



Ask a Librarian service provided by International Students Concierge



Have you heard about the recently added video chat service called “Ask a Librarian”?

It consists on consultation calls, done by Google Hangouts, with members of the international concierge of Tohoku University Main Library, a feature that was added back in 2012. This service, recently added service, is intended to help the users with any doubts about the facilities or literature searches.

The 2017 cohort of the international concierge is conformed by 15 undergraduate and graduate students of Tohoku University from 13 different countries. At the concierge desk, guidance and consultations are some of the services provided in English, Japanese and the native language of the person in turn.

However, as the student concierge is a service limited to the main library, any user who needed a consultation in a language other than English or Japanese had to go to the campus in Kawauchi. With the intention of helping all of the international students, regardless of their campuses, “Ask a Librarian” was created.

Anyone with a google account can easily take advantage of “Ask a Librarian” by using Google

Hangouts. Detailed information about the service, and a “Start Hangouts” button are already set up.

Clear up your questions about literature searches, at the counter of any Tohoku University library or even from your own smartphone. You can contact the International student concierge by a real time video chat, using google hangouts. You can also contact us by voice mails or texting messages. Please check the schedule for the language of your preference.



←Ask a Librarian website

【case1】 You don't have to come to the main library to ask your questions !



Imagine you are an exchange student from Italy who came to Japan 6 months ago. Usually your classes are in Aobayama, and before you leave home you realize you have to go to Kawauchi to return the book you borrowed a couple of weeks ago and then go to your classes in Aobayama. However, there's a torrential rain outside.

In that moment, you think “Ah, could I return the book I borrowed, to the library in Aobayama?” Then, please use the service “Ask a Librarian” and clear up your questions.

Concierge: “May I help you?”

Student: Yes, can I return the book I took out from the main library to the one in Aobayama?

Concierge: Yes, of course. You can return it to any annex of Tohoku University Libraries.

*You can return the books to any of the libraries within Tohoku University.

You can go to the library in Aobayama, return the book you borrowed at Kawauchi and go to take your class!

【case2】 You can talk to our staff in your native language !



Now, imagine you are an international student from Korea and you are struggling with writing reports. As you can confirm on the official website of the main library, the service in Korean is available every Wednesday from 1 to 3 pm.

Concierge: "May I help you?"

Student: "Yes, I have to write a report about the differences between the rich and the poor. But it is really difficult"

Concierge: "Are you having troubles with the report itself? or with Japanese?"

Student: "With both"

Concierge: "I also had problems with writing reports in Japanese during my first month in Japan. The words used in writing differ from those used in speaking. You could read the book "Writing reports, for international students", It's in the global learning room at the international students corner. Its number is 〇〇."

Student: Thanks a lot!

The languages, in which our services are provided and the corresponding schedule. Our staff nationalities and, the languages our service is available in, are published on our website.

【case3】 Interactive explanations !



Let's consider another case. You are a graduate student, currently in Tokyo for a conference. Suddenly, you need to read an article, but you can't the electronical access to the journals, which you do from your laboratory, which is only possible within the campus. That is the time to "Ask a Librarian"!

Concierge: "May I help you?"

Student: "I am outside the campus, but I need to access the electronic journal 〇〇. Can I do it?"

Concierge: "Oh yes, 〇〇. If you use the remote access service, called "Gakunin", you can access it. (showing the webpage of the electronic journal・ ・ ・) look at these images, these are the instructions you should follow.

Student: "Thank you so much!"

*Not all the journals are accessible through the "Gakunin" service.

"Ask a Librarian" is a recently added service, available in several languages, quite informative and useful in research and in your academic activities. Please feel free to use it!

* You can also contact us by email, google hangouts or phone.

* Special thanks: Mr Raffael, Ms Selene, Mr Kumar.

A city of mystery and good food

Greetings, my name is Yang. I am a student at the International literature department of Tohoku University and today I would like to introduce my hometown to you. My country, China, is usually divided into two large regions, North and South. My hometown, Tianjin, is a big city in the former one.

Tianjin(天津) is located 140km southeast from China's capital city "Beijing: peking:北京". Together with Beijing, Shanghai(上海) and Chongqing(重慶), Tianjin is considered as one of the four metropolises of China and in addition to hosting over 13 wards and 5 prefectures, it's the center of industry and commerce in the region.

If good food is the topic, "Goubuli" (Ignoring dog)(狗不理) stands out as the most renowned dish. This steamed dumpling with meat filling has a name, which boggles plenty of people, with an interesting origin. Established in 1858 by a person named Gouzi (roughly translatable as dog) the most historical chain in China, was the birthplace of this meal that quickly gained fame thanks to its delicious flavor. And despite Gouzi's shyness, which made every customer leave the store feeling practically ignored, his dumplings were so good that they sold out every time. Because of that, the dish was quickly baptized with its unique name.

Moving onto folklore, I'm sure that every city has its urban legends. This is Tianjin's. Close to my house there is an office building called Ribao(日報大廈). It is said that, decades ago, during the construction of the building a worker died in an accident. Since then, ranging from; woman's sobbing on the 14th floor up to rumors of an old man severed in half coming out of an elevator, several unexplained incidents have occurred. According to the elders, Ribao building was erected on top of a cemetery. Whichever its origins may be, this edification is always being connected to strange events and interestingly

There are rumors about the workers at Ribao having astronomical salaries, I wonder why... I hope you enjoyed this short review on my city.

Please keep reading this section of the sentinel for new cities, stories, and many other different surprises.

An hour tour around 8 countries

The fear of darkness is, to some extent, justifiable at evolutionary level. Moreover, it is not darkness which is the terrifying factor. Not knowing what lies ahead or, in this case, in the surroundings is what arrests our nervous system.

Arriving at a new place without acquaintances or overall knowledge of one's surroundings is, as expected, scary. New environment, new cultures, new language are few of the challenges which any newcomer can encounter. Aiming to help international students integrate into Tohoku University, IPLAnet initiated a project called 'Global Cafe'. The project gives international students an opportunity to teach not only their native language but also their culture. The sessions are held, mainly in English at the Global Learning Room of Tohoku University Main Library on every Wednesday from 6 pm to 7 pm although, the latter is not a strict limit. Usually, once the class finishes, the professors are surrounded by a flock of excited students, eager to clarify their doubts about the language and culture just exposed.

Currently there are 8 languages being taught which includes English, German, Vietnamese, Russian, Italian, Taiwanese, French and Japanese, all of them by native speakers. With an interactive and dynamic style, although guided by their respective teachers, the classes share the same schedule and the same space on the second floor of the library. Albeit no topic is off limits, the discussion mainly focuses on food, customs, traditions, music and folklore. In addition, despite the organizing committee and the students are predominantly Japanese, the foreign visitors are not scarce.

The current organizer, Sho Kawamura, who is a third year undergraduate student, candidly encourages everyone who, not only is interested in learning a new language or culture but also enjoys spending culturally enriching soiree to experience 'Global Cafe'. It promises you a memorable evening and perhaps some new friends.



Reader's Choice: What to Read Next?

This section introduces a-book-a-month to feed your grey matter with intellect and emotion from the selection available at Tohoku University Main Library. Sit back and let's read!

"I believe that words uttered in passion contain a greater living truth than do those words which express thoughts rationally conceived. It is blood that moves the body. Words are not meant to stir the air only: they are capable of moving greater things."

Kokoro(心) is one of the most celebrated works ever produced by the Japanese literary master, Natsume Soseki(夏目漱石 1867-1916). Written in Meiji Era Japan, Kokoro depicts the isolation and loneliness that the opening of the nation escorted. With the advancement of technology many found that human interaction was hindered, not heightened. In the words of Natsume: "You see, loneliness is the price we have to pay for being born in this modern age, so full of freedom, independence, and our own egotistical selves."

Natsume had a very distinct literary style compared to other writers of his time. Where other august writers like Ogai Mori and Ryunosuke

Akutagawa used solemn and antiquated expressions, Natsume used light and modern expressions. He stressed the need for contemporary literature, rather than rehashing themes and styles of the past. In doing so, he had a profound impact on Japanese writers to this day.

Though many attempts have been made to translate Natsume's prose into English no attempt has proven successful in this venture. Japanese has a subtlety that exceeds the language itself. Cultural aspects play a large part in the way Natsume wrote, which oftentimes cannot be conveyed in any other words than his alone. However, the translation by Edwin McClellan has reached a level of accuracy unmatched to this day.

What sets McClellan's translation apart from other translations, such as the one by Meredith McKinney, is how he translated "weighted" words, or words that have a distinct meaning dependent on the context. McClellan's translation is exceptional in this aspect. Natsume uses these "weighted" words extensively throughout his works. For example, the title of the book "Kokoro" itself is a "weighted" word. In its literal sense, "Kokoro" means "heart," but in actuality the closest translation in English would be "feelings" or "the heart of things." McClellan researched and scoured the English language to find the closest possible translation.

Natsume's work transcends the generations and is timeless. He was ahead of his time in his discernment of human characteristics and tendencies. "You seem to be under the impression that there is a special breed of bad humans. There is no such thing as a stereotype bad man in this world. Under normal conditions, everybody is more or less good, or, at least, ordinary. But tempt them, and they may suddenly change. That is what is so frightening about men." It is these pearls of wisdom that make Kokoro a must-read for anyone.

Author : Natsume Soseki

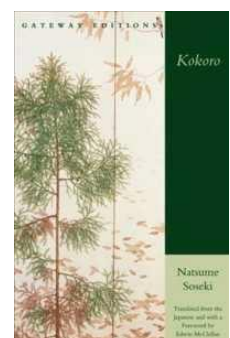
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NATSUME Shuseki

Yang's corner

" An evening in the library"

傍晚图书馆的故事

This is the story of what happens on a regular day in the life of the exchange students that work in the International corner of the Tohoku University Main Library. As one may expect, there are sad and happy moments. Can you relate to this story?

About the author: Yang Yan is a third year PhD student at the international culture department. She has been drawing since a young age and wished to become a cartoonist in the future. As her first work, this marks the beginning of her career. Let's support her publication!



鲁迅 (Lǔ Xùn, Rojin. 1881-1936)

has been considered one of the most influential Chinese writers of the 20th century and the founder of modern baihua (白話), or vernacular literature, highly influential in Chinese history. His literary works exerted a substantial influence after the May Fourth Movement. He was also a noted translator.



There is the bronze statue of Rojin at entrance of The Main Library.

Editors



Lee Sunhee

A graduated student of educational informatics from South Korea, she loves listening to music and can speak English, Japanese and Korean! "It will soon be alright," is her motto for leading life.

Manuel Campos

A graduated student of medicine from Venezuela, he loves to travel, write and cook. "Hard times forge steel smiles," he believes. Did we tell you that he can speak English, Japanese and Spanish?



Yang Yan

From China, Yang loves to write comic strips! A graduated 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!

Trishit Banerjee (Editor-in-Chief)

From the land of Buddha - India, Trishit loves to read, write and travel. A student of chemistry, he can speak 5 languages! "Pick up a good book and open up your world," is what he believes in.



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