

Trends in Japan

Pop Culture

Discover manga, anime, J-pop, and much more in this section showcasing the latest pop culture phenomena to capture the imagination of Japan's young people.

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Songs of Character

High-Quality Anime Songs Go Mainstream

"Anime songs" sung by voice actors are the latest thing to hit the Japanese music world. In particular, character songs that portray an anime character's image are taking the charts by storm and coming to be regarded as a new genre.



The voice actor Minagawa Junko, who sings the character songs of Echizen Ryoma, the main character in *The Prince of Tennis*, and a character song CD. (C)1999 Takeshi Konomi; (C)NAS, The Prince of Tennis Project



Nagato Yuki, a character in *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*, and Chihara Minori, the voice actor who sings her song. (C)2007, 2008, 2009 Nagaru TANIGAWA・Noizi ITO/Member of SOS



The character song section inside the *Animate* flagship store in Ikebukuro.

A Monstrous Database

Cataloging Japan's Ghouls and Goblins

In June 2010, the International Research Center for Japanese Studies published an online "Database of Images of Strange Phenomena and *Yokai* (Monstrous Beings)", introducing people around the world to the monsters and folk beliefs that frequently appear in Japanese pop culture classics like the anime masterpieces of director Miyazaki Hayao.



A red devil (*akaoni*). (C)International Research Center for Japanese Studies



An ox demon (*ushioni*). (C)International Research Center for Japanese Studies



A furry monster with a cauldron over its head.



Even monsters get embarrassed.

(C)International Research Center for Japanese Studies



The main page of the "Database of Images of Strange Phenomena and Yokai (Monstrous Beings)" site. (C)International Research Center for Japanese Studies

An Evolving Anime Legend

Evangelion, the Frontrunner of "Cool Japan"

Evangelion, is one of the best-known works of anime, with millions of fans all over the world. Fifteen years after its debut, *Evangelion* continues to evolve and capture new fans. In 2010 a new chapter was added to the story of this legendary anime.



A scene from the new Evangelion movie (Ayanami Rei). (C)khara



A scene from the new Evangelion movie (an Evangelion). (C)khara



A scene from the new Evangelion movie (the hero Ikari Shinji). (C)khara



The Evangelion pavilion at the Fuji-Q Highland amusement park. (C)khara



The Evangelion pavilion at the Fuji-Q Highland amusement park. (C)khara

The Traditional Theater Gets a Manga Makeover

In the past, young people have tended to think of Kabuki and Noh as impenetrable and inaccessible, but a number of popular manga set in the world of the classical theater have sparked new interest in the traditional performing arts.



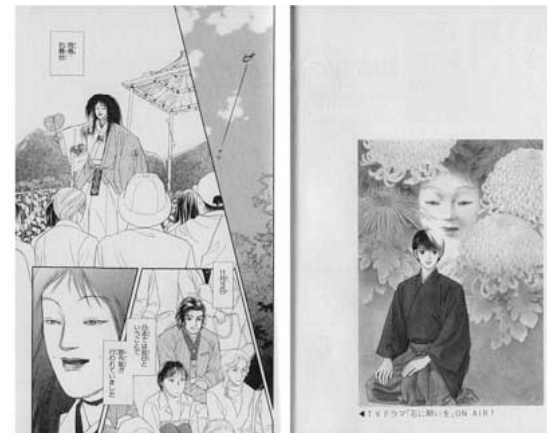
Kabukumon (The Deviant).
(C)David Miyahara・Akio Tanaka/Kodansha



A Noh performance.



Kunisaki Izumo no Jijo. (The Circumstances of Kunisaki Izumo).
(C)Aya Hirakawa/Shogakukan



Hana yori mo hana no gotoku (More Flowerlike than the Flowers).
(C)Minako Narita/Hakusensha(Melody)