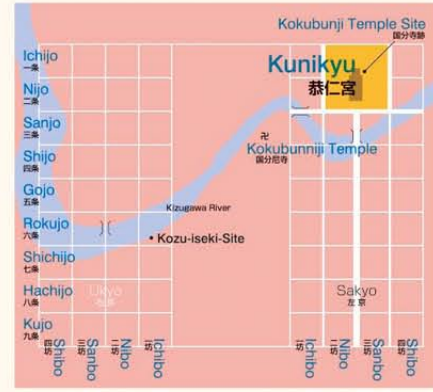


A phantom capital wrapped in mysteries 740~743

Kunikyō - 恭仁京 -



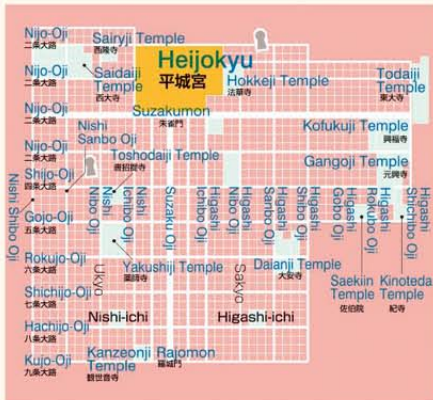
In 740, after leaving Heijo-kyō and moving from place to place, Emperor Shōmu announced to build the new capital at present day's Kizugawa City. Although the capital was in place for only about 5 years before being moved to Naniwa-no-Miya, Emperor Shōmu implemented many significant policies during this time such as a Mikotonori (imperial rescript) for the construction of the Great Buddha, Kokubunji Temple (a provincial temple), Kokubunji Temple (a provincial nunnery temple), and the

establishment of Konden Eien Shizai Law (the Law Permitting Permanent Ownership of Newly Cultivated Land) and so on. Yamashiro Kokubunji Temple was constructed at the imperial palace of Kuni-kyō, with the foundation stones of the imperial palace (Kon-do hall) and a seven-story pagoda remaining to this day. The site of Kuni-kyō was designated as a National Historical Site in 1957. From the end of summer to fall, cosmos flowers and spider lilies bloom in the area.

The international capital at the end of the Silk Road,

710~740 745~784

Heijōkyō - 平城京 -



In 710, Emperor Genmei moved the capital from Fujiwara-kyō to Heijō-kyō. It was modeled after the city of Chang'an, the capital of ancient China (Tang period). It had a long rectangular layout, stretching 4.3km from east to west and 4.8km from north to south. The Suzaku-ōji Street divided the capital into two sections (west part of the capital) and Sakyo (east part of the capital), with an area further east of the Sakyo called Gekyo (present-day Nara Machi.). Heijō-kyō flourished as an international city because of its position at the end of the Silk Road

and the various cultures that came through from the continent. The Site of Heijō Palace, as well as many temples and shrines nearby, were registered as World Heritage Sites under the name of "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara". Suzakumon Gate and Daigokuden were reconstructed.

Fujiwara-kyō was Japan's first formal capital.

694~710

Fujiwarakyo - 藤原京 -

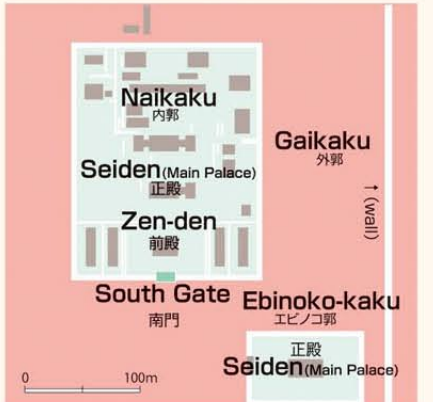


The Emperor Jitō built Japan's first and largest capital northwest of Asuka-no-Kiyomihara-no-Miya Palace. It was an authentic Chinese style capital with Jobosei (street plan) and the residence of three emperors: Jitō, Monmu and Genmei. Dodan (the dirt mound) of Daigokuden in the Fujiwara Palace Site still remains in Takadono-cho, Kashiwara City. The Site of Fujiwara Palace was designated as a national special historic site, and the excavation research around Fujiwara-kyō and its surroundings is still ongoing. The Site of Fujiwara-kyō is on the tentative list

of nominees for UNESCO World Heritage registrations as "Asuka-Fujiwara: Archaeological sites of Japan's Ancient Capitals and Related Properties"

Beginning of the capital before Jobosei(street plan) was established. 643~694

Asukakyo - 飛鳥京 -



A general term for the capitals that were located in the Asuka area in Ancient Times is Asuka-kyō. This is one of the constructive properties on the tentative list of nominees for UNESCO World Heritage registrations as "Asuka-Fujiwara: Archaeological sites of Japan's Ancient Capitals and Related Properties". Through excavation and research, we know that Den Asuka Itabuki Miya Ato (the legendary site of Asuka Itabuki Miya) had 4 palaces: such as Asuka Okamoto-no-Miya (an ancient Imperial Palace where Emperor Jomei lived), Asuka-no-Itabuki-no-Miya, Nochi-no-Asuka Okamoto-no-Miya, and

Asuka Kiyomihara-no-Miya Palace. During the Asuka-no-Itabuki-no-Miya period, Naka-no-Oe-no-Oji and Nakatomi-no-Kamatari assassinated Soga-no-Iruka and carried out a reform called the Taika Reforms. Also, during the period of Asuka Kiyomihara-no-Miya Palace, two generations of emperors, Tenmu and Jitō, advanced the project that forms the foundations of the Japanese nation, under the Ritsuryō legal codes.

