



Japan's Friendship Ties Program "KAKEHASHI Project" Young Researchers the 2nd Slot Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective】 This program invited to Japan young researchers from Cornell University, George Washington University, Johns Hopkins University, and a think tank in the United States, primarily so they could deepen their understanding of Japanese culture, society, and history through a homestay experience, a school exchange, observations, and other such activities, strengthen their network by deepening exchanges with each other, and have them actively disseminate Japan's attractiveness from their standpoint as researchers.

【Participants】 Total: 17 young researchers from the United States
5 from Cornell University (New York)
4 from George Washington University (District of Colombia)
6 from Johns Hopkins University (Maryland)
2 from a think tank

【Locations】 Tokyo, Fukushima

【Program Schedule】

■ Pre-study Program (Online):

Jan. 25 (Thu) 【Pre-departure Orientation】 Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warning, COVID-19 precautions, etc.

Set Period Prior to Arrival 【Video Viewing】 Lecture “Japan and the United Nations” , “Lecture on Japan” (selected from Web Japan)

■ Inbound Program:

Jan. 30 (Tue) Arrival at Haneda Airport

Jan. 31 (Wed) 【Observation】 Tokyo National Museum

【Observation】 Panasonic Center Tokyo

【Briefing】 Japan-U.S. Security Treaty Division and Status of U.S. Forces Agreement Division, North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

Feb. 1 (Thu) 【Japanese Cultural Experience】 Hand towel tie-dyeing experience

【Lecture and Opinion Exchange】 “Soft Power and Public Diplomacy”

Dr. WATANABE, Yasushi, Professor, Faculty of Environment and Information Studies, Graduate school of Media and Governance, Keio University

Feb. 2 (Fri) Travel from Tokyo to Fukushima

	【School Exchange】 The University of AIZU
Feb. 3 (Sat)	【Meeting with the Host Families】 【Homestay】 Aizu Town
Feb. 4 (Sun)	【Farewell Party with the Host Families】 【Observation】 Ouchi-juku 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)
Feb. 5 (Mon)	Travel back to Tokyo 【Reporting Session】 Presentation of program findings and action plans
Feb. 6 (Tue)	【Observation】 Free stroll around Tokyo Departure from Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Inbound Program

	
January 30 【 Observation 】 Tokyo National Museum	January 31 【Observation】 Panasonic Center Tokyo
	
January 31 【Briefing】 Japan-U.S. Security Treaty Division and Status of U.S. Forces Agreement Division, North American Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)	February 1 【Japanese Cultural Experience】 Hand towel tie-dyeing experience

	
February 1 【Lecture and Opinion Exchange】 “Soft Power and Public Diplomacy” Dr. WATANABE, Yasushi, Professor, Keio University	February 2 【School Exchange】 The University of AIZU
	
February 3 【Homestay】	February 4 【 Farewell Party with the Host Families】
	
February 4 【Observation】 Ouchi-juku	February 5 【Reporting Session】

3. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Graduate Student

The most impressive parts of the KAKEHASHI program were the homestay, the visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the university visits. The homestay gave me insight into a part of Japanese culture that I would never have been able to experience and learn in any other program. Staying with my host family taught me about life in rural Japan, agriculture, policy challenges in the countryside, and I saw what it was like to live outside of the city. Their hospitality and kindness

were overwhelming and made me truly grateful for this opportunity. The visit to MOFA was very impressive as one who is focused on security policy and foreign affairs. Lastly, the university visits were very fruitful, learning about the opinions of professors and students in both Tokyo and Aizu.

◆ Graduate Student

I think the most impressive part of this program was my stay with a host family in Fukushima. Our host father took us to a museum about the local history and culture and a bathhouse, and we participated in a local traditional event together. But above all else, we had abundant opportunity to talk with each other. Our conversations spanned from politics to tourism, the economy, and even video games. Getting to know our host father and his wife was the most impressive part of the exchange, and I couldn't have asked for better hosts.

◆ Undergraduate Student

I really enjoyed meeting students from the University of Aizu and being able to interact with Japanese college students like myself. I also enjoyed the traditional tie-dyeing experience. We got to learn about its long history, tradition, and craftsmanship and put it to practice in real life! It really put into perspective the hard work and care that goes into making each product.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Host Family

On our stroll around Maesawa Village, we enjoyed the sights of traditional buildings and the view of the snow-covered village and interacted with many people, including children in the village, the mayor, and tourists. As we had relatively ample time, we had our visitors experience snowshoe walking, shoveling snow from the roof, and other such activities that are unique to a snow country, in addition to making the local dish of Bandei-mochi and salt-grilling a char over an Irori hearth. Using smartphones and tablets, we enjoyed conversing with each other about our families and jobs. They seemed to especially enjoy the images that we showed of the village's four seasons. We are glad we were blessed with nice weather and everything went smoothly without incident.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

Had an amazing time over the last week in Japan participating in the #kakehashiproject. We built ties with University of Aizu students, were briefed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and visited the Panasonic Group Solutions Showroom. Japan is teeming with innovative capacity, and I come away from this trip more optimistic about cooperation between the United States and Japan at the governmental and people-to-people levels! #kakehashi2024 #US-Japan 	 View insights ♡ 💬 📌 I never thought I would ever come to rural Fukushima. But thanks to #kakehashiproject I am able to come to Fukushima and do a home stay. I will certainly comeback for more research. #kakehashiproject
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January 31, 2024 (LinkedIn) Had an amazing time over the last week in Japan participating in the #akehashiproject. We built ties with University of Aizu students, were briefed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and visited the Panasonic Center Tokyo showroom. Japan is teeming with innovative capacity, and I come away from this trip more optimistic about cooperation between the United States and Japan at both the governmental and people-to-people levels!	February 4, 2024 (Instagram) I never thought I would ever come to rural Fukushima. But thanks to #akehashiproject I was able to come to Fukushima and do a home stay. I will certainly come back for more research.
	
February 3, 2024 (Fukushima Minpo) Learning about the University of Aizu's initiatives On February 2, participants of MOFA's KAKEHASHI Project exchange program paid a visit to the University of Aizu in Aizuwakamatsu City and gained a deep understanding of Japanese culture and the local culture of the prefecture. ... Seventeen young researchers held an exchange with 22 students at the University of Aizu, mutually introducing the features and appeals of local attractions based on keywords such as "Tsurugajo Castle," "Akabeko," and "Ouchi-juku." They exchanged opinions on how to widely introduce these attractions to people around the world in an effective manner.	February 3, 2024 (cited from the website of Cornell University, which the participant attends) A first-year Linguistics grad student recently participated in the KAKEHASHI Project, an exchange program for young American researchers to visit Japan, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA). During her eight days in Japan, the student participated in various cultural experiences such as traditional Japanese tie-dyeing in Tokyo, an exchange of opinions and a lecture by MOFA and a professor at Keio University, a school exchange with the University of Aizu, and a stay with a host family in Minamiaizu. Reflecting on her trip, she believes that her experiences have affected her research goals. In her words: "I have always been interested in dialectology, but this experience definitely

furthered my desire to pursue dialectology in the realm of Japanese language and not just American English."

6. Presentation of Program Findings and Action Plans at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Presentation by all 3 groups (Locations: Tokyo, Fukushima)

Group 1



Group 1 (5 participants from Cornell University, 1 from a think tank)

【What we Learned】

By personally visiting and experiencing Japan, our preconceptions about the country changed significantly. Before our visit, when we learned that we would be visiting Fukushima, the first thing that came to our mind was the nuclear power plant accident, and we were a bit nervous. However, once we actually visited and stayed with a host family, those fears quickly disappeared. The local people were sweet, farmers and JA were thriving, and the food was delicious, especially the tomatoes. We also got a real sense of what the Japanese people value, even though the population is aging in rural areas (they place great importance on helping and supporting each other in the local community and with other people).

【Action Plan】

Individual action plans

- I am a resident at NYU (New York University), where I create clothes for robots. I will create clothes that incorporate the traditional Japanese tie-dyeing techniques I learned in KAKEHASHI (at Some-no-sato Ochiai), with the theme of fusing tradition and cutting-edge technology. I will gather a gallery and hold a fashion show (schedule is currently being considered).
- By mid-April, I will create a blog or digital diary with an eye toward talks that have the potential to become a hot topic online. I will catalog and share my experiences and findings with Cornell students and the general public who have an interest in Japan and Japanese studies.
- I will create two videos about Japanese visual arts (paintings, crafts, etc.) and release them online (YouTube) in March or April of this year. One will be about the kimonos and tea utensils at Tokyo National Museum which impressed me during my visit to Japan, and another will summarize my experience at a traditional dyeing workshop.
- As a linguistics major, I will be holding a workshop on "Making Sushi in Japanese" for fellow college students using Cornell University's activity room around mid-March or early April (as soon

as the ingredients are available). I'm also planning to give feedback on the KAKEHASHI experience at the beginning of the workshop, including the fact that it was my host mother who taught me how to make sushi.

- I will give a lecture on Abe Kobo's *Woman of the Sand* and show director Alain Resnais' "Hiroshima, mon amour" in my class. In those classes, I would like to talk to the students (at Cornell University) about how my thoughts on Japanese literature and culture have changed positively through the KAKEHASHI experience and encourage them to participate in a KAKEHASHI program themselves. In the future, I hope to become an attorney in charge of international litigation and arbitration, and I believe that my experience will definitely be useful for international cooperation and understanding.
- Around mid-March, I will hold a "KAKEHASHI Brown Bag (Lunchtime) Lecture (30-minute lecture + 30-minute question-and-answer session)" for colleagues at the think tank where I work. I would like to share my experiences and takeaways from KAKEHASHI in the lecture. The biggest takeaway was that I was able to realize the power of people-to-people exchange.

Group 2



Group 2 (4 participants from George Washington University, 1 from a think tank)

【What we Learned】

The program covered various fields, including policy fields which we are most interested in, such as Japan-U.S. security policy and public diplomacy, as well as advanced technology (Panasonic Center Tokyo, University of Aizu) and traditional culture (Tokyo National Museum, homestay @Minamiaizu, tie-dyeing experience). Thanks to this meaningful program, I was able to learn numerous things. Although it was not the first time for some of us to come to Japan, it was the first time for all of us to stay in the homes of ordinary Japanese people, and we were moved by their hospitality. We also learned a lot about the roles of companies and universities in the field of technological innovation for the first time (we didn't particularly know about the history of Panasonic or the detailed achievements of Konosuke Matsushita). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' briefing was eye-opening.

【Action Plan】

Within three months of returning to the U.S., we will be writing blogs on the university's website to develop "reports" to share our experiences and insights with students and staff. As a further dissemination channel, we will give presentations on Japan-U.S. cooperation and the importance

of Japan-U.S. relations, and provide feedback about Japan. To begin with, the KAKEHASHI Project itself is not well known among general students, so we would like to enlighten them and raise the profile of the project.

At the think tank, a roundtable discussion with staff and students (in NYC) is being planned to share the wonderful KAKEHASHI experience.

Group 3



Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International Studies
Young Researchers Slot 2
January 21th-February 10th, 2024



Highlight: Creating an
incredible flower design!

*Dorcas, a young girl 50... design to create the flower design, who learned from her experience.

Action Plan:

- 1) Share our memories and adventures with our friends and family back home, highlighting KAKEHASHI Project experiences, learn, and experiences.
- 2) Join the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies in a breakfast session to present our findings from the trip, to make the knowledge we've made, and discuss the importance of immersion trip such as the KAKEHASHI Project.
- 3) Share our experiences on social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and to work engage with our broader network and inform the public of our experiences.
- 4) Give group findings on "taking action" for giving global knowledge back home.

Group 3 (6 participants from Johns Hopkins University)

【What we Learned】

We realized that Japanese society is a safe and secure society built on mutual trust. We were really surprised that there is no baggage security check when boarding the Shinkansen. There were only private security guards patrolling inside the Shinkansen cars from time to time, and it was amazing how people feel safe in the first place. We were also impressed by how Japanese people respect each other, especially how they always express their gratitude even to people like bus drivers.

Specializing in international relations, we tend to have a too-big worldview and focus on big-picture issues. However, during our homestay in a rural area of Japan (Minamiaizu), we had the precious experience of sitting face-to-face, having fun laughing and cooking together in broken words, and relaxing in a hot spring, even though we could not communicate properly in Japanese. As a result, what we learned was that it is also necessary to approach international relations from the perspective of interpersonal relationships, customs, and people's daily lives. This made us realize that it is also important to have a more microscopic perspective.

【Action Plan】

Shortly after returning to the U.S., we will share our memories and adventures with friends and family while introducing the KAKEHASHI Project and homestay experience, but within three months, we will hold brown bag lunch sessions at the Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins University for professors, instructors, and students, where we will present the results of our visits to Japan and talk about the connections we made. We also want to discuss the importance of an "immersive trip". There are also many students at the center who are eager to visit Japan, so we will let young students know about the existence and importance of the KAKEHASHI Project.

In addition, we will continue to post on a wide range of networks such as X, Instagram, and

Facebook, as well as Telegram and LinkedIn, and share our experiences and findings with the general public. One member serves as an editor of the school newspaper, so we can also use the online version of the school newspaper.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)