

Foreign High School Students Experience Zen Meditation and Tea Ceremony

(Ehime Shimbun: May 13, 2026)

About 30 people including six foreign high school students based in Ehime and Kagawa prefectures, along with their host families and others learned about the Japanese spirit through Zen meditation and tea ceremony at Zuio-ji Temple (Soto sect) in Yamane-cho, Niihama on May 9.



Japan Inc. Shikoku District holds this event every year. The foreign students come from Germany, Denmark, Finland, Thailand and Uruguay. They study at Saijo, Imabari-Nishi, Niihama-Nishi, Uwajima-Minami, and Takamatsu-Kita Senior High Schools. One of them is going to stay until August and the others until next January.



After learning how to sit with legs crossed for Zen meditation, they tried it themselves. Struggling with unfamiliar posture, they learned with great concentration. They made tea by themselves and served it to their host families. They also enjoyed drinking tea together.

On top of reciting Hannya-shingyo (sutra) in the main hall, they observed Daitenrin Kyoza (a large revolving sutra repository) containing about 2,000 sutra books, which is designated as a cultural property by the prefectural government. Vinicius Lichtenstein (17), a Saijo High School student from Uruguay, said happily, "I had a wonderful experience. The tea also tasted good. Japanese people are very kind to us."

(Tsukioka Gaku)



ONE POINT JAPANESE

「～^{おそ}恐れがある」の^{つか}使い方
(How to use "might")

A : 週末の天気予報を見ましたか。

Shūmatsu no tenkiyohō o mimashita ka?

(Did you see this weekend's weather forecast?)



B : 日曜に、台風が接近する恐れがあると書いていましたよ。

Nichiyō ni, taifū ga sekkin suru osore ga aru to itte imashita yo.

(It said a typhoon might approach our area on Sunday.)

週末のバーベキューは、無理かもしれませんね。

Shūmatsu no bābekyū wa, murikamo shiremasen ne.

(We might not be able to have our BBQ this weekend.)

A : うーん、台風が来るなら、延期ですね。

Ūn, taifū ga kurunara, enki desu ne.

(Yeah, if the typhoon comes, we'll have to postpone it.)

(薬局で)

A : Bさん、お薬の説明をしますね。

Bsan, okusuri no setsumē o shimasu ne.

(B-san, I'll tell you about your medicine, OK?)

これは痛み止めです。食後に飲みます。

Kore wa itamidome desu. Shokugo ni nomimsau.

(These are painkillers. Take them after meals.)

眠くなる恐れがありますから、車を運転する前には飲まないでください。

Nemuku naru osore ga arimasu kara, kuruma o unten suru mae niwa nomanaide kudasai.

(These might make you drowsy, so don't take them before driving a car.)

B : はい、わかりました。

Hai, wakarimashita.

(OK, I got it.)



< 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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Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan Meet Peace the Polar Bear

(Ehime Shimbun: May 18, 2026)

His Majesty the Emperor and Her Majesty the Empress visited the Ehime Prefectural Tobe Zoological Park, Uehara-machi Tobe-cho. They met the famous polar bear Peace and other animals. They appreciated paintings by Ishimura Yoshinari (31), an animal artist from Niihama.

Their Majesties were aware that Peace was the first polar bear in Japan to be raised by bottle-feeding, after overcoming hardships of adolescence. Watching Peace, Her Majesty the Empress said with tears, that seeing Peace had been her dream. His Majesty the Emperor said that he had worried about Peace because of her sickness. Zookeeper Takaichi Atsuhiko (56) emphasized that he would take care of Peace as long as possible.



Ishimura said “I was glad that Their Majesties appreciated my paintings of Peace.” Their Majesties asked him about the secret to painting Peace. He answered that he worked hard drawing the eyes, portraying a feeling of Peace through their shape. Their Majesties remarked on how wonderful they are. Ishimura said emphatically that he made up his mind to work even harder.

Their Majesties also watched Jenifer, a Bornean orangutan, which came from Indonesia last December.



Ishimura Yoshinari Exhibition
‘ikimono daisuki (Loving Animals)’ -2026 Ehime-
July 18th – September 23rd
Ehime Museum of Art

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 K. Kazuko & M.Shiraishi .

Excerpts from the ‘Sad Fat Cat’ translation by Noella Monteiro

I quickly found the polar bear I was looking for. A huge bear that was not at all scary because of the kind expression on her face.
“Hello!” I said, and the polar bear leisurely turned to face me.
“I’m Maru. A male mask-and-mantle bi-colored cat. I’m two years old.”
“I’m Peace. A female polar bear. And I’m a lot older than you.”
Peace stood up and loomed over me like a snowy mountain, but of course I had no fear of her. On the contrary, I sensed an odd scent. For some reason Peace and I seemed to have something in common.
“Uhhh... Peace, did you ever happen to live with humans?”
I regretted asking such a stupid question the moment the words slipped out of my mouth. A polar bear this size, there’s no way she’d have been able to live in a human house.
In spite of that, Peace was unperturbed and with a loud sniff she said,
“Yeh, I lived at my keeper, Mr. Takaichi’s house.”
“Mr. Takaichi...”
“When I was born, I was very sickly. The only reason I’ve lived this long is because of the support from Mr. Takaichi, his family, the staff here at the zoo, and all my well-wishers.”

Peace, the polar bear, is the most well-loved animal at Ehime Prefecture’s Tobe Zoo. Because of her unique story, she is featured in various documentaries nationwide.

Peace was born weighing 680g at the zoo on December 2nd, 1999, to Pearl, a male polar bear from Hungary and Bariba, a female born in Denmark and raised in Switzerland. Bariba was unable to look after her newborn twin cubs. One cub didn’t survive, and Peace was taken from Bariba and placed in an incubator until her condition stabilized. Her keeper, Atsuhiro Takaichi took care of her round the clock, never leaving her for more than 15 minutes. He even took her home with him every day, until Peace grew too big to handle. Peace is now 27 years old and holds the record for being the longest surviving polar bear to be raised artificially in Japan.

Impressed by this story, last month, their royal highnesses the emperor and empress of Japan visited Peace while in Ehime. They also met Niihama artist Yoshinari Ishimura, who showed them his recently painted portrait of Peace.

You too, can see Peace at Tobe Zoo or at Ishimura’s exhibition this summer at the Ehime Museum of Art.

かなしきデブ猫ちゃん



Hardcover



Paperback

Writer - Kazumasa Hayami, Illustrator - Karin Kano,
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July Events



The City Swimming pool in Shinonome

Early July ~ August 31 (Mon) 10:00 a.m. ~ 6:00 p.m.

Fee: ¥10 for Junior High school students and younger

¥60 for High School students and older

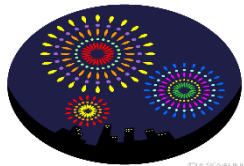
Closed: July 31 (Fri) (Per Fireworks, see below)

August 7 (Fri) 12:00 p.m. ~ (Per swimming pool for disabled people)

For further information, please call the Civic Gymnasium at 34-1888

◦ Due to the renovation of the swimming pool, the opening date will be announced on the city’s website

Fireworks Festival



July 31 (Fri) 8:00 p.m. ~ 9:00 p.m.

Location: Kokuryou-gawa riverbed

North Side of Hirakata Bridge

Phone: 65-1261, 33-5581, 32-4028

In case of rain, it will be postponed to August 3 (Mon)

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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