

ATJ JSP SIG Newsletter: Issue no. 17, September 15, 2014

The ATJ JSP SIG Newsletter bi-annually highlights upcoming events and opportunities of interest. Notices appear under six headings:

- 1. JSP SIG Announcements**
- 2. Conferences and Workshops**
- 3. Grants and Awards Opportunities**
- 4. Other Information**
- 5. JSP Class in the Spotlight**
- 6. Member in the Spotlight**

If you have notices in these categories that you would like posted here, please send them to Tomoko Takami at ttakami@sas.upenn.edu. The next newsletter is scheduled to be published on March 15, 2015. Information received by March 1 will be included in this issue.

(1) JSP SIG Announcements

I hope you all enjoyed the summer break and had a great start to the new school year.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Keiko Kuriyama-sensei, who served as Editor of JSP-SIG newsletter since the 10th issue. Unfortunately, she is not able to continue. I truly appreciate her dedication and enjoyed working with her; thank you very much, Kuriyama-sensei!

I would like to continue to ask for your participation and help other JSP members by

- 1) sending any information that you think could help other JSP members (send me an email and I will share it in the JSP –SIG newsletter, email, and/or on the JSP Facebook.
- 2) joining in writing and composing for the JSP-SIG newsletters.

The *JSP Class in the Spotlight* is Shigeru Osuka-sensei of Seton Hall University. The *Member in the Spotlight* is Akiko Kawano Jones-sensei from Bowling Green State University. I hope you enjoy reading their articles.

Tomoko Takami, JSP-SIG Chair

(2) Conferences and Workshops

The 2014 AATJ FALL CONFERENCE

The 2014 American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Annual Fall Conference will take place on November 21-23 in San Antonio, Texas, in conjunction with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo.

(3) Grants and Awards Opportunities (no updates)

(4) Other Information (no updates)

(5) JSP Class in the Spotlight:

Business Japanese I-II & Graduate Newspaper Reading I-II at Seton Hall University, NJ Shigeru Osuka, Seton Hall University

At the Seton Hall University, the Japanese Program has been offering two Business Japanese/Japanese for Professions Related Courses: JAPN 3211-3212 Business Japanese I-II for upper level undergraduate every year; and JAPN 6113-6114 Japanese Newspaper Reading I-II for graduate every other year. Each class meets 75 minutes twice a week with 7-12 undergraduate students and 4-7 graduate students.

The JAPN 3211-3212 course aims to reach intermediate-high/advanced-low Japanese proficiency with highlighted on leaning frequently used Business (professional) related vocabulary, useful expressions, discourse/honorifics/*taigū-hyōgen* in business/professional context, cross-cultural understanding on business manners and etiquette by reading, and business writing. In particular, the class has lectures, discussions on video/YouTube in Japanese, vocabulary quizzes, role-plays in business/professional presentations and negotiations, cross-cultural reaction papers on readings, and writing practice (resume, cover letter, invitation, budget/estimate, data analysis, etc.) every week. Since there is no suitable textbook for students' need, the instructor prepares 30 weeks of topics and teaching/reading materials. However, the course is adapting the following books as texts: *Japanese for Professionals* by AJALT; *Dealing with the New Japanese Way of Doing Business* (formerly known as *Japanese Etiquette & Ethics in Business*) by DeMente; *Doing Business with Japan: Successful Strategies for Intercultural Communication* by Nishiyama in order to examine the 1980s and 2010s and Japanese corporate values and current trends in a globalized business world.

The JAPN 6113-6114 course aim to attain Advanced-Mid/High level Japanese proficiency with emphasis on reading Business/Professional related Japanese newspapers. Each student picks a topic on newspaper article once a week, and makes a vocabulary list (30-50 items), translates articles, and leads a classroom discussion on the topic (about 20 minutes) in Japanese. Before the student's presentation, the student circulates a vocabulary list and translation to all classmates by e-mail. During the presentation, the student and instructor focus on Business/Professional related vocabulary/expressions and their language roots, Japanese values in business and professional contexts, and presentation/negotiation skills. In particular, the class has vocabulary and Kanji quizzes as well as writing assignments every week. Since the course title is newspaper reading, no textbook needed. However, the course is adapting the following books as texts: *Business Japanese: Over 1700 Essential Business Terms in Japanese* by Suzuki; *Intermediate Kanji I-II* by Kano; *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* by Benedict; *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* by Nitobe; *The Anatomy of Dependence* by Doi.

Both courses basically emphasize the student's presentation and negotiation skills on the topics as well as understanding Japanese language and culture (etiquette and values) by utilizing technology (video, YouTube, Internet, e-mail, social media, PowerPoint, movie maker, etc.). Current Japanese language education in the U.S. is still lacking in covering mathematical/statistical expressions in Japanese, compound verbs (e.g. tori-atsukau, tori-tsugu), adverbs (e.g. tōtei, kanari), and onomatopoeia (e.g. tsugitsugi, bara-bara). Since Business and Professional worlds are quickly changing its terminology and structure, the JSP instructors have to learn new information. At the same time, the JSP instructors have wide opportunity to develop Japanese teaching materials, link Japanese language education to

professional communication skills, and preparing our students to rapidly changing global society. In addition to the classroom learning opportunities, Seton Hall University students have been participating in internships in New Jersey/New York as well as in Japan, applying theory into practice in the real professional world.

(6) Member in the Spotlight: Akiko Kawano Jones- sensei

It is such an honor for me to be given an opportunity to write to the newsletter.

First, let me write here why I first came to the States 44 years ago. I was given an offer to teach Japanese language by the chair of Japanese Studies at Bucknell University in PA in 1970. It was my great desire to tell the Americans about Japan and to experience living in the States surrounded by the Western American culture.

At that time it was hard to imagine that Americans or the people of the world would have as much interest in Japan as they now have. It was before Honda of America came to the States. Japan was better known for cheap toys, expensive cameras and stereos than for cars, industry, trade or culture. I first lived in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. It was such a small place that I was asked by the children and the adults if we had the cars in Japan or what we did on rainy days since we lived in paper made houses.

Let me divide my years in the States in the following times:

1. Teaching Japanese language at a high school as one of the regular foreign languages while studying to receive a master's degree,
2. Teaching 4th grade in a public school on an American Indian reservation in AZ,
3. Raising my children in an American society, and
4. Teaching the Japanese language to develop the program at Bowling Green State University, communicating with the business, communities, and the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit.

Since I started college life, I have had so much satisfaction in teaching. In Japan I taught English to all ages. At Bucknell University, under the federal grant, I taught Japanese to a local high school from 1970~1974. I was told that it was the first high school on the East coast that offered Japanese as a regular foreign language course. Some of my first experiences in America were memorable for me.

Among them are:

- A few days after I arrived, the whole high school went to the movie theater to see "TORA, TORA, TORA". It was a movie about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I remember I felt so shamed, and I was trying to be invisible as possible.
- I experienced the "Ladies First" etiquette on campus right away. In Japan students open the door for the professors when we both come to the door at the same time, and the professors go through the door first. However, the professors opened the door for me and asked me to go first. I just could not do it, and we seemed to always have a struggle that the other go through the door first.
- I was lucky to teach the Navajo and Hopi Indians at an Indian reservation in Arizona in 1975 through 1978. I remember my students in the 4th grade had a great time in presenting "Momotaro" on a Culture Festival Day. Because of my being a Japanese, I was accepted by the American natives better than the so-called Whites at that time.

- I experienced quite a few rare events. I spent a weekend in a one-room Navaho house called “hogan”. I washed my hair like Indians did with soap made fresh from the root of “yucca”. I rode a pony and herded the sheep, and ate fresh mutton.

I married and raised our son and daughter in the States. I had to come across several different customs:

- I was surprised to find out that the bride and her family pay most of the wedding costs.
- I didn’t know what a boy should do before the prom, and I almost forgot to reserve flowers for his date.
- When I went to our son’s high school, I bowed to his teachers, saying “thank you” too much.

During my life in the States, I have a privilege of seeing with my own eyes how Japan has shown its development to the world and how the Americans’ interest in Japan and Japanese culture has increased. When I first came in 1970, I thought I was in the shadow of such a big developed country. I felt everything in the States was great and coming to the States was an exceptional experience. However, soon I realized that I was proudly saying, “I am from Japan. I am a Japanese.”

I started teaching at Bowling Green State University in 1983, and I never thought then that Japanese language and culture would be spreading around the world as it is now. The Japanese program was small. It was exciting work, but I would not say it was easy to make the program as large as it is now. We had one beginning class of around 15 students and one second-year class with fewer students. We had about a handful of Asian Studies majors. I worked with individual students as much as possible; I called them in for tutoring if they were absent from class. I invited the students to my home for the Japanese food, demonstrated the tea ceremony on the floor of the classroom with the sheets spread. I founded the Japanese Club, which has been meeting weekly to socialize, eat, and learn about Japanese culture and customs. I have been fortunate to have very energetic students even in small numbers. Some of the deans and other administrators have been very supportive.

Now our program has grown, thanks to all the enthusiastic students and supportive colleagues and administrators. With very understanding BG mayors, Consuls General of Japan and Japanese businessmen in the surrounding areas, I had opportunities of showing Japanese cultural events to the town people and working with the business people. Now we have more students who would like to go to Japan or go and stay there just like my dream of coming to the States. More people in BG and more students at BGSU now know about Japan.

There are many moments that will reenergize me, such as when the students told me that they like the Japanese classes, when I hear from the former students, saying that they miss the class, or that they have started careers in Japan or are working with Japanese companies, etc. Definitely the award I received from AATJ last year gave me more desire to continue to teach to the students in USA. Last spring as a gesture “to give back”, I funded a scholarship at BGSU to provide \$1000 per year to support the travel and living expenses for a student to study abroad in Japan.

I have now lived in America 44 years, much longer than I lived in Japan. However, I still think of myself as Japanese, and I am proud of my country and culture. Also I love America that let me stay to grow as an adult. I really feel I have been in the fortunate position of introducing Japan to Americans. I am fortunate that I can teach the language and the culture between the two countries that I love.



Tomoko Takami, JSP SIG Chair
University of Pennsylvania
850 Williams Hall
255 S. 36th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305
Tel: 215-573-3640; Fax: 215-573-9617
E-mail: ttakami@sas.upenn.edu