

JENESYS2025 Myanmar-Japan Japanese Language and Cultural Exchange (Online) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

This program was conducted online from November 18 to 25, bringing together eight university students from Japan, and sixty university students and young professionals from Myanmar with the objective of promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries. Through presentations introducing the attractions of each country and virtual home tours in which participants guided one another through their daily living environments, the program deepened cross-cultural understanding, fostered new networks among the participants, and promoted the external dissemination of the attractions of both countries.

【Participants】 Total: 68 participants: 8 university students from Japan; 60 participants from Myanmar (including university students and young professionals)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Fukuoka, Myanmar 68

【Schedule】

■ Pre-study Program (for Japanese university students only):

Oct. 8 (Tue) 【Orientation】 First Joint Orientation

 【Lecture】 Lecture on the Country “Learn about Myanmar”

Lecturers:

Mr. KATO Takeru, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Myanmar

Ms. NAGATA Risa, Third Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Myanmar

Oct. 14 (Wed) 【Exchange】 Face-to-face exchange with participants of the JENESYS2025 Myanmar-Japan Japanese Language and Culture Exchange (Invitation Program) and JENESYS2025 The Philippines-Japan Japanese Language and Culture Exchange (Invitation Program)

■ Online Exchange Program :

Nov. 18 (Tue) 【Orientation】 Program overview, Self-introductions

 【Virtual Home Tour】 Home tours (of the Japanese university students, Myanmar participants, etc.)

Nov. 19 (Wed) 【Student Exchange (1)】

- Presentation by Japanese university students introducing the attractions of Japan
- Q&A session
- Presentation by Myanmar participants introducing the attractions of Myanmar

- Q&A session
- Group exchange, etc.

Nov.20 (Thu) 【Student Exchange (2)】

- Presentation and demonstration by Japanese university students introducing the attractions of Japan
- Q&A session
- Presentation and demonstration by Myanmar participants introducing the attractions of Myanmar
- Q&A session
- Group exchange, etc.

Nov. 21 (Fri) – Nov. 24 (Mon): Conducted in each group

【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, confirming social media posts, preparation of action plans)

Nov. 25 (Tue) 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans

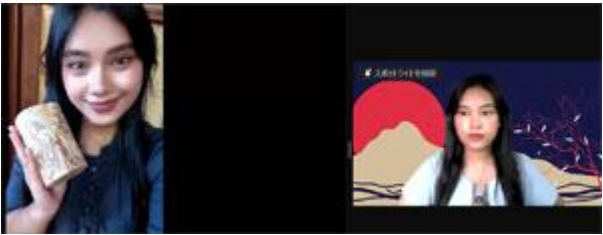
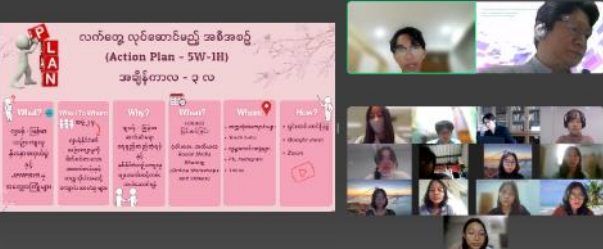
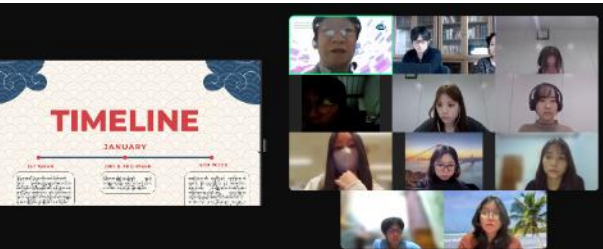
2. Program Photos

Pre-study Program (for Japanese university students only)

	
October 8 【Lecture】 Lecture on the Country “Learn about Myanmar”	October 14 【Exchange】 Face-to-face exchange with participants of the JENESYS2025 Invitation Program

Online Exchange Program

	
November 18 【Virtual Home Tour】 (Japan)	November 18 【Virtual Home Tour】 (Myanmar)

	
November 19 【Student Exchange (1)】 Presentation introducing the attractions of Japan	November 19【Student Exchange (1)】Presentation introducing the attractions of Myanmar
	
November 20 【Student Exchange (2)】 Presentation and demonstration introducing the attractions of Japan	November 20 【Student Exchange (2)】 Presentation and demonstration introducing the attractions of Myanmar
	
November 25 【Reporting Session】 Japan Group	November 25 【Reporting Session】 Myanmar Group 1
	
November 25 【Reporting Session】 Myanmar Group 2	November 25 【Reporting Session】 Myanmar Group 3
	
November 25 【Reporting Session】 Myanmar Group 4	November 25 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

3. Participants' Inquiries and Interests (excerpt)

◆ Regarding: Home Visit

- In Japan, we usually place the household Buddhist altar in a secluded part of the home, so we were surprised to see that the altar was located near the entrance in your house in Myanmar. (Japan)
- Shoes seemed to be neatly arranged at the entrance— is this a Japanese custom? (Myanmar)
- There was a tatami room; could you tell us what is special or good about tatami? (Myanmar)

◆ Regarding: Student Exchange (1)

- Do people in Myanmar still wear traditional clothing today? (Japan)
- The marionette displayed in your home—can it actually be used for performances or theater? (Japan)

◆ Regarding: Student Exchange (2)

- What do young people in Myanmar use to listen to music? (Japan)
- Do people of all ages in Myanmar apply thanaka? Do they put it only on the face? (Japan)
- How many types of matcha are there? (Myanmar)
- Why is the tea whisk (chasen) made of bamboo? (Myanmar)
- What kind of beans are used to make an (sweet bean paste) for dorayaki and other sweets? (Myanmar)

4. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ University Student (Japan)

During the program, we could really feel how curious everyone from Myanmar was about Japanese culture. Over the three days of online exchange, we introduced our cultures to one another, and it didn't just deepen our understanding of Myanmar—it also made us realize how much of our own culture we had only understood on the surface.

At the final reporting session, we shared both the similarities and differences between our cultures. When we presented about our hometowns, the Myanmar participants compared what we said with aspects of their own culture. Of course, the assignment itself was to make comparisons, but the fact that they mentioned what we covered in our presentation made us genuinely happy. That small moment gave us a sense of satisfaction and joy that now makes us look forward to more cultural exchanges in the future.

Although the online program has officially ended, we hope to keep enjoying this connection through our action plans and continue building opportunities to learn about each other's cultures.

◆ University Student (Japan)

Even though the program was held online, we were really glad that we still had the chance to interact with the Myanmar students who were in Japan. Hearing their voices directly—not just learning from secondhand information—gave us insights that felt so much more real and meaningful. One of the things that stood out the most was discovering how friendly, cheerful, and kind everyone from Myanmar was.

When we introduced aspects of Japanese food culture, such as traditional sweets and the tea ceremony, they asked great questions—even about the subtle details like the types of tea and how to whisk matcha properly. Their genuine curiosity made us really happy.

◆ **University Student (Myanmar)**

Even though the program was held online, we felt as if we were actually experiencing Japan's scenery, culture, and everyday life right there in person. We learned so much—from the kindness and respect people show, to the sense of cleanliness, the attention to detail, and the precision in the way work is done. We also came to understand the diversity across different regions and the differences in local foods. Through Japan's food culture, we were able to get a glimpse into the values and the everyday mindset that shape Japanese life.

◆ **University Student (Myanmar)**

We gained an incredibly valuable experience through this program. Sharing Japanese and Myanmar culture with each other in such an enjoyable way helped us learn about diversity and kindness on a deeper level.

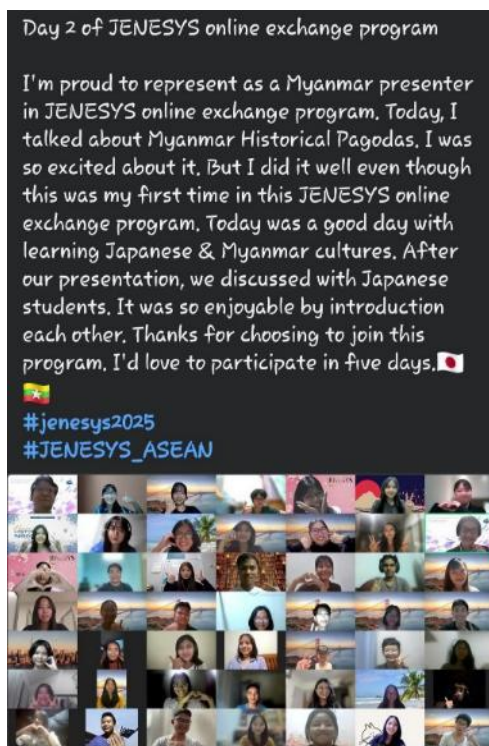
During the orientation, we learned more about Japan's sense of punctuality, its orderly way of doing things, and the importance of teamwork. Through the virtual home tours and cultural exchange sessions, we got a glimpse into the rhythm of daily life in Japan—its structured routines, the precision with time, and the reasons behind those habits. The group discussions helped us improve our teamwork, leadership, and communication skills, and we were even able to learn some basic Japanese. Among all the activities, discovering Japan's many attractions—such as its food, games, and cultural traditions—was one of the most memorable and enjoyable parts of the program. The experiences we had, the knowledge we gained, and the memories that will stay with us are truly precious treasures.

◆ **University Student (Myanmar)**

We really enjoyed discovering how much Japanese and Myanmar cultures have in common. Through the program, we were able to learn about Japanese culture, food, and famous landmarks. Since I hope to study in Japan in the future, this program taught me things that will be especially important for me moving forward.

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

	
October 9, 2025 (Instagram) University Student (Japan) Yesterday, I participated in the first session of the Myanmar Exchange Project, "Let's Learn About Myanmar!" After Japan's defeat in the war, Burmese rice from Myanmar helped save Japan from a food shortage. In return, Japan has continued to support Myanmar by building bridges and providing assistance for earthquakes. I hope this mutually supportive relationship will continue in the future!	November 25, 2025 (Instagram) University Student (Japan) I am delighted to have joined this online program with people from Myanmar. I learned a lot about your culture and lifestyle. I was especially interested in Thanaka, and if I visit Myanmar, I would love to try it! I was also happy to know that you are curious about Japanese culture. Although the program has finished, I will never forget this experience!



November 19, 2025 (Instagram)
 University Student (Myanmar)
 Day 2 of JENESYS online exchange program
 I'm proud to represent as a Myanmar presenter in JENESYS online exchange program. Today, I talked about Myanmar Historical Pagodas. I was so excited about it. But I did it well even though this was my first time in this JENESYS online exchange program. Today was a good day with learning Japanese & Myanmar cultures. After our presentation, we discussed with Japanese students. It was so enjoyable introducing each other. Thanks for choosing to join this program. I'd love to participate in five days.

November 30, 2025 (Instagram)
 University Student (Myanmar)
 I really enjoyed participating this online program. Even though it was a short period and not in-person, I become more understanding about the Japanese food, dessert, culture and their lifestyle. Furthermore, I got Japanese and Burmese new friends and become closer with them after joining breakout rooms sessions and doing workshop together. All groups have to present about the action plan for coming three months is the best part for me and I believe it makes us to be improved our skills and knowledge.

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

Locations: Tokyo, Fukuoka, Myanmar – Presentations by a total of 5 groups

Japanese University Students' Group



【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings from the program

1. The Appeal of Japan:

Japanese tea, especially matcha, comes in a wide range of varieties, and the names change depending on the tea leaves and the method of preparation. Japanese history and regional cultures—such as coal-mining towns, castle towns, and traditional festivals—drew particular interest from the Myanmar participants.

2. The Appeal of Myanmar

Myanmar's rich and distinctive traditions, including Buddhist culture symbolized by its golden pagodas and the use of thanaka, left a strong impression on us. The coexistence of many ethnic groups, along with the warmth and kindness of the people, is a major part of Myanmar's charm.

3. Differences and Similarities Between Japan and Myanmar

Differences:

In Myanmar, extended families tend to live together, and mutual support plays a strong role in daily life. In contrast, Japan more commonly has nuclear families and places greater emphasis on individual lifestyles. Food culture also differs: Myanmar cuisine uses more oil and still has a tradition of eating with their hands, while Japanese cuisine is characterized by broth (dashi), fermentation, and the use of chopsticks.

Similarities:

Both countries place great value on politeness and are deeply influenced by Buddhism. Traditional culture—such as festivals and ethnic clothing—is preserved with pride. And interestingly, both Japan and Myanmar share the custom of taking their shoes off at the entrance of their homes.

【Action Plan】

1. Sharing Information on Instagram

To spark interest in different cultures among younger generations, we will post about foreign countries on Instagram for eight months—twice a month, for a total of 16 posts. Each of the eight Japanese members will be in charge of a month.

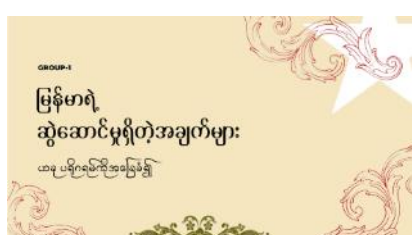
The first post of each month will introduce basic information of a country, such as its location, cost of living, and national flag. The second post will focus on a theme chosen by the member, with the goal of making viewers feel inspired to visit the country.

2. Hosting a “Myanmar Party”

On either February 7 or 8, we will host a “Myanmar Party” for about 30 participants—including Japanese students and international students who speak Japanese.

We will introduce Myanmar’s location, national flag, and food culture, followed by a cooking session where we make and taste *mohinga*, the country’s national dish. We also plan to connect online with people in Myanmar for a live Q&A session. If we can obtain thanaka wood, participants will also get to experience making traditional thanaka cream.

Myanmar Participants Group 1



【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings from the program

1. The Appeal of Japan:

Japanese cuisine is rich and appealing, and the scenery that change with the seasons and cultural heritage allow us to feel the depth of Japan’s history.

Their polite greetings also reflect a cultural value placed on showing respect to others.

2. The Appeal of Myanmar

Myanmar’s traditional dances are beautifully expressive, and thanaka is a traditional cosmetic that is also used as a natural sunscreen.

The golden pagodas, shining brightly across the country, are iconic historical symbols of Myanmar.

3. Differences and Similarities Between Japan and Myanmar

Differences:

Japan has four distinct seasons, trains are the main mode of transportation, and it is common for students to work part-time jobs.

Myanmar has three seasons—summer, rainy season, and winter—people mainly use buses for transportation, and students rarely work part-time.

Similarities:

Both Japan and Myanmar are home to many UNESCO World Heritage sites.

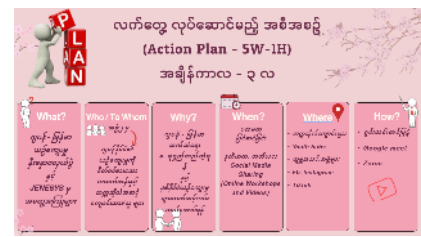
In both countries, tea is widely consumed in various forms and plays an important role in daily life.

【Action Plan】

“Online Seminar on the JENESYS Program and Japanese Culture”

Together as a group of twelve members, we plan to hold a monthly online seminar—using Zoom during the third week of each month—targeted at young people in Myanmar. The purpose of these sessions is to deepen their understanding of the JENESYS program and Japanese culture, while also helping broaden future opportunities for Myanmar youth. Each seminar will feature an explanation of the JENESYS program, the experiences of program alumni, presentations on Japanese culture, information about studying in Japan including scholarship options, and a Q&A session.

Myanmar Participants Group 2



【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings from the program

1. The Appeal of Japan:

In Japan, people can enjoy the beauty of four distinct seasons, and the country is home to many famous mountains across different regions.

2. The Appeal of Myanmar

With its warm climate and fertile land, Myanmar has a thriving agricultural sector. As a multiethnic society, it is also a place where diverse cultures coexist harmoniously.

3. Differences and Similarities Between Japan and Myanmar

Differences:

Japan, being surrounded by the ocean, has a highly developed fishing industry, while in Myanmar, fishing is common only in certain regions. The countries also differ in their food cultures—people in Myanmar regularly eat *mohinga*, a rice-noodle dish that resembles thin wheat noodles.

Similarities:

Both Japan and Myanmar have regional dialects, and in both countries, rice is a staple food. Japan's *mitarashi dango* is also somewhat similar to Myanmar's traditional sticky-rice sweets.

【Action Plan】

“Sharing the JENESYS Program and Japanese Culture”

To strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and Myanmar, we plan to share information about Japan's scenic spots, housing, traditional sweets, and our experiences from this online exchange with high school and university students in Myanmar who are interested in Japanese culture. For the month following the end of this program, we will develop a detailed plan and produce informational videos. Two to three months later, we will hold an online workshop via Zoom or another platform. We will also share the content through Facebook and TikTok, and let people in universities and related organizations know about the posts. Participants who show interest will be encouraged to apply for future JENESYS programs.

Myanmar Participants Group 3



【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings from the program

1. The Appeal of Japan:

Japan's food culture is full of charm, with sweets such as *dorayaki*, matcha mochi, and *ozōni*. At the Namahage Museum, visitors can try on traditional costumes and learn about the folklore behind the Namahage, known for their striking and powerful masks. In Takayama City in Gifu Prefecture, the traditional Takayama Festival—held in spring and autumn—celebrates the deities and marks seasonal transitions.

2. The Appeal of Myanmar

Tea-leaf salad and *mohinga* are among Myanmar's representative dishes. In Yangon, the Shwedagon Pagoda stands as the most famous pagoda in the country, drawing many worshippers on holidays. The Water Festival held in April celebrates the New Year, and the dances performed by the people of the Karen at New Year gatherings and other traditional events are a wonderful example of how cultural heritage continues to be preserved today.

3. Differences and Similarities Between Japan and Myanmar

Differences:

Myanmar receives more annual rainfall than Japan, and snow falls only in certain mountainous regions. In Japan, many university students live alone and work part-time jobs, whereas most university students in Myanmar live with their families and rarely have part-time work—many would like to, but do not have the opportunity.

Similarities:

Many traditional sweets in both countries are made from glutinous rice. Serving tea when welcoming guests is also a shared custom. In addition, both Japan and Myanmar have traditions of “cleansing away the old year” when welcoming the New Year.

【Action Plan】

“Two Nations, One Taste: Sharing Japanese and Myanmar Culture Through Sweets”

We plan to introduce sweets from both Japan and Myanmar on Instagram, targeting young people who are interested in the cultures and foods of both countries. Our goals are to (1) deepen cultural understanding, (2) showcase traditional sweets from each country, and (3) encourage cultural exchange through the theme of sweet foods.

In the first week, we will introduce representative sweets. In the second and third weeks, we will post videos featuring four varieties from each country. In the fourth week, we will summarize the similarities and differences and invite comments from viewers. We will promote participation in the JENESYS program and share our content widely through social media.

Myanmar Participants Group 4



【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings from the program

We would like to present five key aspects of Japanese and Myanmar culture that we noticed during this program, focusing on their similarities and differences.

1. Ozoni and Tea-Leaf Salad

Similarity:

Both dishes are deeply rooted in traditional culture and reflect each country's values.

Difference:

Ozoni is a New Year soup with fixed ingredients, while tea-leaf salad is not a soup and is eaten throughout the year.

2. Kimono and Myanmar Traditional Dress

Similarity:

Both represent important elements of traditional culture and are worn during special seasons, festivals, and events.

Difference:

Myanmar's traditional clothing can be worn daily, whereas kimono is usually reserved for special occasions and often features patterns inspired by nature.

3. Chūson-ji Temple and Shwedagon Pagoda

Similarity:

Both are famous historical structures closely connected to tradition and serve as national symbols that express cultural values.

Difference:

The Shwedagon Pagoda is golden and located in a lively area, while Chūson-ji is wooden and surrounded by a quiet forest.

4. The Takayama Festival and the Festival of Lights (Tazaungdaing)

Similarity:

Both celebrations feature beautiful lantern decorations and traditional clothing. Families gather to enjoy the festival together while passing down cultural traditions.

Difference:

Myanmar's Festival of Lights is held once a year to welcome the Buddha and centers around worship, while the Takayama Festival is held twice a year and features portable shrines paraded through the town.

5. *Gujo Odori* and Myanmar Traditional Dance

Similarity:

Both countries treasure their traditional clothing and dances as important cultural heritage.

Difference:

They differ in music and movement. *Gujo Odori* is held only once a year and continues all night long, while Myanmar's traditional dances are performed at many festivals and events throughout the year.

【Action Plan】

“Sharing Japanese Traditional Culture, Cuisine, and Experiences from the JENESYS Program”

We plan to hold an online seminar for young people in Myanmar who are interested in Japanese culture. We will share what we learned through the JENESYS Program, and give a demonstration of the tea ceremony (matcha), as well as introductions to Japanese foods such as *takoyaki*, *dorayaki*, and Kanto-style *ozoni*. Through these activities, we hope participants will gain a closer connection to Japanese traditions and cuisine.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)