

Tomb of Prince Asaka

Prince Asaka (728–744) was the second son of Emperor Shomu, the 45th emperor of Japan. It is said that the prince enjoyed hunting in Wazuka and often visited the region when traveling between the capital and his father's palace. When Prince Asaka passed away suddenly at the age of 17, his burial mound was erected in Wazuka, and a temple was founded to pray for his repose. The prince was memorialized by his retainer, the poet statesman Otomo no Yakamochi (718–785), with several poems expressing his grief. One of these mentions Wazuka by name:

Having not yet imagined my prince ruling in the heavens,
I once laid my eyes with such indifference
Upon the forested hills of Wazuka

In the late nineteenth century, residents in central Wazuka unearthed flat stones, a stone wall, and fragments of earthenware at a hillside being

converted for agricultural use. Though the area has not been fully excavated, it was identified as a burial mound (*kofun*) for a prominent figure. The Imperial Household Agency designated the site the Tomb of Prince Asaka and erected a small stone torii gate, a fence, and a signboard on the hilltop. In Wazuka, the tomb is commonly referred to as Taikoyama (Mt. Taiko).

Access

Walk approximately 5 minutes from the Wazukayama-no-Ie bus stop. Turn right at the large intersection, take the first right, and follow the sign to the stone path through the fields. Parking is available at the Wazukacha Café.