

also give good service: small profit but big happiness."

From 1995, her training was done totally in Japan. She says, "we have a slightly different licence and the training styles are slightly different here. The examiner will be a Japanese officer as there are no civilian examiners and he expects to see

precise and accurate flying. In the US they are more relaxed in their attitudes."

Now 50% of all the pilots in Japan are trained in her school and her company has 70% of the market share.

Since 1995, she has been able to get students jobs in Japan and now has a small agency to help her students when they apply for work. About 50% of her students are commercial pilots and these go on to get jobs in EMS, fire-fighting, corporate VIP, lifting and other work.



Above: Medals and trophies have been won by the Japanese team every year since 1999



Left: Shizuka Saito, students and teachers with Jennifer Murray and Colin Bodill, and Quentin Smith on their Round the World 'race' 2000

In 1998 she became the service centre for Robinson in Japan. "There was already a dealership in Osaka, but Frank Robinson didn't want two dealerships in Japan, so it took quite a while to convince him that we needed a dealership in the Tokyo region."

Frank Robinson first allowed her to have the R22 dealership and then agreed to add the R44. Then, finally, after three years of dealing with Robinson and the JCAB (Japanese Civil Aviation Bureau) they were allowed type certification, which cost her company US\$15,000 but which allows them to test and certify all

Above: students are expected, and willing, to wash the helicopter after every flight



the Robinsons imported into Japan. This means that even those Robinsons which go to Osaka have to come first to Shimotsuma Heliport to be certified.

"We had to take the JCAB to Torrance for a week," Shizuka explains, "so they could do inspections."

Now Frank Robinson is totally behind her enterprise. Shizuka says, "we can give our customers a better price and do everything more quickly. We translate the documents (manuals etc) as well, so everything is done for the customer here."

In 1997, Jennifer Murray was on her first Round the World trip in an R44, accompanied by Quentin Smith. As it was very difficult to get foreign aircraft into Japan, owing to a ruling left-over from the American occupation after World War II, she contacted Shizuka for help. Shizuka's company managed to get Jennifer a special dispensation for her flight, and also helped arrange customs through Japan. During the trip, Jennifer and Q landed at Shimotsuma, as Jennifer was to do again in 2000 when she came through a second time on her 'race' round the world against a micro-light flown by Colin Bodill (who also landed near the heliport).

When Shizuka met Q in 1999, he told her about the World Helicopter Championships, and that he was the 1994 Freestyle Champion. She thought in some depth about the challenge of this and that the Japanese did not have a national team attending the championships. When they met again Shizuka asked Q if he could train her team for the championships, he agreed and in April 2000 he went out to Shimotsuma for 10 days to put the boys and girl through their paces. Four months