

## ***Manga* Culture in Taiwan**

The streets of Taipei are filled with shops selling Hello Kitty, Doraemon, and Pokemon merchandise. Young adults sporting hairstyles, clothing, and looks influenced by Japanese fashion walk about the city. Sony products are always among the newest electronic fads. It is obvious that Taiwanese youth are big followers of Japanese popular culture. Nothing portrays this phenomenon better than the popularity of Japanese *manga* among Taiwanese youth. There are countless bookstores dedicated to selling *manga* everywhere and *manga* rental stores are a common place for many Taiwanese to go to after school or work. It is a common sight for youth to be seen reading *manga* while waiting for a bus or friends. Various *manga* consistently appear on the best-selling lists in Taiwan. Some estimate that over 92% of Taiwanese youth read *manga*. The popularity of Japanese *manga* is so great that one rarely sees someone reading *manga* from a Taiwanese artist. How did Taiwanese *manga* culture develop to its current state? What exactly is Taiwan's *manga* culture?

### **I. History of *Manga* in Taiwan**

The origin of *manga* in Taiwan is debated. The Chinese term for comics is the same as the Japanese term for *manga* (漫畫/漫画). Yet, the Chinese term describes comics ranging from political cartoons to daily strip comics to what many consider modern *manga*. There are some records of Taiwanese artists publishing satirical political comics in newspapers and magazines about their Japanese rulers during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1935, artist Ji Long-sheng published a highly popular comic strip that satirized the social conditions and customs in Taiwan under Japanese rule.<sup>[2]</sup> This was remarkable considering that the Japanese ruling government kept tight censorship on everything that was published. Since the early Taiwanese *manga* artists grew up under the Japanese occupation, their artwork and style were heavily influenced by Japanese artists.

The first modern *manga* style comics appeared in Taiwan sometime during the 1950s. Around this time, publishing companies began to distribute *manga* periodicals. However, very few of these periodicals lasted for more than a few years, if they even lasted that long. Many of these periodicals would last only a few issues before they were stopped.<sup>[3]</sup> This was partially because Taiwan's economy was not in very good shape at this time, especially in the countryside. The Kuomintang government (KMT) had just inherited Taiwan from Japan after World War II and was still trying to successfully establish an independent, self-reliant economy. Since most of the children living in the countryside did not receive an allowance, the only way they were able to buy *manga* periodicals was by selling scavenged pieces of scrap metal and other goods to peddlers.<sup>[4]</sup> Another factor was that since the KMT had only recently come to power in Taiwan, they wanted to limit the Japanese influence on the island. They did not want Japanese things to become too popular and remind the Taiwanese what life was under the Japanese. Yet, these *manga* periodicals were still mostly filled with Japanese *manga*. In the issue of "Manga King" that was published on July 1, 1958, seven out of the eight works were by Japanese artists.<sup>[5]</sup> The Japanese *manga* that appeared in these periodicals were always bootlegged translated versions from Japan since the government banned the importation of Japanese *manga*. It should be noted that despite the fact that importation of Japanese *manga* was illegal, the government often turned a blind eye towards pirated copies of Japanese *manga*. Someone would bring a copy of the *manga* from Japan and people in Taiwan would translate it themselves. Translation quality was varied; since Taiwan was until recently a colony of Japan, there were many people who were fluent in Japanese. Yet, because the *manga* industry was still trying to get on its feet, the publishing companies did not always have enough money to hire the best translators. The editing quality was also poor. In order to convert the *manga* from Japanese to Chinese, publishing companies hired people to duplicate the works by outlining and copying. Unfortunately, these artists were not very skilled or experienced and the reproductions suffered from uneven lines and messy figures.<sup>[6]</sup> The Taiwanese publishing companies would also try to

cancel some of the content in the Japanese *manga*. For example, the Taiwanese editors would draw bras on bare-breasted women and try to modify sexually explicit or violent panels as much as possible. The government could claim that these translated versions were not true imports from Japan and therefore allowed them to be published.

As Taiwan's economy began to flourish, the *manga* industry also started to grow. From the late 1950s to mid-1960s, *manga* periodicals became increasingly popular and no longer disappeared after a few issues. At this time, most of the works were still from Japan, though more and more Taiwanese artists were being recruited by the publishing companies. These artists were often overworked and it was not uncommon to see them publish three or four series at the same time.<sup>[7]</sup> Some artists even had ten series going on concurrently. This meant that many of the series would face frequent hiatuses as the artists struggled to keep pace with publishing schedules. Also, Japanese *manga* was still more popular among the Taiwanese as they usually had more developed stories and characters. As more and more Taiwanese began to read *manga*, the publishing companies started making a lot of money, especially since they never paid for the rights to publish the Japanese *manga* that were the staple of their periodicals.

However, Taiwan's *manga* culture was almost decimated by stringent laws established in the mid-1960s. Taiwan was under martial law during this period and after the KMT government passed a law restricting the topics and ideas that could be expressed in *manga* in 1964, almost all *manga* had to pass a screening by the government. It is rumored that this law was passed because Chiang Kai-shek was dismayed by what was popular among the youth.<sup>[8]</sup> While he was strolling the streets one day, he became excited when he saw many children sitting together reading intently with a pile of books stacked besides them. When he went over to see what they were reading, he was disappointed to find out that they were reading *manga*, or "evil books." In order to insure that the future generations were reading correct works, Chiang ordered stricter laws governing what was allowed to be published. At first, it seemed like the *manga* industry did not care about the new law. In 1967 a total of 2844 *manga* works were sent to be screened; this number would

increase to 4815 in 1968 and 5114 in 1969.<sup>[9]</sup> These numbers represent the amount of Taiwanese *manga* works submitted since it was not yet legal to import Japanese *manga*. However, the government began to enforce the law in a stricter manner and it became harder and harder for works to pass the screening. Since it was increasingly difficult to publish *manga* under this new law, the *manga* industry shrunk and *manga* production dropped even though pirated Japanese *manga* was still prevalent. In 1971, only 2437 works were sent for screening. When the law was finally repealed, along with martial law, in 1987, only 84 works were sent to be screened that year.<sup>[10]</sup> People during this time were less inclined to read *manga* because of the negative image attached to it. During this time, with the strict laws regulating *manga* and the government's banning of the legal importation of Japanese *manga*, piracy became the only way for many Taiwanese to read *manga*. Therefore, since many of the future Taiwanese *manga* artists grew up reading Japanese *manga*, their style and drawings have a distinctive Japanese influence in them.

Towards the end of martial law, the *manga* industry started to slowly rebuild. In October 1985, the "Happy Manga Bi-Monthly" periodical was published.<sup>[11]</sup> Spurred by the end of the stringent laws regulating *manga*, many other periodicals sprung up across Taiwan. Publishing companies tried to outdo each other by cutting the prices of their periodicals. This, combined with Taiwan's now booming economy, led to both increased demand for *manga* and a larger readership as well. Since the prior laws regulating *manga* discouraged Taiwanese from entering the *manga* industry, very few Taiwanese *manga* artists were available and the periodicals were mostly filled with Japanese *manga*. There was also a lack of Taiwanese artists because many of them were unhappy with how the government had stringently regulated Taiwanese *manga* yet somehow turned a blind eye towards the piracy of Japanese *manga*. Even though it was no longer illegal to import Japanese *manga*, the publishing companies still preferred to publish pirated *manga* as it was cheaper for them. It was also easier to pirate Japanese *manga* because the government no longer restricted Japanese imports. During this period, some companies would distribute over fifty pirated Japanese series a month.

Because of the increased competition during this period, many *manga* periodicals were unable to survive and ended quickly. Yet, due to the allure of the market for *manga*, publishers continued to put out new periodicals in hope that it would become popular.<sup>[12]</sup> This rise and fall of periodicals would continue until 1992, when a crackdown on *manga* piracy changed the nature of Taiwan's *manga* industry.

In June of 1992, the government banned all pirated *manga* for good and started to truly crackdown on offenders. This was in conjunction with many other Asian nations who were facing the same problem as well. The government set new laws that emphasized the importance of intellectual property and demanded that all publishing companies purchase the translation rights of the Japanese *manga* they were publishing. Therefore, the various publishing companies in Taiwan fought with each other in order to obtain the translation rights of the most popular Japanese *manga*. During this struggle, many publishing companies were forced out of business because they were unable to compete with some of the bigger companies. In the end, only seven *manga* publishing companies survived, though some of the companies received barely enough translation rights to stay in business.<sup>[13]</sup> The biggest winner was Tongli Comics, which continues to be the biggest *manga* distributor in Taiwan today and controls over fifty percent of the *manga* market. In fact, when many of the smaller publishing companies collapsed later on, Tongli Comics would almost always buy the now-available translation rights and reissue the *manga* under their name.

Since the companies were now required to buy the translations rights, the price of *manga* in Taiwan went up. However, the quality of the translations went up as well. Since 1992, periodicals continued to be common, but single-volume-books, or *tankōbon*, grew in popularity. Eventually, more and more people favored *tankōbon* over periodicals. There was still a shortage of Taiwanese *manga* artists and most periodicals were filled with Japanese *manga*. In fact, the *manga* that was popular in Taiwan was closely correlated with what was popular in Japan. So what is *manga* culture in Taiwan like today?

## II. Taiwan's Present *Manga* Culture

To understand the current *manga* culture in Taiwan, one needs to look at the types of *manga* available, the readership of *manga*, and the perception of *manga* in general. In Taiwan, *manga* are sold in both the periodical and *tankōbon* format, though the *tankōbon* format is generally more popular. One rarely sees *manga* sold in the small booklet format that one commonly sees in many American comics or some non-mainstream Japanese comics and *dōjinshi*.<sup>[14]</sup> Each *tankōbon* generally costs around \$90 NTD and the costs of periodicals commonly range from \$80 NTD to \$120 NTD.<sup>[15]</sup> Some *tankōbon* can cost up to \$150 NTD, but these prices are usually limited to specialty, less mainstream, and niche *manga*. The pricier periodicals are also usually those that contain *manga* that are not considered mainstream. This is probably because mainstream *manga* aims to reach as large an audience as possible. With lower prices, a casual reader will be more likely to pick up the *manga* and give it a try. If the reader likes what he or she reads, they would then continue to follow the series and buy more volumes. On the other hand, niche *manga* are aimed at specialized audiences. It is less likely that a casual reader who picks it up will end of following the series; therefore these *manga* rely on readers who read it because they like it and are willing to pay the higher price. Prices for *manga* have gone up consistently for the past few years due to both inflation and the rising cost of paper. Less than ten years ago a *tankōbon* would cost only \$75 NTD.

One can buy *manga* from many places in Taiwan. First of all, there are stores that specifically sell *manga* and *anime*. These stores are generally not too big and are usually filled late in the afternoon when students get out of school. Stores that are close to train stations or bus stops are usually more crowded because many students are looking for some quick reading on their way home. The entire store is often filled with shelves of *manga* that are sorted by publishing company and genre. Normally, there will be little signs that tell customers where the most popular series are located. These stores will also sell products that are generally considered complements to *manga* such as *anime*, figurines

and merchandise of *manga* and *anime* characters, and even trading cards such as Pokemon and Magic: The Gathering. There are also many *manga* rental stores in Taiwan. These stores charge interested people a basic membership fee at first, usually around \$100 to \$200 NTD. Once someone is a member of the rental shop, they can choose to rent *manga* by the book or by the hour. These stores will provide places for members to sit down and read their *manga*. Therefore, if one rents by the hour, one would usually stay in the store and read. During this time, members can read however many and whatever *manga* they desire since they pay by the hour; magazines, newspapers, and popular novels are also available at these stores. Some of the fancier rental shops have small cafés within them that allow customers to order drinks and snacks; they even have personal rooms for those who do not want to be disturbed by others and provide free wireless internet as well.<sup>[16]</sup> Prices range from \$25 to \$50 NTD per hour and \$10 to \$15 NTD for each book. One can see how these shops have become a popular place for youth to go to after school and during the weekends, especially during the summer months when the heat and humidity in Taiwan makes hanging out outside prohibitive for youth.

All regular bookstores in Taiwan have a special section for manga as well, though they usually only sell the most popular series. One of the most common places for Taiwanese to buy *manga* is at a convenience store. Convenience stores such as 7-Eleven are extremely popular and play an important role in Taiwanese life. One can do almost everything at these convenience stores, which are everywhere in Taiwan. There is an average of one convenience store for every 2800 people in Taiwan. It is joked that if one is standing in front of a convenience store, one is assured to reach another store if one walks one minute in any direction. These stores are open twenty-four hours a day and not only sell the usual food, drinks, and daily necessities but also allow people to pay their credit card bills, parking tickets, and utility bills there. Under certain conditions, people can even pay their taxes at these stores too. It is common for people to utilize the fax machines, copiers, and ATMs provided. One of the most interesting features of these convenience stores is that many online sellers offer the option of sending one's order to a local

convenience store. Instead of paying online, the buyer would pay at the convenience store. It is very convenient for people to either buy *manga* at the store itself or buy it online and have it sent to the store. The convenience stores carry most of the periodicals available and the newest volumes of certain popular series. It has become so that if someone is looking to buy the newest periodical or volume of a popular series, the person would probably go to a nearby convenience store and get it there. If someone is trying to get some older *tankōbon*, they would go to a *manga* bookstore or a *manga* rental shop.

Currently, the most popular *manga* in Taiwan are unquestionably Japanese ones. Of these Japanese *manga*, *shōnen manga* are the most popular, though *shōjo manga* are not far behind in popularity. If one only looks at the sales rankings of *manga*, one might not get the sense that *shōjo manga* are popular. Look at the statistics of Book.com.tw, the most popular online book-ordering website in Taiwan, eight of the top ten best-sellers for Tongli Comics are *shōnen manga*.<sup>[17]</sup> Interesting enough, the number one best-seller is a *shōjo manga*, the newest volume of the well-liked series *Nodame Cantabile*. The other *shōjo manga* in the top ten was *Skip Beat!*, another long-lasting and popular *shōjo* series. If one looks at the best-seller list for books sold in a bookstore in Taiwan during August 2007, one finds that fourteen of the top twenty are *manga*.<sup>[18]</sup> Of those fourteen, only one, *Skip Beat!* again, is *shōjo*; one has to go down to number twenty seven before one finds another *shōjo manga*, a volume of *Nodame Cantabile*. Similarly, only one of the fourteen was drawn by a Taiwanese artist. The fact that twelve of the top twenty books sold during this period show how well-received *shōnen manga* is in Taiwan.

Seeing how poorly *shōjo manga* does sales-wise, one could think that not many people read *shōjo manga* in Taiwan. Yet, when one goes into a *manga* bookstore, one sees that even though they are usually at the back of the store, at least one-third of the shelves are filled with *shōjo manga* series. The reason is probably that *shōjo manga* are more of a niche *manga* in Taiwan. *Shōnen manga* are the more mainstream *manga* that are designed to draw in as large an audience as possible. Not only do they attract most male readers,

they are also able to appeal to many female readers too, especially since that many of the popular *shōnen manga* in Japan have started to increasingly contain various stereotypical *shōjo* characteristics such as an emphasis on relationships. On the other hand, *shōjo manga* are usually not considered mainstream and tend to rely on groups of fans for their readership. Not only are *shōjo manga* unable to attract a majority of females, they do not always appeal to male readers either. While this means that *shōjo manga* are not able to achieve high total sales, they do have a strong enough fan-base that allows them to remain profitable for the publishing companies. That is why there are many *shōjo manga* series in Taiwan even though they usually do not top the sales charts. Also, as seen earlier, there are *manga* classified as *shōjo* that have achieved good sales. One reason is because both *Nodame Cantabile* and *Skip Beat!* are long running series. The longer the series is, the longer it has to gain a respectable following. The fact that it is long-running is a testimony of its popularity since unpopular series are almost always canceled quickly. Another reason is that although both series are classified as *shōjo*, they have characteristics that go beyond the typical *shōjo manga*. While it does contain *shōjo* characteristics such as the development of relationships, *Skip Beat!* focuses on a girl's revenge against a boy who jilted her. Many consider the main protagonist's desire for revenge and overall craziness as hilarious and entertaining, something more commonly associated with *shōnen manga*. *Nodame Cantabile* also has *shōjo* characteristics but it also closely fits the slice-of-life genre that has been gaining popularity in the past few years. Works within the slice-of-life genre depict the lives of ordinary people as they struggle through life. Unlike many *shōnen manga*, they do not have to deal with dramatic events. This genre is popular because people are more likely to relate with the characters in these stories. *Shōnen manga* continues to be the most popular genre in Taiwan and shows no signs of slowing down. However, *shōjo manga* has its own group of loyal followers and with more and more *shōjo* works expanding beyond the boundaries of stereotypical *shōjo manga*, these works will become increasingly mainstream.

The general perception in Taiwan is that *manga* readership is limited to the youth. While it is true that a large amount of *manga* readers are youth, the number of adults who read *manga* has progressively increased. Taiwanese youth love reading *manga* and many of them see it as a form of entertainment. In an informal survey of Taiwanese *manga* readers conducted by the author, seven out of the eight respondents stated that they read *manga* in order to relax or for some sort of entertainment. Many pointed out that a well-crafted *manga* made for an enjoyable read and that the combination of art and story could make the work superior to a well-written book.[\[19\]](#) Some also admitted that *manga* sometimes served as a form of escapism, though this was usually when they were facing hardships in their life.[\[20\]](#) Many mentioned that they are unable to read *manga* as often as before because of an increase in schoolwork or responsibilities. However, most of them concluded that even though they would probably read less *manga* in the future, they would definitely continue reading even when they were adults.[\[21\]](#)

Many adults in Taiwan seem to have a negative perception of *manga*. Many Taiwanese parents are heavily influenced by Confucian thought and believe that their children need to be constantly studying in order to get a good education and ultimately a good job. This is mostly because back when China still employed the civil service examinations, the only way for men to move up the social ladder and become rich and famous was to pass the examinations and become a scholar-official. When numerous Taiwanese parents see children reading *manga*, their first reaction is that the children are wasting their time and not putting as much effort into their studies as they should; they see reading *manga* as a frivolous hobby that is a marker of a poor student. Also, many believe that unlike sports, which trains the body, or cooking, reading *manga* does not provide its readers with skills that can be of use later on. Also, many Taiwanese, especially of the older generations, are rather conservative and are influenced by the Confucian values of modesty, propriety, and chastity. Therefore, many are offended by the presence of numerous sexual and violent situations in Japanese *manga*. Yet, this negative perception

of *manga* is gradually changing. More and more adults are starting to read *manga*, especially ones that deal with adult situations such as *seinen* and special interest *manga*. It is not a common sight to see a parent get hooked on *manga* after picking up a volume left behind by their children. With globalization occurring, less and less Taiwanese are brought up under traditional yet conservative Confucian teachings. When the current youth of Taiwan grow up, it is likely that they will continue to support *manga* and the negative perception of *manga* in Taiwan will lessen, if not disappear.

The most popular *manga* in Taiwan are overwhelmingly Japanese. Very few people prefer *manga* drawn by Taiwanese artists and there is an overall lack of original content in the Taiwanese *manga* market. One reason for this is the different art styles. The most popular *manga* series are by Japanese and many Taiwanese *manga* readers are used to Japanese-style artwork and artists. The Taiwanese art-style is distinctly different and therefore, many readers are not used to it and dislike it; most consider the Taiwanese style choppy, full of jagged lines and ugly in general.[\[22\]](#) There are also Taiwanese artists whose art styles are influenced by Japanese artists. However, the quality of the artwork of these artists is often considered subpar. Some readers believe that even though these Taiwanese artists try to draw like Japanese artists, they simply do not have the experience or practice to be able to create the same kind of quality artwork.[\[23\]](#) Taiwanese artists are also generally not as good at developing their stories. The storylines in Taiwanese *manga* are often considered flat and generic while the characters are seen as one-dimensional and uninteresting. Some of the most successful Taiwanese *manga* are adaptations of popular computer and video games and not original creations. The lower quality of Taiwanese *manga* is partially because of the strict rules regulating *manga* from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s. These rules stunted the development of Taiwanese *manga* artists as they discouraged participation within the *manga* industry.

Another reason is that Taiwan has a very poor support system for its *manga* artists. The profession is not held in very high regard, especially since there is the aforementioned

negative perception of *manga* in general among adults. Currently, the profession does not pay very well, principally because the works of most Taiwanese artists are not very popular. The government does not try to help out the industry and very few Taiwanese artists are able to make a living out of drawing *manga*. In Japan, many *manga* artists start off as assistants to well established artists; this allows them to learn under professionals and hone their skills before they publish their own work. Since there are currently very few professional Taiwanese artists, Taiwanese who wish to become *manga* artists are denied the same opportunity. This causes the work of Taiwanese artists to suffer as they are unable to obtain the same *manga* education Japanese artists are able to. This unfortunately causes a vicious cycle as the gap between Taiwanese and Japanese artists continues to widen. Readers prefer the Japanese *manga* because they are perceived to be of higher quality. It becomes harder for Taiwanese artists to develop their skills because their work is not as highly acclaimed and they are therefore unable to catch up to Japanese artists. Regrettably, there is also a widely-held belief that all Taiwanese *manga* are of lower quality. Because of this stereotype, even when a Taiwanese artist creates a good *manga*, it is difficult to get the public to read it because it is seen as a lower-quality work.

However, various publishing companies are attempting to counteract this trend by promoting Taiwanese artists. These companies hold numerous *manga* contests and the winners' *manga* often appear in various periodicals. Right now, most of the contestants are amateurs who see drawing *manga* as a hobby and not a possible profession. This is mostly because parents discourage their children from striving to be a *manga* artist because the parents see the profession as being unstable, unpredictable, unorthodox, and not very lucrative. They often question whether a *manga* artist can truly support a family, further degrading the perception of the profession in the public's mind. As one can see, Taiwan lacks a support system that would help Taiwanese *manga* artists succeed and compete with Japanese *manga* artists.

Taiwanese readers face another dilemma, the question of whether they should support Taiwanese *manga* simply because it is Taiwanese-made. Many Taiwanese want Taiwanese *manga* artists to succeed as they feel that it is always good to support your countrymen. However, many of them are put off by the lack of quality works and the minimal support the Taiwanese *manga* industry receives. They realize that there are a few good *manga* out there but feel that until Taiwanese artists are able to consistently draw quality *manga* that can compete against Japanese *manga*, it will be incredibly difficult to challenge the public perception that Taiwanese *manga* is inferior.

### **III. Future of Taiwan's *Manga* Culture**

Currently, Taiwan's *manga* culture is commonly seen as a miniature version of Japanese *manga* culture. Taiwanese readers follow Japanese *manga* series and what is popular in Japan is usually popular in Taiwan. The *manga* culture in Taiwan lacks its own distinct identity and originality that would separate it from Japan's *manga* culture. This is complicated by the fact that there are so few Taiwanese *manga* artists; it is hard to be your own if there is almost nothing that you can claim as your own. Publishing companies have tried to differentiate Taiwanese *manga* culture from Japan in the past but these efforts have failed. During the 1970s and 1980s, Taiwanese publishing companies initially tried to Chinese or Taiwanese-ify Japanese *manga* by editing them. Not only did they edit certain parts to make the content seem more Taiwanese but they also changed all character names to Chinese. One example is the popular series *Captain Tsubasa*, where the main character's name Ozora Tsubasa was changed to Lai Guo-Liang. Through these changes, the publishing companies could say that these *manga* were different from the Japanese originals, which was also handy in evading the KMT ban on Japanese *manga* imports during this time period. However, the public was not supportive of these attempts to localize the *manga* and the publishing companies eventually changed their policy and started to stay true to the original *manga*. Instead of trying to change the Japanese product, the publishing companies should have tried to create and improve their own.

Presently, publishing companies try to recruit new Taiwanese artists by hosting various *manga* contests. This is a step in the right direction but unless the current conditions and perceptions surrounding the Taiwanese *manga* artist occupation change, the effects of these *manga* contests will be limited. The negative public perception of Taiwanese *manga* must be eliminated in order to Taiwanese *manga* culture to break away from the shadow of Japanese *manga* culture. The publishing companies should push for more governmental support of Taiwanese *manga* artists and continue to spend money to develop potential *manga* artists. Until the Taiwanese public can accept *manga* artists as a sensible profession and the readership can recognize the quality of Taiwanese *manga*, there will not be a unique Taiwanese *manga* culture. However, with the current group of young adults and youth supportive of *manga* in general, the future for Taiwan's *manga* culture does not look too bleak.

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[13] Hong De-ling, "Manga History: The Effect of the New Intellectual Property Rights Laws," <http://www.comicart.com.tw/main/3/6-02.htm> (accessed 5/13/2008)

[14] *Dōjinshi* are self-published works by artists. These works can be originals or parodies of existing works.

[15] The New Taiwan Dollar (NTD) has an exchange rate of around 31:1 to the U.S. dollar.

[16] Manga King, "Features," <http://web4u.idv.tw/comic01/a03.html> (accessed May 14, 2008)

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