

## Silk Study Tour to Japan 2019 Itinerary May14-28

### **May 14-Tuesday**

Tour officially begins at Los Angeles Airport (LAX). A non-stop flight to Tokyo (Narita NRT) will depart in the afternoon.

### **May 15-Wednesday**

The ten hour flight plus a time change means arrival in Japan in the late afternoon the next day. Via our charter coach we head for the bright lights of Tokyo and its famous Ginza district. Arriving in Tokyo we will stay at the comfortable Western style Gracery Ginza Hotel, centrally located in the fabulous Ginza district where you will enjoy two days of exploring the city on your own or in groups. The Ginza is the epitome of shopping in Japan, featuring anything and everything from lowbrow to high class. Short walking distances to many Tokyo sites and adventures await you there.

### **May 16- 17 Thursday and Friday**

We have two days here in Tokyo to acclimate and begin to see some of the wonders that are life in the very urban cities around Tokyo. **Thursday** is a free day for you on the Ginza where many sights, sounds, and shopping await you. However, you may want to join me on a short train ride to see the Amuse Boro Museum and the famous Asakusa Sensoji Temple. For those so inclined to join a group and head to Yokohama in the afternoon to visit the Yokohama Silk Museum and the Yokohama Doll Museum, please do so! Anyone wanting to return to the Ginza and explore or rest, can do that as well. **Friday** is also a free day, but you won't want to miss the day trip to Kamakura where Hirata san will give you a very special tour of his own hometown. There, you can enjoy this delightful historical city with hundreds of temples, fantastic shopping, and the famous Daibutsu (Great Buddha) on the shores of Sagami Bay.

### **May 18 Saturday**

We head by bus to Kawaguchi Lake and the Five Lakes region where we will see our favorite indigo dyer Fumiko Satoh in the mountains of Yamanashi. She will give us a tour of her studio, demonstrate her indigo dyeing methods, and present a private showing and sale of her work. She has arranged for a local chef to prepare a special vegetarian sushi lunch for us using delectable local vegetables. After lunch, we head to the famous Ichiku Kubota Museum in the shadows of Mt. Fuji. This museum's collection of the famous kimonos by revered designer Ichiku Kubota is an exceptional experience for all of us silk and textile aficionados. Bead enthusiasts will marvel at Kubota's collection of beads from around the world.

Evening dinner at the Kukuna Hotel is spectacular and after their luxurious rooftop spa and baths you will drift peacefully to sleep dreaming of silk and indigo!

### **May 19- Sunday**

After breakfast and perhaps an early morning walk reveling in the reflection of Fuji san on Kawaguchi Lake, we board our bus for a day journey to Kyoto, where we arrive around 4 PM. Relax, walk, have free time to explore Kyoto nightlife-dinner on your own from the Princess Nikko Kyoto hotel.

### **May 20 Monday**

Kyoto, known for its beauty, temples, shrines, palaces and gardens was also known for its refined textiles. We will visit the Nishijin area known for its weaving studios and kimono making. A Kimono show has been arranged for 10:30 AM. The afternoon will find us marveling at the bamboo groves of Arashiyama.

### **May 21 Tuesday**

In the morning on our first day in Kyoto we will have breakfast and head on over to the Kitano Tenmangu shrine for the monthly shrine sale (flea market). Aside from being a lovely shrine with beautiful gardens, one day a month hundreds of vendors selling plants, antiques, tools, toys and crafts are joined by many food stands selling festival food such as yakisoba, karaage and takoyaki. The afternoon will find us sightseeing around Kyoto. For any dyers in the group, there is a famous dye shop within walking distance of our hotel.

### **May 22-Wednesday**

In the morning we will visit the famous Kyoto Shibori Museum which is the only specialized museum of shibori in Japan and later, the Nijo Castle in the afternoon. Returning to our hotel you may want to rest up and take it back out on the streets of Kyoto, stroll the Philosophers Path and satisfy your wanderlust- or just relax!

### **May 23- Thursday**

The morning will will check out of our Kyoto hotel and head to Orinasu Kan- a handmade textiles museum renowned for preserving the long history of Kyoto's textile traditions. Later, a 25 minute walk takes us to our next stop-Kinkaku-ji. Famously known as the "Golden Pavillion" this site and its gardens could encompass the entire day. Depending on the crowds, we may divert to another nearby temple. Around 1 pm we depart Kyoto and head to Suwa Lake and a delightful one night at Hamanoyu, a lovely lakeside hotel.

### **May 24-Friday**

Checking out of the lakeside hotel, we travel a short way to visit the Okaya Silk Museum which has recently been re-opened and promises to be a real treat. Unlike the Usui Filature Silk Mill and the Tomioka (World Heritage site) Silk Mill this silk museum displays silk equipment from an earlier era.

Afterwards we will depart to Annaka and our next destination- the Isobe Garden Hotel. The relaxing coach ride will give us time to contemplate our adventures so far. At Annaka we will stay for three nights at the charming and restful Isobe Gardens, a Japanese ryokan (inn), complete with traditional hot spring baths and the surroundings of a lovely river and quiet village.

### **May 25-Saturday**

Just 15 minutes from Isobe via our coach bus, we will tour the Usui mechanized filature mill (one of the few remaining filature mills in Japan) located in the middle of a beautiful valley, bursting with mulberry groves. The fascinating mill tour is conducted by the delightful mill manager and begins our journey into the world of silk production. The mill's small store has some manufactured Gumma silk products to purchase, where we have time to ask questions about the production of the silk filaments and their uses. The afternoon will find us visiting contemporary sericulturist Nobue Azuma at her small farm and production facility. Later, we will visit the Tomioka Silk Mill- now a World Heritage Cultural site- where we will begin to understand more about the history of silk in Japan. Back to Annaka where the late afternoon and evening can be spent enjoying the quiet surroundings, the special Annaka hospitality and those spectacular hot spring baths! This night we will enjoy a traditional Japanese group dinner famous at ryokans throughout Japan.

### **May 26-Sunday**

On this day, we head out to visit Yamazaki sensei and have the great opportunity to enjoy a natural dye workshop in his studio. Yamazaki san practices natural in-season dying using the plant materials that are local to him. He specializes in katazome (rice paste resist stenciling) and kusakizome (natural /grass dyeing) and comes from a long and famous familial practice of natural dyeing. When finished with the kusakizome workshop we are invited to the enjoy a tea ceremony. Afterwards, we will have a lunch together with Yamazaki sensei and other staff at his studio. Heading back to the Isobe Gardens we will visit a special antique kimono shop before settling in for some relaxing and dining.

### **May 27-Monday**

Alas, we have to pack our things and leave our quaint and relaxing Isobe Gardens and Spa but we are off for another day of adventure! Our magic chartered coach will whisk us away on a relaxing road trip to visit a textile museum the textile town of Kiyru. Lunch and other exploration of Kiryu city follows until it is time to depart for Narita. We will visit a washi (handmade paper) maker on the way back back to Tokyo, and Narita Airport for final packing and our exit back into reality!

### **May 28-Tuesday**

We spend the last morning exploring the town of Narita or just relaxing before our flight back to the US arriving at LAX before noon the same day.

*(As the tour draws near, some specific details may change as needed and you will be advised as they develop. Hirata san already informs me he has acquired permission to visit a lovely little antique shop in Kamakura run by a woman who has sewn stacks of quilt tops over decades!)*