Appearance and Development of Mounded Tombs with Corridor-style Stone Chambers in the Samguk Period in Korea

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The author makes clear to some extent questions regarding political areas of Koguryŏ, Paekche, Silla, and Kaya, through an overview of the process of the establishment and the development of mounded tombs with corridor-style chambers in the four countries, from the aspects of time and area. As a basic undertaking, he arranges in chronological order the corridor-style stone chambers scattered throughout the Korean Peninsula, establishing the Pyongyang-style and Nungsanni-style stone chambers for Paekche, and the Chunghyongni-style stone chambers for Silla. Understanding of the structure of stone chambers and their distribution makes it clear that these stone chambers had a political character.

The Pyongyang-style stone chambers were standardized in structure and scale, from which the difference in the status and the class of the buried persons can be imagined. These are extensively distributed in the Kingdom of Koguryŏ, and are attributed to the ruling class (royal family and government officials). Through the chronological arrangement of Kofun and with consideration of the structure an scale of mounds, the layout of funeral lands, and posthumous names, the author compares stone chambers of the same period and identifies the mounded tombs of kings. In particular, he identifies the grave of Changsuwang as the Kan’ōbo Grave, and that of Yangwonwan as the Honamni Shishinzuka (Four-God Mound).

The author proves that the structural characteristics and distribution of the Songsanni-style and Nungsanni-style stone chambers in Paekche suggest the relationship of political areas in the country, and that they were connected with a system of rule, called the “Gobu Gohō System”.

For the corridor-style stone chambers in Kaya, the author focuses on the questions of their spread and lineage, and supposes that they were introduced from Paekche in the Ungjin and Sabi Castle Periods. Results of recent excavations have made it clear that the corridor-style stone chambers first appeared in the early 6th century on the reaches of the Naktonggang River, where the stone chambers of this style developed in the latter 6th century onward, after the fall of Kaya.

The establishment of the corridor-style stone chambers in Silla meant the end of the traditional grave system with piles of stones and a timber compartment protecting the coffin. Changes in Silla’s national system can be found behind this. The author also suggests that mounded tombs with corridor-style stone chambers, such as the Chunghyongni style, developed in the territory ruled by Silla after Chinungwang in the mid-6th century. The stone chambers of the Kings’ mausolea in the Unified Silla Period are presumed to have had a vault-type ceiling. The author also takes a general view of the corridor-style stone chambers around the Sobek Mountains and Eastern Coast with regard to their relationship with Silla.