



Report on the SDGs Special Exhibition at the Main Library

The history of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) dates back to 1992, when the United Nations summoned the Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. At this conference, the foundations of what would later become the SDGs were established, with the aim of promoting sustainable development for all, without exclusion.

In 2010, a new agenda for 2030 was formulated, integrating economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainable development. In 2014, the 17 SDGs were formally proposed, to be applied not only to developed countries, but equally to developing and emerging nations.

The 17 interconnected goals are: No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-Being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequalities; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Partnerships for the Goals. All share the common objective of leaving no one behind.

Tohoku University has been actively engaged in advancing the SDGs through a

wide range of programs, workshops, and related activities.

For example, on December 21, 2018, a symposium was held in Sendai City that brought together speakers from industry, academia, and government. The discussion raised important questions, such as how Japan can foster global human resources and what messages it can share with the world based on its experiences with disasters, including the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE). These discussions were framed from the perspective of developing global human resources to achieve the SDGs.

As part of the symposium, speakers and lecturers shared their visions and experiences related to the SDGs. Key points included the need to rethink the concept of “prosperity” through the lens of environmental justice, particularly for those who are severely affected by climate change despite bearing no responsibility for it, as well as the efforts of the International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRI-DeS) in responding to transnational disasters that go beyond past local experience.

Panel discussions also highlighted several initiatives, such as the post-GEJE urban reconstruction plan of Higashimatsushima City, in Miyagi Prefecture, which incorporates SDG-based approaches to create a city livable for all generations by 2030. Another example was the work of the Global Education Promotion Project (GiFT), which fosters global citizenship by

encouraging individuals to first understand themselves before engaging with the wider world.

The 2018 symposium also served to commemorate the launch of a new academic program at Tohoku University in April 2019: the “Global Governance and Sustainable Development Program” (G2SD) at the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies. The program aims to cultivate knowledge for sustainable development and to educate students who can become active contributors to the achievement of the SDGs.

In 2020, the SDG-UP platform was also established to bring together Japanese universities working toward the achievement of the SDGs. The platform promotes collaboration among institutions, an essential factor in advancing higher education and human resource development. Tohoku University has been participating in SDG-UP since 2024.

The Main Library also plays an active role in supporting the SDGs by engaging students through SDG-themed panel exhibitions displayed on lobby walls and information boards, as well as book exhibitions near the library entrance. Through these initiatives, we hope to help students develop a deeper understanding of the Goals by providing commentary from the Concierge Desk in both English and Japanese, thereby ensuring the involvement of international students as well.



Reported by Maria Laura Martelli Giachino

Book Exhibition

A Literary Stroll Through Tokyo

The International Student Concierge staff regularly holds book exhibitions at the entrance of the Global Learning Room. Please stop by and take a look.

Did you know that each semester the Main Library at Kawauchi campus holds a monthly book exhibition curated by the members of the International Student Concierge Desk? Located on the second floor of the Main Library, right in front of the entrance to the Global Learning Room, these exhibitions invite student visitors to discover books which have inspired us in various ways. You may find meticulous selections of books on various topics – from academic to fictional – in various languages, such as English, Japanese, Chinese, etc.

This month’s exhibition is titled *A Literary Stroll Through Tokyo*, in which I invite you to join me for a stroll through time, witnessing a mysterious city shape-shifting before our eyes as each leaf of the history book turns. Meiji-period writers see it as a Fenix rising from the ashes, while the contemporaries depict it as the neon-lit urban metropole. Too large to ignore, and too versatile to define, it often takes the principal place as the backdrop of the majority of Japanese literature.

Indeed, the literature has shown that Tokyo’s portrait takes an entirely different shape under the pen of every single author daring to sketch it in the margins of their stories. The Tokyo in which Natsume Soseki’s protagonist goes on intellectual walks with his sensei, or where Mori Ogai’s O-tama spends her lonely days confined within the house of her captor seems

widely different from Banana Yoshimoto's loneliness-clad urban cityscapes; and even more so from Tim Anderson's description of a bustling city filled with new adventures at the turn of every corner.

This makes us wonder, will we ever be able to fully grasp Tokyo at all? Or rather, are we all just a part of its transformative story which extends into the future, witnessing only a moment in time of its glory? If you, like me, are interested in learning about all the facets of Tokyo's history, I encourage you to visit the exhibition and start this round-trip literary journey 100 years back in time, accompanying various characters on their adventures, strolling along the back alleys of this unique city that lies hidden behind each book cover waiting for you to explore it.





Would you care to join me for a stroll through time?

We are going to witness a mysterious city shape-shifting before our eyes as each leaf of the history book turns. Meiji-period writers see it as a Fenix rising from the ashes, while the contemporaries depict it as the neon-lit urban metropole. Too large to ignore, and too versatile to define, it often takes the principal place as the backdrop of the majority of Japanese literature. Indeed, the literature has shown that Tokyo's portrait takes an entirely different shape under the pen of every single author daring to sketch it in the margins of their stories. For example, the Tokyo in which Natsume Soseki's protagonist goes on intellectual walks with his sensei, or where Mori Ogai's O-tama spends her lonely days confined within the house of her captor seems widely different from Banana Yoshimoto's loneliness-clad urban cityscapes; and even more so from Tim Anderson's description of a bustling city filled with new adventures at the turn of every corner. This makes us wonder, will we ever be able to fully grasp Tokyo at all? Or rather, are we all just a part of its transformative story which extends into the future, witnessing only a moment in time of its glory? If you, like me, are interested in learning about all the facets of Tokyo's history, I invite you to start this round-trip literary journey 100 years back in time, accompanying various characters on their adventures, strolling along the back alleys of this unique city.

Hristina Petrovikj
Graduate School of International Cultural Studies

Written by **Hristina Petrovikj**

Reader's Choice: What to Read Next?

This section introduces a 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 enjoy it!

In the short span of over two decades our society has seen the rise of mass-used internet, social networks, smartphones, and most recently generative AI. At this point, it is impossible to negate that these new technologies have had a great impact on our daily life. And although the benefits of these technologies are clearly visible in our everyday life, they also hide dangers we may not be aware of. Just to give an example, recent studies on the use of generative AI for writing are beginning to show how people who depend on it entirely are seeing their ability to think and produce for themselves highly affected.

For this reason, for this newsletter's *Reader's Choice* I want to invite you to critically reflect on how you use these technologies by proposing the book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* by Marshall McLuhan, originally published in 1964. This book is a classic in media theory literature, and it has served as a basis for other later influential studies, such as *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman, who expands on the arguments that McLuhan proposes.

You may be wondering how a book written around 60 years ago may help you navigate the problems and difficulty we face today because of our current technology greatly differs from that of when McLuhan's wrote his book. However you will be surprised by how McLuhan's argument stays relevant today. It may be said that

the title of the book's first chapter is also one of the central arguments of the book: "the medium is the message".

I encourage you to give it a try and reflect on how media shapes our perception of the world!

Book: Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man

Author: Marshall McLuhan; Introduction by Lewis H. Lapham

Publisher: MIT Press

Call No.: EC235/184

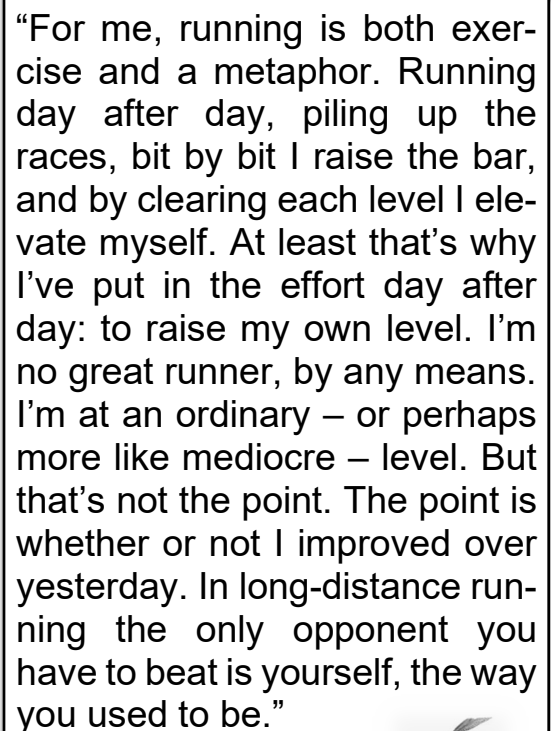
Location: LIB-B1-Stacks-NDLC-Foreign

Language: English

Written by **Antonio Fernandez Caro**

Quote of the Month

This section introduces famous quotes from a recommended book from our available selection at the Tohoku University Main Library. The quotes have been meticulously chosen by our Concierge members with the intention of promoting interest in books and providing motivation to our readers. We hope that you will enjoy our selection!



"For me, running is both exercise and a metaphor. Running day after day, piling up the races, bit by bit I raise the bar, and by clearing each level I elevate myself. At least that's why I've put in the effort day after day: to raise my own level. I'm no great runner, by any means. I'm at an ordinary – or perhaps more like mediocre – level. But that's not the point. The point is whether or not I improved over yesterday. In long-distance running the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be."



Book: What I Talk About When I Talk About Running

Author: Haruki Murakami; translated from the Japanese by Philip Gabriel

Publisher: London : Vintage

Location: LIB-B1-Stacks-NDLC-Foreign

Call No.: KH384/21

Written by **Ana Maria Simplicio**

Manga Corner

At Manga Corner, you will see scenes that frequently happen to newly enrolled students.

Hi! I am Andhika from Indonesia! I like reading and drawing manga, and I hope you enjoy my short manga.



Winter weather makes you want nothing more than to slow down and relax.



Unfortunately, winter deadlines show no mercy...



Naturally, the library fills up with students seeking warmth and space to focus.



I want to play...

I want to make
a snowman...



Let's do our best together!
Let's make it safely to
the end of the semester!



Editors



Petrovikj Hristina [Editor-in-Chief]

A graduate student from North Macedonia enrolled in the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies. She has many hobbies, some of which include: singing, journaling, travelling, reading, watching movies, and photography. She has lived in 3 different countries so far, travelled across Europe, and is hoping to embark on an Asian tour in the near future. Her secret dream is to be a member of a rock band, but since that has not come true yet, you can often find her in a karaoke booth instead!

Martelli Giachino Maria Laura

Originally from Argentina, she earned her undergraduate degree in Journalism before packing her bags and heading to Japan to pursue her Master's and Doctoral studies in Information Sciences. It's her first time living abroad, so every day brings a mix of exciting discoveries, cultural adventures, and—yes—occasional deadlines-induced little panic attacks. When she's not buried in her research, you'll probably find her soaking in an onsen, singing her heart out at karaoke, or obsessing over cats. She's also a huge fan of drawing, binge-worthy TV shows and movies, NBA games—and she hasn't lost hope of receiving her Hogwarts letter.



Andhika Wijaya



A graduate student from Innovative Japanese Studies Major, who was born and raised in Jakarta, Indonesia. She never had seen snow before she came to Japan, so she's always going 'wakuwaku' when the snow is falling down even though she has to struggle a lot with the cold temperature. She loves drawing, reading comics, travelling to scenic places, enjoying nice music, singing at karaoke, and playing with cute animals. Please don't mind her if she makes strange noises when she saw a photo of cute animals. Aside of those, one of her major passion is enjoying food and making review notes about it.

How to reach us?

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