

# Silk Study Tour Itinerary Schedule May 19-30, 2015

## May 19 -Tuesday

Tour officially begins at Los Angeles Airport (LAX). A non-stop flight to Tokyo (Narita NRT) will depart approximately 2 PM. (Airline yet to be determined)

## May 20 -Wednesday

The ten-hour flight means arrival in Japan later that same day, due to crossing the International Date Line. Following our arrival in the late afternoon, we will take a hotel shuttle to the nearby Narita Hilton Hotel for one night of R & R.

## May 21 -Thursday

Early the next morning our magic chartered coach will whisk us away on a relaxing road trip to visit a textile museum and obi weaver in the textile town of Kiryu. We will lunch in Kiryu and see some of the local color before heading off to the village of Annaka. The relaxing coach ride will give us time to contemplate our day's adventures. At Annaka we will stay for three nights at the charming and restful Isobe Gardens, a Japanese/American Inn, complete with traditional hot spring baths and the surroundings of a lovely river and quiet village.

## May 22 -Friday

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 at 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 spectacular Japanese group dinner famous at ryokans throughout Japan.

## May 23 -Saturday

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 dyeing using the plant materials that are local to him. He specializes in katazome (rice paste resist stenciling) and kusaki-zome (natural /grass dyeing) and comes from a long and famous familial practice of natural dyeing. We will then head off to a special lunch and to see and shop at an antique Kimono shop. Finally, back to the Isobe Gardens for some relaxing and dining.

## May 24 -Sunday

This day we take a longer ride and lunch at Imaiizumi then make a stop at another antique kimono shop before arriving at Kawaguchi Lake and our new hotel. If we are lucky, Fuji san will be visible right out our hotel room window across the lake. Rooftop baths were a big hit last time as we soaked our feet and watched the moon rise.

## May 25 -Monday

Early this day 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. After a quick lunch we are on our way to 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.

## May 26 -Tuesday

Today, we head out to visit the Koyata sericulture farm, one of the few remaining sericulture farms in Japan. There we will witness the fascinating nurturing of the silkworms in a traditional Japanese cocoon house and meet the delightful Koyota-san and his wife. Assisted by the artful and skilled guidance of the delightful volunteer group- Tama Silk Life 21, we experience the degumming of cocoons, making of our own mawata squares, spinning silk from mawata by hand/machine, and finally spin filament silk directly from cocoons. This promises to be very special 'silk day' for all concerned.

Now 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 three days of exploring the city on your own or in small 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 27, 28, 29 –Wed, Thurs, Friday

**Wednesday** 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. **Thursday**, there is an optional trip to the city of Yokohama (where I grew up!) and a visit to the Silk Museum with a special tour from Mr. Koizumi. Lunch and a walking tour includes the famous port of Yokohama and a nice little museum called the Yokohama Archives of History, which really ties everything together and gives you a great understanding of how important silk was to the industrialization and opening of Japan to the West. **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. The side tour to Kamakura returns to the Ginza for our last night in Japan.

## May 30 (Saturday)

We grudgingly depart for Narita, via airport shuttle bus, from the Ginza hotel in mid morning for our flight back to the US arriving at LAX on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May.

(As the tour draws near, some specific details may change as needed and you will be advised as they develop.)