

Tatsuyama Stone

Tatsuyama stone has long been a desirable construction material due to its light color and useful physical characteristics, including its soft texture. The hyaloclastite, an aggregate of fine, glassy debris formed by the sudden contact of magma and cold water, was formed about 100 million years ago. Its main colors are blue, yellow, and red.

Tatsuyama stone has been used throughout the region since ancient times, due to its physical characteristics and the proximity of the Tatsuyama quarries to the Seto Inland Sea via the Kakogawa River. It was first used for burial chambers (*kofun*), but only people of high status were allowed to be placed in coffins of Tatsuyama stone, resulting in its additional moniker “great king’s stone.”

In more recent times, the stone has been used for foundations, castle walls, pagodas, statues, torii gates at Shinto shrines, the balconies of Fukiage Garden at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, and in other modern architecture.

Today, Tatsuyama stone is extracted from quarries still in operation for use across Japan and abroad in architecture, walls, foundations of homes, and for landscaping. Small items such as tableware, accessories, and coasters are also made using the material; these are often sold as souvenirs of Takasago.

Tatsuyama stone has been quarried from this single location for some 1,700 years. No other stone in Japan is known to have been mined in the same location for such a long period of time.