



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Online Visiting Japan Program (Kuji City and Autumn Festival)

Follow-up Project Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective and Overview】

This program was conducted to promote understanding of Japan among past participants of the KAKEHASHI Project, and to promote networking activities to expand their interest in and support for Japan by providing them with an online program to pique their interest in studying in Japan through learning about the history and culture of various regions. The main objective of the program was also to strengthen the alumni network by having participants interact and exchange opinions with one another in order to raise their awareness as alumni.

【Participants】

Total: 16 participants from the U.S. and Canada (FY2015-FY2024 KAKEHASHI Project alumni)

(Breakdown) 14 participants from the U.S. (3 undergraduate students, 11 working youth)

2 participants from Canada (2 undergraduate students)

【Location】 Kuji City, Iwate

【Schedule】

■ Online Visiting Japan Program:

August 26, 2024 (Mon)

1. Opening remarks

2. Greetings

3. **【Icebreaker】** Icebreaker led by JICE

4. **【Lecture, Observation】** “The charm of Kuji City and the Autumn Festival”

Lecturers: Mr. SHIMOMUKAI Masaru, Kuji City Tourism Products Association

Ms. GAMANO Yuko, Coordinator for International Delegations General Affairs Section, Kuji City

5. Q&A session

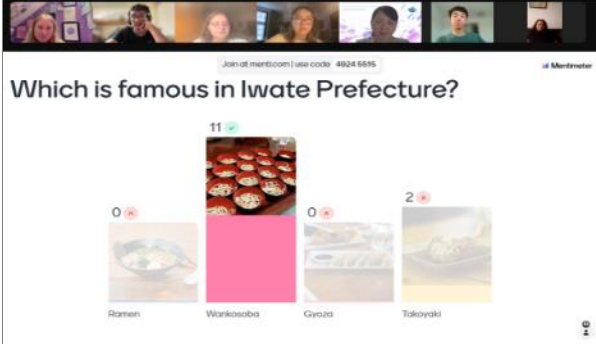
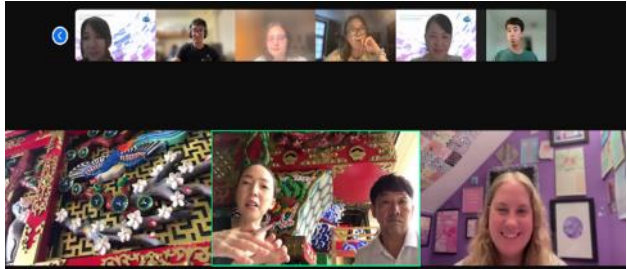
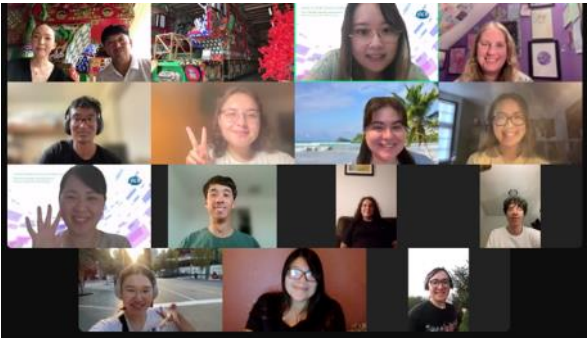
6. Commemorative photo

7. **【Exchange】** Networking with KAKEHASHI alumni (breakout rooms)

8. Information for participants, Closing remarks

2. Program Photos

Online Visiting Japan Program

	
【Icebreaker】 Quiz about Iwate Prefecture	【Lecture, Observation】 “The charm of Kuji City and the Autumn Festival”
	
【Lecture, Observation】 Observing how Dashi (floats) are being made for the Autumn Festival	【Lecture, Observation】 Q&A session
	
【Commemorative Photo】	【Exchange】 Networking with KAKEHASHI alumni

3. Participants' Inquiries and Interests(excerpt)

- How long does it take to make a Dashi?
- Do you have a theme or concept when designing a Dashi?
- How many people visit Kuji City during the festival? Are there any tourists from other countries?

4. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Undergraduate Student (U.S.)

I enjoyed being part of the real-time tour of the Dashi production process. I learned so much about Kuji City and Iwate from this visit, such as about Ama (female divers), the Autumn Festival, its birch tree forest, amber, and so much more. Thank you for organizing such a great lecture.

◆ Working Youth (U.S.)

The presentation of the Autumn Festival Dashi streamed from where they are actually made was very entertaining. I was impressed by the craftsmanship and detailed design that went into the Dashi, and how it reflected ancient Chinese and ancient Japanese literature. Thank you very much for your fascinating and wonderful presentation on the nature and culture of Kuji City. I also really appreciate the opportunity you gave us to interact with other alumni.

◆ Working Youth (U.S.)

I was very impressed by the Dashi being made. Although not as large as Kuji City's Autumn Festival, my town also makes decorated vehicles that are called "floats" for parades. The craftsmanship of Kuji City that we saw during the program was very fascinating. With the language barrier, it should have been difficult to truly understand the Autumn Festival, but I am glad that I was able to get a glimpse of the festival this time online.

5. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Lecturer

I am glad the participants were able to learn about Kuji City and the Autumn Festival. I hope today made them become interested in Kuji City.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)