

Hagino-o Kofun

The Hagino-o Kofun, which is believed to date to the late sixth century, stands on a hill in the southern part of Ōmuta. It measures 15 meters east to west, 19 meters north to south, and 4 meters tall. The 8.2-meter-long entrance faces west, and the burial chamber faces east. The domed chamber inside is 2.9 meters deep, 2.6 meters wide, and 3 meters tall and is lined with tuff megaliths. Given its size, Hagino-o is thought to have interred someone who possessed considerable influence.

The burial mound was opened centuries ago, and no funerary items remain, but it is noteworthy for the murals in its burial chamber. Ships, shields, and geometric patterns were drawn on the walls with a red iron oxide pigment. Two statues of Buddhist deities—Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, and Benzaiten, a deity associated with good fortune—that were placed in the *kofun* during the Edo period (1603–1867) are now displayed in a building outside the entrance. The Kannon statue bears

inscriptions from the early seventeenth century.

The Hagino-o Kofun has been designated a National Historical Site, and the door from the viewing chamber to the burial chamber is locked to protect the murals. To view the murals, visitors may borrow a key to the viewing chamber from Food Shop Hirayama, near the Hagino-o bus stop.

Kugurizuka Kofun

The Kugurizuka Kofun is a circular burial mound about 30 meters in diameter and 7 meters tall, located in southwest Ōmuta. It was discovered in 1959. Based on the funerary items inside, experts believe it was built in the fourth century. The Kugurizuka Kofun is one of the oldest burial mounds in Kyushu.

Excavations have revealed two coffins, laid on a north-south axis with their heads pointing north. The older coffin, to the east, was made of tuff. The

second, to the west, was made of sandstone. Pipe beads, pottery sherds, metal arrowheads, and an iron sword, along with other metal objects, were found in and around the coffins. Copper mirrors made in China in the early to mid-second century were also found in both coffins.

The Kugurizuka Kofun has been designated a National Historical Site, and its burial goods are exhibited at the Miike Playing Cards and History Material Museum.

Kurosaki Kanzeonzuka Kofun

The Kurosaki Kanzeonzuka Kofun was discovered in 1994 and has been dated to the fourth century. It was built at an elevation of 58 meters on Mt. Kurosaki and is the largest keyhole-shaped burial mound that overlooks the Ariake Sea. The burial chamber remains unexplored, but the stones used in its construction are from Kumamoto, and experts surmise that an influential leader is buried inside it. The *kofun* is 10 meters tall, 100 meters long, and 36 meters wide at its widest point. Its circular portion is 27

meters in diameter.

Empty copper and clay sutra containers from the Heian period (794–1185) were discovered at the top of the *kofun*. In the twelfth century, sutras were buried to prevent illness, avert disasters, and quell evil spirits. It is thought that the paper sutras rotted away inside their containers.

A small Buddhist temple dedicated to the bodhisattva Kannon, from which the mound's name is derived, now stands at the mound's peak. The Kurosaki Kanzeonzuka Kofun has been designated an Important Cultural Property by Fukuoka Prefecture.