KUMANO KODO
The Sacred Sites & Pilgrimage Routes of the Kii Mountains of Japan
with Gavin H. Whitelaw, Executive Director of the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies
November 6–14, 2020
Delve into the prehistoric roots of Japanese culture, retracing the footsteps of ancient royalty on a serene, once-in-a-lifetime journey along cedar-shaded, cobblestone trails. From as early as the 11th century, imperials, aristocrats, and samurai from Kyoto followed pilgrimage routes deep into the dense forests of Japan’s Kii Mountains, passing bubbling streams, hot springs, and waterfalls to worship at magnificent shrines, temples, and ojii (enshrined natural landmarks). These six footpaths, collectively known as the Kumano Kodo, reflected the fusion of Japan’s native Shinto religion, with its veneration of nature, and Buddhism, which arrived from China in the 6th century. Alongside the Camino de Santiago in Spain, the Kumano Kodo is one of only two UNESCO World Heritage-recognized pilgrimage routes. Yet, unlike its European sibling, these paths remain underexplored by international visitors. With Japan’s autumn leaves in dazzling gold and crimson, journey from Osaka to the sacred mountain retreat of Koyasan by train and funicular, admiring ornate temples and a Buddhist cemetery amid a stunning ancient forest.

After a night’s stay in a Shukubo (Buddhist temple lodging), embark on carefully selected Kumano Kodo walks over two days to the three sacred Kumano Sanzan shrines, breathtaking in their color and majesty. Indulge in meticulously prepared Japanese delicacies, and pause for a rest overnight at an onsen. Complete your pilgrimage in Ise’s Grand Shrine, the most significant Shinto site in Japan. Transfer for two nights in the ancient capital of Kyoto.

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WHAT TO EXPECT
This is a moderately active to active program. Travelers who embark on the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage should be in good fitness with regular exercise in advance of the tour. If you opt to traverse these rugged, mountainous paths, expect one to three miles each day of walking along trails with steep ascents and descents, loose and slippery cobblestones, exposed tree roots, and stone staircases to the shrines. Well-worn hiking boots with adequate ankle support are a must. Daytime temperatures range in the 50s with possible rain showers, so please bring a jacket or fleece and raingear.

TO BOOK A TRIP, CALL 800-422-1636 OR VISIT ALUMNI.HARVARD.EDU/TRAVEL
Schedule by Day
B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6
Departure
Depart on an overnight flight to Osaka, Japan.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Osaka
Arrive at Kansai International Airport in Osaka and transfer to your hotel. Later, gather for your welcome reception and dinner. R,D

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8
Osaka
Osaka, Japan’s second largest city, is the traditional starting point of the Kumano Kodo. In the 10th century, pilgrims from Kyoto sailed down the Yodo River to begin their pilgrimage from Osaka. Tour the city’s key historical and cultural sites, beginning on the grounds of the 16th-century Osaka Castle, which played a major role in the unification of Japan during that period. Nearby, view the starting point marker of the Kumano Kodo, followed by a demonstration of the art of Japanese knife making. Lunch will feature local specialties like okonomiyaki, a crepe filled with meat and seafood and cooked on an iron hot plate in front of the customer. Then discover the modern Chikatsu Asuka Historical Museum, designed by architect Tadao Ando. Housing 4th- to 7th-century artifacts excavated from nearby burial mounds, the museum is a wonderful example of Ando’s ability to harmonize and integrate his designs into the surrounding landscapes. End the day with a tour of a well-known sake brewery, followed by dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant. B,L,D

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9
Osaka / Koyasan
Transfer to the Osaka train station to board the scenic Nankai Limited Express to Gokurakubashi Station, then take a 15-minute cable car ride up the mountain to Koyasan, one of the most sacred places in Japan and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This site was first settled in the 9th century as a spiritual retreat from the courtly intrigues of Kyoto. The town of Koyasan features a university dedicated to religious studies and over 100 temples, many offering lodging to pilgrims and travelers. More than half of Koyasan’s permanent residents are Buddhist monks. In the afternoon, tour the Koyasan Reihokan Museum, the Danjo Garan Temple Complex, and Okunoin, a Buddhist cemetery in a sacred ancient forest. Okunoin is the final resting place of Kukai, the monk who founded Koyasan, as well as over 200,000 Buddhist monks and followers. In the late afternoon, check in to your Shukubo, a temple that offers lodging to pilgrims, and enjoy a traditional Buddhist-inspired vegetarian dinner. B,L,D

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10
Kumano Kodo World Heritage Sites – Kumano Hongu Taisha / Hongucho Kawayu
Travel to the Kumano Kodo Kan Pilgrimage Center for an introduction and overview of the Kumano Kodo. After lunch, continue along the UNESCO-listed Kumano Kodo Nakasenheki sections of the trail to the Sangenjaya Teahouse ruins near Hongu. Your first hour-long walk of nearly two miles will take you through cedar forests, ending at the Kumano Hongu Taisha, the first of the three “Kumano Sanzan” sacred shrines of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage. Ascend the stone staircase to discover this gorgeous vista, which includes imposing cedars and wooden pavilions with steeply sloped roofs adorned with bronze ornaments. Behold the world’s largest Torii shrine gate, which weighs 172 tons and is made of steel. Return to your hotel in the late afternoon, with time to relax and perhaps enjoy a bath in the hotel onsen (hot spring) or in the naturally heated pools of the Kawayu River. B,L,D

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT ALUMNI.HARVARD.EDU/TRAVEL
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
**Kumano Kodo World Heritage Sites – Kumano Hayatama Taisha & Kumano Nachi Taisha / Ise**

Visit the seaside city of Shingu to tour the Kumano Hayatama Taisha, the second of the Kumano Kodo Sanzan shrines, found along the Kumano River. Marvel at its brilliant vermilion façade. The site is also home to an 800-year-old conifer tree, which is deemed sacred. Continue to Daimon Zaka, to begin a one-hour walk to Kumano Nachi Taisha (the final of the three shrines), perched on Mount Nachi with temples painted in vivid red. Then take a short, 15-minute walk to the splendid Nachi no Otaki waterfall. Lunch is at Kii Katsuura, home to the largest tuna market in Japan and featuring fresh Maguro sushi and sashimi. Following lunch, admire Japan’s spectacular fall foliage on the two-and-a-half hour drive to Ise, considered the end of the Kumano Kodo and home to the Grand Shrine of Ise. Dine at a Teppanyaki (flattop grill) restaurant and enjoy the local specialty, Matsusaka Wagyu beef. B,L,D

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12
**Ise / Kyoto**

Tour the highlights of Ise, including the Ise Jingu (known as the Grand Shrine), the most important Shinto site in Japan. The site consists of an inner and outer shrine, which are set just under four miles apart from each other. The Grand Shrine is purportedly the home of the Sacred Mirror and was dedicated to the Shinto sun goddess Amaterasu. The shrines are rebuilt every 20 years, a custom dating back to the 7th century as a manifestation of Shinto’s main tenet of purity, but also a means of keeping ancient building techniques alive. In the afternoon, transfer to Kyoto for a two-night stay. The evening is at leisure. B,L

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13
**Kyoto**

In the morning, take part in an exclusive tea ceremony. Then discover the magnificent Sanjusangen-do, a temple constructed in 1164. It is known for its Hall of Thirty-Three Bays, a long wooden structure housing 1,001 large wooden statues of Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. In the afternoon, tour the sites of Kyoto’s Higashiyama historic district, stroll the Path of Philosophy, and visit a delightful crafts museum before ending the day with an exclusive Geisha experience. This evening, toast a memorable trip at a traditional Kaiseki farewell dinner. B,L,D

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14
**Kyoto / Return**

From Kyoto, transfer to Kansai International Airport for flights home. B

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*Kii Mountains*
Details

- Embark on a scenic, deeply rewarding pilgrimage along select trails on the Kumano Kodo, which is one of only two UNESCO World Heritage pilgrimage routes, passing stunning streams, hot springs, waterfalls, and towering ancient trees at the peak of Japan’s fall foliage season.

- Explore the Kumano Sanzan, which are the three grand shrines of the Kumano region, including the striking vermilion Kumano Hayatama Taisha Grand Shrine, home to an 800-year-old conifer tree deemed sacred.

- Ascend to the sacred mountain retreat of Koyasan, the UNESCO World Heritage site that is home to more than 100 temples built over a millennium, and lodge in a Buddhist Shukubo (temple hotel).

Rates Per Person

$9,999 per person, double occupancy
$11,999 single rate
TOUR COST INCLUSIONS
Seven nights accommodations as per itinerary; meals as indicated in the itinerary; bottled water and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine at welcome and farewell dinners; enrichment program of lectures and talks; escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits; Nankai Limited Express train from Osaka to Gokurakubashi Station; airport/hotel/airport group transfers for all participants on suggested flights; taxes, service, and portage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers; $200,000 emergency medical evacuation insurance (to nearest hospital).

NOT INCLUDED IN COST
International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; personal items and expenses; airport transfers other than for those on suggested flights; baggage in excess of one suitcase; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

RESERVATIONS, DEPOSITS & FINAL PAYMENT
To reserve your space on this program, a $1,000 deposit per person is required. Please either call us at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806 or fill out and mail or fax the registration form. Reservations are acknowledged in order of receipt until the maximum enrollment has been reached. Your final payment is due 120 days before departure.

AIRFARE
The tour operator will be pleased to assist with air travel arrangements for this program, including suggested flights or individual requests for a processing fee of $40 per person. Complete details will be provided in your welcome packet.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS
All cancellations must be made in writing to Harvard Alumni Travels and are subject to a $500 nonrefundable administrative fee. Cancellations received between 120 and 91 days prior to departure will be charged a fee in the amount of 20 percent of the program cost per person; those received between 90 and 61 days before departure, 50 percent; no refunds will be given for cancellations received within 60 days of departure. No refunds are given for cancellation on or after the day of departure, or for unused portions of the tour, for any reason.

CHANGES IN ITINERARY & COSTS
The itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Harvard Alumni Travels and the tour operator. Deviations from the scheduled itinerary are at the expense of the individual. All prices quoted are based on prevailing fuel prices, airfare, and currency exchange rates in effect at the time of brochure printing and are subject to change. While the tour operator will do everything possible to maintain the published trip price, it may be necessary to institute a surcharge.

INSURANCE
We highly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance. A brochure for insurance will be provided upon confirmation.

RESPONSIBILITY
Certain other provisions apply regarding limitations of liability and rights of Harvard Alumni Travels and the tour operator. The statement of responsibility is available at https://alumni.harvard.edu/travel/trips/kumano-2020. If you are not able to access the Internet, please call Harvard Alumni Travels at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806.

DISCLAIMER
Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information presented in this publication. Neither Harvard Alumni Travels nor the tour operator is responsible for errors in or damages resulting from use of the information contained herein. Information contained in this brochure is subject to change.

QUESTIONS
Please call Harvard Alumni Travels at 800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806, email: hastravels@harvard.edu. CST 2059789-40

Registration Form
To register, please fill out this form and return it to Harvard Alumni Travels with your deposit of $1,000 per person (of which $500 is non-refundable).

Please return this form by mail to:
Harvard Alumni Travels
124 Mount Auburn Street, 6th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
Or by FAX: 617-496-4011

Please call with any questions:
800-422-1636 or 617-496-0806

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NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD
I/WE CONFIRM THAT I/WE HAVE READ AND ACCEPT THE GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THIS TOUR, INCLUDING REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY CLAUSE AT ALUMNI.HARVARD.EDU/TRAVEL.

SIGNATURE

ACCOMMODATIONS

HOTEL ROOM PREFERENCE
I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE A ROOM WITH:
Trip Sampling

LAND & RAIL

Journey in Greece for Students & Alumni
JAN 10–19, 2020
Keith Stone

Tanzania Migration Safari
MAR 6–16, 2020
Joseph Henrich

HMSC Colombia: From Bogota to Cartagena
MAR 12–23, 2020
Jeffrey Quilter

Detroit, The Motor City: Then & Now
MAY 14–18, 2020
Alice DeLana

Symphony of the Senses (Heart of Italy)
MAY 31–JUN 8, 2020
Lisa M. Wong & Lynn Chang

The Holy Land: Israel & Palestine
SEP 6–16, 2020
Peter Machinist

HMSC Silk Road Odyssey: The Five “Stans
OCT 5–23, 2020
Alexandra Vacroux

CRUISES

Mediterranean Masterpieces: Cádiz to Nice on Sea Cloud II
APR 16–25, 2020
Joseph A. Greene

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APR 17–30, 2020
Susan G. Miller

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JUN 27–JUL 9, 2020
Timothy J. Colton

Celtic Classics: Round-trip Dublin on Sea Cloud II
AUG 8–16, 2020
Catherine McKenna

Adriatic Odyssey: Venice to Catania on Sea Cloud II
OCT 4–12, 2020
Lino Pertile

Sicily by Sail: Catania to Naples on Sea Cloud II
OCT 11–19, 2020
Diana Sorensen

HBS New Year’s Galápagos on Origin
DEC 26, 2020–JAN 4, 2021
James Costa

RIVERS & LAKES

Elbe River Cruise on Elbe Princess II
MAR 31–APR 11, 2020
Thomas F. Kelly

The Pearls of the Po: From Venice to Parma on La Venezia
MAY 9–17, 2020
Joyce Chaplin

Great Journey Through Europe: The Rhine River & Switzerland
JUL 17–27, 2020
Christie McDonald

Iconic Christmas Markets: Vienna to Nuremberg on AmaViola
DEC 6–14, 2020
Jay Ellison

Egypt & The Nile: A Journey into Antiquity on Sanctuary Sunboat III
DEC 26, 2020–JAN 6, 2021
Jay Ellison

FAMILY ADVENTURES

Greece Family Odyssey: The Peloponnese on Running On Waves
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James Simpson

Japan Family Adventure: (Tokyo, Kyoto & Hiroshima)
JUN 27–JUL 8, 2020
Ted Gilman