

VIVA ! ひめじ

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<People> Interview THET THIRI ZAW

Originally from Yangon, Myanmar, she married a Japanese man. They live in Takasago with their one year old son and his parents . Her Japanese name is Thiri Takamatsu.

Q : When did you come to Japan ?

A : I came in September 2004 to learn Japanese and sight-see. Also, after coming to Japan, I volunteered at the Visa center in the Myanmar Embassy in Western Japan.

Q : Why did you have the chance to come to Japan ?

A : I worked at a Japanese company in Yangon . My father in law did technical guidance for the Myanmar National Railways and left to be a branch manager for my company and because I worked as a Japanese interpreter in the company, I began to interpret for him and Myanmar Railways. I was then invited to do a homestay in his home to learn improve my Japanese.

Q : Would you please briefly talk about your country ?

A : Myanmar is a multiethnic country . It stretches to the North and South, and has many borders . To its North is China, India and Bangladesh lie to the west, Laos is in the East, and Thailand borders the South. There are various ethnic groups living near each country and each have their own customs and traditions. Myanmar's main industry is agriculture and it exports a lot of rice, fruits, and vegetables. People are self-sufficient and most people are Buddhist.

Q : Please tell me about ingredients and recipes.

A : Rice is the staple food. We eat it steamed. Side dishes are mainly vegetables, seafood and meat(chicken, pork, beef). We make seasonings by blending garlic, onion, and red pepper. It is like Japanese miso. We make oil from peanuts and sesame and frying them over a high flame is a common technique.

Q : What was the most impressive thing you saw when you came to Japan?

A : Himeji was the first city that I visited . I learned Japanese at EGRET in Himeji and I was very glad. Because of this, I was deeply impressed.

Q : What do you want to do in Japan now ?

A : I want to attend Japanese classes at EGRET and volunteer as a Japanese teacher for foreigners. I want to repay people's kindness. In the future I want to join International Friendship Festival and introduce Myanmar's cooking to you all. I want to get to know as many people as possible through cooking , and I hope that they will learn about Myanmar.

***Osechi* –New Year’s food -**

Osechi is a special food served during the New Year. We usually start to cook it around the 29th December and eat it from Jan 1st to 3rd.

There are various kinds of *Osechi*. What they have in common though, is the luck that they bring us for the New Year. Foods are packed in three to five-layered boxes, called *Juubako* and are cooked to stay good for a long time so that housewives, who are usually always busy with cooking, can take a break during the New Year.



Osechi commonly used to be prepared at home but are now easily available at supermarkets and department stores. Although *Osechi* used to contain only Japanese foods, in recent times, they've also included Western and Chinese foods.

Here we'll introduce two easy *Osechi* recipes.

You can find the ingredients for the recipes throughout the year so you can try cooking these anytime!

***Namasu* (4 servings) calorie: 188kcal, cost:130yen**

This is sweet-and-sour pickled salad, which contains *daikon* radish and carrot. It does not require any special tool, oil, or even heat, so it's very easy and healthy dish. *Namasu* is best eaten two or three days after preparation. The color of the radish and carrot is very vivid and the red and white colours signify celebration in Japan. If you do not care for raw vegetables or if you like them to be softer, you can boil the vegetables first.



<Ingredients>

- 1/3 medium size *daikon* radish (400g)
- 1/2 small size carrot (50g)
- 1 teaspoon salt (3g)

*sweet vinegar (seasoning for #2)

- 4 tablespoon vinegar (60ml)
- 2 1/5 tablespoon sugar (18g)
- 2 1/2 tablespoon salt (7.5g)

<Method>

#1. Peel the *daikon* radish and carrot. Thinly slice them into 4cm long by 2mm wide sticks.

#2. Put pieces into a bowl. Sprinkle salt over it and mix well. Stand for 20 minutes to soften.



When vegetables are soft, firmly squeeze them with your hands to rid them of moisture.

#3. Combine vinegar, sugar, and salt to make sweet vinegar. Mix this with the vegetable in the bowl.



Pineapple *Kinton* (sweet potato) (4 servings) calorie: 499kcal, cost: 350yen

Another example of Osechi food is *Kinton*, a sweetened sweet potato. *Kinton* is usually mixed with chestnuts, but it is much more convenient and easier to mix it with pineapples. *Kinton* that contains chestnuts resembles gold and people believe that cooking it will bring them wealth. Also, pineapple probably also reminds you of gold!

<Ingredients>

- 1/2 large size sweet potato(280g)
- 1 1/2 tablespoon sugar (14g)
- 2 slices of canned pineapples
- 1/4 cup of syrup from canned pineapple (50g)
- 1/5 teaspoon salt (0.5g)

<How to cook>

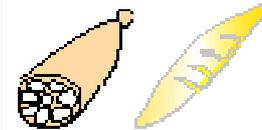
- #1. Peel sweet potato, cut into 2cm by 2 cm cubes. Soak in water for 10 minutes.
- #2. Rinse well, and boil with just enough water to be soaked.
- #3. When sweet potato gets soft, remove the hot water from the pan and boil the sweet potatoes some more to remove excess moisture .
- #4. Add sugar, salt, and syrup of canned pineapple into the pan and boil untill the moisture is gone. #5 Mix in diced pineapples.



Other *Osechi* Menu Items

-*Su-renkon*(pickled lotus root)

Renkon has many long holes, which symbolise a bright and clear future, that you can look through,



-*Kazunoko* (herring eggs)

Kazunoko are eggs from a fish called *Nishin* or herring. Since *Kazunoko* contain a large number of eggs, we eat it to be gifted with many children.

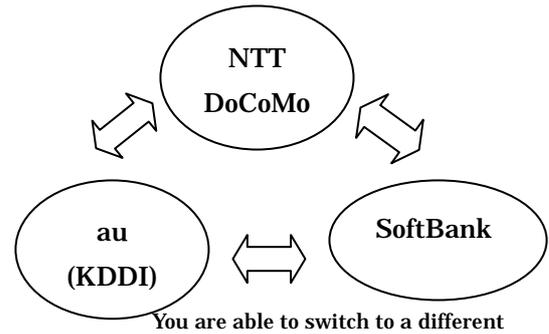
Cell Phone Number Portability System

The cell phone number portability system began from October 24th.

Here are some basic pointers about the system.

Q : What is the cell phone number portability system?

A: It allows you to keep your phone number even if you sign a new contract with a different cell phone company .



You are able to switch to a different cell phone company with the same number.

Q : How can I use the system?

A : 1. Request an MNP Reservation Number from your cell phone company.

- Contact: cell phone shops or call centers for the reservation or check the websites
- Validity term: 15 days including the application date. If you don't sign with a different cell phone company, the reservation will expire and the current contract will continue without any changes.

2. Visit a cell phone shop of the company you want to sign up with. Buy a new cell phone, select a charge plan, and tell them your MNP number. After filling in the contract documentation, you can begin using the new cell phone with your current number. (Note: You cannot sign up through the internet or call centers.)

Q : How much does it cost?

A : You must pay both a 'cancellation charge' and a 'sign-up charge'.

'cancellation charge': paid for the cell phone company contract you will cancel.
2,100 yen for NTT DoCoMo, KDDI, and SoftBank

'sign-up charge': paid to the cell phone company you will sign up with.
2,835 yen for KDDI and SoftBank; 3,150 yen for NTT DoCoMo

Q : Are there any key considerations when using the system?

A : • You cannot use your current email address.

- Since you will be a new customer, you cannot get a discount based on the points you earned by having continued your contract with the current company.

Even if you re-sign up with your original cell phone company, you will also be regarded as a new customer with no continuous contract benefit toward a discount.

- Your points will be completely cleared.
- If you signed up for a long-term contract discount, you may be charged extra for the cancellation.
- In addition, extra charges might be incurred.
- You will not be able to use your current cell phone handset once you switch to a different company.

The cell phone number portability system delivers the advantage of being able to sign a contract with a different company without changing your phone number however, there are several issues you should take into consideration. For further information, please contact your cell phone company.

EVENT INFORMATION ~ 2007 ~

Monday, January 1
Himeji Castle: Admission Free
7 : 3 0 - 1 6 : 0 0

Early in January: All Japan Kite-Flying Festival

Location: Himeji Racetrack (Himeji Koen Keibajo)

About 800 kites from all over Japan will be flying in the sky.

Contact: Tourism & Exchange Promotion

Department

079-287-3659

<http://www.city.himeji.hyogo.jp/kankosin/>



Sunday, January 7
New Year's Parade of Fire Brigades

Location: Sirotopia Park

Time: From around 9:30 - Ceremony
From around 10:20 - Performance
(Fire department band, rescue parties, fire brigades, etc.)

Access

North of Himeji Castle (Approx. 20 min. walk from Himeji Station)

Bus: Take 3, 4, or 64 bus in front of Shinki Bus Terminal, get off at

Hakubutsukan-mae

Shinki Bus: <http://www.shinkibus.co.jp>

Setsubun Ceremony – Throwing Beans to Chase out ‘Oni’

* An oni means an ogre (monster) that symbolizes evil spirit.

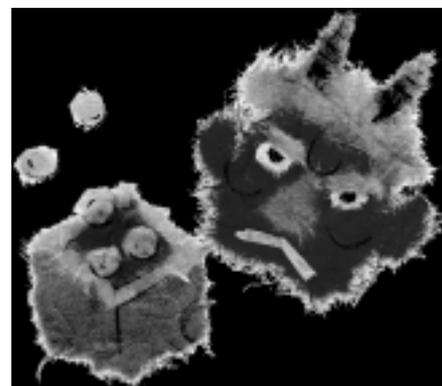
This ceremony is held during ‘setsubun’ or New year’s Eve in the traditional Japanese calendar and is held to purge evil spirits and ask for good health for family members. Small pieces of ‘mochi’ (pounded rice) or dried soy beans are thrown in shrines and temples. It is said that eating the same number of beans as your age will keep you healthy all during the coming year.

Another tradition is the eating of ‘maki-zushi’ (rolled sushi), eaten while facing the ‘eh-hou’ otherwise known as the lucky direction for the year. In 2007, it will be North-NorthWest and doing this will bring good fortune for the coming year.

Note: It is essential that you not say anything while eating the ‘maki-zushi’, or your good luck will run away from you!!

Venues to watch some bean throwing include:

- 1 / 1 8 Shosha-zan Engyo-ji
mailto:tomo@lifeware-design.jp (English available)
- 2 / 3 Harimanokuni Soshu (<http://www2.ocn.ne.jp/~soshu/>)
Hiromine Jinja
Shosha-zan Engyo-ji
Himeji Jinja
- 2 / 1 1 Masui-yama Zuigan-ji



*** A Spring Festival will be held on Sunday, March 11.***

Information from Himeji International Association

Japanese Class for Foreign Residents

Third term classes will run from January to March, 2007.

Basic Japanese classes are available. Classes will focus on grammar, conversation, reading and writing and are taught by professional instructors.

<Levels>

Basic A class (Wed, Sun), Basic B (Thur, Sun), Basic C (Wed, Sun), BasicD-1 (Sun), Basic D-2 (Thur) There are 8 classes. Maximum 20 students p/ class. Cost: 3000 yen

The text book fee: Basic A,B,C,D-2 『みんなの日本語』^{にほんご} main textbook 2,625 yen (tax included)
『みんなの日本語』^{にほんご} sub textbook 2,100yen (tax included)

Basic D-1 undecided

Himeji International Exchange Center

Egret Himeji 4F, 68-290 Honmachi, Himeji-city

Location & Apply: Visit Himeji International Association (Egret Himeji 3F) to reserve your place. We'll be taking applications from Friday, 5th December 2006.

Contact: Himeji International Association

URL <http://www.himeji-iec.or.jp/>



Editors Postscript

Changing cell phone companies has become easier, however, there are still areas that you should be careful about.

For example, changing providers will cost you and you should be aware of problems that may arise with your cell phone functionality. Choose the company that is best for your needs.

The publication of the next issue of "VIVA Himeji No.20" is planned for March 2007.

We'd like to hear from you!

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We appreciate all your help. (Only those permitted are carried)

We always need some translation assistants and native proofreaders.

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