

Minegazuka Tomb (Minegazuka Kofun)

The Minegazuka tomb is a keyhole-shaped burial mound built in the latter half of the fifth century. It originally had two tiers and was surrounded by two moats. It is one of a few *kofun* to have been extensively studied—undergoing a total of 15 archaeological excavations since 1987. The excavations have unearthed over 3,500 artifacts, shedding light on what life was like in prehistoric Japan.

Among the items found in the mound, one of the most impressive are gilt bronze ornaments shaped to look like fish. They were likely attached to a wide ribbon that hung from the grip of a sword. The fish are connected by hinges, allowing them to move with each swing, and the detailed engravings of eyes, scales, and fins indicate a high level of craftsmanship. The burial chamber also contained many silver and gilt bronze flowers. Holes at the tips of the petals suggest that they were sewn onto garments.

The *kofun* is about 10.5 meters high and covers an area of about 1.12 hectares.