

JAPAN LITE

# Herbivorous men, where's the beef?

By AMY CHAVEZ

My single Japanese girlfriends complain that there are no interesting guys out there. Could they be right? It seems that these days the average Japanese guy is, well, you know, kinda boring. Kinda quiet. Nothing wrong with being quiet of course, especially if you have nothing to say.

The Japanese media has coined these men "herbivores" or "grass-eaters" (*soushoku danshi*). They are non-competitive, concentrate on personal grooming (yay!), are frugal, and lack an interest in sex. Now, I am totally for the quiet contemplative, sensitive type. Frugal? Okay. But no sex? Sex is free.

People have been having sex for ever (obviously). Animals have sex, insects have sex (really good sex too), so I am concerned about what will happen to these men. Someone needs to check their hormones. It's enough to make you think maybe their lack of sexual desire stems from feelings of inadequacy. "I'm too quiet, too skinny and too contemplative to be sexually attractive." (Hey, you're right!). If men don't start taking an interest in sex, the Japanese race may become extinct.

It's no wonder some Japanese women aren't all that happy with these grass-eaters who prefer to graze in their own pastures wiling the day away like Ferdinand the Bull.

I think the problem with men is just that they aren't very "manly" anymore. They're not even "menly." I myself am not very impressed with the modern Japanese male. I am, however, very impressed with his girlfriend or wife. These women are lively, interesting and inspiring to be around.

So, what's a modern girl to do? Give advice to men! Here are some tips for those men who suspect that after years of solitude and sexless lives, they ought to reclaim their manhood.

Switch your TV to the safari channel. A lot can be learned from the animal kingdom. Notice that a lion does not just sit around sleeping all day. When duty calls, they leave their computers for a few hours,

chase some female lions, fight for one who is really hot, and goes home with them to live happily ever after. I'm not suggesting you draw blood, but do take an active role in your courting. If you're not feeling inspired by the safari channel, turn to the insect channel. That should really should do it.

Gain some weight. A lean look is fine, but not that lean! Don't leave your women saying where's the beef? Eat manly stuff — hamburgers or *chanko nabe*. Eat till it hurts — because you can. You're a man!

Gain some muscle. Japanese guys are not big on muscle, which is fine, but you should still be able to move furniture and get the lids off of jars. A little body building can't hurt. Stay in good shape. Be athletic. Take part in some sports. Yes, I said SPORTS! At least sports are something to talk about.

Grow some hair. Remember, man comes from Neanderthals, the original burly hunk-of-a-human. The trend away from the Neanderthal look has left the Japanese with hardly any hair left on their bodies. But if you are one of the fortunate ones who can, I recommend you grow a beard. Beards will at least distinguish you from women.

I saw a guy on TV the other day, probably born in the '70s, who was so hairy he looked like a reincarnated shag rug carpet. With legs. Very impressive. Don't ever forget where we came from — Neanderthals.

Learn to haul. Get yourself a four-wheel drive pick-up truck. Haul some dirt, farm animals, whatever, but haul! Real men haul.

Change your stance. Stand up straight, for god's sake. Then swashbuckle a bit. Swagger. Don't drag your heels in your slippers. Make those cowboy boots do something.

Raise an animal: a horse or cow, perhaps. Learn to ride a horse. That's what 4-H is all about in my country: Making men out of pet-owners. Perhaps you could start your own 4-H club or Boy Scout troop for 30-year-olds.

Wear a hat. A hat makes a man. Imagine the Marlboro Man without his cowboy hat, or Frank Sinatra without his top hat. You need something that defines you. In addition to ten-gallon hats, cowboy boots are manly and belts with big silver buckles are manly.

Do something! So many men sit around and do nothing. I hardly see women like this. Go out and cut loose! Assert yourself. Buck and kick up your heels. Go camping or kayaking. Climb a mountain. Make it a habit to get out of doors and enjoy the fresh air and nature. Yes, you may take your cellphone with you. No, you can't take your pocket mirror.

Lastly, get rid of your mothers. Stop letting them do everything for

you. Since single men in Japan tend to live with their parents until they do get married, I'm convinced that this motherly love and fawning over them makes men gradually more worthless. Don't let it happen to you. Do your own laundry, cook for your mother, and learn how to take care of yourself.

If, on the other hand, you are in the position of giving a herbivore a gift, change his life by giving him something manly, like a toolkit. Give him something that has the potential to bring the entire family happiness.

For those who decide to reclaim their manhood, I suspect the result will be men who are lively, interesting, inspiring and able to perpetuate the species.

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