

## **Tomb of Kikuchi Noritaka**

Kikuchi Noritaka was the founder of the Kikuchi clan. Most details of his life are unknown, but he is thought to have been a high-ranking court official who held a post at Dazaifu, the administrative center of Kyushu near the present-day city of Fukuoka. In 1070, Noritaka arrived in what is now the Kikuchi district, possibly to oversee an agricultural estate (*shoen*) owned by the court. Noritaka adopted the surname of Kikuchi and built a fortified compound on the river that was later given the same name, laying the foundations for the castle town of Waifu.

The Kikuchi district was a remote but thriving agricultural region, where rice cultivation flourished. Noritaka established his compound in the eastern part of these fertile plains, in a strategic location that allowed him and his descendants to control traffic on the Kikuchi River. Monopolizing trade on the river and selling crops grown on the surrounding plains allowed the Kikuchi clan to flourish, and the fort Noritaka built remained its headquarters until the late 1300s.

Noritaka's tomb stands on the site of this compound, on the grounds of which he is thought to have been buried. Constructed in 1818, it is a monument rather than an actual grave.