The Provincial Capital of Tōtōmi as Background to the Ichinotani Medieval Graves

ISHII Susumu

Mitsuke, Iwata City, Shizuoka Prefecture, has long been the site of the capital of Tōtōmi province. In the Middle Ages, it was a "medieval provincial political city," the center of the region. In 1984, about 900 medieval graves were discovered crowded together at the head of a hill located to the northwest of the town. These graves are commonly called the "Ichinotani Medieval Graves". In spite of all the efforts of the many people who wished the site to be preserved, it is to be greatly regretted that the site has permanently disappeared due to the construction of a housing estate. However, it is undoubted that much progress was made in research on the graves themselves, as well as on the town of Mitsuke, which was closely connected with the graves and provided their historical background. Of this research, a laborious work by Dr. ŌSHIE Akio, titled "From a Provincial Capital to a Post Town—the Structure and Development of a Medieval Town, Mitsuke, Taking into Account the Ichinotani Site—", can be said to be a representative work tracing the history of Mitsuke over a long period of time and from a variety of viewpoints.

In the present paper, the author re-examines the history of the provincial capital and the town of Mitsuke from Ancient times to the Middle Ages, learning from the research work mentioned and also referring to "The History of Shizuoka Prefecture; Documents" and "The History of Iwata City; Documents", which were both published later, and other historical records newly made public. He has also attempted to correct errors made in previous papers. Especially, as a result of reexamination of the distribution of public demesne in Tōtōmi Province in the Nanbokuchō period, the author has verified that the public demesne still covered an extensive area, mainly in the central part of the Province, and points out that the provincial capital, Mitsuke, was favorably located, that is, at the very center. Mitsuke also served as a base for the management of the demesne at that time. The author stresses that Mitsuke as a provincial city should be explained not only as a post town on the Tōkaidō, but from the viewpoint of its function as the center of the management of the considerably extensive demesne.

Concerning the fact that Mitsuke of the Late Middle Ages has always been highly evaluated as a free city, the author concludes that this town probably gained its special character because it was a "Medieval provincial political city".

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