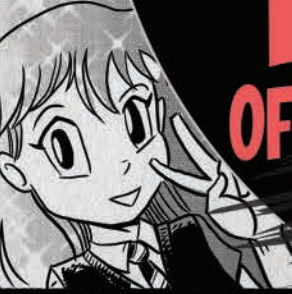


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THE **FOUR COLOR**

COMIC BOOK HISTORY OF COMICS AN G A



JAPAN & USA 1862-2006



Comic Book History of Comics Vol. 2 #3 "Of Mice and Manga"
 - Japan & USA 1862-2006

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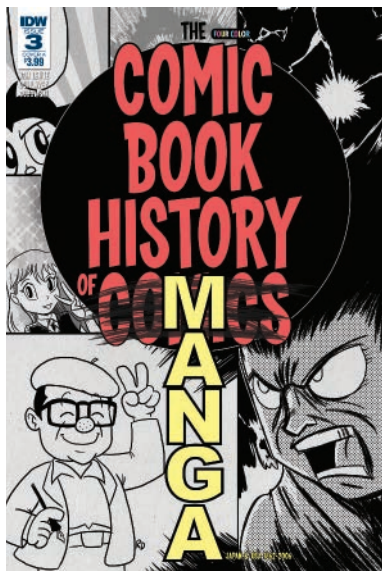
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THE GOD OF ALL COMICS

THOUGH THE FOCUS OF OUR HISTORY IS THE MEDIUM IN AMERICA, IT MUST BE SAID THAT JAPAN IS INARGUABLY KING OF ALL COMICS CULTURES.

BUT WHY?

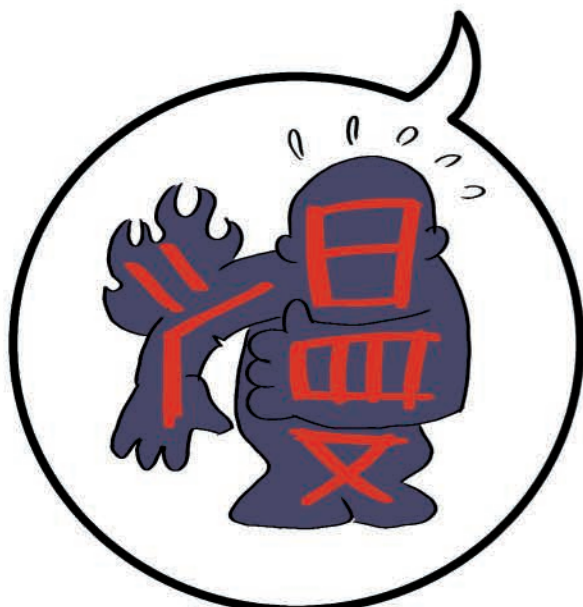
SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT PART OF THE REASON THE JAPANESE HAVE SUCH AN AFFINITY FOR COMBINING WORDS AND PICTURES IS THAT MUCH OF THEIR WRITING IS ITSELF A KIND OF DRAWING, IN THE FORM OF IDEOGRAMS.

"MANGA" IS FORMED WITH TWO SUCH KANJI:

"MAN" -- "INVOLUNTARY" OR "UNCONSCIOUSLY"...

...AND "GA," OR "PICTURE" (REPRESENTED BY THE BORDERS OF A RICE FIELD).

漫 画



LEGENDARY PRINTMAKER KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI (1760-1849) COINED THE TERM TO DESCRIBE A SERIES OF LEISURELY SKETCHES ON VARIOUS THEMES HE BEGAN PUBLISHING IN 1814.

"MANGA" EVENTUALLY CAME TO MEAN "HUMOROUS DRAWINGS," BUT IT WAS NOT THE FIRST WAY THE JAPANESE DESCRIBED "KOMIKKUSU" (TO USE A POPULAR ADAPTATION OF THE ENGLISH WORD).

EARLIER SATIRIC CARICATURES HAD BEEN CALLED **TOBA-E**, OR "TOBA PICTURES," AFTER THE 12TH CENTURY BUDDHIST MONK WHO ALLEGEDLY DREW THE **CHŌJŪ-GIGA** NARRATIVE PICTURE SCROLL, WHICH USED ANIMALS TO **MOCK** HUMAN FOIBLES.



THIS TYPE OF SCROLL IS SURPRISINGLY SIMILAR TO TODAY'S **COMICS**.

THEY COULD BE UP TO **EIGHTY FEET LONG** UNFURLED, COMPRISED OF IMAGES PROGRESSING OVER TIME AND **DISTANCE**.



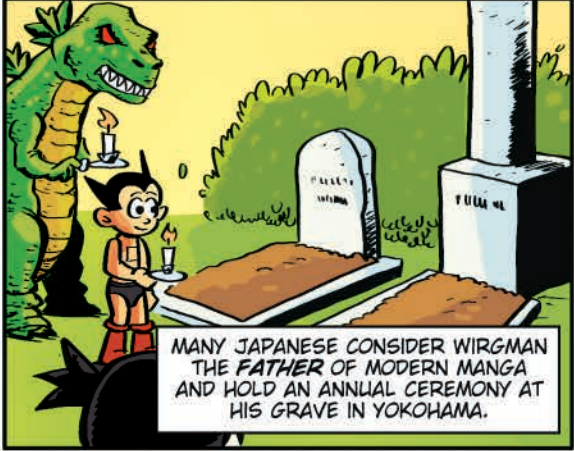
THE FORM ORIGINATED IN **CHINA**, AND JAPAN CONTINUED TO ABSORB **FOREIGN** INFLUENCE FOR COMICS INSPIRATION.

WHEN THE WEST, LED BY AMERICAN NAVAL POWER, FORCED JAPAN OUT OF HER CULTURAL ISOLATION IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY, **EUROPEANS** CAME TO THE ISLANDS SEEKING FORTUNE AND ADVENTURE.

BRITISH CARTOONIST AND YOKOHAMA RESIDENT **CHARLES WIRGMAN** BEGAN THE **JAPAN PUNCH** IN 1862 FOR THE EX-PAT COMMUNITY, CONTAINING POLITICAL CARTOONS AND HUMOR SIMILAR TO THE **UK** MAGAZINE OF THE SAME NAME BACK HOME...



...BUT HIS **JAPANESE** FRIENDS LOVED IT TOO, AND SOON BEGAN PRINTING THEIR OWN HUMOR MAGAZINES FEATURING ONE-PANEL CARTOONS THEY CALLED **PONCHI-E**, OR "PUNCH PICTURES."



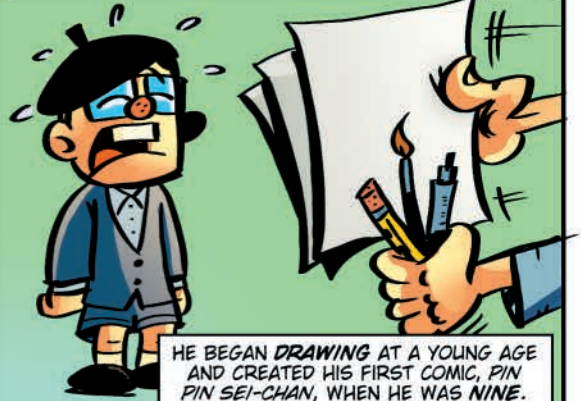
MANY JAPANESE CONSIDER WIRGMAN THE **FATHER** OF MODERN MANGA AND HOLD AN ANNUAL CEREMONY AT HIS GRAVE IN YOKOHAMA.

PONCHI-E FLOURISHED DURING THE COLLAPSE OF THE FEUDAL *SHOGUNATE* AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN, ALSO KNOWN AS THE *MEIJI PERIOD*.



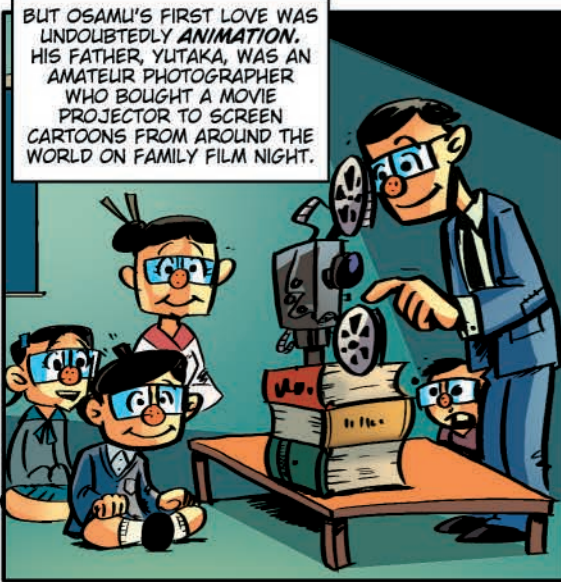
WHEN THE FIRST CHILD OF THE *TEZUKAS* OF OSAKA PREFECTURE WAS BORN ON *MEIJI* THE GREAT'S *BIRTHDAY* (NOVEMBER 3) IN 1928, THEY NAMED HIM WITH THE LAST CHARACTER IN THE EMPEROR'S NAME: *OSAMU*.

OSAMU'S PARENTS QUICKLY LEARNED THAT THE *EASIEST* WAY TO GET HIM TO STAY QUIET WAS TO HAND HIM *PENCIL AND PAPER*.

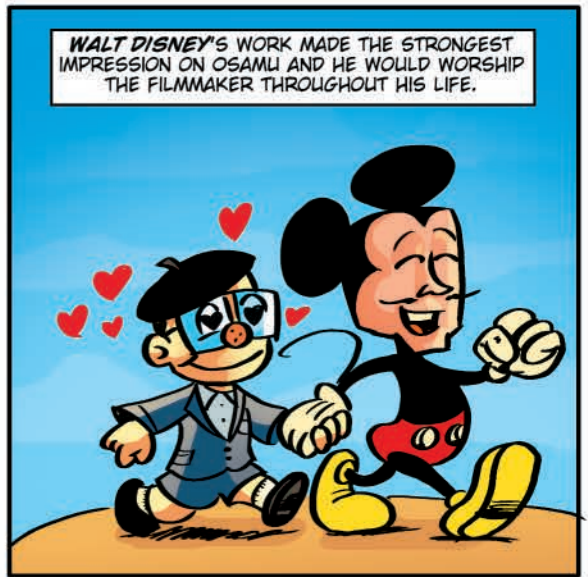


HE BEGAN *DRAWING* AT A YOUNG AGE AND CREATED HIS FIRST COMIC, *PIN PIN SEI-CHAN*, WHEN HE WAS *NINE*.

BUT OSAMU'S FIRST LOVE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY *ANIMATION*. HIS FATHER, *YUTAKA*, WAS AN AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER WHO BOUGHT A MOVIE PROJECTOR TO SCREEN CARTOONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD ON FAMILY FILM NIGHT.



WALT DISNEY'S WORK MADE THE STRONGEST IMPRESSION ON OSAMU AND HE WOULD WORSHIP THE FILMMAKER THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE.



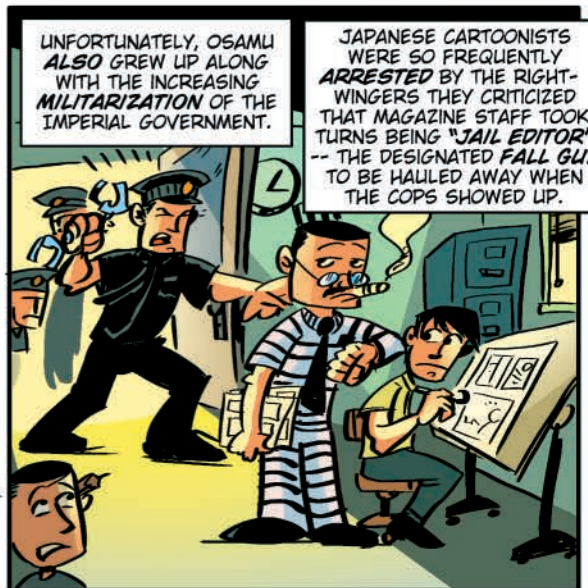
OSAKA HAD ITS OWN COTTAGE *COMICS* INDUSTRY REVOLVING AROUND CHEAP *AKAHON* -- "*RED BOOKS*," AFTER THEIR COVERS' COLOR -- THAT WERE KIDS' FAVORITE READING MATERIAL.

NEWSPAPER STRIPS *ALSO* THRIVED DURING THIS PERIOD, AND OSAMU FORCED HIS PARENTS TO SUBSCRIBE TO ONE SO HE COULD FOLLOW THE STRAY PUP *NORAKURO* BY ARTIST *SUIHŌ TAGAWA*.



UNFORTUNATELY, OSAMU *ALSO* GREW UP ALONG WITH THE INCREASING *MILITARIZATION* OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

JAPANESE CARTOONISTS WERE SO FREQUENTLY *ARRESTED* BY THE RIGHT-WINGERS THEY CRITICIZED THAT MAGAZINE STAFF TOOK TURNS BEING "*JAIL EDITOR*" -- THE DESIGNATED *FALL GUY* TO BE HALLED AWAY WHEN THE COPS SHOWED UP.



IN 1937 JAPAN TOOK HER FIRST REAL STEPS TOWARD WORLD WAR II BY INVADING NEIGHBORING CHINA.



THE FOLLOWING YEAR STRICT LAWS REGULATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE WERE PASSED, BANNING MOST *AKAHON* AS "POOR-QUALITY" AND "HARMFUL."

IN THE RESULTING CRACKDOWN CARTOONISTS WHO CRITICIZED *NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY* WERE ARRESTED AND THEIR STRIPS CANCELLED.



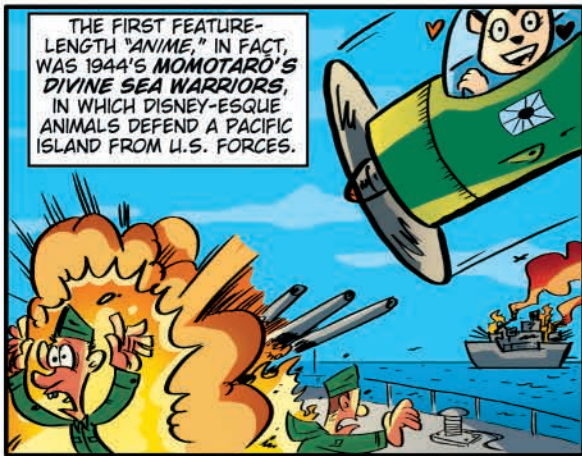
THE EMPIRE PRESSED MANY REMAINING ARTISTS INTO DRAWING ANTI-ALLIED PROPAGANDA LIKE *EROTIC STRIPS* AIRDROPPED ON WESTERN TROOPS THAT PREDICTED THEIR GIRLFRIENDS OR WIVES WERE *CHEATING* ON THEM BACK HOME.



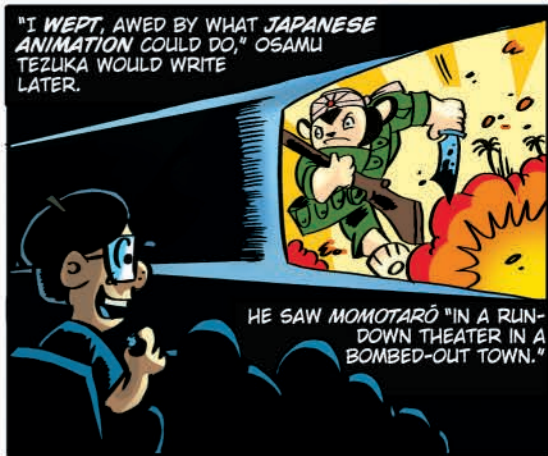
DONNA... WITH MITCH?! NOOOO!!



THE FIRST FEATURE-LENGTH "ANIME," IN FACT, WAS 1944'S *MOMOTARŌ'S DIVINE SEA WARRIORS*, IN WHICH DISNEY-ESQUE ANIMALS DEFEND A PACIFIC ISLAND FROM U.S. FORCES.



"I WEPT, AWED BY WHAT JAPANESE ANIMATION COULD DO," OSAMU TEZUKA WOULD WRITE LATER.



HE SAW *MOMOTARŌ* "IN A RUN-DOWN THEATER IN A BOMBED-OUT TOWN."

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD OSAMU WORKED IN A WARTIME *ASBESTOS FACTORY* WHERE HIS BOSSES BEAT HIM IF THEY CAUGHT HIM DRAWING.

THE AMERICANS *FIRE-BOMBED* OSAKA THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER OF 1945. THE JUNE 1 ATTACK ALONE KILLED OVER 4,000 PEOPLE AND LEFT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS HOMELESS.



OSAMU WITNESSED THE HORRIFIC ATTACK *FIRSTHAND* AND IT LEFT HIM AN ARDENT *PACIFIST* FOR LIFE. HE ENROLLED IN MEDICAL SCHOOL PARTLY BECAUSE OF HIS BELIEFS, PARTLY TO STAY OUT OF THE MILITARY, BUT ONLY A FEW WEEKS LATER, JAPAN *SURRENDERED*, AND THE U.S. *OCCUPATION* BEGAN.

IT WAS DURING THIS CRUCIAL POSTWAR PERIOD THAT JAPAN TOOK DECISIVE STEPS AWAY FROM AMERICA TO ACHIEVE

TOTAL COMICS DOMINANCE

THE UNITED STATES BECAME **SUBURBANIZED** AFTER THE WAR, AND THE DOMINANCE OF **AUTOMOBILES** OVER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GREATLY REDUCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL KINDS OF READING, BUT IT WAS PARTICULARLY DEADLY FOR **COMICS**, WHOSE YOUNG, DRIVER LICENSE-LESS TARGET AUDIENCE HAD LESS **DIRECT ACCESS** TO THE PRODUCT!

WHILE THE ISLANDS OF **JAPAN**, WITH THEIR POPULATION CONCENTRATED ON SMALL LANDMASS(ES), REMAINED AND REMAINS A **MASS TRANSIT SOCIETY** -- **PRIME READER MATERIAL!**

THE INCREASING LIBIQUITY OF **TELEVISION** IN AMERICA IN THIS PERIOD LEAD TO MASSIVE DECLINES IN MOVIE ATTENDANCE, NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION -- AND **COMICS READERSHIP!**

WHILE TECHNOLOGY-STARVED **JAPAN** WOULDN'T EVEN BEGIN TV BROADCASTS UNTIL 1964-- WITH LESS THAN **1,000 SETS** IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY!

INSTEAD, THEY MADE DO WITH THE ANCIENT ART OF **KAMI-SHIBA!** ("PAPER DRAMAS"): ITERANT STORY-TELLERS NARRATED TALES ILLUSTRATED WITH **GEKIGA** ("DRAMATIC PICTURES")! LOW-TECH **COMICS** ALSO FLOURISHED IN THE WAR TORN LAND!

(MANY FUTURE **MANGA** ARTISTS GOT STARTED PRODUCING **GEKIGA** FOR THE **KAMI-SHIBA** MARKET.)

DURING THIS PERIOD THE **AMERICAN OCCUPIERS** TOOK OVER THE **CENSOR** OFFICE WITH A DIAMETRICALLY **OPPOSITE** AGENDA TO THEIR **JAPANESE PREDECESSORS**.

THE U.S. WANTED TO **BAN** MILITARISTIC AND **NATIONALIST** IMAGES LIKE PERIOD SAMURAI DRAMA. CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND FANTASTICAL GENRES LIKE SCIENCE FICTION AND ADVENTURE WERE DEEMED **HARMLESS**--SO BOTH **THRIVED** IN THE NEW ERA!

SAM.

TOSHIRO.

AKAHON RETURNED WITH A **VENGEANCE!** MOST KIDS WERE TOO YOUNG OR HAD BEEN BORN TOO LATE TO SEE ANY COMICS ESPECIALLY DRAWN FOR **THEM** AND NOT THE EMPIRE BEFORE THE WAR!

PAY-LIBRARIES, IN WHICH CHILDREN TOO POOR TO BUY "RED BOOKS" **RENTED** THEM FOR A SMALL FEE, **BOOMED**, PARTICULARLY IN **OSAKA!**