

Watashitachi wa Konyaku Shimashita!

(see text)

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I know that i promised you in the last newsletter that i would write about my job and work in this newsletter. It is going to have to wait for another newsletter or two... primarily for two important reasons.

First, my current activities, duties, and research themes are in a state of flux. There are some significant shifts and reconsiderations occurring in our group, and i am in the middle of trying to get our management to rethink its strategies and policies. This involved a 2 week fact finding trip to America during the first two weeks of April. I guess that i have always tended to try and improve any situation that i am in.

The second and more important/domineering reason has to do with my personal state or status shall we say. Some of you who have been reading closely might have noticed some of the characteristic signs... but i wasn't sure myself until just recently. My trip to America helped formalized my thoughts to the point that I have come to action.

Surprise

I usually enjoy suspense, drama, and surprises... and i have held you off for three paragraphs... but i can't restrain myself forever... Eiko and I are engaged to be married. Eiko and I and each of our families are very happy.

The current plans include a western style wedding during the beginning of August in Japan and a small reception in America. We will continue to live in Japan... but you might see us in America every once in awhile. MEW might also bring us to live in America in the future... we'll have to see... we are

pretty open to all kinds of opportunities.

When we look back at the past six months... it is amazing that we were able to keep our relationship a secret from the ever prying minds of the Matsushita employees. We were only discovered one time... that was at a movie... fortunately he was a friend from another department and i was able to swear him to secrecy. There are 13,000 Matsushita employees in our division alone... and everyone uses public transportation so we were bound to be discovered.

As i began telling my friends in the company that we were engaged... most of them did not believe it at first. They asked if i was really telling the truth? Others, as they heard the recount of our story deemed it "office love" or "destiny". Maybe it was destiny... i did have an unexplainable draw to Eiko that lunch day a year ago last March during my final interview with MEW.

The Plans

As many of you know, planning a wedding and all of the associated details can be quite tramatizing. These first couple of weeks have been a little rough... but it looks like the hard part is over. The two biggest situations so far were finding a ring and finding a church.

As far as the ring was concerned, Japan, as in many other things, has its own way of dealing with engagement rings. First, 90% of all engagement rings are made of platinum and not gold. To me, platinum looks the same as silver, but platinum "matches Asian skin so much better than gold". Secondly, jewelry prices in Japan

are over double that of the USA. And finally, there are only 40 styles of rings in Japan no matter how many stores you go to. On the good side though, we were able to find a jeweler who agreed with our ideas on diamond quality... thus she is now wearing a beautiful ring that we both liked.

The other search... for a church... also turned out to be a quest. The church that we attend regularly is fairly new. It is currently meeting in a medium sized room in a business building... not exactly a cathedral with stained glass windows and a pipe organ. We had pretty much decided that we wanted a western style wedding with a Japanese style family reception. Hence we needed to find a more suitable location for the ceremony. Our trek lead us to some less than desirable choices: old and run down, no air conditioning, sizable donations, and denominational differences. We finally found a nice chapel the suited ALL of our requirements! It was a great relief from a three week multi-city quest.

But alas, while the searching was over, the decisions were not over. When Eiko's parents visited the chapel, it was not quite what they had envisioned. They offered to also look for a chapel and family reception location. Her father was lucky enough to locate a facility on short notice. When we went to visit, I realized that I had been there before... this traditional and formal Japanese restaurant was where the MEW executives had taken us for the extravagant wine and dine during final interviews. The setting of the chapel is very nice with lots of greens and a waterfall. We believe that a suitable location which everyone

is very happy about has finally been determined. The plans are starting to come together.

The Later Years

One nite, Eiko and I were discussing names and what her new name would be. I also am looking for a new name... a Japanese first name. Anyways, we were also discussing what nicknames the Japanese couples use for each other. After a few years, the Japanese husband tends to call his wife, "Oi". This is the Japanese word for "Hey". Kind of like "Oi" being the Japanese equivalent of the English, "Hey You". I was about to accuse the Japanese men of being sexist again when I decided to ask her what Japanese wives call their husbands in the later years. Her response, "Anata", the Japanese equivalent

of "You". So the women get in on the act of "Hey You", too. Somehow, I have the feeling that in our house, we are not going to digress into *those* Japanese familiar names.

First Meeting

This past week, my parents were able to come to Japan. Their primary intention was to meet Eiko and her family, but they have also managed a little sight-seeing also. My parents and Eiko officially met last Saturday in Kyoto. We spent the day touring local temples and shrines, talking, and of course...eating. The meeting went well.. everyone gets along with each other!

On Sunday evening, Eiko and her parents took my parents and me out to dinner. This was also the first meeting of my parents and

hers. The conversations went well.. even when we started discussing wedding plans. Our parents actually agreed on the details for the wedding and celebration. So with the formalities established and good relationship initiated, we are well on our way to being married.

Invite

I know this is not a formal, multi-envelope invitation and all... those won't be ready for awhile... but for those of you who would like to join us for our wedding ceremony in Japan... you would have to start planning soon. We would love to have everyone we know join us. If you have ever had any interest in Japan or are interested in witnessing the joining of two cultures, we invite you attend. The wedding ceremony is Saturday August 4 around noon. Please contact me ASAP if you have any interest or would like more details.

Closing

As you can probably tell... i am very excited... yet a little tired. Forming the plans and such for the wedding can be taxing... but i am convinced that i have found true happiness in Eiko!

So until the next newsletter... which will probably be after the ceremony... be good... and if you can't be good... try harder.

