

Tomorrow, the local office of the former Companhia Vale do Rio Doce will receive the pilgrim image of Our Lady of Nazareth, the patron saint of Pará. She motivates the largest religious procession in the country (and one of the largest in the world), which runs through the streets of Belém on the second Sunday of October.

Bringing together hundreds of thousands of devotees (the exaggerated local statistics reach two million participants), the Círio de Nazaré is also a cultural manifestation of national and international repercussion.

As one of the official sponsors of the festival, which lasts for two weeks after the great pilgrimage, the mining company Vale is entitled to a specific visit to its headquarters. For more than 10 years, the company, privatized in 1997, has sponsored the Círio. And since 2004, it has carried out institutional campaigns in Belém with the aim of promoting the traditions of the event, the main event on the Amazon calendar.

According to a press release issued by Vale today, this year's campaign "highlights the behavior of the people of Belém in preparing to welcome visitors who arrive for the festivities in the capital, a local custom that is already part of the traditions surrounding the Círio period." In September 2004, Iphan registered the Círio as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Site.

But when it was a state-owned company, the company seemed to pay little attention to the Círio and renamed the hospital in the residential village of Serra Norte, in Carajás, which was Nossa Senhora de Nazaré, after Yutaka Takeda, an executive at the Japanese multinational Mitsui, then the main buyer of iron ore.

With 40 beds, the hospital was built to provide care to the company's employees and initially to the population of Parauapebas, the municipality where the iron mine is located, which became Brazil's largest exporter. Today, together with another Vale hospital in the region, Yutaka Takeda, managed by the private group Pró-Saúde, serves the population of other municipalities, where the mining company has implemented copper and nickel projects.

Japan was the destination for a large part of the production of Carajás, which has the largest

high-grade hematite deposit on the planet. Asia continues to be the largest customer, but Japan has been replaced by China, which takes 60% of Carajás' production, 130 million tons of iron.

Maybe someone will have the idea of also paying homage to a Chinese boss.