



Working as an International Student Concierge Member

Thiri Soe

As my time in Japan comes to an end, I find myself with a heavy heart, reflecting on the memories I have made in the library. Saying goodbye is never easy, and sometimes I wish that, like trees, we could stay rooted in one place and avoid the heartbreak of moving. But as humans, we must adapt to change.

The library holds a special place in my heart, even more so than my study desk at home or in the lab. It has always felt warm and inviting, providing a sense of comfort and belonging. Coming from a tropical country, the cold Sendai weather has been a challenge for me, but the library's cozy reading facilities and efficient heating system have been a refuge for me during the harsh winters. I could always focus on my studies there and feel productive. Every minute spent in the library has been valuable and cherished, and I never grew tired of being there.

The library's surroundings have their own charm in every season, but my favorite is the summer. I love the view of the tall trees surrounding the library, with their lush green foliage. While studying, I would often glance out the glass windows and admire the beauty of the small forest outside. It was a nice break from the books and gave me a connection to nature.



International Student Concierge Member in 2018

I decided to join the International Concierge Desk because of my love for the library and my desire to help others. As a concierge member, I had the opportunity to assist international students with their use of library facilities and other challenges they faced. Additionally, we organized events at the beginning of each semester to provide information and support for newly arrived international students, helping them adjust to their new lives on campus. Working with the librarians was a joy, as they were always kind and ready to help. Through these activities, I also made new friends who shared similar experiences. The librarians at the library have been incredibly kind and supportive throughout my time here. They have always been willing to lend a helping hand whenever I faced difficulties with my work or needed assistance with the library facilities. Their guidance and patience have been invaluable to me. Not only did they offer their professional expertise, but they also took the time to get to know me personally. We would engage in conversations about our lives, interests, and shared

experiences. These interactions truly made me feel cared for and valued.

As I write these words, I realize how much the library and my involvement with the International Concierge Desk have meant to me during my time at Tohoku University. The memories I have created here will always hold a special place in my heart. Though it is difficult to say goodbye, I am grateful for the warmth, inspiration, and personal growth that the library has provided me. I will carry these memories with me as I move on to the next chapter of my life. Thank you, dear library, for being a place I could call home.



SDGs Exhibition in 2019



Open Campus

Me, enjoying international concierge activities

Gong Liwei

I am Liwei and it has been two years since I started working as a member of the International Student Concierge (ISC) in the library. The working experience here has definitely become a part of my invaluable memories about the university life in Sendai.

I started to work for the ISC in 2021 during an earlier stage of the pandemic. So, I witnessed the whole process from the period when the strictest anti-infection measures were taken till the time when

pandemic fears seemed to fade away and a “normal” university life was gradually revived. It was difficult for all the library staff at first since the purpose of their job is to promote the communication among students and provide convenience for using the library while the pandemic is working against that in every aspect.

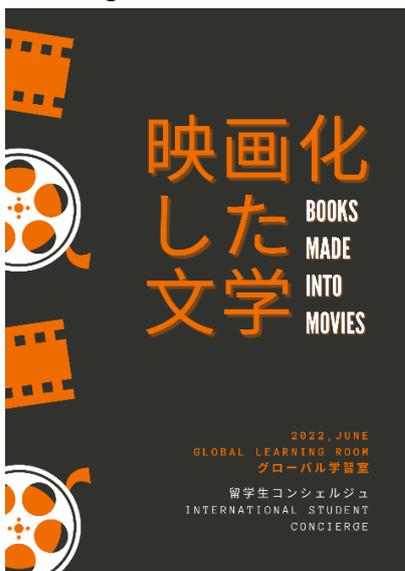
However, they were still making the greatest efforts to make the library services accessible to everyone. For example, guidance lectures about how to effectively use the library were given online when actual guidance tours in the library were not possible. Electronic newsletters consisting of tips for life in Sendai and ISC members’ miscellaneous sharing were published every one or two months. I was glad to be able to help deliver the guidance lectures/tours, write essays sharing my favorite books and my hometown, and provide necessary translations throughout all the tasks.



Global Session 2022

The project that I enjoyed the most working on was the book exhibition shown in the Global Learning Room. I chose the theme 映画化した文学 *literatures made into movies*, selected relevant books, and made a poster for it. I realized during the work for the first time that I enjoyed designing a lot despite my limited experience. I

was also excited to share with everyone some movies and literatures that I found to be interesting.



Book Exhibition Poster

The part-time job also made me less isolated and more connected to the world to an extent. I communicated with more people and read more books in a satisfying way, which probably would not have happened if I had not worked here.

As a student majoring in theoretical linguistics, I had been quite used to dealing with various languages regardless of whether I understand them or not. However, I realized while working here that language barriers (in the sense of proficiency) are just one part of the many barriers standing between people. Our efforts need to go beyond simply conveying information in certain languages if we want to achieve real communication with others.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude towards Horino-san and Ueno-san who have provided patient instructions for all tasks in the job and have been unimaginably tolerant for all my carelessness. I also appreciate all other fellow members for sharing your unique perspectives on many things. See you around!

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 pick your interest and fill your grey matter with intellect and emotion. Sit back and enjoy it!

“In the northerly city of Sendai lived the first person I ever loved. I knew he didn't love me, but even so I loved him to distraction.”

These are one of the opening words of the novel “A Cappella”, or 「無伴奏」[Mubansō]. If you weren't consumed with curiosity by now, wait until a thrilling story unravels before your eyes, filled with vivid descriptions of Sendai in the late 60s, student anti-government demonstrations, chain-smoking rebellious high school girls, tunes of famous classical and jazz compositions echoing through the pages, and the heartbreaking tragedy of forbidden love – in its most unexpected form.

A Cappella follows the story of Kyōko Noma, a high school student from Tokyo who moves to Sendai due to her father's job transfer. She goes to an all-girls high school and, together with her two friends Juri and Reiko, jointly organizes a “struggle committee for the abolition of uniforms” at their school. This mischievous trio cuts classes, spends most of their time in Kotodai Kōen wearing helmets in riots against the police, secretly harboring feelings of guilt for not being as passionate about the cause as much as wanting to be a part of something bigger in life.

One fateful day, while walking around the arcades in Sendai weaving yarns of endless dreamy stories, Juri takes the trio to a mysterious baroque café called “A

Cappella”, where a life-changing encounter unexpectedly turns Kyoko’s world upside down. This event marks the beginning of Kyoko’s first love, first step into adulthood, and the tragedy that this love entails.

Reading this novel will first let you embark on a journey through the familiar streets of Sendai making you feel like you are an active participant in the novel’s plot. Then, as the mystery unravels, it will make you realize that maybe you don’t know all the faces of Sendai yet. Finally, you will have a fresh new perspective on Sendai, thinking about all the mysterious paths that were trodden by numerous people before your arrival, each of them hiding a peculiar life story.

It is no secret that this coming-of-age novel is Mariko Koike’s autobiographical work. Much like the protagonist, she was born in Tokyo, but due to her father's job transfer, she moved to Sendai, where she entered the Miyagi Prefecture Third Girls' High School. It was a time when student movements such as the *Zenkyoto movement* were popular, and Koike also wore a helmet and participated in street demonstrations. Moreover, she really formed a “struggle committee for the abolition of uniforms” at her high school, a story which came down in student history. Surprisingly, the mysterious 「無伴奏」 café also once existed in Sendai, together with the famous shops that characters of this book frequent, which makes this book a thrilling read for students living in Sendai who are interested in learning about its recent history from an interesting perspective.

Revolutionary in many regards since her young age, Koike is presently a renowned

mystery and horror author in Japan, winning numerous prestigious literature awards, such as the Japan Mystery Writers' Association Prize and the Naoki Prize.

Book: A Cappella

Author: Mariko Koike, Translated to English: Juliet W. Carpenter

Publisher: Anthem Press

Language: English

ISBN: 00160199947

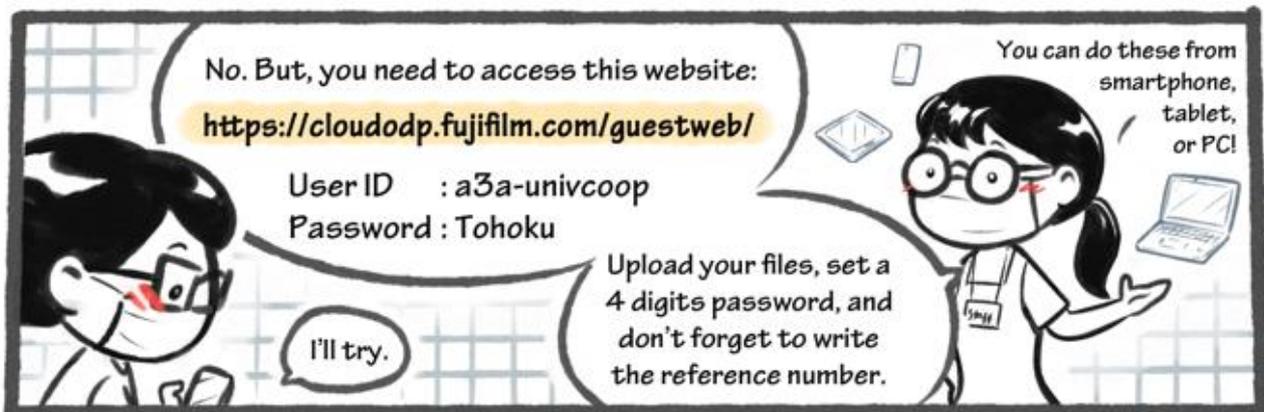
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*Written by **Hristina Petrovikj***

Manga Corner

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

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



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!



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 'waku-waku' 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.

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