

Preface

The historic Asuka Palace Site consists of the remains of palaces dating back to the Asuka period. Archaeological studies to date have revealed that the remains of the palaces constructed during three phases (I - III) of the Asuka period overlap with each other. The palace in Phase I is believed to be Asuka Okamoto-no-miya Palace of Emperor Jomei; Phase II is Asuka Itabuki-no-miya Palace of Empress Kogyoku; Phase III-A is Nochi-no-Asuka Okamoto-no-miya Palace of Empress Saimei and Emperor Tenji; and Phase III-B is Asuka Kiyomihara-no-miya Palace of Emperor Tenmu and Empress Jito.

This time, an archaeological research was conducted by Nara Prefecture as part of the maintenance and utilization project of Asuka Palace Site and Asuka Pond Garden Site, the 192nd such excavation of the Asuka Capital Site. The excavation was carried out at the southern section of the *Naikaku* (inner enclosure) of the Phase III remains, which is located to the east of the 1979 (73rd) excavation area. The main objective of this excavation is to obtain detailed information on the *Seiden* (main hall) in the southern section of the *Naikaku* discovered during the 73rd excavation, also known as building SB7910.

Achievements of the Survey

①Building SB7910: Based on the 73rd excavation, it was presumed that SB7910 could be a building measuring approximately 20.0 m east-west and 11.2 m north-south. The four sides of the building are thought to have faced the four cardinal directions, with *Hisashi* (eaves) on each side. In this excavation, post holes and pillar removal holes, as well as the stone pavement SX7916 surrounding the building, were unearthed from the anticipated locations, thus confirming the structure and size of the building.

Viewed in its planar form, the shape of each post hole is irregular, measuring approximately 0.8 to 1.7 m per side. As with the results of the 73rd excavation, all posts are thought to have been removed. The estimated *Hashirama*(span between pillars) is about 2.94 m for *Moya* (main building) and 2.65 m for *Hisashi*.

Small post holes have been found around the *Gawabashira* (pillars erected outside of a building) and *Irigawabashira* (those erected inside). Each are located at the intersection of two imaginary lines connecting the *Gawabashira* and *Irigawabashira*. These small post holes, judging from their locations and stratigraphic positions confirmed in this survey, may be the traces of scaffolding holes that were created for demolition.

SB7910 is thought to have had a staircase, however, this was not verified in this excavation.

②Stone pavement SX7916: This stone pavement surrounds the building SB7910 and uses stones approximately 30 cm in diameter. The latest survey revealed that these stones

were laid up to the *Hashira-dori* (pillar row) of SB7910’s *Gawabashira*. It was also found that the newly discovered inner stone pavement was placed one step higher than the outer pavement (Photo 1). Stone pavements like this have been discovered at some sophisticated buildings in the Asuka Palace Site, such as the southern main hall SB0301 in the north section of the *Naikaku* and the *Ebinoko-odono* SB7701.

③Stone pavement SX7917: Unearthed in the north of building SB7910, this pavement was connected to the pavement SX7916 in the south and to the ditch SD7911 in the north (Photo 2). Combined results of the 73rd and latest excavations confirmed that the size of the pavement is 2.94 m wide and 10.3 m long, and is made with stones approximately 30 cm across. The pavement is oriented to the west by one degree on the north side, which is slightly different from the orientation of building SB7910, whose four sides face the four exact cardinal directions. This pavement may have been a passage used by the emperor/empress when he/she went to building SB7910 from the living space in the north section of the *Naikaku*.

④Stone ditch SD7911: The stone ditch detected at the north of the building SB7910 runs east to west, and has an inner width of approximately 50 cm and a depth of approximately 20 cm. Stones approximately 15 cm in diameter were laid at the bottom of the ditch while stones approximately 20 cm in diameter were used for the sides.

⑤Pebbled area SH7912: An area covered with stones approximately 10 cm in diameter has been found around building SB7910. The pebbled area spreads throughout the south section of the *Naikaku*. This differs from the north section, which is entirely paved with larger stones.

Conclusion

Considering the orientation of building SB7910 and other remains confirmed in this excavation as well as their overlapping relationship with remains uncovered in previous excavations, these remains are thought to belong to Phase III of the Asuka Palace Site.

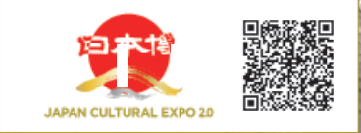
Through this excavation, it was confirmed that SB7910 measured approximately 20.0 m east-west and 11.2 m north-south, with eaves on all sides. The stone pavement surrounding SB7910 runs up to the *Hashira-dori* of SB7910’s *Gawabashira*, and the inner stone pavement was placed one step higher than the outer pavement, which suggests sophistication in design. The fieldwork also found small post holes that may have been used as scaffolding holes for demolition.

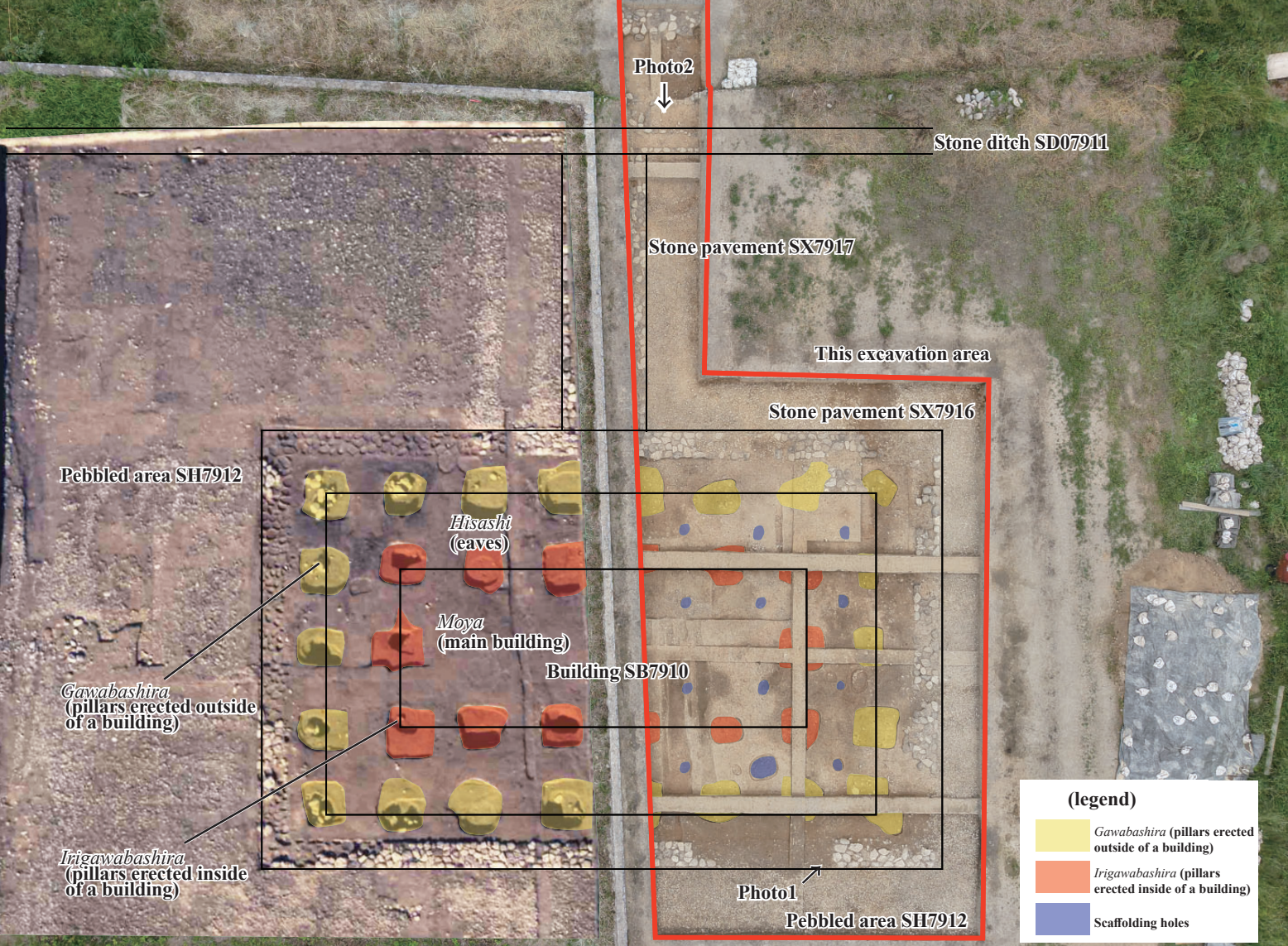
The south section of the *Naikaku* is believed to have been a space used for ceremonial and political purposes by the emperor. This excavation has yielded significant findings, especially with the detailed structure of the main building SB7910 now confirmed.



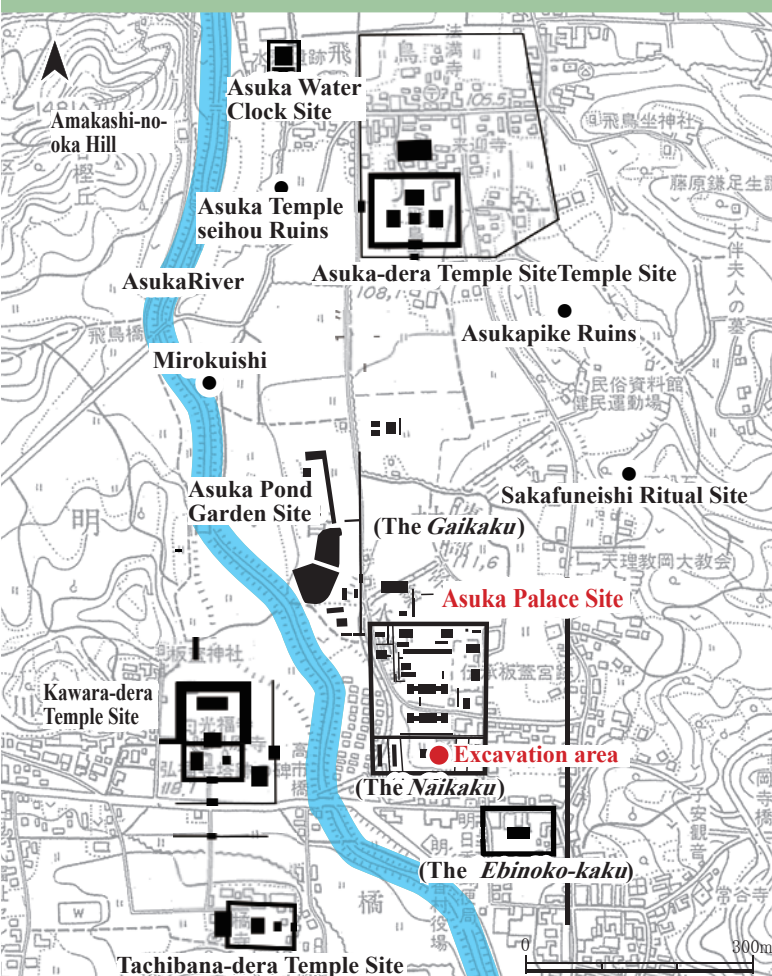
Asuka Palace Site (National Historic Site)

The 192st excavation of the Asuka Capital Site Open Days Leaflet
November 8th and 9th, 2025





Vertical photograph



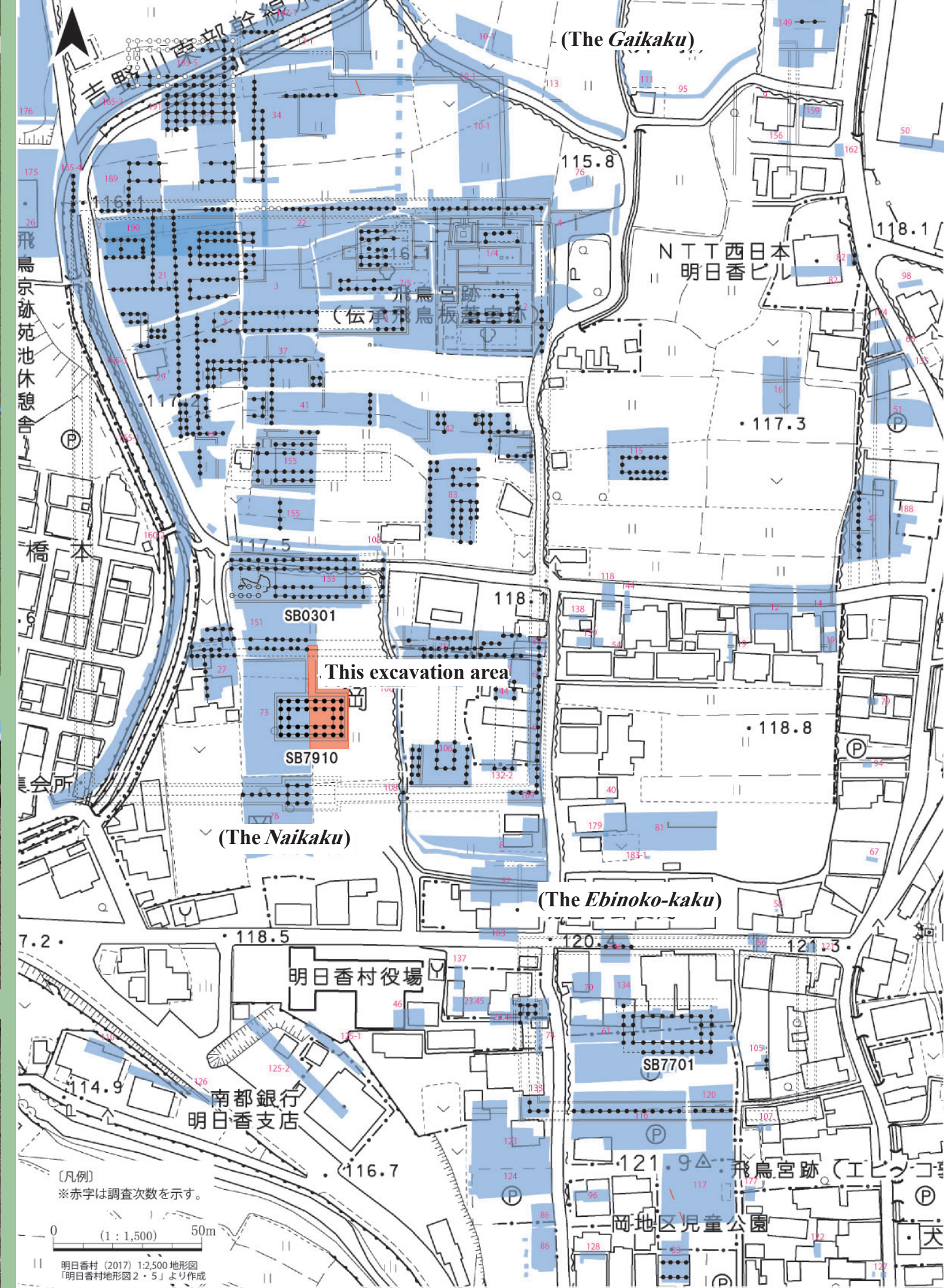
Asuka Palace Site and Major Surrounding Sites



Photo 1 Stone pavement SX7916



Photo 2 Stone pavement SX7917



This excavation area at Asuka Palace Site