



In Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Establishment of the Municipality of Ogori and the Partnership between Ogori City and Kurume University

大原道の記と  
150年前の小郡

## *Exhibition: Ohara Michi no Ki (Chronicle of Ohara Roads) - Ogori of 150 Years Ago*

The city of Ogori is located in midwestern Fukuoka Prefecture. It is conveniently served by railroads and highways, yet the city retains a rich natural environment. In 1972, the city was transformed from Ogori Town to Ogori City and this year marks the 50th anniversary of the city's incorporation. About 150 years ago, a travelogue entitled "Ohara no Michi no Ki" (Chronicle of Ohara Roads) was published about this area. The book is the work of Mitani Arinobu, the result of a journey of six days and five nights he spent in 1873 in present-day Ogori City, Tachiarai Town, and Kitano Town of Kurume City. Mitani spent his time investigating historical sites and folklore related to the Battle of Ohobaru (Ohara).

This exhibition showcases materials that allow us to imagine Ogori as it was 150 years ago, as observed by Mitani Arinobu. It introduces the sites of Ogori as they appear in Ohara no Michi no Ki.

# What was the Battle of Ohobaru?

After the fall of the Kamakura Shogunate, the new government (the Kemmu government) created around Emperor Godaigo collapsed after a mere two and a half years. For a 60-year period, a conflict ensued between Emperor Kōmei (Northern Dynasty), who had been retained by Ashikaga Takauji, and Emperor Godaigo (Southern Dynasty), who had fled to Yoshino.

In Kyushu, Emperor Godaigo dispatched Prince Kaneyoshi(Kanenaga) as the Seisei Shogun, to restore the power of the Southern Court. With the support of Kikuchi Takemitsu and others, the Southern Court expanded its power and set out for Dazaifu in 1359. In July and August, a series of battles called the "Battle of Chikugo River" took place on the riverside of the Chikugo River and into Ohobaru (Ogori City). The battles climaxed on August 6 when the two armies clashed at Ohobaru in a battle known as the "Ohobaru Gassen."

Two years after winning the Battle of Ohobaru, the Southern Court entered Dazaifu. While the forces of the Southern Court in the whole of Japan were in retreat, the Southern Court enjoyed its heyday in Kyushu until 1372, when Dazaifu was

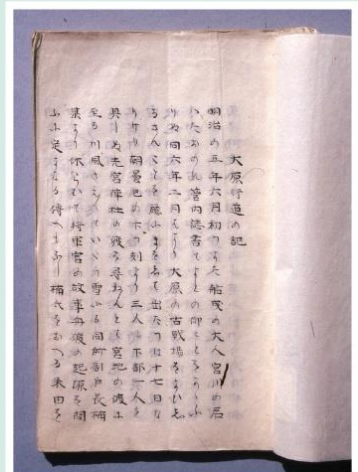


"Battle of Chikugo River" painted by Mitani Arinobu (used with permission by Kurume City Board of Education)



Mitani Arinobu

Mitani Arinobu, the author of "Chronicle of Ohara Road," was the official painter of the Kurume domain. He was born in Kurume Shojima in 1842. From the age of 18, Mitani studied the painting techniques of the Kano school under Kano Ho-in Shosen-in, who was an official painter of the Edo shogunate. He later returned to Kurume and taught painting at Meizen Junior High School and Kurume Normal School during the Meiji era (1868-1912), and also served as a member of the prefectural assembly and chairman of the Kurume City Council.



Ohara Michi no Ki  
(Chronicle of Ohara Roads)

(From the collection of Kurume University Mii Library)

# Chapter 1: Ogori of 150 Years Ago



1

## Matsuzaki-juku and the Hatago Aburaya

Matsuzaki-juku (post town) was established in 1668. The town formed when the second lord of the Kurume domain, Arima Tadayori, established the Matsuzaki domain for Arima Toyonori, his adopted son. Matsuzaki-juku was opened as a section on the Satsuma Kaido, used by daimyo lords on their biennial pilgrimage to Edo (modern day Tokyo). Although the Matsuzaki domain was abolished during Toyonori's lifetime, Matsuzaki-juku continued to be a popular stop for travelers in Kyushu.



**Matsuzaki-juku Inn Aburaya**

In Matsuzaki-juku, there were hatago (inns) as well as ochaya (main lodge) where people of high status stayed, such as daimyo lords and hatamoto (retainers of the shogunate). According to a record from the end of the Edo period (1603-1868), among a total of 129 structures in Matsuzaki-juku, 26 were hatago.

In "Ohara Michi no Ki", the name of the inn where the group stayed, "Aburaya Zenpei (Kihei) House", referred to a structure built between 1861 and 1865. It was used as an inn until around the beginning of the Showa period (1926-1989), after which it was used as a playhouse and a restaurant. The roof was damaged by a typhoon in 1991 and the building was almost torn down, but was saved by the local community. After conducting demolition and excavation surveys, the building was restored and is now a facility that attracts many visitors as the "Former Matsuzaki-juku Inn Aburaya."

2

## Special Haze (wax tree, a species of Sumac) and the Hirata Family

Around the middle of the Edo period (1603-1868), crops intended for sale (commodity and cash crops) started to be produced throughout Japan. In Ogori, sumac (*Rhus succedanea*) was produced as an important commodity. The wax from the sumac tree is used to make Japanese candles, medicines, and cosmetics. Even today, haze wax is used as pomade hair dressing to harden the topknots of sumo wrestlers. Towards the end of the Edo period (1603-1868), the Kurume clan monopolized the sale of wax in order to secure financial resources to strengthen the military.

During this period, the price of wax skyrocketed due in part to increased exports to foreign countries, and the Hirata family and other wealthy merchants made fortunes through the haze trade based in Ogori.

In 1874, the Hirata family established a money-lending company (later to become Gomei Bank) using wealth created from its haze wax business. The garden at the Hirata Residence, built around 1928, still retains its original appearance and is a registered significant national place of scenic beauty.



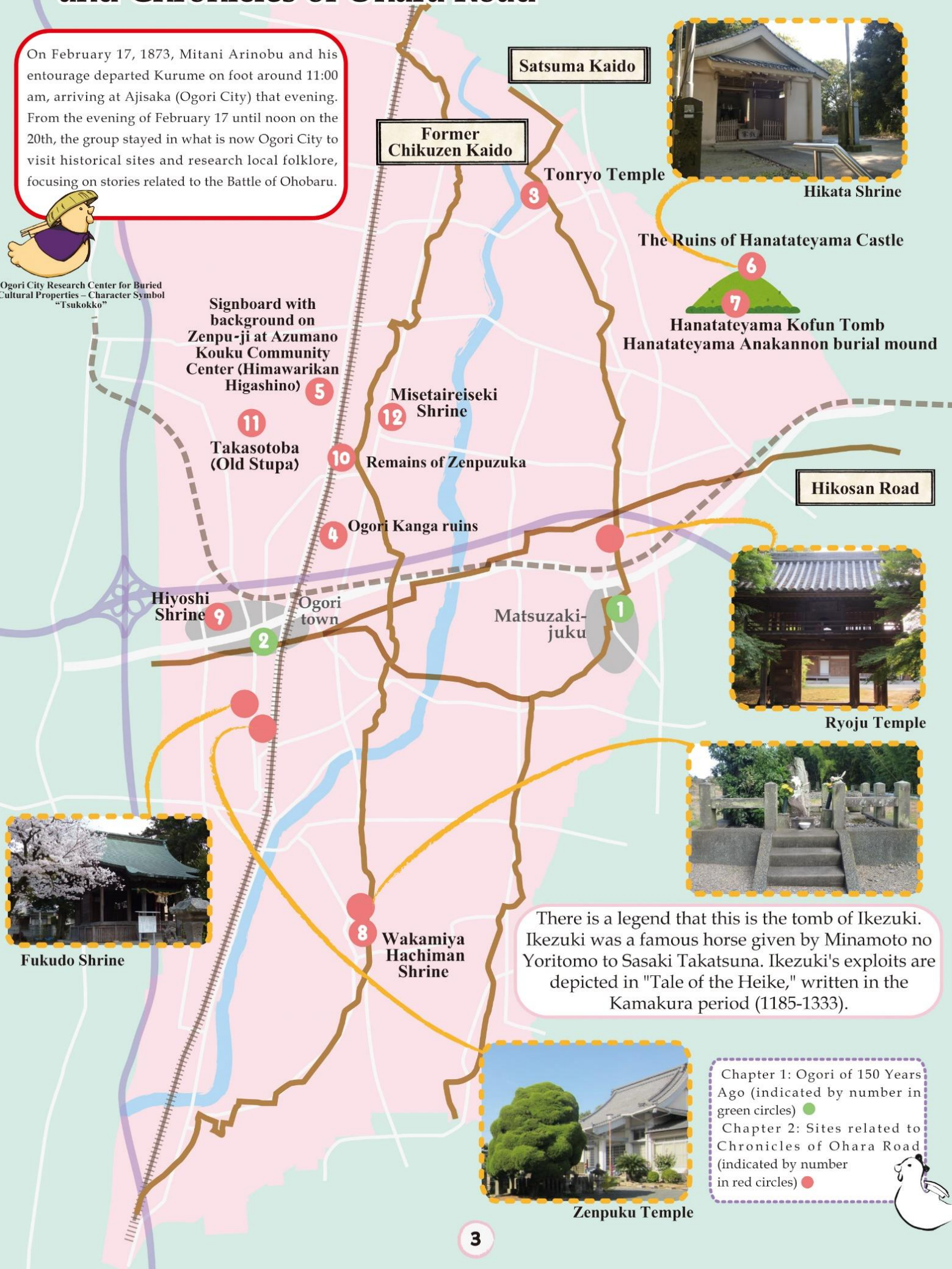
**The garden at the Hirata Residence**

# Map of Sites Related to Ogori of 150 Years Ago and Chronicles of Ohara Road

On February 17, 1873, Mitani Arinobu and his entourage departed Kurume on foot around 11:00 am, arriving at Ajisaka (Ogori City) that evening. From the evening of February 17 until noon on the 20th, the group stayed in what is now Ogori City to visit historical sites and research local folklore, focusing on stories related to the Battle of Ohobaru.



Ogori City Research Center for Buried Cultural Properties - Character Symbol "Tsukokko"



Hikata Shrine

The Ruins of Hanatateyama Castle



Hanatateyama Kofun Tomb  
Hanatateyama Anakannon burial mound

Hikosan Road



Ryoku Temple



There is a legend that this is the tomb of Ikezuki. Ikezuki was a famous horse given by Minamoto no Yoritomo to Sasaki Takatsuna. Ikezuki's exploits are depicted in "Tale of the Heike," written in the Kamakura period (1185-1333).



Fukudo Shrine



Zenpuku Temple

Chapter 1: Ogori of 150 Years Ago (indicated by number in green circles) ●  
Chapter 2: Sites related to Chronicles of Ohara Road (indicated by number in red circles) ●



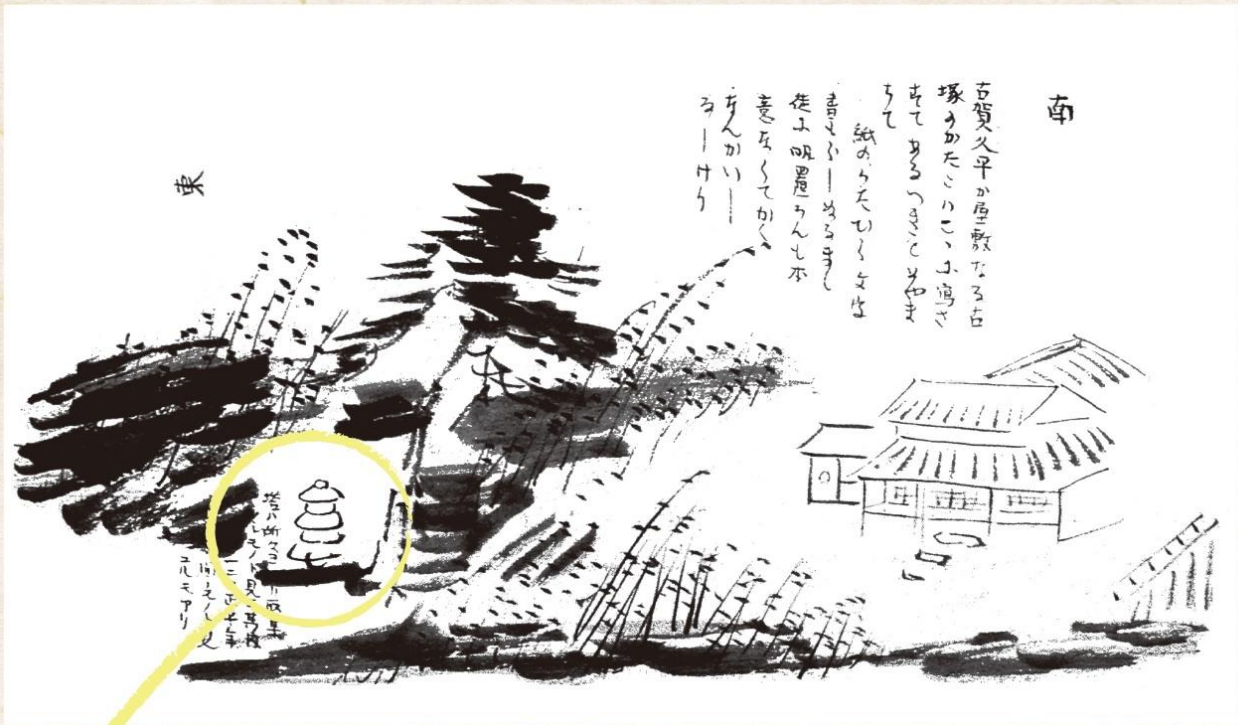
# An Excerpt from Chronicles of Ohara Road

## Translation in Contemporary Japanese

On the 20th (omitted), Mitani Arinobu and his entourage departed Matsuzaki-juku for Hikata Village. (An old man in Higata Village said) "There are thirteen mounds in the village, the largest of which is in the residence of the former village headman, Koga Kyuhei. The character for the land is "dan-no-uchi." Sometimes, rotting bones are found. Swords are sometimes excavated. Remains of gravestones and gold mines are found in Hanatateyama. We have no idea of their age." I had the two old men take me to see the old graves in Dan-no-uchi and the ruins of the castle on Hanatateyama. When they arrived at the house of Koga Kyuhei (the former village headman), they found (the old graves in Dan-no-uchi) in the bamboo near the garden. There is an old pine tree in the middle of the mound, and it is said to be five hundred and sixty years old. (The graves are surrounded by moats on all sides, the same as Zenpuzuka, and must have been the tomb of a nobleman who died in the Battle of Ohobaru.

セリと云ふ塚も村内十三あり其うち大なる  
 るハ旧庄屋古賀久平と云者の屋敷あり地字  
 を檀の内と云ふ其他枯骨の出るもあり刀剣を  
 堀出たるもありまた花立山ハ石を壘し古  
 塚又金礦とも残れり時代の支知らむと語れり  
 さりハ檀の内ハ古塚花立山の城跡を見あはて  
 其古丸二人とあるいせせてかめ久平かり至る  
 一戻近き竹の中あり塚の奥中小松あり古なる  
 ありて五六百年を経たりともいふちいつハ  
 し四方ふかき堀を廻らせりさま善風の塚と云  
 ふこと及小墓も同時ハ戦後せし貴人の墓  
 なるへしまたむのハ塔婆もありつと見えて

Chronicles of Ohara Road



The residence of village headman Koga Kyuhei and bamboo thickets as described in the "Chronicle of Ohara Road."

3

## Stone pagoda in the precincts of Tonryo Temple



Stone pagoda in the precincts of Tonryo Temple

In the precincts of Tonryo-ji Temple (Otoguma, Ogori City), there is a stone pagoda that is said to have been in the residence of the Koga clan, the village headman.

It was built on top of a mound enshrining the dead of the Battle of Ohobaru, but seems to have been moved when a housing site was constructed.

In the past, hoshu (an onion-shaped object at the crown of many stone memorials) and kasa (the umbrella, or shade that is at the top of stone lantern-styled memorials) were also stacked on top of each other, but for safety reasons, they are now placed separately.

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## Chapter 2: Sites related to Chronicles of Ohara Road

4

### "A place called Choja Yashiki" (Ogori Kanga ruins)

On the 18th, around noon, the Mitani entourage stopped at Ogori Town, where the deputy head told them, "Not far from this place called Chiji is a place called Choja Yashiki, where burnt rice is still found after the rains."

This "Choja Yashiki" is the "Ogori Kanga Ruins," the remains of a bureaucratic office (Mihara County Office) that was established to govern this area during the Nara Period(710-794).

At the Ogori government site, a group of buildings have been found dating from the 7th to 8th century. The county office complex were fully developed from the end of the 7th century. As shown in the artist's rendering of the complex, large buildings were constructed in three locations. The buildings were grouped by function and were surrounded by walls and ditches.

In the Shoso area, charred rice has been found in holes around the burned-out building. In 1967, while land was being developed, more than 300 iron arrowheads were discovered, which led to extensive excavation and research of the Ogori Kanga ruins, and it was designated as a national historic site in 1971. The site is now preserved and maintained as Ogori Kanga Ruins Park.

Shoso: Storehouses for rice (and other commodities) collected as taxes



Tachi: Dormitories of the provincial and county governors

Guncho: Used as administrative offices

5

### Once upon a time, there was a temple called Zenpuku-ji (Zenpu-ji)

On the 19th, the Mitani entourage visited "Takasotoba (High stupa)" and "Zenpu-zuka (mound of Zenpu)," where offerings were made to those who died in the Battle of Ohobaru. On the way, in Oho Village, they asked an old man about the origin of Zenpu-zuka, and were told that "there used to be a temple called Zenpuku-ji in a place called Zenpu, but it was destroyed in a wartime fire during the Tensho era (1573-1592) during the sengoku period (1467-1615).

Recent excavations have revealed the temple's existence.

At the Mitsusawa-Tera Shuji site, many remains from the same period as the Battle of Ohobaru have been found. Many tiles have been excavated from ditches and plots of land and the ditches divided the land in all four directions of the compass. The excavated artifacts suggest with a high degree of probability that tile-roofed buildings were erected there. In addition, Buddhist relics have been excavated from a 15th century village (Oho Nishi Shoji site) located east of the Mitsusawa-Tera Shuji site.

Settlements in this area have gone through many transitions over the years, with the period around the time of the Battle of Ohobaru marking a great transformation. Future excavations are anticipated with great interest.



Gatou round end tile (roofing) excavated from the Misawaji-Tera Shuji site.

5

## The Ruins of Hanatateyama Castle

In the northeastern part of section of Ogori City, Mt. Hanatate (130.6 m above sea level), stands as the only mountain in the city. On the 20th, the Mitani entourage was told by an old man in Hikata Village that Mt. Hanatateyama is the former castle of Shoni Clan and at the top the castle ruins remain. There are places there named Honmaru and Ninomaru (sections of a castle keep). There is a horse mound to the south of the foot of the mountain and the remains of a horse training ground to the north. Upon hearing this, the group climbed Mt. Hanatate to see the ruins of the castle.



**Aerial Photograph of Hanatateyama**

Hanatateyama Castle (Yamakuma Castle) is located on the border of Chikugo and Chikuzen Provinces. At the top of the mountain and around it are the ruins of a ring where the ground was flattened for living and for garrisoning soldiers. On the ridge of the mountain, the remains of a moat cut into the earth designed to prevent the invasion of an enemy can be found.

According to a geographical record from the Edo Period (1603-1868), the castle was built by the Shoni clan. After Toyotomi Hideyoshi pacified the off-warring clans of Kyushu, it became a branch castle of Kobayakawa Takakage. In addition, there is a letter dating back to the Sengoku "Warring States" Period (1467-1615), written by a retainer of Otomo Sorin that indicates that the castle was built by his retainer. It is believed that the castle was used throughout the Middle Ages.

## Hanatateyama Kofun Tomb and Tumulus Group

Also on the 20th, during their visit to a village at the foot of Mt. Hanatate the Mitani entourage was told by an old man that "Remains of gravestones and gold mines are found in Hanatateyama. But we do not know when they were built. The old mound mentioned here are thought to be ancient tombs, and the gold mines are thought to be horizontal burial mounds. They were mostly built from the late 6th to the 7th century at Hanatateyama.



**Hanatateyama Anakannon burial mound**

More than 300 kofun burial mounds have been identified at Hanatateyama. Most of them are circular mounds with a diameter of 10 to 20 meters. Among them, the Hanatateyama Anakannon burial mound is a 33-meter long, round frontal burial mound. The walls of the stone chamber have many line engravings, a rare and valuable decorative burial mound, and it has been designated as a prefectural historic site. Buddhist statues enshrined in the kofun can be found inside the chamber. These were placed inside the kofun by people in periods well after its construction in the room where the dead are enshrined and the burial mound has been carefully maintained by the local people.

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## Wakamiya Hachiman Shrine

According to the history of the shrine, it was rebuilt by Sasaki Takatsuna, who was awarded Ajisakanosho for his wartime success in the Genpei wars (1180-1185). Sasaki is said to have donated a part of his manor to the shrine.



Wakamiya Hachiman Shrine is the local shrine of 15 villages, including the villages of Kami-Ajisaka and Shimo-Ajisaka. During the Edo period (1603-1868), the Kurume clan donated shimenawa (sacred hemp ropes) and bamboo used in rituals. In 1873 (Meiji 6), the shrine was designated a special village shrine. The shrine grounds include a shrine pavilion built during the Edo period (1603-1868) and a kusu (camphor) tree planted around the same time.

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## Hiyoshi Shrine

Hiyoshi Shrine was first built about 300 meters west of its current location. In 1586, the shrine was burned down in a wartime fire, and was moved to its present location in 1672.

Since its relocation, the shrine has been treasured as the general guardian of Ogori and the head of the local clan. On the grounds of the shrine, there are stone lanterns and torii (torii gate) donated during the Edo period (1603-1868).



10

## Remains of Zenpuzuka

Zenpuzuka consists of three mounds called Daizenpu and four mounds called Shozenpu, which are believed to be the burial mounds of seven warriors who died in the Battle of Ohobaru.

Zenpuzuka was destroyed by development during the Meiji era (1868-1912) through the Showa era (1926-1989). Now, there remains only a signboard "Zenpuzuka Site," which stands on the west side of the grounds of Ohara Elementary School.



11

## Takasotoba (High Stupa)

The monument "Historic Site Takasotoba" was erected in 1923 by the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Automobile Training Area. The monument was erected to commemorate and mourn the dead of the Battle of Ohobaru.

Originally located at a different site, it was moved to its present location due to the construction of Azumano Tameike.

A memorial service is held annually on August 6, the day of the Battle of Ohobaru.



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## Misetaireiseki Shrine

The shrine is dedicated to Emperor Chuai, the 14th Emperor of Japan. There are many legends about him. The shrine is considered the guardian deity of the land of 19 villages in Mihara County and within its grounds are a pavilion built in the Edo period (1603-1868) and the Yamasugasha, the only remaining thatched building in Ogori City, which is about 350 years old.



Edited by Ogori City Board of Education

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