

What's New?

Niihama City

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LOCATION & KNOWING: THE ARTS OF MEMORY:

Jason Young

As foreigners, home may feel estranged. Our days may bear few resemblances to our old life. We may frequent lostness & isolation. For myself, I often have a “wonderland” experience. But for learners of kanji, our defamiliarized environment may be used as a tool for study (and perhaps give us a sense of connection).

Since college, I've subscribed to a memory technique used by Greeks & Romans called 'Memory Palaces.' (Ever wonder how ancient scholars remembered well?) To anyone unfamiliar with BBC's Sherlock, the premise is simple:

A 'Memory Palace' is a walk taken through an imagined filled with evocative images & objects in order to recall information. Data is retrieved by retaking the journey & decoding the objects.

For example, suppose I want to memorize a deck of cards. I'll use Niihama park since know its layout well: (For simplicity,) let's imagine Niihama park is a square area surrounded by palm trees. At the entrance to the park is two palm trees, the man & woman statue, followed by a bench, a trashcan, two more benches, some stairs, then the 4 ring-shaped benches beneath the trees, etc.

Drawing from a shuffled deck of cards, I get the following: 4, 9, 2, 4, J, K, 6, A, 5, J, 6, A, 5, J, 6, 10, 2, 10... So I'll make the following story:

At the foot of the first palm tree is a square art easel (4), bursting through it is a comedian wearing a shocked horses' face (9), nailed to the second palm is a crossed pair of silver chopsticks (2) strung from a square easel (4), on the bench is Johnny Depp dressed as Captain Jack (J) fighting in a tug of war with whiny King Geoffrey (K) over a lace garment (6), Snoopy's red dog house (The Flying Red Ace) has crash-

landed in the garbage, scorching the second bench is a glowing orange heater (5), setting fire to Captain Jack (J)...

Ordinarily, it's impossible for me to remember decks cards. But via Memory Palaces, I can often recall past sets of numbers forwards, backwards, and even in multiple layers. Apply this to kanji & you may memorize drawing patterns, meaning, and reading. For example, let's use the location of Niihama park again to remember the following kanji: 員、物、打、毆、役, etc.

Starting with #1: 員: At the first palm tree, I'll place a black marble urn (to capture the kanji's shape impression & give weight, texture). Inside, I'll push black mussel shells into mud to remember this kanji's shell radical. In the mud I'll bury a bent coin imprinted with an 'en' to remember this kanji's onyomi ('en' coin, bent, inserted into the sand, 'en'). To capture its meaning, I'll imagine this kanji is laden with a co-worker's ashes: a laborer who was worked to death. From now, I'll see the black urn with the bent "en" token.

Lets explore kanji #2: 物: In this kanji I see a staff topped with a cow's skull beside a giant bat' wing. Now, the meaning of this kanji is "thing" or "object." Its pronounced "mono" or "butsu." So let's imagine its a pig-nosed bat's wing (since pig is "buta") with white fangs gangrenous & drooling with infectious "mono" (a sickness). So, "Be weary of that...thing. That "butsu" is infected with "mono." Let's place our creation under the second tree.

This sounds like a lot, but these are split-second impressions. For a number of reasons, "Memory Palaces" tend to work better than rote memorization:

1.) By spreading information across 3D maps, interacting with information encoded as tangible objects, and exploring our moment-by-moment sensory impressions to create stories, information is remembered in context to other information, the experience of each kanji is intensified at the time of learning, & learning is engaged with full awareness, including brain regions housing our sense memories & spatial reasoning capacities, increasing the likelihood of storage in our long-term memories as we continue to notice them in greater detail. "Sometimes, to study is to dream," said a friend.

-Jason will teach a workshop on mnemonics at the Women's Plaza at 10:30 am on June 14th .

Jason Young is a Niihama ALT.
He is from Virginia, United States.

Chimney Mountain(煙 突 山 ・ え ん と つ や ま)

Shojiyama mountain, known locally as "Chimney Mountain", was once the stage from which the famous Shogun Toyotomi Hideyoshi launched his attack on the Island of Shikoku. At the top, there now stands a red brick chimney with a colossal height of about 20m. It has become a symbol of the country's industrial heritage and in 2009 it was registered as a tangible cultural property of Japan. The chimney was constructed in 1888 as part of the Yamane refinery. The refinery began testing steel and the extraction of chemical substances such as sulfuric acid, however it was discovered that the sulfurous acid gas emanating from the chimney caused serious damage to the nearby agricultural crops, and was closed after just seven years of service. These days nothing remains of the refinery in Sumino town, but even over 127 years after its construction the chimney is unique in its appearance, and it stands today as a reminder of the intensive modernization that took place in Japan during the Meiji era. It takes about 20 minutes to walk up to the chimney from the "Entrance to Shojiyama Mountain", which can be found half way up the Besshi line road. Many citizens of Niihama enjoy walking the gradually inclining promenade on bright, sunny afternoons and early mornings. There is a bench at the top with a view that overlooks Niihama city and the Seto Inland Sea, where you can enjoy a well-deserved break while you take in the scenery. It's a great spot for hiking and it has become a common excursion for local elementary and junior high schools. Sometimes the chimney is lit up at night and the mountains are transformed by the romantic and magical light display. Mr. Ito, a local electrical shop owner and enthusiast of "Chimney Mountain", directs the amazing light-up each time. Light-ups generally take place on Saturdays, but please check the website for full details. The people of Niihama adore Chimney Mountain, so when the weather is good why not pay it a visit?

Chimney mountain light-up homepage:

<http://lightupentotuyama.web.fc2.com/>

This manga and related information is part of a series of informative comic strips that follows the adventures of Niihama's city mascot, Machuri. It was created with the intention of building interest in the places and culture of and around Niihama city. New stories are uploaded to the Machuri website regularly, including a monthly bilingual story. Join the **NPO 法人 新居浜まちゅり隊** facebook page, or visit Machuri's homepage at <http://machuri.com> and be the first to receive all of the latest stories.

SGG would welcome any suggestions, questions or ideas for monthly articles. email: yukiko-m@shikoku.ne.jp
kasi4386@plum.ocn.ne.jp
sheep@abeam.ocn.ne.jp

* The editors for this month are M. Shimamura & Y. Amano

MOVIE

TOHO CINEMAS Niihama (AEON Mall)

- April 17 ~ Furious 7 2D English/ Dubbed
April 25 ~ CINDERELLA 2D English/ Dubbed
May 16 ~ The SpongeBob Movie:
Sponge out of Water 2D Dubbed
May 22 ~ The Maze Runner 2D English

Information Service
Internet: <http://niihama-aeonmall.com>
Tape (24 hrs): 050-6868-5019(in Japanese)

Movies might be changed without notice. Please check.

MAY EVENTS

Minetopia Besshi

5/1~5/31 Peony Flowers are in full bloom.

5/16 (Sat) • 17 (Sun) You can enjoy seeing bonito cooking.

Tea ceremony at Senju-tei on 2nd~4th weekends. Tickets in advance (\200) sold at Minetopia Besshi.

5/10 (Sun) Ehime Mandarin Pirates vs Soft Bank Hawks (3rd string team) Baseball Match at Niihama Baseball Stadium

For further information: TEL: 0897-65-1303

\800 in advance \1000 on the day

Science Museum

5/3~5/5 Giant Soap Bubbles

Entrance hall Admission free

5/30 (Sat) Scary Special Make-up from 1 p.m.

8 people at a time can try makeup for 30 min.

First come, first served. Admission free.

6/7 (Sun) Cruising around Oshima from Higashi Port

for 40 min. Admission \200. Reservation begins on May 3. Call Marine Park TEL:0897-46-5636. Cancelled in case of rain.



ONE POINT JAPANESE

- A** : 連休はどうでしたか。Renkyū wa dō deshita ka.
(How was your holiday?)
- B** : 長い休みが取れたので、国へ帰って来ました。Aさんは?
Nagai yasumi ga toreta node, kuni e kaette kimashita. A-san wa?
(I was able to get a long leave, so I returned home. How about you, A?)
- A** : どこにも行かないで、ずっと家の片づけをしていました。
Doko ni mo ikanaide, zutto uchi no katazuke o shiteimashita.
(I didn't go anywhere; I was home cleaning the house the whole time.)
- B** : “片づけ”と言えば、日本の若い女性が“世界で最も影響力のある100人”に選ばれましたね。
“Katazuke” to ieba, nihon no wakai jose ga “sekaide mottomo eikyō ryoku no aru hyakunin” ni erabaremashita ne.
(Speaking of “tidying up,” a young Japanese lady was chosen as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, right?)
- A** : ええ、実はわたしも彼女に影響を受けた一人なんです。
Ee, jitsu wa watashi mo kanojo ni eikyō o uketa hitori nan desu.
(Yes. Actually I'm also one of those influenced by her.)
- B** : 普通の片づけと違うんですか。
Futsū no katazuke to chigaundesu ka.
(Is it different from ordinary tidying up?)
- A** : ええ。ちょっとユニークです。Ee. Chotto yuniku desu.
(Yes. It is a little unique.)
自分が“ときめく”ものだけを残り、捨てる物への感謝の気持ちも忘れないという考え方です。
Jibun ga “tokimeku” mono dake o nokoshi, suteru mono e no kansha no kimochi mo wasurenai to yū kangaekata desu.
(Her idea is to keep just what makes ‘your heart beat fast’ and not to forget to feel gratitude to the things you throw away.)
- B** : へえ、それだけで本当にうまくいくんですか。
Hē, sore dake de hontō ni umaku ikun desu ka .
(Really? Does it go well just doing that?)
- A** : 家の中がスッキリするだけでなく、人生観まで変わりますよ。
Ie no naka ga sukkiri suru dake de naku, jinsekan made kawarimasu yo.
(It not only makes inside the house look neat and tidy but even your view of life changes.)
よかったら今から家に来ませんか。Yokattara ima kara uchi ni kimasen ka. (If you'd like, won't you come to my house now?)
- B** : それより、私の家に来て、一緒に片づけてもらえませんか。
Sore yori, watashi no uchi ni kite, isshoni katazuketete moraemasen ka. (Rather than that, can't I have you come to my house and tidy up with me?)

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

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

e-mail : manami-m@js6.so-net.ne.jp