

## Funeral system and idea of the world after death in the Kofun Period

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In the Japanese Archipelago, tumuli called “*kofun*” started to be constructed excessively, when the early paddy field rice cultivation had been settled. We call then the Kofun Period with a high profile as on the process of ancient state formation. People enthusiastically kept on constructing *kofun*, lead by keyhole shape tumuli called “*zempo-koen-fun*”. This thesis tackles the basic question of what exactly *kofun* is.

Reconstructing and analyzing artefacts, archaeological structures and people’s activities according to excavation results, the thesis concluded that the whole ceremony held at *kofun* was like a drama; *kofun* (the mound) as the stage and the artefacts and archaeological structures as the setting and properties of the stage, revealing the series of activities happened at *kofun*. *Kofun* is the reconstructed “other world” where a dying ruler is travelling to.

The souls of the dead had been believed, at that time, to travel to the other world on ship. Imitating such situation, the corps of the ruler was carried on the decorated funeral ship to *kofun* at the funeral ceremony. In the society where the blood relationship based on the ancestor worship is prioritized, it was the most important event to send the soul of the dead safely to the other world. *Kofun* was the essential stage setting for the event. Thus, the other world after death, that is the ideal immortal ideal world, is represented on *kofun*, facilitating on surface of the mound with *haniwa*, terracotta figures and objects, in various shape, as well as the structure of the mound.

*Kofun* was the first place artificially created in Japan to visualize the other world after death, which is the most significant aspect from cultural-historical perspective.

Keyhole shape *kofun* and *haniwa* stopped to be constructed in Asuka Period. This is because the other world view of the rulers dramatically shifted from the idea of the Kofun Period to the Buddhist idea.