

KAKEHASHI Project Japan's Friendship Ties Program (USA) University Students Batch No.5 Program Report

1. Program Overview

Under "Japan's Friendship Ties Program", 47 university and graduate school students from United States visited Japan. During the 8 days program from January 7th to January 14th, 2016, the participants studied the Japanese government, society, history, foreign policy, culture and much more. The participants aim to promote Japan through mediums such as SNS.

2. Participating Countries and Number of Participants

USA (47 Participants)

3. Prefectures Visited

Tokyo and Miyagi Prefecture

4. Program Schedule

January 7th (Thu) Arrival at Narita International Airport

January 8th (Fri) Orientation, [Lecture] "Japan's Foreign Policy" by the North

American Affairs Bureau, MOFA

[Observation] Edo-Tokyo Museum, Asakusa

January 9th (Sat) Move to Miyagi Prefecture

[Courtesy Call] Osaki City Office

Homestay

January 10th (Sun) Homestay

January 11th (Mon) Farewell Party with Host families

[Culture Experience] Kokeshi Doll Painting

[Observation] Lake KEJONUMA Bird Watching

[Workshop]

January 13th (Wed) Move to Tokyo

[Observation] Imperial Palace, Akihabara

[Reporting Session]

January 14th (Thu) [Observation] Meiji Jingu, Harajuku

Departure from Narita International Airport

5. Program Photos /University Students Batch No.5



1/8 Edotokyo Museum (Sumida-ku, Tokyo)



1/9 Courtesy Call and Introduction of the Region: Osaki Municipal Government (Osaki City)



1/10 Homestay (Osaki City)



1/11 Cultural Experience: Kokeshi Doll Painting (Osaki City)



1/12 School Exchange: Tohoku University
(Sendai City)



1/13 Reporting Session(Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo)

6. Voice from Pabeirticipants

◆U.S.A Student

One of the things that particularly impressed me was the willingness of the Japanese people to share their culture with foreigners. Cultural exchanges are difficult in that both sides of the exchange have to be open – the giving culture in its opening of borders and the receiving end in its openness in discussing and experiencing a foreign culture. The people of Japan have been absolutely incredible. By opening their homes, schools and thoughts, we were able to really immerse ourselves in the culture. There's only so much you can learn in a classroom and I think that the KAKEHASHI Project does an incredible job at doing exactly what the name prescribes- bridge cultures through understanding. The people of Japan have left me with an overall consensus on my impression of them: warm, open and willing the bridge the gaps between 2 very different cultures. It's an impression that I hope to share with many upon my return to America.

◆U.S.A Student

Throughout the past several days, what impressed me the most are the natural scenery and the manners and friendliness of the Japanese people. Especially Miyagi prefecture, Naruko Onsen, the natural surroundings, the mountains, the snow are all very beautiful. As for the customer service, I believe it is top ntch. One particular thing I found interesting was how the cashier people repeated the amount of money they received. On the other hand, the homestay experience was very amazing. I love how they were welcoming and kind. I'm afraid there were much more I could do in return for their help, but didn't manage to. I do not know if they were satisfied with me, but I was very happy talking with them. If I could come back, I'll definitely visit them again and repay them. I also learned a lot from the homestay family, not only cultural aspects but also about the damage, reconstruction, and sites of Ishinomaki, where the Tsunami it in 2011, Also how Matsushima was also damaged, but thanks to the numerous islands, the damage was mitigated.

♦U.S.A Student

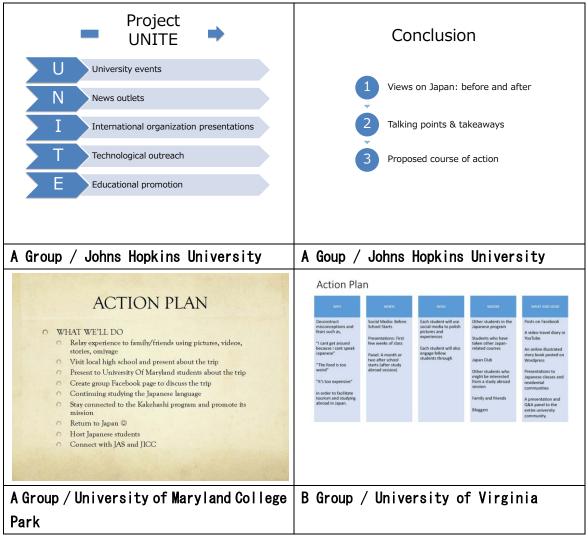
What impressed me most was how tenacious and strong of heart the Japanese people are. We all hear about how kind and friendly Japanese are, but we never really see more than that in media. I visited Matsushima with my host family, an area which was highly devastated by the 2011 great earthquake. I expected to see more damage and aftereffects, but instead a saw a thriving tourist spot full of people carrying their lives without any easily visible consequences. However small traces of the tsunami remained. I was therefore surprised to see that the people were very enthusiastic and full of warmth despite the tragedies of 2011. It strengthened my heart to see Japan pull a full recovery and even more so to see Japan reach at to the international community to expand their influence. I only wish I had even half the strength of the people I met here in Japan, which is what I wish to convey to friends, family, and my community in general once I return to America I have loved my time spent

here in Japan and even the thought of leaving in just few days is enough to bring tears to my eyes. I will make it my lifelong goal to spread information about Japan and to someday return to the place where I made such unforgettable and wonderful memories. Thank you.

◆U.S.A Student

My time in Japan was one of both surprising and pleasant. Being of an Asian background myself Japanese food, lifestyle and manners were not too much of a shock for me. However the traditional architectures and natural landscape of the country completely knocked the breath out of me. I was very impressed and touched by the people of Japan and how they tried to preserve the traditional culture of Japan even admist the modern technology. Also the streets and towns are amazingly spotless with not a single trash to be found. People are so polite and pleasant at all times. I felt very welcomed. Homestay was also a great experience, trying out authentic food and baths. Overall, Japan was a great experience and a learning opportunity of the country, language and the people of Japan.

7. Action Plan Presented at the Reporting Session by Participants



After Japan School Presentations Blog posts and other forms of social media Sustained contact with homestay families Reach out to Keio U. international students at WEM	
B Group / The College of William and Mary	