Organizations and Groups in the East Area of Japan
Judged from the Agglomeration of Tomb Mounds

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The Kōzuhara site consisting of 116 tomb mounds located in the East Area of Japan can be classified according to historical period. Among the items such as the shape of the tomb mounds, haniwa, burial facilities (such as coffin and chamber) and accompanying grave goods, the dates have been judged by the composition of items such as stone imitations, arrowheads pottery such as sueki and hašiki. The period of construction ranges over three hundred years from the late fourth century to the late seventh century. Marked changes took place during this period. The shape of a tomb, for example, changed considerably; in the fifth century it was square, in the sixth century it was circular and in the seventh century it became square again.

The distribution of the tomb mounds is classified into two types. There was a branch group of tombs covering a limited area that were constructed throughout the period and a smaller branch group with a limited number of tombs that were constructed over a limited period. If we assume that the limited area in which the tombs were concentrated was the central tomb area of a group with strong familial ties, judging from the location of the branch groups and small branch groups, there could have existed four groups (with strong familial ties) around the Kōzuhara plateau.

The zenpōkōenfun (key hole shape tombs) that indicated high social status in the Yamato State were built during each stage, changing location from one group to another; the person who was buried represented the head of the four groups at Kōzuhara and the assumption is possible that the leader was politically backed up by all the groups. Among the key hole shaped tombs there is one that was extremely large. When we compare it with the large-size tomb built amongst the nearby Ryūkakuji Kofun-gun (Ryukakuji group of tombs), it is possible to trace the chronology and the transference of the organization it belonged to. If we compare the person buried in the large-size tomb with the regional chief that might have been Inbanokuni no Miyatsuko (territorial families of the Inba), it is reasonably assumed that this chief also
was supported by such sub-political organizations. In other words, in the Inba, there were two ranks of regional organizations similar to agata ("districts") and kuni ("provinces") frequently referred to in history. Közuhara and Ryūkakuji might have been sub-organizations similar to agata. There is a possibility that Ryūkakuji served as a central organization in the formation of a higher level organization such as kuni. Square tombs were built frequently and exclusively during the seventh century and this phenomenon reflects the tendency of factionalism within the groups with strong familial ties that formed sub-organizations. This regional factionalism should be considered in relation to the strong influence of the fluctuations that occurred within the Yamato State.