



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Asian Americans Youth (APAICS) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective】 Participants recommended by the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS), an organization in the U.S. that promotes the active participation of Asian Pacific Americans in society, came to Japan from all over the U.S. to deepen their understanding of Japanese culture and society through people-to-people exchanges and observation visits. The main objectives of the program were to have the participants share and disseminate what they learned and realized during their visit to Japan from an Asian American perspective, and for them to play an active role in strengthening future Japan-U.S. relations.

【Participants】 24 Asian American Youth (undergraduate students and graduate students)
and 1 chaperone

【Locations】 Tokyo, Kanagawa, Nagasaki

【Program Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Mar. 7 (Thu) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Program objective & mission, rundown of the schedule, travel precautions, COVID-19 countermeasures, etc.

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

■ Inbound Program:

Mar. 12 (Tue) Arrival at Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport

Mar. 13 (Wed) **【School Exchange】** Meiji University (and stroll around Akihabara, etc.)

【Observation】 House of Councillors, The National Diet of Japan

【Observation】 Fukagawa Edo Museum

Mar. 14 (Thu) **【Observation】** Japanese Overseas Migration Museum

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

Mar. 15 (Fri) Travel from Tokyo to Nagasaki

【Courtesy Call】 Nagasaki Prefectural Government

【Meeting with the Host Families】

Mar. 16 (Sat) **【Homestay】**

Mar. 17 (Sun) **【Farewell Party with the Host Families】**
【Observation】 Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum
【 Workshop 】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

Mar. 18 (Mon) Travel from Nagasaki to Tokyo
【Courtesy Call】 Mr. HOSAKA Yasushi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
【Courtesy Call】 Mr. ISHIHARA Hirotaka, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister

Mar. 19 (Tue) **【Reporting Session】** Presentation of program findings and action plans
Departure from Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Inbound Program

	
March 13 【School Exchange】 Meiji University	March 13 【Observation】 The National Diet of Japan (House of Councillors)
	
March 13【Observation】Fukagawa Edo Museum	March 14 【Observation】 Japanese Overseas Migration Museum



March 14 【Observation】 Tokyo Skytree Town® Campus, Chiba Institute of Technology



March 15 【Courtesy Call】 Nagasaki Prefectural Government



March 15 【Meeting with the Host Families】



March 16 【Homestay】



March 18 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. HOSAKA Yasushi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs



March 18 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. ISHIHARA Hirotaka, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister



March 19 【Reporting Session】 Presentation of program findings and action plans



March 19 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Undergraduate Student

The part that left the biggest impression on me was the interactions I had with the people. No matter where I was, I found people who were willing and open, and more than excited, to introduce and explain Japan to me. At the Sky Tree, at the Chiba Institute of Tech, I was able to talk with the people who worked there about AI and AI recognition. At Meiji, I became good friends with the students in the same group. At my homestay, I was able to really connect with our host family, and it was amazing to have been shown around Isahaya and Shimabara. At both of the museums we went to, I was able to join tour guides and listen to their tours.

◆ Undergraduate Student

I was very impressed with how simple and easy to navigate around Japan with a new currency. I was also very excited to see how there were different infrastructures accessible for disabled people. For example, there is braille in museums and lower buttons on the elevator to help people with disabilities navigate public transport and different buildings better.

I really enjoyed the homestay part of the trip, where we were able to experience the daily life of Nagasaki residents. I loved talking to the family and kids and asking them about their cultures and country.

◆ Undergraduate Student

I loved the warm hospitality my family showed, how they were very polite, and their appreciation for the Japanese culture. I enjoyed most spending time with my host family's son because it reminded me of my own self when I was younger and naive. I thought that it allowed me to see myself in him.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Exchange School Student

Before the exchange I was very nervous, wondering what would happen if I could not communicate well in English, but once it began, I had a lot of fun and it has become a treasured memory for me. When I couldn't express myself in English or couldn't understand what the other person was saying, I would apologize and say, "sorry..." but they would say, "Don't apologize! Let's learn together" in English, which made me very happy.

I also vividly remember when a participant saw "Edokko" written on a sign at Kanda Myojin shrine and asked what it meant. It was hard to explain since the question took me aback, but I was happy to see the participants so interested in Japan.

◆ Host Family

We had opportunities to talk about Japanese culture, but more than that, we were able to discuss U.S. politics and economics, as well as diplomatic issues such as Israel and Ukraine. Although the participant I hosted was only about 20 years old, he was able to look at the world from a higher perspective, which was very stimulating for us. The more technical topics were

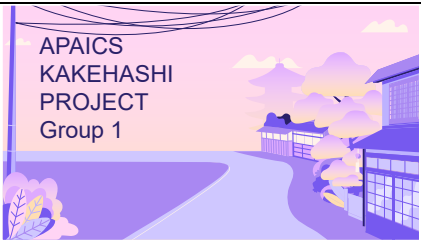
difficult to discuss in English, so my wife and I felt the need to study English more and more. We also happened to meet our son's kindergarten friends, and I think this became a good opportunity for the kids to dive into the world of international exchange.

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

	This spring break, I had the opportunity to participate in a study tour of Toyko and Nagasaki 🇯🇵 Thanks so much to the KAKEHASHI Project, a program fostering people-to-people exchanges between the United States and Japan, as well as the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) and the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE). I loved meeting everyone in the cohort as well as the Japanese homestay families, local students at Meiji University, government officials like the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, and the fantastic coordinators who made this all possible. This initiative has been a cornerstone in promoting mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation between the two nations! #akehashi #bridgeproject #japan #aapi
March 16, 2024 (Instagram) Fun takeaway from this trip; manga in the laundry room! There are so many different complete series, and it's a great way to decompress. as you are waiting for laundry. We also learned through one of our trips that one of the reasons for why manga is so popular in Japan is because it was seen as an accessible way to express your feelings and thoughts. As a result, it continues being a loved pastime by young and old alike.	March 20, 2024 (Facebook) This spring break, I had the opportunity to participate in a study tour of Tokyo and Nagasaki. Thanks so much to the KAKEHASHI Project, a program fostering people-to-people exchanges between the United States and Japan, as well as the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) and the JICE. I loved meeting everyone in the cohort as well as the Japanese homestay families, local students at Meiji University, government officials like the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, and the fantastic coordinators who made this all possible. This initiative has been a cornerstone in promoting mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation between the two nations!

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

Locations: Tokyo, Kanagawa, Nagasaki – Presentations by a total of three groups

	
【What we Learned】 We learned a lot from the culture, Japanese food, and famous tourist attractions to university life and Japanese family life. 【Action Plan】 A member made a vlog video, so we will show this before giving a presentation. Afterwards, we would like to compile the photos and videos into a presentation. We would like to do this at each member's university campus or community center.	【What we Learned】 The homestay in Nagasaki was a wonderful opportunity to learn about Japan's culture of respect for each individual and to build bonds with Japanese families. The Fukagawa Edo Museum allowed us to experience the streets of the Edo period, and even near Shibuya Station we were able to catch a glimpse of how Japan passes down its history through the statue of the loyal dog, Hachiko. During our stay in Japan, we were able to further understand Japanese culture through the homestay, walking around Tokyo, and learning about the history of the country. 【Action Plan】 From late March to early May, at each university, we will share the KAKEHASHI experience with friends and campus students in university student groups and university departments (Asian Studies, Political Science, International Affairs, etc.).

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)