



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Visiting Japan Program for the Princess Delegates Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

Four Princess Delegates^(Note) were invited to Japan from February 25 to March 3. The participants visited Tokyo and Shizuoka to deepen their understanding of Japanese culture and society through courtesy calls, exchanges with related organizations, homestays and cultural experiences. The participants also shared their learning and findings on social media.

(Note) Princess Delegates are participants of an exchange program called “Cherry Blossom Program.” This program takes place during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, a celebration of Japan-U.S. friendship, held annually in Washington D.C. from March to April. Princess Delegates were selected from each state to participate in various cultural programs.

【Participants】 Total: 4 Cherry Blossom Program participants (working youths / undergraduate student) from the United States

【Locations】 Tokyo, Shizuoka

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Feb. 19 (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:

Feb. 25 (Wed) Arrival at Haneda Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation】

Feb. 26 (Thu) **【Observation】** Honjo Life Safety Learning Center

【Exchange】 Japan Sakura Foundation and Japan Sakura Queens

【Observation】 Meiji Jingu

Feb. 27 (Fri) **【Observation】** National Diet Building (House of Representatives)

【Courtesy Call】

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

Travel from Tokyo to Shizuoka

【Meeting with the Host Families】

Feb. 28 (Sat) **【Homestay】** Gotemba City

【Cultural Experience】 Tea picking experience (Katsumata Tea Co.,Ltd.)

【Theme Related Observation】 Gotemba City Fire Brigade Women's Division

Mar. 1 (Sun)	【Homestay】 Gotemba City 【Farewell Party with the Host Families】 【Observation】 Tokinosumika Travel from Shizuoka to Tokyo
Mar. 2 (Mon)	【Observation】 Asakusa 【Observation】 Tokyo Skytree® and the Chiba Institute of Technology Exhibition 【Observation】 The State Guest House, Akasaka Palace
Mar. 3 (Tue)	【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

	
February 26, 2026 【Observation】 Honjo Life Safety Learning Center	February 26, 2026 【Exchange】 Japan Sakura Foundation and Japan Sakura Queens (Note) This photo is for this report alone and may not be disclosed on social media.
	
February 27, 2026 【Observation】 National Diet Building (House of Representatives)	February 27, 2026 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs



February 27, 2026 【Homestay】 Gotemba City



February 28, 2026 【Cultural Experience】 Tea picking experience



February 28, 2026 【Theme Related Observation】
Gotemba City Fire Brigade Women's Division



March 1, 2026 【Observation】
Tokinosumika



March 2, 2026 【Observation】 Asakusa



March 2, 2026 【Observation】 Tokyo Skytree®
and the Chiba Institute of Technology Exhibition



March 2, 2026 【Observation】 The State Guest House, Akasaka Palace



March 3, 2026 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Working Youth

I loved the homestay experience and was so impressed with the quality of food everywhere! In addition, the Chiba Institute of Technology Exhibition was amazing and I enjoyed learning about the project to acquire asteroid samples for analyzing.

◆ Working Youth

My favorite parts were the homestay, the disaster museum. The whole program was so organized and well planned. All of the people we met were so kind and helpful. I learned so much and had a once in a lifetime experience.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Exchange participant

The warm and heartfelt interaction we shared with the Sakura Princesses truly felt like a bridge connecting Japan and the United States. With the participation of the 31st Japan Sakura Queen and Princesses—joined also by members of the 30th Japan Sakura Queen court—the occasion became all the more lively and joyful.

◆ Observation Destination Representative

The families, organizations, and related institutions who have kindly supported the hosting efforts have expressed how enjoyable and fulfilling the experience has been for them. It has also provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen our community's teamwork, allowing us to develop an increasingly well-coordinated and cohesive hosting structure.

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

 Excited to share my first post!!! I had a blast in Gotemba and Tokyo as a cherry blossom princess of the Kakehashi Project. I loved learning about the language, culture, parliament, traditional arts, and religious practices of Japan. Can't wait till my next visit! Arigato Nihon ありがとう日本!!! @jice_exchange #Kakehashi2025 #Kakehashiproject	Currently in Tokyo with the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) and the KAKEHASHI Project. 🇯🇵🇺🇸 I had the honor of visiting Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to discuss international matters with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Onishi Yohei. Observing diplomatic dialogue at this level offered meaningful insight into the continued partnership between our two nations. Beyond the meetings, I also visited the National Diet Building, the seat of Japan's legislature, and toured the Akasaka Palace, where foreign heads of state and dignitaries are received during official visits. Experiencing these spaces—and learning more about Japan's culture along the way—made the trip especially memorable. The food, hospitality, and everyday life in Tokyo absolutely live up to the hype, and I have nothing but rave reviews. I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn so much and to witness, even in a small way, the culture and lifestyle of Japan. #Japan #Tokyo #Kakehashi #Kakehashi2026 #KakehashiProject 
March 2, 2026 (Instagram) Working Youth Excited to share my first post!!! I had a blast in Gotemba and Tokyo as a cherry blossom princess of the KAKEHASHI Project. I loved learning about the language, culture, parliament, traditional arts, and religious practices of Japan. Can't wait till my next visit! Arigato Nihon!!!	March 3, 2026 (LinkedIn) Undergraduate Student I had the honor of visiting Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to discuss international matters with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Onishi Yohei. Observing diplomatic dialogue at this level offered meaningful insight into the continued partnership between our two nations. Beyond the meetings, I also visited the National Diet Building, the seat of Japan's legislature, and toured the Akasaka Palace, where foreign heads of state and dignitaries are received during official visits. Experiencing these spaces—and learning more about Japan's culture along the way—made the trip especially memorable. The food, hospitality, and everyday life in Tokyo absolutely live up to the hype, and I have nothing but rave reviews. I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn so much and to witness, even in a small way, the culture and lifestyle of Japan.

 February 28, 2026 (Shizuoka Shimbun, Morning edition) “Sakura Princess Visits Gotemba to Experience a Life Close to Nature”	 March 1, 2026 (Gakuroku Shimbun, Morning edition) Cherry Blossom Princess from the United States Visits Gotemba City to Promote Japan-U.S. Friendship
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6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Locations: Tokyo, Shizuoka – Presentations by a total of 1 group

 2026 Kakehashi Program	 Interactive Art Workshops: “Art & Heart: The Intangible Creative Works of Japan” Origami Washi paper Kintougi	 Conclusions This was an unforgettable experience. I aim to continue studying Japanese and improve my reading and writing abilities. Thank you for this opportunity! Arigatō Nihon to JICE! ロック・ジャクソン
【Results of the Program】 ◆ Learnings from the program. - Japan is such a peaceful country – everything is so clean and quiet. - No one talks on the metro. - There is no trash on the ground. - Japanese people are so nice! - Everyone has been so welcoming. - It is very high-tech, but also deeply historical. - I enjoyed visiting all the shrines as well as seeing the cutting-edge technology. ◆ Individual Prospects - I aim to continue studying Japanese and improve my reading and writing abilities. - Japan and the U.S. have a lot to learn from each other when it comes to technology. - There are opportunities for international engineers to collaborate. - I want to serve as a bridge — using my skills as a journalist to amplify the cultural understanding and friendship at the heart of this program. - I will be stationed in Japan as the U.S. Ambassador to Japan.		

【Action Plan】

- I will be writing my journalism work and publishing it for an online audience in order to share my personal experience in Japan—including site visits in Tokyo and Gotemba City, local cuisine, and cultural aspects.

I will publish a three part essay about my personal experience here in Japan, creating immersive, scene-setting stories that draw readers into the moment.

The essays will focus on specific reflections from Tokyo Gotemba City, and will be released on March 11, March 18, and March 25.

- Within the next three months, I will create a virtual reality experience—accessible online anytime and anywhere—to enhance memory retention and spark greater curiosity.

This VR project will focus on comparisons between Japan and the United States, engaging diverse audiences by appealing to both sight and sound. Through this immersive medium, I will share what I have learned and discovered in Japan.

- I learned from Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs that he hopes the world learns more about Japan's intangible art forms to spread and preserve Japan's cultural heritage. I aim to support this mission once I return to the U.S. by demonstrating various art forms through interactive art workshops in my professional community.

Interactive Art Workshops: "Art & Heart: The Intangible Creative Works of Japan"

Origami • Calligraphy • Washi paper • Kintsugi

- Within the next three months, I will launch a blog titled "Across the Cherry Blossom Bridge" for my colleagues in government as well as my family and friends. On this blog, I will share my experiences from the KAKEHASHI Project in Japan—photos, short videos, and little stories that capture special moments; the places I visited; the foods I tried; and cultural insights. I will also provide recommendations for things I would suggest doing if you ever travel to Japan yourself. In addition, I will share what it was like to represent the United States as a Sakura Princess at the National Cherry Blossom Festival, as a representative of Montana.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)