

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE CULTURAL DIVIDE



AN OTAKU SURVIVAL GUIDE

Visit the Otaku Survival Guide Website <http://www.otakusurvivalguide.com>

- Print out your own checklists to use.
- Talk with others about conventions and plan carpools.
- Submit your own questions and find answers.
- See sneak peeks of upcoming books.

Otaku Survival Guide Titles:

- Attending Your First Convention
- Cosplay Joy Mayhem
- State of the Publishing Industry
- Self Publishing for Sane People
- A Parents Guide to the Cultural Divide

Check out the website for a more up-to-date list.

This book is copyrighted 2007 to Cassie Richoux at Chibi Dragon Books.
Cover art by Debra "Bee" Rohlfs



Cassie Richoux

Main writer for the books, and occasionally bad artist. She lives in Portland Oregon and has dreams of starting her own publishing company for young adult fantasy books with a manga twist. The Otaku Survival Guide project is her baby, and she just happened to rope some unsuspecting friends into it.



First Convention:
Anime Iowa 2001



First Convention:
Anime Iowa 2002

Heather Imig

Unsuspecting friend, roommate and general minion, she has aspirations of quitting her day job and playing video games all day. Now if only she could win the lottery.

Chelsea Campbell

Editor Extraordinaire and over committed student of Latin, Greek, and French. Somehow, though, she manages to keep track of the English language enough to write young adult novels and edit these books.



First Convention:
KumoriCon 2006

Yaoi and Shōnen-Ai – Both are terms for gay guys, though Shōnen-Ai focuses more on boy-love (BL) and is often more of an innocent romance. Yaoi tends to be more pornographic or sexual in nature, though the two terms are rather intermixed in America, and the best thing to do is to look at the book's rating.

Popular with teenage girls because many of them don't want to think of other girls with the guys they find hot, this is a drastically growing genre. Yaoi Press prints only yaoi manga, some by American writers and artists, and other manga companies have their own yaoi lines.

Now while the guys in yaoi and shōnen-ai might be gay, they very rarely represent realistic homosexual relationships. Instead, they personify the idea of how “cute” gay guys are, and one of the guys is often extremely feminine.

Examples: *Fake*, *Gravitation*.



Yes, those are both boys.

IS ANIME TOO VIOLENT FOR MY KID? WHAT ABOUT THE NUDITY?

That depends on the age of your kid and in what form they are getting their anime (TV, internet, manga). In reality, most anime is censored on American TV. Three episodes of *Pokémon* were cut from the American series, one being the famous seizure episode, another involving cross-dressing that couldn't be ignored (the guy has inflatable boobs and is showing them off), and the last because a gun is waved at one of the characters. In other words, the anime which is aired on CW and similar channels is not going to be any more violent than any other cartoon on the air.

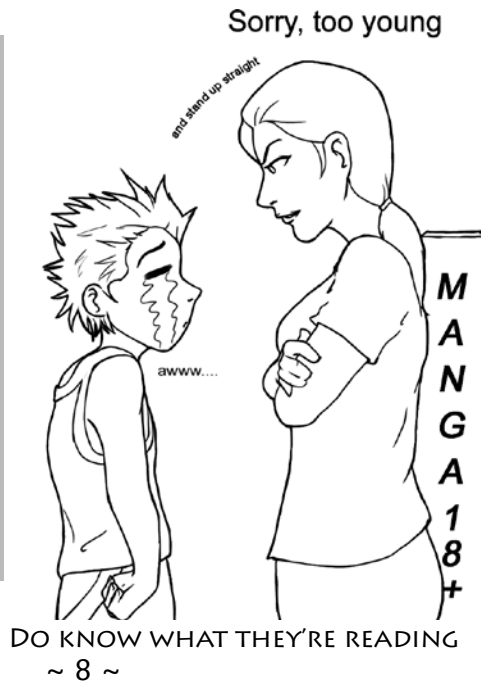
On the other hand, you might think that these are just cartoons, and therefore they aren't graphic or too adult for children of any age. Most anime in America comes with age recommendations. Granted, back when I was fifteen and getting into anime, I routinely watched things rated “17+,” but that was because the only reason for the rating was nudity. Personally, I was brought up believing that nudity isn't an issue. Most of the time the nudity in anime (at least in children's shows) is not of a sexual nature. They simply do not make as big of a deal about it as we do. The fact that there is a bit of naked Sailor Moon while she is transforming into her magical girl outfit simply isn't a big deal.

Really, anime comes in about as many varieties as movies and television shows. Pay attention to the ratings, and don't forget that there can be nudity and violence. Shows on CW and Cartoon Network are going to be edited for TV and fit within those stations' standards. Cartoon Network does show an evening programming run called Adult Swim, and this starts around midnight, depending

on your time zone. Children aren't usually up that late, but the network does make it clear that these are more adult shows and may contain content that may not be appropriate for those under 17. Personally, I think most of the shows are more likely inappropriate for those under about fifteen, since these shows are not even as bad as an R-rated movie. Mostly there is some crude language, and the violence is more likely to have blood and death than in daytime cartoons. There might also be a more sexual nature to the shows, but the actual act of sex is not shown.

Once, I bought a *Tenchi Muyo* manga on eBay. There was a scene where one of the characters, a young girl age 10, turned into a goddess (who she was a reincarnation of), and was therefore naked in one picture. Instead of letting her daughter see the naked girl, the seller had drawn a highlighter bikini on the body. All I could think when I got the manga was, "Isn't that just drawing more attention to the fact that she's naked?"

In fact, that's what they did in the actual television airings of *Tenchi Muyo* in America. They just airbrushed on bikinis.



SETTING LIMITS

I don't want to tell you to censor what your kids read or watch, because my parents let my brother and me read and watch a lot of things, and I turned out just fine. I was given adult novels when I was thirteen and taken to some R-rated movies. But my parents always knew why a movie was rated R before we went, so that they could make an informed decision about whether or not the movie was all right for us to see.

That's a parent's job. Not to limit their child as much as to give them guidelines to pick out the right books and television shows.



If you make something forbidden, children will go out of their way to watch it anyway. Kids are curious about what their parents say they shouldn't do. And teens want to rebel against any limits they don't understand.

So the first step is to sit down with your child and watch or read with them. Why not spend family time reading out loud

in different voices or snuggling under a blanket to watch *My Neighbor Totoro*? It's great bonding time, and they are going to love it.

With older teens, it's not as necessary to read their books (though an occasional glance can't hurt), but it is important to talk to them about issues. Whether we are talking about anime, manga, or teen dramas, teenagers get a lot of different views on the world. Talking to your teen about sex and drugs in a realistic manner can help them form their own views that will be strong enough to stand up to what they see in the media. And I mean real talks, not just "smoking is bad." Everyone knows that smoking is bad, drugs are bad, yet why do people do them? That's where the talks need to go, past the generalities.

Manga can be a good tool for introducing new subjects to your kids. A series called *Confidential Confessions* is kind of the after school special in manga form. It discusses sex, rape, drugs, abuse, molestation, and other topics that teens worry about. While we all hope those things don't happen to someone we know, or especially to our children, it's good to have an idea of how to deal with them if they do happen. And even better yet, having knowledge can help prevent those things from happening.

Most manga and anime companies these days put ratings on their anime and manga, which can help you to know what to buy for your kid. The thing to keep in mind, though, is that the ratings may not always reflect how you feel. Typically there is a division by age, such as: All Ages, 10+, 13+, 16+, and 18+. Some companies divide these up more, but Teen (13+) and Mature (18+) are almost always a classification. Tokyopop has recently released a new comprehensive ratings system with forty indicators of the content of their books.

Anime and manga are also an excellent cultural learning tool. There are many books hitting the market about Japanese culture and heritage, along with possible language and culture classes in your area. Even just encouraging your children to watch their favorite anime's subtitled version is a great way to help their reading comprehension. They can also begin to make a connection between the Japanese that they see in the subtitles and the words that they hear.

Another skill they'll learn (and you'll probably pick up also) is how to read the "wrong" way. Japanese manga is printed in right to left format, and you'll be amazed at how quickly it becomes normal to switch to reading like that.

In addition, Japanese and other Asian languages are very difficult to learn after the teen years because of brain synapses required to speak non-Indo-European languages need to be developed at an early age. While most Japanese students learn English, simply knowing Japanese cultural customs can be useful for future business interactions as Japan grows as a political and economic power.

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Without them, this wouldn't have been possible (or at the very least, as pretty)



Page 8, 9, 12



Page 19 & Cover

<http://nut-case.deviantart.com> Page 16

Uncreativity Page 6



An artist I use for a lot of work, including the original character designs for the Otakus.

~ 20 ~

WHAT TO DO WHEN IT ALL GOES WRONG...

YOUR CHILD WANTS TO MOVE TO/OR VISIT JAPAN

Ah! Your child has decided that the good old U.S. of A. isn't cutting it right now. Heck, the whole western hemisphere just isn't their thing. No, they want to move to Japan. Or at the very least, visit.

1. Consider your options carefully and whether or not your family might actually be able to afford to go to Japan. Visiting a non-western country could be an excellent and unique educational experience.
 - You could make a condition of the trip be that your child needs to research the travel plans and help to figure out how your family is going to deal with the language and culture barriers. Tours can often be a good way to go, and there are many affordable tour groups available.
 - Also, have your child research when is the best time to travel to Japan as far as airfare, hotel rates, weather, and events. These skills will serve them well in the future when mom and dad stop planning all of their trips.
2. Make an offer to your child that if they can save up a portion of the money in X number of years (such as for graduation, 16th birthday, two years from now, etc.), you will match their amount. This gives you enough time to put some money away as well.
3. If they are nearing college age, encourage them to look into colleges that have exchange programs with Japanese schools or simply travel programs in general. Many universities have summer trips that are led by professors and can earn your student credit in school. Scholarships and financial aid may also be available to help pay for school-related programs.
4. Living in Japan is very different, but manageable. At college age or beyond, they might look into teaching English in Japanese schools (many other oriental countries offer similar programs). They will typically have to sign a contract to agree to teach for a few years, but their cost of living will be taken care of, and they will be on a salary, plus there are often support groups and outings for them through the teaching group. This is an option for those of us past the exchange student age.

~ 21 ~

IchorInk.com



Page 3, 4, & 5