Kofun (Archaic) Haniwa figures  
c. 600 C.E. - same time as: 
- Early Christian 
- Byzantine Period 

Non Western Art Comparisons #5: Japan 
- Gardner Art Through the Ages: Pages 217-221 
- Art Past / Art Present: Pages 150-151 

CONTEXT 

History: 
- Jomon culture c. 12,000-300BCE decorated ceramic vessels and dogu (effigy) figures (associated with magic) 
- Kofun Period c. 300 BCE - 552 CE: (“old tomb”) beginnings of architecture in the form of Shinto shrines, haniwa guardian figures on grave mounds 

Shinto Religious Beliefs and Ritual in Japan: 
- Shinto (“Way of the Gods”) belief system of early Japan 
- did not derive from one religious figure or religious writings Shinto shunned pictorial representation 
- based on a love of nature, family (and above all the ruling family who were direct descendants of the gods) 
- Shinto traditions / beliefs developed as part of early agricultural society’s planting and harvesting rituals 
- connected to various gods (kami) which existed in nature (mountains, waterfalls etc.) and in charismatic people 
- Shinto also connected with shamanism (the belief a priest - shaman - can influence the ancestral spirits, gods and demons who produce good and evil) 
- carved images of gods / spirits were not part of the ritual 
- structure of society centered around clans, which built shrines their family kami which could not be entered by anyone but priest who made offerings on behalf of clan members 
- purity was an important component to ritual - shrines were constantly rebuilt to rid sacred site and structure of physical and spiritual impurities which accumulate over time. 
Shinto ritual came to be associated with emperor (seen as a living kami whose divinity surpassed other kami) 
- the shrine at Ise houses the sacred necklace (jewels representing the soul spirit, which can enter the body of the possessor) 

Art Works: 

Haniwa guardian figures 6th Cent. CE 

Context / Function: - found around burial sites (facing out) and were thought to be guardian figures and links between the living and the dead 

Vocabulary: animism kami 

Techniques: Clay hand built technique