

Gobōyama No. 3 tomb

This is a tomb of the Final Kofun period located at Tatsuta Kita in the town of Ikaruga, Ikoma district, about 850 m southwest from Hōryūji temple's Chūmon (inner gate). One of three tombs accidentally discovered during the development of residential land, the mound itself no longer survives. The burial facility was a compartment-like stone chamber with a side entrance, consisting of an upper stone made by hollowing out a huge block of granite and fitted onto a base stone, and the chamber's interior contained a lacquered stoneware coffin. From the skeletal remains inside the coffin, the interred is thought to have been a male 14–15 years in age, around 150 cm in stature.

Regarding the compartment-like chamber's size, the upper stone is 275 cm long by 158 cm wide and 97 cm in height, the base stone is 298 cm long by 144 cm wide and 56 cm thick, and the entrance was sealed off by a cover stone 105 cm wide by 86 cm in height and 35 cm thick. The space inside the chamber was 225 cm long by 71 cm wide, and 52 cm high. The stone exteriors were not dressed but were used with their natural surface, although the inner surface of the chamber was dressed to a smooth finish. The inner surface had been plastered over, and from an investigation carried out in 2015, the seam where the cover and base stones met was also found to have been plastered.

The lacquered stoneware coffin has 3 rows of 7 legs, for a total of 21, on its bottom, and is fitted with a lid. The lid is 156 cm long by 47.2 cm wide and 25 cm high, while the coffin itself is 157 cm long by 47.8 cm wide and 25 cm high, and its interior dimensions are 146 cm long by 36 cm wide and 20 cm high. The lid had a hole 6.5 cm in diameter at one end, which was closed with a ceramic plug after it was fired. Also, the lid was fitted with a wedge-shaped bronze plate 13.7 cm long by 7.3 cm wide, thought to have been for reinforcement of a fissure. The coffin's legs had been pared down considerably after firing to make them level, and in its present form the longest of the legs on the coffin's short end are only about 5 cm high. Traces of paring after firing are also visible on the upper portion of the coffin, and on the portion of the lid that fits onto the coffin. As there was only 5 cm of leeway in height when the coffin was placed within the chamber, these parings are thought to have been modifications to lower the coffin's height.

Inside the coffin, a circular lidded inkstone made of three-color glazed ware was placed to the right of the interred's head (by the right ear), and a glass tube thought to have been the shaft of an ink brush was deposited to the head's left (by the left ear). The interred had also been laid to rest upon a pillow carved from amber. These items, unique examples nationwide, are extremely precious. The three-color glazed circular inkstone is a small item, with the lid just 6.7 cm at its greatest diameter and the width of the grinding surface at 3.5 cm, and has 10 legs called "water drop legs" because of their shape. From the period when such legs were popular, as well as from the characteristics of the clay paste and the glaze, it is thought to have been produced in China between the start and the middle of the seventh century, and thus considered to be an early example of Tang three-colored glazed ware. As an item similar to the glass tube was recovered among the grave goods in the Sui dynasty tomb of Li Jingxun, who was interred in 608, along with the inkstone it was probably an import from China. Incidentally, the grave goods from the Gobōyama No. 3 tomb, and the coffin and chamber are all designated as Important Cultural Properties by the Japanese government.