

The Ueyama Kofun Tumulus Coffers in Japan

by Dirk Gillabel, 2025

Large multi-ton megaliths can be found all over the world, on every continent. A testimony of an ancient culture that had some kind of technology that was able to easily cut, shape, polish the most hardy stones, such as granite, basalt, diorite, and move heavy stones over large distance with ease. They also could drill large holes and even very small holes with ease in those stones, and make perfect right angles, bevels, totally flat and even surfaces, and polish them to a shine. We are still scratching our heads about what technology they had, as we, nowadays, can only cut and work these hard stones only with diamond tipped blades and ropes. And yet the ancient could also make perfect sculptures such as the granite statues in Egypt. We are told by the archaeologists that the ancient cultures used copper chisels and stone hammers. Only a fool would believe that you can cut hard stone with those tools. You can find plenty of articles and pictures of these megaliths and granite sculptures on the internet.

Here I want to show two interesting artifacts from Japan, a country that also has lots of large megalithic, and enigmatic, stone blocks, remnants that remained after the big catalysis of about 12,000 years ago. The survivors of this cataclysm, and their descendants, found the remains of these once magnificent structures and incorporated some of the large stones and other stone objects into their own, more primitive constructions.

The two artifacts were found in the Ueyama Kofun Tumulus (34° 28' 34.07" N, 135° 48' 12.77" E). Ueyama Kofun is a Kofun period burial mound, located in the Gojono neighborhood of the city of Kashihara, Nara in the Kansai region of Japan.

[note: Kofun are large artificial mound tombs built in ancient Japan for the ruling elite between the 3rd and 7th century CE. A tumulus is a mound of earth and stones raised over a grave or graves. Ueyama means Upper Mountain in Japanese.]



The Ueyama tumulus contains two horizontal stone chambers lying side by side, in which are two supposedly sarcophagi. It is said that Empress Suiko was first buried here, alongside her beloved son, Prince Takeda, who passed away at a young age. Their remains were later relocated to the Shinagano Yamadano-misazaki tumulus in Taishi Town, Minami-kawachi in Osaka Prefecture. All this is just speculation by the archaeologists. The two coffers were empty.

The two coffers are reminiscent of the large granite coffers found in Saqqara and other places in Egypt, where the Dynastic Egyptian people found the coffers belonging to a far more ancient civilization and incorporated them into their culture, using them as sarcophagi for their royals. You can find more about this in my article of *The Serapeum at Saqqara: Atlantean Technological Devices?*

Pay attention, in the following pictures, to the perfect workmanship of the coffers, smooth, level surfaces, right angles etc., and the very crude stone walls that were built around it. The stones comprising the walls are of different sizes, roughly shaped, and stacked together as best as they could do. If the 3th-7th century Japanese had the means to cut such a perfect coffer out of a hard stone, they could have cut the smaller stones for the walls also with right angles, and smooth surfaces. After all, they were royal tombs. The people who built the walls did not have any technology or tools to cut and shape the stones in the way the coffer was done.

The coffers from the Ueyama tumulus are made of a hard stone, called of Makado-ishi (so-called Aso pink stone) from the Utsuchi Peninsula in Kumamoto Prefecture. Aso pink stone is a pinkish variety of andesite from volcanic deposits in Japan's Mount Aso region (Kyushu), and is an extrusive igneous rock mainly composed of plagioclase feldspar, pyroxene, and hornblende. Andesite's intermediate silica content (57-63%) makes it a durable building material, often used in traditional Japanese architecture and stonework. Its hardness is 6 to 7 on the Mohs hardness scale, the same as granite. Japanese stone masons of the 7th century (when empress Suiko reigned) did not have the tools (iron chisels, saws and hammers) to cut, shape and polish such a perfect coffer. This coffer was machined, like the coffers in Saqqara, Egypt.

The coffers are smaller than those in Egypt. The body of the coffers are about 2.43 meters long, 1.50 meters wide, and 1.1 high (or 8 x 5 x 3.6 feet). The lid is about 2.52 meters long, 1.5 meters wide and 0.62 meters high (or 8.3 x 5 x 2 feet).

The two burial chambers lying side by side:



The two coffers. The one of the left has its lid broken:



If these were sarcophagi, a heavy lid is not necessary, but also why make it with slanted sides? And the protrusions also don't make any sense.

The one with the broken lid:



The other one with an unbroken lid:



Detail:



A photo from the original excavation:



There is a threshold stone placed on the floor of the entrance gate of one of the chambers, separating the main chamber from the antechamber. The threshold stone is oval in shape, approximately 2.5 meters long and 1.3 meters wide. This stone The stone is made of tuff (known as Tatsuyama stone = rhyolite welded tuff) and came from another mine in the Ibo River basin in Hyogo Prefecture. Tatsuyama stone is relatively soft stone. It is supposedly an entrance stone on

which a door swiveled, hence the hole. However why built a swiveling door in a tomb that is covered up with a huge pile of dirt? The excavations did not reveal any door or remains thereof anyway. Also, the shape of this stone is unique; it is not found anywhere else in Japan. Another ancient heritage?





Notice the level surface, the drill hole, and the channel cut into the stone:



There are a few other such coffers in tumuli which show the same perfect craftsmanship:

One in the Jourujin Tumulus Stone Chamber:



The same type of coffer and lid, with the strange protuberances.

And another in the Jourugami burial mound:



The lid of the house-shaped sarcophagus of the Jourugami burial mound.

(Photograph published by the Gose City Board of Education.)

There are other similar coffers, used for burials, but they are a poor imitation, clearly visible by their rough and imperfect cuts.

The perfect, machined coffers were found by the Japanese people in past centuries as a testimony of an older technological culture, and were repurposed for burials of their royal members. The Dynastic Egyptians did the same. The original builders did not make them as funerary sarcophagi. Why make them so perfect, and make such a heavy lid with all those protrusions, if it is just for putting it into the ground? What they originally were made for, we don't know.