

Rent-A-Friend Agencies Growing in Japan

There are many new ways of making friends in today's world. The best known of these is meeting new pals online. The Japanese are doing things a little differently. There is a growth in rent-a-friend agencies. The only catch is that the friends you meet will not become your true friends. You simply rent one when you need one for a specific occasion. The friends for rent are professional fakers. They will pretend to be anyone you want them to be. They serve a very useful purpose in Japan, where it's very important to keep up social appearances. If you do not have a best man for your wedding or you need a rich aunt to seal a business deal, rent-a-friend agencies will provide you with the perfect impersonator.

Britain's Guardian newspaper reports on Ryuichi Ichinokawa, the owner of the "I want to cheer you up" agency. He has been the best man at weddings, making jokes about happy couples he did not know, and has acted as the uncle of students at school sports days. The Guardian says: "He dutifully cheered them on, recorded their efforts on his handheld video camera and joined in the adult-and-child races." Ichinokawa charges just over \$150 as a rental charge, but says there are extra fees for singing at a karaoke party or making a speech at a wedding. Ryuichi says he plans everything in detail so he doesn't embarrass his client. He boasts: "In three and a half years I've never once been caught out."

Source: www.breakingnewsenglish.com

Vocabulary

pals – friends

catch - disadvantage

impersonator - a person who copies the way another person talks or behaves

You can see the whole lesson from your teacher, please ask them to send it to you before the class.

テキスト全文はレッスン受講時に担当講師よりお受け取りください。