

Welcome Bongkoch! ボンコットさん、ようこそ！

From August 6th, Ms. Bongkoch Namwong started working as the new Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) at the Tokachi International Relations Center. We interviewed her to learn a little more about our new CIR:

OP: Please introduce yourself.

Sawasdii ka! Hi everyone! I'm the new CIR from Thailand. My name is Bongkoch Namwong. I'm 26 years old and my nickname is Gan. You may think that my first name and "Gan", aren't related but please don't mind about the details and feel free to call me Gan. I was born in Chiangmai, a city in northern Thailand. I like traveling. I used to pretend to be a (fake) backpacker and traveled around South East Asia (actually just Laos and Vietnam). I'm also interested in photographing but I'm still just a novice photographer. I started learning Japanese when I was in high school and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Japanese. I studied abroad in Tokyo for a year as an exchange student. And this is my sixth time in Japan. Before I come to Obihiro, I was a freelance translator / interpreter (TH-JP) and also had experience of working for a Japanese company in Thailand.

OP: Why did you want to work in Japan?

As I have introduced before, I've learned Japanese for 8 years since I was a student, so there is no way to run away from Japanese. Actually, I've never thought about working in Japan before because it seemed difficult for me. But my mind changed while I was traveling in Japan. I visited so many wonderful places, met many nice people. I realized that I wanted make a place where anyone can stop by, take a rest, and share their stories. I want to make and own a small guest house in Chiangmai. That's why I came here to find the inspiration and have more experiences to help make my dream come true.

OP: First impression of Obihiro?

When I came here in the first week of August, Obihiro reminded me about my hometown. The summer here looks just like Chiangmai. There are a lot of green forests

and wide rice fields. I'd lived in Tokyo for a year; by comparison, the population in Obihiro is quite less than Tokyo. The houses in Obihiro are bigger than the houses in Tokyo. The spaces and greenery are plentiful. Everything looks simple and peaceful in Obihiro. I feel like, "oh, I could spend a slow life and rest my mind here."

"Gan" getting ready to dance the night away at her first Obihiro Heigen Festival Bon Dance.



OP: Anything you would like to try in Hokkaido/Obihiro?

I want to try Skiing!! I've never played any winter sport before, because there is no winter in Thailand. Even if I'm a little bit worried about how can I survive in winter here, I am looking forward to trying some winter sports like skiing or snowboarding.

OP: Anything else you would like to tell our readers?

Please come to visit us at the Tokachi International Relations Center (TIRC / 森の交流館・十勝). You can check our event schedule on our Facebook page at (<https://www.facebook.com/tokachi.international.relations.center>). We're always making activities and events, so please come and enjoy your time at the TIRC!

We hope that Gan continues to enjoy Hokkaido and quickly adjusts to her new life and new job. Good luck Gan!

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Events (pg 2)



Aloha Elaine!
(pg 3)

あのユニバーサル・スタジオが来る
ミニオンズ



ミニオンズ
7.31 FRI
3D / 2D
MINIONS JP

Movies & Events
(pg 4)

Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
9/6 (Sun) 10:00-13:50	Autumn Japanese Tea Ceremony 森の茶会～秋～ Come and experience the traditional Japanese way of serving tea.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
9/9 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volley Night 国際ミニバレーナイト Meet friends from all over the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport!	
9/12 (Sat) 9:00-14:00	13th International Park Golf Tournament 第13回国際親善パークゴルフ大会 Come and join local and international residents for a friendly round of park golf! After the tournament, we will have a barbecue party at the TIRC.	
9/12 and 9/26 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. Japanese volunteers will be there to help you.	
9/19 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	31st Kids Playground 第31回キッズ・プレイグラウンド Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, you can enjoy Halloween-themed games, stories and much more!	
9/26 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	51st International Talk 第51回インターナショナル・トーク Learn more about the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month's talk will be about Hawaii.	
9/1 (Tues) Every Tuesday until 11/17 *Excluding holidays* (Tentative)	Learn Japanese! 日本語講座 Free classes will be held by Obihiro City for foreign residents needing help in Japanese. Morning conversation (10:00-12:00) and evening beginners' classes (18:00-20:00) are being held in Obihiro City Hall. Please sign-up to attend!	Obihiro City Hall International and Domestic Relations Section 帯広市民活動部親善交流課 0155-65-4133 international@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
9/4 (Fri) 17:00-21:00 9/5 (Sat) 10:00-21:00 9/6 (Sun) 10:00-16:00	Tokachi Marche とかちマルシェ Enjoy local Tokachi cuisine, fresh local produce, and other packaged foods.	Obihiro Station North/South Exit Ground JR帯広駅前広場 特設会場 0155-25-7121
9/5, 19, 26 (Sat) 9:00-13:00	Farmer's Square Obihiro ファーマーズ・スクエア・オビヒロ Enjoy shopping for vegetables, agricultural and livestock products from local farmers and various food stands.	Obihiro Station North Multi-Square JR帯広駅北側の駅北多目的広場 0155-29-3211
9/5 - 9/6 (Sat-Sun) 19:30-20:30	Honbetsu-Kirameki Town Festival 本別きらめきタウン フェスティバル Saturday, enjoy a fireworks show in east Tokachi. Sunday, have fun with the cute characters show, J-pop music and more.	Toshibatsugawa Riverside Event Ground 利別川河川敷地特設会場 0156-22-2141
9/12 (Sat) 10:00-15:00	Yotsuba Milk Festa よつ葉ミルクフェスタ Enjoy touring the milk & butter factory, milk & butter tasting, milk squeezing simulation and much more.	Yotsuda Dairy Industry, Tokachi Main Factory よつ葉乳業十勝主管工場 0155-42-2121
9/13 (Sun) 10:00-15:00	"Sky Day" Memorial; Aviation Festival 「空の日」記念 航空まつり Enjoy a guided tour of the airport and tower, various aircraft, and other events.	Tokachi Obihiro Airport とかち帯広空港 0155-64-5320
9/13 (Sun) 9:00-14:30	Toyokoro Industry Festival 2015; "The Sea and Earth Festival" 「海と大地の祭典」とよこ産業まつり Watch, taste, play and feel the Autumn! Local produce and fresh special-priced salmon will be on sale. There will also be shows, games, and salmon-catching.	JA Toyokoro Event Ground JAとよこ多目的広場 015-574-2216
9/18-20 (Fri-Sun)	Rally Hokkaido ラリー北海道 The only international rally event in Japan. Rally cars will run on routes around Tokachi.	Kita Aikoku Community Square, etc. 北愛国交流広場ほか 0155-22-8600
9/20 (Sun)	40th Hakurin Park Festival 第40回柏林公園まつり Local beef, produce, and crafts will be on sale. There will also be stage shows and salmon-catching.	Taiki Town Hakurin Park 大樹町柏林公園 01558-6-2114

Aloha Elaine! アロハ イレインさん!

Ms. Elaine Le joined the CIR team on August 6th. We asked her a few questions to learn more about her:

OP: Please tell us a little about yourself.

Hello everyone! My name is Elaine Le, the new American CIR based in Obihiro City Hall. This is my 3rd year in Japan, including a year studying abroad at Hokkaido University in Sapporo. I'm originally from the island of Oahu in Hawaii, but I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I began seriously learning Japanese. Soon after graduating I started working in Wakkanai, the northernmost city of Japan as an ALT, or Assistant Language Teacher. Although it was a small city with less people than my university, I learned a lot and had many experiences I could not have gotten elsewhere.

Besides hanging out in City Hall all day, I enjoy working out at Tokachi Oval. I can't speed-skate, but I'm usually lifting weights in the training room. Since studying abroad at Hokkaido University, I've also been doing Aikido whenever I get the chance. I now practice with the Tokachi Aikikai at the



Satsunai Sports Center (札幌内スポーツセンター) on Saturday evenings. Please come by to try aikido and try throwing me!

Here's Elaine practicing Aikido with Hokkaido University Aikido Club. Do you think you can throw Elaine?

OP: How did you end up coming to Obihiro?

Actually, the city that my university is in is one of Obihiro's sister cities, Madison. By fate I ran into one of my former Japanese language professors during the last week of school. She knew that I liked Hokkaido and wanted to live/work there. Although the job wasn't immediately available, she introduced me to Obihiro and the CIR position that would be open the next summer. So after much contemplation, I decided to leave my comfortable ALT job in Wakkanai and take the leap into Obihiro. I foresee a lot of obstacles with this new job, but I came here to take those challenges head-on and try to grow from them.

OP: You're from Hawaii, right? Of all places, why Hokkaido?!

Well, I did go to Wisconsin for school. So the cold doesn't bother me anyway~ Actually, when I studied abroad, I wanted to go to Tokyo or Kyoto, not the land of snow. But after spending time in Hokkaido I ended up enjoying it so much that I wanted to work here after graduating. Now I avoid going to such crowded places such as Tokyo or Kyoto. The people here, the Dosanko, are just so much more welcoming. Some might say they're a little...different, but so am I! Honestly, I'll cry and whine about the cold weather all winter, but the warmth of the people will always keep me wanting to stay.

OP: Anything else you would like to say to our readers?

Although I'm new and inexperienced, I will try my best as Obihiro's new CIR! I hope to share my love for Hokkaido with other international residents of Obihiro and meet more "Dosanko" in the area. I may seem a little intimidating because of my hobbies, but I promise I won't throw you (off of the mat)! Please feel free to say hi if you ever see me around and about!

よろしくおねがいます!

We thank Elaine for her time and giving us an interesting interview. We wish her the best in her new job!

Autumn Tea Ceremony (森の茶会～秋～)



Join us for traditional Japanese tea on
Sunday, September 6th!

The Tokachi International Relations Center (TIRC) will be holding a tea ceremony event to teach international residents of Tokachi about this beautiful art. Japanese residents are also welcomed to attend, but will be limited to 10 residents (chosen by lottery). International participants will be limited to 50. The event will be from **10:00 to 14:30** in the Winter Garden of the TIRC. Participation is free! Please contact the TIRC to reserve your spot ASAP!

Tel: 0155-34-0122

Email: tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp

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
Minions	Japanese	Ends 11th
Jurassic World	Japanese/English	Ends 25th
Mission: Impossible—Rogue Nation	English	Ends 25th
Ted 2	Japanese/English	All Month
San Andreas (California Down)	English	Starts 12th
Antman	Undecided	Starts 19th
Attack on Titan: End of the World	PG 12 Japanese	Starts 19th

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
9/23 (Wed)	39th Obihiro Taisho May Queen Festival 第39回帯広大正メークインまつり There will be all-you-can-carry potatoes, a free potato tasting, potatoes school corner and stage shows.	Taisho Community Square 大正ふれあい広場 0155-64-4591
9/27 (Sun) 10:00-14:30	14th Shintoku Shin-Soba Festival 第14回しんとく新そば祭り Enjoy shin-soba made from freshly harvested ingredients. There will be many food stalls, a soba-eating contest and stage shows.	Shintoku Nagomi Welfare Center 保健福祉センター「なごみ」 0156-64-0522
9/27 (Sun)	40th Urahoro Hometown Festival 第40回うらほろふるさとのみのりまつり A harvest festival featuring local produce, rice cake-throwing, salmon-catching, stage shows, and prize raffle.	Urahoro Shinrin Park うらほろ森林公園 015-576-2181
9/27 (Sun)	16th Onnetoh Lake's Story 第16回オンネトー物語 Fully enjoy the nature of Onnetoh lake, nature community classroom and easy-listening	Onnetoh National Camping Ground オンネトー国設野営場外 0156-25-6131
6/21-9/13 (Sun) 11:00-16:00	Obihiro Downtown Street Festival 2015 オビヒロホコテン2015 Enjoy various performances and activities, with plenty of local food on sale every Sunday in Downtown Obihiro.	Obihiro West 2 South 8-9/Hirokoji 帯広市西2条南8丁目9丁目、広小路 0155-23-4510

We warmly welcome our two newest CIRs Ms. Bongkoch and Ms. Le to Obihiro! They will work with our two current CIRs, Ms. Karen Narita from Brazil (center left) and Ms. Yan Liu from China (center right) on various international events and projects in and around Tokachi. Let's cheer them on!

Good Luck Obihiro CIRs!



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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