

The East in the Bengal: The Influence of Japanese Manga and Korean Webtoon in Bangladeshi Manga



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January 2022

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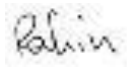
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



Mohammad Zaki Rezwan

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my MA dissertation to my parents, Prof. Dr. Triptish Chandra Ghose and Dr. Mallika Biswas, and my siblings, Dr. Medha Ghose and Digvijoy Ghose Rohan who has always given me their continuous love and support.

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Abstract

The waves of East Asian popular culture can be witnessed throughout the world and its influence is also evident in Bangladesh. The impact is not enclosed in the circle of entertainment purposes. It is now influencing Bangladeshi artists, filmmakers, and animators to produce their version of popular culture pieces. This paper will explore the influence of the Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave through manga and Korean webtoons in the creation of a new version called Bangladeshi manga. The purpose is to reveal that Bangladeshi manga creators are practicing cultural preservation by focusing on three Bangladeshi manga, *Kinsa Khyong*, *Ram Sagar*, and *Tanaporen* created by Shantona Shantuma. To discover the East Asian popular culture effect in Bangladeshi manga, it will also analyze manga created in Japan which are *Naruto*, *Demon Slayer*, *Oishinbo*, *Shirahime-Syo*, and Korean webtoons which are *Mystic Pop-up Bar*, *Shaman Girl*, *Along With the Gods*, and *Bisan*. The methodological frameworks of intercultural cinema and theories related to transcultural fandom and glocalization are being used to examine the cause behind this impact and how it is helping to preserve the Bengali culture by reshaping that influence.

Keywords: Japanese manga, Korean webtoon, Bangladeshi manga, East Asian popular culture, Japanese popular culture, Korean wave, intercultural aesthetics, glocalization, transcultural fandom, cultural preservation.

Chapter One

Introduction

In contemporary times, the popular culture of the world seems to be dominated by East Asian popular culture. From music, films, TV series to video games, cartoons, and comics, the waves of East Asian popular culture seem to be everywhere. From this, the Japanese popular culture is flourishing gradually through manga, known as the Japanese comics or graphic novels, and its animation called anime. For example, *Naruto* which is known for being one of the best manga and anime in Japan is also very popular throughout the world. Similarly, *Pokemon Go*, a game that has gained a lot of popularity also stems from the anime *Pokemon*. Another popular culture from East Asia which is now at its peak form of popularity is the Korean Wave and its popularity in this contemporary times can be understood through the way it has its grasp on the popular media. For example, *Squid Game* which is a Korean drama has crossed borders and become a famous series throughout the world, and the dalgona candy which is a Korean street food has become an online sensation all over the world as it is a part of this popular Korean series. Another example can be K-pop or Korean pop. It can be witnessed that through a K-pop idol group BTS, this genre of music has entered the mainstream popular culture and media. Like K-pop, K-drama, and Korean cosmetics, Korean webtoon, known as the web version of Korean manhwa or comics is also a part of the new Korean wave content as it has also been gaining fans across the world (Jang and Song 174). As the popularity of East Asian popular culture is expanding throughout the world, the boom can also be witnessed in Bangladesh through the growing fans and the communities that have been building in online platforms and also offline. Thus it hints at the extent of its popularity in the world and Bangladesh.

The growing popularity of the East Asian popular culture indicates that there are fans who prefer these cultural expressions. Through these fans, the cultural expressions and practices are crossing borders and influencing the culture that they belong to. For example, because of their passion for manga and Korean webtoon which is the focus of this research, it shows that the fans are creating fan works and in this case, they are creating Bangladeshi manga in Bangla language which are original works and can fall under the category of global manga. In my research, I am mainly analyzing three of the Bangladeshi mangas created by Shantona Shantuma which are *Kinsa Khyong*, *Ram Sagar*, and *Tanaporen*, and to discover whether there are impacts of East Asian popular culture, I am also examining four of the Japanese manga which are *Naruto*, *Demon Slayer*, *Oishinbo*, and *Shirahime-Syo* and four Korean webtoons which are *Mystic Pop-up Bar*, *Shaman Girl*, *Along with the Gods*, and *Bisan*. Thus, the next few paragraphs introduce the Bangladeshi manga creators and their texts and also the Japanese manga and Korean webtoons.

The Bangladeshi manga that I am going to analyze in my paper are created by the comic or manga artist duo, Shahnuruma Shantona and Shahrina Shantuma who are also known as Shantona Shantuma together. These two sisters who are also fans of East Asian pop culture are the ones who have also created the online platform for Bangladeshi manga called ‘Manga Stage’ for the first time in Bangladesh and this is where I have discovered the Bangladeshi manga.

From these Bangladeshi manga creators, the first text that I have selected is called *Kinsa Khyong*. It is a story of romance and tragedy that is based on a legend and it has arrived from the name of the Karnaphuli river of Bangladesh. This manga also has a translation known as *Flower Tucked in Her Ear* which in 2017, also participated in the 11th International Manga Award. In the manga, Shantona Shantuma has depicted that a Marma prince from Chattogram and an Arakanese princess meet beside the river Karnaphuli and fall in love (*Kinsa Khyong* 1-12). But as they are

not from an allied state, they secretly meet up with each other (*Kinsa Khyong* 14-16). At the end of the story, when they are on a boat ride in the river Karnaphuli at night, the flower which was previously gifted by the prince falls in the river, and to retrieve the flower, the princess also dives in and never comes back (*Kinsa Khyong* 17-20). Mourning, the Marma prince also gives up his life in the Karnaphuli river (*Kinsa Khyong* 22). This manga portrays the indigenous communities of Bengal from ancient times, suggesting that the artists are including cultural diversity.

Ram Sagar is also grounded on a legend behind the lake Ram Sagar in Dinajpur and it is known as the largest manmade lake in Bangladesh. In the manga, king Ramnath who could not have children, finally gets his son, prince Ram who is kind and valorous, after praying for a long time (*Ram Sagar* 1-2). During a drought, the king digs a lake that does not bring water and he gets a divine message that it will be filled with water if prince Ram stands in the middle of the lake and sacrifices himself (*Ram Sagar* 3-6). In the end, the prince sacrifices himself, and the lake gets the name, Ram Sagar (*Ram Sagar* 7). This manga portrays a legend that has characters that represent people from the Hindu community and their customs. It also reveals that this is a way for artists to input people from various backgrounds living in Bangladesh.

The last one from the Shantona Shantuma is an original Bangladeshi manga called *Tanaporen* that portrays the setting of an ancient Bengal which highlights the culture, tradition, and society of that time. In this story, Vidyabati, a landlord's daughter, and Nirmal who is a weaver falls in love with each other in their childhood but were separated right then because of the class difference (*Tanaporen* 16-19). As Vidyabati gets married to Maharaj Shahasrakhshya, she faces various ill-treatment and abuse and when Nirmal goes to deliver the saree he made for her, he notices this condition (*Tanaporen* 43-49). Nirmal gets punished and killed in the end by Shahasrakhshya who later loses everything in war and apologizes to Vidyabati (*Tanaporen* 50-64).

This story also reveals a lot about the Hindu tradition and culture and also the traditions of ancient Bengal and its people.

To understand the distinct art style of East Asian manga and webtoons and its influence on Bangladeshi manga, I have chosen some Japanese manga and Korean webtoons and the first Japanese manga that I have selected is *Naruto*, written by Masashi Kishimoto. It is a story about a boy named Naruto who has a nine-tailed fox demon known as Kurama sealed inside of him, and through his journey to becoming a ninja and a Hokage or the leader, he learns how to control the nine-tailed fox and becomes the Hokage of the village (*Naruto*). Including the distinct art style of Japanese manga, I have chosen it to understand how Japanese culture has been incorporated into the popular form of media as the author has included various Japanese folktales, mythology, food, and traditions in this manga that helps to spread the culture of Japan. This manga is going to help me to understand the influence of manga on Bangladeshi manga through art style and also to decipher the usage of folktales, traditions, and culture which the Bangladeshi manga artists are doing in their texts in their own way.

The next manga called *Demon Slayer (Kimetsu No Yaiba)* has been chosen for the same basis as *Naruto* as the manga creator Koyoharu Gotouge has also included Japanese folktale creatures in this story. In this manga, the protagonist Tanjiro Kamado finds his family slaughtered by a demon who also has transformed his sister, Nezuko into one, and his journey to become a demon slayer and turn Nezuko back to her human form begins (*Demon Slayer*). This manga also includes the Japanese folktale creature *oni* which can be translated to demons. I have chosen this manga as it not only represents Japanese folklore but also Japanese traditional culture and customs as the setting of the manga is in the Taisho era of Japan (*Demon Slayer*). This work helps to

interpret Bangladeshi manga as Koyoharu Gotouge incorporates an ancient setting to describe the Japanese culture and folktale creatures that are a part of Japan.

Next, I have selected the manga called *Oishinbo*, which is written by Tetsu Kariya and drawn by Akira Hanasaki where there is a huge amount of information about food, both artistically and story-wise. In this manga, the protagonist Shiro Yamaoka is a cynical journalist who has a unique taste bud that can detect good food, which he has gotten from his overbearing father called Yuzan Kaibara, who is renowned for being the best connoisseur of great food and after receiving the task to create an ultimate menu, his journey of finding and tasting food begins (*Oishinbo*). I have selected this manga because it has expressed the traditional culture of Japan through food which helps to understand Bangladeshi manga and the representation of food from Bengali culture in *Tanaporen*.

The last manga from the Japanese section is *Shirahime-Syo: Snow Goddess Tales*, created by CLAMP (a group of female Japanese manga artists). I have chosen this manga as it has a character called Shirahime-Syo, a snow goddess who is based on a folktale character called *Yuki-onna*. This manga is a compilation of three stories that are created in a folktale manner. The first story called “On Wolf Mountain” is about a girl named Fubuki who goes on a snowy mountain to find the wolf who killed her father, only to be saved by that wolf later, but in the end, the wolf gets killed by a hunter (*Shirahime-Syo*). In the second story called “The Ice Flower,” a woman named Kaya promises to wait for her lover, and when the man comes back, he finds her in the lake, frozen and unchanged (*Shirahime-Syo*). The third story, “Happily Married Couple” is about a lost soldier in a snowy mountain who kills two herons and later finds himself being guided by the spirit of a heron that he killed (*Shirahime-Syo*). All of the stories revolve around the goddess Shirahime-Syo. It portrays that the manga has been created to celebrate the traditional Japanese art style and

folklore. I have also selected this story because it has a Japanese decorative stylistic feature of manga and this influence can also be found in Bangladeshi manga.

Like the Japanese manga, I have also selected some Korean webtoons which will help me to understand its various types of influences on Bangladeshi manga. The first one is called *Mystic Pop-up Bar* created by Bae Hye-soo known as Baehyesu, which focuses on various types of Korean food. In this webtoon, a woman named Wolju runs this mysterious pop-up bar or food cart, and customers who visit this bar consist of normal people and also the dead (*Mystic Pop-up Bar*). While drinking alcohol and eating dishes, they talk about themselves, and Wolju, who is a goddess from the Dream World tries to heal their internal wounds by using her powers in one session individually (*Mystic Pop-up Bar*). This webtoon includes Korean folklore and mythology with mythological characters and the author also uses Korean food in a unique way to solve people's issues to show the connection between food, people, and culture. That is why I have chosen this webtoon because it also helps to perceive the Bangladeshi manga artists' utilization of folklore, traditions, and customs in their works.

I have also chosen *Shaman Girl* created by Hyomi for the same cause as it also deals with folktale creatures from Korean culture and Korean Shamanism. In this webtoon, Ha Beo-deul who is a schoolgirl becomes a Shaman after being kidnapped by some mystical creatures and meets a folktale creature, *Imoogi* known as Gwangcheoli who can also turn into a person and after becoming a shaman her journey starts, where she has to deal with the problems caused by both supernatural creatures and humans (*Shaman Girl* 1-4). It also helps me to comprehend the usage of folktales in Bangladeshi manga.

Along with the Gods by Joo Ha-min is another webtoon that has been taken. But there are three stories and for my research, the first story has been selected as the author depicts a modern Korean underworld with ten kings of hell. In the story, the main character Kim Ja-hong meets three grim reapers after he dies who take him to the underworld and when he reaches there, he finds a lawyer who helps him to get through seven hells out of ten where there are different punishments based on various sins people commit in life (*Along with the Gods*). The story reveals that though hell has been modernized, the punishments are still traditional. I chose this webtoon for my research as it represents Korean mythology and other traditional and cultural elements ingrained in Korean culture which will also assist me to understand the traditional and cultural elements from the Bangladeshi side.

Finally, the last Korean webtoon that I have selected is Park Hye-rim's *Bisan* (*The Flying Mountain*) which portrays a story based on a folktale from Daegu in Korea. It is a short webtoon with eight chapters. In this story, when a boy runs away from his home during a drought, he comes across a turtle who is carrying a mountain and finds out that only he can see and hear the turtle (*Bisan* 1). The turtle helps him with food and carries him around but in the end, the turtle's time comes to an end, and before that, he saves the boy by carrying him to a village where he can find people who will want him (*Bisan* 8). This webtoon has been chosen for my research because as it is based on a Korean folktale, it will help me to comprehend the Bangladeshi manga which are also based on Bangladeshi folktales.

From the introduction of the primary texts of Bangladeshi manga and East Asian manga and webtoons, the basic knowledge about the texts and the motive behind choosing these can be learned.

In order to obtain more understanding of East Asian popular culture, its influence, and further research on Bangladeshi manga, I have reviewed several pieces of literature related to this topic. From the review, I have gathered knowledge about manga and global manga, the tension between Japanese manga and manga made outside of Japan, aesthetics of Japanese manga and anime, the impact of Japanese popular culture in Bangladesh, the Korean wave's emergence and acceptance throughout the world, Korean webtoon as the new form of Korean wave and its glocalizing elements, Japanese and Korean food aesthetics and its importance in the popular culture to express their tradition and culture, incorporation of mythology and folktales in Japanese manga and anime, the Islamization of Bangladesh and two of the Bangladeshi legends which Bangladeshi manga have taken inspiration from. While researching, I have found that there is a gap in research on Bangladeshi manga. Though there are reception studies, there is no extensive research on these texts and their contents as it is a relatively new field. That is why this research is important because it is a new area where it can be suggested that some of the Bangladeshi young artists are becoming interested. They are creating a form of text that is inspired by another culture and making it their own by incorporating the culture and traditions of Bangladesh which is why it is important to research this field.

The intention is to witness why Bangladeshi young artists are being influenced by East Asian popular culture such as Japanese manga and Korean webtoons. This paper also inquires how the Bangladeshi manga creators follow the distinct art style and features of manga and Korean webtoon. How are the Bangladeshi artists trying to incorporate folklore, legends, and religion in Bangladeshi manga? What is the purpose of including Bangladeshi folktales in these? What are they doing to fit these folktales into the medium of manga? How are they preserving culture by incorporating the culture of a religious minority and ethnic diversity? And do these manga creators

intentionally avoid folklores and traditions stemming from any particular religious community or culture.

As my paper looks into the characteristics of East Asian manga and webtoons and how the creators create these contents in a way that makes these distinct from other popular cultures, it mainly explores the art styles and how exactly traditions and cultures are embedded in these texts. It also studies to find the cause behind the influence of Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave on Bangladeshi fans of these particular cultures and how it drives them to create a new form of a subject, the Bangladeshi manga. The main objective of my research is to find out the influences and similarities between Bangladeshi manga, Japanese manga, and Korean webtoons. It also implicates that Bangladeshi manga creators are reshaping the very influence by incorporating their own folktales, traditions, people, and culture in their own way into the texts they are creating to promote the ancient and authentic form of Bengali culture. As they are giving importance to the culture belonging to the ethnic and religious minorities, it also hints that they are embracing cultural diversity which suggests that they are doing this to preserve the Bengali culture. However, my research also implies that Bangladeshi manga artists are showing preference towards folktales and stories which depict cultures that belongs to the minority section which can be seen through the three of the Bangladeshi manga that are based on different folktales and stories that depict traditions and customs of some of the specific groups of Bangladesh. Thus, this can also hint that they are excluding a particular culture of the majority in Bangladesh from being present in these texts to not go against their ideology.

In this dissertation, the first chapter gives a brief overview of the Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave and its influence on Bangladesh. It also offers a background of the primary texts which are Bangladeshi manga, Japanese manga, and Korean webtoons, and also the research

objectives. The second chapter is the literature review section where I have included different theories and ideas of researchers to support my arguments. The section on method and methodology is in the third chapter where I have discussed Laura U. Marks's Intercultural method, another one is Bertha Chin and Lori Hitchcock Morimoto's theory of transcultural fandom, and Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization. The analysis part of my research involves the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters. The fourth chapter is titled "The Idiosyncrasies of Japanese Manga and Korean Webtoon" which demonstrates the characteristics of manga and Korean webtoons. From contents that involve the folktales, mythologies, culture, and traditions to the distinct art styles of both Japanese manga and Korean webtoons have been displayed in this chapter. The fifth chapter which is titled "The Influence of East Asian Manga and Webtoon Aesthetics on Bangladeshi Manga" reveals the impacts of Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave in Bangladesh. By using the framework of transcultural fandom, this chapter also analyzes the influence of Japanese manga and Korean webtoons' art style and aesthetics in Bangladeshi manga. "Reshaping of the Influence of East Asian Manga and Webtoon in Bangladeshi Manga" which is the title of the sixth chapter argues that the influence of Japanese manga and Korean webtoons are being reshaped by the Bangladeshi manga creators to preserve the culture of Bangladesh through portraying the authentic culture of Bengal in the Bangladeshi manga. By examining the Bangladeshi texts using the intercultural method and the theory of glocalization, this chapter reveals that the artists are reshaping the influence of the East Asian popular cultural contents. The seventh chapter is titled "Preference and Exclusion" which discusses the hints of preference for some of the specific cultures that Bangladeshi manga creators have shown in their texts and also the exclusion of another particular culture by bringing the history of Islamization of Bangladesh and the growth of political Islam. And the last chapter is the conclusion, which

assembles everything together and concludes by suggesting the possible scope that can be explored by using the findings of my research on Bangladeshi manga and how it can be expanded more.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

By researching Bangladeshi manga created by young Bangladeshi manga artists, it can be understood that the impact of East Asian popular culture is evident in Bangladesh. To understand the flow of Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave all over the world, researchers from various places have analyzed these topics that have been discussed below. As there is a gap in the research of Bangladeshi manga which has been observed through reviewing various works of literature written by the researchers, these following theories and ideas will help me to understand Japanese manga, Korean webtoon, and the Bangladeshi manga and these will help to get a better idea about this research.

As the research focuses mainly on Bangladeshi manga which can be addressed as global manga as it is made outside of Japan, Casey Brienza, in her book *Global Manga: 'Japanese' Comics without Japan* brings forth the definition of manga and manga without Japan or global manga. According to her, people often have a hard time taking manga that was created outside Japan seriously and these works are called by various names which is why she refers to these as global manga to be open to possibilities (Brienza 4). By global manga, she is “referring, rather, to the published sequential art products of a sometimes globalized, sometimes transnational, sometimes hyperlocal world in which something its producers and consumers might call ‘manga’ can be produced without any direct creative input at all from Japan” (Brienza 4). The meaning of manga has evolved through time as the word manga in Japan was first recorded in the 1770s, but now the modern understanding of manga is a comic book and though they have contents like horror and adventure, their contents are mostly created based on gender and age such as *shoujo* manga

are for girls, *shounen* are created for boys and *josei* manga are created for women (Brienza 6-7). The understanding of manga to the people outside Japan has different meanings based on distinct Japanese art styles and publishers, but it is also becoming a categorical cultural product (Brienza 8). It shows the possible distinction between manga and global manga. The cultural production of global manga can be found in Asia, Africa and the middle-east, Europe and America such as *Scott Pilgrim*, *MANGAMAN*, and *Dramcon*, and from Asian countries, comics made in Korea known as manhwa are widely popular (Brienza 8-10). Though there is a tension between Japanese manga and manga without Japan, global manga production can work to obtain and preserve one's own national identity (Brienza 15).

Speaking of the tension between the term manga raises the tension and relationship between styles and manga made in Japan. According to Zoltan Kacsuk, "Manga is perceived as belonging to or stemming from Japan but at the same time is also increasingly experienced by young people across the globe as their own culture of choice; and its circuits of production, dissemination, and consumption are being both decoupled from the Japanese context and seen as unentangleable from its country of origin" (2). It reveals the tension in the idea of manga and because of the popularity and influence of manga, the production of global manga is increasing in various parts of the world which brings forward the question of what is 'real' manga. As manga produced outside of Japan is marked by an adjective such as "global" manga and Japanese manga is only referred to as manga, it creates a division, inequality, and tension between what makes the difference (Kacsuk 3). To understand the complexity of the idea of manga, Kacsuk analyses two positions which are manga as style and manga made in Japan (5). The author gives a detailed description of the two categories by discussing manga as style through visual and content and manga made in Japan and portrays that there are potential connections, which makes the

relationship between manga and Japan, complex (Kacsuk 14). Because of that, the problem that manga outside Japan faces are either objection about imitating or not being like manga (Kacsuk 14). But this can change over time, for example, Korean manhwa falls under global manga but it has created a unique identity and is popular in its own way (Kacsuk 4).

As Bangladeshi manga also falls under the spectrum of global manga, it is a fruit of the impact made by Japanese popular culture, manga, and anime. Dr. Dilruba Sharmin in her article analyzes the Japanese pop culture's gradual impact on the younger generation of Bangladesh. In her study, she finds out how and in what way Japanese pop culture is influencing the young consumers of Bangladesh (Sharmin 7). She discovers that Bangladesh witnessed the boom of Japanese pop culture such as manga and anime since the last decade which has brought the Japanese cultural influence in Bangladesh and those are creating anime community, arranging cosplay conventions, and creating manga in the Bangla language (Sharmin 7-8). This article gives the idea of Japanese pop culture and its influence on the youth of Bangladesh which is important for this research as it is also concerned with the Japanese anime and manga fandom in Bangladesh and their fan activities.

Other than Japanese pop culture, the Korean wave has become a prominent transcultural phenomenon that has been influencing the entertainment culture of different parts of the world. In a book chapter written by Tae-jin Yoon and Bora Kang stated that as the wave of Korean pop culture is becoming popular in various parts of the world, the subject area of academic research is becoming wider (16). By analyzing the twenty years of the Hallyu or Korean wave history and its academic research work to understand the emergence, it has been witnessed that recently the online social media platforms are working in expanding the Korean wave and creating a worldwide fandom (Yoon and Kang 17). Through this book chapter, it helps to understand the history of the

Hallyu wave and its academic research, which conveys the emergence and evolution of the wave as cross border phenomenon.

To understand the origin behind the popularity of the Korean wave, the book called *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* edited by Youna Kim discusses various Korean pop cultures and the cause behind its popularity. According to the authors of this book, South Korea has an attractive culture and it has been proved that the younger generation of countries outside Korea finds the attractiveness of its popular culture (Nye and Kim 33). In the Asian media, western culture is appropriated and East Asian values and traditions are also incorporated, which works as cultural hybridization, and Ryoo argues that a reason behind the success of the Korean wave is that it has a balance between western culture and their own tradition, which is a point that needs to be verified still (Iwabuchi 46). It reveals that hybridization plays a role in Korean popular culture development. Another reason behind the popularity of the Korean wave is that its popular culture can provide emotions that are relevant to people all over the world (Kim 76). Thus, this book helps to acknowledge the popularity of the Korean wave which is necessary to understand the cause behind its influence on Bangladesh for my research.

Like various Korean pop cultural products, Korean webtoon has become a part of the Korean wave which has been in part of taking the world by its increasing popularity because of glocalization and transnational consumption. According to Jang and Song, “Korean webtoons follow the processes of the development and transnational consumption of the glocal culture” (179). It means that webtoons, like K-pop and K-drama, follow the process of accepting globalization and based on local, construct a new culture (Jang and Song 179). The authors also have stated the emergence of Korean webtoon as a new genre of cartoon, how and why it has become popular, and a part of transnational consumption. Korean manhwa which was known as

printed comics is now called webtoon because the comics can now be read through digital platforms (Jang and Song 174). The reason behind its popularity is that it has distinct features such as vertical scrolling, nonlinear storytelling, interactive motions, and sounds, which increases readers as it is unique (Jang and Song 177). The popularity of the Korean wave and its consumption has also increased because of the fandom's free access and promotion of popular Korean webtoons via social media and creating fan works (Jang and Song 182-183). Thus it shows that Korean webtoon is also a new part of the Korean wave which has created “familiarity and favourability” of Korean culture in the world (Jang and Song 170).

Speaking of manga brings forward the idea of *otaku* and certain Japanese aesthetics that are ingrained in the contents which makes it distinct and also represents culture. In an article, Rea Amit focuses “on a social designation, *otaku*, which encompasses the aesthetic terms” (174). By discussing the aesthetics that various scholars have talked about through time, he portrays how certain Japanese aesthetics that are now used in Japanese pop cultures such as manga and anime, have been derived from ancient times and how some of the meanings have changed (Amit 176). The aesthetics that are frequently used are *moe*, *kawaii*, *sugoi*, *kakkoii*, *yabai*, and so on and to give some definition, the author explains that the *moe* factor that is used in anime and manga is seen as a fantasized appealing factor in a realistic display and similarly, *kawaii* is known as cute, *sugoi* is an astonishing factor and *kakkoii* seems to be known as cool (Amit 176-180). It portrays that Japanese aesthetics are unique and works as a representation. Thus, these are some of the types of Japanese aesthetics related to manga and anime which represents the Japanese culture creating a unique distinction.

In Japanese pop culture, food also works as an aesthetic and represents tradition and culture which can be witnessed in manga and animation. Lorie Brau, in her article about a manga called

Oishinbo, portrays the importance of food culture in Japan and the use of food as a means of communication in comics (34). The element of food is present in various pop cultures of Japan and in the manga too. As manga can be about anything such as adventure, samurai, school, work, and romance, it can also be specifically about food too so that people can enjoy the cooking and eating culture through comic books (Brau 34). According to Brau, Japan has a culture that is information-obsessed which is why in their food-related manga, they give as much information about food as possible and manga artists also illustrate food in a way so that readers can visualize it vividly (36). Through manga, meanings behind each food and food that are related to the Japanese culture are also depicted in manga such as how to perfectly steam Japanese rice and how rice is an expression of Japanese identity (Brau 41). It reveals how food is also a part of an aesthetic and culture that can be seen through manga.

Similarly, Korean food is also a huge part of their culture and aesthetic. In their article about Korean food and its aesthetics, Hae-Kyung Chung, Hye Jeong Yang, Dayeon Shin, and Kyung Rhan Chung states that in this modern world because of globalization, everything is becoming diluted and the only way to keep the diversity, tradition, and culture is through food as it is a cultural experience which is shared by eating together every day (Chung et al. 178). The authors also state that Korean food has the power of affection and harmonization in them (Chung et al. 179). They also convey that each food has different kinds of aesthetic values in them such as *Bibimbap* and *Tangpyungchae* are called foods that have aesthetics of mixing or harmonization as these are made by mixing different kinds of vegetables and one can find the taste of both individualism and togetherness which reflects the characteristic of Korean people that is their love of mixing with people and similarly, there are the food of waiting like *Kimchi* and also foods like caring, beauty, refinement and serving to the gods (Chung et al. 179-186). The aesthetics of food

can also be seen through their pop culture as the writers bring forward an example of the drama called “Daejungkeum” that shows how Korean food can also be globalized (Chung et al. 179). It reveals that Korean food is a symbol of Korean culture and its importance. Thus, this article will help to understand the use of food in the Korean webtoon and Bangladeshi manga to acknowledge the connection between food and people and how the exposure of food in the texts helps to express one's own culture.

Just like food, artists also incorporate religion, mythology, folktales, and legends in manga and webtoons to preserve their culture and tradition. Religion, mythology, and folktales are important aspects in the creation of one's culture. According to Amy Plumb, mythology and supernatural elements are the core aspect of Japanese culture, and these are prominent forces in Japanese anime and manga, and these also work as an inspiration to the manga artists and writers to utilize these in their creations which are getting more popular worldwide (236-237). As texts like manga and anime are very hybrid, these incorporate pretexts like religion, mythology, and folklore and transform the old works as new (Plumb 238). In this article, the author analyzes various manga and anime that use these elements in the contents and one of them is Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto*. She explains how Kishimoto included a mythological character like the nine-tailed fox which is called *kitsune* in Japanese and also ancient Gods as ninja techniques (Plumb 243-244). Though Kishimoto has altered various parts, there are still some elements that are unchanged (Plumb 244). It conveys that by using these elements in popular culture, cultural preservation is in the process and people can learn about the culture and tradition. This article helps understand the incorporation of religion, mythology, and folktales in Japanese manga, Korean webtoon, and also Bangladeshi manga.

Speaking of legends and folktales of a culture, to understand the purpose behind Bangladeshi manga's inclusion and exclusion of specific cultures, *Islam and Democracy in South Asia: The Case of Bangladesh* written by Md Nazrul Islam and Md Saidul Islam is being used. In this book, the writers go in-depth on the topic of Islamization in Bangladesh. They state the way political Islam came to be in Bengal, its growth, and how it changed over the years. According to them, political Islam grew its roots during the time of British colonialism and at that time, it was more puritanical and less political as people wanted to create an Islamic society by getting rid of ideas that goes against the Islamic ways as a response to the British colonialism (N. S. Islam 141). It conveys that at this time the religious identity was stronger. But after East Pakistan was created, because of the harsh treatment and negligence of Pakistan, the focus was more on Bengali nationalism based on language, culture, and ethnicity rather than religious nationalism but there was no conflict between these two ideologies (N. S. Islam 151). After gaining independence from Pakistan, the identity and nationalism of Bangladesh changed many times from secularism to having regained Islamic identities from the timelines of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman, Ershad, Khaleda Zia to now, Sheikh Hasina (N. S. Islam 167-171). As it discusses the growth of political Islam and the identity crisis of Bengali people, this book helps to understand the cause behind the exclusion of a specific culture to not breach the ideology of the majority of people in Bangladesh.

Various legends and folktales being incorporated in manga and webtoon bring forward the idea of including these elements in Bangladeshi manga. *Kinsa Khyong* is one of the three Bangladeshi manga which is being analyzed in this research and it is based on a legend about the Karnafuli River. The legend about the naming of the river is mentioned in the Karnafuli river section of the Banglapedia. It states that it is a tragic love story of an Arakanese princess and a

prince of the Marma tribe from Chittagong and according to the authors in Banglapedia, the name of the river was known as ‘Kynsa Khyong’ to the Marma tribe but the name Karnafuli formed from the word ‘karnaful’ which means ‘flower adorning the ear’ when the princess lost her life trying to retrieve that fallen flower from the river and the prince drowned himself in order to be with her (Saleheen and Chowdhuri). It reveals how this legend used as the base of the story of the Bangladeshi manga *Kinsa Khyong* is portraying the culture of indigenous people.

Another Bangladeshi manga that has been grounded on a legend is *Ram Sagar*. Through a book called *Bangla Kingbodontee* by Asaduzzaman Jewel, which consists of various local myths, it can be understood that the legend of Ram Sagar does exist. In the book, the author explains how these legends spread from one place to another by people and how lakes like Ram Sagar carry local myths which are a blend of history and fantasy (Jewel 9). In the story of the two lakes, the writer covers the legend of Ram Sagar, the largest manmade lake of Bangladesh. He depicts the story of the son of Raja Prannath, Prince Ramnath who sacrificed himself in order to make the lake filled with water, as per the order of the divine message, and the temple that was built in the middle of the lake still stands which exhibits how legends are made, mixed with history and myth (Jewel 9-11). Though the author of *Bangla Kingbodontee* and the manga portrays the legend of Ram Sagar, both stories are a bit different, which proves Jewel’s point of legend’s base being similar but still different as it is a myth and it changes over time because of people. Thus it will help to understand the process of preserving the culture of Bangladesh through Bangladeshi manga.

Both of these works will be analyzed by using the theories and ideas related to global manga, manga as style and made in Japan, Japanese otaku aesthetics, Korean webtoon and glocalization, religion and the supernatural in the anime and manga, and the Islamization of

Bangladesh. These will help to understand the influence of East Asian Popular culture, the reshaping of it, and the creation of new statements.

Chapter Three

Method and Methodology

Culture is something that can transcend borders and influence, which makes it dynamic. The influence of cultures can be understood through the East Asian popular culture that is thriving throughout the world and which is also influencing Bangladesh. It reveals that culture is not restricted to a single culture, proposing the concept of intercultural aesthetics by Laura U. Marks. By consulting Laura Marks's concept of intercultural aesthetics, theory of transcultural fandom by Bertha Chin and Lori Hitchcock Morimoto, and the concept of glocalization by Roland Robertson, this dissertation mainly analyzes three of the Bangladeshi manga written and drawn by Bangladeshi manga creators Shantona Shantuma with Japanese manga and Korean webtoons to understand the emergence and impact of East Asian pop culture stories and how these Bangladeshi manga creators are preserving culture by incorporating Bengali culture in the manga in Bangla.

Laura U. Marks is a scholar whose focus is on Intercultural media arts and philosophy. Her concept of intercultural aesthetics is used to understand the medium of manga, webtoons, and Bangladeshi manga in this thesis as a theoretical framework to identify the blending of culture which has formed the culture of Bangladesh. According to her, “‘Intercultural’ indicates a context that cannot be confined to a single culture” (Marks 6). This acknowledges that an object of a culture cannot stay in a single culture. It can influence or be influenced. I am using this concept to understand the wave of East Asian pop culture in Bangladesh which suggests the idea of intercultural aesthetics. From my understanding, intercultural means mixing of different cultures and this takes us to look into the culture of Bangladesh. Internally, there have been various cultures that have been added and blended into the Bangladeshi culture. For example, the culture of Hindu,

Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian. There is also the culture of ethnic minorities such as Chakma, Marma, and many more and all of these have shaped the culture of Bangladesh which suggests that it was not constricted to only one culture.

Waves of various cultures have also been affecting Bangladeshi culture. As Marks states, “It also suggests movement between one culture and another, thus implying diachrony and the possibility of transformation” (6). It conveys that the concept of intercultural aesthetics is not a one-time thing but a continuous process, which makes the culture change and grow and different cultural waves are one of the reasons. The culture of Bangladesh has been influenced by various waves of culture such as the waves of Western and Indian culture. For example, it can be witnessed that Bangladeshi people follow Western-style fashion and also wear Indian dresses. Because of the influence of Western and Indian pop culture, we can also notice that many Bangladeshi directors who make movies include elements belonging to Hollywood and Bollywood movies such as action, and fighting sequences, an opinionated female lead falling in love with the protagonist, and a villain scheming to destroy the whole world or city and gain power and wealth. For example, *Dhaka Attack* and *Speed*. In that way, the wave of East Asian popular culture has also been impacting Bangladeshi culture and from that, the influence of Japanese pop culture and the Korean wave is my focus.

The impacts of these cultural waves are happening because their works are being consumed here. According to Marks, “‘Intercultural’ means that a work is not the property of any single culture, but mediates in at least two directions” (6). It indicates that work from a culture does not only stay there, it spreads. Culture crosses borders in many ways but it can connect with another culture because of the viewership of their work. Viewers of the East Asian popular culture have been there for a long time ago. For example, I have been watching Japanese anime from my

childhood such as *Pokemon*, *Digimon*, *Naruto*, *Cardcaptor Sakura*, and many others on television and at that time, I would watch anime on BTV or Indian channels featuring on Bangladeshi television. The Korean wave is now one of the most prominent cultural influences in Bangladesh as we can see from the growing Korean cultural conventions that happen each year. It can be suggested that the Bangladeshi manga creators that I am focusing on are the viewers of Japanese pop culture and the Korean wave and in this fashion, they are interacting with Japan and Korea, which is why the intercultural method is occurring as Bangladeshi manga is the result of intercultural aesthetics and it can be seen by analyzing these works.

Speaking of viewership, fandom is one of the reasons for culture crossing borders, for example, as fans of K-drama are increasing in Bangladesh, the market for Korean food like *kimchi*, *Gochujang* sauce, and Korean *ramen* noodles are also growing rapidly as they are always shown in the dramas which reveal how culture is crossing the borders through fandoms. Hence I am also using the theory of transcultural fandom by Chin and Morimoto for my methodological framework. I am applying this conceptual framework in order to analyze and understand the activities of manga creators. In this article, Chin and Morimoto focus more on the fans rather than nations. According to them, the reason behind transcultural fans indulging in the border-crossing works and becoming fans is because they have affinities with those things (Chin and Morimoto 93). It suggests that the fans have a liking for those transcultural works which drives them to do fan practices such as creating fan arts and doing cosplays. By analyzing the Bangladeshi manga creators, we can witness that they are not doing average fan practices. Rather they are creating authentic works after becoming fans of East Asian pop culture.

Chin and Morimoto's concept of transcultural fandom helps me to acknowledge that, fans work as a medium of intercultural aesthetics. According to the authors, "This goes beyond merely

acknowledging that fans are active producers who collaboratively produce transformative works, be they fan fiction, fan videos, or providing subtitling or translation services to foreign texts” (Chin and Morimoto 98). It suggests that fan practices can be of use to promote and influence culture by creating fan works for the transcultural objects. This helps to promote the culture of the transcultural work to another culture and influence the ones that are consuming it. It helps us to understand how Japanese and Korean pop culture is influencing Bangladeshi culture through the growing fandom and their works.

Another concept that I am consulting for my dissertation is the concept of glocalization by Roland Robertson who speaks about the importance of both local and international. He argues that the topic of globalization is often mistaken as only thinking about internationalizing and focusing on the big picture which causes a lack of importance on the issues of locality (Robertson 25). That is why the concept of glocalization is needed because globalization is assumed to overrule and neglect locality, which is why Robertson proclaims that homogeneity should merge with heterogeneity, which means that it is crucial to blend the global with the local in this contemporary time (26-27). The glocalization framework is important because, it includes both global and the local and the idea of incorporating the local means including diversity, and in the twenty-first century, diversity is celebrated. According to Robertson, “In particular, I have tried to transcend the tendency to cast the idea of globalization as inevitably in tension with the idea of localization” (40). By blending globalization with localization, we are becoming aware of different local cultures, which will help to understand how Bangladeshi manga creators are consuming the Japanese manga and Korean webtoons that are being globalized and creating a new version of it by localizing it in their way and in that process, they are depicting diversity and also preserving their own culture.

Chapter Four

The Idiosyncrasies of Japanese Manga and Korean Webtoon

In the whole world, Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave have been the choice of culture that people like to follow and it can be noticed through the consumption of popular media such as manga and webtoon and Bangladesh is no exception. To discover how Bangladeshi manga creators are influenced by East Asian popular culture, some Japanese manga and Korean webtoons are going to be analyzed in this chapter. From the Japanese manga, *Naruto*, *Demon Slayer*, *Oishinbo*, and *Shirahime-Syo* and from Korean webtoons, *Mystic Pop-up Bar*, *Shaman Girl*, *Along with the Gods*, and *Bisan* have been taken. By exploring these texts to find out the primary characteristics, it can be understood that the manga creators include their tradition and culture, and the form of their art style and features are unique which attracts people from all over the world.

To understand the impact of East Asian manga and webtoon in Bangladeshi manga, the first point that is going to be focused on is the inclusion of tradition, culture, folklore, myths, and legends, which play a prominent part in the popular culture of East Asia. The first manga that is going to be discussed is Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto*. A part of the Japanese popular culture, the manga *Naruto* is filled with various Japanese traditions, cultures, mythology, folklore, and legends. To start with the main character, Naruto is a young ninja who has a nine-tailed fox inside of him which is a Japanese mythological monster or spirit (*Naruto*). According to Michael Dylan Foster in his book called *The Book of Yokai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore*, "Yokai" is a force that can be understood as something that cannot be seen and it can be discerned as a mystical creature, a ghost, a monster or a spirit if it is on sight and all of these forces are known in Japan as *yokai* which is an important part of Japanese folklore and culture as they are blended with people

and nature (20). In this book, the writer has described the term *yokai* and discussed its wide varieties.



Figure 1: *Naruto*

In figure 1, it can be seen that the folklore creature, a nine-tailed fox that has been inside Naruto since his birth as his father has sealed it, is a *yokai* (*Naruto*). The main plot of *Naruto*

revolves around the idea of having the nine-tailed fox which constructs the identity of Naruto. The idea of the nine-tailed fox has originated from the mythology of the *kitsune* which is known as the fox *yokai* and Kishimoto uses it to shape Naruto's personality and physical traits (Plumb 243). In Japan, *kitsune* are very common *yokai* and these can be found through folklore, plays, literary texts, and now popular culture (Foster 193). In the manga, it can be witnessed that Naruto is a character who pulls tricks all the time (*Naruto*). For example, in the first chapter of the manga, naruto is defacing the faces of the village leaders that are sculpted into the Hokage Mountain to pull pranks and this trickster characteristics of Naruto is echoed throughout the manga which is similar to *kitsune* which are known for being tricksters (Plumb 243). There are other characteristics that are similar to the *kitsune* which can be found in the manga. The nine-tailed foxes and *kitsune* are famous throughout East Asia, originating from China which is known for having the power to shape-shift into alluring young women (Foster 193). This shape-shifting characteristic can also be found in Naruto. For example, Naruto has a special transformation *jutsu* or technique known as "Ninja Centerfold" which is a shape-shifting technique where he transforms into a seductive young girl covering herself in mist (*Naruto*).

In Japan, *kitsune* are known as dangerous creatures that can shape-shift, possess and deceive people which is why these are sometimes feared (Foster 193). Kishimoto has included this aspect in Naruto too. In the manga, Naruto also faces alienation regarding the fact that he embodies the nine-tailed fox and this suggests another similarity with this *yokai* (*Naruto*). Speaking of the possession brings forward the idea of fox possession which is known as *Kitsune-Tsuki* and legend has it that this evil spirit can possess humans, entering through their breasts or fingertips (Roberts 65). In the manga, Kishimoto portrays *Kitsune-Tsuki* by entering the nine-tailed fox through

Naruto's belly and sealing it, which suggests variation (*Naruto*). These suggest how the legend of *kitsune* is heavily implied in this action manga.

In *Naruto*, the nine-tailed fox demon is a part of the 'Bijuu' which can be translated to the tailed beasts, a concept created in this series by Kishimoto (*Naruto*). There are ten tailed beasts in the manga and like Naruto, who works as a vessel for the nine-tailed beast, each of the tailed beasts also has a human vessel and they are known as the *Jinchuriki* (*Naruto*). Like Naruto's nine-tailed fox which is based on the mythological creature, *kitsune*, the one and two-tailed beasts can also be seen to have similarities with two types of *yokai*.

The one-tailed beast is named Shukaku which heavily resembles the *tanuki yokai*. *Tanuki* or Japanese raccoon dogs are real animals but they also have a *yokai* form and like *kitsune*, they are also known as tricksters and shape-shifters in folklore (Foster 202). Unlike *kitsune*, they are not good in shape-shifting and cannot transform into attractive women, rather they shape-shift into Buddhist priests and other objects such as a tea kettle and the inability to properly shape-shift into a tea kettle is from the folklore related to the *tanuki* known as *Bunbuku Chagama* (Foster 203). In the manga, Shukaku at first was sealed inside a cage with a tea kettle and an old priest called Bunpuku, who was the first *jinchuriki* of Shukaku (*Naruto*). This portrays Kishimoto's way of including Japanese myths.

The two-tailed beast called Matatabi also suggests the incorporation of a *yokai* cat known as Nekomata. Nekomata has a distinct feature which is a split tail (Foster 237). In the manga, Matatabi is known for having an appearance of a giant cat with two tails or split tails resembling the Nekomata (*Naruto*). According to Foster, in Japanese folklore, *yokai* cats are portrayed in various ways such as having a calm and well-mannered form to having ferocious monstrous

abilities which suggest that they have domestic and wild sides (236). In the manga, it can be witnessed that other than having its wild monstrous side, Matatabi has a well-mannered and polite personality, unlike other tailed beasts, which portray the similarity between Matatabi and cat *yokai* (*Naruto*). It portrays how Kishimoto has applied this concept of *yokai* that is a part of the Japanese traditional culture, folklore, and mythology.

The inclusion of the Shinto religion can be found in various Japanese animation and manga and it is also present in *Naruto*. Shinto religion is known as the earliest and ancient religion of Japan and its people, which includes worshipping *Kami*, which translates to gods (Roberts 99). It also contains elements of nature and the most important gods are Izanagi and Izanami, the two primordial gods, and Amaterasu the sun goddess, Tsukuyomi, or Tsukiyomi the moon god and Susanoo the sea and storm god (Roberts 99). In *Naruto*, all of the mentioned Shinto deities have been used as names of certain ninja techniques. Another connection that can be found is that these ninja techniques are originally used by the Uchiha clan, who are specialized in using their eyes to perform these techniques (*Naruto*). According to the Shinto myth, as Izanagi gets away from his dead wife, Izanami from the underworld, he washes and from his left eye, Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi from his right eye and from his nose, Susanoo was born (Roberts 54). This suggests that both in the myth and *Naruto*, Izanagi, Amaterasu, and Tsukuyomi have a connection with eyes. Though Kishimoto uses the name of Izanami and Susanoo, it shows a difference because these Shinto deities do not have a connection with the eyes in the myth.

Other than *Tsukuyomi*, there is another ninja technique in relevance with the moon god, Tsukuyomi and that is called the *Infinite Tsukuyomi*. In the manga, it can be witnessed that when a user uses “Infinite Tsukuyomi,” their eyes can be reflected through the moon as it can be used as a domain and those who are affected by the moonlight, falls under an illusion (*Naruto*). It reveals

that Kishimoto uses the element moon to do this technique, which is linked to the Shinto god, Tsukuyomi. The last person who uses the *Infinite Tsukuyomi* is the final antagonist of *Naruto* who is called Kaguya Otsutsuki. The name Kaguya resembles a Japanese folktale, a tale of Kaguya-Hime, known as the princess of the moon and the child of the moon god who punished her for disobedience and sent her to earth where she was raised by a bamboo cutter but in the end, she returned to the moon. (Roberts 61). In the manga, it can be witnessed that Kaguya was sealed by her sons and that eventually created the moon (*Naruto*). This portrays how the author of *Naruto* creates the story by including folktale references.

Kishimoto also portrays a resemblance to a traditional Japanese way of exorcising evil. In the Shinto religion, *Miko*, known as shrine maidens who perform various duties and rituals in the Shinto shrines can also possess the ability to perform exorcisms (Roberts 75). In *Naruto*, Sasuke Uchiha, a teammate of Naruto has displayed this ability similar to a *Miko*. Plumb states in her article that as the nine-tailed fox is sealed inside Naruto, it can possess and take over him completely but Sasuke has the power to dispel this as if he is performing an exorcism on the *yokai* and he comes across this by using an ability constructed by his eyes called *Sharingan*, which he has inherited from his clan (244). The symbol of Sasuke Uchiha's clan is a stiff fan in red and white color known as *Uchiwa* and this color pattern resembles the traditional dress that a *Miko* wears (Plumb 244). This fan is also used for exorcism, symbolizing that it is blowing away the wicked (Casal 25). It shows how Kishimoto has utilized the folktales and myths of the nine-tailed fox and *Miko* practicing exorcising ability through Naruto and Sasuke. In figure 2, a manga cover from *Naruto* can be seen which shows the illustration of Naruto and Sasuke in the front. An illustration of the Uchiha symbol on Sasuke's back can be seen and he is portrayed as someone who does exorcism.



Figure 2: *Naruto*

As food is known for being a part of a country's tradition and culture, Kishimoto also incorporates this in the manga. Using food as names of manga characters is something that

Japanese manga creators do which can be seen as a way of highlighting the Japanese culture (Brau 34-36). Kishimoto also applied this as the name of the show and its protagonist itself is named after a fishcake made in Japan which is called *Naruto*. This white fishcake with a pink whirl in the middle can be found in the *ramen* and in the manga *Naruto*, it can be seen that Naruto's favorite food is *ramen* which is a food that is very much associated with Japan and East Asia. Just like the fishcake named *Naruto* which is used in *ramen*, the protagonist himself is also deeply connected with *ramen*. In the manga, he is always seen eating *ramen* in a specific *ramen* shop known as Ichiraku Ramen and as he was an orphan, he was always eating in this shop since his childhood (*Naruto*). This shows how Kishimoto draws a connection between *Naruto* fishcake and the character Naruto with ramen which makes *ramen* an important theme of this manga.

Demon Slayer or *Kimetsu No Yaiba*, written by Koyoharu Gotouge is a manga that focuses on the Japanese folklore creature *oni* which in English can be translated to a demon as it can be understood through the English translation of the name. But in Japanese folklore and religion, the meaning of *oni* is not only confined to the idea of a demon. Historically, this folklore creature can have many variations in their appearances, and generally, these were known as all kinds of monsters that were dangerous and uncommon which means that they were known as a synonym of *yokai* but in today's Japanese culture and popular culture, these are seen as having some specific attributes such as having claw-like hands and feet, horns, fangs, humanlike bodies but it can expand and have a hunger for humans (Foster 126-127). In the manga, the protagonist Tanjiro Kamado's younger sister, Nezuko turns into an *oni*, and the attributes that Gotouge has portrayed are kind of similar to the folktale creature as she also grows horns, fangs, claws, and her body can also expand and shrink and also have a hunger for humans (*Demon Slayer*). *Oni* are known as fierce creatures that do not have any morals, are antihuman and a person becomes a demon when they lose

humanity as it can be understood through the folktale of *Shuten Douji* and a tale of a female oni, *Kankyo no tomo* (Foster 126-131). It can be suggested that there are both similarities and dissimilarities with the way a person becomes an *oni*. In the manga, it can be witnessed that a person can turn into a demon by the main *oni* called Muzan Kibutsuji who is the antagonist, which is different from folklore (*Demon Slayer*). But the similarity is that all of the *oni*, shown in the manga are violent and far from human morals except for Nezuko, who after turning into a demon, still controls herself from her desire to eat humans and other activities done by demons and that keeps her from completely turning into an *oni* (*Demon Slayer*). Figure 3 shows an image of Nezuko turning into a demon. It portrays how Gotouge utilizes the concept of *oni* in a creative way.

Figure 3: *Demon Slayer*

Other folklore and cultural references that can be found in *Demon Slayer* are the masks that some of the characters have been seen wearing. For example, a character called Sakonji Urokodaki, who trains Tanjiro is seen wearing the *tengu* mask which is based on a *yokai* called *tengu* (*Demon Slayer*). In contemporary Japanese culture and folklore, specifically *Karasu* or crow *tengu* is commonly known for having features such as a long red nose and the appearance of a priest (Foster 140). In the manga, Sakonji Urokodaki's appearance is also similar to the description

of a *tengu* as he wears a red mask with a long nose, dresses like a *tengu*, and also has a pet crow which draws a connection with the *Karasu tengu* (*Demon Slayer*). In folklore, *tengu* is often linked with mountains (Foster 144). This is also relevant with Sakonji as he also lives in the Sagiri Mountain and trains people there to become demon slayers (*Demon Slayer*).

In *Demon Slayer*, there is a breathing technique that is used for fighting called *Hinokami Kagura* or Dance of the Fire God which has religious reference. *Kagura* is a form of traditional Japanese dance, a ritual that is performed in Shinto shrines in special events and according to the myth, this dance was to persuade Amaterasu to leave her cave and it was performed by *Uzame*, the goddess of the dawn (Roberts 61). In the manga, it reveals that *Hinokami Kagura* is known as the Sun Breathing technique (*Demon Slayer*). This portrays a connection between the sun goddess, Amaterasu as *Kagura* is performed for her.

In the manga, Gotouge also focuses on traditional dresses as the setting of Japan is in the Taisho era (*Demon Slayer*). In the manga, it is witnessed that most of the characters are wearing various types of *kimonos* and *haori* which are known for being traditional dresses and jackets of Japan, for example, Tanjiro wears *kimono* with *haori* and Nezuko wears *kimono* which can be seen through figure 4. This suggests how the manga creator tries to highlight tradition through popular culture by portraying traditional dresses.



Figure 4: *Demon Slayer*

Oishinbo, written by Tetsu Kariya and drawn by Akira Hanasaki is a manga related to food, specifically Japanese cuisine which is a part of the culture and aesthetics of Japan. As food is an important part of the tradition and culture, many manga creators make food-related manga known as *Gurume* which is known as gourmet manga, or *Ryori* which means cooking and cooking manga, to let people know their traditions and culture that is connected through Japanese food (Brau 34). *Oishinbo* also falls in this category of manga. This manga shows cooking and gives extensive food-related information through the main character called Shiro Yamaoka, a journalist who has an exquisite palate and has the responsibility for creating the ultimate menu (*Oishinbo*). Chapter two of the manga titled “First Course: The Secret of Dashi” shows that there is a conflict between Shiro and his father, Yuzan Kaibara who has taught him about gourmet food but it is also indicated that the reason for their bad relationship is food (*Oishinbo*). But in another chapter titled “First Course: The Soul of Ramen,” it portrays that though the two brothers of a *ramen* restaurant compete to know who makes the better *ramen* and in the end, Shiro lets them know that one brother can make the perfect noodles and another brother can make the perfect soup for *ramen* which eventually brings harmony (*Oishinbo*). This portrays how manga creators are using traditional foods to connect people and emotions. Figure 5, containing a picture from *Oishinbo* shows that Shiro is giving information about the noodles.

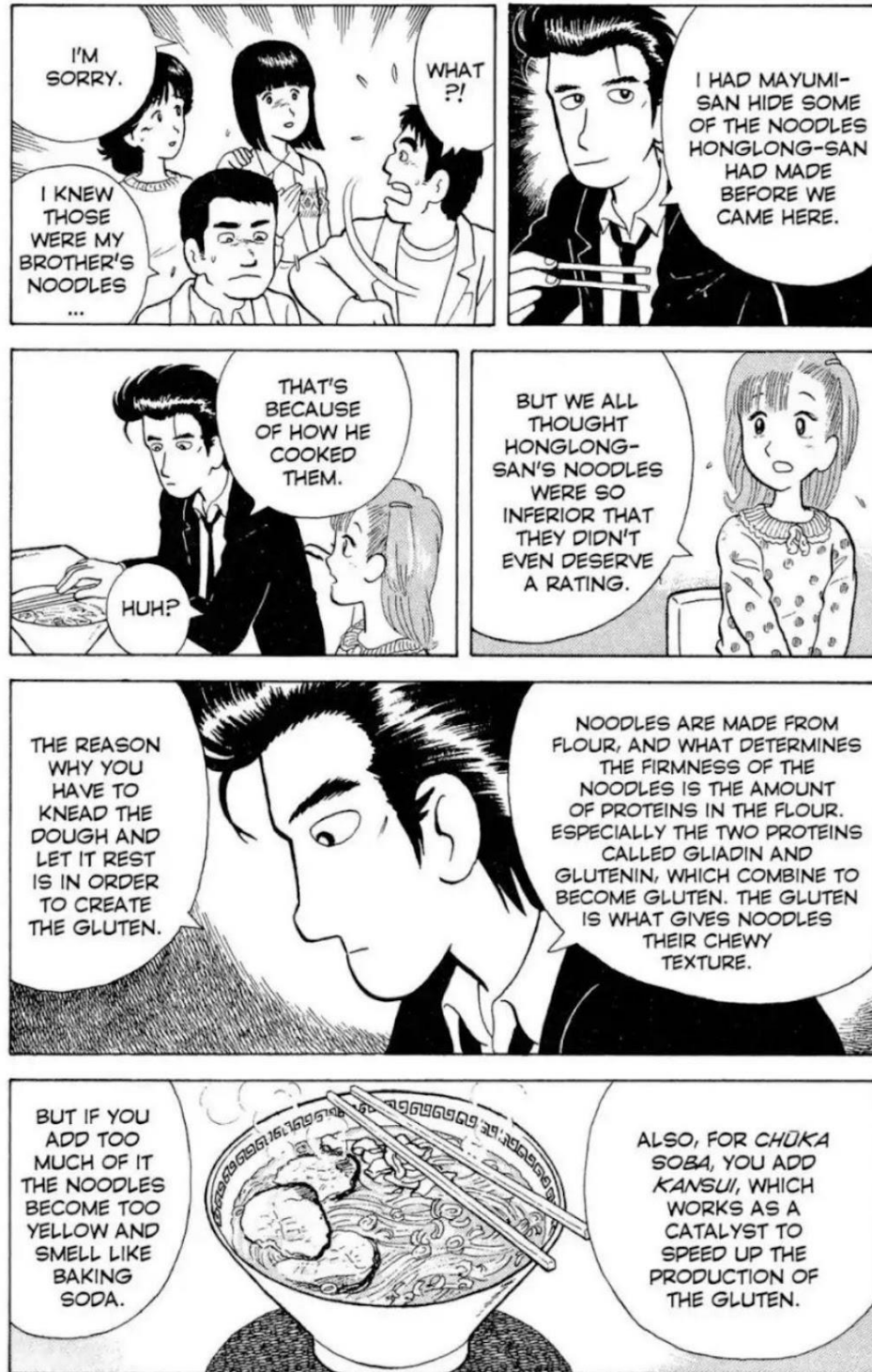


Figure 5: Oishinbo

In *Oishinbo*, Kariya and Hanasaki illustrate various Japanese traditional foods, drinks, and techniques and through these, they have tried to highlight the importance of remembering and maintaining one's culture. For example, in a chapter titled "First Flight: The Versatility of Sake," Shiro tries to show Kyoichi Koizumi, the editor who has been staying in Paris for twenty years that the Japanese pure traditional *sake* has a unique and gourmet taste (*Oishinbo*). Koizumi at first shows criticism towards *sake* by saying that it has an inferior taste but Shiro shows that Japan is now creating *sake* that is not like the traditional way of making *sake* and reveals a concern that it is important to nurture Japanese culture and tradition and by serving Koizumi the traditional one, he proves that Japanese *sake* is not inferior to Western drinks (*Oishinbo*). This part about pure *sake* has been exhibited in figure 6.

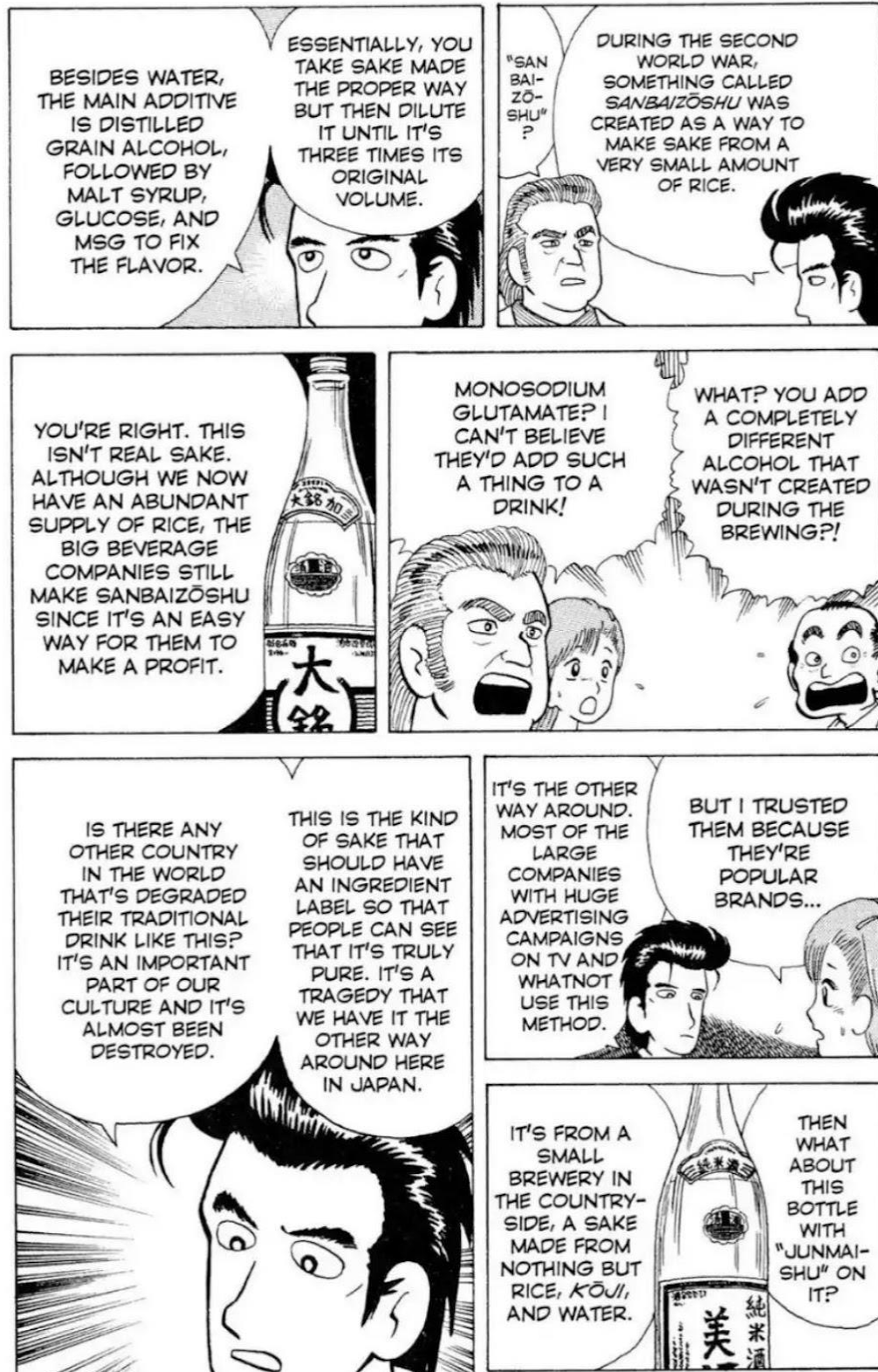


Figure 6: Oishinbo

The last manga is called *Shirahime-Syo*, created by CLAMP, which is a compilation of three short stories and the theme revolves around the character Shirahime. In the manga, it has been depicted that Shirahime is a mythological character, a goddess of the snow and this goddess has a legend around her which is that, on a day when snow is falling hard, it says that the Shirahime is crying (*Shirahime-Syo*). This manga and the character are based on the folktale of the *Yuki-onna*. “Yuki-onna is a female *yokai* who appears on snowy nights or in the midst of a snowstorm” (Foster 188). Shirahime is also illustrated in the manga in a snowstorm or when it is heavily snowing which resembles the *Yuki-onna*. In Japanese myths and folktales, she is also known as the winter ghost but also has the identity of the snow queen, and the lady of the snow who can have a human form and have a family but she can also disappear into a mist if she wants to (Roberts 122). Though in *Shirahime-Syo*, she can be portrayed as a human form, there is no indication of her having a family and solely illustrated as a celestial deity, and the theme of tragedy is also connoted through her. There are various versions of this *yokai* but Foster in his book brings the story written about *Yuki-onna* by Lafcadio Hearn where people die when their face comes into contact with *Yuki-onna*’s breath (188). In the manga, though she is not seen as someone who kills people, the implication of snowstorms and death is present in every chapter (*Shirahime-Syo*). Through figure 7 which is an image of the goddess Shirahime, this implication can be understood.



Figure 7: *Shirahime-Syo*

CLAMP's inspiration from the Japanese traditional way of storytelling can also be found as in the manga it can be seen that all of the short tales are written as a way of telling a legend which is short and have the element of folktale style. For example, the story in chapter four titled "Happily Married Couple" portrays a pair of herons in the snowstorm which a lonely soldier kills because of jealousy, and later he comes across a lady who helps him to find the way in the snowstorm who is revealed of being the female heron and this magical element is the aspect of a folktale (*Shirahime-Syo*). A part of this story can be seen in figure 8. These reveal how animators incorporate tradition and culture in popular culture.

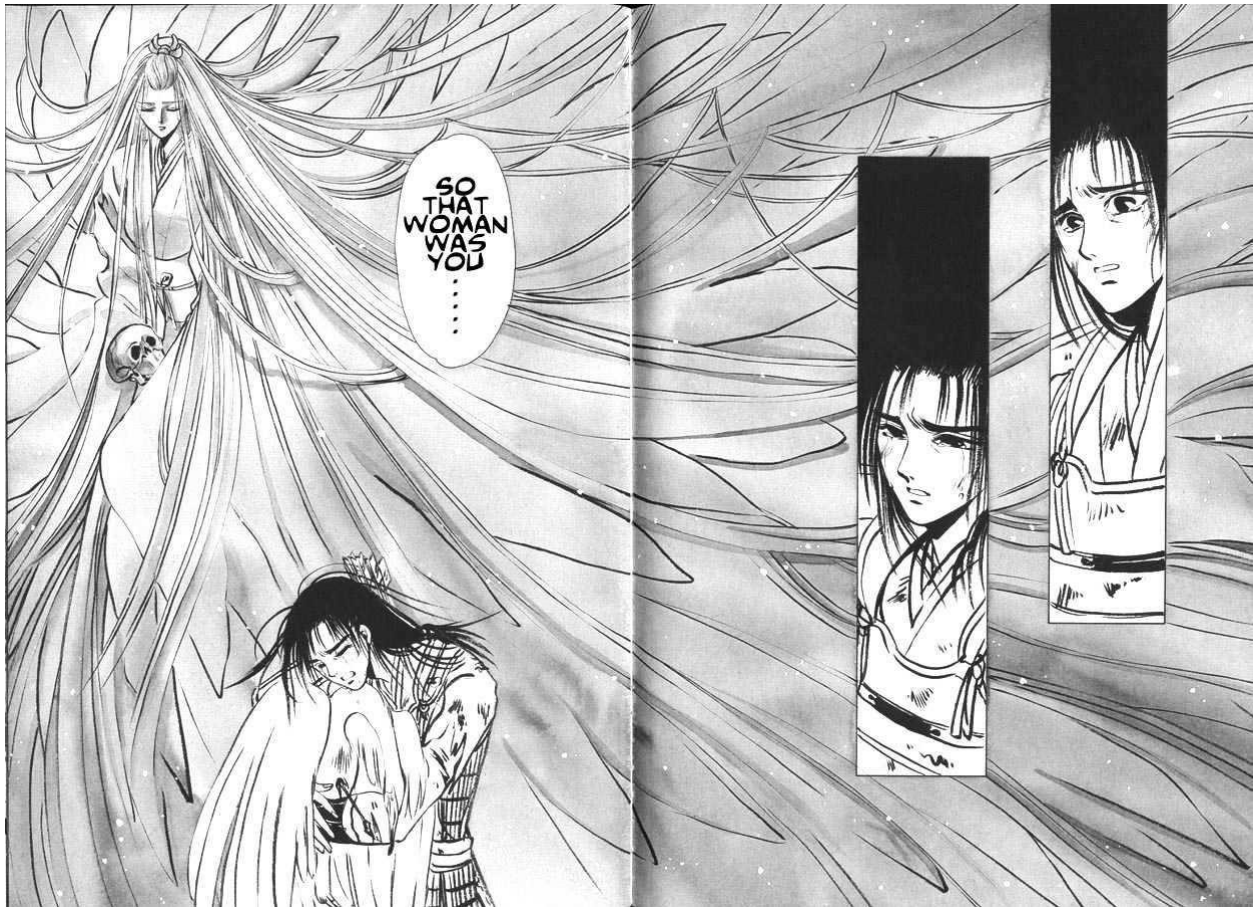


Figure 8: *Shirahime-Syo*

Like manga, Korean webtoons are also portraying Korean tradition and culture through their folktale, legends, myths, foods, and dresses. The first webtoon that is going to be discussed is Baehyesu's *Mystic Pop-up Bar*. In this webtoon, various traditional culture and folklore references are used and it is executed through Wolju, the goddess who runs her pop-up bar and helps people with internal wounds by traditional Korean foods, *soju*, and magic (*Mystic Pop-up Bar*). As every chapter title consists of various Korean foods, it can be witnessed that, that specific food is being eaten in that chapter and each food has a significant connection with each customer. For example, the first few chapters titled "Charcoal Grilled Pilfered Pork" depict the story of a girl who is on the verge of ending her life, and as she witnesses the pop-up bar and sits, Wolju gives

her *soju* and charcoal-grilled pilfered pork, and this food is connected to her cause of depression but Wolju utilizes this food and brings out her sorrow and saves her (*Mystic Pop-up Bar* 1-4). This suggests that food can be used for healing purposes as Chung et al. state in their article that Korean traditional food has the power to heal, show affection, and wish for people's betterment (179). *Mystic Pop-up Bar* also gives a detailed description of each food and the right way of eating it. Korean people's characteristics are portrayed through their food as they love mixing and harmonization and the food also involves that (Chung et al. 180). For example, in part 3 of "Charcoal Grilled Pilfered Pork", Wolju brings out a chili pepper paste and she makes the Korean wrap by describing in which order the leaf, meat, paste, garlic, and Julienne *Ttaengcho* pepper will go and she also includes that these taste great both individually and together (*Mystic Pop-up Bar* 3). This suggests the ideas of harmony and togetherness and it has been exhibited in figure 9. *Kimchi*, the food of Korean people also embodies the aesthetics of waiting as it is a fermented and slow food that requires time (Chung et al. 181). A few of the chapters of this webtoon titled "Sliced Raw Flatfish and Ripened Kimchi" portrays the story of a cat called Ris who waits for her master, Seunghee for a long time as she (R) was previously saved by her (S) and she also saves Seunghee and again waits for her (S) so that they can go to the afterlife together and the specific food for this chapter is *Kimchi* (*Mystic Pop-up Bar* 9-12).



Figure 9: *Mystic Pop-up Bar*

Other than the food, *Mystic Pop-up Bar* also focuses on tradition, myths, and folklore. Though the concept of the Dreamworld and the goddess Wolju is a creation of the author, there are accurate mythical references such as Samshin Halmoni and In part 3 of the chapter titled “Calabash and Octopus Soup,” the author states that Samshin Holmoni is “the triple goddess governing childbirth in Korean mythology” (*Mystic Pop-up Bar* 15). It suggests that Baehyesu has incorporated direct Korean mythology as Samshin Halmoni plays the same role in the webtoon too. In *Mystic Pop-up Bar*, Korean Shamans are also depicted as someone who plays the role of exorcising and practicing rituals. In *An Illustrated Guide to Korean Mythology*, it states that Shamans are responsible for performing rituals and shamanistic ceremonies and they were respected and were part of a sacred class in ancient Korean time (Choi 6). In part 2 of the chapter titled “Raw Oyster,” it is shown that a character known as the Great Shaman, Heeyong is well respected in the community as she is famous for her rituals and observations (*Mystic Pop-up Bar* 20). Figure 10 shows the Korean Shaman and her place where she performs her rituals. In the webtoon, Baehyesu has also illustrated various types of *hanbok*, the traditional Korean dress, for example, Wolju is always portrayed as wearing a red *hanbok* with white *binyeo* which is a traditional Korean hairpin (*Mystic Pop-up Bar* 4). These portray how the author has included tradition, folklore, and culture through this webtoon.



Figure 10: Mystic Pop-up Bar

Like *Mystic Pop-up Bar*, Korean shamanism is also portrayed in *Shaman Girl*, created by Hyomi. Shamans are known for passing on myths because they are connected to both living, dead and supernatural (Choi 6). This idea is also illustrated in *Shaman Girl* as it can be witnessed that, as the protagonist Ha Beo-deul encounters with mystical creatures and enters into a world unknown to humans, she gains the power of shamanism to control an *Imoogi* known as Gwangcheoli and help other humans and supernatural beings and maintain a balance between both worlds (*Shaman Girl* 1-4). Various Korean folktale creatures have been included in this webtoon and the main focus is given on Gwangcheoli. Hyomi has added to the webtoon that, according to Korean folklore, *Imoogi* are known as great serpents or lizards which means less than a dragon and they must strive for a thousand years to become a dragon and she was inspired by the folktale of an *Imoogi* from Kyungsangdo (a province in South Korea) who was unable to become a dragon and it would prevent rainfall as it used to absorb energy from the sun and the difference she shows is that Gwangcheoli can use fire (*Shaman Girl* 11.5). Figure 11 shows an image of Gwangcheoli. This portrays how the author has incorporated the Korean folktale to create new ideas.



Figure 11: Shaman Girl

Along with the Gods, written by Joo Ho-min displays Korean mythology through the first main character, Kim Ja-hong's journey to the underworld by portraying the Korean hell which has been derived from Buddhism. In the webtoon, the author portrays various Korean mythology related to the underworld and incorporates these in a modern world. For example, The webtoon starts by showing Kim Ja-hong's death and three grim reapers taking him to the station where they will catch the "Baridegi train" that takes deceased souls from the living to the underworld (*Along with the Gods* 1-2). The concept of the Baridegi train has derived from the Korean Shamanic mythology of Princess Bari. Baridegi or Paridegi is a Shaman origin's goddess who is known for her healing power and also guides the spirits of the dead to the underworld as she can travel between the living and the world of the dead (Choi 12). This portrays the incorporation of mythology in the webtoon.

Along with the Gods also presents a traditional hell but with twists of modernization and depicts the ten kings of hell, who judge and punish the sinners accordingly and each hell is designed based on specific sins (*Along with the Gods* 5). Figure 12 portrays the image where the hells are being described. In this webtoon, the lawyer, Jin Gi-han who helps Kim Ja-hong to pass through each hell explains to him about each hell and the punishments, for example, the name of the fourth hell is "Balseol hell" and this hell belongs to king Yeom-ra who is also known as the god of death, and spirits in this hell are judged based on the sins they have done by their words and if someone gets convicted here, their tongues are stretched out and cultivated to plant trees (*Along with the Gods* 48). The guardian gods of five directions and their colors are also included in this webtoon and the traditional Korean color spectrum called "Obangsaek" which are black, white, yellow, blue, and red are included by the author (*Along with the Gods* 6). This color

spectrum is deeply ingrained in Korean culture and it can be found anywhere together, even in Korean food (Chung et al. 181). Tradition is focused heavily in the webtoon too.

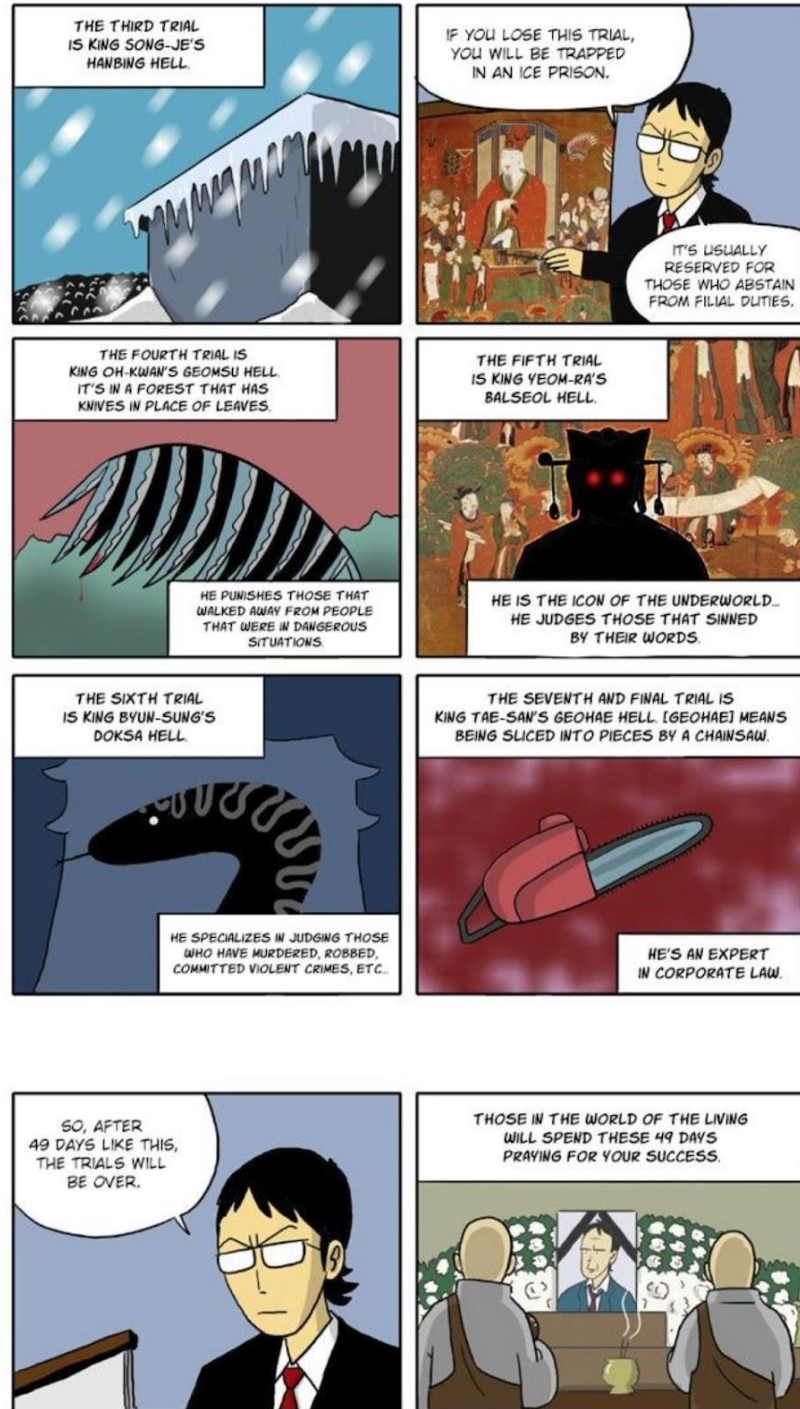


Figure 12: Along with the Gods

The last webtoon, *Bisan (The Flying Mountain)* is written by Park Hye-rim and it is based on a Korean folktale from Daegu city. In the webtoon, it portrays a boy called San who comes across a “Nalmoe” or a flying mountain and witnesses that it is being carried by a turtle which is invisible to everyone (*Bisan* 1). The author in the last chapter of *Bisan* has stated that this folktale is originated from Bisan-dong, a place in Daegu where there is a myth that the mountains from there were all floating and those suddenly dropped when a woman screamed that a mountain was flying (*Bisan* 8). Plumb states that an author can add folklore and create it in a new way (238). In *Bisan*, Park Hye-rim shows that by adding the idea of an invisible lonely turtle carrying the mountain, they are creating a new way of telling the folklore. This invisible lonely turtle carrying the mountain can be seen in figure 13.



Figure 13: *Bisan*

Other than East Asian tradition and culture, the research is also going to focus on the art style and features used in the manga and webtoons which makes it unique. While analyzing manga, it can be perceived that it has a distinct art style which makes it different from other comics and graphic novels. Manga is known for having a monochrome color scheme. All the manga that have been used in this research are in black and white. Another art style or character design which makes the Japanese manga unique is the large eyes and red blushed face which is illustrated as drawing line strokes in the manga. The line strokes which are used for blushing are also a part of the Japanese aesthetics of the *otaku* culture and it falls under the category of “Kawaii” or cute (Amit 178). Another common feature that can be seen in the manga covers and animations is the use of different ranges of hair and eye colors which are shown as natural such as pink, yellow, purple, and other shades. For example, in *Naruto*, the main character Naruto has blond hair with blue eyes, and his teammate Sakura has pink hair with green eyes, while his other teammate Sasuke’s hair and eyes are black.

In the manga, it can also be witnessed that the way they organize the panels, stories, and drawings are distinct from graphic novels. What makes manga the most unique is that it is read from right to left. In a manga chapter, it can be witnessed that each page usually has six to eight panels and though they focus on the art style, most of the manga is also dialogue-heavy. The reason is that Japan is known for having a culture that is obsessed with information (Brau 36). For example, *Oishinbo* gives a lot of emphasis on food-related information, whereas *Naruto* has information on various fighting techniques, politics, and emotions. Another aspect that is present in a manga is the use of onomatopoeic words. According to Brau, Japan is also famous for its onomatopoeic words to express the experiences that can be gathered by senses and *Oishinbo* uses it heavily (37). These words are included in *Oishinbo* so that readers can experience the chopping,

sipping, and even sizzling sounds to experience how food is being made and eaten. These onomatopoeic words are also used in fighting scenes, for the sound of swords being clashed together. For example, figure 14, which is a picture from *Demon Slayer* illustrates various types of onomatopoeic words for crawling, tiptoeing, chopping, and eating.



Figure 14: *Demon Slayer*

Another aspect of manga that can be witnessed specifically in *Shirahime-Syo* is the decorative details. According to Kacsuk, Groensteen has categorized distinct features of *shoujo* (girls) manga which makes the panels unique and one of those categories is decorating and the elements that can sometimes replace the frame or can fill the whole panel or page are flowers, leaves, or long strands of hair (8). *Shirahime-Syo*, being a folktale-related manga also falls under the genre of *shoujo* manga and has elements of flower branches, long hair blowing in the air, and snowstorm covering the whole page. Figure 15 displays an image from *Shirahime-Syo*, filling the page with long strands of hair and flowers. All of these features above make the manga unique.



Figure 15: *Shirahime-Syo*

As Korean manhwa has been closely impacted by Japanese manga, it also possesses most of the attributes of a manga as it can be seen as a part of the global manga but it has its own unique features (Kacsuk 4). Like manga, many Korean manhwa or webtoons art styles and character designs have big eyes, the aesthetic feature of a red blushing face with line strokes, and different colors of hair and eyes. But unlike manga, most webtoons are colorful, have lesser dialogues in panels, and are also read from left to right. For example, other than *Along with the Gods* which has a lot of information about Korean hell, all the other webtoons that have been selected for my research have lesser dialogues. According to Jang and Song, webtoons are the new generation of the Korean wave and a symbol of “glocal culture” (179). This statement conveys that by accepting the influence of Japanese manga and western ideas and incorporating local ideas such as portraying Korean culture through tradition, culture, aesthetics, and new technology, glocalization is on the process and it can be understood by analyzing the webtoons in this research. “The increase of digital content consumption in Korea has had a big impact on fostering webtoon production” (Jang and Song 175). This means that as webtoon is web-oriented, the focus is also mainly on how the creation of webtoon can be more online user-friendly. This is why webtoons have vertical scrolling and non-linear storytelling features (Jang and Song 177). The webtoons that have been analyzed in this thesis have these two unique features and vertical scrolling makes it easier to read on online platforms because it makes the reading faster which is different from the manga. The vertical scrolling also has an effect that resembles watching a short film (Jang and Song 177). Figure 16, an image from *Shaman Girl* shows that by using one long page file without any breaks, using 1 to 2 panels of different sizes and giving spaces offers a movie-like feel which is a new form of market production of cartoons. These discussed elements make the Korean webtoons unique and a product of glocalization.



Figure 16: *Shaman Girl*

In conclusion, this chapter reveals the primary characteristics of Japanese manga and Korean webtoon. Through analyzing the mentioned manga and webtoons, it can be perceived that the manga creators represent their culture by including traditional folktales, myths, and traditional foods and dresses. They also recreate the old in a new way. The manga and webtoons also have unique art styles and features which makes them distinct from other popular cultural texts. These characteristics make the East Asian culture gain fandoms from different parts of the world and influence other cultures which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

The Influence of East Asian Manga and Webtoon Aesthetics on Bangladeshi Manga

The idea of culture crossing the borders and influencing another through fandoms can be the most important reason for East Asian popular culture to dominate the popular culture industry of the world as it can be witnessed how there are so many anime, manga and webtoon fans. Fandoms of these pop cultures can also be found in Bangladesh. For example, as fans of Japanese popular culture and more specifically, manga and anime are known as *otaku*, Bangladeshi anime and manga fans also call themselves *otaku*. There are also fans of the Korean wave such as fans of K-pop, K-drama, and Korean webtoons. According to Rea Amit, Okada Toshio gives the best meaning to the term “Otaku” which is a person or group of people who devote themselves to a particular culture such as manga, anime, and other objects of this specific world (174). This statement can also suggest that as the fandom dedicates most of their time to the products of a single culture, it also influences their lives and the cultures that they belong to. This brings forward to “transcultural fandom” who can surpass the differences such as society, culture, and history which gives them the greater ability to also understand the culture outside their region (Chin and Morimoto 92). Bangladeshi fandom of East Asian culture falls under the spectrum of transcultural fandom and the influence of this culture falls in many areas. One of the influences which have been witnessed is on the Bangladeshi artists who are now creating manga made in Bangladesh.

To understand the reason behind the influence of East Asian culture, it is necessary to see what is happening because of the impact on Bangladeshi culture. Because of the Japanese popular culture fandom, there are various manga and anime groups. As Sharmin states, because Bangladesh found the craze of anime and manga from the last decade, there have been quite a few

groups of anime community and fan groups who practice fan activities such as cosplay conventions and selling merchandise, though there exists a wide cultural difference and one of the first Bangladeshi Anime community is known as ‘Mazecity’ (8-9). Other than Japanese pop-culture fandom, The Korean wave is taking over the interest of popular culture in Bangladesh even more. For example, because of the impact, there are many Korean culture enthusiast fan groups in Bangladesh such as the first Korean culture community is ‘BD K-Family’, and as there are people who follow the Korean wave, many markets of Korean cosmetics, merchandise, and restaurants are there. Fandoms are also buying billboards to show support to the specific fandom they belong to, for example, fan groups of the K-pop idol group BTS in Bangladesh donate to show ads on billboards in Dhaka for various anniversaries of the idol group. The cause behind these activities is watching anime, manga, K-pop, K-drama, and Korean webtoons. It reveals the affinities for border crossing commodities which the transcultural fandoms have and this leads them to do various types of fan activities (Chin and Morimoto 93). Other than the examples that have been given above, the fan practice that is not in the realm of average activity anymore is the creation of Bangladeshi manga as the manga creators are now creating original work and by analyzing these, various influences of East Asian manga and webtoon aesthetics can be found.

To find out the influences on Bangladeshi manga of Japanese and Korean pop culture, the focus has been given to the characteristics of Japanese manga first to see the similarities. From the waves of East Asian popular culture, Japanese manga and anime have been one of the biggest influences in various cultures of the world as it can be seen through the creation of global manga in different parts of the world. Global manga can be influenced by Japanese manga but without any direct input from Japan (Brienza 4). Through this statement, it can be suggested that Bangladeshi manga is a form of global manga and it contains influences from Japanese manga.

The influences occur because the root of their passion lies within the work of that popular culture (Chin and Morimoto 98). This indicates that the fans want to create work like their inspiration. By analyzing three of the Bangladeshi manga created by Shantona Shantuma, it can be understood that there are impacts of Japanese manga art style aesthetics such as incorporating large and colorful eyes and hair which can be found in the manga. In *Kinsa Khyong*, the prince of the Marma tribe has blond hair and green eyes, the Arakanese princess has blue eyes with black hair, and the friend of the prince has brown hair with blue eyes. Similarly, in *Ram Sagar*, the main characters, prince Ram and his father both have blond hair with brown and gray eyes. Another aesthetic element that is present is the red blushing face with line strokes. In *Kinsa Khyong*, the red tint and line strokes when both the characters are bashful can be seen.

Another aspect of manga that can be found in the decorative element of *shoujo* (girls) manga specifically in the Bangladeshi manga *Kinsa Khyong*. In the previous chapter, while discussing *Shirahime-Syo*, it has been mentioned that in Groensteen's characterization of *shoujo* manga, there are many prominent elements that makes it different, and one of them is the ornamental element and these are branches of flowers blowing in the wind and other artistically enhancing objects that fill out the panels or the whole page (Kacsuk 8). This adorning element is present in *Kinsa Khyong* and *Tanaporen* which falls under the genre of *shoujo* manga, for example, in *Kinsa Khyong*, importance has been given to Hibiscus, and this flower and leaves are used as the decorative element in this manga. Figure 17 is a picture from *Kinsa Khyong* that has portrayed these influential elements that are presented here. Figure 18 which is a picture of Vidyabati's wedding from *Tanaporen* also depicts this element as it can be seen that there are petals of the flower marigold everywhere. It conveys that all of these elements that are incorporated in Bangladeshi manga are an indication of the influence of Japanese manga and art style aesthetics.

Like Japanese manga, the influence of Korean webtoon is also present in Bangladeshi manga. The influence of the Korean wave is at its peak in the contemporary world. The reason behind its popularity is that South Korea's popular culture is attractive to young people (Nye and Kim 33). This means that the art and culture of Korea have been expressed through the popular culture to the people in such a vibrant way that the young people find it the most attractive. For example, the music videos of K-pop are made in a way that is very captivating. The Korean wave has the ability to mix Asian culture with Western culture skillfully and has the power to portray universal values in a way that can make them relevant and at the same time also project their culture to the people of a different culture (Jang and Song 172). These statements suggest that the Korean wave has successfully created its own popular industry by utilizing the influences it has got from other countries, its local culture, and also the online media which is unique and attractive to people. Like other Korean cultural products, Korean webtoons have also impacted other cultures, as the foreign webtoon fans are introducing these to their countries through fan activity (170). This suggests that fans are active producers and help to spread the influence of other countries to their country (Chin and Morimoto 98). It also assists to understand how Bangladeshi manga is being influenced and how the Bangladeshi manga artists are also the cause for the influence.

One of the impacts that can be suggested between Korean webtoons and Bangladeshi manga is that, unlike manga, both of these are colorful which can be seen through the image examples of Bangladeshi manga. The influence of Korean webtoons can be found more in the recent Bangladeshi manga called *Tanapern* as it is more vibrantly colored like Korean webtoons. It is observed that Korean webtoon focuses on art more than dialogues (Jang and Song 174). This can also be noticed in *Tanapern* that it is not dialogue-heavy rather the focus is mainly on art which

can be seen through an image from *Tanaporen* figure 19. It can be suggested that the impact of Korean webtoon is lesser than Japanese manga because the Korean webtoon is a new content of the Korean wave, which is why though the impacts are less, the influence is emerging and it can be seen through *Tanaporen*.

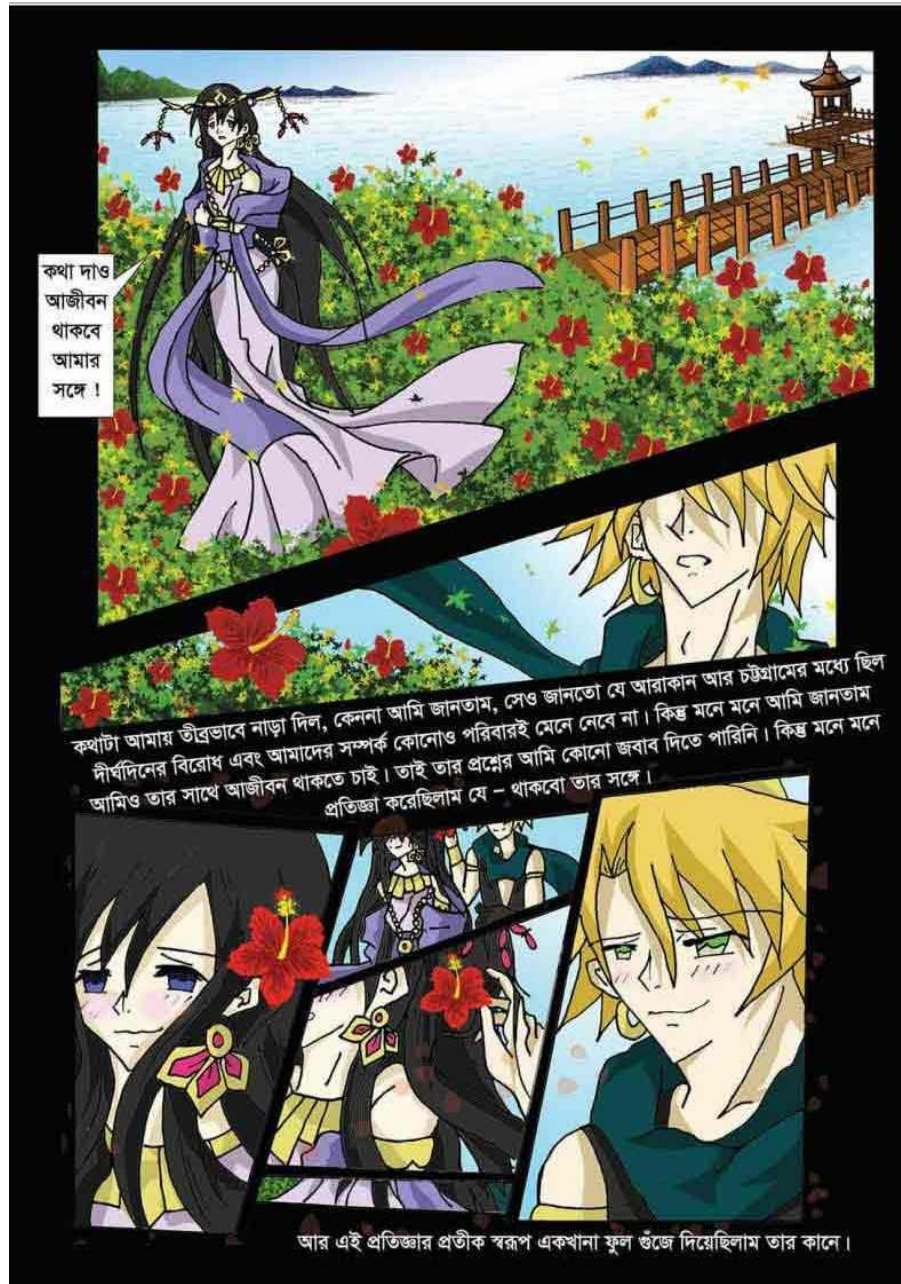


Figure 17: Kinsa Khyong

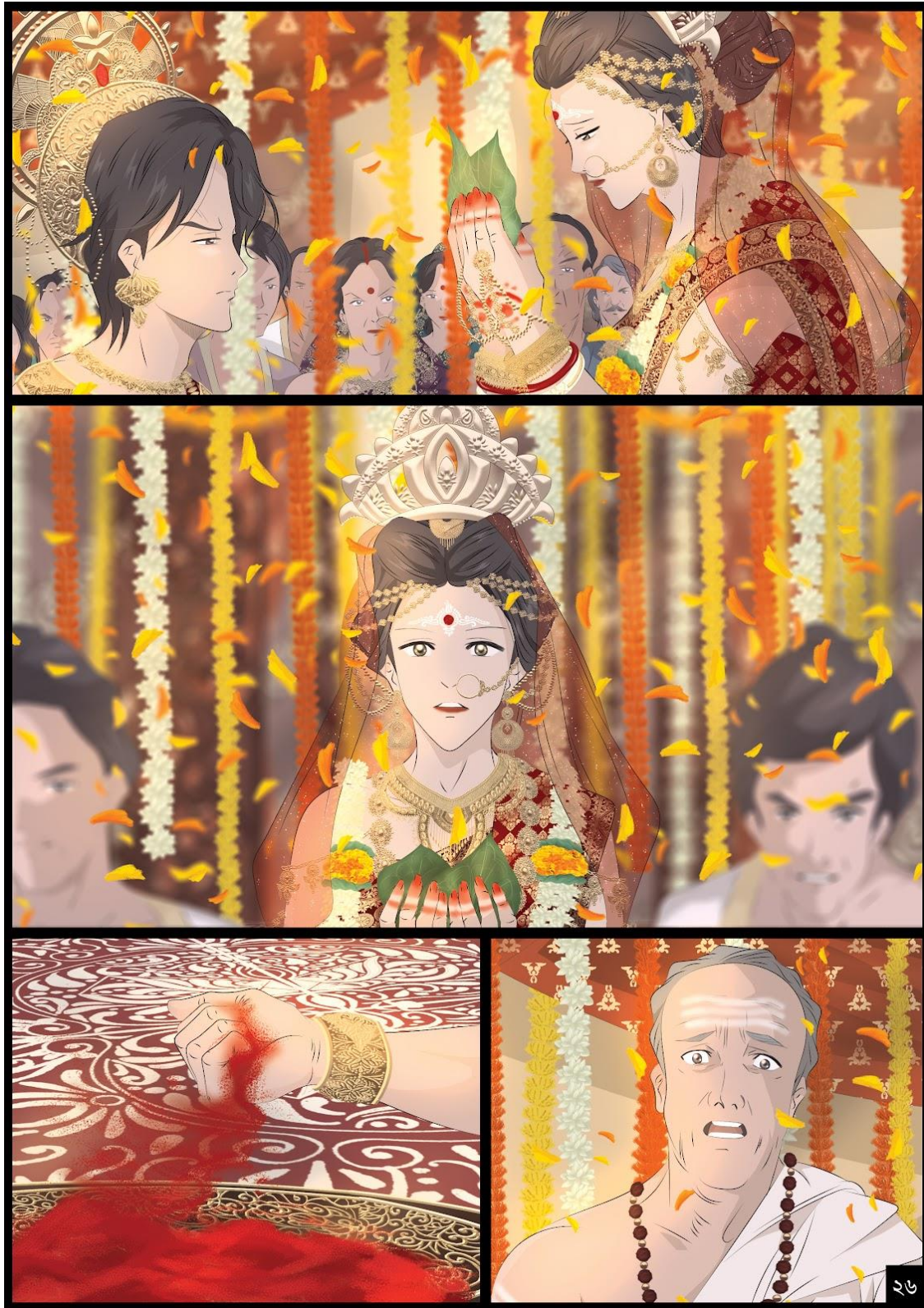


Figure 18: *Tanaporen*

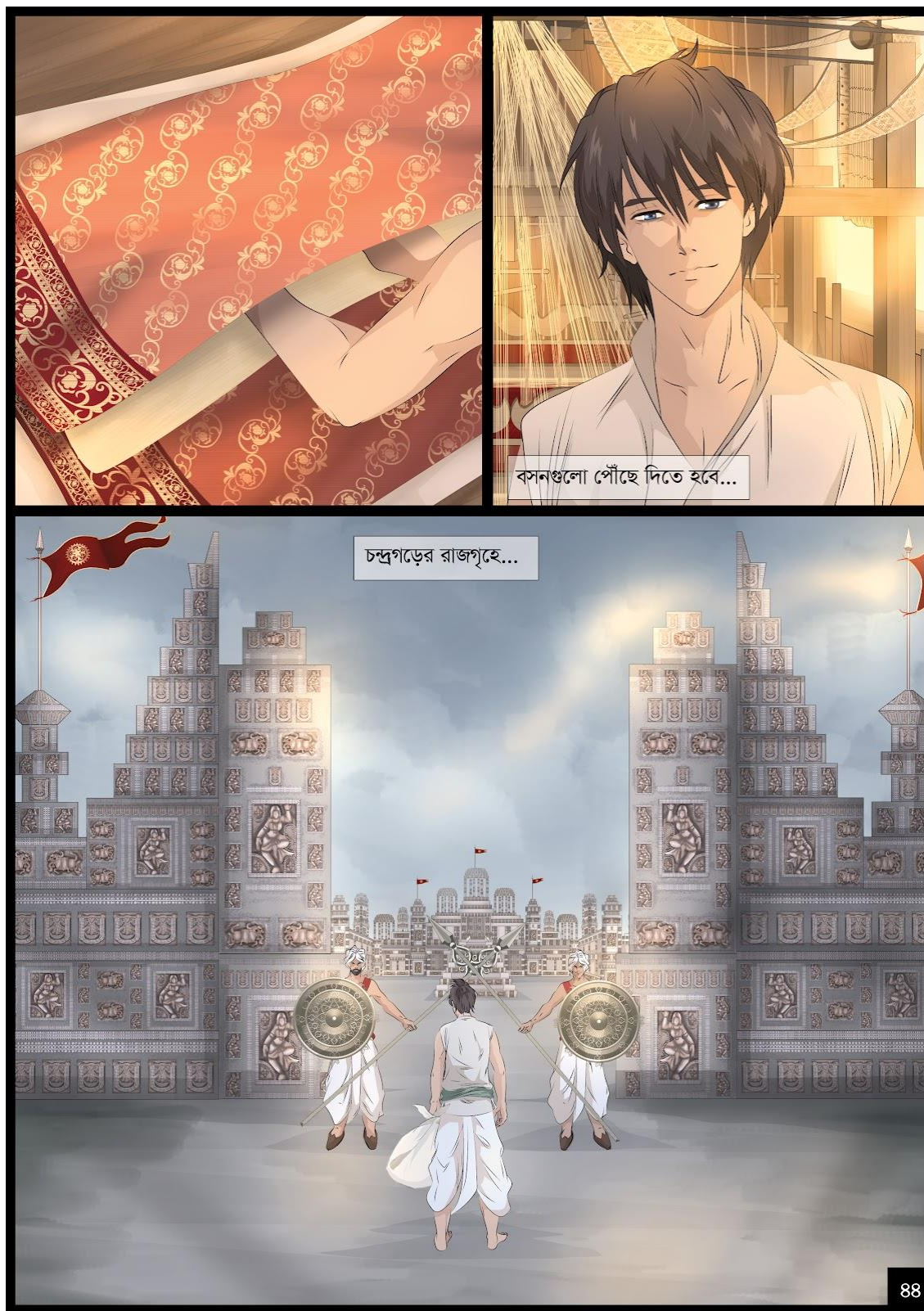


Figure 19: Tanaporen

In conclusion, the impact of East Asian popular culture is prominent in Bangladesh and the existence of transcultural fandom is also present. Through analyzing each of the Bangladeshi manga, I can see various influences from Japanese pop culture and the Korean wave as the creators themselves are also fans. The impacts can be found within the art style and the features such as art style, character design, and dialogue setting. By blending both, they are creating a new version called the Bangladeshi manga. According to Chin and Morimoto, by understanding and utilizing other cultural products, transcultural fandom applies the knowledge in their own cultural context (103). Through this statement, it can be understood that this is happening in the context of Bangladeshi manga too. In the previous chapter, it has been discussed that Japanese manga and Korean webtoon have traditions and culture incorporated in them, Bangladeshi manga also does that by reshaping the influence and this is going to be addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Reshaping of the Influence of East Asian Manga and Webtoon in Bangladeshi Manga

As Bangladeshi manga can be implied as a global manga, it means that East Asian popular cultural influence is there and it has already been demonstrated. It can make people think that the influence also means including East Asian culture in Bangladeshi manga but that is not the case. Kacsuk states that manga has two positions which are manga as style and manga made in Japan (5). It suggests that there can be two ways to create a global manga as it is made by people who are influenced. But though there are impacts of art style aesthetics, the manga creators of Bangladesh are trying to reshape that very influence by incorporating the authentic traditional culture of Bengal. A culture that is authentic to our own and creating characters that looks like South Asian people which can be found in *Tanaporen*. By analyzing three of the Bangladeshi manga created by Shantona Shantuma, which are *Kinsa Khyong*, *Ram Sagar*, and *Tanaporen* it can be witnessed that the artists are trying to repurpose the influence and utilize the art style and distinct features to portray Bangladeshi traditions and culture including legends, folktales, foods, dresses and also show the cultural diversity which works as cultural preservation.

By crossing borders, culture is something that can blend with another culture. This indicates a mixture of different cultures which means the “intercultural” concept (Marks 6). And this idea has been incorporated by the creators of Bangladeshi manga, Shantona Shantuma, in three of their manga. The first manga that is going to be analyzed is *Kinsa Khyong (Flower Tucked in Her Ear)*. In this story, by including the two main characters, the prince of the Marma tribe and the Arakanese princess, the manga creators are trying to portray cultural diversity as they are representing the indigenous people of Bangladesh. As this tragic tale is about the Arakanese

princess who dies while trying to retrieve the flower and the Marma prince who commits suicide because he could not bear the loss of his lover, this manga is based on a legend about the Karnafuli river (Saleheen and Chowdhuri) which subtly points at the cultural diversity. It can be suggested that it is a legend that is not very commonly heard because when people think about the Karnafuli river, the idea of Arakan being a part does not come to mind. By choosing this legend to base the manga on, the authors are trying to make people culturally aware. This manga was originally created in 2016 which also has significance because of the issue of the Rohingya conflict which is happening in Myanmar where the Arakan (Rakhine) state is and Bangladesh, where the Rohingya community is now taking shelter to save themselves from the ethnic cleansing that is happening in Myanmar. “The conflict between Muslim Rohingya and Buddhists in the Rakhine State intensified in 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2017” (Ty 52). This suggests why the authors have chosen this specific time to write about this story.

In this story, when the prince notices the Arakanese princess beside the river Karnafuli, he confronts her and asks why she came here from Arakan when she knows that Arakan and Chattogram are not allied states (*Kinsa Khyong* 9). This brings forward the issue of the relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar and the mixing of culture which suggests the intercultural aesthetics as Marks says that a culture cannot be confined (6). It has been traced that, for centuries, Buddhist Arakanese and Rohingya Muslims have been living together in the borders of Chattogram and Arakan state which was ruled over and also played the role as the protectorate of Bengal for quite some time. (Ty 51). This indicates the connection between the people from Arakan and Chattogram for centuries. In the manga, after the Marma prince’s confrontation, the Arakanese princess says that she wants to cross all the obstacles and does not want to bind herself to these types of restrictions (*Kinsa Khyong* 9). It shows that the manga creators are trying to

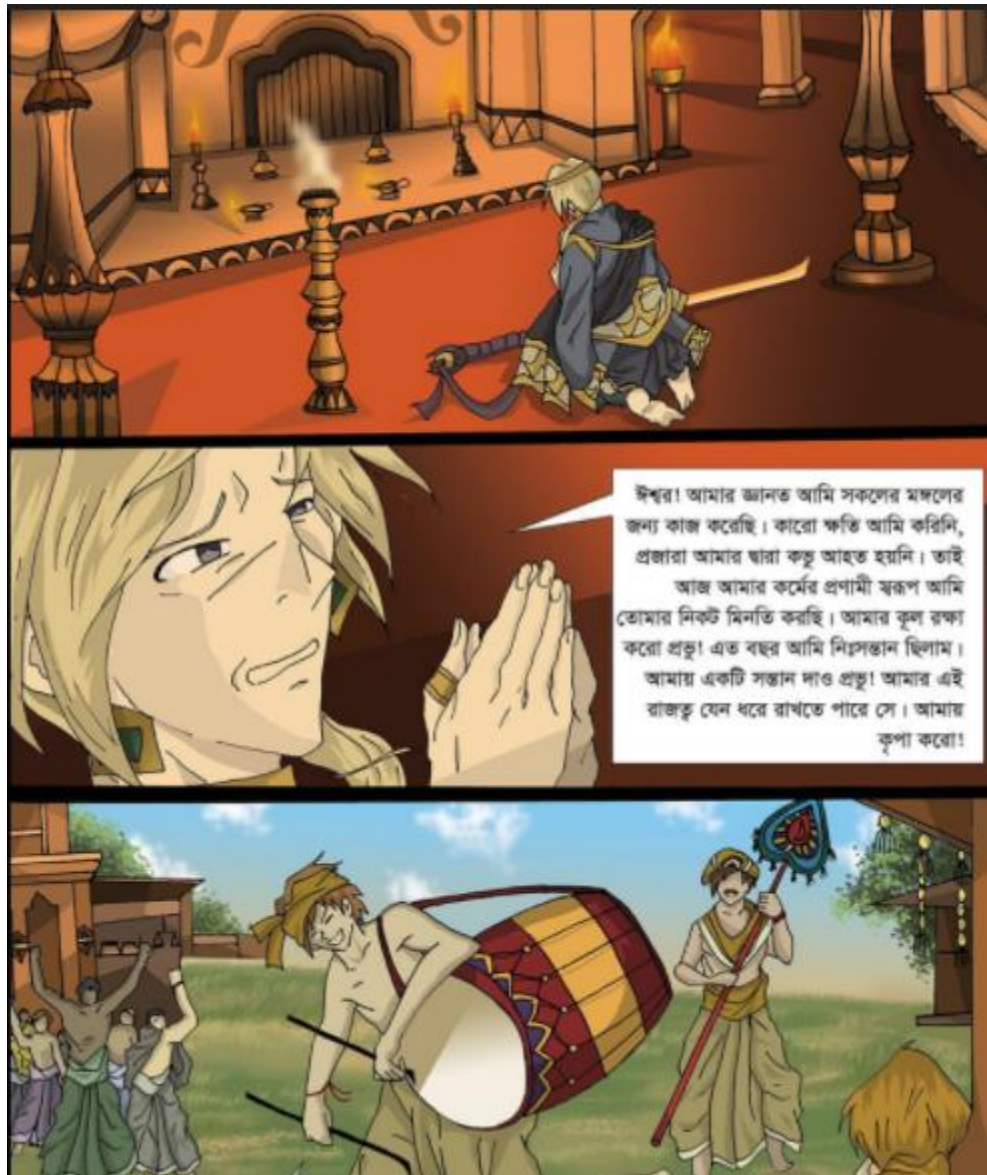
indicate that people should be open towards diversity, not judge people based on their culture and accept them because, in ancient Bengal, there was a connection.

Though this manga is based on a legend, the manga creators included the connection and conflict between Bangladesh and Arakan in this story. In the legend, there was only the tragic love story between the Arakanese princess and the Marma prince. But the authors Shantona Shantuma has portrayed not only the indigenous people but also the ancient connection between Bangladesh and Myanmar in a time when the Rohingya issue was in its first stage to make people aware of the diverse culture of Bangladesh. This portrays the idea of taking a folktale and creating a new meaning (Plumb 244). This also shows how they are reshaping the influence by portraying their own culture and also preserving it. By using this popular platform which is a global product they accepted, they are bringing out the authentic cultures and people of Bangladesh which suggests local culture and this suggests “glocalization” as Robertson says that the global is including the local increasingly (40).

Like *Kinsa Khyong*, the Bangladeshi manga, *Ram Sagar* is also based on a legend that is surrounded by a place of Bangladesh known as Dinajpur. It can be indicated that they are using this legend to let people know about the legends of places in Bangladesh through the popular platform so that people can learn about different ancient traditional stories of various places from a culture. In *Ram Sagar*, there is also a specific religion and culture and it indicates that this is the Hindu culture as it refers to the king Ramnath having a divine message in his dream from the gods to sacrifice his son in the lake that he ordered to dig for the people who were dying of drought (4). In the legend, it has been written that the king builds a temple in the middle of the lake so that the prince can perform a ritual according to the dream and while doing so, the water rises up and he drowns in the lake (Jewel 10). However, in the manga, it can be seen that in the king’s divine

message, he sees that if prince Ram stands in the middle of the lake, the water will rise up (*Ram Sagar* 6). This indicates that there is a slight change between the legend and the manga. As Jewel states, legends can change because it spreads from person to person (5). But it can also suggest that it has a slight change to fit it into the manga medium of Bangladesh.

As it can be witnessed in *Ram Sagar*, the king is holding the palms of both of his hands together to pray and there are illustrations of lamps and incense burners that are used for Hindu prayers which points to the portrayal of the customs of Hindu religion and culture (1). It suggests the diversity of culture portrayed in the manga. It also hints that the Hindu culture which is now a religious minority in Bangladesh has been there in Bangladesh from ancient times as the religion is part of this legend. Robertson states that homogeneity should merge with heterogeneity (26). This statement suggests that through incorporating religious and cultural diversity in the manga, Shantona and Shantuma are trying to portray the diversity within a uniformity of culture which also indicates cultural preservation. But in this manga, there is also no illustration of deities or a temple that the legend talks about (*Ram Sagar* 1). No illustrations of deities can be seen in figure 20 from *Ram Sagar*. It indicates that they are pointing towards it in a delicate manner but not directly implying it. This can be suggested as a way of trying to fit the folktale with a specific religion in the popular medium so that it does not go against anybody's ideology. It also exhibits how a tale can be altered in a way to twist meanings (Plumb 244).

Figure 20: *Ram Sagar*

The last Bangladeshi manga that is going to be discussed here is *Tanaporen* which is not based on a legend and is an original story that depicts the ancient Bengal and highlights various traditional aspects of the society, culture, class, custom, profession, religion, dresses, and foods.

Out of the three, this is the most recent Bangladeshi manga that the manga creators have created and it represents the elements of cultural preservation and repurposing of the culture vividly.

By illustrating the tragic love story of the two main characters Vidyabati and Nirmal, the artists portray the ancient society, religion, and class of the Bengal. As the title of the manga is written in Sanskrit, it indicates that the story is based in the time of ancient Bengal when the main official language was Sanskrit which has changed as time went by and various cultures emerged and now the language is Bangla in the contemporary times. Marks also states in her book that culture is not a one-time thing and there is a movement between cultures which is why it changes continuously (6). Through this statement, it can be understood that the manga creators have tried to portray this. This idea can also be understood by other aspects of the manga too. For example, as the setting of the manga is from the olden times, it shows how people used to dress at that time. For example, in the manga, the artists have depicted that Hindu women did not wear a blouse at that time which can be seen through figure 21 (*Tanaporen* 1). From figure 22, it can also be perceived that the weavers at that time made all the clothes and designs with their hands which have been depicted here. This suggests the continuity and change that Marks talks about in the Intercultural method.



Figure 21: Tanaporen



Figure 22: *Tanaporen*

The manga creators have also portrayed the characteristics of the society in ancient Bengal. There was a division of class that consisted of the royal family, the zamindars, and the ordinary people. In the manga, it can be identified that Vidyabati belongs to the Zamindar class. When she gets married to Maharaj Shahasrakshya, she becomes part of the royal family, and on the other hand, Nirmal is from the ordinary class who is from the weaver community (*Tanaporen*). Speaking of class also brings forward the idea of how women were treated at that time. In *Tanaporen*, they reveal that in ancient Bengal, women's role and identity were bound by what the men and the society wanted them to do and become no matter how educated they were. For example, though Vidyabati is educated and expert in horse riding, in the end, she is expected to become a wife and do household work. It is also portrayed that even after marrying, Maharaj Shahasrakshya stays in the dance hall, neglecting both Vidyabati and his kingdom and when she questions him about it, he addresses her as an object, something beautiful which needs to be in his possession (*Tanaporen* 42). This indicates how the manga creators are depicting the women's position in ancient Bengal, suggesting that they are showing the real culture of olden Bangla.

In *Tanaporen*, as the artists are portraying ancient Bengal, it can be seen that they have illustrated the Bengali village of old times. In the manga, there can be seen various houses, animal farms that are similar to the Bangladeshi village. For example, Figure 23 shows the image of a house and people of a typical Bengali village. The way the people are also depicted and also the communities of potter and weaver in the village indicates that the artists are trying to highlight the culture of Bangladeshi village and preserve the culture through these illustrations. Not only the village, but they have also depicted the architecture of the Zamindar house which can be seen as an example from figure 21 that shows the indoor decoration of Vidyabati's house. The architecture of the royal palace is also portrayed in this manga and through figure 19 from the previous chapter,

it can be witnessed how the ancient Bengal architecture of the royal palace used to have designs of celestial nymphs and other complicated patterns. All of these suggest that the manga creators are practicing cultural preservation by their illustrations.

Speaking of designs also brings forward the types of designs that have been incorporated in this manga. Other than the architectural design of buildings, the manga artists have also illustrated beautiful and complex designs of the pieces of jewelry that Bengali women of the upper class used to wear and also for weddings, and an example can be seen in figure 21. *Tanaporen* also portrays numerous colorful designs of sarees that they used to wear and also shows red and white sarees village women used to wear. These suggest the traditional culture that the artists are trying to incorporate into this popular culture which indicates the reshaping of the influence.

Tanaporen shows that the designs of sarees are made by the weavers of the village of ancient Bengal. Weavers are an important part of Bengali culture because they are known to have contributed heavily to establishing the cultural tradition by making clothing patterns in Bangladesh. For example, the making of sarees and also the design patterns in these can be seen in figure 22, where Nirmal, the weaver, is creating the sarees which suggests that they are the ones who work as artists. Shantona Shantuma also portrays the lives of the weavers in the village where it can be seen how they are making saree from scratch. From making colorful threads to creating a full saree, they are doing it all and it can be perceived through Nirmal's life. These show how weavers are creating a traditional cultural work. Through *Tanaporen*, it can be understood that weavers and sculptors have contributed a lot to establishing Bengali culture and by incorporating these characters, the artists are trying to acknowledge their contributions, as these characters are cultural workers. By showing that the manga creators are exercising cultural preservation.

As the culture of Bangladesh has different religious cultures mixed within, the Hindu culture is one of them, and in this manga, the focus has been given to this particular religious culture to highlight the heritage and diversity in Bangladesh. It also suggests “systematic incorporation” (Robertson 40). Because it helps to subtly hint that Bangladesh does not only have a single religious and ethnic culture and if someone dives deep into the ancient Bengal, this statement related to culture becomes clearer. *Tanaporen* focuses particularly on Hindu culture and that can be understood through the characters, customs, and rituals that have been shown here. For example, it can be noticed that all of the women are wearing shakha and sindoor, which married Hindu women wear and the manga also illustrates the Hindu wedding of Vidyabati, focusing on all the details which can be seen through figure 18 (*Tanaporen*). This shows how the manga creators are trying to illustrate the religion, culture, and society of ancient Bengal.

In *Tanaporen*, Shantona Shantuma also depicts food from the Bengali culture. For example, in figure 23, it can be seen that the woman is offering ‘Murir Mowa’ to the child who came to look for Nirmal (*Tanaporen* 8). This image also suggests another thing about the Bengali culture which is receiving and taking care of the guest really well and offering them food is a part of that practice. In Hindu religion and culture, guests are similar to the gods, and offering foods to the gods is also part of the culture. “However, eating is a cultural experience for every day or every meal” (Chung et al. 178). This statement also goes with the foods of Bengali culture. In figure 24 image, it shows that a maid is serving food to Vidyabati which includes the illustration of various Bengali foods such as “Bhaat”, “Maach”, “Daal”, “Alu bharta”, “Begun bhaji”, and other types of fries (*Tanaporen* 30). These are also known as the traditional staple food and part of the culture which people eat. The idea of “Maache Bhaate Bangali” is also indicated in this manga by

portraying this type of food which states that rice and fish are ingrained in the Bengali culture (Tanaporen 30).



Figure 23: Tanaporen

Figure 24: *Tanaporen*

Reshaping of the East Asian popular cultural influence can be understood in a better way through another example, which is the skin and hair color that has been portrayed in *Tanaporen*. It can be seen in the manga that the characters are depicted as having brown skin and blackish or

brownish hair. For example, the figures that have been presented on *Tanaporen*, show that all of the characters are portrayed in this way which is similar to the people of South Asia. Though Shantona Shantuma's previous two of the manga follow the influence of Japanese manga and anime aesthetics not only in the art style but also in the character's physical attributes, in *Tanaporen*, it can be witnessed that they are reshaping that influence here by creating the characters physical attributes in a more authentic South Asian way. This indicates the statement that Chin and Morimoto give which is that fans take ideas from other cultures they are passionate about and in their own cultural context, create a new text (103). So, though the influence of East Asian art style aesthetics are present in the Bangladeshi manga, the manga creators are repurposing it by creating characters that are similar to the people of South Asia,

In conclusion, it can be suggested that work from a single culture cannot stay confined in that culture only and it will spread in other cultures too which indicates intercultural aesthetics (Marks 6). It shows that East Asian popular culture and its arts and distinct elements have spread among the Bangladeshi young generation too which can be observed through the three of the Bangladeshi manga created by Shantona Shantuma. It can make people wonder if Bangladeshi manga means only manga that depicts Japanese culture or only has features that are presented in East Asian pop culture. But though there are impacts, they are portraying the authentic culture of Bengal and also depicting characters that are similar to Bengali people. It indicates that the Bangladeshi manga creators are using the global and local to create their version of manga which suggests that they are appreciating and utilizing the popular culture that is thriving in the contemporary world but ruling out the East Asian tradition and culture to incorporate South Asian traditional culture. This suggests the importance of mixing the global with the local in this contemporary world to show diversity (Robertson 26-27). So, it shows that the purpose of

including folktales, legends, and ancient Bengali tradition and culture is to preserve the culture of Bangladesh through Bangladeshi manga and they are practicing this by repurposing the impacts from East Asian popular culture.

Chapter Seven

Preference and Exclusion

Freedom of creativity is something that is important to artists to openly express their ideas and emotions through their creative platforms. If there is a restriction, there can be a loss of motivation from the artists and loss of ideas that could have produced great pieces. By analyzing three of the Bangladeshi manga created by Shantona Shantuma in the previous chapters, it can be indicated that there are influences of East Asian manga and webtoon aesthetics and the manga creators are also reshaping that influence by incorporating the authentic culture of Bangla by which they are practicing cultural preservation. But it can also be proposed that there are preferences and restrictions of creative freedom. The implications that I would like to apply in this research is that the manga creators are utilizing the folktales that are attached to the ancient tradition, heritage, and land of the country, Bangladesh and they are specifically choosing folktales and tradition of some culture and not of Islam. This brings the idea of preference, exclusion, and also creative freedom.

By analyzing *Kinsa Khyong*, *Ram Sagar*, and *Tanaporen*, it can be understood that three of the manga portray the authentic and ancient Bengali folktale, tradition, and culture which consists of Hindu religion and culture and the Indigenous community. But there is a lack of representation of Islamic folktales and traditions in this creative platform which suggests a restriction of creative freedom because people tend to back away from this practice as it has a risk of unintentionally going against the ideology of the majority of Bangladeshi people. It suggests censorship of art. “Censorship is usually political or moral, and sometimes religious, or a combination of these” (O’Leary 10). This conveys that the restriction of creative freedom that is occurring here is religious and political.

Speaking of the religious and political issue of Bangladesh brings forward the idea of Islam, identity, and politics in Bangladesh. Md Nazrul Islam and Md Saidul Islam in their book argue that, though there was no conflict between ideologies of Islam and Bengali nationalism, the nationalism of Bengali people was built upon tradition, culture, ethnicity, and language (151). The religion was always there but the focus was on the cultural aspects. It brings the question of why the restrictions or risks now. It is because of the changing identities of Bengali Muslims. The identities of Bengali Muslims have changed quite a few times and it traces back to the idea of Islam being politicized in colonial Bengal. Before that time, in ancient Bengal, the folktales, cultural festivals, and even dresses were based on Bengali traditional culture which is not based on any religion. Through three of the manga that have been analyzed, it can be seen that ancient Bengali culture has been the focus. During the British rule, political Islam entered Bengal and it was a response towards them which is why at that time the religious identity was strong and puritanical (N. S. Islam 141-142). It conveys that Bengali Muslims were more aware of religious nationalism at that time rather than culture. As the religious conflicts also grew higher, the ethnic identity of Bengal was being broken and religious identity was taking shape, which also took a few steps behind when the Bengalis from East Pakistan started experiencing violence from Pakistan, bringing the Bengali ethnic, linguistic tradition, and cultural identity in the spotlight (N. S. Islam 151). This indicates another shift of identity from religious to Bengali traditional culture.

The identity again changed when Bangladesh gained independence. According to Md Nazrul Islam and Md Saidul Islam, as the Mujib regime started, the constitution included secularism which was not a part of the Bengali Muslim's essence, and the society and people were not ready for this but later on, he also started to focus on Muslim identity and symbolism gradually (172-174). This is the time when the problem with the name of religion in the constitution started

as it changed a few times. After Sheikh Mujib was assassinated, Ziaur took control and changed the constitution in order to bring back religious nationalism in a stronger way, and after his assassination, Ershad changed the constitution again by giving the state name Islam (N. S. Islam 170). This portrays the many times that the identity has changed from Bengali to Bengali Muslim to Muslim. Though religion and culture had no conflict before, the frequent change of identity and trying to fit the identity of Bengali people in a single box made the confusion and started causing the problem.

Md Nazrul Islam and Md Saidul Islam again reveals that after Ershad, Khaleda Zia was leading who followed Ziaur Rahman's ideology and now Sheikh Hasina who has been controlling the government of Bangladesh has incorporated both secularism and Islam and also focuses on Islamic ideologies and Islamization more (171-172). This shows the process of the change in Bengali identity. It indicates that the identity has been changing for a long time, shifting from the Bengali cultural identity, and Bengali nationalism to Bangladeshi Muslim nationalism. Because of that, the priority is shifting from culture to religious identity. This creates confusion between possessing the identity of Bangladeshi Muslim nationalism or Bangladeshi cultural identity. As there are confusion and problems regarding identity and the focus is on the fostering of the Islamic ideologies more, it suggests that the art, literature, and other things will be produced within the context of politics and religion.

As the issue of politics and religion is a delicate matter, artists tend to not go through it. While creating art and story based on folktales, traditions, and customs, it can be noticed that there can be changes or distortions to fit it in a medium sometimes. For example, all three of the manga have slight changes for various reasons such as to make the story more appealing or to state a message. As they are from specific cultures that are not the majority, people tend to not focus on

the changed parts. It can also suggest a reason for the preference towards some cultures. While creating art, the artists also need to keep in mind to not go against anyone's ideology. As it has been shown before in the previous chapter, in *Kinsa Khyong*, there are no illustrations of deities and temples, which indicates that the manga creators are aware of the conflict it can cause. It reveals that they are making decisions and being selective based on the religious and political situation which conveys that there is a lack of creative freedom. This indicates the reason behind not including Islamic folktales and traditions in Bangladeshi manga yet.

Another reason behind the preference for utilizing folktales from different cultures of Bangladesh is to portray that these folktales are part of the culture, heritage, and land of Bangladesh. The specific cultures that have been chosen are indigenous and Hindu cultures. The manga creators are depicting these cultures to indicate that these are also the prominent part of Bangladeshi culture which has been there for centuries which is why there are legends and folktales about them and it can be understood from the analyses of the Bangladeshi manga from the previous chapters. There are various religious and ethnic cultures blended in Bangladesh which is why there are many creative works based on different cultures, and that is why the artists have chosen the folktales and the setting of ancient Bengal in order to reject the radical ideas and barriers and embrace the authentic culture of Bangladesh, that has been there from the past. Through the platform of Bangladeshi manga, the manga creators are trying to let people know the traditional culture through legends and folktales that belong to the people of Bangladesh which shows that they are preserving the culture.

In conclusion, through Shantona Shnatuma's manga *Kinsa Khyong*, *Ram Sagar*, and *Tanaporen*, it can be understood that they are choosing selective works based on religious and political situations. Because of that, they have to exclude a specific culture whether they want to

or not, and this suggests that there is a lack of creative freedom. The cause behind this is that Bangladesh has gone through various stages of identity changes based on historical and political situations which ultimately has led to confusion. The increase of focus towards Islamic ideologies also suggests the very reason why there is a risk if the Islamic folktales and traditions are represented in the wrong way. This ultimately reveals the preference towards the cultures that are now a minority and by creating manga based on the cultural heritage and tradition, the manga creators are acknowledging the pure and ancient culture of the Bengal and preserving the culture by reshaping the influence of East Asian popular culture.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

The influence of the East Asian popular culture in Bangladesh is happening through Japanese popular culture and the Korean wave which is also a sensation in the whole world. Though there are various pop culture objects that fall under these two spectrums, my research is only focusing on Japanese manga and Korean webtoons. These East Asian popular culture texts have a very wide fan base which also transcends the borders of culture as Chin and Morimoto state that transcultural fandoms can cross the borders and look behind the cultural differences because they are passionate about those transcultural texts (93). This is why the Bangladeshi fandom of manga and webtoons have also crossed the borders because they also have a liking towards these popular cultural objects of East Asia and now they are creating Bangladeshi manga which is what this paper mainly explore.

This study also explores how East Asian manga and webtoon creators incorporate their traditions and culture in this popular form of media to let people know about their culture. Through *Naruto*, *Demon Slayer*, and *Shirahime-Syo*, the Japanese traditional folktales of *yokai* and *oni* are portrayed which revolves around the people of Japan and their culture. Various Japanese mythological gods and goddesses are also incorporated in these manga and also their ancient religion and traditions. Food, which is an element of culture can also be seen through *Oishinbo*. Like manga, Korean webtoon's incorporation of culture and traditions can be witnessed through *Mystic Pop-up Bar*, *Shaman Girl*, *Along with the Gods*, and *Bisan*. The focus on food, mythology, culture, and tradition can be perceived better through *Mystic Pop-up Bar*. *Shaman Girl* mainly

focuses on mystical creatures and shamanism. Whereas *Along with the Gods* portrays Korean mythology heavily and *Bisan* only represents a folktale.

This paper also analyses the art style aesthetics and forms by analyzing various Japanese and Korean manga and webtoons. It can be understood that they have a distinct style, aesthetics, and forms that make these different from other forms of graphic novels. The art style of manga consists of monochrome art and characters have big eyes and line strokes as blush. Manga is also read from right to left, has six to eight panels, and focuses on both art and dialogue which is why most of the manga is dialogue-heavy with a lot of information. Manga is also known for using onomatopoeic words to generate more expressions. All of these can be understood through various manga that have been discussed here. But a unique way characteristic of *shoujo* manga can be witnessed through *Shirahime-Syo* and that is the “decorative element” (Kacsuk 8).

On the other hand, Korean webtoons have various elements of manga, but the unique feature is that most webtoons are colorful, the focus is generally more on art than dialogues and these also have lesser panels. The uniqueness of Korean webtoon’s format is the vertical scrolling and nonlinear storytelling (Jang and Song 177). Korean webtoon is a new way of cartoon and comic form which utilizes the online platform in a unique way as everything is online-based in this contemporary times and because of this, webtoon is gaining popularity quickly.

By examining the primary characteristics of manga and webtoon, this study also analyzes the influences of these popular culture texts on Bangladeshi manga. It can be suggested that there are influences from manga and webtoon on Bangladeshi manga as Marks states that, a work of a culture cannot stay in one place and it can mediate (6). In *Kinsa Khyong* and *Ram Sagar*, the characters have large and colorful eyes and also colored hair. *Kinsa Khyong* and *Tanaporen* portray

blushing faces with line strokes. The decorative feature which can be seen in *Shirahime-Syo* is also present in *Kinsa Khyong* and *Tanaporen* as these are from the romance genre. These suggest the influences of manga. Similarly, it can be suggested that there are also influences from Korean webtoons such as Bangladeshi manga are also colorful like Korean webtoons. *Tanaporen* also shows that the focus is on art and Bangladeshi manga are not dialogue-heavy.

Another objective is to see how the Bangladeshi manga artists are reshaping the influence by incorporating ancient traditional Bengali culture and creating characters that look like the people of South Asia. By *Kinsa Khyong* and *Ram Sagar*, the artists are reshaping the culture by creating these manga based on folktales of the Karnaphuli river and Ram Sagar from Dinajpur. In *Kinsa Khyong*, there are people from ethnic minorities and *Ram Sagar* portrays characters from Hindu culture. On the other hand, *Tanaporen* shows the repurpose by depicting the ancient Bengal society, tradition, culture, food, and also Hindu culture. The influence and reshaping suggest the mixture of global and local, meaning “glocalization” (Robertson 30).

Through the Bangladeshi manga created by Shantona Shantuma, it can be perceived that they are being influenced by the East Asian popular culture which is presented in the Bangladeshi manga and also reshaping it by portraying the pure culture of Bengal. But it can be implied that they are using folktales that are attached with the culture, land, and heritage which includes ethnic and religious minorities to promote the ancient culture of Bangladesh. It also implicates that their preferences for including minority culture show that they want to highlight cultural diversity. But not including Islamic folktales and traditions yet suggests that there is a lack of creative freedom.

From my research on the topic of Bangladeshi manga, I have found that there is quite a lot of research on Japanese manga and Korean webtoon. But Bangladeshi manga and its contents have

not been properly explored much by the researchers of Bangladesh or elsewhere. As this paper explores the influences of manga and Korean webtoon on Bangladeshi manga and the repurposing of the influence, it can be suggested that my research can be analyzed and expanded further to instigate more research in this area and also in the field of global manga in different places. Thus, this new area of Bangladeshi manga needs to be explored more as the works of young Bangladeshi manga creators like Shantona Shantuma are helping to preserve the culture of Bengal and promote cultural diversity which will help to exhibit this culture more.

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