



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for the LA Next Generation Japanese American Young Leaders

Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

Four young leaders from the LA Next Generation Japanese American Leaders Initiative were invited to Japan from December 3 to December 9. During their stay, they visited Tokyo and Nagasaki, deepening their understanding of Japan's politics, economy, security, and entertainment sectors. They also strengthened networks through exchanges and discussions with various Japanese counterparts. This program was designed to help them become key players in strengthening U.S.–Japan relations as next-generation Japanese American young leaders. Each participant also shared the many appeals of Japan through social media and other platforms.

【Participants】 Total: 4 Japanese Americans (working youths) from the U.S.

【Locations】 Tokyo, Nagasaki

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Nov. 27 (Thu) **【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:

Dec. 3 (Wed) Arrival at Haneda Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation】

Dec. 4 (Thu) **【Cultural Experience】** Tea ceremony experience

【Theme Related Lecture and Opinion Exchange】 Ministry of Defense

【Observation】 Tokyo Suiso-miru (Tokyo Hydrogen Museum)

Travel from Tokyo to Nagasaki

Dec. 5 (Fri) **【Observation】** Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Sasebo

【Observation】 Yumihari Park, Mt. Yumiharidake Observatory

【Observation】

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Sasebo Museum (Sail Tower)

【Observation】 Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo

【Courtesy Call】 Mr. MIYAJIMA Daisuke, Mayor of Sasebo City

Dec. 6 (Sat)	【Observation】 Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and Peace Park, Urakami Cathedral 【Observation】 Dejima Dutch Trading Post
Dec. 7 (Sun)	Travel from Nagasaki to Tokyo 【Observation】 Japan Olympic Museum 【Observation】 Honjo Life Safety Learning Center 【Opinion Exchange】 Dinner with Young Japanese American Leaders
Dec. 8 (Mon)	【Courtesy Call】 Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs 【Opinion Exchange】 Lunch hosted by North American Affairs Bureau, MOFA 【Company Visit】 BANDAI CO., LTD. 【Opinion Exchange】 Dinner with assembly member Ms. KAMIO Risa & other young, elected officials
Dec. 9 (Tue)	【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans) 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans 【Observation】 Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building (Observation Deck) Departure from Narita Airport

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program

	
December 4 【Cultural Experience】 Tea ceremony experience	December 4 【Observation】 Tokyo Suiso-miru (Tokyo Hydrogen Museum)
	
December 5 【Observation】 Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Sasebo	December 5 【Observation】 Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo



December 5 【Courtesy Call】
Mr. MIYAJIMA Daisuke, Mayor of Sasebo City



December 6 【Observation】
Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum



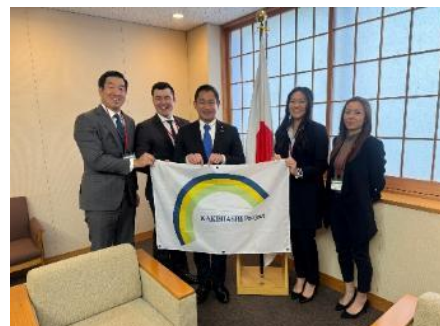
December 6 【Observation】
Dejima Dutch Trading Post



December 7 【Observation】
Japan Olympic Museum



December 7 【Opinion Exchange】
Dinner with Young Japanese American Leaders



December 8 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. ONISHI Yohei,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs



December 8 【Opinion Exchange】 Lunch hosted
by North American Affairs Bureau, MOFA



December 8 【Company Visit】 BANDAI CO., LTD.

	
December 8 【Opinion Exchange】 Dinner with assembly member Ms. KAMIO Risa & other young, elected officials	December 9 【Reporting Session】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Working Youth

The most impressive part of the program for me was the opportunity to meet with the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hearing directly from high-ranking officials offered a level of insight and candor that you simply can't get from reading reports or following the news. It was extraordinary to learn from leaders who are shaping policy at the highest levels and to understand the complexities of their work firsthand. At the same time, experiences like the tea ceremony and our visit to the Japan Olympic Museum added a rich cultural layer to the program. They offered a beautiful window into Japan's values, history, and social fabric, helping me appreciate how tradition and modern identity intersect in everyday life. Taken together, these moments deepened my understanding of Japan beyond its policies—into its heart and spirit.

◆ Working Youth

The most impressive aspect of the trip was visiting Sasebo base and learning from both the SDF and the US Navy about their common goals and how they interact for the betterment of all that participate.

◆ Working Youth

I loved meeting with such successful and powerful participants. Everyone in their respective fields truly left a lasting impression that will forever hold a place in my heart.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Observation Destination Representative

We held an exchange and networking session with Japanese politicians. This provided an opportunity to learn about each other's cultures and customs, deepening their mutual understanding.

◆ Observation Destination Representative

Four participants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "KAKEHASHI Project" for promoting understanding of Japan visited the mayor's office. We look forward to seeing these distinguished individuals, who are active in politics, business, diversity, and entertainment in the United States, continue to thrive as true "bridges" between Japan and the U.S.

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

 Okay, I didn't expect to get THIS excited about hydrogen energy, but here we are! 🤖💡🌱 Today at the hydrogen museum in Japan, we learned how hydrogen power works—and they made it SO fun. The informational videos had these adorable cartoon characters representing the elements (honestly, I want merch), and we explored a miniature model city running entirely on hydrogen energy. Then came the best part: I got on a bike that converts your pedaling into actual hydrogen energy. As I rode, a dragonfly started moving and other pieces came to life—all powered by the energy I was creating in real-time. How cool is that?! @meganono crushed it on the hydrogen pump, figuring out all the buttons and mechanics like a boss. If we can understand this technology, it's ready for mainstream use. That's the point. But here's what really stuck with me: This isn't just a fun science exhibit. This is Japan's roadmap to a zero-emission future. Hydrogen-powered cars, buses, entire infrastructure—all producing nothing but water vapor. No carbon. No pollution. Just clean energy. As KAKEHASHI representatives, we're supposed to bring back lessons from Japan. This is a BIG one: The green initiative isn't optional. It's urgent. And Japan is proving it's possible. We made friends, we learned, we laughed—but we also left with a renewed sense of responsibility. The future can be clean. We just have to choose it.	 There's a clock in the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. It stopped at 11:02 AM on August 9, 1945—the exact moment the atomic bomb detonated. Time froze for over 70,000 people that day. But time kept moving for the survivors, who made a choice that would define Nagasaki forever: they chose peace over revenge. Understanding over hatred. Hope over despair. Today, as KAKEHASHI 2025 representatives, we stood at the hypocenter—the exact spot where history changed forever. We saw the statues. We walked where a city once stood. We learned what happens when the wrong choices are made in moments of fear and power. But we also learned this: history doesn't have to repeat itself if we choose differently. The museum's message is clear: peace isn't passive. Peace is the hardest, bravest choice humanity can make. And it starts with understanding each other—truly understanding. That's why programs like KAKEHASHI exist. That's why cultural exchange matters. That's why building bridges between the U.S. and Japan isn't just important—it's essential. Nagasaki rebuilt. Nagasaki forgave. Nagasaki became a beacon for peace. What will we choose? #KAKEHASHI2025 #Nagasaki #AtomicBombMuseum #PeaceEducation #ChoosePeace #NeverForget #BuildingBridges #CulturalExchange #HistoryLessons #K4 us
December 4, 2025 (Instagram) Okay, I didn't expect to get THIS excited about hydrogen energy, but here we are! Today at the hydrogen museum in Japan, we learned how hydrogen power works-and they made it SO fun. The informational videos had these adorable cartoon characters representing the elements, and we explored a miniature model city running entirely on hydrogen energy. Then came the best part: I got on a bike that converts your pedaling into actual hydrogen energy. As I rode, a dragonfly started moving and other pieces came to life— all powered by the energy I was creating in real-time. How cool is that?! This isn't just a fun science exhibit. This is Japan's roadmap to a zero-emission future. Hydrogen-powered cars, buses, entire infrastructure-all producing nothing but water vapor. No carbon. No pollution. Just clean energy. As KAKEHASHI representatives, we're supposed to bring back lessons from Japan. This is a BIG one: The green initiative isn't optional. It's urgent. And Japan is proving it's possible. We made friends, we learned, we laughed-but we also left with a renewed sense of responsibility. The future can be clean. We just have to choose it.	December 8, 2025 (Instagram) There's a clock in the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. It stopped at 11:02 AM on August 9, 1945-the exact moment the atomic bomb detonated. Time froze for over 70,000 people that day. But time kept moving for the survivors, who made a choice that would define Nagasaki forever: they chose peace over revenge. Understanding over hatred. Hope over despair. Today, as KAKEHASHI 2025 representatives, we stood at the hypocenter-the exact spot where history changed forever. We saw the statues. We walked where a city once stood. We learned what happens when the wrong choices are made in moments of fear and power. But we also learned this: history doesn't have to repeat itself if we choose differently. The museum's message is clear: peace isn't passive. Peace is the hardest, bravest choice humanity can make. And it starts with understanding each other-truly understanding. That's why programs like KAKEHASHI exist. That's why cultural exchange matters. That's why building bridges between the U.S. and Japan isn't just important-it's essential. Nagasaki rebuilt. Nagasaki forgave. Nagasaki became a beacon for peace. What will we choose?



December 8, 2025 (Instagram)

Building bridges between cultures, one unforgettable moment at a time.

Our journey through Japan has been extraordinary. From Nagasaki's historic streets to Sasebo's welcoming community, we've been honored to represent the United States as cultural ambassadors through the KAKEHASHI 2025 program.

Meeting Leaders, Making History

We had the privilege of meeting Mayor Daisuke Miyajima of Sasebo, as well as the Commanding Officer and Command Master Chief of Naval Base Sasebo. These weren't just photo opportunities—they were genuine exchanges that deepened our understanding of the enduring friendship between our countries.

Honoring Tradition in Asakusa

In Tokyo's Asakusa district, we participated in a traditional tea ceremony - a living meditation teaching harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility. Every movement deliberate, every gesture meaningful. These lessons in mindfulness and reverence will stay with us forever.

Ichigo Ichie: Once in a Lifetime

一期一会 (Ichigo Ichie) - "one time, one meeting"-reminds us that each encounter is precious and will never happen again in exactly the same way. This philosophy guided our entire journey, helping us treasure every conversation, every meal, every shared laugh.



December 9, 2025 (Assembly member Ms. KAMIO Risa's Instagram)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' KAKEHASHI Project cultivates the next generation of leaders in Japan-U.S. relations. This year, four leaders from Los Angeles, U.S.A., visited Japan.

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

Locations: Tokyo, Nagasaki – Presentation by 1 group

**LA Next Generation
Japanese American Leaders
KAKEHASHI 2025**

December, 2025

Main Theme:
The US-Japan Alliance is the Foundation for Peace

Sub Theme 1
We (all) play a role. Connection is needed at all levels, across all industries and sectors.

Sub Theme 2
Unique experience as Japanese Americans. Our history is the history of both countries.

Sub Theme 3
Spontaneous interactions lead to meaningful, authentic person-to-person relationships.



Our Action Plan

Short Term (~1 month)	Mid Term (~2 months)	Long Term (3 months+)
Contact Connection Connect w/ contacts we met	Subcommittee Sharebook Presentation Share a book to share our experience and insights with our respective LA Next Gen JA Leaders subcommittees.	Integrate Learning into Subcommittee Initiatives Integrate Learning into our Professional Work
Continued thinking + Reflections - Social media - Exchange with friends, family, colleagues	Publish a written reflection in an L.A. community newspaper, magazine, or blog Debrief Lunch in LA with Consul General Kikuchi and Vice Consul Hiroko Morita (Dec 16)	Hosting & Community Bridge Building Act as a hosting committee for visitors from Japan and help strengthen community ties

【Results of the Program】

- ◆ Learnings from the program
 - The US-Japan Alliance is the Foundation for Peace, and Connection is needed at all levels.
 - We all play a role. Connection is needed at all levels, across all industries and sectors.
 - Our experience as Japanese Americans is unique. Our history is the history of both countries.
 - Spontaneous interactions lead to meaningful, authentic person-to-person relationships.

【Action Plan】

- ◆ Short-term
 - We will connect with contacts we met and maintain the connection
 - We will reach out to assembly member KAMIO Risa to realize a collaboration with young, elected officials of Japan and the Obama Foundation.
 - We will exchange with friends, family, and colleagues to look back on the program
 - We will join a Debrief Lunch in LA with the Consul General and Vice Consul (Dec 16)
- ◆ Mid-term
 - We will host 4 sessions to share our experiences and insights with our respective LA Next Gen JA Leaders subcommittees.
 - We will publish a written reflection in an L.A. community newspaper, magazine, or blog
- ◆ Long term
 - Integrate Learning into Subcommittee Initiatives
 - Integrate Learning into our Professional Work
 - Act as a hosting committee for visitors from Japan

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)