

The Japan Journey for Hope, Healing, and Wellness

The John Zeus project:
A transformative small group tour of
Japanese culture, spirituality, cuisine,
and well-being.

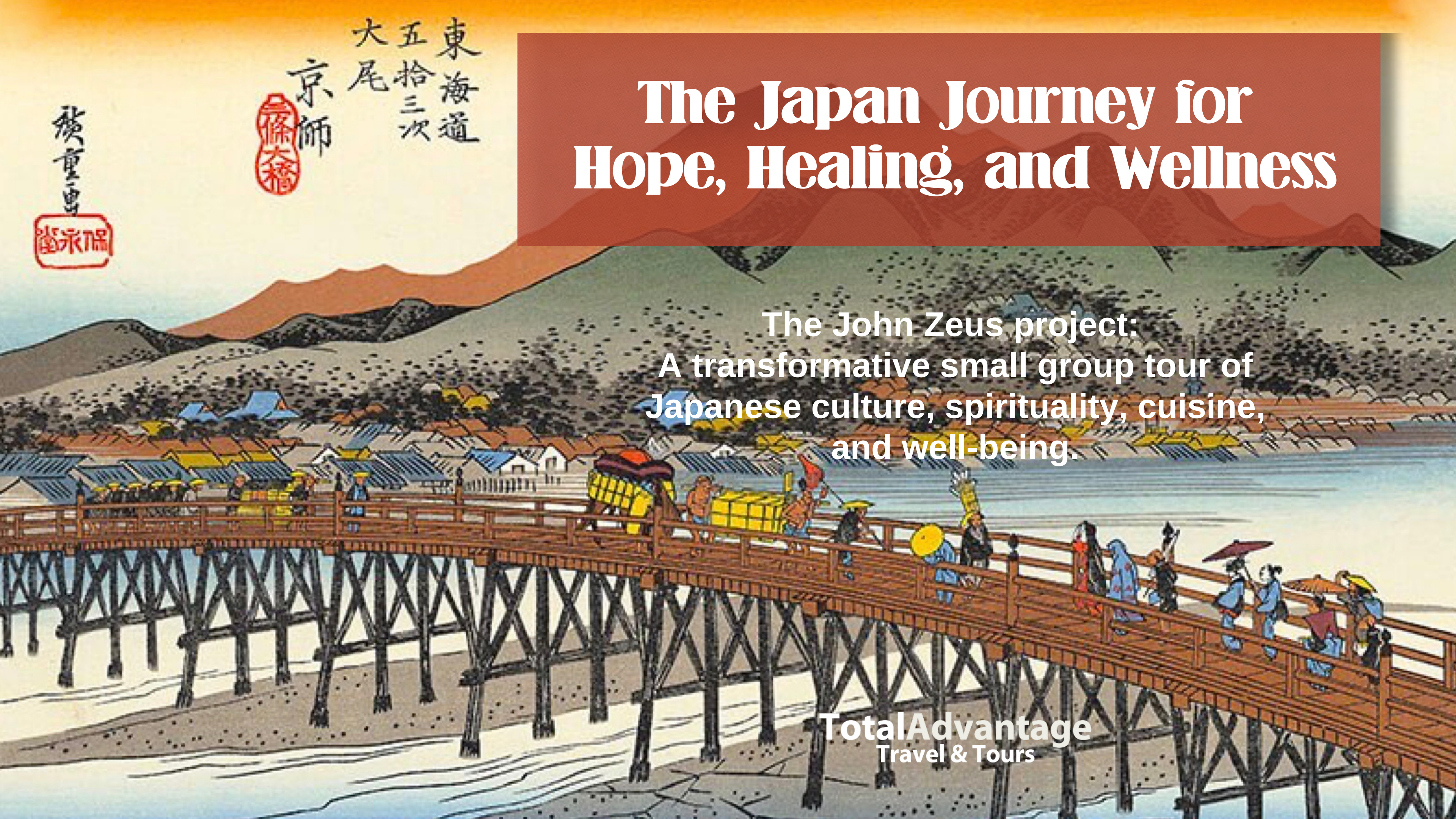
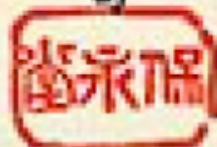
Total Advantage
Travel & Tours

東海道
五拾三次
大尾

京師



廣重



Japan Journey For Hope, Healing and Wellness

12 Days

November 28th through December 9th, 2023

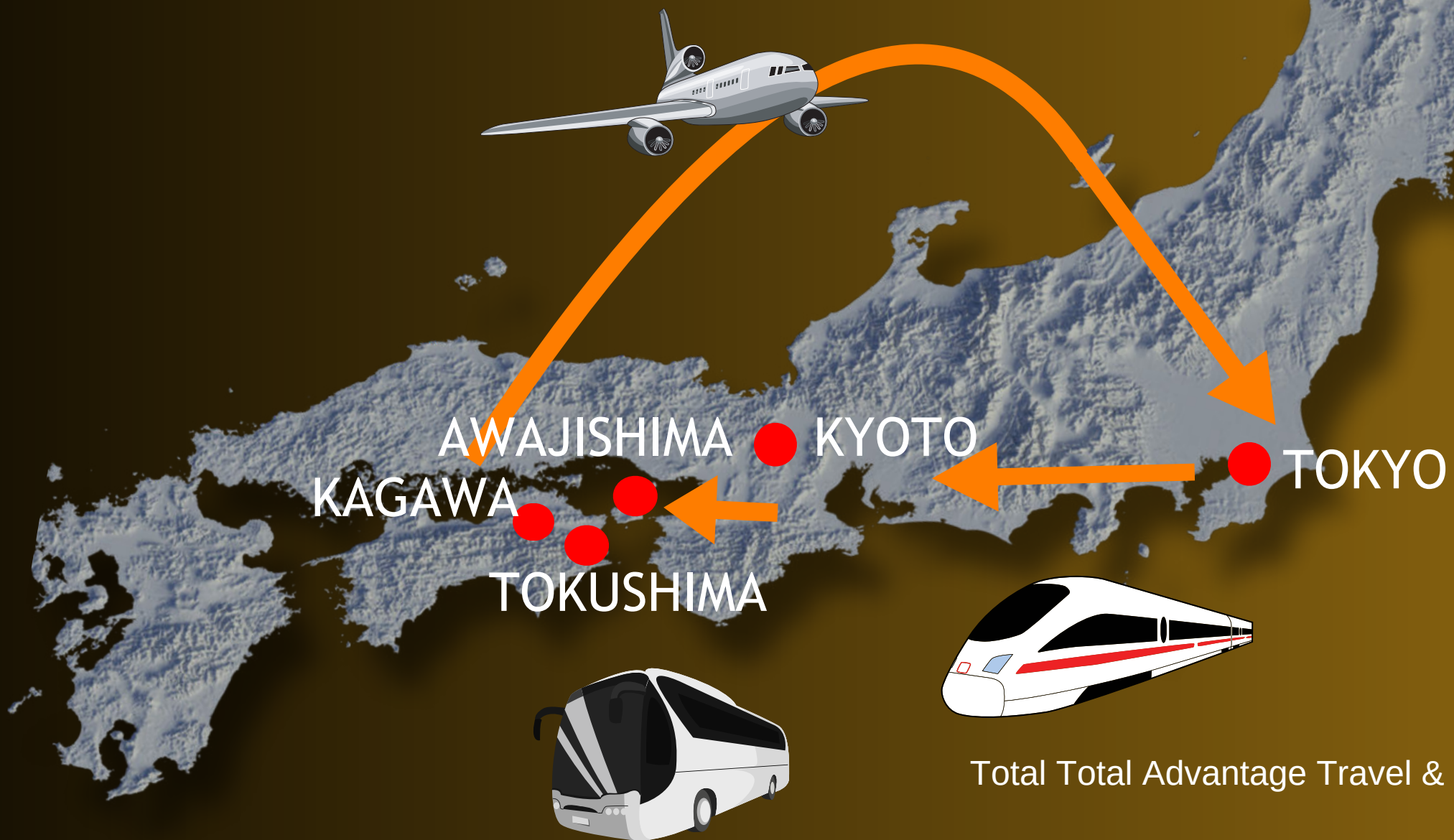
TOKYO * KYOTO * NARA*
AWAJISHIMA * TOKUSHIMA *
KAWAGA * TOKYO

Curated by John Zeus & Mark Groenewold
for Total Advantage Travel & Tours

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Your Japan (日本) Journey



Itinerary At A Glance

Day One - Overnight flight to Tokyo (Nov 28)
Day Two - Tokyo Arrival (Nov 29)
Day Three - Tokyo Day Tour (Nov 30)
Day Four - Kyoto Bound (Dec 01)
Day Five - Kyoto Day 2 (Dec 02)
Day Six - Kyoto Day 3 & Nara Day Trip (Dec 03)
Day Seven - Kyoto Day 4 & Osaka Bound (Dec 04)
Day Eight - Awajishima (Dec 05)
Day Nine - Tokushima & Kagawa Bound (Dec 06)
Day Ten - Shikoku Ohenro (Dec 07)
Day Eleven - Travel to Tokyo and re-set (Dec 08)
Day Twelve - Departure from Tokyo for Home (Dec 09)

Sad Sayonara to Japan or...

Extend your Japan journey with a 4-night, 5-day optional tour add-on of Tokyo or Okinawa, the Hawaii of Japan.*



Arrival in TOKYO



17FEB	18:12	航空会社	便名	航空会社	便名	備考	出口
FLY	WILL ARR.	FROM/VIA	FLIGHT NO.	AIRLINE	FLIGHT NO.	REMARKS	EXIT
17:40	17:24	SHANGHAI	JAL JL792	CHINA EASTERN	MU8723	ARRIVED	A
18:00	17:44	TAIPEI	CHINA AIRLINES CI18			IN TERMINAL	A
18:40	18:10	KUALA LUMPUR	MALAYSIAN MH70	ANA	NH5852	NEW TIME	A
18:45	18:20	TAIPEI	JAL JL648			NEW TIME	A
18:55	19:40	GOLD COAST	JETSTAR JQ11	QANTAS	QF251	DELAYED	A
19:00	18:35	PARIS	JAL JL5058			TERMINAL 1	
19:00	18:25	GUAM	JALWAYS JO942			NEW TIME	A
19:45	19:10	MACAU	VIVA MACAU ZG281			NEW TIME	
19:55	19:25	BEIJING	JAL JL782	CHINA EASTERN	MU8736	NEW TIME	
20:00	19:30	MANILA	JALWAYS JO742	JAL	JL742	NEW TIME	
20:00	19:40	CAIRNS	JETSTAR JQ25	QANTAS	QF249	NEW TIME	
20:10	20:00	GUANGZHOU	JAL JL604	CHINA SOUTHERN	CZ765	NEW TIME	
20:10	19:55	HONG KONG	JAL JL732			NEW TIME	
20:10	19:45	MANILA	PHILIPPINES PR432			NEW TIME	
20:15	19:48	HONG KONG	CATHAY PACIFIC CX500			NEW TIME	

Day Two: November 29th

Pick up at the airport.

Gathering and escort to first accommodations.

Commute from the airport to the hotel about 1 hour

Hotel: Chic-modern and central

Option for an evening excursion downtown.

TOKYO

Day 3: November 30th

Today we will venture out into Tokyo, yet not at full steam. There may be some traces of jet lag so we will take time to see the city on MEGA scale from the top of the Sky Tree and then come down to the city, exploring Sensoji Temple, The Imperial Palace and Solamachi. In the evening we will have a nice dinner in Tokyo Bay.



Imperial Palace



Sensoji Temple

Solamac



Sky Tree



Yakatabune



Japan Journey For Hope, Healing and Wellness

KYOTO BOUND

Day 4: December 1st

Today we rocket westward by bullet train (Shinkansen). The ride is surprisingly short but there is nothing like a trip on one of the fastest trains in the world to get a sense of really being in Japan.

We will have lunch onboard in the Japanese custom of “bento” or “boxed lunch”, also called “Eki-ben” (station lunchbox).

Arriving mid-day we have time to get out and get our feet wet in Kyoto. Let’s start with a castle.

Shinkansen
Arrive Kyoto
Nijo Castle

50 years running
10 billion passengers
Not a single derailment
or collision!



Nijo Castle of Kyoto was home to the Tokugawa shoguns. An elaborate and beautiful structure with gardens and moats, this was also the official building for government ministers as well. There are secret passageways and a “nightingale floor” that makes noise when walked upon. The castle is a place where social rankings were carefully detailed and clearly created. Walk through from the “lowest of positions” to the rooms where only elite guests and prestigious members are allowed.



Background information

Samurai Facts

Another word for samurai is “Bushi”, but “Bushi” means “warrior”, and “samurai” also means “rich noble person”. So a samurai can be a “Bushi”, but not all “Bushi” are “Samurai”. Samurai used swords (katana), bows (yumi), and spears (yari). Their armour was designed for movement over protection. Speed was essential for fast sword movement. The helmet (kabuto) often had images of demons with horns to intimidate the enemy. Samurai were not just fighters but expected to be highly educated in literature, calligraphy, mathematics, tea ceremony, and poetry.



ABOUT KYOTO

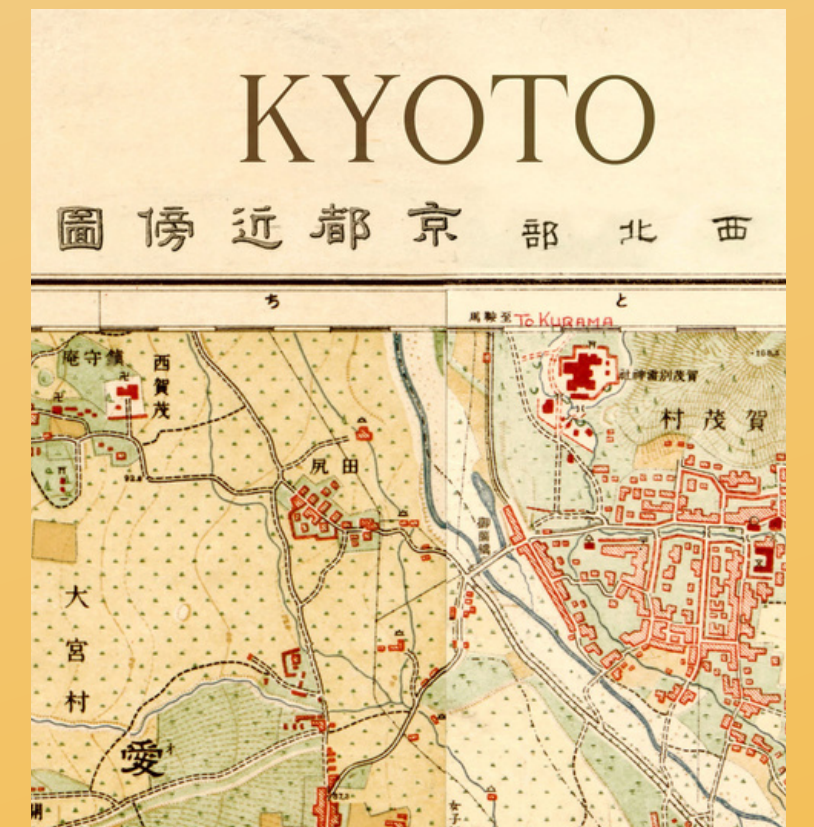
While Tokyo is the modern capital of Japan, Kyoto was the original capital of the nation and was for over 1000 years.

In its heyday, Kyoto was the largest city in Japan and all main roads led to it. Kyoto has over 3000 temples and shrines and is the cultural centre of Japan and is the heart of music, literature, philosophy, art, and religion.



Despite the pressure of so many buildings, industries, government offices, artisans, temples, and shrines, Kyoto remains true to its roots in nature as well.

The city is nestled between mountains and it takes no more than 20 minutes to find yourself immersed in the natural bounty that circles this ancient capital. Kyotoites pride themselves on this balance between high culture and connectivity to nature.



KYOTO

Day 5: December 2nd

Kyoto boasts of having the greatest concentration of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in one city. As we travel through the ancient capital you will surely see why.

Let's take this day to see what treasures have been preserved through the centuries and the high culture that it has produced.

Today we will go to the Fushimi Inari Shrine, the Silver Pavillion and the Sanjusangendo.

Brace yourselves.



Nara

Day 6: December 6th

It's time for a road trip. And what better place could we go to that is reasonably near than Nara City, the one-time ancient capital of Japan?

Nara is amazingly beautiful and home to both Shinto and Buddhist structures, holding the two hearts of the nation. We will explore both, and also take some time to enjoy the sacred deer that live on the temple grounds as well.

We return to Kyoto at the end of the day.

What is the DIFFERENCE between Shinto and Buddhism?

An important question. Long ago, they coexisted with each other in Japan but later were forced to separate. So, there are similarities but some differences as well.

Quick Notes:

Shinto celebrations focus on birth, weddings, new companies, success in love and education, and wishes for good luck.

Buddhism is the focus for the end of life and the afterlife. Funerals are Buddhist and philosophies and meditations are Buddhist or Zen Buddhist by and large

But for most Japanese, holding both Shinto and Buddhist beliefs is not a conflict. Life has both happy and unhappy events. There is enough human experience to be explored in both traditions.



The Great Buddha of Todaiji Temple



The Great Kasuga Taisha Shrine



Nara - Background Information



Nara is a beautiful medium-sized city and is on the border of Kyoto Prefecture. During the Nara Period of Japan's history (710 to 794 AD), this city was the capital of Japan. As such it is the home to many important historical buildings, temples, and shrines, and its core centralized area is considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

While many guests to Japan spend the majority of their time in Kyoto and Tokyo it is very nice for us to take a side-step into deep historical Japan to Nara and see the "Todai-ji".

Todai-ji is translated as "Great Eastern Temple" and is home to Japan's largest bronze statue of the Vairocana, the "Buddha of the Cosmos".

The Vairocana is the Buddha that presides over countless bodhisattvas and is considered to be the celestial manifestation of Gautama Buddha (the historical Buddha in human form).

At the end of our time in Nara, we will zip back to our Kyoto hotel.

KYOTO & Osaka Bound

Day 7: December 4th

We will spend our last day in Kyoto a little more leisurely so that everyone has a chance to wander about a little in this treasure of a city.

For our organized portion of the trip, we will visit two places. The first is the famous Kiyomizudera. A massive temple on stilts, a national treasure, and a place whose water is said to have curative properties and where many seek longevity. We will also spend some time in a traditional zen hall and have a chance to experience how real monks live and spend their lives seeking truths in unanswerable “koan”, or word riddles.

Later we are on a short trip to Osaka to see the Osaka Castle and at night we will explore the “food paradise” in Dotonbori, the heart of the city. The people of Osaka say, “Eat until you drop”. We may put them to the test.



Awajishima

Day 8: December 5th

Travelling further west, we now enter the Deep Japan portion of our journey. We travel first to the island of Awajishima, the “power spot” of the nation, and the place where the first gods of Japan gave birth to its islands.

The Shinto tradition considers this the holiest part of the nation.

We will spend some time at the Zen Seinei Wellness Center while here:
<https://zenbo-seinei.com/en/>

This Zen experience is a very different form of meditative practice and provides a remarkable contrast to the day prior.



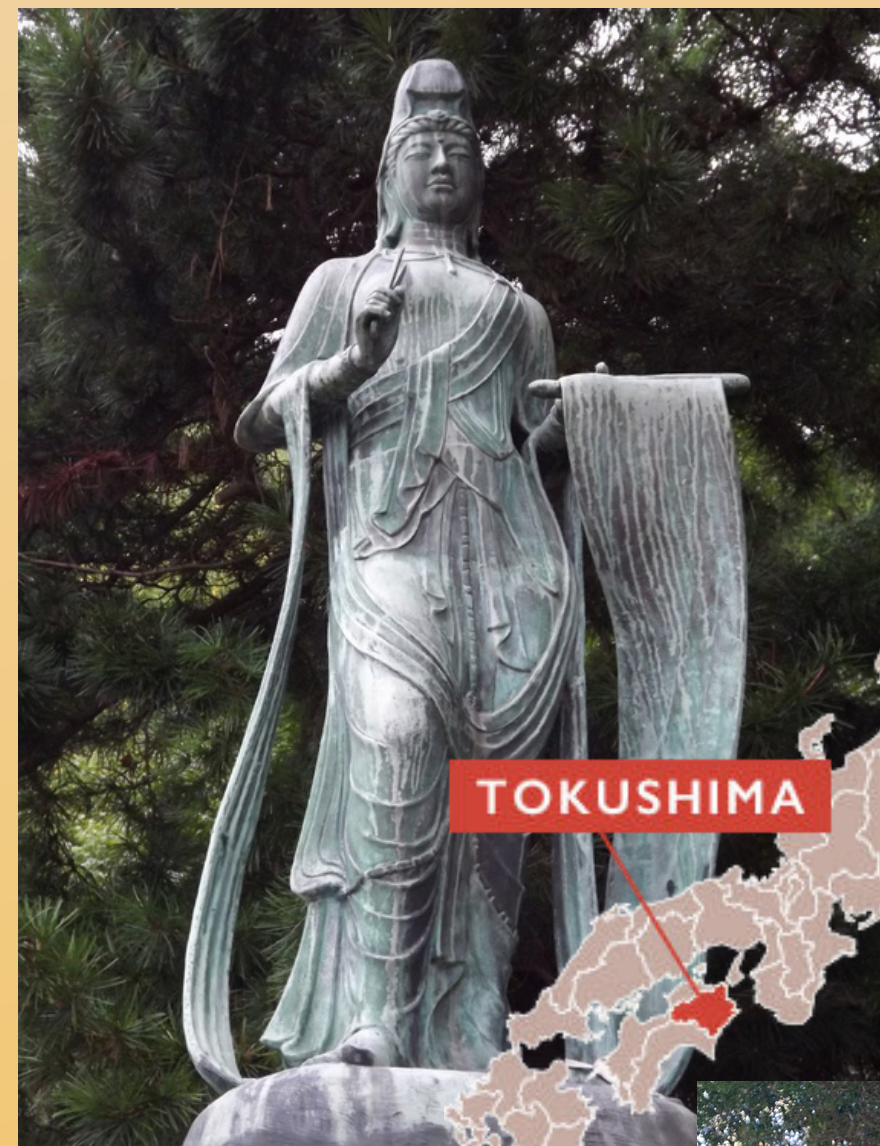
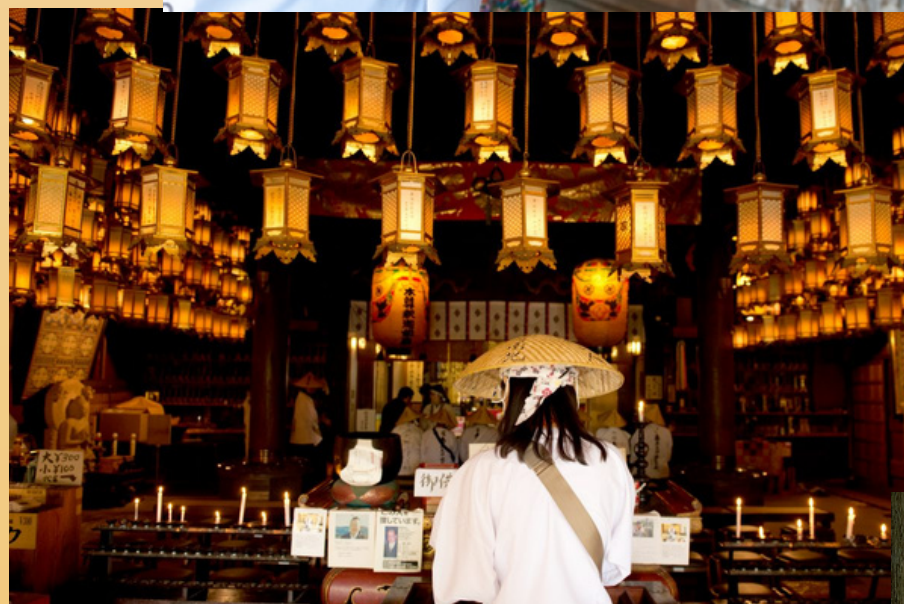
Tokushima

Day 9: December 6th

Through the morning we will take some time to become familiarized with the 88 Buddhist Temple Pilgrimage of Shikoku. We will start at the first temple, Ryozenji, and then take the morning to walk through the first few on the route.

The Japanese word for “pilgrim” is “ohenro-san”. And we will make our own group and start on to the path of enlightenment.

We will be spending the day visiting three of the 88 temples that ring the Shikoku region. Prepare to be on an adventure that is very very much off the beaten path. We are not in Osaka anymore...



Takamatsu, Zentsuji

Day 10: December 7th

Today we will spend the day exploring one of the most beautiful gardens in all of Japan: Ritsurin Garden. After that, we will explore a traditional museum park called “Shikoku Mura” and have a traditional udon lunch.

We may visit the Yashima-ji, a temple also included in the 88 Buddhist Temple pilgrimage. It sits at the top of a huge plateau and offers panoramic Inland Sea views.

At the end of the day, we will stay at the temple which is the birthplace of Kukai, Zentsuji. We will stay overnight in their temple quarters and join them for prayers the next morning.



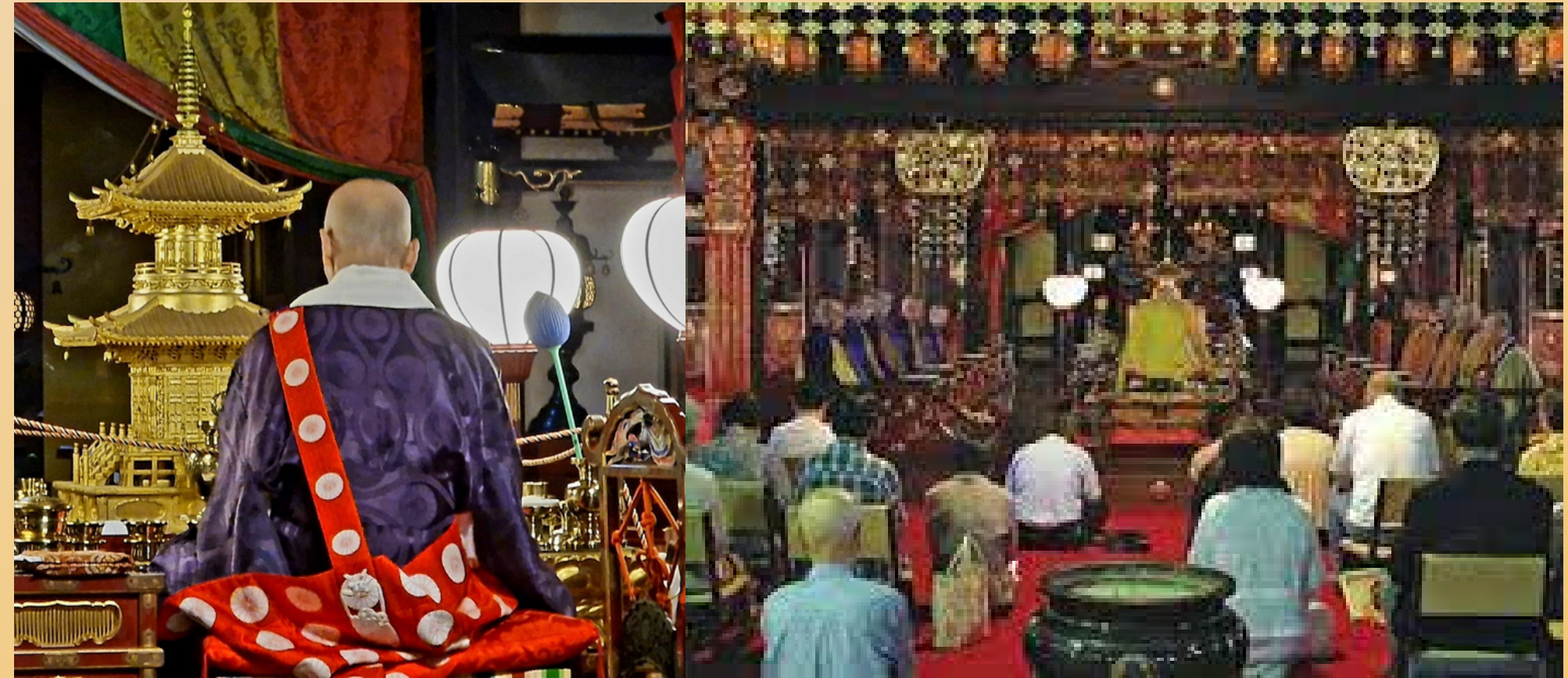
Tokyo Bound

Day 11: December 8th

Today we will take the day to travel back to Tokyo.

After morning prayers we will start to make our way back eastward. We expect to arrive in Tokyo by mid-day and check into the hotel.

You are welcome to take the evening to relax and prepare for the journey home. A final group dinner may be on the plan, and then an optional outing for those who are so inclined.





5 Days / 4 Nights

**Optional Tokyo or
Okinawa Post Tour
Extension!
(Dec 9th - 13th)**

*Take your exploration of Japan to the next level with an incredible 4-night, 5-day tour of Tokyo or Okinawa. Take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to discover even more of Japan's rich culture and history.

Departure day

Sad Sayonaras

Today we will be on the road. We will send you home on flights from Tokyo. We will ensure that all connections are made smooth.

We are grateful for our time together and look forward to when our paths cross again.

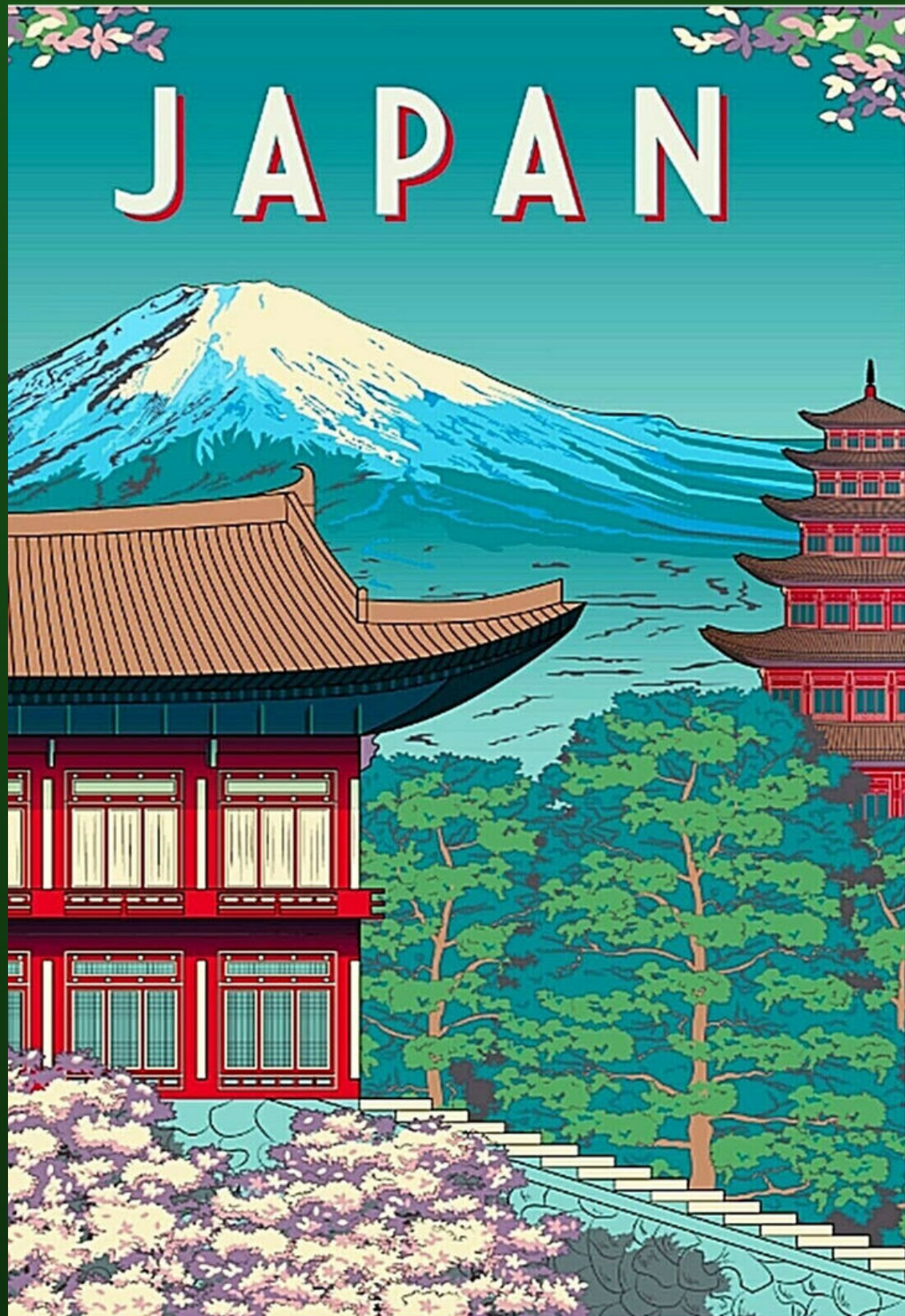
感謝

“Kan-sha” means
“Gratitude”



**We shall not cease from exploration and
the end of all our exploring will be to
arrive where we started ... and know the
place for the first time.**

-T.S. Eliot



Kindly visit the provided links to access the full itinerary and tour information.

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