Driving in Heavy Rain

Your Assessment of the Situation is Important

(Ehime Shimbun: September 24, 2026)

Because flooding of cities happens in various places due to heavy rain, it is essential to know how to cope with vehicle submersion. The heavy rain in Chiba prefecture last August caused the submersion of more than 2500 cars, hindering recovery efforts and even causing several fatal accidents inside of cars. Such accidents could happen in this prefecture, so to prepare the Ehime branch of the Japan Automobile Foundation (JAF) warns drivers to drive with a proper assessment of the situation and disaster emergency supplies in the car.



A woman who later died was found in a state cardiac arrest in an underpass that was flooded by record breaking heavy rain last September in Fukushima prefecture. In Nagoya-city about 200 cars were said to have been damaged.

What should we do when we encounter a flooded road while driving car? The JAF suggests not driving the car if the water level is above the lowest part of the tire wheel. According to JAF, if the water level exceeds 10 cm, the boundary between the water channel and the road becomes unclear due to muddy waters. If the water level exceeds 30 cm, the risk of engine stoppage increases. If the water level reaches 60 cm, opening the door becomes difficult because of water pressure, and failure of the electrical system makes closing and opening the window impossible.

Imaging being locked inside the car, it is also important to carry an emergency escape-assisting hammer. There is a palm sized hammer with which the glass can be broken by pressing it to the window. It is recommended to put it within hands reach. It is also recommended to carry a raincoat for evacuation, a portable radio, a helmet, etc. in the car regularly. Avoid going out as much as possible when heavy rain is forecast, and if you must go out, confirm the circumstances carefully and evacuate promptly if there is any abnormality around you. (Takaoka Taisei)



ONE POINT JAPANESE

「厳しい」の 使い方

(How to use “strict”, hard”, etc.)

A：田中先生の 授業は どう？

Tanaka sensē no jugyō wa dō?

(How is Mr. Tanaka’s lesson?)

B：宿題も 多いし、テストも 難しいよ。とても 厳しいんだ。

Shukudai mo ōishi, tesuto mo muzukashī yo. Totemo kibishīnda.

(We have a lot of homework and the tests are difficult. He is very strict.)

A：そうなんだ。遅刻にも 厳しい？

Sōnanda. Chikoku nimo kibishī?

(I see. Is he also strict about being late?)



B：うん、1 分 遅れても 教室に 入れないよ。

Un, ippun okuretemo kyōshitsu ni hairenai yo.

(Yes. If you are even one minute late, you can’t enter the classroom.)

A：この 書類 明日までに 作れる？

Kono shorui ashita made ni tsukureru?

(Can you finish this document by tomorrow?)

B：明日ですか…？ほかの 仕事も あるので、ちょっと 厳しいです。

Ashita desu ka? Hokano shigoto mo aru node, chotto kibishī desu.

(Tomorrow? It may be a little hard because I have other work to do.)

A：そうか。じゃあ 明後日の 朝までで いいよ。

Sōka. Jā asatte no asa made de īyo.

(I got it. Then, the morning after tomorrow will be OK.)

A：大学の 入学試験 終わったんだね。どうだった？

Daigaku no nyūgakushiken owattanda ne. Dō datta?

(You finished your university entrance examination, right? How was it?)

B：思ったより 難しかったな。合格は ちょっと 厳しいかも。

Omotta yori muzukasikatta na. Gōkaku wa chotto kibishī kamo.

(It was more difficult than I had thought. I may not have passed.)

A：明日、久しぶりに 飲みに 行かない？

Ashita, hisashiburi ni nomi ni ikanai?



(It’s been a while since we’ve gone out for drinks. How about tomorrow?)

B：行きたいんだけど、今月は 出費が 多くて 生活が 厳しいんだ…。

Ikitainda kedo, kongetsu wa shuppi ga ōkute sēkatsu ga kibishīn da.

(I’d like to but I have a lot of expenses this month, so I don’t have much money.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai>

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

Feel free to contact us at: Niihama Kokusai Kōryū Kyōkai

（Niihama International Center）Tel:0897-65-1579

E-mail:niihamashikokusai@gmail.com

What’s New?

Niihama City No.374 November 2026

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“I Fell in Love with Africa and I Became a Storyteller”

Inoue Yuzu

“Why do you love Africa so much? This is the question I am asked most often. My love for Africa began with a tree that I saw on a TV program when I was in elementary school. It was a Baobab tree. This tree was big and full of wonders. It had an overwhelming presence, but somehow it felt warm and friendly. I was deeply impressed to see the tree on the TV program. I thought “I can’t believe such a wonderful tree exists!” After that, all the books I borrowed from the library and all the programs I saw on TV were related to Africa. I started thinking of going to Africa someday at any cost.

Even after I entered university, I kept hoping to go there. When I was a third-year university student, I was finally able to visit Africa. I visited Ghana, Togo and Benin. The landscape I saw for the first time, the sounds I heard, smells in the town, foods, culture... everything was different from Japan, including the flow of time and common sense. What impressed me most deeply was the people. When I was shopping, an unknown person said to me, “This one looks better.” Conversations started between people who first met. If music started playing in any situation, everybody danced and laughed.

Needless to say, there are a lot of problems such as poverty and inadequate infrastructure in Africa. Africa is not a place where people only have fun and enjoy wonderful things. Even so, I was deeply moved to know the people I met there had strength to live in the moment to the fullest. Instead of worrying too much about their future, they enjoyed each moment. When they met someone, they laughed together.

When the music was played, they danced. Their attitude toward life eventually helped me free my mind.



The most impressive thing was the unique religion and lifestyle culture I found in a village in Benin. There, prayer, music and dance were not special events but usual parts of daily life. It was an unfamiliar world to me who had lived in Japan for a long time. But experiencing this "unfamiliar world" helped me looking at the things I had taken for granted from a different viewpoint. I felt with my body, not just with my head, that there are still various kinds of values and ways of living in the world that I don't know much about.

After coming back to Japan, I realized that it would be a waste to keep these experiences as my own memories. I wanted to convey the excitement and energy I felt in Africa to somebody and possibly broaden their world. Those thoughts led me to start activities in Niihama, where I send information about Africa as "African culture ambassador".

Now I post a lot of information about Africa on social media. I also give lectures and hold workshops. At these events, participants and I listen to African music and dance together. They touch African cloths and know about African food culture. What I want to convey to them is not only knowledge about Africa. I also want to give them the chance to feel like "Africa looks fun!" or "I want to know more about Africa".

Since I discovered the world of Africa through a baobab tree my life has changed. I believe one encounter can change a person's life. Now I choose my hometown Niihama as the place of my activities and I want to make a chance for people in Niihama to encounter "the world".

I want to share with Niihama people "the strength to enjoy this moment to the fullest", "the importance of taking an interest in differences" and "closer connections with others". I will be happy to hear someday that since there was such a unique person in Niihama, they felt like trying something fun.

The elementary school student was deeply moved by a baobab tree on a TV program. The starting point to change people's lives might be in a small, unexpected place. For me, that starting point was Africa. Now I want to become a starting point for others. My motto for activities is to energize Niihama with African powers.

Well-Man:
Energize Our City! Make Everybody Smile

(Niihama Monthly City News: October, 2026)



A new super hero named "Well-Man" debuted at the "Niihama Health Festival" last May to help vitalize the city. His wish is to spread the importance of "Well-being," (living a fulfilling life mentally and physically) and "Wellness," (maintaining good physical and mental health).

The source of Well-Man's power is from the energy and smiles of citizens. His mission is not to defeat enemies, but to bring smiles to people of all ages. The sun on his head and "W" symbol, the first letter of Wellman, on his chest are both shining. He gives energy and smiles with his special move, the "Wellness Flash."

Well-Man will visit various places in Niihama with his wish to "Energize Our Niihama!" and "Bring Smiles to All Children!"

Accompaniment Support

for Non-Japanese-Speaking Patients



We provide volunteer accompaniment support for non-Japanese-speaking patients visiting medical facilities.
Our volunteers can help explain how to complete forms, guide patients through the medical visit process, and, to the best of their ability, provide interpretation support when needed.

Contact: email: yasumi@galaxy.ocn.ne.jp
Tel: 090 9454 9688

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.
email: yukiko-m@shikoku.ne.jp hayatine@nbn.ne.jp

This month's editors are Oishi Taeko & .Kumata Kazuko.



November Events

☆The 21st Japanese Speech Contest

Date: Sunday, November 15th, 13:00~16:00
Venue: Akagane Museum, Tamokuteki Hall
Organizer: Niihama Nihongo no Kai
Contacts: Niihama International Center (0897-65-1579)

☆Marine Park Niihama 30th Anniversary Event
Date: Sunday, November 15th, 9:30~16:00
Venue: Marine Park Niihama
Program: Live music performances by local junior high and high school students, calligraphy performance, magic show, food and local specialty product
Special Activities: Orange Ferry ship tour and patrol boat experience cruisl っっっっv
Registration opens on November 1st via the official website
Contact: Marine Park Niihama 30th anniversary Event Organizing Committee (0897-65-1350)

☆Mine Topia Besshi – Autumn Leaves at their peak
Tonaru Zone: Peak viewing from early to mid-November
Hadeba Zone: Peak viewing from mid to late November

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**
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