

What's New?

Niihama City

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4



The Ruins of Ichinokawa Mine

By John Wheeler

The single-lane road winds up the side of Mt. Hachido, across the Matsuyama Expressway, and past a dilapidated shack populated by a half-dozen dogs. Unseen chickens reveal themselves with frantic clucking only when the scrappy mutts begin to bark their displeasure at my trudging presence.

Through the picturesque, sparsely-populated village of Ichinokawa, population less than one hundred, and up, up, up the paved path, I come to my destination: the Ichinokawa Community Center. Stone markers for the former Ichinokawa Elementary and Middle Schools, victims of the economic devastation wrought by the closure of the Ichinokawa Antimony Mine in 1957, greet me as I descend to the community center parking lot.

The building is deserted, so empty that it might be mistaken for abandoned were it not for the up-to-date city posters on the bulletin board. A sign on the door reads “temporarily closed.” The only sound is the dripping of faucets, left running presumably to prevent the pipes from freezing in the bitter winter nights.

I turn away from the empty building. A sign points me toward the site I hiked this far to see: the entrance to the Senga vein, which had been one of the most productive shafts of the old mine. A short green path leads to the mouth of the mountain, a sealed stone arch engraved with “January 1890 (Meiji 23).” Half of the arch has been buried in a landslide, possibly during the devastating 2004 typhoon season. I run my hand along the weathered stone and snap a few photos.

There is more that I want to see in the region, but chill of mid-February convinces me to put those trails aside for warmer days and descend back into Saijo. The arch will continue to stand sentinel as the sole remaining proof that Ichinokawa once boasted one of the largest antimony mines in the world, with stibnite crystals pulled from its depths on display in places as far away as London, until it is reclaimed completely by the mountain.

Toward the end of its life, the Ichinokawa Mine was purchased by Sumitomo Heavy Industries, which also operated the more-famous Besshi Copper Mine in Niihama. The difference in the way the two ruins have been memorialized is striking, with the Niihama

facility converted to a slightly-gaudy tourist attraction called Minetopia. The area around Minetopia is lonely and severe and beautiful in the same way as Ichinokawa, and one of my fondest memories since coming to Ehime is hiking the long stone stairway up to Tatsukawa Shrine.

I began my assignment as a Coordinator for International Relations at Saijo City Hall in August 2013. One of the pleasures of my job has been learning the history of the Toyo region. Most of my research has been performed in the library and in conversation with local experts, but occasionally I will head into the field to see sites like the Senga vein entrance for myself, to feel the old stone and the soft earth under my feet. The history of the Showa period, of simultaneous economic development and decline, of movement and stagnation, is writ on that stone.

The Saijo-Niihama area is so beautiful, so rich with culture and history. I feel blessed to live here, a land of vibrant cities in the shadows of lonely mountains.

John Wheeler is a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) at Saijo City Hall. He hails from sunny San Diego and studied abroad in Saitama and Yokohama. He loves movies and often bikes to the theater in Niihama, so look for him pedaling along on Route 13.

April Event

- Cherry blossoms viewing
- Boat cruise around Oshima Island

Date: Monday, May 5

Time: Cruises at 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm

Reservations: From April 3 until reach capacity
(first come, first served)

Route: From Marine Park around Oshima Island

Capacity: 40 people each (aged 3+)

Fee: ¥200 per person

Enquiry: Marine Park

TEL: 46-5636 or 46-4100

If it is rainy or bad weather, it'll be called off.

MOVIE

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Shopping Center)

February 15 ~ Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit 2D English

February 28 ~ THE HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION

OF SMAUG 2D English / 3D Dubbed

March 13 ~ FROZEN 2D English / 3D Dubbed

March 19 ~ The Secret Life of Walter Mitty 2D English/Dubbed

April 19 ~ Captain America The Winter Soldier

2D / 3D English

April 26 ~ The Amazing Spider-Man 2D / 3D English

Information Service

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

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

Movies might be changed without notice. Please check.

SGG would welcome any suggestions, questions or ideas
for monthly articles. email: yukiko-m@shikoku.ne.jp

kasi4386@plum.ocn.ne.jp

sheep@abeam.ocn.ne.jp

*The editors for this month are M. Okada & T. Kashimoto

Blow the wind against my sail.

(from Asahi Shimbun December,2013)

Mom, when you see a tricolor sail, it's my sailboat.

-Letter of a thousand of winds-

Michitaka Murakami

The winners of the "Your letter which will be sent to your beloved one who passed away and became a thousand winds" contest were announced at the Saijo Library.

Mr. Murakami won the grand prize with his letter entitled "Hi, Mom. Blow the wind against my tricolor sail." In the letter he expressed his feelings toward his now deceased mother who was very worried about him when he acquired his disabilities.

Mr. Murakami, who was the head of the dental department at Rosai Hospital, was paralyzed on the right side of his body because of a cerebral hemorrhage in September, 2001.

One year and a half later, his mother Chieko passed away at the age of 81. He was forced to retire as a dentist because he had been right-handed and could no longer control his right hand enough to be able to work. After going through hard rehabilitation he was able to recover some movement. However his mother also became physically handicapped in her left hand and leg.

Together they racked their brains to discover the best way they could handle what must be done in their daily lives.

Mr. Murakami became a member of a listening volunteer group and started to listen to elderly people.

What was more; he began sailing a sailboat again which he hadn't enjoyed since he was a student. The happy feelings and excitement he felt when the sail filled with wind encouraged him to participate in the letter contest. Last spring his friend told him about the letter contest and it took Mr. Murakami a week to write his letter. In his letter, "Mom, when you see my tricolor sail, became a thousand winds and blow the sail with Dad.". He regrets having said to his mother when she was alive, "I can no longer enjoy sailing." Instead he wishes he had said to her, "I will surely be able to sail a boat again someday."

He says, "I just expressed my honest feeling toward my mother, that's all. I feel much obliged to have received the grand prize."

The Acupuncturist in Brazil from Niihama

(from Asahi Shimbun January 27, 2014)

Mr. Fumio Takahashi(75) from Niihama is the popular acupuncturist in Brazil.

Ronaldinho, a former member of the Brazil national soccer team, has been his patient for twelve years.

When Ronaldinho was treated with acupuncture by Mr. Takahashi, he sweated a lot and gave a groan with tears in his eyes. Then Mr. Takahashi said to him, "Please stay still and trust me."

Mr. Takahashi had won perfect trust from him. Once he stayed at his house and treated him for three months.

He can tell which part is injured by feeling his body with his fingers. When Ronaldinho injured his left part of groin, he recovered much faster than expected and scored two goals at the final of the Club World Cup.

Mr. Takahashi is originally from Niihama. When he was young, he couldn't afford to go to college. He went to Brazil thinking, "I want to be successful in a foreign country." He acquired the nationality of Brazil and learned acupuncture and moxibustion by himself while working at the laboratory of the mint factory. After retiring, he started practicing his acupuncture and moxibustion clinic and his reputation spread by word of mouth. Each time he treated his patient, he improved the quality of his treatment, by racking his brains to find the best method for each one of his patients. When he treats a patient with a heavy injury, he often cannot sleep for a few days. Among his patients are the world top soccer players such as Messi, from Argentine national soccer team and Drogba from Ivory Coast national soccer team.

He is also an avid fan of Sumo and during the Sumo tournament he gets up at three in the morning and enjoys the internet live broadcasting of sumo. In addition, he never fails to watch all the high school baseball games held in Koshien Baseball Stadium in Japan. "I kind of like soccer." "If I am asked to treat Japanese soccer players at the World Cup held in Brazil, I am ready to treat them without any hesitation."

Information in English & Chinese on the Web

***What's New?**

***How to sort Garbage and trash**

***Information on living in Niihama**

Click  <http://www.city.niihama.lg.jp/english/>

Clair: *Multilingual Living Information

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

ONE POINT JAPANESE

“^{はい}入る”

A : 入学 おめでとう ございます。

Nyūgaku omedetō gozaimasu.

(Congratulations on your admission to school.)

希望の 大学に 入れて、よかったね。

Kibō no daigaku ni hairete, yokatta ne.

(It's good you were able to enter the university of your choice.)

B : ありがとう ございます。

Arigatō gozaimasu.

(Thank you very much.)

A : サークルには、もう ^{はい}入ったの？

Sākuru ni wa mo haitta no?

(Have you joined a school club?)

B : いいえ、まだです。

Iie, mada desu.

(No, not yet.)

入りたい サークルが 多すぎて、迷っているんです。

Hairitai sākuru ga ōsugite, mayotteiru n desu.

(There are so many clubs I want to join that I can't decide.)

(^{りょこう}旅行から^{またたく}帰宅して) (After coming home from traveling)

A : あー、やっぱり うちが 一番 落ち着くね。

Aa, yappari uchi ga ichiban ochitsuku ne.

(Ah, after all, home is the most relaxing.)

B : まずは ゆっくり お風呂に ^{はい}入って、^{はや}早めに ^ね寝よう。

Mazu wa yukkuri ofuro ni haitte, hayame ni neyō.

(First of all, I'll take a leisurely bath and go to bed early.)

(スシローの ^{ちゅうしゃじょう}駐車場で) (In the parking lot of Sushiro)

A : わー、車が いっぱいで、入れないね。

Wā, kuruma ga ippai de, hairenai ne.

(Wow, it's full of cars; we can't park.)

B : 先に 降りて、店に ^{はい}入ってて ください。

Saki ni orite, mise ni haittete kudasai.

(Please go ahead and get out, and enter the restaurant.)

A : あっ、あそこ 空いたよ。

Aa, asoko aita yo.

(Ah, there's an open spot!)

< 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