



KAKEHASHI Project (United States of America) Outbound Program for Jewish Studies Researchers Program Report

1. Program Overview

Under the “KAKEHASHI Project” of Japan’s Friendship Ties Programs, 7 Japanese researchers visited the United States of America from March 3 to March 10, 2020 to participate in the program aimed at promoting the understanding of Japan with regard to its politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy as well as Jewish studies in Japan.

During the exchange program, they delivered a presentation and exchanged opinions on Jewish studies in Japan. Through the observation of various sites, the participants enjoyed a wide range of opportunities to improve their understanding of the US and Japan US relations, and shared their individual interests and experiences through social media.

【School Names and Number of Participants】

7 Jewish Studies Researchers (from University of Tokyo Graduate School etc.)

【Destination】

State of New York, Washington D.C.

2. Program Schedule

3/3(Tue)	【Arrival】
3/4(Wed)	【Orientation】 【Courtesy Call】 Consulate General of Japan in New York 【Observation】 Congregation Belt Simchat Torah (CBST) 【Observation】 Congregation Shearith Israel (CSI)
3/5(Thu)	【Observation】 YIVO Institute for Jewish Research 【Observation】 The American Sephardi Federation (ASF)
3/6(Fri)	Move to Washington D.C. from New York 【Courtesy Call】 Embassy of Japan in the United States of America 【Reception】 AJC and B'NAI B'RITH members 【Observation】 Shir Delight
3/7(Sat)	【Exchange program】 Discussion with Mr. David Bernstein (President & CEO of JCPA) 【Observation】 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 【Exchange program】 Dinner with a rabbi 【Exchange program】 The Jews of American Jazz
3/8(Sun)	【Observation】 The Wanderers (Satmar Hasidic Jews)

3/9(Mon)	【Departure】
3/10(Tue)	【Arrival in Japan】

3. Program Photos



3/4 【Observation】 Congregation Shearith Israel (CSI)

3/5 【Observation】 YIVO Institute for Jewish Research



3/6 【Courtesy Call】 Embassy of Japan

3/6 【Observation】 Shir Delight



3/7【Exchange program】Discussion with Mr. David Bernstein (President & CEO of JCPA)

3/7 【Observation】 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

4. Voice from Participants (abstract)

◆ The most impressive aspects of this program was witnessing the diverse, multi-faceted and open aspects of Jewish society in the US. It started with a visit to a synagogue which is open to LGBTQs. We visited and observed a variety of matters such as a historical Spanish-Jewish synagogue, a Jewish youth gathering and a lecture about Jewish society in India and Jewish music in east Europe. I was able to see many Jewish communities which were not categorized as just one ethnic group. It was a precious opportunity for me not only to deepen my own thoughts, but also to compare the US Jewish community to its Israeli counterpart, which is my main field of study. Since the program was designed for a group of Jewish researchers, I was able to have great experiences which I could not have had if I had been visiting such institutes as an individual researcher or if I had been studying alone as a researcher. Specifically, it was really meaningful to see the historical Yiddish materials at the archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and to exchange views with a prominent Jewish person whom we seldom see. I was also happy to interact with young Japanese Jewish researchers with whom I had rarely interacted. It gave me an opportunity to think about my perspective and thoughts again. I also started to re-think about communications in English.

◆ The most impressive part about the program was that we had an opportunity to actually see the precious materials kept at YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in NY. It included musical scores of old songs and instrumental music. They said that they were preparing to post them online now. I thought I would like to access their website immediately once they finish it. At YIVO, they showed us how to use their library. Maybe I will visit the institute again and search materials related to central and east European Jewish music. Secondly, I had an opportunity to sing a song at the Shir Delight event to celebrate the Sabbath. I learned that even though the lyrics were the same, the musical tones were different according to the religious sects or regions. A person I met told me that the sophisticated melody and way of singing were quite different among the religious sects, and the styles of the songs were handed down orally. Given the chance, I would like to study these differences in the future. Thirdly, at Congregation, we had an opportunity to see the activities of American Jewish Jazz musicians. And we were lucky to have a lecture by one of them. I was particularly interested in the fact that their Jazz music was affected by the melody of Klezmer music. I knew that some pieces of classical music which were composed by Jewish composers had influences from Klezmer music or the Nigun from Hasidic music. But it was the first time for me to know that Jazz music was also affected by Jewish ethnic music such as Klezmer. I will analyze some pieces of music introduced by the musicians and further detail the relationship between Jazz and Klezmer.

◆ At the Consulate General of Japan in NY, we had an opportunity to talk with the Consul. She shared us her experiences during her stay in Syria as a Charge d'Affaires ad interim and she told us about Jewish organizations in NY. Especially, she pointed out that Jewish studies



are more or less susceptible to current political situations and interests of Europe, the US and Middle East countries. I thought it important when the Consul spoke on the challenge of academics in distancing themselves from such influences. To what extent could we actually pursue our research while overcoming the interests of above mentioned countries? How can we expand the possibility of Jewish studies, especially in Japan, which is positioned differently than Europe, the US and the Middle East? I recognized again that these questions are what I am going to keep addressing in the future. It was a precious opportunity for me to visit Congregation Belt Simchat Torah (CBST), one of the Jewish communities which broadly welcome LGBTQ sectarians. I learned the diversity of Judaism in the US. I was moved by the talk of the Rabbi. Even though the rabbi belongs to Orthodox Judaism, the rabbi insisted the importance of engaging with every person including sexual minorities. If time permitting, I wanted to learn more details of the relationship between Jewish doctrine and sexual minorities. At Shir Delight, we were able to interact with various Jewish people. It was interesting to know that the attendees were not always acquaintances, but it seemed like they gathered at the event from various areas and were enjoying the social gathering with dinner. I was impressed by the idea that a religion could bring people together regardless of their place of origin, because my social life and identity has always revolved around belonging to a place.

5. Voice from Organizations (abstract)

- ◆ We find this exchange to be incredibly important, and we are always amazed at the level of talent showcased by the delegates.

- ◆ We got to learn a lot from the brilliant academic fellows and were very glad to give them glimpses of Jewish and American life, dances, traditions, young leaders etc. during their visit.

6. Dissemination by the participants

	
<p>About the observation(Facebook)</p> <p>Today we visited YIVO and encountered some incredibly valuable documents in the archives. I'll definitely come back here.</p>	<p>About the Exchange program (Facebook)</p> <p>Collaboration of American and Japanese Klezmer musicians.</p>

7. Action Plan Presented by Participants at the Reporting Session

Action Plan

- Reporting Session: In Japan, general interest in local Jewish communities in the US and other regions is not deep. To promote people's understanding toward the Jewish communities in the US and other regions, reporting sessions by the participants will be held in Kanto area and Kansai area respectively. We will give a presentation with some photos taken in the US which indicate the atmosphere of the Jewish communities. We will include the explanations of each site visit and the contents of each exchange meeting in the presentation. Concretely, we will introduce the diversity of "Jewish nature" in the US, which is the second largest hub of Judaism/Jews, including the words of Jewish people/Jews we met in this program.
- Video making: We will make a video to introduce this outbound program. By showing the video, we would like to disseminate the atmosphere which we can seldom show when we use only words and photos. Not only introducing this program, but also we will introduce the KAKEHASHI Project itself to the general public. We will finish making the video by the end of March and disseminate it at the reporting sessions, through social media and other media with the aim of reaching as many people as possible and letting them know of KAKEHASHI Project.
- Newsletter: All participants will make a Newsletter about the overview and site visits of the program and distribute it to the audience of the reporting sessions, and post it online.
- Lecture: One of the participants will give a lecture at a women's university. The contents of the lecture is music related activities which the participant learned during the site visits of the program. Through the lecture, the students at the university will be able to become more familiar with Jewish culture and music they will also understand the music in the connection with religious background.
- PR activity at a radio show: One of the participants will be on a radio show "Komae AM Monday" broadcasted by Komae FM and explain about the outbound program. It is a good opportunity to disseminate the information to the general public and get some feedback from them. Eventually, we would like to increase the number of people who will be able to see the US society and Jewish society with broad perspectives.
- Translating the "Vilnius Ghetto Diary": One of the participants will start translating of the precious material "Vilnius Ghetto Diary" which is kept at the archive of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research into Japanese.