

Furuichi Kofun Group

The cluster of ancient *kofun* found in a 2-kilometer radius within the cities of Habikino and Fujidera are known as the Furuichi Kofun Group. *Kofun* are burial mounds that were constructed across Japan from the third century to the seventh century. Some are massive mounds of earth, and many are surrounded by a ditch or moat. Soil was dug up from the perimeter of the structure and packed in the center to form the mound. The mound was then covered with fist-sized stones and its flat surfaces were lined with terracotta figures.

The impressive size and effort involved in their construction suggest the *kofun* were not merely tombs but were intended to be symbols of wealth and power. Excavation into some of the smaller mounds has revealed evidence of trade between people living on the Japanese archipelago and on the Asian continent. Many of these tombs were built in the southern part of the Osaka Plain near the coast of Osaka Bay, which was likely a site of maritime exchange with the Asian continent between the third and seventh centuries.

There are more than 130 *kofun* in the Furuichi area, including the *kofun* of Emperor Ōjin, which is the second largest in Japan. In 2019, 26 *kofun* in the Furuichi area and 23 *kofun* in Sakai were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group.