

Tomb of Emperor Nintoku (Nintoku Tennō-ryō Kofun)

The tomb of Emperor Nintoku is the largest *kofun* burial mound in Japan. It covers approximately 32.3 hectares, making it one of the largest tombs in the world.

Emperor Nintoku is traditionally considered the sixteenth emperor of Japan. Based on the account in the *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan, 720), he is believed to have ruled from 313 to 399 CE. The *Nihon shoki* describes his commission of a massive earthen dike to prevent recurring floods, which would have been one of Japan's first large-scale engineering projects if the account is accurate.

The Imperial Household Agency, which manages the site, claims that the *kofun* or tumulus is the final resting place of Emperor Nintoku. However, since the tumulus was likely constructed in the middle of the fifth century, some experts believe that historical evidence does not support the claim that Nintoku is buried there. Since the Imperial Household Agency has not allowed excavation of the site out of respect for the Emperor, it is impossible to confirm who or even how many people have been entombed in the mound.

The Imperial Household Agency forbids standing anywhere on the tumulus. On the south side of the moat there is a torii gate and worship area from which the lower part of the mound is visible. A scenic walk around the tumulus can be completed in an hour.