



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Jewish Americans the 2nd Slot

(American Jewish Committee) Report

1. Program Overview

As part of this program, 17 Jewish Americans selected by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) visited Tokyo, Kyoto, and Fukui prefectures. The objective of the program was to strengthen Japan-U.S. relations by having participants deepen their comprehensive understanding of Japan and its attractions through a variety of exchanges within Japan, as well as to promote exchange and cooperation between Japan and the Jewish community in the U.S.

【Participants】 Total: 17 participants (15 working youths and 2 chaperones) selected by the AJC

【Locations】 Tokyo, Kyoto, Fukui

【Schedule】

■ Pre-study Program (Online):

Jan. 10 (Fri) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warnings, precautions of infectious disease, etc.
Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Video Viewing】** “Lecture on Japan” (Choose on Web Japan)

■ Invitation Program:

Jan. 16 (Thu) Gather at the hotel
 【Post-arrival Orientation】

Jan. 17 (Fri) **【Courtesy Call】** Mr. GILAD COHEN, The Ambassador, Embassy of Israel
 【Courtesy Call】 U.S. Embassy in Japan
 Ms. Sarah M. Belousov, Education and Exchanges Officer Public Affairs Section
 Mr. Douglas Flitter, Deputy Political-Military Unit Chief, Political Section
 【Opinion Exchange】 Jewish Community of Japan

Jan. 18 (Sat) **【Observation】** Nezu Museum
 Travel from Tokyo to Kyoto

Jan. 19 (Sun) **【Observation】** Kinkakuji Temple, Tenryuji Temple / Arashiyama, Nishiki Market

Jan. 20 (Mon) Travel from Kyoto to Fukui
 【Courtesy Call】 Tsuruga City
 Mr. YONEZAWA Koji, Mayor
 Mr. TSUTSUMI Munekazu, Vice-Mayor
 Mr. OGAWA Akira, Director of Town Planning and Tourism Department

	【Observation】 Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum Travel from Fukui to Kyoto 【School Exchange】Doshisha University
Jan. 21 (Tue)	Travel from Kyoto to Tokyo 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. FUJII Hisayuki, State Minister for Foreign Affairs 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans) 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans
Jan. 22 (Wed)	End of program at hotel

2. Program Photos

	
January 17, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. GILAD COHEN, The Ambassador, Embassy of Israel	January 17, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 U.S. Embassy in Japan
	
January 17, 2025 【Opinion Exchange】 Jewish Community of Japan	January 18, 2025 【Observation】 Nezu Museum
	
January 19, 2025 【Observation】 Kinkakuji Temple	January 19, 2025 【Observation】 Tenryuji Temple

	
January 20, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. YONEZAWA Koji, Mayor, Tsuruga City	January 20, 2025 【Observation】 Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum
	
January 20, 2025 【School Exchange】 Doshisha University	January 21, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. FUJII Hisayuki, State Minister for Foreign Affairs
	
January 21, 2025 【Reporting Session】	January 21, 2025【Reporting Session】Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Working Youth

Highlights of the program were the visits to the Jewish Community of Japan and Tsuruga Port of Humanity Museum. I was really moved learning about the history of the Jewish community in Japan and the details

◆ Working Youth

I thought the visits to the MoFA and Doshisha Univ. were the most important for getting to know Japanese people. I think more interactions with local Japanese professionals could be very beneficial.

◆ Working Youth

It was so impressive to meet with all of the different officials and embassies in contrast to the cultural experiences. Tsuruga was very special and informative. I particularly loved Kyoto and seeing the bamboo forest.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Courtesy Call Destination

The participants showed great interest in our city's nature, history, economy, and other aspects, and we were able to re-acknowledge the attractions and current situation of our city. We also received valuable suggestions on how to promote inbound tourism. The participants appreciated the visit to the "Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum," and we were grateful for the opportunity to interact with a descendant of a refugee who actually came to Japan on a transit visa issued by Chiune Sugihara.

◆ Exchange School Student

When I told them about my research and my future plans, they asked me so many questions. Through this exchange, I felt the significance of studying Judaism in "Japan" as opposed to in Israel, Europe, or the U.S. I would like to learn not only Biblical Hebrew, which I am learning now, but also modern Hebrew and one day visit Ulpan.

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

	
January 20, 2025 (Instagram) Port City of Tsuruga My grandfather was a Sugihara visa holder, holding visa number 1324. This life-saving visa was issued by Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat stationed in Lithuania during World War II, who courageously defied government orders to issue transit visas to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. With this visa, my grandfather traveled to safety through Japan, arriving at the Port of Humanity in Tsuruga. The city of Tsuruga served as a vital haven for refugees, where the community welcomed and supported those escaping the horrors of war. My grandfather's journey is a powerful reminder of Sugihara's extraordinary bravery and the compassion of the people of Tsuruga.	January 22, 2025 (Instagram) As the granddaughter of a Sugihara visa holder, this visit is profoundly meaningful to me. My grandfather, with visa 1324, found refuge in Japan thanks to Chiune Sugihara's extraordinary courage and blind compassion. His arrival at the Port of Humanity in Tsuruga is a story my family holds dear, and being here has been a deeply emotional experience. Walking through Tsuruga, I felt a profound connection to my grandfather's journey and immense gratitude for the kindness and humanity that greeted him here. This visit has allowed me to honor his legacy in a way I will never forget.



January 27, 2025 (Instagram)

Visited the Israeli Embassy in Tokyo, where we met with Ambassador Gilad Cohen a mere 16 minutes after the historic hostage ceasefire deal was signed! What an incredible moment to witness. The embassy, located in the heart of Tokyo, plays a vital role in fostering bilateral relations between Israel and Japan. The visit was a poignant reminder of the power of diplomacy and international cooperation.



January 21, 2025 (Port of Humanity Tsuruga Museum's Facebook)

The KAKEHASHI Project delegation visited our museum.

This project is part of the "Japan's Friendship Ties Programs" promoted by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, targeting North America. 17 Jewish Americans selected by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) came to Japan, and Tsuruga was chosen as one of their destinations to trace the relationship between the Jewish people and Japan.

During the courtesy call on the Mayor of Tsuruga, the delegation asked the mayor a number of questions covering a wide range of topics, including the mayor's views on Tsuruga's attractions, sister city alliances and the nature of their exchanges, and Tsuruga's economic activities. In response to the mayor's question on how Tsuruga, a regional city, can become a destination for more foreign tourists, the delegation members raised their hands one after the other and offered various suggestions, including the use of social media and the promotion of eco-tourism. After the courtesy call on the mayor, the delegation moved to Tsuruga Port, where they were guided by the museum director on a tour of the landing point

	(where refugees arrived) and the Museum. The delegation had apparently been looking forward to visiting the museum, and during the tour, they had a number of questions they wanted to ask about the exhibits. One of the participants was a descendant of a refugee who had received a transit visa to stay in Japan from Chiune Sugihara, and the participant's delight when they found their grandfather's name on the visa issuance list displayed in the museum was exceptional. We would like to thank the KAKEHASHI Project delegation for visiting us!
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6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session

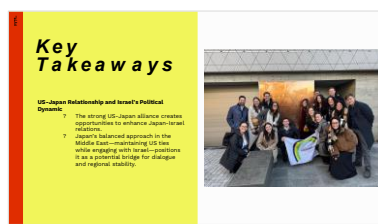
Locations: Tokyo, Kyoto, Fukui - Presentations by a total of 4 groups

Group Atlanta		
		
【Results of the Program】 ◆ JEWISH HISTORY AND ANTISEMITISM: ▪ Impact Japan had on Jewish lives during WWII ▪ Sugihara visa for life program ▪ Japanese Government has zero tolerance for antisemitism ▪ The storied history of the JCJ ◆ CULTURE: ▪ Communal values within Japanese society ▪ Collective responsibility ▪ Order ▪ Respect ▪ Decline in population and interest in studying abroad driving a cross-cultural gap ◆ DIPLOMACY: ▪ Value of nurturing young professionals and students ▪ Japan's strategic importance ▪ Potential for increased relations with Israel.		

【Action Plan】

- ◆ Short term (3months) (internal activities)
 - Present our takeaways from the trip to our fellow AJC Atlanta ACCESS board members.
 - Give a brief lesson about Sugihara and the "visa for life" program.
- ◆ Long term (3-6 months) (external activities)
 - Sugihara Shabbat Dinner to be hosted around Yom Ha'Shoah.
 - Serve Japanese cuisine
 - Educate guests on Sugihara and the "Visa for Life" program
 - Partner with Israeli and Japanese consulates in Atlanta
 - Create Educational Tools for Jewish High School Students in Jewish Day Schools and Summer Camps.
 - Collaborate with the Weber School in Atlanta to teach them about Sugihara and share our experiences visiting Tsuruga.
 - Develop a pen-pal program for American and Japanese high school students to engage with one another and learn about each other's histories and cultures.

Group New York



【Results of the Program】

1. Japan's Little Tolerance of Antisemitism
2. Shared Values: Humanity, Celebration of Life
3. US-Japan Relationship and Israel's Political Dynamic

【Action Plans】

1. Cultural

Finding the intersection between Jewish New York Culture and Japanese Culture

2. Political

Speaking with the consulates and strengthening relationships

3. Educational

Creating meaningful connections that strengthen the relationships between our communities for generations to come

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)