

# City of Ancient Culture

# DAZAIFU

Today's Dazaifu City owes its name to an office called the Dazaifu, or "Government General Headquarters," which was established approximately 1,300 years ago and which ruled all of Kyushu for a period of some 500 years. Within the city, there are many historical sites which serve as reminders of its past, including the ruins of the Dazaifu itself, the Mizuki (Water Fortress), the Ono-jo Fortress Kanzeon-ji Temple, Chikuzen Kokubun-ji Temple, and Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine.

## 1 Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Nishitetsu Dazaifu Eki"  
5 min. from Nishitetsu "Dazaifu" sta. on foot.



Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine is sacred to the memory of Michizane Sugawara, also known as "the god of literature or calligraphy." In 901 A.D., Michizane was suddenly demoted from his position as Minister of the Right and sent to work at the Dazaifu, where he died two years later. Tenmangu Shrine was built on the site of his grave. The main hall, as it stands today, was constructed in 1591 A.D. and is registered as an Important Cultural Property. Within the Shrine precincts, there are many plum trees, camphor trees and irises, which provide natural beauty in every season of the year. Tenmangu's history is recalled by events such as the New Year's Demon Chasing Ceremony (Oni-sube), the Spring Water Poetry Festival (Kyokusui-no-en), and the Annual God-Procession Festival (Jinko-shiki) which takes place in the fall.

## 3 Remains of Ancient Dazaifu Government Office (National Historical Site)

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Dazaifu Seicho-ato"  
15 min. from Nishitetsu "Tofuro-mae" sta. on foot.



The site of the Dazaifu government office is known as "Tofuro." During the Nara and Heian periods (8-12th century), the Dazaifu was responsible for supervising Japan's maritime frontier, as well as for administering the nine provinces and three islands of Saikaido (current Kyushu).

In those days, a great edifice with vermilion lacquered columns and a tiled roof stood at the foot of Mt. Ono, but today all that remains is a park containing the huge foundation stones of the original building.

## 2 Komyozen-ji Temple

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Nishitetsu Dazaifu Eki"  
5 min. from Nishitetsu "Dazaifu" sta. on foot.



Komyozenji Temple was built in the Kamakura period (13th century) in connection with the "Tenjin Crossing to China" legend. There was a belief in the Middle Ages that the "Tenjin" Deity had gone to Song China to study Zen. This temple is famous for its two gardens; one represents an artificial land and sea using moss and white pebbles, and the other has several stones arranged in the shape of the Chinese character "Light (光)," which refers to the halo of the Buddha. Many people visit this Buddhist temple, especially in the early summer to enjoy the rhododendron flowers, or in the fall to view the autumn colors.

## 4 Kanzeon-ji Temple (National Historical Site)

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Kanzeonji-mae"  
10 min. from Nishitetsu "Gojo" sta. on foot.

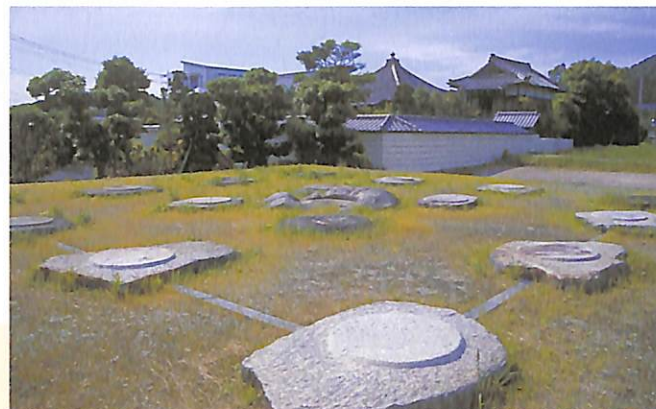


The name of Kanzeon-ji Temple appears in the Man'yoshu poetry and in "The Tale of Genji" a famous novel written by a court lady of the Heian period (1008 A.D.). Kanzeonji was built in memory of the late Empress Saimei by her son, Emperor Tenji. After its completion in the Nara period, it became the most important Buddhist establishment in Kyushu, exerting a great influence on all other temples in the region. Now, a bronze Bonsho bell, which is the oldest one in Japan, and a number of Buddhist statues survive to tell us of its history.

# Welcome to DAZAIFU

## 5 Remains of Chikuzen Kokubun-ji Temple (National Historical Site)

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Chikuzen Kokubunji"  
20 min. from Nishitetsu "Tofuro-mae" sta. on foot.



Chikuzen Kokubun-ji Temple (which is located in the northwest part of the city, at the foot of Mt. Shioji) was one of the national temples constructed in each province in accordance with Emperor Shomu's imperial decree of 741 A.D. It was a large temple with many buildings. All that remains today is foundation stones from the pagoda, when Kokubun-ji Temple was built, and a provincial nunnery was also established. Its ruins are said to have been about 300 meters west of the temple.

## 7 Remains of Ono-jo Fortress (National Historical Site)

60 min. from Nishitetsu "Dazaifu" sta. on foot.



To the north of Dazaifu City, there is a mountain called Mt. Shioji. Ono-jo Fortress was built on its summit in 665 A.D. It consisted of a number of buildings surrounded by a soil and stone embankment 8 kilometers in circumference. Only the embankment and the foundation stones of about 70 storehouses remain today. Mt. Shioji was originally called Mt. Ono, a name which often appears in the Man'yoshu. The name "Shioji" comes from the Shitenno (Four Devas kings) who were enshrined on the mountain.

## 8 Kaidan-in (Buddhist Ordination Hall) (National Historical Site)

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Kanzeonji-mae"  
11 min. from Nishitetsu "Gojo" sta. on foot.



This ordination hall, or Kaidan-in, was built in the Nara period (8th century) as part of Kanzeon-ji. Together with Todai-ji in Nara and Yakushi-ji in Tochigi, it was one of Japan's three official ordination halls.

Those living in Western Japan who wished to enter the Buddhist priesthood had to be confirmed at the ordination hall of Kanzeon-ji. The main image, a sitting statue of Rushana Buddha (Vairocana), is a work of the Heian period (12th century).

## 9 Dazaifu Site Exhibition Hall

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Dazaifu Seicho-ato"  
15 min. from Nishitetsu "Tofuro-mae" sta. on foot.

The Exhibition Hall contains an ancient drainage.

Ditch discovered during excavations in Remains of Ancient Dazaifu Government Office. This is displayed at the site, together with many other materials and artifacts illustrating the Dazaifu history. It is closed on Mondays.

## 6 Remains of Mizuki Fortress (National Historical Site)

Mahorobago (City Bus) "Tokubetsu Shiseki Mizukiato Higashimon-mae"  
20 min. from Nishitetsu "Tofuro-mae" sta. on foot.



To the northwest part of the city, there is a long, low embankment cutting directly across the plain. This is the Mizuki, or "Water Fortress," which was built in 664 A.D. against a possible invasion from Tang China and/or the Korean kingdom of Silla. All together, the Mizuki is 1.2 kilometers long, 80 meters wide and 10 meters high. The name "Water Fortress" comes from a moat which used to exist on the Hakata side. "Water was filled in the moat on the Hakata side," the moat was 60 meters wide and 4 meters deep.

Smaller embankments of the same type as the Mizuki are found in Kasuga City and Onojo City.

## 10 Dazaifu Hall

2 min. from Nishitetsu "Dazaifu" sta. on foot.

You can gather information on sightseeing for Dazaifu, and also enjoy the experience of baking Umegae-mochi (rice cake). There is also a hall with seating for 200 people, as well as rest spaces. It is closed on Wednesdays.

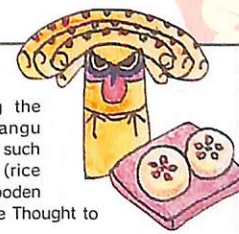
## 11 Kyushu National Museum

10 min. from Nishitetsu "Dazaifu" sta. on foot.

It's the 4th National Museum following Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara. It is based on the concept of "Understanding Japanese culture from the Asian perspective." It is closed on Mondays.

### ◆Souvenirs

Many shops lining the approach to Tenmangu Shrine sell souvenirs such as "Umegae-mochi" (rice cakes) and "Kiuso" (wooden bullfinches), which are thought to bring good luck.



### ◆Events

January 7 — "Usokae" (Bullfinch Exchange Rite), Oni-sube (Demon Chasing Ceremony) purging of demons (Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine)  
1st Sunday in March — "Kyokusui-no-en" Water Poetry Festival (Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine)  
Late May — "Gomataki" prayer for protection against sickness during the year (Kamado Jinja Shrine)  
July 24 and 25 — Summer Festival (Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine)  
September 20 to 25 — "Jinko-shiki" God Procession Festival (Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine)  
Early October — Shushi Autumn Festival (Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine)



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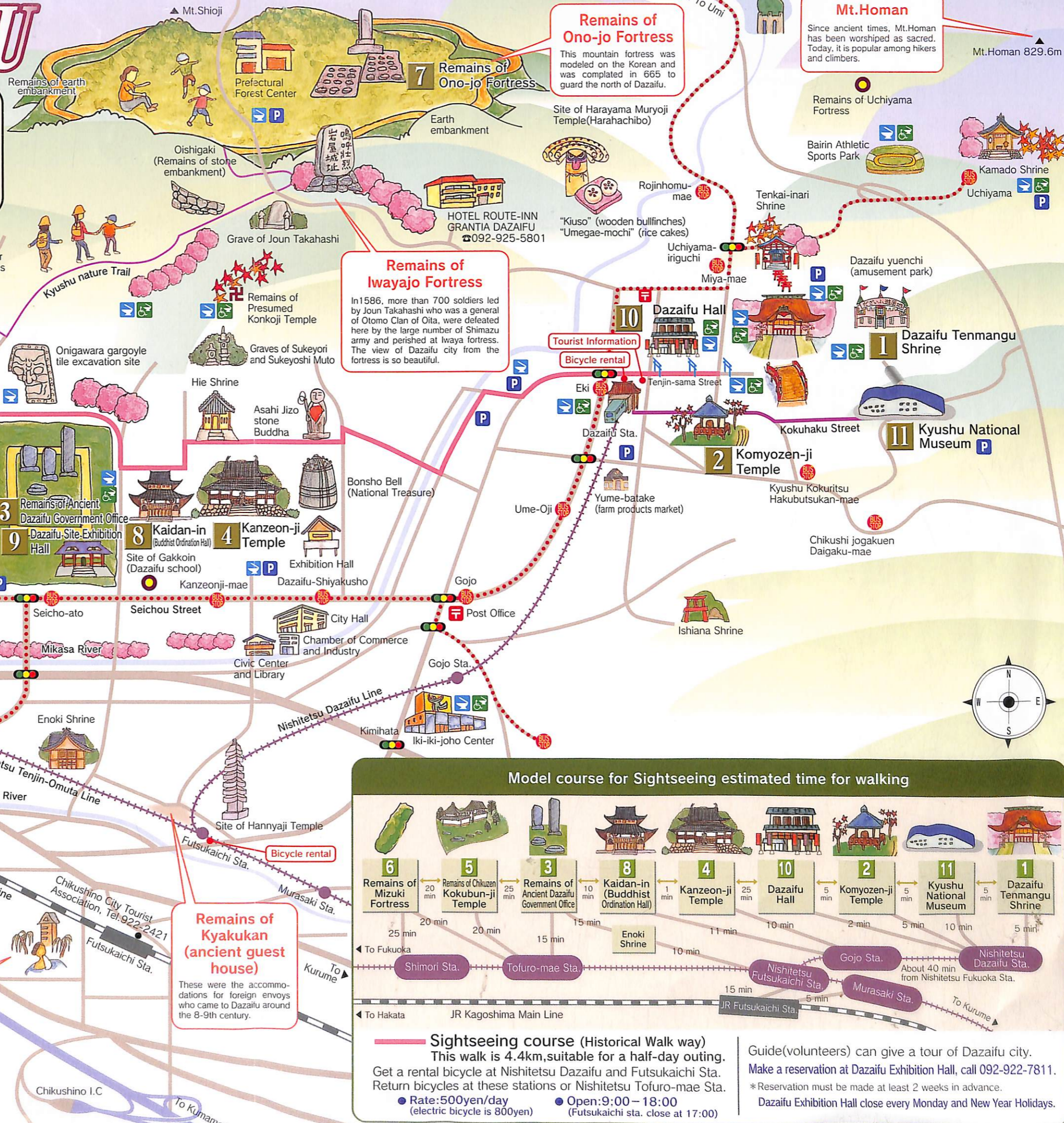


**Dazaifu City Bus "MAHOROBAGO"**  
 Fare: 100yen/ride 300yen/day  
 (Elementary School Students and older)

Convenient to access local facilities and major landmarks in Dazaifu. Show your pass at Dazaifutenmangu, Kanzeonji Houzouko, and Dazaifu Amusement Park to receive a discount on admission.



Timetables



**Remains of Karukaya Barrier**  
 The gateway of Dazaifu, it was said to have been a barrier station or a checkpoint.

**Remains of Iwayajo Fortress**  
 In 1586, more than 700 soldiers led by Joun Takahashi who was a general of Otomo Clan of Oita, were defeated here by the large number of Shimazu army and perished at Iwaya fortress. The view of Dazaifu city from the fortress is so beautiful.

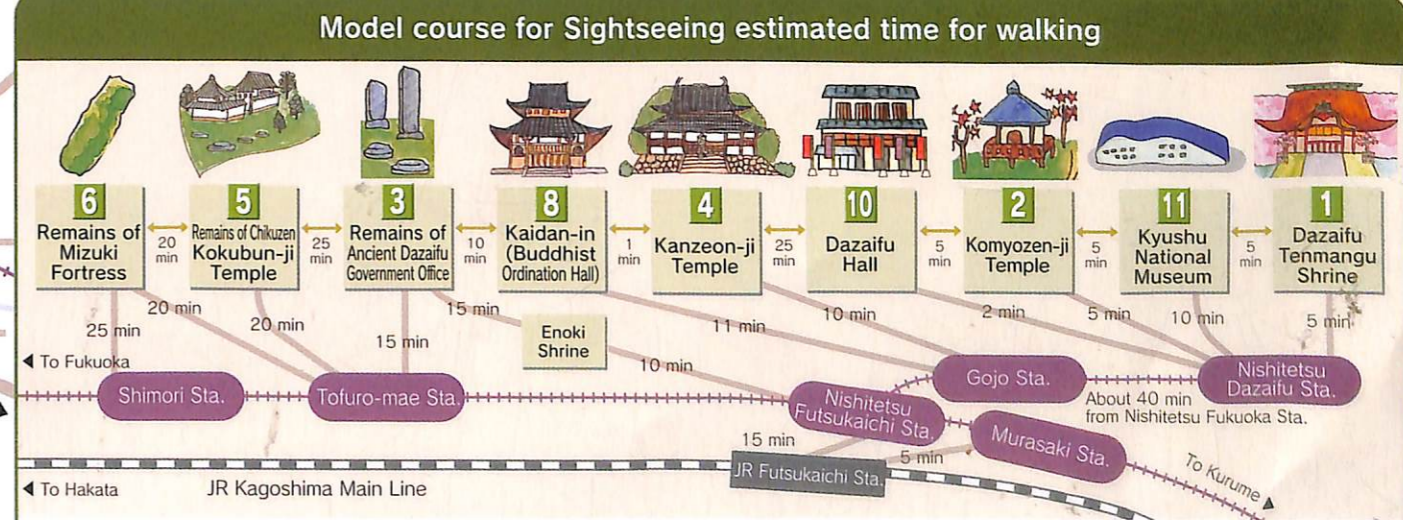
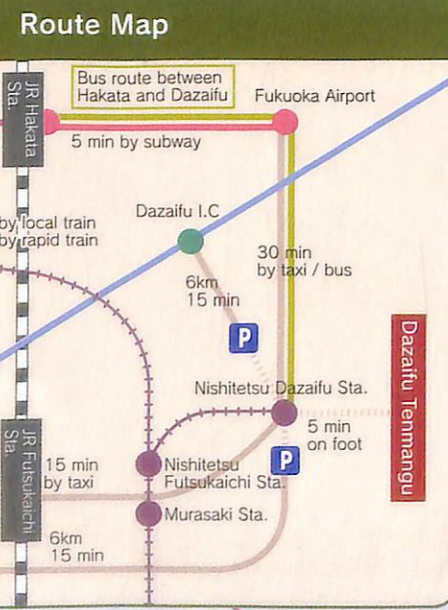
**Remains of Ono-jo Fortress**  
 This mountain fortress was modeled on the Korean and was completed in 665 to guard the north of Dazaifu.

**Mt. Homan**  
 Since ancient times, Mt.Homan has been worshiped as sacred. Today, it is popular among hikers and climbers.

**Remains of Kyakukan (ancient guest house)**  
 These were the accommodations for foreign envoys who came to Dazaifu around the 8-9th century.

**Futsukaichi Hot Springs**  
 The history of Futsukaich Hot Springs goes back to the 8th century. Officials of the Dazaifu and priests frequently visited this spot.

- Map Symbols**
- Mahorobago(city bus) Routes and major bus stops
  - Sightseeing course (Historical Walk way)
  - Historical Site
  - Restroom
  - Parking Place



**Sightseeing course (Historical Walk way)**  
 This walk is 4.4km, suitable for a half-day outing. Get a rental bicycle at Nishitetsu Dazaifu and Futsukaichi Sta. Return bicycles at these stations or Nishitetsu Tofuro-mae Sta.

- Rate: 500yen/day (electric bicycle is 800yen)
- Open: 9:00 - 18:00 (Futsukaichi sta. close at 17:00)

Guide(volunteers) can give a tour of Dazaifu city. Make a reservation at Dazaifu Exhibition Hall, call 092-922-7811. \*Reservation must be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Dazaifu Exhibition Hall close every Monday and New Year Holidays.