

What's New?

Niihama City

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The Case for Manjiro

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Nearly ten years ago, I sat down in front of my computer to fill out an application form for a large English language school chain based in Japan. I was approaching my college graduation and uncertain of which direction to take my life and had decided to give Japan a try. Tasked with writing a short essay on any topic, I reached into my not-so-deep well of Japanese historical knowledge and pulled out a story that seemed relevant.

155 years earlier, a young fisherman from Kochi named Nakahama Manjiro found himself shipwrecked on a deserted island in the middle of the Philippine Sea. After managing to survive for five months, Manjiro and his crew were rescued and taken to Honolulu by an American whaler ship called the John Howland. Though his crew stayed in Hawaii, Manjiro elected to stay on and head back to the ship's home port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, later entering a school in neighboring Fairhaven, my hometown. Here, Manjiro became the first Japanese national to study English in the United States. He later used his language and cultural knowledge to help Japan transition from the isolation of the Edo period into the Meiji era.

The parallels seemed too obvious to ignore. Manjiro, a Japanese man, goes to America, learns English, and returns to his native land a learned and confident diplomat. I, an American man, ready to go to Japan, teach English, and develop confidence and diplomacy skills. Manjiro, a young fisherman who survived being stranded at sea for five months. I, a young college grad who survived nearly five hours at the library, five nights a week (or three or four). Manjiro, a master of the sea. I, a master of macaroni and cheese. OK, maybe the parallels weren't so obvious.

Nonetheless, I was hired by the school chain and sent to Japan. Having listed no preference in regards to location, the company

assigned me to work in Niihama, Ehime. Shikoku. Bordering Kochi. The home of Manjiro. Was it because of my essay that I was sent to this relatively remote area? To this day I still don't know, but I'm thankful.

As I began my new life in Niihama, I carried around my knowledge of Manjiro as a kind of ice-breaker, to be used at any time to let the local people know that we shared a deep connection. After all, when I was four years old, Emperor Akihito himself, then the Crown Prince, visited my small town on a well-publicized, goodwill tour. Certainly, the people of Ehime, neighboring Kochi, had heard of Fairhaven, Massachusetts and would understand our connection, I thought. I began to name drop. "Do you know Manjiro Nakahama? Also known as John Manjiro?" I was met with half-knowing nods or the occasional blank stare. "You know, the first Japanese person to study English in America?? The famous translator for the government during the Meiji Restoration?" More staring. It was around this time that someone told me about the reigning champion of Kochi historical figures, Sakamoto Ryoma.

OK, OK I get it. I understand Sakamoto Ryoma's undeniable importance to Japan during the end of the Edo period, especially after watching the very recommendable NHK drama Ryomaden (in which Manjiro appears for about five seconds). The man essentially united opposing factions in feudal Japan, setting the wheels in motion for modernization, allowing Japan as we know it today to come into existence.

But what about my guy? Where was his NHK drama? Was he not the cultural and historical icon I had assumed he would be? Some of my disappointment was relieved when I visited Tosashimizu-city, the birthplace of Manjiro and sister city of my hometown. There I visited the John Manjiro Museum and saw the giant statue of the man. I was glad to see his history being preserved. It is also really, really far from Niihama. I've come to realize that although Shikoku is an island, it is actually a fairly vast piece of land, and while Manjiro's name may loom large in his hometown, other areas of Shikoku have their own history and pride. Nonetheless, I do feel some personal connection to Mr. Manjiro, he an honorary Massachusettan, and I, a hopeful Shikokuan. While our journeys don't exactly run in parallel, I am inspired by his spirit and courage, and still look for chances to drop his name whenever possible.



James Whittle drifted between Japan and the USA for several years, until finally settling in Doi. He and his wife recently became the owners of Jade Eikaiwa in Niihama, where he is also a teacher.

MOVIES

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Mall)

December 18	Star Wars: The Force Awakens	2D English • Dubbed, 3D Dubbed
January 8	Bridge of Spies	2D English
January 15	Paddington	2D English, Dubbed
January 16	In the Heart of the Sea	2D English
January 23	THE WALK	2D English
February 4	The Martian	English
February 12	Dragon Blade PG12	unfixed
February 19	SHERLOCK: The Abominable Bridge	English
February 20	Point Break PG12	English
February 27	The Finest Hours	English

Information Service
Internet: <http://niihama-aeonmall.com>
Tape (24 hrs): 050-6868-5019(in Japanese)

Movies might be changed without notice. Please check.

★ Setsubun (節分) Wednesday, Feb. 3rd

The name of this holiday means the “division between two seasons” (winter and spring.) It features a bean-throwing ceremony. According to the old lunar calendar of Japan, the following day is called *risshun*, which means the first day of spring.

People scatter roasted soybeans inside and outside their homes as they shout “*Fuku-wa-uchi, Oni-wa-soto.*” This means “Fortune in, devils out.” It’s also customary to eat the same number of beans as one’s age. These beans have been used as a charm against demons since ancient times.

In recent years, this festival is held on a grand scale at many temples and shrines. Well-known personalities who were born under the zodiac sign for that year are invited to throw beans from the stage.



SGG would welcome any suggestions, questions or ideas for monthly articles.

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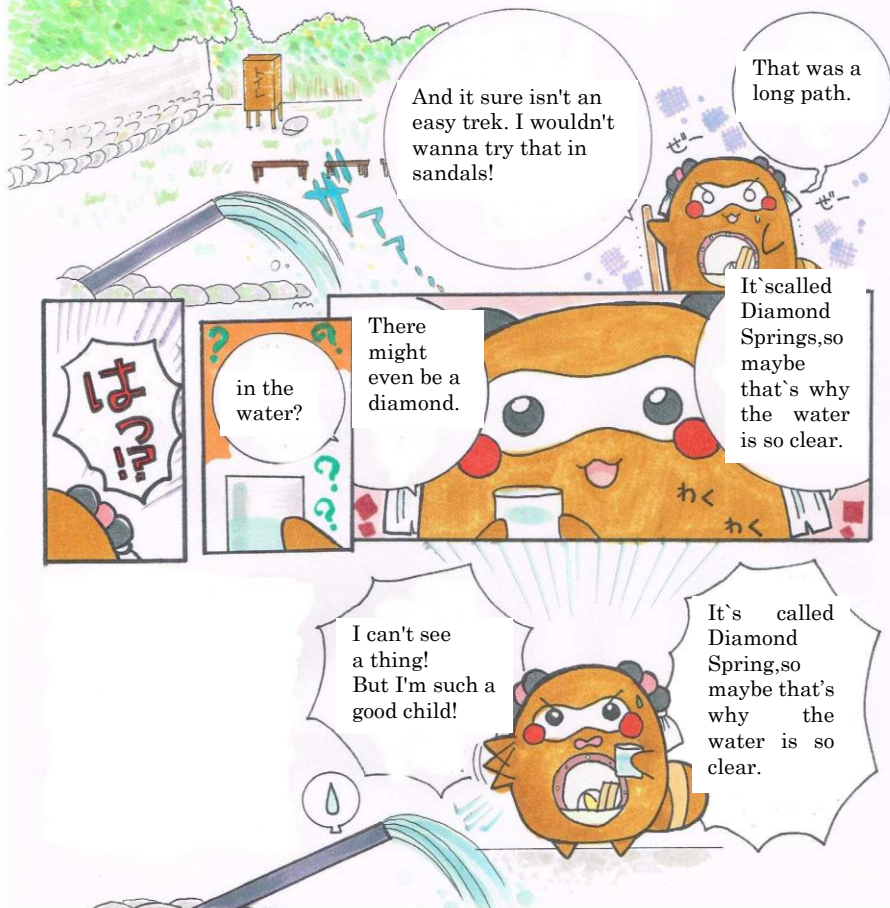
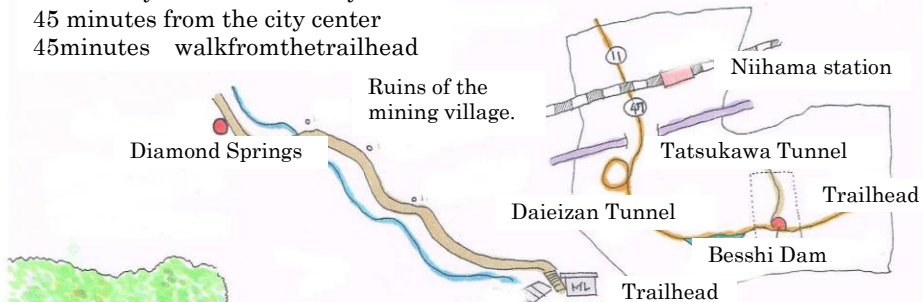
*The editors for this month are K.Kumata & T.Oishi.

Machuri ' s Adventure

Diamond Springs



Route 47 sometimes freezes over
 Studless tyres are a necessity
 45 minutes from the city center
 45 minutes walk from the trailhead



Diamond Springs actually got its name when a diamond at the tip of a boring drill broke off into the water vein and couldn't be recovered.

NPO 法人新居浜まちゆり隊&黒島望沙&English Press
 More information: join NPO 法人新居浜まちゆり隊 Facebook Page or
 visit Machuri's Homepage at <http://machuri.com> wireless-activated disaster warning system.

The 26th Annual Niihama Global Party

Date: Sunday February 21st, 2016
Time: 1p.m.-3:30p.m.
Venue: Niihama Women's Plaza
4-4-19 Shonai-cho, Niihama-shi
Admission: ¥500/person
Free for children age 6 and younger
Contact: 0897-37-1700

Join us for an afternoon of fun performances, delicious treats, and friendly conversation! If you're looking to make friends from all over the world here in our very own Niihama, come on over and join the Global Party!

Notification from City Office

The density of PM 2.5 tends to rise in the coming months. So when the high density is predicted, the City will send out a notice by wireless-activated disaster warning system around 8:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. When it is announced, please avoid doing strenuous sports outdoors.

February Event


Gathering for foreigners
The City would like to offer a place for interacting among foreigners.
Date: Feb. 22nd
Time: 1:00 p.m. ~ 7:00 p.m.
Place: Machi-zukuri Kyo-do Office
(on the 1st floor in the Bunka Center)
You can come any time.
Enjoy conversing, etc. over a cup of tea.



Information in English & Chinese on the Web

*What's New?

*How to sort garbage and trash

Visit  <http://www.city.niihama.lg.jp>

Clair:*Multilingual Living Information

<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengorev/en/index.html>

ONE POINT JAPANESE

ふゆ つか ことば 冬に使う言葉

A : 明日は かなり 冷え込みそうですね。

Ashita wa kanari hiekomiso desu ne.

(Tomorrow is going to become really cold!)

B : 雪が 降るかも しれませんね。

Yuki ga furu kamoshiremasen ne.

(It's probably going to snow!)

A : ええ。大雪警報が 出たら、学校は 休みに なるそうですよ。

Ee. Ōyuki kēho ga detara, gakkō wa yasumi ni naru sō desu yo.

(Yeah. If a heavy snow warning is issued, schools will be off, I hear.)

B : いいなあ。会社も 休みに ならないかなあ。

Ii nā. Kaisha mo yasumi ni naranai ka nā.

(That'd be great! I wish my company would be off, too!)

A : 寒くて、凍えそう！ Samukute kogoeso!

(I'm so cold I'm about to freeze!)

B : 手が かじかんで きた。Te ga kajikande kita.

(My fingers have become numb.)

A : 早く 帰って、温かい お風呂に 入ろう！

Hayaku kaette, atataikai ofuro ni hairō.

(I want to get home right away and get into a warm bath!)

B : 夕食は “鍋” に 決まりですね。

Yushoku wa “NABE” ni kimari desu ne.

(OK. Today's dinner is Nabe!)

(リビングで) (In the Living Room)

A : やっぱり、コタツは いいね。

Yappari kotatsu wa ii ne.

(The kotatsu sure is wonderful.)

B : 足が ポカポカして きた。Ashi ga pokapoka shite kita.

(My legs have gotten nice and warm.)

A : 大雪で、高速道路が 通行止めに なってるよ。

Ōyuki de, kōsoku dōro ga tsūkōdome ni natteru yo.

(Because of the heavy snow, the expressways have closed down.)

B : JRの ダイヤも 乱れている みたい。

Jeiāru no daiya mo midareteru mitai.

(It seems that the JR schedule is disrupted too.)

A : 強風で、フェリーの 運航も 見合わせている らしいよ。

Kyōfū de, ferī no unkō mo miawasete iru rashi yo.

(Ferry service seems to be suspended due to the strong wind.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

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