Forging in Ancient Korea and Groups of Foreign Craftsmen

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Research by scholars in the past on prestige goods that include armor, weapons, and horse gear and production tools such as agricultural and manufacturing implements has centered on a diverse range of items, while at the same time these studies have been conducted separately. In the field of armor, weapons and horse gear in particular, there has been exhaustive research that has typed such goods on the basis of detailed observations. However, specifying their place of production becomes necessary in order to be able to verify important matters such as their production, distribution and diffusion. In this context, understanding the working conditions at the places where they were made is vital for gaining an understanding of the production organizations and division of labor that occurred at workshops. Even though in an attempt to shed light on the circumstances surrounding iron production some progress has been made in clarifying the structures of smelting furnaces, only in a few cases has there been an investigation of ancient sites for the remains of iron workshops. Accordingly, the structures of mainly smelting furnaces, ages and details of techniques have become major subjects of research. In this way, whereas prestige goods have been studied through research into funerary accessories in burial mounds, agricultural and manufacturing implements have mainly been studied in the context of research undertaken into the history of iron techniques. In other words, there has been little research that has brought to light the relationship between the production of iron and ironware and production groups through specific geographical locations. The following are the three most useful points when studying locations with a focus on forging. First, unlike iron manufacturing workshops, forges were located within settlements or in neighboring areas and the abundance of relics such as earthenware that have been excavated makes it easy to specify production eras. There have even been cases in which unfinished products have been excavated from workshops and this makes it easy to form a picture of the mode of production that existed in settlements. Two, from the length of continuation of settlements that had workshops, the structure of these settlements, and excavated remains it is easy to study specialization among craftsmen in each region, which makes it possible to elucidate the relationship they had with those who held power in their respective regions. Three, it is possible to ascertain their existence in regions which were the terri-
ories of chiefs through burial mounds containing iron slag and funerary accessories made out of forged iron. That is to say, in situations where the extent of iron production is not clear, it is possible to gain an organic understanding of foundry workers and workshops. Also, by locating foundry workshops between the production of raw materials and manufactured goods, the process from production through to distribution becomes clearer. The foundry workshops used here include those related to the refining and wrought processes. In particular, I would like to make a comprehensive investigation of epochs and production groups and the influence that visitors to Wa from the Asian continent during the Kofun period had on technical reforms and the control structure within the internal political system of Wa by examining the structure of iron foundries, excavated remains and the burial mounds containing iron slag where iron workers are believed to have been buried.