A History of “Non-Silla-type” Horse Trappings Excavated in Japan:
a Comparison with Horse Trappings of the Dae-Gaya Federation

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Ornamental horse gear that has been excavated from burial mounds in Japan is broadly classified into one of two categories depending on differences in their origin. These relics are classified as either "Silla-type" or "non-Silla type", with the majority possessing characteristics found in the latter category. The criteria for these categories are based on elements indicating differences in the regions where horse gear was made on the Korean Peninsula from the second half of the 5th century, which have been put forward by Mr. Kim Doo-Chul 金斗喆. Horse gear belonging to the "Silla-type" are thought to be those from Koguryo and Silla and some parts of Gaya, while "non-Silla type" horse gear tend to be concentrated in Paekche and Gaya. These categories are most useful when determining the origin of horse gear discovered in Japan.

This paper examines horse gear of the "non-Silla type", by first paying particular attention to the frequent modifications that were made to horse gear in Dae-Gaya, which has been nominated as the likely place of origin of bridles with f-shaped cheek pieces and diamond-shaped horse accessories that have been excavated in Japan. Most of this gear has been re-made into the "non-Silla type" after having originally been made as horse gear fitting the "Silla-type" category. It is believed that strong influences from the Paekche region were at play here. In particular, during the second half of the 5th century when Paekche was temporarily decimated in a war with Koguryo, it is believed that the influx of craftsmen into Dae-Gaya who were fleeing the troubles there transformed the craft. Although there is ongoing debate as to the age of Paekche burial mounds in Korea, it is considered highly likely that the diamond-shaped horse ornaments were made in the Kongju (公州) region of Paekche at the same time as the f-shaped cheek pieces were made.

It is assumed that the f-shaped cheek pieces and diamond-shaped accessories that were brought to the Japanese Archipelago were either brought directly from Paekche or, in the case of articles that were made in Paekche but came via Dae-Gaya, it was the imitations of these articles that were made in Dae-Gaya that were brought to Japan. It is also believed that horse gear such as heart-shaped bridles and ornaments made in Silla but modified in Dae-Gaya in the early part of the 6th century have historical links to Japanese horse gear.
that is cylindrical in shape.

In this way, the origins of horse gear in Japan dating from the second half of the 5th century through to the early part of the 6th century are to be found first in Paekche, and then later in Dae-Gaya. These are most useful materials for learning about the regions that maintained friendly relations with the Japanese state of Wa amid the ever-changing state of affairs in the Korean Peninsular at that time.