

# Memories of FLEAT I

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The first FLEAT was an incredible sharing process between two language organizations--LLA of Japan and NALLD of the U.S.--as well as members of the language profession from around the world. NALLD members learned much about Japan and were the recipients of many gifts, honors, and wonderful experiences. While NALLD members were primarily language teachers managing language labs, LLA members were generally ESL professors. According to the "Proceedings," almost 2,000 participants attended the first FLEAT, and at the closing ceremony, Joseph Sheehan presented to Kuroda-san the NALLD Achievement Award.



**Presentation of the NALLD Achievement Award to the LLA. Left to right: Joseph H. Sheehan, President and Samuel Burggraaf, Executive Secretary, NALLD; Sutesaburo Khomoto, FLEAT Chair (deceased); Takashi Kuroda, President, LLA (deceased). Photo courtesy of Joseph H. Sheehan. [F1award.jpg]**

The first FLEAT received generous support from the Ministry of Education in Japan, the Commemorative Association for the Japan World Exposition (1970) and the Hoso-Bunka Foundation.

In Japan, there is a national holiday, called "Adults' Day," which celebrates the coming of age. To celebrate the twentieth year of the Language Association of Japan, NALLD was invited to co-sponsor an international conference. Thus, this conference would celebrate the arrival of adulthood for an academic association and provide an opportunity to reflect upon the past while, with the help of honored guests, considering educational technology solutions that would assist in the teaching of second languages. The goal was both traditional and futuristic--examining foreign language acquisition methodologies that would better equip graduates to work for international cooperation.

Both organizations dealt primarily with members from colleges and universities but realized that the inclusion of teachers and specialists from secondary institutions had much to offer, not only in membership numbers but also in opening up new dialogues for sharing mutually beneficial information and experiences. This conference would provide a forum for discussing all phases of foreign/ second language education and the promise of technology.

The FLEAT conference had three goals: to develop concrete ideas and means to promote international cooperation in education and technology; to examine technology aids; and to explore possibilities for the improvement of methodologies using technology for language learning. Both groups recognized that while funding was available for initial equipment purchases at members' home institutions, funding for support activities, teacher training, and technicians was often lacking.

NALLD was the younger and smaller organization, founded in 1965 to meet the need of media professionals and teachers in the field of language acquisition. The U.S. group at the first FLEAT conference had a few NALLD members and teachers interested in the theme of the Japanese-based conference. Several stops were made before arriving in Tokyo. In Taiwan, Hong Kong, Osaka, and Kyoto, we visited shrines, gardens, museums, factories and schools--especially those with language laboratories. There was ample time for shopping and we arrived in Tokyo heavily laden with home-bound treasures.

Tokyo offers two sides: the westernized metropolis and its Old World traditions. As first-time visitors we were impressed with the city, its beauty as revealed in small gardens and shrines, the busy temples, the thriving business scene, and the hustle of the Ginza district. The conference setting was the elegant Okura Hotel. The program was diverse, with speakers from Asia, Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Japan. The presentations offered evaluations of technological approaches, methodological advice, and second language acquisition theories. There were many others involved in the planning, the details, the program, and I do not mean to exclude anyone from recognition, but those from the Japanese team who were especially memorable to me, from shared activities and late evening discussions, included Michiko Tenma, Masuko Izumi, Takeko Itakura, Yasushi Sato, Shozo Usami and Masaaki Osugi. My own images of Japan and this wonderful conference are still fresh in my memory, and I have slides to share, if you ever have a few minutes!

The NALLD Board met frequently with the LLA Board during the conference to work out details and to organize follow-up sessions. Joseph Sheehan was then NALLD President, Sam Burggraaf was Executive Director, Victor Aulestia was Vice-President, and I was Secretary. Missing from the trip were Les Bailey, Treasurer, and Dale Lally, then Editor of the journal.

Most everyone had allowed for a couple of tourist days in Tokyo after the conference. I went to Yokohama to spend time with the Ohashi family, with whom I had been corresponding for several years. That stay in a Japanese home was a very special highlight of the trip--a remarkable and cherished memory to end an event filled with good experiences.