BILINGUAL

Plant-eating guys just waiting to get chomped on

By KAORI SHOJI

It has finally happened: the inevitable relationship phenomenon. I was at a party the other day where every one of the couples present were paired off in the kokusai onna (国際奥様, domestic female)-gaijinkō otoko (外国入系男, foreign man) combination, a sight that would have caused my ojichan (おじいちゃん, grandfather) — who's been dead for 15 years — to spit in the depths of his grave and unlease with venom his favorite two-kanji phrase "kokuyō-komonomada! (国境のたまものだ! It's a humiliating insult to the nation!)".

And he probably won't be the only one, as daki (隠蔽, spitting in sheer disgust) was how many men of his generation chose to express their indignation. In their heyday, they aimed this invective toward the kokkaigijidō (国会議事堂, National Diet Building).

To cap it off, there was not a single nihonjandai (日本-indent, full-fledged, red-blooded Japanese male) present, and all the mingling (which there was plenty of, believe me) between the singles went on between gorgeous, intelligent, super-capable Japanese women and equally wonderful foreign guys from places such as Michigan or Sheffield, England.

It wasn't always like this. I can remember a time when, at parties, foreign men were a minority among Japanese males, who made up in numbers what they lacked in charm, conversation and girl-getting aggression. Too often, the "I-men" were fighting a losing battle, but at least they were there, much to the delight of folks like myself and girlfriend Akiko — two of a dying breed of folks like myself and girlfriend Akiko — two of a dying breed who tended to nurse nationalist sentiments when it came to men. "Kokusai otoko wa damare dakedo hotō suru (国際男はだまってところす)" (国際男はだまってところす) Domestic guys are hopeless, but they're relaxing)" was Akiko's maxim, and she held that at the end of a long day, the working woman opts for that hotte (ほっと, relaxing feeling) factor no matter how glamorous the alternative.

Alas, those days seem officially over, as one finds that (sob) few single Japanese men profess themselves willing to go out in the field anymore. "Mendikushoku (門締しぶく、苦しむ力)" (門締しぶく、苦しむ力) never complains," and "kane ga nai (お金がない, no money)" "tsukareru (つける, it's tiring)" head the list of reasons I collected from my brothers, cousins and other extended family members. Especially shocking was a derisive "party ni ikyūna onna niwa kiyō ga nai (パーティーに行こうような女には興味がない, I'm not interested in a girl who would go to a party)."

He also said, "Gatsu gatsu shiteiru omowaretakunai (かかっていないと思う, I don't want them to think I'm desperate)" and added that it's far wiser and more effective to wait for the girl of his dreams to pounce on him out of the blue. "Eeeehn! (ええええ! Reeeally?!)

Actually, my nephew is the typical nihonjandai (日本-indent, full-fledged, red-blooded Japanese male) present, and all the mingling (which there was plenty of, believe me) between the singles went on between gorgeous, intelligent, super-capable Japanese women and equally wonderful foreign guys from places such as Michigan or Sheffield, England.

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Never mind that his biceps are the size of grapefruits and he divides his life into two clear-cut boundaries — mastering the shinjokukō (親戚団体, extended family) — who's been dead for 15 years — to spit in the depths of his grave and unlease with venom his favorite two-kanji phrase "kokuyō-komonomada! (国境のたまものだ! It's a humiliating insult to the nation!)".

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