



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Visiting U.S. Program for America Bowl Program Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective】 A group of 11 outstanding high school students who achieved excellent results in the America Bowl Competition^(Note) held in Japan were dispatched to Washington, D.C., with the aim of promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the United States. During their stay in the U.S., the students visited the local embassy and various government-related institutions, and deepened their knowledge of Japan-U.S. relations, as well as the cultures and diplomatic ties of both countries through exchanges with American students. While gaining new insights and learning through exposure to different cultures and customs, they also actively shared the attractions of Japan with the people they met during their visit.

(Note) America Bowl: A competition held in English organized by the America-Japan Society with the aim of deepening Japanese high school students' interest in the U.S. and their understanding of U.S.-Japan relations.

【Participants】

Total: 11 Japanese high school students and representatives from The America-Japan Society, Inc.

(Breakdown) 3 students from Ochanomizu University Senior High School
 3 students from Seiko Gakuin High School
 3 students from Nishiyamato Gakuen High School
 2 representatives from The America-Japan Society, Inc.

【Locations】 Washington, D.C. / Burtonsville, Maryland, U.S.A.

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Feb. 27 (Thu) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warnings, precautions of infectious disease, etc.

■ Dispatch Program:

Mar. 20 (Thu) Departure from Haneda Airport, Arrival at Washington Dulles International Airport

Mar. 21 (Fri) **【Observation】** National Mall
 【Courtesy Call】
 Mr. YAMADA Shigeo, Ambassador, Embassy of Japan in the United States of America
 Mr. MIYAKE Fumito, Minister, Public Affairs Section / Director of the Japan Information and Culture Center
 【Observation】 U.S. Department of State

Mar. 22 (Sat)	【Observation】 Library of Congress 【Meeting with the Host Families】
Mar. 23 (Sun)	【Homestay】
Mar. 24 (Mon)	【School Exchange】 Paint Branch High School 【Observation】 The National Museum of American History 【Observation】 U.S. Capitol (House Chamber) 【Courtesy Call】 Representative Jen Kiggans, United States Congresswoman
Mar. 25 (Tue)	【Observation】 Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II Guide: Mr. John Tobe, Chair, National Japanese American Memorial Foundation 【Observation】 Japan-America Society of Washington DC 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (Summarizing program and findings and preparation of action plans)
Mar. 26 (Wed)	Departure from Washington Dulles International Airport
Mar. 27 (Thu)	Arrival at Haneda International Airport

2. Program Photos

	
March 21 【Observation】 National Mall	March 21 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. YAMADA Shigeo, Ambassador, Embassy of Japan in the United States of America
	
March 21 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. MIYAKE Fumito, Minister, Public Affairs Section / Director of the Japan Information and Culture Center	March 21 【Observation】 U.S. Department of State

	
March 22 【Observation】 Library of Congress	March 24 【School Exchange】 Paint Branch High School
	
March 24 【Observation】 U.S. Capitol	March 24 【Courtesy Call】 Representative Jen Kiggans, United States Congresswoman
	
March 25 【Observation】 Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II	March 25 【Observation】 Japan-America Society of Washington DC

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ High School Student

During the exchange at the local high school, we were able to experience multiculturalism and a pro-Japan atmosphere firsthand. At the Department of State, the Japan-America Society, and the U.S. Congress, we had valuable opportunities to hear specific opinions about how Japan is seen in the U.S. and what role the U.S. seeks for Japan.

◆ **High School Student**

During the school exchange, I was able to actually see the classes, cafeteria, and experience the school system, and through exchanges with American high school students, I was able to get to know their personalities and other aspects of their lives. The high school visit was a great opportunity for me to get to know how local people think about Japanese people. Not only did I deepen my understanding of how classes are different in Japan and the U.S., but I think the school exchange was the best opportunity to promote understanding between Japan and the U.S.

◆ **High School Student**

It was because we visited Washington D.C. that we got the opportunity to talk with important people we would never normally meet, such as political officials, and through this experience we were able to both gain new knowledge and deepen the knowledge we had gained thus far.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ **Courtesy Call Representative**

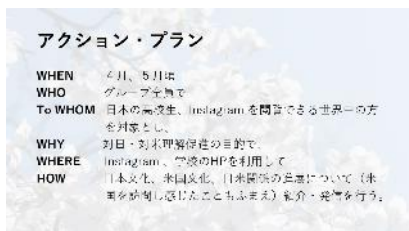
There were moments when the high school students actively asked questions and made comments in English to the congressional officials. I also believe the opportunity to meet with U.S. Senators and Representatives, even if only for a short time, provided a good opportunity to demonstrate Japan's presence and influence to the U.S. Congressional members.

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

 meteorite at Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History In Japan, I've scarcely ever seen such a large exhibition about meteorites. It was a great learning for me!	 Difference between America and Japan AMERICA • Recycle • The Others JAPAN • Burnable • Non Burnable • PET • Can
March 24, 2025 (Instagram) High School Student Meteorite at Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History In Japan, I've scarcely ever seen such a large exhibition about meteorites. It was a great learning experience for me!	March 22, 2025 (Facebook) High School Student We came to America two days ago and are enjoying American life. I figured out that there is a difference in the trash cans between America and Japan. Americans have to separate garbage to "recycle" or "other".

	On the other hand, we have to separate garbage to “Burnable, Non-burnable, Plastic bottles, Cans” in Japan. The purpose garbage is sorted is to recycle and use natural resources in a better way, so I think the American way is very direct and simple. But, doing it this way, everyone has to know what is recyclable and what 's not, (and I have felt lost at which trash can to choose in the past) so Japan's way is also easy to understand which garbage can to throw what in. For me, separating things like “Paper, Plastic, Plastic Bottles, Cans” is the best idea to make everyone separate garbage correctly. What do you think is the best way to separate garbage? Please let me know if you come up with a nice idea.
--	--

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

Ochanomizu University Senior High School		
		
【Learnings from the Program】 ◆ Awareness of Environmental Issues: • The United States Botanic Garden on the National Mall was impressive, not only for its plants, but also how it has exhibits on environmental issues, including a sign that has an alarm that goes off to raise awareness about the loss of tropical rainforests. • At The National Museum of American History, there were a number of exhibits focused on marine plastic pollution, such as an exhibit of marine life getting entangled in nets. • Trash cans in the U.S. were divided into mainly two categories: trash that is recyclable and trash that is not. Also, there seemed to be less litter in the streets, probably due to the large number of trash cans placed along the side of the road. There were also trash cans where people could specifically throw away dog waste, which made us think that this kind of effort is helping to keep the roads clean in the U.S.		

◆ Multicultural Society:

When visiting a local school in the U.S., we were a little worried that Asians would be greeted with different treatment, but we were pleasantly surprised to find that they accepted us with open arms. In Japan, multiculturalism is not a widespread concept, and I found the American way of accepting everyone, regardless of race, to be refreshing. In Japan, most students are Japanese, but in the U.S. schools, students come from various backgrounds, and we believe that it is this kind of environment that promotes cross-cultural understanding in the U.S.

◆ War:

Hitler, once the Chancellor of Germany, is frequently mentioned and emphasized as a dictator in Japan. On the other hand, we do not get the impression that Hideki Tojo, who served as Prime Minister of the Empire of Japan, is emphasized nearly as much as Hitler and there seems to be a difference in the treatment of the two, even though they were both heads of the Axis powers. In the U.S., when we entered the World War II section (at the museum), we first saw a large display about the Axis heads of state: Hideki Tojo, Hitler, and Mussolini. We got the impression that all three were emphasized as war criminals to the same degree.

◆ Impressions of Japan:

- Japanese cars: In the U.S., we thought the ratio of U.S. cars would be the highest, but the ratio of Japanese cars was higher. Some people also felt that Japanese cars made them feel closer to Japan. We could see that Japanese cars are selling well overseas.
- Cherry Blossom Festival: The Cherry Blossom Festival is held on a large scale in Washington, D.C., and goods related to the festival were sold at museums and galleries. This shows just how well known the festival is. In addition to the donated cherry trees (from Japan), there were cherry trees planted all over D.C., showing how they are now a part of people's lives.
- Japanese Language Education and the Japan Bowl: We had never imagined that Japan's influence had reached the point where Japanese language would become an option to learn in U.S. high schools. It seemed strange to us, but after talking to a lot of people, we came to learn that Japan's cultural and economic influence in the U.S. is greater than we had imagined. After hearing this, we finally understood why the Japanese language had become an option at schools. There were also many Japan Bowl participants, which made us realize again just how many people are interested in Japan.

【Action Plan】

All members of our group will introduce and disseminate information about Japanese culture, American culture, and the progress of Japan-U.S. relations to Japanese high school students in Japan and people around the world based on their personal impressions from their visit to the U.S. using Instagram and our school website. We plan to do this around April and May to promote further mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S.

Seiko Gakuin High School



気づき・考え

- 現地の高校生生活の現状への危機感
例：経済や、最低賃金、minimum wageの低などとしている。
- 街ごとに考え方が違う
例：Takoma Parkは伝統的にリベラルで、他のそういう街だと、そうじゃない街もあって〜という認識された。

アクションプラン

- Why日常生活の中にも文化の差異が顕著に現れており、when,how週に一回は定期的に、かつ意識的にニュースや本などで文化に触れて、考える機会を作りたい。
- Whyアメリカのメモリアルをたくさん作る文化にふれたWhen, How日本のアイデンティティに対する探求を深めるために、神社、寺などの歴史的・精神的に重要な場所を積極的に訪れたり、伝統行事に参加したりする
- Whyアメリカの高校生や現地の議員などに会うことで知識不足を感じたので、When Howニュースを見て知識を収集し、学校の新聞にコラムを寄稿するなど校内の人々にこのプログラムやアメリカと日本の関係などについて知らせる機会を作りたい。
- When, How知り合った人々とも定期的に、(月に一回は)連絡をとりあい、異文化理解に努めていきたい。

【Learnings from the Program】

- What stood out was the size of the meals, and in terms of food culture, we saw adaptations of dishes from other countries. We were surprised at the small differences in food culture, such as the American way of eating crab with a mallet and knife, and the fact that they don't usually eat the brown meat of the crab. We noticed that there were obvious cultural differences even in their daily lives, so even if something is customary for us, we should always be aware of the underlying story and meaning of such differences.
- We saw many people from diverse backgrounds and with different values, and we felt that dialogue could lead to a correct understanding of each other's culture. We would like to try and keep in touch with the people we met during the program on a regular basis and continue our efforts to better understand different cultures.

What we were also impressed by was the sheer number of monuments. It seemed that monuments also played a role in shaping identity. After returning to Japan, we would like to actively visit shrines, temples, and other places of historical and spiritual importance, and participate in traditional events in order to explore the identity of Japan.

- The U.S. high school students seemed to be wary of their current situation, talking about the economy, the administration, the minimum wage, and so on. We realized our lack of knowledge and learned the importance of gathering information on a regular basis and having our own opinions.
- Having heard that each area in the U.S. has a different way of thinking, we would like to be conscious of the characteristics of each region in the U.S., pay more attention to the news every day, and study more and more on a daily basis.

【Action Plan】

We noticed we lacked knowledge when we met with U.S. high school students and U.S. legislators, so the entire group will write a column for our school newspaper by the end of June. We will gather information by watching the news to inform students at our school about the relationship between the U.S. and Japan and more about this program.

Nishiyamato Gakuen High School

JICE報告プレゼンテーション

西大和学園高等学校

Why: 主に関西にアメリカボウルを広める、またゲームを通じた反戦教育を目指す

When: 2025年6月中までの実施を目標に 6/28(土)あたりにイベント実施

Who: 西大和学園高等学校のプログラム参加生3人で

To Whom: 日本の中学3年生～高校2年生

What: アメリカボウルの大会及び遊技プログラム理解に関するイベント

How: イベントの実施

最終的にはアイスブレイクとして、日本人、アメリカ人、日本人の経験談での人生ゲームを実施。メインイベントはアメリカボウルの模擬大会とし遊技機などを出展する。その後、遊技プログラムの内容を共有し、アメリカボウルを宣伝する。

「日本のアイドルのダンスとプリクラ体験」を実施。そこでの評判がとても良く、また、アメリカのプリクラは現状日本のものとは大きく異なっており、日本のほうが最新かつ多様である。また、ホームステイなどを通じて、カワイイ文化の事実に気づいた。

When: 4月からクラファンを立ち上げて、8月頃に買ってプリクラの機械をアメリカに送る

Who: 西大和学園高等学校のプログラム参加生3人で

To Whom: アメリカの中高生、特に女子高生

Why: 「Kawaii」を広める。アメリカの現地校との交流プログラムでかawaiiをテーマにワークショップ

What: Kawaii文化に関する事業(プリクラ)

How: プリクラの機械を中古で買い取り、アメリカの中高生が多い(人口の)地域に送ることで、日本のKawaii文化(自然と多くの学生たちの目に届くようにする。

【Learnings from the Program】

- Americans had much more positive feelings toward Japan than we had expected.
- There were so many positive impressions of Japan that we didn't hear any negative ones.
- Japan's food culture, anime culture, and cars are very popular, and many people have high regard for Japan in these areas.
- We learned that Japan holds a fairly important position in the U.S. economy.
- We learned that Japan is under the U.S. nuclear umbrella, that there are ongoing disputes over security, and when we asked questions about security, the opinions differed depending on each person's situation.

【Action Plan】

- Aiming for mid-June 2025, the entire group will organize an event to promote America Bowl, or anti-war education through games, mainly in the Kansai region, for ninth to eleventh grade students in Japan.
- We will start a crowdfunding campaign in April to promote “Kawaii” to junior high and high school students in the U.S., particularly female high school students, and around June, we will purchase used Purikura (photo sticker) machines and send them to areas where there are many junior high and high school students in the U.S. We want the Kawaii culture itself to catch the attention of many students in the U.S., and we will also hold a workshop on the theme of “Kawaii” as part of an exchange program with a local school in the U.S.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)