Aspects of Tumuli in the Final Kofun Period
in the South-western Part of Kazusa

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There existed two powerful political blocks in south-western Kazusa in the Tumulus Period. One was the Makuta-koku in the basin of the Obitsu River, and the other was the Sue-koku in the basin of the Koito River. In these two areas, the continuous construction of large tumuli can be observed through almost all the stages of the Tumulus Period. This indicates that these areas maintained a particularly stable power among the various chiefs in the Bōsō area.

In the basin of the Koito River, in the early part of the Tumulus Period, small and medium-sized keyhole tombs with quadrangular rear mound existed on the hills of the middle and lower reaches of the river. However, in the middle to later period, groups of chiefs' tombs were formed centering around the Dairizuka Tumuli Group on the alluvial plain of the lower reaches. After the Dairizuka Tumulus, the largest keyhole-shaped tumulus in the Bōsō, was constructed in the middle of the 5th century, there was a period in the first half of the 6th century, when there is uncertainty about the existence of chiefs' tombs. Then, in the latter half of the 6th century, there was continuous construction of 100m-long keyhole-shaped tumuli, and tomb areas for the chief family group were formed, including small and medium-sized keyhole-shaped and circular mounds. In the 7th century, several square tombs, including the Warimizuka Tumulus, were constructed, and the tomb system of the chief's family group went through a complete change. These square tumuli had very strong common features, such as double surrounding ditches, and ashlarred stone rooms. It can be assumed that there was a class significance in the uniform formation of square tumuli of the final period in the various areas in the Bōsō District.

In the basin of the Obitsu River, there was already a chief power based in the Obitsu district on the middle reaches of the river, and large keyhole-shaped tumuli, such as the Igozuka and Hakusan-Jinja Tumuli, were constructed. In the middle Tumulus Period, however, chiefs' tomb groups were consistently formed in the Gion and Nagasuka districts on the alluvial plain of the lower reaches, the Takayanagi-Chōshizuka Tumulus being the first example. Thereafter, the development is notably similar to that in the basin of the Koito River. However, many of the chiefs' tombs in the basin of the Obitsu River have disappeared, a large part of the chronological relationship is not clear.

Furthermore, with the Kinreiizuka Tumulus built at the end of the 6th century is as the last example, after which no chief-type tumuli (square mounds) are to be seen in the basin of the Obitsu River. This leaves a large question concerning trends in their relationship to the appearance of the Odera, the oldest temple in Kazusa.