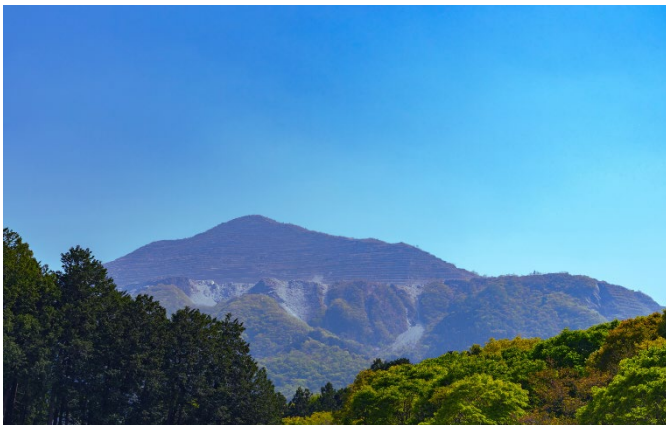


## ✦ One Day in Chichibu

### A Cultural Journey with Two Ladies from Denmark

We had the pleasure of welcoming two Danes living and working in Tokyo on a one-day English-guided cultural tour of Chichibu, a town rich in tradition, spirituality, and artisan craft. From hands-on workshops to historical landmarks, the day was filled with memorable experiences and warm hospitality.



### 🎨 Indigo Dyeing at Chichibu Meisen Museum

Our journey began at the Chichibu Meisen Museum (ちちぶ銘仙館), where the ladies immersed themselves in the art of indigo dyeing. This historic textile center preserves the legacy of *Chichibu Meisen*, a silk fabric once popular throughout Japan for its bold patterns and soft texture.

Wearing traditional aprons, they folded, tied, and dipped white cotton into natural indigo vats using the *shibori* (tie-dye) technique. The moment they unfolded their fabrics to reveal intricate blue and white patterns was filled with joy and surprise. Each piece was a unique work of art—created with their own hands.





## Lunch and Peaceful Moments at “Kuu & Kan”

Next, we visited “Kuu & Kan”, a charming rest stop and cultural hub nestled in a quiet part of town. Here, the ladies enjoyed a healthy, local-style lunch and experienced a moment of calm with shakyo (sutra copying) and shabutsu (Buddha tracing). These mindfulness practices have been cherished in Japanese Buddhism for centuries as a way to center the mind and find inner peace.

The tranquil environment and slow pace offered a true sense of “Japanese hygge,” echoing both Zen and Nordic simplicity.



## Visit to Chichibu Shrine & Festival Museum

Our next stop was Chichibu Shrine, one of the oldest and most important Shinto shrines in Saitama Prefecture. It is famous for its elaborately carved wooden motifs, including the unique “*okigaru san-saru*” or “energetic three monkeys,” which reinterpret the famous “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” into a more proactive and spirited approach to life.



Just a short walk away, we explored the Chichibu Festival Museum, which showcases the grand floats and rich history of the Chichibu Night Festival (秩父夜祭)—one of Japan’s top three float festivals and recognized as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. The ladies were fascinated by the vivid visuals, interactive exhibits, and centuries-old community traditions.

---

🧑🏻 Temple Walk along the Chichibu 34 Kannon Pilgrimage



To round out the day, we visited some of the sacred sites on the Chichibu 34 Kannon Pilgrimage, a spiritual journey that dates back over 300 years. This pilgrimage, dedicated to the Buddhist goddess of compassion, connects 34 temples across the region and offers serene natural surroundings, temple architecture, and quiet reflection.

Among them was Jigen-ji Temple, the 13th site of the pilgrimage, where we took a commemorative photo beneath the historic gate—a symbol of entry into a space. Also visited Shorin-ji Temple, the 15th site of the pilgrimage. The main hall is a rare and unique structure that combines both traditional Japanese architecture and Western building techniques.



## Reflections

This one-day tour offered a perfect blend of traditional craft, spiritual exploration, and heartfelt hospitality. Our guests from Denmark not only learned about Japanese culture—they experienced it with their own hands, minds, and hearts.

We look forward to welcoming more international visitors to Chichibu, where every path leads to discovery.

Feedback from participants:

**It was one of those rare experiences that felt both deeply personal and beautifully curated—and in the best company.**

**Starting with the indigo dyeing workshop, it was such a joy to engage with a timeless craft and create something by hand. I have always wanted to try it, and now finally I had the perfect opportunity – and a cute souvenir. The traditional vegetable lunch that followed was not only delicious, but prepared with such care—it felt like a quiet celebration of the season and the region. Afterwards we were able to immerse ourselves in a quiet moment of meditation while enjoying matcha and copying the sutras down felt so relaxing and I am sure it also improved my Japanese handwriting some!**

**As we wandered through the town, had our fortunes read, and encountered the stunning festival floats, I felt completely immersed in the spirit of Chichibu. There was something magical about seeing the layers of history and culture so naturally around us and so close to Tokyo too!**