

The Ancient city of Tagajō

In the late Nara period (710-794 CE), a city began to form on the south side of the administrative center that was Tagajō. The city was demarcated by straight roads.

Many officials who worked in Tagajō and common people lived there.

This exhibit room displays archaeological materials excavated in the area of the ancient city.

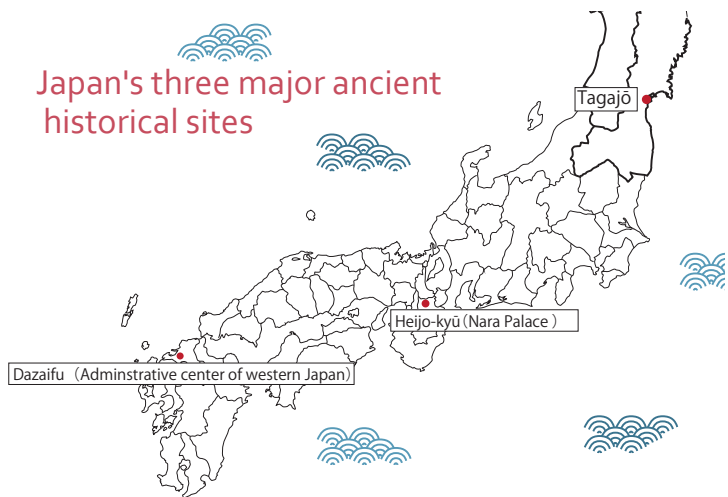


What is Tagajō?

Tagajō was an administrative center established in 724 by central government to control the vast area of the Tohoku region (northeastern Honshu). It functioned until the mid-11th century.

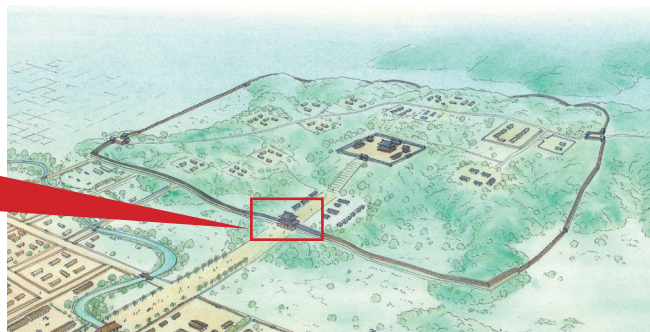
The administrative center grew to flourish as a political and military center and was an important hub of the Tohoku region.

Japan's three major ancient historical sites



The front gate of Tagajō

An authentic reconstruction will be opened to the public in 2025.



Structure of Tagajō

The administrative buildings were surrounded by a wall about 900 meters long on each side and 4-5 meters high. At the center is an important area surrounded by a wall 100 meters long on each side.

Contents of Exhibits

I The Beginning of Tagajō

After the Taika Reforms of 645-650, a system of government by a centralized national administration based on the emperor and his aristocrats in the new capital of Nara was established, based on the Ritsuryō Code. Under the new governmental system, the Nara court extended its rule to the Tohoku region.

Tagajō was a fortified administrative center established in 724 in response to the expansion of the Nara court's territory, and played an important role as the center of its conquest and administration of the Tohoku region, which was all incorporated into the single province of Mutsu at the time.

II City Formation and Land Use

In 780, a discontented warrior leader called "Korehari no Kimi Azamaro (伊治公咎麻呂)" attacked and burnt down the original fortified complex. It was during the period of reconstruction of the fortified complex that city construction on the southern face of Tagajō also began.

The city, neatly divided by straight roads, reached its peak from the mid to late 9th century, and the space where the various functions that supported Tagajō and the places where people lived were all integrated into a single area that was worthy of being called a city.

III The residence of the area's chief executive officer

Under the new centralized government, governor-generals with the title of "Kuninokami (国守)" was dispatched from the capital to the provinces to oversee the local governors within the provinces. The residence of Mutsu-no-Kami, the chief of Mutsu Province, was discovered in a plot of land facing the East-West Grand Road.

The building on the site dates from the early 10th century, and is thought to have served as both a government office and daily residence. By this time central control of regional administration was beginning to decline and in Tagajō, governmental offices were no longer thoroughly maintained and managed.

IV People and goods gathered in the City

Tagajō was built at a strategic point for water and land transportation, and developed as a place of exchange where various people and goods came and went.

Traces of the active movement of people and goods within the province of Mutsu, to and from the territories and people lying beyond the borders to the north the province of Mutsu, from Tagajō to the capital, and from the capital to Tagajō can be glimpsed from materials excavated in the townscape.

V People's Beliefs and Rituals

In the City, rituals and spells similar to those in the capital were performed to purify the defiled, appease the gods, and pray to the Buddha.

VI The End of City

In the 10th century, the ancient Ritsuryō system declined, and Tagajō is believed to have been abandoned in the mid-11th century. With it, the City on the south side of Tagajō also came to an end.