On the "Kokufu" in the Ritsuryo Period

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In recent years it has been necessary to re-examine the historical concept of "kokufu". This general tendency was opened with historiophilological studies by YAGI Atsushi. This paper aims at verifying his view by gleaving some facts from historical documents.

General conclusions are as below:

(1) Nowhere in the Sugawara Michizane's poetical works, "Kanke-bunsō" is there a poem suggesting the existence of the capital (heijō-kyō or Heian-kyō) style kokufu area in Sanuki province from 886 through 890. The presumption is that this apparent lack of kokufu area may be extrapolated on a nationwide scale.

(2) There has been found no historical material wherein the word "kokufu" is used as a local appellation in the 8th to 9th century. It is not necessary however to go to the length of denying the very possibility that there once existed in the vicinities outside the "kokuchō-in" a certain collective dwelling area including the private houses of commoners, and that such area were called "funai" or "fuchû".

It should however be noted here that the first conclusion as above falls into a sort of passive demonstration drawn from rather negative viewpoint and that the second conclusion includes substantial presumption.

Whether these conclusions are right or not is, therefore, to be entrusted to the future development of archeological investigations and studies.