

2026 Short-term Study Program in Green Shinshu

Experience the Traditional Perspectives on Nature and Life rooted in Shinshu's Mountain Faith, Shinto and Zen essences & Food Culture and Sustainable Food System in Green Shinshu

Part 1: Experiencing Japanese nature and traditional perspective through;

- Mountain faith with Shinto Shrines
- Buddhism Temple and Zazen- Shojin cuisine practice
- Time-Travel from the Jōmon to the Edo Period discovering Jōmon Pottery and current Lacquerware crafts"

Part 2: Exploring SDGs with Shinshu's food, agriculture & environment

- Fermented food tour and Japanese food culture.
- Hands on practices in Satoyama farming in hilly and mountainous areas.
- Comparisons with Japanese food and healthy diet.

✓ Period: May 26 (Tue) morning – June 6th (Sat) evening, 2026
(Check in the guest house in Matsumoto city on May 25th / Check out on June 7th).

* Nawate Guest House: <https://www.nawateguesthouse.com/>



Program Introduction Video ▼ <https://youtu.be/Nh-N71wJUbc>

Part 1: Japanese Nature & Traditoinal Perspective

- Trek Kamikochi & visit Hotaka Shrine to experience mountain faith
- Participate in Zazen meditation and shojin cuisine workshop including Mottainai sprits and behaviours.
- Discover Jomon pottery origins and Kiso lacquerware traditions

Mountainous nature and Japanese faith



Forest and Spring in Mountain



Shrine

Foundations of Japanese habits and lifestyle



Zazen in temple



Shojin Cuisine



Earthenware in Jomon era (5000 years ago)



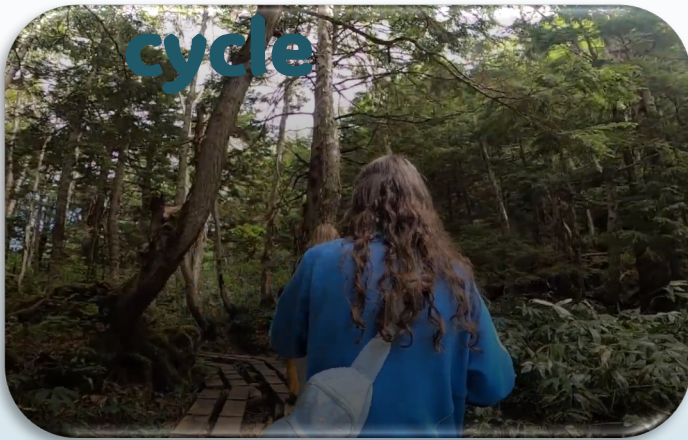
Lacquerware in Kiso

Part 2: Food culture and Sustainable Food System

- Tour a forest resources and water cycle in natural environment
- Engage in sustainable farming training in Shinshu's satoyama
- Tour a local fermentation industries to explore food innovation
- Hands-on Japanese cuisine cooking workshop: mindful food culture

Food system in ecological

cycle



Forest tour



Rice transplanting



Traditional Miso-factory tour



Japanese food with Miso

Cooking skills and knowledge on Healthy Food



Cooking practice and discussion for healthy food



Programme Fee and other necessary cost

Programme Summary

- ✓ **Period:** May 26 (Tue) morning – June 6th (Sat) evening, 2026
(Check in the guest house in Matsumoto city on May 25th / Check out on June 7th).
- ✓ **Application guide** will be available in October on the Shinshu University's web-site.
- ✓ **Programme fee** (to be paid to Shinshu University in advance): Approximately 350,000JPY (2,300USD/1,750GBP) including accommodation, transportation, tour guide, visit and entrance, and hands on activities during the programme in Nagano Prefecture.
- ✓ **Other necessary cost** (to be covered directly by participants: including airfare, transportation from International air-port to JR Matsumoto station, and in town areas of Matsumoto (e.g., between guest house and campus), travel insurance (medical and accident coverage, and liability and property damage coverage), and daily meals.

Contact Email Address

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Hands on Collaborative Learning Experiences



Rice transplanting



Sticky rice making (Mochi-tsuki)

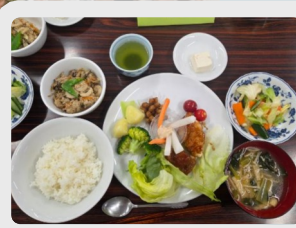


After final presentations



Collaborative experiences

Photo Gallery from the Green Shinshu program in 2025 June



Schedule Overview

Date	Activities	Main Location	Learning Theme
May 25 (Mon)	Students arrive in Matsumoto and are guided to their accommodations		
May 26 (Tue)	Program Opening: Orientation, Survival Japanese, Campus Tour, Welcome Gathering	Matsumoto Campus	Introduction to Shinshu University and the local community; relationship building
May 27 (Wed)	Kamikochi Forest Environment: • Faculty of Science Kamikochi Station: Natural circulation and water systems • Hotaka Shrine Okumiya (Mountain Worship)	Kamikochi	Understanding nature and lifestyle through mountain faith; appreciation of forest and water resources
May 28 (Thu)	Hotaka Shrine: Morning: Lecture by Shinto priest (Mountain worship, Shintoism, and people's view of nature and life) Afternoon: Tour to learn about mountains, forests, water, agriculture, and rural life	Azumino City	Shinto perspectives on nature; relationship between religion and the environment; connection between natural environment and human life
May 29 (Fri)	Zen Temple: Zazen (meditation) experience, Dharma talk, Shojin-ryori (vegetarian cuisine) experience + The spirit of Mottainai * Planned invitation of Rev. Tokuchin Ueno, a Soto Zen priest who operates a Zen café in Matsumoto	Hiraide and Hirasawa, Shiojiri City	Daily life, food utensils, and traditional crafts
May 30 (Sat)	Independent Student Exploration Day: Small group travel (within train-accessible areas). Options include: • Hiraide Ruins, Hirasawa Lacquerware, Narai-juku • Jomon pottery and lacquerware workshops and lectures • Sightseeing in Hakuba or Norikura	Individually selected	Independent exploration and refreshment

Schedule Overview

Date	Activities	Main Location	Learning Theme
May 31 (Sun)	Free Day / Rest	Individually selected	Independent exploration and refreshment
June 1 (Mon)	Agriculture and Washoku Experience: Visit wasabi fields and soba-making workshop	Matsumoto & Azumino	Modern Japanese cuisine (Washoku)
June 2 (Tue)	Agricultural Experience: Rice field work in Azumino	Matsumoto & Azumino	Agricultural practice
June 3 (Wed)	Fermented Foods: Visit a miso brewery, experience miso-based lunch; "Find the spring water in Matsumoto!"	Matsumoto City	Agricultural practice and food culture
June 4 (Thu)	Fermented Foods: Oyaki (fermented dumpling) making Optional: Visit a sake brewery or additional Oyaki session	Matsumoto / Azumino	Development of fermentation industries and appeal of fermented foods
June 5 (Fri)	Reflection and Preparation: Group discussions and creation of presentation materials	Ina City or Matsumoto area	Review and synthesis of agricultural experiences
June 6 (Sat)	Final Day: Morning – Final reflections and preparation Afternoon – Presentation session & certificate ceremony Evening – Farewell party Program Ends	Matsumoto Campus	Sustainable food, environment, and perspectives on nature
June 7 (Sun)	Students check out from hotels and depart		

Course Syllabus: JAPN199 Explore Green Shinshu: Nature, Food, Sustainable Life style, Global Apprenticeship

Nature walk, Meditation, Global Apprenticeship in Japan

Summer 2026

May 25th – June 7th: Nagano, Japan

General Information

Prof. Kazue Masuyama e-mail: masuyama@csus.edu
<https://www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/world-languages-literatures/meet-us/>

Catalog Description

JAPN 199. Special Problems. 1 - 3 Units

Individual project or directed reading. Open only to students competent to carry on independent study. Note: Departmental petition required.

Course Description

This course offers an immersive academic and cultural experience in collaboration with Shinshu University. Through a 14-day on-site program in Nagano, students explore how Japan's unique worldview—shaped by its natural environment, spirituality, craftsmanship, and food traditions—connects to the global pursuit of sustainability.

The program is divided into two parts: Part 1 "Japanese View of Nature and the World" – Students learn how nature, religion, and traditional arts express Japan's environmental consciousness and worldview; and Part 2 "Sustainability in Food, Agriculture, and the Environment" – Students participate in agricultural training, fermentation-food production, and discussions on sustainable food systems and community revitalization in rural Nagano.

Prerequisites for this course:

No prior Japanese language proficiency is required. However, familiarity with Japanese language and cultural knowledge will be helpful during the program. Students with higher proficiency are also encouraged to participate, but the program is designed to be inclusive for beginners.

Credits: 1 unit or 3 unit (Variable)

1 unit: Completion of pre-departure and on-site assignments (Learning Objectives 1 – 3).

3 units: Completion of all pre-departure, on-site, and final research/report assignments (Learning Objectives 1 – 4). Students may register for 3 units in summer 2026 or 1 unit in summer + 2 units in Fall 2026.

Learning Objectives (LO) and Assignments

This course integrates academic learning with experiential fieldwork to deepen understanding of Japan's worldview, sustainability, and intercultural communication. Through lectures, site visits, collaborative discussions, and hands-on agricultural experiences, students will connect theory with practice and reflect on Japan's approach to sustainable living and community resilience.

LO1 – Understanding Japan’s Worldview through Nature and Culture

Student will identify how Japan’s spiritual and cultural practices reflect harmony with nature and everyday life. Assignment: Participation in lectures and site visits (Kamikōchi, shrines, temples, craft studios).

LO2 – Intercultural Discussion on Tradition and Modernity

Student will compare Japan’s traditional values and lifestyles with students’ own cultural perspectives. Assignment: Collaborative discussions with Shinshu students; short reflection paper.

LO3 – Experiential Learning in Agriculture and Food Sustainability

Student will gain firsthand understanding of sustainable agriculture and fermentation practices in rural Nagano. Assignment: Participation in farm and factory visits; daily reports.

LO4 – Critical Analysis of Sustainability and Global Food Systems (for 3-unit students only)

Student will analyze environmental, demographic, and economic challenges affecting sustainable food systems. Assignment: Comprehensive final report or multimedia project integrating research and field experience.

Upon completion, students will be able to:

1. Describe how Japanese traditional beliefs, arts, and food systems reflect harmony with nature and current issues of the food systems.
2. Compare Japanese and global approaches to sustainability and community life.
3. Engage responsibly in cross-cultural collaboration and fieldwork.
4. Communicate insights through academic writing and multimedia presentation (for 3-unit students only)

Course Stages

Stage I – Pre-Departure Preparation: Canvas readings, self-introduction, and orientation.

Pre-departure materials, available on Canvas, include readings and short video lectures on Japan’s worldview, food systems, globalization, and sustainability challenges. Students will complete self-paced assignments and reflection questions prior to departure. These materials are designed to help students understand key concepts such as *nature and spirituality in Japanese culture, the relationship between agriculture and the environment, and the global context of sustainable food systems.*

Stage II – On-Site Program: 14-day immersion at Shinshu University with lectures, fieldwork, and collaborative learning.

The **14-day Shinshu Summer Program** offers a comprehensive field-based learning experience that integrates lectures, fieldwork, and collaborative projects with Shinshu University students.

Part 1 (“Japanese View of Nature and the World”) introduces Japan’s unique environmental and spiritual worldview through site visits to shrines, temples, and cultural heritage locations, as well as hands-on experiences in traditional crafts and Zen practices. Students will discuss how these experiences reflect Japanese values of harmony, mindfulness, and sustainability.

Part 2 (“Sustainability in Food, Agriculture, and Environment”) provides hands-on engagement in local agricultural communities. Participants will take part in field activities such as rice cultivation, soil and water resource management, and visits to fermentation-food producers (miso and sake).

Students will stay in traditional housing or farm-stay accommodations, allowing immersion in rural community life. They will explore issues of depopulation, aging society, and the balance between human activity and nature.

In addition to farm work, students will join **cooking activities using local produce**, connecting household practices to the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and learning how sustainable lifestyles can be integrated into everyday routines.

Active participation is required in all scheduled activities — including punctual attendance, active discussion, and respectful interaction with community members and Shinshu partners. As representatives of Sacramento State, students must demonstrate professionalism, curiosity, and cultural sensitivity at all times.

Stage III – Post-Program Project: Reflective report or multimedia project due within 3 weeks after return.

Students earning 3 units will submit a comprehensive final project that synthesizes their internship experience and personal research findings. Possible formats include:

- **Video Presentation:** A short documentary or narrated reflection video showcasing field experiences, findings, and insights
- **Journal Report:** A detailed written record of daily observations, analyses, and cultural reflections
- **Website Portfolio:** A curated website presenting research results, photos, interviews, and reflections
- **Multimedia Presentation:** A creative combination of visuals, writing, and recorded commentary providing a holistic overview of learning outcomes

Assessment and Grading (1 Unit)

Students enrolled for 1 unit will be evaluated based on their pre-departure preparation and on-site participation during the Shinshu program.

1. Pre-Departure Orientation Assignments (30%)

Students are expected to complete all required pre-departure materials on Canvas, including readings, video lectures, and reflection assignments. Active participation in the orientation session and submission of a self-introduction video are also required. These assignments ensure that students are prepared to engage meaningfully with the cultural and sustainability themes explored during the on-site program.

2. Shinshu University Program Participation and Assignments (70%)

Students must actively participate in all lectures, field visits, workshops, and discussions at Shinshu University and partner sites. This component includes submission of daily reflection journals (approximately 300–500 words per day), short written responses, and any assignments

or group presentations required by Shinshu faculty. Evaluation is based on attendance, engagement, collaboration, and demonstrated understanding of course themes.

Note:

The 1-unit version focuses on participation and experiential learning.

Students enrolling for 3 units will also complete a comprehensive final project or report that synthesizes their research and field experience.

Important Date:

April - May 2026

Pre-departure orientation @ Sac State / Zoom

You will need to be in Matsumoto by 5/25 on your own. You will check out from hotels and depart on June 7.

Appendix 1: Pre-Departure Orientation

TBA Self-Introduction

1. Introduce yourself in English (and Japanese) within 60 ~ 90 seconds.
2. Name, grade, major (minor), your hobby, your favorite foods, and anything you would like other people to know about you.
3. Learn about Japan's geography, transportation system, and major cities.
4. Learn how to get to Matsumoto from Tokyo airports (Haneda / Narita)

TBA Assignment 1: Watch 5 video lectures and write a brief report for each

1. Fermented Food and food culture in Japan.
2. Micro-organism in Fermented Food.
3. Shinshu's environment and food culture: 1-5 Food culture
4. Miso: 1-5 Food culture 1-7 Miso and Sake
5. Case study of Miso Company (Ishii-Miso)

TBA Assignment 2

1. Record your daily diets for 3 days in a week and estimate your monthly food cost including your self-cooking, delivery, and dining out.
2. Make a group presentation via ZOOM.

Post Program

1. Summarize your findings and key learning points from each activity.
2. Discuss issues, possible improvements, and your action plans for establishing a sustainable food system and environment.