

What's New?

Niihama City

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Much Ado about Heating

by James Whittle

Another winter in Japan, another chance to lament the lack of insulation and central heating? Perhaps. I wonder how many Western people have come to Japan and realized that their fortune lies in the Japanese homebuilding industry; to build a neighborhood of insulated homes and create the next trend in Japanese housing. But that sounds like the other idea of becoming an editor of “bad” English t-shirts and other merchandise. Many newcomers to Japan fantasize about this but alas, no one has ever seen a job ad for “editor of t-shirt English”. By the same token, Western heating has never caught on here. There must be reasons for these things.

Last winter, I lived in Nagano prefecture. After walking

home from work everyday, I would take about a half hour to thaw out in front of the kerosene heater waiting for my joints to begin working again before I could get on with the evening. I considered eating dinner in the bathtub but couldn't find a small enough floating-tray. Okay, I'm exaggerating, but the point is, it was cold. Instead of eating dinner in the bathtub I turned to what has become my and many other foreign people's saving grace through Japan winters: the kotatsu.

I've had several visitors from home (New England, USA) during winter vacations in Japan and while they all share my gripes about heating, they also all ask the same question: why aren't kotatsu sold back at home? Everyone seems convinced that, in a place where people spend winters shoveling snow and scraping ice off windows, kotatsu would be a big seller, sparking a third shot at fortune after heating Japanese houses and editing t-shirts.

But I'm not so sure. I think back to all the winters I've spent at home in Massachusetts and I recall even during the black, bitterness of late January wearing a t-shirt in the house, watching TV in my room waiting for spring to come. What's wrong with this picture? What place is there for a short little table with blankets and a heater underneath plugged into the wall in the living room when I'm in my bedroom recreating the atmosphere of mid-July?

Kotatsu in northeastern America share the same fate at

t-shirt editors and central heating in Japan. They aren't really necessary. While my winters back home are defined by extremely high temperatures in my bedroom, winters here are spent beneath the kotatsu. I admire this invention for its ability to, as if my magnetic force, draw people together into conversation and shared warmth. In fact, in many ways it represents some of the things I love about this country: the sense of community, sharing/reciprocation, and the importance of a gathering. So let this winter be not another chance to gripe about the cold, but a chance to embrace the people around you and the warmth you share as you wait for spring.

James Whittle is an English teacher living with his family, and their kotatsu, in Doi.



Global Party

If you are looking for a party with a lot of fun, please join the Global Party, where you can have a good time talking, tasting various sweets, enjoying performances on stage and meeting people from different cultures.

D a t e : Sunday, 13th February, 2011

T i m e : 13:00-15:30

V e n u e : Niihama Women's Plaza
4-4-9 Shonai-cho, Niihama
TEL : 0897-37-1700

Admission : JPY500/person to be paid at the reception
Free for children of 6-year-old and under

My father's High blood Pressure Makes Me Careful about What I Eat!

(From the Asahi Shimbun 2010/10/26)

My father was a NHK announcer and he always led a busy life. He used to drink strong alcohol before going to bed and left for a work early in the morning. His blood pressure was 185(high) and 140(low). He often said, "I am in good shape", but he died at the age of 54. His death made me so painfully aware of the danger of high blood pressure that I decided to take more care of myself. Once you get used to salt reduced food, you can enjoy eating it without any problems. A bowl of miso soup contains 1.5g of salt but if you use natural stocks like kelp or dried bonito shavings, you can reduce the amount of salt by half. When I order food at Restaurants, I make it a rule to ask them to use as little salt as possible. There is an expression "You are what you eat". I try my best to choose food without agricultural chemicals or additives. Such vegetables have their own tastes and are delicious even if you don't season food with salt. Although they are little more expensive, eating healthy food makes you healthy, which means you won't have to pay as many medical bills. It does after all pay in the long run.

Garbage Collection

From the Shisei-dayori (Monthly City News) December, 2010

***Recyclable Plastic Containers & Packaging Items with stains go into "Burnable".**

Please put them into the same transparent or semi-transparent bags that you use for burnable garbage such as kitchen garbage or paper trash.

Plastic containers or packaging materials with stains create troubles at the handling facility. Dealers rank their quality according to the foreign substances included in the stains and their size. In the worst cases, the dealers refuse to take them. So only put the containers into 'Recyclable Plastic Containers & Packaging' if they are clean after being slightly rinsed with water. If they are not clean, they go into 'Burnable'.

***Bottles and Cans**

Never put ceramics or metals into the wrong designated recycle category.

Knives and razors are dangerous and should be included with 'Dangerous Items'. Ceramic balls or broken dishes are 'Non-burnable Garbage'.

Please follow the rules. If you do not follow them it becomes more difficult to recycle Bottles & Cans efficiently.

MOVIE

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Shopping Center)

January 7 ~	Unstoppable	English
January 15 ~	The Social Network	English
January 22 ~	Green Hornet	English
January 29 ~	RED	English
February 4 ~	Wall Street : Money Never Sleeps	English
February 11 ~	How Do You Know	English
February 19 ~	Hereafter	English
February 25 ~	The Chronicles of Narnia : The Dawn Treader	3D English
February 25 ~	Morning Glory	English

Information Service

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

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



<Contributed by Adam Schartup>

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

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* The editors for this month are Eiko Kato&Taeko Oishi

ONE POINT JAPANESE

漢字の意味を覚えよう “満” No.1

<p>A : 受験シーズンは、ホテルの予約が取りにくいですね。 Juken shizun wa, hoteru no yoyaku ga torinikui desu ne. (During the entrance examination season, it is hard to get hotel reservations.)</p> <p>B : ええ。Ee. (Right.) 特に大学の近くのホテルは、ほとんど満室だそうですよ。 Tokuni, daigaku no chikaku no hoteru wa, hotondo manshitsu da sō desu yo. (In particular, hotels near universities are said to be almost full.)</p>
<p>A : あーあ、この駐車場も満車ですね。 Aaa, kono chūshajō mo mansha desu ne. (Ah, this parking lot is full too, isn't it?)</p> <p>B : 大きなイベントがあると、すぐに満車になってしまいますね。 Okina ibento ga aruto, suguni mansha ni natte shimaimasu ne. (When there's a big event, it fills up quickly.)</p> <p>A : じゃ、近くの有料パーキングに止めましょうか。 Ja, chikakuno yūryō pākingu ni tomemashō ka. (So, shall we park at a nearby pay parking lot?)</p>
<p>れすとらん (レストランで) Resutoran de. (At a restaurant)</p> <p>きゃく 客 : あのう、予約していないんですが、大丈夫でしょうか。 Anō, yoyaku shiteinain desu ga, daijōbu desu ka. (Excuse me, I haven't made a reservation, but is it alright ...?)</p> <p>てんいん 店員 : すみません、ただいま満席で・・・。 Sumimasen, tadaima manseki de. (Sorry, we are full now.)</p> <p>いす そちらの椅子におかけになって、しばらくお待ちください。 Sochira no isu ni okakeninatte, shibaraku omachikudasai. (Please take a seat over there and wait for a while.)</p>
<p>がそりんすたんど (ガソリンスタンドで) Gasorin sutando de (At a gas station)</p> <p>てんいん 店員 : いらっしゃいませー! Irasshaimasē! (May I help you?)</p> <p>きゃく 客 : レギュラー満タン、お願いします。Regyurā mantan, onegaishimasu. (Fill it up with regular gasoline, please.)</p> <p>てんいん 店員 : はい! レギュラー満タン! Hai! Regyurā mantan! (Got it! Fill it up with regular!)</p>

- ・満室…be fully booked, No vacancy
- ・満席…All the seats are full.
- ・満車…The parking lot is full.
- ・満タン…The tank is full.

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.
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