



KAKEHASHI Project (United States) Online Visiting Japan Program ("Bento-making" and "Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)") Follow-up Project Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

This online program was organized for past KAKEHASHI Project participants (alumni) . With the theme of "Bento-making" and "Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)" , the program aimed to raise their understanding of Japan and to maintain their interest in the country. In addition, the alumni network was further strengthened through interactive exchanges among the alumni and a Q&A session.

【Participants】

Total: 16 participants from the U.S. and Canada (up to FY2025 KAKEHASHI Project alumni)

(Breakdown) 11 participants from the U.S. (2 undergraduate/graduate students, 9 working youths)

4 participants from Canada (3 undergraduate/graduate students, 1 working youth)

1 participant from Japan (undergraduate student)

【Schedule】

■ Online Visiting Japan Program: January 15 (Thu), 2026

1. Opening Remarks

2. Address

Mr. HARADA Seitaro, Researcher, North America Exchange Division,
North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

3. 【Lecture, Cultural Experience】 "Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)"

Lecturer: Ms. YAMAGUCHI Wakako, Master of Japanese Calligraphy

Vice President, NPO Institute for Japanese Culture Experience & Education (IJCEE)

4. 【Lecture, Cultural Experience】 "Bento-making"

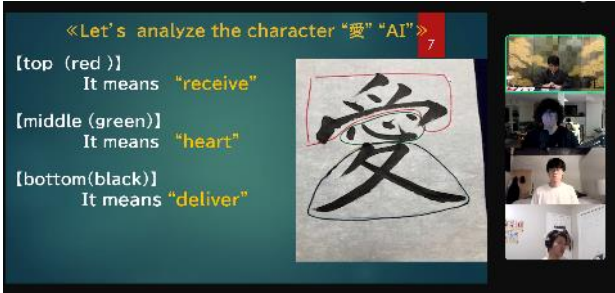
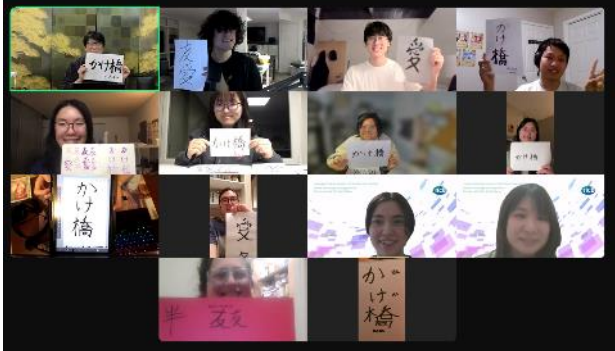
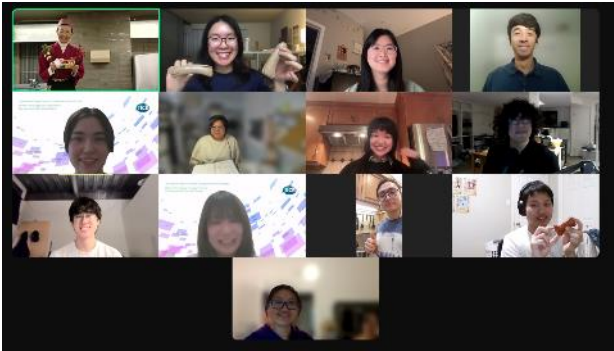
Lecturer: Ms. KIKUCHI Kuniko, Executive Director and Secretary General, NPO Institute for Japanese Culture Experience & Education (IJCEE) / Managing Director, True Japan Tour Co. Ltd.

5. Q&A Session

6. Commemorative photo

7. Information for Participants, Closing Remarks

2. Program Photos

	
【Lecture, Cultural Experience】“Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)”	【Lecture, Cultural Experience】“Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)”
	
【Lecture, Cultural Experience】“Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)” Commemorative photo	【Lecture, Cultural Experience】“Bento-making”
	
【Lecture, Cultural Experience】“Bento-making”	【Lecture, Cultural Experience】“Bento-making” Commemorative photo

3. Participants' Inquiries and Interests (excerpt)

- What methods do you recommend for practicing Shodo (Japanese Calligraphy)?
- Can kitchen paper be substituted with something else?
- How can I prevent apples from turning brown?
- What are good fillings for onigiri (rice balls)?

4. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Working Youth (U.S.)

Yamaguchi Wakako sensei, thank you so much for showing us how to write Japanese calligraphy. I really enjoyed learning about the different parts and meanings that make up the characters for love, bond, friend, and Kakehashi. It is the first time I know how Kakehashi is written in Japanese.

Kikuchi Kuniko sensei, thank you so much for showing us how to make different items for a Japanese bento. I can't wait to try all the recipes for Japanese fried chicken, Japanese style egg, sausages in octopus and crab cuts, cucumber salad, apple bunny cut, and onigiri rice balls. A Japanese bento box looks so simple but requires so much love, time, and effort from the person who makes it.

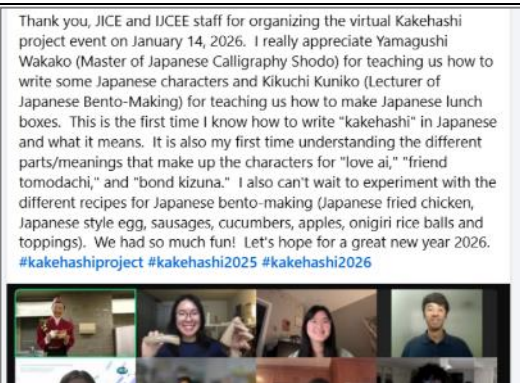
◆ Working Youth (U.S.)

This is my first online event with KAKEHASHI. I found the topics to be very interesting and beginner friendly. The calligrapher and bento chef were wonderful and were willing to answer any questions.

◆ Working Youth (U.S.)

I really enjoyed the presentation and got to learn the two different skills. Getting to follow along helps break the ice of trying it for the first time.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

 Thank you, JICE and UCEE staff for organizing the virtual Kakehashi project event on January 14, 2026. I really appreciate Yamaguchi Wakako (Master of Japanese Calligraphy Shodo) for teaching us how to write some Japanese characters and Kikuchi Kuniko (Lecturer of Japanese Bento-Making) for teaching us how to make Japanese lunch boxes. This is the first time I know how to write "kakehashi" in Japanese and what it means. It is also my first time understanding the different parts/meanings that make up the characters for "love ai," "friend tomodachi," and "bond kizuna." I also can't wait to experiment with the different recipes for Japanese bento-making (Japanese fried chicken, Japanese style egg, sausages, cucumbers, apples, onigiri rice balls and toppings). We had so much fun! Let's hope for a great new year 2026. #kakehashiproject #kakehashi2025 #kakehashi2026	
January 15, 2026 (Facebook, etc.) Working Youth (U.S.) I really appreciate Ms. Wakako Yamaguchi (Master of Japanese Calligraphy Shodo) for teaching us how to write some Japanese characters and Ms. Kikuchi Kuniko (Lecturer of Japanese Bento-Making) for teaching us how to make Japanese lunch boxes. This is the first time I know how to write "Kakehashi" in Japanese and what it means. It is also my first time understanding the different parts/meanings that make up the characters for "ai" (love), "tomodachi" (friend), and "kizuna" (bond). I also can't wait to experiment with the	January 15, 2026 (Instagram) Working Youth (Canada) This time I'll be sharing my experience with the "Bento-making" and "Shodo (Japanese calligraphy)" Online Visiting event as part of the KAKEHASHI Project. The lesson was taught by Yamaguchi-sensei, who opened by teaching us a brief history of the art, including the utilization of traditional Chinese characters in the Japanese language, as well as the natively-Japanese hiragana and katakana. (...) A theme that Yamaguchi-sensei liked to highlight was the evolution of calligraphy and how it adapted

different recipes for Japanese bento-making (Japanese fried chicken, Japanese style egg, sausages, cucumbers, apples, onigiri rice balls and toppings). We had so much fun! Let's hope for a great new year 2026.	along with the rest of society over time. She mentioned how in the past, calligraphers would use “real” ink, but now, liquid ink has become a convenient substitute. In fact, that’s what Yamaguchi-sensei used in her demonstrations! (...) When Yamaguchi-sensei saw the software, she (in paraphrase) remarked, “Wow, that is very 21st century!” which one could consider to be in line with the theme of “the evolution and adaptation of calligraphy over the years.”
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Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)