

Monkey Punch, creator of megahit Japan comic *Lupin III*, dies

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Cartoonist Monkey Punch, best known as the creator of the Japanese megahit comic series *Lupin III*, has died at the age of 81.

His office, MP Pictures, said Monkey Punch, whose real name was Kazuhiko Kato, died of pneumonia on April 11.

The story of master thief Lupin's adventures with his gang — gunman Daisuke Jigen, sword master Goemon Ishikawa, and sexy beauty Fujiko Mine, as well as a detective, Zenigata — started in 1967.

The cartoon also was adapted for TV animation and movies, some directed by renowned animators including Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata.

Kato himself directed the 1996 animated film *Lupin III: Dead or Alive*. Miyazaki, who directed a 1971 Lupin animation for TV, made his feature-length film debut with *Lupin III: The Castle of*



Cagliostro in 1997.

The hard-boiled, yet comical story with a bit of sexy content has quickly won adult comic fans and became a longtime bestseller. Kato's intended readership was

adults, and he reportedly has told younger fans to watch Lupin TV animation and read comic books when they become high school students.

The main character in his trademark

CREATIVE CARTOONIST. Cartoonist Monkey Punch draws his character, Fujiko Mine, on a whiteboard at a symposium in Nishinomiya, western Japan, in this June 2004 file photo. Monkey Punch — whose real name was Kazuhiko Kato and who was best known as the creator of the Japanese megahit comic series of master thief Lupin III — has died at age 81. (Kyodo News via AP)

red jacket is a grandson of famous Arsene Lupin in a Maurice Leblanc detective story.

The son of a fisherman in Hokkaido, in northern Japan, Kato debuted as a professional cartoonist in 1965 while working part time at a rental bookstore, and started using his penname Monkey Punch soon after the Lupin series started in *Weekly Manga Action* magazine.

Despite his age, he quickly adapted to digital animation and studied animation on multimedia formats at a technical graduate school in Tokyo in the 2000s. Kato also taught animation at a university in Nishinomiya in western Japan.

Daimler says it has no idea how Kim Jong Un got his limos

By Eric Talmadge
The Associated Press

TOKYO — German automaker Daimler, which makes armored limousines used by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, says it has no idea where he got them and has no business dealings with the North.

Kim has raised eyebrows by using Daimler-branded stretch limousines at several very high-profile summits, including his recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and both of his earlier summits with President Donald Trump.

The sale of luxury goods, including limousines, is banned under U.N. sanctions intended to put pressure on North

Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Kim nevertheless had two limos waiting for him at Vladivostok station — a Mercedes Maybach S600 Pullman Guard and a Mercedes Maybach S62. He is believed to have also used the S600 Pullman Guard for his summits with Trump in Singapore in June last year and in Hanoi in February.

"We have absolutely no idea how those vehicles were delivered to North Korea," Daimler spokeswoman Silke Mockert said in a written response to an Associated Press report on the limousines. "For Daimler, the correct export of products in conformance with the law is a fundamental

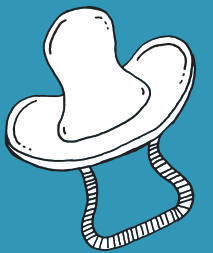
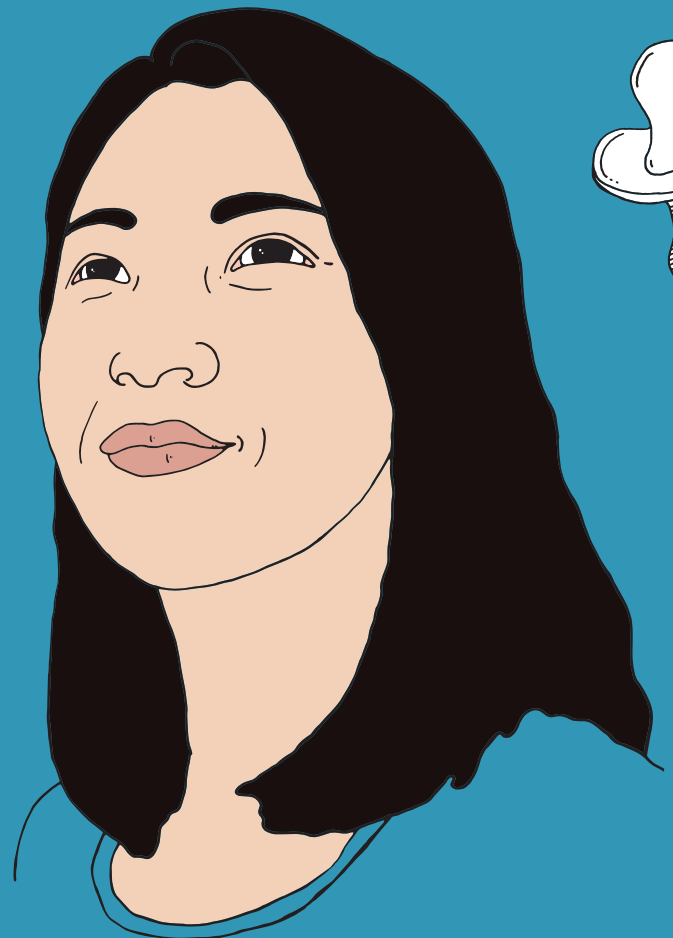
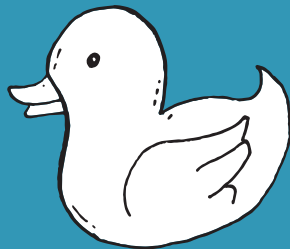
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IMPROPERLY IMPORTED. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's limousine arrives for a wreath-laying ceremony in Vladivostok, Russia, on April 26, 2019. German automaker Daimler, which makes armored limousines used by the North Korean leader, says it has no idea where he got them and has no business dealings with the North. (AP Photo/Alexander Khitrov)

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