

JETAA International Conference

Sixth Annual Meeting Attended by 89 Delegates in Tokyo

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From November 9-12, 2000, representatives from 43 chapters in 11 countries gathered in Tokyo to attend the 6th International Conference of JETAA (the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association), the first held outside of North America. In attendance were 89 official delegates from JETAA chapters plus observers from Brazil and Russia, who do not currently have official chapter status. Representatives from JETAA New York were the author and Bill Higgins, head of the Philadelphia sub-chapter. The meeting was also attended by officials from CLAIR, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, and its three sponsoring Japanese Ministries: Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Education.

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 throughout the world.
- To share ideas and experiences on local level JETAA activities from chapters around the world.
- To deepen the delegates' understanding of Japan's people, society and culture, and to further promote international understanding both in Japan and abroad.

The meeting opened at the Joba Conference Center in Shinjuku with welcome

messages from the three Ministries and this year's host, the Eastern Japan JETAA Chapter. Smaller groups then broke off for sessions on topics such as local chapter activities, fundraising and budgetary issues, the strengthening of the JET program, strengthening ties with Japan, information and technology issues and volunteer and NGO (non-governmental organization) activities. There was also a session for those interested in hosting a future interna-

that came out of this meeting were compiled and presented to the three Ministries. They include items such as re-evaluating the age limit, allowing past JETs to return to the program, maximizing the use of the JETs in their current positions, setting minimum standards for new JETs applying to the program so as not to sacrifice quality for quantity, and improved training for the JETs assigned to teaching. The session on improving

AJET/JETAA relations covered topics such as featuring articles by JETAA alums in the AJET newsletter and vice versa, better utilizing AJET to recruit future members to JETAA, and creating a JET Mentor network.

The final day of the conference was a Parliamentary Session for election of JETAA-International's new country representatives and Executive Committee. In addition, the bylaws for JETAA-I were debated and voted on. The new US country representatives are Libby

Wolfensperger from San Francisco and the author. Executive Committee members are Paula Kelly (Ireland), Megan Kaino (Perth, AU), Julian Paisey (London, UK), and Boleyn Relova (Vancouver, CN). JETAA-I supports JETAA chapters around the world but in no way has authority over them.

JETAA-New York would like to thank the three Ministries, CLAIR and the Eastern Japan Chapter for all of their hard work and financial support for making this conference a success!



Pictured here are the more than 20 US Chapter representatives who attended the stimulating JETAAI meeting in Tokyo last November.

tional conference. We New York delegates split attendance at the various sessions so we could report in more detail to our members.

Since the conference was being held in Japan, we also had the unique opportunity to hold two joint sessions with representatives of AJET, the Association of JETs currently active in Japan. We discussed how to improve the JET program and AJET/JETAA relations, and how to improve bilateral cooperation between the two groups. Some of the suggestions on how to improve the JET program