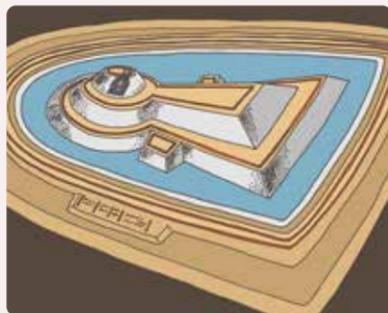
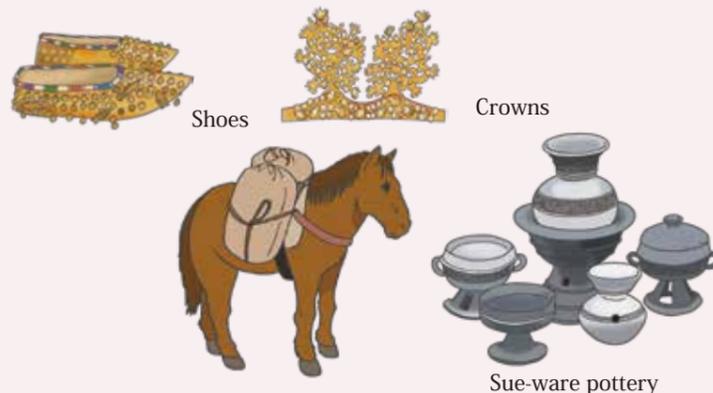


Kofun Period 1750 years ago - 1400 years ago



- Appearance of the keyhole-shaped mound tombs
- Yamato government and its Great King



- Clothes** Crowns, earrings, shoes, trousers and belts
- Foods** Cooking in steamer
- Housing** Elites' mansions, House with a covered hearth
- Tools** Horses and Sue-ware pottery

3. Structure of Kofun

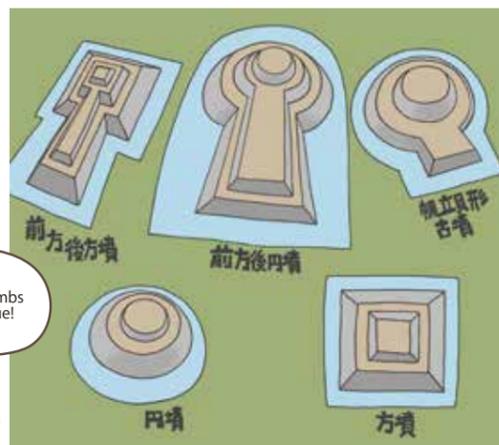
Kofun tombs look like small mountains with trees, however, the surface was covered with stones. Probably soil and trees gradually covered the tombs over the centuries. The tombs were placed with terracotta figures called 'haniwa' on top and terraces stuck out from the sides. Some tombs were surrounded by ditches. There were different ways of burial. Early Kofun period wooden coffins were placed in 'pit-type' chambers through a vertical passage, then stone coffins were used during the middle Kofun period, and in the late Kofun period tombs widely had 'corridor-style stone chambers', accessible from the side.



Burial styles changed with time.

1. Kofun (old mound, ancient tomb) period?

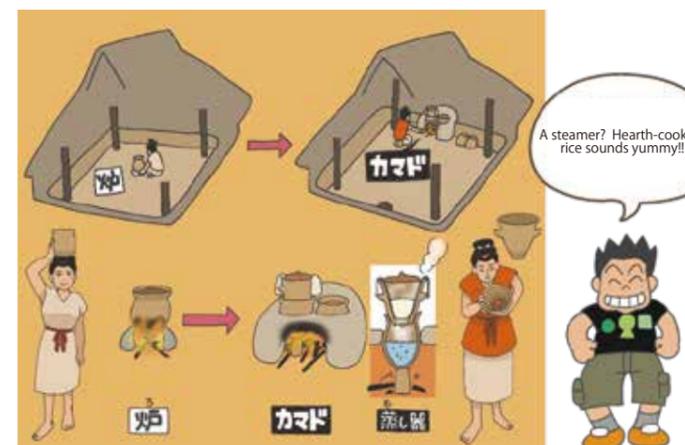
Kofun are large-sized mound tombs of different shapes: keyhole, circular, square, scallop-shaped, etc. There are about 160,000 kofun known in Japan. There are no kofun in Okinawa in the south, in the Tōhoku region or Hokkaidō in the north, but only smaller size circular kofun from the seventh century. The oldest the keyhole-shaped burial mound is believed to be from the third century, located in the Yamato region (present Nara prefecture). Grave styles have local characteristics.



Designs of tombs are all unique!

4. People's Life

In the Kofun period there were a large number of migrants from the Korean peninsula bringing their cultures and technologies. A new type of pottery for steaming rice was introduced. People started to construct a more efficient covered hearth for cooking in their houses. For fashion, gilded bronze crowns and earrings were brought from the Korean peninsula. Horses were also brought from the peninsula and became popular, because they were useful for fighting. Horse riding men started to wear trousers and shoes.



2. The keyhole Kofun and Yamato Kingdom

Among various shaped kofun, the largest is the keyhole-shaped kofun. Circular and square tombs are found around the world, but the keyhole shape is unique to the Japanese archipelago. The keyhole-shaped tombs are found widely in Japan, but concentrated around Osaka. These are said to be the top elites' tombs. The 'Yamato' central state was supported by a number of regional kings. The King of Yamato was inscribed on bronze mirrors and daggers which were discovered in the kofun in the area.



5. Exchange with Korean Peninsula

During the Kofun period, Japan was actively exchanging with all The Kingdoms from the Korean peninsula (Baekje, Gaya, Silla, Goguryeo). It was not only the Korean people visiting Japan, but Japanese people also went to Korean peninsula. The various goods found in the tombs show the strong influence of the Korean peninsula cultures through their active exchange. Also, in a similar way, there were some pottery figures 'haniwa', burial goods and keyhole tombs discovered in the southern Korean peninsula, proving their active cultural exchange with Japan.

