

Kikugahama Beach

A five-minute walk from Hagi Castle, Kikugahama Beach runs east to west along the northern edge of the city facing Hagi Bay. The beach affords a good view of Mt. Shizuki (former site of Hagi Castle) to the west, Mt. Kasayama on the peninsula to the northeast, and various nearby islands.

In the early 1850s, the country was forced to open to trade with Western powers through so-called “gunboat diplomacy.” Chōshū domain opposed the opening of the country and took action by firing on Western ships, provoking the 1863 Battle of Shimonoseki Straits. In preparation for additional conflict, the domain ordered the residents of Hagi to build a defensive earthen mound on Kikugahama Beach.

Most of Hagi’s samurai were engaged in the fighting at Shimonoseki, so the townsfolk joined the construction project. Even the wives of high-ranking samurai participated in the effort, donning their finest kimono and singing a song titled *Otokonara* (literally, “If I Were A Man”) as they labored. The song is still sung today, and the mound is known as Onagodaiba, “the women’s fortress.” The feared attack on Hagi by Western gunships never came, but the mound remains beneath a leafy park behind the beachfront.

Address: 2-ku, Horiuchi, Hagi, Yamaguchi

Access: 1-minute walk from Kikugahama Iriguchi Bus stop (Hagi Junkan Māru Bus Westbound)

Google Maps link: [here](#)