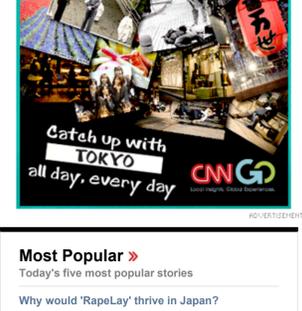


Part of complete coverage on **Connect the World**

Why would 'RapeLay' thrive in Japan?

By **Kyung Lah**, CNN
April 2, 2010 -- Updated 1141 GMT (1941 HKT)



Parent outrage over rape game

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Lack of participation of women in power sets stage for popularity of hentai games
- Japanese government says it is aware of international outrage toward games
- Temple University professor says Japan has some of world's worst child pornography
- He says he believes international debate will pressure Japan to amend laws

Tokyo, Japan (CNN) -- In the two days since CNN.com posted the story on hentai games (specifically, the "RapeLay" video game), there have been thousands of comments, more than a million page views and many questions about how a culture can produce this genre of games and then quietly allow the industry to thrive.

It is terribly easy to condemn Japan as a sexist and repressed culture with a government that chooses to look the other way. Part of that would be true, but the reason hentai continues to thrive in a country as progressive as Japan is a complex cultural issue.

Kyle Cleveland, an associate professor of sociology at Temple University in Japan, teaches a course called "Youth and Deviant Subcultures in Japan."

Yes, there is enough material to fill an entire university level syllabus. Cleveland explains that the outrage from critics is borne through the prism of their own cultures, a Western sensibility with an entirely different cultural norm than what exists in Japan.

"Japan is a patriarchal society. It has been historically and remains to this day," said Cleveland. "It's no surprise that this is expressed in mass media and pornography. The moral entrepreneurs that are scrutinizing Japan have both a feminist history and cultural tradition that is simply not in play in Japan."

'RapeLay' video game goes viral amid outrage

According to the 2009 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap report, Japan ranked 101 out of 134 countries, called abysmally low by women's groups considering it is the world's second largest economy.

That lack of participation of women in positions of power sets the cultural stage for why hentai games thrive openly in the country.



Video: Rape video game controversy

"What you have in Japan is policymakers and politicians who are in some ways blind to these issues because you have a relatively male-dominated, elderly political class that was raised under a different set of gender norms and have never acknowledged the feminist critiques that have become integrated in American and Western consciousness. There are whole sets of non-issues that are not raised for political debate in Japan, so they don't filter into the consciousness of most Japanese people," said Cleveland.

But they are becoming issues in our borderless digital world. Japan's Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office told CNN that the government was aware the international community is outraged by the games.

The national government is considering making possession of child pornography illegal -- currently it is not. But this possible change to the law is due to outside pressure, not internal protest.

Cleveland says Japan has some of the most heinous examples of child pornography in the world. "It's a country that has been held to task by the U.N. for human trafficking and exploitation of women."

"Japan has ways of expressing sexuality that are practically indecipherable to a Western sensibility but that are so normalized in Japan that the Japanese don't often understand or acknowledge the critiques that are made against them," Cleveland says.

Japan is a patriarchal society. It has been historically and remains to this day

--Kyle Cleveland, associate professor at Temple University in Japan

Cleveland believes the international debate will pressure Japan to amend its laws, making it harder for hentai games to be sold and distributed. He believes Japan will not comply for moral reasons but because "it's politically expedient."

But he cautions those who are appalled to take a look within their own culture.

"What provokes people about Japan is the cultural distance which inclines people to see Japan as exceptionally lurid or perverse simply because it expresses sexuality in ways outside of Western norms.

Japan is in some ways not that different than other cultures, including the United States, which has its own gender problems that are quite apparent."

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abhinandan why is this top so high on the ratings?
5 minutes ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)

Kelz220 I never heard about this game until the media covered it.... Be honest, Who downloaded this game out of curiosity? Now this game is more popular than ever..... Check your kids computers!!
2 hours ago | [Like \(4\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

Tuskus Now, I kind of want CNN to bash Kanon or some other Key visual novel. "Moe is a menace to society!" or something like that for the headline.
3 hours ago | [Like \(4\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

laype10 there are enough violence around and rapelay is adding fuel to fire - we could have done without it. although have not seen the actual game, it seems like a violence created to fuel the animal instinct in young humans. every violent movie has a hero (a good men/women) in it - i have not heard of a h ...more
4 hours ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)

krotch Learn how to spell "violence" first. Just a quick google search or spellcheck in MS Word. It'll even check sentence structures for you. Yes, it's possible English maybe your 2nd language or what have you, but guess what? It's also my 2nd language and I'm currently working on Japanese.
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sdfdsdf my god this sickens me when i was six my parents banned me from gta and every week they checked my laptop when i turned twelve they bought me halo odst because it had barely any violence and i was so happy i stopped playing those games because my grades went up and i stopped swearing
5 hours ago | [Like \(3\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

MsPeaOde I wonder if there is so much homophobia in the world because straight men are afraid that some gay men will treat them the way they treat women?
5 hours ago | [Like \(5\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

MsPeaOde Does anyone really think there would be ANY debate were this a game about lynching black males, placing jews in ovens, or cornering and castrating white males? Please! The debate just goes to show that far too many males on this planet still think women are no quite human and that they have the ri ...more
5 hours ago | [Like \(3\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

krotch No, we just make games where your black males, Jewish, and white males are now aliens or something along those lines. That way no one gets angered by it.Instead of worrying about a game, worry about why the US still have your black neighborhoods or white neighborhoods, where those of the opposing ra ...more
22 minutes ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)

petromyzon I wonder what the reaction of Western media would be if they happened to discover explicit "BL games"... Pretty boys getting raped in games designed for a female target group. I bet they would go nuts.
10 hours ago | [Like \(7\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

TinaRazum People who didn't grow up with games don't understand them and keep "warning" equally ignorant parents about so called DANGERS. What dangers exactly??? CNN should rather warn about having children people don't intend to take care of properly. Neglection makes kids do bad things, not games.And why is ...more
14 hours ago | [Like \(18\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AntiActivist One of the biggest questions I have concerning about CNN's choice of using Kyung Lah as the Japanese correspondent is due to the fact she seems to be a Korean hyper-nationalist, since she is always reminding everyone that she's mostly focused on her Korean background. Most Korean hyper-nationalists ...more
19 hours ago | [Like \(49\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

krotch clathen>>
You do know that violent crimes rates are at like a 33 year low. They haven't seen violent crime rates this low since the 70s.
13 minutes ago | [Like](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AdmriAckbar You do realize you'll shoot your eye out don't you?
15 hours ago | [Like \(1\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AntiActivist @AdmriAckbar: America even has the "Right to bear arms." in the Constitution. So that pretty much protects those who are willing to arm themselves with guns, even if they don't need it. They even sell B.B. Guns to children, and the classic Christmas movie "A Christmas Story" glorifies guns for ch ...more
16 hours ago | [Like \(4\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AdmriAckbar Nice post Anti! Ha half of mine got erased when they deleted Yipe and her alt. There is a ton of psychological based research on video games out there and they can indeed be used in therapy and to relieve stress. Studies do however show that they can also influence children's aggression when childre ...more
16 hours ago | [Like \(2\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AntiActivist @clathen: America had the highest gun related fatalities even before video games were popularized. Have you forgotten about street gangs, mafia, trials, robberies, etc.? If games were truly inspiring these crimes, then these crimes would have skyrocketed because of them, and you would probably be ...more
16 hours ago | [Like \(4\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

clathen If video games act as a "supressant" that serves to "relieve tension and stress" and millions of Americans play these violent video games. Why is it that America has the highest amount of gun related fatalities per-capita of any nation on earth?
17 hours ago | [Like \(4\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AntiActivist Final note I would like everyone to pay attention to, is the video interview with the intelligent Dr. Cheryl Olson, that CNN seemed to have hidden from view concerning Rapelay. She was the most positive and logical individual CNN "interviewed" but CNN dismissed her explanations entirely, and even d ...more
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AntiActivist The realistic positive aspect of rape games like these, it can act like a suppressant. Just like how Americans play violent video games to relieve tension and stress. If rape games were truly inspiring people to commit rape as CNN claims, then wouldn't these violent American video games inspire mo ...more
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AntiActivist Second "expert" is Kyle Cleveland. His course name "Youth and Deviant Subcultures in Japan" is more than enough evidence that this individual has nothing but disdain towards the Japanese culture. His belief is to force Western culture to overtake Japanese culture. What gives him that right to even ...more
17 hours ago | [Like \(5\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

AntiActivist Here's another thing I would like to point out about Kyung Lah's "reporting". All of her "experts" are people who already have a biased "negativity" towards Japan and their culture. Take a look closely everyone, her first "expert" is a radical feminist member of Equality Now! Taina Bien-Aime. Even ...more
17 hours ago | [Like \(6\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

riseofatomsk this is disgusting yes, but you all have seen the Saw series, and Hostel movies with no moral problem. dont be hypocritcs you annoying people. and all these fake rape experiences mentions above are bs, stop lying over the interent, I for one come to get a ill international information on events...no ...more
23 hours ago | [Like \(14\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)

joeschmoe122 To me it sounds like people use 'RapeLay' to judge whole Japan. since when do we use games to judge other countries? Of course, 'RapeLay' indicates a difference in culture but is this not a extreme example? And is it really necessary to condemn a whole country, is it not more logical to be against t ...more
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AntiActivist Americans have been judging Japan for a long time now, especially recently since the no longer have control of the Japanese government ever since Liberal Democratic Party was voted out. The Democratic Party of Japan doesn't want to kiss up to the American government as much as the LDP, and they wan ...more
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