



## A look into the International Student Concierge Services

Within the walls of Tohoku University's Main Library in Kawauchi Campus, when passing through the gate, there is a desk at the left hand side at main floor. Some who might walk passing it not knowing what the student in that desk does. But do not worry. All that mystery will soon be uncovered. In this brief article we (those sitting at the inconspicuous desk) would like to give you (our avid readers) an introduction to the International Concierge and all of its services.

**Concierge Service for International Student**  
面向国际学生的咨询服务  
@ Reference Desk at the Main Library  
(Kawauchi-Minami Campus)  
Weekdays, 13:00-17:00 (10:00-17:00 in October)

The International Concierge service was established in 2012 with the aim of providing help and support to international students. With that in mind, the International Concierge team is made up of 19 foreign students, who at some instance, were "new" to Tohoku University and Sendai.

At one point or another international students have gone through the phase of arriving at a new and unknown place. For some people, this might be their first time in Japan, for others it might be the first time out of the country. Regardless of the situation, we have

all arrived at a new place and felt a bit overwhelmed or lost.

The students at the International Concierge have been able to settle into Tohoku University themselves and are very eager to help anyone. The concierge team is made up of students from all around the world and that is why we are able to provide in various languages (Farsi, Portuguese, Korean, Spanish, Chinese, Hindi ...) assistance as well as English.



### Services

The International Concierge desk is open from 1pm until 5pm from Monday to Friday (As of December 2018).

The Concierge students are there to provide assistance to anyone who has any problem using the library or its services. For example, if there is a student who does not know how to search for materials using the library's Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), we can walk them through that.

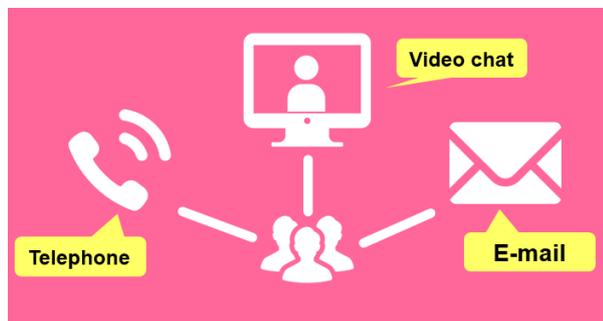
Another issue that a student may face is printing. Perhaps they are not acquainted with the computers or the process that is required in order to print materials in the library. That is also another thing we can help with.

Needless to say, the International Student Concierge is a service for anyone who is having any sort of difficulties.

Our services are help to (but are not limited to):

- ❖ Searching for books within the Tohoku University Libraries
- ❖ Connecting to the on campus Wi-Fi (eduroam)
- ❖ Using the online database for research
- ❖ Having trouble printing
- ❖ Borrowing materials from other libraries or from other universities.

And while the International Concierge desk is located in Kawauchi, we can still be reached via email, telephone, or even video-chat. So there is no need to come all the way to Kawauchi in the middle of the winter ... students can still reach us.



### Library Guidance Session & Tour

At the beginning of every semester, the International Concierge Staff holds various library guidance sessions/tours for the newly arrived students. In October we held 5 sessions in English and 5 sessions in Chinese.

The library guidance and tour lasted about an hour and it consisted of a 30 minute PowerPoint presentation and a 30 minute tour of the facilities. In the PowerPoint presentation gave students a brief history of the library followed by an explanation on how to use the basic services of in the library.

We also talked about the online resources that are available and we familiarized the students on how to access certain database.

Following the presentation the students were taken around the library and shown key points of interest. The students were shown the different reading rooms, taken to the basement and shown the stack room, amongst other things.



### Global Sessions

Global Sessions are events held throughout the semester by the International Student Concierges, to provide a cross-cultural experience for both Japanese and foreign students. The first Global Session of the 2018 autumn semester was Vivi Sendai! Let's enjoy Your Life in Sendai. In this event International Concierge students gave presentations in English and Japanese about life here in Sendai.



As expressed by **Cristy Garciamendez**

## Reader's Choice: What to Read Next?

*This section introduces a new book from our available selection at the Tohoku University Main Library. It is intended to pique your interest and fill your grey matter with intellect and emotion. Sit back and read!*

It is well known that Japanese has been deemed one of the most difficult languages to learn. In my experience, one of the main reasons that Japanese is troublesome, is due to the difference between the Japanese that is taught in the classroom vs. the Japanese that is actually used in the streets. Additionally, there are many people who supplement their Japanese studies with tools, such as, MANGA or ANIME. In the world of MANGA/ANIME, there is the concept of 役割語 (yakuwarigo), when the word is broken down, it is made up of 役割 (yakuwari), meaning "role", and 語 meaning "language". Putting both words together, you get the concept of "role language" which is used to depict certain characteristics about the character. For example, a certain type of speech could be used to illustrate the gender, time period, or the fact that the character is an animal. These features are used to highlight personality traits of a character in the story, and thus this type of language may not be present in "standard" Japanese. If someone who is learning Japanese were to speak in such a manner, it may confuse native Japanese speakers. Although I have been learning Japanese for 10 years, there are still times where I have problems with the language and at times this makes me feel doubtful about my Japanese skills.

When I was taking a Japanese reading class during my undergraduate studies, the teacher gave us an assignment to present in class a book that we liked. One of my friends presented this book and according to her, most Japanese language teachers face troubles when teaching Japanese to foreigners. This book, is a compilation of experiences that happened to the author. Through Umino Nagiko's experiences and the brilliantly illustrated comics by Hebizo, the story tells of various instances where foreigners have used Japanese in a confusing way. While there is Kanji throughout the book, all the Kanji have FURIGANA (ふりがな) which is a Japanese

reading aid. The FURIGANA helps with learning the pronunciation and also makes it easy to search for the definition of unfamiliar words.

I strongly recommend the column "そんな日本語使いません" (We don't use that kind of Japanese, which tells the story of 2 European students who loved to watch historical dramas and yakuza films. Because they thoroughly enjoyed watching that, their Japanese was influenced by what they watched. These students would find themselves using Japanese that characters in films used but are not used in everyday life. After reading this chapter, you may wonder, "Do I use some strange words or sentences when I talk in Japanese?"

Not only would this book be suitable for those who are learning Japanese, but also, for native Japanese speakers. Since language is used daily, there may be instances where even native speakers may not notice the small changes in language. Definitely an interesting read for anyone with a penchant for Japanese!



**Book :** 日本人の知らない日本語 : なるほど〜  
×爆笑!の日本語"再発見"コミックエッセイ  
(Nihonjin no shiranai Nihongo; naruhodo~ X bakushou! no Nihongo  
"saihakken" KOMIKKU ESSEI)

**Author :** 蛇蔵, 海野尻子

**Publisher :** メディアファクトリー (Media factory)

**Barcode No :** 00170141283

**Call no :** KF21/0499

**ISBN :** 9784040686462

**Location :** Main library Global Learning Room

Reviewed by **Maturin Limhassanaikul**

## My hometown: Daqing (大慶市)

*In this column, we introduce the hometowns of our members, giving you glimpse into the culture and the best things to do!*

Daqing is a city in the western part of the Heilongjiang province in People's Republic of China. The name literally means "Great Celebration". Daqing is known as the "Oil Capital of China" because it is one of the country's most important sources of oil.



Daqing Oil Field  
©2018 ADVENTURE Inc

This picture shows the machines used to pump the oil. Since these machines can be seen all around the oil fields, they have become the symbol of Daqing.

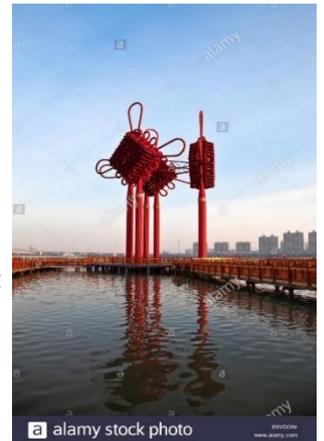
Although Daqing was initially an industrial city, the government has been making a lot of efforts to protect the environment and exploit sources of clean energy. Therefore, if you visit the city, you'll be surprised by how neat every road and lane is. Additionally, the fertile grasslands, far-reaching reed marshes and lakes, natural forests, and unsophisticated

Mongolian flavor have given Daqing a distinctly unique atmosphere.



The Heming Lake is a well-known tourist destination in Daqing.  
© 2018 Alamy Ltd

Daqing landmark- the world's highest water Chinese knot  
© 2018 Alamy Ltd



When it comes to food, Daqing is renowned for having the most traditional food in the northeastern region of China. Due to the Songhuajiang lake, many of the local dishes rely on fish.



The All fish banquet  
© 2016 <http://www.mjqs.com/> Inc.

### "All Fish Banquet"

With all the fresh fish from the lake, it is no surprise that a feast is done to take advantage of this. In this feast, over 100 fish dishes can be cooked. Specialty dishes include fried fish, home cooked crucian carp, grape fish, lake water fish and even sashimi.

As expressed by **LYU SHENGNAN (吕 胜男)**

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## Seasonal Chapter Celebration of Christmas

*The calendar moved to the last month of year 2018 - December, it has already snowed in Sendai few times, so everything proves that we have entered the most magical time of a year. "Christmas is in the air", but we should remember that depending on a country/culture Christmas celebration is different or even non-existent. So let's have a quick overview on how it is celebrated around the globe, so you will know when the right time to congratulate your international friends is.*

Christmas is the most-known in Western countries winter holiday (and the most commercialized one). Coming from a religious origin, it is widely celebrated around the world by Christian people and commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ. In some countries like USA it became more like a cultural phenomenon, being treated as the main holiday of a year (sometimes even regardless of confession), gathering the whole family for the Christmas Eve dinner and the morning presents exchange. In other countries like India or China, where the percentage of Christian population is relatively low, Christmas is celebrated in way smaller circles.

The interesting point about Christmas in international perspective is the difference in dates of celebration, and this goes back to the change from so-called "old-styled" Julian calendar to modern Gregorian. So there is a whole variety of Christmas celebration dates depending on church politics.

For example, the Roman Catholic Church and most Protestant churches celebrate Christmas on December 25th according to the modern Gregorian calendar. Constantinople (except Athos), Antioch, Alexandria, Cyprus, Bulgarian and Romanian also celebrate Christmas on December 25th according to revised Julian calendar, which matches with the Gregorian calendar (but only until March 1st, 2800).

Opposite to that, the Russian, Jerusalem, Serbian, Georgian Orthodox churches and Athos, the Polish and Eastern Catholic

churches celebrate Christmas on January 7th. And lastly, ancient Eastern churches (including the Armenian Apostolic Church) celebrate Christmas on January 6th.

So coming from Russia, I can say that the main winter holiday for us is New Year, which is being celebrated starting December 31st night to so-called "Old New Year" on January 13th-14th. Christmas in Russia is usually a religious holiday which is celebrated mostly by Christian people (for all the others it's more of a nice excuse to have another winter gathering and presents exchange). In China as well New Year becomes the main holiday, being held on second new moon after the winter solstice (which is usually in February).

Winter holidays in Japan are like a mixture of all – lately Japanese people started holding Christmas celebration like in USA on December 25th with an interesting local custom of ordering a bucket of chicken wings from KFC, while still keeping an authentic New Year celebration with traditional food like "osechi-ryōri" and mochi, custom with giving children little envelopes with pocket money "otoshidama", sending each other "nengajo" postcards and respecting "hatsumode" - the first shrine visit of the year. If you are an international student in Tohoku University and you are feeling homesick during these winter holidays, it might become an interesting experience to celebrate New Year like the locals do. Hope you have great winter vacation time and stay warm!



The image taken from:  
[https://www.officeholidays.com/countries/global/christmasas\\_day\\_world.php](https://www.officeholidays.com/countries/global/christmasas_day_world.php)

## Editors

### **Lin, I-Chia (林宜佳)**



A graduate student of International Cultural Studies from Taiwan, she loves listening to music and reading children's literature which full of illustrations. "Peace begins with a smile" is her favorite quote.

### **Cristy Garciamendez**

She is a graduate student of law and philosophy from Mexico. She loves to travel, dance, and read. Her personal motto is: "The more you explore, the more you learn and grow."



### **Yang Yan (楊妍)**



Yang, from China, loves to write comic strips! A graduate student of international cultural studies, she believes that none of us should ever forget our first resolution. Interested in her work? Check out the next issue for her manga!

### **Andi Holik Ramdani [Editor-in-Chief]**

Salam Kenal! A student of religious study and come from Indonesia, a country with thousands island and rich with diversity, Andi love to watch a movie, traveling, and art-design. Active in Tohoku tsunami disaster reconstruction social and mutual activities between Indonesia and Japan, also supporting mutual coexistence program (Tabunka Kyosei) in Sendai through interreligious dialogue.



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## How to reach us?

Facebook : @tohokuunivlib  
Twitter : @TUL\_Global  
Website : [www.library.tohoku.ac.jp](http://www.library.tohoku.ac.jp)  
E-Mail : [desk@grp.tohoku.ac.jp](mailto:desk@grp.tohoku.ac.jp)  
Telephone : 022-795-5935

Office Hours : 8:30 - 17:00 (Weekdays)

Address : 27-1 Kawauchi, Aoba-ku, Sendai, Miyagi, 980-8576 JAPAN

