

**Diane McCall**  
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In the eighteen months or so that I have worked at LIOJ, I have had the opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas with English teachers of thirteen different nationalities: American, Australian, Canadian, English, Hungarian, Irish, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Philippine, Russian, Thai and Welsh. These teachers have been colleagues as well as guests and participants of the International Summer Workshop. This has been a rewarding and stimulating experience—as well as a lot of fun! When I told my LIOJ students that their next teacher could be from Korea or Hungary, all were intrigued; What language do they speak in Hungary? Can a Korean speak English? The bias in Japan is very much towards 'native speakers', and, as an inevitable result of this, the teachers that most Japanese students of English encounter at language school tend to be just that; 'English speaker' becomes associated in many minds with a Caucasian face and a US or British passport. This system perpetuates itself when many language schools adopt hiring policies that reflect those expectations. The nice thing is that at LIOJ, students get the chance to encounter the wider world of English use.

Another large part of my experience here has been the school's physical environment. The grounds of Asia Center are beautiful, whatever season. The surrounding area is rich and green with a wonderful variety of trees, flowers and shrubs. Monkeys come and go. (An LIOJ student informs me that Kanagawa prefecture is the home of around two thousand monkeys. One group makes its home here.) All of this natural beauty makes quite a backdrop for classes, parties and special events. Summer Workshop guests and teachers congregate on the roof of the building to have a drink, while enjoying the views of Odawara Castle, Sagami Bay, and the summer fireworks displays taking place below. When I leave here, I'll carry with me the memory of these things.