

Kawachi Otsukayama Tomb

Kawachi Otsukayama Tomb stands on the mid-level terrace surface out of the west side of the Higashiyoke River in Nishi-Otsuka. It is a massive keyhole-shaped burial mound with a surrounding moat. The tomb is 335 meters long, with the front half being 230 meters wide and 4 meters tall, and the back circular-shaped area having a diameter of 185 meters and height of 20 meters. The front half faces north. It is a man-made artificial mountain, but the top of the back circular-shaped area reaches 45 meters above sea level, reaching the highest elevation in Matsubara City.

The tomb is the fifth longest tomb in Japan, but few records remain that indicate when it was built. However, considering that 1) The front half is flat and somewhat irregular, 2) The existence of clay burial figures or a stone covering have not been confirmed, 3) A massive stone, known as a "Gobo Stone" has been found in the back circular-shaped area and a massive stone known as the "Migakido Stone" has been seen in the "Abo Shinno Kototorishu" of the Mori clan records (from the Yamaguchi Prefectural Archives) from the Horeki to Meiwa eras from the latter half of the 18th century, and 4) The Tatsuyama stone and granite thought to be used in the burial chamber and coffin within the tomb were moved to places like Shibagaki Shrine (7 Ueda, Matsubara City).

From the above, it can be theorized that a horizontal stone chamber was built into the back circular-shaped area and that the tomb itself is from the mid to late 6th century.

In medieval times, a member of the Tange family utilized the tomb to build Tange castle. After Tange castle was destroyed by Oda Nobunaga, in the Edo period, Otsuka village was formed at the front half, and Tenmangu Shrine (Sugawara Shrine) was built on the back circular-shaped area to worship the local deity.

In March of the 10th year of the Taisho period (1921), the tomb was designated as a historical site (the designation was removed in December of the 16th year of the Showa period (1941)) and because, in September of the 14th year of the Taisho period (1925), it became a mausoleum reference site, by the 3rd year of the Showa period (1928), numerous families were moved to outside the moat.

While theories exist that the tomb was for Emperor Ankan or Emperor Kinmei from the 6th century, it is also theorized that the tomb is actually incomplete. Currently, it is a mausoleum reference site managed by the Imperial Household Agency.