

A photograph of one of the thatched roof kominka in Miyama owned by Haruo Nishio

THE TIMBER FRAMERS GUILD NOVEMBER 11 - 23, 2026 JAPANESE BUILDING ARTS STUDY TOUR & WORKSHOP SERIES

IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE KOMINKA COLLECTIVE

Please note that some activities are optional and some details may change slightly. For more information, please contact Jim DeSantis at jim@tfguild.org.

The Schedule at a Glance

11/11	Tokyo	Meet in Tokyo
11/12	Kamakura	Visit author and minka architect Yoshihiro Takishita at his three minka; explore Kamakura
11/13	Kyoto	Explore Kyoto's historic temples, gardens, and traditional neighborhoods; free time
11/14 11/15	Miyama	Learn earthen wall systems with Emily Kaneko Reynolds, kumiko with Shinichi Murayama, roof thatching with Haruo Nishio, and indigo dyeing with Naoko Kamimura Omae
11/16	Kyoto	Visit the Imperial Villa and Arashiyama; free time
11/17	Nara	Visit Nara's architectural treasures, including Tōdai-ji and Horyu-ji
11/18	Kobe/Himeji	Visit the Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum and Himeji Castle
11/19 11/20	Shinshiro	Practice carpentry with Toda Komuten master carpenters, explore traditional crafts, and visit minka, kura, and architectural salvage storehouses. Option to participate in workshops related to Japanese crafts, including shibori tie dyeing and Japanese calligraphy
11/21	Shinshiro/ Tokyo	Visit Horaiji Temple; visit Nezu Shrine Michikusa Handmade Market and other Tokyo sites
11/22	Sōsa	Two options: Attend the National Kezuroukai Competition in Sōsa, Chiba or explore Tokyo and surrounding towns, such as Kawagoe
11/23	Tokyo	Farewells in Tokyo

Travel arrangments by T-Net International (Aichi, Japan) Registered Travel Agency, No. 3-1035

TFG JAPAN TOUR

In the event of an emergency

- We will prepare cards with information about what to do in an emergency and share digital and printed versions with you.

Interpretation & Translation Apps

- The Google Translate App is free and easy to use. It provides both text and voice translation / interpretation.
- A short video (perhaps a bit out of date) explaining how to use the app is here.



Transportation Information

- The Japan Transit Planner App is very useful and worth having on your phone. We use it all the time.



Voltage Converters for Devices

The voltage in Japan is 100V. Most electronics from North America are 110V to 120V and do not require a voltage converter, and so usually have no problem working in Japan.

Information about tax-free shopping is here.
From the website, “As of November 1, 2026, this program will be shifting to a refund system which will allow travelers to receive the consumption tax as a refund as they exit the country. “

Some resources

- Japan Guide YouTube
- Visit Japan Web (for arrival services)
- Japan Travel Useful Information
- Lonely Planet Japan

TFG JAPAN TOUR

What to bring

- Some warm clothes for the morning and evening - the weather may be changeable and it may be chilly in the morning and evening.
- A rain jacket or folding umbrella
- Comfortable shoes for walking
- Slippers if you would like to have your own with you
- Some lighter clothes for warmer days
- Some cash for extras (please see below)

Travel Insurance

- Travel insurance that covers medical emergencies such as accidents and unexpected illness is required for the duration of the trip is required. Japan has an excellent health care system, but without travel insurance, medical treatment is expensive.

Financial arrangements: What to expect

- Accommodations, transportation, meals, entry fees for temples, shrines, museums, etc that all members of the group go to, and workshops are included in the fee you pay to the Timber Framers Guild.
- Beverages and snacks while out and about, bicycle rental, entry or workshop fees that are not part of the tour program, and transportation to areas outside of the local areas we are visiting will be paid out of pocket.
- It is perhaps best to change money at the airport as doing so can be somewhat difficult when we are out and about.
- It is possible to use a credit card in many but not all places.
- Convenience stores and other establishments have ATMs where it is most likely possible to get a cash advance using a credit card.

Communications while in Japan

- Some people sign up for a global plan or Japan plan with their provider at home and then use their phones as usual.
- It is also possible to buy a Japanese SIM card in the US or Canada or to purchase one at the airport in Japan.
- It is possible to use Wifi at a number of places when we are out and about - except for when we are in Hanase and Shinshiro.
- We will prepare a list of What'sApp (and other) contacts to share with the group

Tattoo Coverings for Hot Springs

- In general, most public hot springs do now allow people to enter the hot spring if they have tattoos. This outdated rule is related to hot spring resorts hoping to prevent the Japanese yakuza (mafia) from the baths.
- If one has tattoos and would like to enter a public hot spring, there are bandage-like coverings that are available to cover tattoos.

TFG JAPAN TOUR

Slippers

- As you know, shoes are not worn in homes or in some restaurants, Japanese style inns, or other establishments. If you are not comfortable wearing slippers or if they do not fit, it is generally not a problem if you do not wear them as long as you are wearing socks.
- If you are concerned that slippers might not fit, it is fine to bring your own to slip on if and when needed.
- There will sometimes be outdoor slippers to wear when you go outside into a garden - the trick is to remember to switch back to the indoor slippers when you come back inside.
- Many homes or establishments have slippers to be worn in the toilet room. In this case you leave your regular slippers outside the toilet room and put them back on before you leave the restroom area.

Tipping

- In general, tipping is not done in Japan. However, if a taxi driver helps you with your bags, for example, it would be appropriate to give the driver a small tip.

Bathroom etiquette

- In Japan, the toilet room and the bathing room are in different places.
- Before taking a bath, first wash before getting into the bathtub.
- In a public bathing area or onsen, small towels are used for purposes of modesty.

Food & Eating

- It is somewhat difficult to find restaurants that serve purely vegetarian or vegan food
- Rest chopsticks on a chopstick rest or on your plate when you are not eating. When you finish eating, you can return your chopsticks to their paper holder (if they are disposable chopsticks) and fold over the end of the paper to indicate that you have finished using them.
- It is very bad manners to pass food directly from one person's chopsticks to another person's chopsticks and it is not polite to point at something with chopsticks.
- Don't hesitate to ask for a fork, knife, or spoon if a dish is difficult to eat with chopsticks!
- Before beginning to eat, it is polite to put your hands together and say *Itadakimasu,* and after a meal, it is polite to say *Gochisosamadesita* to the host and to the staff at the restaurant.

Bowing

- In general, it is perhaps best to bow as deeply and as a long or more deeply and a bit longer than the other person.

At Shrines

- At the area where one rinses their hands, use the ladle to rinse your hands.
- When walking up and down stairs to a shrine, walk up on the right side of the stairs and down on the left.



TOKYO & KAMAKURA
NOVEMBER 11 & 12

TOKYO & KAMAKURA
NOVEMBER 11 & 12

Getting to Central Tokyo from airports
- We will arrange to meet you at the airport or at another central location.

Accommodations on the 11th and the 12th
APA Hotel Asakusa Kuramae
(https://www3.apahotel.com/hotel/syutoken/tokyo/asakusa-kuramae/)
2-4-6 Komagata, Taitō-ku, Tokyo 111-0043, Japan
〒111-0043 東京都台東区駒形2-4-6
Phone: 03-5806-2111 | GPS: 35.70575° N, 139.79422° E

Note: There are two other APA hotels in Kuamae - APA Kuramae Kita and APA Kuramae Ekimae. Please be sure to go to the APA hotel at 2-4-6 Komagata, above.

For APA Hotel Asakusa Kuramae at 2-4-6 Komagata, the closest subway access listed by the hotel is Kuramae Station on the Toei Ōedo Line, Exit A6, about a 2-minute walk. If you arrive on the Toei Asakusa Line, the hotel lists Exit A2, about a 4-minute walk.

In a separate document, we will provide detailed maps and instructions about getting from either Haneda or Narita Airports to the hotel.

Getting around
Walking and public transportation. Some maps and information about the Asakusa and Kuramae areas can be found here. (The links to information about Asakusa and Kuramae are near the top of the page.)

Some places to visit in Tokyo
- Asakusa
- Kigumi Museum (Closed Mondays)
- Nezu Museum (Closed Mondays)
- Mingei-kan (Closed Mondays) Japan Folk Craft Museum
- Minka-en (Closed Mondays) Opoen air minka museum
- Kawagoe Just outside of Tokyo, known for its repurposed kura storehouses
- Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum (Closed Mondays)

Note: In any of the places we visit, if there are things you are particularly interested in seeing or doing - sake tasting, antique shops, traditional Japanese arts-related experiences, etc. - please let us know and we will do our best to find information!

November 11th
- Meet for a group dinner near the hotel.

November 12th
On the morning of November 12th, we will take the train to Kamakura, which takes about an hour. From Kamakura Station, we will take taxi to visit Yoshihiro Takishita, a hero in the world of preserving Japanese architectural heritage, at his three minka overlooking Kamakura.

After our morning with Takishita san, some people might like to see more of Kamakura. There are wonderful walking courses in the hills surrounding Kamakura and nice places to eat and shop in the town center. A Japan Guide video is here.

TOKYO & KAMAKURA
NOVEMBER 11 & 12





Information about November 11th and 12th, continued

Meals

Wednesday, November 11th

- Breakfast Individually as people will be arriving at different times
- Lunch Individually as people will be arriving at different times
- Dinner as a group at a local izakaya

Thursday, November 12th

- Breakfast at the hotel before leaving for Kamakura
- Lunch individually in Kamakura
- Dinner individually

Friday, November 13th

- Breakfast at the hotel before leaving for Kyoto
- Lunch individually in Kyoto
- Dinner individually





KYOTO
NOVEMBER 13

KYOTO
NOVEMBER 13

From Tokyo to Kyoto
After breakfast, we will leave Tokyo and take a train to Shinagawa Station to catch the Shinkansen (Bullet Train) to Kyoto.

- We will do our best to miss the commuter rush in the morning traveling between the hotel and Shinagawa Station, but we should expect a somewhat crowded train.
- As we will all have luggage, we will plan a route that has easy access to elevators.
- We will have tickets ready for everyone for both the Tokyo train and the Shinkansen to Kyoto.

The trip from Tokyo to Kyoto on the Shinkansen takes …. At Kyoto Station, we will take taxis to Chisakuin Temple and leave our luggage there. A Kyoto area travel guide is here.

Accommodations in Kyoto
Chishakuin Temple and Chishakuin Kaikan
964 Higashikawara-cho, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto-shi, Kyoto-fu 605-0951, Japan
- The temple's website is here (it may be under maintenance)
- The temple's YouTube channel is here and Instagram is here

Some places to visit and things to do in the eastern part of Kyoto, near-ish Chishakuin Temple
- The Philosopher's Path
- Nanzenji Temple
- Ginkakuji Temple
- Kiyomizudera Temple
- Kawai Kanjiro's House
- Teramachi and Shinkyogoku
- Tool Shops



Some places to visit in the western part of Kyoto
- Ryoanji Temple
- Kinkakuji Temple
- Haradani-en Garden
- Arashiyama
- Imperial Villa

Getting around
- Walking and public transportation (and perhaps sometimes taxis)

Meals - November 13th
- Breakfasts at the hotel
- Lunches individually
- Dinners individually



MIYAMA
NOVEMBER 14 & 15

MIYAMA & KEIHOKU
NOVEMBER 14 & 15

From Kyoto to Miyama
After lunch on the 14th, we will go to the Keihoku and Miyama area by charter bus. The trip takes about an hour and a half.

Accommodations on the 14th and 15th
We will stay in several thatched roof minka near Miyama Village.

Getting around
- Walking and a 27-seat bus

Activities in this area include
- Visit Miyama Village
- An indigo dying demonstration at OW Indigo
- Thatching session with Master Thatcher Haruo Nishio
- Earthen walls system demonstration with Emily Kaneko Reynolds
- Workshop with kumiko artisan Shinichiro Murayama

Meals

Saturday, the 14th
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Lunch in Keihoku
- Dinner as a group in Miyama

Sunday, the 15th
- Breakfast at the minka
- Bento lunch
- Dinner as a group in Miyama

Monday, the 16th
- Breakfast at the minka
- Lunch in Kyoto individually
- Dinner individually







KYOTO
NOVEMBER 16

KYOTO
NOVEMBER 16

From Miyama to Kyoto
After breakfast at our various minka, we will leave Miyama and return by bus to Kyoto. The trip will take about an hour and a half.

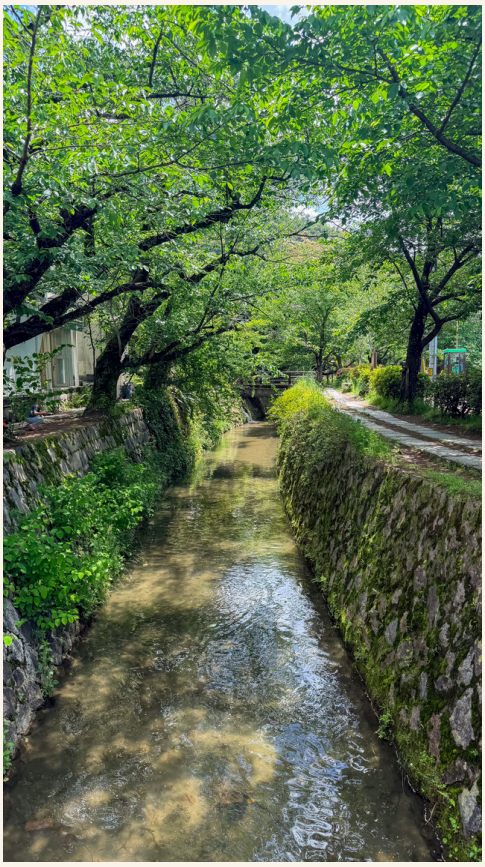
A Kyoto area travel guide is here.

Accommodations in Kyoto
Onyado Nono Kyoto Shichijo (天然温泉 蓮花の湯 御宿 野乃京都七条)
491 Zaimokuchō, Shimogyō-ku, Kyoto 600-8146, Japan
〒600-8146 京都府京都市下京区材木町491番地
Phone: 075-365-5489

- The hotel's website is here
- The hotel is about a 7-minute walk from Kyoto Station's Central Exit.

Some places to visit and things to do in the eastern part of Kyoto, near-ish Chishakuin Temple

- The Philosopher's Path
- Nanzenji Temple
- Ginkakuji Temple
- Kiyomizudera Temple
- Kawai Kanjiro's House
- Teramachi and Shinkyogoku
- Tool Shops



Some places to visit in the western part of Kyoto

- Ryoanji Temple
- Kinkakuji Temple
- Haradani-en Garden
- Arashiyama
- Imperial Villa

Getting around

- Walking and public transportation (and sometimes taxis)

Meals - November 13th

- Breakfasts at the hotel
- Lunches individually
- Dinners individually





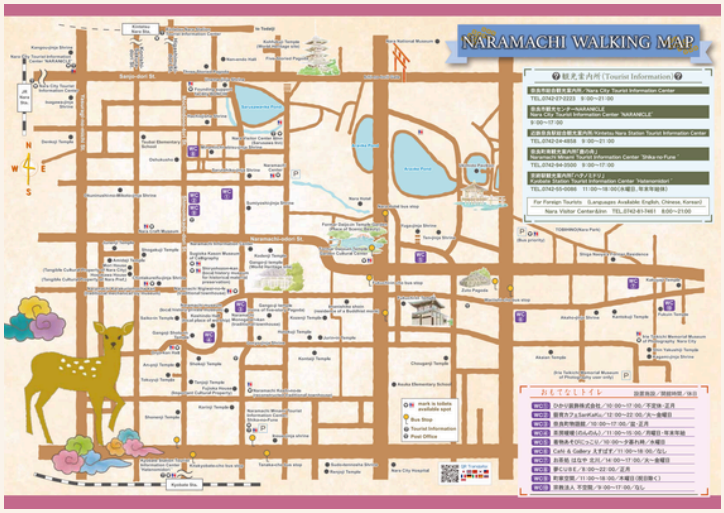
NARA
NOVEMBER 17

NARA (A DAY TRIP FROM KYOTO) NOVEMBER 17

From Kyoto to Nara
We will leave for Nara after breakfast on the 17th, and the trip takes about an hour. Information about World Heritage venues in Nara is here. A Japan Guide YouTube video about Nara is here.

Note: Nara isgenerally quieter than Kyoto, however a challenge is that the most historic temples, Todaiji Temple and Horyuki Temple, are in different parts of Nara. Both can be visited in a day at a brisk place, or if more slowly, it may be best to visit just one of the areas.

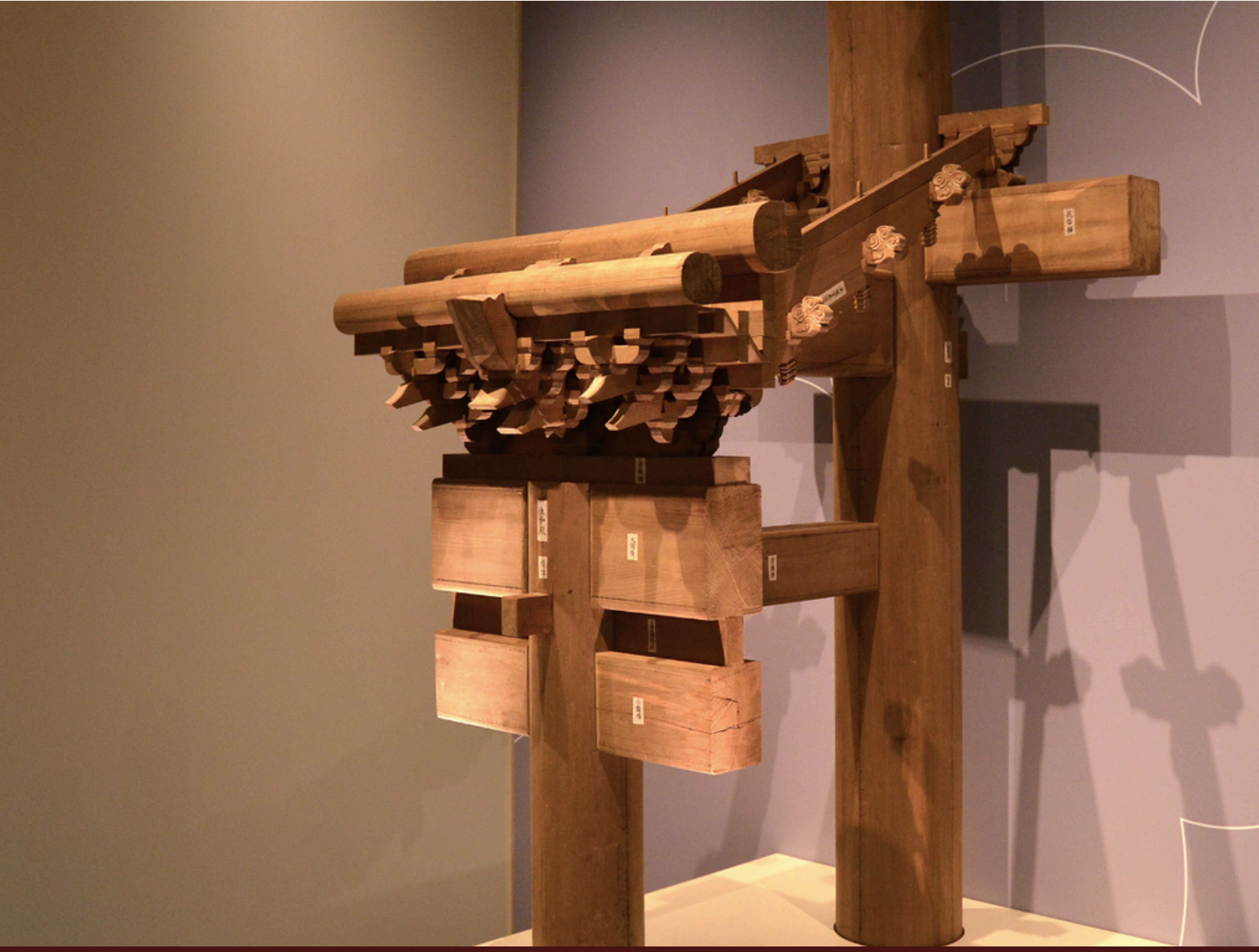
Some places to visit in
- Todai-Temple
- Kasugataisha Shrine
- Yakushi-Temple
- Horyuji-Temple
- and more



Getting around
- On foot, bus, and train
- Bicycles can be rented from l locations all around Nara

Meals - Wednesday, November 17th
- Breakfast at the Kyoto hotel
- Lunch Individually
- Dinner individually





KOBE & HIMEJI
NOVEMBER 18

KOBE & HIMEJI (A DAY TRIP FROM KYOTO) NOVEMBER 18

Note: Tuesday the 18th will be a flexible day as some people might like Museum in Kobe, and other might like to vist Himeji Castle. We are planning that we will go from Kobe to Himeji Castle directly, but some people might like to spend the morning in Kyoto and then meet the group at the castle in the afternoon - or even spend the day in Kyoto!

From Kyoto to Kobe: We will leave for Kobe after breakfast on the 18th. The trip takes about an hour by train.

From Kobe to Himeji: Kobe (JR Sannomiya) → Himeji: about 40 minutes by JR Special Rapid, direct.

From Kyoto to Himeji: Kyoto → Himeji: about 1 hour 30 minutes by JR Special Rapid, direct; or roughly 45–60 minutes by Shinkansen, depending on the service.

From Himeji Station, allow another 15–20 minutes on foot to Himeji Castle. visit-

Travel guides for Kobe are here and here.
A tavel guide for Himeji is here.



Some places to visit

- Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum
- Himeji Castle



For people who enjoy onsen, a visit to Arima Onsen Village near Kobe might be of interest. and the village can be reached by train or by the Mount Rokko Ropeway.

- Arima Onsen Village
- Mount Rokko



Getting around

- Walking and public transportation

Meals - Wednesday, November 18th

- Breakfast at the Kyoto hotel
- Lunch individually
- Dinner individually



SHINSHIRO
NOVEMBER 19 & 20

SHINSHIRO
NOVEMBER 19 & 20

From Kyoto to Shinshiro
We will leave the Kyoto Station for Shinshiro and Toyohashi in the morning after breakfast. The trip will take about an hour and a half, first by Shinkansen and then we will travel by a chartered bus to Shinshiro.

Information about the Shinshiro / Okumikawa area is here.

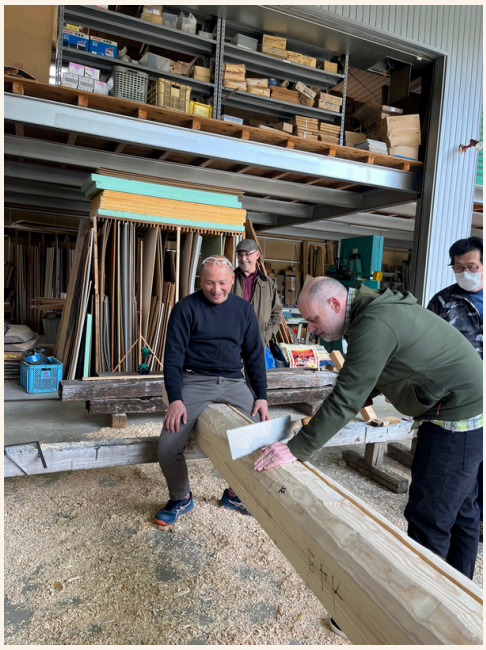
An NHK reporter will join us in Shinshiro with a film crew. If anyone would prefer not to be filmed, this can be arranged.

Accommodations November 19 & 20
Hazu Bekkan Onsen Ryokan

Activities in this area include:
- A visit to a 200-year-old minka that was relocated from Niigata and is now one of Toda Komuten's offices
- A visit to a local minka typcial of the Oku-Mikawa area
- A yakisugi demonstration by Toda Komuten and a tour of their storeroom
- A visit to 1,200-year-old Horaiji Temple, time permitting

Hands on Workshops (Parallel sessions so people can choose)
- A carpentry workshop in the morning and afternoon
- Shibori tie dyeing (am) and Japanese calligraphy workshops (pm)

Getting around
- Walking and a small bus



Meals

Thursday, November 19th
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Bento lunch as a group
- Dinner as a group at Hazu Bekkan Onsen Ryokan

Friday, November 20th
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Bento lunch as a group
- Barbecue dinner at SO House

Saturday, November 21st
- Breakfast at the hotel







TOKYO
NOVEMBER 21 & 22

TOKYO
NOVEMBER 21 ~ 23

From Shinshiro to the Tokyo area
On the 21st, we will return to Toyohashi in the morning and take the Shinkansen to Tokyo, a journey of about 90 minutes to Central Tokyo

Accommodations on November 21 & 22
Keisei Richmond Hotel
3-2-7 Kotobashi, Sumida-ku, Tokyo 130-0022
〒130-0022 東京都墨田区江東橋3-2-7
Phone: 03-6658-8647
About 5 minutes on foot from Kinshicho Station.

On the 21st::
We will arrive in Tokyo in the afternoon and leave our luggage at the hotel. Some people might like to visit Nezu Shrine Michikusa Handmade Market - the admission is free - and of course other Tokyo sites.

On the 22nd: There are two main options.
- Attend the National Kezuroukai Competition in Sōsa, Chiba. It is about 90 minutes from Tokyo by train. https://www.instagram.com/kezuroukaisosa2026/?
- Explore Tokyo and surrounding towns, such as Kawagoe

Other things to see and do include:
- Kawagoe
- Asakusa
- Kigumi Museum
- Nezu Museum
- Mingei-kan
- Minka-en
- Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum



Getting around
- Walking, taxis, and public transportation

Meals

Saturday, November 21
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Lunch individually
- Dinner as a group in Tokyo



Sunday, November 22
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Lunch individually
- Dinner individually most likely

Monday, November 23
- Breakfast at the hotel
- Lunch individually as flight times vary
- Dinner individually as flight times vary