Changes in Armor from Gaya Tombs and Korean-Japanese Relations

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Iron armor may be described as a symbol of important military power during the period of the formation of ancient states. This is because armor was used as an important symbol of authority. In Gaya, different types of iron armor were buried in tombs as important symbols of authority. Knowing about iron armor that was used as funerary accessories provides clues that shed light on the hierarchical structure within a group. In addition, focusing on the regional differences of armor used as funerary accessories makes it possible to conduct a comparative study of the course of development of groups.

This paper first classifies iron armor from the Gaya region into two periods: the 4th century and the 5th century onwards. This is followed by a general discussion that examines the form of iron armor and the situation surrounding armor as funerary accessories. In the course of determining the factors behind the appearance of iron armor for each period and the changes it underwent, I have found that in the 4th century these factors were the social situation, the system of weapons and fighting tactics, while in the 5th century the main factor was interaction with a horse-riding culture. As for New type body armor that appeared after the 5th century, I discuss their excavation on the Korean Peninsula and their unique elements, and conjecture as to the areas where they were made while taking a look at their appearance and disappearance in Japan. Next, I address the form of iron armor funerary accessories and locate tombs where armor was found as funerary accessories in the Busan Bokcheon-dong tombs and the Gimhae Daeseong-dong tombs, and examine the relationship between tombs and the practice of using armor as funerary accessories while examining its development over time. By studying iron armor used as funerary accessories in this way, I provide a rough sketch of the process of development of the structure and transformation of groups.