

Dainakanoko Minami Site (a Historic Site of Japan)



This site consists of the ruins of an agricultural village from the Yayoi Period, which was discovered during reclamation work on Lake Dainakanoko. Traces of the original paddy fields, waterways, and various wooden implements used in rice cultivation have been recovered from the ruins.



Wooden implements from the Dainakanoko Minami site

Hyotanyama Kofun (a Historic Site of Japan)



Hyotanyama Kofun is a keyhole-shaped tumulus, or burial mound, made using a small ridge on the western foot of Mt. Kinugasa in the fourth century. It is the largest ancient tumulus in Shiga Prefecture, with a total length of 136 meters. Three pit-type stone chambers were built into the top of the mound, from which bronze mirrors and iron weapons, etc., have been excavated.

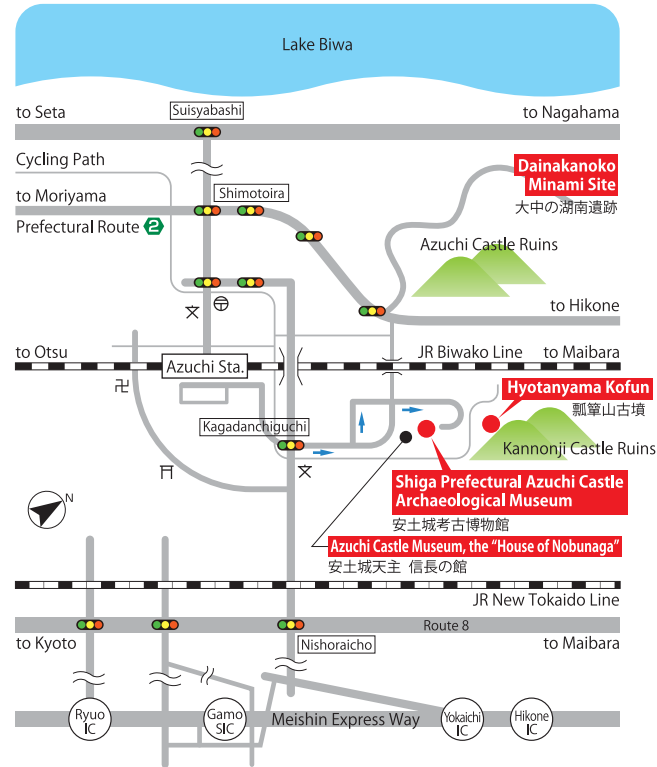


A life-size model of the pit-style stone chamber or tomb of the Hyotanyama Kofun

Admission Information

Admission fee varies according to specific exhibition and event. Please confirm admission fee at the time of your visit. A combined ticket including admission for both the museum and an adjacent facility, the "House of Nobunaga", is also available for purchase.

There is no base admission fee for elementary and junior high school students, those with disabilities, or residents of Shiga Prefecture who are 65 years of age or older and hold verifying identification. (However, there is a special exhibitions fee for elementary and junior high school students and those over 65 who live in Shiga Prefecture.)



- 25 minutes on foot from Azuchi Station on the JR Biwako Line.
- 10 minutes by rental bicycle from Azuchi Station on the JR Biwako Line.
- 14 minutes by bus from Azuchi Station South Plaza (weekday service only): four departures per day
- 25 minutes from the Gamo exit (Gamo SIC) of the Meishin Expressway.
- 30 minutes from either the Ryuo exit (Ryuo IC) or the Yokaichi exit (Yokaichi IC) of the Meishin Expressway.
- On Route 8, proceed through Nishorai Intersection then turn right at Kagadanchiguchi Intersection.

Publication: Shiga Museums Support Committee

Editing: Shiga Prefectural Azuchi Castle Archaeological Museum

TEL. 0748-46-2424 FAX. 0748-46-6140

URL <http://www.azuchi-museum.or.jp>

e-mail gakugei@azuchi-museum.or.jp



平成29年度 文化庁 地域の核となる美術館・歴史博物館支援事業
Supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan in the fiscal 2017

Lake Culture in Prehistoric Times



Shell mound at the Awazu site in the bottom of Lake Biwa (provided by the Shiga Board of Education)



Bronze bells from the Oiwayama site

Shiga Museums Support Committee

Shiga Prefectural
Azuchi Castle Archaeological Museum

The Jomon Period (c. 13,000 B.C. to 800 B.C.)

Hunting and Gathering

Traces of the activities of the people of ancient times are often uncovered around Lake Biwa. Over 100 archeological sites related to the people of ancient times have been discovered beneath the waters of Lake Biwa thus far.

Located near where the Seta River leaves Lake Biwa, the Awazu Shell Mound is the largest fresh water shell mound in the world. The shells, other organic remains, and cultural artifacts recovered at the site have been a rich source of information about the hunting and gathering lifestyles characteristic of the lake vicinity during the Jomon Period, roughly 5,000 to 5,500 years ago.

After consuming shellfish (mainly freshwater varieties), people in the Jomon Period discarded the shells as refuse near their settlement, and a large-scale shell mound resulted. A great number and variety of items have been discovered in this shell mound, in addition to shells, such as fish and animal bones, plant remains, pottery, and so on. Cultural artifacts ranging from earrings to knives, fishing net weights, and other types of tools have been unearthed. The animal and plant remains recovered at the Awazu Shell Mound represent invaluable documentation of what people of the period ate and how they lived.



Awazu site and shell mound in the bottom of Lake Biwa from the sky (provided by the Shiga Board of Education)



Pottery and stoneware from the Awazu site

The Yayoi Period (c. 800 B.C. to 250 A.D.)

Seeds of Agriculture

Civilization based on agriculture is a relatively new development in the Japanese archipelago. During the Yayoi Period, paddy rice cultivation was initiated around Lake Biwa, based on agricultural techniques imported from China and the Korean Peninsula. Since rice production and agricultural land use required close supervision and control, the lake and river drainage basins fell under the control of dominant local leaders, and a hierarchical society emerged.

In the Yayoi Period, many agricultural implements were fashioned out of wood. In the areas surrounding Lake Biwa, many of these wooden tools have been unearthed in excellent condition, having been well preserved in layers of peat.

Production of bronze and the utilization of iron instruments also began during the Yayoi Period. The bell-shaped vessels made of bronze, called *dōtaku*, which were produced at the time are believed to have their origins on the Korean Peninsula, but the bells developed in distinctive and characteristic ways in the Japanese archipelago. *Dōtaku* were used as musical instruments at festivals and religious rituals. It is believed that the bells were outfitted with a “tongue” or clapper made of bronze, wood, or stone which hung from a string inside the bell, and that the bells were rung by moving either the clapper or the body of the bell itself in a way that the clapper contacted a textured section on the inner wall of the bell. Approximately 500 *dōtaku* have been excavated so far in Japan. In 1881, 14 of the bells were discovered at Ōiwayama in Yasu City, Shiga Prefecture, and in 1962 a further 10 bells were excavated at the same site. One of the bells unearthed there in 1881 is now part of the Tokyo National Museum collection; standing 135 centimeters in height, it is the largest *dōtaku* in Japan.



A depiction of agricultural work in the Yayoi Period



A small bronze bell

The Kofun Period (c. 250 A.D. to 600 A.D.)

The Birth of Political Power

In the Kofun (Tumulus) Period, the hierarchical differentiation of society continued to develop in Japan, giving birth to a wide-ranging political power centering in the Kinki region. In various parts of Japan, *kofun* (tumuli or burial mounds) which served as tombs and symbols of power for local potentates were constructed. These tombs incorporated many graves and were repositories for burial accessories such as bronze mirrors, weapons, and ornaments, in addition to the bodies of the deceased. Various clay figurines, particularly those of cylindrical shape, were arranged around the circumference of the *kofun*.

The largest burial mound in Shiga Prefecture is the Hyotanyama Kofun, located in the Azuchi Town area of Omihachiman City. This tomb was constructed in the early Kofun Period. The *kofun* has a keyhole shape and is approximately 136 meters in length. Bronze mirrors and iron weapons have been excavated from three pit-style stone chambers which were built into the top of the mound.

Horses were initially imported into Japan from the Asian continent during the Kofun Period, and the tombs of local potentates came to be furnished with harnesses made of iron along with other burial accessories. Shingai Kofun in Ritto City is particularly noteworthy for the large number of iron harnesses and arms which it has yielded.

The late Kofun Period was marked by the large number of burial mounds which were built. The construction of tunnel-style stone chambers in the earthen mounds of the *kofun* became a distinctive and common practice of the time. While tombs built in the earlier part of the Kofun Period had been designed and constructed to accommodate only the individual local leader, these later tombs accommodated the leader’s family and descendants, as well.



Various clay figurines



Iron arms from the Shingai Kofun