



PETERS VALLEY SCHOOL OF CRAFT



SIGHTSEEING ITINERARY

May 23-June 3, 2020

Japanese Arts and Crafts



Traditional crafts have played an important role in making the culture of the Japanese distinctly its own. It can indeed be said that traditional crafts are the heart and soul of the Japanese culture. A country that spent much of its history in isolation, Japan claims unique arts and crafts traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation. The first dated traditional crafts in Japan date back in 10,000 BC when beautiful ceramic wares intended for day to day use were created. As time passed, traditional crafts developed from useful tools to fine pieces of art that became embedded in the Japanese culture. The mastery and craftsmanship of traditional handicrafts was passed down allowing the art to prosper and become increasingly sophisticated through time. As Japan opened up to the world in the middle of the 19th century, Western merchant ships were quick to return home with exotic art from the once reclusive nation. The private galleries and curiosity shops of London and Paris were flooded with Japanese woodblock prints, calligraphy and ceramics.

Japanese crafts can be classified into seven major types (textiles, pottery and ceramics, lacquerware, metalworking, doll-making, woodworking and papermaking) all employing various techniques and different materials to form different designs. However, each major traditional craft is further divided into different styles depending on the area of origin. Usually, styles are named from the prefecture where the technique was developed or made popular.

Day 1. Depart: Saturday May 23, 2020

Depart the US on an overnight flight to Japan.

Day 2. Tokyo. Sunday May 24, 2020

Arrive in Tokyo and after clearing immigration and customs formalities proceed to the Limousine Bus stop. We will provide tickets for the Limousine Bus which will transport the group to the hotel, the *Mitsui Garden Hotel Ginza Premier*.

Dinner tonight on your own.

Day 3. Tokyo. Monday May 25, 2020

B, L, D

Although Tokyo may be thought of today as a busy urban center, it was Japan's capital during the Edo period (1615 - 1868), a period of great significance in Japan's history. At the beginning of the 17th century, the country was unified under the Tokugawa family after years of civil unrest. The following years were ones of unprecedented peace and prosperity, prompting an increase in artistic, cultural and social development. Although Japan remained a basically agrarian society, towns and cities grew and craft production flourished.

This morning we will visit Japan's most important crafts museum. The **Mingeikan** or Japan Folk Crafts Museum was founded by Yanagi in 1936. The tranquil, traditional-style wooden building was designed by Yanagi to look like a country residence and houses an extensive collection of over 10,000 folk art objects from all over Japan, including textiles, pottery, metalwork, woodwork and paintings. It also exhibits work by Bernard Leach and a collection of Korean Yi dynasty crafts that were inspirational to the mingei artists.

Across the street is a traditional 19th-century long gatehouse, which was moved by Yanagi piece-by-piece from Tochigi Prefecture, north of Tokyo.

After lunch at a local restaurant meet with a **Kimono master**. For centuries Japanese have worn beautiful, hand-crafted kimonos, but the skills required to make one of the nation's most enduring cultural symbols is dying. Previously sustained by the need to dress an entire nation in traditional costume, it has today shrunk to a fraction of its former size. Once the garment of choice for samurai, aristocrats and workers alike, kimonos are rarely worn by today's young Japanese, who prefer to wear Western clothes. Even if a formal occasion does demand a kimono, they are likely to put on machine-made versions which are much less expensive to produce than a traditional handmade kimono.

Meet with **Yasumasa Komiya**, whose family has made the kimonos for 200 years. From the silk cocoon to the final product, there are more than 1,000 processes involved in one kimono, each carried out by different specialist craftsmen. It can take 40 years to master a single technique. Most craftsmen alive today are over 85 and within the next 10 years, many will pass away. Mr. Komiya's father and grandfather were designated Living National Treasures and in 2018, the Council for Cultural Affairs recommended that Mr. Komiya be given that honor – a living, breathing cultural asset to be protected – and one of the few artisans left who can undertake the delicate form of hand-painting kimono silk in pure gold.

Stop off at the **Mitsukoshi**, one of Japan's oldest department stores which began its life in 1673 as a kimono store. Today, its "kimono salon" spans an entire floor and is home to more than 30,000 handcrafted costumes, one of the biggest collections of handcrafts in the country. Designs range from

seasonal images – cherry blossoms, autumn leaves and sweeping scenes of nature – to delicate abstract patterns created using old dyeing techniques, hand painting or gold embroidery. Vivid hues such as scarlet are reserved for young women. The unmarried wore long hanging sleeves. Designs for older married women are in more subdued hues, with less flowing sleeves and subtle motifs.



A few minutes away is **Haibara**, one of the city's oldest artisan paper producers. Learn about washi paper, one of the glories of Japanese craftsmanship. The word “washi” comes from wa ‘Japanese’ and shi ‘paper’, and the term is used to describe paper made by hand in the traditional manner. Washi is one of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage objects. Most Japanese papers utilize bast fibers, the inner surface of the bark of woody plants. The fibers most commonly used for paper making in Japan – kozo, ganpi and mitsumata – are carefully freed from nonfibrous impurities by soaking, scraping and repeated washings, and boiling with ash lye. In the drying process, the sun bleaches and further purifies the paper. All of the care taken in the production of washi, resulting in pure and pH-neutral (meaning, like pure distilled water, neither acid nor alkaline) paper, makes it valuable not only to the calligrapher, but also the ink painter and wood-block printer.

Return to the hotel.

Enjoy a lovely welcome dinner this evening.

Day 4. Tokyo. Tuesday May 26, 2020

B, L, D

We will request a meeting this morning with the **Ohsaka family** workshop in the Shinjuko area of central Tokyo. Seated at a raised wood floor Mr. Ohsaka and his son work at two benches surrounded by tools with every available space filled with timber. They create hand scroll boxes including a futomaki (a kiri wood roller used to protect the scroll as it is rolled and unrolled). It is incredible how specialized the whole construction is, from the choice of timber and tools; in particular the planes used to fashion the futomaki, wooden nails and specially prepared rice glue.

From here head to the studio of **Nuno**, a Tokyo based design studio known for its creative blending of

traditional Japanese textile making with a contemporary sensibility. Since 1984, Nuno has worked exclusively with weavers and dyers in Japan, combining old practices with new technologies to create textiles that are original, distinctive, and fresh. Nuno designs are in the collections of major museums around the world. NunoWorks was launched in 2002 as a showcase for hand-printed textiles – silk-screened, stamped, or stenciled – that are bold and modern.

Close by is the **Nezu Museum**, the private collection of Kaichirō Nezu which consists of magnificent examples of Japanese painting, calligraphy and ceramics, some of which are registered National Treasures including the famous Shinto paintings ‘Nachi Waterfall’ and ‘Mandala with 81 Deities’. The majority of the collection is the result of Kaichirō Nezu’s ardent acquisition, beginning in his twenties, of superb pre-modern art. He was unusual among private collectors in gathering works in a wide range of genres, including painting, calligraphy, sculpture, metalwork, ceramics, lacquerware, wooden and bamboo craft, textiles, armor, and archaeological specimens. In his later years, he adopted Seizan as his tea name and collected tea wares to enjoy during the tea ceremony; those works are a major pillar of the collection.

After lunch at the museum drive to the gardens of **Hama Rikyu**, a tranquil oasis in the heart of Tokyo. The waterfront garden of Hama Rikyu was built in the 17th century for the Tokugawa family, who hunted ducks on the garden’s tidal pools. Today Hama Rikyu is a beautiful public park and a refuge for ducks, herons and migrating birds. Explore the garden and discover moon-viewing pavilions, ancient pine trees clipped into dramatic shapes, and an island tea house: a chance to draw breath and enjoy a soothing cup of green tea and a traditional Japanese sweet.

From here board a boat for a relaxing ride (40 minutes) up the **Sumida River** and an opportunity to admire Tokyo’s sleek skyline.

Disembark the boat at **Asakusa** and explore the area of Asakusa, the center of Tokyo's shitamachi ("low city"), one of Tokyo’s districts, where an atmosphere of the Tokyo of past decades survives. At the very heart of Asakusa is **Senso-ji Temple**, Tokyo’s oldest temple. The temple is approached via the Nakamise, a shopping street that has been providing temple visitors with a variety of traditional, local snacks and religious items for centuries.

Close by is **Maito Kuramae** – an atelier and shop that was opened in 2012 by designer and plant dyeing teacher **Maito Komuro**. Drawing on two main concepts – "natural source" and "Made in Japan" – the shop features knits, cut & sew garments, shirts, stoles, bags, pouches and other goods.



Threads are colored with natural and plant-based dyes (no chemicals are used), with items carefully produced in gentle shades that gain beauty with each wear. Visitors can get a hands-on appreciation for the dyeing process through one of the monthly seasonal- and material-themed workshops

Tucked down a small street near the Sensoji Temple in Asakusa, is a small, inviting restaurant in a traditional-style Japanese farmhouse (that is in reality several different farmhouses). **Kuremutsu** is set behind a courtyard and inside it is scattered with farming implements and glowing paper lanterns. It serves three kaiseki set menus, which offer a procession of small courses including cod cooked in miso.

Return to the hotel after dinner.

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| Day 5. Kanazawa. Wednesday May 27, 2020 |
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This morning take a 3 hour bullet train to **Kanazawa**, recognized for its many artisan workshops. In 2009 Kanazawa was designated a **UNESCO Creative City of Craft and Folk Art**.

Located between the Sea of Japan/East Sea and the Japanese Alps in western Japan, Kanazawa was spared from destruction during World War II and remains one of the best-preserved castle towns of the Edo Period. It is considered one of the country's best places to learn about samurai's history and lifestyle. In the past, the feudal lords invited skilled artisans from Kyoto and Edo (currently Tokyo) to introduce craft techniques that combined dynamism with the elegance of the samurai culture. The refined samurai of Kanazawa were an anomaly, made possible by their ruler's disinterest in violence and an affection for the arts. This combination is what makes Kanazawa's crafts unique. Although Samurai were abolished in the late-19th century much of their world remains in Kanazawa.

Arrive at the **Kanazawa Station** which was re-opened in 2005. The station's wooden hand-drum-shaped Tsuzumi Gate and glass umbrella-shaped Motenashi Dome were controversial because they clashed with the traditional architecture of this old castle town but the station's beauty in its sleek modern design is appreciated by those that see it.



Our hotel, *Hotel Nikko Kanazawa*, is located just a few minutes by foot from the train station.

After lunch, accompanied by **Kiyoe Nagashima**, a 6th-generation resident, explore the neighborhood of **Higashi Chaya** – miles away from the more modern city of Kanazawa. Walk through a labyrinth of teahouses, temples, beautiful latticed buildings and restored samurai houses. Admire the roofs of the stately wood buildings with detailed carvings sprouting from clusters of ginkgo and maple trees. Kanazawa's streets were partly designed to mislead and disorient outsiders.



In the adjacent neighborhood of **Utatsuyama**. Samurai once lived in Buddhist temples here working as security guards called boukan. The samurai who flourished in this city during the Edo Period (1603-1868) were almost nothing like the ferocious warriors they are often depicted to be. During this peaceful golden age, the feudal military class focused most of its energy on scholarly pursuits and craftsmanship. The Maeda family, the beloved rulers of Kanazawa until 1868, encouraged the samurais to focus on arts and craftsmanship instead of fighting. That way they did not pose a threat to the clan with the highest power, and so were not invaded. As a result, there was actually almost no fighting in Kanazawa for 400 years. As the highest social caste during this time, the samurai built extravagant residences and opulent gardens behind thick, earthen walls.

Kanazawa is home to **22 different kinds of crafts** – ranging from gold-leaf making to silk dying and from lacquerware to kutani ceramics. As we walk in the area we will meet with local crafts people understanding that Kanazawa has the largest number of ‘intangible cultural properties’ in the fields of arts and crafts in the whole of Japan.

Stop at the studio of a **maki-e artist, Masaru Nishimura**. Nishimura followed first his father and grandfather before becoming the apprentice of Living National Treasure Shogyo Oba. Maki-e (Japanese lacquer sprinkled with gold or silver) is a time-consuming art form, with a single tea box taking from ten months to ten years to complete. The process can be broken down into three basic parts: planning and creating the wooden base form; lacquer application and sanding; and maki-e decoration. The second step requires the greatest time commitment.



Kanazawa's largest architectural relic of the samurai age is the stunning white **Kanazawa Castle**, resting on a hill that offers 360-degree views of the city. The castle was built in the 16th century by the Maeda family and during their rule, the castle was their fortress, surrounded by a moat and stone wall that still stands today. The castle's striking white tile roof is made of weathered lead.

Adjoining the castle, the **Kenroku-en Garden** is home to plum, cherry, and Japanese maple trees and is considered one of Japan's finest gardens. The meticulously groomed garden incorporates the six characteristics – spaciousness, tranquility, artifice, antiquity, aquatic elements and panoramic views – that collectively create the ideal, balanced Japanese garden. Gardens with all six features are very rare.

Before dinner meet with American designer and artist **Evelyn Teploff-Mugii**, who has lived in Kanazawa for over ten years. Several years ago, Evelyn Claude, a new brand of original accessories, children's and women's clothing, stationery, and jewelry, was born. Teploff-Mugii's true gift is her ability to take an ancient technique, blend it with a high-tech material, subtly build in layers of visual messages through both form and graphics, and then incorporate color combinations not always associated with the typical Japanese aesthetic. At the moment, Teploff-Mugii is focusing her attention on her stationery and jewelry lines.

Dinner this evening at the lovely **Fuwari Restaurant** located in a tradesman's house. Mr. Matsumura, the owner is a wonderful chef and will create a wonderful dinner for the group!

This morning visit the **local fish market**. With the Sea of Japan less than ten miles to the west the market has everything from tiny hotaru ika (“firefly” squid) to enormous magaro colorfully arrayed in stall after stall. Note that most of the hand-scrawled signs identifying the wares are written in Japanese. A local chef will accompany the group and after the visit he will set up an interactive lesson in sushi preparation, culminating in a delicious and impossibly fresh lunch.

Between the visit to the market and the sushi class, we will stop at the **21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa** which was designed by the architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa who form the group SANAA. The circular building of the Kanazawa museum, which was designed based on the concept of a museum that looks like it has a seamless transition with no partition between the front and back sides so guests can come in from anywhere within the premises. The exterior and walls inside the building are made of glass, creating a transparent, bright and expansive space. The collection focuses on Japanese and international art since 1980 and includes pieces by Andy Warhol, Grayson Perry, Anish Kapoor and Kusama Yayoi among others. Leandro Elrich's swimming pool is a highlight which visitors enter from below beneath the water.

Stop in at the **Kanazawa College of Art** which embodies a blending of rich Japanese tradition dating back hundreds of years with harmonious natural surroundings.

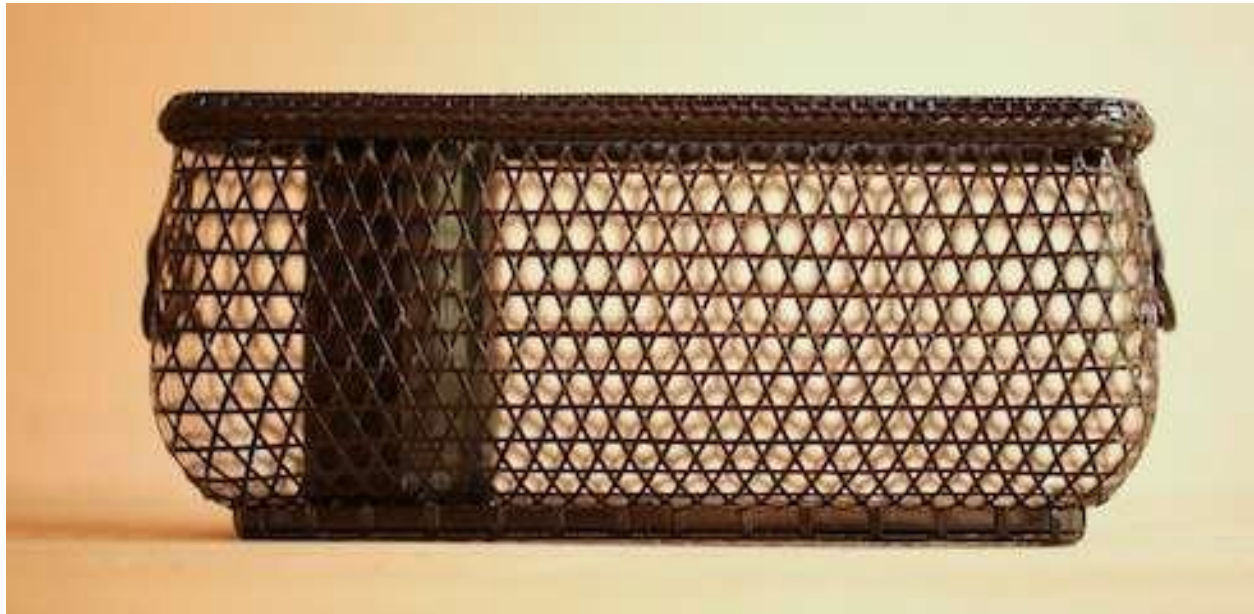
Stop at the **Kutani Kosen Kiln**. This Kutani ceramic kiln was opened in 1870 (3rd year of Meiji Era) and is the only Kutani kiln in Kanazawa where you can see the entire process of handmade Kutani—from the forming of potter's lathe to the paintings drawn on the potteries. This is a kiln known for its long tradition and genuine ceramic works and handmade articles with handwork paintings. There are various traditional Kutani ceramics on display and a demonstration of processes involved in making of ceramics—from shaping clay on a wheel to the firing to the final touches.



Meet with Kanazawa-based ceramic artist **Yuri Takemura**. Rounded shapes and curves feature prominently in her work: soft ridges reminiscent of a snail's shell decorate her chawan (tea bowls) and circular shapes are molded to or cut away from her sculptural bowls and vases. The rounded edges and interplay of colors give her pieces a lively dynamism while simultaneously having a calming effect, bringing to mind a small-scale meditative labyrinth. Like kôgei artists of the past, Takemura creates chawan with a tea-ceremony participant in mind; yet the sculptural elements, additive and subtractive

techniques, designs, and pigments she uses are not exactly traditional. Takemura notes that she particularly enjoys the intersection of kôgei and art found in the medium of ceramics.

Continue on to meet with bamboo artist **Chifuyu Enomoto**, one of fewer than 100 practicing contemporary bamboo artists in Japan and, of those, only two masters have been named a "Living National Treasure" – a government accolade recognizing cultural figures who help preserve Japan's ancient traditions. Perhaps one of the most important influences on Enomoto was the sixteen years he spent working as an assistant to Living National Treasure **Shokansai Iizuka**, a 3rd-generation bamboo artist. From 1989-2004, Enomoto worked closely with Shokansai, honing his own craft as he learned techniques that had been passed down through generations of the Iizuka family. Among the skills Enomoto acquired from his mentor was the acuity to select the perfect bamboo to use for individual projects. Although there are over 600 species of bamboo found in Japan, artists tend to rely on just a few types in their work. The studio itself, which is part of the home Enomoto shares with his wife, is a traditional Japanese room, with clean, polished wood floors, sliding shoji doors, and exposed beams. Enomoto works on the floor, seated on a thin cushion. Every step of the process required to produce the intricate and visually arresting baskets he is known for is done by hand, aided only by a small number of basic tools. The bamboo itself, however, is becoming increasingly rare and difficult to source due to a dwindling number of suppliers.



We will request a meeting with **Kazuo Yamagishi**, a Living National Treasure. For Mr. Yamagishi, the difficult technique and muted beauty of fine lacquer embody traditional values that are still a way of life in this more wind-buffed region. Mr. Yamagishi makes boxes and tea containers with chinkin designs, etching common road-side grasses and flowers with steel styluses on polished lacquer. It's a modern touch that sets his chinkin work apart from more traditional depictions of cherry, plum and pine. Once tamped with crushed gold, the patterns resemble negative images of sumie (ink paintings). He doubts whether outsiders can fully appreciate his art's subtlety!



Late afternoon visit to the shop of **Fukumitsuya**, the oldest sake brewery in Kanazawa who has been making sake since 1625. Their renowned Junmai sake is brewed using only premium sake rice and the purest groundwater that has been filtered underground from Mt. Hakusan for over a century. Fukumitsu takes pride in employing the traditional sake-brewing techniques that have been passed down and polished from generation to generation.

Dinner at leisure this evening.

Day 7. Kyoto. Friday May 29, 2020

B, L, D

After breakfast depart by train for a two-hour journey to Kyoto.

Upon arrival drive to the **Tea Ceremony Room Ju-an** which offers a tea ceremony explained in English at an exquisite tearoom surrounded by a petit Japanese garden. This will be an opportunity to learn Japanese words and history related to the ceremony as well as and the steps in performing the ceremony.



Drive a short distance to lunch at the **Kyoto Modern Terrace** before walking a short distance to the **Kyoto Museum of Traditional Crafts** which is managed by Kyoto University of Traditional Arts. The Kyoto University of Traditional Arts was established to groom people who would transmit their knowledge of traditional arts for generations. The facility has four floors and on the second floor one can admire the work of master craftspeople from Kyoto. There is also a demonstration corner, where you can see how the art objects are made. Bamboo crafts, pottery decorating, Buddhist sculptures, lacquer crafts, wood carvings, metal crafts are demonstrated. If you wear Japanese traditional clothes, entrance is free. Japanese traditional clothes include yukata, kimono, jinbei and hakama!

A few minutes away by car is the just opened **Cross Hotel** where inside a modern interior, there is an atmosphere of ancient culture.

Enjoy dinner this evening in the **Pontocho area**. Pontocho Alley, which runs parallel to the west bank of the Kamo-gawa River between Sanjo and Shijo is considered by many Kyoto residents to be the most beautiful street in the city. It's lined with traditional shops and restaurants, and no cars, modern buildings or gaudy signs are allowed! By night Pontocho becomes a magical place and the chances of spotting a maiko (apprentice geisha) or geiko (fully-fledged geisha) scurrying to an appointment at one of Pontocho's private clubs are high.

Day 8. Kyoto. Saturday May 30, 2020

B, L

This morning begin exploring Kyoto, the most traditional of all Japan's major cities, which has a spectacular collection of temples and shrines, dating back to its days as the country's capital city. There are about 2,000 temples in total, many having national significance, which give the city a relaxed and traditional atmosphere. Kyoto is where the Japanese go to see Japan, and is well-known for its exquisite Zen gardens. Like nearly all of Japan's cities, modernization has left its mark in Kyoto, and often the most

beautiful of the traditional buildings stand cheek by jowl with less elegant post-war constructions and modern architecture.

Rise early to take taxis to **Ryoan-ji** considered the supreme example of an abstract Zen Garden. It consists of a rectangle of raked white gravel on which are arranged 15 rocks, devoid of all vegetation save for a few splashes of moss. Its origins are as mysterious as its meaning, its creator and exact age are unknown.



Continue by foot to **Myoshin-ji Monastery's Taizo-in**. Admire a private garden designed by famed painter, Kano Motonobu. Close by is a pond garden that uses small-leaved satsuki azaleas to create a scene of vast rolling mountains and the quiet garden of Keishun-in.

Close by is **Kinkaku-ji**, the Golden Pavilion, a gilded, floating palace built for Ashigawa Yoshimitsu at the end of the 14th century. The building is set in a maze of ponds and islands and encircled by densely wooded hills. The style of the Golden Pavilion was inspired in part by the landscape paintings of the Chinese Song Dynasty that had begun to filter into Japan in the mid-13th century, and in part by memories of the simple but brilliantly colored buildings of the Heian era. The garden covers only four-and-a-half acres, but it is cleverly designed to seem very much larger.



Learn about traditional **Sanadahimo cords** from a 15th-generation master craftsman. Woven on a loom, Sanadahimo cords are the narrowest woven fabric in the world favored by samurai. Very durable and resistant to stretching, sanadahimo cords came into use during the Warring States period (1467-1568) serving as straps for swords and armor. Over time these cords with their infinite possibilities of design were perfect for tying wooden boxes for tea utensils. For 15 generations, **Master Enami** family has been transmitting precious techniques of sanadahimo (such as yakusokuhimo, or “promise bonds”, for different tea ceremony schools) and carrying out all the processes of the traditional cord making, from yarn dyeing to weaving.

Enjoy lunch at **Hyotei**, a Michelin starred restaurant. Hyotei was originally a tea house for travelers to rest on their way to the Nanzen-ji temple, established well over three hundred year ago. It converted to a restaurant in 1837 and ownership has been in the Takahashi family for sixteen generations. The setting is rustic and lovely, with individual teahouses, the oldest of which is 300 years old, spread around a beautiful garden with a pond. We have arranged lunch at the communal tatami room with views of the garden. The specialty here is shokado bento (lunch boxes), which change with the seasons.

After lunch enjoy a stroll along the **Philosopher’s Walk**, a pretty path bordering a canal, as far as Ginkaku-ji, the Silver Pavilion built for Ashikaga Yoshimasa in 1482. He filled the villa with paintings collected over a lifetime and made it a hub for all the different arts inspired by Zen. It stands on the edge of the Brocade Mirror Pond, a convoluted network of ponds and islands linked by stone bridges and decorated with rocks, dwarfed pines and azaleas. The garden’s most famous features are an unforgettable field of raked gravel and an extraordinary cone built from sand, called Kogetsudai, or ‘Moon Observing Platform’.

End the day with a meeting with a **Ukiyo-e master**. Ukiyo-e are Japanese woodblock prints which flourished during the Edo Period (1603-1867). They originated as popular culture in Edo (present day Tokyo) and depicted popular geisha, sumo wrestlers and kabuki actors from the world of entertainment. Ukiyo-e, literally “paintings of the floating world”, were so named because their subjects were associated with impermanence and detachment from ordinary life. Visit Kyoto’s internationally acclaimed studio, **Takezasado** which was established in 1891 under the name “Takenaka Mokuhan”. It produced traditional woodblock prints made by hand – a process passed down through each generation based on the techniques used over 1,200 years prior. Under the direction of Mr. Kenji Takenaka, a 5th-generation master printer, the company started Takezasado as a new venture and it began making its own papers in 1999. In recent years, Takenaka has also created a product line called “MOKUHAN”, which aims to extend Takezasado’s woodblock designs onto new materials (such as textiles and bamboo).

Dinner at leisure.

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| Day 9. Kyoto. Sunday May 31, 2020 |
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After breakfast depart the hotel for a drive to the **Miho Museum** which stands deep in forested hills. The museum was designed by the architect, I. M. Pei, and is named after Koyama Mihoko, the founder of the museum. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the museum is the design of its structures and how they are integrated into their natural surroundings. This is highlighted in the museum's approach which leads through a mixture of man-made and natural environments. The inside of the museum continues this theme by contrasting steel and glass with warm stone and panoramic views of the surrounding valleys.

The museum's exhibits house the Shumei Family Collection and consist of works from ancient civilizations including the Egyptians, Romans, and various Asian cultures, with the pieces largely coming

from Koyama's private collection. The main exhibit changes every year or so, and special exhibits change every few months.



At leisure for lunch.

After lunch drive ten minutes to the **Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park**. Shigaraki is a ceramic town known as the home of Shigaraki ware. It has one of the six oldest kilns in Japan and is known historically for its good clay. Shigaraki ware is said to have begun when tiles were made in 742 for the construction of Shigaraki no Miya Palace.

Nobori-gama is a step-like kiln constructed on a slope. The fire is set from the lowest compartment and when the temperature in that compartment reaches a certain level, the fire is set in the next compartment followed by another. Depending on the number of compartments, the kiln is kept alight for seven to nine days. After three days and nights of cooling down, the pottery wares are finally brought out. The Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park has several museums and ceramic ware halls, as well as cultural facilities, such as the Exhibition Hall of Industrial Ceramics and the Institute of Ceramic Studies.

Continue on to the 1,000 year old **Byodoin Temple**. Surrounded by a *jodo-shiki* (paradise-type garden) and built in part over the Ajiike Pond, it appears to float. Architect Akira Kuryu was entrusted with adding a museum to the site, and he has created an abstract representation of Phoenix Hall in glass, steel and textured concrete that stands in complete harmony with the landscape. The museum houses various national treasures, including 26 statues of Unchu Kuyo Bosatsu and the original temple bell.



Return to Kyoto. Dinner at leisure.

Day 10. Kyoto. Monday June 1, 2020

B, L

This morning drive to **Nishijin**, Kyoto's traditional textile center.

Feel the history of **Nishijin brocades** in an old Kyoto machiya. Established in 1906, **Watabun** is a long-standing shop specializing in Nishijin silk brocades. From yarn dyeing and warping to weaving gorgeous obi sashes by hand and Noh costume restoration, the establishment protects the original Nishijin-ori techniques by maintaining the traditional system of division of labor. Watabun is situated in the Daikoku-cho district, the heart of the Nishijin textile industry with numerous weaving companies standing side-by-side. **Orinasukan**, a textile museum adjoining the workshop, has an architectural style characteristic of Nishijin weavers' houses. Watabun and its neighborhood with traditional Kyoto merchant houses and stone paving is a perfect place to feel the history of old Kyoto.



After lunch at **Kitchen Bonasai** continue on to meet with master craftsman **Kikuo Hirano** about Tsuzure-ori weaving. In this brocade weaving, the artisan sharpens his fingernails into a saw-tooth shape and uses them like a comb to create a relief brocade pattern. This technique is very advanced and time consuming – even the most skillful and experienced craftsman will weave only a few centimeters of textile after a whole day of work.

Close by is **Ko Kado**, a modern-day master of all things paper. Kado is the creative force behind Kyoto's **Kamisoe**, a small shop and atelier that specializes in karakami, a traditional technique of decorative paper made using woodblock prints. His creations stand out for their new-meets-old aesthetic – a legacy of his background as a graphic designer fused with five years of intense training at a centuries-old karakami studio. Kado, in his early forties, is one of only 10 or so masters of the technique in Japan, half of whom are based in Kyoto.



He's also arguably the most modern in his approach. Traditionally, karakami artisans use inherited woodblock prints with old patterns, but Kado designs completely new patterns. Housed in a 90-year-old former barber shop in Kyoto's Nishijin district – an area famed for its weaving heritage – Kamisoe comprises a small ground-floor shop (complete with the original barbershop sink) and first-floor studio. Here, Kado collaborates with craftspeople and clients to produce an eclectic range of paper creations – designing patterns, dyeing paper by brush and then printing patterns using woodblocks.

While many traditional crafts in Japan – and Kyoto in particular – are at risk of dying out as the artisans age and few young creatives are learning the highly specialist techniques, Kado appears refreshingly confident about the prospects of his chosen discipline. “I don't worry about the future of karakami,” he says, “because there will also be a demand for paper for traditional Japanese architecture.”

Plan is also to visit **Aizenkobo** – an indigo dye workshop and retail shop that produces a number of hand-dyed clothing items using techniques such as shibori (binding and dyeing), sashiko embroidery (hand stitching), ikat and double ikat (resist dyeing and weaving) and also natural dyeing with plant dyes. Meet with **Kenichi Utsuki**, a 3rd-generation indigo dyer.



Balance of the day at leisure.

Day 11. Kyoto. Tuesday June 2, 2020

B, L

This morning meet with meet **Takeshi Udo** of 1883 Indigo Dying. The son of a dyer, Takeshi san is carrying on the family tradition of botanical dyeing. His work ranges from vivid to subtle, depending on the dye, fabric, and technique he uses for each piece. Weather conditions, relative humidity, and the different seasons in general also come into play. Before becoming a dyer, Takeshi-san worked for a textile design company for four years. His mother had been dyeing for 30+ years and hoped to pass on the tradition, so they brought their textile skills together. Takeshi works with a variety of botanicals including thyme (yellow-green), madder (red), rose (gray), and various other plants and mordants in combination with indigo.

Drive to **Saiho-ji**, located on the western edge of Kyoto. The group will be permitted to enter the garden after attending a special ceremony in the temple, and copying part of a sutra, using ink and a brush. Saiho-ji Temple is one of Kyoto's World Heritage Sites. This area was turned into a temple by the Buddhist monk Gyoki in the Nara Period. In 1339, the gardens were renovated by Muso Soseki, a Rinzai Zen Buddhist monk and teacher who gained considerable recognition during his lifetime as a calligrapher, poet, and garden designer. The gardens are the highlight of this temple. Approximately 120 varieties of moss grow inside the temple compound, covering the ground in a lush green carpet. The mossy landscape is complicated by islands, inlets and promontories that are linked by little wooden bridges, and on the hillside above is one of the earliest examples of a dry waterfall, attributed to Muso Soseki.



Afternoon at leisure.

Enjoy a wonderful farewell dinner this evening.

Day 12. Kyoto. Wednesday June 3, 2020

B

Transfer to Osaka airport by an airport limousine bus for flights home.

Pricing:

Double (per person): **\$8,290**

Single supplement: **\$1,590**

Includes:

- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels as listed based on availability
- Meals as listed in the program – with bottled water at each meal.
- All sightseeing and entrance fees listed
- Transportation is based primarily on using public transportation and taxis. This will require participants walking at least half a mile on some occasions
- Private bus for the Miho Museum and Shigaraki Ceramic excursion
- Second class bullet train tickets – Tokyo to Kanazawa
- Second class express train tickets – Kanazawa to Kyoto
- Separate luggage handling on both these days (luggage will be delivered by a private delivery company)
- Tickets for airport limo bus on arrival in Tokyo and on departure from Kyoto.
- All private visits as listed based on people's schedules
- All entrance fees listed
- An English-speaking national Japan tour manager who will accompany throughout as the logistical co-coordinator and source of unending information.
- Local guides on certain excursion
- Basic gratuities to tour manager/guide and driver
- Special meetings as listed or comparable

Does not include:

- International airfare to and from Japan
- Visa and passport fees
- Travel insurance
- Drinks other than bottled water with meals
- Excess luggage charges
- Laundry charges
- Communication (phone, fax and internet) charges
- Marketing fee
- Items of a purely personal nature
- Any items not listed