

Shimanoyama tomb (Tōin, Kawanishi-chō, Shiki district)

This is a keyhole-shaped tomb with the mound 200 m in overall length, located at Tōin, in Kawanishi-chō, in the district of Shiki, Nara prefecture. It is situated at a lowland of about 40 m elevation in the center of the Nara basin, at the confluence of the Tera and Asuka rivers, tributaries to the Yamato river.

Artifacts were collected from this tomb from the Edo period until the start of the Shōwa era, and in addition to being mentioned in *Unkonshi* (Treatise on rocks) written by the eighteenth century collector of rare and unusual rocks Kiuchi Sekitei, specimens of bracelet-shaped stone objects and beads, etc., are in the collections of not only this museum, but older households in the tomb's environs, the Tokyo National Museum, the Tenri Sankokan Museum, the Metropolitan Museum and the de Young Fine Arts Museum in America, etc.

The burial facility in the round part of the mound is inferred to be a vertical stone chamber, and worked stone material of Tatsuyama stone believed to be from the chamber ceiling is found at the Himekuwa shrine just west of the tomb, and in various facilities and old houses in Kawanishi-chō.

Excavation was conducted in 1988 at the outer rampart, and subsequently the Nara prefectural Archaeological Institute of Kashihara and Kawanishi-chō have conducted 13 excavations over the 14-year period starting from their first investigation in 1995.

In their second excavation in 1996, a clay compartment was found at the top of the front (rectangular) portion of the mound. The compartment was built within a 10.5 m long by 3.4 m wide pit, situated toward its northern side. The scale of the compartment was 8.5 m in overall length, by a width of approximately 2 m. At the center was placed a 7.5-m long split-log coffin of Japanese umbrella pine, covered twice over with clay. Within the coffin, cinnabar had been spread over the area where the interred was placed, and near the head position were three bronze mirrors, three stone replicas of lidded containers, and five stone objects in the shape of large-scale cylindrical beads, and from the area near the chest were cylindrical beads regarded as from a necklace, while from the area of the wrist were cylindrical and round beads strung into bracelets, plus four iron knives and a hairpin comb that had been included as grave goods.

Also, 80 wheel-shaped stone objects, 32 ring-shaped stone bracelets, and 21 hoe-shaped stone bracelets for a total 133 items in the shape of bracelets fashioned from stone were recovered from between the clay layers covering the coffin. Further, from above the coffin and in the clay cover, two short and five regular swords, and more than 2,500 beads and stone scepter heads were detected. These were found in the manner of having been cut loose from their bindings and scattered about. The items recovered from this clay compartment were designated an Important Cultural Property in 1998. The possibility of the principal interred figure being female has been pointed out from the near absence of weapons among the grave goods.

Further, it has become clear that another burial facility exists in between the round and front portions of the mound. The extent of this feature has been detected only at its top, but grave goods such as steatite imitations of sickles and knives, and iron axes and so forth have been recovered.

Also, from investigations of the mound, it has become clear that the mound was built in three tiers, that

the sloping side of each tier was paved with cobbles, that cylindrical *haniwa* were closely lined up in rows going down the center of the level areas of the tiers, and that at the constrictions on the east and west sides between the round and front portions there were triangular-shaped projections on the round portion of the mound. From the constrictions, wooden implements, baskets, and other artifacts have been recovered.

This tomb was built in the latter part of the fourth century, and is a representative large-scale keyhole tomb that can be placed in the transition between the Early and Middle Kofun periods, and there are opinions linking it with the chiefly lineages of the Ōyamato tomb group in the southeastern Nara basin, and those seeing it linked with the chiefly lineages of the Kazuraki region.