



Japan's Friendship Ties Program (USA)
KAKEHASHI Project
Japanese American the 2nd Slot Program Report

1. Program Overview

Under the “KAKEHASHI Project” of Japan’s Friendship Ties Program, 69 university students/young professionals and 6 supervisors from the United States visited Japan from December 13th to December 20th, 2016 to participate in the program aimed at promoting their understanding of Japan with regard to Japanese politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy. Through lectures by ministries, observation of historical sites, school exchange, homestay and other experiences, the participants enjoyed a wide range of opportunities to improve their understanding of Japan and shared their individual interests and experiences through SNS. Based on their findings and learning in Japan, each group of participants made a presentation in the final session and reported on the action plans to be taken after returning to their home country.

【Participating Countries and Number of Participants】

U.S.A. : 75 participants

【Prefectures Visited】

Tokyo, Mie (Group A/B), Gunma (Group C)

2. Program Schedule

December 13th (Tue) Arrival at Haneda International Airport

December 14th (Wed) [Orientation]

[Lecture] North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
“Japan’s Foreign Policy”

[History • Culture] Japanese Overseas Migration Museum

December 15th (Thu) ~ December 18th (Sun)

Divided into two groups. Group A/B visited Yamaguchi and Group C visited Gunma.

After the local prefecture program, all 3 groups traveled back to Tokyo on December 19th.

(1) Group A/B: Mie

[School Exchange] Kogakkan University

[Courtesy Call • Lecture on the Region] Ise City

[Historical Landmark] Hinjitsu-kan

[Observation] Meoto-Iwa Rock

[Historical Landmark] Ise Jingo Shrine

[Observation] Okage Yokocho Street

[Homestay]

[Workshop]

(2) Group C: Gunma

[Courtesy Call • Lecture on Outline of the Region] Tomioka City

[Cultural Experience] Tea Ceremony

[Historical Landmark] Tomioka Silk Mill

[School Exchange] Takasaki University of Commerce

[Homestay]

[Workshop]

December 19th (Mon) [Lecture] IBM Japan, Ltd

[Reporting Session]





December 20th (Tue) [Lecture] Gender Equality Promotion Division, Cabinet Office

[Commercial Facility] Odaiba

Departure from Narita International Airport

3. Program Photos

Tokyo

	
12/14 [Lecture] Ministry of Foreign Affairs North American Bureau (Tokyo)	12/14 [History • Culture] Japanese Overseas Migration Museum (Tokyo)
	
12/14 [History • Culture] Japanese Overseas Migration Museum (Tokyo)	12/19 [Lecture] IBM Japan, Ltd (Tokyo)



12/19 [Reporting Session] (Tokyo)



12/19 [Reporting Session] (Tokyo)

Group A/B: Mie



12/15 [School Exchange] Kogakkan University (Ise City)



12/16 [Courtesy Call • Lecture on the Region] Ise City (Ise City)



12/16 [Historical Landmark] Hinjitsu-kan (Ise City)



12/16 [Historical Landmark] Ise Jingo Shrine (Ise City)



12/17 [Homestay] (Taiki-cho)



12/18 [Homestay] Farewell Party (Taiki-cho)

Group C: Gunma



12/15 [Lecture on the Region] Tomioka City
(Tomioka City)



12/15 [Cultural Experience] Tea Ceremony
(Tomioka City)



12/15 [Historical Landmark] Tomioka Silk
Mill (Tomioka City)



12/16 [School Exchange] Takasaki University
of Commerce (Takasaki City)



12/16 [School Exchange] Daruma doll
painting (Takasaki City)



12/17 [Homestay] Mochi-tsuki
(Minakami-town)

4. Voice from Participants

◆ U.S.A., University Student

- Lecture: The most significant lecture was the lecture on Nikkei identity of the Japanese Overseas Museum. This was the first time I heard of the term Nikkei. It made me question how I identify myself when people ask me who I am. I changed my perspective on who I am and how I represent myself.
- School exchange: The school exchange at Kogakkan University was exciting, especially when we were able to join an English class. The experience was very personal and special moments. I also enjoyed the Shinto museum as my grandmother is Shinto, so it was nice being able to understand where she comes from.
- Government office: The Foreign Affairs ministry's lecture opened my eyes to the importance of politics. As an engineering student, I don't receive many opportunities to take classes on international affairs. His lecture was informative but also inspiring because it made me aware of the world.
- Homestay: The homestay experience was my favorite part about Kakehashi Program. In the city that I live in, there aren't many Japanese people, so this experience was the first time I was able to understand Japanese culture.

◆ U.S.A., University Student

The lectures/workshops have been extremely informative and interesting. What stood out to me the most was the relevance/connection between the information shared here and the classes I'm taking for my global studies major back in Santa Barbara. It is important and valuable to study and understand the past in order to assess the present and look forward to plan for the future.

The school exchange was one of the biggest highlights of the trip! The students we met were so kind and engaging, and worked really hard to communicate with us even if they weren't had a lot of English practice. We learned about as well as experienced first-hand Japanese hospitality. It was also awesome to share my experience during an interview for the local TV channel in Gunma!

The government office we visited shared about the impact of the Tomioka Silk Mill becoming World Heritage Site, economically and socially. It was impressing to see what a positive change it has had on the city, but also with some drawbacks. The presentation of the mill reveals the Japanese People's respect for tradition and history.

The homestay was a great immersion experience here in Gunma. Seeing the daily life of our homestay parents in the north part of Gunma revealed the hard working ethic, as well as the day-to-day routine of their guesthouse. The neighbors/community are all somewhat connected and they were all older individuals. The aging population of Japan as whole was seen in that specific community, as well as their extremely warm hospitality and generosity. I have never been so full for so long since staying here. It was an amazing experience getting to witness as well as participate in the lives of Japanese people

5. Voice from Japanese Participants

◆ University Student from School Exchange

My recent participation in the KAKEHASHI Project was a great experience. I had never traveled overseas before, and the only time I have ever worked on my English was through the content taught in the classroom, so I was worried about whether or not I would be able to communicate. But the others actively spoke to me, and when I had trouble understanding something they would look it up and convert it to Japanese for me, and so our discussions went smoothly. What's more, some of the participants are also studying Japanese, so I feel that when they would address me in Japanese it served as a chance to learn from one another about each other's languages. For the daruma doll paintings, we had a great time working on handicrafts, and were able to see one another's unique daruma dolls. It was interesting to see unconventional darumas that looked like Pikachu and colorful darumas. It was difficult communicating with foreigners, but ended up being a very fun day.

◆ Host Family from Taiki town

English isn't really my strong suit, but I was able to get my point across to some extent through hand and body gestures. I had them try zazen meditation and flower arrangement at a nearby temple, and this project also served as an opportunity to link up with other local people, which allowed us to host them smoothly. Even the local people told us, "In the future, when people come from overseas we would like to hold exchanges with them locally."

I brought out and had them try on my kimono, which had lain dormant for a long time, and they had an absolute blast. I'm sure the kimono enjoyed it too. A staff member from my shop brought their one-year-old child so we had a birthday party, which they also enjoyed. I would be grateful if they would arrange it so that someone who can speak Japanese is in the group, if possible.

◆ Host Family from Minakami town



All four of the people had different personalities, yet over and above everything else it was great to catch a glimpse of their sincere attitude. When I asked them about the subjects they're majoring in, they explained them thoroughly until I had a good understanding of them, and would take notes while listening to what I had to say. From this, I was deeply impressed by their sincere attitude.

It was an incredibly fun and meaningful experience. This give me both a strong admiration for and interest in Japanese-descent American. I would like to have more opportunities to receive these non-Japanese people of Japanese descent.


◆ Host Family from Minakami town

Since our guests were adults, they were considerate towards the host family and friends, which made for an easygoing and great atmosphere from start to finish. The each guest also seemed to make an effort to communicate amongst one another as well. All of them actively helped out with clearing up after meals and washing the dishes. Having them clean-up was a huge help, and they were very good at it. We had enough time in our schedule, which was great because it allowed us to take it easy in a hot spring and relax. They took an interest in Japanese food, and I was surprised that they learned the word “nappa” (meaning leafy greens). I was happy that they ate every meal without leaving any leftovers. I felt like they were even more considerate than Japanese people.

6. Dissemination by the participants

 <p>What a feast! Thanks, Melanie Nomiyai!</p>	 <p>We met students from Kogakkan University, Ise City, Mie Prefecture to practice our Japanese & to teach some English!</p>
<p>What a feast!</p>	<p>We met students from Kogakkan University in Ise city, Mie to practice our Japanese & to teach some English!</p>

7. Action Plan Presented by Participants at the Reporting Session

<p>Be an Advocate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socialize our story with anecdotes when people ask about your trip • social media, blogs, conversation • promote Japanese culture in our JA organizations (or start one), become more involved • write letters to Congressmen supporting U.S. Japan relations • encourage participation in exchange programs to Japan 	
<p>Our experiences and findings in Japan will be disseminated through social media and JACL related events, and positively ask for the support to the Consulates and congressmen in the US.</p>	<p>Japanese brand will be promoted through purchasing made-in-Japan products, and grow Japanese brand value in the U.S. in order to develop better business relationships between US and Japan.</p>