



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Jewish Americans the 1st Slot (B'nai B'rith International)

Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

Seven Jewish Americans selected by B'nai B'rith International participated in the program and visited Tokyo and Hiroshima. Through a variety of exchanges in Japan, the program aimed to give them a general understanding of the country, actively share Japan's appeal, promote interaction and cooperation between Japan and the Jewish community in the U.S., and strengthen U.S.-Japan relations.

【Participants】 Total: 7 participants (6 university students and working youths, 1 chaperone) selected by B'nai B'rith International (U.S.)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Hiroshima

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Oct. 29 (Wed) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warnings, precautions of infectious disease, etc.

Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Video Viewing】** "Lecture on Japan" (Choose on Web Japan)

■ Invitation Program:

Nov. 3 (Mon) Arrival at Haneda Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation, Group Leader Briefing】

Nov. 4 (Tue) **【Observation】** The State Guest Houses, Akasaka Palace

【Courtesy Call】 Mr. Gilad Cohen, Ambassador, Embassy of Israel in Japan

【Observation】 Meiji Jingu, Harajuku (Japanese Pop-culture)

Nov. 5 (Wed) Travel from Tokyo to Hiroshima

【Home Visit】 Fukuyama City

Nov. 6 (Thu) **【Observation】** Fukuyama Castle

【Observation】 Holocaust Education Center

【Lecture】 Passing Down Atomic Bomb Experiences

Speaker: Ms. OKAMOTO Toshiko

【Observation】

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

Nov. 7 (Fri) Travel from Hiroshima to Tokyo

【Courtesy Call】

Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

【Observation】 TEPIA (Association for Technological Excellence Promoting Innovative Advances)

【Opinion Exchange】 Chabad Tokyo—Chabad House of Japan Center

Nov. 8 (Sat)

【Observation】 Tsukiji Outer Market

【Cultural Experience】 Matcha Experience

【Observation】 Senso-ji Temple, Asakusa Shrine

Nov. 9 (Mon)

【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans

Departure from Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program



November 4 【Observation】
The State Guest Houses, Akasaka Palace



November 4 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. Gilad Cohen,
Ambassador, Embassy of Israel in Japan



November 4 【Observation】 Meiji Jingu



November 5 【Home Visit】



November 6 【Observation】
Fukuyama Castle



November 6 【Observation】
Holocaust Education Center



November 6 【Lecture】
Passing Down Atomic Bomb Experiences



November 6 【Observation】
Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum,
Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park



November 7 【Courtesy Call】
Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister
for Foreign Affairs



November 7 【Observation】
TEPIA (Association for Technological
Excellence Promoting Innovative Advances)



November 7 【Opinion Exchange】 Chabad Tokyo



November 8 【Observation】 Tsukiji Outer Market



November 8 【Cultural Experience】
Matcha Experience



November 9 【Observation】 Senso-ji Temple



November 9 【Reporting Session】



November 9 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ University Student

We gained a deeper understanding of Japan's diplomatic priorities and its commitment to strengthening relations with diverse communities abroad, including the Jewish community. The thoughtful dialogue and hospitality we received reflected Japan's genuine interest in fostering lasting mutual understanding and friendship.

◆ **Working Youth**

We had the privilege of meeting with Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. It was such an honor to hear directly from him about Japanese and US relations and the relationship between Japan and Israel, and hoping for peace in the future.

◆ **Working Youth**

Meeting with Ambassador Gilad Cohen was so meaningful. We heard and appreciated his love and support for Japan and appreciated the diplomatic efforts to support Japanese-US relations.

◆ **University student**

Visiting Chabad of Japan was an unforgettable experience. The building itself, with its Japanese-inspired design and calm, wooden interior, felt like a perfect harmony between local culture and Jewish tradition. Even more memorable was the community, which made us feel instantly at home, thousands of miles away.

◆ **Working Youth**

We were so impressed by the culture at every point of the project. The home visits left the last impression, but we also really enjoyed getting to know the kind staff that took us around and some of the side conversations that we were able to have in order for them to give us some personal perspectives. We thoroughly enjoyed Hiroshima an understanding the Japanese side of such a devastating time in history. We took away so much humanity and perspective from this experience on a cultural level and we intend to use this trip to help bridge the relationships with the people of Japan but also with other communities in New York City. I feel like I'm coming away more empathetic.

◆ **Working Youth**

The visit to the Holocaust education center was inspirational and so meaningful. And following that with the Hiroshima Peace Museum showed so many connections between the Jewish people and Japanese people. I plan to share information with groups I'm involved with like Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America.

◆ **Working Youth**

Definitely the home visit, the Holocaust education center, peace museum and the visit to the embassy + MOFA were the highlights for me. I'd love to stay connected with our amazing guides and with the home visit family. Ideally would like to go back next year and explore the Hokkaido region. My family also would like to go to Okinawa.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ **Host Family**

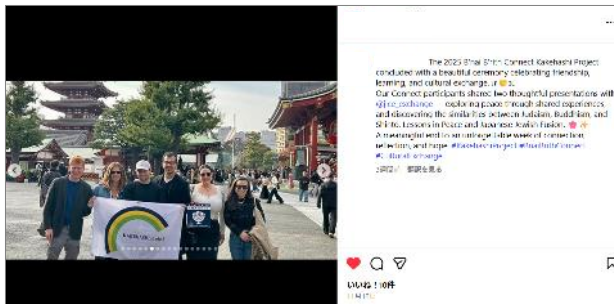
We were so happy to hear the participants say "Kakko! (Cool)" over and over as they looked around our old farmhouse, inside and out. Their faces lit up with such bright, big smiles! I truly wish that more people in Japan would do the same.

◆ **Lecturer**

Given today's complex global situation, I found myself wondering how much I could truly convey about what happened in Hiroshima. It's something that really made me think. But the purpose of my talk was never just to share facts—it was to spark reflection on peace. From the participants' feedback, I feel that it may have helped deepen their thoughts and feelings about peace, and perhaps offered a starting point for further reflection.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt), Articles, etc.

Have had a wonderful week in Japan sponsored by Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) and B'nai B'rith International for a group of Jewish Americans to support ties with Japan. We met with the Israeli ambassador, Gilad Cohen- my heart has been there for 2 years and it was incredible to be in a space in Tokyo to rejoice at the news of the hostages being returned and discuss foreign affairs. We met with Onishi Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to discuss American and Japanese ties as well as share our reflections on this wonderful country. And had time to (also!) rejoice about the Israeli hostage return and discuss ties as Jewish Americans and our appreciation for the Japanese. We have visited Hiroshima, Fukuyama and Tokyo and feel I have come away with such appreciation for Japanese perspective, culture and of course... food!!! https://lnkd.in/eQW7Htdr 	 Coming back from an amazing trip in Japan with @shoshanahsussman and @jira_nichols After spending your best for 2 years about my personal duty feelings about seeing what my family went through in the 1930s/40s in front of my eyes with how people outside the community saying anything, I was invited to Japan by the Japanese government to see their culture which has also been shaped by devastation and adversity when the world might have looked to have worked against them and they built and became which is exactly what this world needs. We visited Tokyo (and in Tokyo if you visit the Israel embassy's, Hiroshima and Fukuyama). In between all of the stuff, we met with government officials as representatives of the Jewish American community and how to keep Israel and United States ties with Japan.
November 8, 2025 (LinkedIn) Working Youth Have had a wonderful week in Japan sponsored by B'nai B'rith International for a group of Jewish Americans to support ties with Japan. We met with the Israeli ambassador, Gilad Cohen- my heart has been in Israel for 2 years and it was incredible to be in a space in Tokyo to rejoice at the news of the hostages being returned and discuss foreign affairs. We met with Onish Yohei, Parliamentary Vice – Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to discuss American and Japanese ties as well as share our reflections on this wonderful country. And had time to (also) rejoice about the Israeli hostage return and discuss ties as Jewish Americans and our appreciation for the Japanese. We have visited Hiroshima, Fukuyama and Tokyo and I feel I have come away with such appreciation for Japanese perspectives, culture and of course... food.	November 12, 2025 (Instagram) Working Youth For two years, I've been posting about what my family went through in the 1930s/40s, even though it's rarely talked about outside our community. Then, I was invited by the Japanese government to learn about Japanese culture—a country that has also faced great adversity and overcome it. We visited Tokyo (including the Israel Embassy!), Hiroshima, and Fukuyama. In between, we met with government officials as representatives of the Jewish American community to discuss Israel-Japan-U.S. relations. I was deeply moved by the kindness and determination of the Japanese people and how their culture turns hardship into strength. It was my first time in Japan, but I fell in love with the country and can't wait to go back. I'm also truly grateful to have experienced this trip with B'nai B'rith. My connection to this organization goes back to my great-grandmother, and it's even how I met my husband. Thanks to them, I've added another incredible experience to my life.



November 12, 2025 (Instagram)

Working Youth

The 2025 B'nai B'rith Connect KAKEHASHI Project concluded with a beautiful ceremony celebrating friendship, learning, and cultural exchange.

Our Connect participants shared two thoughtful presentations—exploring peace through shared experiences, and discovering the similarities between Judaism, Buddhism, and Shinto. Lessons in Peace and Japanese Jewish Fusion.

A meaningful end to an unforgettable week of connection, reflection, and hope.



November 7, 2025 (Instagram page of B'nai B'rith

Connect (B'nai B'rith International's Young Professional's group))

On November 7, Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, received a courtesy call from a delegation of Jewish-American young leaders recommended by B'nai B'rith International, who were invited to Japan under the KAKEHASHI Project.

At the outset, Parliamentary Vice-Minister ONISHI welcomed the delegation. He further referred to and welcomed the recent agreement that achieved a ceasefire and the release of all surviving hostages, more than two years after the terrorist attacks by Hamas and others.

Parliamentary Vice-Minister ONISHI emphasized the importance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, noting that close exchanges between Japan and the American Jewish community is an important part of the bonds that underpin the Alliance. He expressed his hope that the delegation would contribute to the further development of Japan-U.S. relationship.

The delegation expressed their gratitude for the invitation to Japan and shared their impressions and aspirations for the visit. The participants also asked questions concerning Japan-Israel relations and Japan's security environment.

The purpose of KAKEHASHI Project is to increase the interest in and understanding of Japan among

outstanding young leaders in the North American region. By having them engage in activities that make the most of their visit experience, it aims to foster supporters and experts of Japan. The project promotes participants' understanding of Japan's politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy in accordance with their areas of expertise and interest and enhances their external communication about Japan.



November 5, 2025 (Embassy of Israel in Japan's Instagram)

Members of B'nai B'rith International, a Jewish community mutual aid organization, visited and had an exchange of views with Ambassador Gilad Cohen about the situation in Israel and future diplomatic relations with Japan. The meeting was held in a warm and friendly atmosphere and became a truly meaningful opportunity to deepen mutual understanding.



November 6, 2025 (Fukuyama Marugoto Taiken Suishin Kyogikai's Instagram)

【Takehashi Project × New York × Utsumi-cho, Fukuyama City】

Young Jewish American leaders visited Utsumi-cho in Fukuyama City as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "KAKEHASHI Project"! Young Jewish American leaders visited Fukuyama's Utsumi Town as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "Takehashi Project"!

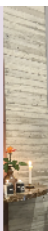
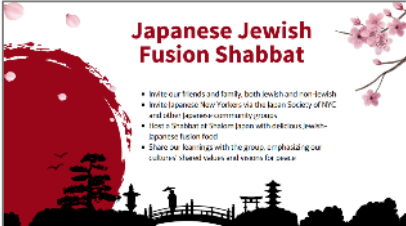
They cruised the calm waters of the Seto Inland Sea, explored stunning spots like Abuto Kannon and the surrounding islands, strolled along the beach, shared stories around a bonfire, and even danced to music.

It was a time where nature and people resonated together—smiles and hearts connecting beyond culture, countries, and language.

With the sea breeze of Setouchi, true "heart-to-heart bridges" were formed!

6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Locations: Tokyo, Hiroshima – Presentations by a total of 2 groups

Group A		
 Lessons in Peace	Building the Bridge Together - Japan Society of New York - Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation - Museum of Jewish Heritage / B'nai B'rith Office / ICC, Manhattan - Local schools for student engagement and art displays 	Youth & Education Passing the Torch - Student art & essays: "What does peace mean to me?" - School visits by Japanese cultural envoys or survivors' descendants - Volunteer opportunities 
【Results of the Program】 ◆ Learnings from the program Visiting Hiroshima showed us how Japan rebuilt from devastation with grace and humanity. ◆ Individual Prospects We aim to spark understanding between cultures and generations. 【Action Plan】 - We will gather student art and essays themed "What does peace mean to me?" - We will plan a school visit by Japanese cultural envoys or survivors' descendants - We will create volunteer opportunities.		
Group B		
 Japanese Jewish Fusion	SHALOM JAPAN BROOKLYN, NY Bridge our cultures by welcoming Jewish and Japanese communities over a ritual (Shabbat) and good food (harvest) to promote peace and coming together 	Japanese Jewish Fusion Shabbat - Invite our friends and family, both Jewish and non-Jewish - Invite Japanese New Yorkers via the Japan Society of NYC and other Japanese community groups - Host a Shabbat at a private home with delicious, Jewish-Japanese fusion food - Share our learnings with the group, emphasizing our culture's shared values and visions for peace 
【Results of the Program】 ◆ Learnings from the program We discovered cultural similarities. We observed Shinto and Buddhist rituals, discovering both cultures emphasize a hand-washing ritual before prayer. ◆ Individual Prospects We aim to bridge our cultures by welcoming Jewish and Japanese communities over a ritual (Shabbat) and good food (harvest) to promote peace and coming together. 【Action Plan】 -Japanese Jewish Fusion Shabbat- We will invite our friends and family, both Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as Japanese New Yorkers via the Japan Society of NYC and other Japanese community groups. To participate in a Shabbat we will host at Shalom Japan with delicious Jewish-Japanese fusion food. We will share our learnings with the group, emphasizing our culture's shared values and visions for peace.		

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)