

2000 JETAA International Conference  
Final Report

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## I. Goals & Objectives

The goals of the 2000 JETAA International conference were as follows:

- To build a group identity and feeling of team spirit among delegates from JETAA chapters around the world
- To share ideas and experiences related to local level JETAA activities in chapters around the world
- To deepen the delegates understanding of Japan's people, society, and culture and further promote the international understanding both in Japan and abroad

## II. Venue & Sponsorship

Timing: The conference began on Thursday November 9<sup>th</sup> and concluded on Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup>. Hotel registration and check-in began on Wednesday November 8<sup>th</sup> and check out concluded on Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup>. (Some delegates were asked to stay an additional night in order to qualify for a lower airfare, so they were offered accommodations at the Narita airport rest house hotel on Sunday night.)

Venue: Participants stayed at the Century Hyatt Tokyo Hotel in Shinjuku, and the conference was held at the JOBA Conference Center on the 17<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Shinjuku Park Tower.

Sponsorship: The Eastern Japan Regional JETAA Chapter hosted the conference with sponsorship from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture (MOE), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR).

Funding: Round-trip international airline tickets, hotel accommodations, and meals were provided for all participants using funds provided by MOFA. The conference venue was paid for using funds provided by the CLAIR. Miscellaneous expenses were paid for by the Eastern Japan Regional Chapter, which receives funding from MOFA and CLAIR.

### III. Participation

Delegates: Eastern Japan invited each of the forty-three (43) officially recognized regional chapters to send up to two delegates to the conference. In total, eighty-four (84) delegates attended, and all forty-three (43) chapters were represented. Germany (GR1) and Alaska (US15) were each represented by a single delegate. (Appendix A is a copy of the conference program listing the names and contact information of all participants. Appendix B is a list of participants including years on JET and location.)

Observers: Eastern Japan invited two observers each from Brazil and Russia, which both have large populations of returned CIRs and SEAs. A total of four observers attended from Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Moscow, and Khabavorsk.

Ministry Officials: Officials from the three ministries and CLAIR attended or observed all sessions of the conference and took notes on the proceedings.

Volunteers: Volunteers from the Eastern Japan Chapter planned and organized all events, coordinated application and registration procedures, assisted with hotel reception and check-in, and served as speakers the Volunteer and NGO workshop session.

### IV. Content

#### A. Lectures & Presentations:

- i. “Japanese Junior High School Students Send Video Messages to the World” by Hidetoshi Uchiyama, Sony Foundation for Science Education
- ii. “Japan’s Goals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” by Tadashi Yamamoto, President, Japan Center for International Exchange
- iii. “Progress of Foreign Language Education in Japan” by Mikio Kano, Senior Curriculum Specialist, Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture

(Note: Appendix C contains a list of presenters, speakers and moderators.)

## B. Workshops & Discussions

Delegates and observers were divided into two groups consisting of one representative from each chapter for workshops i) thru viii), each of which lasted 40-50 minutes. Discussion ix) began as an explanation of JETAA in Japanese, which was initially offered as an alternative to presentation i) but grew in size and scope as the conference proceeded.

- i. “JETAA Funding and Budgetary Issues” featured lively discussions about various means of raising and managing funds to support local activities, including a brief explanation of grant-in-aid and embassy/consulate funding procedures
- ii. “Strengthening Ties with Japan” provided a forum for discussing ways to leverage JETAA with Sister City programs, the overseas Japanese community and other organizations to build and strengthen grass-roots ties to Japan
- iii. “JETAA Information Technology Issues” introduced various ideas for improving communication and exchange both within and among local JETAA chapters
- iv. “Volunteer and NGO Activities” involved presentations from two Eastern Japan JET alumni members performing volunteer work for “Ashita no Kai” and “Peace Boat”, two volunteer, non-profit organizations founded to promote international understanding. Neither organization has religious or political affiliations.
- v. “Introduction of Local Activities and Events” served as an open forum for sharing newsletters, photos, and ideas, from JETAA chapter around the world.
- vii. “Improving JET Recruitment and Selection” involved discussion of ways to maintain and improve the quality of the JET participants.
- viii. “Planning for the 2001 International Conference” offered an inside look into the funding, planning and organization of the 2000 JETAA International conference for the benefit of chapters offering to host next year's event.
- ix. “Issues Affecting Smaller Chapters” began as an explanation of JETAA in Japanese and evolved into an impromptu discussion among the delegates from France, Germany, Japan, and Korea and the observers from Brazil and Russia.

### C) Brainstorming Sessions with AJET

The eighteen (18) officers of the AJET National Council joined the conference two brainstorming sessions. Participants were split into nine (9) mixed groups of approximately twelve (12) delegates, observers, and AJET officers. Each session lasted 80 minutes, including fifty minutes of group discussion followed by a three to five minute presentation by each group. (Lists of group members and discussion summaries are included as Appendix D.)

- i. “Improving Bilateral Cooperation” focused on ways to incorporate information, ideas and advice into AJET events and publications as well as improving JETAA’s role in assisting JETs with pre-departure orientation and post-JET readjustment. Specific discussions focused on linking Internet home pages, exchanging officer lists, and cooperating to provide JETs with a greater array of job search resources.
- ii. “Improving the JET Program(me) for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” focused on strengthening recruitment and selection procedures, increasing workplace effectiveness, and improving overall morale. Specific discussions involved limiting program growth, compiling specific workplace guidelines, and enforcing strict discipline for willful misbehavior. (A list of recommendations compiled by the conference delegates is attached as Appendix E.)

### D) Parliamentary Session

A JETAA International parliamentary session was held to (1) elect Executive Officers, (2) select a venue for next year’s conference, and (3) revise the organizational by-laws.

- i. Elections: the following people were elected to JETAA International Executive Officer positions:

Paula Kelly	(IR1 Ireland)	Chair
Megan Kaino	(AU4 Perth/Darwin)	Vice-chair
Boleyn Relova	(CA6 Vancouver)	Secretary
Julian Paisey	(UK1 London)	Treasurer

- ii. Conference Venue: the JETAA Chapter Representatives voted to hold the 2001 JETAA International conference in London, England.
- iii. By-laws revision: a copy of the recently revised JETAA International by-laws is included in Appendix F.

## F) Reception Events

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CLAIR provided funding for various reception events including a welcome dinner at the Ikura Kokan, a reception party at the conference venue, and farewell party on the final evening of the event.

- i. Welcome Dinner: The three ministries and CLAIR hosted a welcome dinner on Thursday night that was funded by MOFA. Conference participants and former Japanese co-workers were invited to attend. Delegates and observers were introduced country-by-country, and Eastern Japan hired a photographer for the event.
- ii. Reception Party: CLAIR and MOHA hosted a joint reception party for AJET and JETAA at the conference venue on Friday night. The AJET officers performed impromptu skits during the party.
- iii. Farewell Party: Eastern Japan organized a farewell dinner at the Mo-Mo Paradise restaurant in Kabuki-cho on Saturday night that was attended by conference participants, CLAIR program coordinators, and other Eastern Japan JETAA members.

## G. Other

- i. CLAIR Information: Eastern Japan gave permission for CLAIR to distribute handouts about Grant-in-Aid application procedures and pending revisions to the “Regulation of the JET-AA”, a document it drafted and adopted in 1989. (Both are attached as Appendix G.)
- ii. Japanese Language Courses: Eastern Japan allowed representatives from the Tokyo School of the Japanese Language to provide interested participants with a brief presentation about Japanese language courses and related information.

- iii. JET Mentor Network: Daniel McKelvey, the JETAA Liaison for AJET, conducted a brief session with participants interested in assisting with the establishment of a program to help returning JETs begin/resume their careers in their home countries. (See Appendix H.)

## V. Evaluation

### A. Lectures & Presentations

Generally speaking, positive feedback was received regarding all speakers and lecture topics. Loud laughter could be heard throughout the conference center during the video presentation, and many participants voiced strong agreement with Mr. Yamamoto's opinions.

### B. Workshops & Discussions

All workshop sessions were lively and well attended. Some delegates mentioned that they had expected to receive more concrete information about JETAA funding issues from the directly government, but CLAIR provided supplementary information about Grant-in-Aid the next day. Many of the smaller chapters suggested that much of the workshop content did not apply to them and indicated a need to provide special sessions or events for smaller and newer chapters.

### C. Brainstorming Sessions

It was generally agreed that these sessions were very stimulating and productive. Some delegates expressed a desire to devote more time to these sessions in the future. The Japanese-speaking delegates expressed a desire to involve more people who are fluent in Japanese in future conferences as a means of supporting CIRs and SEAs as well as a means of promoting Japanese as an international language.

### D. Parliamentary Session

Many delegates felt that much of this session was a waste of time. More thought needs to be put into making the JETAA decision-making process swifter, smoother, and more orderly.

## E. Reception Events

The reception events were generally very popular and enjoyed by everyone. Several delegates were ecstatic to meet their former co-workers at the event and wish to thank the ministries for the surprise invitations.

One participant had a serious allergic reaction to food labeled “vegetarian” at the Thursday night party that apparently contained seafood. She became sick for two days but recovered fully. More care needs to be taken at future events.

Many JETAA delegates voiced strong complaints about the inappropriate content of the AJET skits at the Friday night reception and asked Eastern Japan to convey their concerns to AJET, the ministries and CLAIR. Some even recommended that AJET officers not be invited to future JETAA events where alcohol is served.

## F. Other

Eastern Japan is concerned about revisions to the “Regulation of the JET-AA” and new procedures for managing the JETAA membership database. The regulations adopted in 1989 state that CLAIR should hold regular meetings with the Japan regional representatives, and we look forward to the next meeting.

## VI. Conclusion

The international conference is indispensable for strengthening our organization, and we look forward to continued cooperation and support from the three ministries and CLAIR in the future. We look forward to continued participation of all chapters worldwide. Meanwhile, more needs to be done to encourage establishment of chapters in non-English speaking countries.