

Goodbye, Gan! さようなら、ガンちゃん！

Sawadikap! This month, Obihiro sadly waves goodbye to its longest running CIR, Bongkoch "Gan" Namwong from Thailand. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, she extended her contract until the end of January, 2021. We had the pleasure of interviewing her about her time as a CIR.

OP: Hello Gan! Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be a part of this interview. You are finally leaving TIRC after 5 and a half years! That's more than any JET Program CIR! How's that feel?

Gan: I think very few CIRs work this long, so I guess my case is a rare one haha. For me, I found that working as a CIR in Obihiro City was pretty fun, especially working at TIRC. There were so many events to organize, and there was a huge variety to my job, which I enjoyed a lot. I've improved both my English and Japanese skills together with communication and management skills. I was able to work at my own pace and also share and implement my ideas in each project. I think what made me stay this long is that my hard work was noticed by my coworkers, supervisors and the people who participated in each event. The good feedback from them made me feel rewarded and it motivated me to work harder and improve each event every time I did it. I have never wanted to "just get it done", I've always wanted to do it well. As a *senpai* (senior), I think this is what every

CIR should keep in mind. And don't forget to make friends and be a part of the community.

OP: As a new CIR, I appreciate your advice! What were some of your most memorable experiences as an Obihiro CIR?

Gan: Actually I liked every part of my job. If I have to choose just one..... no, I want to share two of my most memorable experiences haha. I think the first is visiting schools. I still remember my very first time doing a visit to an elementary school. The children's purity and energy always give me energy and motivation. I loved visiting the schools and telling them all about my country. I hope that years from now when they have grown up, they will think of me or at least the name of my country will remain in their memory and bring them to visit Thailand.

The second experience is the annual Multicultural Festival, which I was in charge of for 5 years. As part of the festival, I always performed dances with many other



Gan wearing her vibrant traditional Thai clothes

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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

Please be aware that these events may be cancelled to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers.

When	What	Where/Contact
2/10 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night 国際ミニバレー・ナイト Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport. TIRC Multipurpose Hall Fee: Free of charge Organized by the Tokachi International Association	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiko.hokkaido.jp
1/30-3/21 (Sat-Sun) Sat 10:00- Sun 11:30	Shikaribetsuko kotan 然別湖コタン This year, the phantom village of snow and ice that only appears during winter has arisen on the surface of Shikaribetsu Lake once more! Join us for the 40th anniversary of the Shikaribetsuko kotan. *The activities available may change depending on the circumstances regarding COVID-19 and restrictions on a national and prefectural level.	Shikaribetsu Lake 然別湖コタン実行委員会 0156-69-8181 www.kotan.jp
2/6 (Sat) 17:00-20:30	Ice Candle Night 2021 氷灯夜2021 Join us in Memuro on the night of February 6th, as we hold a one-night-only "Ice Candle Night" where we create a magical space with sparkling ice candles. Features a variety of activities appealing to range of people regardless of age or gender, as well as couples and families, including a winter fireworks show!	Memuro Park 芽室町 商工観光課観光物産係 0155-66-6522 www.memuro.info
2/13 (Sat) 10:00-12:00	Walking Café サンボカフェ Wear snowshoes and stroll around experiencing the winter nature of Tokachi Ecology Park. Have a warm drink at your destination and enjoy a snow raft tour on your way back. Bring warm clothes and gloves. Limited to 10 participants Fee: 1000 yen For high school students and above	Tokachi Ecology Park Visitor Center Project House 十勝エコロジーパーク財団 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
2/23 (Tue)	The 8th Snow Duathlon Hokkaido 2021 Memuro Tournament 第8回スノーデュアスロン北海道2021めむろ大会 A snow cycling and cross-country skiing competitive race. Categories are divided into: long-distance; short-distance; men's; women's; and elementary and junior high school students' events.	Shin Arashiyama Sky Park NPO法人花サイクルクラブ 0113-74-1301 www.hana-cycleclub.jp
2/27 (Sat) 10:00-16:00	Ecopark Saijiki "Hinamatsuri" エコパ歳時記「ひな祭り」 Make traditional and modern Hinamatsuri dolls, and enjoy our gourmet and goods corner. Fee: charges apply per activity	Tokachi Ecology Park Visitor Center 十勝エコロジーパーク財団 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp

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international students every year. I had never thought that I was a good dancer, but because I want to make it a success, I decided to join the students in practicing dancing after work for months instead of just asking them to perform. This helped form a strong relationship with the international students. Moreover, every time after the event finished, I just felt complete. I got many messages from my friends and participants telling that I am a natural dancer, telling me that they had a good time and enjoyed the event, which made me feel so happy and fulfilled because it meant that all my hard work resonated with everyone.

OP: *That's so moving to hear. I'm so glad to hear that you and the people here were able to have a positive mutual impact on each other! When you first came to Obihiro, you said you wanted to learn how to ski. Did you get a chance to learn?*

Gan: Did I say that??? Haha. Unfortunately, I had no chance to learn how to ski but instead, I've learned how to snowboard with my friends. My first snowboarding experience wasn't great because I didn't take any proper lessons. My friends were good at snowboarding but they just didn't know how to teach. So what they did was, they brought me to the top of the mountain and let me go down by myself. Of course, they did support me sometimes, but I took about 2 hours to get down the mountain just one time while everybody else took only about 15 minutes. To tell to the truth, I did not enjoy it at all haha. The worst thing was that on the next day I had muscle pain from head to toes. That was the worst muscle pain experience I have ever had. I didn't go again for one year after that but my friend brought me in the 3rd year, then I started to enjoy it. It feels good to look back and see how I've been improving slowly year by year. That's why I kept going every year after that. Oh, I did also go cross-country skiing as a part of my work

several times with the international students if that counts? haha.

OP: *I'd say that counts! I'm glad to hear you got to learn how to snowboard here, I hope you have a chance to come back and enjoy the Hokkaido mountains again in the future. Speaking of which, what are your plans for the future? Do you plan on staying in Japan?*

Gan: After I have been thinking for a while about going back to Thailand or looking for a job in Japan, but I have decided to stay in Japan and let my next job bring me to wherever I have to be. I'm still waiting for the results of the job interview, so I still have no idea exactly where I'm going after this. However, I have decided to move out of Obihiro soon after finishing my contract with the City. If I'm not hired by the company I've currently applied to, I plan to stay in Tokyo for a couple months until I find a job, then I might move to somewhere else - wherever the new job takes place. In the worst case scenario, if I cannot find any job I want to do, my backup plan is to go back to Thailand, rest for a while and find a job there. I believe I still have a way to go, so please wish me luck!

The staff at Obihiro Pioneer thanks Gan for participating in this interview and for her years of hard work for Obihiro. We wish you the best in the future. がんばれ！



Gan appearing at the 13th annual International Culture Festival with her dance group

**Due to COVID-19, release dates for new films may be postponed.
Please contact Cinema Taiyo directly for more details.**

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
Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba the Movie: Mugen Train (<i>Gekijou-ban Kimetsu no Yaiba mugenressha-hen</i>)	Jpn Dub	Until 25 th
Peninsula (<i>Shinkansenhantou Fainaru Suteeji</i>)	Jpn Sub	From 12 th
Pokémon the Movie: Secrets of the Jungle (<i>Gekijou-ban Pokettomonsutaa Koko</i>)	Jpn Dub	Until 25 th
Suicide Forest Movie (<i>Jukai-mura</i>)	Jpn Dub	From 5 th
Super Sentai Movie: Ranger 2021 (<i>Suupaa sentai MOVIE Renjaa 2021</i>)	Jpn Dub	From 20 th

International Festa in Tokachi 2021 国際フェスタ in とかち 2021

International Festa in Tokachi is back again!

On **February 6th (Sat)**, experience international exchange and cooperation through various activities. Because of COVID-19, this year's event has been separated into online and offline activities. Advance application is required to attend the offline activities!

This year's activities include:

- ◇ A workshop by the Fairtrade organization.
- ◇ English lessons for kids conducted by a international preschool based in Obihiro.
- ◇ Online showcase of international cuisine by foreign residents featuring dishes from Thailand, China, Indonesia and more!
- ◇ An online tour of Tokachi International Relations Center and JICA Obihiro, as well as an introduction to various activities run by them.

To apply for the offline activities, please visit www.t-i-a.jp or scan the QR code provided.
Application period: Jan 20 (Wed) - Feb 4 (Thu)



Organized by Tokachi International Association
Co-organized by JICA Hokkaido (Obihiro), the City of Obihiro
With the cooperation of the Committee for Improvement of the City

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")

"Obihiro Pioneer" is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro City Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to the Editing Team at international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp.