โดราเอมอน มาเมืองไทย: กระบวนการครอบครองสินค้าต่างวัฒนธรรม

นางสาวอิซูมิ อาโอยามา

DORAEMON COMES TO THAILAND:
THE PROCESS OF APPROPRIATING
A FOREIGN CULTURAL PRODUCT

Miss Izumi Aoyama

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Thai Studies
Faculty of Arts
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2006
ISBN: 974-14-3547-9
Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

490222

Thesis Title   DORAEMON COMES TO THAILAND: THE PROCESS OF
               APPROPRIATING A FOREIGN CULTURAL PRODUCT

By   Miss Izumi Aoyama

Field of Study Thai Studies

Thesis Advisor Associate Professor Thanavadee Boonlue, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master's Degree

Theraphan Luangthongkum Dean of the Faculty of Arts
(Professor Theraphan Luangthongkum, Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

Chairman
(Assistant Professor Carina Chotirawe, Ph.D.)

Thesis Advisor
(Associate Professor Thanavadee Boonlue, Ph.D.)

Member
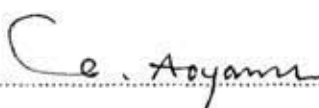(Associate Professor Surichai Wun'gaeo)

ความนิยมการ์ตูนแบบญี่ปุ่นปรากฏชัดเจนในสังคมไทยในปัจจุบัน วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีความประสงค์ที่จะศึกษากระบวนการเผยแผ่วัฒนธรรมผ่านการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่นโดยมุ่งพิจารณาหนังสือการ์ตูนชุดโดราเอมอนและศึกษาปัจจัยที่นำไปสู่ความนิยมแพร่หลายของการ์ตูนดังกล่าว

ผู้เขียนได้ทำการวิจัยเชิงลึกอุตสาหกรรมการ์ตูนแบบญี่ปุ่น เนื่องจากอุตสาหกรรมดังกล่าวได้มีบทบาทอย่างสำคัญในการเผยแผ่วัฒนธรรมผ่านการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่นในประเทศไทยมาเป็นเวลากว่า 30 ปี โดยพิจารณาจากการเปลี่ยนผ่านองผลิตภัณฑ์ การผลิต ผู้อ่าน ผู้พิมพ์ และการจำหน่ายการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่น การเผยแผ่ทางวัฒนธรรมของโดราเอมอนในประเทศไทย จำแนกได้เป็น 2 ลักษณะ ได้แก่ การเผยแผ่แบบในท้องถิ่นเป็นผู้ดำเนินการเอง ซึ่งดำเนินการตั้งแต่ปี พ.ศ. 2514 ถึง พ.ศ. 2536 และแบบ"การเผยแผ่แบบมาตรฐาน" อันเป็นกระแสที่มาจากผู้ถือลิขสิทธิ์ของญี่ปุ่นไปยังผู้พิมพ์ในประเทศไทย ตั้งแต่ปี พ.ศ. 2537 จนถึงปัจจุบัน

การเผยแผ่ทั้ง 2 ลักษณะนี้ มีส่วนสำคัญในการส่งเสริมให้การ์ตูนโดราเอมอนแพร่หลายออกไป การเผยแพร่โดยคนในท้องถิ่นเป็นผู้ดำเนินการซึ่งมักจะเป็นการละเมิดลิขสิทธิ์ แต่ได้มีส่วนสำคัญในการเผยแพร่การ์ตูนโดราเอมอนในเชิงปริมาณ ราคาที่ย่อมเยา ตลอดจนความสามารถของผู้จัดพิมพ์ในประเทศที่ผลิตในปริมาณมากทำให้ผลิตภัณฑ์เป็นที่แพร่หลายมากยิ่งขึ้น การเผยแพร่แบบ "มาตรฐาน" มีบทบาทสำคัญในการเผยแพร่ การ์ตูนโดราเอมอนในเชิงคุณภาพ ความต้องการของผู้บริโภคในประเทศเป็นจุดเริ่มต้นของการเผยแผ่วัฒนธรรม ในขณะที่จุดมุ่งหมายในเชิงการค้าเพื่อแสวงหาผลกำไรของ สำนักพิมพ์ในประเทศไทยก็มีส่วนในการส่งเสริมการเผยแผ่วัฒนธรรม แม้เมื่อผู้พิมพ์ในประเทศญี่ปุ่นได้เข้าร่วมในกระบวนการเผยแผ่วัฒนธรรมแล้ว

ถึงแม้ว่าประเทศไทยและญี่ปุ่นจะมีความสัมพันธ์ซึ่งกันและกันในการจัดพิมพ์การ์ตูน โดราเอมอน ความเป็นมาตรฐานอันเป็นผลสืบเนื่องมาจากการบังคับใช้กฎหมายลิขสิทธิ์ การพิมพ์จำหน่ายการ์ตูนแบบญี่ปุ่นอย่างเป็นเรื่องเป็นราวได้นำไปสู่อิทธิพลของการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่นในท้องตลาดและในการสร้างวาทกรรมทางสังคม อย่างไรก็ดี ศักยภาพในการสื่อสารทางวัฒนธรรมผ่านการ์ตูนจะเป็นมิติใหม่ของปฏิสัมพันธ์ทางวัฒนธรรมระหว่างไทยกับญี่ปุ่น

สาขาวิชา ไทยศึกษา ลายมือชื่อนิสิต...

ปีการศึกษา 2549 ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา...

IZUMI AOYAMA: DORAEMON COMES TO THAILAND: THE PROCESS OF APPROPRIATING A FOREIGN CULTURAL PRODUCT. THESIS ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. THANAVADEE BOONLUE, Ph. D. 178pp. ISBN: 974-14-3547-9

The popularity of Japanese-style comics is apparent in Thai society today. This thesis attempts to study the process of the cultural dissemination of Japanese comics by focusing on a popular comic book, Doraemon, and examines the factors which contributed to the spread of the comics.

The author conducted an in-depth research of the Japanese-style comics industry, which has played an important role in the cultural dissemination of Japanese-style comics in Thailand for more than 30 years. The transition of the products, the production, the readers, the publishers and the distributions are explored. The cultural flow of Doraemon in Thailand can be classified into two styles: "local market-led" circulation in which the whole process was conducted by local publishers from 1971 to 1993; and "standardized" circulation which is the flow from the Japanese copyright holders to local publishers from 1994 to the present.

Both flows contributed to the spread of Doraemon. The "local market-led" circulation which is often regarded as piracy helped the cultural dissemination of Doraemon in terms of quantity. Affordable price and high supply provided by the local publishers created greater access to the product. The "standardized" circulation contributed to the diffusion of Doraemon in terms of quality. The demand from local consumers created the beginning of the cultural dissemination while the profit-seeking motives of local publishers enhanced the cultural flow even after the Japanese publishers joined the process of cultural diffusion.

Despite the parallel publishing relationship between Thailand and Japan even after the standardization due to the enforcing of copyright protection, the active circulation of Japanese-style comics led to the dominance of the market and social discourses. However, the potential of the cultural dialogue through the comics gives a new highlight in the cultural interaction between Thailand and Japan.

Field of Study: Thai Studies   Student's Signature...................

Academic Year: 2006   Advisor's Signature...................

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am honored to have the chance to study with great professors in Chulalongkorn University throughout this project. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Associate Professor Thanavadee Boonlue who showed interest and understanding towards my topic from the beginning. She gave me room to explore my ideas and provided a Thai perspective to my research. I would also like to put on record my gratitude to Assistant Professor Carina Chotirawe, the chairman of the committee who helped clarify ideas in the thesis and Associate Professor Surichai Wun'gaeo who gave me new directions and intensive encouragement. Assistant Professor Chomanard Setisarn also encouraged me through the individual studies course.

I owe a special debt of thanks to Wacharapan Luanyanon who is an antique Japanese-style comics collector and discovered Doraemon at an early age through his collections. Also, Worawijya Wejnukroh, the owner of a Thai cartoon library, provided me with the chance to read the original comics in his collection. My research cannot be accomplished without the support of all the interviewees in particular Jairuakiap Rongphapsawat, Kitsada Boonsri, Somboon Kriengareekul and Virat Teekaputisakul who provided me with rich and reliable information.

I would like to thank the Thai Studies Center and Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond, the director of the Thai Studies Center, whose lectures guided me throughout the course, as well as khun Ann and khun Puu who advised me on the administrative processes.

Furthermore, I would like to specially thank the following persons who supported me during the project. Jane Lee helped in editing my thesis while Caroline Favier, Mitsuko Yamashita, Fritz Goss, Rasamee Maneenin, Supannee Yamaguchi, and Maythawee Leartrattana gave me suggestions and encouragement.

Last but not least, my sincere gratitude goes to my husband who encouraged me with his endless support and deep understanding, as well as my sisters and my parents in Japan for their constant care and concern.

CONTENTS

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Thailand and Japan will celebrate 120 years of diplomatic relations. In this relationship spanning more than a century, various cultural interactions have been observed between the two countries at different levels: in face-to-face experiences such as migrations of people; in transfer imaginations through the media; or in official events at state diplomacy level. On the other hand, with the rapid development of communication technology, both countries face a global consumer culture in which powerful media conglomerates, such as News Corp., Disney, and Sony, are active in spreading the same product to the world in the late 20th century. Young people enjoy consuming global cultural products and watching Hollywood movies. The global cultural commodities have a profound influence in everyday life in both countries.

However, the *Manga* or Japanese-style comics, is one of the long-lasting popular cultural products to show cultural interactions between Thailand and Japan. Japanese animation and comics have been circulating in Thailand since the mid-1960s, before global interconnectedness became a central concern. They remain quite popular among children and the youth. The author found that in September 2005, 13 stories of Japanese TV animation were aired weekly by Thai channels. Hundreds of new Japanese-style comic book titles are issued each month[1] and are sold at magazine stands near schools or households in the city. Of the Japanese-style comics, Doraemon is one of the most popular stories in Thailand as well as in Japan. When *Time* magazine chose Doraemon as one of 25 Asian heroes in 2002 (29 April 2002), Thai newspapers proudly reported its contribution as "Doraemon, the (cutest) hero in Asia" despite the fact that Somphop Jantraka, a Thai social activist, was also nominated in it

---

[1] Figures estimated by the author based on information from major publishers.

(*Nation Sudsapda*, 29 April, 2002, *Phujadkarn*, 25, June 2002). Doraemon was selected as the most popular comic character by Thai children in 1983 and 1987. Most Thai university students recognize him and own Doraemon merchandise (Sounsamut, 1999), while Doraemon's videos or VCDs occupy 40 per cent of the market in 2006 (*Khao Sod*, 9 August 2006).

On the surface, the asymmetrical popularity of Japanese-style comics in Thailand might remind us of "cultural imperialism" which is apt to be defined as "a dramatic, pessimistic 'master scenario' for the absorption of peripheral cultures into a homogenized, commodified 'globalized' future" (Tomlinson, 1997:175). A popular monthly magazine printed a feature article titled "Japan Attack!" and warned that nowadays Japan does not only export products, but also exports cultural values and lifestyle (*GM magazine*, August 2002). Therefore, it is very important to look through the process of cultural flow of Japanese-style comics to understand this phenomenon.

How did Doraemon arrive in Thailand and become well-known among Thai people? What factors have contributed to Doraemon's cultural flow? This thesis attempts to investigate Doraemon's cultural flow in Thailand by focusing mainly on the activities of local publishers. Chapter II provides the background of the local comics market in Thailand; the history and the production of Japanese comics in Japan; Thai cartoon history; and social development in Thailand. Next, chapter III explores Doraemon as a phenomenon of cultural flow in the Thai comics market through the process of its reproduction and distribution by the local cultural industry. Chapter IV then analyzes the cultural flow of Doraemon through the relationship between Thai publishers and publishers in Japan, and the authorization of copyright protection. The conclusion discusses the factors that contribute to Doraemon's cultural flow and the potential for cultural dialogue through comics.

This thesis contains primary historical research on the development of Japanese-style comics in Thailand which has been popular since the mid-1960s. There is no well-organized research or book on this topic because it has been regarded as illegal and pirated consumption since the legalization of the comics industry in Thailand.

1. 1 Objectives

1. To grasp the outline of cultural dissemination of Japanese-style comics in Thailand.
2. To study the process of cultural flow of Doraemon, a foreign cultural product, in Thailand.
3. To examine the domestic and external factors that contribute to the Doraemon phenomenon as a cultural flow between Thailand and Japan.

1. 2 Research question and hypothesis

This thesis attempts to examine Doraemon's circulation and consumption in Thailand with the following research questions.

1. How has Doraemon been circulated in Thailand?
2. What factors contribute to Doraemon's cultural flow?

Hypothesis

1. Doraemon's circulation in Thailand was shaped by local publishers and consumer demand.
2. The cultural flow of Doraemon has been influenced by intellectual property rights (IPR) under the "Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)".

1. 3 Scope and limitation of the study

This thesis examines Doraemon mainly in print media such as comic paperbacks and magazines because the print medium is the original expression of Doraemon in Japan and is the first medium that introduced Doraemon to Thailand. In addition, it is necessary to focus on a single medium to examine its cultural flow clearly.

Therefore, TV animation, cinema films and the merchandizing of Doraemon are beyond the scope of this thesis. The historical scope is from 1971 to present.

Data collection of old original documents is also necessary for this thesis to examine the cultural product in the print media. However, this is one of the most difficult tasks in this thesis because Doraemon's circulation started three decades ago and comic books are rarely found in public libraries. Hence, I had to rely on private collections. This is also why some of the documents cited in this thesis are re-quotations from other works.

1. 4 Definition of terms

The following terms will be defined in this section; comics, Japanese-style comics, standardization.

1. "Comics" is defined as a kind of visual art on printed media expressed in panels by using images and texts, often in the form of speech balloons. "Comic strips" are a kind of comics expressed by four panels or so except for editorial cartoons which satirizes political and social issues and usually appear in news publications. "Cartoon" has a wider meaning, including animated cartoon as well as comic strips (or comic books), and editorial cartoons.

2. "Japanese-style comics" is defined as comics with a particular style developed in postwar Japan [The characteristic of Japanese-style comics will be described in Chapter II and Table 2-1]

3. "Japanese-style cartoons", which is known as *manga* in Japanese, is defined as Japanese-style comics and Japanese-style animations (*anime*).

4. "Standardization" is defined as the process to establish technical standards between competing parties in the market so that all parties can be benefit without hurting competition. In the context of social science, standardization often means the process of establishing standards of various kinds, and improving efficiency to handle people and their interactions.

5. "Local publisher" is defined as the publisher in Thailand as compared to the Japanese publisher.

6. "Readers" is defined as the consumers of comics. "Consumers" is defined as the persons who consume cartoons: both comics and TV cartoons.

1. 5 Theoretical framework

1. 5. 1 Globalization or transnational cultural flow

With cultural globalization becoming the center of academia's interest since the 1980s, various discussions and definitions have been held among scholars. One basic view poses globalization as a concept refers "both to the compression of the world and intensification of consciousness of the world as whole" (Robertson, 1992:8). He developed the theory of globalization as a process of simultaneous interpenetration of the "global" and the "local" towards homogeneity of the culture and the process of globalization can be explained as localization, hybridization and glocalization (Robertson, 1995). However the concept of "the world as whole" is still controversial because it contains some aspect of homogenization by the spread of the same products of Western-American origin all over the world through media conglomerates. Cultural imperialism posed by Tomlinson explains the cultural flow from the West as an invasion of non-Western countries, which is destroying local culture (Tomlinson, 1997).

Since the aim of this thesis is to study the cultural flow of Doraemon in Thailand, the concept of globalization seems relevant for the framework. Indeed, the phenomenon of Doraemon or Japanese comics' circulation in overseas markets has been discussed as globalization of Japanese popular culture. However, there are several characteristics which cannot be explained by the definition of globalization (Befu, 2001, Hu, 2004:219, Iwabuchi, 2004, Shiraishi, 2003a) because globalization itself is synonymous with Westernization (Hannerz, 1996:18, Iwabuchi, 2001:3, Befu, 2001). Moreover, it is still controversial to regard Japanese comics or animation as global

culture (Napier, 2001:23).

Therefore, this thesis will apply the term "transnational cultural flow" which explains "meanings and meaningful forms over people and social relationships". This can also be an adequate label for "phenomena which can be of quite variable scale of distribution, even when they do share the characteristic of not 'international' "(Hannerz, 1996:6).

According to Ulf Hannerz, there are four organizational frames which entail different tendencies in the way that meanings and meaningful forms are produced and circulated in social relationships. One is *form-of-life* frame which characterizes the "circulation of meaning in households, work places, neighborhoods". And it is "often routinized because it results from practical adaptations to enduring circumstances". Next is the *state* frame which is "the flow of meaning between the state apparatus and the people defined as subjects/citizens". The third is *market* as a frame of cultural process encompassing commoditized culture, that which passes from buyer to seller. The fourth is the *movement* frame, involving a highly deliberate although often rather decentered handling of meaning, a matter of persuasion and proselytizing, in relationships between those converted and those not yet converted (Hannerz, 1996:60-70).

Arjun Appadurai suggests five dimensions of global cultural flows which move in non-isomorphic paths. Firstly, there are *ethnoscapes* produced by flows of people: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles and guest workers. Secondly, there are *technoscapes*, the machinery and plant flows produced by multinational and national corporations and government agencies. Thirdly, there are *finanscapes*, produced by the rapid flows of money in the currency markets and stock exchanges. Fourthly, there are *mediascapes*, the repertoires of images and information, the flows which are produced and distributed by newspapers, magazines, television and film. Fifthly, there are *ideoscapes*, linked to flows of images which are associated with state or counter-state movement ideologies which are comprised of elements of the Western Enlightenment worldview — images of democracy, freedom, welfare, rights, etc. (Appadurai, 1990: 296-301).

1. 5. 2 Cultural industries and creative industries

Cultural industries can be seen as one of the factors working for cultural interconnectedness today. Since cultural markets have been increasingly going global, the role of cultural industries has been more important because it contributes to the construction of cultural value, reproduces cultural identity and contributes to social cohesion. Therefore, international organizations such as UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) or General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had required it to be defined in order to more forcefully shape the global trade structure of cultural goods and services. They define cultural industries as "those industries that combine the creation, production and commercialization of contents that are intangible and cultural in nature. These contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services" (UNESCO, 2000:13). Throsby describes it similarly as "cultural goods and services [that] involve creativity in their production, embody some degree of intellectual property and convey symbolic meaning" (Throsby, 2001:112).

"Cultural industries" used to be a term associated with the radical critique of mass entertainment by the Frankfurt School in and following the 1930s and 1940s. One historical work, "Dialectic of Enlightenment", written by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in 1947, used the concept of "cultural studies" to signal their disgust at the success of Fascism. At the same time, they criticized American mass media which were responsible for dumbing down the population, making it politically docile, and softening it up for demagoguery and worse by industrializing culture as commodities (Hartley, 2005:10-11, Ueno and Mouri, 2003:33-34).

As represented by Adorno's work, there is significant difference on the concept of popular culture between European and American scholars.

> "Europeans persisted in seeing culture in national terms (e.g. "French culture") and therefore also in the context of transnational negotiation governed by law, to preserve and promote national cultures without

overwhelming the national culture of others.   Americans on the other hand defined culture in market terms, and saw no reason why the market shouldn't prevail" (Hartley, 2005:11).

Against the backdrop, a new term, "creative industries" has emerged: "(1) the core of "culture" was still creativity, but (2) creativity was produced, deployed, consumed, and enjoyed quite differently in post-industrial societies from the way it used to be in the time of the earl of Shaftesbury" (Hartley, 2005:18).   This thesis is based on the concept of "creative industries".   However, the term "cultural industry" will be used in this thesis in order to explain copyright protection and intellectual properties as standardized by GATT and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The theoretical framework for the thesis is based on theories used in the study of Doraemon or comics as a cultural product produced by cultural industries, and more specifically, in the study of cultural flow of Doraemon, within the discipline of cultural studies.   It also draws heavily on Hannerz's (1996) seminal work on the concept of transnational cultural flow.

1. 6 Research methodology

Since there is no primary research on Doraemon's circulation and consumption in Thailand, field research was mainly chosen to examine its process.

Field research for this thesis consists of personal interviews.   In-depth interviews with 16 people were carried out primarily during the four months from April 2006 to July 2006: Eleven of them are either currently or used to be involved in the local publishing business, two are Thai and Japanese-style antique cartoon collectors, two are working for a Japanese publisher in Japan, and one is a Japanese officer working for the Strategic Council on Intellectual Property (SCIP) of the Japanese government.   All the interviews were conducted in Thai except for the ones with Japanese nationals (see

Appendix C for the interview questions). Although the author had a list of questions as a guide line, the questions were adjusted appropriately in the course of the interview with the interviewees. Each initial interview lasted for 1.5 to 2 hours. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Subsequent interviews were carried out for clarification purposes. The skills honed in the author's six years of experience as editor-in-chief of a magazine were invaluable during the interview process.

Other than observations made during the fieldwork, documentary research into the original comics was conducted.

1. 7 Literature review

1. 7. 1 Japanese-style comics

Transnational cultural flow of Japanese-style comics

There are many books and sociological research on Japanese-style comics especially in Japan. However they discuss mainly the contents of the comic itself and there is little research on the industry, or cultural flow overseas.

Saya Shiraishi is a leading researcher who linked globalization and the soft power of Japanese comics (Shiraishi, 1997:233-234). Through her field research in Asia, mainly in Indonesia, she notices that the consumption of Doraemon created a set of "image alliances" which are "multi-industrial, multinational" among Asian consumers and points out its potential of working as a cultural hegemony. She also proposes the difference between the globalization process for *manga* and *anime*.

> *"The process of globalization of manga proceeded mainly in the 1980s.*
> *When we survey the early age of Japanese cartoon globalization, we*
> *found a different model of globalization which explains McDonald's or*
> *Coca-Cola. We tend to think of cultural globalization as a global*
> *conglomerate's penetration in the local market. However, manga is*

different. ... I call it globalization by "consumer's long hand toward Japanese comics". (Shiraishi 2003a, translation author's)

Fusanosuke Natsume is a well-known *manga* critique in Japan. His work (2001) reveals the process of the reproduction of Japanese-style cartoons (*manga*) overseas as well as the attitudes of Japanese comic publishers who ignored the overseas market. In this work, he discusses the characteristics of Japanese-style cartoons through the eye of foreigners, and warns about the late response for the establishment of intellectual property as a global standard. For example, a Japanese publisher has to pay the patent fee to a French agency who claimed Dragon Ball, a very popular Japanese comic title, as their intellectual property in France.

Cherry Sze-Ling Lai and Dixon Heung Wah Wong (2001) explore the reception of Japanese-style comics in Hong Kong. They describe the historical process of Japanese-style comics' penetration in Hong Kong from the point of view of the structure of the local comics industry and the sociocultural endowments. Although comics have long been regarded as harmful in Hong Kong, "Japanese-style comics changed the local readership of comics [and] thus enhanced the social status of comics" (2001:120).

Chie Yamanaka (2004) examines the development of Korean comics industry under the national strategy to promote local comics to the world, yet the situation is complicated by its complex relationship with Japanese-style comics. Until 1998, the Korean government had prohibited the diffusion of Japanese culture. Hence most Koreans have been familiar with reproductions of Japanese-style comics drawn by local cartoonists with Korean names although the picture and story line remain based on the original Japanese one. The reception of Japanese-style comics in Korea after the opening of the market is a very complex process and still faces heavy criticism. This historical process affects Korea's national strategy to globalize its cartoons.

Comics industry in Japan

As for the Japanese comics industry, there are two informative books on this subject.

One is "*Manga manga*, the world of Japanese comics" by Frederic Schodt (1983). Schodt conducted the first primary research of Japanese comics in English and the book is still used as a textbook in courses on Japanese popular culture. With numerous comic panels and historical analysis, he shows the richness of the Japanese comic world and its unique character as well as the structure of the industry. The characteristics of various Japanese comic magazines and cartoonists were described in his next work in 1998.

An important work by Haruyuki Nakano (2004) explores the factors that contribute to creating the huge domestic market of Japanese comics. He points out that the emergence of children consumers in the late 1950s was the turning point for the development of the Japanese comics industry. The Japanese comics industry is characterized by a few aspects: the publishers' success in keeping the baby boomers as readers in the market for half a century; the industry's success in cooperating with a new media, television, by providing the contents for TV animation production; and high production abilities of Japanese cartoonists.

1. 7. 2 Thai cartoons

There are few books on the history and industry of Thai comics. The only published book that describes Thai cartoon history is "Legend of Thai Cartoon" written by a Thai cartoonist, Julasak Amdravej (2001). He introduces various Thai cartoonists and their works with many comic panels. While the history is well-described, the poor organization fails to provide a holistic view.

Warawijya Wejnukroh's "Kartoon Thai" (2006), which is in the process of being, published talks about the development and decline of the Thai comics industry. A famous Thai comics collector, he describes the comics industry by using a lot of original documents, old comic titles as well as lists of publishers in great detail. This is one of the finest works on the Thai comics industry.

Naron Thongbaan (1983) looks at local cartoons for children in his book "*Kaan Sarng Nangsue Samrap Dek* (Creating Books for Children)". Other than introducing

the work of local cartoonists, he also suggests how to create good cartoons for children. Moreover, the book provides a sketch of the local comic market in the early 1980s.

1. 7. 3 Japanese-style cartoons in Thailand

Although there are no books written on the history of Japanese-style comics in Thailand, various research projects have been conducted to examine its impact and effect on Thai children.

Pornpanit Puangpinyo (1988) conducted a research focusing on the contents such as spelling, wrong use of language, as well as lack of moral keywords; she finds the destructive moral effects and frequent mis-using of the language. In addition, her field research on the reading habits and preferences of 300 students in primary and secondary schools in Bangkok for Japanese-style comics revealed the participation of children and youth in consumption of comics. Children and youth of their own accord set aside about 20 baht per month to buy three comic books. Since the children and the youth are not aware of the harmful moral effect of Japanese-style comics, Pornpanit warns about the consumption of Japanese-style comics and the harmful results for children and youth.

Lalita Yuwanakorn's (1990) survey of 396 secondary school students in Bangkok investigates the production and distribution process of Japanese-style comic consumption in Thailand. According to her research, 610 comic books were published during 1987-1988 and most of them are one-off editions priced at 10, 12 and 15 baht. The results of the questionnaires were: 90 per cent of the students know and read Japanese comics frequently. Half the students buy comics on their own and 40 per cent of them borrow them from friends. They chose comic books based on the drawing and price. Despite "unusual sex images" in the contents, the youth still prefer Japanese comics because of its drawing presentation, story line and the main themes.

Chanya Liewtrakul's (1997) "The development of imported animation films broadcast on Thai Television Channel 9 (MCOT)" shows that the importing of animation films on Channel 9 changed from American animation film to Japanese ones.

Dividing the history into five periods, she collects data of the importing process, reproduction technique of the local industry as well as part of the titles aired by Channel 9. Through her research, we can study the development of local media industry and its structures.

Thidarut Rukprayoon (2002) researches the diffusion of Japanese teenage culture on media in Thailand. Although her research focuses on the diffusion of television, radio and print media especially magazines in the 1990s, the findings portray the spread of Japanese teenage culture consumption by both the local media industry and audiences.

Doraemon in Thailand

As for Doraemon, I could find four studies that focus on the contents of Doraemon in Thailand.

Orathai Srisantisuk presented a short history of Japanese-style comics and the Doraemon boom as a social phenomenon at the "Technical Seminar on Thai-Japanese Relations" on 26-27 November 1982 during the Doraemon boom. She pointed out the difference in reception between Mot X and Doraemon, and analyzed Doraemon's popularity by surveying 25 Thai children. She concluded that the reasons behind Doraemon's popularity are: Doraemon's futuristic gadgets stimulate children's imagination; Doraemon's cute looks; and moral lessons. She also mentions that the reason Thai comics industry cannot create such comics is due to the budgetary constraints.

Duangrat Kamalobol conducted a research on "The study of the social construction of emotion of the Japanese cartoon TV Series Doraemon" to understand the social construction of emotion as well as important factors that influenced the construction of emotion which includes major techniques used for conveying messages. She concludes there are both similarities and dissimilarities in values between Thai and Japanese society. The main similarity is that there are Chinese influences on both societies. She points out the dissimilarities are caused by the difference of philosophies in both cultures. For example, the deep relationship between Doraemon

and Nobita was explained by *bushido* which is the traditional philosophy of a *samurai* serving his master.

Prem Sounsamut conducted a survey to find out the popularity of Doraemon especially among university students (1999). All the respondents know Doraemon and have Doraemon goods. He explains that Doraemon is in the heart of almost all Thai people even though Doraemon was drawn by Fujiko F. Fujio who grew up in Japanese society. It is because episodes of Doraemon provide freedom of imagination, fantasy and displacement, in psychological terms, by his gadgets.

In Virapong Saeng-Xuto's "Science Creative Thinking from Cartoon Doraemon" (2003), he conducted the research on 50 episodes of Doraemon mainly in comic books to examine creative thinking in science as seen in Doraemon's gadgets. She found that Doraemon's gadgets are based on knowledge in physics, biology, astronomy, and geology. These creative ideas, based on science, are used to meet the physical needs, safety needs, need for love and belonging. These ideas from the creator stemmed mostly from his originality and adept mind. The researcher concludes that creative ideas shown in Doraemon can be useful for teachers when they teach not only science but also mathematics, social science, art, Thai language, and English.

Books and magazine articles that focus on Doraemon will also be used in my documentary research to examine the reception and interpretation of Doraemon by Thai readers.

Prasert Pritpongarnphim analyzes Doraemon's text in his book "*Kartoon Sut Thii Rak* (lovely comics)". He explains that the character of perennial loser Nobita "appeals to Thai children who cannot always be a winner". He compares Nobita with Charlie Brown and Doraemon with Snoopy in *Peanuts* comics drawn by Charles M. Schultz but analyzes that Doraemon shows more sympathy for Nobita than Snoopy does for Charlie Brown. Also he explains Nobita can go against or fight with Doraemon because while Doraemon takes care of Nobita like a mother, he is not Nobita's parent. That is why Doraemon gained popularity among children. In addition, he found

similarities between Doraemon's stories and the story pattern of Western traditional fables such as Hansel and Gretel, and Snow White.

A Day, a popular youth monthly magazine, selected Doraemon for a special article in February 2002. With a personal history of Doraemon's creator, detailed data of Doraemon's character and Doraemon's history in Thailand, this article provides rich background information for readers who grew up with Doraemon. It also interviewed "Doraemon fans" who collect a lot of Doraemon merchandise, as well as showed how ordinary people on the streets can easily draw Doraemon, showing the depth of Doraemon's consumption after its arrival 20 years ago.

1. 8 Significance of the study

This thesis is a primary English research in the comics industry in Thailand. The importance of the comics industry as a "cultural industry" is increasing today, because it transfers cultural values, identities and lifestyles. This thesis provides the basic understanding of the comics industry and its history.

In addition, with the author's fieldwork conducted both in Thailand and Japan, this thesis would be a baseline study for understanding the Japanese-style comics in Thailand as well as the relationship of the local comics industry with the Japanese publishers. Despite the huge circulation of Japanese-style comics, previous studies of these comics in Thailand have been concerned not with the industries that produce the comics but with the audience by conducting audience surveys.

Finally, there is no research to explore the cultural flow of a foreign comic from its beginning to the present and to analyze the transition of its flow through various factors especially from the viewpoint of copyright protection. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the development of consumption of a foreign cultural product, as well as the impact of global standards on the local cultural industry.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF JAPANESE-STYLE

COMICS IN THAILAND

Chapter II provides a sketch of the history of comics in both Japan and Thailand. Although comics in both countries took a leaf from Western/American comics, they had developed differently in its culture and the industry. The first section describes the outline of Doraemon's history and the second section summarizes the background of the Japanese-style comics and the industry in Japan. The third section traces the development of the history of Thai cartoons and its struggles with the new medium of television, before the arrival of Doraemon in Thailand in 1971. The fourth section examines the social development of Thai society as a socio-political background especially from the 1960s to the 1980s which was the main period of Japanese-style comics consolidated its position in Thai society.

2. 1 Background of Doraemon

Doraemon has been a "national darling" for more than three decades in Japan. It was serialized in children's magazines since the end of 1969 by Fujiko F. Fujio[1]. Doraemon strengthened its position when the episodes were compiled into comic books in 1974 and exploded in popularity with the arrival of Doraemon's TV cartoons which have been aired since 1979 until now. Doraemon is definitely one of the most popular comics in postwar Japan (Shiraishi, 1997:233).

---

[1] Hiroshi Fujimoto drew Doraemon under the pen-name of Fujiko F. Fujio. He was one half of the duo of Fujiko Fujio with Motoo Abiko since their debut in 1951.

2. 1. 1 Storyline of Doraemon

Doraemon is a "science fiction (SF)" fantasy based on the everyday struggle of Nobita, the main character (Fig. 2-1) who is a typical under-achiever in the fourth grade. It was originally expressed in the one-off comics around 10-15 pages long. According to the cartoonist, this "SF" has a double meaning: one means science fiction in the notion of Western novels and another means "sukoshi fushigina monogatari" in Japanese (translated as "small fantasy" or "a little wonderful tale") (*Yomu*, 1993:10). This "SF" idea shapes Doraemon (Fig.2-1) as a very humanistic and approachable robot. Doraemon is sent back in time by Nobita's great-grandson who wishes to improve Nobita's circumstances for a better future. Doraemon showed up first from the drawer of Nobita's desk (Fig.2-1). It uses very ordinary settings in daily life unlike Western science fiction which explores a specific aspect of humanity or universe under a new condition contrived by the author.

Fig. 2-1 Doraemon showed up first from the drawer of Nobita's desk.

Fig. 2-2 Nobita is crying about his problem.

Fig. 2-3 Doraemon is going to provide some gadgets from his pocket.

The typical storyline is that of Nobita returning home crying about his problems at school or among friends (Fig.2-2). Doraemon then provides some gadgets[1] from his four-dimensional pocket in order to fix Nobita's problem (Fig.2-3). However, Nobita goes the wrong way despite Doraemon's good intentions, and gets into deeper trouble than before.

---

[1] They are originally called *himitsu dougu* (secret tools) in Japanese. It is translated in Thai as *khong wiset* ของวิเศษ(magical tools).

2. 1. 2 Variety as cultural products

Once Doraemon became a social icon, its image was recreated by several media and commodities. Children can enjoy Doraemon in many ways. The most authentic way was reading Doraemon comics in monthly magazines. Doraemon was serialized in educational magazines first targeting young children such as those in *Shogaku 4 nensei* (fourth grade of primary school pupils, Fig. 2-4)[1] and was published by Shogakukan, one of the largest publishers which print comics as well as various magazines, books and dictionaries. The next way is to read Doraemon paperbacks (Fig.2-5). Doraemon has been compiled into 45 volumes of the "Tentoumushi comics" series published by Shogakukan as well. From the first Doraemon paperbacks published in August 1974, the sales now total 150 million copies (Yokoyama, 2005:43, Fig.2-6). Except for 45 volumes of comic paperbacks in "Tentomushi comics", there are various comic books including educational books. According to Shogakukan, 1,363 titles of Doraemon-related books in the market in Japan in 2006. The third and most popular way is watching TV cartoons which has been shown weekly since 1979. The fourth way is watching a movie which has been produced yearly since 1980. It is almost a ritual for Japanese families to go to the

Fig. 2-4 *Shogaku 4 nensei*, a monthly magazine.

Fig. 2-5 The original Doraemon paperback published in Japan.

---

[1] Doraemon first appeared in 6 children magazines: *Yoiko* (good child), *Youchien* (kindergarten), *Shogaku 1 nensei*, *Shogaku 2 nensei*, *Shogaku 3 nensei* and *Shogaku 4 nensei* in December 1969. "Shogaku-nensei" means the different grades in a primary school. Hence, *Shogaku 1 nensei* means first grade.
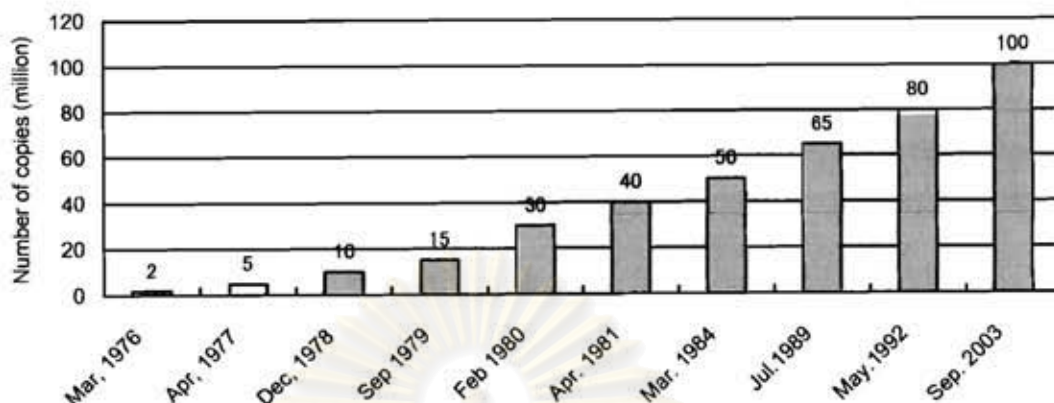
Fig. 2-6 Total sum circulation of Doraemon paperbacks in Japan (Yokoyama, 2004:101)

cinema for the Doraemon movie every March (Schodt, 1998:182).

In addition, there are hundreds of Doraemon merchandises. More than 400 kinds of "Doraemon merchandises"[1] were produced by more than 40 different companies in 1993. Doraemon's merchandizing might be one of the top among Japanese comic characters in its variety and its long-running popularity (*Yomu*, 1993: 23).

2. 1. 3 Popularity of Doraemon overseas

Doraemon is loved not only by Japanese but also by children overseas. Twenty-five countries such as: Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Cyprus, and Spain have also published Doraemon's comic books. Children in more than 30 countries including the Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin American countries and European countries such as Italy, Spain and France, have enjoyed the imported TV cartoon (Pers. Interview, Atsushi Kuwamura). Generally, Asian countries tend to welcome Doraemon more enthusiastically than Western countries (Natsume, 1993:14, Yokoyama, 2005:59). However, Doraemon was received differently in each Asian country because of the

---

[1] These include toys, clothes, stationery, food, watches, medicines, table wares, daily goods.
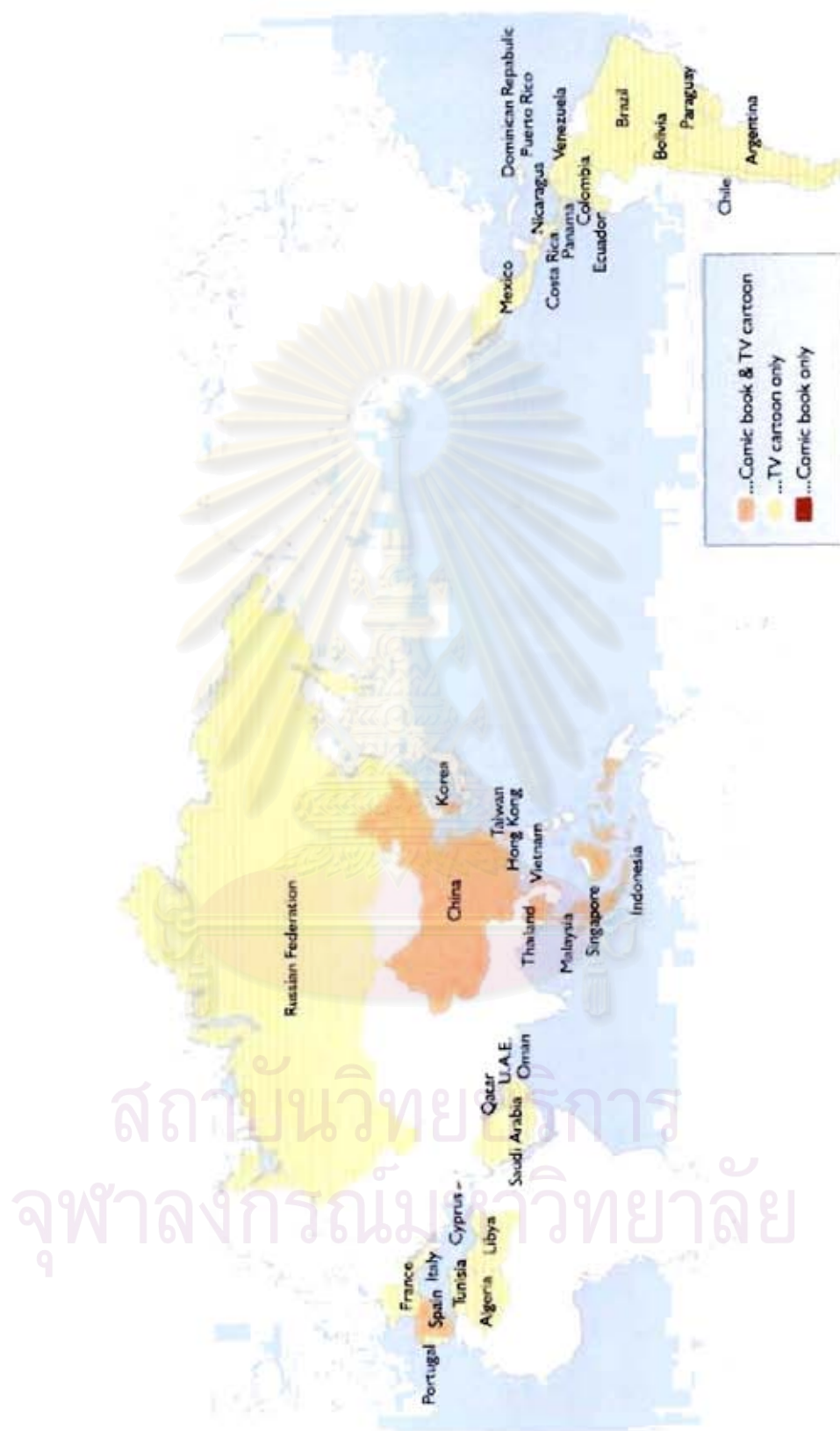
Fig. 2-7 Doraemon comic books and TV animation in the world (Yokoyama, 2005:118-119)[1]

---

[1] Graphic produced by the author.

historically problematic relations Japan has with other Eastern and Southeast Asian countries. According to Shogakukan, Thailand, as well as Taiwan is one of the most popular countries of the consumption of Doraemon. In addition, Thailand was the second country in the world to broadcast Doraemon in September 1982.

Taiwan is one of the earliest countries to consume Doraemon overseas. It was introduced in 1976 and has been serialized since 1978. It gained huge popularity. "No one exists who doesn't know Doraemon as his Taiwanese name, *Shao Ting Tang*, all over the Taiwan" by the early 1990s (*Yomu* 1993: 4). Most children grew up with *Shao Ting Tang* and without knowing it was Japanese comics because they started to create Doraemon's story by local cartoonist when all of original stories were published in 1983, (*Yomu*, 1993:4, Shiraishi, 1997:269). Several publishers print locally-created Doraemon until it was authorized in 1992. Although there are several differences in the period and title's translation and the depth of popularity, the reception in Hong Kong, China, Indonesia and Vietnam is similar to Taiwan's situation.

In contrast, Doraemon did not receive a warm welcome in South Korea and the Philippines where serious damages were inflicted during the World War II. South Korea officially forbade the diffusion of Japanese culture until 1998. Therefore, most Japanese comics were redrawn and renamed by Korean publishers before circulation. Doraemon was re-titled as *Donchanmon*, however, it was not popular because "[Doraemon] has a strong Japanese identity. Nobita lives in a *tatami* room, the father wears kimono"(*Yomu*, 1993:7)

Italy and Spain are the only Western countries in which Doraemon has been widely known among children through the TV cartoon. "*Doraemon Gatto Cosmico* (Cosmic cat, Doraemon)" has been aired since 1982 in Italy and several merchandizing goods are consumed (*Boku Doraemon*, 2005:11). Five different dialogue versions of Doraemon have been aired on 10 local channels almost everyday in Spain since 1993.

Many scholars, writers, and critics have tried to answer the question why Doraemon can gain huge popularity even overseas countries. Natsume, a well-known critic of comics, attributes it to simplicity as a standard of children comics in postwar Japan:

"The core of Doraemon's expression is simplicity in the drawing and various sublimed dramatic expressions in the panelling which has developed in postwar Japan.   In this notion, Doraemon can be said as a basic standard of children comics in postwar Japan, as opposed to the Japanese comics' development toward grown-up readers or diversity of expressions. " (Natsume, 1993:19)

2. 2 History of the Japanese comics industry in Japan

Unlike cartoons in the West or Thailand, Japanese cartoon or *manga,* is a mainstream popular culture and it creates a huge market for domestic cultural industries. In 2002, 9,829 titles of comic books and 281 titles of comic magazines were "newly" published in 2002 in Japan (Nakano, 2004:1).   Japanese comics and comic magazines accounted for 37.8 per cent of the total circulation in publishing industry.   It occupies 23.3 per cent of the total domestic publishing sales, reaching 2.22 trillion yen (US$19 billion) in 2003 (*Shuppan Geppou,* February 2004 quoted by Natsume, 2004b:294).   It means one third of total consumption of publications was comics and comic magazines. Some staff in the publishing companies sneer at the idea of using profits from the comics to subsidize the publishing of literary novels.   As some enterprising reporters have discovered, Japan now uses more paper for its comics than it does for its toilet paper (Schodt, 1983:12).

Japanese comics took its current form shortly after the World War II, developed from a mixture of Japanese traditional drawing such as *ukiyo-e* and the foreign style of comic drawing.   Shiraishi summarizes the characteristics of Japanese comics as a new medium:

1. The narrative tendency of **story-comics** developed their narratives as a most common form in postwar Japan
2. The **monochrome expressive form** with simple line drawing
3. Having **a huge domestic marke**t supported by readers that include children and adults
4. **A flexible industrial structure** of publishers, animation productions and

others

(Shiraishi, 2000:84, translated and emphasized by author)

The first two points will be discussed in the section 2.2.1 under the history of Japanese cartoons while the latter two points will be looked at in the section 2.2.2 under the development of the Japanese comics industry.

2. 2. 1 Heritage of Japanese cartoons

There are several books and papers exploring the history of Japanese comics. This section is a summary of the works from Schodt (1983, 1998), Yomoda (1999), Kure (1997), Ito (2005) and Napier (2001).

Authentic Japanese drawing with monochrome line art

Although the origin of Japanese comic is still controversial, most scholars agree that Japanese comic (*manga*) and Japanese animation (*anime*) share a common heritage of that emphasizes the culture privileges the visual far more than that of the West (Napier, 2001:21) . Some scholars mention the origin of Japanese comic history in a certain point in Japanese history. One of the oldest surviving examples is

Fig. 2-8 A scene from *Chojugiga* drawn by Bishop Toba during the 12th century in Japan (Available from http://akituya.gooside.com/choujyu_allall).

Chojugiga, a picture scroll with caricatures of everything from animals and people drawn by Bishop Toba in the 12th century (Fig.2-8). We can see the characteristics of Japanese comics' monochrome expressions in these old examples. Popular printed art was spurred on in Japan by the woodblock-printing process which is known as *ukiyo-e* in the early 17th century. Like the comics of today, *ukiyo-e* and *kibyoshi* (Fig.2-9) were a part of popular culture during their time. Under the feudal dictatorship of the Edo period (1600-1867), the mass production of woodblock print was developed for popular consumption and the simple drawing technique generated an assembly-line style as well as their various themes. Susan Napier, a leading scholar studying Japanese animation, explains the characteristics of *ukiyo-e*:

> *"Certainly Edo period works have images that appear to have direct links to both manga and anime, particularly with the 'kibyoshi', illustrated books with an often humorous and/or erotic content, and the woodblock print known as ukiyo-e, which featured not only actors and courtesans of the demimonde but, as time went on, increasingly grotesque and imaginative subjects such as demons, ghosts, and extremely creative pornography."* (Napier, 2001:21)

Fig. 2-9 *Kibyoshi,* a popular wood print book during the 17th century in Japan. (Schodt, 1983:33)

Arrival of Western-style cartoons and the birth of Japanese-style comics

Western- style cartoons were introduced in Japan after the United States forced Japan out of her self-imposed isolation. In 1862, a British-style humor magazine, *The Japan Punch* (Fig.2-10), was published by an English resident in Japan. The Japanese also acquired new printing technologies from the Westerners very soon because woodblock printing was expensive and time-consuming. They began publishing their own humor magazines and daily newspapers, modeled after those of the West. By the end of the 19th century, the focus of Japanese cartoonists began to shift from Europe to the United States where a lively, less subtle type of political cartoon was popular. During the wartime, the Japanese government used the popularity of cartoons for state propaganda from the 1930s (Fig.2-11).

After Japan's unconditional surrender in August 1945, surviving cartoonists started to work and their art form began to flourish again. One of the most remarkable developments was Osamu Tezuka's comic book titled *Shintakarajima* ("New Treasure Island"). Its creative page layout, clever use of sound effects, and lavish spread of frames to depict a single action made reading *Shintakarajima* almost like watching a movie (Fig.2-12). These techniques served to establish *manga*'s originalities and a new beginning of Japanese comics known as *Manga* (Table 2-1). Thus, Osamu Tezuka is known as "God of *Manga*"(Schodt, 1983:139). His main influence from the West was not comics but film, and the animation of Walt Disney and Max Fleisher.

Although Tezuka's new techniques had a big influence on young followers such as Fujiko F. Fujio, the author of Doraemon, his main contribution to the development of *manga* culture was his narrative style.

> *"The important achievement of Tezuka does not lay in these fiddling techniques. The contribution of his story-comics is the narrative going beyond the framework of Japanese comics by using a complex story line like novels or films."* (Nakano, 2004:46)

With a new drawing form and narrative style, Tezuka developed Japanese comic from the mimicry of Western comics to *manga*, a new media and entertainment for the Japanese with an original form.

Fig. 2-10 *Japan Punch* issued in 1862 (Schodt, 1983: 39).

Fig. 2-11 *Bouken Dankichi,* a popular character, shows how to worship at a Japanese shrine (Schodt, 1983:53).

Table 2-1 Comparison of the techniques between Western cartooning and *manga*

	Manga cartooning technique	Western cartooning technique
Origin	Animation, Film	Drawing, Sketch
Angle-picture view	Film and animation shot; close up, pan shot, zoom in and out etc.	Simple drawing method: such as bird's eye view
Coloring	Black and White	Full color
Shadowing	Using screen tone	Drawing a line or painting
Panel	Free form, sometimes out of frame and allow characters from different panels to communicate with each other	Strictly, cartoons must be put in a formulaic frame with fixed order
Words and description	*Manga* uses pictures to explain the story because it brings animation to drawing	Comics use words to explain the story because it enhances story appreciation by picture
Emotion expression words	Emotion expression words are considered as a part of the picture. In the Chinese and	Emotion expression words appear as words, not part of the picture

| | Japanese alphabet, it was the imitation of nature that words become a type of pictures | |

(Arranged from a chart in Sounsamut, 2004)

The birth of Japanese animation

The story of the birth *anime*, or Japanese animation, provides us with the background for understanding the overseas strategy of Japanese animation and comics later.   The creators of *anime* believed that if they produced high-quality animation, the product will sell well automatically.   In the early days, the high production costs were borne by the creators themselves, as Japanese TV channels were not willing to put up the large investment needed.   As a result, the Japanese animation industry explored merchandizing and overseas market as means of increasing revenue.

Soon after the appearance of *Shintakarajima*, Tezuka began the serialization of what were to became two classics – *Jungle Taitei* (known as "Kimba, the White Lion" in the West) and *Tetsuwan Atom* (or "Astro Boy", Fig.2-13).   Years later Tezuka attempted to animate both works as a pioneering television series which was considered a very challenging project and even Toei, the biggest animation producer in Japan, hesitated to serialize the TV animation.   Forging ahead, Tezuka and his team asked for the production fee of 500,000 yen per episode, which was the market rate for children's programs in that period but it covered just one third of their total cost.   Therefore, his production team worked hard before starting the broadcast and was successful in launching various merchandises: Eleven toys, seven kinds of stationery, eight daily goods, four sets of clothes, four food products and five other miscellaneous products. He gained more than 100 million yen in the first year from merchandizing (Nakano, 2004:76).   In addition, Tezuka's production team wooed overseas markets right from the beginning.   The animation production of *Tetsuwan Atom* was exported to several countries including the US and arrived in Thailand in 1965, just two years after its broadcast in Japan.

Fig. 2-12 Fujiko Fujio was excited by Tezuka's *Shintakarajima.* (Schodt, 1983:63)

Fig. 2-13 *Tetsuwan Atom (Astro Boy)*, the first TV animation in Japan.

Soon after Tezuka's success, many TV cartoons targeted at children were produced and broadcast between the 1960s and 1970s. As most animations are based on Japanese comics, the symbiotic cooperation between the comics industry and TV animation production proved to be successful as they could now tap into readers of comics as well as the TV audience. When film animation *Uchusenkan Yamato* marked blockbuster success in 1977, Japanese animation became widely accepted in society and gained older audiences which helped to expand the domestic market.

2. 2. 2 The development of Japanese comics industry

Instead of just relying on its cultural heritage, the Japanese comics industry has also created several tactics to expand their domestic market by targeting different type of readers. First, affordable comic magazines were successful in attracting the readers with various comics, especially the story-comics. In addition, the comics industry had developed a flexible industrial structure for its survival by cooperating with other industries such as TV cartoon production and had supported the merchandizing of the character. This section mainly discusses the summary of the comprehensive works of Nakano (2004), Natsume (2001, 2004a), Kure (1997) and Schodt (1983, 1998).

2. 2. 2. 1   The huge market for magazines

Many foreigners are surprised by the sight of adults reading comics at public spaces such as on the train when they visit Japan.   Now readers of Japanese comics range from young children to middle-aged men, with various magazines targeting each group of readers.   However, comics were regarded by adults as children's entertainment until the end of the 1960s in Japan.   In the late 1960s, the media anxiously reported a strange phenomenon where university students were still reading comics.   Actually the comics industry grew with the baby boomers; their largest consumers were born just after the end of the war and the industry created various styles of comics to keep baby boomers in the market (Nakano, 2004:26).

There are various comics targeting different groups of readers in Japan.   The following is classified according to an annual report on publication in Japan[1] (Nakano, 2004:171)[2].

1. **Boys' comics**
   (For boys in upper primary school. *Shonen manga* in Japanese)
2. **Girls' comics**
   (For girls in upper primary school. *Shojo manga* in Japanese)
3. **Young men's comics**
   (For boys in upper secondary school. *Seinen manga* in Japanese)
4. **Adult comics**
   (Comics for adult. *Seijin manga* in Japanese)
   4a)   **Ladies comics** (For adult women)
   4b)   **Four-panel comics** (*Yon koma manga* in Japanese)
   4c)   ***Pachinko* comics**[3]
   4d)   **Golf comics**

---

[1] "*Shuppan shihyou: nenpou*" is annual report which provides primary data on the market for publications and is published by The Research Institute for Publication in The All Japan Magazine and Book Publishers' and Editors' Association (www.ajpea.or.jp)

[2] There are more detailed categories such as kindergarten children comics, children comics, women's comics (www.wikipedia.com).

[3] *Pachinko*, or pinball machines, is a popular amusement in Japan.

This wide range of readers resulted from the comics industry's effort and marketing for nearly 50 years (Nakano, 2004, Natsume, 2001:212). Until the late 1950s, there were only children's comic magazines targeting pupils in primary schools in the market. Publishers established new weekly magazines targeting boys such as *Shukan Shonen Magazine* ("Weekly boy's magazine") by Kodansha in 1959 because their largest consumers – the baby boomers – were going to graduate from primary schools. By this time, children had enough pocket money to buy comic magazines on their own (Nakano, 2004:33-39). With high economic growths averaging 11.6 per cent in the 1960s, comic magazines started to target consumers directly without paying heed to the opinions of the children's parents:

> *"Around 1962, a unique comic market structure was started where children who used to be just readers had become consumers. Parents could not stop the children's habit reading of comics if children had enough money to buy it and free time to read it."* *(Nakano, 2004:38)*

The same thing would happen 10 years later. Several new comic magazines targeted young men in 1967. *Shukan Shonen Magazine* sold one million copies by the end of 1966. Again, new comic magazines targeting adults such as *Young Jump* by Koudansha or *Big Comic* by Shougakukan appeared in the market in 1979. Publishers were launching new magazines for new readers in order to expand their market.

Creating different contents

On the other hand, the Japanese comics industry has been successful in keeping the youth as their consumers because cartoonists had already developed their drawing techniques and narrative form for "grown up readers". Therefore, sexual expressions or violence which are often criticized by foreigners are usually included in Japanese-style comics because they targeted older readers. The most significant progress on the comic drawing are the creation of story-comics by Osamu Tezuka and

Fig. 2-14 Girls' comic *Ribon no kishi* ("Princess Knight") drawn by Tezuka (Schodt, 1983:96).

Fig. 2-15 *Gekiga* (drama pictures) for adults (Schodt, 1983:72).

the booming of *Gekiga* since the late 1950s.

Story-comics became the basis of comic expression for adult. Osamu Tezuka, who is regarded as the creator of story-comics in Japan, experimented with his new style in a spate of productivity, creating science fiction, detective stories, historical works, and romances for girls (Schodt, 1983:64, Fig 2-14). Stories that are hundreds of pages in length and his new cinematic technique allowed a level of character and plot development that had been previously unimaginable. Tezuka's followers later developed more variation in this field.

Gekiga or "drama pictures" was a new comic style that flourished from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. The characteristics of *gekiga* include a more graphic approach to depict adult themes such as violence as well as the lack of didactic story telling (Fig 2-15). *Gekiga* was successful in pushing the envelope of comic's nature which defined comics as funnies. With the *gekiga* drawing style, Japanese comics could focus on serious stories such as killing for justice or the defeat of the hero. Japanese comics acquired a new form of story-telling which made it possible to draw closer to the reality in society (Schodt, 1983:124, Kure, 1997:144, Nakano, 2004:47).

2. 2. 2. 2 Flexible organization of the comics industry

In the process of its development, the Japanese-style comics industry ended up with a unique structure that was flexible in responding to the market demand. This section looks at the role of comic magazines, the reusing of contents by paperbacks, merchandizing, and cooperation with other media.

The role of comic magazines

One characteristic of the market is the unique role of comic magazines. The comic magazine has worked as a billboard for the comics market and has attracted new readers as well as given rise to the merchandizing of the comic characters (Schodt, 1998:70). Since it used to be a product for children, the comic magazine was sold at an affordable price for a long time. The average price of a boys' comic magazine is less than two dollars, with 350 pages and contains as many as 15 serialized and one-off stories; only 10 to 20 pages are devoted to ads or text. The main reason that magazines could survive was due to the huge circulation. For example, *Weekly Shonen Jump*, the biggest Japanese comic magazine, was printed at six million copies per week in 1995 at their peak.

With their large circulation, comic magazines turned to marketing tools to defeat their numerous rivals. For example, *Weekly Shonen Jump* had 24 competitors in 1994. It was one of the first comic magazines to put a postcard in the magazine for its marketing survey. Readers who sent in their comments using the postcard might even get an autograph from a famous cartoonist as a prize. With the results from the postcard survey, the publishers then decided on the development of the story-line and the longevity of the comic series. The editor's function is to encourage the cartoonist to draw the comic to fit the result of the marketing survey (Kinsella, 2000:55). Hence, Japanese comics developed products that were popular with the readers in order to survive the high competition in the domestic market. The competition led to higher-quality comics as well as age-specific products that were later to have an edge over their competitors overseas.

Paperbacks and TV cartoons: reusing of the contents

Comic magazines can earn more profit by reusing the contents to publish paperbacks. Since most large comic magazines are owned by major book publishers, they can compile the serialized comic magazines, publish them in paperback form, and sell them through regular book distribution channels when the comic proves to have lasting popularity. Paperbacks can attract new readers for the comic because they do not target any special readers' group like magazines. Doraemon also strengthened its position after the stories were compiled as paperbacks in 1974, a different distribution channel from the children magazines which used to be the arena for Doraemon in the early period. As a result, Doraemon's paperbacks gained a wider generation of readers who did not read the children magazines.

The emergence of TV cartoons opened up more consumption opportunities for the comics industry. Many well-known comics experienced a jump in paperback sales after the comic was made into TV animation. For example, Doraemon swept through Japan in the TV animation series which started in April 1979. The total sales of paperbacks reached 15 million copies by September 1979 and it doubled within six months (Fig.2-6). The TV animation programs which are easily accessible to everyone work as billboards for the comics industry. Over a hundred animated programs were shown on Japanese television in May 1981. More than half were based on comic stories (Schodt, 1983:146). In addition, TV animation helped to promote Japanese comics to the overseas markets. Limited by the print medium, Japanese comics developed their own comic expressions with many symbols and "comic grammars" to narrate the complex plots, hence it is difficult for foreigners to understand the comics without some basic knowledge. But TV animation provided the "basic knowledge" to understand Japanese comics for overseas readers (Shiraishi, 1997:33).

TV animation and merchandizing

The Japanese TV animation industry started merchandizing the comic characters from the very beginning as described in section 2.2.1. One of the first tie-ups between publishers and television involved the popular comic *Obake no Q taro*

(a.k.a Oba-Q), a tale of a friendly ghost, by Fujiko Fujio, who would go on to create Doraemon later. More than 40 contracts for merchandizing were subsequently signed. The sales of comic paperbacks also exploded after *Oba-Q* appeared on television. And when the publisher, Shougakukan, built a new 10-story head office in Tokyo, it was called "Oba-Q building" (Schodt, 1983:146). After the success of TV animation, the first Doraemon's film animation "Nobita's Dinosaur" was launched in March 1980 and was seen by 3.2 million people, raking in 1.5 billion yen in sales. Doraemon films have been produced every year since then and most Doraemon films are usually ranked among the best-selling films in the year.

Expanding the comic market

The partnership between TV animation and merchandizing helped to expand the comics market and provided additional profits for the comics industry. When a TV channel agrees to produce make a new animation series, the advertising agent then finds the sponsors who are interested in merchandizing the characters, such as toys or games to attract the audiences. During the production of the animation, the cartoonist sometimes has to change the name of the characters or the design of the gadgets in the story, so as to go along with the sponsor who needs to sell the merchandise. This unique and flexible structure is a major characteristic of the comics industry in Japan. Moreover, it then becomes the strong point for Japanese comics industry to be competitive in overseas markets later. Nakano estimates that the total sales of comic magazines and paperbacks peaked at 624 billion yen (around US$ 5.6 billion) in 1995. However, the figure jumps by 20 times more if the animation industry and overseas markets are included (Nakano, 2004:69).

Summary

Japanese-style comics have cultivated a wider group of readers by creating new styles of comics such as story-comics and *gekiga* in postwar Japan. The comics industry has been successful in attracting the baby boomers born in the late 1940s by publishing various comic magazines at affordable prices. The comic magazines have

been arenas for comics with new expressions, and have been marketing tools and billboards for the comics industry. The partnership between the TV animation industry and advertising agencies handling the merchandizing resulted in a Japanese comics industry with a flexible structure which is shaped by readers' demand.

2. 3 History of Thai cartoons

According to the research of the Thai Farmer's Research Center (TFRC), licensed Japanese-style comics accounted for 70 per cent[1] of the total domestic comic market in 1997. In the same survey, the majority of the respondents preferred Japanese-style comics, while Thai comics lagged far behind at second place (TFRC, 1997).

This section aimed to look at the situation of the Thai comics market when Doraemon or Japanese-style comics arrived in Thailand. Indeed, Thai comics have a long history and have developed its original style under the influence of Western-style cartoons. In contrast to Japanese comics, Thai comics had been developed as an entertainment not for children but for adult bourgeoisie living in Bangkok and flourished in the 1950s. However, it suffered serious damage from TV broadcasting, a new entertainment for the bourgeois, and foreign comics targeting children in the 1960s.

There are very few documents written on Thai comic history in English. This section owes a good deal of information to Wejnukroh's book (2006) as well as the works of Amdravej (2001) and Thongbaan (1983). This section looks at the period before the arrival of Doraemon in 1971.

---

[1] All the Japanese-style comics including pirated comics occupy nearly 90 per cent of the market, while the pirated comics account for 30 per cent of the Japanese-style comics.

2. 3. 1 The birth of Thai cartoon: the reign of Rama VI

The origin of Kartoon

In Thailand, cartoons are called *Kartoon* in Thai. According to Wejnukroh's, this word came into use in Thailand with an Italian artist who drew murals for Ananta Samakhom Palace during the reign of Rama IV (Wejnukroh, 2006:6). However, the word "cartoon" means a rough sketch for the mural painting; modern cartoons which started to appear in the English *Punch* magazine from 1843 seemed to arrive in Thailand during the reign of Rama IV or Rama V. However, most Thai books describe the Thai cartoon history by starting with their cultural heritage in the past. For example, a famous artist, Kruainkong [1], who served during the Rama III to Rama IV period is regarded as the first Thai to draw pictures not in traditional Thai pictures but in perspective. His works expressed his comical feelings effectively (Thongbaan, 1983:64). However, most of his works were drawn on walls. They were not printed and circulated among ordinary people.

Phaab-lhor and editorial cartoons in the reign of Rama VI

In Thailand, cartoons gained popularity during the reign of Rama VI who had been educated in England for 10 years. He was known as a cartoon-lover and also drew cartoons or caricatures (Fig. 2-16). He held a drawing contest at his private club, the "Navy blue ballroom", in 1920 (Amdravej, 2001:28-43). This drawing contest had three categories: cartoons or *Phaab-lhor* [2] in Thai named by the King; drawings based on imagination; and realistic pictures. The king also joined in and portrayed the persons or officers who served him so well that the guests could guess the person without any explanation. As he was keen to draw editorial cartoons and printed them in his own magazine, *Dusit Samit* [3] (Fig. 2-17), editorial cartoons then became popular in the newspapers.

---

[1] ขรัวอินโข่ง

[2] ภาพล้อ

[3] ดุสิตสมิต

Fig. 2-16 *Phaab-lhor* **drawn by Rama VI** **(Amdravej, 2001:29).**

Fig. 2-17 Front page of *Dusit Samit*, **a magazine published by Rama VI (Amdravej, 2001:29).**

The emergence of cartoons arose because of the progress made in printing technology. The first printing house was established in 1844 by Dr. Dan Bradley, an American missionary, during the reign of Rama III and it printed the Thai newspaper *Bangkok Recorder*. Next, *Siam Times*, the weekly English newspaper followed in 1859. However, *Bangkok Recorder* failed because of Bradley's intention to use the newspaper as a means of influencing the monarch, King Mongkut (Rama IV). The Siamese monarchy responded to this attempt by establishing its own publication *Royal Gazette* in 1858 (McCargo, 2000:9-10). However, it was not successful until King Chulalongkorn reissued the *Royal Gazette*. Until 1867, there were only a few printing houses owned by foreign missionaries[1]. Newspapers gained powers as a medium during the Rama V era. *Darunowat*, a Thai weekly newspaper, launched in 1869, was sold for 25 *satang* (Kesboonchoo Mead, 2005:51, Wejnukroh, 2006:9)[2]. Many Thai folktales were printed such as *Phra Aphai Mani* and *Khun Chang Khun Phan* as well as supplementary text for children in this period.

---

[1] Kham Bunnark launched a new printing house for Thais because printing houses owned by missionaries refused to print his new book which contained Buddhist teaching (Wejnukroh, 2006:8-10).

[2] To subscribe for three months cost three baht (four baht with delivery service); for six months, five baht (6. 5 baht with delivery); for one year, eight baht (10 baht with delivery).

Although printing houses had appeared in Thailand since the reign of Rama III, they had to make use of the photocomposition process in India for the printing of pictures because there were no printing facilities capable of photocomposition in Thailand. It took several months and high costs to print photos or pictures until Plen Taipin[1] opened his hot-metal typesetting shop during the reign of Rama VI. Plen had lived in Europe for about 20 years and brought back the printing technique as well as his cartoon-drawing skills. He is known as one of the most popular cartoonists in that period. He put his cartoons on *Daily Mail*, a weekly newspaper then it became popular to put editorial cartoons on newspapers, such as *Krungthep Daily Mail* and *Yamato* since Rama VI introduced cartoons to Thailand. *Yamato*, owned by Japanese[2] Iwaji Miyakawa, started publication in 1921 until it was deemed subversive and thus banned after three years because of the strong critics. At that time, most cartoons were drawn for adult readers. The first Thai magazine for children, *Dek Thai*, was issued by a private publisher in 1921.

2. 3. 2 Emergence of comic strips

After the revolution of 1932 and the recovery of the Thai economy, original Thai comic strips were adapted in magazines and became popular. One well-known cartoonist in this period, Sawasdi Jukarop,[3] put his comic strips on daily newspapers such as *Sri Krung* and *Siam Rath*. He tapped on the plots from Thai folktales like *Sang Thong*, *Phra Aphai Mani* (Fig.2-18) and *Krai Thong* for his comic strips. During this period, Thai cartoons were strongly influenced by Western countries. Sawasdi's original character, *Kunmun*[4], would remind one of Popeye in American comics (Fig.2-19).

---

[1] เปล่ง ใครปิ่น

[2] There were around 200 Japanese residents by 1910 and 377 in 1919 (*Krungthep*, 1984:46).

[3] สวัสดิ์ จุฑะรพ

[4] ขุนหมื่น

Fig. 2-18 Thai comic strips drawn by Sawasdi using the plot of a folktale (Amdravej, 2001:20).

Fig. 2-19 Sawasdi's popular character, *Kunmun* (Amdravej, 2001:114).

Sawasdi's popular works, *Chuchok* and *Muang Meamaai*, were published as comic books in 1939. Other than daily newspapers, magazines also included cartoons in the publication. For example, when the magazine, *Yuwachon*[1], was started in February 1937, it was 48 pages long, (size 13×18.5cm), sold for five *satang*, and included a comic "Kartoon Naai Pongpang" which looked at life in the city through the eyes of a student, *Naai Pongpang* (Fig.2-20). However the publishing slowed down when the Japanese army landed in Thailand in 1941 and enforced media control.

Fig. 2-20
A comic strips, *Kartoon Nai Pongpang*,
sold at 5 *satang* in 1937
(From the collection of Thai cartoon library)

---

[1] ยุวชน

2. 3. 3 The golden age of Thai cartoons: around 1950-1960

With the Thai economy recovering from World War II, Thai cartoons also returned to the public.   This was the start of the golden period for Thai cartoons.   This golden age was supported by a variety of printed materials such as daily newspapers and magazines, and launched the careers of many well-known cartoonists.

In the wake of the recovery of the publishing market, daily newspapers started to put out editorial cartoons again around 1948.   When other publications such as novels, folktales and children's books started to appear in the market, *Chao Krung*[1], a monthly magazine known for its rich contents for comics was launched in 1951.   *Chao Krung* gave a pump-priming effect to the publishing market and was well-known among the people in the city.   *Chao Krung* was edited like Western magazines; it put cartoons at the beginning, and gravure pictures followed.   After the success of *Chao Krung*, *Kadueng Thong*, and followers such as *Kiattisakt Raiduan* and *Krungthep Magazine*[2] entered the market in the 1950s.   These magazines provided opportunities for Thai cartoonists and supported the development of Thai cartoons.

When a cartoonist became popular, several magazines and newspapers would offer him editorial space.   For example, a famous cartoonist, Sangop Jampat[3] known by his pen-name of Jaw Waew, drew for *Chao Krung* magazine and four more magazines at the same time.   Other than him, there were many famous cartoonists such as Prayoon Chanyawong[4] known as the king of Thai cartoons or Pimol Kalasi[5] who published a comics magazine for families titled *Tukata*.   Prayoon was known for using plots from Thai folktales such as *Holwichai-Khawi*, *Phra Suhton-Manorah*, and *Phra Roth-Meri* in his comic strips and fusing them with a contemporary setting in *likay* style. It was serialized in daily newspaper such as *Thai Rath* and became very popular

---

[1] ชาวกรุง

[2] เกียรติศักดิ์รายเดือน,   กรุงเทพฯแม็กกาซีน

[3] สงบและแจ๋วแหวว

[4] ประยูร จรรยาวงษ์

[5] พิมล กาฬสีห์, ตุ๊กตา

Fig. 2-21 Hem Wechagorn's *Rachatirat* serialized from 1962 (Amdravej 2001:83).

(Thongbaan,1983:119). Hem Wechakorn[1], also a well-known cartoonist and illustrator in this period, developed his own drawing style. And his cartoon or picture story *Rachatirat* (Fig. 2-21), is regarded as one of the more memorable achievements of Thai cartoon history. It was serialized in daily newspaper *Chao Thai Raiwan*, four panels a day without using balloons, from 1962 and ended after two years (Amdravej, 2001:82).

Comic books and family cartoon magazines

Subsequently, cartoons became so popular that publishers started to compile them as comic books after they put the cartoons on their magazines or newspapers. Although these comic books were around 30 pages and sold for 2.5 baht, it was not cheap entertainment at all. In those times, a bowl of noodle cost 50 *satang* and children's pocket daily money was 25 *satang*. These comic books clearly were not targeting children but white-collared workers. As soon as they saw the success of comic books, many new publishers entered the markets such as Bangkok, Padung Suksa, Pramuansarn, Sakul Thai, Banluesarn, and Phanfa Pitthaya (Wejnukroh, 2006:11). These publishers became the driving force behind the golden age of Thai cartoons in the 1950s.

---

[1] เหม เวชกร, ราชาธิราช

Fig. 2-22 *Tukata*, a popular comic magazine published January 1961.

Fig. 2-23 Comics in *Tukata* (January 1961).

Fig. 2-24 An article which reported Rama IX's overseas trip.

(All the pictures were taken by author at the Thai cartoon library)

In the middle of the 1950s, a pioneer of the family comic magazine, *Tukata*, was born in 1954. All the contents including the advertisements were written and drawn by a popular cartoonist, Pimol Kalasi, who goes by his nom de guerre Tukata. In the beginning, the *Tukata* magazine was just a monthly A4-sized comic book with 60 pages costing three baht. It was a compilation of his works in various magazines and newspapers, but took shape as a magazine for families by 1955. For example, the Tukata published in January 1961 contained various readings: impressive news with cartoon drawings, short comics with several panels and serialized comics. His main cartoon characters always wore modern Western clothes and lived in nice houses like those seen in American soap operas of that period (Fig. 2-22, 2-23, 2-24).

Amazingly Pimon Kalasi was responsible for all 62 pages by himself and earned 2,000 baht per issue from the publisher. It was only after the success of *Tukata* with circulation hitting 10,000 copies thus cementing its position as one of the largest magazines, that he earned around 5,000 baht per issue and could hire a few assistants. He also enjoyed a much higher income than others. For example, a public officer got 900-1,000 baht in this period (Pers. Interview, Warawijya Wejnukroh). *Tukata* was

well loved by the city people and enjoyed steady popularity until 1989[1] when the cartoonist died. This instance shows that the popularity of comic magazines was not based on the publisher's marketing skill but on the ability of the cartoonist. *Nuu Ja*, *Baby*, and *Khun Nuu*[2] were published following *Tukata*'s success, using the same concept, size and price as *Tukata*.

Other alternative comics with American titles were also introduced to the market. When film became the new entertainment for the Bangkok people by the early 1950s, a new type of cartoon was sold in front of the movie theaters for the audiences who needed a repeat of the movie's story. Another is the translated American comic books. It started spreading among children after Thai soldiers who joined the Korean War with the US army brought these comics back to Thailand. Translated and reproduced *Superman* or *Tarzan* spread among Thai children who previously only knew Thai cartoons based on Thai folktales or *chakchak wongwong* stories[3]. Translated comics were called "Jinjo Comics"[4] (Fig.2-25) after the name of the publisher and were well loved by children (Wejnukroh, 2006:26-31).

Fig. 2-25 "Jinjo comics" featuring foreign comics (Amdravej, 2001:368).

2. 3. 4 Decline of Thai cartoons and emergence of television broadcasting

The golden age of Thai cartoons suffered a serious setback when the new entertainment of television broadcasting started in 1955. People were fascinated by television especially the foreign programs that were broadcast and started cutting back

---

[1] According to Wejnukroh, *Tukata* temporarily suspended publication from 1965 to 1970.

[2] หนูจ๋า,เบบี้,คุณหนู

[3] *Chakchak wongwong* stories are known as Thai fairytales. Detailed explanation can be found in Natthalang(2004)

[4] จิงโจ้ คอมิค

on comics in order to save money to buy a television set.

The main reason that Thai television aired a lot of foreign programs especially American programs is due to the lack of technology for production of local programs (Liewtrakul, 1997:33). When the first Thai television channel, Channel 4, was launched in 1955, it had to rely on the support from the United States. In the early days, it broadcast foreign programs without dubbing or translation. When Channel 7 was launched in 1960, both channels made an effort to choose better programs and aimed for more sophistication in the programs. The two channels took turns to broadcast every other day but competed head-on on Sundays. Both channels increased the import of animation programs for children in an attempt to beat the competitor. During the monochrome casting period, main programs were imported from the US and some programs from Japan because both countries used the same NTSC systems for broadcasting as Thailand (Liewtrakul, 1997:42).

To compete or cooperate with new content from television, some cartoonists started to create new series based on the television's program or image. For example, Juk Biewsakul's new series titled *Jaochai Phom Thong*[1] was inspired by Elvis Presley. However, these trials did not become popular because it was not worth paying two or three baht for these comic books when they could watch a similar story free of charge on television (Wejnukroh, 2006:36). Consequently, a number of magazines were forced to cease publication. At least 26 Thai cartoon magazines closed down from 1961 to 1969 (Wejnukroh, 2006: 34-35).

On the other hand, new magazines that featured foreign TV contents started to appear on the market. Disney licensed a local publisher to produce Disney's comic books in 1967. In the same year, a magazine that featured Japanese TV animation was published. This is the beginning of the history of Japanese-style comics in Thailand.

---

[1] เจ้าชายผมทอง

2. 3. 5 Japanese TV animation and comic magazine in the early age (1965-1971)

Although some sources insist that Japanese cartoons existed before the WWII[1], most people in the Japanese comics industry agree that the arrival of Japanese comics in Thailand was through TV animation. Two years after Thai TV channels started to run the first Japanese TV animation, *Jao Nuu Lomkrod,* in 1965, *Kartoon Dek* (Fig. 2-26) was published by a Thai cartoonist, Paiboon Wongsri[2]. Sharing a similar concept with *Kartoon Dek, Khun Nuu* (published by Udomsuksa Publishing since 1967,) and *Kartoon Phuan* (in circulation since 1968) were launched. These comic magazines were usually A4-sized, 32 pages long, with Japanese-style comics drawn by local cartoonists and stories from Japanese superhero animation aired through local channels. The price was set at two baht, much cheaper than *Tukata* or *Nuu Ja* which were already successful in the market. At least nine magazines featuring Japanese characters were launched from 1967 to 1971 (Wejnukroh, 2006:35).

There are three factors that support the emergence of comic magazines featuring Japanese-style comics: the high popularity of Japanese TV programs among children; Thai comic magazines overlooked of children as consumers; and the failure to launch domestic animation also had an indirect impact.

Japanese animation and programs on Thai TV channels

As described in the last section, Japanese TV programs were imported from the beginning of Thai television. *Asawin Maa Khao*[3], a TV drama about a *samurai*, was broadcast in 1963 and was very popular among the Thai audience. A Japanese animation movie, *Magic Boy: Jao Nuu Kay Sit*[4](Fig. 2-27), had already been screened

---

[1] Some sources say a Japanese cartoon, *Shou-chan lae karok* (Original title is "Shou-chan to Risu"), appeared in a newspaper in 1920 (Amdravej, 2001).

[2] ไพบูลย์ วงษ์ศรี

[3] อัศวินม้าขาว Original title is *Kaze Kozou produced* by Toei in 1959.

[4] เจ้าหนูกายสิทธิ์ Original title is *Shonen Sarutobi Sasuke* produced by Toei Animation in 1959.

in the cinemas in 1961, and *Nuu Noi Phu Pichit*[1] followed in 1963.

The first Japanese TV animation broadcast in Thailand was *Jao Nuu Lomkrod*[2] (Fig.2-26) by Channel 7 in 1965. Soon after this, two representative works of Osamu Tezuka (see section 2.2.1), *Jao Nuu Phramanu*[3] (Fig.2-13) and *Leo*[4] followed on Channel 4 in 1965. According to the *Daraa TV* magazine in January 1966, *Jao Nuu Lomkrod* was placed in the top-25 of a TV rating chart and *Jao Nu Phramanu* was top-40[5]. Most of the popular Japanese programs in this period were superhero stories. For example, *Yord Manut* (or "Ultraman") was a fictional fantasy series with special effects based on the story where superhero *Yort Manud,* clothed in metal suits, beats up monsters and aliens that were threatening civilization. *Magma Taishi, Ai Mot Daeng* ("Kamen Rider", Fig.2-28), *Nakak Sua* (or "Tiger Mask", Fig.3-8) and *Super Sentai* are also superhero action stories with special effects.

These Japanese programs targeted children and were produced to fit children's taste because children had consuming power by 1960 in Japan (see section 2.2.2.1). Thai children were fascinated by the child-friendly contents with exciting fighting sequences or special effects.

Fig. 2-26 *Kartoon Dek* (vol. 1) launched in 1967. *Jao Nuu Lomkrod* was on the front page. (Pat Studio, 2005:82)

---

[1] หนูน้อยผู้พิชิต Original title is *Anju to Zushioumaru* produced by Toei Animation in 1961 (*Phapayon lae Thorathat,* 'TV weekly' vol 249,1964).

[2] เจ้าหนูลมกรด Original title is *Shonen Ninja Kaze no Fujimaru* produced by Toei in 1964.

[3] เจ้าหนูปรมาณู Original title is *Tetsuwan Atom* ("Astro Boy" in English) produced as the first Japanese TV animation series by Osamu Tezuka in 1963.

[4] Original title is *Jangle Taitei* ("Kimba, the White Lion" in English) produced as color animation by Osamu Tezuka in 1965.

[5] The winner was *Man from UNCLE,* followed by *Jesse James.* Japanese TV drama titled *Judo* (no original title) placed top-18.

Fig. 2-27 Advertising of *Magic Boy* in *TV weekly* magazine (vol. 225) in 1961.

Fig. 2-28 *Ai Mod Daeng*, a popular Japanese TV programs with special effects.

Thai local "family" cartoon for children

Children, the audience of TV cartoon, were not considered the main consumers of Thai comics when magazines featuring Japanese comics appeared in the late 1960s. Local comics that were regarded as children's cartoons such as *Tukata*, *Nuu Ja* and *Baby* were more than children's comics and catered to the family. They were sold at 3.5 baht in 1967, much more expensive than the magazines that featured Japanese comics which were sold at two baht. At that time, children received pocket money of one or two baht per day in this period (Wejnukroh, 2006:34). In addition, the contents of local family comic magazines were "parent-friendly". For example, the contents of the *Baby* magazine issued in April 1967 for three baht in A4 size with 48 pages (Fig. 2-29) included the following:

- Readers' column,
- Lyrics of English songs.
- Write-up of animals with detailed illustrations.
- Graphics with stories.
- One-panel cartoons, four-panel cartoons (Fig.2-30)
- Comic strips based on Thai history (11 pages, Fig.2-31)
- A children's story with illustration.
- Local comic strips titled *Yord Niyai Ai Pung* (11 pages)

(*Baby* magazine, April 1967)

Fig. 2-29 *Baby*, a comic magazine, published in April, 1967.

Fig. 2-30 A four-panel comic in *Baby* (April, 1967)

Fig. 2-31 A page from history comics in *Baby* (April, 1967)

Both *Tukata* in 1961 (Fig. 2-22, 2-23, 2-24) and *Baby* in 1967 are similar to each other in the content and design of the front page even though *Tukata* focused on the family and *Baby* was regarded as focusing on the children. *Baby*'s contents were mainly educational rather than recreational. Although readers' taste had changed with the advent of foreign TV programs which started to be aired in the early the 1960s, the comic magazines had not kept up with the changing trends.

The struggle to launching domestic animation

Thai TV channels soon came to realize the importance of cartoon programs for children. TV cartoons were usually aired in the evenings as a 10 minute program on weekdays and 30 minute programs on weekends. At least 142 minutes worth of TV cartoon programs were aired by Channel 4 in 1970[1].

However, domestic animation could not take off despite struggling for a long time. The first Thai animation was created in 1945, but few works followed and there was no feature-length animation for commercial use. The first Thai animation was produced in 1945 by Sen Khlaikhluen, who was a well-known illustrator at that time. It

---

[1] The author's estimates based on the data from Liewtrakul (1997:46).

was an educational animation for Thai farmers. The first story animation *Tumhasajan* created by Payut Ngokrajang[1] appeared in 1955. The 12-minute length animation was on 16-mm film for cinema use. Although the story was welcomed by the Thai audience and Payut was nicknamed the Walt Disney of Thailand (Liewtrakul, 1997:27), his fame did not bring commercial success. Payut struggled to adjust his animation to the market. He made two animations for advertisements in the 1950s. Though the character in his animation became popular among children, the income was far from covering the high costs of production. He created two more story animations for cinema: *Dek gap Mee* ("Child and bear") in 1960 and *Sudsakorn* which was based on Thai classical literature in 1979. Beside Payut's failed struggle, no other Thai animation had been created for television until 2002.

Summary

Thai comics began as a political satire and an entertainment for upper-middle class adults and family members during the reign of King Rama VI. It became popular in the 1950s and comic magazines like *Tukata* became one of the best-selling magazines at that time. However, Thai comics could not compete with new entertainment such as film and television. To survive this social change, the Thai comics industry tried to search for new contents for the market.

2. 4 Social Development in Thailand

This section provides the outline of the development of society in postwar Thailand in order to understand the formation of the Thai comic market as well as the cultural flow of Japanese-style comics which will be examined in Chapter III.

---

[1] ปยุต เงากระจ่าง

2. 4. 1 Economic growth spurred by foreign investment

Thailand has experienced gradual economic expansion since 1960. By the late 1980s, Thailand's economy was "one of the developing world's strongest" (Komin, 1989:4). The high, long-term, non-inflationary growth averaged 7-8 per cent per annum. The growth in the late 1980s accelerated to 11 per cent.

The path to significant economic growth was paved by the policies of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) set up by Sarit Thanarat under an alliance with the U.S. in 1961. The principles of the first three NESDB plans spanning from 1961 to 1976 were: start with light manufacturing; spearheaded by the private sector except in basic social structures such as transportation, communication, energy and education; it is encouraged to use foreign support if the program requires a higher standard than it could be provided by Thai private sectors (Japanese Chamber of Commerce, 2004:57). NESDB's market-defying industrial policy provided the room for foreign investment. Foreign investment was conditioned more by international business' perception of Thailand than by specific Thai government policies (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2000:17). It was in the Fourth NESDB Plan (1977-1982) that there were two major policy shifts, which marked a new phase of industrialization, manifested in the Fifth and the Sixth Plans (1983-1988). The two shifts were: the launch of a large-scale industrial development plan –the Eastern Seaboard Development Program – following the discovery of natural gas in the Gulf of Thailand; and the protection granted to heavy industries producing intermediate and capital goods.

After the withdrawal of the U.S. from this region in 1975 with the end of the Vietnam War, Western investment also stagnated. As a result, Japanese companies entered the market to fill the space for "foreign support" as proposed by NESDB.

Japanese economic investment

Although Japan lost all its residents[1] as well as its business dealings in Thailand after the defeat in the WWII, the payment of the compensation for the Pacific War started attracting the Japanese back to Southeast Asia. The payment of compensation was renamed as economic assistance and started in 1969. The Japanese economy enjoyed huge economic benefits from the payment of compensation because the compensation was paid mainly in capital goods and services from the Japanese people (Yano, 1975:177). Accordingly, Japanese residents in Thailand once again increased with the growth of Japanese investment to Thailand. By the end of the 1960s, the first Japanese book shop, *Thai Bun Do*, started business to provide the latest Japanese publications for Japanese residents in Thailand. This book shop will play a main role in the cultural flow of Japanese-style comics later.

The growing influence of the Japanese economy triggered an "anti-Japanese goods" demonstration by Thai students in November 1972. This demonstration began to focus on the issue of reinstating the constitution and democracy, and the big demonstrations deteriorated into violence in October 1973 (Baker and Phongpaichit, 2005:188). The protest against Japanese goods surfaced again in 1974 when Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited Thailand. The massacre at Thammasat University and the military coup then took place on 6 October 1976.

After October 1976, most Japanese firms went through a shift in policy to link up as a joint-venture partner with local conglomerates. In particular, the Plaza Accord in 1985 and the appreciation of the yen caused a boom in Japanese foreign investment and the number of Japanese companies investing in Thailand increased rapidly. The number of members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok (JCCB) increased to 394 companies in April 1985 and then to 696 companies in 1989. As a result, Japanese foreign investment exceeded that from the U.S. by almost three times during the 1980s, with many Japanese goods thus sold in the stores of Bangkok. The dominance of Japanese goods in Thai society was reflected in the lyrics of a poem:

---

[1] There were 3,500 Japanese residents in Thailand by the end of the WWII (*Krungthep*, 1984:46).

"First thing in the morning,
Grasp White Lion toothpaste and enjoy brushing teeth;
Then make some tea with a National electric kettle
And smooth down hair with Tanjo pomade.
Put on Thaitorae Tetoron clothes,
Wear a Seiko watch when leaving home,
Listen to the government news broadcasts on a Sanyo radio,
Drive a Toyota to pick up girlfriend"

(Quoted in Baker and Phongpaichit, 2005:202)

The openness to foreign direct investment (FDI) and access to technology relieved the government of any imperative to divert funds towards technology development, or to force firms to do likewise (Westphai 1989, quoted in Phongpaichit & Baker, 2000:19). However, the active FDI encouraged the government to equip their systems to adjust to free trade or international standards. The Thai government attended the Uruguay Round (1986-1994), joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1990 and the financial system was liberalized over 1990-1993.

Uruguay Round was a trading negotiation which transformed GATT into the World Trade Organization (WTO), a permanent intergovernmental body that deals with the global rules of trade between nations through multilateral agreements (UNESCO 2000:27). The Uruguay Round tried to draft a code to deal with copyright violations and other forms of intellectual property rights. Other issues such as reducing agricultural subsidies, restrictions on foreign investment, enforcing a barrier on trade in services like banking and insurance were also negotiated.

2. 4. 2 Socio-political background in the 1980s

The political disorder after the violence of October 1976 gradually settled down by the early 1980s. Under the effort of reconstruction of the unity between people and the state, the phrase "democracy with the King as head of state" had

appeared and was emphasized in education programs. Most of the students who fought against the army after the violence of 1976 left the jungle between 1979 and 1981 when the army offered amnesty to defectors. (Baker and Phongpaichit, 2005:197). At the same time, the business leaders who were in the midst of shifting their business to exporting recognized the importance of politics and started to take a more aggressive role in the political scene from the mid-1970s. Prem Tinsulanond who became prime minister in 1980 was successful in separating the political and military powers. He stretched the idea of managed democracy or *"prachathipatai khrung bai (half-democracy)"*. With support from both the palace and the army, Prem remained prime minister for over eight years. The political stability drew in the foreign investments and laid the foundation for the later economic boom driven by exports of manufacture goods as well as services in the mid-1980s.

Emergence of the middle-class

Agriculture, which used to be the major earner in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), gave way to manufacturing around 1980 (Fig.2-32). By the late 1980s, the rapid economic growth shaped Bangkok into a world-class city. The agricultural share of the national income declined steadily from 40.5 per cent in 1960 to 24.9 per cent in 1980, and then to 22.6 per cent in 1986. At the same time, the manufacturing sector expanded very rapidly, increasing its share of the national income from 11.9 per cent in 1960 to 20.7 per cent in 1980, and then to 21.7 per cent in 1986 (Komin 1989:4).

By then, most university graduates were choosing to join private companies instead of the public sector like they used to. With a better salary, they represented consumer power in the 1980s. On the other hand, the income from manufacturing (27.2%) doubled that of agriculture (12.5%) by 1985 (Shiraishi, 2004:233). The population that had moved to Bangkok from the countryside tended to settle down around Bangkok because the land in the countryside was gradually being developed, leaving no space left for them (Motoda 2000). The middle class in Bangkok increased baht a month increased ten times in the same period (Shiraishi, 2004:233).

Summary

Thailand has been experiencing economic growth since the 1960s, with government policies and foreign direct investments acting as fuel for the development. In the late 1970s, the main investor shifted from the U.S. to Japan which entered the Thai market primarily due to the payment of compensation for WWII. Despite social protests in 1972 and 1976 triggered by the flood of Japanese goods, Japanese companies continued to invest in Thailand in the 1980s. The political stability and shift towards industrialization droved the economic boom in the mid-1980s. By the beginning of 1990, the middle-class has emerged as a significant group in Bangkok. And at the same time, the government was keen to adjust domestic laws to meet international standards.
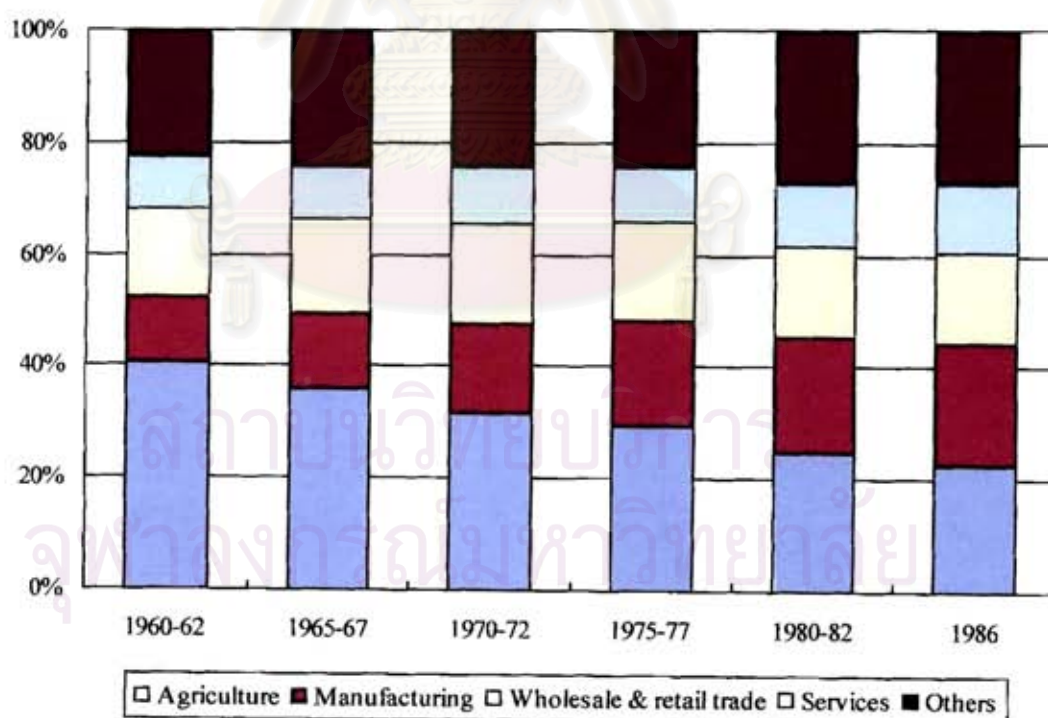
Fig. 2-32 Share of GDP by economic sectors at 1972's prices (Source: National Account Division, NESDB, Komin, 1989:6).

CHAPTER III

DORAEMON'S ARRIVAL IN THAILAND

Despite Doraemon's ubiquitous image in Thailand, it is astonishing that the Japanese publisher had nothing to do with Doraemon's diffusion in Thailand in the 20 years after its first arrival in 1971. It was as though Doraemon traveled and walked around by himself without any form of "central" control. Why did it happen and how was Doraemon successful in gaining popularity? Chapter III will investigate the circulation and consumption of Doraemon in Thailand. It will also explore the cultural flow of Doraemon through its reproduction and distribution, as well as the dynamics of the local comics market.

Doraemon had been adapted into various forms of publications during the process of its commodification. This research looks at the five major changes in Doraemon as a cultural product circulated in the local marketplace since 1971 to the present:

1. The first arrival of Doraemon in 1971
2. The second introduction of Doraemon in 1978
3. The Doraemon boom in 1981-1982
4. Consolidation of Doraemon's popularity in 1983-1993
5. Legal Doraemon in 1994 to the present

Doraemon was first introduced to Thailand by a local comic magazine that featured Japanese-style comics in 1971, just a year after the original Doraemon was serialized in Japan. Next, another local comic publisher printed Doraemon in a comic magazine in 1978. However, both attempts did not take off. It was only a decade after Doraemon's first arrival that there was a burst in consumption of Doraemon among children, giving rise to a social phenomenon known as the "Doraemon Boom". Nine

publishers were competing to print Doraemon in 1981-1982. Doraemon then appeared in a weekly comic magazine which was newly launched in the expanding comics market after the boom. The consequence of the rat race among local publishers called for the legal power or the copyright, from Japan to win the neck-to-neck race. Finally, Doraemon became "official" and still gained popularity in the Thai comics market after the legalization of the market in 1994.

Various factors such as production, industry, the dynamics of the comic market, and distribution have shaped the consumption of Doraemon in each period.

3. 1 The first arrival of Doraemon in 1971

The earliest introduction of Doraemon in Thailand which appeared in a local comic magazine published in 1971 was Doraemon "hand-drawn" by local cartoonists. Because of the printing technology at that time, most imported comics were copied by hand by local cartoonists. Although local comic production did not have any official connection with Japanese publishers, some cultural flow such as Japanese TV programs on local channels and a bookshop which imported Japanese books existed behind the first arrival of Doraemon in Thailand. However, this hand-drawn Doraemon was neglected by readers who were addicted to Japanese superhero stories on local television. Japanese-style comics in the local market were still a niche under the umbrella of Japanese TV program's cultural flow.

3. 1. 1 Product: hand-drawn Doraemon in a monthly magazine

As far as the author could find, the earliest introduction of Doraemon was by *Yawamit* magazine (vol.1)[1] published in 1971 (Table 3-1, Fig.3-1) at the price of two baht. This Doraemon looks different from the original one in its story and its drawing. The

---

[1] This Doraemon was discovered by an antique comic collector, Wacharapan Luanyanon in his collection.

drawing process apparently was done by a local cartoonist (Fig. 3-2, 3-3) similar to other foreign comics published in Thailand. There were various styles of drawing Doraemon's face in this version. Also the story was re-created with 18 pages, supposedly longer than the original story. The title and character of Doraemon was changed to "Dam-mu", and the characters' names were replaced with those shorter than the original such as: Nobita was renamed Shiro. The plot seemed to combine two or three original episodes into one story. However, the story of this version does not follow the typical plot of Doraemon and the storyline is developed without the use of gadgets.

Table 3-1 Reproduced Doraemon in 1971

Title	Dam-mu
Translation	The change of names of characters (Doraemon: *Dam-mu*, Nobita: *Shiro*)
Contents	Added creativity to the storyline
Pictures	Hand-drawn by a local cartoonist
Pagination	18 pages (in a magazine of 36 pages)
Publication style	In *Yawamit* monthly magazine
Size	A4
Price	2 baht

There are questions as to who drew this Doraemon and how it was done. Although the re-creation of Japanese comics was not rare in the local comics industry during this period, it was done not on newly introduced characters but on well-known superhero characters of TV programs. According to the staff in Shogakukan, the publisher of the original Doraemon, *Dam-mu* is similar to the recreated Doraemon by Taiwanese cartoonists[1].

---

[1] During the research, no particular connection of publishers between Thailand and Taiwan was found. In addition, most of the data confirms that the first introduction of Doraemon in Taiwan was in 1976. More research is required to know the details.
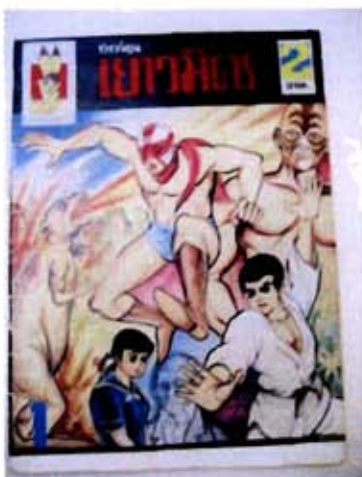
Fig.3-1 *Yawamit,* a comic magazine (vol.1) published in 1971.

Fig.3-2 First introduction of Doraemon. Title was changed to *Dam-mu*

Fig.3-3 Pictures were redrawn by local cartoonists.

(These pictures were taken by the author from Luanyanon's comic collection.)

Nevertheless, it is surprising that Doraemon arrived in Thailand only a year after it originally started in Japan when Doraemon had not even gained popularity in Japan yet. This first introduction of Doraemon might have been too early to gain popularity in Thailand because most of the readers were addicted to Japanese superhero stories introduced by local TV channels.

3. 1. 2 Local production: hand drawn by local cartoonists

Before the arrival of offset printing technology, all comic stories had to be drawn by Thai cartoonists. "Dam-mu", the earliest Doraemon, was not an exception. The information about the local production during this period was collected through an interview with Taweepat Khonkhasuthi who was the former editor of *Piriyasarn* magazine, a popular magazine launched in 1972. There is no information for the former staff of *Yawamit* magazine.
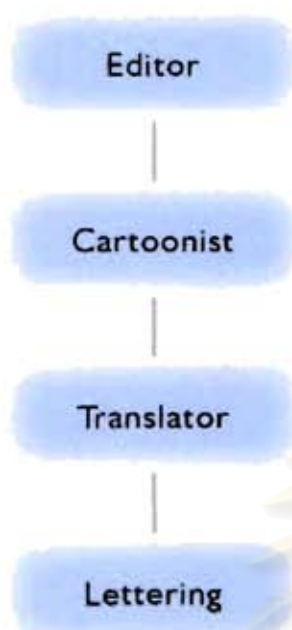
Fig. 3-4 Flow chart of local comic production around 1971

Editor

Cartoonist

Translator

Lettering

1. The editor chooses the title and gets the original comics by purchasing a Japanese book at a Japanese bookshop or get celluloid pictures from the company that imported Japanese TV cartoons.
2. The editor assigns the cartoonist to draw the comic[1] with sound effects.
3. The editor or cartoonist finds someone to translate the comic.
4. The letterer handwrites the words in the balloons.
5. Printing

The publishers could start their business easily without any contact with the Japanese publishers because they could get the latest Japanese comics at the Tai Bun Do Bookstore which dealt with Japanese books[2] and second-hand Japanese comics, and was located at the weekend market (Pat Studio,2005:76). Tai Bun Do is a Japanese bookshop targeting Japanese residents,[3] especially Japanese businessmen and their family in Bangkok, which has been in business since the late 1960s. Tai Bun Do imported the latest popular Japanese magazines and books by surface and by air from Japan. This aspect of globalization – the increased mobility of people and cultural commodities – provided the seed of comic business without any official permission of the Japanese side.

3. 1. 3 Comics industry: expanded by arrival of offset printing

Comic magazines like *Yawamit* that featured Japanese-style cartoons appeared as a response to the popularity of Japanese TV programs. As described in section 2.3.5,

---

[1] *Piriyasarn* Magazine used three or four cartoonists for two or three comics per issue. Each cartoonist earned 10 baht for drawing a page (Pat Studio,2005:136-138).
[2] Tai Bun Do Bookstore remains in business with four branches in Bangkok.
[3] There were around 6,000 Japanese residents in Thailand in 1975 [www. th. emb-japan. go. jp/jp/consular/zairyuto, accessed on 23 August 2006].

Fig.3-5 *Kartoon Dek* (vol. 14), monthly magazine published around 1969.

Fig. 3-6 *Piriyasarn* magazine (vol. 8) with *Yort Manud* ("Ultraman").

Fig. 3-7 *Piriyasarn* magazine (vol. 18) published around 1974.

there were already several comic magazines with a similar concept in the market since the first comic magazine featuring Japanese-style comics, *Kartoon Dek* (Fig. 3-5), was published by Thai cartoonist Paiboon Wongsri in 1967.

The number of magazines jumped with the new technique of offset printing. New publishers started entering the Japanese comics market when it was introduced to Thailand around 1972. Offset printing provided easy access to copy the pictures by the photo-setting technique. Without having to rely on the drawing skill of cartoonists, publishers could now make easy money from printing Japanese comics. At least six magazines such as *Piriyasarn* (Fig. 3-6, 3-7) were launched in the year of 1972, just after the offset printing was introduced. These magazines were published by local publishers which regularly printed Thai comics.

3. 1. 4 Japanese-style comics in the market: superheroes

It seemed that almost nobody paid attention to the earliest Doraemon. Even Doraemon-lovers or Doraemon-collectors in Thailand do not know about the existence of this earliest Doraemon in Thailand[1] because this magazine did not last long due to small

---

[1] Generally it is said that Doraemon was first introduced by Vibulkij in the late 1970s (Puangpinyo, 1988:79).

circulation[1]. In addition, the comic market in this period was not open to story-comics like Doraemon. The most popular contents among children were superheroes in Japanese TV cartoons and TV programs with special effects[2] such as *Yort Manud* ("Ultraman" in Japanese, aired in Thailand in 1967, Fig.3-7), *Ai Mot Daeng* ("Kamen Rider" in Japanese, Fig. 2-28) and *Nakak Sua* ("Tiger Mask" in Japanese, aired in

Fig.3-8 *Nakak Sua* drawn by local cartoonist. (from the collection of Thai cartoon library)

Thailand in 1970, Fig. 3-8). These programs had original story-comics with the same characters in Japan. Therefore, comic magazines in Thailand could re-draw the superhero comics by using the original Japanese comics. According to Wacharapan Luanyanon a collector of old Japanese comics in Thailand, it was not popular to put the story-comics like Doraemon in Japanese-style comic magazines[3] (Pers. Interview). I could not find any background on *Yawamit* magazine which printed Doraemon first, but it might have be challenging to introduce comics that were not preceded by animation on Thai channels.

3. 1. 5   Readers: school boys as consumers

Japanese comic magazines were the one of the first comic magazines in Thailand targeting at children especially the boys in schools who loved Japanese superheroes aired on TV channels. Although several Thai comic magazines such as *Tukata* and *Nuu Ja* gained popularity in society, they targeted families and not children as described in section 2.3.5. The cheaper price and more child-friendly contents than local comic magazines were attractive for children who had pocket money of just one or two baht per

---

[1] Even Piriyasarn, one of the biggest Japanese comic magazines in this period, printed around 3,000 copies in this period (Pers. Interview, Wacharapan Luanyanon).

[2] These superhero TV programs used various special effects. It is categorized as *tokusatsu* program in Japan.

[3] The author found *Toyama* magazine published in 1969 with a story-comic.

day. Usually children used it for their transport fares, lunch at school and snacks after school. A bowl of noodle cost 50 *satang* in this period. It is also interesting that children consumers of Japanese-style comics at an early age would become staff or editors in the production of Japanese-style comics publishers later.

3. 2 The second introduction of Doraemon in 1978

The second introduction of Doraemon was printed as a part of a comic magazine *TV Line* in 1978. By this time, Japanese-style comic publishers were successful in adding new products, like story-comics paperbacks targeting teenagers after their struggle with the dwindling supply of their main contents – superheroes on local TV channels. While the Japanese-style comic market had developed uniquely under the direction of young editors, Doraemon remained under the radar.

3. 2. 1   Product: Doraemon in a magazine with story-comics

Doraemon was published in *TV Line*, a monthly magazine, in February 1978 by Vibulkij Publishing (Vibulkij) (Table 3-2). Doraemon appeared alongside superhero comics in *TV Line* (vol. 36).

Table 3-2   Reproduced Doraemon around 1978.

Title	*Doremon : Sat Na Rak*
Translation	Following the original names
Pictures	Pictures were scanned from original comics. Translated words in balloons and sound effects were hand-drawn.
Contents	The story started from the first episode akin to the original in Japanese
Pagination	8 pages (in a magazine of 28 pages)

Publication style	With two superheroes comics in *TV Line* magazine
Size	A4
Price	7 baht

Fig. 3-9 *TV Line* (vol.36) in February 1978.

Fig. 3-10 The second Introduction of Doraemon in *TV Line* (vol. 36) (From Luanyanon's collection).

However, Doraemon was introduced to the Thai market without any big expectations. Jarukiat Tangthatsawat, the former editor of Vibulkij, says:

> "At that time, we published the monthly magazine TV Line that featured Japanese superheroes. To get the original content for TV Line, we always bought Japanese monthly magazines such as "Shogaku 1 nensei" (magazine for the first grade of elementary school, Fig.2-4). I tried Doraemon on TV Line because we had a certain stock of Doraemon's episodes as all "Shogaku" magazine series carried an episode of Doraemon monthly. I even remember the volume number: TV Line No. 36. But I cannot remember the exact date."

> (Pers. Interview, July 2006)

By this time, several titles of story-comics started to become popular in the market. Therefore, it was not strange to introduce a new title in the magazine when it had never appeared on local TV channels before (described in detail in section 3.2.2).

However, they published Doraemon just once because the response was not good enough. According to Tangthatsawat's, it is because "the drawing of Doraemon was not sophisticated then as much as now".

3. 2. 2 Japanese-style comics in the market: decline of superhero comics and rise of story-comics

Fig.3-11 *TV Line* Magazine (vol.57, Pat Studio, 2005: 96)

Before explaining the industry and production in this period, it is relevant to mention the change of the comic products in the local market. The market suffered serious damage and was shrinking around 1976 to 1978 because Japanese TV programs and cartoons were disappearing from Thai TV channels. Due to the lack of support from the audience, most magazines discontinued their publications. Only a few magazines such as *TV Line* (Fig. 3-11) and *TV Review*, could survive after the troubled times. And a new style of products – story-comics compiled in paperbacks – was successfully launched in the local comics market without any support from TV programs. The popularity of story-comics contributed to the independence of the comic market from relying on the popularity of TV programs.

Decrease of superheroes programs on local TV channels

There are several reasons that could explain the disappearance of Japanese programs from local television. One reason is the impact of the anti-Japanese goods movement led by university students in October 1976. The authority banned the broadcast of Japanese TV programs on local channels (Pers. Interview, Wacharapan Luanyanon). The second reason is the Thai economic recession during the energy crisis caused by the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978. The printing cost went up especially the price of paper. Another reason is the ending of several well-loved TV series in Japan such as *Yort Manud* and *Ai Mot Daeng*. In addition, the criticism leveled against

Fig. 3-12 *Asawin Siam* created by Taweepat Khonkasut in 1978 (Pat Studio 2005: 107)

Japanese TV programs and comics increased when a boy who thought he was *Ai Mot Daeng* jumped down from a building and injured himself (Srisantisuk, 1982:4). Such strong criticisms made the authorities decide to establish an auditing organization for imported TV programs in 1975[1] (Liewtrakul, 1997:49).

Without the new contents on superheroes, some cartoonists tried to create original comic strips based on the popular Japanese comic characters such as *Nakak Sua, Yort Manut* and *Ai Mot Daeng*. For example, local cartoonist Taweepat Khonkhasuthi tried to create his own superhero named *Asawin Siam* (Fig. 3-12) in 1978 but it failed to gain wide popularity. Publishers such as Udomsuksa, Sirisarn, and Phanfa Panit decided to discontinue Japanese comic magazines and shifted their products from the Japanese-style comics to Thai comics (Wejnukroh, 2006:36). The shrinking of the Japanese-style comics market would lead to the rapid growth of *Kartoon lem la baht*, a one-baht Thai comic book which started to circulate around 1975.

Emergence of story- comics

The Japanese comic publishers needed to find a way to survive. Some publishers were successful in introducing new products, the story-comic, for older readers who grew up with Japanese comics and animations. The story-comics or narrative comics which were developed uniquely in postwar Japan were "an integral part of Japan's popular culture and as such reveal legacies from the past, ideals of love, attitudes to work and perfection, and a basic love of fantasy" (Schodt, 1983:16). Although several types of story-comics such as *shonen manga* ("boys' comics"), *shojo manga* ("girls' comics") had already circulated in Japan since 1960 (see section 2.2.2.1),

---

[1] That is Research Committee for Radio and Television (*Kor Bor Wor*), คณะกรรมการบริหารวิทยุกระจายเสียงและวิทยุโทรทัศน์ (กบว.). However there were only few cases where *Kor Bor Wor* stopped the broadcasting (Pers. Interview, Niran Bunyaratphan).

Fig.3-13 The story-comic *Ai-i lae makoto* (from Luanyanon's collections).

Fig.3-14 A popular girls' comic *Khamsap Pharo* (Pornpanit,1998:240).

Fig.3-15 A girls' comic *Candy Candy* (Schodt, 1983:88).

most local editors of Japanese-style comic magazines in Thailand neglected them "because it wasn't interesting" (Pers. Interview, Taweepat Khonkhasuthi). However, when Chunasarn Publishing published an A4-sized comic book, *Ai-i lae Makoto*[1] (Fig. 3-13), a boys' comic that featured a love-triangle story, the comics gradually became well-liked without any support from TV programs around 1977. Next, story-comics for girls, *Jawsao Satan*[2] and *Khamsap Pharo*[3] (Fig.3-14) were also welcomed by teenage girls. In this way, story-comics were accepted as a new form of entertainment for teenagers. Other publishers started to print other story-comics. Usually these story-comics were compiled in an A4-sized comic book and sold for five to seven baht.

Paperbacks and the popularity of "Candy Candy" independent of TV support

A girls' comic, *Candy Candy*[4] (Fig.3-15), achieved the peak of story-comic popularity in this period; it had a print run of 10,000 copies while other comics had first

---

[1] Original title is *Ai to Makoto*, written by Ikki Kajiwara, drawn by Takumi Nagayasu, run by *Weekly Shonen Magazine* during 1973-1976.

[2] Original title is *Deimosu no Hanayome* ("Bride of Demon"), drawn by Yuho Ashibe.

[3] Original title is *Ouke no monsho* ("Royal arms"), drawn by Chieko Hosokawa & Fumin.

[4] Original comics drawn by Yumiko Igarashi, story by Kyoko Mizuki.

impressions of 3,000 to 5,000 copies. The TV channels knew this and decided to import *Candy Candy* which was made into a TV cartoon after the rise in popularity of the comics and was successful in gaining a huge interest among girls. Soon after Vibulkij, the first publisher to introduce this story, realized the good response, other publishers started to print the same story. To compete with others, Vibulkij reduced the standard size of the comic book. The smaller B6-sized comic book, called pocket book in Thailand, gained popularity among girls and it became the standard size for comic books later.

Kartoon ruam lem (assorted comic paperback) also appeared in this period. It was a paperback that contained two or three different story-comics in it. Introducing story-comics to Thai readers, *Kartoon ruam lem* was in a convenient style for readers who were not familiar with story-comics enough to be able to choose a favorite. It also worked for publishers as a marketing tool to survey readers' preference.

3. 2. 3 Readers: teenagers as new readers of Japanese-style comics

Teenagers became the new readers of Japanese comics and helped to expand the market in this period. Until this period, comics were regarded as entertainment for young children or adults. The reasons why the comics industry was successful in attracting youth as comic consumers are: 1) They were the first generation to consume Japanese-style comics since they were young; 2) The comics industry took on teenagers to work in the production team; 3) There were few local comics targeting teenagers; 4) Evolution of the products style, such as paperbacks were called "pocket books", was welcomed by school boys and girls and was easy to bring around.

3. 2. 4 Comics publishers: with teenage editors

The local comics industry could expand their contents as well as readers by shifting its contents from superheroes in the monthly magazines to story-comics with a pocketbook style. In this period, the tendency of young creators joining the Japanese-style comics publishers became apparent. With the deep understanding and strong

interest toward Japanese-style comics, they could create new products such as story-comics in paperbacks or *Kartoon ruam lem* for the market. They formed editing teams and worked with local publishers which had never printed Japanese-style comics and created the products which they themselves wanted to read.

Vibulkij is a very good example of a business expanding with the development of the Japanese-style comic market. Vibulkij would play an important role in the Doraemon Boom later and become the main publisher of Japanese-style comics from the 1980s. Today, their market share in the Japanese-style comic market in Thailand is around 30 per cent. According to a personal interview with Nathanas Tirajaras, a former staff of Vibulkij, the company used to be a small printing agent which did not even own a printing house. Their business was not specialized and they printed anything from booklets for children or Thai comic books that were brought to them by their clients (Pers. Interview). There were no editing staff or production capabilities to produce their own contents in Vibulkij. Therefore, they accepted teenagers easily to print new comic magazines. Vibulkij's first publication of Japanese-style comics in *TV Line,* a magazine featuring Japanese superheroes, was produced by teenagers who grew up with Japanese TV series. Jarukiat Tangthatsawat, who established *TV Line* and was a former editor of Vibunkij, explains:

> "*After working as a part-time worker at several comic magazines, I brought my idea to Vibulkij and started to work with them. I was a high school student and asked some friends who liked Japanese-style comics to work with me. I got 1,300 baht for the first issue of 'TV Line'. It increased to 8,000 baht per month with other products. My mother's pride in me was evident by saying 'my son could earn 8,000 baht even when he was a student!'*".   (Pers. Interview, July 2006)

The episode shows the dynamics of the industry in the early period. Without any requirement for the registration from local authorities and negotiation with Japanese copyright holders, the Japanese-style comics industry in Thailand opened its door to anybody who wanted to start the business. In addition, it is important to note that the

children who grew up with Japanese cartoons were the ones who entered the comics industry. The second generation in the Japanese-style comics industry helped to expand the market with their appreciation for and understanding of Japanese comics.

3. 2. 5 Production: after the arrival of offset printing

The technique of scanning comics brought by offset printing changed the production process. Without the reproduction of pictures by local cartoonists, the role of local cartoonists became less important than before. In contrast, the editor contributed to the survival of Japanese-style comics industry.

Fig. 3-16 Flow chart of comic production around 1980.

1. The editor chooses the title and gets the original comics by purchasing a Japanese book at a Japanese bookshop or a second-hand bookshop.
2. The editor assigns the translator to translate the comic.
3. The editor edits the translation to adopt comic-style writing and reduces the words to fit the balloon size.
4. The editor assigns the artwork staff to erase Japanese characters on the original comic.
5. A letterer draws letters in the word balloons and sound effects on the original comic.
6. The editor assigns the design of the front page of the comic to a designer and an illustrator.

7. Both the comic pages and front pages go through the photo-setting process to make films for printing
8. Printing

3. 2. 6 Distributions: seeking new systems for youth

In this period, the publishers of Japanese comics started to realize the characteristics of their readers. Their readers were not adult but children and youth who bought comics on their own. However, there was no particular distribution system for the youth because there were few books or comics targeting youth. Therefore, Japanese-style comic publishers ended up losing out when they used common subscription agencies to distribute Japanese comics. Somboon Kriengareekul, who was a freelance illustrator in this period, explains the distribution of Japanese-style comics:

> *"We had a lot of returns when we used a subscription agent. Some were returned without even opening the package. The distributor sent the comics to common bookstands. But some of booksellers did not want to sell the comics to youth because most booksellers targeted the adults. So we started distributing by ourselves."*
>
> (Pers. Interview, May 2006)

Since the market was still small, they published the comic paperbacks at 3,000 to 5,000 copies per title and around five titles were published in a month. They could manage the distribution and save on the inefficient distribution.

Even though the second Doraemon also had not been welcomed by the readers yet, its publication showed the development of the local Japanese-style comic market after its struggle against the decrease of cultural flow by local TV channels and prepared the arena for the next arrival of Doraemon.

3. 3 The Doraemon boom in 1981-1982

In the middle of 1982, Thai parents noticed that their children saved their pocket money to buy a comic paperback. That was Doraemon. Without any special promotion, the consumption of Doraemon's paperbacks spread among children by word-of-mouth from 1981 to 1982 and caused a huge popularity that marked a new phenomenon.

> "*I remembered that Doraemon was very popular among children when I was five years old. If someone said he didn't know Doraemon, his friends would laugh at him.*" (Jiambunsom, 2002:63)

> "*The public started noticing that Thai children were crazy about Doraemon. Daily newspapers mentioned it in the articles and many academic workshops were held recently to try to explain [its popularity].*" (Srisantisuk, 1982:6)

The third arrival of Doraemon in 1981-1982 caused huge popularity as a social phenomenon. At first, children found Doraemon without any marketing by suppliers and the local comics industry quickly responded to the demand. The media such as publishers, newspapers, film theaters and TV channels followed the phenomenon and contributed to its cultural flow. In addition, the merchandizing of Doraemon by local manufacturing industries in daily goods, clothes, and stationery contributed to the profits.

Local publishers also contributed to this phenomenon. The editing team reproduced Doraemon effectively with some adaptations and factories were ready to respond to huge demands quickly because they were operating at below capacity. Doraemon's cultural flow was conducted by local consumers and local suppliers; it was shaped by various local conditions since Japanese publishers remained oblivious to the overseas market.

3. 3. 1 Market: Doraemon as a social phenomenon

In the beginning, the comic paperback was the first medium to attract children to Doraemon at the end of 1981. Children discovered the *Doraemon* paperbacks on their own because they were never advertised. Moreover, TV cartoons of Doraemon had not arrived yet. But Doraemon became popular among the children through the whisper campaign.

At the end of 1981, a publisher named Mitmitri started to publish Doraemon under the title of *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (Fig.3-17). In the beginning, it sold as well as other comics and was published once a month. At the same time, Vibulkij which used to print Doraemon in its magazine in 1978 (see section 3.2.1), started to print Doraemon under the title of *Doremon* (Fig.3-18). Once it recorded good sales, Mitmitri started to produce Doraemon more frequently, from printing twice a month to once a week. However, Vibulkij tried to compete with Mitmitri and published Doraemon twice a week. Finally, Mitmitri printed Doraemon five times a week. Nathanas Tirajaras says:

> *"Mitmitri could publish Doraemon more frequently than us because we had to use the printer for other publications such as paperbacks and magazines. We cared for the quality of the translation as well as the creation of the front page."* (Pers. Interview in June 2006)

Before Doraemon, Mitmitri was already publishing a few Japanese-style comics. Although it used to print one-baht Thai comics, *Kartoon lem la baht,* the owner of Mitmitri gave the order to stop printing other publications and concentrated on printing Doraemon. With the growth in popularity, the number of impressions per volume reached around 30,000 copies (Pers. Interview of Jarukiat Tangthatsawat) or "not less than 70,000 copies" (Jiambunsom 2002:70, Pers. Interview, Somboon Kriengareekul). Nevertheless, it was an extraordinary figure for the Thai comics market which used to print 3,000-5,000 copies for one impression. By the middle of 1982, nine publishers were competing to print Doraemon (details in 3.3.3).

Fig. 3-17 *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (vol.11) published by Mitmitri in 1982.

Fig. 3-18 *Doremon* (vol.12) published by Vibulkij in 1982.

Doraemon's appearance in Thai Rath

Knowing Doraemon's popularity, *Thai Rath*, the biggest daily newspaper, started running the *Doramon Maew Jom Yung* comic strip since 29 July 1982 (see Appendix D). *Thai Rath*, a popular newspaper that "imitates all popular features adorned by the mass mind" (McCargo, 2002:12) was established in 1962. It thrived despite the political ban because "the press has been the primary source to reflect and 'lead' some public opinion" much more than the electronic media which was directly controlled by a number of public agencies (McCargo, 2002:12). *Thai Rath* stuck to the motto of "ordinary news for ordinary people" during the military government in the 1970s and sold 1 million copies daily in 1976 when they printed the storyline of a popular TV soap opera (*Thai Rath*, 2006). Apparently *Thai Rath* was regarded as a mass medium and half of Thai adults were reading *Thai Rath* by the 1990s (Baker and Phongpaichit, 2005: 221). Doraemon became the first Japanese-style comics for *Thai Rath* and its appearance in a mass medium like *Thai Rath* contributed to its popularity and social acceptance. As a result, children could enjoy Doraemon on a daily basis.

> "I was able to buy Doraemon comic books sold for 10-15 baht since my pocket money was five baht per day. But my family strictly forbade me having comics, much like having drugs today. So I had to read it on the

Thai Rath newspaper. Every morning I waited for my father who bought the newspaper so that I could read Doraemon before going to school."

(Jiambunsom, 2002:63)

Media: movies and TV cartoon

On 21 August 1982, Vibulkij was successful in importing the first Doraemon movie *Doraemon Phojono Dinosaur*[1] (Fig.3-19) in cooperation with Chaiyo Production. Although it was in the middle of the school term, it had good response and was screened for a month at two cinemas, Metro and Samyarn. The sales were estimated at around two million baht. They brought in the second Doraemon movie *Doremon Bukapihip Phowkat*[2] just a week after the first movie was off the screens (*A Day*, July 2002:70). However, it did not attract as big an audience as the last time because of the arrival of TV cartoons.

TV cartoons of Doraemon contributed to raising its popularity. It started airing on Channel 9 on 5 September 1982. The program was scheduled for 10 minutes after the evening news on weekdays and re-aired from 10 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays (Srisantisuk 1982:6). The theme song of the Doraemon TV cartoon also became very popular. The advertising rate of Doraemon TV cartoon jumped from 8,000 baht to 15,000 baht per minute (Puangpinyo, 1988:80).

The preference for Doraemon emerged among children around Bangkok with several media coming together to reproduce Doraemon's image and distribute it throughout Thailand.
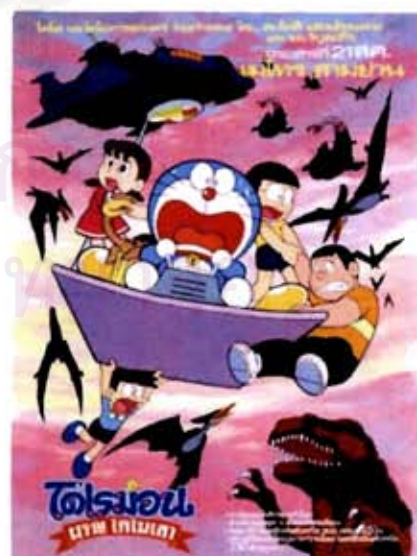
Fig. 3-19 Brochure of the first cinema film of Doraemon in Thailand in 1982 (from the collection of Kriengareekul)

---

[1] Original title is *Nobita's Dinosaur or Nobita no Kyoryu* produced in 1980.

[2] Original title is *The Record of Nobita: Spaceblazer or Nobita no Uchu Kaitaku-shi* produced in 1981.

Merchandizing

The idea of merchandizing was not a new phenomenon in Thailand. Many toys and goods of the characters of Japanese superheroes such as *Ai Mot Daeng* or *Yort Manud* had been in the Thai marketplace already. However the profits brought by Doraemon's merchandizing reached 100 to 150 million baht per month, much bigger than other characters.

> *"The high popularity of Doraemon in 1982 set a record where it created profits for various industries such as comics, movies (including TV cartoons), music tapes, and merchandizing. The sales are estimated at no less than 1,000 million baht or 100-150 million baht per month."*
> (Puangpinyo, 1988:79)

According to the data printed on *Turakij Karn Ngun* ("Journal of Business and Finance" Nov-Dec, 1982), 44 kinds of products featuring Doraemon were available by November 1982 (Table 3-3). The table shows various publishers and sectors of the local manufacturing industry that were involved in the merchandizing of Doraemon in Thailand. Although some publishers of Doraemon paperbacks such as Vibulkij and Siam Sports Printing (Siam Sports) managed the media mix, it was apparent that no "center" controlled Doraemon's merchandizing in Thailand. Merchandizing emerged in the space created by suppliers who sought profits while there was a consumer demand for Doraemon goods. Consequently, a sizeable number of agents joined the merchandizing process, hence reproducing and distributing Doraemon's image.

3. 3. 2 Products: Doraemon paperbacks

The third introduction of Doraemon 10 years after its first arrival was welcomed by Thai children. A comparison of Doraemon's consumption between Thailand and Japan shows some similarities. Both markets took a long time before Doraemon could

Table 3-3 Merchandizing of Doraemon in Thailand in 1982

Category	Details	Supplier
1. Publications	Paperbacks	9 publishers; Mitmitri, Vibulkij, Siam Sports Publishing , Sam Dao, Bangkok Sarn, Siam Sarn, Ratchada Panit, Chunasarn, and Sirisarn
	Newspapers	Thai Rath
	Magazines	e.g. Siam Sports Publishing
	Coloring books	Vibulkij, Mitmitri etc.
2. Animations	Theater films (3 titles)	Vibulkij and Chaiyo Production
	TV cartoons (104 episodes)	Channel 9
3. Music tapes	Thai-Japanese songs (2 tapes)	Asona and Siam Sports Publishing
	Stories (2 tapes)	Siam Tour
4. Exhibition	Sapda Doraemon (Doraemon week) in Oct	Siam Sports Publishing and Deang Nirmid (amusement park)
5. Videos	The same stories of theater films (3 titles)	(no company name on the products)
6. Accessories	Sports wears	Siam Sports Publishing
	T-shirts	Dek, Susu etc.
7. Department stores	Free giveaway, souvenirs for their promotions	Metro etc.
8. Toys	Face masks, printings, picture games, dolls, stickers etc.	
9. Stationery	Notebooks, pencils, letter sets, erasers, pencil cases etc.	
10. Accessories for girls	Brooches, hair accessories, belts, necklaces, handbags	
11. Daily goods	Water bottles, bottle openers, handkerchiefs, towels, bags, glasses, Water pots, key holders etc.	

(*Turakij Karn Ngun* Nov-Dec 1982: 24)

take off, with paperbacks triggering the popularity[1]. However, several local adaptations were seen in the paperbacks of Doraemon that were published in Thailand during the boom.

Although at least 250 volumes of Doraemon paperbacks were published by Mitmitri, Vibunkij, and Siam Sports during the boom,[2] the author looks at 10 paperbacks for this research[3]. All the paperbacks are the same B6-size as the comic paperbacks called pocket books, 12.7cm by 17.7cm, and sold for 10 -15 baht; its 128 pages contained around 10 episodes. The original Doraemon paperback,[4] *Tentomushi comics series*, published by Shogakukan is twice as thick as local paperbacks. In addition, several differences are seen on local paperbacks such as the order of each episode of Doraemon, there were no references to the original cartoonist or original publisher on all the paperbacks, advertising copy was placed on the cover, and other paperback comics were advertised alongside. However, there are no big differences in the products between the three local publishers except for the title.

Doraemon published by Mitmitri[5]

Mitmitri's Doraemon paperback is known for its attractive front page (Fig. 3-17). With columns for the editor's note and readers, the paperbacks have reader-friendly characteristics similar to those of magazines (Table 3-4). The editor's note and readers' columns served to inform readers of the next publication schedule and postal service for readers in remote places as well as advertise new products.

---

[1] Although Doraemon had been serialized since 1970, it became popular among the Japanese only after it was compiled into paperbacks in 1974 and exploded in popularity in 1979 when it was made into TV animation in Japan.

[2] The author's observation from the comic collections of Luanyanon.

[3] Five comic books are published by Vibulkij, four are published by Mitmitri and one is published by Sam Dao.

[4] It contains around 18 episodes in 190 pages. Doraemon paperbacks in *Tentomushi comic series* have been published since 1974 in Japan. It has 45 volumes.

[5] Based on data from *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* vol. 12, 13, 14, 15 published by Mitmitri in 1982.

Table 3-4 Reproduced Doraemon published by Mitmitri in 1982

Title	Doraemon Maew Jom Yung
Front cover	Color illustration by local cartoonists
Contents	Characters and stories basically followed the original stories. But the order of the episodes is different from the original paperbacks
Pictures	Hand-drawn translations in balloons, few translations for sound effects.
Publication	Advertisement of comics, Editor's note, Readers' column are added.
Pagination	128 pages
Price	10 baht
Size	17.7cm by 12.7cm

Doraemon published by Vibulkij[1]

By using hard paper for the cover, Vibulkij's paperbacks looked like "books" more than "magazines" (Fig.3-18). Instead of editor's note and readers' columns, Vibulkij used the photo of well-known cat *Name-neko* in Japan[2] on the inside of the front cover (Table 3-5).

Table 3-5 Reproduced Doraemon published by Vibulkij in 1982

Title	Doremon
Front cover	Color illustration without local cartoonist signature. Title logo is designed by the publisher. An advertising copy saying "Most popular cartoon in Asia has arrived in Thailand. Good for everyone who loves improvement".

---

[1] Based on the data from *Doremon* vol. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 published by Vibulkij in circulation in 1982.

[2] The former editor of Vibulkij, Jarukiat Tangthatsawat, says, "*Name-neko* was very cute and popular in Thailand as well." (Pers. Interview).

Contents	Characters and stories basically followed the original stories except for a character named "Suneo" translated as "Nesuo". The order of the episodes is different from the original paperbacks.
Pictures	Hand-drawn translations of the words in balloons and sound effects.
Publication	Publisher's advertisements of new products, a photo of cat with clothes (*Name-neko*) which was popular in Japan as well as Thailand in the 1980s are added.
Pagination	128 pages
Price	10 baht
Size	17.7cm by 12.7cm

Doraemon published by Sam Dao[1]

Sam Dao was one of those who tagged along with the "Doraemon paperback fever". There is no special content or advertising in the paperbacks (Table 3-6, Fig. 3-20).

Table 3-6 Reproduced Doraemon published by Sam Dao in 1982

Title	Doremon
Front cover	The advertising copy reads: "Special edition, new translation from Japan. Never been introduced!"
Contents	Similar to others
Pictures	Similar to Vibulkij
Publication	No advertisement in the comic book
Pagination	128 pages
Price	10 baht
Size	17.7cm by 12.7cm

---

[1] Based on the data from *Doremon, Special Edition* published by Sam Dao.
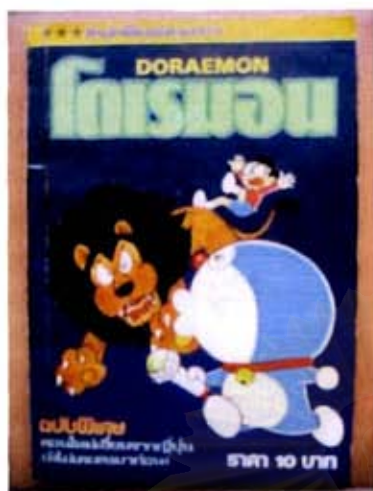
Fig. 3-20) *Doremon* published by Sam Dao in 1982

Fig. 3-21) *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (vol.80) published in 1983

3. 3. 3 Production: with free creations

Although Doraemon's production flow was similar to the one in the last period (Fig. 3-16), the publishers, especially Mitmitri and Vibulkij, had to brush up their skills to survive the tough competition. Both of them tried to create better products by having quality editing, clearer translation and more beautiful cover pages. This section looks at the process of the production flow for Doraemon.

Editing: pros and cons of free creation

Due to the rat race, the editors tried to choose more interesting episodes of Doraemon than the competitors. They extracted Doraemon's episodes from Japanese monthly magazines (Fig. 2-4) as well as original Japanese Doraemon comic books (Fig. 2-5) in random order, and this is why the episodes in Doraemon paperbacks in Thailand are ordered differently from the original. Somboon Kriengareekul says:

> "Mitmitri chose the episodes from monthly magazines in which the original
> Doraemon appeared first. We chose the better episodes for the Thai
> readers because some episodes that targeted younger children were not

interesting.   On the other hand, Vibulkij used the early volumes of Doraemon's original comic books where the drawing was still not very sophisticated.   In addition, we managed to find the birth story of Doraemon from a monthly magazine which was sold at a secondhand bookshop at the weekend market. By putting it in our comic books, it helped to impress the readers that we're the original publisher".

(Pers. Interview, May 2005)

The editor's effort helped to boost Doraemon's popularity at the beginning of the Doraemon boom.   Through the editor's local perspective, Doraemon's episodes were reshuffled and reproduced to suit Thai readers.   In the beginning, the competitors respected one other by avoiding printing episodes which had already been translated by other publishers because they had a sufficient stock of original episodes which had run since 1970.   The newcomers to Doraemon publishing such as *Thai Rath* newspaper used the "leftover" episodes which were not chosen by the preceding publishers(Pers. Interview, Jarukiat Tangthatsawat).

However, publishers stopped worrying about overlapping when the printing race heated up.   Moreover, the stock of the original episodes was used up as Mitmitri printed around 65 volumes in the first year.   According to the author's research, *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (vol. 65) published by Mitmitri at the end of 1982 printed the episodes of Doraemon together with other comic titles.   The proportion of other comics exceeded that of Doraemon by the time Volume 77 was printed at the beginning of 1983.   Volume 80 (Fig. 3-21) had only one episode of Doraemon, the rest of the space was taken up by nine other comics such as *Dr. Slump*[1] or *Mitsume ga Toru*[2] (Fig. 3-21).

Therefore, the popularity of Doraemon comic books started declining at the end of 1982.   The random selection system worsened the overlap in printing.   The children were disappointed when their new Doraemon comic book contained a lot of episodes that they had already read.

---

[1] The original also uses the same title, drawn by Akira Toriyama in 1980-1984.
[2] The original also uses the same title, drawn by Osamu Tezuka in 1974-1978.

Translation

Research findings showed that the translation of Doraemon was based on the original stories. Although there were no systems to control the quality from the Japanese side, no major changes in plot, names of characters or locations were seen in translated Doraemon paperbacks in this period. Translation was also important for Japanese-style comic production. However, translators usually worked freelance. Translation fee was five to 10 baht per page (Pers. Interview, Somboon Kriengareekul). It can be estimated that one comic book translation brought 500 to 1000 baht to the translator.

Cover creation

Although most of the pages were scanned and printed after they were translated, front cover pages were created by local cartoonists or illustrators. It was difficult to find original color illustration without any Japanese characters on it because Japanese comic magazines put a lot of characters on the front pages (Fig.2-4). In addition, the cover pages were very important for paperbacks to attract readers. Without any advertising in other media, the cover pages or comic paperbacks should represent the contents and fire the imagination of the readers. The cover pages of Mitmitri's paperbacks were well-loved by people. Somboon Kriengareekul, the illustrator of Mitmitri's cover page, describes the process:

> *"We needed new illustration for the cover page. We didn't have a color cover page because we took the original episode not from paperbacks but from monthly magazines in Japan such as 'Shogaku 4 nensei'. In addition, Thai children loved the illustration with scenery. So I tried to create Doraemon in seasonal scenery."* (Pers. Interview, May 2006)

The paperbacks of Doraemon were reproduced through several steps by local publishers. The various adaptations on the cover page, the publication, the order, and selection of episodes contributed to the popularity of Doraemon.

3. 3. 4 Industry: expanded by several newcomers

The local comics industry expanded due to Doraemon's popularity. By the end of 1982, nine publishers such as Mitmitri, Vibulkij, Siam Sports Publishing (Siam Sports), Sam Dao, Bangkok Sarn, Siam Sarn, Ratchada Panit, Chunasarn, and Sirisarn competed to print Doraemon (*Turakij Karn Ngun*, 1982:21). Siam Sports, a newspaper publisher that featured sports contents, entered the market because "the owner liked Doraemon" (Pers. Interview, Virat Teekaputisakul). Sam Dao and Bangkok Sarn were the publishers mainly for the one-baht Thai comics. Sam Dao and Siam Sports remained in the market to print other Japanese-style comics even after the boom. Some publishers profited from using a variety of media. For example, Vibulkij imported Doraemon cinema films under cooperation with local film makers. Siam Sports organized an exhibition entitled "Doraemon week" in October 1982.

3. 3. 5   Readers: the children who love Doraemon

Young children have been the main readers of Doraemon (Puangpinyo, 1998:78, Srisantisuk, 1982) and this trend was confirmed by Puangpinyo's survey in 1988 (Table 3-8). Here is the voice of a young reader who was introduced to Doraemon paperbacks published around 1982:

> "*I have read Doraemon from volume 1 to volume 8. My mother says that I have to save money to buy the comics on my own. I can save five baht per day... Sometimes I quarrel with my sister as to who gets to read Doraemon first.*" (Phuwakhon Wannarat)[1]

Why was Doraemon so popular with young children when there was no overt marketing? This question has puzzled Thai critics and scholars from the beginning, who offer three main reasons behind Doraemon's unexpected success.

---

[1] From readers' column in *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (vol. 15) published by Mitmitri.

1) There were no comics targeting young children then.

2) The children are attracted to Doraemon's futuristic gadgets.

3) Doraemon is regarded as "good comics" unlike Japanese superhero comics which were full of violence.

Doraemon as child-friendly

Young children were not regarded as consumers in the early period. Even the publishers did not expect such a demand for story-comics from the children. As Doraemon was the pioneer in story-comics for children in Thailand (see section 2.3.5), its publisher had not placed much hope on it because it was different from all the other comics on the market. Somboon Kriengareekul explains:

> "Khun Anusorn, the translator of Doraemon, was attracted to Doraemon and brought it to several publishers to publish it. The editor of Chunasarn rejected this idea by saying "Who would read this comic?" The story wasn't like any other popular comics on the market at that time. When he went to negotiate with Mitmitri, which had never printed Japanese comics, to publish it, the owner accepted it because he needed publishing material for his new printing house."
>
> (Pers. Interview, May 2006)

A columnist confirms the idea that there was no other cartoon like Doraemon which was designed especially for children.

> "[Doraemon] isn't similar to any stories in Thai comics in our society. It reflects the dreams and adapts to the inspirations of children nowadays. It speaks in the voice of children or people who used to be children. It behaves just like children do. It catches the children's heart because no other comics could achieve it."
>
> (Nawarat Pongpaiboon, 1982:25 quoted by Yuwanakorn, 1990:156)

Doraemon's gadgets stimulate the children's imagination

In 1982, Orathai Srisantisuk conducted a survey to study why children loved Doraemon. She found that children enjoy reading, so Doraemon was good entertainment for them while his science gadgets inspired them towards the future. Not only did Doraemon appear cute to the children, he also taught good behaviors. Many children started reading the comic because their friends were reading it. She also noted that Doraemon helped stimulate the children's imagination:

"Children love fantasy which meets their dreams and their needs. Doraemon's science gadgets provide inspiration towards the future. In the future, we will have tools to solve our problems." (Srisantisuk, 1982)

Shiraishi observes that Doraemon's gadgets can represent "dreams for the future" especially by Asian readers who wish to have better prospects.

"They [Asian readers] still remember the excitement when the first television arrived in their home. Through their experiences, they believe that the progress of the future is brought about by the development of science technology……However, Doraemon's message of "dreams for the future" received in Asia is interpreted as "material-dependent hungers" in the U.S which is a highly developed consumer society." (Shiraishi, 1999:96)

It can be said that Doraemon's gadgets represented dreams to Thai children in an age when the society was experiencing rapid economic growth. The major earner in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shifted from agriculture to manufacturing around 1980 (Fig 2-32). Thai children knew that their daily life was different from their parents' childhood. They could look forward to a better future that was being created by the progress of technology, a recurrent theme in Doraemon's stories (Fig. 3-22).
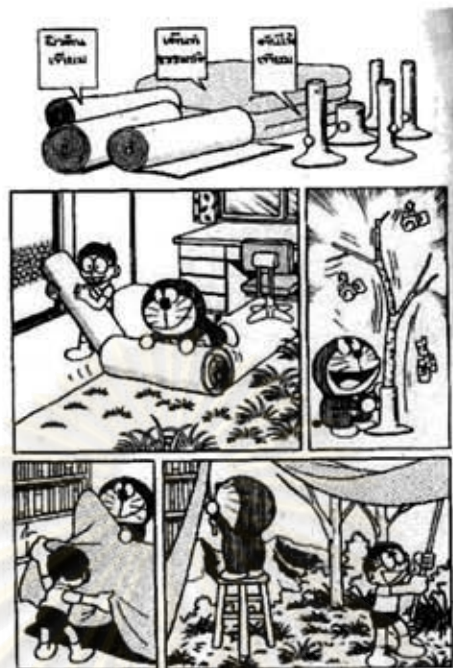
Fig. 3-22 Doraemon's gadgets helped create a miniature garden in Nobita's room (Doraemon vol.10 : 26), published in 1982.

Doraemon as "good comics"

The children's craze for Doraemon has been mentioned and analyzed by several local newspapers and few people in society are against Doraemon's popularity (Srisantisuk 1982). According to Saraai, a newspaper columnist, Doraemon fuses both new ideas and traditional culture (Fig. 3-23):

"This story [Doraemon] is different from other cartoons such as Yord Manut Komputer or Mot X superman ("Kamen Rider X"). It combines traditional culture and the latest developments in technology. Therefore it is a hit in Thai society which is still agriculture-based but is trying to be an industrial society." (Sarai quoted by Srisantisuk, 1982:9)

Duangrat Kamalobol (1992) concludes from her research on the social construction of emotion as seen in Doraemon that there are some similarities between Thai and Japanese societies, such as respecting the elders, the importance of education, the basic roles of a father and a mother in a family (1992:167, see Appendix E for

details). Yamklinfung and Nishio (1998) also observe that both societies share a number of values: social relationship based on hierarchy, compassionate way of thinking and behaviors based on Buddhist teachings, emphasis on social harmony, and importance of retaining traditional culture in modernization. It can be noted that these social similarities are reflected in the Doraemon comic and have helped breed a wider acceptance of Doraemon among Thai adults. This social acceptance was further strengthened when popular newspaper *Thai Rath* ran the comic strip (see Appendix D). A young reader reports on his father's attitude:

> "*I save money to buy Doraemon. My father doesn't blame me because Doraemon is a good comic and it's funny. Even my father can join in the laughter. I hope Doraemon will continue until Volume 999 and I hope it sells well. I will keep on buying it.*" (From the readers' column in *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung*, vol.15, 1982)

This incident shows that although parents usually regard comics as useless entertainment, they did not keep their children from reading Doraemon because they had a chance to read it in the daily newspaper.

Fig. 3-23 Last scene of the episode "How to use the money which has never been saved" (Doraemon vol. 4 :87) .

Summary

The boom in the Doraemon comic came about due to several factors. The children found the content very attractive while parents and social critics found little to dislike in the comic. Local publishers were flexible in responding to the demand by providing a variety of paperbacks and magazines, which were printed in huge quantities. Moreover, due to the lack of a "central" control, several media and agents could participate in the merchandizing of Doraemon in a laissez-faire fashion. As a result, the Doraemon comic could spread so quickly throughout the country.

3. 4 Consolidation of the popularity in 1983-1993

Although the Doraemon paperback fever cooled after the broadcast of a Doraemon TV cartoon started in September 1982, the popularity of Doraemon remained high among children. Doraemon was nominated as "the favorite cartoon character" by Thai children in 1983 (Somkit Plortprong, 1984:3 quoted by Puangpinyo, 1988:90). Further academic research confirmed Doraemon's popularity in 1987 even though many "new" comics were introduced by the comics industry which had become active after the Doraemon boom. The monthly and weekly comic magazines launched and played an important role as billboards for the industry, in a similar way to the comics industry in Japan. When the next boom was triggered by a boys' comic titled *Dragon Ball*, the competition between publishers heated up until a publisher rushed to get the copyright from Japan.

3. 4. 1 Product: Doraemon in weekly magazine

The Doraemon paperbacks boom ended in 1982-1983 just after the arrival of the TV cartoon because of the over-printing of Doraemon paperbacks. With several publishers rushing to print Doraemon, no one bothered over which stories had already been translated or not. Once the publishers finished printing all the Doraemon episodes,

they mixed the old episodes with new ones that had just arrived from Japan. New episodes were drawn by the creator, Fujiko F. Fujio, at the rate of around six stories per month. The readers were confused by the chaos. They were sometimes disappointed that the same episodes were compiled in new paperbacks (Puangpinyo 1988:79, Pers. Interview, Somboon Kriengareekul).

However, Doraemon still maintained a certain level of popularity and was published in two different ways. One was in paperbacks, the same style as it was during the boom. For example, Doraemon was sold at 10 baht for 128 pages by Mitmitri in 1987. Now they put advertising copy on their cover page: "Mitmitri, the original publisher reprinting for new-generation readers. *Doraemon Meaw Jom Yung* is the only story always loved by everyone and no cartoon had ever reached this level. Here is the new version in a second edition for new readers!" (*Doraemon Maew Jom Yung*, vol. 37, Fig. 3-24).

The second form of Doraemon's circulation was the weekly magazine. Weekly comic magazines appeared around 1984. Vibulkij launched the first weekly magazine *Zero* targeting boys and Mitmitri followed by launching another weekly magazine *Shukan Weekly Talent*. Since the original Doraemon was still running in several monthly magazines in Japan, new Doraemon episodes were introduced in *Shukan Weekly Talent* occasionally (Table 3-7).

Fig. 3-24 Reproduced Doraemon paperback (vol.37) around 1987 (Puangpinyo, 1988: 234).

Table 3-7 Doraemon in weekly magazine *Shukan Weekly Talent* (estimated data)[1]

Title	*Doraemon Maew Jom Yung*
Front cover	Color illustration for the magazine's front cover
Contents	Characters and stories basically followed the original stories. Translation from new episodes of Doraemon from Japanese magazines
Pictures	Hand-drawn translations in balloons; few translations of sound effects
Publication	Appeared inside weekly magazine occasionally
Pagination	Around 12 pages in 160-page weekly magazine
Price	10 baht
Size	B5 size

Doraemon remained highly popular. When Eastern Asia Institute held a drawing competition titled "My Favorite Cartoon" for children aged 3-11 in April 1983, 71 per cent of the 213 drawings showed Japanese comic characters and the most popular characters were Doraemon and Ikkyusan [2] (Somkit Plortprong, 1984:3 quoted by Puangpinyo, 1988:90, Fig.3-25). Another survey through a questionnaire for 300 students aged 10-22 years old revealed Doraemon's overwhelming popularity. 88 per cent of respondents have read Doraemon and it is the most widely read comics in 21 titles of Japanese-style comics (Table 3-8). The result by age confirms Doraemon's stronger popularity among young children than college students (Fig.3-26). In addition, Doraemon was chosen the best character whom the readers want to emulate in this survey.

---

[1] This data is estimated by the author based on interviews with Wacharapan Luanyanon and Jarukiat Tangthatsawat.

[2] A Japanese TV cartoon based on the story of a temple boy named "Ikkyu".

Fig. 3-25 Origin of characters chosen for "My Favorite Cartoon" drawing contest in 1983
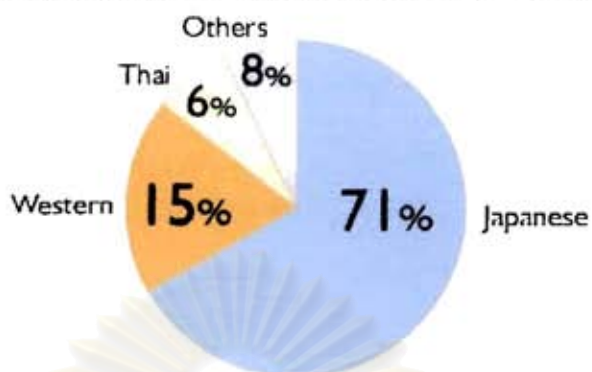
(Somkit Plortprong, 1984:3 quoted by Puangpinyo, 1988:90, the chart is designed by the author)

Table 3-8 Japanese style comics that Thai students aged 10-22 years old have read (1987)

	Title	No. of people	Percentage
1	Doraemon	263	87.7%
2	Matthep Jaodaonua (Hokuto no ken)	173	57.7%
3	Captain Tsubasa	168	56.0%
4	Cobra	160	53.3%
5	Khamsaap Pharo (Ouke no monsho)	138	46.0%

(Puangpinyo, 1988: 123, the table was designed by the author)

Fig. 3-26 Students who have read Doraemon by age (1987)
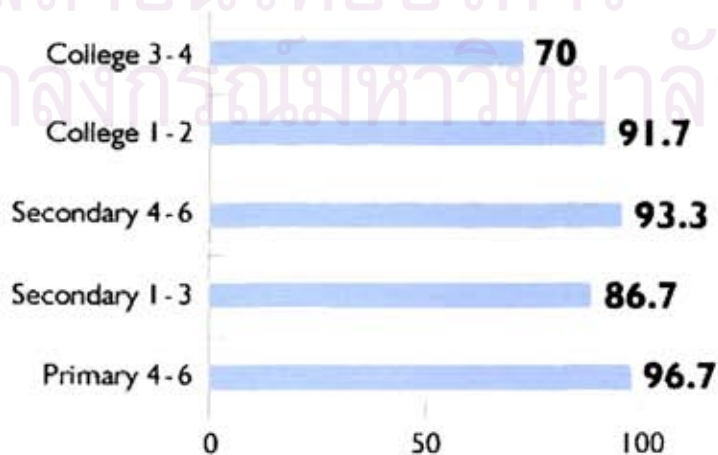
(Puangpinyo, 1988: 125-126, the chart was designed by the author)

3. 4. 2   Market: increasing new publishers and weekly magazines

According to a study conducted by Sriwan Dempanit, more than 50 titles of comics (including magazines and paperbacks) were published in the market and Vibulkij issued at least 30 titles per month while Chunasarn issued 50 titles by 1984 (Dempanit, 1984:13 quoted by Puangpinyo, 1988:84).   It is much bigger than the numbers before Doraemon.   For example, Vibulkij published around five to six paperback comic books around 1980[1].   The publishing data around 1988 can be confirmed from another source: 610 titles of new comics were published in a year by four major publishers, Vibulkij, Chunasarn, Siam Sports, and Mukjin from 1987 to 1988.   Each publisher issued at least five titles every 10 to 15 days (Yuwanakorn,1990:103).

Magazines

Weekly magazines were very new products for the Thai comics market. Vibunkij issued the first weekly comic magazine *Zero* around 1984. Soon after *Zero*, Mitmitri also launched *Shonen Weekly Title*. Jarukiat Tangthatsawat, the former editor-in-chief of *Zero*, recalls the excitement of starting the first weekly magazine:

> *"At that time, boys' comic paperbacks such as 'Cobra[2]' and 'Wolf[3]' had good response from readers.   To prevent other publishers from printing these titles, I thought of starting a weekly magazine because 'Cobra' and 'Wolf' were serialized in Japanese weekly magazines.   Since we couldn't predict market demand, we published the second issue 20 days after the first issue, and then printed the third issue 10 days after the second issue. We ran weekly only after the fourth issue."*   (Pers. Interview, July 2006)

---

[1] The number is estimated by the author.   Doraemon vol. 10 was published by Vibulkij around 1982 and has the running number of 134. This number had started since Vibulkij printed the first paperbacks around 1979.

[2] Original title is the same, drawn by Buichi Terasawa in 1977.

[3] Original title is *Seikenrou*, drawn by Ryouichi Ikegami in 1983.

Zero took original comics from weekly Japanese comic magazines, *Shonen Jump* by Shueisha and *Shonen Sunday* by Shogakukan[1]. Usually it ran four or five stories from both magazines and set aside one or two pages for advertising (Puangpinyo, 1988:81). Mitmitri's *Shonen Weekly Talent* also used a similar style. As for monthly magazines for girls, there were *Gift* by Vibulkij and *Lemon* by Siam Sports with 200 pages. It contained other contents such as Q & A for the readers. There were at least nine Japanese-style comic magazines in 1987-1988 and three of the nine were weekly magazines (Yuwanakorn, 1990:104).

However, the popular titles were translated by several local publishers into different Thai titles. For example, *Hokuto no Ken (North Star)*, the popular boys' comic, was translated as "Makthep Jaodaonua" in *Zero* whereas *Shukan Weekly Title* translated it as "Ratmat Daonua". According to Yuwanakorn's research, 22 episodes (4.79 per cent) in 234 comic books and magazines were exactly the same with the same title. The main reason for the overlap was due to competition between different publishers (Yuwanakorn, 1990:107). The research confirmed that the duplication of the popular titles is due to the lack of a central control in the industry.

3. 4. 3   Readers: children and youth

As the local comic market developed, purchasing Japanese-style comics became common among children. According to another study conducted by *Siang Dek* newspaper in 1987 on school children, all the respondents liked Japanese cartoons. The weekly magazine *Zero* was the most popular magazine among children. Moreover, most of the children spent 50-150 baht to purchase comics monthly (Puangpinyo, 1988:92). Another survey on 400 secondary school students showed that children started to read Japanese-style comics from the first to fourth grade in primary school. The reasons they cited for buying Japanese-style comics include recommendation from friends, the modern

---

[1] Both of them were very popular and enjoyed huge circulation in Japan: such as 2,600,000 for *Shonen Jump* and 1,800,000 for *Shonen Sunday* in 1980 (Schodt, 1983:14).

image of Japanese-style comics, and the influence of TV cartoons. About half of the students bought comics on their own and 40 per cent of them borrowed the comics from friends or siblings. Seven per cent of the students borrowed them from comics rental shops (Yuwanakorn, 1990:145). These surveys reveal that reading Japanese-style comics had become popular among children who were the consumers for the comics.

3. 4. 4 Production: more emphasis on translation

Although the basic production system was the same as in the last period, publishers hired more staff to produce more products, such as magazines and paperbacks, for the market. Some publishers such as Vibulkij and Mitmitri that ran weekly magazines had some corporate staff in Japan to get the original comics earlier than their competitors. Some publishers hired translators as regular staff because they needed a higher quality of translation for complicated story-comics. However, there were many freelance translators who were university students, Japanese language teachers and so on. They earned a translation fee of seven baht per page (Puangpinyo, 1988:83).

Publishers which ran weekly or monthly magazines started to reuse the content. They translated new stories from original Japanese weekly magazines and compiled them as paperbacks later.

3. 4. 5 Distribution: building up the comic distribution system

Along with the market growth, publishers established their own distribution system. There were no efficient distribution networks for Japanese-style comics by book distributors in Thailand because there were no publications targeting only teenagers or children in the way of Japanese comics. General book distributors which charged distribution fees of 25-40 per cent (Yuwanakorn, 1990:98) per book could not distribute the comics efficiently. For example, they sent comics to bookstands that had only adult customers or placed girls' comics in the bookshop in front of boys' schools. Therefore major publishers such as Vibulkij or Siam Sports tried to distribute the comics by

themselves especially in the Bangkok area and established a network of comic shops. There were several ways of distribution by 1988.

1. **Direct sales to readers** via a membership system: the reader receives comics by mail and payment is made through postal order.
2. **Direct sales of comics from shops operated by publishers**: major publishers have their own comic shops at major shopping spots in Bangkok. Although they sell only their comics, the prices are much cheaper than at other places and the consumers can get premium goods as well as special information about comics.
3. **Comic book agents**: These are the comic bookshops that have special contracts with the publishers. They sell the comics a bit cheaper than other bookshops. Most of these shops have contracts with several publishers and provide various comics to consumers.
4. **General bookshop** by using distributors
5. **Rental bookshop**: outside the control of publishers.

<div align="right">(Puangpinyo, 1988:83, Yuwanakorn, 1990:98-100)</div>

3. 4. 6 Industry: moving into chaos

With Doraemon fever spurred by the high demand from consumers, publishers could then expand the market with utter conviction. Vibulkij and Chunasarn, the two major publishers of Japanese-style comics, had kept their leading position in the industry. Mitmitri, which used to publish Thai comics and other publications mainly, shifted their business to Japanese-style comics and issued weekly magazines. A newspaper publisher, Siam Sports, which had entered the market through the printing of Doraemon decided to continue printing Japanese-style comics because the market demand was still high (Yuwanakorn 1990:90).

The increasing number of publishers triggered a rat race and an overlap in the publishing of Japanese-style comic publications (see section 3.4.2). This high competition affected the market and the readers. Some readers felt the competition was good as it resulted in better-quality comics. However, some readers had negative

experiences such as buying the same story but under another title and wasting their money (*Siang Dek* Newspaper 1987 quoted by Puangpinyo, 1988:92).   In addition, the huge popularity of *Dragon Ball* threw the local comics industry into chaos.

"Dragon Ball" boom and copyright war

When the popularity of *Dragon Ball* (Fig. 3-27) heated up among Thai children as well as Japanese readers around 1990, the rat race between publishers reached its peak. According to Taweepat Khonkhasuthi, at least four or five publishers printed *Dragon Ball* weekly (Pers. Interview, April 2006).   The edition of *Zero* which also reproduced *Dragon Ball* weekly reached 80,000 copies, when only half[1] the number was printed before the boom.   In addition, the *Dragon Ball* paperbacks, 400 pages for 18 baht, sold out quickly and Vibulkij re-printed them at least five times.

The original *Dragon Ball* in Japanese was printed in *Shonen Jump* magazine which was published every Monday in Japan.   As soon as the newest episode in *Shonen Jump* magazine was in the market in Japan on Monday, Thai publishers would get the original *Dragon Ball* by facsimile on the same day, translated and made the layout within a day. They could publish the newest story on Wednesday, just two days after the original was published. If they publish any later than the competitors, the profit would go down to half or less than half[2]. Therefore, the printing race heated up until the D-day of Thai comics industry when a new publisher declared he had all the copyrights of popular comics such as *Dragon Ball*.

Fig. 3-27 A paperback of *Dragon Ball* **(Puangpinyo, 1988: 258)**

---

[1] According to Jarukiat Tangthatsawat, the first imprint of *Zero* around 1984 was 10,000 copies. It gradually increased to 20,000, to 30,000 and to 47,000 copies before the *Dragon Ball* boom (Pers. Interview, July 2006).

[2] According to Taweepat Khonkhasuthi, one publisher's *Dragon Ball* sold 10,000 copies. But it was reduced to 3,000 copies when their publications arrived later than others (Pers. Interview, April 2006).

"It happened that a new publisher, Advanced Comics Company, declared they had got all the copyrights of major comics such as 'Dragon Ball' and 'Touch' around 1991. Major publishers such as Siam Sports and Vibulkij rushed to visit Japanese publishers in Japan to ask for the copyright."

(Pers. Interview, Krisada Boonsri, April 2006)

However, Japanese publishers could not give a clear answer because they neither had any staff to control copyright in the oversea markets nor paid any attention to these markets. The Japanese publishers just instructed them to temporarily stop publishing the comics in the way that they had been doing if they wanted to get the copyright from Japan. It took more than a year before Japanese publishers decided to provide the copyright. During this period, Siam Sports printed Thai comics to keep the staff and factory in operation (Pers. Interview Virat Teekaputisakul).

3. 5 Legal Doraemon in 1994 to the present

The chaos caused by the copyright war in the local market ended when Japanese publishers agreed to close contracts with the local publishers. As for Doraemon, Shogakukan chose two publishers, Nation Edutainment and Nanmee Books, to be their partner in Thailand. With two new publishers, Doraemon had a new start in Thailand. Although major publishers could survive after closing contracts with Japanese publishers, small or middle-sized publishers such as Mitmitri or Chunasarn could not negotiate for the copyright and disappeared from the arena of Japanese-style comic publishing.

3. 5. 1 Products: Doraemon with official face

Following the rush to close contracts with Japanese publishers, there are now two publishers holding the copyright to Doraemon publication in Thailand. The first is Nation Edutainment which publishes various Doraemon comics as well as educational reading based on Doraemon comics. Nation Edutainment had never printed

Japanese-style comics before; they were already running their comic business with Walt Disney Company. Wongsiri Miyaji, the first editor of Doraemon in Nation Edutainment, explains:

> "Since the Nation Group had comics business with Disney, we tried to get the copyright of Japanese comics. According to our own research, the popular Japanese comics were 'Dragon Ball', 'Slam Dunk' and 'Doraemon'. Therefore we contacted Shogakukan, the copyright holder of 'Doraemon', as well as Shueisha which had the copyright for 'Dragon Ball' and 'Slam Dunk'".
>
> (Pers. Interview, May 2006)

The second is Nanmee Books which holds copyright to Doraemon educational books such as: "English conversation with Doraemon", "Mathematics for first grade with Doraemon". By October 2005, Nation Edutainment has published 14 series with around 167 titles of Doraemon publications. Doraemon publications take up more than 30 per cent in all the Japanese-style comics products of Nation Edutainment. With the copyright, the price of Doraemon's paperbacks rose in price from 10 baht to 25 baht in 1994[1].

The change was seen not only in the price but also in products adopted as the original paperback's format (Table 3-9). The size had changed to 11cm by 17cm, a bit smaller than the pirated paperbacks to make the official change obvious to the readers (Fig. 3-28). The number of pages and the order of the episodes became exactly the same as the original series of Doraemon in Japan. The pagination was nearly doubled to 194 pages from 128 pages in the past. They used the same cover illustration like the Japanese paperback. The only differences between the Thai and Japanese versions were the coloring and logo of the title of the front cover and some local contents inside the paperbacks; there were the advertisements both on the inside of the front cover and the inside of the back cover, half a page for editor's note, some information reading about Japanese culture and the creator, Fujiko F. Fujio, pictures for coloring, and explanation of

---

[1] Nation Edutainment gradually increased the price of Doraemon's paperback: 25 baht in 1994, 30 baht in 2000 and 40 baht in 2005.

paper craft in Japanese *origami* style[1]. However, these local contents disappeared from the latest version published in 2000.

Fig. 3-28 Doraemon (vol. 4) with copyright in 1994[2]

Table 3-9 Doraemon published by Nation Edutainment in 1994

Title	Doraemon vol. 4 (the first official print in 1994)
Translation	Good quality
Pictures	Pictures were scanned from original comics. Translated words in balloons and sound effects were hand-drawn[3].
Contents	Same as original comics
Pagination	194 pages
Publication style	Paperback with Editors note
Size	11cm×17cm (a bit smaller than Japanese one)
Price	25 baht

---

[1] Author's observation of Doraemon (vol. 4) published by Nation Edutainment in 1994

[2] The sticker is not original. Author found this comic at second book shop.

[3] Doraemon (vol. 9, the second imprint in 2000) use typed letters for the translation in balloons and sound effects.

However, the circulation of "un-authorized" Doraemon did not stop immediately. The piracy of Doraemon comics (Fig.3-29) still existed until recently but gradually disappeared.

Fig. 3-29 Doraemon comic without copyright published in 1999

3. 5. 2 Production: under cooperation with the Japanese publisher

There were several changes in the production process after local publishers linked up with the Japanese side. First is the work flow in the production. They could now get the original copy from Japan. And the editor had to consult with the Japanese side on the date and number of impression[1] as well as the design of the front cover. All the paperbacks of Japanese-style comics print the name of the creator which used to be missing on the cover page of pirated comics. Next is the role and qualification of the editors. It is necessary for the editor to have Japanese language ability not so much to choose "suitable" comics for local market but to consult or negotiate with the Japanese publishers. Nation Edutainment employed an editor who graduated from a doctoral course in Japan. In addition, the creation of the front page was abolished since they could now get the original "official" cover illustration from Japan. They do not need local illustrators and designers but operators for the layout and printing.

Interestingly, Nation Edutainment asked the first Thai publishers of Doraemon for advice on the knowledge of local comics production because they had no experience

---

[1] The minimum impression is fixed in the contract. Usually it is between 7,000 and 10,000 copies (Pers. Interview, Phitoon Terapatanapan).

in it; Shogakukan chose Nation Edutainment because of its clean image and was not involved in "piracy". As a result, the Nation's production team had to work with those who used to print the comics without copyright protection.

Fig. 3-30 The flow chart of Doraemon production after 1994
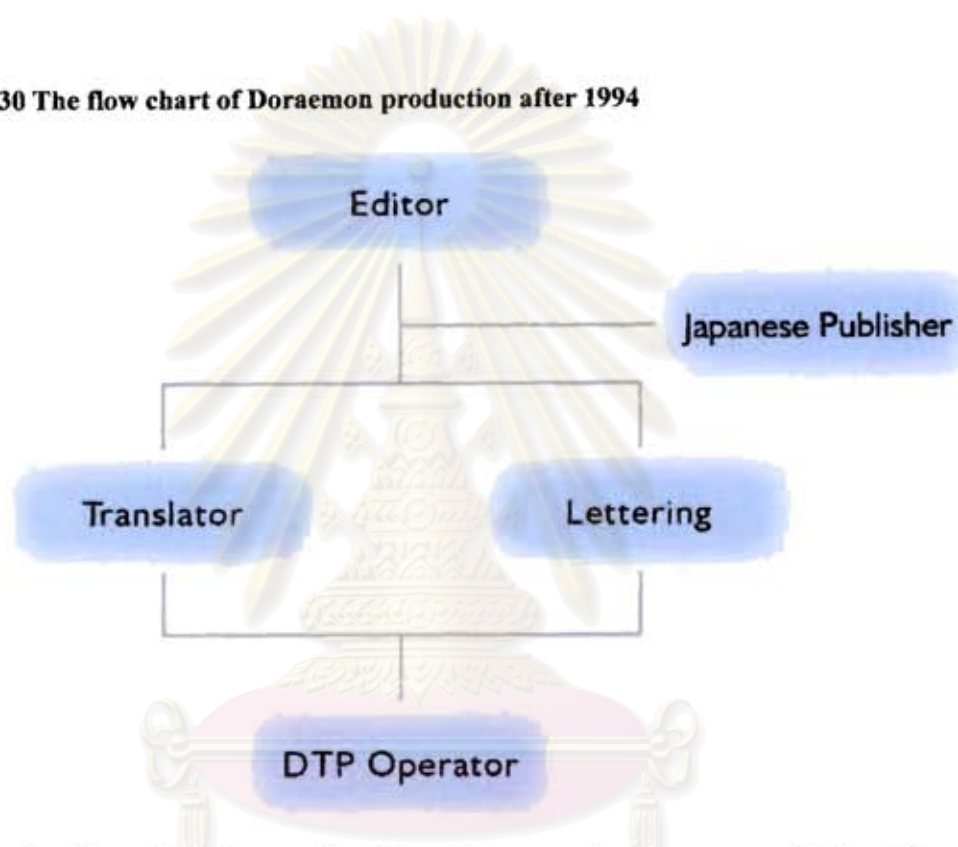
1. The editor chooses the title and contacts the Japanese publisher, Shogakukan, to get the copyright and the original comic.
2. The editor assigns the translator to translate the comic.
3. The editor edits the translation to adopt comic-style writing and reduces the words to fit the balloon size.
4. An artwork staff erases Japanese characters on the original comic.
5. A letterer draws letters in the word balloons and sound effects on the original comic (They type the words into the balloons now.)
6. The editor assigns DTP operator to lay out the front page.
7. The editor contacts Shogakukan to get approval for the front page design
8. Printing

3. 5. 3 Comics Industry: segregation of publishers

Only big publishers could remain in the industry after the local industry had been legalized by Japanese publishers. The reasons why the major publishers could acquire the copyright from Japan are as follows.

1) Although the copyrights were negotiated by titles, Japanese publishers preferred to deal with a few local publishers which could purchase several titles to avoid confusion.

2) Japanese publishers required a halt to publishing as a condition for negotiating the copyright until a decision was made. Due to this ban which lasted more than a year, only big local publishers could survive more than a year without having any income from the comics.

Small publishers that could not get the copyrights suddenly became "illegal" publishers and gradually disappeared from the "legal" market although some of them continued their business illegally.

Interestingly, the actions against the pirate publishers were conducted by legalized publishers. Japanese publishers did not exercise their authority over pirate publishes directly.

> *"When we got the copyright of a title, we contacted the publisher that used to print that title. Most of them understood the situation and stopped printing. In addition, we asked the distributors which had contracts with us not to put the "illegal" comics on sale. Although there was no serious conflict between publishers, pirate printing still exists and is very difficult to abolish."*
>
> (Pers. Interview, Virat Teekaputisakul, May 2006)

Since most legalized publishers have their own distribution systems, they could ask distributors and retail shops[1] to cooperate for legalization. Gradually, the reforms in

---

[1] For example, Siam Inter Multimedia (formerly Siam Sports) owns 30 retail shops by 2005.

the industry bore fruit and piracy in the local comic market dwindled to an estimated 30 per cent share in the comic market (TFRC 1997). Most pirate publishers prefer to print sexy or violent comics to earn easy cash (*The Nation*, 3 February, 2003).

3. 5. 4 Expanding market

According to a survey by the TFRC in 1997, the market for comic books was estimated at no less than three billion baht in 1996 and it expanded by 30 per cent in 1997. Around 70 per cent of the comic book market is captured by licensed Japanese comics. On the other hand, Total sales of general books (excluding comics) are estimated at eight billion baht in 1997 (Niyomka 2002:183). It can be estimated that the total sales of comic accounts for 33 per cent (Japanese-style comic accounts for 23 per cent) of total sales of publications including general books and comics in 1997[1] (Fig 3-31).

There is another way to examine the market size by looking at the data in the annual report in 2005 of Siam Inter Multimedia (Siam Inter, formerly Siam Sport) which went public in 2003 and has a market share of around 35 per cent in Japanese-style comic publishing. The sales of the entire Japanese-style comics market is estimated at 1,219.284 million baht. If comics were sold for 35 baht each, 34.836 million copies of comic books were sold in 2005 or 2.9 million copies per month.

Fig. 3-31 **The percentage of the entire sales of publications in Thailand in 1997**

- ...Books
- ...Japanese comics
- ...Other comics

---
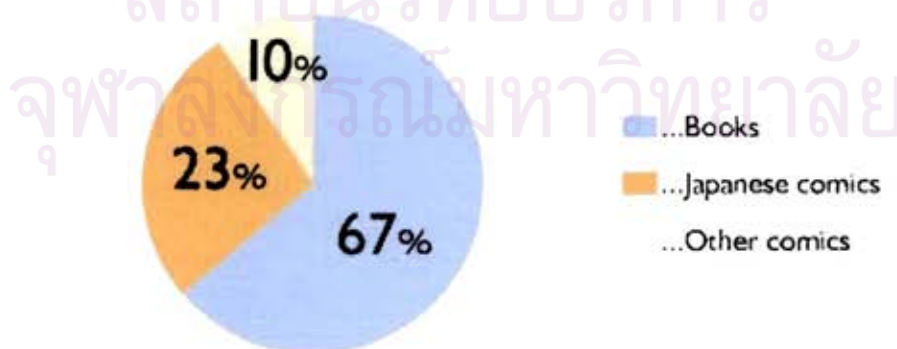
[1] The author uses the data of total sales of comics market in 1996 in this estimate.

3. 6 Summary

Chapter III has examined the process of Doraemon's circulation from 1971 to 2006. Despite its early introduction, Doraemon's consumption did not take off until 1981 when the episodes were compiled into paperbacks. The huge popularity of Doraemon caused a social phenomenon and various media helped to kindle this phenomenon. Although the boom fizzled out due to the overlap in printing as well as the arrival of Doraemon TV cartoons, Doraemon still kept its popularity until present day. The position of Japanese-style comics in the market had expanded from a niche market under the influence of Japanese TV programs to an important player in the domestic publishing market. Although the local industry printed Japanese-style comics without any permission from Japan, they adapted the contents and publication effectively and contributed to its circulation.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DORAEMON'S DISEMMINATION
AND COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

Chapter IV analyzes the relationship between Doraemon's cultural diffusion and copyright protection to study its contribution to the dissemination of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics. Copyright protection is based on the idea of intellectual property rights (IPR: copyrights, trademarks, patents, etc.). IPR has been regarded as a "global standard" since the Uruguay Round (1986-1994) was held to discuss it. Based on copyright protection, "cultural industries…. [and their] contents are typically protected by copyright" (UNESCO, 2000:13). However, Doraemon (and other Japanese-style comics) had been disseminated by local publishers without any control from the Japanese publishers and copyright protection since the 1970s (or the late 1960s). Would the enforcement of "copyright protection" contribute to Doraemon's diffusion and cultural interaction between Thailand and Japan?

The first section looks at the transition in the cultural flow of Japanese-style cartoons between Thailand and Japan. The second section analyzes the cultural flow of Doraemon in Thailand, which is described as "local market-led" circulation and analyzes the pros and cons of its dissemination. The third section examines the standardization of Japanese-style comics' circulation in Thailand by enforcing copyright protection. The fourth section discusses the contribution of both flows to the spread of Doraemon and analyzes the relationship between copyright protection and the cultural dissemination of Japanese-style comics in Thailand.

4. 1 Analysis of the cultural flow of Doraemon in Thailand

The cultural flow of Doraemon between Thailand and Japan as discussed in Chapter III is summarized as follows:

Before Japanese-style comic magazines appeared in Thailand, the cultural flow of Japanese cartoons to the consumers was only through Thai TV channels with copyright protection (Fig. 4-1).

Since Japanese-style comics appeared in Thailand in 1967, most Japanese-style comic magazines followed the titles of Japanese TV programs and animation aired by Thai local channels. The comics of superheroes based on TV programs were mainly printed in this period from 1967 to around 1977 (Fig. 4-2).

Fig. 4-1   Cultural flow of Japanese cartoons around 1965

Fig. 4-2   Cultural flow of Japanese cartoons from 1967 to 1977
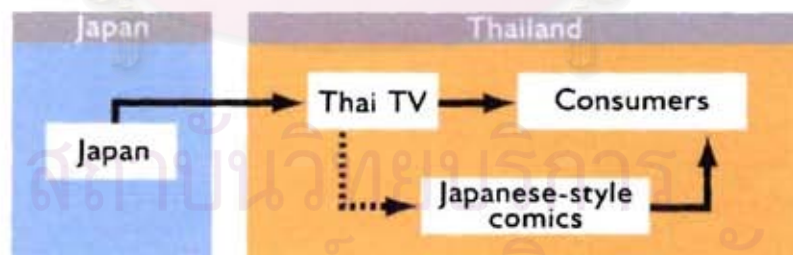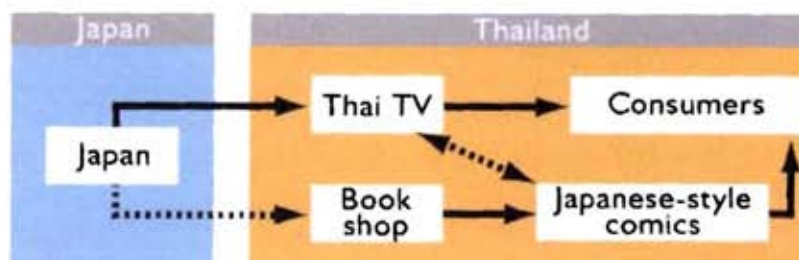

**Fig. 4-3   Cultural flow of Japanese cartoons from 1978 to 1993**

The cultural flow of the Japanese-style comic market stopped depending on local TV channels when the superhero programs disappeared from local channels (see section 3.2.2). The new products, story-comics paperbacks, were welcomed by teenagers. Local publishers bought Japanese comic magazines from a bookshop in Thailand and scanned them for reprinting.[1] In this period, the flow of comics industry sometimes complemented the flow through local television. Both flows influenced each other to introduce new contents to the consumers in Thailand. However, the flow of the Japanese-style comics in Thailand was not controlled by Japanese publishers (Fig. 4-3).

After the enforcement of copyright protection, the flow of Japanese comics became standardized (Fig.4-4).

Fig.4-4 Cultural flow of Japanese cartoons from 1994 to today
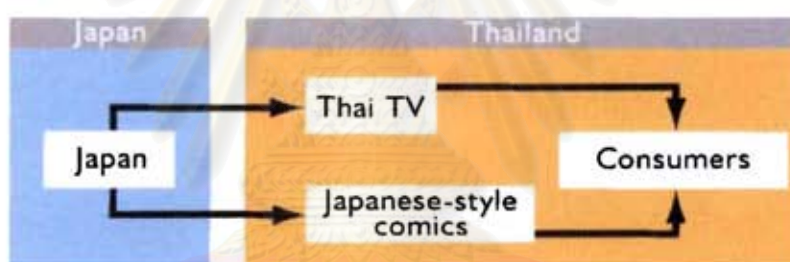
According to the summary of the cultural flow shown above, there are two characteristics of Doraemon's cultural flow in Thailand. One is the "local market-led" circulation without copyright protection (Fig.4-2, 4-3) and the other is standardized circulation with copyright protection (Fig. 4-4).

The "local market-led" circulation was so named by the author because the whole process in Thailand had been conducted by local publishers for local readers without any connection to Japan. As described in chapter III, Doraemon was commoditized and distributed by local publishers without any control from the Japanese side for more than two decades until 1994.

---

[1] The Japanese bookshop, Tai Bun Do, has been established since the late 1960s. The flow showed in Fig.4-3 had already started since then. But the author divided the period from 1977 to emphasize the independent from the flow through Thai TV.

This "local market-led" cultural flow of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics is sharply different from the diffusion of some popular Western cultural products represented by Disney which has "a mode of delivery in the sense of the staging of goods and services for consumption" (Bryman, 2004:159) based on copyright protection. Also, Doraemon's "local market-led" circulation cannot be explained by the global spread of prominent brands such as Coca-Cola and Nike which try to "commoditize as much as possible, but also in terms of their selling the same things to as many as possible regardless of where these customers are" (Hannerz, 1996:70). On the other hand, Japanese publishers disregarded the overseas as a potential market and did not take any action to tap into overseas markets. Doraemon and other Japanese-style comics had been freely reproduced and distributed by local publishers and distributed to the local market.

This "local market-led" circulation can be labeled as "media piracy" as it is not based on copyright protection. However, this label is not relevant in explaining the characteristics of the cultural flow of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics because there was no legal circulation controlled by copyright protection and Japanese publishers did not take any action to protect it.

Doraemon is widespread in Thailand and has been successful in getting wide popularity even much more than Disney's characters (Fig.3-26). This shows the significance of "local market-led" circulation in the dissemination of a cultural product.

The standardized circulation refers to the circulation after it has been authorized by the Japanese publishers. With the copyright protection, the products were disseminated under central control. Even after the standardization from enforcing the copyright protection, the process of circulation continues to be conducted by the local publishers. However, there are some changes in the local comic market from the standardization.

Consequently, it is necessary to look at the factors behind the "local market-led" circulation of Doraemon and to discuss the pros and cons of "local market-led" circulation as well as the standardized flow with copyright protection for studying the cultural flow of Doraemon in Thailand. Which characteristics of cultural flow have

contributed to the dissemination of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in Thailand? Both styles of circulation had helped in the dissemination of the cultural products effectively.

4. 2 "Local market-led" circulation without copyrights control

The process of Doraemon's arrival and circulation shows active local interaction towards a foreign cultural product, conducted mainly by local publishers without any control from the "center" or Japan. As described above, this "local market-led" circulation is not similar to the cultural diffusion of globally prominent brands.

What are the factors behind the "local market-led" cultural flow of Doraemon and what are the pros and cons without copyright protection? This section analyzes the factors behind the Doraemon's "local market-led" circulation and discusses the pros and cons of "local market-led" circulation for the dissemination of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in Thailand. Various factors in both Japan and Thailand formed Doraemon's "local market-led" cultural flow and, surprisingly, several significant points are seen in its cultural diffusion without copyright protection.

4. 2. 1 Factors behind "local market-led" circulation of Doraemon

The "local market-led" cultural flow emerged without any control or any intention from the "center". The various factors behind Doraemon's "local market-led" circulation in Thailand include: local demands stimulated by television; Japanese publishers' lack of interest in overseas markets; ambiguous perceptions of copyright; and the profitable nature of piracy that motivated local publishers.

Local demand stimulated by imported Japanese programs
As examined in chapter II, Japanese animation companies had a clear strategy to export to overseas markets in order to cover their production loss since the beginning (see

section 2.2.1).   By the late 1970s, Japanese TV cartoons nearly occupied all the space for "children's programs" [1] introduced by the Research Committee for Radio and Television (*Kor Bor Wor*).   A producer, who worked for Channel 9, preferred airing Japanese TV cartoons to others because Japanese TV cartoons were cheaper than others and were popular among children (Liewtrakul, 1997:69).   According to a survey by UNESCO, four foreign TV cartoons including two of Japanese origin were aired weekly in Thailand in 1981.   This increased to 16 cartoons – 10 Japanese, two American and four from Hong Kong – per week in 1984.   Japanese animation occupied 60 per cent of the total 260 minutes of animation broadcast per week (UNESCO, 1990:58-59).   This high occupation of foreign programs in local channels was due to a supply-demand gap in Thailand which still had low cultural production capacity.

> "Each country's share in this rapidly expanding market will be proportionate to the vitality of its cultural industries and the quality of its cultural products.   This may provide opportunity for each country or each region of the world to extend the sphere of influence of the most universal elements of its culture—which may well be those that are most specific to the culture or nation concerned, most deeply human...   Or, on the contrary, it may mean greater dependence by countries with a low production capacity on those with powerful production capabilities."
>
> (Girard, 1982:30)

The Japanese TV cartoons led to a demand for Japanese-style comics, which were a print version of the superhero cartoons.   When the number of TV cartoons declined around 1977, local publishers introduced the story-comics as an alternative, which was independent of TV programs. These comics took off and paved the way for Doraemon's boom later.   In latter years, television latched onto the popularity of these comics by producing animation based on them.   The relationship between TV cartoons and comics publications then developed into a mutually symbiotic one.   And the cultural

---

[1] Children's programs were scheduled in the morning on weekends and evenings on weekdays (Liewtrakul, 1997:49).   As for the launch of *Kor Bor Wor*, see section 3.2.2.

flow of Japanese programs by local channel has continued to support the Japanese-style comic market until now[1].

In addition, the change in Thai society that was brought about by rapid economic growth and the emergence of the middle-class as described in section 2.4 is the important factor behind the emergence of local consumers' demand. The change in the lifestyle was connected to the social change. The rise of the middle class as a social formation further transformed Bangkok's spatial structure and its social and cultural life (Shiraishi, 2004:234). Local production houses could not meet the spike in demand among the middle class for new entertainment (see section 2.3.5). Therefore, the local cultural industries responded by importing foreign cultural products.

Japanese publishers' lack of interest in overseas markets

Japanese publishers never intended to enter the local market from the beginning. Even after knowing of the existence of the local market, they did not take action until local publishers requested the grant of copyrights around 1993. It can be said that Japanese publishers had not considered overseas as a market unlike Western media conglomerates. The reasons of this are 1) They were too busy in the huge domestic market to cultivate overseas markets 2) Unlike English, the Japanese language is not an international language. Therefore they never had any strategy for foreign markets, nor were the staff trained in knowledge about overseas markets.

The overseas markets, especially those in Asia, were still small and undeveloped as compared to the huge domestic market in Japan. In 1981, just before Doraemon's boom in Thailand, the comics market in Japan recorded 157 million yen in sales by publishing 296 million copies comic paperbacks. As for Doraemon, the total sum of paperback impression reached 40 million copies by 1981(Fig.2-6). The domestic comic market was big and was still expanding until 1995[2]. Without a clear strategy to

---

[1] But there had been no business cooperation between the local comic industry and the local TV channels (Pers. Interview with Nathanas Tirajaras).

[2] The peak of the Japanese comics industry was in 1995. In 1996, when people realized that *manga* was not selling as well, many columnists tried to analyze the situation.

cultivate overseas markets, most of the staff have not studied the situation in overseas markets.

A good example that shows Japanese publishers apparent disregard for and lack of knowledge about the Thai market is as follows. When Siam Sports asked to gain the copyright of Doraemon from Shogakukan around 1982, Shogakukan asked for 20,000 baht per page of the original comic and 100,000 copies as a minimum impression for the first issue to acquire the copyright of Doraemon (Yuwanakorn, 1990:96). Shogakukan might calculate this amount based on the Japanese market which consumed 14 million copies[1] of Doraemon paperbacks within a year of 1979. This request was a tall order for the local comic market where the normal print run of comic books was around 5,000 copies, and where an impression of 30,000-70,000 copies at the height of the Doraemon boom was considered a major feat.

Another reason that Japanese publishers were not prepared for copyright protection in overseas markets was due to the lack of a clear strategy for foreign markets. Natsume explains a typical attitude of Japanese publishers.

> *"Around 1990, many offers [were made to Japanese comic publishers] to purchase the copyright from them. Originally the comics industry was concerned only for the domestic market. In addition, as most Japanese were not good at dealing with foreigners, they could not respond effectively. Indeed, most Japanese publishers did not have any staff to deal with copyright issues and they just neglected the offer to purchase the copyright from abroad."* (Natsume 2004b, 246-247)

Even Shogakukan, the publisher that manages the copyright of Doraemon, has established an "International Licensing Division" to manage all the copyrights of their publications only a few years ago even though they established their own agent in the U.S much earlier than it. Takeshi Fukuda, manager of the division, says:

---

[1] The data of domestic sales of Doraemon is according to Yokoyama (2005:102)

"We were not trained to be experts in licensing from the beginning. Most of the staff in this department used to work in other divisions such as editing or production. We are too busy managing the domestic strategy by responding to readers' opinions collected by postcards to be concerned with overseas markets. It seems that there is a consensus that good comics make good sales in our company and we still concentrate on producing better-quality comics more than the marketing. Overseas markets are unpredictable. For example, the popular title "Kochi-kame[1]" is popular in China but not India. It's very difficult to examine the taste of each local market." (Pers. Interview, May 2006)

Without a strategy and specific knowledge, Japanese publishers were not interested in the local comic market. Their attitudes indirectly led to the rise of "local market-led" circulation in Thailand indirectly.

Ambiguous understanding of copyrights

The Japanese-style comic market in Thailand could exist because both Japanese and Thai publishers did not have a firm understanding of copyright issues. Copyright protection is defined as below;

*"**Copyright protection** grants authors the exclusive right to freely exploit their work on a commercial/non-commercial basis by enjoying moral rights protected by law... **The author's** rights over their literary and artistic works (e.g. books and other written works, musical compositions, paintings, sculptures, software and cinematographic works) are protected under copyright for a minimum period of 50 years after their death."*
(UNESCO 2000:24, emphasis author's.)

The Japanese publishers or the creators had not taken strong action against local publishers who managed Doraemon's cultural flow without permission. Even the author of Doraemon, Fujiko F. Fujio, who visited Thailand in 1982 during the Doraemon boom

---

[1] 'Kochi-kame' is a shortened nickname. Original title is *Kochira Katsushika-ku Koen-mae Hashutujo* by Osamu Akimoto. It is the longest serialized cartoon in history since 1976.

by non-licensed comic paperbacks, had not showed his annoyance against local "pirate" publishers when appearing in several local media (Baanthai and Sawassri, 1983:34-38).

Later, Fujiko F. Fujio answered a question concerning piracy of Japanese comics overseas.

> "At first, I was excited to know my cartoons were read by children who spoke a different language from me. But it [piracy] has proliferated too much…….. Recently there are some local publishers who applied for the licenses. I don't wish the proper [licensed] publishers to be at a disadvantage." (Yomu, 1993:10)

This quote confirms Bettig's observation that "Asian authors and artists have viewed the copying of their works as an honor" (Bettig, 1996:213-19 quoted by Smiers, 2000:394). And it is very different from the attitude of Bonnie Richardson, spokeswoman for the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), that "all we are talking about piracy is theft" (Smiers, 2000:387). While Japanese animation had to cover their production costs by exporting to overseas markets, comics industries in Japan had enjoyed catering to the huge domestic market and had been unaware of the need to protect their copyrights overseas.

The local Thai publishers were also not keen to contact copyright owners. They insist that Japanese creators have already gained the copyright fee from TV cartoons and cinema animation films or the merchandizing of the comic characters. Comic books are just for advertising other "proper" media such as TV cartoons. During publishing, they changed the layout by flipping the panels horizontally and added Thai language on it. Hence, they should not be charged for the copyright of the Thai version (Puangpinyo, 1988:82). This opinion shows that Thai publishers still did not understand the concept of "author's right".

Profitable for local publishers

Local publishers got involved with Doraemon because it was a very profitable product. The content of Doraemon was well developed through stiff competition and

had already gained huge popularity in Japan. Also various media products such as a TV cartoons, movies and merchandizing of Doraemon character were already available in Japan. In addition, it existed without any copyright protection. Doraemon was very good as a cultural commodity one that they did not have to invest in the creation of content, almost like "pennies from heaven". Therefore, they were keen to create effective circulation by creative adaptation and effective distribution. Consequently, local publishers cultivated the market, and trained staff for production, and established their distribution system for youth. This became the basis of the industry.

Other than these four main reasons, some factors helped to form the "local market-led" circulation. The progress of new technology such as offset printing or copy machines made it possible for local publishers to copy the products easily. Also both governments had not taken effective action towards copyright protection. In addition, it should be noted that the universality of comics whose pictorial grammars cross language barriers easily also contributed to the "local market-led" circulation.

4. 2. 2 Pros and cons of "local market-led" circulation without copyright

As seen in chapter III, Doraemon gained huge popularity during the period of "local market-led" circulation without copyright protection. Generally diffusion without copyright is regarded as "piracy" and strongly protested by copyright owners. It is also against a law which upheld IPR in the 1990s. However, there are significant considerations about the "local market-led" circulation as well as certain disadvantages from the viewpoint of the products diffusion.

Significance of the "local market-led" circulation

The significance of "local market-led" circulation or so-called "piracy" in terms of diffusion is not a new idea (Dave Laing cited in Smiers 2000:390, Davis and Yeh 2001: 229, Hu 2001:208). However, it is important to pick up the significance of it from the spread of Doraemon in Thailand.

First, a local publisher that is not under the confines of copyright protection could remain flexible in responding to market demand. When Doraemon started to get a good response, the local publishers, Mitmitri and Vibulkij, dealt with it very quickly without any strategy meeting or marketing research which often used to undergird efficient marketing. They could print as much as possible without having to negotiate the contract with the copyright owner.

Second, local publishers could reproduce Doraemon freely to adapt to the local market. As we have explored in chapter III, there were various twists in the reproduced Doraemon. These free expressions of creativity might hardly occur if the production were controlled by Japanese publishers (see Appendix B).

Third, the circulation easily doubled and tripled when new "pirated" publishers started to print similar products of Doraemon without copyright control. Anybody could print Doraemon as much as possible if they thought it would make a profit. Even *Thai Rath*, the largest local newspaper, also dipped into the "Doraemon boom" easily without copyright protection and supported its diffusion.

Fourth, this "local market-led" circulation could provide the comics at cheap prices because they did not have to pay any production costs for the contents. As for Doraemon, while the price of 10 baht for a paperback was not very cheap for children in the 1980s (Yuwanakorn, 1990:6), it would still be much cheaper than the "legal" product produced under the Japanese publisher's unrealistic demand of 20,000 baht as copyright fee for a original page.

Various factors such as the high flexibility, the free rein for reproduction, the high circulation and its cheaper price can be noted as significant to the "local market-led" circulation for Doraemon's cultural diffusion.

Disadvantages of "local market-led" circulation without copyright protection

While one well-known disadvantage of "local market-led" circulation is the copyright infringement for copyright owners, other disadvantages for dissemination often go overlooked. Looking at the spread of Doraemon, damage from chaotic market conditions such as low product quality, and heating up of competition was serious enough

to warrant standardization of the market.

The low quality of the products was criticized by several researchers (Puangpinyo, 1988: 167, Yuwanakorn, 1990:133-134). The translation's quality was not good enough and mis-spelling or mis-using of the words were found in 42 per cent in 234 comics which were published in 1987-88 (Yuwanakorn, ibid). The overlap in printing discouraged readers' consumption (see section 3.4.5). Since episodes in Doraemon comic books were ordered "creatively" by local editors, nobody could control the overlap in printing of the same episodes when a new competitor entered the market.

High competition among the publishers caused undeniable damage for the cultural diffusion of Doraemon and other Japanese-style comics. Without any control from authorities, comics publishing became easy business to get quick cash for local publishers. During the Doraemon boom, nine publishers entered the market to print the same products and caused an excess in supply. Consequently, the boom in the consumption of Doraemon's paperbacks did not last long in spite of Doraemon's high popularity. The competition resulted in chaotic market conditions during the *Dragon Ball* boom (see section 3.4.5). To print the newest episode, a local publisher that was earning "more than 10 million baht" per month, sent its staff abroad to get the latest episode[1]. The profit would be halved if the issue arrived on the market half a day later than other competitors (Pers. Interview, Krisada Boonsri). The tough competition made the comic business a risky investment. To defeat the competitors, a local publisher turned to "copyright protection" as tool.

Summary: "local market-led" circulation without copyright control

Doraemon's diffusion is different from other global brands because it was steered by local publishers without any control from the Japanese. This "local market-led" circulation of Doraemon was due to local demands that gave rise to the high

---

[1] This publisher found the original magazine (*Shukan Shonen Jump*) sold in Singapore earlier than Tokyo. They could get ahead by sending an employee to Singapore by air in order to buy the latest magazine. As soon as they get the latest episode by facsimile, the reproduction could be done within half a day and sold in the market the next day (Pers. Interview, Krisada Boonsri).

popularity of Japanese television programs in Thailand; the Japanese publisher's lack of interest in overseas markets; ambiguous understanding of copyright protection by publishers on both sides; and the profitability of printing Doraemon.

This "local market-led" circulation contributed to Doraemon's diffusion through the local publishers' ability to respond flexibly to the demands, creativity in reproduction, high circulation, and affordable prices for consumers. In contrast, the disadvantages also include copyright infringement, low product quality and high competition among publishers that required authorities to step in. Other than copyright protection, "local market-led" circulation also had significant bearing in the spread of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics.

4. 3 Standardization due to copyright protection

The cultural flow of Doraemon had changed drastically with the enforcement of copyright protection of Japanese-style comics in the local market. Both Thai and Japanese publishers were in contact directly for the first time in three decades. Interestingly, copyright protection was proposed not by the copyright holders in Japan but by local publishers. Copyright protection led to the standardization of the Japanese-style comics dissemination, stabilization of local markets and improvement in the product quality. However, it also divided local publishers into "authorized" and "pirate" publishers and reduced the room for local creativity under copyright control.

4. 3. 1 Background of copyright protection and its problems

With the increasing international trade in the cultural market, the definition and trade agreement of the cultural industry had become important. Since cultural products and services convey and construct cultural value, produce or reproduce cultural identity and have impact on the society, the "integration process has generated a lot of debate on the political, economical and institutional limit" (UNESCO, 2000:9). The idea of IPR

was discussed mainly at the Uruguay Round hosted by GATT since 1986 and the decision was made to acquire TRIPs, an instrument to bring IPR under common international GATT and World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. The Thai government responded to this global movement and standardized its related laws with regards to TRIPs. For example, "author's rights" which were first established in 1978 was revised in 1991 and 1994 to include the author's rights on computer software; patent protection was also revised in 1991 (Motoda, 2000).

The TRIPs agreement and other worldwide free trade and investment agreements mark a clear historical demarcation in the global control of information and impose a definition of international property right directly disadvantageous to Third World countries (Flow, 1996:89 quoted by Smiers, 2000:392). This emergence of global standards on intellectual property rights led to several discussions. The global business sector largely welcomed it because economic loss caused by piracy had become central concerns. According to a report by the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)[1], the loss from intellectual property infringement in the Asia Pacific area was estimated at US$ 250 billion in 2002. In Thailand, the loss from copyright infringement on publication in Thailand accounted for US$28 million in the same year (Japan Patent Office, 2002:10).

However, there are fears that TRIPs protection will contribute to the creation of a new global oligopoly. According to statistics on the world cultural market, economies of scale and vertical integration of strategies seem to be paying off for USA-based audiovisual entertainment groups (UNESCO, 2000:20). Another concern is that "those rights have turned culture into business" (Koopman,1991:454 cited by Smiers, 2000:383). In addition, non-Western societies do not have a notion of individual authors (Smiers, 2000:396). Smiers asks in his paper: "This raises the difficult question about what and who needs protection" (ibid. 2000:396).

Under global trade rules such as TRIPs, domestic publishers cannot disregard overseas markets. Once the cultural product is created and sold in the domestic market,

---

[1] IIPA was established by copyright industries of U.S. in 1984.

the creator or the copyright holder has to be responsible for its circulation even in overseas markets. The IPR will be effective for the copyright holder who attempts to conduct his overseas business like the globally prominent brand companies. Therefore, it is interesting to look at the effect of standardization resulting from copyright protection on the domestic publishing industry like Thailand and Japan.

4. 3. 2 Standardization of Japanese-style comics in the Thai market

The idea of enforcing copyright protection was used to defeat competitors in the local publishing market in Thailand. The active discussion of IPR in the Uruguay Round and the positive reactions of Thai government had the local publishers so worried that nearly all the publishers sent someone to Japan to request for the copyright from Japanese publishers when a new publisher declared that he had attained copyrights for all the major Japanese-style comics titles in Thailand (see section 3.4.6). This section attempts to analyze the effects from the standardization brought about by copyright protection for each actor in the local comics market: local publishers, readers, the Japanese publishers, and the market.

Local publishers

The pros and cons for local publishers would be different for the winners and the losers because standardization divided them into authorized publishers and pirate publishers. While publishers that were unable to get the copyright suffered huge losses, the authorized publishers managed to grow their business steadier than before and were able to contribute to a stable supply of Japanese-style comics.

Only a few large publishers could gain the approval from the Japanese publishers after other smaller publishers could not meet the criteria set by the Japanese publishers in which the local publishers were to wait and not print comics that infringed on the copyright until they made decisions (see section 3.5.3). As a result, the authorized publishers found themselves in a stable market with fewer competitors and with a steadier supply of comics contents. All these factors helped in their business growth.

Mitmitri, one of the contributors to the Doraemon boom, became one of the "pirate" losers. They could not get any copyright. The "pirated" publishers had to limit their activities to only the illegal market since it appeared to be very difficult to become "legal" again once they have been regarded as "pirates".

In contrast, Siam Inter Multimedia (formerly Siam Sports) is a good example of the winners. They entered the market during the Doraemon boom and gradually expanded their business. The Japanese comics industry has become more above board since Siam Inter Multimedia (Siam Inter) went public in 2003. Now Siam Inter has 30 retail comic bookshops and 400 staff members, of which 50 works in comics production. They publish 25 to 30 new comic book titles and two comic magazines per month. Siam Inter had an annual sales of 677.38 million baht in 2005 (Siam Inter Multimedia, 2005). Seventy per cent of the turnover came from comics publishing, of which 90 per cent are Japanese comics[1]. Vibulkij is another winner. Vibulkij publishes Japanese-style comics on average a book a day, with 48 comic books issued per month including reprints of old editions. Vibulkij publishes nine magazines, of which seven are Japanese-style comic magazines (five monthlies and four weeklies). According to Phitoon Terapatanapan, editor-in-chief of Vibulkij, there are some disadvantages too.

> *"Being authorized brought a lot of advantages. However, we have certain risks from a possibility of overprinting because the minimum impression has been fixed when we signed the contract with the Japanese publisher."* (Pers. Interview, July 2006)

The standardization by copyright protection resulted in a steadier Japanese-style comic market which was occupied by several large publishers including listed companies. It is said that more than half of the legal market is occupied by two major publishers; Vibulkij and Siam Inter are holding 35 per cent and 30 per cent respectively and the rest is shared by Bongkoch Publishing, Burapat Comics, and Nation Edutainment (Pers. Interview, Virat Teekaputisakul, Phitoon Terapatanapan).

---

[1] They publish comics imported from Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

While the disadvantages for loser publishers were huge, the standardization enhanced the authorized publishers' business development by leading to a stable market and a steadier supply for their business.

Product (Doraemon)

With standardization, Doraemon's physical appearance as a cultural product became similar to the original comics and there was more variation of the products in the market such as educational cartoons of Doraemon (see section 3.5.1).

There was no serious confusion among the readers from the standardization of the products because the local creativity formerly seen on the Doraemon comic, as published by local publishers, was not in the contents or drawings but in the additional sections (see Appendix B). The locally-produced Doraemon before 1994 was already similar to the original one; names of characters or publication style (paperbacks) were almost the same as the authorized Doraemon.

It is observed that Doraemon offered a wider selection of titles after the standardization. With the control of the copyright protection, there was no overlapping in printing the same title and less famous titles had a chance to be translated. More than 200 titles of Doraemon publication were translated into Thai[1] including the Doraemon education books published by Nanmee books in 2005.

However, the effect of the legalized products on the spread of Doraemon is ambiguous because Nation Edutainment has yet to reveal the total circulation of Doraemon comic book post-copyright protection. However, one could say that Doraemon's popularity is still evident from the wide assortment of Doraemon comic books.

Readers

Readers also gained several benefits from a standardized market. They can purchase better-quality comics and choose from a greater variety than before. As

---

[1] The number was estimated by the author based on data from Shogakukan and Nation Edutainment.

publishers now avoid printing the same titles, "less famous" titles then have a chance to be translated after the standardization (Pers. Interview, Phitoon Terapatanapan). In addition, they will not be blamed for purchasing illegal products after the market's standardization. However, readers need to bear the higher cost for better comics. The price of comic books has more than doubled from 10 to 25 baht in 1994 and to 40 baht in 2006. It can be said the pros and cons for the readers are similar in comparison with other actors.

Becoming a cultural industry

The establishment of copyright protection standardized the connection between Thailand and Japan, and the local comic industry became a "cultural industry" with cultural products that are protected by the author's right. The standardization of the industry also contributes to the health and stability of the market.

The standardization from enforcing copyright protection changed the publishing relationship between Thailand and Japan. Local publishers are now connected directly to Japanese publishers via copyright protection. The standardized business relationship provides health and stability to the local comic industry. The local industry gained a good reputation by meeting international standards. Japanese publishers also had a chance to connect with the local market. The global standards for international trading connected the two countries' markets in a global trading network.

In addition, the enforcement of copyright protection created a cultural industry. The local "pirated Japanese-style comics industry" became "a comics industry with a business relationship with Japan". It increased their social reputation and business potential with other countries. For example, Siam Inter now imports comics from other countries such as Hong Kong and Korea according to WTO's standard of cultural trade.

At the same time, with the legal market taking up 70 per cent of the market share (TFRC : 1997), the Thai industry still has to deal with copyright infringement by "pirate" local publishers. Authorized publishers try to keep their standards by reducing piracy because pirate publishers prefer to print erotic or violent comics that are socially disapproved (*The Nation*, 3 February 2003).

Japanese publishers

While the Japanese publishers clearly benefited from the enforcement of copyright protection, their role in cultural diffusion has not increased even after the standardization of the business relationship with local publishers.

The Japanese publishers gained several benefits by the standardization from enforcing the copyright protection. First, they get copyright fees from local publishers. Although the sales of the license for comics come up to only about one per cent of the Japanese publisher's total sales[1], it is "additional income" which they have never claimed. Next, they were given new markets where consumers have already been cultivated by mature agents (local publishers) without any effort or investments on their part. The Thai comic market would be like "pennies from heaven" for them.

Nevertheless, Japanese publishers still do not seem to pay attention to the local market. They just manage the copyrights but make no special direct investment into the local market. The main production and distribution is still conducted by local publishers.

"We don't think we will print our comics in overseas by ourselves. What we can do is to authorize the local publishers and take action against piracy." (Pers. Interview, Takashi Fukuda, May 2006)

Thus the contribution of Japanese publishers to the spread of Doraemon in Thailand is still very limited.

Summary: Standardization

There are several advantages and disadvantages to the standardization of the Japanese-style comic market in Thailand by enforcing copyright protection. The

---

[1] Usually they charge 7 per cent of the local comic's price as the copyright fee. However less than half goes to the Japanese publishers. The rest is shared by the cartoonists. Recently, Shogakukan's international license division earned total sales of around 10 billion yen (around US$ 86 million) including the licenses of all the publications of the company. It accounts for five to 10 per cent of total sales of the company (Pers. Interview, Takashi Fukuda).

advantages are: business growth for authorized publishers, better quality and wider selection of the cultural products leading to a healthier Japanese comic market. By firming up the relationship between the Thai and Japanese publishers, the local comics industry gains potential for the future. The disadvantages are: publishers that lost out on getting the copyright have a reputation as "pirated" and had to limit their business activities to only within the "illegal market". The higher price of cultural products and slower response of the local publisher would reduce the dynamics of the Japanese-style comic market.

4. 4 Copyright and cultural dissemination

This chapter investigates the contribution of copyright protection to the diffusion of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in Thailand by discussing the pros and cons of cultural flow of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics with/without copyright protection. Two contributions are seen in the cultural flow of Doraemon which has lasted more than 30 years: the contribution of "local market-led" circulation for cultural dissemination in terms of quantity; and the impact that standardization has on the spread of cultural products in terms of quality.

4. 4. 1 "Local market-led" circulation and quantity

The significance of the "local market-led" circulation without copyright protection and standardized circulation for the spread of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics are as follows:

The significance of local market-led circulation

1. **Affordable price** for the readers.
2. **High supply** by several "pirate" publishers.
3. Profitable enough for local publishers to **cultivate the market**

4. **Flexibility** of the local publishers in responding to the market demand.

5. **Creativity** of the local publishers for effective adaptation of the product to the local market.

The significance of standardized circulation

1. **Stable supply** of the products under the business relationship with Japan.

2. **Healthier and steadier market** conditions

3. **Better quality and wider selection** of cultural product

The contribution of "local market-led" circulation to the diffusion of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics is unambiguous especially in terms of numbers. Even though this "pirated" circulation violated the copyright of Japanese comics, and the low quality of the production discouraged readers, there are undeniable contributions to the spread of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics.

While "local market-led" circulation without copyright is usually called "piracy" and is strongly protested by many companies, the role of piracy on cultural dissemination has been pointed out by several scholars.

"Piracy also plays an important role in the relationship between the Japanese media market and the VCD market." (Hu, 2001:206)

"Recycling practices have, as we have shown, been very successful in expanding computer culture, by making it inexpensive and accessible." (Sundram, 2005:46)

The characteristic of piracy such as "cheap price to a wider range of potential customers" helped in Doraemon's diffusion especially in term of quantity. The cheap price and high circulation gave readers greater access. The flexibility and creativity of the local publishers also shaped the products to become more "consumer-friendly", while expanding new cultural products, such as Japanese-style comics, within the reach of potential readers. In addition, the profitable flow cultivated the local publishers to

motivate the market in establishing a distribution network. The effective distribution system created further consumption.

The "local market-led" cultural flow contributed to the spread of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in terms of quantity. And it built the basis of the market and the industry by cultivating readers and investing in the expansion of the distribution system.

4. 4. 2 Standardized circulation and quality

The standardized circulation with copyright protection contributed to the diffusion of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics by lifting the quality of the products and the local comics industry to global standards.

The enforcing of copyright protection forced two comic industries in two separate countries into establishing a business network where the Japanese publishers authorize the local publishers to print their works. The authorizing of the local publishers helped in reducing the competition and supported the growth for local publishers. Without the kind of chaotic competition seen during the *Dragon Ball* boom (see section 3.4.6), the local publishers can produce a wider selection of better-quality products.

The increase in quality does not seem to contribute to the cultural diffusion directly. However, it is necessary because copyright protection has become central in social discourse due to IPR being regarded as a global standard. The Thai government was also revising laws related to IPR to meet global standards. The increasing global interconnectedness has changed the definition of "good products" for the consumers. Therefore, local publishers requested "authorization" on their own accord, and put the "authorized" logo on the front page to appeal to the readers after they enforced the copyright protection (Fig. 3-28).

The process of the circulation of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in Thailand did not change drastically after the enforcing of the copyright protection because local publishers still conduct main part of reproduction of Japanese-style comics in Thailand. However, the copyright protection added a global dimension to

Doraemon and Japanese-style comics, and established a business relationship between Thailand and Japan.

Conclusion

There are two styles of cultural flow in the cultural diffusion of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics: "local market-led" circulation without copyright protection; and the standardized circulation with copyright protection. The local market-led circulation helped the spread of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in terms of quantity due to the affordable price as well as flexible and creative adaptation by the local publishers. The standardized cultural flow added quality to the circulation. The authorizing of local publishers led to the stability of the market and resulted in better-quality products that meet to the global standards.

However, the contribution from the "local market-led" circulation was higher than the standardized circulation in terms of quantity. In terms of cultural diffusion, "local market-led" circulation or piracy expanded the reach of the products.

> *"[The] illegal market for music contribute[s] to the diffusion and popularity of music in East Asia by offering the products at [a] cheap price to a wider range of potential customers, expanding the reach of the products in a highly unregulated and uninstitutional manner."*
>
> (Otmazgin, 2004:267)

The Doraemon boom in 1981-1982 showed the great progress in the process of the spread of Doraemon. Various media even the local daily newspaper joined the social phenomenon "in a highly unregulated manner" and contributed to the diffusion of Doraemon. As we saw in section 3.3.1, the various media could be an alternative for a reader who could not access the products. The significance of the "local market-led" circulation such as affordable price and high circulation are important factors in the diffusion of Doraemon.

In conclusion, both styles of cultural flow contributed to the dissemination of the cultural product of Doraemon in Thailand. The "local market-led" circulation cultivated

the market effectively and played a significant role in the diffusion of Doraemon by expanding the reach of the produce. On the other hand, the standardized circulation provided the quality that could cater to the reader whose taste has been influenced by global interconnectedness.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5. 1 Summary of the findings

This thesis examined Doraemon's cultural flow in Thailand in order to understand the cultural dissemination of Japanese-style comics in Thailand. The local comic market in Thailand is largely dominated by Japanese-style comics. Of the many popular titles, Doraemon is one that has been widely known among Thai people for more than two decades. This section summarizes the findings on how Doraemon has been circulated in Thailand as well as the factors that have contributed to its diffusion.

Chapter II gave an overview of the history of Japanese-style comics in Thailand by looking at the background of Doraemon, the Japanese comics industry in Japan, and Thai cartoon history. Chapter III went on to explore how Doraemon was circulated. The main agent of Doraemon's cultural flow is the local publisher who commoditized the comic by reproducing it with several twists to adapt to the local market. In the beginning, these local publishers were keen to distribute the comics to the readers without any control from the Japanese publishers. Doraemon was introduced twice in local comics magazines – in 1971 and 1978 – before taking off in 1981-1982. The Doraemon paperbacks were discovered by children and spread through word of mouth. Various media joined this phenomenon and helped to kindle the boom until it fizzled with the arrival of Doraemon's TV cartoon. Even after copyright protection led to standardization in 1994, Doraemon has continued to capture the hearts of children until today.

Chapter IV discussed Doraemon's cultural flow vis-à-vis copyright protection. The cultural flow of Doraemon is classified into two styles: "local market-led" circulation which is the cultural flow without copyright protection from 1971 to 1993; and

"standardized circulation" which is the cultural flow with copyright protection from 1994 to the present. Both cultural flows have contributed to the cultural dissemination of Doraemon and Japanese comics. The "local market-led" circulation was significant in helping to spread Doraemon in terms of quantity. The affordable price, high supply, and flexible and creative adaptation of the comics by local publishers created greater access to the product. The profitable circulation also motivated local publishers to invest in building the foundation of the Japanese-style comics industry. The following factors influenced the "local market-led" circulation:

1. The influence of foreign TV programs on local consumer demand
2. The Japanese publishers' lack of interest in overseas markets
3. The ambiguous understanding of copyright protection
4. The profitable nature of piracy that motivated local publishers

On the other hand, the standardized cultural flow with copyright protection added quality to the diffusion. The stability of the local comics market and better-quality products by authorized publishers catered to the taste of consumers who were influenced by global standards. The following factors influenced the standardized circulation:

1. The chaos in the comics market that ensued from high competition
2. The enforcing of copyright protection as a global standard

To conclude, it is evident that both circulations bear significance on cultural dissemination. However, the contribution from the "local market-led" circulation would seem greater given that it has created easier access to the product for potential consumers. Two factors have under girded these two circulations. First, it was local consumer demand that got the circulations off the ground. Second, the profit-driven local publishers unwittingly became a go-between connecting the Japanese market to local consumers.

5. 2 Implications of the study

Japanese-style comics have by now managed to corner almost the entire local comics market after being introduced more than three decades ago. Although the cultural flow remains asymmetrical in terms of numbers and the situation may appear to be one of "cultural imperialism", the findings in this research suggest otherwise. The following discussion will look at three aspects: the role of the cultural industry in cultural dissemination; copyright protection and cultural dissemination; and cultural dialogue through comics.

5. 2. 1 The role of the cultural industry in cultural dissemination

Local comic publishers had been quick to tap into the easy profits from publishing Japanese-style comics and had thus played the main role in the cultural dissemination of Doraemon and other Japanese-style comics. Since cultural industries are defined as those where "the contents are typically protected by copyright" (UNESCO, 2000:13), these local comic publishers became part of the cultural industry when copyright protection was enforced in Thailand in 1994. The cultural industry has a "twofold nature—both cultural and economic" (UNESCO, 2000:12); the cultural aspect has led to greater creativity in the cultural dialogue between Thailand and Japan while the economic aspect has resulted in the dominance of Japanese-style comics in Thai society.

Impact of the economic aspect

The profit motive was the major factor behind the "local market-led" circulation which contributed to the spread of Doraemon. Therefore, local publishers were printing Japanese-style comics mainly because it was profitable to do so. This profit-driven agenda resulted in the dominance of Japanese-style comics in the local comics market. As described in Chapter III, several publishers swung from publishing local comics to Japanese-style comics after Doraemon's market became apparent. Consequently,

Japanese-style comics occupy around 70 per cent of the local comics market (TFRC, 1997). Such extensive domination by Japanese-style comics has impacted Thai society in various ways.

First, local comic creators were adversely affected when several publishers which used to print Thai comics shifted their business to print Japanese-style comics during the Doraemon boom instead (see section 3.3.4). The popularity of Japanese-style comics also discouraged local publishers from investing in local comics that could compete with Japanese-style comics. A scholar mourned:

> *"We want to have Thai comics which attract Thai children [like Doraemon] ...but better-quality comics magazines like Phuan Kartoon had to be closed because of their economic problems."*
>
> *(Srisantisuk, 1982:9)*

Second, the economic aspect of the local comics industry creates a conducive setting for the diffusion of Japanese-style comics with "lots of graphic sex and hard core violence" that are sold everywhere "like hot cakes" (The Nation, 3 February 2003). The sex and violence depicted in Japanese-style comics have been a point of criticism for a long time. As a result, the Thai government started taking action against comics that focused on sex and violence (Otmazgin, 2004:269).

Third, the domination by Japanese popular culture provoked social discourse on the Thai identity. A scholar was worried over "the potentially negative fallout from the infusion of foreign cultures" (*The Nation*, 13 January 2002). Popular magazine *GM* also cautioned about the effect of the popularity of Japanese popular culture and cited Doraemon as an example: "Nobita represents Japanese children who are dependent on Doraemon. Are Thai children becoming like Nobita? Some are, some are not." (GM Magazine, August 2002:140).

While the economic aspect of the cultural industry contributed to the cultural diffusion of Doraemon and other Japanese-style comics, it not only resulted in the domination of Japanese-style comics over the local comics culture but was also posing a threat to cultural values and cultural identity in Thai society. The Japanese-comics industry used to be a niche market in the late 1960s. However, it has grown to such an

extent that Japanese-style comics account for 23 per cent of the total sales of domestic publications in 1997 (Fig. 3-31). Because of the sheer quantity, the importance of local Japanese-style comics publishers is also on the increase.

Impact of the cultural aspect

On the other hand, the cultural aspect of the Japanese-style comics industry has led to greater room for creativity, and thus stimulating local comic creations.

All Japanese-style comic magazines in Thailand have to set aside editorial space for local cartoonists in the magazines because of the condition[1] stipulated by the Japanese publishers to include local comic titles in the Japanese-style comic magazines (Pers. Interview, Isares Thongpusnoe). Although Thai cartoonists have yet to produce a successful title as yet, the *Apaimanee Saga* (Supot and Blue Hawk, 2001, Fig.5-1) comic which reinvents the well-known Thai folktale *Phra Aphai Mani* and whose plot was used by several local cartoonists in the past has been serialized in the Japanese-style comics magazines.

In addition, Japanese-style comics stimulate the cultural interaction of local cartoonists. Nathanas Tirajaras, former staff of Vibulkij, became the creator of an original animation titled *Taen Taen* (Fig. 5-2) aired by Channel 5 in 2003.

> *"I worked for a Japanese-style comics publisher because I love it. I wanted to create an animation like the Japanese. But it was an unrealistic dream at that time because it cost so much."*
>
> (Pers. Interview, June 2006)

After the first Thai TV animation, *Pangpond, the Adventure in the Future World* (Fig.5-3), was launched in 2002, several local animations have been produced since then. Seven Thai animation programs were broadcast on television in September 2005[2]. The full-length cinema animation *Khan Kluay* was produced in 2006 after long absence of local animation production since 1979 (*The Nation* May 19, 2006) and a cinema film

---

[1] Japanese publishers stipulated the quota because they were worried of being accused of "cultural imperialism" in view of their colonial history. (Natsume, 2003:182)

[2] Surveyed by author in September 2005.

Fig. 5-1 *Apaimanee Saga* drawn by Thai cartoonists serialized since 2001.

Fig. 5-2 *Taen Taen*, TV animation created by the former staff of Vibulkij.

based on local comic *Nuu Hin* (Fig.5-4) was a commercial success in 2006. A newspaper article declared: "The Japanese own the Thai animation market, but Kosol Choochuay [director of the Thai Anima 2003 animation festival] wants to change that." (The Nation, 17 January 2003) Both Khan Kluay and Nuu Hin have also merchandized their characters, similar to Japanese and Western animations (Fig.5-5).

The two aspects of the cultural industry have been discussed in this section. The economic aspect led to cultural domination by Japanese-style comics and provoked social discourse in response. On the other hand, the cultural aspect of the Japanese-style comics industry helped stimulate cultural interaction.

5. 2. 2 Copyright protection and cultural dissemination

As described in section 4.3.1, the emergence of copyright protection has raised concerns over the creation of a new global oligopoly of the cultural industries especially by the West. The statistics show that the seven major media conglomerates in the world – most of which are in the West – took the lion's share of the total turnover of 50 largest audiovisual companies in 1997 (UNESCO, 2000:21). A similar situation can be observed in Thailand where copyright protection has helped to preserve the rights of the authorized local publishers and has also given rise to the oligopoly in the Japanese-style comics market.

Fig. 5-3 The first TV cartoon series in Thailand, *Pangpond*, since 2002.

Fig. 5-4 A poster of the movie *Nuu Hin the Moo Fawee* in June 2006.

Fig. 5-5 Merchandizing of the character *Nuu Hin* in July 2006.

Nevertheless, findings from this research show that copyright protection has helped to maintain cultural diversity by shielding local creators from low-cost piracy in Thailand. In the late 1960s when Japanese-style comics entered the market, local comics gradually lost their market share. As the Japanese-style comics did not come under copyright protection then, printing them became more profitable than publishing local comics since publishers did not have to invest in the creation of content (Pers. Interview, Virat Teekaputisakul). Local comic creators could not compete with the Japanese-style comics which were reproduced at a low cost.

However, the standardization of the cultural flow forced the local publishers to invest in the contents of the comics by enforcing copyright protection. The standardization of the flow led to a rise in the price of Japanese-style comics and also opened up editorial space for the local comic creations. Although the seven-per-cent copyright fee for printing the Japanese-style comics is cheaper than the fee that Thai cartoonists charge (Pers. Interview, Virat Teekaputisakul), local publishers are now more inclined to seek out local content as they would then hold the copyright over the content and could thus manipulate it in different ways to rake in more profit either through merchandizing or media mix (Pers. Interview, Phitoon Terapatanapan).

Hence, the findings show that copyright protection, in protecting the author's rights over the Japanese-style comics, it also helps to guarantee the local cartoonists' creations and their incomes, thus giving local comic creators the opportunity to profit from their creations.

5. 2. 3 Cultural dialogue through comics

Given the popularity of Japanese comics in Thailand, and vice versa in a lesser extent, there have been increasing opportunities for cultural dialogue between Thailand and Japan through the comics, so much so that both governments are keen to use the cultural dissemination for economic or diplomatic purposes.

Doraemon as a tool for communication

It can be observed that Doraemon has created a "common image" shared among Thai youth after its circulation of more than three decades. Doraemon has become a tool of communication in Thai society. For example, in satires about the political confusion caused by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his rival, Sondhi Limthongkul, caricatures of politicians circulated in chain mails and circulated especially among the youth (*A Day*, July 2006, Fig.5-6). The caricatures used characters from Doraemon. Sondhi, the failed critic of Thaksin was portrayed as Nobita, while Thaksin was portrayed as Giant who always kicks Nobita around in the comics. With the photo of politicians combined with each character of Doraemon, this chain mail does not need much explanation about the sender's opinion.

In addition, several young contemporary artists use Doraemon as their inspiration. Pod, an artist and a singer in popular music group "Modern Dog", expresses

Fig. 5-6   Doraemon as a tool for political satire (*a day*, July 2006)

his feeling about Japan with Doraemon in the exhibition held in February 2006. Udom Taephanich, a famous comedian and an artist, puts many colors on the face of Doraemon to express his sadness (Fig. 5-7). "I drew Doraemon as a memory of my trip to Japan. I put colors on it when I broke up with my girlfriend. I even drew a picture of Doraemon committing suicide" (Pers. Interview, September 2006). Both artists are in their thirties and they would have been among the first readers of Doraemon in Thailand.

Fig. 5-7 A work of Udom Taephanich in 2005 (Vajira and Kurusu 2006:122-123).

State interference in the cultural dissemination

In recent years, the authorities have been increasingly interested in the active cultural interaction between the two countries. Thailand's Board of Investment (BOI) announced new measures to facilitate and increase investment in industries throughout the country, especially encouraging "new activities in the software and film industries" including "animation, cartoons and characters" (BOI, 15 June 2004). In contrast with the relatively-parallel relationship between Thai and Japanese publishers, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has displayed an increasing interest in the possible connection between popular culture and diplomacy (Otmazgin, 2004:261). The aim of the Japanese government became apparent when it launched the Strategic Council on Intellectual Property (SCIP) in 2002. The aim of the council, supervised by the Office of the Prime Minister, is to promote the growth of the nation's intellectual property,

including patented technologies, designs, movies and comics, as a means of revitalizing the economy. The comic is recognized as "a cultural expression from Japan" and the government has plans to promote its development.

> "In order to raise the international status of manga, an original style of expression from Japan, and make it widely accepted in foreign countries, from FY2006, the GOJ [Government of Japan] will promote initiatives to honor young and promising foreign manga artists, and encourage foreign comic artists to engage in creative activities by applying the manga style."
>
> (SCIP, 2006:143)

The cultural flow of Doraemon was started by a small number of people who loved reading Japanese comics. It had spread among children through the whisper campaign. In addition, the "local market-led" cultural dissemination did not result in a "center-periphery" relationship that many globally prominent brands created. It is because of the informal spread that comics are capable of that the Japanese government is keen to promote this form of cultural interaction.

Potential for cultural dialogue through the comics

Recently a remarkable production "*Hesheit*" (Fig.5-8), drawn by Wisut Pongnimit, has started to attract Japanese young people. It has been serialized since 1998 and recently appeared in *A Day* monthly magazine, which is the first youth sub-culture magazine in Thailand. Although his work has been popular among Thai young readers, it has now crossed borders and is drawing in Japanese readers. Wisut held several solo-exhibitions in Japan in 2005 and his comics were compiled into a comic book in Japan in 2003. His essay "*Tam-kun to Yipun (Mr. Tam and Japan)*" was published by Shincho-sha, one of the leading publishers in Japan, in 2006.

Fig. 5-8 Front page of Hesheit published in Japan in 2003

Why are these comics tools of communication even in the overseas market? The pictorial nature of comics can cross borders and language barriers easily. It can be said that comics have a universal nature appealing to readers. In addition, both the Thai and Japanese have been familiar with comics as a visual art for more than a century. The distinctiveness of "Japanese-style" comics lies not only in the drawing techniques but also in the development of a narrative style that is not commonly found in Western comics.

When Doraemon arrived in Thailand for the first time in 1971, the cultural interaction between Thailand and Japan was still limited. The asymmetrical economic relationship resulted in strong protests against the purchasing of Japanese goods in 1972. Thirty years after its first arrival, the economic imbalance between the two countries still exists. However, we can see the expansion of the potential of cultural interaction by comics. Although Doraemon cannot be credited solely for it, he did contribute to some of the active cultural interaction we see today.

5. 3 Recommendations

During the research period for this study, the author encountered various difficulties or limitations that could be addressed in future research.

5. 3. 1 Recommendations for further study

First, this thesis did not study the cultural values and identity of Thai people, as well as their perception of foreign cultural products in general; instead it focused on Japanese popular culture and comics. Moreover, the aim of the author was not in explaining the cultural dissemination of Doraemon and other Japanese-style comics by exploring the cultural factors behind the popularity but by studying the factors behind the dynamics of cultural industries. As local demand was crucial in shaping the cultural

dissemination of Doraemon and other Japanese-style comics, it is thus necessary to study the background of the readers' demand in terms of cultural value. As the author had implied in section 3.3.5, the cultural similarities between Thailand and Japan, as well as the socio-economic change in Thai society should be studied more deeply to understand the popularity of Doraemon and Japanese-style comics in Thailand.

Second, the relationship between cultural dissemination and piracy or "local market-led" circulation can be studied more deeply in comparison with the spread of globally prominent brands. It would be interesting to investigate the difference in cultural diffusion between Doraemon and Mickey Mouse. While Disney tries to formulate Mickey's media appearance, Doraemon was spread in a laissez-faire fashion by various local media. A research project in this direction could offer suggestions of effective methods of spreading cultural products.

Third, further study into the history of Japanese-style comics in Thailand is needed; previous studies on Japanese-style comics tend to examine its impact on Thai readers and society. Understanding the historical process would lay the foundation for embarking on any research into Japanese-style comics in Thailand. This thesis has tried to explore the history of Japanese-style comics, but it is not enough. It is necessary to put the history on record; otherwise it will disappear with the memories of the people in the industry.

5. 3. 2 Recommendations to be put into practice

While the author was conducting research for this thesis, it was discovered that there was no specific organization that preserves mass publications. Antique comics can be found only in the homes of private collectors. The Thai cartoon library, the only place to access a lot of antique Thai comics, is maintained by an individual collector. Mass publications such as comics and magazines are important tools in the study of popular culture. The authorities should support the preservation of mass publications as a cultural heritage by setting up specific libraries.

The re-evaluation of the "local market-led" circulation is important in understanding the impact of the Japanese-style comics. The early period when Japanese-style comics were printed before copyright protection was enforced is now unfortunately labeled as a time of "piracy" and has almost become a taboo topic in local comics circles. This label of "piracy" is an obstacle in the development of the discussion on Japanese-style comics. In fact, it is difficult to obtain antique Japanese-style comic books as secondhand bookshops do not stock them for fear of copyright infringement. Therefore, to understand the effect of Japanese-style comics in Thai society, it is irrelevant to label the "local market-led" circulation as piracy.

In order to protect the copyright as well as to decrease the piracy of entertainment products, it is important to carry out public awareness campaigns about copyright protection, copyright law, and the punishment for infringement.
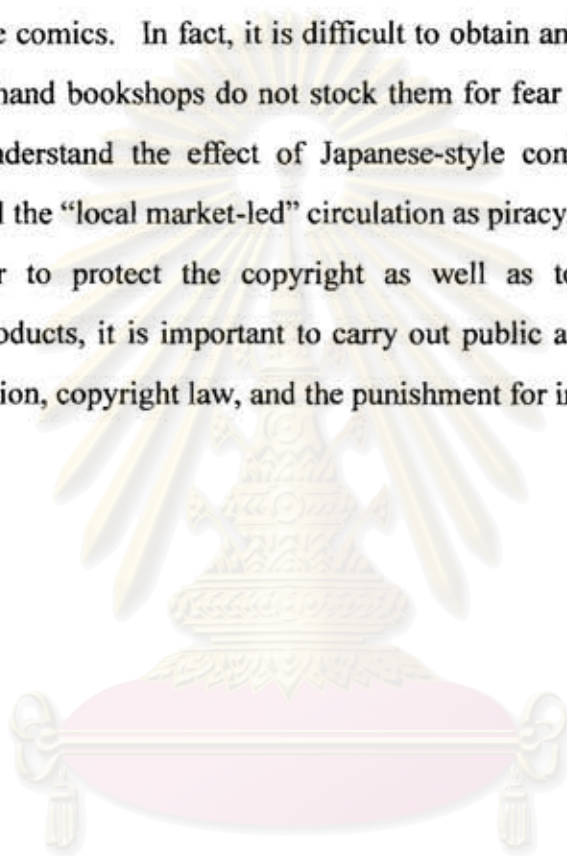
REFERENCES

Thai

Amdravej, Julasak. Legend of Thai Cartoon (Tamnaan Kartoon). Bangkok: Sean Daw Printings, 2001.

Baikasuyee, Jintana. "Nangsue Kartoon: Phrayot Nai Karn Rian Karn Son", In Kaan Songsoem lae Pattana Nangsue Kartoon Thai. pp.64-80, Bangkok: Soon Pattana Nangsue,1993.

Baanthai, Kavi and Sawassri, Suchart. "Sampart Fujiko Fujio", Look Nangsue. Vol.6, 7 (April 1983):34-38.

Bunyasunthikul, Benja. An Analysis of Moral Concepts in Three to the baht Comic Books, Adapted from Foreign Stories. Master's Thesis, Department of Education, Srinakharinwirot University, 1982.

GM magazine, "Japan Attack" (August 2002): 139-160

Jiambunsom, Somprasong. Doraemon, A day, 18 (Feb. 2002):62-81.

Kamalobol, Duangrat. The Study of the Social Construction of Emotion of the Japanese Cartoon TV Series "Doraemon", Master's Thesis, Department of Mass Communication, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 1992.

Khao Sod, Doraemon Khlong Talat Rose Reng Khayaai Ngaan Kartoon, (10 Aug. 2006).

Liewtrakul, Chanya. The Development of Imported Animation Films Broadcasted on Thai Television Channel 9 (MCOT). Master's Thesis, Department of Mass Communication, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 2002.

Pat Studio, 1970 Heroes Never Die. Bangkok: Animate Group, 2004.

Pritpongarnphim, Prasert. Kartoon Sut Thii Rak, Bangkok: Matichon, 2001

Puangpinyo, Pornpanit The Role of Japanese-translated Comic Books in Developing Children and Youth. Master's Thesis, Department of Mass Communication, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 1988.

Rukprayoon, Thidarut. The Diffusion of Japanese Teenage Culture on Media in Thailand. Master's Thesis, Department of Mass Communication, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 2002.

Saraai, "Khwam Fai an Sean Ngaam Kong Doraemon", Matichon, (2 November 1982).

Saeng-Xuto,Virapong. An Analysis of Science Creative Thinking from Cartoon Doraemon. Department of Education, Chiang Mai University, 2003.

Siam Inter Multi Media. Annual Report 2005[online]. Available from http://www. smm. co. th /annualreport. pdf

Sounsamut, Prem, Anuphak Kong Viset Khong Doraemon. not published, paper for Department of Art, Chulalongkorn University, 1999.

Sricharoen, Kannika. An Analysis of Moral Concepts in One-Baht Thai Comic Books. Master's Thesis, Department of Education, Srinakharinwirot University, 1982.

Srisantisuk, Orathai. Kartoon Yipun Kap Dek Thai: Jaak Mot X Maa Suu Maew Doraemon. Technical seminar on Thai-Japanese Relations, (November 1982), Bangkok: Social Science Association of Thailand, 1982.

Supot, A. and Blue Hawk. Apaimanee Saga. Ned Comics, Bangkok: Nation Edutainment, 2001.

Taarot, Patnayu. "Doraemon; Wiraburut (Thii Naa Rak Thii Sut) Heng Esia", Nation Sutsapda, 517 (29 April, 2002).

Thai Rath History of Thai Rath [online]. Available from http://www.thairath.co.th/about/history/history.htm [2 October 2006].

Thanapongphan, Ransan. "Doraemon", Phujadkarn, Vol.19, 225 (June, 2002).

The Board of Investment (BOI) Press Release, (15 June 2004).

Thongbaan, Naron. "Karn Sarng Nangsue Samrap Dek, Phak Pattana Tamra lae Ekkasarn Wichagarn Nuai Suksanithes", 250 Ekkasarn Karn Nithet Karn Suksaa, Krom Karn Fukhat Kruu, 1982.

Turakij Karn Ngun "Doremon", 9 (November-December 1982):18-26.

Wejnukroh, Warawijya. Kartoon Thai. Bangkok: Ongkarnka Kong Kuruspaa Suksapan Parnit, 2006 (In the process on printing).

Yuwanakorn, Lalita. The Analysis of Translated Japanese Comic Book Content for Youth. Master's Thesis for Master, Department of Educational Research, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University, 1990.

English

Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In M. Featherstone (ed.). Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity. London: Sage,1990.

Befu, Harumi. "The Global Context of Japan and Outside Japan", In Befu, H. (ed.) Globalizing Japan. pp.3-22, London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Baker, Chris. and Phongpaichit, Pasuk. A History of Thailand. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Ben-Huat, Chua, "Consuming Asians: Ideas and Issues", In Ben-Huat, Chua (ed.), Consumption in Asia. pp.1-34, London: Routledge, 2000.

Bryman, Alan. The Disneyization of Society. London: Sage Printings, 2004.

Chaiwat Khamchoo and Reynolds, B. (ed.) Thai-Japanese Relations in Historical Perspective, Institute of Asian Studies. Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok: Innomedia Co., Ltd. Press, 1988.

Ching, Leo. "Imaginings in the Empires of the Sun", In Dolores, Martinez (ed.), The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Davis, W. Darrell. and Yeh, EmilieYueh-yu. "VCD as Programmatic Technology: Japanese Television Drama in Hong Kong", In Iwabuchi, Koichi (ed.), Feeling Asian Modernities. pp. 227-248, Hong Kong University Press, 2004

Girard, Augustin. "Cultural Industries: A Handicap or a New Opportunity for Cultural Development?" In Cultural Industries. pp.24-39, UNESCO, 1982.

Hartley, John. Creative Industries. Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Hannerz, Ulf. Transnational Connections, London: Routledge, 1996.

Hu, Kelly. "Chinese Re-makings of Pirated VCDs of Japanese TV Dramas", In Iwabuchi, Koichi(ed.), Iwabuchi, K. (Ed.), Feeling Asian Modernities. pp.205-226, Hong Kong University Press, 2004.

Hinshaw, M. John. "The Role of Standardization and Interoperability in Copyright Protection of Computer Software", *Communication Law and Policy*. 4 (1999): 299-323. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Ito, Kinko. "A History of Manga in the Context of Japanese Culture and Society", Journal of Popular Culture. 38 (2005): 456-475, Blackwell Publishing.

Iwabuchi, Koichi. "Cultural Globalization and Asian Media Connections" In Iwabuchi, K. (ed.) Feeling Asian Modernities. pp.1-22, Hong Kong University Press, 2004.

Japan Patent Office. Survey Report on Losses caused by Counterfeiting 2005 [Online]. Available from: http://www.jpo.go.jp/torikumi_e/index.htm.

Kesboonchoo-Mead, Kullada. The Rise and Decline of Thai Absolutism. London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004.

Kinsella, Sharon. Adult Manga. Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000.

Komin, Suntaree. Social Dimensions of Industrialization in Thailand. Bangkok: National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), 1989.

Lai, Cherry Sze-Ling, and Wong. Dixon H.W. "Japanese Comics Coming to Hong Kong", In Befu, Harumi (ed.) Globalizing Japan. pp.111-120, London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

McCargo, Duncan. Politics and the Press in Thailand. Bangkok: Garuda Press, 2002.

Natthalang, Siraporn. Thai Folklore: Insights into Thai Culture. Chulalongkorn University Press, 2004.

Napier, Susan. Anime, from Akira to Princess Mononoke. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Natsume, Fusanosuke. "East Asia and Manga Culture: Examining Manga-comic Culture in East Asia", In Richardo G. Abad (ed.), Asian Public Intellectual Program. The Work of the 2001/2002 API Fellows, 2004(a).

Otmazgin, Nissim. "Flying Pockemon Theory", In Shiraishi, Takashi. (ed.), <u>Middle Classes in East Asia.</u> Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 2004.

Otmazgin, "Cultural Commodities and Regionalization in East Asia", <u>Contemporary Southeast Asia.</u> No.3, 27 (2005): 499–523, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Phongpaichit, Pasuk. and Baker, Chris. <u>Thailand's Crisis.</u> Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2000.

Phongpaichit and Baker. <u>Thailand, Economy and Politics.</u> Oxford University Press, 2002

Robertson, Roland. <u>Globalization: Social theory and Global Culture,</u> London: Sage,1992.

Robertson. "Globalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," In M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (ed.), <u>Global Modernities,</u> London: Sage, 1995.

SCIP (The Strategic Council on Intellectual Property). <u>Intellectual Property Strategic Program 2006.</u> The Prime Minister's Office, the Japanese Government, 2006. Available from http://www.ipr.go.jp/e_materials.html [8 October, 2006].

Schodt, Fredrik L. <u>Manga, Manga, World of Japanese Comics.</u> Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983.

Shiraishi, Saya. "Japan's Soft Power; Doraemon Goes Overseas, In Katzenstein, Peter J. and Shiraishi,Takashi (ed.) <u>Network Power: Japan and Asia,</u> pp.234-272, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Shiraishi, Takashi. "Middle Class in Southeast Asia", In Shiraishi, T (ed.) <u>Middle Classes in East Asia.</u> Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 2004.

Smiers, Joost. "The Abolition of Copyright". <u>Gazette,</u> 62 (2000):379-406, London: Sage Publications.

Sounsamut, Prem. <u>Janapriyanantakal: the Audiences and the Adaptation of "Phra Aphai Mani" in "Apai Mani Saga",</u> Not published, Paper presented in 2004.

Storey, John. Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture, Edinburgh University Press, (2nd edition), 2003.

Sundaram, Ravi. "Recycling Modernity: Pirate Electric Cultures in India", In Abbas, Ackbar and Erni, John Nguyet (ed.) Internationalizing Cultural Studies. pp. 43-60, Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Thai Farmer's Research Center (TFRC), Cartoon Books: Creative Media or Corrupting Influence. (June 1997), Bangkok: Kasikorn Research.

The Nation, Japan Still Selling the Trend, (13 Jan. 2002).

The Nation, Animated Ambition, (17 January 2003).

The Nation, Manga on Demand, (3 Feb 2003).

The Nation, Never Forget, (19 May 2006).

Tomlinson, John. Cultural Globalization and Cultural Imperialism, In Mohammadi, A, (ed.) International Communication and Globalization, A Critical Introduction. London: Sage Publications, 1997.

Throsby, Davit. Economic and Culture, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

UNESCO. Import Export International flow of television. Paris: UNESCO Printing, 1990.

UNESCO. Culture, Trade and Globalization. Paris: UNESCO Printing, 2000.

Vajira. and Kurusu, Hirotaka. Domcumentary: Art about Udom Taephanich. Bangkok: Pordee Phanich, 2006.

Yamklinfung, Prasert. and Nishio, Hurry K. "Traditional Value, Social Organization and Patterns of Modernization: A Comparative Study of Japan and Thailand", Japanese Studies. 1 (1998): 52-86, Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1998.

Japanese

Boku Doraemon, "Doraemon in the World", vol. 9 (July 2005):3-13, Tokyo: Shogakukan.

Iwabuchi, Koichi "Houhou to Shite no Trans-Asia", In Iwabuchi, K.(ed.) Koeru Bunka Kousakusuru Kyoukai (Media Culture in Trans-Asia), Tokyo: Yamakawa Publishing, 2004.

Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Bangkok (JCCB), Tai-koku Keizai Gaikyo (Economy of Thailand), 2004

Krungthep. "Special edition for 70th anniversary of Japanese Association in Thailand". (March 1984), Bangkok: Japanese Association in Thailand

Kure, Tomofusa. Gendai Manga no Zentai-zou (Outline of contemporary Japanese comics). Tokyo: Futaba-Bunko, 1997.

Motoda, Tokio. "Tai-koku no Chiteki Shoyu-ken ni Tsuite"[online], JAC Journal (October 2000), Japan: The Japan Commercial Arbitration Association, Available from http://home.att.ne.jp/yellow/tomotoda/iplawsthai.htm [8 October, 2006]

Nakano, Haruyuki. Theory of Manga Industry. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2004.

Natsume, Fusanosuke. "Doraemon no Yomikata (How to Read Doraemon)" Yomu (June 1993):14-19, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Natsume. Manga Sekai Senryaku (Global Strategy of Manga), Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2001.

Natsume. "Higashi Ajia ni Hirogaru Manga Bunka", Aoki, Tamotsu. (ed.), Ajia Shin-seiki 6, Media, Genron to Hyosho no Chisei-gaku, pp.179-194, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003.

Natsume. Manga no Fukayomi Otonayomi (Analysis of Manga for Adults). Tokyo: East Press, 2004(b).

Niyomka, Porn-Anong. "Tai no Shuppan Gyoukai (Printing Industry in Thailand)", In Kuni-betsu Bunka Jijou: Thailand, pp.182-184, The Japan Foundation, 2002.

Ponnimit, Wisut. Hesheit:1998-2003, Bangkok: beboydcg, 2003.

Schodt, Fredrik L. Nippon Manga Ron (original title: Dreamland Japan), Tokyo: MAAR-Sha Printing, 1998.

Shiraishi, Saya. "Manga Anime no Globalization", In Igarashi, A. (ed.), Henyou-suru Ajia to Nihon (Asia and Japan in Transition), pp. 319-349, Tokyo: Seshiki Shobo, 1998

Shiraishi. "Umi wo Koeta Doraemon", Douwa-gaku ga Wakaru, AERA Mook, 47 (November, 1999): 94-97, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbum-sha.

Shiraishi. "Kaigai kara Nihon wo Rikaisuru: Global-ka Suru Manga Anime", Ningen-gaku Kenkyu, vol.2, (2000):83-85, Kyoto Bunkyo University.

Shiraishi. "Manga Media no Grobal-ka (Globalization of Manga-media)", Journal of Multi-media and Socio-Information Studies Archive, 15 (March 2003), Tokyo University, Available from http://www.center.isics.u-tokyo.ac.jp/new/news 15/15-1.html [8 October, 2006], (2003a).

Shiraishi "Manga no Global-ka wo Kangaeru", Yamada, Shoji (ed.), Mohou to Souzou no Dainamism, pp.181-214, Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2003.

Ueno, Toshiya and Mouri, Yoshitaka. Karuchuraru Stadizu Nyumon (Cultural Studies for Beginners), Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho, 2000.

Wung-geao, Surichai. "Amerika Kara Nihon ni Koromo-gaesuru Tounan-ajia", In Igarashi, M. (ed.), Henyou-suru Ajia to Nihon (Asia and Japan in Transition), pp. 25-41, Tokyo: Seshiki Shobo, 1998

Yamanaka, Chie. "Kankoku Manga" Toiu Senyaku (Korean Manga as a Strategy), In Iwabuchi, K.(ed.) Koeru Bunka Kousakusuru Kyoukai (Media Culture in Trans-Asia), pp.109-132, Tokyo: Yamakawa Publishing, 2004.

Yano, Toru. Nanshin no Keifu (The Process of Southing Expansionism), Tokyo: Chukou Shinsho, 1975.

Yokoyama, Yasuyuki. Doraemon-gaku (Doraemon studies), Japan: PHP Shinsho, 2005.

Yomoda, Inuhiko. Manga Genron (Theory of Manga). Tokyo: Chikuma Gendai Bunko, 1999

Yomu, "Umi wo Koeru Doraemon (Doraemon at overseas)", (June 1993):3-23, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Interview

In Japan

1. Atsushi Kuwamura, International licensing division manager, Shogakukan Inc. 8 May 2006

2. Takashi Fukuda, International licensing division manager, Shogakukan Inc. 8 May 2006

In Thailand

3. Isres Thongpusnoe, Senior Assistant Editor (Japanese comic division), Nation Edutainment Co.,Ltd., 10 September 2005.

4. Jarukiat Tangthatsawat, Former editor of Vibulkij, 7 June 2006, and 3 July 2006.

5. Kitsada Boonsri, Editor in chief, Animate group Co., Ltd, 20 April, 2006.

6. Nathanas Tirajaras, Former staff of Vibulkij, Silptorn comics & Animation, Thailand Animation & Computer Graphics Association (TACGA) Committee Member, 3 June 2006.

7. Niran Bunyaratphan, a voice actor for TV cartoon of Doraemon and Managing Director of Toontown Entertainment, September 17, 2005.

8. Phitoon Terapatanapan, Editor in chief, Vibulkij Publishing Group Co., Ltd. 7 June 2006.

9. Ruetaivan Kessakul, Editor (Japanese comic division 3), Nation edutainment Co.,Ltd. 17 May 2006.

10. Somboon Kriengareekul, Former illustrator for several comics publishers, Creative Director, Dream Express, 31 May 2006.

11. Taweepat Khonkhasuthi (Pat Studio), Former editor of *Piriyasarn* Magazine, Cartoonist of title *Asawin Siam*, 6 April 2006.

12. Virat Teekaputisakul, Chief operating officer, Siam Inter Multimedia Public Company Limited. 27 May 2006.

13. Wacharapan Luanyanon, Antique cartoon collector, 22 June 2006 and 26 September 2006.

14. Warawijya Wejnukroh, Thai antique cartoon collector, the owner of Thai Cartoon Library, 22 June, 2006 and 12 July 2006.

15. Wongsiri Miyaji, the first editor of authorized Doraemon, Nation edutainment Co.,Ltd. 24 May 2006.

16. Yasushi Ichikawa, Currently working for The Strategic Council on Intellectual Property (SCIP), First secretary, Embassy of Japan, 18 August, 2006.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Time table of Thai and Japanese cartoons history

Thai history	Cartoons in Thailand	Doraemon in Thailand	Doraemon in Japan	Cartoons in Japan
1851 Accession of Rama IV 1868 Accession of Rama V 1910 Accession of Rama VI 1927 Accession of Rama VII 1932 Revolution converts absolute to constitutional monarchy	1920 King Rama VI holds drawing contest of *Phaap-lhor*		(1843 *Punch* magazine published in England) (1923 Disney create Mickey Mouse)	1862 *The Japan Punch* magazine 1923 First Japanese comic using balloons "*Adventure of Shou-chan*" Around 1920 First Japanese animation was produced
1935 Abdication of King Rama VII	Local comic strips become popular 1939 Sawasdi's works compiled into comic books			Japanese comics propagate the war

1941 Pearl Harbor, Japanese army enters Thailand **1945 End of WWII**	1945 First Thai animation is produced			
1946 Pridi's constitution Accession of King Rama IX **1950 Pibul takes power** **1957 Salit takes power by coup** **1958 Channel 4's launch**	1951 *Chao Krung* magazine is launches 1954 *Tukata* magazine is launches Around 1955 Sawasdi's comic strips and *Jingjor comics* are popular			1947 Osamu Tezuka's historical "Shintakarajima" with new techniques *1950s Gekiga* boom catchs young generation 1958 First theater animation is produced by Toei 1959 Shukan Shounen magazine (weekly boys magazine) is established
1960 Channel 7's launch **1961 National Development Plan** **1964 First air strike on Vietnam flown from Thailand**	1960 Payut produced theater animation "Dek gap Mee" 1962 Hem Wechakorn's "rachatirat" on a newspaper 1963 Japanese TV program "Asawin Maa Khaao" 1965 Japanese TV cartoon, Jao Nuu Lomkrot, Jao Nuu			1965 First TV cartoon, "Tesuwan Atomu" 1967 Young men's magazine

	Pramanu (Atom) 1967 *Kartoon Dek*, the first magazine, *Urutraman* appears on TV		1969 Doraemon has serialized in monthly magazines	
1971 Tanom's coup 1972 Student protest against Japanese goods 1975 The end of the Vietnamese War 1976 Massacre at Thammasat University	1970 *Nakak Sua* (Tigar Mask) on TV 1972 Offset Printing launch 1972 *Piriyasarn* Magazine was launched 1975 *TV Line* magazine was launched by Vibulkij 1977-78 Decline supply of Japanese TV programs 1978 Story-comics were started to be introduced 1979 "Candy Candy" as pocket book 1979 Payut produced theater animation "Sudsakorn"	1971 The first arrival of Doraemon 1978 The second introduction of Doraemon in *TV line* by Vibulkij.	1973 Doraemon's first TV animation fails 1974 Doraemon compiled into paperback 1979 TV cartoon of Doraemon has started, paperbacks sales reaches 15 million copies	1970 Kamen Rider 1970s Girls' comics became popular. Paperbacks makes good sells 1977 TV cartoon, "Uchusenkan Yamato" boom 1978 Comics account for 15 % of all publications
1980 Prem as prime minister			1980 First Theater film "Nobita's Dinosaur" marke	

			¥1.5 billion sales, the first theater animation of Doraemon is produced	
		1981 Paperbacks of Doraemon	1981 Production of theater animation become yearly (until the present)	1981 "Dr. Slump" boom
		1982 Doraemon boom, The creator, Fujiko F Fujio visits Thailand		1982 A girls comic "Tokimeki Tonight" boom
1985 Chamlong elected mayor of Bangkok	1984 *Weekly Zero* magazine starts	1983 Doraemon become the most favorite comic character		Middle of the 1980s, ladies comic for adult women become popular
1985 Investment boom by Japanese caused by Plaza agreement			1986 Doraemon's creation has been slowed because of the creator's illness	1987 "Dragon Ball", "Saint Saiya" become popular
1988 Chatchai becomes first elected prime minister since 1976	1988 610 new title of Japanese-style comics published	1988 A survey shows Doraemon is the most familiar among childrens		
1986-1994 Uruguay Round discusses IPR	Around 1990, "Doragon Ball" boom and chaotic competition between publishers		1990 The paperback series of Doraemon finishes with the volume 45.	1990 "Chibi-maruko chan" become TV animation
1992 Black May	1993 Japanese publisher grant several publisher	1993 Nanmee books get copyright agreement with	1993 Merchandizing of Doraemon marks more	1995 "Doragon Ball" ends the series, Domestic comics

		Shougakukan	than 400 kinds, comics is translated 8 countries, TV animation is exported to 21 countries	market starts to decline Animation "Evangerion" become popular
1997 People's constitution, Economic crisis	1998 Wisut Pongnimit "Hesheit" has been started	1994 Nation publishes autholized Doraemon (vol.1-8)	1996 The creator, Fujiko. F. Fujio passed away	
2001 Thaksin become prime minister	2001 "Apaimanee Saga" serialized in *Boom* magazine		1999 Doraemon celebrates 30th anniversary	2001 Miyazaki's theater animation "Spirited Away" wins an Oscar
	2002 First Thai TV animation "Pangpond" is aired	2005 More than 200 titles of Doraemon in the market	2004 TV animation of Doraemon changes voice actors	
2006 Celebration of Rama IV's 60th anniversary of coronation	2006 First 3-D theater animation "Khan Kluay". Wisut published his comic books in Japan	2006 Doraemon's VCD occupies 40 per cent of the market	Yahoo Japan has special article "Doraemon for adults"	2006 Studio Ghibli's "Tales from Earthsea" is distributed in US by Walt Disney Pictures

Appendix B

Transition of adaptation on reproduced Doraemon comics in Thailand (1971-2003)

Doraemon comics have been reproduced with various adaptations by local publishers before authorization by Shougakukan, the Japanese copyright holder in 1994. The tables show the transition of adaptations on reproduced Doraemon comics in Thailand from the first arrival in 1971 to the authorization in 1994. Percentages are author's observation in comparison with the original publications of Doraemon in Japan. 100% means completely same as the original comics. Details of reproduced Doraemon in each period are described in chapter III.

Original Doraemon in Japan

1. Picture: drawn by the creator, Fujiko F. Fujio.
2. Name of characters: Doraemon, Nobita, Giant, Suneo, Sizuka, etc.
3. Variation of publication: monthly magazines and paperbacks (Tentomushi Comics Series).
4. Order of episodes: In paperbacks, the order of episodes was designed by the creator.
5. Lettering: Typed for written dialogue in balloons and hand lettering for sound effects.
6. Size: 17.5mm $\times$ 11.5mm. (paperbacks), A4 (magazine)
7. Additional sections: Original Doraemon does not have any additional pages in paperbacks.

Data of Reproduced Doraemon

In 1971	: *Yawmit* Magazine (vol.1)
In 1978	: *TV line* Magazine (vol. 36)
In 1981-82	: *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (vol. 12,13,14,15) published by Mitmitri
	: *Doremon* (vol. 10.11.12.13.14) published by Vibulkij
	: *Doremon* (special edition) published by Sam Dao
	: Doramon Maew Jom Yung (July 29- 3 Aug, 1982) serialized in *Thai Rath*
In 1988	: *Doraemon Maew Jom Yung* (vol. 37) published by Mitmitri
	: *Shukan Weekly Title* Magazine
In 1994	: *Doraemon* (vol. 4) published by Nation comics
In 2003	: *Doraemon* (vol.1) classic series published by NED comics

Doraemon in 1971

	50%		100%
Picture	▓		
Name of character			
Variation of publication	▓	▓	
Order of episodes			
Lettering	▓		
Size	▓		
Additional sections			

Doraemon in 1978

	50%		100%
Picture	▓	▓	▓
Name of character	▓	▓	
Variation of publication	▓	▓	
Order of episodes	▓	▓	
Lettering	▓		
Size	▓		
Additional sections	▓	▓	

Doraemon in 1981-82

	50%		100%
Picture		▓	▓
Name of character		▓	▓
Variation of publication			
Order of episodes			
Lettering	▓	▓	
Size	▓	▓	
Additional sections	▓	▓	

Doraemon in 1988

	50%		100%
Picture	▓	▓	▓
Name of character	▓	▓	
Variation of publication	▓	▓	▓
Order of episodes	▓		
Lettering	▓		
Size	▓	▓	
Additional sections	▓		

Doraemon in 1994

	50%		100%
Picture	▓	▓	▓
Name of character	▓	▓	▓
Variation of publication	▓		
Order of episodes	▓	▓	▓
Lettering	▓	▓	
Size	▓	▓	
Additional sections	▓	▓	

Doraemon in 2003

	50%		100%
Picture	▓	▓	▓
Name of character	▓	▓	▓
Variation of publication	▓	▓	
Order of episodes	▓	▓	▓
Lettering	▓	▓	
Size	▓	▓	
Additional sections	▓	▓	▓

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PERSONS

IN COMICS INDUSTRIES

Note: These questions act as a guideline for the in-depth interview and are adjusted accordingly during the course of the conversation.

1. Tell me about your job in the comics industry.
2. How long have you been in the industry?
3. Why did you start to work in the comics industry?
4. Tell me about the process of comics production.
5. Do you know the history of Japanese-style comic books in Thailand in the early days?
6. Do you know when Doraemon arrived in Thailand?
7. Do you know how many copies of Doraemon paperbacks have been sold?
8. What is your opinion on why Doraemon bas become popular among Thai people?
9. What do you think are the differences (if any) between Thai comics and Japanese?
10. Are there any difficulties when you commoditize Japanese-style comics in Thai market?
11. What was the change in the comics industry after the enforcing copyright?
12. Who are the readers of Japanese-style comics?
13. How do you distribute the products?
14. Was there any confusion when the copyright act was enforced in Thailand?
15. How do you choose the title for the readers?
16. Were you aware of the copyright when you worked at the comics industry?
17. Personally, do you like Doraemon?
18. What do you think can be done to improve the Japanese-style comics?

Appendix D

Doraemon in Thai Rath newspaper in 1982

Doramon Maew Jom Yung on 2-3 August, 1982

Appendix E

Comparison of cultural values

	Japanese values as seen in episodes of Doraemon	Thai values
Father	– Leader of the family and works outside – The only person to earn income for the family	– Leader of the family and works outside – Has an important role to earn income but is not the only breadwinner
Mother	– Manages the house by keeping it clean and orderly – The only person to take care of the children.	– Manages the house as well as works outside – Educates the children more than the father.
Education	Most important for one's life	Important to some degree
Other values	Respect for elders	Respect for elders
	Friendship is very important and group activities occupy high priority in one's life.	Relatively weaker bonds in friendship and groups
	Hate loss of face very much	Hate loss of face
	Emotions are not expressed visibly	Emotions can be expressed to a small extent
	Crying is common in times of joy or sadness	Crying is reserved only for very sad occasions
	Taking revenge is important	Releasing each other from bad *karma* is important

(Summarized and translated by the author from Kamalobol 1992:166-167)

BIOGRAPHY

Izumi Aoyama was born in Chiba province, Japan. She graduated from Keio University in Tokyo, Japan with a bachelor degree in oriental history in 1993. After her graduation, she came to Thailand and worked in the media field. In her career, she joined Data & Communique Express Co., Ltd as an editor-in-chief for the Japanese community magazine *DACO* for 6 years. In 2004, she enrolled in the Master program in Thai Studies at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.