

Has anyone heard these words?

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang.japan/2005-11/msg00775.html>

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 - *Date:* 26 Nov 2005 12:19:49 -0800
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<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-1870754,00.html>

New words tell sad tale of Japan's Bridget Jones
>>From Leo Lewis in Tokyo

BRIDGET JONESES of the world beware: spend too much time with the rikonmiminenzo

[ãZ I get. 3 õ— âZ3õ— Looks like mojobake.]

(divorce-promotion generation) and you just may end up as a moshimo-onna (a "what if?" girl) or even risk spending your thirties as a tsurumun (a woman who dreads being alone on

[Äëàó]

national holidays and invents reasons to visit friends).

These are part of a swelling lexicon of Japanese neologisms and the products of a language that is working flat-out to keep up with the rapidly changing lifestyles of young Japanese women.

Until the present generation made its mark on Japanese society, single working life was generally a short-term experience for most women as they prepared for marriage and motherhood. There has never been much need, therefore, for words such as nitto-onna, which

[kchs åSs]

describes a woman so dedicated to her career that she has no time to iron blouses and so resorts to dressing only in knitwear tops.

Equally, there has never before been any serious sense of boinryoku, the potentially disruptive power of maternal instincts on patriarchal society.

[Üðó <f fGj]

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Many of the new words reflect the miseries of living alone and the seemingly hopeless quest to bag a worthwhile man. The ultimate fear is of slipping by default into the life of a sokosokozuma, a woman who settles for a so-so marriage just to get it out of the way.

[jS]S» – finally something that at least looks plausible.]

For those who do not manage even that, there is the prospect of eating a Kurisumasu-nabe,

[ˈɛ¹P¹K Does that exist?]

a cheap stew cooked at the table and designed to inject a feeble sense of conviviality to a Christmas gathering of single friends.

Several of the phrases reveal how far some women are prepared to take things when the prospect of marriage seems too distant. Kondoumukeikaku (literally, "pregnancy now plan")

[ʒóÉüà ;="pregnancy now plan"? I thought it meant "pregnancy never plan"]

describes the way in which some women over 35 have unprotected sex with strangers to have children, while nakayoshi ninpu (buddy pregnancy) describes the act of two women deliberately getting pregnant at the same time so that they can experience childbirth together.

Other words capture the more positive side of life. The huge social upheaval that has given Japan its ranks of single women has also produced a generation of sharp consumers and thick wallets to feed their shopping appetites.

Ippaiyoku are women whose every garment and accessory is made by the same designer,

[o2? ,FoLò _DcfSh]

and chokuegambo describes the wish that there were more designer-brand shops on a given

[j<{i ô¶X m But do people actually say that?]

street. A yubisakibijin is a woman who spends a large portion of her salary tending to her fingernails.

LONER'S LEXICON

Kakobijin Literally, past beauty. Describes the sort of woman who talks incessantly about how she would have been thought of as a stunner if she had lived in a different era, when men's tastes in women were different

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Minekokon Describes a woman who gives up a high-powered career in Tokyo for a dull life in the country with a quiet husband

Ame-unication The act of offering sweets to another woman in the hope of striking up a conversation and breaking the loneliness of single life

[èæË±ü·çó]

Toirebijutsukan Literally, toilet museum. The trend whereby young women moving into an apartment alone for the first time will go to extreme lengths to decorate their lavatory, scent it with perfume and stock it with interesting literature

Rakudaraifu Literally, camel life. Applied to single women who spend much of their weekends cooking food and deep-freezing it so that it can be reheated in a hurry when they return from work late

Henkyoryugaku Literally, study abroad in the wild. Describes young women who in their

OPÜf deviant paleontology?

twenties and thirties rebel against social norms and travel abroad to devote time to an eccentric art form, such as Balinese dancing.

Marc

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• *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ ***Re: Has anyone heard these words?***

◇ *From:* kouji ueshiba

- ◆ ***Re: Has anyone heard these words?***

◇ *From:* massangeana

- Prev by Date: ***Re: off-topic question about negative particles in a positive state***

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