

MEDIA RELEASE

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JAPAN FOUNDATION 
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EDO GIGA:

Comical Woodblock Prints from Japan

The Japan Foundation, Sydney will exhibit a selection of rare, 200-year old woodblock prints from the **Kyoto International Manga Museum** collection at the Japan Foundation Gallery from mid-August to early November.

Titled '*Edo Giga: Comical Woodblock Prints from Japan*', the exhibition features

40 coloured prints from around 1800. The exhibition includes pieces by artists Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Utagawa Hirokage and Utagawa Yoshitora and will be shown in two parts.

Part I runs **August 13 – September 1**, and Part II runs **October 13 – November 2**.

Edo Giga is a window into the society of the late Edo period (18th and 19th centuries), when common people developed their own forms of art and entertainment. *Giga* (lit., 'funny pictures') is the name given to the humorous and sometimes satirical images that were part of this new urban culture. Due to their simple and exaggerated imagery,

giga are sometimes regarded as **precursors to modern manga**, but in reality they are closer to cartoons and visual gags than serial graphic narratives.

A spokesperson from the International Manga Research Center (IMRC), Kyoto Seika University, says, “The Edo period was when printing really boomed in Japan, allowing a culture of the people to emerge as a counterpoint to that of the ruling samurai class. As a result, depictions of scenes from daily life began to emerge in art forms for the first time—replete with all the humour, playfulness and irreverence of Edo times. Edo *giga* are really quite quirky, and the closer you look, the more you see. Viewers may be able to draw connections between *giga* and modern manga based on styles of visual expression and humour.”

Nao Endo, Director of The Japan Foundation, Sydney, says, “Manga has captured the imaginations of many young people in Australia, and is now one of the most popular pathways to discovering Japan and Japanese language. This exhibition gives Australians the chance to meet the “ancestors” of manga in the flesh, so to speak—which is a rare opportunity outside of Japan.”

A talk event by Dr Sookyung Yoo from IMRC, titled ‘*Edo Giga and Contemporary Manga*’, will be held as part of the exhibition program.

Edo Giga: Comical Woodblock Prints from Japan

Part I August 13 – September 1
Part II October 13 – November 2

Gallery hours

Monday – Thursday: 10am – 8pm
Friday: 10am – 6pm
Selected Saturdays: 10am – 3pm (August 15 & October 17)
Closed Sundays

Admission is free.

Talk Event

August 13 *Edo Giga and Contemporary Manga*
6:30pm – 7:30pm Talk by Dr Sookyung Yoo (International Manga Research Center, Kyoto Seika University)

Further events will be held during Edo Giga Part II and will be announced closer to the date.

Venue:	The Japan Foundation Gallery The Japan Foundation, Sydney Level 4, Central Park 28 Broadway Chippendale NSW 2008
Admission:	Admission is free. RSVP essential for events.
Enquiries/RSVP:	reception@jpf.org.au / 02 8239 0055
Website:	www.jpf.org.au

ABOUT EDO GIGA

Edo Giga [lit., 'funny pictures'] is a satirical genre of woodblock prints produced during the Edo period (1603-1868), a stable time when Japan was unified under shogunal rule. The affordable prints appealed to the common people with tongue-in-cheek elements which often parodied upper class society. *Giga* typically feature human and animal caricatures printed in clean strokes, and contain well-known cultural references that would have been well known at the time. Their often exaggerated composition and occasional use of panels and speech bubbles can be identified in modern manga.

ABOUT MANGA

The term 'manga' first emerged in the early 19th century to refer to picture anthologies that included funny images. These gradually evolved into the serial graphic narratives that we recognise as manga today. Contemporary manga stories draw on an extensive variety of themes and have gained worldwide attention in recent years. Famous modern manga artists include Osamu Tezuka (Astro Boy), Naoko Takeuchi (Sailor Moon) and Masashi Kishimoto (Naruto).

ABOUT KYOTO INTERNATIONAL MANGA MUSEUM

Kyoto International Manga Museum opened in 2006 as a joint project between Kyoto City and Kyoto Seika University. The museum collects, preserves and exhibits manga and animation materials for systematic research and study. The museum houses valuable historical materials and popular contemporary works, as well as one of the world's largest collections of manga-related materials. It holds both permanent and special exhibitions throughout the year.

ABOUT KYOTO SEIKA UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL MANGA RESEARCH CENTER

The International Manga Research Center (IMRC) was established in 2006 by Kyoto Seika University, which conducts extensive research on manga and builds networks related to this field. IMRC uses the Kyoto Seika University's accomplishments to support the development and direction of the Kyoto International Manga Museum.

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 22 offices in 21 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1978.



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