

SAKURA

CELEBRATE THE REJUVENATED TOHOKU

As news of blooming sakura (cherry blossoms) in different regions reaches across the country, spring comes to the hearts of Japanese people. Cities in the Tohoku region, devastated by a major catastrophe on a spring day ten years ago, are once again graced by sakura this year.



FUKUSHIMA

福島

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11, 2011, followed by the nuclear power plant accident, overwhelmed Fukushima. Aizuwakamatsu City, in the inland western part of the prefecture, is the site of a castle—Tsurugajo—famous for having been impregnable. Every spring, 1,000 cherry trees blossom gloriously, symbolizing the indomitable spirit of Fukushima's citizens.



IWATE 岩手

As an icon of spring in Japan, *sakura* is joined by *koinobori* (carp streamers). Carp is a traditional symbol of social success for Japanese people, and *koinobori* are displayed on May 5, Children's Day, as prayers for the health and growth of children. Flowing through Iwate Prefecture, the Kitakami River is festooned with about 300 carp swimming through the air, lifting up prayers for a peaceful world.



MIYAGI

宮城

Long famous as one of the most scenic spots in Japan, Matsushima comprises a unique seascape of about 260 interlacing islets on the coast of Miyagi Prefecture. Although damaged by the massive tsunami caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake, its beautiful scenery has miraculously endured. Among the various affected areas in Tohoku, tourism first recovered here, driving the revitalization of the region.