

What surprised me most about my new home was how delicious the ‘food’ was. In comparison to the bland food at the Cat Café, the cat-food here mixed with scraps of fresh fish and was simply scrumptious.

I diligently gobbled up everything that Mom served me. I even sucked up to her if it meant I could have seconds.

I’d look up at her and mew sweetly. A few cute meows were all it took for me to obtain as many helpings as were to be had.

Eat, eat again, sleep. And then eat and sleep again.

On another one of these idyllic days, I was hit with a shocking realization, as I caught a glimpse of a fat, chubby cat, reflected back at me in the window!

“Gosh! Has Maru always been that fat?”

A few days after Dad blurted that out, my menu was suddenly replaced with “Diet Food.” But it was too bad to even be called food.

It had no taste and no smell and was drier than even the Cat Café food. Having to eat it made me miserable.

The only one to notice my feelings was Anna.

On rare occasions when Mom was not looking, she would slip me tasty treats, once saying, “Maru, this is our little secret. You can’t tell anyone.”

Christmas and New Year are just around the corner, not to mention ‘Bonenkai’ (‘Forget-the-Year get-togethers’). How will you be spending the holiday season?

Some Japanese spend it visiting relatives and shrines, travelling or shopping, cleaning up in preparation for the New Year, while others just laze around indoors like Maru and eat, eat again, and sleep. The word for this in Japanese is ‘kuccha ne’ 食っちゃ寝. In Ehime people often relax at a kotatsu (heated table) with a bowl of mandarin oranges an arms-length away and the new year’s fare is usually specially prepared dishes called ‘osechi.’お飾.

How ever you spend them, do enjoy the holidays! Eat, drink and be merry. The diet can wait...or can be your new year’s resolution!

かなしきデブ猫ちゃん



Hardcover



Paperback

Writer - Kazumasa Hayami, Illustrator - Karin Kano,
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ONE POINT JAPANESE

「～ずに いられない」の 使い方
(How to use “can’t help ~ing”)

A : 本格的に 寒く なって きましたね。
Honkakuteki ni samuku natte kimashita ne.
(It has gotten really cold, right?)

B : こんなに 寒いけど、蚊が 出て きたんですよ。
Konnani samui kedo, ka ga dete kitandesu yo.
(It’s so cold, but some mosquitoes were flying around.)

A : えっ！ まだ、蚊が いるんですか。
E! Mada ka ga irundesu ka.
(Really? Are there still mosquitoes?)

B : そう、刺されて かゆくて、かかずに いられないんです。
Sō, sasarete kayukute, kakazu ni irarenain desu.
(Yes. I got bitten and it’s so itchy that I can’t help scratching it.)

A : ジェイさん、急に 笑い出して、どうしたんですか。
Jeisan, kyū ni warai dashite, dō shitandesu ka.
(J-san, you burst into laughter, what’s going on?)

B : この まんが、読んだ ことが ありますか。
Kono manga, yonda kotoga arimasu ka?
(Have you read this manga?)
すごく おもしろくて、笑わずには いられないんです。
Sugoku omoshirokute, warawazuni wa irarenain desu.
(It’s very funny, so I can’t help laughing.)

A : Bさん、ダイエット 続いて いますか。
B-san, daietto tsuzuite imasu ka?
(Are you sticking to your diet?)

B : 続けて いるけど、今、忘年会シーズンでしょう？
Tsuzukete irukedo, ima, bōnenkai shūzun deshō?
(Yes, but now it’s the year-end party season.)
鍋料理とか、食べずには いられないんです。
Naberyōri toka, tabezuni wa irarenain desu.
(I can’t help eating hot-pot dishes and stuff.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai>

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

Feel free to contact us at:

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What’s New?

Niihama City

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Be Considerate of Others

(Nikkei Shimbun: October 13, 2025)

Last week, reading articles over the excitement about multiple Japanese researchers’ Nobel prizes, I happened to read another article that moved me just as deeply. It reported that part of a human bone found in Miyagi prefecture in February two years ago was identified as belonging to Yamane Natsuse (6), a missing girl from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and will finally be returned to her family.

More than fourteen years have passed since the disaster, but when remains are discovered by someone by chance, they’re able to return to the place where they belong. I feel it is amazing to see the fact that our society has such a system. In her family’s statement, there were many words of gratitude to people who volunteered to clean up, those who discovered her bone fragment during the sorting process and the police officers who conducted the disaster investigation. I imagine their consideration at each of the various scenes.

You do things carefully in your daily lives and work, and in addition consider other people a little as you go. Consideration may be trifling for those who do it, but it seems as valuable as saving a life for those who receive it. If you experienced something precious you lost returned to you, you might understand the level of gratitude.

I have great respect for those who devoted themselves to returning Natsuse to her family and reflect on myself whether

I am considerate enough of others and work for others. I feel that like Nobel Prizes, the fertile ground for nurturing consideration is unstable in today's society. At the same time, Natsuse's story is great because it reminds us that consideration is able to foster strong power to save people and is a valuable social capital.

Mural Installed on Ceramic Panel at JR Niihama Station (Ehime Shimbun: October 8, 2025)

A monument based on the work of the Niihama-born artist Ishimura Yoshinari was installed in front of JR Niihama Station (2-chome Sakai-cho Niihama). It was donated by the group Soroptimist International Niihama Art. The group presented a certificate of the work to city office in June.

The mural is 0.9 meters high and 1.8 meters wide and features paintings of the twelve zodiac animals. Ishimura said, "I painted my own giant dragon through the image of embroidered dragons on the Niihama Taiko Floats. I painted them with 'copper red' as the background color. The title of the work is 'May This Year Be a Good One, too!' Ishimura expressed his delight by saying, "Thank you for turning my cherished work into this splendid ceramic panel. I hope many people will see and enjoy it." (Tsukioka Gaku)



Smartphones (Ehime Shimbun: June 6, 2025)

I feel as if work, play, even life itself is controlled by a tiny smartphone in the palm of my hand. I am not happy with my smartphone, but I can't go without it while I'm awake.

Newspaper reporters collect a lot of news material as a team and share the information we get, and then go back for follow up interviews. In that sense, from the point of view of "information sharing", smartphones play an overwhelming role. Sharing information with each member of the team individually on the phone takes much labor and time. The chat function on the phone lets us share information instantly.

Take the forest fire in Imabari last March as an example. More than twenty reporters covered it, instantly sharing information and photos taken at each site, using them as news updates.

On the other hand, your smartphone can also entertain you in your free time. With just one phone, time flies by because it has countless music and videos.

Reporters have to work every day. Even on our days off, notification sounds ring one after another. We take a look at them and reply if necessary. We have no single days when we can get away from them. When I find my life so deeply eroded by the smartphone, I feel empty.

Someday I'd like to be free from this hell. Although things have become much more convenient than before, I have a feeling that we've become much busier and farther from being happy. Don't you have the same feeling? "Chiring"---There is another notification sound.

Food Provisions

(Ehime Shimbun October 10, 2025)

When a large scale disaster occurs, several kinds of food become unavailable in convenience stores or supermarkets due to logistical failure. In past experience, it took more than one week after a disaster to restore essential utilities. To tackle the situation, storing at least three days and, if possible, a week of foods yourself is best.

As a way to store foods, a food rotation system is recommended. For instance, buy extra amounts of foods like instant noodles, instant soy soups or canned foods, consume the ones with the earliest expiration date first, and compensate for the lack accordingly.

It is important for infants, aged people, and chronic disease or allergy sufferers to store at least two weeks' worth of foods. The availability of anti-allergy foods is extremely difficult for a long time after a disaster. Water for drinking and cooking, and a gas cartridge stove are also essential.



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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* This month's editors are Hada Michiko & Matsuoka Toshio

December Events

☆ We are looking for volunteer staff for 34th Global Party (February 8, 2026).

Please apply for admission to Global Party wo Tanosimou-kai
Tel : 090 9454 9688 (Okame) or Tel : 65 1218 (Regional Community Section, Niihama City Office) by the deadline December 5, 2025.

Volunteers are invited to attend

Preparatory Meeting : 10:00AM, December 7 (Sun)

No.1 Seminar Room, Women's Plaza

(Volunteer who cannot attend the Preparatory Meeting is acceptable.)

☆ Lecture Meeting "Get"

"In Search for Sleeping Giant"

Forty Years Since Moving in Silicon Valley

Lecturer : Shimamoto Yuriko

(David Shimamoto's Mother)

10:30-12:00 AM, December 20 (Sat), 2025

No.3 Training Room, 4F of Fureai Plaza

Admission Fee : ¥ 500 (Free for student)

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**



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