

Farewell Miao-San! さよならミオ国際交流員！

March marks the end of Japan's fiscal year. We part ways with co-workers who will be moving to other sections or retiring. While it is always saddening to see them go, it is also the beginning of a new journey for those moving on to the next chapter of their life. In this month's Obihiro Pioneer, we bid farewell to Chinese

Coordinator for International Relations, Ms. Miao Shujin. Before she takes her next step, we had a chance to briefly interview her.

Obihiro Pioneer: Miao, thank you for your time. You must be busy in the last few weeks of work at Obihiro City Hall. In your introduction, you told us about how you were worried about the cold. How are you holding up after living in Hokkaido for almost a year?

Miao: It's still cold! Just as I thought, it's too cold here for me! But I've been able to warm up by going to the onsen 温泉 or hot springs. The Moor hot spring water here is amazing. It's the perfect way to blow off steam (literally!) after a long strenuous day at work.



Out enjoying the snow!

OP: Sorry it's been so cold! But we're happy to hear that you've gotten to enjoy the Moor hot springs. So, what's next on your journey?

M: Well, this past year I was able to get my masters degree back in China. I'm hoping to go back to school to pursue my Ph.D. I'm considering continuing my education here in Japan or going to the United States.

OP: Sounds exciting! We're sad that you had to leave so soon, but it sounds like you have a new adventure on the horizon. Before you go, do you have any words of wisdom or advice you would like to tell your incoming "kohai 後輩/ successor?"

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Farewell Miao-San!
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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
3/10, 3/24 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge Organized by Tokachi International Association	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
3/14 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport. Organized by Tokachi International Association	
3/17 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	46th Kids Playground (Thailand) Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, you can enjoy Thai crafts, storytelling and much more. Come and interact with our guest from Thailand! TIRC Multi-purpose Hall Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Organized by the City of Obihiro	
3/17 (Sat) 18:30-20:00	66th International Talk (Thailand) (Japanese and Thai Food Culture Differences) Learn more about the countries of the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month, the theme is “Japanese and Thai Food Culture Differences: You would never see this in Thailand!” Our guest, an exchange student from Thailand, will introduce her country to us and talk about differences in Japan and Thailand’s food culture. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For junior high school students and older. Organized by the City of Obihiro	
3/3 (Sat), 3/4 (Sun), 3/17 (Sat), 3/18 (Sun), 3/21 (Wed)	Melody Kids (Workshop and Concert) メロディキッズ ワークショップ & コンサート This workshop is targeted at young kids, who will learn to dance and sing along to the beats of the Cajon. Ultimately, the kids will be able to perform in a concert together with Marimba players Mika Noda and Kawachi Kuni with what they learn in the workshop.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
3/3 (Sat) 9:00-12:00	Girl’s Day エコパ歳時記 ひな祭り A workshop to make ornamental dolls will be held on Girl’s Day. The workshop is open to everyone, including young kids accompanied by their parents.	
3/10 (Sat) 9:45-12:00	Bird Whistle Workshop エコパ探検隊 バードコールを作りたい Learn to make a bird whistle in the workshop, and try it out in the forest nearby. Spots for the workshop is limited, so reserve your place early!	

Farewell Miao-San

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M: Always ask! What you might assume to be correct, might be different or wrong here. So hold fast to senpai 先輩/ senior CIRs and surrounding Japanese workmates.

Be professional: always apologize first when you are told that you are wrong. You won't get anywhere by arguing.

Be strong: don't take it seriously or personally when you're told something absurd or offensive. You have other priorities that are worth your time and effort.

Make some friends! Try your best to make your daily routine tolerable.

Last, but not least, watch your weight! The fabulous sweets, cheese and jingisukan (grilled lamb meat) has more calories than you think...

OP: Such a wealth of wisdom! You must have had quite an eventful year here in Obihiro. Is there anything else you would like to share?

M: I really appreciate the chorei 朝礼 (morning meeting) we have at work. It offers a chance to relate to other people personally and helps jumpstart the day. You can listen to various episodes here, interesting or creepy, and let out a laugh. At most times people here tend to talk about the local weather or traffic situation though.

And let's talk about some culture shock...

1. People here seldom (or more precisely,

never) bring their breakfast to work! And apparently snacking in the office is not allowed.

2. Brushing teeth and gargling are allowed in the common kitchen room...(maybe)

3. Almost everyone here can drive, old or young!!

OP: Wow! Even though China and Japan aren't that far apart by distance, they're culturally worlds apart!



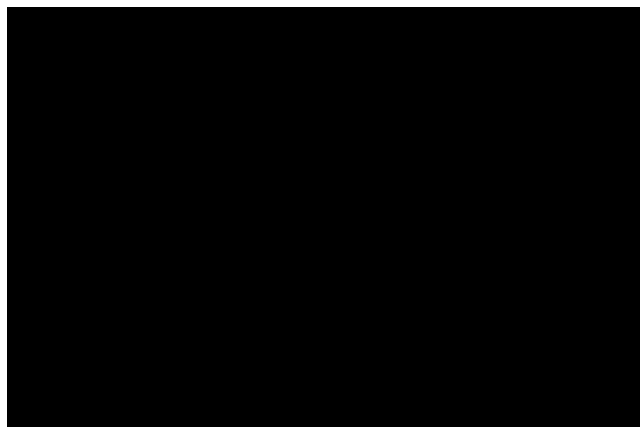
Ms. Miao teaching local elementary students about China.

We thank Ms. Miao Shujin for her time and lovely interview. Best of luck in your next adventure! As cold as it is here in Obihiro, don't be a stranger!

Culture: Don't Forget to Wear Green on the 17th! Saint Patrick's Day

March 17th is the day that Ireland's patron saint, Saint Patrick passed away. The 17th has since become a day of celebrating Irish culture. Saint Patrick's Day first became popular in the mid-1800's when the Irish immigrants in the United States began to flourish. The 17th falls in the Christian Lent period, during which various diet restrictions are in place. For Saint Patrick's Day, these restrictions are lifted, leading to a day full of fun and green (for the color of shamrocks). Nowadays, Saint Patrick's

Day is celebrating all around the world by wearing a piece of green and sharing a pitcher of beer with a friend!



Movies At Cinema Taiyo, in Obihiro

(Nishi 3, Minami 11)
Tel: (0155) 20-1525

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml

Title	Language	Dates
The Greatest Showman	Eng Sub	Until 30th
Paddington 2	Jpn Dub	Until 9th
Black Panther	Eng Sub	All month
Remember Me	Jpn Dub	From 16th
Boss Baby	Jpn Dub	From 21st

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
3/25 (Sun) 10:00-11:00	Fish Day 魚の日 Every month in Hiroo town, there is "Fish Day" during which fish and other ingredients taken from the sea are used to make healthy dishes native to the north. A variety of products are on sale for the event.	Hiroo Town Fisheries Cooperative Food Division 広尾漁協食品部 (広尾郡広尾町会前2丁目79番地先) 01558-2-3202
Until 3/21 (Wed/P.H.)	Lake Shikaribetsu Kotan (Village) しかりべつ湖コタン "Kotan" is the Ainu word for "village." Seen only in the coldest time of year, you can come and experience an entire village made of snow and ice. Try dipping in a hot spring made of ice! Please refer to the homepage for more information.	Lake Shikaribetsu 然別湖 しかりべつ湖コタン実行委員会 0156-69-8181 http://www.nature-center.jp/kotan/index.html
Until 3/31 (Sat)	Winter Festa in ECOPA ウインターフェス in エコパ Enjoy winter activities at Tokachi Ecology Park. Hot drinks are available while you try out activities such as walking with snow shoes, cross-country skiing, snow rafting, snow tube etc. The local café also has a menu prepared (with ingredients sourced locally).	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

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