

Special Historical Landmark Kii Castle Remains

In the mid-7th century, during the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, Japan, in an effort to support the revival of the kingdom of Baekche, fought against China and Silla, but withdrew after a monumental loss at the Battle of Baekgang in 663. Then, feeling the need to prepare for when China and Silla next turned their sights to Japan, they hurried to prepare defenses in the northern parts of Kyushu, which were closest to the Korean Peninsula. So, in 664 Japan began to garrison troops, establish signal fire locations, and built Mizuki Castle in Fukuoka, and in 665, to protect the key location of Daizaifu, they built Onojo Castle to the north and Kii Castle to the south.



1 Remains of the Sluice Gate - Southern Gate

Because this area is a valley, it was chosen as the site of construction for a stone fort. Currently, the remains of the structure here have a length of 26 meters, a height of 8.5 meters, and an upper width of 3.3 meters. One section of the stone fort has a sluice gate. The sluice gate allowed valley water to run through the lower section of the stone fort, releasing the accumulated water from the Sumiyoshi River (Tsutsu River) and itself had a length of 9.5 meters, a height of 1.4 meters, and a width of about 1m. It was built on an incline, to guide the waters downstream. During a recent examination, spouts that served as drainage were found in three different locations. Based on the location of this site, it's thought that there must have been a southern gate in the vicinity, to allow for entrance into the castle from the south.

2 The Summit of Mount Kizan (Elevation 404.5m)

The trapezoid-shaped high ground at the end of the pathway up from the grass skiing slope is the summit of Mount Kizan. When Kizan was used for the site of a mountain castle, from the Nanbokuchū Period to the Warring States Period, this elevated ground was thought to have been created along with the Imo-no-gangi moat as the main district, and a horizontal moat was dug to surround it. This site boasts a first-class vantage point for triangulation and from it, one can see all the way to the Bay of Hakata, the Chikushi Plains, Mount Aso, and Mount Unzen. The enormous stone on the southern tip of this site is called "Tamatama Ishi," and stories handed down through the generations say that when the Araho Shrine at the southern foot of Mount Kizan used to stand here, this stone was thought to have housed a god.

3 Remains of the Southeastern Gate

Constructed in the valley (Hotokedani) to the east of the sluice gate and the southern gate, so that a stone fortification about 15 meters long and 5 meters high fits in the land of the valley. You can see an opening where a gate probably stood close to the center of this structure, but currently the details of how it might have been constructed are unknown.

4 Remains of the Bell Pagoda

From long, long ago, this area has been known by the name "kanetsuk" which means "Bell Ringer." Stories of the area say that there was a facility connected to a buddhist temple here. And because this area allows for an unbroken view of the land inside the castle walls, it's hypothesized that there would have been some sort of facility for the transmission of information here.

5 Embankment Remains

These remains are on the summit of the eastern peaks of Mount Kizan, consisting of a hollow in the ground with a diameter of 18 meters. It's thought that there may have been either a reservoir or a signal fire pit here. We can also see similar vestiges on the western peaks (in the ridges around the summit of Mount Kizan as well).

6 Remains of the Northeastern Gate

A gate with a width of about 2.7 meters cut into the earthen walls (6 meters wide, 3 meters high) that make up the northeastern portion of the castle. The gate cornerstones (the stone foundations of the gateposts) remain here on both the right and left sides of the gate foundation area. In the early modern period, the passage from the sluice gate and southern gate through this gate, was used as a shortcut for passage when headed in the direction of Hagiyawa (in Chikuzen domain, what is now the city of Chikushino) and was called "tagiwara-goto."

7 Remains of the Northern Front Gate

The remains of the northern front gate are in the northern section, and are thought to have served as a sort of front entrance when approaching from the direction of the governmental office in Daizaifu. Currently, we can see that there was a space with a width of about 4 meters and because it was constructed in a location that overlooks the entire castle, it's thought that there must have been some special function of this building. Within the walls, the remains of about 40 buildings that were used as storerooms, etc., have been found but with some exceptions, most of those buildings used pillars spaced at an area of about 9 meters by 5.4 meters. This building shares its size with one that was discovered in the remains of Onojo Castle, that would have been built at around the same time.

8 Imo-no-Gangi (Potato-Eave Trench)

In the middle ages, when mountain castles were being reused, Imo-no-Gangi was the name given to the moat that was made by quartering the line of earthen walls at the summit of Mount Kizan. It was so named because the shape of this moat resembled the ridged rows seen in potato fields. It prevented incursion from enemies into the trapezoid-shaped main district on the south side of this site.

9 Earthen Walls

The line of earthen walls are walls that, taken together with a number of the stone fortifications (stone walls) in the valley areas, surround the entire area of this mountain castle, and form the castle walls that served to prevent the incursion of enemies. These earthen embankments made the steeply sloping terrain outside of this castle even more formidable, and ran parallel to the areas near the upper part of the outer slope.

10 Stone Monument in Veneration of Emperor Tenji

11 Tamatama Ishi (The Coincidental Stone)

Recommended Walking Course (Thick Line)

Crossroads

A route that will take you to the chief archaeological remnants within Kii Castle.

- 1 Remnants of the Sluice Gate - Southern Gate
- 2 Rice Granary Foundation Stones
- 3 Remnants of the Bell Pagoda
- 4 Embankment Remains
- 5 Remnants of the Northeastern Gate
- 6 Maruo Foundation Stones
- 7 Large Foundation Stones
- 8 Summit of Mount Kizan

Time required: About 2 hours (Will vary person to person)

Check here for Kiyama Tourist Information!
Do-as-you-like Kiyama
<https://a.a.a.kiyama.com/>

Managed by the Kiyama Township