



**MAK**

Press Release

## **Nippon Chinbotsu Japan Sinks. A Manga**

Press Preview	Tuesday, 15 January 2013, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Tuesday, 15 January 2013, 7 p.m.
Venue	MAK Exhibition Hall MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	16 January – 21 April 2013
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.

With the *Nippon Chinbotsu* manga series which is about the sinking of Japan after a series of earthquakes, the *manga-ka* (manga or comic artist, cartoonist) Tokihiko Ishiki produced a megaseller that has remained popular until today. The MAK exhibition *Nippon Chinbotsu. Japan Sinks. A Manga* takes this well-known example as a basis to explore the visual aesthetics and graphic-art quality of manga, which have risen into a mass phenomenon of contemporary culture far beyond the isles of Japan.

Ishiki took the inspiration for his manga series from the best-selling novel *Nippon Chinbotsu*, first published 1973 and adapted into several movies, by science fiction writer Sakyō Komatsu (1931–2011). The book describes the fictitious submergence of the whole of Japan, one of the most earthquake-endangered areas in the world, following several cataclysmic earthquakes and passes epic criticism on the progress- and technology-obsessed Japanese society of the 1970s and '80s.

Working closely together with Komatsu, Ishiki combined the novel and the visuals of the 2006 movie made by anime specialist Shinji Higuchi into a highly successful manga, which appeared in weekly installments between 2006 and 2009 and was also published as a 15-volume pocketbook series.

Beginning with the predicted doom of Japan, which, according to one scientist, is about to be entirely destroyed within only 322 days by a chain-reaction of disastrous earthquakes, Ishiki's manga interweaves several narrative strands, of which the two

most important address the questions of if— and how—the Japanese population can be evacuated and eventually rescued, as well as of how the threatening uncontrollable destruction of a high-technology nation might be averted. Unlike the movie, the manga has no happy ending—Japan goes under.

The MAK exhibition focuses on the graphic-art qualities of *Nippon Chinbotsu*. The genesis of this manga is traced through original drawings, from the first sketches of ideas to the different stages of the fine drawings and to the printed weekly comic-strip sequels. Animated films make it possible to “look over Ikishi’s shoulder” and to witness the meticulousness and patience with which he developed his manga. Selected blown-up graphic-art prints bring out the filmic element of the originally much smaller comic strips.

Born in Tokyo, Ishiki first made a name for himself as a sports manga artist. His breakthrough was a series named *Derby Jockey* (1999–2004), which made him a successful manga artist known well beyond the borders of Japan. What characterizes his manga drawing is his free and dynamic pencil work; there is hardly another artist who could have rendered the earthquakes with such graphic and visceral impressiveness.

Based on the theory that manga, like formerly ukiyo-e, Japanese colored woodblock prints, have an influence on the development of visual culture, the MAK Asia Collection has worked for years on building its own collection of manga. After *UAAAAA!!! MANGA. On the Aesthetics of a Trash Culture* (2005), *Nippon Chinbotsu. Japan sinks. A Manga* now is the second exhibition in which the MAK puts the focus on manga as a possible artistic expression beyond “official art”.

Press materials and photos are available for download at [MAK.at/press](http://MAK.at/press).

Press Fact Sheet

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Curator	Johannes Wieninger, Curator, MAK Asia Collection
MAK Admission	€ 7.90 / reduced € 5.50 / family ticket € 11 / Free admission for children and teens up to 19
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