

History of JLTANE (Japanese Language Teachers' Association of the Northeast)

President, Tamae Prindle's ご挨拶 and JLTANE's 生い立ち

Tamae Prindle (Colby College)

Thank you everyone for attending the 24th JLTANE conference. I would also like to cordially thank—on behalf of the participants of this conference—Professor Kasumi Yamamoto and other members of the Williams College for Chairing and preparing this conference.

It was twenty-four years ago that the late Professor Tazuko Monane convened the first conference at Harvard University. The keystone of her plan was to make the Japanese language instructors' work easier by creating a space for them to learn, present, and share their know-how of Japanese language teaching. Professor Monane was aware of and sympathetic to the Japanese language instructors who have been spending an enormous amount of time preparing for classes. In other words, Professor Monane created the system to help US out. So, please note that this is OUR workshop/conference. Since then, 14 colleges and universities in the New England region have taken turns in hosting a pedagogical workshop/conference. Those who have hosted the conference three times are Harvard, Wesleyan, and Connecticut College, and twice, Amherst, MIT, and Brown. I am grateful for their continued support. Being one of the many who were encouraged to sponsor a workshop, I still remember Professor Monane's words, "the experience will help you in the future."

The first group to host the workshop after Harvard was the Five Colleges in Massachusetts, and at this workshop, our association was named The New England Region Japanese Language Teachers' Pedagogical Workshop. After the most unfortunate loss of Professor Monane in 1991, Professor Wagoner of Trinity College convened the first business meeting in the following year at Middlebury College. There, Professor Wagoner was nominated as the first Secretary of the association. Nine other Advisory Board members were also chosen.

In 1997, ten years from the first workshop, Professor Wagoner turned over the helm to me. Between our terms, she and I drafted a set of bylaws for the association. During the 13-years of my leadership, I created a web-page for the association, changed the name of the association to JLTANE (Japanese Language Teachers' Association of New England), changed the title "Secretary" to "President," changed the nomenclature "workshop" to "conference," tried to make the association into an endowed nonprofit organization, solicited future hosts of the conference, helped the hosts of the conferences by giving them seasonal reminders, answering their questions, and helping them draft a grant proposal if necessary, creating the conference web pages for them if asked, and the like.

The JLTANE home page (<http://web.mit.edu/21f.500/JLTANE/>) consists of (a) the bylaws and a brief history of the association, (b) information about the JLTANE conferences, and (c) the member list. Please take a look. As to the change of the association's name, it was done mostly to streamline it. And the reason why we changed the title "Secretary" to "President" is for grant application purposes. The word "secretary" may mislead some into believing that there is a President above the secretary. Similarly, we changed "workshop" to "conference" in order to expand the scope of the gathering to include the analyses of the Japanese language. Unfortunately, the lack of a college or university to manage a trust-fund made me abort the idea of turning JLTANE into an endowed non-profit organization.

Many associations and workshops have sprouted throughout the United States and abroad, pioneered by us. This is a welcoming phenomenon. The flipside of it, however, is competition over funding and participants. In order to overcome this awkwardness, JLTANE and our neighbor, NECTJ (Northeast Council of Teachers of Japanese)—which is membered mainly by K-12 institutions—, hosted four conferences jointly from 2006 through 2009. Including last year's, NECTJ will be hosting their own workshop every other year from now on.

Another significant change pertaining to JLTANE's activities was the "follow-up" meeting of the Steering Committee in the summer of 2009. Professor Wako Tawa of Amherst College kindly prepared a space and lunch for us. The major changes we made then were:

- (1) JLTANE will change the name of the association to read as "Japanese Language Teachers' Association of the Northeast" although the acronym will remain the same. This will help expand the membership and conference hosts to a wider area.
- (2) JLTANE will establish the position of vice-president. The vice-president's term will be four consecutive years. During the four years, (s)he will assist the president in every aspect, especially in the management

of the JLTANE webpage. (S)he will assume the President's position after the completion of his/her four year term. The first vice-president to accept this position was Professor Yoshimi Nagaya. Thank you Professor Nagaya.

- (3) The Steering Committee will consist of nine members including the non-voting President and eight other voting members. They are:

- Vice President of the association
- Chair of the conference of the previous year,
- Chair of that year's conference;
- Chair of the conference of the following year;
- Chair of the conference of two years later;
- three representatives of the K~12 level institutions

This means that each member—except for the representatives of the K-12 institutions whose terms rotate every three years—has a staggered four-year term.

- (4) Instead of relying on Colby College, we now have our own web domain. Right now, it is hooked to MIT, but you can access JLTANE directly. I am thankful to Naoto Kobayashi-sensei at the Hall-Dale School system in Augusta for making this happen.

I would like to close here with a reminder that this is OUR association. And, please make use of the information and links in our member list. They come in handy.