



## Julio Nascimento My time as an International Student Concierge member

I do not remember when exactly I started liking libraries, but I do remember that they were always part of my life. The scent of books, the corridors, the possibilities as a Borgean labyrinth just fascinated me. So, obviously I had to know how to use the Tohoku University Main Library in my first week here in April 2018. After a while I learned about the existence of a special computer that would allow me to access the files from the Diet Congress Library so I could do my research. I came to the library looking for it, and this was the first time I met library staffs Ms. Ueno and Ms. Nishimura. While I was using the computer, we talked and since I could speak Japanese well (at least it is what they say, not me). Later they invited me to work for the concierge. As I was not a Master's student yet, I had to wait until April 2019 to start.

Working in the concierge, I had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of several amazing people not only from Japan, but from everywhere. At the Open Campus week, I could make a presentation to high school students about Brazil, answer their questions about my country, my life, and research, and it was really great. I am really looking forward for this kind of event restarts.

In the concierge, I could also make tours in the library, explain how to use the mysterious stacks with electrical powered mobile moving system, and I always enjoyed these moments. A library is a living place, and its quietude can be understood as boredom, but once you are involved in this universe, you realize that the truth is completely the opposite.



2019 Open Campus

There is also a challenging moment that concierge members need to face, that is the SDGs event. We always struggle to find interesting and meaningful books to explain the topics we choose, and I know for sure that I learned a lot from this. Also, I had several chances to write for this Newsletter about my former university's library, my hometown, my recommended book, etc. All these activities just made my stay in Japan more pleasant and satisfying.



2019 and 2020 SDGS

I am really happy to be part of the International Student Concierge, since this place means a lot to me. Every time I could talk to the public in English, Japanese, Portuguese, or any other language they needed. I felt I was making my best to help with their experience here at the university. That is precisely what the Concierge is here for, to help international students in making a better place while they study here. I am finishing my work here with a feeling that I did my best to help anyone I could.

Finally, I must say that my days here were meaningful because I could work with librarians, Ueno san, Horino san, Nishimura san, and so many other amazing people to whom I am always happy to talk. In the beginning of the shift we start talking about anything and it really brightens up my days. I wish the concierge thrives more and more and many more students be part of it, always improving the exchange of ideas from different origins and nationalities.

Thanks to everyone, and I hope I can meet you all again soon! I wish you the best, always!

*Written by **Julio Nascimento***

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## The University Libraries Around the World

*This section introduces university libraries around the world, mainly from the alma mater of our International Student Concierge members.*

### National and University Library “St. Kliment Ohridski” in North Macedonia

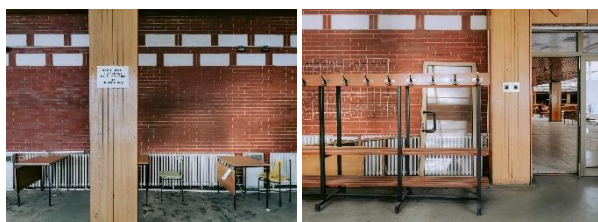
This library introduction will be slightly different from the usual journal entries, because as much as I would like to share a beautiful library from the other side of the world with you, my experience was very different. As a student of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Macedonia from 2014 until 2019, I did not have access to the University library due to its unfortunate condition at the time.



However, the condition of this library was not always this bad, as this place used to be an impressive treasury of Macedonian literature from its establishment in 1944, until one decade ago. Hence, it became this country's both National and University library, allowing students and researchers to spend quality time in the reading space of the library.

The history of this library is also impressive: it bears the name of a prominent religious figure from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, who was one of the first educators of the Slavic world and a creator of the Cyrillic script (キリル文字), which we still use today. He established the first monastic library in a

Macedonian city called Ohrid, and he is considered to be the founder of librarianship in the Balkans. Thanks to the long history of librarianship in this region, the library holds special collections which include old printed material and rare books, old Slavonic manuscripts, Oriental manuscripts written in Arabic, Turkish and Persian from the past, as well as students' Master and PhD theses, from the modern times.



Various political reasons in the country have led to the destruction of this library, and the students were the ones who suffered the most. What was left of the once popular student hub were broken chairs and tables made of wood and ceilings which would leak whenever it rains. For this reason, everybody from my generation was compelled to use the small departmental libraries, which only had a handful of books that we could use for our research. However, there were no big rooms for students to learn in, so our research had to be conducted at home; and those who were not able to study at home had to come to the University library, unfortunately.

Thankfully, in 2021, numerous influential people from the cultural scene of Macedonia started raising awareness about the devastating condition of the library on social media. Faced with harsh criticism, the government has initiated its renovation as of July 2021. It will take time to repair the long-lasting damage, but we truly hope

that study conditions in this library will improve for the future students.

As I write this, I am sitting in the University Library of Tohoku University and thinking how lucky we are to have all of these amazing facilities to enjoy reading and resources to conduct research with ease.

\*All photo by Ana Jakimska, 2021

Written by **Petrovikj Hristina**

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## My hometown: Beijing, China

*In this column, we introduce the hometowns of our members, giving you a glimpse into their culture and some traveling tips from locals!*

Hello everyone, today I would like to introduce one of my hometowns, Beijing, the capital of China. If I want to introduce it completely, I might need to write a book as thick as a dictionary. Thus, I will just introduce several famous historical scenic spots of Beijing.



Tian'anmen Square

The landmark square is the city center and its name "Tiananmen" means Gate of Heavenly Peace. It contains the Monument to the People's Heroes, the Great



Hall of the People, the National Museum of China and the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong, the first president of People's Republic of China.



Palace Museum

Also called the Forbidden City, the Palace Museum is actually the real palace of ancient Chinese emperors constructed from 1406 to 1420. Now it is a museum introducing Chinese history and exhibiting ancient Chinese historical cultural relics to visitors. I really like here and I visit the palace almost every year when I am staying in China.



The Great Wall of China

This is probably the most famous site to foreigners from all over the world and is regarded as one of the symbols of China. It was initially built by Qin Shi Huang as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Originally, it was used for defending enemies as barriers and border controls. Later during different dynasties, it was reconstructed several

times and also used as a path of transporting goods.

The Temple of Heaven is an imperial complex of religious buildings. Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties always held annual ceremonies to pray for good harvests. Currently it is a park in Beijing. If you go there in the morning, you will see people aging from 10 to 80 do morning sports, or participate in different kinds of group activities.



Temple of Heaven

As it is known to all, Beijing is the only city which has held both summer and winter Olympics in the world. There are too many interesting places to visit, delicious foods to taste and different things to do in Beijing. However, due to the limitation of page range, I can only introduce a super tiny part of this city. Maybe in the next newsletter, I will continue to introduce Beijing, and I hope everyone out of China could have a chance to visit Beijing.

\* All photos were taken by the author.

*Written by **Zihe (Helen) Li***

## Manga Corner

This corner is about things that happen in the library, especially when you are a new student at Tohoku University.

Hello! I am Marina from Brazil! I like drawing for fun, so I hope you have fun reading too!





## Editors



**Thiri Soe [Editor-in-Chief]**

A language science student from the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies. She is from Myanmar, a land of Golden Pagodas, in South East Asia. Thiri is studying applied linguistics, seeking knowledge to benefit her teaching profession. Her hobby is cooking and writing. She believes that things happen for a reason and the reason is to be good.

**Petrovikj Hristina**

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!



**Marina Nascimento**

A Brazilian graduate student from the Innovative Japanese Studies department. She enjoys drawing and reading comics as well as traveling around the world. Mari has been to 13 different countries and loves to talk about new places she would like to discover. If you want to become her friend just show her cat pictures, she will automatically love you!

**If you feel unwell, even just a little, please do not come to the campus or to the library. Rest at home and get well soon.**

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