

## *Gamagori Guided Tour*

Himawari-no-kai, an international volunteer group based in Toyohashi, will conduct an English guided tour covering Gamagori area which is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Higashi-Mikawa region.

Date and time: September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 (Sunday)      10:00 AM

Departure: Toyohashi

Transportation: Car

Free of charge.

Please bring own lunch with you.

### NOTES

※ No insurance coverage

※ No plan for employing charged attractions, which we will never owe.

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### Destinations

#### ***Takeshima***

Takeshima is the symbol island of Gamagori, connected by a 387m bridge with mainland. The distance may seem to be not so long, but this gives Takeshima very unique flora which has been designated as a national nature treasure since 1930. This uniqueness is come from the different climatic zone: Takeshima belongs to subtropics which is typically featured by evergreen forest, whereas the mainland belongs to temperate zone represented by pine trees.

A shrine called Yaotomi-Jinja, which presides better fortune, easy delivery, and matchmaking, is enshrined on the island. The shrine is said to be established by Fujiwara Toshinari (alternatively Shunzei), who reclaimed Gamagori area first, in 1181. He was also a great Japanese Waka (consisted by 31 syllables) poet.

#### ***Statue of Kōbō-Daishi***

This statue is a landmark of Gamagori standing on an east hill of the city. Kobo-Daishi is the nickname for Kukai who opened a very unique Japanese Buddhism sect, Shingon-Shu, which centre is a world heritage site, Koyasan. He is beloved all over Japan, and this Higashi-Mikawa region has many major Shingon temples. That may be one reason for establishing this Japan's biggest (which should mean world's biggest) statue in this area. The height of the statue was decided after his age of demise,62, converting to Japanese metric unit Shaku(about 30cm) to be 18.7m. This was built in 1937 by the same person who built the bridge to Takeshima.

As this statue locates on a hill, the view from there is magnificent. You can take an extensive view of Mikawa Bay which is subtended by Atsumi and Chita peninsulas with Takeshima at that centre.

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