

Igenoyama Tumulus

Igenoyama Tumulus is a burial mound (*kofun*) built in the first half of the fifth century. At the time, such structures served as tombs for emperors, members of the nobility, clan leaders, and other powerful figures. Igenoyama Tumulus is the largest keyhole-shaped *kofun* in the Otokuni region of Kyoto Prefecture and is therefore believed to be the burial place of an influential ruler. In 1980, several hundred iron weapons were discovered inside the mound, and it became a nationally designated Historic Site in 1981. An excavation survey began in 2003, and a plan to restore and maintain the *kofun* was developed and implemented. In 2014, a historical park was opened to preserve the site, provide information about the burial mound and its history, and serve as a recreation area for the community.

Features

The three-tier mound is about 128 meters long. The back circular part has a diameter of 78.6 meters and is 10.4 meters tall, while the front square part is 78.6 meters wide and 7.6 meters tall. The *kofun* was once surrounded by a moat, covered with stones, and lined with ceremonial clay objects called *haniwa*. A rectangular space adjacent to the west side of the mound was likely used for funerary rites and ceremonies. A stone burial chamber is believed to exist in the circular part of the *kofun*. However, this part has not been fully excavated because a cemetery is located on the top.

Grave Goods and Other Finds

During preparation to expand the cemetery in 1980, a long wooden crate filled with around 700 iron weapons was found in the square part of the *kofun*. The items included swords, spears, various arrowheads, and knives. It is the only case of such a discovery in Kyoto Prefecture and is extremely rare even for the rest of the country. Numerous iron agricultural tools, such as axes, sickles, and hoes, were found nearby. Most of the many excavated *haniwa* were cylindrical, arranged like a fence to delineate the boundaries of the *kofun*. Others were shaped like items for the comfort of the deceased (houses, boats, parasols), weaponry for protection (shields, armor, quivers), and animals (waterfowl and chickens). The iron weapons and other excavated objects were designated Tangible Cultural Properties by Kyoto Prefecture in 1999.

Igenoyama Tumulus Park

A spacious park with abundant greenery now surrounds Igenoyama Tumulus, which was restored to its presumed original shape. Near the base of the square part is a model of the mound accompanied by explanations of its features, as well as a map that shows all the *kofun* in the Otokuni region. Numerous *haniwa* replicas line the tumulus and the ritual space on the west side, recreating how the site may have looked in the early fifth century. Stairways were added to the front and sides of the mound, and visitors can walk along each of the tiers and observe the wide view of the park and the surrounding cityscape. A full-scale historical photo of the excavated iron weapons at the top of the *kofun* shows the site of the important discovery.