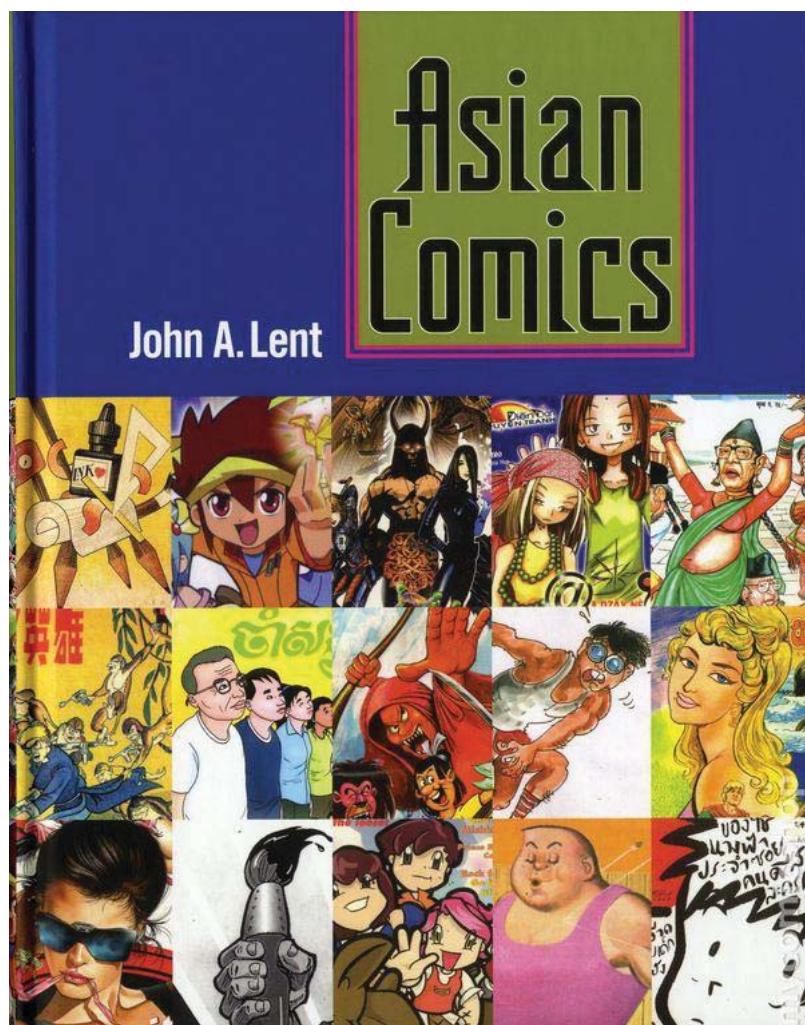


BOOK REVIEW

Asian Comics

Reviewed by Warat Karuchit, Ph.D.¹¹



Author: John A. Lent

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Being written by Professor John A. Lent, an internationally-known guru on international comics is probably the most important factor that gives *Asian Comics* its immediate credibility. With more than fifty years of Asian mass communication and comic art research, Professor Lent has founded and chaired or edited numerous organizations and periodicals, including Asia and Pacific Animation and Comics Association, Asian Research Center on Animation and Comic Art, Asian Popular Culture group of the Popular Culture Association, Asian Cinema Studies Society. He founded and edited the International Journal of Comic Art, the first and only academic journal devoted to comic art, and has also written or edited more than seventy books.

Asian Comics, described by the publisher as "The first comprehensive overview of comic production and creativity in Asia," provides detailed information on comics of sixteen countries, arranged alphabetically by the three Asian regions; East Asia: China, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan; Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam; South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka. This book intentionally leaves out Japan to highlight invigorating comic industry in many other Asian countries.

Each chapter is presented comprehensively with historical development, key publishers and personnel, characters, contemporary issues, the status of the industry, challenges, trends and outlook of that country. The author incorporates facts and interesting anecdotes with interview quotes from several artists and key people and rarely seen images of local comics, so the readers can get the overall picture of comics industry in each country in only about ten pages.

Personally, I am proud to say that I was involved in helping Professor Lent, who was one of my professor and a member of my Ph.D. examination committee at

Temple University in Philadelphia, USA, gather information about comic art in Thailand. Under Professor Lent's guidance, I authored two academic works on Thai comics; "The Renaissance of Thai Knowledge Cartoons," published in 2010 in Professor Lent's *International Journal of Comic Art*, and "The Uphill Climb to Reach a Plateau: Historical Analysis of the Development of Thai Cartooning," published in 2014 in *Southeast Asian Cartoon Art: History, Trends and Problems*, a book edited by Professor Lent. My two works on Thai cartooning are also cited in the chapter on Thai comics. Professor Lent also came to Thailand several times to collect data and interview many prominent Thai cartoonists.

Finally, I am certain that anyone who is interested in Asian comics or Asian culture will tremendously enjoy this book, which is written in pleasant style of English but also backed up with first-hand experience of the author and various academic studies by local scholars, many of whom are Professor Lent's former students and advisees. Most importantly, this book will serve as an invaluable source of reference for further studies on Asian comics in the years to come. I will not at all be surprised this book will be called "The Bible of Asian Comics."

