

Inkstones

Thirteen inkstones were found at the Ninomaru Goten site, two of which were fully intact. The inkstones were likely used by scribes who worked at the castle.

Stones for grinding and holding ink have been used in China since antiquity. They spread to Japan from the Asian mainland, along with written language, in the fourth century. Inkstones are mentioned in several classical works, including the eighth-century *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan) and Sei Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book*, completed in 1002.

Written records were crucial to successful administration during the Tokugawa period (1603–1867). Extensive record-keeping of taxation and harvest yields is part of what allowed the Tokugawa shogunate to maintain its control over the country for more than two centuries.