

Hakayama Tomb (Hakayama Kofun)

The Hakayama *kofun* is in the shape of a keyhole and has a stone-covered shaft at its center. It is the fifth largest burial mound in the Furuichi area, with a maximum height of 21 meters and a total area of about 4.3 hectares. It is surrounded by five rectangular subsidiary tombs. When it was built in the first half of the fifth century, the sides of the mound were covered in stones, while the flat terraces were decorated with *haniwa* pottery. One of the interesting items found at the site is the oldest example of a human-shaped shield *haniwa*. *Haniwa* depicting humans would become more common after the fifth century.

Experts believe that the stone-covered shaft leads down to a sarcophagus, but it is yet unknown who is interred there. The chamber was built with stone from Takasago in Hyogo prefecture. The difficulty involved in obtaining and transporting the massive stones some 100 kilometers suggests the tomb's occupant was a wealthy and powerful person, and that stone from Takasago was highly prized. Large caches of iron tools and weapons were found in the subsidiary tombs to the north and west of the Hakayama tomb. At the time the *kofun* was built, the only workable iron on the Japanese archipelago had been brought from the Korean peninsula, so this is another indication of the occupant's power and prestige.