

Newsletter of The Association of Indiana Teachers of Japanese

Joint Issue: Fall 2004 and Spring 2005

Letter from President of AITJ, March 2005

Jane McMurrer

Greetings Colleagues,

Spring is on the horizon. The time goes by so quickly that soon, the snow and cold will be a memory. And then, we can recharge our batteries for next school year and prepare for the 2005 IFLTA Conference.

Part of me is overwhelmed by the volume of work that is crying out to be done, but most of me is simply overwhelmed by how blessed I feel to have such remarkable colleagues and students. Having come back from another great Japan Bowl last night, I cannot keep from thinking about how great all the students were and how much fun it was to be in the company of Japanese teachers from around the state.

I would like to thank Mike Tsugawa and Noriko Kinoshita for putting on a whale of a Japan Bowl. Michigan City High School was a perfect venue. It was an especially nice touch to get the "Japanese National Honor Society" information as part of the registration packet. We have Shingo Satsutani to thank for making that information available and for being a moderator as well. Please see the article on Japan Bowl for complete information on volunteers and winners! Congratulations to all who participated and a special congratulations to winners and their teachers. Seeing all of you interact with your students, sharing ideas, and catching up was great fun. Mike and Noriko, you made it look easy. Thank you again!

This is my first message since the IFLTA conference, which was another success for us and our organization. We were fortunate to have Chuck Yates and Erika Sebens for our Friday morning session. The intellectual stimulation Chuck provided was complimented by fabulous teaching materials from Erika. Thank you Chuck and Erika for all your hard work and for the pleasure of your company at the 2004 IFLTA Conference.

I would like to extend our gratitude to the rest of our presenters this year:

Noriko Kinoshita The other side of the story:
Discussing WWII in the Japanese Classroom

Michael Kluemper / Noriko Kinoshita / Molly Jeon
Regional Bon Dori dance for the Japanese
Classroom and program promotion

Sadatoshi Tomizawa / Daisaku Yamamoto
Teaching basic Japanese particles through
pictures and drawings

Michael Kluemper Support organizations and
resources for Japanese teachers
(Continued on page 2)

.....-TANKA CORNER-.....

To A Poet Friend

Every now and then, a friend of mine in Japan would send me a poem that she newly composed. I truly enjoyed the delicate sentiment expressed beautifully in her lines. When I requested for more, however, she complained that, unless I send a few lines of my own in return, I would run into a deficit. Thereupon, I sent her the following.

おくゆかし
こころをこめた
君の歌
アカジといわずに
読ませて頼む

Guohe Zheng, Ball State University

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Yasuko Watt / Hiroko Chiba

Activities for advanced students of Japanese

We take away so much from each presentation. I would like to extend a special thanks and congratulations to first-time presenter, Noriko Kinoshita. Thank you to all who presented and all who attended.

This is a very busy time for all of us. Many of us just wrapped out our Japan Bowl season and have grades coming due. We are planning trips to Japan and hosting Japanese students at our schools. We are plenty busy just preparing our lessons and grading papers, but we have the mixed blessing of being passionate about what we do and who we do it for.

So while you are doing all the things you do, please give some thought to presenting at the 2005 IFLTA conference. Lisa Berkson will be presenting ideas and materials for Lesson 10 of AIJ and Noriko Kinoshita and I will be doing a presentation on teaching about the weather. Since many of us use AIJ, please consider sharing your materials and ideas on a chapter of the book. It is an enjoyable learning experience to co-present, so do not hesitate to contact a colleague to share the load with you. Book I, Lessons 5 and 10 will have been covered. I suggest Book I, Lessons 11 or 12 and Book II, Lessons 3 and 6. It might make an excellent presentation to do Book I, Lesson 12 with Book II, Lesson 6, which both deal with "illness." Here is another idea -- Do you have a great "self-contained" lesson that a substitute teacher could easily present? This could be for any level. Preparing for a substitute teacher can be a monumental task, so please share if you think you have something with general appeal. We love taking things from the conference that we can use the next day or even a week or two later -- when we are exhausted.

This brings us to Linda Worman. **We will miss you!!** You have been an inspiration to us and your students for years. I wish you all the best in your retirement. Being your homestay roommate in Japan was a kick. Everyone who has had the pleasure of working with you is richer for it.

And finally, **congratulations** to Yasuko Watt, who was named the Indiana State College Foreign Language Teacher of the Year for 2004. Yasuko, you are so deserving of this honor. Also, to Sachiko Kawakubo, our Indiana State Japanese Teacher of the Year for 2005. Sachiko, we admire you and appreciate all your contributions.

Enjoy the rest of the school year. Have a super spring break. I hope to see everyone in the fall.

With my appreciation and respect,

2005 JAPAN BOWL IN MICHIGAN CITY

Mike Tsugawa, 2005 Japan Bowl Host

The 2005 Indiana Regional Japan Bowl was held on March

5th at Michigan City High School. There had been some concern about snow and late arrivals, but all teams were on schedule or early, and the event ran smoothly. This year marks the best-attended and most competitive Japan Bowl yet, with a staggering 50 teams and 16 schools participating. Including alternates, nearly 150 students participated in this year's competition, and many "extra" students came along to support cultural events, act as volunteers, or "study buddies" for their teammates.

With such a large field of teams, the size of judging teams was increased to five judging teams. This year's team was a diverse panel of community residents, academics, and professionals with ties to Japan Bowl, language education, or Japan in some way. Yasuko Ito-Watt Sensei of IU provided leadership as a past judge and was our moderator for Level 4. We were also fortunate to have Shingo Satsutani Sensei of Illinois' College of DuPage, president of NCJLT and also the chair for National Japanese Honor Society, as our head judge for level 3. Setsuko Shiga Sensei of Notre Dame University, Akiko Tsugawa of Michigan City Area Schools, and Kumiko Jones, a Michigan City community volunteer, also made Japan Bowl judging 'debut'. Some of these members met their scorekeepers and timekeepers for the first time that morning, but ice was quickly broken, and preparations made. Japan Bowl coordinator Kinoshita Sensei of Crown Point High School led a judging review session, and the event was under way.

The level of competition was high and preliminary scores quite close, but at Level 4 Chesterton, Warren Central, and Franklin Community advanced to the finals, with Chesterton (John Sparks Sensei) winning. At level 3, Chesterton, Indiana Academy, and Michigan City made the finals, with Chesterton winning. In the level 2 final were Indiana Academy, Michigan City, and Carroll, with Indiana Academy (Fumiko Chiuni Sensei) winning. 1st place teams received certificates, and also special gifts provided by Satsutani Sensei.

Japanese teachers across Indiana had the chance to catch up, exchange tips, and also peruse information regarding Japanese National Honor Society and the second edition of the Japanese Advocacy Kit, provided by Satsutani Sensei. Meanwhile, the students were enjoying the opportunity to participate in many cultural activities, including calligraphy, Dance Dance Revolution, manga drawing, an anime/manga corner, Go, kanji karuta, origami, animated films, traditional toys, and haiku.

Overall, the event was highly successful; a tribute to the hard work and long hours put in by all the teachers, students, and the many volunteers that made this possible. Otsukaresama Deshita! Mata Rainen Ganbarimashou!

A CASE OF NENGŌ, JAPANESE ERA NAMES

Guohe Zheng, Ball State University

Japan has a quite different year counting system from the rest of the world. It is called nengō 年号, literally meaning

“the name of an era.”

It is commonly believed that the nengō system started in Japan in the year 645, namely the first year of Taika. Until modern times, the nengō changed very frequently. A change in the nengō took place not only when a new emperor was enthroned. It could take place also due to a natural disaster, a war, or the offering of an auspicious present to the emperor, etc. From the first year of Taika (645) to the first year of the current emperor (Heisei, 1989), each nengō lasted on average for 5 years, with short ones lasting only 2 months. The longest nengō in Japanese history was Showa, which lasted, or more accurately spanned, 64 years.

But the first year of Showa was extremely short. Taishō Emperor died on December 25, 1926. When the new emperor was enthroned, it was already designated the first year of Showa. Six days later, it already became the second year of Showa.

The brevity of the first year of Showa led to the solution of a criminal case in Japan recently. A group of criminals sneaked into a woman’s residence and stole her bank account, along with her personal seal, something required for bank transactions in Japan. They even found out the victim’s birth date to be June 1, 1926. Apparently, the criminals checked the conversion table and used the legally required Japanese way of year counting and forged a document saying that “holder was born on June 1 of the first year of Showa,” which, of course, never existed as a date in Japanese history. A woman who looked like the right age appeared in the bank soon, showed the forged document and withdrew 6,000,000 yen from the account and then disappeared.

When the victim sued the bank for the loss, the bank pleaded not guilty. Even “The Imperial Edict for the Change of the engō into Showa” was presented in the court as evidence. Eventually, however, the victim won the case. The verdict of the court contains in part the following: “It is common sense in Japan that the first year of Showa had only a few days and the suspicion of bank employees should have been aroused by the outlandish birth date that appeared on the documents of the criminals.”

Even though few Japanese worry about being charged for forgery, most of them do feel troublesome about the conversion between Western calendar and the Japanese year counting system.

(Based on Tensei jingo of *Asahi shimbun* Feb. 28, 2005)



PHOTOS: OSAKA STUDENTS IN INDIANA



A Study Trip to Japan

Karen Countryman, and 11 of her Japanese students went on Tour 2 of NP Japan. Despite the heat, and the high teacher student ratio, we all survived without incident! This was partly due to the fact that two former JALEX assistants, Miho Yoshida, and Toshiko Kanai, met and toured with us in Tokyo, as well as Karen's brother, Chuck, who also speaks Japanese. Our week long home stay this time around was in Hiroshima. What a wonderful city. And, of course, the Peace Park is a stop that everyone who goes to Japan should make. Before going, all the Japanese students at Jeff folded and helped string Senbazuru, which we left at the Park.

Hosting Guests from Japan

Crown Point High School hosted 24 students and 2 teachers from their sister city in Yokohama from March 18 to 29. The Japanese guests spent 4 days at the high school following their host students' class schedules, and 1 day at

Taft Middle School. March was CPHS's Foreign Language Month and the Japanese students participated in the language exchange activities in which all students learn foreign languages that they have never learned. The Japanese students also saw the CPHS production of a musical, went on a in field trips to the Woodfiled Mall, Navy Pier and Japonais restaurant in Chicago, Mitsuwa Marketplace, and Chinese Buffet with their host families and the Japanese club members. The CPHS students organized a tour of their brand-new school building in Japanese, two Japanese club meetings, and a Easter egg hunt and egg coloring. Both Japanese and American students had a wonderful time!

Exploring Distance Learning

Columbia City High School has had an Anime/Manga Club for 2 years. Now, some of the members are begging to learn Japanese. The administration has approved adding the class; but the school is overcrowded and room space is at a premium. They are hoping to find a way to offer the class to students via video conferencing and webcams by connecting to a teacher at a remote site, with a telephone nearby for student questions and a fax for transmitting tests and written projects. They are also exploring other possibilities and would welcome any suggestions. Messages with ideas or encouragement may be sent to Julia Robinson, Media Specialist at jarobins@wccsonline.com or by phone at 260-244-6136.

AWARD OF \$8,000 RECEIVED BY KAREN DOWLING

Muncie – Karen Dowling, foreign language teacher at Central High School, was presented a check for \$8,000 Tuesday for being selected a recipient of the 2004 Project E Teacher Award.

As part of the Project E Awards program, Central High School also received a cash award of \$2,000. The surprise presentation was made at a Central High School staff meeting by Dolly Bauman, education outreach director of Project E, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization designed to recognize and reward 20 of the state's top teachers for their commitment to education and their role as established or emerging leaders in the teaching profession.

Mrs. Dowling received an \$8,000 grant for personal use from Project E and the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation. By awarding the money directly to the recipient, Project E hopes to honor the individual teacher for their tremendous contribution to Indiana's youth. Central High School received a \$2,000 grant in

conjunction with Mrs. Dowling's personal award for use throughout the school community. The Project E Excellence in Education Teacher Award is in its fifth year of annually presenting monetary awards to 20 of the state's top teachers who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to education. Winners and finalists are selected by a panel of past teacher award winners from nominations made by teaching colleagues, school administrators, parents, and students earlier this year.

Ten finalists of the recognition program will receive \$1,000 each. Since 2000, the Foundation has awarded over \$500,000 to teachers and schools for the Excellence in Education Awards. For more information on the 2004 Teacher Awards, visit www.projecte.org.

Retirement and Job Opening

Linda Worman

Dear AITJ friends,

After 33 years of teaching (about 15 years studying and teaching Japanese) I have decided that it is time for me to retire and finally spend more time with my family. I teach at one of the best places and work with really great students so it is really hard to leave this position. I thought that my replacement was ready to take over next fall, but those plans have changed. So I am sending out this information in hopes that you might know someone who would like a position teaching Japanese at Bluffton High School.

Bluffton is a small town (10,000) set in a rural area in northeastern Indiana. It is located on the Wabash River, near the Ouabache State Park. There are several Japanese companies that have chosen to locate in small towns near Bluffton; the newest one is being built in Berne, the center of an Amish community. Bluffton is close to Ft. Wayne, a much larger city to the north. Our new high school was just built four years ago, so it is a very nice facility. We have a school population of about 500 students. I have many materials that I have accumulated over the years, so the new teacher would "inherit" this wealth of teaching materials. Also I am willing to help my replacement recruit students and also to aid the new teacher in taking over the position.

Presently I am teaching Japanese II, III, IV, and V at the high school. I have between 20 and 23 students per class, with the IV/V as a combined class. I previously also taught Japanese for select students at the middle school in grades 6-8 during one semester each year so they covered Japanese I level material before entering high school. At present that middle school program is on hold. Scheduling at the middle school is for 7 periods each day, while the high school is on block 4 schedule. Trying to share my time between two schools with two different schedules was becoming increasingly difficult. However there are presently 30 - 7th grade students and 24 - 8th grade students who have had some experience with learning Japanese language. These students will likely want to resume studying Japanese as they move up to high school.

Our principal, assistant principal, and our superintendent are very supportive of the Japanese program. The German teacher is considering retirement as well and his numbers have been declining, so I believe that there will be potential for more students to want to sign-up for Japanese in the future. Our Spanish classes are at capacity, so there is need for at least one other foreign language choice (Japanese).

At present the position for teaching Japanese is part-time, but could certainly be a full-time position if a candidate is qualified and willing to teach any other subject. If you or anyone that you know is interested in this job opportunity, please contact my principal, Steve Baker. (See contact information below.)

Thanks to all of you who encouraged and helped me during my years of studying and teaching Japanese. It is a pleasure to know such great professionals in our field. Best wishes to all of you in the new year and always.

Linda Worman

For more information, please contact:

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Bluffton High School
#1 Tiger Trail
Bluffton, IN 46714

FAX 260 824-6001
Phone 260 824-3724

Worman-sensei

ご苦労様でした!!!!

New Feature: Useful Websites

Hiragana Tutoring

<http://members.aol.com/writejapan/hiragana/writutor.htm>

Photo Gallery of Japan

<http://japanesecentral.com/NihongoWeb/Picturegallery/>

Online Video News

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/stream/index.htm>

Manuscript submission:

For future newsletter please submit items by the following deadlines:

Fall Newsletter: 15 September

Spring Newsletter: 15 February

Please send articles to Guohe Zheng at

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