

# THE WORD, *Visualized*

by Siku

Once, American narratives influenced global culture. Now Japanese visual forms, such as Manga, increasingly influence Western narratives, shaping what we see in our culture, from *Street Fighter* video games to *Gorillaz* pop videos, and from *The Matrix* to tiny mobile phones.

Beginning in the mid 40s, Manga introduced cinematic framing, composition and filmic story telling techniques to comic books. It, unlike western comic books which are text heavy, relies more on visuals to tell the story, hence its cinematic quality—the drive in the narrative coming primarily from the visuals rather than the words. This rather suits young people who are used to fast moving images as seen in video games and internet media.

Unfortunately, much like traditional comic books were in the '50's, Manga has also increasingly become a convenient scapegoat for some in government and within the media. So, with this in mind, my colleagues and I have decided to enter the fray with *The Manga Bible*—and I am quite proud that we were the first to do it in English.

Some commentators view *The Manga Bible* as a watered down rendering of biblical narrative for children, and others may see it as heretical. Both points of view, I must say, are outmoded and misinformed.

From the 50s up to the early 80s, comics had been relegated to children readership; since the 90s, however, adults in the UK and the States have been a growing demographic. Manga, being the fastest growing within the graphic novel sector in the West, appeals to both children and young adults and includes a huge and notoriously difficult female demographic.\* This appeal to the video game/internet generation is manga's strength; a strength, I believe, that education institutions should see as an opportunity. And the format is maturing, as it increasingly covers more sophisticated material and offers more meaningful content.

\* Until recently, the Video Game and Comic Book media formats have proved difficult to sell to girls and women in the West. Nintendo's current console generation *Wii* bucked the trend with its innovative and highly interactive controllers. *Manga* had led the way previously with its *Shojo* genre variant. It is worth noting that these two break-through entertainment media are Japanese inventions. As America led the cultural narratives of the modern era, Japan leads the cultural narratives of the young in the post-modern era.





And to those who may view this project as heretical, it's important to remember that the stories of the Bible were originally conveyed in an oral form, then written down in an ancient or ancient version of a contemporary language, and then re-rendered in numerous and sometimes conflicting vernacular translations. This newest rendering is simply a continuation of a long line, one suited to a more visually-oriented generation.

The following pages highlight key moments from the book and I think give you a feel for the style and content. I invite you to consider using *The Manga Bible* for educational purposes, so please also take a look at the teaching guide provided by Youth Alpha, an organization promoting a practical introduction to the Christian faith: [www.themangabible.com/images/ER\\_youthgroups.pdf](http://www.themangabible.com/images/ER_youthgroups.pdf) although this resource was designed for the New Testament, it demonstrates how *The Manga Bible* can be utilised as educational resource. ■

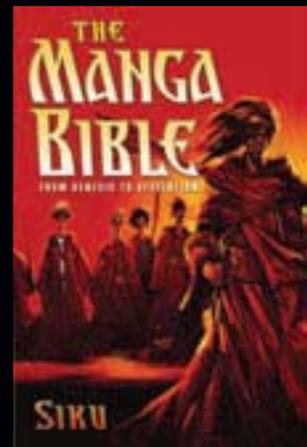


### About the Writer

*SIKU—artist, theologian and musician—is one of Britain's leading comic book creator/conceptualists. His works are published in several books, including prominently in Dez Skinn's Comic Art Now, a compilation of the best of international contemporary comic book art.*

*He dreams of flying one day, just like Superman. Until then, he'll make do traveling around on the London Underground network.*

For more information on the Manga genre, check out this article from RHI Volume I: [www.randomhouse.com/highschool/RHI\\_magazine/pdf/middaugh.pdf](http://www.randomhouse.com/highschool/RHI_magazine/pdf/middaugh.pdf)



### THE MANGA BIBLE

From Genesis to Revelation  
by Siku

**M**anga, the most popular literary form in Japan and Korea, is the fastest growing genre in the U.S. Essentially book-length comics, *manga* combines dynamic, action-based artwork with fast-paced, emotional storytelling in a style particularly popular with teens and young adults.

*The Manga Bible* contains Artist Siku's distinctive, edgy style and first-ever English *manga* adaptation of the Bible.

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