

Dokudami (Chameleon Plant)

Ten Drug Effects in Kanpo

(Ehime Shimbun: July 1st, 2024)

The chameleon plant’s flower is white and lovely. It particularly stands out in June. The grass as a whole has a strong characteristic smell which may turn some people off. The smell is due to a substance called decanoy acetaldehyde, which has a strong bacteria-restraining power that is very effective for several types of suppurations.

Raw leaves can get rid of the odor from meat or fish, so in my home we put three of four raw leaves in the pan when simmering fish. However, the ingredient exists only when the leaf is raw. When dried, the leaf loses both the smell and bacteria-restraining power.

Meanwhile, in the dried chameleon plant’s leaf, the glycoside known as quercitrin and other useful substances can prevent the aging of blood vessels, among other things. In kanpo, the dried whole grass of the chameleon plant is called juyaku (ten medicines), meaning it has ten medical effects.

If using the chameleon plant, I recommend harvesting the whole grass during the June flower season and dry it to make chameleon plant tea.

\*kanpo: traditional Japanese herbal medicine originally introduced from China.

(Ohumi Jun)



This newsletter is published by SGG, a volunteer group that helps foreigners living in and around Niihama. If you need any advice, information, or support, please contact SGG. SGG would welcome any suggestions, questions, or ideas for monthly articles.

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ONE POINT JAPANESE

「つもり」の使い方

(How to use “be going to”)

**A** : もうすぐ <sup>なつやす</sup>夏休みですね。 <sup>けいかく</sup>なにか 計画が ありますか。  
Mōsugu natsuyasumi desu ne. nanika kēkaku ga arimasu ka?  
(The summer vacation is coming soon. Do you have any plans?)

**B** : <sup>ふる</sup>古い <sup>てら</sup>お寺を まわる つもりです。  
Furui otera o mawaru tsumori desu.  
(I’m going to visit old temples.)

**A** : いいですね。 <sup>しこく</sup>四国 <sup>てら</sup>のお寺ですか。  
Ī desu ne. Shikoku no otera desu ka.  
(That sounds great. Are they temples in Shikoku?)

**B** : <sup>きょうと</sup>いいえ、 <sup>てら</sup>京都の お寺です。  
Īe, Kyoto no otera desu.  
(No. They are temples in Kyoto.)

**A** : <sup>どうりょう</sup>同僚が <sup>りょこう</sup>旅行の ために「つもり <sup>ちよきん</sup>貯金」を してるって  
<sup>い</sup>言ってたんですが、 <sup>い</sup>どういう 意味ですか？  
Dōryō ga ryokō no tame ni “tsumori chokin” o shiterutte  
ittetan desu ga, dōyū imi desu ka?  
(My colleague said she has begun saving for “Places I’m Going to Go.” What does it mean?)

**B** : ああ、「つもり <sup>ちよきん</sup>貯金」ね。たとえば <sup>の</sup>コンビニの <sup>もの</sup>飲み物は いくら？  
Ā, “tsumori chokin” ne. Tatoeba kombini no nomimono wa ikura?  
(Oh, “I am going to save,” right? For example, a convenience store drink, how much would that be?)

**A** : <sup>えん</sup>300円 くらいでしょうか。  
Sambyaku yen kurai deshō ka.  
(About 300 yen, I think.)

**B** : <sup>か</sup>それを <sup>まいにち</sup>買った つもりで、 <sup>えん</sup>毎日 300円 <sup>ちよきん</sup>貯金する ことだよ。  
Sore o katta tsumoride, mainichi 300 yen chokin suru koto da yo.  
(You were going to buy that, so every day you’ll save 300 yen!)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.  
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What’s New?

Niihama City

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Sad Fat Cat  
Kanashiki Debu-neko-chan

Noella Monteiro

You may have spotted this cat, or goods depicting him at various places in Ehime - toys, T-shirts, bags, postcards, stuffed toys, teacups and even LINE stamps.

His name is Maru. He’s known for his bravery and is famous for holding the record of being the first male cat in history to ever travel across Ehime Prefecture. He is the main character in a picture book called ‘**Kanashiki Debu-neko-chan**’ which translates to ‘**Sad Fat Cat**’ in English.

I first came across this character one evening when I was jogging in Matsuyama’s Shiro-yama Park. I’m more a dog person, not a ‘cat-lover,’ but the lit-up display of this character and the odd title piqued my interest. I next saw him at the book-store, this time on the cover of a story-book. I thought I’d just flick through the book to see if it’s any good...but to my surprise it was no plain storybook! It was a novel with illustrations!!! The illustrations were based on hand painted pictures of many places I’d been to in Ehime. The were so amazing, that I just had to buy the book and I just had to read it. From the very first lines I fell in love with it - the pictures, the story, the characters, the settings, and of course the main character Maru, the sad fat cat!

The book is written by nationally renowned writer **Kazumasa Hayami**, with illustrations painted by Ehime’s very own **Karin Kano**. Hayami is an award-winning novelist whose captivating works have gone on to become TV series. (No wonder it was wordier than a child’s picture-book!) I later learned that Hayami had resided in Ehime for six years and late one night, the idea dawned upon him as he gazed at his pet cat...Would it be possible through the eyes of a cat to show off all that Ehime has to offer to everyone out there? So, the

story was set in motion.

Opting not to write a novel for his usual adult audience, he chose to write a children’s story to capture the imagination of children who would uphold the future.

He asked Karin Kano, an artist originally from Imabari City to illustrate the story, as she too was parent to a little girl like the one featured in the story. Karin’s ability to capture the hearts of people through her charming art was a great support to Hayami.

The book is compiled from the special weekly series run in the Ehime Newspaper (every Saturday from April to November 2018). It was followed by two sequels in Ehime and then three Hyogo sequels and a new series has just started with Maru, the sad fat cat continuing his travels in Hiroshima.

Hayami and Kano strongly wish for ‘Sad Fat Cat’ to become a story known and loved by all residents of Ehime. And they have a dream that someday people from all over Japan and all over the world will read the book and come here to see beautiful Ehime for themselves.

Like Hayami, I too am originally not from Ehime. And while I find the beauty, culture and history here amazing, many people around me, especially locals don’t seem to realize all there is to Ehime. They often regard it as rural and boring. So I often find myself telling foreign people and local Japanese people about my adventures in Ehime - the sea, the mountains, the cuisine, the festivals...

After I read this book, I passed it on to all my friends and colleagues. A few asked me if it was a sad story (due to the name), and I had to assure them that it wasn’t. I really enjoyed the looks on their faces after they had read the book. Everyone seemed to be impressed by some part of the book, as it features local places in Ehime that most people know or have been too. Even friends from outside Ehime really enjoyed reading it after visiting Ehime.

I don’t want to ruin it for you by telling you what Maru gets up to in the book, but I will say that it is cute, entertaining, and inspiring too. It brings up issues like acceptance, equality, and harmony and their importance. The story is set in some of Ehime’s best sights, so it is like a sightseeing guide too. It also made me a bit of a cat-lover too. And I find myself looking forward to the Saturday newspaper for the latest weekly edition which also it provides a delightful topic to discuss with my friends and colleagues, the following week at work.

Do try to read this book or even just look at the pictures, I can assure you, you won’t regret it.



Hardcover

Sad Fat Cat

Writer - Kazumasa Hayami, Illustrator - Karin Kano,



Paperback

## Doughnut Lover Endeavors in her 50’s

(Ehime Shimbun: April 18, 2025)

There is a popular specialty doughnut shop in Niihama. A woman in her 50’s started the shop from nothing simply out of her love of doughnuts. Local doughnut lovers line up out front every day since the shop’s opening in February this year and her doughnuts sell out in a short time. She is now living a fulfilling life and says she is happy to hear customers say, “Delicious!”

55-year-old Ito Junko (2 cho-me Sakai-cho, Niihama) is the proprietor of “Doughnuts & Coffee Die Katze” (1 cho-me Kikumoto-cho, Niihama). She used to visit doughnut shops in and outside of Ehime Prefecture but had never made doughnuts nor managed a shop herself. But after her only daughter got married and left home, she began contemplating her life.

Before opening she was anxious. Her friends were worried about her idea. But she started to prepare, thinking “I will do what I want when I can.” She worked especially hard to develop doughnut recipes, all while searching for a shop location, preparing equipment and studying business management.

Focusing on “nostalgic flavors”, she sells ten kinds of doughnuts, putting “Sugar” as her main item, floured with powdered sugar. She manages almost everything by herself, including dealing with customers.

Averaging 250 doughnuts a day, with as many as 400 on busy days, all items sell out in a few hours. Even after limiting the number of pieces per customer, some are not able to get any. Her shop is booming. She says, “Preparation is tough but it is rewarding. Now I am at the happiest in my life.”



## June Events

～June 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Exhibit of Sumitomo’s collection French and modern Japanese fine art masterpieces at Akagane Museum**

Fee: 1,000 yen for adults

800 yen for 65 and older

Free for college students, high school students and younger

**June 16<sup>th</sup>～August 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Four 45-minute Planetarium shows per day at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 and 3:00 p.m. at City Cultural Center (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)**

Fee: 60 yen for adults.

30 yen for high school students

10 yen for junior high school students and younger.

**July 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Futsal match between Miracle Smile Niihama and Polseid Hamada from Shimane Prefecture starting at 2:00 p.m. at the City Gymnasium**

Fee: 1,500 yen for adults

500 yen for students.

Details: 0897-65-1303 (Sports promotion section of city office)

### Online Information in English from Niihama City

☆ **A Guide for Living in Niihama**



☆ **The Niihama Medical Institution Map**



☆ **Trash & Garbage Sorting Information**



☆ **What’s New? in English**



☆ **Niihama Tourist Information**

<https://niihama.info/>



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☆ **Yorisoi Helpline for foreigners**

[TEL:0120-279-338](tel:0120-279-338) 10:00 am～10:00 pm

Multilingual Your privacy will be protected.