



Japanese garden society

Tours to Japan

All our trips include at least a week and usually more, in Kyoto. Our trips have taken us, over many years, to the very south of Kyushu island to see the wonderful Samurai gardens in Chiran, through many of the major gardens on Kyushu, Hiroshima, the Adachi Museum gardens and other sights and gardens in the nearby city of Matsue, as well as gardens on the island of Shikoku. We have also visited many locations north and east of Kyoto, one such itinerary being described below. Other locations in the east that we have visited include Kamakura, Yokohama and Nikko, to see the fabulous shrine dedicated to the memory of the great Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Sample tour itinerary: (Kyoto, Kanazawa, Takayama, Matsumoto, Fuji Lakes and Tokyo)

This is an outline of one of our three week trips. On most days the focus was on gardens, but there was always plenty to see and do at each destination. There were also several free days to allow group members time to pursue their own interests.

Kyoto - The timing of this trip was to coincide with cherry blossom time in early April. Whilst in Kyoto, we explored many of the major sites in and around the city including Murin-an, Shosei-en, Daisen-in, Saiho-ji and Agon Shu. We were fortunate to spend time at the residence and garden of the renowned Japanese garden designer, Shigemori Mirei. We also arranged visits to a number of splendid private locations not normally open to the public. Our day trips out from the city included:-

Sakai City and the South – The first stop was at Myokoku-ji temple, famous for its garden of ancient cycads, and then on to Kishiwada Castle where we were invited to participate in a tea ceremony. The next stop was Izumiotsu to see some relocated Shigemori gardens where we also received the generous hospitality of the Mayor. The day finished with a trip around Daisen Park.

Nara – The first capital city of Japan where our visits included Yoshiki-en garden, the beautiful Isui-en garden and Todai-ji Temple, with its huge and ancient bronze statue of Buddha.

Ohara – A bus ride provided the chance of an afternoon visit to this small town set in the mountains where group members were free to explore the gardens at Jikko-in, Hosen-in and Sanzen-in.

Hikone – The trip to this popular location on the east side of Lake Biwa provided ample viewing of cherry blossom near Genkyu-en gardens, and in the higher gardens surrounding Hikone Castle, which also included views of snow capped mountains.

Kanazawa – Most of the day was spent in the beautiful Kenroku-en Gardens, one of the top three gardens in Japan.

Takayama – A wonderful chance to see the colourful local spring festival and to spend the night in a traditional ryokan. On the following day many group members visited the Hida Folk Village, an open air museum of old rural buildings.

Matsumoto – The classic Matsumoto Castle looked superb in front of a panorama of snowy mountains. A chance conversation generated the bonus of an ad-hoc visit to the splendid gardens of a local ryokan.

Lake Kawaguchi – Our stay in this beautiful area gave ample opportunity to see Mount Fuji in all its splendour, situated directly across the lake.

Tokyo – Hama Riku gardens were visited on the first afternoon, and the following day was spent inside at the Edo-Tokyo and Nezu Museums. The beauty of the wisterias at Kameido Shrine were matched only by the azaleas at Nezu Shrine on the last day, before which we saw the stunning gardens of Rikugi-en and the delightful Old Furukawa garden.