

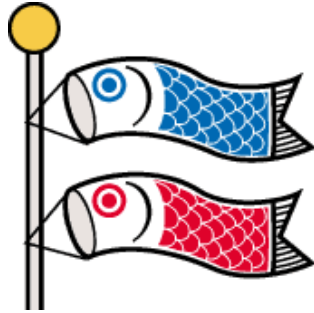
What's New?

Niihama City

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The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Thomas Leblanc-Beauregard

All over the world, spring associated with rebirth. After a dreadfully cold winter, the weather gets a little warmer, trees start to bloom and people can start spending time outside again. In Japan, springtime is synonymous with hanami parties, where friends and family will join together and have picnics under the beautiful cherry blossoms. Over the last couple of weekends, I have had the chance to go to quite a few of those parties. I had heard a lot about how wonderful springtime in Japan is, but it only took one hanami to make me a true believer!

Back in my hometown of Quebec City, Canada, we only have one sakura tree; it's hidden away in the university garden. I did not see it very often because it's so out of the way. However, everywhere I look in Niihama, I can see gorgeous pink and white sakura flowers in full bloom.

Still, just because us Canadians don't get to see these marvelous flowers in full bloom all over our cities, it doesn't mean that we don't like going outside during springtime! Indeed, instead of hanami parties, people in my area, the province of Quebec, like to celebrate spring by going to the sugar house. This is a tradition that goes back many centuries. People gather at a cabin in the woods to gather sap from the nearby maple trees. This sap is then warmed up and can be transformed into many different products, such as syrup, butter, taffy and candy.

Nowadays, the collection of sap is mostly handled by private companies. However, the tradition of the sugar house lives on! The modern sugar house has been remodeled in order to accommodate more people at once. Long tables are set inside so that large groups of friends, family and coworkers can come and enjoy a traditional Quebecois brunch together. This meal will usually consist of pancakes, bacon, ham, sausages, eggs, pork rinds, meat pies and baked beans. Almost everything on the menu is either cooked in or served with maple syrup. After the main course, everyone goes outside to enjoy some maple taffy. Why go outside? That's because taffy is very hot; it has to be served on clean snow so that it can cool down!

Once everyone has been fed, the real party can begin! The province of Quebec has a special status in Canada because of the French settlers who originally populated the area. In fact, French is still the most used language in that part of the country! As such, Quebecois culture is, in many ways, a fusion between its French origins and North American upbringing. Inside the sugar house, the long tables are moved to the side so that people may dance to traditional folk music. Quebec also has a very strong storytelling tradition: *Le raconteur* will tell stories and sing songs about local legends. Outside, people can enjoy the fresh air and go on hiking and sledding trips around the site.

In short, spring is the most wonderful time of the year in Canada and Japan because nature's rebirth gives people a reason to come together and enjoy themselves once again. During the long winter months, people tend to stay indoors and become lethargic. However, an invitation to a hanami party or a day at the sugar house is all it takes to renew your soul and become active once again! I hope all of you had a chance to enjoy a picnic under the sakura trees before the season was over. I for one am very happy that I had the opportunity to go to many hanami parties because it gave me plenty of energy, just in time for the new school year!

Thomas Leblanc-Beauregard studied to become an English teacher in Canada. He is currently working as an assistant language teacher in five of Niihama's junior high schools. He has been living in Niihama since September 2010 and intends to stay for a good long while!



Emergency Card

Ehime Prefectural International Center (EPIC) has published a leaflet, Emergency Card, to help foreign residents in Ehime be better prepared for emergencies in English, Chinese, Indonesian, Korean and Portuguese.

You can get one free at City Hall, 2nd FL, Shimin-katsudo-suishin-ka.

Some excerpts about Earthquakes and Tsunami are as follows:



Earthquakes

- ① Until the earthquake is over,
 - [Indoors] →cover your body by crawling under a table or with something else.
 - [Outdoors] →move away from concrete blocks, fences, signboards, glass and windows.
 - [Elevators] →press the Emergency button and alight at the floor at which the elevator stops.
 - [Car] →move the car to the left and stop. Leave the key in the ignition, alight from the car, leaving the doors unlocked.
- ② When the earthquake is over,
 - [Indoors] →switch off the gas and the stove fires in the kitchen and other parts of your home.
 - [Outdoors] [Elevators] [Cars] →walk to the closest evacuation center.
- ③ Beware of aftershocks (earthquakes that come afterwards)

Tsunami

A tsunami (tidal wave) may occur after an earthquake. If you live near the coast, escape to higher ground immediately. Multiple tsunamis may hit even if you cannot feel the earthquakes. Take note of the tsunami information.



May Events

5/3 Kids Taiko Float (in the afternoon)

At Ikku Shrine, IEON Mall, Co-op Kozato, Kikoji

5/5 Dome Niihama "Kids Paradise" 9:30—16:00

Many kinds of show and events: Admission free

4/23—6/5 Antarctic Exhibition at Science Museum

¥300 for over high school student ¥200 for others

5/3—5/5 Exciting Show at Science Museum Entrance Hall

You can make giant soap bubbles and strange slimes. Admission free

5/1,5/15 Sunday Market 7:30—12:00 At Chuo Koen North to City Hall

Tonaru "Machu Pichu in Orient" Tour Every Sunday till November 10:00—12:50

¥2500 for adult (lunch, hot spring, guide fees are in it.)

Booking is required a week before the date. For further information: 0897-43-1801

Would You Like some Handmade "Salty Sweets"?

Goods created from the Imagination of Primary School Students

(from The Ehime Shimbun's March 5 issue)

Students at Takihama Primary School in Niihama City, which has a salt field on its campus have recently devised a new variety of sweets, dubbed "Salty-chan",--- a cookie and rusk seasoned with handmade salt.



With the cooperation of a local confectionary firm, their creation has been commercialized and the sweets will be on sale from early March at the Takihama community center.

In 2005 a flow-down type 'mini salt field' named "Salty Takihama" was built on the school campus. The aim of the project was to cultivate the students' love for their hometown through salt making which used to be the main industry in the area, Since then, the students have experienced salt making as part of the school curriculum and can now boast that their school salt field is the only one in the world.

The development of the sweets was originally planned by all 25 of the sixth-year students of the school. Since last summer vacation they have been making trial batches of sweets and finally through repeated trial and error they succeeded in creating their salty sweets.

Late last January they asked the local confectionery firm "Eikyu Do" for cooperation in producing the sweets. They are to be sold in a 12-piece set of four kinds of rusks and cookies made of dough seasoned with handmade salt, priced at 350 yen. The rusks sprinkled with raw salt are available with the students' message "This is sweet and tasty" conspicuously shown on the packaging.

MOVIE



TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Shopping Center)



April 15 ~ GULLIVER'S TRAVELS 3D English/ Dubbed

April 15 ~ Sucker Punch Dubbed

April 23 ~ MARS NEEDS MOMS 3D Dubbed

May 13 ~ BLACK SWAN English



May 20 ~ PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN:

ON STRANGER TIDES 3D English

May 27 ~ THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU English



Information Service

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

Tape (24 hrs): 0897-35-3322 (in Japanese)



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

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ONE POINT JAPANESE

漢字の意味を覚えよう **連**

- A : 5月の **連休**、どこか 行きますか。
Gogatsu no renkyū, doko ka ikimasu ka?.
(Are you going anywhere during the May (consecutive) holiday?)
- B : いいえ。Iie (No.)
実は、**連休中**の方が 忙しくて、どこにも 行けないんです。
Jitsu wa, renkyūchū no hōga isogashikute, dokonimo ikenain desu.
(Actually I am busier during the holiday, so I can't go anywhere.)
- A : そう なんです。残念ですね。
Sō nan desu ka. Zannen desu ne.
(Is that so? That's too bad.)
- B : でも、**連休明け**に、沖縄へ 行く ことになっています。
Demo, renkyū ake ni, okinawa e iku koto ni natte imasu.
(But, I'm going to Okinawa after the holiday.)
- A : 青い 空、青い 海、いいですねえ。
Aoi sora, aoi umi, idesu ne.
(The blue sky, fresh air, the blue sea... That's wonderful.)
- B : ええ、海の 近くの ホテルに **連泊**して、のんびりしたいです。
Ee, umi no chikaku no hoteru ni renpakushite, nonbirishitai desu.
(Yes. I want to stay at a hotel near the sea for several days, and have a leisurely time.)
- A さんは?
A-san wa? (How about you, A?)
- A : 時間は あるけど、お金が ないので、家で **連続**ドラマの DVD でも 見ようかな。
Jikan wa aru kedo, okanega nainode, uchi de renzoku dorama no DVD demo miyō ka na?
(I have time but no money, so I'll maybe watch DVD of a series of TV dramas.)
- C : わたしは 10**連休**と 取れたので、帰省する ことに しました。
Watashi wa 10 renkyū toreta node, kiseisuru kotonni shimashita.
(I was able to get 10 days off in a row, so I've decided to go home.)
- A : それは、よかったですね。
Sore wa, yokatta desu ne. (That's good.)
- ゆっくり 楽しんで きて ください。
Yukkuri tanoshinde kite kudasai.
(Please have a good relaxing time.)
- C : ありがとうございます。Arigatō gozaimasu. (Thank you.)
- 帰って きたら、**連絡**しますね。
Kaette kitara, renraku shimasu ne.
(I'll get in touch when I come home.)

- ・ **連休**…consecutive holidays
- ・ **連泊**する…stay at a hotel in a row
- ・ **連続**の…a series of
- ・ **連絡**する…get in touch

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.
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