Amazing Development from Japan Toastmasters Council (JTC) to Provisional District 76

Creation of Provisional District 76

Fourteen Toastmasters clubs in Japan had organized Japan Toastmasters Council (JTC) in 1986. Around that time there were no national level activities of Toastmasters, but speech contests in English or Japanese were held by those clubs in major cities such as Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kobe, Kumamoto, and Fukuoka.

After the JTC was established, the activities of English or Japanese Toastmasters clubs in Kanto, Kansai and Chubu began to steadily develop year by year. Thanks to Keiko Omachi, Tatsui Fujisama and Kazunasa Umemoto from Kanto, Takeshi Yamanaka and Shuzo Shimada from Nagoya, and Kazuhiko Nomura in Kobe, a two-day twice a year national level Toastmasters workshop in Kobe was held for the first time. The instructive workshop successfully helped members to collaborate and build a nationwide network of Toastmasters.

Rika Oshima, JTC Governor 1998-1999 suggested holding a meeting every month at her residence in Kanda, Tokyo. In response to her proposal, Toastmasters from Tokyo, Saitama, Yokohama, Fujisawa and Kobe gathered to discuss practical plans for JTC activities that would vitalize JTC activities to further develop the JTC.

During that time, JTC speech contests and annual meetings were periodically held in major cities in Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, and Kyushu.

The JTC webmaster, a member of Tsukuba Club had asked me, JTC PR Officer at that time, to take over his job as webmaster. I accepted his request and built many web sites for clubs that had none.

In addition, I had organized a new emailing list for the JTC at Yahoo for the first time which made it easier for members to communicate with each other by using email lists. This further contributed to the development of clubs in the JTC.

Birth of Provisional District 76

JTC events such as officers’ election, annual meetings, and club officers’ training sessions at a national level became more active and the number of clubs in the JTC increased. JTC officers and active Toastmasters discussed practical plans to apply to become a Provisional District of Toastmasters International (TMI).

One of the qualifications for the application was that the JTC must have more than 40 clubs in good standing and continue steady growth after becoming a provisional district. In order to qualify, it was necessary to submit signed letters of consent from all the clubs at the time the application was submitted. It was a difficult task to collect the letters of consent from more than 40 clubs throughout Japan. A young and energetic super Toastmaster appeared. Her name is Nagisa Watanabe from the West Tokyo Club. She used to work at a travel agency in Akihabara and returned home in Oume after midnight. After getting home around midnight she sent me encouraging emails. To my surprise, she had received in a month or so the letters of consent from all the clubs. I had no idea how she had done it.

In 2000, the JTC had been accepted as Provisional District 76. This change in status allowed for the official translation from English into Japanese of Toastmasters training manuals to be published by TMI. Also, District Governor, Lieutenant Governor Education & Training, and Lieutenant Governor Marketing were invited to the annual official training course in the United States.

As Provisional District 76 Toastmasters’ activities at the national level became even more active than in the past, and many new clubs were born. Such as Sendai, Kesennuma, Niigata, Tsurugashima, ICF Chiba, Leadership, KeyForce, Kamakura, Toyota Friendship, Kyoto, Takarazuka, East-Kobe, Nanawa, Tokushima, Kurume, Nakayamato, Minami-Kyushu and others, so many clubs were born. In response to requests from Keiko Omachi, former International President 1999-2000 Timothy Keck often visited clubs in Kanto, Kansai and Hokkaido to assist in their activities. Also, he joined the Spring or Fall Conferences to encourage our activities in the District.

Promotion from a Provisional District to a full-fledged District

During that period, the number of Toastmasters clubs steadily increased year by year and grew to be more than 60 clubs. That growth continues today.

At the Toastmasters International Board of Directors meeting in February 2004, Provisional District 76 was accepted as a full-fledged District of Toastmasters International. On that day International President 2003-2004 Ted Corcoran made an international phone call to me to congratulate me on the promotion.

Mutual Exchanges between Toastmasters in Japan and Taiwan

Early exchanges between Taiwanese Toastmasters and Japanese Toastmasters were on personal and independent bases. During a Taiwanese Toastmasters’ activities at the national level became even more active and the number of clubs in the JTC increased. JTC officers and active Toastmasters discussed practical plans to apply to become a Provisional District of Toastmasters International (TMI). One of the qualifications for the application was that the JTC must have more than 40 clubs in good standing and continue steady growth after becoming a provisional district. In order to qualify, it was necessary to submit signed letters of consent from all the clubs at the time the application was submitted. It was a difficult task to collect the letters of consent from more than 40 clubs throughout Japan. A young and energetic super Toastmaster appeared. Her name is Nagisa Watanabe from the West Tokyo Club. She used to work at a travel agency in Akihabara and returned home in Oume after midnight. After getting home around midnight she sent me encouraging emails. To my surprise, she had received in a month or so the letters of consent from all the clubs. I had no idea how she had done it.

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Mutual Exchanges between Toastmasters in Japan and Taiwan

Early exchanges between Taiwanese Toastmasters and Japanese Toastmasters were on personal and independent bases. In 2000 a Taiwanese Toastmaster from Taiwan participated in a JTC speech contest in Nagoya and won one of the prizes. Then in 2008, a joint meeting of Success Club from Taiwan and Kumamoto Club from Japan took place in Kumamoto, Japan for the first time. Kazumasa Umemoto (Urawa), Shuzo Shimada (Kasuga), and Mayumi Shimamura (Kumamoto) have been great contributors to the strong ties between the two Districts.

I myself participated in several District 67 Conferences in Taipei, Tainan, and Tainan together with many other fellow Toastmasters from Kanto, Kansai, Chugoku and Kyushu. Recently, thanks to Kiminari Azuma, Kazumasa Umemoto, and Hiroki Obara who have made many visits to Taiwan, the exchanges continue.

New Clubs: 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zama-Articulators</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>2000/7-2001/6</td>
<td>Kanagawa</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Corporate</td>
<td>2000/12/1</td>
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<td>Kyoto</td>
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<td>Kyoto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takarazuka</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>2001/6/23</td>
<td>Hyogo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiroshima</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2002/5/2</td>
<td>Hiroshima</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurume</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2002/5/2</td>
<td>Fukuoka</td>
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<td>Toyota Friendship</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2002/8/20</td>
<td>Aichi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speak-up</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2002/10/16</td>
<td>Hyogo</td>
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<td>Kesennuma</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2003/2/11</td>
<td>Miyagi</td>
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<td>Minami-Kyushu</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2003/12/31</td>
<td>Miyazaki</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Congratulations!
THE FIRST YEAR AS A FULL-FLEDGED DISTRICT

Fall Conference 2004 in Yoyogi
Nov. 20, Sat.-21, Sun. @ National Olympics Memorial Youth Center

Table Topics Contest

International Speech Contest

Japanese Contest - Host: CBD TMC
Winners:
1st: Masafumi Abe (Yokohama TMC)
2nd: Setsuko Noda (ICF Chiba TMC)
3rd: Chie Kojima (Nagoya TMC)

English Contest - Host: Leadership TMC
Winners:
1st: Joel Campbell (Speak-up TMC)
2nd: Peter T. Fujiyama (ICF Chiba TMC)
3rd: Takako Ueda (Kansai TMC)

New Clubs: 7
# Corporate Club  ** Advanced Club  English Club  Japanese Club  Bilingual Club

Japan Contest - Host: Area 23 Clubs
Winners:
1st: Rikuko Kanai (Kyoto TMC)
2nd: Kiichiro Ohmi (EDO TMC)
3rd: Tomohide Oshima (Yokohama TMC)

English Contest - Host: Leadership TMC
Winners:
1st: Chika Hisamatsu (Hiroshima TMC)
2nd: Kenny Kawsarazaki (Fussa Speakers TMC)
3rd: Tomohide Oshima (Yamanote TMC)

Spring Conference 2005 in Yoyogi
May 21, Sat.-22, Sun. @ National Olympics Memorial Youth Center

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Winners:
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Guest of Honor
Jon R. Greiner, DTM
International President 2004-2005

Conference Chair
Michael Sorey

Congratulations!
THE FIRST YEAR AS A FULL-FLEDGED DISTRICT

District Governor 2004-2005
Ludlow Gibbons, DTM

The Toastmaster year 2004-2005 was the year District 76 became a full-fledged Toastmasters District. I succeeded Past District Governor Masahiko Inatsugi who by way of his steady effort and wise leadership guided the then District 76P through its early transition phase. Past International President Tim Keck was also instrumental by frequently visiting Japan and inspiring us along the way.

The theme for my term was “Challenge Yourself to Change.” I wanted it to relate to then International President Jon Greiner’s theme: “Changing Lives, One at a Time.” Change is a good word to describe my term. I believe we began to change the way we looked at ourselves as a District, change the way we conducted our business, and change the way we viewed the future of Toastmasters in Japan.

Education awards, clubs and membership started to rapidly increase. It is true District 76 had its fair share of growing pains that first year as a full-fledged District, but thanks to the District Officers’ enthusiasm and the support from Toastmasters International, the later part of the transition phase went smoothly and terminated at the Spring Conference held at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo where for the first time a Toastmasters International President, Jon Greiner, paid an official visit to Japan.

Looking back over the past ten years, I can see all the positive changes that have taken place in the District’s organization, District’s members, and me. “Thank you Toastmasters.”
The term 2005-2006 was the second term after District 76 attained a full-fledged district status. Under the district theme of "Together Everyone Achieve More (TEAM)", we achieved a distinguished district status ranking 17th in the world in terms of Distinguished District Program with the following results:

Previous Term 2005-2006:  
Net increase of Membership 1729 1822 93 members  
No. of Clubs 68 73 5 clubs

The theme of the then Toastmasters International President Dilip Abayasekara, DTM, was "Find Your Voice, Serve Your World". The 2005 Fall Conference was held from November 19 to 20 at the Edogawa Green Palace, Tokyo, where we recognized Toastmaster of the Year, Division Governor of the Year and Area Governor of the Year during the Hall of Fame ceremony, and we extended our recognition to those Toastmasters who had rendered their services to help grow District 76 by serving on various district committees. The 1999-2000 Toastmasters International President Timothy R. Keck, DTM, was our guest of honor.

The 2006 Spring Conference was held on May 12 to 14 at the Yumebutai International Conference Center on Awaji Island. Our guests of honor were Toastmaster David Brooks, 1990 World Champion of Public Speaking, and 1999-2000 Toastmasters International President Timothy R. Keck, DTM. I really enjoyed working hard with my team. I cannot possibly put into words my appreciation of my team and all members of District 76 for their enduring efforts in achieving the Distinguished District status for the term of 2005-2006.

New Clubs: 6

- Corporate Club
- ** Advanced Club
- English Club
- Japanese Club
- Bilingual Club

- OPM ** Aki 2005/7/22 Hiroshima  
- Takamatsu 2005/8/18 Kagawa  
- Matsumoto 2005/9/6 Nagano  
- Yachiyo ** 2006/1/1 Tokyo  
- Kochi 2006/1/2 Kochi  
- FFLC 2006/5/2 (→ 2010/6/30) Fukuoka

Keiko Omachi, DTM  
District Governor 2005-2006

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District 76 missed achieving Distinguished District status by just short of three Competent Communicators awards. During this year, the Toastmasters International President was Johnny Uy, DTM, and his theme of the term was “Toastmasters: Simply Amazing!” District 76 sent contestant Setsuko Fujiyama to an Inter-District Contest held in Washington DC, USA. Her speech was titled “Hardships made me happy.” The Spring Conference was held at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center where once Olympic athletes from around the world competed to the best of their physical abilities and challenged their human potential. The guest of honor of the Conference was John Lau, DTM, a passionate International Director. He encouraged us by saying, “Be proud of the membership together and the fact that we belong to a “Simply Amazing” organization, named Toastmasters International.”
Fall Conference 2007 in Awaji
Nov. 16, Fri. – 18, Sun. @ Awaji Yumebutai International Conference Center

Evaluation Contest

Japanese Contest Host: Kyoto TMC
Winners
1st: Mieko Kobayashi (Aoyama Lunch TMC)
2nd: Akira Kamo (Kyoto TMC)
3rd: Mieko Maik (Yugawara TMC)

English Contest Host: Speake-up TMC
Winners
1st: Marie Josee Brassard (Sendai TMC)
2nd: Joel Campbell (Kyoto TMC)
3rd: Matthew Ownby (Kuso-Zama TMC)

Guest of Honor
Timothy Keck, DTM
International President 1999-2000

Takashi Suzuki, DTM
District Governor 2007-2008

We are very proud of all the members of District 76 (2007-2008) because we, District 76, had achieved Distinguished District which ranked 19th in terms of Distinguished District Program among all the districts. We had a formal slogan of our District “Grow Together Sharing Moments of Truth”, but we had another informal slogan which was “SuCCess CC”. Our Lt. Governor Education and Training had used the slogan “SuCCess CC” to increase the number of Competent Communicator (CC) because we were short of the District goal for Competent Communicators. Actually, in March, we had only 84 CCs while the goal was 132. However, we could overcome the challenge thanks to the great cooperation by all the members with the slogan “SuCCess CC”. I have learned that a simple slogan can work more than the formal one. Marketing was so successful. The number of Toastmasters Clubs increased to more than 80 for the first time. I appreciated the great job given by Lt. Governor Marketing. It was our great pleasure that Keiko Omachi, DTM, was awarded a Presidential Citation.

Spring Conference 2008 in Hiroshima
May 16, Fri. – 18, Sun. @ International Conference Center Hiroshima

International Speech Contest

Japanese Contest Host: Kumamoto, Higo, and FFLC TMC
Winners
1st: Kiminari Azuma (Yamato Bilingual TMC)
2nd: Ruskyle Howser (Tokyo TMC)
3rd: Shinji Fukuda (Fukuoka TMC)

English Contest Host: Hiroshima TMC
Winners
1st: Masatsugu Araya (Hamamatsu Bilingual TMC)
2nd: Hikaru Hirose (Tokyo TMC)
3rd: Shinji Fukuda (Fukuoka TMC)

Guest of Honor
George Yen, DTM
International Director 2006-2008

Guest
Jorie Wu, DTM
Past District 67 Governor

Special Guest
Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba
Mayor The City of Hiroshima

2007-2008
DISTRICT 76  4th year

Takashi Suzuki, DTM
District Governor 2007-2008

DISTINGUISHED

1,990 MEMBERS  82 CLUBS  47 DISTINGUISHED CLUBS OR ABOVE

New Clubs: 7

Kagayaki**
2007/10/5
Tokyo

Tokyo International
2008/1/23
Tokyo

Quantum
2008/1/9
Hiroshima

Pioneer
2008/2/14
Tokyo

Chiba Central
2008/3/3
Chiba

Kanagawa
2008/3/31
Kanagawa

Chiyoda
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2008/3/31
Kanagawa

Chiyoda
2008/3/27
Tokyo
Fall Conference 2008 in Saitama
Nov. 1, Sat.–2, Sun. @Saitama Provident Hall

Table Topics Contest

District 76 succeeded to achieve Distinguished District status for the second consecutive year by the efforts of all clubs and members. The Toastmasters International President was Jana Barnhill, DTM, AS, with the theme of the term “The Courage to Conquer”. The Spring Conference was held at Science City Tsukuba with the theme “Discover Your Potential”. The Experimental module “Kibo” of Japan was launched successfully. A dream of scientist is “To enable what seems to be impossible by discovering the potential”. Dreams, however are not limited to scientist only. “Kibo” gave us the chance to envision our dreams and focus on the achievement of those dreams. International President Jana Barnhill sent us her message “Courage to Conquer”. She encouraged us “To continue to learn, to continue to grow, and to continue to “Discover Your Potential”. The guest of honor of the Conference was International Director Mohammed Murad, DTM.

Spring Conference 2009 in Tsukuba
May 29, Fri.–31, Sun. @Tsukuba Nova Hall

New Clubs: 10

Shoko Takimoto, DTM
District Governor 2008–2009

International Speech Contest

Japanese Contest Host: Pioneer TMC
1st: Mieko Kobayashi (Aoyama Lunch TMC)
2nd: Kazumasa Umemoto (Ageo TMC)
3rd: Takashi Tadooka (Tachikawa TMC)

English Contest Host: Pioneer TMC
1st: Tomohide Oshima (Yokohama TMC)
2nd: Marie Josee Brassard (Sendai TMC)
3rd: Kazuko Kawauchi (Pioneer TMC)

Japanese Contest Host: Musashi-Kosugi TMC
1st: Tomohide Oshima (Yokohama TMC)
2nd: Kiyoshi Inoue (Musashi TMC)
3rd: Kazuko Kawauchi (Pioneer TMC)

Japanese Contest Host: Pioneer TMC
1st: Mieko Kobayashi (Aoyama Lunch TMC)
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English Contest Host: Pioneer TMC
1st: M. Kishimoto (Tokushima TMC)
2nd: Tomohide Oshima (Yokohama TMC)
3rd: Marie Josee Brassard (Sendai TMC)

Guest of Honor
Mohammed Murad, DTM
International Director 2007–2009

Shoko Takimoto, DTM
Conference Chair

Conference Staff

Shoko Takimoto, DTM
Conference Staff

Banner March

Banner March

Hall of Fame

Banner March

Banner March

Conference Staff

Perry

bannerdale@shibuya
2008/8/4

Tokyo

Shoko Takimoto, DTM
District Governor 2008–2009

2008–2009

DISTRRICT 76  5th year

DISTINGUISHED DISTRICT

2,317 MEMBERS  92 CLUBS  42 DISTINGUISHED CLUBS OR ABOVE

DISTINGUISHED DISTRICT
When I became the District Governor of District 76, the number of clubs was around 90 and I felt that we possessed the energy to grow further. As the 2009-2010 District theme, I chose “Quality Regular Meeting to Enjoy and Grow” which is considered to be a core value of Toastmasters that creates success with fun. I made three targets for District 76 and tried to achieve the following:

- Set up strong and good TEAMWORK by which all District Officers could fulfill each role, especially the Division Governors.
- Prepare more JAPANESE manuals to cope with the increasing number of Japanese clubs.
- Create a LIVELIEST website to serve the electronic needs of the District’s members.

It was a great honor for my home club Tokushima TMC to host the 2010 Spring Conference in Tokushima. Many people cooperated a lot including neighboring clubs, Prefectural Governor Iizumi, and the Awa Dance Group Tonosamaren. Although I could not fully achieve my targets, to serve as a District Governor was a great benefit to me and I thank everybody who contributed.
While I served as District Governor, 2010-2011, my term was made noteworthy by two conferences. The Fall Conference in Kumamoto was enhanced by the presence of then International President, Pat Johnson. As for the Spring Conference, its memory created in me extremely mixed feelings: a bitter of decision and humble gratitude. Immediately after the March 11th Tohoku Dai Shinsai, I had to make a tough decision about the Spring Conference. Finally, the venue was relocated from Tokyo to Kyoto and downsized to a one-day event. Although immensely disheartened by the catastrophe, we could show our strong mindset by the slogan of the Spring Conference: “Be Resilient. We can Overcome.” We received a lot of messages and encouragement from Toastmasters across the seas. Thanks to the encouragement of those messages, we tried hard to achieve the District goals. Regrettably, the result was seven Competent Communicators short of the goal. However, the number “7” meant more to us later than the unattained goal. The number will remain in our hearts as the symbol of fortune, not regrets. I’m really thankful to the members of District 76 for the concerted efforts they presented in the midst of the aftermath of that disaster. We were, we are, and we will be resilient, after all.