Aspects of Tumuli in the Final Kofun Period
in the Eastern Part of Shimôsa

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In the eastern part of Shimôsa, the tombs of the elites that were found rather scattered. Since it is not a closed area, it is considered that elites there ruled smaller areas and repeated rises and falls.

In the latter half of the late Kofun period, large tomb mounds were constructed in various parts of this region, and they could stand comparison with the ones in other areas. But at the end of the period, those tombs were no longer built. Even the largest one, Morito-Otsuka Kofun, is 50 meters long, (the longer side of its rectangular shape, including the surrounding ditch) and not much of the excavated funerary goods attract attentions. Judging from the differences between the tomb mounds in this area and others such as Iwaya Kofun, Danozuka Kofun, and Warimizuka Kofun, it is clear that the elites in this area were not so powerful as those in other region. Furthermore, as it was rare to succeed to the tomb areas of the predecessor, most of the entombed in this period were considered to be the ones who established their influences newly. And, judging from the fact that the “gato” patterns of Yamada-dera (temple) type were adopted by all the temples of the early period, it is considered that these temples were under the influence of the power ruling the area around Inbanuma (marsh).

Major changes in the final stage of the late Kofun period cannot be explained only by the local factors. Considering the situations of Inbanuma area in those days, it can be assumed that in the early 7th century the reorganization of the elites took place and it covered the whole Shimôsa district.