

**Gretta McIlvaine**  
**(1988~89)**

I came to LIOJ directly after finishing my Master's Degree at San Francisco State in 1988. I was working at the American Language Institute and a colleague had just returned from Japan with wonderful stories about LIOJ. Shortly after that, I was told that the director of LIOJ at that time was coming to SFSU to interview. I was thrilled and talked my husband into the possibility of working in Japan. We were selected for an interview and a few weeks later were told that we'd gotten the job. When we arrived, we both worked in the Business Program and enjoyed it immensely. I was interested in participating in the Community Program as well and was able to work with Don Maybin who was the head of the program at the time. It was quite inspiring and creative and allowed us to get out into the schools.

I have many memories of Asia Center, Odawara, and Japan but the one I'd like to share was when the Shibusawas invited my husband and me to their country home for the weekend. I hadn't been in Japan very long and everything was new and we had the most wonderful weekend filled with conversation, good food, walks in the countryside. It left quite an impression on me.

After LIOJ, I moved to Tokyo and worked for five years at Athenée Français. I enjoyed that very much, but was becoming more interested in natural medicine and energy healing that I discovered in Japan. In 1994, I came back to America and totally changed my career and became interested in holistic medicine. I now have my own practice in the San Francisco Bay Area, and travel to New Mexico, Virginia, and Maryland to see clients there as well.

Japan launched me into an exciting English teaching career and sowed the seeds for the next step as well.