

International Crafts Study Tour  
**Japan:**  
Gifu Prefecture and the Hida Alps  
October 19 – 29, 2010

Since 1991 Country Workshops' Drew Langsner has been organizing an annual crafts tour in a country selected for its outstanding craft traditions and Drew's personal contacts. We had our first Japan tour in 2003 and went again in 2004 and 2008. In subsequent years Drew has continued to develop his friendships with his Japanese friends, so it was decided to revisit Japan in 2010.

Located roughly half way between Tokyo and Osaka, Gifu Prefecture is just inland (to the north) of Nagoya, Japan's 4<sup>th</sup> largest city. Gifu Prefecture is an off the main tracks area that is a treasure trove for traditional crafts. Our tour dates in October come at a time when the weather should be very nice and travel is generally pleasant in this part of Japan.

We suggest that tour members plan to arrive in Japan one or more days before October 19. You can now fly directly into the new (and not so busy) Nagoya International Airport. Tour members who want to visit Tokyo can fly into Narita International Airport, and then take a *Shinkansen* bullet train to Nagoya. Those wanting to visit Kyoto can fly into Kansai International Airport (Osaka) or Nagoya. From the Nagoya airport, take a short train ride to Gifu City, and then walk one block to the modern hotel where we will stay for the first 2 nights.

The tour begins when our group gathers at our accommodation in Gifu City on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 19. Days 2 – 6 will be in the Gifu City area, with visits in Seki, Mino, Tajimi and Mizunami. Days 7-10 are based in Takayama to the north in the Hida Alps. The tour ends back in Gifu City on Friday, October 29. Land transportation during the tour will be by mini-bus with a professional driver. Our tour accommodations will be in both traditional *ryokans* and modern "western" hotels.

As with our other tours, this year's itinerary is truly off the tourist path, taking us inside the homes and workshops of master artisans who you will meet on a personal basis. We have arranged for demonstrations at many of our visits, and it will be possible to buy outstanding craft work directly from our hosts. Although our primary focus is woodworking, we will include visits with artisans working in other materials including pottery, paper and metal. The tour includes cultural and historic sites, and opportunities for exploring and shopping in the towns and cities that we visit. We are also very pleased to include a special performance of traditional puppetry.

The staff for this year's tour has been expanded to include four of Drew's contacts in Japan. Masashi Kutsuwa will be our guide and translator for days 1-6. Masashi is a woodworking instructor at Gifu Academy of Forest Science and Culture. He is also an organizer of the new Japan Green Woodworking Association. Osamu Shoji is our guide

and translator for Days 7-10. Osamu is a founder and head teacher at Shinrin Takumi-juku, one of the best known woodworking schools in Japan. Osamu will also be teaching a Japanese Woodworking class at Country Workshops, scheduled for August 9-14. Erina Horiuchi has contributed to the Hida part of the itinerary. Both Masashi and Erina are graduates of the woodworking program at Shinrin Takumi-juku. Pierre Nadeau (from Canada) will be the technical translator during our visit with *katana* swordsmith Hiromune Takaba. Pierre is currently finishing a formal apprenticeship in blade making with another master smith. Drew Langsner will serve as tour host and director.

The maximum size for our tour group is limited to 12 clients.

If you have questions about the tour you can contact Drew by e-mail or phone (828 656 2280.)

Photo highlights from our 2008 Japan Tour can be seen at:

[www.countryworkshops.org/japanjournal.html](http://www.countryworkshops.org/japanjournal.html)

## Tour Itinerary

(Details subject to modification. )

Day 1 Tues Oct 19 Tour group meets at the Daiwa Roynet Hotel in Gifu City. Welcome Supper with tour guide Masashi Kutsuwa.

<http://www.daiwaroynet.jp/english/>

Day 2 Wed Oct 20 Gifu City. Visits in the old town center. Sakurai Meiboku is the name of a family run timber company that specializes in large, free edge slabs for dining tables. An extra treat will be a tour of Mr. Sakurai's old, multi storied timber framed house.

[www.shizendo.net/sakurai.html](http://www.shizendo.net/sakurai.html)

Our day in old Gifu also includes a stop at a private indigo textile museum, a visit at one of the last traditional wood and paper umbrella workshops, and a Japanese paper craft shop.

[www.sibsi36.com](http://www.sibsi36.com)

Day 3 Thur Oct 21 AM visit in Seki City with samurai *katana* swordsmith Hiromune Takaba. Apprentice blade smith Pierre Nadeau will assist. Lunch at Gallery Ze. PM visit to a cormorant fisherman's house and a basket maker who weaves the bamboo baskets used by the cormorant fishermen. Mr. Fumio Ishihara is the last maker of these baskets in Japan. In recent years he has also been teaching bamboo basketry at Gifu Academy.

[www.japancraft.blogspot.com/2007/02/bamboo-basket-making.html](http://www.japancraft.blogspot.com/2007/02/bamboo-basket-making.html)

We are lodging for 3 nights at Masunoya Ryokan near Mino City.

Day 4 Fri Oct 22 Mino City. Demo with *washi* paper maker Takashi Kano. Westerners often think of *washi* as “rice paper” but actually the primary material is the inner bark from small mulberry trees. Mr Kano also makes *washi* from hemp.

[www.gifu-hemp.net/minomashi.htm](http://www.gifu-hemp.net/minomashi.htm)

Guided walk around old Mino. PM tour of Mino Academy of Forest Science and Culture where Masashi is a woodworking instructor. The school teaches timber framing, forestry and woodworking in a 2 year program.

[www.forest.ac.jp/english](http://www.forest.ac.jp/english)

This evenings supper is at one of our favorite restaurants, Café Sasaya in Seki. Masunoya Ryokan.

Day 5 Sat Oct 23 Excursion to Tajimi City, famous for its ceramics artisans. Our primary visit is at an art gallery called “Momogusa.” The gallery is in a restored old Japanese house surrounded with beautiful gardens. The exhibit during our visit will be wooden bowls, plates and cutlery made by Ryuji Mitani. The gallery owner, Masanobu Ando, is a potter and author who writes about Japanese arts and crafts. We will also visit one of the more traditional pottery shops in Tajimi. Masunoya Ryokan.

[www.momogusa.com](http://www.momogusa.com)

[www.mitaniryuji.com](http://www.mitaniryuji.com)

Day 6 Sun Oct 24 Excursion to Mizunami City in the eastern part of Gifu Prefecture. We will be guests at the Hanbara puppet show, a tradition in Mizunami that goes back more than 300 years. Each half life- size bunraku puppet is manipulated by 3 puppeteers who are also on stage, dressed in all black. The show will be preceded by a special lecture for us on the history of this traditional folk art. They only perform 2-3 times a year and have agreed to do this performance on this date for our tour schedule.

[www.chibunken.gijodai.jp/hozonkai/01/03/post-18.html](http://www.chibunken.gijodai.jp/hozonkai/01/03/post-18.html)

After the puppetry we take a bus ride to Takayama City in the Hida Alps. We will be staying at an old, but very nice ryokan called Hodakaso Yamnano-Lori.

[www.d1.dion.ne.jp/~h\\_iiyama](http://www.d1.dion.ne.jp/~h_iiyama)

Day 7 Mon Oct 25 Takayama is famous for it’s Spring and Fall Festivals, saki production, and for the many traditional craftsmen and carpenters who created significant historic works across Japan. Among the special creations are the old festival floats (portable Shinto shrines) that are used during the festivals. AM stroll through the old town, with a visit to the museum that houses the hand-carried festival floats. We also visit Akira Hachino’s workshop. Mr Hachino is a highly skilled shrine and temple carpenter who also does restoration work on the festival floats.

[www.hida-hachiman.org/yatai\\_kaikan](http://www.hida-hachiman.org/yatai_kaikan)

[www.chuokai-gifu.or.jp/yatai/index.html](http://www.chuokai-gifu.or.jp/yatai/index.html)

In the afternoon we tour Yoshijima Heritage House. This is an old Machiya Style Japanese merchant’s home. Our guide will be the owner, Tadao Yoshijima. Mr Yoshijima is also an architect.

[www.orientalarchitecture.com/japan/takayama/yoshijima.php](http://www.orientalarchitecture.com/japan/takayama/yoshijima.php)

Day 8 Tues Oct 26 AM visit to the store house of Sanshokan Art Museum. This is a treasure trove of old traditional tools for various crafts and trades. The collection includes many interesting and rare tools formerly used by Japanese woodworkers. PM visit with Zigen Takada, a Buddhist monk who first learned *Ichii Ittobori* yew carving, then began his training as a Buddha carver. He has carved 2 or 3 Buddhas each year dedicated to temples across Japan for the past 35 years. Yamakyu Ryokan.

Day 9 Wed Oct 27 AM visit to the Hida-No-Sato Folk Village, an open air museum with restored traditional rural structures of the Japanese Alps. Demonstration by the resident spoon and ladle carver.

[www.hidanosato-tpo.jp/hdsmap.html](http://www.hidanosato-tpo.jp/hdsmap.html)

PM visit with Keiichi Nishida, a maker of bent wood boxes that serve as a base for *urushi* lacquer ware. Yamakyu Ryokan.

[www.pref.gifu.lg.jp/pref/s11355/takumi/dentoumain/sakuhin/shunkei/05.html#Nishida%20Keiichi](http://www.pref.gifu.lg.jp/pref/s11355/takumi/dentoumain/sakuhin/shunkei/05.html#Nishida%20Keiichi)

Day 10 Thurs Oct 28 AM visit at Shinrin Takumi-juku, the woodworking school where Osamu Shoji is a founder and head teacher. PM Visit at Oak Village, a wood production center that manufactures wood products including household accessories, furniture, and timber framed residences.

<http://www.takumijuku.com/>  
[www.oakv.co.jp/index.html](http://www.oakv.co.jp/index.html)

We will also visit Mr & Mrs Masatoshi Tsukuda in their newly built timber frame home made by the Oak Village carpentry shop. Mr Tsukuda is Director of Shinrin Takumi-juku. Mrs Mayumi Tsukuda is a skilled basket maker. Evening bus trip back to our hotel in Gifu City.

Day 11 Fri Oct 29 AM visit with Madoka Tone at her *urushi* lacquer workshop and small gallery. (Madoka is Masashi Kutsuwa's wife; we hope to also meet Fuku, their almost 2-year old daughter. Surprise lunch. PM. Free time in Gifu City for fun shopping at the local department stores and supermarkets. Farewell supper. Daiwa Roynet Hotel in Gifu City.

## Tour Fees and Financial Details

The tour fee for reservations received by April 30 is \$3,650. After April 30 there may be an adjustment in the tour fee due to variations in exchange rates or other considerations.

The tour package includes: services of our tour staff members, land travel beginning October 20, all lodging beginning October 19 and ending October 29, all meals (excluding special beverages and ordered deserts), all admissions, host honorariums and guide fees.

The tour package does not include overseas air travel. We can assist in locating good airfare prices and reasonable accommodations if you wish to extend your stay in Japan.\*

Note: We will be using a mix of accommodations. When staying in traditional ryokans we will be sleeping on futons, placed directly on the tatami mat flooring. Some ryokans have double occupancy rooms, at other times we may be divided into men's and women's groups, with 3 or 4 in a room. We realize that this is not customary for contemporary travelers, but also believe that ryokans offer a very special traditional Japanese cultural experience that cannot be duplicated.

Tour participants will need to limit their luggage to one standard airline carry-on size case plus one handbag, briefcase or day pack. This is necessary due to the unknown luggage capacity of the mini-bus which we will be using. Any additional luggage will need to be checked at the Gifu City hotel during our stays in Mino and Takayama..

To reserve your place on the tour, return the attached Reservation, along with a deposit of \$1,000. The balance is due July 21. If you need to cancel, you must notify us in writing. Refunds will be made under the following schedule:

<u>Number of days before October 19</u>	<u>Cancellation fee</u>
90 days or more	50% of deposit
89-60 days	50% of tour fee (assuming full payment received)
59-30 days	75% of tour fee
29 days or less	no refund

\*Note: Airfare, baggage, and tour cancellation insurance can be purchased from your travel agent.

**RESERVATION**  
**Country Workshops Japan Craft Tour**  
**Gifu Prefecture and the Hida Alps**

October 19-29, 2010

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First Name

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name First Name  
(Please use full name as on your passport)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

/ \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone Alternate Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail

Do you have any dietary or health considerations that we should be aware of?

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**Release of Claims**

This Reservation constitutes a release of all liability. Country Workshops, Inc. (herein known as "Tour Operator") serves only to assist in making necessary air travel arrangements for its tour participants, and in no way represents, or acts as agents for transportation carriers, hotels, and other suppliers of services connected with this tour. Tour Operator will not be held liable for any personal injury or property damage, loss, accident, delay, or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved. Additionally, responsibility is not accepted for losses or expenses due to sickness, accident, weather, etc.. The Tour Operator staff reserves the right to make changes in the published itinerary whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the tour participants. Tour Operator reserves the right to cancel the tour due to under-enrollment or unforeseen circumstances. In case of cancellation by Tour Operator, responsibility will be limited to a refund of tour fees received. Tour Operator also reserves the right to decline to accept any person as a participant, or to require any participant to withdraw from the tour (without refund) at any time, when such action is

determined by the staff to be in the best interests of the health, safety, and general welfare of the tour group or of the individual participant. Because of the inherent risks Tour Operator suggests that tour participants purchase trip cancellation insurance from an independent agent.

Tour applicants should not purchase airline tickets until receiving a confirmation letter stating that they have been accepted as tour participants.

\_\_\_\_ I/we would like to register for the Country Workshops 2010 Japan Craft Tour. I/we have read the Tour Prospectus, including "Tour Fees and Financial Details" and "Release of Claims." I/we understand that the tour staff or others may take photographs that include my image. I agree that these photos can be used for Country Workshops publicity or other purposes without personal compensation or further permission.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Passport # \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Passport # \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed Deposit \_\_\_\_\_

Deposits may be made with Visa/MasterCard or your personal check. Credit card payment is not available for the final payment.



Card number \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

In the case of a personal emergency during the tour, who should be contacted in the US?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Upon acceptance, participants will receive a confirmation letter, along with a listing of travel suggestions including luggage, appropriate clothing, etc. You must carry a valid US Passport. A visa is not required for travel in Japan.

Country Workshops, Incorporated is a nonprofit, educational organization chartered by the State of North Carolina. We accept participants of any race, sex or creed.

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