



KAKEHASHI Project (U.S. and Canada)
Invitation Program for the Winners of the Japanese Speech Contest
Invitation Program for Japanese Language Communication Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective】 This program was held intended for winners of the Japanese speech contest held in the United States and students studying Japanese in Canada. Through homestays, school exchanges, and observations, the program primarily aimed to have the participants deepen their understanding of Japanese society, culture, history, and diplomatic policies, actively disseminate Japan's attractions, and motivate them to play a role in strengthening U.S.-Canada-Japan relations.

【Participants】 Total: 26 winners of the Japanese speech contest held in the U.S. and undergraduate students studying Japanese in Canada
(Breakdown) from the United States 16, from Canada 10

【Locations】 Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka

【Program Schedule】

■ Pre-study Program (Online):

Jan. 16 (Tue) 【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. 21 (Sun) Arrival at Haneda Airport and Narita International Airport

Jan. 22 (Mon) 【Observation】 Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, The Great Buddha and Kotoku-in, and Hasedera

Jan. 23 (Tue) 【Observation】 Azabudai Hills

Travel from Tokyo to Shizuoka

【Meeting with the Host Families】

【Homestay】 5 homes in Kawanehoncho Town, Haibara Province, Shizuoka Prefecture

Jan. 24 (Wed) 【Homestay】

Jan. 25 (Thu) 【Homestay】

Travel back to Tokyo

	【Student Exchange】 Nonprofit Organization MIS (Multilateral Interaction with Students) 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. MURAI Hideki, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Prime Minister's Office 【Courtesy Call】 Prime Minister's Official Residence, Mr. MURAI Hideki, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary
Jan. 26 (Fri)	【Lecture】 "Seminar on Working and Living in Yokohama, Japan (attracting Highly-skilled Foreign Professionals)" Lecturer: Mr. KONISHI Yasuaki, Manager for Asia and Oceania, International Relations Division, General Affairs Department, International Affairs Bureau, City of Yokohama 【Observation】 Port of Yokohama 【School Exchange】 Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies (IUC)
Jan. 27 (Sat)	【Observation】 Fukagawa Edo Museum, Kiyosumi Garden 【Observation】 Akihabara (observation of Japanese electric appliances and technologies) 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)
Jan. 28 (Sun)	【Reporting Session】 Presentation of program findings and action plans Departure from Haneda Airport and Narita International Airport

2. Program Photos

Inbound Program

	
January 22 【Observation】 Hasedera	January 23 【Observation】 Azabudai Hills
	
January 23 【Meeting with the Host Families】	January 24 【Homestay】
	
January 25 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. MURAI Hideki, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Prime Minister's Office	January 26 【Lecture】 International Relations Division, General Affairs Department, International Affairs Bureau, City of Yokohama
	
January 26 【Observation】 Port of Yokohama	January 26 【School Exchange】 Inter- University Center for Japanese Language Studies (IUC)

	
January 27 【Observation】 Fukagawa Edo Museum	January 27 【Observation】 Kiyosumi Garden
	
January 27 【Workshop】	January 28 【Reporting Session】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Undergraduate Student (U.S.A.)

I enjoyed the homestay the most, possibly because of the way it contrasted with the earlier parts of the visit in Tokyo. I learned much from the inaka experience and what social problems the societies outside of larger metropolitan areas are facing. The people were welcoming and told great stories from their pasts, and I was able to learn about our similarities and differences in a rich and honest conversation with my host family.

◆ Undergraduate Student (U.S.A.)

I think the most impressive part of the whole visit was the homestay. We were able to see many things and really focus on a specific area in Japan that I was previously unaware about. We were able to bond as a group by cooking together, and the hospitality offered by our host family was nothing short of amazing. It was an experience of a lifetime.

◆ Undergraduate Student (U.S.A.)

I was most impressed by the historical areas in Japan such as the shrines, temples, and scenery. I have never been in a place having a history that goes so far back in time. I also really loved seeing trees and plants around the city that were so beautifully taken care of.

◆ Undergraduate Student (Canada)

The most impressive part of the IUC exchange was how hard the students worked in their individual study and studying Japanese. I also found it very impressive how well they prepared to answer our questions and how knowledgeable they were of the subjects.

◆ Undergraduate Student (Canada)

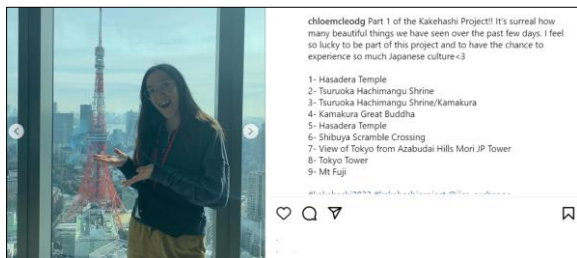
I really enjoyed the home stay, cultural sites and exchange with the MIS students. The home stay was an awesome experience, being able to experience a traditional Japanese home, food, and culture. It was something I could only have experienced in this program. The cultural sites were very beautiful and well planned out. I also enjoyed hanging out and talking with the MIS students.

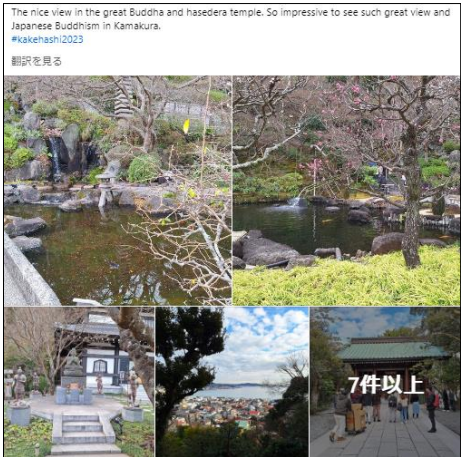
4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Host Family

I was impressed with how well the students knew about Japan and studied the Japanese language. I was also happy to see them having a try at pounding mochi and playing the Wadaiko Japanese drum.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

	January 23, 2024 (Instagram) U.S.A. Part 1 of the KAKEHASHI Project!! It's surreal how many beautiful things we have seen over the past few days. I feel so lucky to be part of this project and to have the chance to experience so much Japanese culture, including the following: Hasedera Temple, Tsuruoka Hachimangu Shrine, Kamakura, Kamakura Great Buddha, Shibuya Scramble Crossing, view of Tokyo from Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower, Tokyo Tower, etc.
	January 23, 2024 (Instagram) U.S.A. Hi y'all! I'm super excited to share that I'll be doing a cultural exchange program in Japan this week. It's called the KAKEHASHI program, run by the Japanese government, and we'll be visiting and learning about lots of different aspects of Japanese culture. For example, today was all about history and culture in Japan. We went to Kamakura, a city an hour's ride south of Tokyo, famed for its large number of temples and shrines. We first visited Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, where we learned a brief history of Shintoism and the proper way to give prayers at a shrine. Next were the Daibutsu Hall and Kotoku-in Temple. "Daibutsu" means "Large Buddha" and is accordingly home to a massive statue of Buddha. Even sitting, I would say he is around six or seven times my height and very impressive! The Daibutsu Hall is also the most famous of all of Kamakura's landmarks.

	Last was Hasedera Temple, which is a gorgeous building on top of a steep hill overlooking the town. It was filled with thousands of statues called Jizou, ranging from just a couple inches to perhaps a yard tall. They represent the spirits of lost children and are said to protect children who are missing or are in danger. I've got so many more cool pictures of stores and other places I stopped by, I think I'll upload some to my story if you're more interested! I've also taken a bunch of pictures of road signs and posters all around town. It's been fun trying to read them, and I've already discovered new useful words as 理由, 禁止, and 掲示 (and of course, 鎌倉).
	
January 22, 2024 (Facebook) Canada A nice view of the Great Buddha and Hasedera Temple. So impressive to see such great views and experience Japanese Buddhism in Kamakura.	January 24, 2024 (Facebook, etc.) Canada Crossing the suspension bridge. Gotta appreciate engineering!

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

Locations: Tokyo, Kanagawa, Shizuoka (presentations by all four groups)

Group A (U.S.A.-1)	Group B (U.S.A.-2)
	
【What we Learned】 • We were impressed with Japan's ingenuity based on advanced technology, which we saw when visiting the Port of Yokohama. • We were able to see the respect that the Japanese people have for their community and orderliness in the way cleanliness and social order are well maintained. • We were touched by the respect and compassion with which the Japanese people demonstrate courtesy and warm hospitality to others, as we have witnessed with our host family and people we encountered during the program. 【Prospects】 • I will further my language studies. • I will continue my exchanges with IUC. • I will return to Japan to work as an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher). • I will return to Japan on a study abroad program. • I will enter the aerospace industry and work with Japanese engineers. • I will spend a couple years in the JET Program. • I will get a job in Japan. • I will live in Japan for the rest of my life. 【Action Plan】	【What we Learned】 Shrines, temples, and other such cultural remains are an integral part of the modern city. A well-developed public transportation system, including an expansive railway network, and an abundance of various types of foods make for a highly convenient society. The beautiful cityscape was also stunning. 【Prospects】 • I will study Japanese further. • I will study abroad in Japan. • I will return to Japan on another program. • I will apply to the JET program. • I will seek employment in Japan. • I will pass the JLPT. • I will plan a personal trip to Japan. • I will translate media such as manga. • I will write poems, stories, etc. 【Action Plan】 • On February 3, 2024, we will share the attractiveness of Japan that we experienced through the KAKEHASHI Project in an online meeting at our university and also via social media and local newspapers. • To an audience of Japanese language students and Japanese culture club members from various universities, and students,

1. I will make a video to be presented on March 9th at the Japanese Speech Contest in Georgia. 2. I will organize a seminar or presentation in the Japanese Department at my university, prepare a news article on it, and post the article on local news sites. 3. I will give a presentation of my KAKEHASHI experience to the Japanese culture club. 4. I will translate ads, street signs, and posters and post them on social media. 5. I will disseminate information via Vlog to the students of the high school where I started studying Japanese.	families, and friends interested in Japanese culture, we will actively promote the KAKEHASHI Project, study abroad in Japan, and travels to Japan.
Group C (Canada-1)	Group D (Canada-2)
	
【What we Learned】 Society is efficient and convenient because everyone follows the rules. In public spaces, everyone is considerate of others. In Kawanehoncho, Shizuoka Prefecture, and throughout Japan, the population is decreasing due to the declining birthrate and aging of the population. We learned that particularly in rural areas, young people move to the cities because there are no good jobs in their hometown. Most of the people in the towns are therefore elderly. 【Action Plan】 • We will tell friends, family, people who are interested in Japan or learning Japanese about our KAKEHASHI experience.	【What we Learned】 Japan is convenient and accurate, with convenience stores everywhere and everything you need available anytime and anywhere. There is also a wide variety of vending machines. 【Learnings about the Service Culture】 We were impressed by how polite the Japanese people are. Even though there is no tipping system, people in shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. are polite. This politeness seems to be deeply rooted in Japanese culture. 【Action Plan】 • We will share KAKEHASHI photos, information about Japan, and the

• We will hold events for introducing Japan at universities and share our experience and information about Japan using videos and movies. • We will post information about trips to Japan on social media sites. We will also create an online communication site to disseminate information to people who wish to learn Japanese.	KAKEHASHI Project to friends, Japanese language learners, those who are interested in Japanese pop culture, like anime, at our university after returning home. • We will also share our experience in Japan using a Power Point presentation in our university class.
---	---

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)