A Study of the Transformation of the Central Palace in the Ancient Capital

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During the stage of the Centralized Imperial State after the Age of Tomb Mounds (Kofun Jidai), a city was constructed to function as the center of administration. The formation of the capital started in Asuka during the seventh century, and afterwards, the central city constructed according to an urban plan changed its location, i.e. Naniwakyo (Osaka), Fujiwarakyō, Heijōkyō (Nara Prefecture), Nagaokakyō, Heiankyō (Kyoto). The urban plan of the capital was influenced by the urban plans of China; a recent debate centers on whether it was influenced by the cities of the T’sang dynasty or by cities of former periods. In the center of the city lay the Daidairi, a place where the Emperor (Tennō) and aristocrats gathered together. Inside there was a palace where the Emperor lived, and an area where more than 10,000 officials worked; to the south of the Dairi lay the Chōdōin, where aristocrats administered and where officers observed the national rituals. The Chōdōin was as big as the Dairi, and as a central symbol of administration, there were twelve big buildings and a large garden. Furthermore, the transformation of this space due to the formation and decline of the centralized state reflected the characteristics of the central features of the centralized state. In the Owarida Palace at Asuka during the beginning of the seventh century, historical literature shows that there was a Chōdō in the south of the Dairi. In the Naniwanagara Toyosaki Palace during the middle of the seventh century, a Chōdōin was constructed that consisted of several Chōdō that were undergoing stylization, though at this stage the main buildings in Chōdōin, the Daikokuden and the surrounding Daikokudenin didn’t function independently, and the main building constructed in the south of the Dairi performed the function of these buildings, judging from the results of excavation. The Daikokuden and Daikokudenin were completed during the late seventh century in Fujiwarakyō; the Chōdōin came to be regularly of tiled construction. Afterwards Fujiwara Palace was suddenly abolished and in the beginning of the eighth century, Heijō palace was constructed. The main reason judging from the remains was due to the observation of rituals and politics in different buildings. In Fujiwara
Palace, politics and rituals were observed in the *Chōdōin*, whereas in Heijyō Palace the two were observed in two different *Chōdo*. An analysis of the stimulus for the change in the function of the buildings reveals an awareness of the Ta, Ming, Kung Parace of the T’sang Capital Ch’ang, An in China aroused by the special envoys who visited T’sang.

After this stage two central buildings functioned separately and this tendency was found in other palaces.