

Shijō No. 1 tomb (Shijō-chō, Kashihara city)

This is located in Shijō-chō in the city of Kashihara. It is situated on level ground on the northeastern portion of Mt. Unebi, one of the “three mountains of Yamato.” In the current townscape, hospitals, a police station, and the like stand side by side as national highways crisscross the environs.

The Shijō tomb group formed in the Middle and Late Kofun periods (fifth to sixth centuries), comprised of medium and small keyhole-shaped mounds, plus square and round tombs, but nearly all were leveled in conjunction with the construction of the Fujiwara capital, and in excavation they are detected only by their moats. Of the group the Shijō Tsukayama tomb (currently designated as the mausoleum of Emperor Suizei) is considered to be one for which the mound has survived. Also, it is thought possible that another tomb once stood at the site currently designated as the mausoleum of Emperor Jinmu, and that it too was one of the tombs comprising the Shijō group.

In 1987, the Shijō No. 1 tomb was the first among the group to be confirmed. It is a square mound with a projection on the western side, the scale of the mound is 32 m long north–south, and the east–west length including the projection is approximately 40 m. It has inner and outer double moats, and on each side of the inner moat a land bridge was created by not digging out one part. Including the outer moat, the scale is inferred to reach about 60 m north–south by 75 m east–west.

Very few artifacts were recovered from the outer moat, but from the inner moat large amounts of wooden implements and *haniwa* were found. Among the wooden implements are items in shapes including birds, shields, parasols, scepters, and ceremonial fans, that are thought to have been erected on the mound in the same manner as the ceramic *haniwa*. This type of object has accordingly been given labels such as “wooden *haniwa*” and “wooden funerary sculpture,” and the representative examples are the items from the Shijō tomb. Also, in addition to the fan-shaped items, other wooden objects in the shapes of swords and socketed spears have been recovered, and there is a theory that these were all used in the funerary rites and subsequently discarded in the moat.

Also, centering on the area in the moat around the projection, representational *haniwa* in forms including humans, horses, deer, wild boars, dogs, and chickens were recovered. Most likely these were originally placed as a group on the projection. The human figures have great variety, including a man with tattoos, a man holding a bow, a wrestler, a man wearing elegant clothing, etc., and the animal figures were all reconstructed to their complete forms. The horse-shaped *haniwa* is a large-scale item standing 106 cm high and 120 cm long, and is a precious specimen from which we can learn in detail the forms of horse gear from the halter on the head to the crupper on the rear. Further, among items expressing aspects of hunting, namely dog/deer/wild boar forms, the deer is shown looking backward with a fearful expression. These representational *haniwa* from the Shijō No. 1 tomb are also superlative products representative of Japan’s Kofun culture.

The tomb’s date of construction is considered to be the final portion of the Middle Kofun period (the latter decades of the fifth century). In addition to being an example of the small number of tombs with a double moat, it is a rare instance in which nearly all aspects of the *haniwa* and wooden funerary items can be discerned. It may be called an indispensable case for reconstructions of the external appearance of tombs decorated with *haniwa* and wooden items, and for learning about the customs and rituals of the time.