLY SPECIFIC FOR EXPORT HAS BECOME ANOTHER EXTENSION OF JAPAN'S SOFT POWER, WHAT JOURNALIST DOUGLAS MCGRAY CALLS ITS "GROSS NATIONAL COOL." MANGA HAS ACHIEVED LIFTOFF. SAYONARA!

**THE END**

JASON THOMPSON (JASON @SONIC.NET) WAS A SENIOR EDITOR AT VIZ AND IS AUTHOR OF MANGA: THE COMPLETE GUIDE.

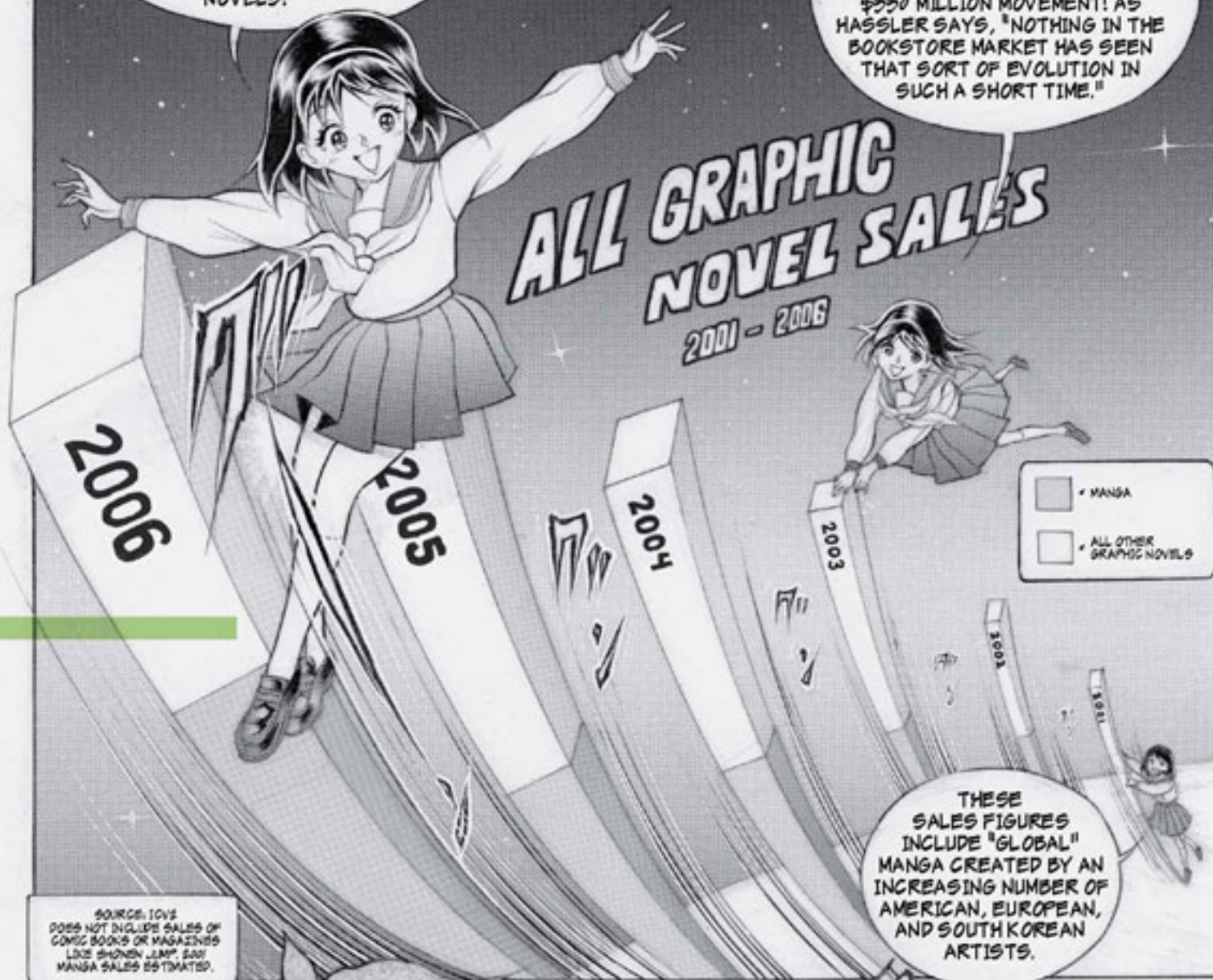


IT'S NOT ALL BAD NEWS FOR AMERICAN COMICS PUBLISHERS—THE MANGA BOOM MAY HAVE BYPASSED COMICS SPECIALTY SHOPS, BUT IT HAS OPENED UP ADDITIONAL SPACE IN BOOKSTORES, HELPING TO SELL AMERICAN GRAPHIC NOVELS!

IN THE LAST SIX YEARS, MANGA HAS GONE FROM BEING ABOUT A THIRD OF THE \$76 MILLION GRAPHIC-NOVEL INDUSTRY TO CLAIMING ALMOST TWO-THIRDS OF WHAT IS NOW A \$330 MILLION MOVEMENT! AS HASSLER SAYS, "NOTHING IN THE BOOKSTORE MARKET HAS SEEN THAT SORT OF EVOLUTION IN SUCH A SHORT TIME."

# ALL GRAPHIC NOVEL SALES

2001 - 2006



SOURCE: IGV  
DOES NOT INCLUDE SALES OF COMIC BOOKS OR MAGAZINES LIKE SHONEN JUMP. 2001 MANGA SALES ESTIMATED.

THESE SALES FIGURES INCLUDE "GLOBAL" MANGA CREATED BY AN INCREASING NUMBER OF AMERICAN, EUROPEAN, AND SOUTH KOREAN ARTISTS.



GLOBAL MANGA IS INCREASINGLY WINNING NOTICE WITHIN JAPAN ITSELF. EARLIER THIS YEAR, AUSTRALIAN ARTIST MADELEINE ROSCA'S STEAMPUNK-THEMED TITLE, *HOLLOW FIELDS*, WAS A RUNNER-UP FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MANGA AWARD, A NEW HONOR SPONSORED BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.



ARTISTS AROUND THE WORLD ARE CREATING WORKS INFLUENCED BY MANGA. IN 2006, THE U.S. MANGA PUBLISHER SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT ISSUED TITLES THAT REPRESENT THE PINNACLE OF MANGA ASSIMILATION. IT ASKED ITS WESTERN ARTISTS TO DRAW IN THE JAPANESE FORMAT, FROM RIGHT TO LEFT!

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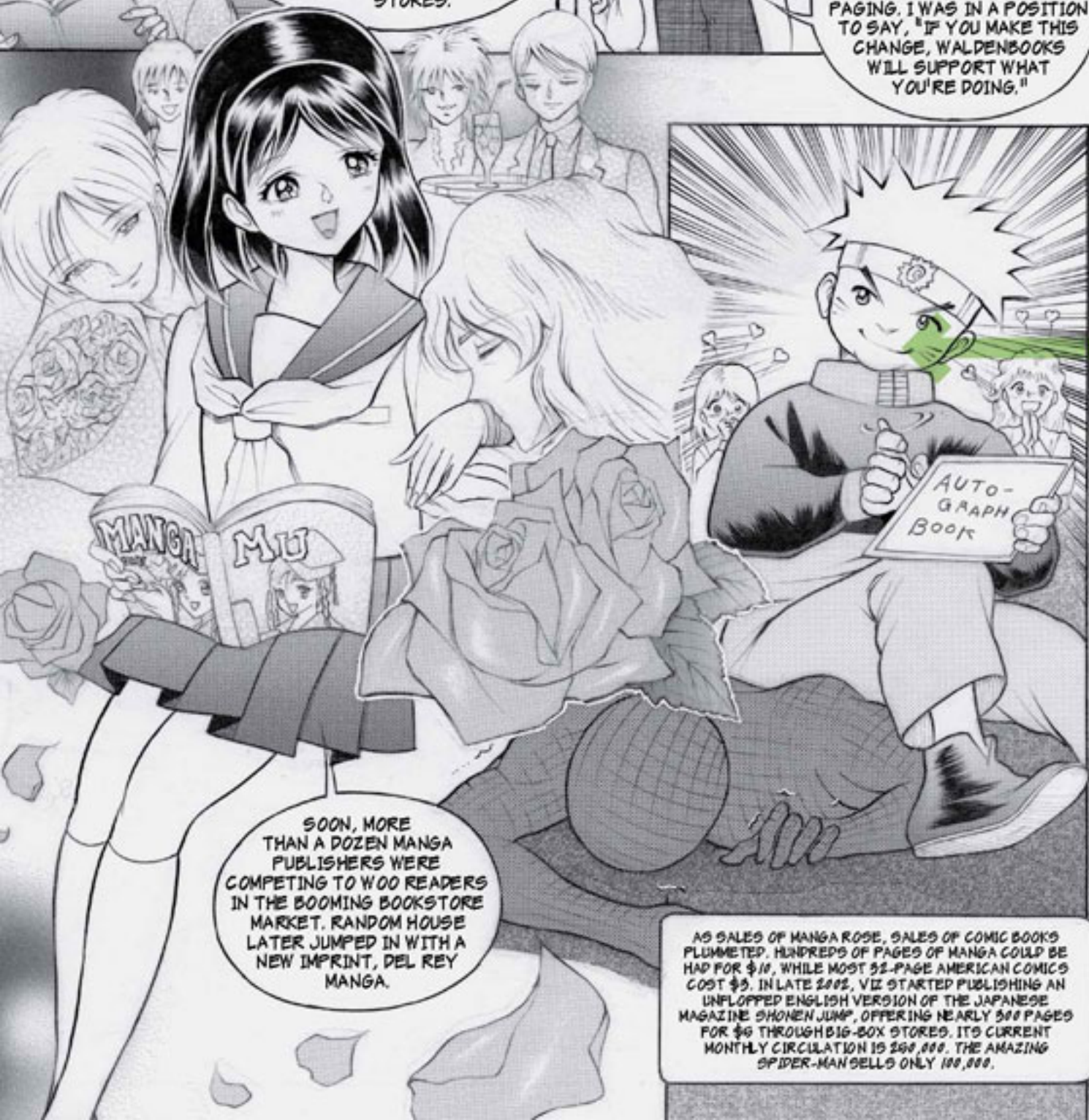


THE TANKOBON-LIKE PAPERBACK FORMAT, THE LOWER PRICE, HASSLER'S ENCOURAGEMENT, THE GROWING FAMILIARITY WITH JAPANESE STYLES ... ALL OF THESE FACTORS COMBINED TO MAKE TOKYOPOP'S UNFLOPPED MANGA A SMASHING SUCCESS. SOON, MANGA HAD ITS OWN AISLE IN MANY STORES.



KURT HASSLER, FORMER GRAPHIC-NOVEL BUYER FOR WALDENBOOKS AND BORDERS, PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE MANGA BOOM.

AT THE TIME, THERE WERE MAYBE 10 OR 20 GRAPHIC NOVELS IN BOOKSTORES. SOME PUBLISHERS WERE UNEASY ABOUT RIGHT-TO-LEFT PAGING. I WAS IN A POSITION TO SAY, "IF YOU MAKE THIS CHANGE, WALDENBOOKS WILL SUPPORT WHAT YOU'RE DOING."



SOON, MORE THAN A DOZEN MANGA PUBLISHERS WERE COMPETING TO WOO READERS IN THE BOOMING BOOKSTORE MARKET. RANDOM HOUSE LATER JUMPED IN WITH A NEW IMPRINT, DEL REY MANGA.

AS SALES OF MANGA ROSE, SALES OF COMIC BOOKS PLUMMETED. HUNDREDS OF PAGES OF MANGA COULD BE HAD FOR \$10, WHILE MOST 32-PAGE AMERICAN COMICS COST \$5. IN LATE 2002, VIZ STARTED PUBLISHING AN UNFLOPPED ENGLISH VERSION OF THE JAPANESE MAGAZINE SHONEN JUMP, OFFERING NEARLY 500 PAGES FOR \$6 THROUGH B16-BOX STORES. ITS CURRENT MONTHLY CIRCULATION IS 200,000. THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN SELLS ONLY 100,000.

THE BIGGEST JAPANESE CULTURAL EXPORT OF THE '90S WAS POKÉMON.



NINTENDO MILKED THE LUCRATIVE POKÉMON PHENOMENON BRILLIANTLY. TOY STORES AND VIDEOGAME SHOPS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY STOCKED THE MONSTROUSLY POPULAR GAMEBOY TITLE, ALONG WITH TIE-IN MERCHANDISE LIKE COLLECTIBLE CARD GAMES, TOYS, ANIME, AND MANGA.

IN LATE '90, POKÉMON HELPED MANGA TO BUST OUT OF THE COMICS SHOP GHETTO. THE MANGA SPINOFFS OF THE FRANCHISE SOLD MILLIONS OF COPIES, MOSTLY THROUGH OUTLETS LIKE TOYS 'R' US, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME A MANGA WAS THE BEST-SELLING COMIC FRANCHISE IN AMERICA.

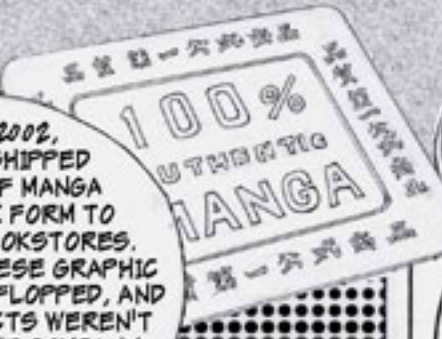


MANGA PUBLISHERS HAD TRIED MAINSTREAM DISTRIBUTION BEFORE BUT WITH NO SUCCESS. AFTER THE FAILURE OF THEIR TITLE MIXXZINE, MIXX ENTERTAINMENT EXECUTIVES MOVED EVEN FURTHER AWAY FROM COMICS. FIRST, THEY CHANGED THEIR NAME TO TOKYOPOP.



TOKYOPOP GOT OUT OF THE NEWSSTAND BUSINESS ENTIRELY. THEN CEO STUART LEVY MADE A DECISION THAT FOREVER CHANGED THE AMERICAN MANGA INDUSTRY.

IN APRIL 2002, TOKYOPOP SHIPPED A NEW LINE OF MANGA IN PAPERBACK FORM TO MAINSTREAM BOOKSTORES. THE PAGES OF THESE GRAPHIC NOVELS WEREN'T FLOPPED, AND THE SOUND EFFECTS WEREN'T TRANSLATED. THE COMPANY TOUTED THIS "UNFILTERED" APPROACH AS A SELLING POINT.



THE SIMPLER TRANSLATION PROCESS MEANT QUICKER AND CHEAPER PRODUCTION (PAY RATES FOR MANGA LETTERS WOULD DROP PRECIPITOUSLY). PAPERBACKS IN TOKYOPOP'S NEW LINE SOLD FOR \$10, SEVERAL DOLLARS LESS THAN WHAT MOST PUBLISHERS CHARGED.

MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTION IN AMERICA ABSOLUTELY SUCKED. WALDENBOOKS IN THE MALLS, THE BIG BOXES ... THOSE WERE WHERE PEOPLE WENT. OUR LICENSOR, SHUEISHA, REALLY, REALLY WANTED US TO RELEASE UNFLOPPED VERSIONS OF ITS TITLES IN THE U.S. WE DECIDED TO BET THE FARM ON IT.



VIZ STARTED PUBLISHING THE DRAGON BALL Z MANGA IN 1999. AT THE BEHEST OF CREATOR AKIRA TORIYAMA, THE MANGA WAS NOT FLOPPED. KIDS HAD TO READ IT IN ITS ORIGINAL RIGHT-TO-LEFT SEQUENCE IF THEY WANTED THEIR ACTION FIX.

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IN 1996, AMERICAN TV WELCOMED ANOTHER SMASH HIT ANIME, CALLED DRAGON BALL Z - A SHONEN KUNG FU SLUGFEST BELOVED BY TEEN BOYS. EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T A FAN OF THE SHOW, YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN THE HALLOWEEN COSTUMES.



TORIYAMA, LIKE MANY MANGA ARTISTS, HATED FLOPPING. IT MADE ALL THE CHARACTERS LOOK LEFT-HANDED AND AS THOUGH THEY WERE WEARING THEIR KIMONOS BACKWARD! THINK OF A MOVIE DIRECTOR WHO DOESN'T WANT THEIR WIDESCREEN EPIC REFORMATTED FOR A SQUARE TV SCREEN. THE ORIGINAL PUBLISHER OF DRAGON BALL Z, SHUEISHA, FELT THE SAME WAY.

SHUEISHA PUBLISHES NINE Y SHONEN JUMP, WHICH HAS A CIRCULATION OF 5 MILLION IN JAPAN.

'AK OF TROY' IS THE FOUNDER OF THE SCANLATION SITE CALLED TORIYAMA'S WORLD.

IN THE MID-'90S, MORE AND MORE MANGA FANS WERE DOING THEIR OWN TRANSLATIONS AND SCANS AND TRADING THEM OVER IRC, THEN LATER ON THE WEB. THEY DIDN'T FLOP THE PAGES BECAUSE IT WAS EASIER NOT TO (AND READING IT IN THE ORIGINAL FORMAT WAS A BADGE OF HONOR).

THE UNFLOPPED DRAGON BALL Z SOLD SURPRISINGLY WELL. AT THE TIME, IT WAS HARD TO FIND UNFLOPPED MANGA IN ENGLISH ... UNLESS YOU KNEW WHERE TO LOOK. MANY POPULAR TITLES WERE BEING TRANSLATED AND DISSEMINATED ILLEGALLY BY DIY 'SCANLATION' GROUPS.

I HAD NO SKILLS WITH IMAGE EDITING OR WEB DESIGN ... I JUST USED MS PAINT AND A GEOCITIES SITE. I PUT UP ABOUT 10 CHAPTERS OF KINNIKUMAN (ULTIMATE MUSCLE) AND GOT A FEW HITS AND SOME NICE EMAILS. WHEN I STARTED DOING CURRENT SERIES LIKE NARUTO AND HIKARU NO GO, THE SITE EXPLODED!

IN FIVE YEARS, THE FRONT PAGE OF TORIYAMAWORLD.COM HAS RECEIVED \$8 MILLION HIT\$.



SHOJO (GIRLS') MANGA FOCUSES ON ROMANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS. IT HAS NO EQUIVALENT IN AMERICAN COMICS. THE ART IS FULL OF ABSTRACT IMAGERY, FLOWER PATTERNS, AND FULL-PAGE CLOSE-UPS OF CHARACTERS WITH HUGE EYES THAT BRIM WITH EMOTION.

HOWEVER, MANGA WASN'T JUST GRISLY ACTION AND EXPLICIT SEX. CASE IN POINT: TITLES AIMED AT GIRLS.

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CONVERSELY, SHONEN (BOYS') MANGA INVOLVES NONSTOP ACTION, SHOUTING, AND GRATUITOUS PEEKS UP GIRLS' DRESSES. MOST OF WHAT CAME TO AMERICA WAS EITHER SHONEN OR THE PARKER, MORE EXPLICIT SEINEN (MEN'S) MANGA.

SAILOR MOON, A POPULAR TITLE ABOUT A KICK-ASS BLOND SUPERHEROINE IN A SHORT SKIRT, WAS A MAJOR HIT IN JAPAN. THE ANIME CAME TO AMERICAN TV IN 1996, GIVING MANY U.S. GIRLS THEIR FIRST TASTE OF SHOJO.


SAILOR MOON PROVED THERE WAS A SOLID AMERICAN FEMALE AUDIENCE FOR MANGA. ONE SIGN WAS THE GROWTH OF COSPLAY-FANS DRESSING UP AS THEIR FAVORITE CHARACTERS AT INCREASINGLY COMMON ANIME CONVENTIONS.

ANIME  
EXPO  
97

MANY OF THE POPULAR IMPORTS IN THE '80S WERE ROMANCES AND TENDER SITCOMS, NOT JUST NINJAS BATTLING CYBORGS. THEY APPEALED TO BOTH GENDERS.

IN 1987, THE SAILOR MOON MANGA WAS TRANSLATED IN A U.S. PERIODICAL CALLED MIXXZINE, WHICH OFFERED SERIALIZED BLACK-AND-WHITE STORIES CLOSER IN FORMAT TO A JAPANESE MANGA THAN A U.S. COMIC. THE COMPANY, MIXX ENTERTAINMENT, DIDN'T MARKET ITS PRODUCTS AS COMICS; IT PUBLISHED THEM MOTIONLESS PICTURE ENTERTAINMENT.


MIXX  
ZINE




MANGA WAS LANGUISHING IN THE U.S., BUT ANIME—JAPANESE CARTOONS—CAME TO THE RESCUE. IN THE '80S, OLDER TEENS DISCOVERED DIRECT-TO-VIDEO ANIME TITLES WITH MORE SEX AND VIOLENCE THAN STANDARD TV FARE.

SUDDENLY, JAPANESE POP CULTURE WAS SEEN AS GRITTY AND ADULT. ANIME TITLES LIKE AKIRA AND BATTLE ANGEL HELPED DEFINE CYBERPUNK IN THE MINDS OF WESTERNERS, AND U.S. MANGA PUBLISHERS FOLLOWED THE MONEY, TRANSLATING THE ORIGINAL COMICS THAT THESE POPULAR ANIME PROPERTIES WERE BASED ON.

GHOST IN THE SHELL #1 ON BILLBOARD VIDEO CHARTS, AUGUST 1988.




JAPANESE GAMES CONTINUED TO SELL WELL IN AMERICA, TOO. MANGA VERSIONS OF MANY POPULAR TITLES LIKE STREET FIGHTER II AND SUPER MARIO BROS. SOON ARRIVED IN THE STATES.




IN AMERICA, "MANGA" BECAME A BUZZWORD THAT CONJURED UP IMAGES OF POSTNUCLEAR DYSTOPIAS, KINETIC VIOLENCE, BIZARRE SEX, MUTANTS, CYBORGS, HORNY TENTACLE BEASTS—OR BIZARRE SEX INVOLVING MUTANTS AND CYBORGS AND HORNY TENTACLE BEASTS. KITSCHY ATTEMPTS TO IMITATE THE STYLE PROVED POPULAR IN THE U.S., BUT SALES OF AUTHENTIC MANGA WERE FLAT.






THE FIRST BLOCKBUSTER MANGA IN AMERICA WAS THE SAMURAI ACTION TITLE *LONE WOLF AND CUB*, WITH NEW COVERS DRAWN BY COMICS GENIUS FRANK MILLER (*SIN CITY*, *THE DARK NIGHT RETURNS*). IT SOLD 100,000 COPIES A MONTH. THIS WAS IN 1987, WHEN A HIT TITLE LIKE *X-MEN* MOVED 400,000 COPIES EACH MONTH.

AT THE SAME TIME, SHOGAKUKAN, ONE OF JAPAN'S LARGEST PUBLISHERS, OPENED A SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH CALLED VIZ AND PUT OUT HITS LIKE *MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL* AND *THE LEGEND OF KAMUI*.



VIZ PRESIDENT SEIJI HORIBUCHI WAS AN EXPAT HIPPIE WHO HAD MOVED TO THE BAY AREA IN THE 1970S. HE KNEW VIZ'S CFO, SATORU FUJII, FROM THEIR COLLEGE FOLK-SONG CLUB IN JAPAN.



ONE CONCESSION MADE TO WESTERN SENSIBILITIES WAS "FLOPPING." IN ORDER TO READ LEFT TO RIGHT, PAGES HAD TO BE REVERSED HORIZONTALLY—AN ARDUOUS PROCESS IN THE DAYS BEFORE SCANNERS AND PHOTOSHOP.

TO MAKE MANGA PALATABLE TO WESTERNERS, VIZ AND ITS RIVALS TRIED OTHER TRICKS, LIKE ADDING COLOR. BUT IN THE EARLY '90S, THE AMERICAN COMICS MARKET COLLAPSED, TAKING MANGA DOWN WITH IT.

SOUND EFFECTS MIXED INTO THE PANELS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN MANGA. AMERICAN EDITORS HAD TO PAINSTAKINGLY TRIM THESE OUT AND REPLACE THE STRIKING JAPANESE ONOMATOPOEIA WITH ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS LIKE WHAM! AND POW!



HORIBUCHI EXPLAINS THE CHALLENGES VIZ FACED.

WE HAD TO "EDUCATE" AMERICANS IN HOW TO READ MANGA, ALMOST AS THOUGH WE WERE TEACHING THEM TO USE CHOPSTICKS. ANOTHER PROBLEM: TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD WE MAKE MANGA CONFORM TO THE AMERICAN COMICS STYLE? MANGA ARE SOUND ON THE RIGHT, NOT THE LEFT.

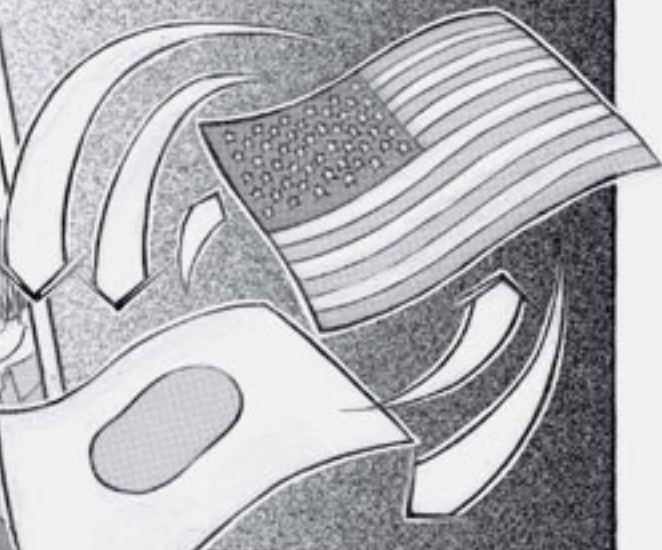
FOREIGNERS IN JAPAN ARE OFTEN AMAZED BY THE VITALITY OF COMICS CULTURE: A JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN SITS ON A TRAIN WITH HIS NOSE BURIED IN A CHILDREN'S COMIC BOOK. THAT SAME COMIC MIGHT SELL 2.6 MILLION COPIES A WEEK.



ILLUSTRATIONS MIXED WITH TEXT HAVE A RICH HISTORY IN JAPAN. TV WAS SLOW TO ARRIVE IN THE COUNTRY AFTER WWII, AND MANGA SOON BECAME THE MOST POPULAR FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT. OSAMU TEZUKA, THE CREATOR OF TETSUWAN ATOM WHO IS OFTEN CALLED "THE GOD OF MANGA," HELPED POPULARIZE THE MEDIUM IN THE LATE '40S WITH DYNAMIC STORIES AND AN ART STYLE INFLUENCED BY WALT DISNEY CHARACTERS.



MANGA STORIES ARE USUALLY SERIALIZED IN MAGAZINES, WHICH ARE PRINTED IN BLACK AND WHITE TO KEEP COSTS DOWN. JAPAN'S SMALL SIZE AND DENSE POPULATION MAKES DISTRIBUTING THESE PHONEBOOK-SIZED PERIODICALS EASY.



EPIC STORY LINES, REVERSED PAGES, BLACK-AND-WHITE ART ... THESE WERE NOT THE SORT OF COMICS THAT AMERICANS WERE USED TO. IN ADDITION, MANGA HAD DEVELOPED ITS OWN DISTINCT SYSTEM OF ICONS AND VISUAL SHORTHAND THAT WAS GUARANTEED TO FLUMMOX FOREIGNERS.

BIG EYES

AFTER APPEARING IN MAGAZINES, MOST POPULAR MANGA TITLES ARE REPRINTED IN PAPERBACKS CALLED TANKOBN. SOME STORIES RUN FOR DECADES—TOTALING THOUSANDS OF PAGES.

NOSE BLEED

SPEED LINES

BIG SWEAT DROP

SNOT BUBBLE

ELLIPSES

IN THE LATE '80S, TRANSLATED MANGA SERIES BEGAN SHOWING UP IN THE U.S. THEY WERE STILL VIRTUALLY INVISIBLE TO THE MAINSTREAM, APPEARING ONLY IN COMICS SHOPS.



FOR MANY AMERICANS, FREDERIK SCHODT'S 1985 BOOK MANGA! MANGA! PROVIDED AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIUM, OUTLINING A ROBUST ART FORM THAT RANGED FROM SOAP OPERAS TO SPORTS STORIES, FROM HIGH ART TO PORNOGRAPHY.



TETSUWAN ATOM (MIGHTY ATOM) WAS THE FIRST WEEKLY CARTOON MADE FOR JAPANESE TV. IT WAS LICENSED AND REDUBBED FOR THE AMERICAN MARKET AS ASTRO BOY THE SAME YEAR IT WAS MADE.

A BENEVOLENT ATOMIC-POWERED ROBOT, ASTRO BOY WAS ONE OF MANY EASTERN EXPORTS. FOR 60 YEARS, AMERICANS HAVE LOVED JAPANESE POP CULTURE ...

HOW MANGA CONQUERED AMERICA  
 STORY BY JASON THOMPSON  
 ART BY ATSUKIYA OKURA



**1990's**

**1980's**

**1970's**

**1960's**

**1950's**

DON'T FORGET THE MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS!

... PLUS INTRICATE TOYS LIKE VOLTRON AND TRANSFORMERS.

... TO VIDEOGAMES LIKE PAC-MAN AND SPACE INVADERS ...

... AND TV SHOWS LIKE SPEED RACER AND GIGANTOR ...

... FROM MONSTER MOVIES LIKE GODZILLA ...

FAST-FORWARD TO 2007 AND MANGA IS THE HOTTEST TREND IN AMERICAN PUBLISHING. MOST BOOKSTORES AND LIBRARIES ARE CROWDED WITH MANGA-HUNGRY KIDS. WHAT CHANGED— AND WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG?

MANGA

SHIMATTA! WHAT DOES SPIDER-MAN HAVE THAT I DON'T?

BUT DESPITE ITS APPETITE FOR JAPANESE MOVIES AND SHOWS AND TOYS, THE WEST HAS LONG BEEN RESISTANT TO JAPANESE COMICS, KNOWN AS MANGA. ASTRO BOY WAS A HIT ON AMERICAN TV IN 1963, BUT THE MANGA THAT THE SHOW WAS BASED ON DIDN'T APPEAR IN ENGLISH UNTIL 2002!