



November 2016

# Newsletter



## The 2016 KKC Japan Study Tour

Amy Boots, Executive Director  
The Japan-America Society of Pennsylvania

### About the KKC Japan Study Tour

Since 1980, more than 600 U.S. and Canadian social studies teachers have taken part in the KKC Study Tour to Japan. The program aims to deepen participants' understanding of Japan and contribute to international mutual understanding across the Pacific. Their experiences and findings in Japan have significant value to their students, who will build future ties with Japan.

The KKC Study Tour to Japan is filled with opportunities to:

- Interact with Japanese students and teachers
- Discuss with scholars and experts on Japanese society
- Meet business leaders
- Enjoy traditional and contemporary Japanese culture



Each June, ten strangers arrive in a strange land for ten days of study. Each July, ten friends leave a country that they have begun to know over their short stay. The Keizai Koho Teacher Fellowship has, over 35 years, introduced Japan and its people to educators throughout the United States and Canada.

This summer, nine Americans and one Canadian had the chance to experience Japanese business, government, education, and culture for the first time.

The 2016 Fellowship began

with a session about Japan's educational system, followed by a visit to the US Embassy to learn about student exchange. During several corporate visits including Sanrio, Nissan, Sony, Dentsu, and Dai-Ichi Life Research Institute, the Fellows learned about a variety of industries that have driven Japan to be a leader in the global economy. In addition to Japan's domestic economy and the challenges of population decline, the companies shared their insights on recruitment, research and development, and international strategy and marketing.

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## What Can You Gain From the Fellowship?

Arpan Chokshi, 2016 KKC Fellow

### Understand Complexity of Cultures

While attending the seminars led by scholars of economics, government policy and education, I realized how complex the task of a policymakers is. As an economics teacher, I was especially interested in Prime Minister Abe's efforts to stimulate the economy by increasing money supply and spurring investment. However, while the challenges facing policymakers were mere footnotes in my economics text, they were very real issues that came to life because I learned how demographics, economics and culture are all intertwined. For instance, Japan faces a declining labor supply due to an aging population (however, it should be noted that more women are joining the workplace). Also, a strong cultural identity encourages hard work but makes immigration a less plausible short-term policy solution. Therefore, despite ambitious government policies to revive the economy, Japan faces significant challenges.

This insight is just one example of how the seminars I attended in Japan will help me teach about Japan's policies in a more sophisticated and nuanced manner.

### Collect Cultural Artifacts

Having a wide range of cultural experiences allowed me to collect artifacts that will help my students do the real work of social scientists. Video of fans chanting in unison at a Tokyo Giants baseball game, pictures of a Tokyo apartment from my homestay, and maps of Tokyo's subway system will be launch pads for inquiry into Japan. My World Cultures students will have the opportunity to explore deeper questions about the values, policies and history of Japan by examining these artifacts.



### Connect with Teachers

Perhaps the most valuable experience was building lifelong relationships with the teachers in my cohort. Unprompted, everyday, whether we were on a bus, subway or streets of Tokyo, we found ourselves discussing our classes at home and how might use what we saw that day. Since returning from Japan, we have continued to share curriculum ideas, articles and videos. The teachers I met across North America will be invaluable resources as I continue to refine my curriculum and look for innovative ways to help my students better understand Japan.

## New Opportunities to Share My Knowledge About Japan

Jennifer West, 2016 KKC Fellow

Traveling with the 2016 Keizai Koho Center Fellowship program this past summer was truly a transformative experience. The program did an excellent job of introducing us to Japan through cultural activities, speakers from think tanks and government agencies, and through visits to private businesses and Japanese classrooms.

Upon returning from the fellowship, I have had multiple opportunities to share with others about my visit. I never realized how often Japan comes up in conversations among my colleagues, or how family and friends will mention something that brings Japanese culture or products to mind. I often find myself sharing my new knowledge and better understanding of Japan without having planned a lesson or formal presentation. These authentic opportunities to speak about Japan have been rewarding- I feel everyone has ultimately been more interested in Japan after having spoken with me.

In my classroom, my students are now enthralled with all things Japan!

I have already had the opportunity to speak about my travels in my world history course- and this will only increase in frequency as the curriculum progresses toward the 20th and 21st century. In teaching about early Japan, I shared photos of my visits to shrines and the Zen Buddhist meditation- which was helpful when speaking about the syncretic nature of religion in Japan. I have additionally taught my current events students about Japan's economy, its political relationship with the U.S., the impending demographic issues of the country, and the upcoming hosting of the Olympic games.

In addition to teaching about Japan in my classroom, I presented photos and information from my trip with the International Club that I host at my high school.

***I find the more I speak about Japan, the more students and colleagues realize that I am a resource to them on the topic-***

***something I could never have provided without the Keizai Koho experience.***

This is a picture of me at the Kansas City Japan Festival- I have found several connections between the city I teach in and Japanese community organizations!



## Becoming an Ambassador of the Japanese People

Christopher Spaman, 2016 KKC Fellow

In the summer of 2016, I was honored to be selected by the Keizai Koho Center for their competitive teacher fellowship. My two week visit allowed me to meet with educators, governmental officials and business leaders as well as visit historical & cultural sites throughout Japan. This has provided me, as a World History and AP Human Geography teacher, with a better understanding of modern Japan.

During the 2016-2017 school year I have been able to incorporate my fellowship experiences into exciting new lesson plans as well as to run workshops for members of the high school community. During my trip, our group met with a Japanese economist from the Japan Research Institute. I used this valuable session to develop a lesson on the impact of a shrinking population on Japan's economy. Subsequently my class and I discussed this issue and proposed possible solutions to this economic problem. Likewise, I have led workshops which include speaking to my colleagues about the Japanese education system, teaching meditation to AP students during our summer bridge program, and leading a calligraphy class for students of the Future Teachers of

America program.

Upon returning home, I have received emails from teachers throughout the country asking for advice on becoming a KKC fellow. My recommendation to these teachers and to all who wish to be part of this amazing program is to communicate your interest in Japanese history and culture. Additionally, it is important to provide the KKC with a vision of how your time in Japan will benefit your students, colleagues, and the community. Potential fellows also need to be aware that ***by becoming a KKC fellow, one also takes on the added responsibility of becoming an ambassador of the Japanese people.*** This means that as a KKC fellow, one must help to foster a positive relationship between the US and Japan and its people.

I am thankful to the KKC, all the educators, administrators, business leaders, and governmental officials who took time out of their busy schedule to meet and educate us about Japan. I will always remember the fellows and KKC staff who made my time in Japan so special.



**Join us at the NCSS Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. (Dec. 2-3, 2016)**

The NCSS Annual Conference in Washington DC is coming up and Keizai Koho Center will be there with a KKC booth on Dec 2-3. We will also be hosting the following events:

**KKC Reception:**

Friday, Dec. 2, 6:00-8:00 PM

Venue: Marriott Marquis

Scarlet Oak Room,

Mezzanine floor

(901 Massachusetts Ave NW,

Washington DC, 20001-4307)

**KKC Japan Session:**

Sat. Dec. 3, 10:30-11:30 AM.

Venue: Exhibit Hall, Classroom B  
(Walter E. Washington Convention Center)

**Japan Study Tour: [www.kkc.or.jp/english/fellowship](http://www.kkc.or.jp/english/fellowship)**

**Contact us at: [fellowship@kkc.or.jp](mailto:fellowship@kkc.or.jp)**

**Japan Lesson Plans can be downloaded at:**

**[www.kkc.or.jp/english/fellowship/lessonplan/](http://www.kkc.or.jp/english/fellowship/lessonplan/)**

## Highlights from the 2016 Japan Study Tour

### [School Visit]

Four teachers gave lessons to Japanese students at Mejiro Kenshin High School on July 1.

The topics of the lessons were as follows:

Arpan Chokshi (Globalization & Cultural Diffusion: Japan & US)  
Cindy Downing (Discovery Bags)  
Robert Jardine  
(The Land of Living Skies)  
Aaron Levesque (The Great Forests of New Hampshire)

The students were listening very carefully with interest.

Teachers of Mejiro Kenshin were much satisfied, saying, ***"It is a very good opportunity our students to be taught directly by North American teachers."***



**Kohei Muramatsu  
Senior Fellow, KKC**

I was seconded to KKC from Toyota this January and conducted the coordination of this program for the first time. I arranged most of the visits of the 2016 Japan Study Tour and provided occasions for North American teachers to understand Japan.

I believe this program has been contributing much to strengthening mutual understanding between US/Canada and Japan over 35 years.

I am very proud of being a part of this program and would like to contribute to its further development.

### [Company Visit]

On June 28, the teachers visited Sanrio Puroland, the theme park of Sanrio Company. The most famous character of the company is Hello Kitty.

The teachers met with various Sanrio characters and were able to feel the company's philosophy very well.

Mr. Tohmatsu, PR manager of Sanrio explained their activities in North America. The teachers and Mr. Tohmatsu also discussed the potential of their new character in the North American market. ***"The visit was fruitful for Sanrio too."*** said Mr. Tohmatsu.



## Globalizing My Classroom

Amber Lewis, 2016 KKC Fellow

My fellowship with the Keizai Koho Center was one of the most fulfilling professional development experiences I have ever had as an educator. Without hesitation, I can say that participating in the KKC program has made me a better social studies teacher and provided me with a wealth of new knowledge to share with my students and colleagues. The opportunity to learn first hand about Japanese culture, businesses, and educational systems, as well as seeing Japan's landscape with my own eyes, made a profound impact on my ability to teach about these topics with depth and relevancy.

The caliber of professional experiences that the leaders of the Keizai Koho Center arranged for the summer 2016 program was truly remarkable. The opportunity to visit Japanese schools where we spoke with students, teachers, and administrators allowed the fellows to develop a sense of how we might integrate our experiences in Japan into our own classrooms. Speaking with professionals at major Japanese corporations like Sanrio, Nissan, and Sony, as well as experts on Japan's economy provided

insight for lessons regarding international trade and globalized markets that will help our students understand that America's economy does not exist in a vacuum. During the program we also had countless opportunities to learn about Japanese culture and daily life. Having the chance to stay with a family in Tokyo was something that I'll never forget and the visit to Buddhist temples in Kyoto had a lasting impact on me personally. Both experiences also gave me some fantastic information to share with my students in the classroom.

As a geography teacher in Rural Nebraska, one of my primary objectives is to globalize my classroom and bring the world to my students. Many of my students struggle to imagine the world beyond the boundaries of their own community. Being able to share personal stories with them about the time I spent in Japan allows them to connect to the world on an entirely different level than if I were to show a video or presentation with information I got from



the internet.

As someone who also grew up in rural Nebraska, I understand the limited perspective that my students can have.

***By sharing my experiences with the KKC Fellowship Program, I hope to ignite a sense of adventure in my students and encourage them to seek ways to build global connections.***

I am eternally grateful to the Keizai Koho Center for giving me the opportunity to travel to Japan and for putting such a phenomenal program together for teachers from the United States and Canada. My fellowship with the KKC has made an enduring and immeasurable impact on my career as an educator.

## Realizing the Value of U.S.-Japan Relations

Bryan Wallace, 2016 KKC Fellow



During my recent trip to Japan from late June to early July, 2016, I met and conversed with people from all walks of life, from store clerks and teachers to corporate executives and economists, and during these interactions a surprising theme emerged. After the requisite pleasantries and small talk, one question seemed to be on the mind of many Japanese people: "What do you think of the U.S. presidential election?"

Initially, I simply chalked the ubiquity of this question up to the tendency of U.S. presidential elections to capture foreign news cycles, or even the idea that this election in particular, with all its volatility and unpredictability, might elicit some fascination for a culture that places such a high value on propriety and respect. But there was something about the manner in which this question was asked, with an occasional furrow of the brow and an air of trepidation, which led me to believe that it was more than political or cultural curiosity that was driving people to ask for my thoughts. What I began to realize is that people seemed to be asking this question out of genuine concern.

But why such concern about another country's election on the far side

of the Pacific Rim when the Japanese people had myriad domestic and regional issues of their own to occupy their attention, including an important Diet election approaching in July, and territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Despite these and other pressing issues, the question was still there, resurfacing in every interaction. What I began to realize was that maybe the question was not driven by curiosity but rather by anxiety, and that viewing it as something separate from the domestic issues referenced above was perhaps a fallacious interpretation.

This year's presidential election has certainly contained the usual debates over domestic and economic issues such as the national debt, immigration, Supreme Court nominations, and social issues like gun violence and civil rights. Foreign policy has also been of great concern with events in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan at the forefront of many U.S. citizens' minds. But in a marked difference to many past elections, economic and diplomatic relations with Japan have occasionally emerged in policy discussions, with topics ranging from trade relations and the viability of the TPP to nuclear proliferation, the U.S. military presence in Japan, and the role of Japan in U.S. and regional security. For Americans, this election and its sometimes incendiary campaign rhetoric has revealed deep rifts in the fabric of American ideals and stark differences in our vision for our country's future.

For the Japanese people, this same rhetoric, when concerning them, might call into question the very nature of the relationship between these two nations. This relationship has evolved into an important guarantor for regional security, an economic alliance neither country can do without, and a source of partnership for international issues and proposals. It has become a clear force for peace and stability and a bedrock alliance in a geopolitical climate that is increasingly grounded in change and uncertainty. It follows, given these realities, that an informed Japanese citizen might be unnerved by any reexamination of such a defining part of their historical and contemporary worldview. Hence, delivered however casually, the question about the U.S. election begins to clarify itself. It is a question not about the vagaries of U.S. electoral politics, but about the state of two nations; about the future of a region; about the foundations of a mutual philosophy.

It is possible that there existed a need to remind the citizens and governments of both nations of the nature and value of this relationship, or at least a need to declare it again publicly; to affirm to each other, and the world, the critical importance of this long-standing partnership.

(by Amy Boots, continued from p.1)

The Fellows visited five schools in Tokyo and Kyoto, both private and public. They observed the differences in teaching styles and talked with students in English classes about their lives. These meetings were an invaluable opportunity to connect with students, not only to learn about their everyday experiences, but also to pique their interest in the lives of North Americans. A teacher roundtable provided a chance for the Fellows to talk with Japanese teachers and share their challenges and insights. The session was richly rewarding for both sides.

Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki, former Ambassador to the United States and current president of the America-Japan Society, shared his views of the issues affecting the governments of the two countries

in a very frank and informative discussion

The Fellows were placed in homes in the Tokyo area for one night of homestay with a Japanese family for a window onto everyday life in Japan. After returning with a wealth of experiences, the Fellows took the bullet train from Tokyo to Kyoto, Japan's cultural capital, to see UNESCO World Heritage sites like the Golden Pavilion and the famous rock garden of Ryoanji Temple.

Finally, after touring Japan's seat of government, the Diet Building, Fellows participated in a panel discussion on the "Challenges of U.S.-Japan People-to-People Exchange and expressed their views to an audience of educators and business leaders.

The Fellows left Japan bound to share their lessons with their students to keep the kizuna (bonds) between the countries strong.



Kinkaku-ji Temple  
(Golden Pavilion)