

Trends in the Latest Research on Metalware and Social Changes from the Yayoi Period to the Kofun Period: Consistency with Research on “The Late to End Stages of the Yayoi Period,” which Deviated from the “True Yayoi Period” in Kinki

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During the Yayoi period that unfolded on the Japanese archipelago, an early agricultural society centered on paddy rice cultivation brought over from the Korean peninsula spread slowly over time, but it was not accompanied by the production of metalware such as bronze and iron objects. Bronze and iron objects were introduced in the Kinki region during the middle of the period, but variants of polished stone tools originally from mainland China and chipped stone tools of the Jomon style were already commonly used in farming. Bronze objects became large ceremonial objects such as bronze bells, bronze swords, and bronze halberds. Iron objects began to spread by taking the place of woodworking tools, but the actual number of iron objects used was limited. The late Yayoi period, marked by the rapid appearance of plain or undecorated earthenware, was when Yayoi culture matured, or more precisely, the end of the “True Yayoi period” in the Kinki region. How did systems of producing bronze objects and technology to manufacture iron objects change after the late Yayoi period, when society changed drastically? By tracking those changes, the differences in innovations in production systems have been noted, so I presented models spanning the Yayoi period over the past few years and ascertained the significance of changes. I have participated in new research on metal objects and reviewed its authenticity through findings and discussions. In light of those efforts, I have summarized the research overall in several points, and my personal opinions are also offered.

Key words: true Yayoi period, production system of bronze objects, ironware manufacturing technology, the Kinki region, society of the late Yayoi period, problem of metallic raw material