

Zenigata Sand Coin

The Zenigata Sand Coin in Kotohiki Park is a massive coin-shaped monument molded directly out of the white sand of Ariake Beach. Said to bring long life and luck in money matters to anyone who lays eyes upon it, the sculpture is 345 meters in circumference, up to 122 meters wide, and surrounded by black pine trees. The origins of the artwork are not clearly recorded, but the most commonly cited story is that it was shaped by local residents in a single night in 1633 to welcome Ikoma Takatoshi (1611–1659), the daimyo lord of the Takamatsu domain.

The Zenigata Sand Coin is made entirely of sand, but its size and the pine trees around it make the sculpture relatively resistant to rain and wind. Local residents get together to repair it twice a year, in spring and autumn. This maintenance effort attracts hundreds of participants, many of whom join in for the opportunity to tour the interior of the sculpture, which is usually off limits to the public.

The sheer scale of the artwork becomes clear from the park's elevated vista point on nearby Mt. Kotohiki. The vista point can be reached by car or a 15-minute walk uphill from the beach. The Zenigata Sand Coin is illuminated at night for additional effect. The lights are usually green, but are temporarily changed to other colors to mark special occasions—including the period of an annual year-end lottery, when the giant sand coin shines in shades of gold.