

THE JAPAN FORUM

Annual Report
2008 — 2009

Overview of 2008 Programs

Following the 2007 celebration of TJF's twentieth anniversary, 2008 became the kick-off year for a new decade of Japan Forum programs. Dedicated to helping elementary and secondary school students around the world learn each other's languages and enhance their personal development through dialogue and understanding of the culture that forms the backdrop of each language, TJF carried out a variety of projects under the following overall programs.

I Foreign Language Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools in Japan and Overseas

- Japanese language education-related programs for elementary and secondary schools overseas
- Chinese language education-related programs for Japanese high schools
- Korean language education-related programs for Japanese high schools
- Japanese-Chinese-Korean language education collaboration programs

II Exchange Programs Linking Japanese-language Learners Overseas with Their Peers in Japan

New Horizons for Japanese Language Education in Dalian, China

The Japanese language had long been taught as a first foreign language in middle and high schools in China, but in recent years it has been replaced by English in terms of importance and the number of Japanese-language learners began to decline.

In 2006, it was announced that the city of Dalian, China would promote Japanese language education, and classes in Japanese as a second foreign language began in middle schools there. While English is taught as the first foreign language, Japanese language classes are given one or two hours a week to further cultivate students' capacity for international understanding. TJF has cooperated for several years with the Dalian city education authorities in encouraging Japanese language education through programs for training Japanese-language teachers in Dalian and development and production of textbooks for teaching Japanese as a second foreign language. In 2008, TJF also held Japanese-language teacher training sessions in Dalian and published the third volume of the five-volume set of texts being developed. TJF also



cooperated with a fiscal 2008 program sponsored by the Dalian Education Bureau bringing four Japanese-language teachers to Japan for training.

As the result of these efforts to encourage Japanese language education, Japanese is offered at 31 middle schools in the city of Dalian and there are 67 Japanese-language teachers (as of May 2009). A total of 8,398 middle school students are studying Japanese, 1,791 as their first foreign language, 5,480 as their second foreign language, and 1,127 who are studying both English and Japanese as their first foreign language. Study of Japanese language was on the wane in China around 2000, but that trend has reversed and interest has sharply expanded in the past three years. TJF will continue to promote support for the study of Japanese as a first foreign language in China, and we hope that the adoption of Japanese as a second foreign language in the Dalian school system will encourage its spread to other parts of China as well.



Strengthening Information-on-Japan Functions of the TJF Website

TJF supports Japanese language education overseas and education for cultural understanding by publishing information in print and online about Japanese youth and contemporary affairs. It is hoped that this information will help foster mutual understanding among elementary and secondary school students throughout the world.

“Click Japan” Webpages Launched

TJF’s English newsletter *Takarabako* and Chinese newsletter *Hidamari* are published for Japanese-language teachers in elementary and secondary schools overseas. Each issue takes up a topic currently newsworthy in Japan and introduces it in text and images. Many requests were received asking for specific advice in using the material in these publications in Japanese language classes. The objectives of Japanese language education, however, differ from country to country, region to region, and school to school, and educational environments are diverse. The space available in these printed publications proved limited in accommodating the wide spectrum of needs and situations. There were also requests that the information about Japan be provided in Japanese.

TJF therefore created “Click Japan,” a section of its website that provides, in Japanese, English, and Chinese, not only the text and photo captions from the newsletters but also examples of classroom activities for learning Japanese using the newsletter text and photographs. In a subsection of Click Japan called “Culture and People of Japan,” information mainly

from the newsletters is provided along with additional information that could not be included in the printed publications. Another subsection presents examples of classroom activities contributed by Japanese-language teachers and specialists in Japanese language teaching in countries around the world.

“High School Student Photos Galore!” Preparations

For several years, TJF’s website has posted photographs taken by high school students showing their personalities and daily lives in such sections as the “Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students: Photo and Message Contest,” “The Way We Are” (showing prize-winning entries from the contest), and “Focus on Japan 2007” (photographs taken in the face-to-face exchange program). During 2008, TJF made preparations for launching a new section called “High School Student Photos Galore!” to bring these together in a permanent collection, and added two new subsections for occasional posting of photographs by high school students. One of the subsections, the “High School Students Photo Gallery,” displays photos taken by high school students as part of their photography club or art club activities. “The Way We Are II” subsection, meanwhile, features some of the prize-winning works from the Photo and Essay Division for high school students of the Yomiuri Photo Grand Prix organized by the major Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*. This division of the Yomiuri photo contest, which carries on the tradition of TJF’s “Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students: Photo and Message Contest,” was established in 2008.

The launch of the “High School Student Photos Galore!” site reinforces TJF’s efforts to provide access to photographs of and by young people in Japan. We hope the TJF website will become *the* place to go to view photographs by young Japanese and obtain them for educational use.



Improving the Environment for Teaching Chinese and Korean Language

TJF believes that facility in communicating in foreign languages as well as in their native language is extremely important for young Japanese people. Studying a foreign language not only helps learners gain a fresh appreciation of their own language but fosters their ability to get along with people from diverse cultural backgrounds as well as see themselves in world perspective. This experience helps cultivate young people's ability to better express themselves in word and action. We believe that such capacities will be crucial for young people who will live through the twenty-first century.

Foreign language teaching in Japan has a tendency to overemphasize English, but today, when the number of people from China, Korea, and other non-English-speaking countries residing in Japan has grown and frequency of travel to other countries has dramatically risen, interchange with people from different language and cultural backgrounds has become a daily occurrence. Given these developments, some exposure to languages other than English is increasingly important. Based on the conviction that young Japanese should be encouraged to study Chinese and Korean, the languages of the country's closest neighbors, TJF has long been engaged in programs to promote Chinese and Korean language education in Japan.

Curriculum Guidelines for Chinese and Korean

During 2008, TJF promoted the *Kotogakko no Chugokugo to Kankoku/Chosengo: Gakushu no meyasu* [Curriculum Guidelines for Teaching Chinese and Korean in Japanese High Schools] (hereafter "Curriculum Guidelines"), the (March 2007) publication of which TJF had played a central role in, and collected sample lesson plans of classes given using the Curriculum Guidelines. Working together with universities in Japan and overseas,

TJF also conducted training seminars mainly for high school teachers. The main purpose of the Curriculum Guidelines is to develop classes that enable students to acquire practical communication skills. They provide learning objectives based on can-do statements by topic and performance level and present specific content and methods incorporating the communicative approach for attaining each of those objectives. These guidelines were drawn up by a project team composed of teachers who are leaders in their fields at Japanese high schools and universities, who also referred to practices followed in Europe and the United States. We hope the Curriculum Guidelines will be taken up by foreign language teachers at high schools throughout Japan and will help to make Chinese and Korean language study a subject of increasing appeal to high school students.



Encouraging Study of Language and Culture

Programs aimed directly at encouraging study of language and culture among high school students included continuation of the short-term Chinese-language training program "Hanyu-qiao" ["Chinese Bridge"]: Summer Camp for Japanese High School Students" (hereafter "Chinese Bridge") and inauguration of the Kumho Asiana Cup, a nationwide annual "Let's Speak in Korean" contest for Japanese high school students studying Korean language. Participants in the "Chinese Bridge" program not only took classes in Chinese but put what they learned into practice on shopping trips and in exchanges with Chinese high school students. By coming into contact with people and culture in China, they deepened their understanding of



the country and its people. The Kumho Asiana Cup, which is aimed not only at high school students studying Korean at school but all high school students who are interested in Korean language and culture, drew entrants from all over Japan. The event showed that many high school students are studying Korean outside their schools and that their interests in Korea and Korean culture are diverse.



Cooperating with Government Policy Makers

While conducting programs for language learners

and language teachers, TJF has also worked actively to raise awareness among government policy makers and school administrators of



the need to expand Chinese and Korean language teaching in school education and to build networks among them. Along with continuation in 2008 of the training program for Chinese-language teachers that TJF co-hosted with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), TJF also collaborated with local governments (such as those of Osaka and Kanagawa prefectures where Chinese and Korean language education is comparatively well-developed) in conducting the aforementioned new Curriculum Guidelines class development project and a program to send local education authorities and school administrators on observation visits to China.

Providing Forums where Secondary School Students from Around the World Can Talk Together

One of TJF's missions is to provide forums where elementary and secondary school students from around the world can talk together in a safe environment. During 2008, TJF actively promoted "Tsunagaaru," its new interactive communication site for secondary school students that went live in October 2007. Using a social networking service (SNS), this site establishes a space on the Internet where students can engage in exchange. TJF invites participation in the forum relying on its networks among Japanese-language teachers overseas and foreign-language teachers in Japan. As of May 2009, more than 900 secondary school students in 13 countries and regions were registered on Tsunagaaru, and the list continues to grow. Participants post introductions of themselves and messages about matters of concern to them. They receive comments from other members and participate in discussion of topics of interest with other members. Tsunagaaru also provides "communities" made up of limited memberships that can be used to engage in exchange

between classes or between schools in different countries.

TJF hopes to build Tsunagaaru into a vibrant forum where secondary school language students from around the world can use their own language and the language they are studying to enter into exchange with their peers in other countries, get to know people of different backgrounds, and learn about other cultures. Since the essential purpose of foreign language education is to use that language to communicate with others, Tsunagaaru is also designed to contribute to the invigoration of foreign language education.



Programs of Fiscal 2008

I Foreign Language Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools in Japan and Overseas

Program	Time	Place	
Japanese Language Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools Overseas			
Cosponsorship of the Training Program for Japanese-language Teachers in Junior High Schools in Dalian	July 29–Aug. 7	Dalian, China	
Funding and Cooperation for the Training in Japan of Dalian Junior and High School Japanese-language Teachers	Jan. 28–Mar. 20	Tokyo, Saitama, Yokohama, Kyoto, etc.	
Funding to Dispatch of a Japanese-language Teacher to a Junior High School in Dalian	Aug.–Mar. 2010	Dalian, China	
Invitation to Japan of Outstanding Japanese-language Teachers in Dalian	May 9–15	Tokyo, Chiba, Yokohama, Shizuoka, etc.	
Joint Production of Japanese Language Textbooks <i>Hao Pengyou</i> for Dalian Junior High Schools	Publication of <i>Hao Pengyou 3</i> Holding of a Joint Japan-China Editorial Meeting	Aug. Apr., Aug., Oct., Dec., Mar.	China Dalian, China
Funding of Publication of Japanese Language Textbooks for Liaoning Elementary Schools	Year round	China	
Funding of the 2008 International Conference on Japanese Language Education (ICJLE) Panel Discussion on the Principles and Objectives of Japanese Language Teaching in Elementary and Secondary Education	July 11–13	Pusan, ROK	
Funding of a Special Event Sponsored by the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT) at the Annual Convention of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)	Nov. 21–22	Florida, USA	
Launch of “Click Japan”—Website of Information about Japanese and Their Culture Today Along with Sample Japanese Language Classroom Activities	Jan.		
Compilation and Maintenance of the “TJF Photo Data Bank: Japan” Website	Year round		
Takarabako	Print Publication	June, Sept., Dec., Mar.	
	Development and Maintenance of the Website	Year round	
Hidamari	Print Publication	June, Sept., Dec., Mar.	
	Development and Maintenance of the Website	Year round	
Chinese Language Education in Japanese High Schools			
Cosponsorship of the Training Program for Chinese-language Teachers in High Schools in Changchun	July 27–Aug. 17	Changchun, China	
Cooperation and Support for Activities of the Japanese High School Chinese Language Education Association	Year round	Japan	
Funding and Support of Chapter Activities of the Japanese High School Chinese Language Education Association (Kumamoto, Sapporo, Nagoya, Osaka, Urasoe, Beppu, Chiba, and Kanazawa)	Year round	Japan	
Conducting the Language Training Program for Students Studying Chinese at High Schools in Japan (Sponsored by Hanban)	July 25–Aug. 3	Dalian	
Dispatch of Japanese Educators to China (Sponsored by Hanban)	Dec. 22–25	Dalian	
Compilation and Maintenance of the “TJF Photo Data Bank: China” Website	Year round		
Xiaoxi	Print Publication	Apr., July, Oct., Jan.	
	Development and Maintenance of the Website	Year round	
Support of Regional Eliminations of 1st “Chinese Bridge” (Hanyu-qiao) Chinese Language Contest for Secondary School Students of the World	May, June	Kyoto and Tokyo	
Korean Language Education in Japanese High Schools			
Cosponsorship of the Training Program for Korean Language Teachers in High Schools, Universities, and Other Institutions	Aug. 11–16	Osaka	
Support of the 6th High School Korean Language Education Seminar (Sponsored by the Korean Cultural Center of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Japan)	Aug. 17	Osaka	
Support of the Japan Association for Korean Language Education at High Schools (JAKEHS) Osaka Training Program (Sponsored by JAKEHS)	Aug. 18	Osaka	

Program	Time	Place
Cosponsorship of the 1st Kumho Asiana Cup National High School "Let's Speak Korean" Contest in Japanese High Schools	Mar.–June 14	Japan, ROK
Cosponsorship of the 1st Kumho Asiana Cup National High School "Let's Speak Korean" Contest for Japanese High School Students Training Tour and Korean Language Training Program	July–Aug.	ROK
Cosponsorship of the 2nd Kumho Asiana Cup National High School "Let's Speak Korean" Contest for Japanese High School Students	Nov.–Mar. 21, 2009	Japan, ROK
Support of the "Let's Speak Korean" Regional Contest (Aomori, Kumamoto, Tottori, Fukushima, Kagoshima, Tokyo and Osaka)	Dec.–Feb.	Japan
Cooperation in Inviting Applicants for the Seminar for Seekers of License to Teach Korean in Japanese High Schools (Held by Kanda University of International Studies)	Apr.–Aug.	Tokyo
Funding for the Production of the <i>Kokosei no Tame no Kankoku/Chosengo II: Sukiyanen Hanguru</i> [Korean for High School Students Part II: I Love Hangul] (Edited by the "Sukiyanen Hanguru" Editorial Team)	Apr.–July	Japan
Cooperation in Editing the <i>Sugu ni Tsukaeru Kankokugo Akutibiti 45</i> [Easy-to-Use Korean Language Activities 45] (Edited by the JAKEHS Class Activity Collection Editorial Team)	Year round	Japan

Programs to Link Japanese, Chinese, and Korean Language Education

	Development of Guidelines Jointly with the Osaka Prefectural Board of Education	Year round	Osaka
	Sponsorship of the 2008 Training Program for High School Chinese-language Teachers in the Kinki Region	Aug. 4–6	Osaka
"Gakushu no Meyasu" (Curriculum Guidelines) Project	Cosponsorship of the Sapporo University Confucius Institute 2008 High School Chinese Language Teacher Training Program	Aug. 6–8	Sapporo
	Cosponsorship of the J. F. Oberlin University Confucius Institute 2008 High School Chinese Language Teacher Training Program (Chinese Language Teachers License Renewal Course also provided on Nov. 15)	Aug. 13–15	Tokyo
	Cosponsorship of "Forum 2008 Symposium: Japanese-Chinese-Korean Ways of Life and Cultures As Seen in Food"	Nov. 6	Tokyo

II Exchange Programs Linking Japanese-language Learners Overseas with Their Peers in Japan

Program	Time	Place	
	Development and Maintenance of the Website	Year round	
"Tsunagaaru" Project	Workshop	Year round	
		Canada, Australia, Japan, USA, etc.	
	Cosponsorship of the "Japanese Bridge" (Nihongo-bashi) Summer Camp for Chinese High School Students	July 30–Aug. 3	Dalian
	Cooperation for Japan-China Friendship Exchange Programs	Year round	China, Japan
	Cooperation for Acceptance of a Beijing Educational Delegation (Sponsored by the Beijing International Education Exchange Center)	Nov. 14–20	Tokyo, Kanagawa, etc.
	Cooperation for Japan-U.S. Friendship Exchange Programs	Year round	USA, Japan
	Cooperation for "The Way We Are" Exhibition of Works from the Lives of Japanese High School Students: Photo and Message Contest (Sponsored by the NPO Anshin Sozo Network)	May–June	Osaka
	Support of the 9th High School Speech Contest (Sponsored by the High School Speech Contest Executive Committee)	Mar. 20	Tokyo

III Publicity

Program	Time	Place
<i>Kokusai Bunka Foramu Tsushin</i>	Print Publication	Apr., July, Oct., Jan.
	Development and Maintenance of the Website	
Publication of the TJF Annual Report 2007–2008	Japanese Version	Sept.
	English Version	Oct.
Publication of the TJF Information Leaflet (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean)		

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