



## **KAKEHASHI Project (United States) Invitation Program for Jewish Americans the 2nd Slot (American Jewish Committee) Report**

### **1. Program Overview**

#### **【Objectives and Overview】**

Under this program, 12 Jewish Americans selected by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) visited Tokyo and Kyoto from January 19 to January 25. The program was conducted with the objective of promoting active exchange and cooperation between Japan and the Jewish American community, and to further strengthen Japan–U.S. relations. The participants deepened their understanding of Japan's politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy, while also building stronger networks through interaction with one another.

**【Participants】** Total: 12 participants (10 working youths and 2 chaperones) selected by the AJC

**【Locations】** Tokyo, Kyoto

#### **【Schedule】**

##### **■ Online Pre-study Program:**

Jan 15 (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:**

Jan 19 (Mon) Gather at the hotel

**【Post-arrival Orientation】**

Jan 20 (Tue) **【Courtesy Call】** Embassy of the United States of America in Japan

Mr. Aaron D. Snipe, Deputy Chief of Mission

Mr. Juan Manuel Cammarano, First secretary, Political Affaires

Ms. Sarah M. Belousov, Education and Exchanges Officer, Public Affairs Section

**【Observation】** Nijubashi Double Bridge, Imperial Palace

**【Courtesy Call】** Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. ARIMA Yutaka, Deputy Minister / Director-General, Foreign Policy Bureau

Travel from Tokyo to Kyoto

Jan 21 (Wed) **【Observation】** Fushimi Inari Taisha

**【Cultural Experience】** Sutra Copying Experience (Shorin-ji Temple)

**【Observation】** Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion

**【School Exchange】** School of Theology, Doshisha University

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|              | 【Observation】 Nishiki Market                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Jan 22 (Thu) | <p>【Observation】 City of Kyoto (Due to heavy snows, the originally scheduled visit to Tsuruga City, Fukui Pref. (including a courtesy call on the mayor of Tsuruga City and visit to the Port of Humanity TSURUGA MUSEUM) was cancelled)</p> <p>Travel from Kyoto to Tokyo</p>                          |
| Jan 23 (Fri) | <p>【Observation】 National Diet Building (House of Representatives)</p> <p>【Courtesy Call, Observation】 Mr. Gilad Cohen, Ambassador, Embassy of Israel in Japan</p> <p>【Opinion Exchange】 Jewish Community of Japan</p>                                                                                  |
| Jan 24 (Sat) | <p>【Observation】 Tokyo Skytree Town® Campus, Chiba Institute of Technology</p> <p>【Observation】 Asakusa</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Jan 25 (Sun) | <p>【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, confirming social media posts, preparation of action plans)</p> <p>【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans</p> <p>Departure from Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport</p> |

## 2. Program Photos

### Invitation Program

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| January 20, 2026 【Observation】<br>Nijubashi Double Bridge, Imperial Palace            | January 21, 2026 【Observation】<br>Fushimi Inari Taisha                               |
|    |  |
| January 21, 2026 【Cultural Experience】<br>Sutra Copying Experience (Shorin-ji Temple) | January 21, 2026 【Observation】<br>Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion                         |



January 21, 2026 【School Exchange】  
School of Theology, Doshisha University



January 23, 2026 【Observation】  
National Diet Building (House of Representatives)



January 23, 2026 【Courtesy Call, Observation】  
Mr. Gilad Cohen, Ambassador, Embassy of Israel  
in Japan



January 23, 2026 【Opinion Exchange】  
Jewish Community of Japan



January 24, 2026 【Observation】 Tokyo Skytree  
Town® Campus, Chiba Institute of Technology



January 24, 2026 【Observation】 Asakusa



January 25, 2026 【Reporting Session】



January 25, 2026【Reporting Session】Group photo

### **3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)**

#### **◆ Graduate Student**

The most impressive aspects of my visit included the general attention to detail and the reverence of nature. The quality, artistry and mastery of whatever the Japanese do stands out strongly, and it is easy to appreciate the time and effort that goes into it. Whether it is the meticulousness of the train system, the cleanliness of the streets, the effort that goes into a meal, everything feels done so lovingly and with such care. It makes me want to be more particular and intentional with my day-to-day routine when I return home

#### **◆ Working Youth**

The school exchange was wonderful- we spent one on one time with students, and I found that portion quite educational - learning about a Chinese student's journey and discussing their experience as a Chinese in Japan and interactions with Jewish Americans. All of the meetings with the diplomats were extremely impressive and of high quality. I fully appreciated how detailed they each were.

#### **◆ Working Youth**

One of the most impressive and meaningful aspects of my experience during the KAKEHASHI project was the opportunity to engage directly with Japan's diplomatic community at an extraordinarily consequential moment. Our visit coincided with the dissolution of the Japanese parliament and took place in the immediate aftermath of former President Trump's meeting with PM Sanae Takaichi. Being in Japan during such a politically dynamic period added a layer of real-time relevance to every conversation we had. What stood out most was the depth of insight we gained into the inner workings of both U.S.-Japan and Israel-Japan relations. The briefings and exchanges we participated in offered an unusually transparent look at the strategic priorities, challenges, and longstanding partnerships that underpin these relationships. It was especially powerful to see firsthand how closely aligned the American Jewish Committee and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been over many years, and how that collaboration continues to shape meaningful dialogue between our communities. The combination of high-level diplomatic engagement, exposure to pivotal political developments as they unfolded, and the opportunity to understand Japan's foreign policy framework from the inside made this experience profoundly impactful. It offered not only a deeper appreciation of Japan's global role, but also a clearer sense of how people-to-people and organizational relationships directly contribute to international understanding and trust.

### **4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)**

#### **◆ Exchange School Faculty**

It was a valuable experience getting to know the Jewish American delegation. It reminded me how important it is to communicate in English. It also made me want to look more into the similarities between Japanese and Jewish cultures.

#### **◆ Exchange School Student**

I really felt how important human connections that go beyond ethnicity and nationality are. It was a great opportunity for everyone to get to know and understand each other.

## ◆ Exchange School Student

It was a rare and meaningful opportunity to interact with Jewish Americans. But because my English isn't that great, I had trouble communicating with them and needed help from the teachers and graduate students. Overall, though, what really stuck with me was seeing how much everyone seemed to enjoy the exchange.

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

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| <p>Wrapping up an <a href="#">American Jewish Committee (AJC)</a> diplomatic delegation to Japan aimed at strengthening ties between <a href="#">Japan</a> and the <a href="#">Jewish</a> people.</p> <p>In the middle of our meetings, Prime Minister <a href="#">Takaichi</a> dissolved parliament and called for snap elections. Takaichi is the protégé of Shinzo Abe, who was assassinated in 2022, and she's taking Japan in a very interesting direction - accelerating Japan's rearmament and significantly increasing the defense budget. Japan understands it faces numerous security threats, primarily from China, Russia, and North Korea, and can no longer maintain its pacifist approach.</p> <p>Japan is a country that relies heavily on energy imports, including from the Arab world, so they try to balance working with <a href="#">Israel</a> and the rest of the Arab world.</p> <p>The highlight of the trip was a meeting with Mr. Arima Yutaka, currently the Deputy Minister for the <a href="#">Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan</a>. Mr. Arima mentioned multiple times Japan's needs in <a href="#">defense</a>, <a href="#">cloud</a>, <a href="#">CyberSecurity</a>, and <a href="#">AI</a>, and how much Israel can help them. Japan sees Israel, rightly so, as a cyber and defense powerhouse, areas where they need help, and fast.</p>  | <p>Being in Japan during the current political moment added an unexpected layer to the experience.</p> <p>While we were there, the Prime Minister called for a snap election, dissolving the House of Councillors on the very day we were scheduled to visit. Instead, we spent time at the House of Representatives. A significant political shift was unfolding in real time, yet the response on the ground felt calm and procedural. The focus stayed on continuity and next steps rather than disruption.</p> <p>It was also a privilege to meet with diplomats and senior officials throughout the program, including Mr. <a href="#">ArimaYutaka</a> at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <a href="#">GiladCohen</a> at the Japan-Israel Embassy, and <a href="#">AaronSnipe</a> at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. (Our meeting with the mayor of Tsuruga was unfortunately canceled due to a blizzard).</p> <p>Having those conversations while everything was unfolding in real time added depth and context to the broader discussions around security, regional dynamics, and long-term cooperation. It also reinforced how much political context shapes decision-making and partnerships. How institutions respond in moments like this says a lot about how they think, and what they prioritize, over the long term.</p>  |
| <p>January 27, 2026 (LinkedIn)</p> <p>Wrapping up an American Jewish Committee (AJC) diplomatic delegation to Japan aimed at strengthening ties between Japan and the Jewish people.</p> <p>In the middle of our meetings, Prime Minister Takaichi dissolved parliament and called for snap elections. Takaichi is the protégé of Shinzo Abe, who was assassinated in 2022, and she's taking Japan in a very interesting direction - accelerating Japan's rearmament and significantly increasing the defense budget. Japan understands it faces numerous security threats, primarily from China, Russia, and North Korea, and can no longer maintain its pacifist approach.</p> <p>Japan is a country that relies heavily on energy imports, including from the Arab world, so they try to balance working with Israel and the rest of the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>January 29, 2026 (LinkedIn)</p> <p>Being in Japan during the current political moment added an unexpected layer to the experience.</p> <p>While we were there, the Prime Minister called for a snap election, dissolving the lower house on the very day we were scheduled to visit. A significant political shift was unfolding in real time, yet the response on the ground felt calm and procedural. The focus stayed on continuity and next steps rather than disruption.</p> <p>It was also a privilege to meet with diplomats and senior officials throughout the program, including Mr. Arima Yutaka at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gilad Cohen at the Japan - Israel Embassy, and Aaron Snipe at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. (Our meeting with the mayor of Tsuruga was unfortunately canceled due to a blizzard).</p> <p>Having those conversations while everything was</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| <div data-bbox="308 645 643 1238"> <p>Just returned from an unforgettable week in Japan, where I had the privilege of staffing AJC ACCESS's Kakehashi Mission—now in its 10th year.</p> <p>Representing AJC alongside my colleague <a href="#">Hana Rudolph</a> and an inspiring group of ACCESS leaders, I was reminded throughout the week just how vital, multifaceted, and deeply meaningful the Japan–U.S.–Israel–Jewish relationship is.</p> <p>For the past decade, AJC has partnered with the Japanese government to bring young Jewish leaders to Japan, strengthening ties across diplomacy, civil society, and culture. This year's mission took place at a particularly meaningful moment, with Japan playing an increasingly active role on the global stage and renewing engagement across the region.</p> <p>Throughout the week we had the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in high-level diplomatic meetings, discussing Japan's evolving global role and the growing importance of its relationships with both the United States and Israel.</li> <li>Connect with Japan's Jewish community, celebrating Shabbat with the Jewish Community of Japan—AJC's newest global partner—and experiencing the warmth, resilience, and depth of this community.</li> <li>Engage with the next generation of scholars of Jewish life, through a thoughtful visit to Doshisha University's Jewish Studies program led by Professor Ada Taggar-Cohen. For many students, meeting our delegation was their first interaction with Jewish peers, and their openness and curiosity were deeply meaningful.</li> </ul> <p>A huge thank you to our counterparts at the 一般財団法人日本国際協力センター, without whom this program simply could not happen. Their partnership and commitment make this bridge-building possible year after year.</p> <p>What stood out most was how much genuine goodwill and shared purpose exist between our communities—and how much promise there is for continued partnership. ACCESS leaders on this mission committed to advancing this work through AJC regional offices across the United States, helping strengthen this important relationship for years to come.</p> <p>I'm grateful for the opportunity to help carry forward a decade of bridge-building, and energized for what comes next.</p> <p>Thank you to our partners in Japan and the remarkable leaders who made this journey so impactful.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="308 1243 643 1417"> </div> | <div data-bbox="930 645 1342 1077"> <p>One thing that really stood out to me in <a href="#">Japan</a> is how much people seem to think about the impact they have on others.</p> <p>You notice it everywhere. On public transit. In meetings. In everyday interactions. There's a shared awareness of space, time, and other people that starts to feel normal once you're there.</p> <p>What surprised me is how calming that is. Even in busy places, things feel orderly and still without feeling stiff. People move with intention. There's less noise and less friction.</p> <p>That's probably why <a href="#">FushimiInari</a> ended up being my favorite place we visited. As you walk through the gates and move away from the crowds, everything slows down. Each gate represents gratitude for something given or a prayer answered. You feel that as you walk. People pause. They bow. They move on quietly. It's reflective without being performative.</p> <p>Spending time in that environment makes you notice your own habits. How often we rush. How quickly we talk. How uncomfortable we can be with silence. And honestly, I get now why people talk about culture shock when they come back to the States. The contrast is real.</p> <p>It's not about one way being better. It's just different. But that mix of <a href="#">mindfulness</a> and <a href="#">gratitude</a> is something I want to carry with me long after the trip ends.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="930 1081 1342 1417"> </div> |
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| <p>★ Tokyo, Japan<br/>We're proud to share that Dos Shisha and Firoozeh Tuber (Shisha) represented AJC Miami &amp; Broward this week as part of the ACCESS AJC delegation to the Kakehashi Program, administered by the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICC).</p> <p>Kakehashi means "bridge" and this experience truly embodied that role.</p> <p>Throughout the program, our delegates met with diplomats, university leaders, and civil society partners across Tokyo, engaging in deep, thoughtful conversations about how perspectives are shaped, how trust is built, and how nations make decisions in a complex global environment. When stood our most with the intentionality the time spent listening, understanding context, and exploring how long-term relationships—between countries, communities, and institutions—are strengthened before any formal ties is done.</p> <p>There are values that guide AJC's work every day, and we are grateful to JICC and the Kakehashi Program for creating space for this kind of meaningful exchange.</p> <p>Dan and Consuelo return home with new insights, partnerships, and bridges built. To learn more about traveling on AJC delegations for young professionals, <a href="https://www.ajc.org/ajc-101">https://www.ajc.org/ajc-101</a></p> <p>★ The Consulate General of Japan in Miami<br/>#KakehashiProject2026 #JICC #AJCAccess #AJC #AJCMiami</p>  | <p>This year's AJC-Kakehashi Mission took ACCESS AJC leaders to Japan for an immersive experience in diplomacy, dialogue, and connection.</p> <p>From meetings with senior Japanese officials to shared moments with local communities—including Shabbat with the Jewish Community of Japan—the mission reinforced the growing ties among Japan, the U.S., Israel, and the global Jewish community.</p> <p>Through decades of engagement led by AJC Asia Pacific Institute, AJC has deepened ties with the government of Japan, and we are grateful for the Japanese government's ongoing commitment to nurturing this important relationship.</p> <p>ACCESS' people-first approach fit naturally in Japan, where relationships are central to diplomacy. By putting young Jewish leaders at the forefront of global engagement, ACCESS is helping build a future shaped by collaboration and bridge-building.</p>   |
| <p>January 28, 2026<br/>(AJC Miami and Broward's Facebook)</p> <p>We're proud to share that AJC Miami &amp; Broward members joined the KAKEHASHI Program as representatives in the ACCESS AJC delegation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>January 31, 2026<br/>(AJC – American Jewish Committee's Facebook)</p> <p>This year's AJC-KAKEHASHI Mission took ACCESS AJC leaders to Japan for an immersive experience in diplomacy, dialogue, and connection.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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

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

| Group A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                       |
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| <p><b>【Results of the Program】</b></p> <p>Through the exchange at Doshisha, we truly felt that conversation has the power to change lives. We developed a deep respect for the silence, mindfulness, and hospitality found in Japanese society and culture.</p> <p><b>【Action Plan】</b></p> <p>Events including the following: publish op-ed in Japanese newspaper about the experience, intimate event with Japanese Counsel General and South Florida AJC ACCESS (2/23), Tea tasting event (DC), diplomatic dinner, bring-a-friend event with KAKEHASHI alumni (Atlanta)</p> <p><b>【Overall Goal】</b></p> <p>Become ambassadors for the KAKEHASHI program and partnership between the Japanese and American Jewish people.</p> |                                                                                       |

## Group B

### Bridges Across Cultures: Insights from the AJC Kakehashi

Japan's unique blend of ancient and modern culture, and its deep respect for tradition and craftsmanship, offers a unique perspective on the Jewish experience in Japan.



### Japan Through a Jewish Lens: Safety, Hospitality, and Curiosity



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### Lowering the Barriers to Japan-Israel Startup Collaboration

1. Build Trustful Bonds
2. Create Japan-Israel Startup Networks
3. Create Long-Term Connections



### 【Results of the Program】

We learned valuable lessons from the program as well as food culture we encountered in Japan and the flowers placed at temples we passed by—exemplifying how tradition, craftsmanship, and respect for one's surroundings can coexist even as society develops and becomes more convenient. Visits to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Doshisha University also proved highly rewarding, offering hope amid rising anti-Semitism.

### 【Action Plan】

- Deepen connections with the Boston Consulate and others to establish friendly relations.
- Give a lecture on Japan at “lunch and learn” with rabbis.
- Share insights about Japan at ACCESS NY events for youth.
- In Cleveland, strengthen Japan-Jewish ties through the Cleveland Asian Festival, AJC ACCESS, the Japanese Association of Northeast Ohio, and sister cities to further strengthen Japan-Jewish relations.
- Plan a Japan-themed Shabbat, invite a Shinto expert.
- Build networks in the business sector.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)