

**Lori Brooks  
(1981~83)**

I went to LIOJ in the summer of 1981. I had finished graduate school (TESL/TEFL) the previous semester and wanted to work for one semester in San Francisco before going to Japan. I had gone straight through college and graduate school and didn't know what it was like to just work.

I taught English to businessmen and also taught Community classes. I taught quite a few movie classes in the Community Program, and also assisted in a few dance classes in that program as well. I also was co-editor of *Cross Currents* during my tenure at LIOJ. I am still friends with quite a few of my colleagues from LIOJ (Ruth Sasaki, Liz Neblett, Bob Ruud, Jane Prestebak, Mike Kleindl, Mehta Bos, Lance & Yoshiko Knowles) and have happily reconnected recently with Tom and Fran Smith as well.

I have many wonderful memories of my time in Odawara and Japan, so it's hard to narrow it down to just one. My most memorable, though, would have to be my "initiation," if you will, to life at LIOJ and life in Odawara. I was taken downtown to a *robatayaki* by Tom Smith, I believe (don't recall if there were others) to a place where the chef was nicknamed "Fingers" by some of the teachers because he had lost some of his (cutting up fish?!?). "Fingers" gave me a special dish. I forget the name, but it was sashimi and the fish was still alive when it was served! That was a bit much for me to take having only been in Japan for a few days. Tom insisted that the fish needed to be moving its lips as it was the proof of how fresh the fish was. Well, when the fish finally stopped moving his lips, I tasted the sashimi. It was, and remains, the best sashimi I have ever had!

I continued to teach ESL for many years after returning to the United States. I stopped in 1998 when I became a mom. These days I am a computer Help Desk Manager for a large group of researchers at University of California. LIOJ was the best teaching job I ever had because teachers are respected in Japan, and we had wonderful opportunities for professional development at LIOJ. The work was challenging and rewarding. Living in Japan was a wonderful experience and that is why I kept extending my stay. I will always cherish the memories of Japan and LIOJ.