

## JAPAN : Through the Cultural Maze

### Fall 2009 Itinerary

Led by three dynamo instructors -- Sonia Katchian, Douglas Beasley, and Tim Grey -- the Japan Photo Workshops are an induction for photographers into all things Japanese, into a more spiritual approach to picture-making, and improved skills in digital optimization. Geared specifically to the professional photographer wishing to take their work up a notch, the workshop is also open to photographers ambitious and energetic enough to keep up with the pace.

#### **Dates:**

Saturday, November 7 – Wednesday, November 18, 2009; 12 days /12 nights

#### **Lodging:**

In Tokyo we stay at the Asia Center, located in Akasaka, central Tokyo. Rooms are modest, Western style, with twin beds, internet and TV in all rooms.

<http://www.asiacenter.or.jp/eng/>.

In Kyoto, we stay at a lovely bed & breakfast called the Sandalwood. Rooms are Japanese style tatami with futon bedding; kitchenette, internet and TV available in the commons area. <http://tinyurl.com/ao3v9l>

While we want to experience the best that Japan has to offer, we are sensitive to the fact that budgetary constraints are of concern to many. Therefore we have chosen lodging that is basic, clean, safe and pleasant. Lodging is based on double-occupancy. (Single occupancy is available at the Asia Center only, for an additional \$400.)

#### **The Workshops:**

Mornings start with a cultural description of places we will visit that day plus special cultural tips from Japan-hand Sonia Katchian. Doug Beasley will suggest mini assignments for participants to consider if they choose to go 'inward'. Most evenings we gather after dinner to review, edit and optimize our images. Digital master Tim Grey will show us many ways to improve our digital files and workflow.

Though we have schedules for each day, we hope to stay flexible and be open to change...whether due to the weather, serendipity, or circumstances beyond our control.

#### **Provisional Itinerary:**

Day 1: We start in Tokyo with the in-gathering of participants on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup>. After introductions of participants and instructors we will go over some workshop guidelines and safety issues, then we kick off with a Welcome Party.

Day 2: Out of consideration to different peoples' reactions to jet lag, we will have a slow start this day, with free-time till noon. We start by a visit to a local shrine... Nogi Shrine, then we go to Meiji Shrine, one of the key Shinto complexes in Tokyo, where we may see a wedding party, or some other special event. Then we head to Harajuku where teenagers, decked out in their 1950's American garb, blast rock music and dance all afternoon on the closed off streets. We will stroll over to high-fashion Omotesando, where we could visit a tea garden. After dinner we gather in the downstairs meeting room with our laptops for the nightly image edit/optimization session with Tim.

Day 3: It's up early on Monday morning to watch and photograph sumo wrestlers go through warmup exercises at a sumo 'stable'. This is a special treat, but it starts around 5am. There are special do's and don't's that Sonia will go over. Doug will give everyone a special assignment to think about while shooting. After a stroll through the funky old Ryogoku neighborhood, a stop at a bank to change currency, and lunch, we go to Asakusa Kannon Shrine one of the oldest shrines in Tokyo. Then we fast-forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> century by heading to Akihabara, Tokyo's astonishing electronics district, and on to Shinjuku Station, the world's busiest train station. After dinner we gather for an image edit/optimization session with Tim.

Day 4: Another early morning, this time to Tsukiji, the world's largest fish market, boisterous and colorful at 4am. Hardly a smell of fish anywhere though! After filling up our memory cards we might have sushi for breakfast, and a rest, after which we head out to the old city of Kamakura. As we may get back late in the evening, editing/optimizing session will be next day.

Day 5: After breakfast, we gather for image optimization with Tim, then board the bullet train, with bento lunches in tow, for a memorable ride to Kyoto. Check in at Sandalwood.

Day 6: A visit to Kokedera, also known as Saihoji, or the Moss Temple. Some 143 varieties of moss have been identified on the grounds of this exquisite Zen temple, designated a Unesco World Heritage Site. With the autumn foliage near their peak, the colors will be breathtaking. Special permission is required for a visit, and we will have it. A monk will instruct us in meditation, and we will get to practice, prior to heading onto the grounds. After lunch we may choose to visit the dazzling beauty of Kinkakuji Temple and its golden pavilion, or visit a miso maker. After dinner, editing/optimizing session with Tim.

Day 7: TBA

Day 8: After breakfast we visit Arashiyama Park with its wild monkey preserve and bamboo groves. A two-hour boat ride down the Hozu River takes us past forests and mountains. We proceed after lunch to the world-famous Ryoanji Temple known for the simplicity yet excellence of its "empty" rock garden. After dinner, editing/optimizing session with Tim.

Day 9: TBA

Day 10: After breakfast, go to Enryakuji Temple. Stroll down the so-called Philosophers' Walk and into the Gion geisha district. We can't promise you an evening with geisha entertainment, but this is the area where most of the geisha and maiko (geisha-in-training) living quarters are located.

Day 11: Morning TBA, 2pm board bullet train to Tokyo. After a restful train ride we do what most business people do in Tokyo – go out for a night on the town. We start in Ginza and end up who-knows-where ... maybe even catch the last train home.

Day 12: Morning edit/optimize session with Tim, then break into groups of three or four to discuss a pet project or discuss ideas that have percolated during the workshop. A Sayonara Party with Powerpoint slide show of our work will be held that night at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan.

**Instructors:**

*Sonia Katchian*, Director of Photo Shuttle: Japan and PHOTO DISTRICT NEWS Tokyo correspondent for a decade, provides the nuts and bolts of this workshop. She will discuss the fine points of setting up a photo shoot in Japan, how to make inquiries by phone even with no Japanese, how to woo a complete stranger whom you wish to photograph, navigate the world's busiest train system, plus tons of other useful tips and hints. Sonia knows the ropes in Japan and is ready to pass on her skills! <http://photoshuttle.com/>

*Douglas Beasley*, leader of Vision Quest workshops, focuses on what lies within. Having a mother who is Japanese, Doug's ties to Japan run deep. He will guide participants who wish to do so, to go deeper into the image-making process and make photos that reflect not only the spirit of Japan but the photographer's own spirit. Because all this comes naturally to Doug, he is a highly sought-after instructor. <http://douglasbeasley.com/>

*Tim Grey*. When it comes to digital capture and file optimization, thousands of photographers seek the advice of digital guru Tim Grey. Author of a dozen books (and counting!) on digital photography, he is known by many for his Daily Digital Question (or DDQ), and most recently served as digital consultant to Microsoft. This is a fantastic opportunity to watch and learn from this trusted expert. <http://timgrey.com/>

**Native-speakers:**

At least one Japanese, native speaker will be available to participants throughout the workshop.

**Participants:**

This is an advanced workshop, open to professional photographers and advanced amateurs. We also welcome people who are willing to embark on a great adventure and take incredible pictures while doing so. Space is very limited; please register early!

**Requirements:**

Each participant must bring digital SLR camera and accessories, a laptop computer (Mac or PC) with Photoshop installed, and all necessary power cords and cables. You may shoot with film too, but all edit sessions will be based on our digital captures. Participants must have a passport valid for the entire time they will be in Japan. Entry to Japan does not require a visa for tourists who are U.S. citizens (and for many other countries). If you are not sure about your situation, check with your closest Japanese consulate. Everyone should bring cash or travelers checks to pay for incidentals, some meals, and shopping. Though not mandatory we urge everyone to take out travel insurance (more info later).

**Workshop Fee:**

The \$5,800 fee (\$5,500 if paid by June 1<sup>st</sup>) includes 12 nights lodging, travel within Japan, all entrance fees, most breakfasts and dinners. Participants are responsible for airfare to and from Tokyo, some meals and personal expenditures. Travel insurance is highly recommended. A \$700 deposit must accompany registration, with balance due August 31, 2009.

**Payments, Cancellations & Refunds:**

Cancellations, if made 4 months or more prior to start date, will obtain a 50% refund of deposit (+ full balance, if already paid). On cancellations made 60-119 days prior to start date, deposit is not refundable, but balance paid will be refunded in full. Cancellations made less than 2 months prior to start date are not refundable unless a last-minute participant can be found, in which case balance paid will be refunded but not the deposit. Should a participant choose to leave the workshop after it has started or need to leave due to health or other emergencies, they will not be eligible for a refund. If cancellation is due to a decision of the Japan Photo Workshop organizers, a full refund will be made to all participants by check within two weeks of notification. We are not responsible for non-refundable airfares.

**Health & Safety:**

We expect all participants to be in good physical and mental health. If there are any medical conditions we should be aware of, please tell us when you register. We cannot accommodate special diets, but we will certainly try to take into account any dietary restrictions participants may have. Japan has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. The bad news though, is that the country is prone to earthquakes. A mini-drill with safety precautions about what to do in case of an earthquake will be held on Day 1. The Japan Photo Workshop will not be held liable for any accidents or emergencies.

**Registration:**

[www.photoshuttle.com/workshops](http://www.photoshuttle.com/workshops)

**Fine Print:**

Workshop fee is quoted in U.S. dollars and based on two persons sharing a room. The fee has been calculated a year prior to start date. Due to fluctuations of international currency exchange rates it may be necessary to adjust the fee. Workshop organizers will do their best to keep the fee as quoted and will let all registrants know 60 days prior to start date if any such adjustment is needed. Workshop originates and ends in Tokyo, Japan. Airfare to and from Tokyo is the responsibility of each participant; and it is the participants' responsibility to be in Tokyo by the start date. Any accommodations needed prior to or after the workshop are the responsibility of the participant.

Photographs may be taken during the workshop showing participants and instructors in the various locales which may be used in marketing material for future workshops. Participants agree to the use of such photos for marketing purposes and, if they don't, will let the organizers know in advance.

The Japan Photo Workshop will not be held liable for any damage, should it occur, to, or loss of property, or injury to or death (God forbid) of participants by an act or omission of its organizers or subcontractors, including but not limited to accidents, health incidents, whether by transportation vehicles used to convey participants and instructors or otherwise. The Japan Photo Workshop will not be held liable for any loss or damage due to delay, cancellation, or disruption in any manner caused by the laws, regulations, acts or failures to act, demands, orders, or interpositions of any government or any subdivision or agent, or by acts of God, strikes, fire, flood, earthquake, war, rebellion, terrorism, insurrection, sickness, quarantine, epidemics, theft, or any other causes beyond their control. The participant waives any claim against the Japan Photo Workshop, any of its organizers or instructors for any such loss, damage, injury, or death, may God forbid.

Though our itinerary is subject to change, without penalty, any participant who chooses not to be part of the group's activities at any point will do so at their own expense, with no pro-rated refund. In the untoward event of a health or personal emergency, the Japan Photo Workshop will not be liable for a refund. We therefore encourage everyone to purchase travel insurance prior to departure. Under no circumstances is the Japan Photo Workshop responsible for non-refundable airfares.

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