



Lovers at a café in Tokyo.

Win your lover back

by Justin McCurry

- 1 Japan is in the midst of a boom in services that promise to reunite couples months, and sometimes years, after they have gone their separate ways. Ladies Secret Service is a private detective agency in Tokyo's upmarket Ginza district. About 70% of its clients are women, aged between 20 and 40. It has successfully rekindled romances on behalf of hundreds of men and women who are prepared to spend huge sums, of up to 700,000 yen (£3,300) a month, on their quest to win back former lovers.
- 2 The agency's president, Yoshiko Okawa, employs about 300 men and women who are selected for their ability to befriend their targets and convince them that breaking up with an ex-lover or divorcing their spouse was the biggest mistake of their lives. Her team of fukuenuya – “those who

restore bonds” – use hi-tech surveillance, counselling and outright deception to achieve the most unlikely reconciliations.

- 3 “After they have won the target's trust, they might mention our client in passing and feign amazement when they realise they have a mutual acquaintance,” Okawa said. “All the while our agents are learning as much about their new friend as possible and are devising a plan to reunite him or her with our client. The trigger for reconciliation could be a ‘chance’ meeting in the street or a location that evokes happy memories of their time together,” she added. “We relay any complaints the target has to our client, so they can decide whether to make the necessary changes to repair their relationship. It could be a divorcee who wants to get back with her ex-husband, but who needs to change her appearance or keep the house tidier

before there is any chance of that happening.”

4 When the obstacle to a possible reconciliation is a third person, the agents face the task of engineering the end of one relationship before they can repair the other. “We do an incredible amount of research into the new man or woman in our target’s life, and then, if we actually find anything, drop hints that he or she is unsuitable,” says Okawa, a 40-year-old former office worker whose divorce – and infatuation with James Bond films – prompted her career change. “Before long the target knows all about his new lover’s debt problems, her sordid past, or the fact that she has a young child she failed to mention.”

5 Typically, fukukenya agents are presentable and sociable, but insiders say the most successful have a quick mind as well as good looks. “Looks alone aren’t usually enough to bring in the results you get paid to produce,” said Satoyo Nakamura, who reunites couples for another company, the Japan Research Information Centre. “It’s a job that requires being able to assume the role of a counsellor who can bring about radical changes in thinking, not just in the target, but also in the client. It’s an extremely difficult job.”

6 Fukukenya carry out their operations in utmost secrecy. Even when attempts at reconciliation are successful, the targets must never learn how they came about, says Okawa, who routinely refuses media requests to interview clients or agents. In one typical case an agent tried to convince a bar hostess to go back to her ex-husband. Over five months he frequented the woman’s club pretending to be a wealthy businessman, accompanied by a friend posing as a fortune teller. He spoke about how his friend’s psychic insights had helped him become rich, and before long the hostess agreed to have her fortune read. The sooth-sayer’s advice was, 13, to return to her ex-husband. They reunited and eventually remarried.

7 Okawa puts her success rate at around 50%, and believes that, in time, more lovelorn people will seek her help. “When the economy is in real trouble, people are defeatist and tend to give up on relationships too easily, even if money wasn’t the actual cause of the break-up,” she said. “If they have more money in their pockets they are naturally more optimistic, even about winning back old flames.”

The Guardian, 2008

Tekst 3 Win your lover back

- 1p **8** What becomes clear from paragraph 1?
- A** It is easier to get former couples back together than to find new matches for single men and women in Japan.
 - B** Japanese singles prefer expensive dating bureaux to other forms of match-making.
 - C** Japanese women over 40 tend not to be very keen on meeting their ex-lovers.
 - D** There is a great demand in Japan for businesses offering to mend couples' broken relationships.
- 1p **9** How does paragraph 2 relate to paragraph 1?
Paragraph 2
- A** analyses the information given in paragraph 1.
 - B** contradicts the information given in paragraph 1.
 - C** elaborates on the information given in paragraph 1.
 - D** repeats the information given in paragraph 1.
- 2p **10** Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze wel of niet in overeenstemming is met de inhoud van de alinea's 3 tot en met 5.
- 1 "Fukuenya" laten de ex-partner van hun klant soms geloven dat de klant een gezamenlijke kennis is.
 - 2 "Fukuenya" moeten vooral aantrekkelijk gevonden worden door de klant om succes te kunnen hebben.
 - 3 "Fukuenya" vertellen leugentjes over de nieuwe relatie van de ex-partner van hun klant.
 - 4 "Fukuenya" werken nauw samen met psychologen.
- Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".

- “radical ... client” (at the end of paragraph 5)
- 1p 11 Which of the following statements is in line with this remark, judging from paragraphs 3-5?
The client has to
- A acknowledge that ending the relationship was for the best.
 - B be able and willing to adjust to the views of the ex-partner.
 - C come to terms with the betrayal by the ex-partner.
 - D realise that spending a lot of money is no guarantee for success.
- “the targets ... came about,” (at the beginning of paragraph 6)
- 1p 12 Which of the following quotes from the text explains why not?
- A “Her team ... unlikely reconciliations.” (at the end of paragraph 2)
 - B “a location ... time together” (in the middle of paragraph 3)
 - C “Okawa, ... career change” (in the middle of paragraph 4)
- 1p 13 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?
- A fortunately
 - B naturally
 - C sadly
 - D surprisingly
- 1p 14 What becomes clear from paragraph 7?
According to Okawa,
- A it is cheaper to find a new partner than to try and get back an old flame.
 - B people’s choices and actions in romantic matters are influenced by economic factors.
 - C unemployed people have more time to patch up their broken relationships.
 - D when the economy is in decline people clearly get more interested in love affairs.

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.