

What's New?

Niihama City

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Nature and Me

Daniel Gough

For pretty much all of my life before coming to Japan I've lived in relatively big cities; the smallest having a population density of 1,500 people/km sq (about the same as Kyoto). In the city, flies, mosquitoes, and the occasional rat were fairly common, but overall urbanization did a disturbingly efficient job of keeping the city for people only. This is why I've never really been around nature until recently, and I have to say my experiences were at times a bit surprising.

The first time I came to Japan was as an exchange student in 2008. During that time I went on a field trip to Kamakura to see the *Daibutsu* statue. The statue's plaza was a great place to take pictures and sit for a while, but come lunch time everyone in my group wanted to eat at different places, so we decided to split up and meet again later. On my way back to the *Daibutsu* after lunch I ended up getting lost. Due to this I found myself walking down the rugged steps of a tall hill when my hand felt a bump on the railing I was holding. At first I was grossed out, thinking it was someone's freshly discarded gum, and by some unknown pull I checked to see the bumpy substance some inconsiderate person left behind. That's when I saw it. Unwrapping its coils and headed down the railing in my direction was a Japanese centipede, or *mukade*, roughly 20cm in length. Of course the sight of such a large centipede shocked me so much that it triggered my natural survival instincts: which are apparently to scream like a little girl and run away. It was comforting to learn later that although *mukade* bites cause intense pain, they are not lethal.

Even so, there was a day I did come across a more frightening creature. I was traveling with a friend between school terms and one particular stop en route was Inuyama Castle. The castle was interesting as it's the oldest original castle in Japan and has a fine view of the area. However, having skipped breakfast, my friend and I were hungry so we decided to break for lunch near

the castle's entrance. We bought food from the gift shop and my friend purchased two Coca-Colas with his meal; a bad idea in retrospect. Once he opened the second Coke, the biggest bee I ever saw landed on his shoulder. After seeing a bee which easily out scaled his pinky on him, he gave a shout and started running around frantically. He managed to shake the bee off his body, but it began to fly after him. As my friend ran for dear life—with an additional one or two bees joining the chase—he yelled “Help me! Help meeeee!!!” I told him to throw the Coke he was still clutching and run, but when someone wants to finish his drink as adamantly as my friend did I suppose nothing more can really be done. Later that night, after I looked into what was chasing my friend, I discovered it was the Asian Giant Hornet, or *Suzumebachi*. Apparently this hornet is a big reason why people in Japan have a connotation that poison is corrosive. This is because not only do the toxins in this hornet's sting amplify pain, but they will melt organic tissue. Of course, it doesn't help that this poison emits an odor which attracts other hornets to attack the target. Honestly, there aren't many things I'd like to avoid as much as this bug.

Naturally, I also had memorable experiences with Japanese deer. In Nara, my friends and I were thrilled to see deer which are not afraid of humans. In our excitement we pooled our money and bought a sack full of crackers for the deer. However, the deer soon caught on that we carried food, and the bucks began to run their heads into us so we would either feed them more or drop the sack. Eventually my friends and I ended up stranded after climbing on top of a large statue for refuge. We only managed to escape after throwing out the remaining crackers and sneaking off while the deer were occupied. Luckily, the deer I met in Miyajima were far more docile. The only problem there was you needed to watch your food because the deer had a habit of sneaking up and taking off with whatever they could get their mouths on.

Well, Japan has given me more experience with nature outside a cage in two years than I had in the US. It was startling to get used to at first, but I'm pretty happy I can still interact with these things beyond a zoo, and I look forward to more surprises as I continue living in Japan.

Daniel Gough is an ALT in Saijo, Ehime. He just finished his first year working there but he studied in Japan for one year in 2008-09. He comes from Chicago, Illinois in the US and enjoys video games, Frisbee, and cooking.

MOVIE

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Shopping Center)

July 15 ~	HARRY POTTER AND DEATHLY HALLOWS : Part II	3D	English/Dubbed
July 30 ~	TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON	3D	English/Dubbed
July 30 ~	CARS II	3D	Dubbed
August 19 ~	Hop		Dubbed
August 19 ~	Kung Fu Panda 2	3D	Dubbed
September 2 ~	Winnie the Pooh		Dubbed
September 9 ~	The Smurfs		Dubbed
September 16 ~	SANCTUM		English
September 17 ~	BATTLE: LOS ANGELS		English

Information Service

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

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



<Contributed by Adam Schartup>

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My town's AKB, “Hime-kyun Fruit-kan”

From the Asahi Shimbun July 13, 2011

"AKB48" has become very popular in Japan. It was born in a small theater in Akihabara, Tokyo and since then many other groups have been formed and are following in their footsteps. Across Japan many groups are endeavouring to make a major debut nationally. They are expected to revitalize their own towns with their performances.

"Hime-kyun fruit kan, girl group from Ehime, is terrific." This is what was posted on an Internet bulletin board with many people talking about the group favorably. Their debut single "The law of the conservation of love energy" which went on sale last March, was ranked top for its first entry on the Weekly Indie Chart of Oricon and, moreover, their second single titled "Prison of love", clinched the second spot on its release. Their regular live, being held every Sunday at a live house in Matsuyama, has been very popular and is causing a great sensation to the extent that it has attracted crowds greater than the venue's seating capacity with standing room only every time.

"Hime-kyun" debuted last August, aiming to become "The idol of the nation".

Their songs are original they also play full-fledged dramas.

The group consists of 8 regular members, 14 to 19 years old, plus a few trainees called "Hina(chick)-kyun".

Producer, Emu Nishimura, once a director at a commercial broadcasting company, and one of the founders of this group, says, "This group has no specific sponsors, which might be its advantage. It can easily join up with any organization or industrial firm to engage in the revitalization of local areas."

So last spring, "Hime-kyun" was quick to form a tag-team with the Ehime Prefectural Government and made a PR song "Osakana(fish) La La La".

You can read on the Web.

***What's New?**

***Garbage and trash Collection Calendar**

***Information living in Niihama**

Click  <http://www.city.niihama.lg.jp/english/>

Won't you join our "Get Together" as a speaker?

SGG regularly has "Get Together" once a month. It is held to deepen the mutual understanding among people with different cultures. Around 15 people take part in it and talk with the guest speaker.

Usually it is held:

Place: Women's Plaza

Time: 10:30—12:00, the 3rd Sunday of the month

You can speak about anything you want in English or in Japanese for about an hour and then everyone will chat over tea. SGG can pay you some thank-you money for your talk. If you need a projector, we can provide one. If you are interested, please contact Ms. Okame, well in advance.

e-mail: yasumi@galaxy.ocn.ne.jp

TEL/FAX: 0897-34-8914

September Events

Sunday Flea Market at Niihama Central Park

Date: Sept. 18th (Sun.) from 7:30 to 12:00 (unless it rains)

Charity Bazaar in the main hall of Niihama Culture Center

Date: Sept. 18th (Sun.) from 10:00 to 14:00

Sports Day at every junior high school except Besshi

Date: Sep. 18th (Sun.)

Sports Day at every elementary school except Besshi

Date: Sep. 25th (Sun.)

Information

Free posters of the Niihama Taiko Festival will be available from September 12th.

Posters for the 2011 Niihama Taiko Festival have now been made and you can get one for free at Niihama City Hall. They will be given out to the first 1000 people, but there is a limit of only one per person.

Date: from 8:30 till 18:00 on Sep. 12th

Place: City Hall (4th FL, Unyu-Kanko Ka)

ONE POINT JAPANESE

だれでも

A : 9月は連休が2回もありますね。

Kugatsu wa renkyū ga nikai mo arimasu ne.

(There are renkyū (consecutive holidays) twice in September.)

B : ええ、どこか行きたいですね。

Ee, dokoka ikitai desu ne.

(Right. We feel like going somewhere, don't you?)

A : 格安バス旅行に申し込んでみませんか。

Kakuyasu basu ryokō ni mōshikonde mimasen ka.

(Why not try applying for a super-cheap bus trip?)

B : 外国人でも参加できますか。

Gaikokujin demo sankā dekimasu ka.

(Is it possible even for foreigners to take part in it?)

A : ええ、18歳以上なら、だれでも参加できるですよ。

Ee, jūhassai ijō nara, daredemo sankā dekiru sō desu yo.

(Yes, as long as they are over eighteen, anyone can participate, I hear.)

A : 来週、焼肉パーティーをするんだけど、Bさんも来ない？

Raishū, yakiniku pati o surun da kedo, Bsan mo konai?

(Next week we are going to have a Yakiniku party (Grilled meat party). Won't you come, B?)

B : えー、いいの？ Eē, ii no? (Wow, is it OK?)

A : どうぞ、どうぞ。Dozo, dozo. (Please!)

B : 友達も誘っていい？ Tomodachi mo sasotte ii?

(Can I invite my friends too?)

A : もちろん。だれでもOKだから。

Mochiron. Daredemo okkē dakara.

(Of course, because anyone is OK.)

A : わー、おいしい！これ、Bさんが作ったんですか。

Wā, oishi! Kore, Bsan ga tsukuttan desu ka.

(Wow, delicious! Did you make this, B?)

B : ええ。Ee. (That's right.)

A : 作るの難しそうですね。

Tsukuru no muzukashisō desu ne.

(It looks difficult to make.)

B : そんなことないですよ。Sonna koto nai desu yo.

(Not at all.)

だれでも簡単に作れますよ。

Daredemo kantan ni tsukuremasu yo.

(Anyone can make it easily.)

A : よかったら、レシピ(を)教えてもらえませんか。

Yokattara, reshipi (o) oshiete moraemasen ka.

(If it's OK, could you give me the recipe?)

B : いいですよ。Ii desu yo. (I'd be glad to.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

Feel free to contact us at: Tel 0897-34-3025 (Manami Miki).

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