

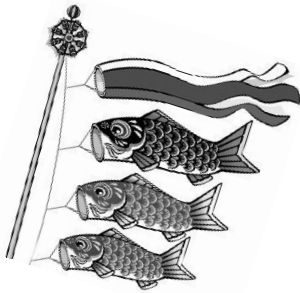
What's New?

Niihama City

No.249

May 2016

Published by SGG Niihama



5

Wasshoi! Wasshoi! John Wheeler

On the third Saturday of February, 9,000 men congregate at Saidai-ji Temple in Okayama Prefecture for *Eyo*, a tradition known colloquially as *Hadaka Matsuri* (Naked Festival). Wearing *fundoshi* loincloths and *tabi* cloth shoes, these men compete for *shingi*, lucky wooden sticks thrown onto the jam-packed stage of the temple's main hall. It is a raucous, occasionally violent event requiring a suspension of sanity and shame to participate. This year, I joined the festivities.

The Hadaka Matsuri has about 500 years of history and is an important local tradition. Every year, a group of JET Program participants from around western Japan join in. My friend and I met veterans on the bus from Okayama Station to Saidai-ji who gave us invaluable advice.

We arrived at Saidai-ji by 6 p.m. and purchased *fundoshi* and *tabi*. Assistants were on hand in the changing tent to help with the *fundoshi*. These are pulled *very* tight.

Now appropriately scantily-clad, we joined groups of men in running around the temple grounds shouting "Wasshoi!" We ran side-by-side with our arms around each other's shoulders to keep warm. Part of the circuit around the temple grounds included a splash through a pond watched over by a statue of Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Mercy. The runners are purified by this and by the head priest, who ladles water onto the revelers from the balcony.

At 9 p.m., the participants ascended the stage of the main hall to await the dropping of the *shingi*. The veteran participants from Okayama warned us repeatedly to stay away from the steep stone steps, and over the next two hours I saw many people tumble down them.

The main stage was packed beyond belief. Men in fundoshi who had decided not to compete for the shingi were standing on the muddy ground around the main hall. Stuck in the crowd on the stage, I longed to join them. Only now did I understand what I had gotten myself into.

“Attention naked participants: there is still an hour left before the shingi are dropped,” a temple official announced from the balcony.

“An hour?!” Each roll and pitch of the mass of bodies, more densely packed than any rush hour Tokyo train, put pressure on my bad ankle or pulled my fundoshi in an uncomfortable new direction. It became difficult to breathe in the heavy air.

I decided that this discomfort was not worth the experience of fighting for a shingi, and with the help of an official watching from the balcony above the stage, I managed to break free of the crowd and get down the steps. I watched the mayhem when the lights on the stage went out and the shingi were dropped. Overall, the Hadaka Matsuri was an unforgettable experience.

Participating in cultural activities here in Japan can have elements of danger and discomfort. Traditions are based on rituals with religious and agrarian origins, and even though they have been updated and sanitized, a core from a pre-modern past remains. For many matsuri, especially those in the countryside, this gives the proceedings a gravity that centers the wildness of the festivities and the occasionally bad behavior of the participants. My experience with Hadaka Matsuri was not pleasant and I don't plan to participate again, but I met several Okayama JETs who love it in the same way that I love Saijo Matsuri. Anyone can participate, but being a part of the community where it is held gives the tradition a different significance.

Joining these festivals, especially those in your own community, is one of the best examples of so-called “grassroots internationalization” that I know. I can't recommend it enough. Just be aware of what you are getting into.



John Wheeler is a CIR in Saijo. He has lived in Ehime for three years and will be leaving in August.

Besshi-onsen & Akagane Kids' Park Minetopia Besshi Remodeled

(from Monthly City News May issue, 2016)

The 4th floor of Minetopia Besshi has been remodeled as Besshi-onsen and Kids' Park. It opened on April 15.

Besshi-onsen has several kinds of relaxation facilities such as an open-air onsen, a relaxation bath, jet baths and a far infrared sauna. Hot rock beds at an additional fee.

Open: 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Fee: ¥500 for high school age and over

¥400 for 65 and over

¥300 for elem. & jr. high age

¥200 for pre-school children, 3 yrs. old and over

Free for under 3 yrs. old

Akagane Kids' park offers 6 kinds of facilities suited to different age groups: a baby area, a picture book library, a pool of balls, an inflated track, inflated tube wheels and a climbing wall.

Open: 10:00a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Fee: ¥500 for up to 2 hours and ¥200 for each additional hour for children up through elementary school

¥300 for junior high and up

Matsuyama City installed QR Translator at 50 places for foreign tourist

(from Ehime Shimbun March 5, 2016)

The number of foreign tourists has been increasing in recent years.

For their convenience, Matsuyama City Government introduced QR codes at fifty spots at four tourist destinations. These codes provide useful information in four languages: Japanese, English, Korean, and two kinds of Chinese.

The QR codes were recently set up at Matsuyama Castle and Ninomaru Shiseki Teien where there had previously been exhibits written only in English and Japanese. And they were also set up at Dogo Onsen Honkan and Tsubaki-yu where the table of prices had been written only in Japanese.

By reading the QR code with a digital terminal device like a smart phone, the information is available in the form of both voice and text guidance in four languages.

Visiting Lecture About How to Easily Make a Temporary Portable Toilet

(from Ehime Shimbun January 23, 2016)

At Sumino Community Center, Niihama Commercial High School Students held a visiting lecture about what they had learned from disaster prevention class. Seventeen third graders and fifteen members of the neighborhood community tried making temporary portable toilet by cardboard.

Last October at the school, a storyteller told the students about his experience during the Great East Japan Earthquake. They learned that so many people had had so much difficulty finding toilets in the earthquake stricken areas. So the students decided to make their knowledge known to the people in the neighborhood. In the lecture, students and neighbors made toilets by putting two cardboard boxes together, strengthening its four corner and cutting it into a toilet shape with a cutting knife. They carefully made thirteen portable toilets. The toilets will be kept at the community center and used in case of emergency.

New “Anpanman Train”

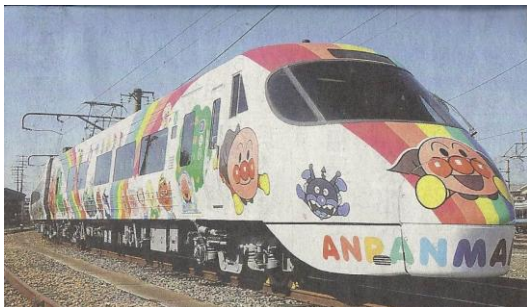
(from Ehime Shimbun March 4, 2016)

JR Shikoku has just completed the refurbishing of the 8000 series express train into another “Anpanman train.” This is the first Anpanman train following the Diesel and trolley types. It operates between Matsuyama and Okayama as well as Takamatsu.

Anpanman flying in the sky is painted on the front part of the streamlined car. A colorful rainbow is pictured on both sides of the train and mandarin oranges, a hot spring (onsen) and towels are drawn around the rainbow, which remind passengers of Ehime's cultural offerings along the route.

It has 8 cars and the first car has 16 special reserved seats. Vestibules, washbowls and restrooms are also decorated as if you were in the Anpanman world.

The series of Anpanman trains started operation on the Dosan Line in 2000 in honor of the late Takashi Yanase, the original cartoonist and anime creator, who was from Kochi.



MOVIES

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Mall)

April 15 ~	Spotlight	2D English
April 22 ~	The Revenant	2D English
April 29 ~	The Sea of Trees	2D English
April 29 ~	Captain America: Civil War	2D Dubbed
May 27 ~	The Huntsman : Winters War	2D English

Information Service

Internet: <http://niihama-aeonmall.com>

Tape (24 hrs): 050-6868-5019(in Japanese)


Movies might be changed without notice. Please check.



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>

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

email: kasi4386@plum.ocn.ne.jp

sheep@abeam.ocn.ne.jp

yukiko-m@shikoku.ne.jp

*The editors for this month are T. Nakaya & Y. Amano



ONE POINT JAPANESE

“準備する” “備える”

A : 今年の 連休は 帰国するんですか。

Kotoshi no renkyū wa, kikoku surun desu ka.

(Are you going back to your home country this holiday?)

B : ええ。有休が 取れたので、10日ほど 帰ってきます。 Ee. Yūkyū ga toreta node, tōka hodo kaette kimasu.

(Yes. I was able to get paid leave, so I'm going home for a whole 10 days.)

A : もう 準備は できましたか。 Mō junbi wa dekimashita ka.

(Have you prepared for the trip yet?)

B : 実は お土産の 準備が まだ できていないんです。

Jitsuwa omiyage no junbi ga mada dekiteinain desu.

(Actually I haven't prepared presents yet.)

A : 何だか 忙しそうですね。 Nandaka isogashiso desu ne.

(You look rather busy.)

B : 子供や 孫達が 帰ってくるので、布団の 準備を したり、買い出しに 行ったりして、バタバタしています。

Kodomo ya magotachi ga kaette kuru node, futon no junbi o shitari, kaidashi ni ittari shite, batakata shiteimasu..

(My children and grandchildren are coming home, so I'm busy preparing futon and shopping, and things are hectic.)

A : にぎやかに なりますね。 Nigiyaka ni narimasu ne.

(It's going to be lively!)

A : 地震に 備えて、何か していますか。

Jishin ni sonaete, nanika shiteimasu ka?

(Are you doing something in case of earthquakes?)

B : ええ、いつも 水や 缶詰などを 多めにストック しています。

Ee, itsumo mizu ya kanzume nado o ōmeni sutokku shiteimasu.

(Yes, I always stock extra water and canned food.)

C : 私は、枕元に 懐中電灯を 置いて 寝ています。

Watashi wa makuramoto ni kaichūdentō o oite neteimasu.

(I sleep with a flashlight by my pillow.)

A : 私は、避難生活に 備えて、車の トランクに 新聞や 段ボール、ビニールシート、ゴミ袋等を入れてあります。

Watashi wa, hinan seikatsu ni sonaete, kuruma no toranku ni, shinbun ya danbōru, binirushito, gomibukuro nado, o ireteimasu.

(In case of evacuation, I keep newspaper, cardboard, plastic sheets, garbage bags, etc., in the trunk of my car.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

Feel free to contact us at: Tel 0897-34-3025 (Manami Miki).

e-mail : manami-m@js6.so-net.ne.jp