

## **Konosu City 鴻巣市**

Konosu city is located in central Saitama Prefecture, 50km away from Japan's capital city, Tokyo. The city has a long history and was a post town on the Nakasendo, one of the most important highways built by the Tokugawa shogunate in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to connect Tokyo and Kyoto.

Konosu is known as “the town of Hina dolls and flowers” and hosts large festivals that highlight tradition and the products of local industries.

The oldest and best-known industry of Konosu is the making of traditional Hina dolls. In Japan, a set of Hina dolls is customarily presented to baby girls for their first Hina Matsuri (Festival), on the first March 3 following their birth, in the hope that they will be healthy and happy.

From mid-February to mid-March, Konosu doll shops and volunteers put on a major annual festival – the Bikkuri Hina Matsuri- which delights people with a variety of seasonal and cultural displays and events throughout the city.

Lately, another event rising in popularity is the Konosu Fireworks Festival held in October. Behind the festival's growing recognition is not only its certification by Guinness World records in 2014 as having shot off the world's largest firework, a monster weighing at 464.826kg (1,024.76lbs), but also the sheer number of fireworks- more than 20,000 – included in any one show.

Other Konosu festivals – the Poppy Festival in spring and the Cosmos Festival in autumn – are held on broad, fertile fields by the Arakawa River. Flower cultivation is one of the Konosu's main industries, and the area leads Japan in the production of marigolds and cinerarias.

Seasonal festivals include the Sakura Festival in spring and the Summer festival, both of which include events and merchant participation throughout the city and attract visitors not only from the local area but from more distant places.