



**Restoration of the
historic site for public use
in Takatsuki City**



The Imashirozuka Museum

Restoration of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound national historic site for public use

Introduction

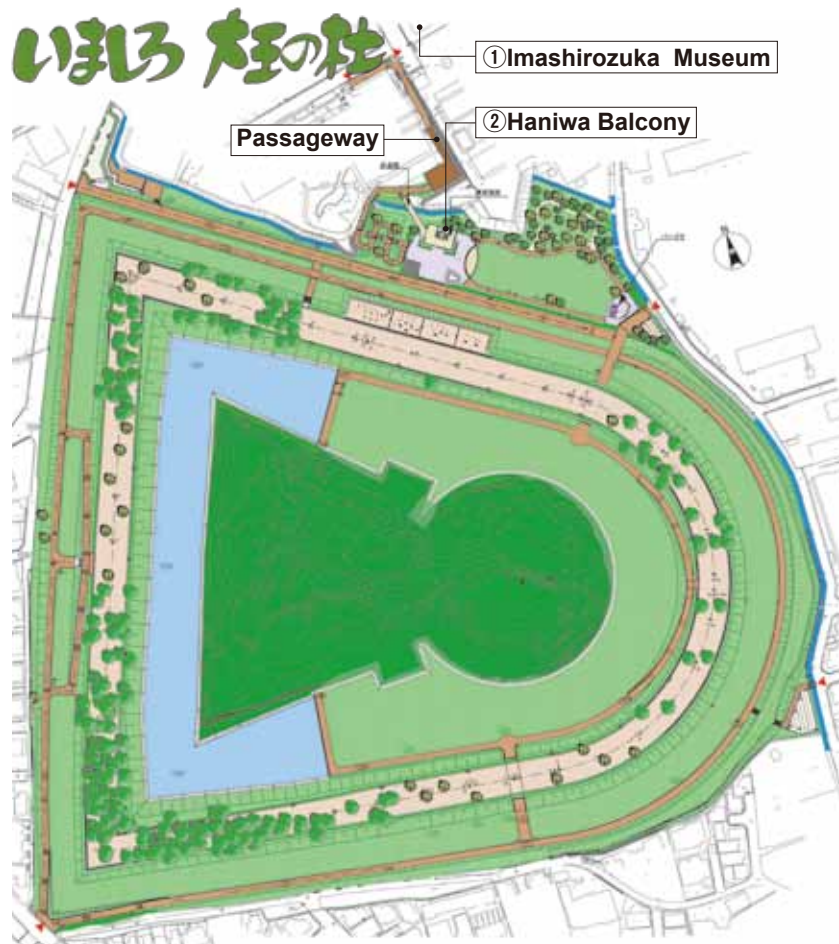
Upon completion of the restoration work, the Imashirozuka Burial Mound national historic site was officially opened to the public on April 1, 2011, otherwise known as “Imashiro Daio no Mori” (Great King’s Woods). At the same time, the Imashirozuka Museum was opened, which had been under construction in parallel with the restoration work. The restoration of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound is the culmination of the preservation and restoration efforts of Takatsuki City, and constitutes a milestone in the city’s management of local cultural properties.

Archaeological findings of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound national historic site

The Imashirozuka Burial Mound is a huge keyhole-shaped burial mound that represents the Mishima burial mounds located on the north bank of the Yodo River. It measures about 354 m in total length including its double moats. As a result of the archaeological investigation conducted from 1988 to 1990 in the ruins of the Shin-ike haniwa production site (which were added to the Imashirozuka Burial Mound national historic site in 1991), it was found that the haniwa clay figures arranged on the Imashirozuka Burial Mound date to around 530 A.D. This finding provided conclusive evidence that the Imashirozuka Burial Mound is the tomb of Great King Keitai that is described as Mishima Aino Misasagi in two ancient documents, the Record of Ancient Matters and the Chronicle of Japan. The area designated as the Imashirozuka Burial Mound national historic site totals about 86,210 m².

The follow-up investigation carried out for ten years from fiscal 1997 further revealed that the mound and other parts of the burial mound were heavily damaged and hardly retained their original shapes because of robbery and landslides caused by the Fushimi Earthquake.

Map of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound national historic site upon restoration



① Imashirozuka Museum

Two-story steel-framed building with total floor area of 3,956m²: Parking area for 37 passenger cars and 2 buses:

Permanent exhibition room(727m²), thematic exhibition room(144m²), hands-on study room(135m²), training room with audiovisual equipment (186m²), general storeroom(636m²), special storeroom(75m²), tourist information corner(100m²)



② Haniwa Balcony

One-story reinforced-concrete building: The rooftop is directly accessible from the passageway via “Haniwa Bridge.”

The first floor accommodates restrooms and storage space. A miniature model of the entire Imashirozuka Burial Mound is located in front of the building.

Fortunately, on the other hand, the investigation led to many important discoveries about the techniques used to construct the huge burial mound, such as the stone masonry within the mound where underground drainage ditches were found and the rockwork buried in the upper part of the mound which was named the “foundation of the stone chamber.”

Other discoveries include: three kinds of house-shaped stone coffins, made of welded tuffs with Tatsuyama-stone, Nijozan White stone, and Aso Pink stone respectively; round gravel from Awajishima Island; and a haniwa ritual precinct where more than 200 representational haniwa clay figures are thought to have been placed. These remains and artifacts bear evidence that the Imashirozuka Burial Mound was constructed with materials carried over long distances by laborers mobilized from a wide area, indicating the importance of this burial mound and adding to its academic value.

Outline of the restoration work

Restoration of the burial mound and construction of the guidance facilities started in fiscal 2004 as a seven-year project, under the auspices of the national subsidy program.

In principle, the project placed highest priority on properly preserving the Imashirozuka Burial Mound. At the same time, it aimed to enhance the historical value of the burial mound by developing this important local heritage as a historical park, while making the city more attractive so that citizens will have greater pride in and affection for it, and communicating the city’s distinctive local culture widely throughout Japan.

The mound, together with the trees on, was preserved in its current form as much as possible including the damage caused by past robberies and disasters, to make the history behind the burial mound more clearly visible. The stone row along the bank of the inner moat was restored so as to mark out the keyhole-shaped outline. The mound is now open to and freely accessible by visitors.

The double moat area consisting of an inner moat, an outer moat and the bank sandwiched between them was elevated by 0.5 m from its restoration height and laid with lawn to form an extensive flat area, except for the inner moat along the front square part of 1.2 ha in area, which is filled with water.

In the bank area, the stone row along the mound was restored, and the inner row of haniwa and the haniwa ritual precinct that face the water area were also restored as close to their original conditions as possible, using full-sized haniwa replicas.

In addition, a maintenance pathway was created to enable proper management of the burial mound, while underground passageways were built by making use of the damaged portions of the burial mound in two locations, each provided with a slope leading to the surface of the bank to provide barrier-free access.

Outdoor guidance facilities include: information boards about the burial mound installed in 13 locations including the investigation sites and main view points; Haniwa Balcony which overlooks the haniwa ritual precinct; a one-fiftieth scale model of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound made of granite; and a mosaic-tiled open floor with a map depicted on it.



Aerial view of the Imashiro Daio no Mori seen from the north



Upper left: **A miniature model of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound**



Upper right: **The third zone of the haniwa ritual precinct**

Lower right: **The fourth zone of the haniwa ritual precinct**

While the burial mound is open for free around the clock, all the lights on the bank and the north square are turned off at 20:15, and the passageways in the bank are locked during night hours. The fourth zone at the western end of the ritual precinct is open all day and is a very popular photo spot.

The restored row of haniwa consists of 1,249 and 2 haniwa replicas in the shapes of a cylinder and morning glory respectively, while the haniwa ritual precinct features 189 replicas of representational haniwa figures. All these haniwa figures are porcelains and strong enough to easily withstand being used in the way shown in the photo on the right.

The miniature model of the burial mound is made of granite and has three tiers in the round rear part and two tiers in the square front part in accordance with the restoration plan. The water-filled inner moat and the empty outer moat are laid with blue and gray chips, respectively. This model is especially popular with small children who enjoy climbing it and competing for “territory” on it.



Outline of the Imashirozuka Museum

The Imashirozuka Ancient History Museum is designed to enable visitors to learn about the Imashirozuka Burial Mound and ancient history through hands-on exhibitions. Today, the museum plays a central role in supporting various historical and cultural activities and communicating the appeal of Takatsuki as a “city of history.” The museum is located about 80 m from the burial mound and a pedestrian passageway runs between them.

The permanent exhibition, which is dedicated to the theme of the “Kofun period of the Mishima area that prospered along the Yodo River,” consists of a full-scale diorama of the construction site of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound that was created based on the findings of investigations, and haniwa clay figures that are displayed openly without a glass showcase to allow visitors to have a closer look. Replicas of the three stone coffins are also on display, which are made of the same stones as those used in the originals, and visitors can touch them freely.

Citizens who participated in the investigations of the burial mound, on-site seminars or other similar events, or the process of producing the replicas of stone coffins feel that they helped to restore the burial mound. Thus, these events helped to spread information about the Imashirozuka Burial Mound during its restoration and to increase public understanding about the burial mound and the restoration project.

Cultural heritage as part of the community

When planning the restoration of historical sites, it is important to consider how they can contribute to the local community upon restoration. The restoration project of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound was drawn up under the guidance of archaeologists and other experts and in consultation with the Agency for Cultural Affairs and other relevant organizations. Before the project was implemented, the municipal council went through the official procedures to pass resolutions on budgeting for the project and awarding of contracts, and in this process, the importance of the project was repeatedly explained to citizens, helping them to understand the restoration of this



Permanent exhibition

The exhibition in the upper photo shows the Burial Mound under construction. The workers are climbing the first tier of the mound, and a row of cylindrical haniwa figures with a drawing of a ship is placed on the other side. Going around the row of haniwa brings visitors to the space shown in the lower photo, where a replica stone coffin is placed in the mockup stone chamber built on the foundation.

historical site. Consequently, many citizens became interested in the restoration of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound and felt that they were also taking part in the project.

The number of visitors to the Imashirozuka Ancient History Museum in fiscal 2011 totaled approximately 90,000. The historical park where the burial mound located is also visited by many people including visitors to the museum, who, whether individually or as a group or family, enjoy various activities in their own ways, such as strolling, playing, walking with their dogs in the morning and evening, jogging, and nature watching and bird watching. The historical park was created by preserving and restoring the Imashirozuka Burial Mound, a magnificent monument that reminds us of the ancient sovereignty, while effectively using the historical and natural elements that remain in the community. Thus the park has become a natural part of the local landscape and is available for various uses, bringing a wide array of values to citizens. This may explain the great popularity of the park among citizens.

Future prospects

The restoration project, which covered an area of approximately nine hectares and cost about four billion yen for restoring the burial mound and constructing the Ancient History Museum, is the core of the community development policy of Takatsuki City.

The entire municipal government worked in unison, especially in cooperation with the departments in charge of tourism, to provide information to the mass media, to develop new tourist routes, and extensively to promote Imashiro Daio no Mori as a destination of school excursions. For example, the bus stop nearest to the Imashirozuka Burial Mound was renamed Imashirozuka-kofun-mae (in front of the Imashirozuka Burial Mound).

In response to a proposal made by citizens, the municipal government also designated August 20 as “Haniwa Day” and organizes public events related to haniwa on this day.

The Society of Cultural Heritage Staff in Takatsuki City, an NPO joined by approximately 170 citizen volunteers, works with the municipal government in promoting Imashiro Daio no Mori and increasing public awareness of it. Especially, the members of this NPO play a central role in giving information and guidance to visitors and carrying out hands-on learning programs. They have organized a “group of guides” and a “group of creators” to look after visitors as peer citizens, and their friendly and helpful attitude has earned them much praise, making visitors want to come back again and again. Various outdoor events are also organized, such as bus tours and hands-on study programs, which have raised public interest in this local cultural heritage.

When autumn comes, small children from nearby kindergartens can be seen collecting acorns on the bank of the burial mound, where the acorns are significantly bigger than in other locations due to proper tree thinning. Later, these children will learn that this site is called Daio no Mori, and the tomb of an ancient emperor is located here. Then they will then feel proud of this “cool” historical park, which is the only one in Japan and is comparable to a world heritage site.