



ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION of SMITH COLLEGE

Journey to the Far East ***An Exploration of Japan's Cultural Traditions, Historical Treasures, and Cutting-Edge Innovation***

June 3 – 16, 2007

DETAILED PRELIMINARY ITINERARY

(subject to amendment)

Sunday, June 3: DEPARTURE

Depart the U.S. for Tokyo, Japan.

Monday, June 4: TOKYO

Arrive in Tokyo in the early evening and transfer to the lovely Takanawa Prince Hotel Sakura Tower, situated in a beautiful Japanese garden. The rest of the evening is at leisure to relax after a long flight. *Takanawa Prince Hotel, Sakura Tower (meals aloft)*

Tuesday, June 5: TOKYO

Following breakfast, attend study leader Don Robinson's first lecture. Begin exploring Japan's unique traditional culture at the incomparable Tokyo National Museum and Horyuji Treasure House, repositories for Japan's most important treasures. Following lunch at a local restaurant, meet a celebrated ink-brush artist in her studio, who demonstrates her work and the basic techniques of this ancient art form. This afternoon, join a professional Japanese architect for a lecture and highlight tour of Tokyo's renowned cutting-edge architecture. *Takanawa Prince Hotel, Sakura Tower (B, L)*

Wednesday, June 6: TOKYO

Following a peaceful stroll through the forest-covered grounds of sacred Meiji Shrine, switch gears and experience Tokyo's most advanced, experimental technology at the progressive NTT InterCommunication Center which displays media art works that combine avant-garde science and art. This afternoon, take in a stunning panoramic view of Tokyo's metropolis from the observation deck of the Roppongi Hills Complex, followed by a curator-led tour of the contemporary works on display at the Mori Art Museum, situated on the top floors of the complex's central tower. Dinner is at a local restaurant in this lively district. *Takanawa Prince Hotel, Sakura Tower (B, D)*

Thursday, June 7: TOKYO

Learn about Tokyo's 400-year evolution from a small fishing settlement into a major metropolis at the Edo-Tokyo Museum. Continue to the lively Asakusa Kannon Temple complex, Tokyo's most spectacular Buddhist temple, to observe its ritual traditions and wander the bustling Nakamise Shopping Arcade. Following a delicious tempura luncheon, board the Sumida River "water bus" and cruise down this celebrated river to the Hama Rikyu Garden, considered by many to be Tokyo's most beautiful garden. *Takanawa Prince Hotel, Sakura Tower (B, L)*

Friday, June 8: MATSUE

Board the famous Bullet Train and depart Tokyo for the attractive castle town of Matsue. Enjoy a traditional o-bento lunch box on board. In Matsue, visit one of Japan's most celebrated art/garden venues, the Adachi Museum of Art. The museum's magnificent garden has been ranked as Japan's top garden three years in a row by the *Journal of Japanese Gardening*. This evening, we check into a *ryokan*, a Japanese-style inn featuring rooms with *tatami* mats and *futons* (Western-style beds are available upon request), and an elaborate multi-course traditional Japanese dinner. *Kasuien Minami Ryokan (B, L, D)*

Saturday, June 9: MATSUE / HIROSHIMA

Wake this morning to a traditional Japanese breakfast in the ryokan. Explore the imposing Matsue Castle, one of only a handful of original castles in Japan that have survived fire, earthquakes, and war. Then visit Izumo Grand Shrine, among the most recognized shrines in Japan where, according to popular lore, the Shinto religion's eight million gods gather annually to determine the world's fate for the upcoming year. Continue to Hiroshima and check into our hotel located in the heart of the city. *Rihga Royal Hotel, Hiroshima (B, L)*

Sunday, June 10: HIROSHIMA

Modern Hiroshima, now a bustling city of over 1 million residents, is characterized by an atmosphere of reconciliation and amity – the city is committed to promoting peaceful relations between nations. Following a lecture by your study leader, visit Hiroshima's Peace Memorial

Park, which houses numerous memorials and the historic A-Bomb Dome, one of the few structures to survive the bomb and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Continue to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, providing an impressively balanced presentation of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima -- truly a profound educational experience. *Rihga Royal Hotel, Hiroshima (B, L)*

Monday, June 11: MIYAJIMA / KYOTO

Take a ferry to the scenic island of Miyajima. View the famous red *torii* gate set in the water off the coast of Itsukushima Shrine, widely regarded by the Japanese as one of the three most scenic spots in all of Japan. After touring this beautiful area, continue to Kyoto, the cultural capital of Japan. Enjoy a traditional *kaiseki* dinner in one of Kyoto's first-class restaurants. *Kyoto Hotel Okura (B, D)*

Tuesday, June 12: KYOTO

Begin at Kiyomizu Temple, a beautiful wooden structure where pilgrims have come for over 1000 years to pray and drink from its sacred spring. Next, visit Sanjusangendo's breathtaking display of 30 intricately carved guardian deities, each designated as a national treasure, backed by 1000 life-size statues of the Buddhist deity Kannon. By special arrangement, enter the garden villa of a late contemporary Japanese artist and observe a tea ceremony performed by his grandson, a tea ceremony master. Following lunch in the villa, visit the home and workshop of the late master potter Kawai Kanjiro and view a varied collection of his work. In the late afternoon, enter a private home in the charming Gion district, famous for its traditional restaurants, theaters and Geisha tea houses. Meet the house's owner, one of Kyoto's best-known interior designers, who will lecture on the Japanese aesthetic. *Kyoto Hotel Okura (B, L)*

Wednesday, June 13: KYOTO

Following your study leader's final lecture, visit the legendary Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavilion Temple). Next observe a Buddhist ceremony at the serene Saihoji Moss Temple Garden before strolling through the peaceful moss-covered grounds. Walk through Nishiki Food Market, a narrow covered street filled with stalls selling a huge range of uniquely Japanese culinary curiosities. Following lunch at a local restaurant, tour Nijo Castle, famous for its creaking "nightingale floorboards" that warned of enemy intruders. *Kyoto Hotel Okura (B, L)*

Thursday, June 14: MIHO MUSEUM / SHIGARAKI

Today, visit I.M. Pei's architectural masterpiece, the Miho Museum, built to house a private collection of precious objects from the ancient world. Eighty percent of the museum building lies beneath the earth, assimilating the structure into the natural scenery. Following lunch at the museum's organic café, visit a renowned pottery kiln in the ceramic town of Shigaraki, and meet a potter who discusses the unique Shigaraki style. *Kyoto Hotel Okura (B, L)*

Friday, June 15: KYOTO

Take a full-day excursion to Japan's eighth-century capital of Nara. En route, visit Byodo-in Temple, and the adjacent Hoshokan Museum, housing the incomparable "Bodhisattvas on Clouds," intricately detailed wooden statuettes from the Heian period, each carved from a single piece of cyprus. In Nara, visit the romantic Kasuga Grand Shrine, lined with hundreds of stone lanterns, and by special arrangement, observe a special Shinto ceremony of graceful music and dance. Explore the remarkable Todai-ji, a massive temple structure housing the largest seated bronze Buddha in the world. Return to Kyoto and celebrate the journey's end with a festive farewell dinner.

Kyoto Hotel Okura (B, D)

Saturday, June 16: DEPARTURE

Depart from Osaka's Itami Airport for return flights to the U.S. (*B, aloft*)