

Audio Guide (Basic Introductory Course)

1 .Welcome to Chikatsu Asuka Museum

Welcome, and thank you for coming to Chikatsu Asuka Museum.

Osaka is home to many *kofun*, ancient burial mounds and tombs, the largest and most famous of which were key-hole shaped. Many of Osaka's *kofun* serve as excellent examples of ancient 5th century tombs, particularly the Emperor Ōjin Mausoleum from the Furuichi Tomb Group and the Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum from the Mozu Tomb Group. *Kofun* can be seen near the Chikatsu Asuka Museum as well. Nearby lie the Empress Suiko Mausoleum, Prince Shōtoku's Grave and the Ichisuka Tomb Group on Chikatsu Asuka Doki Hill, along with other various *kofun* which belong to people who played a central role in Japan's 7th century government. The Chikatsu Asuka Museum focuses on artifacts gathered here in Osaka, home of the most *kofun* in all of Japan, to explore how the Japanese government was created and run during the Kofun Period (roughly 250 to 538AD).

The museum also looks at the great influx of travelers from the Korean Peninsula who crossed the ocean and came to Japan during the 5th century. The advanced technology and high culture that these foreign travelers brought to ancient Japan became the very core of Japan's own culture and created the Japan we know today. Historically, the Chikatsu Asuka area itself was home to just as many of these foreigners as the nearby capital, Asuka. Many artifacts have been excavated from the nearby Ichisuka Tomb Group which show how Japanese at the time interacted with these foreigners. The artifacts are now on display in this museum.

Chikatsu Asuka Museum is designed to show visitors how the government was run in early Japan and show the deep connections Japan has long had with its East Asian neighbors.

2. Zone 1: International Relations during the Kofun and Asuka Periods

Here in Zone 1 we introduce the world of Umayado no Miko, known posthumously as Prince Shōtoku Taishi. He lived from the late 6th century during the Kofun Period to the early 7th century in the Asuka Period.

During the Kofun Period, especially during the late 5th century, the rulers of powerful clans in Japan began turning their eyes abroad and interacting with countries on the Korean Peninsula and in mainland China. Japan began importing new technology and culture from their East Asian neighbors such as metal working, pottery making, a government system and a writing system. Bringing these new ideas into Japan, they began advancing the country culturally to be on equal standing with the Korean Peninsula and China.

As you can see in the left display case, many artifacts have been excavated from the Ichisuka Tomb Group that show this interaction between Japan and East Asia. Horseback riding became mainstream in Japan for the first time after exchange with the Korean Peninsula and China. Many artifacts of horseback riding equipment and tools have been excavated. We can also see first hand the Japanese adoption of Chinese characters during this time period as they began carving writing into swords using Chinese characters.

From the end of the 6th century to the 7th century, people such as Soga no Umako and Prince Shōtoku Taishi began seriously importing Buddhism from abroad and Buddhist Temples appeared throughout the country. The Chinese writing system continued to gain popularity which helped with record keeping and quickened the spread of information. In turn, this helped with law making and sped up the pace of government making. The Chinese writing system was also used in Buddhist texts as powerful figures such as Prince Shōtoku Taishi continued to promote this new religion to Japan. We have a model of the stone burial chamber room Prince Shōtoku Taishi is believed to be resting in, as well as a model of the temple he built known as Shitennō-ji Temple, on display in Zone 1.

By the coming of the 7th century, the most famous type of key-hole shaped *kofun* tombs were no longer made and the few *kofun* still made were much smaller than the previous magnificent mausoleums. In the 8th century cremation became popular due to the influence of Buddhism.

New technology, culture and religion brought on by interactions with the rest of East Asia represent a major change in Japanese society of the time.

3. Foreign Travelers and the Ichisuka Tomb Group

During the mid-Kofun Period, the 5th century onwards, many travelers came from the Korean Peninsula across the sea to Japan. In Japanese, these foreign travelers from East Asia are called *toraijin*.

These foreigners had a major impact on Japan at the time. They taught the Japanese how to make pottery using a kiln, introduced the custom of horseback riding, showed how cooking with an oven could be done inside a home, brought over gold and bronze items and introduced Japan to countless new tools and technology.

Near Chikatsu Asuka Museum are 260 small round *kofun* graves built around the 6th century, between 10 and 20 meters in size each. They are called the Ichisuka Tomb Group. These tombs were found to contain many valuable burial accessories that only powerful people of the time had, items that were received from the East Asian travelers. These valuable items included earrings with gold ornamentation, silver hair ornaments as well as

bronze crowns and shoes.

Miniature models of kitchen tools such as an oven, pots and steamer have also been found in the tombs. These domestic items and cooking customs were introduced to Japan from East Asia. The impressive jewelry and technology found in these tombs shows clear interaction between Japan and East Asia. For this reason, it is believed that people related to the East Asian travelers created the Ichisuka Tomb Group.

4. Kanayama Kofun

Kanayama Kofun is located in Kanan Town, about 8km south of Chikatsu Asuka Museum. The Kanayama Kofun is of a very rare variety, as it is made up of one small circle and one big circle connected in the middle to form an “8”-like shape. However, tombs like this can be seen in Korea at Silla and Gyeongju. As such, it is believed that the person buried at Kanayama Kofun had some kind of relation with Silla.

Here in the museum you can observe a full size model of the inside of the stone grave room from northern smaller circle of the tomb. The southern larger circle also has a similar room, although it has not yet been excavated.

The two red colored stone coffins you see inside the model room are known as house-shaped stone coffins. And did you notice that the rock pattern on the glass behind the stone coffins represents the stone built walls of the grave room? From the way these coffins and the walls were built, we can conclude that this tomb was built over 1400 years ago during the late 6th or perhaps 7th century.

During this time period Japan sent an envoy to visit China's Sui Dynasty and began to have direct relations with China. Up until this point, Japan's relations with China had often been indirect, filtering through the Korean Peninsula. Japan began to proactively bring in aspects of the flourishing Chinese culture and this led to a major turning point in the history of Japanese government. Kanayama Kofun serves as a hint for us now as we strive to learn more about international relations during this time period.

5. Prince Shōtoku Taishi's Grave

Umayado no Miko, known posthumously as Prince Shōtoku Taishi, was buried in a tomb in Eifuku-ji Temple which is located just 2km north of Chikatsu Asuka Museum. You currently cannot see into the stone burial chamber; however we have built a model of the room based on records.

With a diameter of 54m, the tomb has an impressive passage to the burial chamber that is made of rock that has been smoothed flat. Inside there were three stone coffins. It's believed the coffins were covered in black lacquer and sat atop stone stands, as you can see in our

model.

Looking at the left side of our display, the stone coffin in the back belonged to Prince Shōtoku Taishi's mother, the one closet on the right belongs to his wife and the largest one is Prince Shōtoku Taishi's coffin. This is how records describe the tomb and its contents; however, nothing can be known for certain now because the tomb is sealed.

To the north of Chikatsu Asuka Museum lies the Shinagadani Tomb Group which contains many imperial tombs. This includes the tombs of Prince Shōtoku Taishi, Emperor Bidatsu, Emperor Yōmei, Empress Suiko and Emperor Kōtoku from the late 6th and early 7th centuries. It is interesting to note that the first made, the Imperial Tomb for Emperor Bidatsu, was key-hole shaped but the tombs built later are square or circular in shape.

6. The Introduction of Buddhism and Roof Tiles

In the mid-6th century, Buddhism came over to Japan from the Korean Peninsula. By the late 6th century and early 7th century, when Prince Shōtoku Taishi lived, Buddhist temples began to be built throughout Japan. These temples used roof tiles and decorative eave-end roof tiles which had never been used in Japanese construction methods before. This style was used to mimic Buddhist temples on the Asian mainland. Eave-end roof tiles use a design that is looking down at a lotus flower from above and so are called *rengemon* in Japanese. This pattern changed over time which helps us date when buildings were constructed. The oldest design has either leaf veins or nothing carved into the flower petals. The next style to come into use carved one seed in the middle of the flower and after that developed a similar style which had multiple seeds.

Buddhist temples built in the 7th century seem to have been built after fighting amongst various powerful families. The center of the government at the time was Yamato and many temples were built in the surrounded area. However, Kanan Town where the Chikatsu Asuka Museum stands was the location of just as many temples as Yamato.

With the coming of the Nara Period in the 8th century, Buddhism's power was used as a tool to help govern the country and push forward new policies. The capital sponsored the building of Tōdai-ji Temple in Nara Prefecture and many other state-supported temples were built in other regions.

The model you can see on the left is of Shitennō-ji Temple which was built with the support of Prince Shōtoku Taishi. The temple still stands today in Osaka City, near Tennoji Station. The temple's layout is a quite old fashioned as the central gate, tower, main sanctuary, and auditorium all line up along the same axis.

7. The Spread of Writing

Writing played a very important role in creating law and expanding cultural growth. It allowed for detailed record keeping and helped speed the spread information. Writing in Japan started with Chinese characters from the mainland. Writing was done on paper, but because paper was a rare and valuable commodity it was more common to write on wooden tablets called *mokkan*. Writing was done simply by carving directly into the tablets. Writing has also been found carved or painted on pottery and roof tiles. Tools for writing such as brushes, ink and ink wells have been found during various excavations also.

Mokkan were used for general writing, record keeping, and evaluating government officials as well as for learning to write. They serve as a valuable historic resource, because unlike written paper records that may have been altered over time, *mokkan* still retain their original writing which can tell us a lot about what life was truly like at the time.

8. The End of Kofun

Kofun tombs which had been popular since the late 3rd century had almost completely disappeared by the start of the Nara Period in the 8th century. Historians believe that this was because at this point in time graves were no longer used to show social status and thus extravagant tombs fell out of style.

During the Nara Period, Japan proactively imported law systems and culture directly from China to create a more powerful and united Japan. One of the cultural aspects imported was a clothing system, in which you could understand someone's social status and job with a single glance. The color of a person's clothing and their accessories was different depending on their rank.

We have on display a reproduction of the excavation of Togyama grave, a Nara Period grave located in Taishi Town. The small grave was built with rocks and contained a wooden coffin surrounded by charcoal. It can be assumed that this was the grave of quite a high ranking figure because the wooden coffin contained a silver decorative belt.

Cremation was brought to Japan with Buddhism and records state that in 700AD a monk named Dōshō became the first ever Japanese to be cremated. After that cremation began to be used for the emperor or members of other powerful families and spread in popularity. However, we can see from the excavation of Togyama grave that even as cremation became common practice more traditional burials still persisted.

9. Zone 2: When Kofun were made

Here in Zone 2 we introduce how life in Japan was from the late 3rd century to the 6th century when giant key-hole shaped *kofun* tombs were constructed. The exact number of *kofun* made during this period is unknown but believed to be between three and four million.

In this zone we display the *kofun* culture and relics of this three hundred year period, which lasted roughly from the death of Queen Himiko in the mid 250s until the time of Prince Shōtoku Taishi in the mid-600s.

The Kofun Period can be divided into three parts, each: early, middle and late. In Zone 2 our displays correspond to this order. Lifestyles and culture changed over time, so every part of the Kofun Period has its own unique developments to look out for. The exhibit on the early period features many fine examples of early Japanese bronze circle mirrors as well as other burial accessories. The middle period display features many iron products, such as armor, helmets and other weapons. Finally, the display on the late period contains shining gold burial accessories and passage grave chamber designs. Zone 2 also contains *haniwa* clay sculptures in various shapes and stone coffins, all of which were found in *kofun*.

When thinking of the Kofun Period, it is natural to immediately think of *kofun*- the tombs themselves. However, be sure to take note of the new forms of pottery making and metal working that began to change the lives of the people of this period and played a big role in their day-to-day life.

10. The Beginning of the Kofun Period

We consider the early part of the Kofun Period to be from when Queen Himiko died to when the Furuichi and Mozu Tomb Groups were built. This is from the mid-3rd century to the 4th century. *Kofun* tombs from this period that have been excavated were found to contain many Japanese bronze circle mirrors, arm bracelets made out of green stones, and other rock made commodities. It is believed that at this time mirrors were not used for looking upon oneself but used in religious festivals or as charms. Because of this, we can conclude that the leaders and powerful clans of the time strongly believed in sorcery and charms. In contrast, by the 5th century tombs were found to contain many iron products such as armor and helmets which shows a change in focus from sorcery to military.

In this museum we have burial accessories from this time period on display, primarily bronze circle mirrors that were excavated from Ibaraki City's Shikinzan Kofun. Some believe that these bronze mirrors came to Japan when Queen Himiko received one as a gift from China. There are many theories around these mirrors but regardless of their meaning and origin, when you consider their importance to the leaders and powerful clans of the time you can see what a valuable burial accessory they were.

11. Shikinzan Kofun

Shikinzan Kofun is a key-hole shaped *kofun* constructed during the early Kofun Period in Osaka Prefecture's Ibaraki City. The tomb is 100m long and it contains a long passage to

the burial chamber which holds a carved wooden coffin. The burial accessories excavated included mirrors, armor, helmets, weapons, farming tools and stone made arm bracelets.

The Japanese name for the bronze mirrors popular at this time, *sankakubuchishinjuu-kyou*, comes from the fact that the mirrors had a small triangular pattern around the rim and had images of the beasts said to protect the gods in Chinese Shenxian though. It's believed that Queen Himiko may have received up to 100 bronze mirrors from the Chinese Emperor of Cai Wei, however the mirrors found in Shikinzan Kofun are believed to include quite a few that were made in Japan. There were also noticeably larger mirrors, with circumferences of up to 36cm, and these were the largest mirrors in existence during the Kofun Period.

An artifact often found from the latter half of the early Kofun Period is the stone bracelets. Looking back in time, this trend originated in the Yayoi Period when seashell bracelets made with shells from Southern Amami Oshima were popular. Bits of conch shell have also been found in *kofun* from this time, which supports theories on the connection between stone and shell bracelets.

The armor and helmets excavated from these *kofun* are valuable examples of Japan's first iron products. Other important iron products found include swords, arrowheads, axes, saws, chisels, and plows.

Shikinzan Kofun is one of the Kansai Area's best *kofun* representatives of the early Kofun Period thanks to its large size and the variety of burial accessories contained inside.

12. The Haniwa Sculptures Placed in Kofun

Haniwa are sculptures made of clay. They were seen in use from the late 3rd century when Queen Himiko died until the 6th century right before Prince Shōtoku Taishi became involved in politics. There are many varieties of *haniwa*, but to divide them into two categories there are *haniwa* that are tube shaped pots and *haniwa* that are modeled after something in the real world such as humans, animals and houses. The tube shaped *haniwa* were most common and they were lined up on flat parts of *kofun* tombs. *Haniwa* developed as a big version of the stands used for pots in the Yayoi Period. They then began to be lined up by graves. As a result, tube shaped and pot shaped *haniwa* are the oldest designs.

After these *haniwa* gained in popularity, house shaped *haniwa* began to be produced. This led to much more variety in *haniwa* production and with time they began making *haniwa* in the shape of arrow holders, umbrellas, shields, swords, armor and helmets. By the mid-Kofun Period, the 5th century when the Furuichi and Mozu Tomb Groups came about, human and animal shaped *haniwa* were common as well. Human shaped *haniwa* often depict shrine maidens or warriors while animal *haniwa* were sculpted into the shape of

horses, wild boars, dogs and other common animals.

There are many theories as to why human shaped *haniwa* were lined in tombs. Some believe it was a ritual to pass on the throne, while some think it represented what the deceased had done in their life time. Others theorize that it was just a ritual to mourn for the dead while yet another theory says it was supposed to be depicting what heaven was believed to look like. Currently none of these theories can be verified and the reason for human shaped *haniwa* in graves remains a historic mystery. So how about you, which theory do you think sounds most plausible?

13. The Mid-Kofun Period - When the Five Kings of Wa were Active

We call the 5th century when the Furuichi and Mozu Tomb Groups were made the Mid-Kofun Period. During this time lived Emperor Ōjin, Emperor Nintoku, Emperor Yūryaku and other emperors who's names and stories still live on today in ancient Chinese records.

The Mid-Kofun Period is when the Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum and Emperor Ōjin Mausoleum were built, classic examples of giant *kofun* tombs. Many pieces of iron armor and helmets have been excavated from these Mid-Kofun Period tombs. Based on these findings, it is believed that the kings and powerful clans of the time valued the military and had a strong interest in war. This obviously contrasts with the values held during the early Kofun Period when kings and powerful clans seemed to focus on magic and superstitions.

The Mid-Kofun Period was not only a time of military focus, but a time of technological revolution as well. All of the ironware found as burial accessories show how widespread the new knowledge of metal working became during this period. Hard grey colored unglazed pottery, called Sue Ware, was another new technological advancement of the time. These new skills were learned from foreign travelers who crossed the ocean and came to Japan from the Korean Peninsula.

In summary, the Mid-Kofun Period was a time of large scale *kofun*, technological revolution and deepening relations with the Korean Peninsula and China.

14. A Large Amount of Iron Goods Used as Burial Accessories

A large number of iron goods have been excavated from Mid-Kofun Period tombs. The wide variety ironware found includes military items, farm equipment and general tools. Military items included armor, helmets, Japanese katana, swords and spears. Commonly found farm equipment included hoes, plows and sickles. The types of general tools found have also been varied, including axes, carving knives, chisels and more.

These goods were all created with bits of raw iron called *tettei* which the Japanese of the Kofun Period received from people from the Korean Peninsula. These *tettei* were just small

rectangle slabs of iron. At the time, almost no iron mining was done in Japan so iron had to be obtained from overseas.

The ironware we have on display was excavated from the Fujiidera City Nonaka Kofun, Ariyama Kofun, Nishihakayama Kofun and Nara Yamato Kofun Number 6. These tombs held many iron goods, specifically, Nonaka Kofun contains 11 sets of armor, approximately 1500 arrowheads and 200 sickles were found in Ariyama Kofun, Nishihakayama Kofun contained over 294 rakes and 139 axes and 872 *tettei* iron pieces have been excavated from Yamato Kofun Number 6.

Ironware became more commonly seen and used throughout the Kofun Period but it was nonetheless still a rare commodity. Tombs found to contain a great number of these products are sure to have been tombs of emperors, powerful clans or other famous figures. Another important thing to notice about the contents of these tombs is that the Yamato Kofun Number 6 was filled with the *tettei* pieces that served as Japan's access to raw iron. The King of Yamato was the political center of all other kings at the time and his tomb shows that he held the key to ironware production.

15. The Technological Revolution of the 5th Century

During the 5th century, the large number of foreign travelers coming into Japan brought with them many new items and technologies.

One of the new technologies brought to Japan was the method for making Sue ware, a type of unglazed pottery. This method of making pottery came to Japan in the beginning of the 5th century and involved using a slanted kiln to heat pottery over 1000 degrees Celsius. Sue ware is distinctive for its gray color and extremely hard dried state. Later in history, the technology for making Sue ware would be used to develop Tokoname and Bizen ware.

The largest production area of Sue ware in the Kofun Period was located in Suemurakamaato-gun, located near Osaka Prefecture's Sakai and Izumi Cities. This area produced Sue ware from the 5th to 10th century and the remains of over 500 kilns have been found there.

The other major new advancement brought to Japan during the 5th century was the production methods for ironware such as weapons, armor and farm equipment. Up until foreigners introduced these methods, Japan only had a few small factories. With the 5th century came large scale iron manufacturing factories. In Osaka Prefecture, examples of this can be seen in Katano City Ruins or the Kashiwara City Tabi Ruins and Ōgata Ruins, areas where huge iron manufacturing factories were built in the 5th century.

With the coming of new iron manufacturing techniques came a burst in iron armor and helmet making for defense, as well as the manufacturing of new farm equipment. The scale

of these factories was like nothing Japan had ever tried before, making this a clear turning point in Japan's ironware culture

16. Stone Coffins

Since the Yayoi Period (300BC to 300AD) Japan had used wooden coffins to bury their dead, but during the Kofun Period stone coffins built in the same shape as traditional wooden coffins began to be used. It was probably believed that stone coffins could protect the dead much longer than the easily rotted wooden coffins that had been used up until that point.

The first stone coffins appeared in the 4th century and were made imitating wooden coffins that had been constructed from bamboo. Very few of these stone coffins have been found but they have been found in the Kansai region made from rocks from Kagawa's Mt. Washinoyama or volcanic pumice. Stone coffins then began to be made in a boat-shaped form from whatever local good rock material could be found.

In the latter half of the 4th century, long oblong stone coffins began to be used in the Kansai Area. They have been found often in the tombs of powerful kings so are sometimes called "King Coffins". They are almost all made from a volcanic rock called Tatsuyamaishi gathered in Hyogo Prefecture's Kakogawaryuiki. These coffins look similar to the large oblong chests used for storing clothing at the time.

House-shaped coffins appeared in the 6th century. There were two methods for making them, one which involved carving the lid and body from the same piece of stone and another where several different stones were used and then put together in the finished coffin. Those made from multiple stones were often made from boat-shaped coffins. Boat-shaped coffins made from volcanic from Kyūshū's Mt. Aso were then completed as house-shaped coffins in the Kansai Area.

Why do you think they went out of their way to bring stone all the way from Mt. Aso in Kyūshū to Kansai? It is thought that this may have been indicative of deep ties between the person put to rest and Kyūshū.

17. The Late Kofun Period which was filled with dazzling art

The late Kofun Period is an almost 100 year period from the beginning of the 6th century when the Ichisuka Tomb Group was built until right before Prince Shōtoku Taishi became active in Japanese politics.

Passage graves holding multiple people became very mainstream during this period. Powerful clans would create huge tombs for themselves but smaller tombs of only 10m in diameter were also made to hold people of lower social status. It was also during this period

that the key-hold shaped tombs, which are representative of the Kofun Period, became smaller and less frequently built.

During this time period, burial accessories became colorful and dazzling. Gold plated swords and horseback riding equipment as well as golden colored crowns and shoes became popular. The iron armor, helmets and weapons which were seen so often in tombs during the mid-Kofun Period fell out of use. Gold plated and gold colored sparkling objects became the key burial accessory in the late Kofun Period.

These gold objects represented authority to the people of the times. It seems that only a very small percentage of people had enough power to acquire such items. At the time, leaders or those of similar authority would cover themselves in flashy objects like this to make their social status clear to others. Golden crowns, earrings with pendants, golden shoes and large swords decorated with dragon head symbols were some of the standard sparkling outfit pieces they wore. In turn, these were included as burial accessories in their tombs after death.

18. Passage Graves

In the latter half of the Kofun Period, Japan began making tunnels inside the *kofun* tombs which lead to the burial chamber. This style of tomb is called a passage grave and they came into use as a result of influence from the Korean Peninsula. Until this point, the primary style was a pit grave—which involved lowering one body into a hole in the top of the grave and then sealing the tomb. Once the tomb was sealed like this, it could never be opened again. On the other hand, passage graves involved bringing in the body through an entrance and then a tunnel which would lead to the burial room. The unique trait of this style is that by removing the rocks that were used to close the entrance, you could re-enter the tomb multiple times. This allowed for multiple people to be buried in the same tomb.

The model of Ichisuka Tomb #0-5 that you can see under glass by your feet contained two coffins. Next to a stone coffin archaeologists found wooden planks with nails in them, which shows that a wooden coffin had been there originally but decayed over time. Ichisuka Tomb #0-5 is an example of a tomb in which multiple people were buried using the passage grave style.

The people who brought new bodies into an already occupied burial chamber must have sometimes seen the remains of whoever had been placed there earlier, especially when quick to decay wooden coffins were used. It is believed that this came to bring great change to how the Japanese perceived death and the afterlife.

In some of Japan's oldest remaining written books, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, there is a story that is believed to reflect on the custom of multiple bodies being buried in the same

tomb. The myth claims that the god Izanagi no Mikoto goes to visit goddess Izanami no Mikoto after her death and departure to heaven. This visitation of the departed can be interpreted as an explanation of what it was like entering an already occupied tomb.

19. Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum Model

Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum, also known as Ōyama Tomb or Daisenryō Tomb, is a 5th century key-hole shaped *kofun* located in Osaka Prefecture's Sakai City. The tomb is 486m in length and circular part is 35m tall, making it the largest *kofun* in the world. According to a modern construction company, considering the technology of the time it probably took 15 years, 8 months and 6,807,000 people to build the Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum.

Our model of the mausoleum is 1/150th the size of the real tomb. In addition to the model of the mausoleum, the display also contains models of the mausoleum's surroundings. Around the Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum lie many small *kofun*, the houses of powerful clans, and workshops used for constructing parts of the tomb, *haniwa* sculptures and ironware to go inside. This model of what the Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum was like during construction was built based on data gathered from *kofun* excavations done across Japan. Building a *kofun* took a long time, so it is believed that the construction workers must have slept and lived nearby. It is also thought that kilns and metal working workshops used for making *haniwa* sculptures and ironware placed in the tombs were located in the vicinity of the tomb. We included models of these workshops and living quarters so you could see how the *kofun* would have looked during construction.

Surrounding large *kofun* were smaller *kofun* called *baichou*. Sometimes they were the graves of people who served the person buried in the main *kofun*; however there were also times where they contained nothing but more burial accessories for the main tomb. In our model, we show these *baichou* in various states of completion so you can see the process used to make the *kofun*. You can see how the initial body of the tomb was built, then how it was filled with burial accessories, the ceremony used for a funeral and finally how the tomb was sealed shut.

20. Kofun Period - When Politics Changed Based on the Alliances of Powerful Clans

The Kofun Period is an era that created the foundations of Japan as a united country. As you may already know, it was during the Yayoi Period which Japanese people began harvesting rice and creating rice paddies. With time those who had achieved influence and success formed powerful clans. These leading clans could be found throughout Japan. During the Kofun Period, a government-type structure was created centered on the powerful clans in what is present day Nara and Osaka Prefectures. That is why Osaka Prefecture, which at

the time had as much power as Nara Prefecture, was chosen as the location for large *kofun* tombs such as the Emperor Nintoku Mausoleum and the Emperor Ōjin Mausoleum. *Kofun* were built all around Japan, one of the largest being the Tsukuriyama Kofun located in Okayama Prefecture which reaches 360 meters (approximately 1,180 feet) in height. The Kofun Period can be defined by the popularity of *kofun* tombs and the government-- which was run by the emperor and maintained by his alliances with powerful clans from throughout the land.

The ones who brought an end to this alliance based government were Empress Suiko, Prince Shōtoku Taishi and Soga no Umako. During the Asuka Period they moved to replace the alliance system with one of centralized authoritarian rule, which they had learned about from China. At the time, China had recovered from a long era of fighting after being united by the Sui Dynasty and boasted of great power. Empress Suiko and the others worked carefully to create a Japanese government based on the Sui Dynasty. These efforts were continued by Emperor Tenchi and Emperor Tenmu and eventually led to the creation of Japan's first national government, which was run using the Ritsuryō Legal System.

Japan's first national government could not have come to be without the advanced culture and systems of China and the Korean Peninsula. The Kofun Period, particularly the late 5th century onwards, was filled with very active importation from these Asian neighbors. This included the technology for metalworking and pottery making, the custom of horseback riding, political systems as well as writing systems. These provided a foundation for the government to be built upon. Japan's first national government was born as the result of cultural exchange in East Asia.

21. Shura

Shura are large sled-like tools that were used for transporting heavy objects. The main shura seen here was found in the moat surrounding Mitsuzuka Kofun in Fujiidera City, Osaka Prefecture. It is 8.8 meters long (approximately 29 feet) and weighs an impressive 3 tons. It was made using the large Y-shaped limb of a single Japanese Evergreen Oak tree. The smaller shura, which can be seen in the back, was found in the same location. It is 2.8 meters (approximately 10 feet) in length and was made using the Y-shaped limb of a single Sawtooth Oak tree.

When *kofun* tombs were being built, shura were used for moving heavy objects such as stones for construction and stone coffins. The six holes in the side are believed to be where rope was attached to pull the shura. It is also believed that round logs were put under the shura when it was in use, to make pulling it easier. A wooden lever was inserted into the back and was used to control the direction of the shura's movements.

We are able to preserve and display wooden artifacts such as this in their original condition thanks to scientific treatments which replace water that has built up in the wood with a polyethylene glycol compound. It took 14 years for this shura to be treated and it now rests here in the Chikatsu Asuka Museum.