

Outstanding Universal Value of the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group

Criterion (iii) While 160,000 kofun are found throughout Japan, the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group represent and provide exceptional testimony to the culture of the Kofun period of Japan's ancient history. The 45 components demonstrate the period's socio-political structures, social class differences and highly sophisticated funerary system.

Criterion (iv) The Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group demonstrates an outstanding type of ancient East Asian burial mound construction. The role of the kofun in the establishment of social hierarchies within this particular and significant historical period, as well as the tangible attributes such as the clay sculptures, moats and geometric terraced mounds reinforced by stone, are outstanding.

Location of the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group

Gateway for interaction with other powers of East Asia

Against the backdrop of a divided Chinese court, East Asia witnessed the growth of the Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla and Gaya kingdoms on the Korean peninsula and Wa in the Japanese archipelago during the period corresponding to Japan's Kofun period. It was a time of turbulence for the region, with various kingly powers engaged in repeated conflicts and coalition-forming.

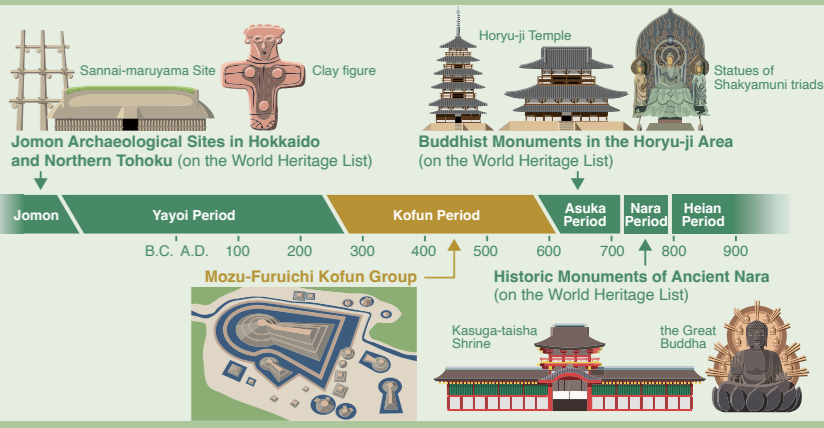
The Osaka Plain, on which the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group is located, served as a gateway for interaction with the powers of the Korean peninsula and China, and was a leading center of politics and culture in ancient Japan.



The time of kofun construction

The formation and development of an ancient kingly power

Preceded by the Jomon period based on hunting and gathering, and the Yayoi period when wet-rice agriculture was introduced, the Kofun period witnessed the growth of various forces throughout the archipelago and the formation of political alliances between them. Dating to just before the full-scale introduction of a ruling system and new religion (Buddhism) from the Asian continent, it was a distinctive historical stage during which power was symbolized through mounded tombs.

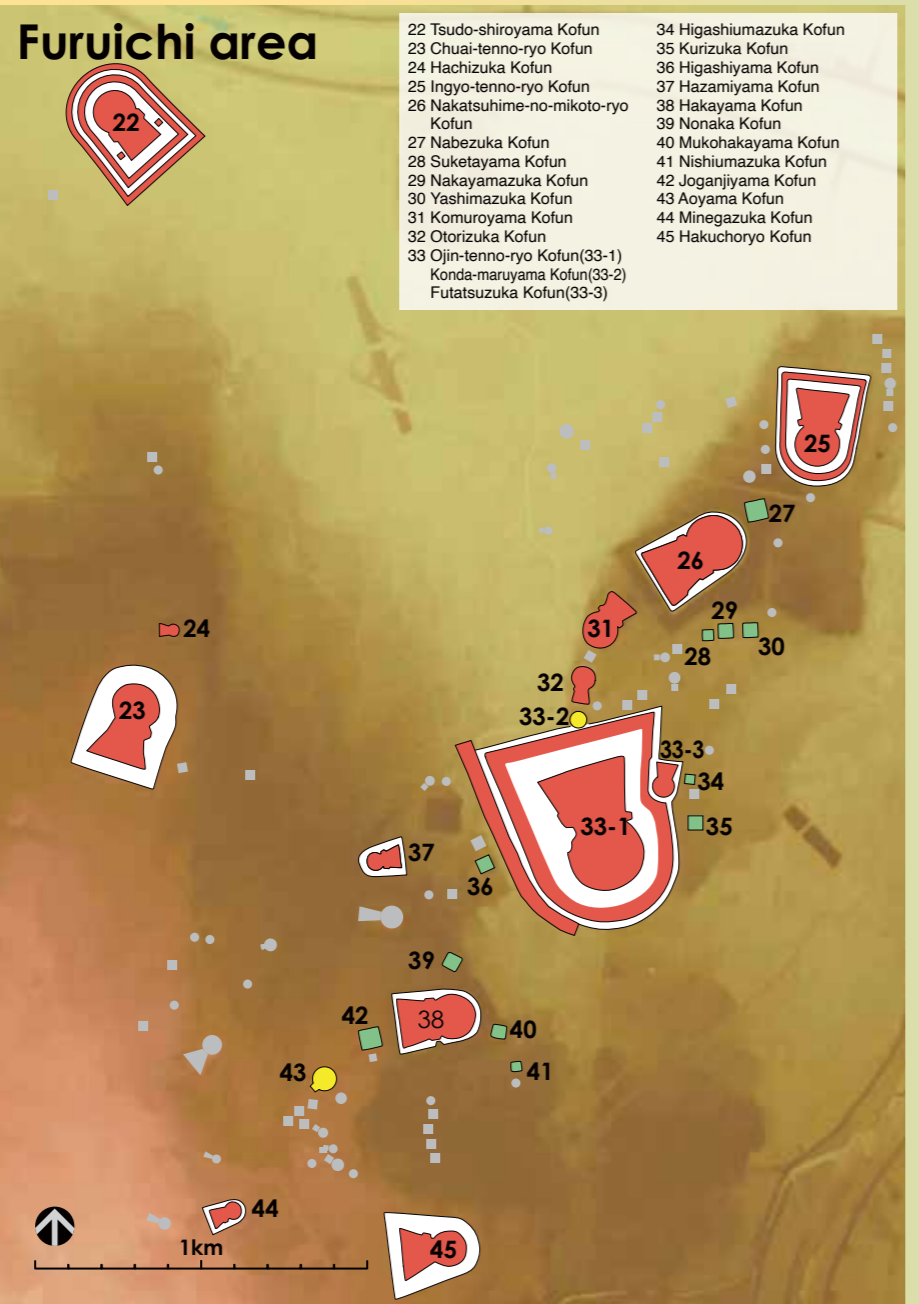


Three attributes of Japan's unique and characteristic kofun

Attribute a)

A wide range of types of mounded tombs grouped together

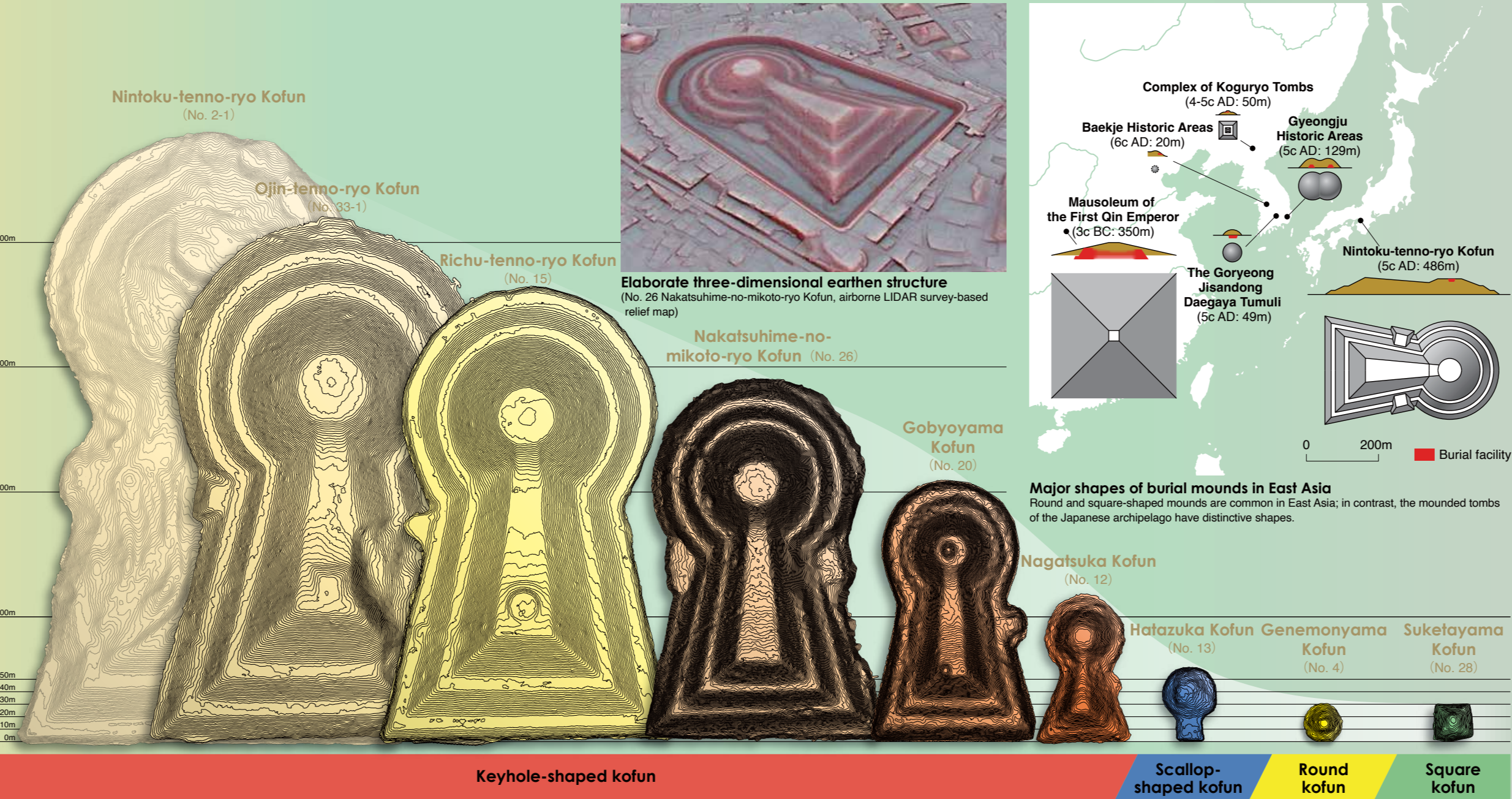
Densely concentrated in two areas, the mounded tombs of the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group show a wide variation of shape and size, from the largest keyhole-shaped kofun measuring almost 500 meters long to others as small as 20 meters. They most clearly demonstrate the distinct feature of the kofun built in the Japanese archipelago: mounded tombs differing in shape and size were built in the same region during the same time period.



Attribute b)

Four standardized plan types

The mounded tombs of the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group come in four plan types: keyhole shape, scallop shape, round and square. They are the standardized kofun shapes, which served as models for local kofun constructed across the archipelago. In other words, the kofun group played the leading role in developing the design and construction technologies required to build them.



Attribute c)

Evidence of elaborate and distinctive funerary rituals

A burial facility was dug into the top of the mound of each kofun, and haniwa (earthenware funerary sculptures) and paving stones were placed along the mound surface. The fact that funerary rituals took place on the mound and that the mound was made to be a glorious platform were major features of the kofun of the Japanese archipelago. The tombs of the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group clearly demonstrate this.

