

About the nomination of “Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun” for World Heritage List (Summary)

We would like to express some opinions of ours about “Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun”, which was nominated by the Japan government in January last year for UNESCO approval of World Cultural Heritage.

Most of the tombs of the ancient “Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun” are mausolea for Emperors in Japan, they are beloved, worshipped and deified in various times. Today, they are still used for religious services as Imperial mausolea. Yet, they are just referred as “big tumuli in the ancient time” in Japan government’s nomination proposal, the facts about the mausolea in other and the current era are completely ignored.

For instance, Konda Hachimangu in Habikino city is regarded as a shrine for Emperor Ojin. Its office also manages the Imperial Mausoleum of Emperor Ojin (Ojin Tenno Ryo) right next to it. Thus, the service in which the Mikoshi (portable shrine) is carried from the shrine to the mausoleum remains nowadays as an annual event in September.

Mozu Hachimangu in Sakai city is another shrine for Emperor Ojin. It manages also Gobyoyama Kofun (The Undecided Imperial Mausolea and Tombs of Mozu) as a Holy land, which commonly believed as the temporary tomb of Emperor Ojin.

However, the above facts are completely ignored in the nomination proposal from the Japan’s government. Isn’t it a terrible ignorance to important culture?

The campaign to nominate “Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun” as a World Heritage is, merely, making the place as a visiting spot for tourists and thus for money. It alters the landscape and tombs nearby for the developing a tourist spot. Such an intension is a serious violation of the “convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage”, as well as an ignorance to Osaka residents’ opinions to keep the Imperial mausoleum peaceful and respected.

The green space on the west side of the Imperial Mausoleum of Emperor Nintoku (Nintoku Tenno Ryo) in Sakai city is, for example, being developed as a tourist-customized facility right now. Besides, trees are being cut down for building up the observatory deck in Terayama-minamiyama Kofun in Sakai city. It is being made into a “View Spot” for visitors.

Can the body doing all these be qualified as a protector of World Heritage?

Based on the above reasons, we oppose the registration of “Mozu-Furuichi Kofungun” to World Cultural Heritage. It would be great if you could put these facts into your consideration in the World Heritage Committee in Azerbaijan.