

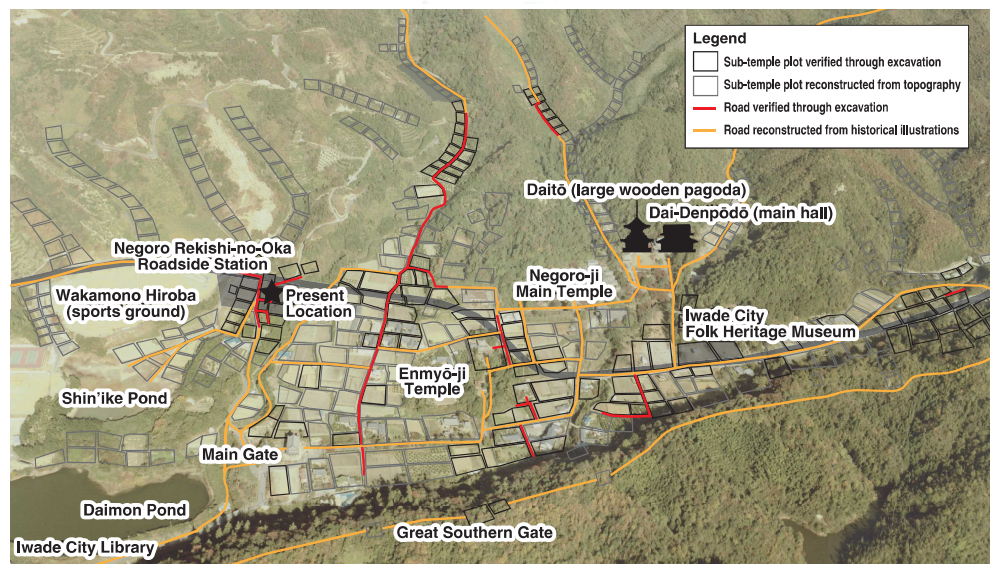
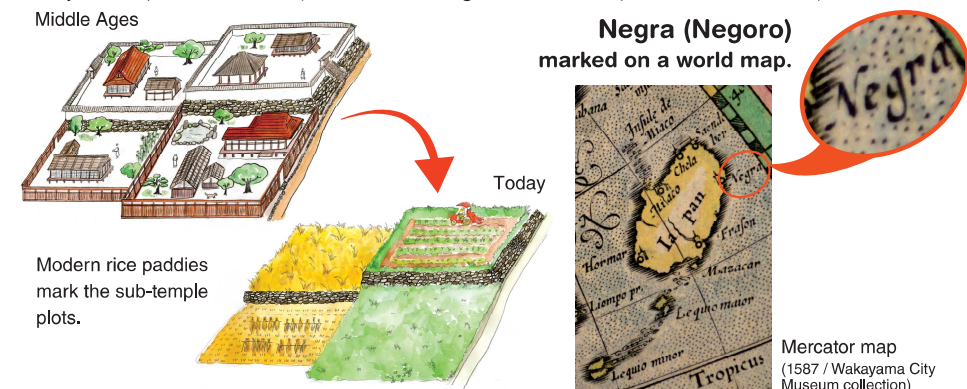
The Rise and Fall of Negoro-ji Temple in the Middle Ages

The Negoro-ji temple complex was founded at Mount Kōya by a priest named Kakuban at the end of the Heian period and later relocated to Negoro. The missionary Luís Fróis called it “one of the most prosperous temples in Japan” as it strengthened its position during the Age of the Country at War. A world map from that time shows Negra (Negoro) alongside Miaco (Miyako) and Lequio (Ryūkyū), which suggests its status may have gained worldwide recognition.

However, in the attack on Kishū (present Wakayama Prefecture) by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1585 (Tenshō 13), the temple was largely razed to the ground except for the Daitō (large wooden pagoda), Daishidō (founder's hall), and Sanmon (main gate).

Archaeological excavations conducted in 1976 during the construction of a major farm road led to the discovery of many medieval artifacts from layers of scorched soil, evidently from the fires of the Tenshō-era attack. The excavations revealed the existence of medieval Negoro-ji temple artifacts in good condition buried in the ground.

Archaeological excavations conducted by Wakayama Prefecture and Iwade City uncovered the grounds of the medieval Negoro-ji temple, packed with around 300 sub-temples. Based on the results of the excavations, the medieval Negoro-ji temple grounds were preserved as a historic site and came to be regarded as one of Japan's three most significant medieval sites alongside the Ichijōdani Historic Asakura Family Ruins (Fukui Prefecture) and Kusado Sengen Town Ruins (Hiroshima Prefecture).



The reconstructed grounds based on archaeological excavation and topography

Places of Interest in the Area

Negoro History Museum

The museum provides information about the historic Negoro-ji temple grounds. Unearthed artifacts, videos, and photos describe the rise of the Negoro-ji temple in the Middle Ages. Authentic large Bizen-ware pots and stone monuments can be viewed up close.

- Closed on Tuesdays (except holidays) and from Dec. 29 to Jan. 3
- Free admission



Negoro-ji Temple

Negoro-ji temple is the grand head temple of the Shingi Shingon sect of Buddhism. The Daitō (large wooden pagoda), a national treasure, is the largest of its kind, requiring 67 years until its completion in 1547. The three principal images and the Daishidō (founder's hall) were spared from the fires of the Tenshō-era attack and have survived to this day. Structures such as the Dai-Denpōdō (main hall) and Daimon (main gate) were rebuilt in the Edo period under the Kishū Tokugawa family's patronage. The grounds have been designated as a historic site and its garden a place of scenic beauty by the national government.

- Viewing times: 9:10–16:30 (until 16:00 in the winter)
- Admission: Adults (secondary school children and older) 500 yen



The Old Wakayama Prefectural Assembly Hall

The assembly hall of Wakayama Prefecture was built in 1898 on Ichiban-chō in Wakayama City. It is the only surviving wooden, Japanese-style prefectural assembly hall built after the Meiji period. It was designated an important cultural property of Japan on July 31, 2017.

- Closed on Tuesdays (except holidays) and from Dec. 29 to Jan. 3
- Free admission



Negoro-ji Site Museum

Closed: Dec. 29 to Jan. 3

Admission: Free

Address: 2347-22, 2348-1, Negoro, Iwade City

Access: ● **Public transportation**

- 20 min by bus (Wakayama Bus Naka) from Iwade Station (JR Wakayama Line)
- 30 min by bus (Wakayama Bus Naka) from Kii Station (JR Hanwa Line)
- 30 min by bus (Wakayama Bus Naka) from Izumi-Sunagawa Station (JR Hanwa Line)
- Get off at Negoro Rekishi-no-Oka
- Or get off at Iwade Toshokan or Negoro-ji and walk 10 min

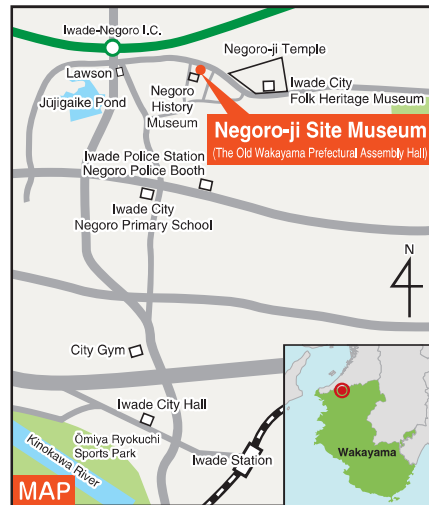
● **Car**

- Drive 15 min toward Iwade from Hanwa Expressway Sennan I.C. Turn right at Keinawa Expressway Iwade-Negoro I.C. and drive 3 min

Inquiries: **Wakayama Prefectural Board of Education, Lifelong Learning Bureau, Cultural Heritage Division**
TEL 073-441-3731

About the Museum

- The museum offers high-definition cast replicas of artifacts for visitors to enjoy.
- The description panels are equipped with Uni-Voice audio codes that can be accessed by smartphone to read out and translate the texts in Japanese, English, Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), and Korean.
- The museum is compliant with Wakayama Prefecture's inclusive society ordinance, as it provides wheelchair ramps, rails, and textured paving blocks.



Negoro-ji Site Museum

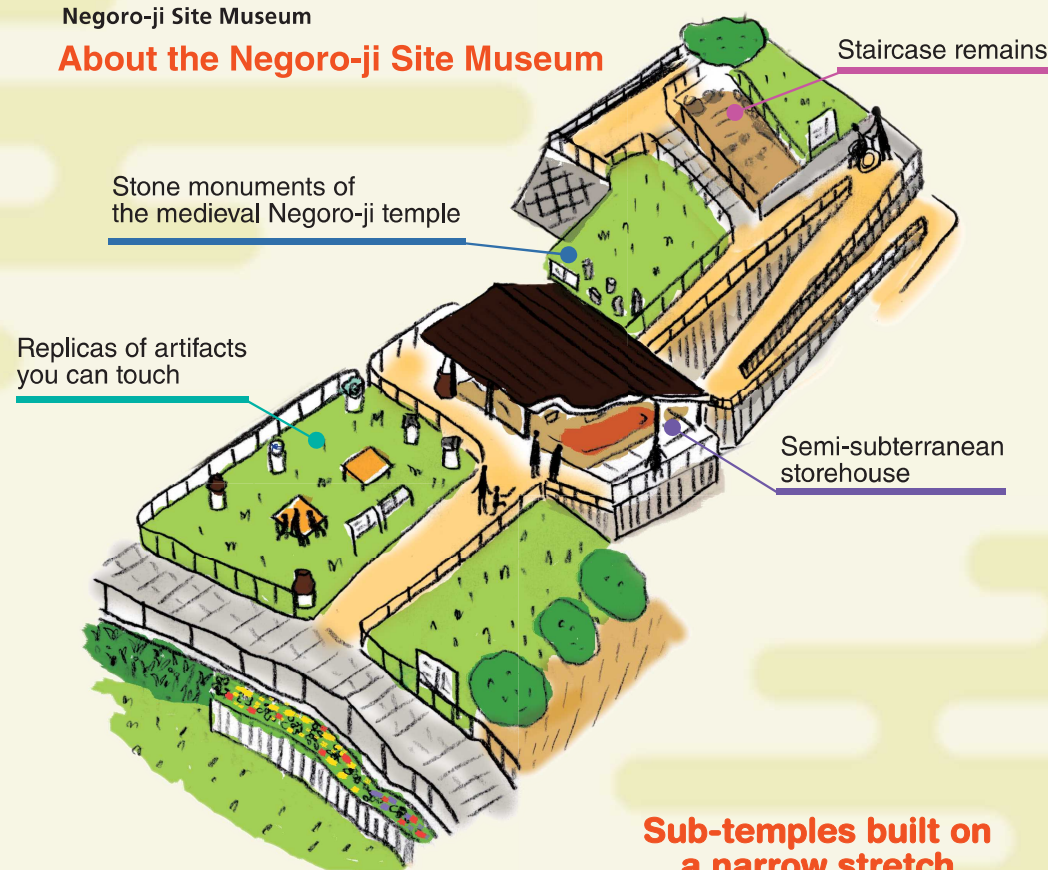
根来寺遺跡展示施設



Illustration by tatuco= Kaori

Negoro-ji Site Museum

About the Negoro-ji Site Museum



Sub-temples built on a narrow stretch along the hill

The grounds of Negoro-ji temple contained numerous monks' living quarters and places of learning called sub-temples.

At the height of the Age of the Country at War (16th century), there were around 300 sub-temples built not only on flat land but all over the grounds, including along the valley and hilltops.

The place where the Negoro-ji Site Museum stands was originally a hill that stretched south from the Izumi Mountain Range. Excavation revealed numerous sub-temples built on a narrow stretch of this hilly area. The hill was developed to build sub-temples on the upper and lower tiers, the plots were divided by stairs and pathways, and there were drainage trenches, as well.

The sub-temple remains are conserved underground, with high-definition cast replicas of the semi-subterranean storehouse and staircase remains exhibited above.

The Negoro-ji Site Museum presents the remains of the medieval Negoro-ji temple in all its former glory.



Sub-temples were built on a narrow stretch along the hill where the Negoro-ji Site Museum now stands.



A cast replica of an excavated semi-subterranean storehouse is exhibited on site.

It clearly shows the ferocity of the Tenshō-era fires.

Semi-subterranean storehouses

Semi-subterranean storehouses were built into the ground. Many have been found on the Negoro-ji temple grounds, and they represent the site.

The excavated semi-subterranean storehouse had a mezzanine with a deeper floor divided by an earthen partition in the center.

The storehouse would have held large pots filled with oils and liquids and barrels filled with miso and pickled vegetables, in addition to rice and other necessities.

A cast replica of an excavated storehouse is displayed on site. The red, burnt area is the remains of a fire accompanying Toyotomi Hideyoshi's military expedition against the region.



A cast replica of the stairs and pathway leading to the hilltop are on display.

The replica is shown as found without a protective cover.

The 4-meter-high remains of the staircase are spectacular.

Remains of the stairs

A staircase and pathway connecting the upper and lower sub-temples were discovered here. The replica shown is a part of the staircase and pathway made from molds of the original remains. A robust material called glass reinforced concrete (GRC) is used to display them without a protective cover.

Next to the stairs and pathway, a gutter runs along the stone wall. Water that collected in the upper sub-temple's catchment tank flowed through a drain in the stone wall and into the gutter.

Visitors can touch and learn from the replicas on display.

The patterns and textures on the plates, jar, and roof tiles are faithfully replicated.

Touchable Replicas

Celadon platter: This platter was imported from Ming China. It was damaged in the fire and bears scars where the glaze bubbled.

Blue-and-white porcelain plate: The plate's inside is decorated with a Buddhist-inspired *katsuma* pattern and the outside bears a Buddhist motif called *happō*. Since they are designs favored by Buddhist temples, the platter may have been chosen and purchased from a merchant.

Bizen-ware jar: Bizen-ware jars were used for storage. The dripped glaze is faithfully reproduced in the replica.

Bizen-ware sake server: The surface of the Bizen-ware sake server has a glaze that resembles grains of rice.

Large Bizen-ware pot: Many large pots used to store liquids such as oil, sake, and water have been unearthed from the grounds of Negoro-ji.

Round eave tile: Only a few tiles have been excavated on site, and it is believed that the roofs were shingled with boards apart from the tiled ridges.

Ridge-end tile: While many ridge-end tiles bore ogre designs, the ones found here bear gem-orb designs and are particular to Buddhist temples.



Bizen-ware jar replica



Celadon platter replica



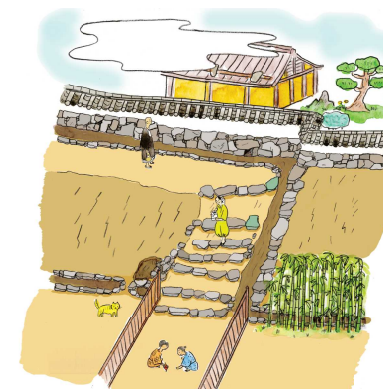
Ridge-end tile replica



The semi-subterranean storehouse with the remains of fire (seen in red).



This illustrated reconstruction of the storehouse shows a mezzanine.



An illustrated reconstruction of the stairs and pathway.



The remains of the staircase showing the unearthed stairs and pathway.

Many stone monuments survive on the grounds of Negoro-ji.

Those unearthed on site are stylishly exhibited.

Medieval stone monuments of Negoro-ji

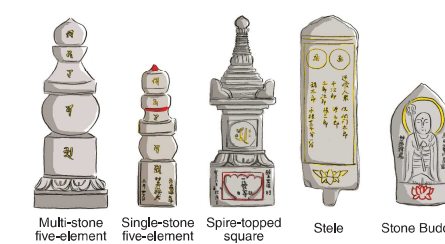
Numerous stone monuments from the medieval period can still be seen within the Negoro-ji grounds.

These stone monuments were mostly used as memorial pagoda and tombstones and display a variety of shapes: They include five-element pagodas (*gorintō*), spire-topped square pagodas (*hōkyō intō*), Buddhist steles (*itabi*), and Buddhist statues. Parts of stone monuments unearthed from the temple grounds are on display here.

Square parts of these stone monuments were sometimes reused in stone walls, gutters, and stairs.



Medieval stone monuments at Negoro-ji



Unearthed stone monuments decorated in gold and cinnabar.

Illustrated by tatuco= Kaori