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Koyasan, Kii, and Takayama

October 13 - 25, 2010

**Price: \$4150.00 per person
(based on double occupancy)**

Tour price includes:

- Airfare from Honolulu to Japan Roundtrip
- Ground transportation as indicated by itinerary
- Admission as indicated by itinerary
- Daily Breakfast and Seven Dinners
- Hotel Accommodations
- Tour Escort

October 13, 2010 Wednesday Day One Honolulu to Kansai

An afternoon flight will take us from Honolulu to Kansai Airport.

October 14, 2010 Thursday Day Two Kansai

We arrive in Kansai in the late afternoon and will head to our hotel for the evening.

October 15, 2010 Friday Day Three Kansai to Koyasan

We begin our tour by heading to Koyasan, the headquarters for Shingon Buddhism and settled by the monk Kukai known posthumously as Kobo Daishi. This area is home to 120 temples and one Japan's most famous graveyards. While there we will visit the Daimon, Danjyo Garan, Koyasan Reihokan, Kongobuji, and Okunoin. The **Daimon** is the great gate entrance to this temple complex. From there we will head to the **Danjyo Garan** a complex centered around the **Kompon Daito**, a great Pagoda in brilliant red, originally built Kobo Daishi. Next we will go to the **Koyasan Reihokan**, a museum that showcases various treasure collected over the centuries. The **Kongobuji** is our next stop and it is the main temple of Shingon Buddhism. The last stop will be the **Okunoin**, a massive graveyard with numerous mausoleums dedicated to various historical figures, like Tokugawa Ieyasu and Tokugawa Iemitsu, not to mention the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi himself, where he is said to be meditating for all eternity.

For the evening we will be spending it at one of the temples that lets visitors experience some of temple life. This includes trying shojin ryori, the vegetarian meals that are eaten by the monks daily.

October 16, 2010 Saturday Day Four Koyasan to Shirahama Onsen

We leave the tranquility of Koya-san and head to the Shirahama via the Ryujin Skyline, a scenic highway in the mountains. For lunch we will stop at **Tore Tore Ichiba**, Western Japan's largest seafood market.

October 17, 2010 Sunday Day Five Shirahama Onsen – Katsuura Onsen

After a relaxing evening we will explore the town before heading to Katsuura. Shirahama has a number of beautiful rock formations, the first we will visit is **Sandanbeki**, a fifty foot cliff that was used as a lookout for passing ships and swarms of fish. From there we will go to **Senjo Jiki**, a giant rock formation that looks like a tatami mat floor. Our last stop will be to see **Engetsuto** or Full Moon Island. This nickname comes from the hollow circle in the center of the island when viewed from the mainland. It looks like the rising moon. From there we head to Kushimoto where we will stop at **Hashigui iwa**. This giant rock formation is a series of large rocks that are in a straight line giving the impression of a bridge into the ocean. According to legend, Kobo Daishi is said to have started constructing this bridge, but was tricked into stopping before finishing it.

We will then travel to visit **Nachi no Taki** and **Kumano Hongu Grand Shrine**. Nachi no Taki is a very tall waterfall, said to rival the beauty of Kegon waterfalls. A bus will take us to the waterfalls, where we must descend a natural staircase to the foot of the waterfalls. When we return we will be using taxi's to take us to visit one of the three Kumano grand shrines, dedicated to the Kumano river god. From there we can enjoy the beautiful lookout unto the valley below and glimpse the waterfalls from another angle.

October 18, 2010 Monday Day Six Katsuura Onsen

In the morning, before breakfast, we will go to watch the fish auction. Katsuura is a noted tuna port and we will stop by to see the second largest tuna catch in Japan. After breakfast we will take a short cruise around the harbor. The area is sometimes known as Kii no Matsushima, referencing the beautiful Matsushima islands in Miyagi Prefecture. The cruise includes a stop in Taiji, a noted whaling port. The afternoon will be free to relax and enjoy the onsen.

October 19, 2010 Tuesday Day Seven Katsuura Onsen – Nagoya

We continue northward early this morning to visit **Mikimoto Pearl Island**. This is the fulfillment of Koichi Mikimoto's dream of placing a pearl necklace on every lady's neck. The island is dedicated to his dream and the production of pearls.

From there we head to **Meotoiwa**, the wedded rocks, and the **Ise Shrine**. The shrine is said to be among the most sacred of shrines in Japan. It dates back to the 7th century and honors two spirits, the more famous of which is Amaterasu, the spirit of the Imperial family.

October 20, 2010 Wednesday Day Eight Nagoya - Takayama

We continue on to the mountainous town of Takayama. During the Edo period, the town was unable to pay its taxes in rice and was allowed to send instead craftsmen to work on various public work projects. This produced highly skilled artisans who returned to create many crafts that Takayama is noted for. Along the way we will stop at **Shirakawa-go**, a collection of 25 buildings saved from destruction due to the nearby dam construction. These buildings are built in the traditional style of Takayama's distant past when it was known as Hida. These buildings display the unique construction materials and techniques used in the area, as well as demonstrating various skills used in the mountainous region. Buildings were adapted to deal with the cold, with roofs of thick bundled straw to those of wooden slats held down by stones. Traditional craftsmen have set up shop and we can see them practice their craft and purchase products, everything ranging from pottery to woodwork to textiles.

October 21, 2010 Thursday Day Nine Takayama

Our first stop today is a visit to the **Takayama Morning Market**, where we can find products made from the river fish found to local vegetables. You can also find various teas and handcrafts that are made locally. Nearby we will also stop at the **Takayama Jinya**. This set of buildings was the government

offices during the Tokugawa period. They retain their original architecture and show the various facilities that were kept at that time.

Our next stop will be at the **Takayama Yatai Kaikan**, where several of the floats used during their festivals are on display along with replicas of the remaining floats. These floats are the pinnacle of the artisans' art that was developed in this area and hidden within the ornately decorated float are katakuri ningyo.

We then go to nearby Furukawa City to see their silk hand weaving shop.

October 22, 2010 Friday Day Ten Takayama - Utsukushigahara Onsen

Today we embark on our journey through the **Kurobe Alpine route**. The Japan Alps were named by English missionary Walter Weston and aside from Mount Fuji, the tallest peaks in Japan can be found here. This particular route can only be traversed by the use of public transportation and no less than five different modes of conveyance. It is only thirty-seven kilometers in distance, but we will travel nearly two kilometers high into the mountains. This will require us to ride a bus, a trolley bus, a cable car, a ropeway, and a short walk on the Kurobe dam. Careful attention was paid during its construction so as to preserve the natural beauty of the scenery. Along the way we will see a man-made lake, Japan's highest waterfall, the majestic scenery, and more.

October 23, 2010 Saturday Day Eleven Utsukushigahara Onsen - Tokyo

We hop on the train as we leave the relaxing mountains for the bustling metropolis of Tokyo. These last two days in Tokyo are free to enjoy at your leisure. If you need help shopping or finding various sites, your escort will be on hand to assist you.

October 24, 2010 Sunday Day Twelve Free Day

This is a free day in Tokyo, where you may relax, explore the city, and do as you please. Your escort will be on hand to assist you with getting to where you might want to go.

October 25, 2010 Monday Day Thirteen Tokyo/Honolulu

Our flight leaves in the early evening so the morning is free to relax or do any last minute shopping. We will leave the hotel in the afternoon for the airport.