A tumulus in which there are colored relief carvings and lines carved on the surface of the stone coffin or on the wall of the stone chamber is called a decorated tumulus. The special tumulus whose walls are painted in color is called a painted-wall tumulus and it is often presented at the entrance and inner wall of corridor-style stone chamber of 5th to 7th century, both inside and outside of stone coffin, and inner and outer wall of horizontal chamber. Various scenes, patterns, lines, and figures are colored. Over half the tumuli of this kind are concentrated in Kumamoto and the southern part of Fukuoka Prefecture and the most number of decorated tumuli are concentrated along the Kikuchi River.

The early design of decorated tumuli is mainly that of intersecting straight and curved lines or geometric patterns such as circles, triangles, and concentric circles. In the 5th century mirrors, balls, swords, ancient armors and shields often appeared as patterns and in the 6th century a design presented a story in general and boats, the Sun, the Moon, fishermen, and warriors appeared more often. The Decorated Tumulus Culture that had prospered in the northern part of Kyushu spread eastward in Japan and reached the Northeast region by the 7th century.
With Nature’s Power

The World of Decorated Tumulus Which Is Arising Brightly Now!

Decorated Tumulus Museum and Higo Ancient Forest
As part of the initiative of “Fudoki-no-oka” proposed by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Kumamoto Prefecture designated three areas along the Kikuchi River basin, which are Yamaga(Yamaga-shi), Kao(Kao-machi, Yamaga-shi), and Kikusui(Nagomi-machi) and have promoted maintenance of historical sites since 1979. Then its title was changed to “Higo Ancent Forest” and opened to the public as the thirteenth “Fudoki-no-oka” in Japan in 1995.

“The Decorated Tumulus Museum of Kumamoto Prefecture” was opened on April 15, 1992 as a central facility for the “Higo Ancient Forest.” Our name derives from “decorated tumulus” of which we boast the biggest number in Japan and our exhibited materials are mainly based on decorated tumuli of Japan and East Asia. In addition to special exhibitions and lectures, we hold hands-on study and provide learning occasions and places of relaxation to many citizens.
Main Building 1st Floor

Permanent Showroom
Principal remains and relics of primitive, ancient, and medieval times which are from Kumamoto Prefecture and mostly from the Kikuchi River basin are exhibited.

Project Showroom
We will have a couple planned exhibitions. We have regular exhibitions related to the Higo Ancient Forest and decorated tumuli.

Main Building Basement Floor

Decorated Tumulus Room
There are twelve stone chamber reconstructions whose inside are adorned with the detailed replicas of twelve decorated tumuli in the prefecture. The grave goods excavated from the decorated tumuli are exhibited.

Imagination Hall
Movies with 3D and Hi-vision are shown. “Funereal statue of human was alive,” “Eating habits of the Jomon period,” as well as “The Story of Kikuchi Castle—The Songs of Sakimori (Military Guards conscripted for duty in the Kyushu district)—” and an animation, “Pledge to Peace” are now showing.

List of replica of main decorated tumuli in the prefecture
1. Nabeta Yokoana Mounded Tomb Group
2. Kamogo Tumulus Stone Chamber
3. Ideru Tumulus
4. Odara Tumulus
5. Segonko #1 Tumulus
6. Chibusan Tumulus
7. Daibou Tumulus
8. Ososou-toroku #1 Tumulus
9. Horiura Tumulus Stone Material
10. Benkeiga-ana Tumulus
11. Eianji-higashi Tumulus
12. Omura Yokoana Mounded Tomb Group #11 Tomb
13. Ouzuka Tumulus

Basement Hall / Outdoor Exhibition Site
Precise replicas of Nabeta and Omura Horizontal Chambers on the wall-hall, photo panels of decorative tumuli from all over Japan are now exhibited. A boat-shaped sarcophagus excavated from Tsuji Tumulus, sarcophagus and replica excavated from the Kikuchi River basin are exhibited at the Outdoor Exhibition Site.

Annex Practice Building

At the practice building various experience classes for housing, food and clothing of primitive and ancient times and related lectures are held.

Learning through Hands-on Experience Room
Regular hands-on experience classes such as comma-shaped bead making and ancient drawing for parent and child are held throughout the year.

Group Learning Room
This room is used for school trip orientation or group learning. Lectures and symposiums are also held here.

Open-air Practice Square
Hands-on practice square is located at the south side of practice building. Acorn woods, ancient pit dwelling, and renketsudokou of the Jomon period are reconstructed. “Tatara Iron Furnace” which was produced as an experiment is also exhibited.

General Information

Open
9:30am — 5:15pm
(Entry is permitted until 4:45pm)

Closed
Every Monday
(f If Monday is a holiday, the next Tuesday will be closed)
Year-end and New Year Holidays
(December 25 — January 4)

Admission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>individual</th>
<th>Group (over 20 persons)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>¥410</td>
<td>¥290/person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College student</td>
<td>¥250</td>
<td>¥180/person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/student</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Free for physical disability certificate holders

Kumamoto Prefectural Decorated Tumulus Museum
3085 Iwashara, Kyo-machi, Yamaga-shi, Kumamoto Prefecture, 861-0161
TEL(0986)36-2151 FAX(0986)36-2120
http://www.kofukan.pref.kumamoto.jp/
Prefectural Decorated Tumulus Museum and “Higo Ancient Forest” Kao Area

Officially-designated historical site
Iwabaru Mounded Tomb Group

Mounded tumuli of the middle and late Kouran period dot the Iwabaru Plateau. At its center is the Iwabaru Futagozuka tumulus, one of the biggest keyhole tombs with a quadrangular rear portion, whose entire length is 107 m, located. The Kitanosezuka tumulus, the Shimobaru tumulus, the Kanbaru #1 to #3 tumuli, the Urumakuzu #1 to #3 tumuli and the Tsukahara tumuli are located at the margins. The Kitanosezuka tumulus has a horizontal chamber, Kanbaru #2 has a house-style sarcophagus, and Kanbaru #3 has a slab coffin. Other tumuli have not yet been investigated. Therefore the details are not available.

Historical site designated by the Prefecture
Iwabaru Horizontal Chambers

There are more than 130 horizontal chambers in each valley located on the margins of Iwabaru Plateau. At the eastern extremity there is a group of 43 horizontal tumuli, among which six tumuli have decorations.

Yokoyama Tumulus

It is a keyhole tomb with a quadrangular rear portion built in the middle of 6th century at Yokoyama, Ueki-machi, Kamoto-gun. Along with the construction of the Kyushu Longitudinal Expressway, an investigation was carried out and this tumulus was removed and reconstructed at the current site. There are patterns of triangles, cogwheel shaped circles with two ribbon-like short projections, and concentric circles on the iwayakata where the body is buried, inside its stone chamber.

*tour*
9:30-16:30 (except closed days)