

# What's New?

Niihama City

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## **“Thank You, Niihama” Michael Serge**

As a foreigner who relocated to Niihama only six months ago, I want to use this as a chance to thank the city of Niihama for granting me the opportunity to live in a nation very different from my own, America, and for welcoming me in such a way that made the transition as easy as possible. When I return to America, my time in Niihama will prove to be a great asset personally and to American society since I will be better equipped to be more proactive and effective in welcoming and assimilating immigrants into American culture.

On a less serious note, I must also thank you for having spectacular food! I had been to Japan twice before moving to Niihama, neither instance for work or study, only leisure. On both trips I ate various Japanese dishes but there were many I was unable to due to time limitations, lack of guidance/inability to order/buy them myself, or uncertainty as to what I exactly would have been eating. While I enjoyed some dishes on these trips, there were some I did not. When I was considering relocating to Japan, one of my biggest concerns was the drastic change in diet that would follow. My first time in Japan, I lost about 4.5kg in a week and a half! Though I enjoyed tightening up a bit from visiting, I was worried I would lose a lot more than 4.5kg if I were to live here!

I am not sure what it was about my visits that left a bad taste in my mouth (pun intended!), but thankfully I am not concerned with this situation any longer. Although, to be fair, there are still many dishes to try, the number of dishes I have not liked so far is significantly less than expected. As an ALT, I eat school lunches everyday: the only thing I don't like about them, besides chikuwa days, is that they end quickly, since they are small from an American perspective. Their taste is phenomenal. Japanese curry is delicious to the point where I want to say I dream about it in my sleep, though I haven't actually done that! I prefer it strongly to Indian curry, regardless of whether or not curry came from India. I immediately fell in love with toriten curry udon after stumbling into an udon restaurant not far from my apartment. I think the owner, or at least the person who I suspect is the owner since I see him every time I go, thinks I am crazy because of the frequency in which I go. I also admitted to him that I want to eat toriten curry udon every day.

Before my toriten curry udon kick, I frequented a katsu restaurant where I would scarf down katsu curry rice, katsu sauce, or a large tonkatsu like it was nothing. Japanese pork katsu is delicious. The only thing I am not 100% thrilled about is that there are often times a large amount of fat left on the pork cutlet. I can be a little strange with the texture of my food at times, so I do not care for the feeling of chewing on fat. Regardless, because katsu is so good, I manage. I have also realized that I like fish a lot more than I would have suspected before leaving America. The school lunch dish, saba I believe it is called, might be my favorite. While a frequent dish, it is not frequent enough for my tastes! I made some faculty at my school laugh by asking them where I can eat this dish, as it seems to be a simple house dish, not one you'd order at a restaurant. I think there is a specific version that has a fruit sautee topping on it - ah, so good! Is your stomach growing a little or is that only mine?! I also ate the best sashimi I have ever had in early November. The texture was so crisp and the initial taste reminded me of fruit - it was a subtlety sweet, like a pear! Whenever going for sushi in America, I would never eat for sashimi, only nigiri sushi, so I am glad I had this experience! I will now be venturing out to try other types of sashimi.

Being in Niihama has made me understand more deeply what, from what I understand, many sociologists claim: cuisine is one of the pillars holding up the rooftop of culture in which a people gathers. In America, there were times where I talked to people about American culture, be it a foreign student studying abroad or a foreign worker. Often times, these people would criticize America for having no culture (which I found strange - if that was the case, why would they choose to leave their respective country for America?), but specifically claim there was no good American cuisine. While I did my best to be as understanding as possible (perhaps their exposure to American cuisine was limited to only American fast food, which I would agree is terrible!), the initial reaction I had was usually slight offense. I realized that cuisine is literally not only food: it represents something deeper, a part of human identity.

So, thank you, Niihama, for having so many good dishes I can easily partake in, making it easier to assimilate to Japanese culture and identify with all of you.

My name is Michael Serge, a new ALT here in Niihama. I was born in Levittown, NY but moved to Virginia Beach, VA when I was four and resided there until moving to Chicago, IL nearly three years ago. I love road bicycling (I brought my Trek Madone from America!) and music. I once biked about 211 KM alone. I studied bassoon for seven years and have played Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 in f minor, Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade, and Bizet's Carmen Suites. The thing I find most interesting and important is my Christian faith and I have been blessed by attending 日本キリスト改革派新居浜教会 for weekly worship services here in Niihama. よろしく願います!

**Column (Chijiku) of Ehime Shinbun, September 12th, 2017**

It has been 13 years since Ehime prefecture lost the title of "Number One Mandarin Orange Producer" in Japan. The reason for this may be partially due to farmers' changing from mandarine citrus to intermediate and late ripening citrus, such as "Benimadonna" or "Kanpei". Ehime is still number one in citrus production overall, and from outside of the prefecture, the first impression of Ehime is that of orange. The status that Ehime has been championing for 34 years makes us realize the popularity and the outgoing power of it.

On the other hand, in Uwajima, the eight-years straight champion of farmed pearl production in Japan, the circumstances are a little bit different. Producers there complain, "People's image of the pearl always goes to Mie prefecture." Mie prefecture is the place where Mr. Kohkichi Mikimoto succeeded to farm pearls for the first time in the world at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of production capacity they are number three, but they boast of the number one pearl accessory shipment. Mr. Mikimoto's enthusiasm, who claimed, "You can see my pearl necklaces strangling women all over the world", seems still alive.

For Ehime which is said to be poor in processing of pearls in spite of its production, Mie is one of the targets to catch up to. Young craftsman's brains are always developing an idea saying, "We will highlight Ehime by designing power".

A citrus farmer's successor said "Terraced fields were cultivated and maintained by our ancestors. We will increase production of intermediate and late ripening citrus, keeping our true pride". It should be important to understand the passage of time and consumers' changing preferences. Riding a bicycle along the sea coast of Southern Ehime, you will see pearl farming rafts in the sea, orange fields on the hill which forms the heart warming traditional landscape of Southern Ehime, and you will appreciate ancestors' toil and young peoples' succeeding enthusiasm.

## January Events

### ☆1/1 New Year's Day

People visit Shinto shrines to pray for happiness and good health.

Department stores sell "lucky bags" full of valuable goods.

### ☆1/2 • 1/3 Kakizome (First Calligraphy of the year)

11:00 a.m. ~ 3:00 p.m. at Akagane Museum. Admission free

### ☆1/7 Coming-of-Age Day(1/8)

Ceremony starts at 11:30 a.m. at Niihama Bunka Center.

### ☆1/8 Ohshima Island Todo Fire Festival

Special ferry boat leaves Kuroshima port at 5:30 a.m. and the fire is at 6:00 a.m.

### ☆1/14 Akagane Marathon

Leaves Yamane Park at 9:00 a.m.

More than 1600 runners participate in this marathon.

### ☆1/21 Kite Flying Match

Entries accepted beginning at 1:00 p.m. at Marine Park

Kites must be homemade; strings cannot be longer than 150 meters.

Metal is not allowed. No reservations needed. Admission free.

## A Hint for Your Life

### **If you Get a Thorn in your Finger**

(from Ehime Shimbun, October 25, 2017)

What do you do if you get a splinter in your finger?

Even if you think only a first aid kit is enough for you, you should not be lazy about removing and disinfecting.

If you try to pick or dig out the thorn forcibly by your finger nail, it may cause suppuration.

Sterilize the wound first if you get pricked with a thorn.

Remove the thorn with a needle or tweezers sterilized by fire.

It is important to pull it out as straight as possible.

After removing it, you should disinfect the wound again.

If the splinter gets in under the skin, you may have difficulty removing it.

In that case, I suggest you use a five yen coin.

Please try placing the hole of the coin on the part and pressing it hard, then the splinter may come out and you may remove it more easily.

## MOVIES

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Mall)

November 23 ~	JUSTICE LEAGUE	2D English
December 8 ~	Murder on the Orient Express	2D English
December 15 ~	Star Wars The Last Jedi	2D English/ Dubbed
December 22 ~	Kung-Fu Yoga	2D Chinese/ Dubbed
January 19 ~	Paddington 2	2D English
January 19 ~	GEOSTORM	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.

### The 28<sup>th</sup> Niihama Global Party

Date: Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Time: 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Venue: Niihama Women's Plaza

4-4-19 Shonai-cho, Niihama

Admission: ¥500/person

Free for children age 6 or younger.

Try on traditional outfits!

Visit the calligraphy corner!

Enjoy sweets from all over the world!

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

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\*The editors for this month are M.Hada and T.Masuda.

# ONE POINT JAPANESE

いろいろな“とる” No.1

**A** : ちょっと、その **ドレス** を **取** っ て。 Chotto sono doresshingu totte.  
(Say, will you get me the dressing?)

**B** : はい、どうぞ！ Hai,dōzō! (OK. Here you are!)

**A** : ここで **写** 真 を **撮** っ て、**ブ** ロ グ に **ア** ッ プ し な い ？

Koko de shashin o totte, burogu ni appu shinai?

(How about taking photos and posting to a blog?)

**B** : あの 人 に **撮** っ て も ら お う ！ Ano hito ni totte moraō!

(I'll get that man to take a picture of us.)

すみませーん！ ちょっと **写** 真、**撮** っ て い た だ け ま せ ん か。

Sumimasen, chotto shashin, totte itadakemasen ka.

(Excuse me. Would you take a picture of us?)

**A** : お 正 月 休 み は ど の く ら い **取** れ ま し た か。

Oshōgatsu yasumi wa dono kurai toremashita ka.

(How long were you able to take for the New Year's holiday?)

**B** : えーと、ちよーど 10 日 だ す。 A さ ん は ？

Eeto, chōdo tōka desu. A-san wa? (Well, just 10 days. How about you, A?)

**A** : 仕 事 が 忙 し く て、ほ と ん ど 休 み が **取** れ ま せ ん で し た。

Shigoto ga isogashikute, hotondo yasumi ga toremasen deshita.

(I was so busy that I could hardly take any holiday.)

**B** : それは 大 変 で し た ね。 Sore wa taihen deshita ne. (That's too bad.)

**A** : 年 を **取** っ た ら、**田** 舎 で、の ん び り 暮 ら し た い な あ。

Toshi o tottara, inaka de nonbiri kurashitai nā.

(When I get older, I'd like to live leisurely in the country side.)

**B** : でも、不 便 な 所 は ち ょ っ と …。 Demo fuben na tokoro wa chotto... (But inconvenient places are a little...)

車 に も 乗 れ な く な る し …。 Kuruma ni mo norenakunaru shi...

(I won't even be able to use a car...)

**C** : や っ ぱ り、近 く に 病 院 や ス ー パ ー が あ る と、安 心 で す ね。

Yappari, chikaku ni byōin ya sūpā ga aru to, anshin desu ne.

(After all, when there are hospitals and supermarkets nearby, we feel secure.)

**B** : と に か く、年 を **取** っ て も、自 立 し た 生 活 を 送 り た い も の で す。

Tonikaku, toshi o totte mo, jiritsu shita sēkatsu o okuritai mono desu.

(Anyway, I'd like to lead a self-sufficient life when I get older.)

・ ~ を 取 る take, have, get

・ 休 み を 取 る take a day off

・ 年 を 取 る get old

・ 写 真 を 撮 る take a picture

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

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