Ukwanshin Kabudan 御冠船歌舞団

Fostering goodwill and peace through sharing the music and dances of Ruuchuu

GAKUMUN HERITAGE JOURNEY to OKINAWA

Ippe nifee deebiru, thank you for your interest in our annual Gakumun Heritage Journey to Okinawa. . This information will help you to better understand our purpose and give you a clearer idea of what to expect on this journey to help you decide if this is the type of trip for you. We ask that you please review the information and please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

PURPOSE OF THIS JOURNEY

This journey was created for the purposes of .....

- developing a deeper understanding of Okinawa, it's history, culture, and people.
- creating a connection that will hopefully continue after you return to home
- taking pride in the rich history and places of Okinawa
- creating discussion and thoughts on identity, culture, history to help us reflect on our presence and effects in other native spaces
- offering an experience to meet and see native artists at work
- listening to stories of the people of Okinawa
- supporting locally owned Okinawan artists and businesses
- connecting or reconnecting with family and friends
- making new friends
- giving back to Okinawa in some way for their generous support of our community in Hawaii

We ask that members of our group participate in activities and at least try things which may be new and different for you. Sometimes our local hosts will go out of their way to make or do things special for our visit and because each member is a representative of the group and community of Hawaii, we encourage participation to show our appreciation. Out of courtesy to those local folks who will be hosting our tour group, please remain with the tour for the full itinerary. Any deviation from the planned activities is highly discouraged. At times we also show our appreciation to our hosts by singing, dancing or kachashii. The connection of music and dance goes beyond our difference of languages. There also will be times when we go to sacred places and pay our respects to ancestors or to historical areas connected with royalty or people. In following traditional cultural protocols, we perform rituals and postures of respect, just like Native Hawaiians and other indigenous do in their sacred places or exalted spaces. These acts are not necessarily religious beliefs or practices, but are

cultural protocols to show our identity that we are trying to pass on and give you a chance to experience. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact us prior to confirming your space. Our visits are NOT typical of tourist type visits and we would like to ask that you please understand this to help you make the right decision on whether this trip is for you or not.

- We travel in a smaller mini bus to access places that the larger regular bus tours are not able to maneuver.
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- Most meals are traditional Okinawan and usually include pork or fish products. A 100% vegetarian meal is difficult to prepare since even vegetable dishes use fish seasoning and most soup broth are pork based. Although there may be some vegetarian choices at the breakfast buffet, it's important to let us know if you have any restrictions or allergies since special arrangements will need to be made in advance with the dining facility to prepare special orders.
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- Besides historical sites, we will introduce you to the current events and situations which affect the local people. This helps us to understand history and also have a better understanding of what our friends and relatives have gone through and are going through now. You may hear first hand experiences of the war and other tragedies which have affected Okinawans to this day.
- In visiting sacred sites, there are certain protocols that we will ask you to follow, such as males being restricted from entering certain areas due to traditional *kapu*. Because we try to follow traditional rules (instead of behaving like nosy or ignorant tourists) we would like you to assume responsible and personal pride in the places we visit to show respect and our understanding of our culture.
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- **IMPORTANT**: *This trip will involve a good amount of walking; climbing up/down stairs; and walking over uneven surfaces (forest trails, dirt roads, etc). Please be advised that some of the sites we visit are not fully accessible and lack hand rails and ramps. There also may be occasions that the group will need to kneel and/or sit on the ground. Please consider these conditions carefully in making your decision to join us on this trip..*
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- Accommodations are comfortable but not to western standards, so the hotel rooms may seem smaller than what you are used to. Also, nonsmoking rooms are not common and few if available. You may also be asked to take a single room if double rooms are not available. This is to help keep prices affordable. (no extra cost)

- Tour leaders are taking time off from work without pay, and are volunteering their time for the tours. The information and experiences we share have been from research and personal experiences that we thought would be interesting for others. This is another reason for being able to keep costs down and continue to offer an affordable trip.

- Efforts will be made to book this round trip to Okinawa at the most advantageous period to offer cost-saving on your airfare. It would be very difficult to make changes (such as stop-overs, date changes, etc) and we will probably not be able to accommodate any requests to do so. Please understand that any travel/lodging arrangements made outside of the group's itinerary are the full responsibility of the individual traveler.
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Ukwanshin tries to give back to the Okinawa community to show our support and thanks for years of support from Okinawa. We annually donate to an organization that is working for revitalization and education of Okinawan language, culture, and history. To continue its mission, Ukwanshin continues

to work with the communities in Hawai`i and makes minimal profit from events and tours. We are able to continue our work due to generous donations, volunteers and supporters. We feel so blessed to be able to continue these past years because of the support from the community.

- Prior to our trip, we will have a few meetings/workshops and encourage all members to attend to be better informed as well as receive travel packets and updated information.
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- We also encourage our group members to attend/participate in Ukwanshin events, especially those that involve learning Okinawan culture and history as it will help you make the most of your journey to the motherland.

Approximate cost is $4,350* (subject to change) based on per person double occupancy. There is a $1000 deposit required to confirm your reservation to hold a space. Final payments for this trip are usually made 2 months prior to departure. Cancellations may result in penalties and refunds are given 90 days or more from departure date (minus some cancellation fees). There may be exceptions due to emergencies. Travel Insurance may be arranged through Travel Guard. Tentative detailed Itinerary will be available at a later date..

* cost may fluctuate depending on dollar/yen rate and flight/hotel costs

If you would like to participate in this tour, please complete the attached application form and email to: events@ukwanshinkabudan.org

or send my postal mail to: Ukwanshin Kabudan
PO Box 892725
Mililani, Hawaii 96789

Should there be any questions or you would like more information, please contact us at anytime.
Ippee Nifee deebiru!

Ukwanshin Kabudan Tour Leaders
Eric Wada - udui808@gmail.com
Norman Kaneshiro - nkaneshi@gmail.com

UKWANSHIN KABUDAN GAKUMUN HERITAGE JOURNEY
APPLICATION FORM

I am interested in the Heritage Journey for the _____year(s).

1. Name (exactly as shown on passport)

   _____

2. Date of birth _____

3. Passport number: _____

4. Expiration date on passport _____
   *US Passport Office recommendation: The standard rule of thumb for international travel is to have **at least 6 months of validity** remaining on your passport beyond your planned departure/return date.

5. Home Address _____

6. email address _____

7. contact phone numbers. _____ _____

8. allergies/special requests _____

9. Emergency contact/relationship _____

10. Please briefly describe your interest in joining our tour and what you hope to gain on your journey to Uchinā.

    _____

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11. What is your seat preference? _____ aisle _____ window

12. I would like to confirm my reservation with the enclosed deposit check for $1,000.00 payable to Ukwanshin Kabudan.

    _____ yes _____ not at this time

Please return your completed application and mail it with your check (if applicable) to:

Ukwanshin Kabudan
PO Box 892725
Mililani, HI 96789