Rethinking the Hashihaka Tomb

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"The Era of the Key-Hole Mound Tombs" is one of the exhibitions at the National Museum of Japanese History that opened in March, 1983. In the display, as an example of an early key-hole shaped mound tomb, a model of the Hashihaka Tomb in Nara Prefecture was reproduced. Replicas of haniwa, unglazed clay cylinders that were excavated from the tomb, were also exhibited. The paper covers the results of the research that was conducted for the reproduction of the model, presenting the diagrams drawn for the reproduction of haniwa, and discussing the academic basis for the reproduction.

The reproduction of the Hashihaka Tomb mound was based on a survey map. The circular part of the tomb was constructed by placing a huge, round, four-layered mound on a small hill. The first half of the angular part is quite wide; the front end has four layers, but the sides do not show a layered structure. The surface of the angular section of the tomb slants and is connected to the surface of the fourth layer of the circular construction. No surrounding moat has been identified. These characteristics are quite different from the later key-hole tombs and show that Hashihaka is of a type constructed before the features of the key-hole tomb became perfectly stylized.

Blackish tiles cover the tomb mound and from an analysis of the composition of the rocks utilized in the construction, it seems that the building stones for these tiles included gabbro and granite gathered from the nearby River Hase. There is flat stone that was originally quarried from Shibayama (Kashiwara City in Osaka, 20 kilometers west of Hashihaka). Judging from the nearby early key-hole tombs, the inference can be drawn that the stone served to construct stone chambers.

From the top of the circular section of the tomb pieces of a special kind of cylindrical haniwa and pot-shaped haniwa were excavated, and in the top of the angular part of the tomb, pot-shaped earthen-ware was found. Research was carried out in particular to reproduce the original shape of haniwa. As a result it appeared possible that there were at least two forms of cylindrical haniwa, and the patterns carved
on the surfaces typologically belonged to a period after specimens from Totsukizaka No. 1 Tomb in Okayama Prefecture were produced. But it seems that the pot-shaped haniwa with three projecting bands patterns on the body belonged to a period before the Totsukizaka No. 1 specimen was produced.

However we suppose that the older elements of the specimens in this case survived till the age of Hashihaka Tomb. Although this idea would be permitted, we could not identify the age of Hashihaka Tomb only from these evidences. Because we could not touch on the important specimens Mr. R. Maruyama had reported before, and also they might be identified the special pedestal dated to the Yayoi Period in Okayama Prefecture. Things to be considered will remain in the future.