

MANGA AND ANIME MANIA

by Colette Weil Parrinello

Manga and anime are a cultural phenomena in Japan and around the world. Manga (maw-nnnn-gah) are Japanese comics, and anime (onn-nee-meh) are Japanese animations for film and TV. Their distinctive creative styles, depth of storylines, and longevity of storytelling set them apart from anything in the United States. The United States didn't catch manga and anime fever until about 30 years ago, but the art style had been flourishing in Japan and much of the world since the 1950s.

MANGA EVERYWHERE

The unique comic characters of manga and anime surround you in Tokyo and the rest of Japan—on billboards, buildings, advertising, public art, clothes, backpacks, jewelry, store windows, buses, trains, taxis, and more. Tokyo's Akihabara district is known as one of the top *otaku* (those who are passionate about manga, anime, games, and electronics) centers in Japan. The streets are lined with manga cafes, hobby stores, video game arcades, electronic stores, and cosplay (costume play) stores.

Manga is read in weekly, monthly, or quarterly serial magazines, books, and online. The manga book format is unique—published in smaller book sizes, much smaller than American comics, and is read right to left, starting at the back of the book to the front. The panels are also read right to left, completely opposite to a traditional U.S. book.

Manga and anime are purchased from huge multi-level dedicated stores, bookstores, bookstands, and convenience stores. Hobby shops throughout Tokyo and other major cities are filled with manga and anime toys, video games, costumes, and drawing and art materials.

MANGA ART AND STORIES

Manga characters are completely unique in design. While there are no common designs, many characters have large eyes, small mouths, and amazing hair in wild colors. The characters show exaggerated emotions or emotion in a tiny movement. There's something for everyone in the wide range of topics in fantasy, action,

Vending machines dispense manga.





A young man walks by posters featuring manga art.

education, friendship, science fiction, romance, sports, war, politics, and so much more. Best-selling manga are made into anime, which increases manga exposure and sales and can run for years.

The artists and writers of manga are held in high esteem. They are devoted to their art. Eiichiro Oda was 17 years old when he started writing and illustrating *One Piece*, the best-selling manga of all time with more than 83 volumes and more than 320 million sold. *One Piece* launched in 1997, the anime in 1998, and it is still topping the charts. The story is about the adventures of Monkey D. Luffy, a man whose body gained the properties of rubber after eating a Devil Fruit by mistake. He and his group, the Straw Hat pirates, search for One Piece; whoever holds this becomes the next King of the Pirates.

A few of the many popular manga include *Dragon Ball* by Akira Toriyama, *Naruto* by Masashi Kishimoto, *My Hero Academia* by Kohei Horikoshi, *Fruits Basket* by Natsuki Takaya, *Sailor Moon* by Naoko Takeuchi, *Attack on Titan* by Hajime Isayama, *Pokemon Adventures* by Hidenori Kusaka, and *Black Butler* by Yana Toboso.

ANIME

Anime is computer animation used in short and full-length films and TV series. Like manga, anime have complex story lines that explore a wide range of topics. The music and theme song are as important a part of the story as the writing and illustration. Anime may be original scripts, or based on manga, or even based on a video game like Nintendo's *Pokemon*.

The anime film, *Spirited Away*, made history in 2003 as the first animated Japanese film to win the Academy Award for animated features, and is recognized as one of the best films in animated history. The fantasy is about a 10-year old sullen girl who is trapped in a spirit world as she and her parents to move to the suburbs.

The 2016 anime *Your Name*, the story of two teenagers who find themselves paranormally linked, is a runaway hit in Japan and even more popular than *Spirited Away*.

If you haven't already, pick up manga and anime in a bookstore, library, or online. Immerse yourself in the action and excitement, try your hand at comic art, and enjoy the worldwide sensation.



FUN FACTS:

- Enthusiasts visit manga cafes, typically located by train stations. Patrons pay a fee for a specified amount of time to read as much as they can.
- Tokyo hosts worldwide conventions for manga and anime and has many anime and manga museums, and themed amusement parks.
- *One Piece* manga received the 2016 Guinness World Record title for the most copies published for a comic book series by the same author.
- Check out a diagram showing how to read manga at <http://www.mangaforkids.com/howto.php>

Sailor Moon R The Movie: Promise of the Rose was released in 1993.

