

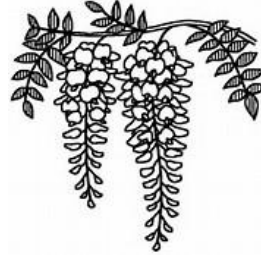
What's New?

Niihama City

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Fighting for LGBT rights in Niihama

Scott Tamaki

Fully-focused, in the moment, and filled with waves of passion. This is how I feel when supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) rights. It was February 3rd on a Friday night, when Niihama's Akagane museum opened itself up to the gay community. A friend asked me to present about something I felt passionate about and I decided on LGBT rights. The attendees slowly gathered, some old, some young, and some middle-aged Niihama residents came to the underground café at Akagane—a retired elementary school teacher, a dentist assistant, a Japanese teacher, some members of Niihama's guides club, two city hall employees, and one high schooler were in attendance for the LGBT presentation.

The presentation started with a basic explanation of the acronym "LGBT:" Lesbian: women who like other women, Gay: men who like other men, and Bisexual: people who like both men and women, T: "transgender" is when someone born either a boy or girl, feels they are in the wrong body and would like to change the sex of their body. After a few minutes we started a "maru-batsu" quiz. The first question: According to global statistics, in a class of 30 students there are about 1 or 2 students who are LGBT. This fact is correct. And the majority of people guessed correctly. People were really shocked to learn that 7% of Japan's population is LGBT. Or, that the earliest some LGBT people realize their identity is before they enter elementary school—others realize as late as junior high school. One of the biggest shocks for people was hearing there was a gay bar in Niihama! After sharing these statistics about LGBT Japan, people had many questions. As a group we clarified each other's questions. Some who were knowledgeable about the LGBT community were able to answer questions better than I could in Japanese.

Following the maru-batsu section we broke into group discussions. The first question I asked everyone was: “If your child was a boy and said he liked boys, what would you do?” This was the high point of the lecture. People had very deep and intense conversations. I went in-and-out of several groups, listening to the conversations people shared. One man gave a superb example of explaining sexual identity: a woman tastes an apple, she likes it. She then tastes an orange. She doesn’t like the orange as much as the apple. Why does she prefer the apple over the orange? The answer: Preferring an apple over an orange, a woman preferring a woman over a man, or preferring both are NATURAL CHOICES, those choices are different for each person. It’s not wrong, it’s not right, it’s just different, and that’s perfectly fine. For example, how does a man who likes women, explain WHY he likes women? Can he explain that? And why should he NEED to explain that? In Japan’s society, however, being different from the group is bad. In schools, children get bullied for being different from everyone else. Standing out makes things harder and “the nail which sticks out gets hammered down” 「出るくぎは打たれる」 is unfortunately still a mindset of most Japanese people.

Towards the end of the presentation, one older Japanese man stood up to give his opinion on our group discussion. He said, “This was the first time I heard about people who are LGBT. In Japan, this is an issue we don’t normally talk about. I think it’s important for everyone to understand what being LGBT means and to be accepting of sexual minorities.” The presentation that day ended well.

My name is Scott Tamaki, I’m an ALT from America. I’m not LGBT, but I have supported LGBT people/sexual minorities and their rights since high school. My uncle is gay and married to a nice English man. I have lived in Japan three years and heard horrible stories of LGBT Japanese people committing suicide, being violently bullied, fired from work for being gay or lesbian, unable to visit their loved one in the hospital after an accident, or being denied adoption rights.

My simple request for people who read this article: Do your own research on the Japanese LGBT community, or watch an LGBT movie, or visit the gay bar in Niihama, “Odamari ぽてと,” or learn more about the LGBT support organization: “Pride Ehime.”

This is a human rights violation that can end if more people become allies (people not LGBT but who support LGBT rights), and if more people understand the issue. Thanks for reading!

MAY EVENTS

5/3~5/5 Golden Week Special Event at Science Museum

You can enjoy giant soap bubbles and science-themed arts & crafts.

5/7 (Sun) Pagora Wisteria Flower Festival

Wisteria flower and wild flowers are at their peak. Outdoor restaurant of Auberge Yuragi is open. Local products are on sale. For further information:
TEL: 0897-64-2220

Ehime Manderine Pirate Baseball Match at City Stadium

5/13 (Sat) 12:00 ~ vs. Tokushima Indigo Socks

5/14 (Sun) 12:00 ~ vs. Kochi Fighting Dogs

The elementary school & junior high school students with the handout with them are invited. If it rains, it will be cancelled.

For details: Please call City Office

TEL: 0897-65-1303



5/22~5/28 Domu Market for Local Products

Fresh, reliable and safe vegetables and fruits produced mainly in Niihama are on the market. (10:00a.m.-7:00p.m.)

At Minetopia Besshi.

5/1~5/31 Peony Flowers are in full bloom.

5/13 (Sat) • 14 (Sun) You can enjoy seeing bonito cooking on the spot and listening to Japanese drumming. Admission free.



A Hint for Your Life

Fermented foods do us good.

(from Ehime Shimbun January 19, 2017)

We have a number of traditional fermented dietary ingredients in Japan such as miso, vinegar, sweet sake (used as seasoning), pickles, and dried bonito, fermented soybean, to say nothing of soy sauce. These fermented foods have been said to be good for our health in many ways. They are good for our skin and our intestines as well as our immune system. By eating some of them together or with dietary fibers, which help intestinal bacteria grow, they work much better. If you prefer Western food, you just have to put cereal and honey into yogurt. Don't you think it so easy?

MOVIES

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Mall)

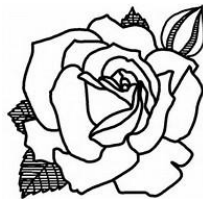
March 17 ~	Sing	2D English / Dubbed
March 25 ~	Kong : Skull Island PG12	2D English / Dubbed
April 7 ~	Ghost in the Shell	2D English
April 21 ~	Beauty and the Beast	2D English / Dubbed
April 28 ~	ICE BREAK	2D English / Dubbed
May 12 ~	Guardians of the Galaxy Vol.2	2D English
May 19 ~	Arrival	2D English

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>



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* The editors for this month are M. Shimamura & Y. Amano.



Three Haiku Bars Downtown Matsuyama

(from Ehime Shimbun March 1, 2017)

Want to compose haiku poem one night with a drink in one hand in Haiku Capital Matsuyama? A service called Three Haiku Bars, where you can enjoy composing Haiku together with food and drink, started in Matsuyama on March 1st. People related to Haiku in Ehime help each other to offer this service to Haiku fans and tourists from Japan and abroad. Each of the three bars puts the logo, “俳句 BAR” on the front. Haiku guidebooks and Haiku cards on which you can write your own pieces are available.

At “Izakaya Hoyaken”, 2 cho-me 3 bancho, owner Tetsushi Kadoya (50), gives you Haigo (Haiku pen name). He says, “Do not think Haiku high-brow but think it rather casual.” Mr. Rod Walterz, the tourism consultant of Matsuyama, adds with smile, “It would be a pity not to compose Haiku in Matsuyama since it is amusing even for beginners. I think these bars will become popular.”

At “CARAVAN”, 2 cho-me Okaido, you can enjoy “Haiku Cocktail” (¥1000 and over) made on the image of the Haiku you composed. At “WAGO”, 2 cho-me 1 bancho, you can enjoy a magic show using Haiku cards (¥3000 with 1 drink.)

Mr. Kim Chamhi(48), the chief editor of Haiku magazine Marukobo, who collaborated with this project said, “Enjoying the discussion on Haiku, we can better understand each other. I hope this attempt may become a special amusement in Matsuyama nightlife.”



ONE POINT JAPANESE

“遅い”と“遅れる”

A : 連休、どこか 行った？ Renkyū, dokoka itta?

(Did you go anywhere during the holidays?)

B : ううん、どこにも 行かないで、毎晩 遅くまで DVDを見てたよ。

Uun, doko ni mo ikanaide, maiban osoku made DVD o miteta yo.

(No, I didn't go anywhere. I watched DVDs until late every night.)

(待ち合わせ場所で Machiawase basho de) **At a meeting place**

A : Cさん、遅いですね。C-san, osoi desu ne.

(C-san is late, isn't she?)

B : ええ、Cさんが 遅れるのは 珍しいですね。

Ee. C-san ga okureru no wa mezurashi desu ne.

(Yes. It's very rare that C-san is late.)

A : あっ、メールが 来た。こちらに 向かっている そうです。

A, meru ga kita. Kochira ni mukatte iru sō desu.

(Ah, I got an email. She is on her way here.)

B : あっ、来た来た。A, kita kita. (Oh, she's here, she's here!)

C : 遅くなって、すみません。寝坊しちゃって・・・。

Osoku natte, sumimasen. Nebō shichatte...

(Sorry to be late. I overslept...)

A : 早く、早く！急がないと、(電車に) 乗り遅れるよ。

Hayaku, hayaku! Isoganai to, (densha ni) nori okureru yo.

(Hurry! Hurry! If we don't hurry, we're going to miss the train!)

B : 大丈夫！事故で、電車が 遅れてるらしいから。

Daijōbu! Jiko de, densha ga okureteru rashi kara.

(It's OK. Because of an accident, the train seems to be late.)

S : 先生、試験の 申し込みは いつまでですか。

Sensei, shiken no mōshikomi wa itsu made desu ka.

(Ms. A, when is the examination application deadline?)

T : えーと、締め切りは 来週の 土曜日です。絶対に 遅れないように。

Eeto, shimekiri wa raishū no doyōbi desu. Zettai ni okurenai yō ni.

(Let's see, the deadline is Saturday next week. Make sure you're not late!)

★遅い (adjective)

★遅れる (verb) (学校・会社・仕事・会議・授業・約束の時間) ◎ 遅れる
(バス・電車・飛行機) の 遅れる

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

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