



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Asian American Youth Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

From March 12 to March 18, 10 Asian American youth recommended by the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) from across the United States were invited to Japan to deepen their understanding of Japanese politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy, and to strengthen networking among themselves. They visited Tokyo and Akita, where they learned about cutting-edge technology and were exposed to Japanese culture through homestays, deepening their overall understanding of Japan. Each participant also disseminated information about the attractions of Japan and what they learned from the program.

【Participants】 Total: 10 participants (9 Asian American Youth (undergraduate students and graduate students) and 1 chaperone)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Akita

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Mar. 7 (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:

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

【Post-arrival Orientation】

Mar. 13 (Thu) **【School Exchange】** Temple University Japan Campus (TUJ)

【Observation】 Miraikan - The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation

【Courtesy Call】 Mr. NAGASHIMA Akihisa, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister
Travel from Tokyo to Akita

Mar. 14 (Fri) **【Observation】**

Tazawa Lake, Kakunodate Bukeyashiki (Former Samurai District)

【Lecture】 “Inbound Green Tourism Initiatives in Semboku City”

Lecturer: Ms. ITO Kaori, Department of Tourism, Culture, and Sports Communication Design Division Director, Semboku City's Inbound Green Tourism Initiatives

	【Meeting with the Host Families】
Mar. 15 (Sat)	【Homestay】 Semboku City, Akita Prefecture
Mar. 16 (Sun)	【Farewell Party with the Host Families】
	【Cultural Experience】
	Making original soy sauce bottle labels (Ando Jozo Brewery)
	Travel from Akita to Tokyo
Mar. 17 (Mon)	【Observation】 National Diet Building
	【Observation】 Asakusa
	【Observation】 TSE Arrows
	【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)
Mar. 18 (Tue)	【Courtesy Call】 Ms. Eri Arfiya, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
	【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans
	Departure from Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program

	
March 13, 2025 【School Exchange】 Temple University Japan Campus (TUJ)	March 13, 2025 【Observation】 Miraikan - The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation
	
March 13, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. NAGASHIMA Akihisa, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister	March 14, 2025 【Observation】 Tazawa Lake



March 14, 2025 【Observation】
Kakunodate Bukeyashiki (Former Samurai District)



March 14, 2025 【Lecture】 “Inbound Green Tourism
Initiatives in Semboku City”



March 14, 2025 【Meeting with the Host Families】



March 15, 2025 【Homestay】



March 16, 2025 【Farewell Party with the Host
Families】



March 16, 2025 【Cultural Experience】
Ando Jozo Brewery



March 17, 2025【Observation】National Diet Building



March 17, 2025 【Observation】 Asakusa

	
March 17, 2025 【Observation】 TSE Arrows	March 18, 2025 【Reporting Session】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Undergraduate Student

The school exchange with Temple University left a lasting impact on me. Getting the privilege to speak to American students studying in Japan was incredible. They were able to share their way of life, studying, and working in a different light compared to what I have experienced in the U.S.

◆ Undergraduate Student

My favorite part of the program was the home stay. I think there are a lot of foreigners that would be interested in experiencing the Japanese countryside, but don't know that there are inns that they can stay at with such hospitable hosts. It was a great way to actually connect with Japanese people, beyond visiting popular tourist attractions. As we get ready to go back to the U.S., the green tourism aspect is what I'm most excited to share.

◆ Undergraduate Student

Throughout this trip, I think the most memorable memories were when we were at Akita. The homestay itself was amazing because I personally got to see snow for the first time ever and simply experienced snow falling from the sky. Our host family was also so cute and adorable, as they were such a loving couple that really cared about each other. A few places we arrived at, like the shrine, were also something memorable because I have always wanted to visit a shrine in my lifetime. I enjoyed such an amazing time just taking in all the beautiful views and people.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Lecturer

The members of the invitation program delegation were eager to deepen their understanding of Semboku City. From the questions they asked after the lecture, I could tell how truly engaged they were with the program, which was truly impressive. Although it was their first time meeting each other in person after arriving in Japan, I observed how they grew closer and more united with each passing day. They also formed meaningful bonds with their host families, which made me realize how valuable and fulfilling their time in Semboku City must have been

◆ Host Family

I made sure not to feel intimidated just because the participants were from a different country, and we were able to be open and understanding of each other's culture.

I enjoyed hearing the real voices of Americans, which I could not have heard from news on TV. I now want to study English more.

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

	
March 13, 2025 (Instagram) Undergraduate Student (U.S.) This university would definitely be kept in the back of my mind! I LOVE how it is a very small knitted community. PLUSSS this place is absolutely beautiful you guys should definitely visit if you have a chance.	March 15, 2025 (Instagram) Undergraduate Student (U.S.) Day 2 in Semboku City Our host family are farmers who welcome guests into their home to experience the Japanese countryside. We learned that this is called green tourism, which the city tries to promote. They showed us around their greenhouses, and most of the meals they prepared for us included vegetables that they picked fresh from their gardens!



Today, the TUJ MiM program and delegates from the Kakehashi Project group met in partnership with JICE on March 13 at TUJ. The Kakehashi Project, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan is a government-funded grassroots exchange program that brings together groups of Americans to Japan to gain experiences and diverse knowledge in specific fields. TUJ is a keen supporter of these initiatives which are critical to fostering cross-cultural understanding between Japan and other countries, and we look forward to working together more in the future. The current students from the MiM program offered a warm welcome and introduced our program to this enthusiastic audience of students.

April 2, 2025 (Temple University Japan Campus (TUJ) MiM program's Instagram)

The TUJ MiM (Master in Management) program was delighted to host delegates from the Kakehashi Project's group visit in partnership with JICE on March 13 at TUJ. The Kakehashi Project, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan is a government-funded grassroots exchange program that brings together groups of Americans to Japan to gain experiences and diverse knowledge in specific fields. TUJ is a keen supporter of these initiatives which are critical to fostering cross-cultural understanding between Japan and other countries, and we look forward to working together more in the future. The current students from the MiM program offered a warm welcome and introduced our program to this enthusiastic audience of students.



March 17, 2025 (Semboku City Exchange Design Division's X page)

KAKEHASHI Project Delegation Visits Japan
As part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Japan's Friendship Ties Programs, the KAKEHASHI Project (U.S.), 10 Asian Americans were hosted in Semboku City from March 13 to 16. Thank you so much for coming to Semboku City!

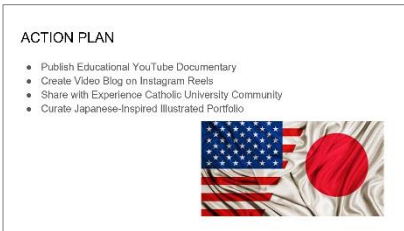
March 17, 2025 (Semboku City Exchange Design Division's Facebook page)

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The delegation went around Tazawa Lake, visited Kakunodate Bukeyashiki (former samurai district), received a lecture on the city's inbound green tourism efforts at Kakunodate Town Hall, followed by a two-night homestay with local host families. At the farewell party on the last day of their stay in Semboku City, members of the delegation said the program was "the best ever" and that they "enjoyed the wonderful scenery and the warmth of the people." The host families commented that they were "glad to have received the participants" and that they "had a great time." There were some emotional moments when the students said goodbye to their host families, and we believe it is safe to say that it was a wonderful homestay exchange for everyone involved. Before leaving Semboku City, the group visited the Ando Jozo Brewery.

We hope that the delegation will share the charms of Semboku City that they experienced through the program with other people. Thank you very much for visiting Semboku City!

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

Locations: Tokyo, Akita (Presentation by a total of 2 groups)

Group A		
		
【Findings】 • Understanding Student Life Abroad • Japan's Role in Non-proliferation in the Indo-Pacific • Role of Green Tourism in Promoting Rural Economies and the Value of Traditional Japanese Life 【Prospects】 • Pursue JET Programme & Career Opportunities in Japan • Promote Political and Social Cooperation through Fellowships • Highlight Local Businesses in Rural Communities in Future Projects • Build relationships 【Action Plan】 By mid-June of 2025, each participant will carry out the following action plans: • Publish an Educational YouTube Documentary • Create Video Blogs on Instagram Reels • Share their Experience with their University Community • Curate a Japanese-Inspired Illustrated Portfolio		
Group B		
		
【Findings】 In Tokyo we went to Temple University, Miraikan, and paid a courtesy call on Mr. Nagashima, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister. Through these visits, we learned the importance of developing your personal voice, how Japan is at the forefront of developing technologies such as with iPS cells, and about Japan's role in tackling nuclear disarmament. In Akita we went to the Ando Jyozo Brewery, had a lecture on Green Tourism, and visited the former samurai district, Kakunodate Bukeyashiki. We learned about how miso and soy sauce are made, what a farm stay can provide, and how a hierarchy system used to exist in Japan. The homestay we went on also taught us about hospitality and the importance of being meticulous and considerate.		

【Prospects】

Consider Graduate School in Japan, Consider Living & Working in Japan, Teaching English in Japan through JET or Fulbright, To get involved in Local US-Japan NGOs, Stay involved with JICE Exchange Alumni, Learning Japanese

【Action Plan】

- Share on Social Media:

Share information on the KAKEHASHI Project, Semboku City, and studying abroad in Japan through social media such as YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

- Create & Share Infographics:

Targeting people who may travel to Japan, we will create an infographic about green tourism in Semboku City based on information we can gather online and from our own experiences to promote Semboku City's hospitality businesses among tourists. In April 2025, we will share this information with travel sites and/or agencies.

- Conduct School Visits:

Targeting high school and university students, we will research study/work abroad programs and promote them through presentations that we plan to give in March/April 2025.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)