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(1974~75, 77~80)
LIOJ Director 1977~79

I appreciate LIOJ, first of all. I did from the very start, which was, for me, in 1974. My wife, Elena, and I were hired as teachers by Rowland Harker. We were part of LIOJ's connection with Occidental College in the 1970's, like Phil Como and Carolyn Josselyn and others before us. LIOJ thrust us all in an intense environment with very talented, inquisitive, often opinionated people. It was stimulating. It was enjoyable. It was draining. And it never slowed down. My term as director ran from January 1977 through March 1979. I followed Bill Harshbarger. I wouldn't say that LIOJ was easy in the late 1970's. By turns, I thrived and struggled in the middle of it. But there was no way I wanted to do anything else at the time. It was compelling. That LIOJ was a special opportunity in my life was always evident to me.



Bill had made fundamental changes from what Rowland had begun. Rowland brought him in to do just that. Bill brought increasing professionalism to LIOJ and opened up avenues to creativity for both students and teachers. He created scheduling changes to afford longer teaching blocks in support of this. There was little need for me to tamper with a program that was working. Besides, there were other good people having their impact as well. Walt Matreyek and later Don Freeman were the academic supervisors. Mike Joy and later Howie Gutow were the editors of *Cross Currents*. Gene Phillips was expanding our children's classes by a kind of outreach program to Chigasaki and working with Masami Takahashi, our business manager, to explore the possibility of a downtown Odawara LIOJ center. We couldn't close the financial equation on this one, so it never came to fruition. I suspect Mr. Kehara went over it with a fine-tooth comb.

Cross Currents grew up a lot in those years. We were grappling with issues like how to solicit quality manuscripts, the creation of an editorial board made up of people outside LIOJ, and adding advertising. The journal became more professional and demonstrated closer ties to JALT and KALT. It took on broader content beyond language teaching to include cross cultural training, and yet, continued to find its focus in articles on practical teaching strategies that could be applied in the ESL/EFL classroom. All of us seemed to agree on three things. It was terrific for LIOJ's image. It provided teachers important professional opportunity outside of teaching. And finally, despite determined efforts to expand readership, it would never pay for itself.

Staffing through the year consisted typically of eight or nine teachers and three or four Japanese administrative staff. The latter were led by Masami, and later Nobu Seto. I was always impressed with the patience and good humor of Mitsuko Takahashi, Yoshiko Oguri, and Ryoko Yamaguchi. We ballooned to about twenty instructors in the

summer months. There were institutional linkages with the School for International Training (SIT), the University of Southern California through Dr. Sumako Kimizuka and Dr. Bill Gay, the East-West Center in Honolulu through Dick Via (English through drama), and Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. Every summer, Tuck sent an MBA student who could talk business with our businessmen students and hopefully learn how to teach a little English in the process. Mr. Shibusawa, of course, was very active across several fronts on Japanese relations with ASEAN countries at the time. This translated into direct benefit for LIOJ as he supported a scholarship program to bring Thai students and Thai teachers of English to LIOJ. Renu Pholsward helped us coordinate this from the College of Commerce in Bangkok.

LIOJ teachers had a challenge in shifting gears with students in different programs. Classes were divided between the “Businessmen’s Program” (that’s how we advertised it) and our Community Courses. The types of students and their motivations to learn English or just to be with us at LIOJ really varied.

First, the Businessmen’s Program was an intensive, four-week course that catered primarily to businesspeople. We included “regular” students who also wanted the intensive, “English-only” atmosphere, but in 1977-78 we were pulling advertising to this group and putting more emphasis on retaining business students. I would guess the ratio of businessmen to “regular” students (usually university students) was about two to one. In those days, efforts we made at locating and recruiting Japanese businesswomen into the program were singularly unsuccessful. It’s remarkable to me, in retrospect, that we offered eleven of these four-week intensives a year. The first Monday was opening orientation in the Hakone room. The last Friday was the farewell party in the Pacific View room. These were constant refrains. (Many teachers paid 300 yen per month into a “record club” to build a music collection. We could at least add variety to the farewell party by updating the dancing music with the latest Stevie Wonder, Jackson Browne, or “My Sharona.”) These were intense, four-week flurries with motivated students and I think we did an outstanding job of making their time at LIOJ productive, unique and something they would always remember. For me, it was not always easy telling what month we were in, so it was individuals that I remember.

Broader world issues were affecting the program too. First, our enrollments were tenuous. Japan in the years following the OPEC “oil shock” of 1973-74 was doing a better job than the rest of the world in growing its economy. This was so much the case that it was causing major trade imbalance issues with the US. Japan had become the free world’s second-ranked economic superpower. Our students were very bright businessmen from Japan’s elite companies in telecommunications, computers, shipbuilding, construction, finance, and so on. Japanese companies found it increasingly cost effective to send people abroad for training rather than pay high in-country costs at LIOJ. Secondly, our students were feeling their economic oats. I can remember heated late-night discussions with some of our businessmen students in early 1977 when Japan’s new prime minister, Takeo Fukuda, was traveling the world attending trade summits and meeting with the new US president, Jimmy Carter. That our students were voicing strong opinions was a positive. That they were doing so in a

second language posed an obvious teaching challenge for us. Mr. Shibusawa was articulating in those years that Japan was projecting primarily an economic image and did not adequately portray a more human, cultural face to the world. We had incredible people on the LIOJ advisory board—people like Sen Nishiyama of Sony Corporation or Tadashi Yamamoto of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)—who were saying the same thing. The small contribution I felt we could make as teachers, I suppose, was to help these businessmen bring out (in English) their own unique personalities quite apart from business.

We used a lot of VTR for listening comprehension. We used textbooks by BBC English called *The Bellcrest Story*, about the survival of a fictional British company called Bellcrest Ltd., as a foundation for student role plays for business English. We attempted to dramatically reduce teacher talk-time and draw out the students through the Silent Way. We implemented Community Language Learning (CLL) strategies that we got from good LIOJ friend, Father Paul LaForge. We went on a craze for several months with student-produced slide-tapes for presentation in the last week. We picked strawberries in Shizuoka and had dog-eat-dog ping pong and volleyball matches. We talked about Alex Haley's new book, *Roots*, and Anwar Sadat's first-ever visit by an Arab president to Israel (thereby acknowledging their right to exist). It was all very pedagogically sound.

The Community Courses included Night School, Ladies' Classes, Children's Classes, and Junior High Classes. Night School, I seem to recall, met every Wednesday and Thursday night from 7:00 to 8:30PM. We had five classes, each with a maximum of fifteen students, and it was always filled up. There was always a struggle with attendance issues in that students who missed a lot of sessions were taking a coveted spot away from another student who would have taken better advantage of it. This is one of those universal issues in education. Ladies' Classes epitomized the social aspect of "English as a hobby." We had three classes with a maximum of 24 students per class but, in reality, I doubt we turned anyone away or taught much English. Gene's Children's Classes and Junior High Classes were limited to ten students per class, though there was a lot more demand in grades 3-4 and 5-6 than there was with the junior high kids.

The LIOJ Summer Workshop for Japanese Teachers of English has always been a hallmark at LIOJ. We held the 9th and 10th Annual Workshops in 1977 and 1978. We had to limit participation to 120 Japanese English teachers. We divided them into three groups of 40 for lecture purposes. For language study, we set up twelve classes with no more than ten "students" each. This had been the formula for many years. In our 1978 brochure, we claimed to that point a total of 1,237 graduates of the LIOJ Workshop. One of the highlights that year came as result of the creativity of Kathy Campbell, one of our teachers. Kathy produced and directed "The Tongue-cut Sparrow" (*Shita-kiri Suzume*) and "Peach Boy" (*Momotaro*). These were short plays based on Japanese folk tales, interspersed liberally with clever puns, and performed by LIOJ faculty and staff.

Life for us at LIOJ in the late 1970's was hectic and absorbing. I found in an old LIOJ teacher orientation binder from July 1978 the following description of how our students (from all the different programs) viewed us back then.

- are surprised at how young we are;
- are perceptive about whether or not a teacher is "eager to teach";
- appreciate—almost demand—expressions of interest in Japanese culture, people;
- view some teachers' attitudes as not "professional," i.e., they don't cut the image of *sensei*;
- are quick to generalize about "hippy" appearance;
- want teachers with business background (businessmen);
- consider teachers' attitude or character important;
- want conversation where they talk, not the teacher;
- want to know the goals or aims of the class, the lesson;
- want more contact with teachers.

Our students always came to LIOJ with high expectations. I think we delivered. They forced us to view our lives through a different lens. I doubt any of us came away from LIOJ unchanged. And always they wanted "more contact with teachers." I laugh now to think that I was once young enough to think this was a reasonable request. But, of course, it was all this intense contact which made LIOJ what it was in those years. It made it stimulating and enjoyable. It exhausted us. It made it important for us to have an overnight faculty/staff "outing" on Hatsushima following the Summer Teachers' Workshop. Hatsushima memories could take me in a whole different direction on life at LIOJ but, for those times too, I am appreciative. Besides, I'm not sure I've got my dates straight.