

Tour 3: History of wetland and storks, rice paddy art, and Arakawa River—a bus trip to fish passage for loach and small fish, paddy art, rice field art, and Japanese dolls.

Duration: 9:30–18:00 Wed. 22nd Aug. (8.30 h)

Driving time: 3.30 h

Tour Size (Numbers) : 20–30

Tour Description

We will visit historic paddy area, Arakawa basin. Since this area once was the Oriental white stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) distribution area, various stakeholders are collaborating with each other to conserve and restore environments by using storks as a symbol. Please enjoy the nature, culture and history in the area.

About rice field art in Gyoda City

Rice field art, which is a type of ground painting employing various rice plants, can be viewed from the ancient Lotus Hall dormitory observation room 50 m above the ground. We adopted representative “Hummingbird” and “Condor” designs from Nazca's land paintings. Also, since the condor is “the biggest flying bird in the world,” a “condor” was designed that spreads its wings dynamically, with an “ancient lotus,” which is a symbol of Gyoda City. We can also see an “archaelotus,” from which seed was excavated and sprouted after 3,000 years slumber.

Paddies and storks

Progress of stork-reintroduction during the first decade—Reintroduction of the stork commenced in 2005, and the Japanese stork population is now recovering in Tajima District, in the northern area of Hyogo Prefecture. The storks now fly all over Japan, and some flew over the Japan Sea, arriving on the Korean Peninsula in 2014. The stork-reintroduction project is expanding, and paddy fields have become important places for producing food for these wild storks. We will visit a historic place associated with a folklore story about storks.

Japanese dolls

Konosu City is famous for producing classical Japanese dolls, Hina Ningyo. Every year on March 3rd, Japan celebrates the Doll Festival. We will visit the Hina Doll Shop, and then we can see both old and newly style Japanese dolls.

Time	Program
------	---------

9:30	Meet at Ikebukuro Station in Tokyo
9:30–10:30	Departure and drive to Gyoda City
10:30–11:20	Arrival Gyoda. Visit paddy (archaelotus and paddy art)
11:40–12:30	Lunch* (Japanese local specialty, Udon Noodle)
13:00–15:15	Ecological paddy field and history of the stork
15:30–16:30	Japanese doll shop
16:30–18:00	Departure and drive to Ikebukuro Station

* Udon noodle include gluten as raw material