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<People> Miss. Michelle Milburn

Michelle is from Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. She arrived in Japan in April 2012 and is teaching English at the Junior High School of University of Hyogo.

Q : What kind of place is Prince George, your hometown?

A : It's a small city about one hour north of Vancouver by plane. The city is surrounded by hills and the primary industry is forestry. Like Japan, it has four seasons. The changing colour of leaves in the fall is especially beautiful too. In the winter it can get as cold as -25°C, and there's a lot of snow.

Q : Why did you want to come to Japan?

A : Originally I was very interested in Japanese *anime* and *manga*. Then in university, although my major was art, I took Japanese courses for two years. I also had an interest in teaching, so I applied for a position with JET Programme. I thought that while teaching English here I could continue to study Japanese and also travel to various places in my free time.

Q : Were there things that surprised you when you got to Japan?

A : Yes, there were a lot. For example, separating garbage here is so complicated, and toilets have a lot of functions that they don't have in Canada. I was also surprised when I entered shops and was greeted by a loud "Irasshaimase~," and by the squeaky voices of some of the female clerks. In Canada, clerks usually just greet you with a quiet "Good afternoon." Another thing that surprised me was that you can buy alcohol 24 hours a day in convenience stores. In Western Canada, you can only buy alcohol in special liquor stores. You also have to show two pieces of ID. On top of that, you can't drink alcohol in public places like parks and on the street.

Q : Do you have any dreams for the future?

A : I think I'd like to become a teacher when I return to Canada. But for now I'm having such a good time teaching English, and I love my school and students, so I'd like to stay in Japan as long as possible.

## Let's get out this winter!

2013 is rapidly drawing to a close. Our schedules are getting busier and it is getting colder... but there are some great things we can still see and do outside!

### ●Mt. Shosha - Ropeway ALL-NIGHT-RUN for New Year's Eve - December 31<sup>st</sup> (Tue)

Let's welcome in the New Year at Engyoji temple! Engyoji is the 27th Kinki area temple (1 of 33). It has a statue of Bodhisattva, an enlightenment being, and is often visited by pilgrims.

We can enjoy the crisp, fresh winter-night air as we travel to the top of the mountain by cable car. Please wear warm winter clothing, which is easy to walk in, because there is low-visibility on the mountain trail to the top of Mt Shosha and the walk ascends quite steeply. A flash light would be handy. On New Years Day, in the Maiden-temple, the chief priest of Engyoji temple will show us the New Year's Yume-no-sho, which is a very large, single *kanji* (Chinese character) representing the dream for the New Year.

Admission fee: ¥500.

Directions: Take a No.8 Bus from the Northern Shinki Bus Terminal, to the last stop on the line, Shosha Ropeway, approximately 30 minutes. Bus fare ¥260  
Round trip Ropeway fare ¥900      Round Trip Bus & Round trip Ropeway ¥1,300



### ●Fire Fighters Event - See fire-fighting IN ACTION.

Rescue performances, climbing ladders, fighting fires and more.

Date: January 5<sup>th</sup> (Sun) Starts at 9:30am, Rescue performance from 10:30am

Place: Shirotopia Park - directly north of Himeji Castle

### ●Mt. Masui - Zuiganji temple, *Shushoe*

Inside the pitch-black main temple, a red ogre-like demon and a blue ogre-like demon will dance, accompanied by trumpets, shell sounds and bell sounds. A ritual will be conducted to banish the demons. Following this, rice cake rolling, the ritual of burn pieces of wood on the altar and firewalking will take place in order to invoke divine blessings.

Date: February 11<sup>th</sup> (Tue · holiday), afternoon onwards

Place: Himeji city Shirakuni 3 chome 12-5

Directions: Take a No. 81, 84 or 86 bus from the Northern Shinki Bus Terminal. Get off at Shirakuni bus stop, it's approximately 30 minutes walk from there. Bus fare ¥200



« New Year's ritual of burning wood »

### ●Mt. Ayabe Plum (*Ume*) Grove

With beautiful scenery from the summit comparable to the islands of the Seto Inland Sea, the view overlooking the mountain is not to be missed. It is said that in just one sweeping glance, you can see around 20,000 red and white Japanese apricot blossoms of trees, which are planted along the hills of Ayabe mountain.

Viewing Times: February 11<sup>th</sup> (Tue · holiday) - March 21<sup>st</sup> (Fri · holiday) 9:00 - 17:00

Place: Tatsuno city, Mitsu town, Kurosaki 1492

Admission fee: Adult ¥500 Child ¥400 Parking fee: ¥500

Directions: JR Aboshi station or Sanyo electric Railway stopping over Aboshi station.

There are also special buses operating for this event.

Queries: Kurosaki Baien Association, Phone: 079-322-3551



● **Koko-en (The gardens on the west-side of Himeji Castle) Plum Blossom festival**

You can see a wide range of dwarfed potted plants (*bonsai*). There are also multicolored plums (*ume*), for example one variety is a deep red and white plum variety. They are very interesting and beautiful in different places in the garden.

Dates: February 16<sup>th</sup> (Sun) - March 9<sup>th</sup> (Sun)

Viewing Times: 9:00 - 17:00, last entry 16:30

Admission fee: Adult ¥300 Child ¥150

Directions: Take the Loop bus, or any scheduled bus, from the Shinki Bus Northern Terminal and get off at near Himeji castle at “Otemon-mae” bus stop. Bus fare ¥100



**In regards to the consumption tax**

From April 1st, 2014, the consumption tax will be **raised**.  
The current rate of **5%** will rise to **8%**  
(More details will be provided at a later date.)

**Himeji Police News**

**Please be careful not to get scammed!!**

● **The “Hi Grandpa” swindle**

You get call from a person pretending to be your son or your grandson, which says “I’m in trouble, please help me, transfer your money into my account.” The scam artist tells you their bank account and tells you to transfer the money there.

● **The “Financial products dealings” swindle**

The scam artist calls you saying they are from corporate bond or insurance company, they send you the pamphlets make you believe the business is lucrative if you purchase those financial products, but it is a fictitious company. It’s a scam!

● **The “Refund” swindle**

The scam artist calls you and gives their name as a city worker or an employee of social insurance office, then tells you “You are able to receive rebate of medical expenses or pension, so to claim it please go to the ATM machine of a convenience store nearby.” After that, you access your account from the ATM machine and the scam artist defrauds your money by transferring your money to another account.

Please don’t be confused if a stranger calls you.

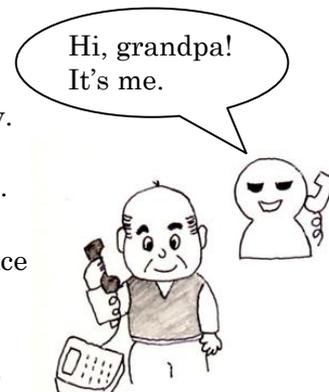
Pause a moment and please do NOT believe their story of easy money.

Talk with your family and acquaintances please do NOT decide alone.

There are no procedures that order you to operate an ATM machine so you can receive money back from city hall or a social insurance office by phone.

If you think that the call is suspicious, please call police immediately.

The Hyogo police please call #9110 or 110.



# Setsubun

~Enjoy! Traditional Custom~



Setsubun means “division of seasons” and in Japan, there are four seasons per year, so there should be 4 ‘Setsubun’ festivals each year. However, Setsubun as “Traditional event” in Japan is only celebrated once a year in February.

This event is held on the day before the change of season from winter to spring on the old lunar calendar (Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>). On this day, people throw and scatter roasted soybeans as a wish for good fortune and to avoid misfortune throughout the year.

Setsubun in 2014 will take place on Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>. At famous shrines and temples, “Bean-Throwing Ceremonies” are very popular, and meanwhile, at home, children throw roasted soybeans inside and outside their houses with a cry of “Fuku wa uchi! Oni wa soto!” which means “Good luck in! Devils out! ”. After that, the children eat the same numbers of soybeans as their age.

For setsubun, people also eat “*Makizushi*” (hand-rolled sushi). They take a bite of their *makizushi*, face towards “Ehou” (the lucky direction) and make a wish. This year, you can make some hand-rolled sushi with your family and friends and make a wish too! The lucky direction for 2014 is “east-northeast”. Here’s the recipe for *Makizushi*! Good Luck!



## Hand-Rolled *Sushi* (For 4 people)

### Ingredients

- Seaweed for hand-rolled sushi...1pack
- Rice.....3 cups
- Vinegar.....60cc
- Sugar.....3 tablespoons
- Salt.....2 teaspoons
- ※Ingredients.....anything you like
- Seasoning ..... Wasabi, Mayonnaise, Soy sauce

### How to cook

- ①Cook 3 cups of rice using 2½ cups of water. The rice should be slightly hard-boiled.
- ②Mix the vinegar, sugar and salt together and heat them for 15 seconds (based on 500w) in the microwave oven.
- ③Put the hot rice in a tray and mix in ②, then cool it immediately using a hand-held fan.
- ④Put 2 tablespoons of rice on the seaweed, put the “ingredients” on top of the rice, then roll the sushi up, starting from the lower left corner.

### How to roll

1 Ingredients →



2 Put rice on→



3 Add ingredients → 4 Roll from the lower left



※Ingredient suggestions: tuna, shrimp, squid, meat, cucumber, shoot, lettuce, green perilla, pickles, rolled egg, fermented soybeans, etc...anything you like, really!

## Information: Vegetable market place

There are some market places near JR Himeji Station, where neighboring farmers sell their fresh vegetables directly to the public. They are within walking distance from Himeji station, so they are very conveniently located.



### ① Bus station Veggie Shop

This veggie shop is in the building of the Shinki bus transportation terminal, they sell vegetables, fruits, flowers and processed foods.

Trading hours: 11:30 - 17:30, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays  
Closed: National holidays

Contact: Shinki bus transportation Co., Ltd.  
Tel: 079-223-1247



### ② Nishinikai-machi Morning Market\*\*

The women's circle in Hayashida district sells their hand-made products. The market is in front of Nishinikai-machi Community Center.

Trading Days: 10:00 - 13:30, on second and fourth Wednesday of every month

Contact: JA Hyogo West Agricultural Center  
Tel: 079-261-4551

\*\*Nearby, *Yose (Rakugo)* is also held on the third Wednesday of each month at Shichifukuza theater. (Tickets are very cheap at only ¥500!).



### ③ Nikaimachi Heartful Fresh Market

Vegetables, fish and other products.

Trading Days: 10:00 - 17:00, on Fridays and Saturdays, in first ten days of every month

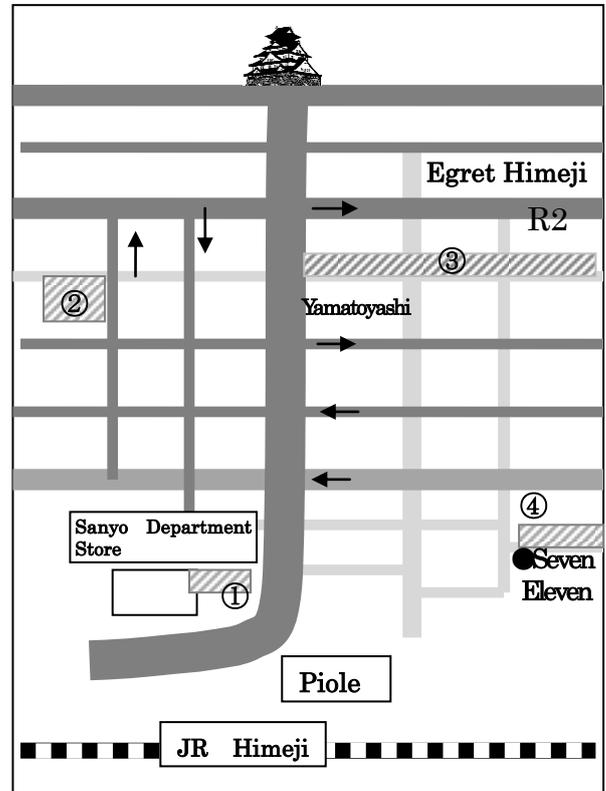
Contact: Nikaimachi market street promotion union  
Tel: 079-225-1040

### ④ Arakawa Morning Market (on Omizo street)

Vegetables and flowers. Open until sold out. You need to get in quick because things usually sell out in only two hours. Omizo-*suji* (street) is located on the northside of Seven Eleven.

Open: 8:30 until sold out, every Saturday

Contact: JA Hyogo West, Himeji central agriculture Center  
Tel: 079-298-3201



### A recipe for vegetables in season

☆Sauteed Bacon and Spinach☆

Ingredients: 1 bundle of spinach

5 slices of bacon

10 grams of butter

1 tablespoon of soy sauce

A pinch of grated garlic

A small amount of salt

and pepper



Method: Cut the spinach and bacon into bite-sized pieces. Add some salad oil to a hot frying pan. Fry the spinach and bacon until they become soft, then add other ingredients. Sautee together.

How about asking the market staff how to cook those vegetables?

☆☆Information about the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation☆☆

■We are now inviting participants for a Japanese Speech Contest

The Spring Festival will be held at Egret Himeji (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors) on March 2, 2014.

During the festival, we will hold a Japanese Speech Contest for foreign residents, who are living, working or studying in Himeji. We are currently looking for participants for this speech contest. Do you want to come join us and make a speech in Japanese? Last year, 14 people took part and it was a really exciting contest and a valuable and rewarding experience for all of our contestants. If you're interested, please contact Kiyose (the person in charge) using the contact information below. Anyone who wants to make a speech in Japanese is strongly encouraged to register their interest.

■The 3<sup>rd</sup> term of Japanese language course for 2013—Now looking for course participants

The 3<sup>rd</sup> term of Japanese language courses for foreign residents will start in January. If you wish to register for these courses, please come to our office at Egret (3<sup>rd</sup> floor). Please note that we are closed over the New Years period from December 28<sup>th</sup> to January 4<sup>th</sup>.

※※※ Editor's Postscript ※※※

The world is ever-changing and time passes by so quickly. Generally speaking, at this time of the year, it is customary for us to quietly reflect on the year that has passed, think about our hopes and dreams for the coming year and pray for peace.

As I reflect on this year, I think of all the natural disasters that have raged not only in Japan, but throughout the world. Without an end to these disasters in sight, it looks like the situation is only going to get worse across the globe. So, as we look to the years ahead, it is imperative that we make concerted efforts to address the global challenge of natural disasters.

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Their assistance is much appreciated.

Back issues of "VIVA! ひめじ" can be accessed from the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation (International Exchange Section) website - <http://www.himeji-iec.or.jp/>.

The next issue of "VIVA! ひめじ" will be available in March. Don't miss it!

We invite your comments and suggestions and we are always looking for translators and native speakers of English to assist us with translating and proofreading upcoming editions of "VIVA! ひめじ". If you are interested, please contact us using the contact information below.

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